

ADVENTURES

UNLIMITED



Issue #1

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SHADOWRUN

VAMPIRE
The Masquerade™

MAGIC
The Gathering™

CALL OF
CTHULHU

Mrs. Magica

CYBERPUNK®

OVER THE
EDGE

GURPS®

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS



elcome to the first issue of *Adventures Unlimited*. We hope you like what you see.

Adventures Unlimited has a straightforward, simple concept. We publish games and adventure scenarios only. Nothing but good, solid, gaming material. Pick it up and play.

We hope to produce a truly interactive product. That means we want to hear from you. We're encouraging our readers to comment on what they'd like to see in the pages of our magazine. What gaming systems do you play? What games need more published adventures to support them? What do you think would make a good starting point for an adventure? Would you like to see a familiar game system transposed into an unusual setting or time period? Do you have a favorite type of NPC, magical item, or scientific gizmo you'd like to see a scenario based upon?

Once you've had a chance to read our premier issue and play through some of the scenarios, we'd also like you to comment on them. Did you use them as is, or did you change anything? Did you wind up converting a scenario from one gaming system to another, and would you like to share your conversion notes with other readers? (We'll be doing a little of this ourselves; some of the adventures in this first issue include conversion rules for other gaming systems.)

We plan to pack a lot into each issue of *Adventures Unlimited* – anywhere from five to eight adventures, each based on a different gaming system. There will be a mixture of established, "big-name" games, hot new games that we think are worth promoting, and even a few "forgotten favorites" that are no longer in print. We also hope to be the first to publish adventures for new gaming systems as they are released, meaning that you won't be faced with a months-long delay before you have an adventure to go with the new game you've just bought.

In the case of established game systems, we plan to link each scenario with the latest product for the system. That does NOT mean that you have to purchase this supplement or sourcebook before you can play. On the contrary, each of our adventures is designed so that it is ready to play on its own, and does not require any extra background reading. We simply believe that, by basing the adventures on the latest products, we can give the game master an opportunity to make the best use of the hottest new supplements and sourcebooks.

A number of the adventures will feature sidebars outlining new spells, NPCs, equipment, locations, organizations, and other goodies. So even if you

don't play the adventure, you'll find lots of new material to add to your campaign.

Adventures Unlimited is a truly independent product. We're not a "house organ" for any one gaming company, and so we can promise that you'll see the widest variety of adventures possible in each issue. What's more, we can respond to your suggestions, producing whatever it is you'd like to see.

We'd like to take a moment to thank all of you who responded, via the Internet, to our questions about what the magazine should include. We encourage our readers to let us know what they think would make an interesting scenario. (These "requests" should be no longer than a sentence or two.) Should our designers select your suggestion to build an adventure around, we'll be giving credit where credit is due. Just turn to some of the adventures in this first issue, and you'll see the names of those who graciously offered us their input.

We'd like to use this magazine as a vehicle for helping beginning game designers to get published. Keep an eye on future issues of *Adventures Unlimited* – once the magazine is running smoothly, we'll be organizing a contest for previously unpublished game designers. Among the prizes offered will be publication of the winning module in *Adventures Unlimited*.

In the meantime, we'll be offering what assistance we can to beginning game designers through our editorial columns. You'll see tips on how to approach a gaming company with your game design, hints about what gaming companies are looking for (and even more importantly, what they are NOT looking for), and information on what kind of contract and payment you can expect. We'll also offer writing tips: how to start an adventure with an intriguing hook; how to keep the tone consistent throughout; how to give an adventure just the right mix of background material and action; and how to write in nasty twists and surprise endings. In short, everything you need to know to design the perfect adventure and get it published.

If you like what you see here, please tell your friends about us and ask your local hobby store to carry *Adventures Unlimited*. Only with your support can we make this a continuing venture.

Let the games begin!

Lisa Smedman

Editorial Director, *Adventures Unlimited*



ADVENTURES UNLIMITED

Issue #1
Spring 1995

DENVER DOUBLE CROSS BY NIGEL FINDLEY 4



In the shadows, it's often not what you know but who you know that makes the difference between life and death. When someone you think you know and trust leaves you hanging out to dry, the first question is, "Why?" The second is, "How do I get even...?"

FOURTEEN FLAVORS BY NICOLE LINDROOS FREIN 16



An ice cream vendor has been spotted all over The Edge, everywhere the player characters go. Who is this guy? What is he up to? And who is the fool who ordered the Spumoni Fizz?

RIDE THE DIVINE WIND BY LISA SMEDMAN 26



When Kinuko ran away from her home in Tokyo to join a boso-zuko gang, she stole a secret motorcycle prototype from her father's lab. It's up to you to bring her back. But what's more important to her father – keeping Kinuko alive, or recovering the bike?

GRAND MAGIC BY PIERS BROWN 37



These variant rules for Magic: The Gathering give the game a whole new twist. The multi-player format and hex-based mapping system put the emphasis on destroying your opponents' territory. Be prepared to use your cards in new and intriguing ways.

OLD FRIENDS BY ANDY LUCAS 42



You thought the city was safe – at least for you and your kind. Now someone or something is attacking the Kindred and all indications point to other vampires. The Prince wants to know what's going on. Guess who's been elected to investigate?

**CHECK OUT OUR
CENTERFOLD!**

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The "Genera Bar" is a
1-to-1 scale map for use
with figurines. Just
photocopy it, lay it on your
gaming table, and play.

Our cover illustration, by Mark
Poole, is from the popular Magic the
Gathering™ trading card game. The
white/blue card *Jedit Ojanen* is an
uncommon Legend.



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The obscure covenant on the rocky, wind-swept isle is reputed to have
one of the best magical libraries in the tribunal. But that doesn't mean it
hasn't got problems. Secret promises to faerie folk, missing vis, and overly
inquisitive magi will complicate your visit.

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For decades, the Ferals have looked upon the city dwellers with reverence
and resentment. Those inside the city have been given everything they
need by their robots. Everything except freedom. Now city dwellers and
Ferals fight together against the tyranny of the machine.

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**CALL OF
CTHULHU**

Smuggling rum into Nova Scotia during the Prohibition years was a
dangerous business, but some ships carried deadlier cargo. When a coffin
goes missing and the trail is speckled with wriggling worms, it's time for a
good, stiff drink.

Adventures Unlimited is a quarterly publication of Bootstrap Press Inc. All adventures presented herein are
unofficial supplements to existing game systems. Permission to use the logos of these gaming systems has
been granted by the companies that produce these games, but does not imply official sanction.

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DENVER



4 ADVENTURES UNLIMITED

ART BY GAVIN LONERGAN

DOUBLE CROSS

BY NIGEL FINDLEY

SHADOWRUN

Denver Double-Cross is an adventure for *Shadowrun*, which takes place in the Treaty City of Denver. Although the adventure is written to complement the material in the *Denver Campaign Set*, you don't have to own the Denver material to make use of it. (The shadows are pretty much the same in the underbelly of any city, chummer...) If you do have access to the *Denver Campaign Set*, however, the background information and "local color" on the Treaty City will add a lot to the adventure.

Denver Double-Cross is appropriate for just about any shadow team. While a decker would prove useful, the adventure can still be completed without one. The adventure contains enough combat to get the blood pumping, but the main focus is on investigation and "social engineering". Runners with a tendency to shoot first and forget about the questions probably won't ever solve the central mystery.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

The runners are contacted by a fixer they've worked with before – someone they've come to respect and trust (as much as runners trust anyone, at least...). This fixer – a veteran of the shadows who operates under the handle "Nikchick" – has an attractive contract for the runners: smuggle a shipment of "California hot" simsense chips from the Ute Zone into the Sioux Zone. Nikchick has set things up so the runners should expect little resistance at the border. The security forces have been diverted elsewhere, or otherwise suborned. (If the runners do some checking, they'll find that Nikchick has actually made the provisions she's discussed. Everything looks like it's on the up-and-up.)

The team makes the penetration... and all hell breaks loose. The border crossing is an ambush. Fortunately there aren't enough ambushers to handle a bunch of metallated-up street monsters like the runners. The team manages to fight its way to safety, losing the shipment in the process.

Obviously, they've been set up. Fighting mad, the team goes looking for Nikchick, only to find that she's pulled the quick fade. This is *Shadowrun*, after all, so they'll assume that Nikchick has double-crossed them.

>>I'D LIKE TO SEE A SHADOWRUN
ADVENTURE IN WHICH THE
RUNNERS ARE USED AS ONGOING
PAWNS IN A CONFLICT BETWEEN
TWO RIVAL FIXERS.<<
ANDREW BERGER, DENVER, CO

In fact, Nikchick isn't the villain, she's a victim, too. A rival fixer has decided it's time to eliminate competition, and Nikchick's name is at the top of the list. It was this rival who penetrated Nikchick's security, discovered the smuggling plans, and ratted the runners out to the Sioux border security force.

Nikchick knows she's in deep, deep dred. The individuals who contracted for the smuggling mission are ticked that their shipment has gone missing, and are quite willing to take the value out of Nikchick's hide. The rival fixer has made other assaults on

Nikchick's "empire". And Nikchick also knows how the runners are going to respond to being double-crossed. Her only option is to go underground, fast.

Presumably, the runners will try to track down Nikchick with pay-back in mind. As they try to follow her trail,

however, they'll stumble across evidence that the fixer is as much of a victim as they are. They'll learn that the rival fixer has been using them as pawns, and will presumably want to show him – in no uncertain manner – the error of his ways.

INITIAL CONTACT

It's been a dry couple of weeks, omae, and the old credstick has started looking a mite lean. There've been job offers bandied about – this is Denver, after all, the Front Range Free Zone, and there's always some kind of biz in the offing – but nothing that really yanks your crank. Either the payoff's been too low, or the risks too high, or the contractual obligations too ridiculous ("This is my cuz Gnasher, he'll be working with you." Yeah, right.)

Thank the spirits for old chummers. Just when you thought you'd have to knock over a Stuffer Shack to get the cred to keep yourself in beer, you got a call from a fellow veteran of the shadows. Nikchick's the handle she's working under these days: a dred-hot Denver fixer and a notorious "Zoner" – one of the wraiths who seems to flit back and forth over the Zone boundaries with total impunity. You've worked with Nikchick before and she's always played straight and square with you. In fact, on reflection you'd have to say you actually trust her (as much as you trust anyone in the Sixth World...).

Nikchick, the fixer, contacts each of the runners individually (or through the team spokesperson, if there is one) and arranges for a meet at a club in the Ute Zone. Denim is one of the Ute Zone's hottest clubs, banging on late into the night Tuesdays

through Sundays. The young crowd packs the large dancefloor, enjoying a weird mix of shag, retro-flash and "tribal rock". The dark corner booths and private rooms are a hot place to negotiate contracts: either shadow-biz, or short-term social liaisons. (Use the Nightclub archetype, *Sprawl Sites*, p.29.)

The contract Nikchick offers to the runners is fairly straightforward. In the next couple of days, she'll be coming into possession of a shipment of "California hots" – simsense chips with their outputs boosted almost to BTL levels. Cal hots are perfectly legal in the Ute Zone, but hideously illegal in the Sioux Zone. Predictably, Ute offers the supply of Cal hots while Sioux provides the demand.

A reputable "Zoner", Nikchick knows how to ghost across the Demarcators between the zones into which the Treaty City has been divided. As part of the deal, she'll put her considerable expertise to use, smoothing the runners' crossing. She promises to lay on a couple of diversions to draw Sioux security forces away from the intended crossing site – a stretch of fence between Thornton and Northglenn – and to suborn (or otherwise "zero") the guards that haven't been drawn away. Unless the runners do something to bring attention to themselves, the run should be more or less of a cake-walk.

If they agree to the deal, the runners will receive 1,000 nuyen each immediately – as a "binder" for the contract – an additional 2,000¥ each when they take possession of the shipment from Nikchick, and the balance of 7,000¥ each on delivery of the chips to the Sioux "conduit". These payments are negotiable. Let the runners make Negotiation tests – either individually or as a group – to sweeten the pot. Nikchick is under time constraints and needs a team on-line now; her negotiating posture should reflect this.

Assuming the team agrees, Nikchick closes the meeting by handing over the "binder", and arranging various electronic mail "dead drops" by which they can keep in touch. She will notify them within 96 hours when and where they can pick up the shipment, and will confirm to them at that time that she's "ameliorated" the security at the demarcator.

PREPARATIONS

Trust doesn't come easily in the shadows. Even though the runners know Nikchick, and haven't been fraggled over by her in the past, their instincts will be to trust her about as far as they can spit a rat. If they want to look into her efforts to deal with Sioux security at the zone demarcator – or into Nikchick's recent activities – ask for Etiquette tests from the players. Refer to the table that follows for results.

Security Provisions (Target Number 6)

Appropriate Contacts: any Street, Law Enforcement or Security contact.

Shadowland: n/a.

Notes: If the runners use contacts with Sioux military connections, subtract 2 from the Target Number.

SUCSESSES:

- 0 "Go around asking stupid questions like that and you'll get yourself in deep drek, my friend."
- 1-2 "The buzz I hear is that some Ute yahoos are gonna go raging in the next couple of days. Sioux security thinks they'll be coming across the demarcator right downtown."
- 3 "Chummer, *somebody* is yanking the Sioux-boys around a treat. Disinformation out the hoop... and the Sioux-boys are buying every byte of it."
- 4+ "Oh-ho, so you're in on Nikchick's scam, huh? Gotta give that slitch credit – when she sets up a diversion, she does it *right*. Give my regards to the Sioux sector."

Nikchick (Target Number 4)

Appropriate Contacts: any Street contact.

Shadowland: Target Number 4/Search Time 12 hours.

Notes: If the runners use any contacts who are established "Zoners", subtract 1 from the Target Number.

SUCSESSES:

- 0 "Oh, her. She's a stripper down at the Flash One Club, isn't she? (Shower... shower...)"
- 1-2 "Nikchick? Good at what she does... and if you don't know what that is, why am I talking to you in the first place?"
- 3 "One of the hottest reps in town, priyatel, let me tell you. And – here's the *really* freaky thing – she comes by it honestly. I think I'd rather trust Nikchick than... well, me, for example..."
- 4+ "Couple of the other Zoners are just drooling for a way to frag her over. But it's tough getting leverage on someone who plays it straight and clean."

THE PICKUP

Seventy-two hours after the initial meeting in Denim, the team receives a call from Nikchick through one of the email "dead drops" she established. They are to pick up their "shipment" at a warehouse deep in the decaying heart of the Ute Sector. (Use the Dock archetype, *Sprawl Sites*, p.22, but delete the cranes and – of course! – the ocean.) The meeting is set for midnight (when else?). Nikchick informs the runners that they are responsible for all transportation to and from the border. To help them in planning their "vehicular requirements", she tells them that the entire shipment

Nikchick

Before sliding west to Denver, Nikchick used to run the gritty shadows of the Rust Belt under the handle "FineTime". She's got a brag-sheet longer than her arm, and shadow-buzz credits her with a few ops too sensitive to even mention on her resume. Her rep as a fixer is fragging near impeccable. (Sure, she's screwed a couple of people over... but consensus in the shadows is that they all had it coming, big-time.)

Nikchick is in her early 30s, but looks almost a decade younger. She's got ice-blond hair, green eyes as penetrating as lasers, and attitude to burn.

Nikchick usually travels with an "executive assistant" called Joe-Bob – a metalled-up Troll bodyguard (use the Bounty Hunter archetype, *SRII*, p.203) packing whatever arms and armor are appropriate for the setting (e.g., no mil-grade armor in a nightclub, etc.).

ATTRIBUTES:

Body: 2
Quickness: 4
Strength: 2
Charisma: 4
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 5
Essence: 0.8
Reaction: 5

SKILLS:

Computer: 3
Electronics: 2
Etiquette (Corporate): 3
Etiquette (Street): 5
Etiquette (Tribal): 1
Firearms: 5
Negotiation: 7
Psychology: 4
Threat/Professional Rating: 3/4

CYBERWEAR:

Datajack, 500 Mp of memory.

GEAR:

Ares Viper Slivergun [30(clip), SA/BF, 9S(f); with Laser Sight, 2 extra clips]; Armor jacket (5/3); Wrist phone; Pocket computer.



- fits in a single, sealed container 100cm x 75cm x 50cm, and massing 50 kilos.

- When the runners arrive in their (probably stolen) vehicle, they find the area around the warehouse to be totally deserted. There are no obvious guards or observers outside the building, and nothing whatsoever to make the runners suspicious that this is a set-up. If a mage or shaman patrols the area astrally, she will find that there are four troll leg-breakers waiting around inside the warehouse, guarding a sealed shipping container just the size Nikchick said to expect.

- Let the runners play all the stealth-and-penetration games they want. Nothing untoward will happen; the troll leg-breakers are Nikchick's people, waiting to turn the shipment over to the runners. When the team finally makes its presence known, the trolls hand over the shipping container... but not before holding out a pocket computer and asking for a signature and thumb-print from the team leader. (This is just to confirm that they're handing over the goods to the right people... although the runners might take exception to it, of course.) The trolls also pass on Nikchick's instructions that the runners are not to open the container, under any circumstances.

- Once the turn-over is made, the leader of the trolls passes over a cluster of credsticks – 2,000¥ for each team-member (or whatever the re-negotiated sum might be). Finally, the troll leader hands over an optical datachip containing the details of the "diversion" that Nikchick has arranged to ease the team's crossing of the demarcator. Once biz is concluded, the trolls make themselves scarce; it's up to the runners to hump the shipment into their vehicle, and decide how to proceed from here.

- For the four troll leg-breakers, use the Troll Bouncer archetype (*SRII*, p.213), but equip them with armor jackets (5/3) and Uzi IIIs [SMG, 24 (clip), BF, 6M, w/2 extra clips, Laser Sight].

NIKCHICK'S INSTRUCTIONS

- The information on the datachip specifies that Nikchick has "made arrangements" for the runners to cross the demarcator into the Sioux Zone via a stretch of fence between the suburbs of Thornton and Northglenn north of downtown, between 120th Ave. and 136th Ave. (Refer to the Denver Sector Map, and to the Ute Sector map on page 155 of the *Denver Sourcebook*. The crossing point is along Route 25, some distance north of location 49 on the Ute Sector map.) Map coordinates specify the exact location of the crossing. A digitized map shows the layout of the demarcator (this is the map included later in this adventure).

- Nikchick's message confirms that she's arranged for a major diversion to take place at 03:30, this date – in other words, three and a half hours after the runners pick up the shipment. Most of the Sioux border guards will be conveniently elsewhere; those few who still remain on station have been bribed to

let the runners through, and to temporarily disable the sensors along the fence-line (although *not* the anti-air defenses; trying to fly over the zone is just asking to be missile-bait). The datafile stresses that the runners are *not* to kill, or even wound, these bribed guards. They must, however, incapacitate them without causing them permanent harm; otherwise their superiors will know they'd taken a bribe. If the guards see the runners approaching, they will open fire, the datafile goes on to say... but they will shoot to miss, giving the runners a chance for a "non-lethal take-down".

Finally, the datafile states that at exactly 03:30, two maglev trains will be passing the crossing site in opposite directions, running along the four-railbed track that parallels Route 25 and the border fence. The speeding trains will add a further diversion for the runners.

THE CONTAINER

As promised, the shipping container is exactly 100cm x 75cm x 50cm, massing 50 kilos. The container is made of silvered macroplast, and provides a Barrier Rating of 24 (should the runners have occasion to take cover behind it). Its clam-shell lid is secured with a maglock (Rating 6).

If the runners decide to disobey orders and open the container, they'll find it contains just what it *should* contain: several hundred of "Cal hot" simsense chips in plastic chip-carriers. (Titles are on the order of *Zelda does Zurich-Orbital* and *Behind You All the Way...*) Sitting on top of the chips is a slip of notepaper, with a few words scrawled in Nikchick's handwriting:

That's going to cost you!

"SLIPPING THE ZONE"

Along this part of the demarcator, the high-speed maglev line parallels Route 25, a divided eight-lane freeway. Refer to the accompanying map.

The Maglev: The maglev line comprises four parallel railbeds, all cast from prestressed ferrocrete. Each bed is eight meters wide, and individual beds are separated by two meters of ferrocrete. Thus, the entire line is 38 meters across. It is elevated ten meters above ground level, supported by thick ferrocrete pillars every 25 meters. Five-meter-high electrified fences surround each pillar; these fences pack enough juice to inflict 4D Stun damage to anyone stupid enough to touch them (refer to *Neo-Anarchists' Guide to Real Life* (NAGRL), p.89, for additional rules on electric fences). The maglev line is lined on both sides by similar electrified fences.

The bottom and sides of the railbeds are electrified (that's how maglevs work, after all). Anyone stupid enough to jump – or unlucky enough to fall – into a railbed suffers 4D damage. (Note: this *isn't* Stun damage; can we say ouch?)

Solar collector panels cover the maglev line like

- a silver-blue awning. They are supported 10 meters above the railbeds. Note that these panels conceal the railbeds from spotter drones and other airborne observers.

The Highway: The highway is four lanes wide, about 20 meters from one side to the other. A one-meter-high "Jersey barrier" of reinforced ferrocrete (Barrier Rating 30) divides northbound from southbound lanes. On each side of the freeway is a narrow shoulder – veritably bristling with EMERGENCY STOPPING ONLY signs – with another Jersey barrier running along its outside edge.

Beyond the ferrocrete barrier is a four-meter-wide "no man's land"; beyond that is a three-meter-high reinforced fence (Barrier Rating 15 for impact only; obviously, a wire fence doesn't do much to block gunfire...). This fence is topped with three strands of monowire. Anyone who tries to climb over the monowire without taking adequate precautions suffers 7S damage (see the *Denver Gamemaster Book* and NAGRL for supplementary rules).

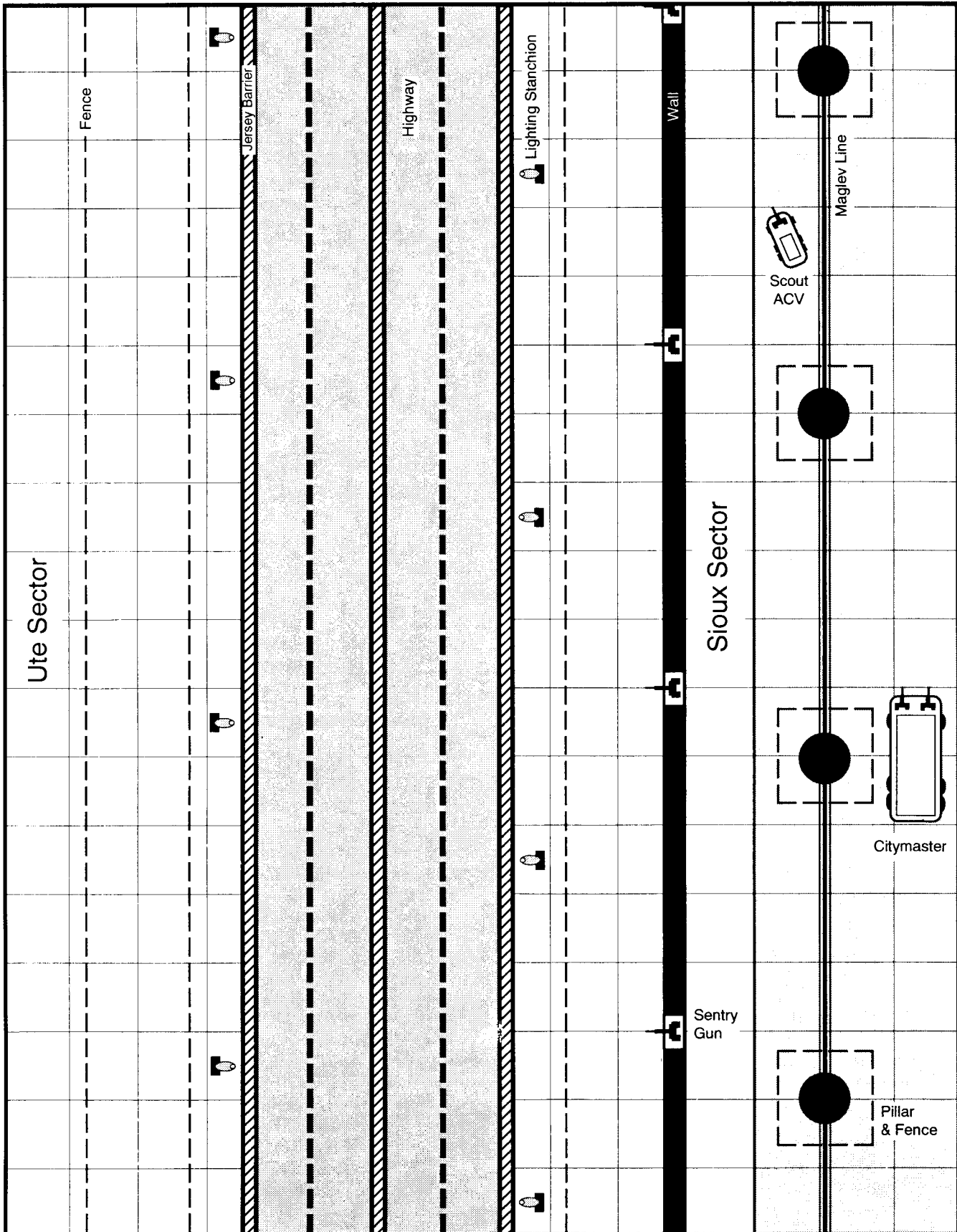
The highway is well-lit by sodium vapor lamps (the harsh yellow kind) mounted on stanchions every 25 meters. (These stanchions have a Barrier Rating of 12.) Atop every fifth lighting stanchion is a surveillance vidcam, allowing various agencies to monitor traffic patterns on the highway. These cameras are partially concealed (Concealability 4), because cameras always seem to prompt certain classes of people to consider spontaneous target practice. With a successful Etiquette (Street) 4 test, a character will know that these cameras exist, and are always active. If a character achieves four or more successes, however, he knows that nobody *monitors* the cameras between about 02:00 and 04:00.

At 03:30, traffic density is lower than normal, but still significant. Most of the vehicles on the road are commercial tractor-trailer rigs: typically, GMC 4201s and Conestoga Prime Movers (*Riggers Black Book* (RBB), pp.34-35), each towing at least one trailer. As a general guideline, there will be one truck passing any given point – in either direction – every 30 seconds. (This is an *average*. Depending on gamemaster whim, the runners might encounter a southbound convoy of a dozen trucks, followed by five minutes of empty road.) Other traffic is at the discretion of the gamemaster.

The highway is wired with full GridGuide electronics. Any motor vehicle accident involving a GridGuide vehicle will sound alarms in various police stations in both the Ute and Sioux zones. Police assets (gamemaster's discretion) will be on the scene in 2D6 minutes.

The Zone Boundaries: Highway 25 is, at this point, officially in a "no man's land" – neither in Ute nor Sioux territory, but between the two. (Which, of course, plays merry hell with road maintenance issues...) At this point, the elevated maglev line is in Sioux territory.

Ute / Sioux Border



Scale: 1 square = 5 meters

On each side of the highway, there's a 20-meter "free-fire zone" between the road-side fence and the actual national boundary. As described in the *Denver Sourcebook*, the security provisions are very different on each side of the highway.

Ute Security: The Ute "line" is a reinforced fence (Barrier Rating 17 for vehicles), 12 meters high, topped with monowire. The fence is laced with sensors; anyone cutting through the fence without taking appropriate precautions will set off an alarm, attracting the attention of a "containment team" which will arrive in 1D6 minutes. This team comprises five troopers (use the Mercenary archetype, *SRII*, p.58) and one combat mage (use the Combat Mage (Combat Specialization), *SRII*, p.50), loaded out with whatever toys strike the gamemaster's fancy at the moment.

Motion and pressure sensors are liberally sprinkled throughout the "free fire zone" between the Ute line and the highway; these are Rating 6. They may well pick up the runners as they cross the open ground... but this won't attract the attention of a containment team. (The Ute government doesn't much care about people sneaking out of the zone...)

A character who Assesses the area will spot a whole drekload of Astral presences patrolling the Ute line: mainly Watcher spirits, with a couple of Force 3 City spirits keeping them company. Again, these spirits will watch the runners – and maybe scare the drek out of them – but won't intervene as long as it's obvious the team is leaving the Ute sector.

Sioux Security: On the other side of the highway, the Sioux "line" is a dark, brutal-looking wall five meters high and a full meter thick (Barrier Rating 40). It's topped with three strands of monowire, and sensor pads installed in the top of the wall comprise a Rating 5 sensor and motion detector system. Every 25 meters along the top of the wall is mounted a "sentry gun" system, built around a FN HAR assault rifle, drum-fed with 1,000 rounds of ammo, mounted on tripods providing 6 points of Recoil Compensation. The sentry units have an effective Firearms Rating of 6, and have an Initiative of 25+2D6. They fire up to 15 rounds an action, in five 3-round bursts. The sentry units have a 180 field of fire, covering the no-man's land. They are incapable of firing over onto the Sioux side of the fence.

As Nikchick led the runners to expect, the sensors and the sentry guns are inactive when the team arrives. (Actually, they're inactive between 03:20 and 03:45, except as noted later; if the team is late, they suffer the consequences...) The sentry guns will track the runners as they approach the wall, but won't fire (a potentially very scary feeling for the team).

On the Sioux side of the wall, two border guards are patrolling the region on foot. Fifty meters from the crossing point the runners choose is the guards' vehicle, a modified Sikorsky-Bell "Red Ranger" Scout

- ACV (see *Denver Gamemaster Book*, p.48), parked and
- powered down, with a third guard inside. All three
- of these guards has had Spell Barrier (Force 6) cast on
- them and Quickened.

- If these three guards spot the runners as they
- come over the wall, they just watch, weapons
- lowered... until the team is well and truly on Sioux
- territory. Then they cut loose with everything
- they've got... and they're not shooting to miss. The
- guard in the Scout ACV will use the Vigilant rotary
- cannon in the vehicle's turret.

"Standard" Trooper (7)
 BQSCIWERArmor 4542443.54(6)8/6
 Initiative: 6 + 2D6
 Threat/Professional Rating: 3/3

SKILLS:
 Etiquette (Tribal) 3
 Etiquette (Street) 3
 Firearms 4
 Stealth 2
 Unarmed Combat 2

CYBERWEAR: Smartlink; Wired
 Reflexes (1).

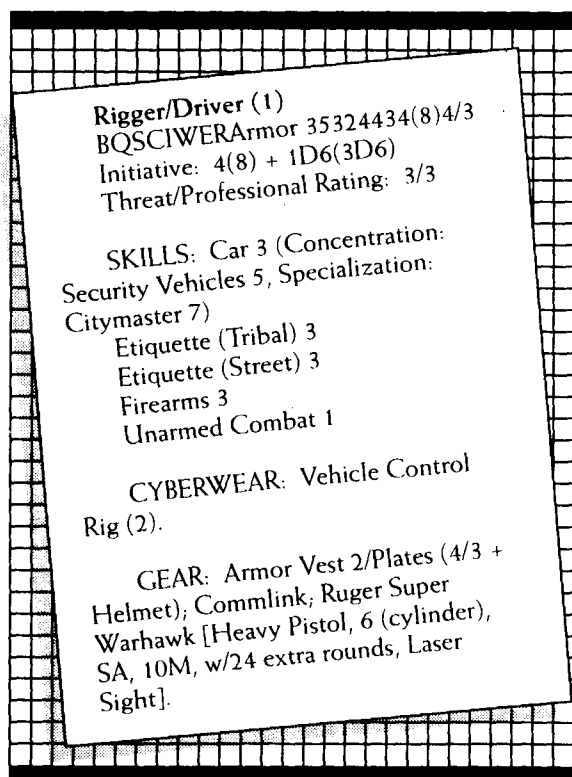
GEAR: Full Heavy Armor (8/6 +
 Helmet w/Integral Commlink); H&K MP-
 5TX [SMG, 20 (clip) SA/BF/FA, 6M, w/2
 extra clips, Integral Smartlink, Gas-Vent 2
 Recoil Compensation].

THE AMBUSH

- Perhaps the runners will be able to drop the
- guards before they notice the team's approach. In
- either case – as soon as the first shot is fired, or the
- guards go down – all hell breaks loose.

- Forty meters away, an Ares Citymaster roars
- out from behind a maglev support pillar, and
- screeches to a stop in front of the runners. While
- four more troopers pour out of the armored
- vehicle and the turret comes to bear on the team,
- an amplified voice blasts out: "Hold it right there,
- drekwads. Drop your weapons and you won't get
- hurt." Immediately giving the lie to this
- statement, the guards open fire on the runners.
- It's firefight time! If and when the runners decide
- that discretion is the better part, etc., and go back
- over the wall, they'll find that the sentry guns
- have (predictably) been reactivated.

- Unless the runners are total losers, they *should* be
- able to put pain to the security forces, or at least
- escape with their lives. (Whether or not they make
- it out with the "Cal hot" chips is another issue



entirely.) In fact, the gamemaster should shamelessly "fudge" the combat so this is the outcome. (After all, there's more to the adventure than this ambush...) It's perfectly acceptable for the runners to be bloodied in this encounter, but they shouldn't be totally wiped out. An ideal situation would be for the team to bug out one step ahead of the Sioux troopers, leaving their precious cargo behind in the free fire zone.

Sioux Forces: The ambush force comprises seven "standard" troopers, and the rigger/driver of the Citymaster who handles the vehicles' weapons via his Vehicle Control Rig.

The Citymaster was hidden from casual view behind the maglev support pillar, but its concealment went much further. The vehicle and its occupants were hidden by the Concealment power of a Great Form City spirit (Force 7), summoned by a powerful shaman at one of the border posts and ordered to provide this service. (Fortunately for the runners, that was its sole service, and it returned to its home metaplane once it dropped the Concealment.)

DEBUGGING

It's possible for the runners to get themselves slaughtered here – not likely, if the gamemaster handles the combat right, but possible. If that's the way it looks as if it's going to turn out, bring in the cavalry... on the Sioux side. A couple of Yellowjacket rotorcraft swoop down, dropping Neuro-stun VIII gas-bombs among the runners. This, plus the possibility of the Yellowjackets making

- a few strafing runs, should convince even the most militant players to back off and surrender.

- If the runners are captured, the Sioux border forces should basically humiliate the hell out of them: take fingerprints and retina patterns, confiscate all their cool toys, maybe even rough them up a bit. Eventually, however, the gamemaster should allow them a chance to make a daring prison break. The humiliation they suffered at the hands of the Sioux troops should only whet their appetite for revenge...

"A DISH BEST SERVED COLD..."

- How are the runners going to interpret the ambush? This is *Shadowrun*, after all – they're going to assume that Nikchick set them up, for some compelling reason of her own or just because she had nothing better to do. Almost certainly, the runners' first order of business is to find out what Nikchick's up to, and track her down.

- **First Things First:** The runners have a couple of immediately-obvious avenues of investigation: the email "dead drops" Nikchick established; her traditional associates; and her usual haunts (including her "office").

- **Email Channels:** Predictably, all of the email "dead drops" have been canceled, without any forwarding address. In fact, *all* electronic lines of communication with Nikchick have been rolled up.

- If the runners think about it, a successful Etiquette (Matrix) (6) Test (or Computer (8) Test) to learn that the email drops were canceled at precisely 03:47 – 17 minutes after the runners were supposed to hit the Sioux line.

- **Nikchick's Associates:** Unless the runners have some kind of prior history with these individuals (in other words, unless the runners have them as Contacts), getting anything out of them at all will require an Etiquette (Street) (5) Test.

- Nikchick's traditional associates simply don't know her current whereabouts. She simply dropped off the face of the Earth – coincidentally, vanishing the same night that the runners' mission was hosed – and hasn't been heard from since. Her closest associates know about the mission for which the runners were hired, and know it went bad. They don't know for sure whether there's any connection between the hosed run and Nikchick's disappearance... although they can't deny that the timing is fairly indicative. They have no evidence, one way or the other, concerning the possibility that Nikchick double-crossed the runners. It's up to the gamemaster as to whether the individual associates speculate beyond this.

- **Regular Haunts:** The situation here is the same as with Nikchick's associates. If the runners investigate the restaurants, bars, etc. where Nikchick usually

hangs, they'll require a successful Etiquette (Street) (5) Test to pry any information out of the regulars. All they'll be able to learn is that nobody's seen Nikchick since the night of the hosed run.

Nikchick's "Office": This is a run-down flop in the Chinatown region of the CAS Sector, on the 19th floor of a high-rise block that's seen better days. (Use the Small Residence archetype, *Sprawl Sites*, p.33.) Nikchick doesn't live here – she's got better taste than that – but this is where she does most of her biz. (By the bye, *nobody* knows where Nikchick actually lives...)

If the runners decide to investigate, when they reach room 1901 they find a yellow tape reading POLICE LINE – DO NOT CROSS blocking off the hallway outside. There aren't any police around at the moment, however.

Assuming the runners aren't feeling overly law-abiding today, they'll find that the door to room 1901 has been blown open by two shotgun blasts which took out its hinges. Inside, the place is absolutely trashed. On an Intelligence (3) Test, the runners will recognize that the damage was done by a frag grenade tossed into the center of the doss.

There's nothing of any interest to be found in the doss. Perhaps there *used* to be something interesting on the telecom in the corner of the room, but it was totally shredded by shrapnel, and the data is completely irrecoverable.

DIGGING UP THE DIRT

Unless the runners just want to let the whole thing slide – not particularly likely, all in all – they'll have to do some serious digging to find out what's gone down. The gamemaster should role-play out all the team's attempts to track Nikchick. Getting anyone to discuss Nikchick's background, activities and possible whereabouts requires an Etiquette (Street) (5) Test (or an Etiquette (Matrix) (5) Test if the runners decide to try Shadowland). (Drop the Difficulty Number by 1 if the contact being questioned is a close associate of Nikchick. This bonus isn't appropriate for Shadowland searches.)

Throughout the investigation, the gamemaster should keep track of the team's total number of successes, and then refer to the following chart. Each time the team's aggregate number of successes reaches a new "threshold" on the chart, the gamemaster should give them the information associated with that success level. (This is like a "macro" version of the usual Legwork procedure. The runners will have to interview a number of different people over a span of time to get the true picture of what's going on.)

Note that this process *can* be integrated with other adventures. Unless the runners drop everything and concentrate entirely on getting even with Nikchick, the investigation could well be spread over half a dozen runs, and a couple of months of game time.

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

As shown in the table above, when the team acquires an aggregate total of 19 successes on their investigation, they run afoul of the same gang that tried to off Nikchick some time ago – the Twilight Zone. (The background is, of course, that the gang is "on retainer" for Lukaas, the Zoner who's trying to squeeze Nikchick out of the biz. Lukaas has learned that the runners are digging into matters, is starting to get a bit twitchy, and has sent his leather-clad "enforcers" out to put the team out of Lukaas' misery.)

The gamemaster can stage the gang assault any time and anywhere – ideally, at the most inconvenient juncture, of course. The Twilight Zone is a go-gang;

all its members ride motorbikes of one kind or another (typically Yamaha Rapiers, but the gamemaster may spice up the mix with more novel rides).

The Twilight Zone

members are a tough bunch; use the Gang Boss archetype (SRII, p.207). The number of gangers in the assault is up to the gamemaster; the threat should be tailored, again, so the runners have a tough scrap, but don't get gutted. Six to eight gangers riding hogs should be about right. All the gangers wear armor jackets (5/3). One of them is carrying four offensive grenades [10S], and will use them given the chance; this single ganger has a Throwing Weapons skill of 5.

Most of the gangers are packing Uzi III's [SMC, 24 (clip), BF, 6M, w/2 extra clips, Laser Sight]. For extra firepower, one or two

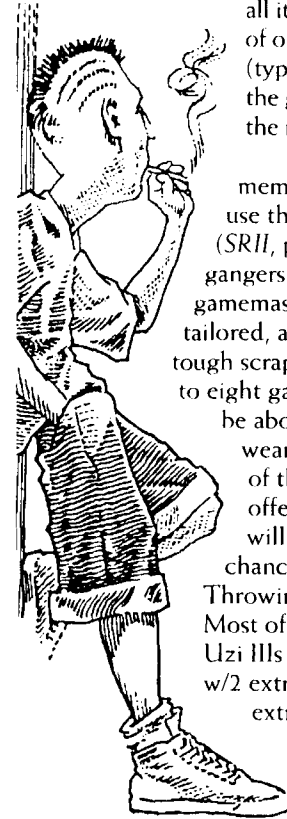
might be armed with AK-97s [Assault Rifle, 38 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 8M, w/1 extra clip,

Gas-Vent 1 Recoil Compensation, Laser Sight]. (Just for fun, the gamemaster might consider arming one of the gangers with a monofilament whip [10S; see special rules on p.103, SRII]!)

The gangers are militant sons of slitches who like nothing better than a good hash in the streets... but they're not suicidal. If it looks as though the fight's turning against them, they'll bug out.

Questioning the Gangers: If the runners decide to question any surviving gangers (using Interrogation), they can learn a couple of key points:

- The attack against Nikchick *wasn't* random street violence. The gang specifically hunted the Zoner and tried to assassinate her. Only the presence of Joe-Bob – and a good dose of luck – kept her alive.



- The Twilight Zone go-gang is currently "on retainer" – paid by a Johnson they know only as "Luke". They've never met Luke; all communication is via electronic mail. They don't even know for sure if Luke is male or female. All they know is that he pays well, and on time.

If there are no survivors, there's nothing on the bodies to point the runners in the direction of the mysterious "Luke". (Sorry, chummers. Maybe next time ask questions *before* geeking everything that moves...)

VISITING NIKCHICK

The New Horizon is a drek-kicked 20-floor tenement building in the nasty heart of the Aurora Warrens, UCAS Sector. Once the runners know the building, actually tracking down Nikchick's room should be pretty simple (requiring an Etiquette (Street) 5 Test).

Nikchick's doss is on the third floor. Use the Small Residence archetype (*Sprawl Sites*, p.33). The door is secured by a maglock (Rating 6). Nikchick has installed a tiny surveillance camera (Concealability 7) over the door, providing a live video feed to the room's telecom. A hired bodyguard (use the Bodyguard archetype, *SRII*, p.49) watches the feed 24 hours a day, and will react to any attempt the runners make to come in the front door.

Predictably, Nikchick is pretty damn paranoid, and she's told the bodyguard to take no chances. The Zoner knows that there are several factions with different reasons to see her dead: Lukaas, the rival Zoner, the principals behind the chip run, who are still slotted off about their lost shipment; and the runners themselves, who probably think they've been double-crossed. The bodyguard has been instructed, therefore, to shoot first and question the corpses.

Whenever the runners arrive, Nikchick is sleeping in the doss' small bedroom, while the bodyguard is watching the surveillance feed. Neither will fight to the death; the bodyguard simply isn't being paid that much, while Nikchick figures while she's still breathing, she'll have a chance to escape. When deciding on Nikchick's reactions, however, the gamemaster should remember that she's justifiably paranoid, and respond accordingly.

Interviewing Nikchick: Assuming the runners don't simply cut Nikchick down on sight, they now have a chance to learn what's actually been happening. If they can persuade the Zoner that they're not here to geek her, she'll tell them that a Zoner named Lukaas has been trying to take over her biz of late. He's tried to have her killed using a "tame" gang (the Twilight Zone, of course), and he finally managed to cack Joe-Bob with a frag grenade (Nikchick herself took a superficial wound from shrapnel).

Nikchick stresses that she *didn't* double-cross the runners. She came through with her side of the deal, setting up the diversion. Somehow, somebody in the Sioux border forces learned about the diversion, and

- turned the op into an ambush. For some time, Nikchick has suspected that one of her rivals has some kind of connection with the Sioux border forces, and has been feeding them information to screw up operations she ran into the Sioux Sector. (That's why she hasn't been running many Sioux ops recently.) She agreed to the Cal hot run only because the principals offered so much money that she could set up a bullet-proof diversion... or so she thought. Although she doesn't have any proof, she strongly suspects that Lukaas is the one who's been ratted out her ops to the Sioux forces, and who was behind the cluster-frag at the Sioux line.

- If the runners ask why she didn't just level with them when everything fell apart, she'll look at them evenly and ask, "Would you have believed me? Didn't think so."

- Nikchick will try to convince the runners to go after Lukaas – to track him down, close him down (or gun him down) and dig up proof that Nikchick was operating throughout in good faith. (She needs that proof to "rehabilitate" herself in the shadows.) Unfortunately, she's got no hard information on Lukaas or his operations; the runners will have to do their own leg-work. Once they've located Lukaas, however, Nikchick will ask to accompany them when they go "visiting". Because her rep in the shadows is trashed, she can't whistle up much in the way of muscle to support them. All she can do is bring along the bodyguard she hired to watch her back (that is, assuming that the team didn't splatter him).

TRACKING LUKAAS

- Once the runners have Lukaas' name, they can do the legwork necessary to track him down:

Lukaas (Target Number 5)

- Appropriate Contacts: any Street contact.

- Shadowland: Target Number 5/Search Time 12 hours.

- Notes: If the runners use contacts who are established "Zoners", subtract 1 from the Target Number.

SUCCESES:

- 0 "Used car dealer, right? Saw his ad on the trid last night."

- 1-2 "Zoner. Second-tier, if you ask me, but with a bullet. Aggressive little frag. Does a lot of work across the Sioux line."

- 3 "Does biz out of the back of a real scuzzy watering-hole in the Sioux Sector, name of the Hardpan. Seems to consider it his office."

- 4+ "Lukaas? In tight with the Sioux border patrol, chummer, and I mean tight. Don't know who's paying who off, but there's *some* kind of biz relationship going down there."

Smart runners might want to research the Hardpan before putting in an appearance:

The Hardpan (Target Number 3)

Appropriate Contacts: any.

Shadowland: Target Number 3/Search Time 4 hours.

SUCCESSSES:

- 0 "Oh yeah, *that* place. Down on East 54th somewhere. Never been, though."
- 1-2 "I'd think twice about drinking there if you're an anglo. The locals don't take too kindly to palefaces."
- 3+ "Man, do not start trouble in the Hardpan. Maybe there's quicker ways of committing suicide, but I can't think of any at the moment."

MEET YOU AT THE HARDPAN

Located near the sewage treatment facility, Riverside Cemetery and the algae tanks, the Hardpan is in a neighborhood with an ambiance all its own. Use the Bar Archetype (*Sprawl Sites*, p.12). It's a dark, seedy, exceptionally nasty place; visitors can *smell* the barely-repressed violence in the air.

The place is open around the clock, catering to shift workers. There are no predictable slack times in the bar's trade, and there are always 2D6 patrons – all Amerindians – in various states of intoxication. (Use the Gang Boss archetype, *SRII*, p.207; this is a *tough* crowd. Equip them with whatever small arms strike your fancy.) In addition to the regular crowd, whenever the runners decide to make their approach, a militant Wolf shaman by the name of Will Green is among the clientele (use the Street Shaman archetype (Fighter orientation), *SRII*, p.63).

Also present are a bartender (Bartender archetype, *SRII*, p.203) and one waitress (use the Squatter archetype, *SRII*, p.210, but raise Charisma to 3). Both are armed with suitable hold-outs. In addition, the bartender has a Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, 8 (magazine), SA, 9S(f), w/Gas-Vent 1 Recoil Compensation, Laser Sight] concealed under the bar. The clientele of the Hardpan typically has no tolerance for "Anglos" (i.e., non-Amerinds). They'll generally give any Anglos a bad time, but stop short of overt violence... unless it's the Anglos who start it. If the clientele see a bunch of Anglos coming down hard on a "brother" (in this case, Lukaas; see below), they'll certainly take action to protect their own, and to teach the Anglos the error of their ways.

Behind the long bar is a mirror – actually one-way glass, giving anyone in the back office a perfect view into the barroom. The rear door, which opens onto the alley from the storeroom, is secured by a maglock (Rating 5), and is wired with an intrusion alarm (Rating 6) that triggers a silent warning in the office and behind the bar.

- *In the Office:* Whenever the runners put in an appearance, Lukaas is hanging out in the office, with two Twilight Zone gangers he's hired as bodyguards.
- Since there's no back door out of the office, if Lukaas sees the runners coming, he'll try to bail out before they get to him. If some of the team block off the rear door of the bar, however, he's trapped, and he'll fight like a cornered rat.

- In the office, beside the macroplast desk, is the shipping container that the runners tried to smuggle into the Sioux Sector (assuming they didn't manage to take it with them). The container still holds all the Cal hot chips.

- The runners can find out Lukaas' story either by interrogating him, or by scanning the data on his pocket computer (this requires a Computer (4) Test to penetrate the system's security).

Gangers (2)
BQSCIWERAArmor 434234635/3
Initiative: 3 + 1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: 2/2

SKILLS: Armed Combat 4
Etiquette (Street) 6
Firearms 4
Unarmed Combat 2

CYBERWEAR: None.

GEAR: Armor Jacket (5/4); Knife [4L]; Ruger Super Warhawk [Heavy Pistol, 6 (cylinder), SA, 10M, w/24 extra rounds, Laser Sight].

- *Lukaas' Story:* Lukaas has been maneuvering for some time now to take over Nikchick's position of dominance in the Zoner community. He's tried just about everything: corrupting her communication and data processing systems, even trying to kill her.
- Finally he came up with a new scam: discrediting her in the shadows. He approached the Sioux border forces, and cut a deal with a maverick officer. In return for a generous "retainer", he fed the Sioux forces any and all information he could dig up on Zoner activities across the Sioux line. Predictably, he concentrated on *Nikchick's* operations, trying to smear her reputation.

- When he learned about the Cal hot run, including the shadowrunner team, he saw his opportunity. He helped the Sioux forces set up the ambush, knowing that an "obvious" double-cross like this would put an end to Nikchick's career.



Lukaas

Lukaas is an Amerindian in his late 30s. He's of above-average height, but he's so scrawny that he looks considerably shorter. His face is reminiscent of a rabid weasel. He always wears a beaten-up armor leather jacket.

He's exceptionally bright, and equally ruthless. The only thing that matters to Lukaas is... Lukaas. He'll sacrifice anyone and anything to further his own purposes. If he can't see any alternative, he'll fight like a cornered rat.

For the last six months or so, he's been on the payroll of the Sioux border forces as an "irregular asset".

ATTRIBUTES:

Body: 3
Quickness: 4 (5)
Strength: 4 (5)
Charisma: 2
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 4
Essence: 1.3
Reaction: 4 (8)

SKILLS:

Computer: 2
Etiquette (Corporate): 3
Etiquette (Street): 5
Etiquette (Tribal): 3
Firearms: 6
Leadership: 5
Threat/Professional Rating: 3/4

CYBERWEAR:

Datajack; Muscle Replacement (1); Smartgun Link; Wired Reflexes (2).

GEAR:

HK227-S [SMG, 28 (clip), SA/BF, 7M, w/ 2 extra clips, Smartgun Link, Laser Sight, Gas-Vent 2 Recoil Compensation]; Armor jacket (5/3); Wrist phone; Pocket computer.

- Part of his deal with the maverick officer was that, officially speaking, the contraband was "lost" in the engagement. In fact, Lukaas took it, and is planning to smuggle the cargo into the UCAS Sector and sell the Cal hot chips there. He'll then split the revenue with the Sioux officer.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

- Presumably, the runners will be interested in "rehabilitating" Nikchick's rep in the shadows (probably in return for future considerations of some kind or another). The data from Lukaas' pocket computer provides the proof they need.
- Re-establishing relations with the principals behind the Cal hot deal might be a little more delicate, of course (although having possession of the chips will certainly help). The runners might get involved in the process of rebuilding business links between those principals and Nikchick.
- And finally, the maverick officer who cut the deal with Lukaas might be a mite ticked that he's not going to see his illicit profits. He could well decide to make life unpleasant for the runners in the future.



Nigel Findley

- In the eleven years that Nigel Findley has been involved in the gaming industry, he's written source material, adventures, and – most recently – novels for most of the major (and many minor) game companies. He has publication credits with such diverse companies as TSR, FASA, West End Games, Mayfair Games, Whit Publications, White Wolf, Steve Jackson Games, Wizards of the Coast, and many others. His most recent projects include the *Denver Sourcebox*, the *Lone Star Sourcebook*, and the novel *Lone Wolf*, all for FASA's Shadowrun system.

- When he's not writing game material he works as a freelance journalist concentrating on the computer industry; he also skis, cycles, plays tennis, and risks bodily injury in various high-speed vehicles. Born in Venezuela and raised throughout the western hemisphere, Nigel currently makes his home in Vancouver, Canada.



Gavin Lonergan

- Gavin has been writing and illustrating for the past 12 years, and in college studied printmaking and art history. Originally from Ontario, he came to Vancouver five years ago and now works in the printing industry doing paste-up and layout.

- Gavin has provided illustrations for Genghis Con (now Altercon), Vancouver's annual gaming convention. He is currently at work adapting and illustrating the Bill Gibson short story *Hinterlands* for issues 5 and 6 of *Freeflight*, an independent comic book.

FOURTEEN FLAVORS

BY NICOLE LINDROOS FREIN

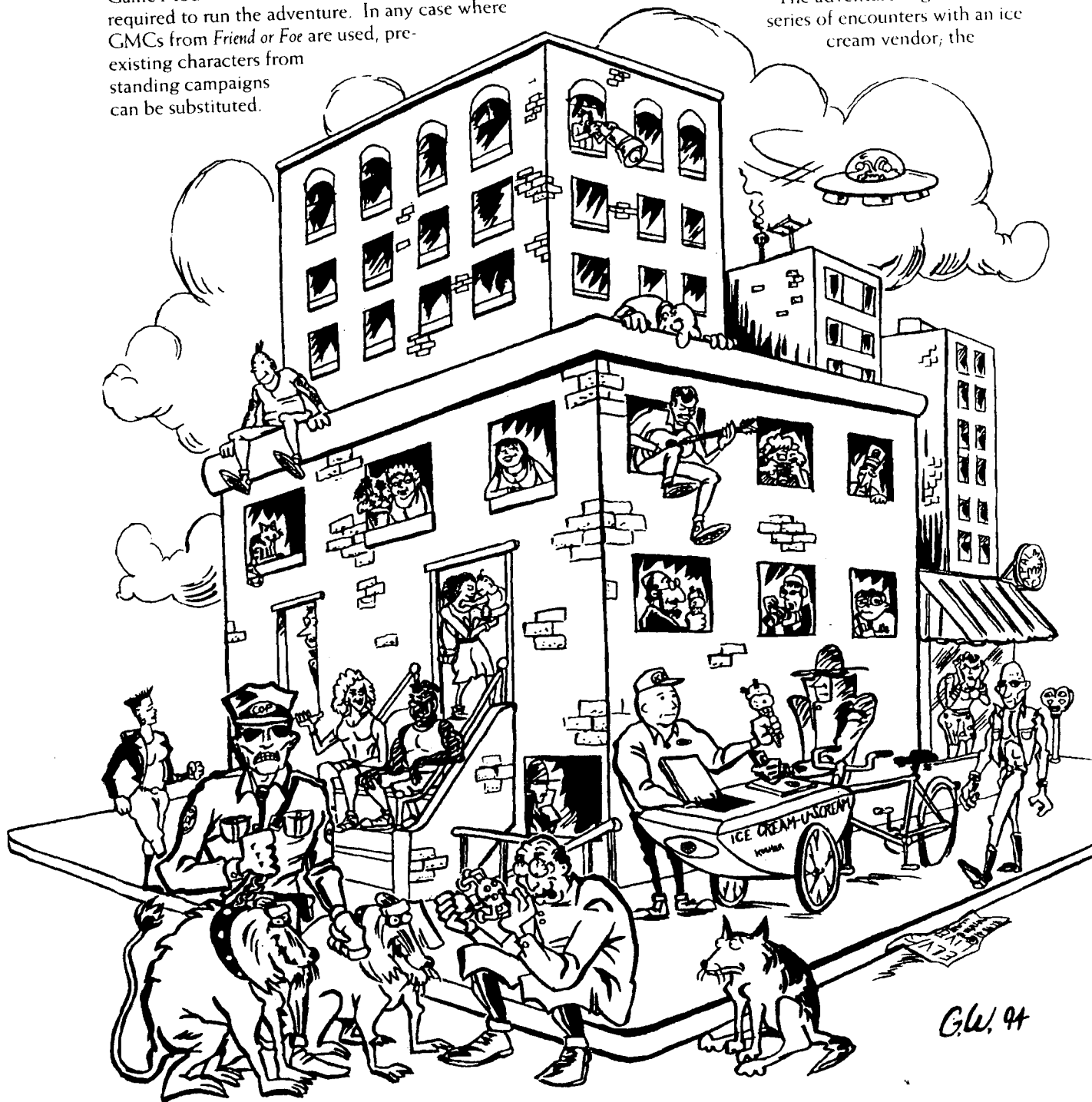
ART BY GARY WILDEMAN



This adventure is designed to be included in any *Over the Edge*™ game, and makes use of the recent *Friend or Foe* supplement. While *Friend or Foe* is an excellent source of weird and wonderful Game Moderator Characters for *Over the Edge*, it is not required to run the adventure. In any case where GMCs from *Friend or Foe* are used, pre-existing characters from standing campaigns can be substituted.

Any number of PCs can be accommodated into this adventure; no special skills are required to ensure that the scenario runs smoothly. In the event that this adventure is included in any long-running campaign, many background details may be rearranged to accommodate standing conspiracies.

The adventure begins with a series of encounters with an ice cream vendor; the



frequency and intensity of the encounters should increase with time and can be easily interspersed as detail or diversion into an already established storyline. The encounters should increase and be used to build tension until they become the focus of the PC's attention.

PLOTTING

During the character's normal movements around The Edge, they begin to notice the conspicuous presence of an ice cream vendor who seems to be everywhere. They see him riding what looks like a large, pastel-shaded tricycle with a huge, silver-colored refrigeration box attached over the two large wheels behind the seat. The side of the icebox is painted with the slogan Fourteen Flavors and the various combinations. The company name is Ice Cream, U-Scream. The man is hard to describe, with very bland features and darkish hair, although it is easy to tell that it is the same nondescript man each time. He wears a light-colored brown uniform with pinkish undertones, and a black-brimmed felt cap with the Ice Cream, U-Scream emblem emblazoned above the brim.

MEETING ONCE AGAIN

If characters decide to question Alberto about why he is all over town, he'll merely shrug slightly and say, "Hey, just tryin' to make a few bucks, you know?" If asked about the unusual flavors of ice cream he carries, he'll shrug again and say, "I dunno. Kids love that stuff." He won't be overly talkative, especially towards those who do not look like they're going to buy anything. In order to keep the refrigeration constant in the ice cream box Alberto must keep pedalling, and he takes this responsibility very seriously. Unless he has stopped to sell something, he will be quite anxious to get moving again. The ice cream bike is also equipped with bells that ring in the tune of *Greensleeves* whenever the bicycle is in motion. A single scoop of ice cream costs \$1.95, a double is \$2.49, an triple scoop (only for the daring) costs \$3.19.

Alberto can recite the fourteen available flavors, although he does so without enthusiasm or inflection. The flavors are Prickle-Berry, Chunks-a-lot, Grungy Green, Mouth o'melon, Espresso-hike, Raisin Rum-me-down, Spumoni Fizz, Choco-Graham, Black Death, Mint Mess, Marshmallow-Peanut-and-Butter, Runoff, Don't Try This At Home and Vanilla. If any of the characters buys a Chunks-a-lot (or GM's choice) cone, Alberto will be more attentive and respectful, though still not talkative. (If no one seems interested in Chunks-a-lot, the GM can choose a flavor that better suits the party.) The ice cream contains a fringe technology chip which is between the size of a raisin and a dime. Unless the character eating the cone is obsessive about food (one of his traits is bulimic or something similar), he is unlikely to notice the chip.

At the GM's discretion, several of the other

ALBERTO ULUDAG

Ice Cream Vendor/ unknowing bennie

Alberto has been hired to sell ice cream by Ice Cream, U-Scream, which is owned (unknown to him) by a fringe scientist; he works on commission. His only instructions from the folks at Ice Cream U-Scream were not to be too talkative and to be respectful to anyone buying Chunks-a-lot ice cream. He also knows that he must continue to pedal the cart to keep the refrigeration constant, and is unwilling to pause for very long out of fear that the melted ice cream will be taken out of his pay. Alberto is not too bright and is grateful for the job, so intends to follow his instructions (such as they are) to the letter. He is 165 cm, 73 kg, with brownish hair and a nondescript face. He could be any age from 22 to 45; it's very difficult to estimate.

Languages: Al Amarjan patois.

Attack: 2 dice; X2 damage from kicking.

Defense: 2 dice.

Hit Points: 20 (hardened).

Traits

Psychic Neutral. Alberto is without a psychic presence and leaves no impressions to be read by anyone trying to probe his thoughts or read his mind. Anyone looking at his aura will see only the slightest trace, and he cannot be found on the astral plane. (Eyes look kind of flat and vacant.)

Legs of Iron. 3 dice Alberto is in incredible physical shape from pedalling the heavy ice cream vendors tricycle all over the city. His endurance is very high, and he is capable of running or pedalling very fast, as well as kicking quite hard. (Huge, hard legs and calm breathing.)

Nondescript. Nothing is very striking about Alberto's physical appearance; it would be hard to recognize him from a verbal description. He does not photograph well and an artist would not draw an accurate picture of him from a verbal description or a photograph. This could be a side effect of his having no psychic presence. (Difficult to describe, carries a blurry Ice Cream, U-Scream ID badge.)

Simple Minded. Without a psychic presence to give him any intuition, Alberto is a simple minded fellow who has a difficult time with complex questions, detailed instructions or anything which requires much guile. He functions on rote memory and routine, and gets agitated when these methods are tainted or fail him. (Often asks people to repeat what they just said.)

flavors might be spiked with other substances familiar to residents of The Edge (unbeknownst to Alberto, of course). In order to keep the smuggling outfit in business, there have to be a certain amount of legitimate ice cream sales that occur. In this case, flavors like Espresso-hike might have been jumped, or the Vanilla is actually spiked with Zorro (after all, who in The Edge would be so bland as to order a vanilla cone but some Zorro-head who sees truly sees things in black and white?).

If the characters seem interested in buying a lot of ice cream but not particularly suspicious of Alberto, the GM can have Alberto refuse to sell a certain flavor of ice cream to the characters. Perhaps he has been instructed not to sell that flavor to anyone but Blue Shock junkies, since it has been laced with Relapse, or some other such substance. In any case, Alberto is only looking out for the characters, but it gives them yet another excuse for suspicion or curiosity if they have yet to rise to the bait. If the characters seem very suspicious of Alberto, but not interested in buying ice cream, it is possible to draw the characters into the plot through the CPC investigator, or through similar means.

SET IN MOTION

Once an ice cream sale has been made, and the chip passed off to the characters, Alberto insists that he must be moving on before his ice cream melts. Unless the characters forcibly stop him, he gets on his tricycle and pedals away. This should be the last time the characters see him; his absence around The Edge should be as conspicuous as his presence has been up to this point. Once his patron finds out that Alberto has passed off the chip to someone other than the expected courier, Alberto is removed from action and isolated in Dr. Ebelmeyer's secret laboratory hidden beneath the ice cream plant. Alberto is about to become one of Al Amarja's best-kept secrets.

Meanwhile, the characters may be experiencing the effects of their ice creams. If the GM has gone this route, the effects on the characters should be played out for as long as the players seem to be having fun with it. The side-effects are interesting but not important to the continuation of the plot; in fact, they can be applied as subtle influences on the characters behavior and not blatantly represented to the players at all. In any case, they won't have much time to focus on the effects before the events surrounding their possession of the chip will begin to spin out of their control.

If one of the characters has ingested the chip, all is easy going. It will take the real agents a little while to figure out who has the chip, who ingested it, and what they are going to do about it. If some food-obsessed or overly suspicious PC has discovered the chip in her ice cream and begins interrogating Alberto before he can make his escape, then now is the time to have any ice-cream side effects kick in and hinder the characters in their efforts. It is

- important that Alberto get away. He will fight back against any attackers, but he also has an Attackalert panic button, which he will hit at the first sign of a robbery, calling in the Peace Force or SafeSound.

NOT HUNGRY

- In the event that the characters have been introduced to Alberto and his ice cream tricycle but just aren't taking the bait, the GM can opt to have the characters witness a real smuggler purchasing ice cream from Alberto. Perhaps it is a shady GMC that they have been keeping an eye on, or maybe known junkies are seen approaching the ice cream vendor on a regular basis and then exhibiting the symptoms of their drug-induced states. This option should only be used for characters who are letting genuine clues slip past right beneath their upturned noses. In the Edge, everyone should be concerned enough about the multi-levels of conspiracies to at least want to investigate this mystery; folks who don't aren't likely to last too long on the mean streets of the city. The GM is encouraged to drive this point home.

- If the characters witness one of the shady transactions or for some other reason decide to tail Alberto, they will find that he can move swiftly on his tricycle. He puts on several hundred kilometers every day, always returning to the ice cream plant outside town before nightfall. Particularly enterprising characters who wish to tail Alberto to his home find that he lives alone in a modest (but not seedy) apartment in Traboc. Alberto takes a Giovannis Cab to and from work every day, and does not go out at nights after his hard days of pedalling ice cream (literally).

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?

- Behind the scenes there are many forces at work. After the chip falls into the wrong hands, all of these entities begins moving at their own pace, hoping to achieve their various goals. While running the characters through their actions, the GM should consider what the forces behind the scenes are doing, and how that might affect the plans of the characters.

- First, the man behind the chip, Dr. Myron Ebelmeyer, is producing mostly harmless gadgets. It is his own paranoia that his work will attract unwanted attention from the Center for Paranormal Control that has him smuggling these interesting little self-powered chips out of The Edge in the ice cream cones of willing couriers. Dr. Ebelmeyer's other inventions of recent years have included Stay-Stuk double sided tape (a popular brand among cloaks, cat-burglars and wallpaper hangers), and the Therm-a-sip, the self powered, self-heating/cooling wide-mouthed thermal container (a favorite among the Edge's private investigation community).

- The self-powered chip is a similarly harmless gadget, but Dr. Ebelmeyer is under the mistaken impression that these chips emit a high-frequency pitch which attracts and disables wandering disembodied spirits. (Similarly, he believed that the

double-sided tape changed the molecular structure of the objects it was adhered to, drawing the surfaces together; and that the thermal container circulated elemental fire or ice around the food/beverage in the bottle, keeping it at the appropriate temperature.) Fearing government seizure of his creation, he has set up an elaborate scheme which allows him to smuggle these chips into the hands of his distributor. In spite of the seeming inanity of Dr. Ebelmeyer, he takes this network very seriously, and will not hesitate to acquire force to use against any unfortunates who mistakenly intercept his creation. Ironically, it is his connection to this force which places him in the greatest danger from the CPC.

WATCHING FROM THE WINGS

Another party who is interested in these goings-on is Anima Nee-Owoo (p. 48, *Friend or Foe*). She is aware of Dr. Ebelmeyer's belief in his abilities and is keeping a watchful eye out for any manifestations of truly dangerous or unregistered paranormal activity. She will become especially interested in the characters if they have paranormal abilities of their own that come to her attention after they intercept the mysterious chip. While she feels fairly confident that poor Dr. Ebelmeyer is merely delusional, she is not willing to take the chance that people who pose a more serious threat to Her Exaltedness will accidentally acquire one of the good doctor's unusual devices to use for ill. The GM who does not have *Friend or Foe* should feel free to substitute another generally easy-going investigator from the CPC.

Yet another person interested in Dr. Ebelmeyer's latest invention is Nordica Barron (p. 8, *Friend or Foe*). Nordica's specialty is acquiring useful items that she can sell to her multitudinous contacts. After seeing the success of Dr. Ebelmeyer's other flaky-yet-useful devices once they hit the market, Nordica has been keeping an ear to the ground in case any new items are making their way to the public. Her vast network of contacts will inform her if the characters are asking about Dr. Ebelmeyer, or if goons known to work for Ebelmeyer are showing interest in tracking down the chip or the characters. Nordica is tough, self-reliant and crafty. She wants new and different items to sell for higher and higher fees, and she will jump at the opportunity to intercept the technology that could potentially make her a lot of money. (If you don't have *Friend or Foe*, any black marketeer character with traits such as Contacts, Self-Defense and Manipulation can be substituted.)

THE CHIP ITSELF

Dr. Ebelmeyer is manufacturing several of these chips, which he is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to smuggle out to his waiting buyers. The chip is actually quite harmless and doesn't need to be smuggled at all, but neither Dr. Ebelmeyer nor his smugglers seem to be aware of this. The chip is roughly the size of a dime and covered with a protective rubber coating. Underneath the rubber,

the chip looks like the result of some strange cross between a watch battery and a computer chip... which in fact is just what it is. The chip itself isn't even particularly valuable, except to other scientists who might be able to modify Dr. Ebelmeyer's

DR. MYRON EBELMEYER

Accidental Oppenheimer

If he weren't clearly deranged, Dr.

Ebelmeyer could be someone's sweet but aging grandfather. He stands 170 cm, weighs 82 kg and has a wrinkled face, sparse gray hair and bushy eyebrows. He looks to be at least 70 years old. He is very pale and nervous in person, but hardly anyone sees him in person any more.

Languages: Latin, German, English, Al Amarjan patois.

Attack: 2 dice.

Defense: 2 dice.

Hit Points: 17 (sluggish).

Traits

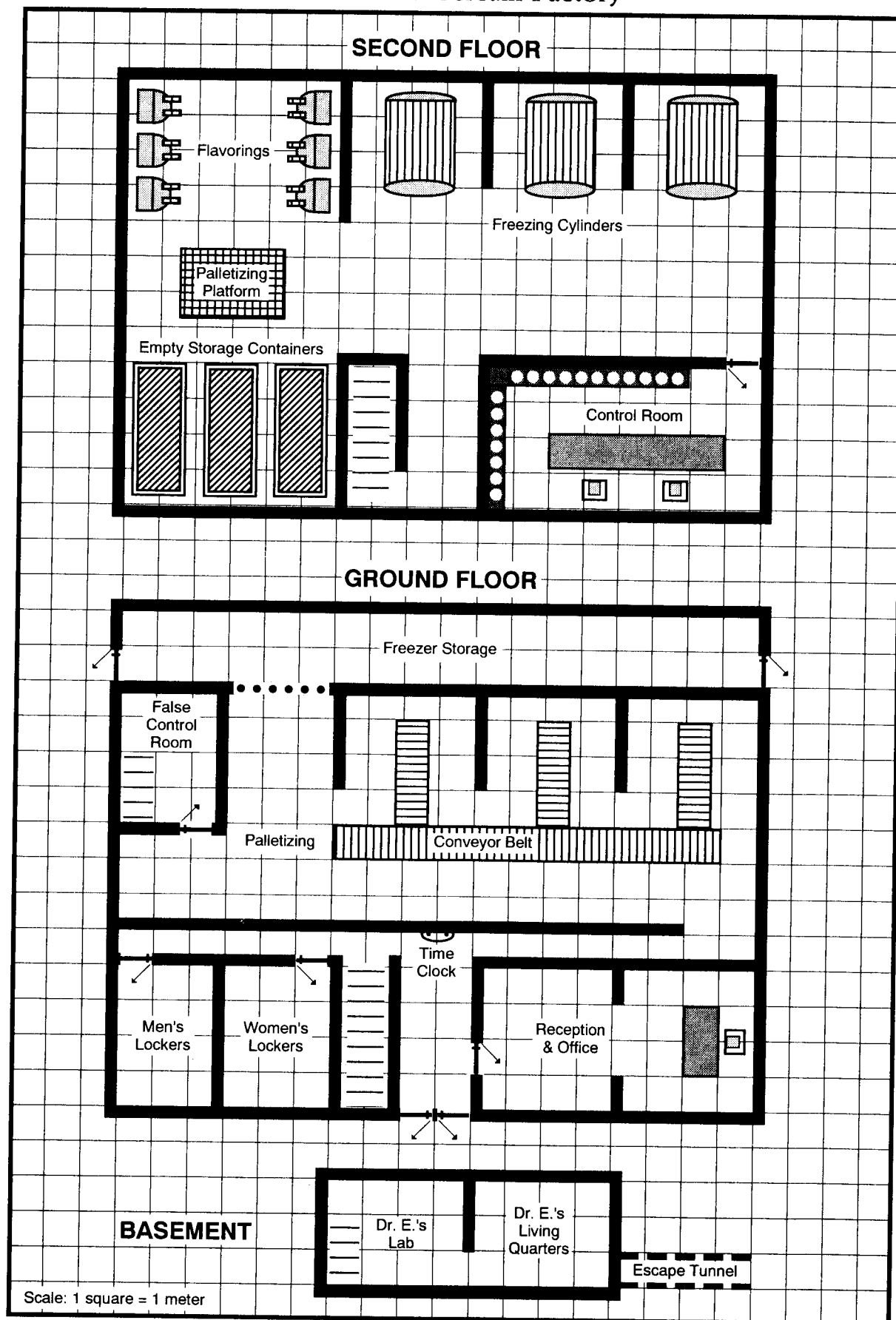
Paranoid, 3 dice. Myron's paranoia runs so deep that he has created bogeymen for himself that are too bizarre to ever actually manifest themselves, even in the Edge. His paranoia has allowed him to be prepared for all manner of things. (Repeatedly looks over everything around him)

Accidental Genius, 3 dice. Myron Ebelmeyer has become a successful inventor in spite of himself. He somehow manages to create devices that have some sort of practical use, even though his intentions may have been quite different, and his understanding of the true value of his creations seems to be warped and limited. (Comes up with bizarre and unrealistic explanations for common items.)

Aging, penalty die. Dr. Ebelmeyer is encountering old age head-on. In fact, he has looked forward to this time, his second childhood as he calls it. He believes that old age affords him a return to the uninhibited ways of childhood, and that in turn leads him to make his astounding discoveries. In truth, it has made him weaker and his reflexes slower, in addition to allowing his imagination to take over his life. (Wrinkled face and hands, loses his train of thought in mid-sentence.)

Wealthy. Myron has made a fortune from his creations, but has used his wealth to maintain a life as a recluse. What money normal wealthy folks spend on trips and impressive status items, he squanders on security against perceived threats and on his convoluted distribution networks.

Ice Cream U-Scream Factory



simplistic design to create a truly revolutionary device.

Should the characters gain possession of the chip and try to unload it in the Edge, they will almost certainly come to the attention of Nordica Barron. She will approach the characters herself and will offer to take the chip off their hands for a reasonable price. Nordica is certain that no matter what the cost, she will be able to turn a profit on one of Dr. Es devices.

Selling the chip is probably the worst thing the characters can do unless they plan to go into hiding afterwards. Once word of the unfortunate trade gets

Dr. Ebelmeyer's Goons

(1 per character, +1) **Hired Fists**

Languages: Al Amarjan patois.

Attack: 3 dice, X2 for knife.

Defense: 3 dice.

Hit Points: 20 (tough).

Traits

Fighter, 3 dice. Former fighter at Sad Mary's. Not only carries a knife, but knows how to use it. (Willing to take a few blows.)

Cool, 3 dice. Able to perform all sorts of activities with a detached cool. (Not persuaded by emotional appeals.)

Hired Force, penalty die. Paid well enough to follow orders, but not to face overwhelming force. (Often remarks, "That'll cost extra!")

out to Dr. Ebelmeyer, he will have Jacob hire the best security force he can muster and will work at tracking down the characters and his chip. If Nordica Barron gets her hands on the chip, that will be the last the characters see of it or her. Before making her bid, she will have arranged passage to Italy, where she plans to pass off the chip to one of her wealthy patrons. Meanwhile, the characters can expect to be tailed, spied upon, and generally harassed until Dr. Ebelmeyer is satisfied that they do not have the chip and that they cannot get it back for him.

If the characters do not take the discovery of the chip seriously, or if one of the characters actually ingests it, Dr. Ebelmeyer's goons will take the opportunity to capture and hopefully detain the character who has swallowed the chip. Ideally, that character will be detained in a bare room with only a chamber pot and a chocolate bar for company. If forced to wait for more than a few hours, the goons will happily attempt to force-feed several glasses of prune juice and more chocolate bars to the unfortunate character in order to expedite things. (The GM should feel free to substitute any long-standing enemies of the characters who might have hired on to work as enforcers for Dr. E. in place of the generic goons supplied here.)

ICE CREAM, U-SCREAM H.Q.

- If the characters begin looking into Ice Cream, U-Scream they will find that it is a small ice cream manufacturer. The plant is located just outside of the Edge, along Freedom Road. If the characters look into meeting with Dr. Ebelmeyer, they will be given the run-around by his personal assistant who will announce that he is attending a conference in Tunisia. In truth, there is a conference in Tunisia, but he has not left the island to attend one of these conferences in over 15 years. Dr. Ebelmeyer has constructed a living area next to the secret underground laboratory beneath the factory, and often doesn't come out for weeks at a time.

- The Ice Cream, U-Scream company conducts tours of the facility every Thursday at 4:30 p.m. This tour is brief and conducted under fairly heavy security, especially for a simple ice cream factory (they claim this is for the safety of the many children who often tour the facility). The factory is largely automated, but there are several Quality Control agents stationed along the conveyor belts. The company runs three shifts, around the clock five days a week.

- One aspect of the plant's security which can be exploited is the horrible defensive technology that has been installed by Dr. Ebelmeyer himself. Being a deranged scientist, he is certain that all sorts of paranormal events would befall him if he let his guard down, so he has created his own high-tech security system using his own benign creations. Since he believes that anyone with knowledge of fringe technology and psychic defenses can't be trusted not to betray him, he has never consulted anyone on his paranormal defenses. There are no true brain loopers or crystal traps installed here, but Dr. Ebelmeyer firmly believes his modified versions are sufficient protection. In the same way that he believes the chips neutralize wandering spirits, he has placed his confidence in many other similar and similarly ineffective security devices around the plant. He will be taken extremely off guard, and risks collapsing from the shock, if a true and blatant wielder of fringe powers breaks into his domicile.

ICE CREAM, U-SCREAM 1ST FLOOR

- The factory is a two-story, rectangular building, nearly windowless and with one set of bright red double-doors that can be viewed from the front. A cement sidewalk leads through a tidy green lawn to these doors. Beyond the doors lies a corridor that ends in a T-intersection. At the far end of the corridor, directly across from the front door, is a time-clock and a security camera. Just inside the front doors is a glass door on the right hand side of the corridor which leads into the reception area. Jacob, the sharp-eyed receptionist, sits here keeping up on Ice Cream, U-Scream paperwork, scheduling tours and keeping an eye out for any unusual activities or threats to Dr. Ebelmeyer. In this office there is one small window which faces the street,

allowing Jacob to see out onto the street and the sidewalk leading up to the entrance.

Jacob is a loyal retainer, carefully screened by Dr. Ebelmeyer himself. Jacob handles all of the daily business for the ice cream company, as well as Dr. E's personal finances and arrangements. It was Jacob who arranged the sale of the invention which would

JACOB JONESSON

Loyal and Trusted Retainer

Jacob is blonde, blue-eyed and probably of some Scandinavian descent. His complexion is on the light side, and his cheeks are often flushed, but oddly, he is not tanned or sunburned by the Mediterranean climate. Jacob is 170 cm, 67 kg. He dresses in only the finest business attire and brightly colored nooses.

Languages: German; English;

Al Amarjan patois.

Attack: 3 dice; X2 with saber.

Defense: 3 dice.

Hit Points: 20 (wiry).

Traits

Observant, 3 dice. Jacob was hired to keep an eye on things and he takes that responsibility very seriously. His eyes are bright blue and piercing, and he is quick to take in any deviation from the norm, catch mistakes on spreadsheets, and anticipate peoples actions. (Stares right through you, notices small details.)

Control Freak, 3 dice. Jacob revels in the total control Dr. Ebelmeyer has given him. It is obvious that he wants to extend that control as far as possible. Though he is not unpleasant, he does come off as rather bossy and controlling. (Speaks in clipped tones, often asks about picky details.)

Fencing, 3 dice. Jacob enjoys the precision and control fencing allows him. He often wishes he had been born during a time when duels were common; he carries his saber with him and practices during his lunch break. (Makes jabbing gestures while speaking.)

Lulled by monotony, Penalty die. Despite his desire to control his surroundings, Jacob is intensely bored by monotony. He doesn't even realize the extent to which he contributes to his own boredom. Once he is certain that everything is in its place, he allows himself to entertain fantasies in which he brings the whole world into order, or daydream about fencing. As long as things seem to be going as expected, this trait applies as a penalty die. (Nods and smiles to himself at unusual times while working.)

- become Stay-Stuk tape, ensuring Myron Ebelmeyer's fortune and his own permanent position as trusted
- personal assistant. He cannot be bribed to betray
- Myron, and is too sharp to be easily tricked. He has,
- however, fallen into a repetitive pattern of behavior
- as the daily grind of the business wears him down.

- At the time-clock, the hallway branches to the
- left and right. Immediately to the left, on the left-
- hand side of the hallway, is the entrance which leads
- up to the second floor. Further down, also on the
- left, are the men's and women's locker rooms. There
- are security cameras in both locker rooms to ensure
- that nobody can sneak anything off the factory floor
- and into their lockers.

- The hallway to the right of the time clock is
- bare and contains no doors or paintings, only a single
- security camera. At the end of the hallway, the
- threshold onto the factory floor is separated from the
- hallway by a double curtain of thick, heavy clear
- plastic fringe. This plastic fringe helps keep the
- temperature of the factory floor constant at just
- above freezing.

- Scents don't carry well in the cold, so there is
- little or no smell of ice cream in the air. Sounds, on
- the other hand, seem to be amplified in off the cold,
- bare walls of the factory. The packaging machinery
- *ka-chunks* rhythmically, the conveyor belts hum, and
- forklifts roar across the floor in and out of the freezer
- storage area, where the distant beeping of their
- reverse warning horns seems only slightly muffled.
- People unprepared for the drastic change in
- temperature from the semi-tropical weather of the
- island might find the cold air refreshing for about a
- minute before they start to shiver. The employees
- seem to be well prepared for this cold environment,
- wearing heavy jumpsuits, the occasional pair of ear-
- muffs, and gloves with just the tips of the fingers cut
- off.

- The factory is laid out with three automated
- machines that fill containers with semi-frozen ice
- cream, each machine handling a different flavor. The
- containers then pass along their own conveyor belts
- to a central conveyor belt, where they are sorted by
- human workers into crates, and stacked to be
- palletized. Once placed on the palletizing platform,
- the pallets are swathed in shrink-wrap, and moved by
- forklift into the freezer storage. The freezer storage
- has a loading dock at either end where Ice Cream, U-
- Scream trucks are pulled up and loaded, again by
- forklift. Near the factory entrance for the freezer
- storage is a smallish cubicle which fronts onto a
- control room. Someone is in this room at all times.

- This room is actually a facade. Inside this
- control room is a trap door which leads down to Dr.
- Ebelmeyer's secret laboratory and private chambers.
- (If Alberto has lost the chip to the characters, he has
- been kidnapped and hidden away in Dr. Ebelmeyer's
- secret rooms.) There are three workers manning
- each machine, as well as three workers devoted to
- palletizing, one man in the false control room and
- three forklift drivers, one permanently working in the



freezer storage area.

Inside the factory floor, there is a pathway marked by reflective yellow tape. Tours are conducted within this pathway, and non-employees are not allowed outside of the yellow tape under any circumstances. One part-time employee is devoted entirely to conducting tours. She drones on in a monotone, pointing stiffly to the various workings of the factory: "Straight ahead you will see the first ice cream packaging machine. The machine can output 20 cartons per minute, as you can see. Farther down the line they will be processed and combined into pallets. Stay behind the yellow line please. Let's move ahead..."

The pathway follows the wall and goes straight across the factory, stopping just short of the palletizing platform. Once the tour reaches the platform, everyone is given an ice cream cone in the flavor of the month (this month it's Rusty Raspberry) and all members of the tour are quickly ushered back outside.

ICE CREAM, U-SCREAM, 2ND FLOOR

The second floor is one large room, with a large control room area in the corner to the right of the stairs. This control room is the true control room, inside which two people constantly watch the security monitors, as well as the controls for the ice cream machinery. In the spaces directly above the three conveyor belt areas below are three freezing cylinders, which workers fill with milk products and flavorings (sometimes including drugs and the secret chips). The cylinders mix and freeze the ice cream which is then pumped into the machinery below and packaged.

To the left of the stairway there is a storage area

- for empty containers which are loaded on the palletizing elevator and lowered to the first floor of the factory to be filled with ice cream as needed. On
- the other side of the palletizing elevator are the crates of flavorings and ice cream base products.
- Besides the two workers in the control room, there is
- a worker manning each cylinder and a forklift driver on this floor.

DOCTOR EBELMEYER'S ROOMS

- Doctor Ebelmeyer's rooms are about 20 meters square. A steep stairway leads down into his
- laboratory first, which is a jumbled mess of various radio parts, bottles of oil and goo, scattered papers, etc. A half-sized refrigerator sits on the wall
- opposite the stairs, in which Dr. Ebelmeyer keeps his weekly rations and any weird chemicals or items that
- need to be refrigerated for his experiments. There is also a security monitor that alerts Dr. Ebelmeyer to
- anyone entering the control room above his chambers.

- In the bedroom there is a single bed and a dresser with several lab coats tossed on top. If
- Alberto has been hidden away here, there will also be a blanket and a pillow on the floor. Alberto is
- miserable with his confinement, and spends his day sitting dejectedly on the bed and reading comic books. If the characters were to break in and offer
- him a way out of this room, he could easily be persuaded to overpower Myron Ebelmeyer, but he
- will not stand by while anyone actually injures his patron.

RESCUING ALBERTO

- If the characters decide that they are willing or able to rescue Alberto from his uncomfortable
- confinement, he will likely become a friend for life...

unless the characters injure or otherwise appear to harm Dr. Ebelmeyer. Since Alberto has no family, Dr. Ebelmeyer represents both a stern judge and kindly father figure. While Alberto is unhappy with his confinement, he is not violent or hateful towards Dr. Ebelmeyer.

Getting into the sanctuary will require the characters to somehow get past the yellow line barrier, into the false control booth. Then they must incapacitate the worker who is manning the station and find the trap door before Dr. Ebelmeyer becomes aware of their presence. If the characters have any shape-shifting abilities, or can walk through walls, teleport, or project themselves astrally, this will be a lot easier. They can also find Ice Cream U-Scream jumpsuits in several lockers in the locker rooms, if they can make it there and change undetected by the workers monitoring the security cameras. (Anyone who attempts this at a time other than during a normal shift change will be noticed by the guards and will have to fast-talk their way through an encounter with the factory foreman... and failing that, Jacob.) Of course, breaking into the factory on the weekend when no one but a security man, Dr. E and Alberto are around would also solve this problem.

Dr. Ebelmeyer is not a vicious man. If it is pointed out to him how miserable his actions have made poor Alberto, or how a particular character has suffered at the hands of some of his enforcers, Dr. Ebelmeyer will feel remorse. If given a chance, he will explain in a feeble voice that he only wanted to ensure the evil government agents wouldn't intercept his precious inventions, and that he never meant to hurt anyone. He will launch into a warped explanation of his bizarre device as he believes it to function if the characters seem willing to listen to him. However, if the characters spend more than 15 minutes talking with Dr. Ebelmeyer, he will lose his train of thought and forget what the characters have told him about their motivations or sufferings. If he forgets that he was responsible for hurting people, he will become agitated and his intense paranoia will take over. There is no reasoning with him in his paranoid state, and he will threaten the characters with more of his useless devices (such as his Temporal Disruption Ray, which is actually a tinkered-with high-beam pocket flashlight).

If the characters attack Dr. Ebelmeyer outright, he will grope around on his lab table until he finds the altered Stinger Mark V he has kept around just in case. It has a full six charges, and his modifications don't seem to have affected it at all.

LOOSE ENDS

This adventure leaves many options open for further adventures. If the characters have rescued Alberto from his imprisonment at the hands of Dr. Ebelmeyer, Alberto will make a willing if dim-witted friend. If they have attacked Alberto or harmed Dr. Ebelmeyer, however, both parties can be considered

- enemies unless the characters make their own reparations.

- There is also the matter of Nordica Barron, who may or may not have been impressed with any dealings she had with the characters. If the characters dealt fairly with Nordica, she might come to them looking for more items or information. Or maybe her buyers decided they weren't interested in the strange chip after all, and Nordica feels she was taken by the characters. Her reactions should be based on the role-playing of the players during any encounters with her.

- Continuing interactions with Anima Nee-Owoo also depend on how the characters conducted themselves during the adventure. Even if they did not have direct contact with her during the adventure, Anima is keeping an eye on the characters. If she hears about any attack on Dr. Ebelmeyer, or any unusual paranormal activities the characters have been exhibiting during the adventure, she will return at a later time to investigate them further. In fact, the characters might never even make the connection between the incident with Dr. Ebelmeyer and this sudden interest the CPC has with them. While Anima is generally easy-going about these things, she will not allow a serious threat to the DAubainnes to go unchallenged.



Gary Wildeman

- Gary's illustrations have appeared in *Discorder* music magazine and in *Canadian Biker*. He also works as a baker, and is a drummer for The Impromptu Jazz Ensemble.

- Gary is a self-taught artist with a passion for comic books. He is currently working on a black and white comic book that he hopes to publish soon.



Nicole Lindroos Frein

- Originally from Minnesota, Nicole has also lived in Georgia and Oregon and traveled through most of the states in between. She fell in love with Utah and has sworn to go back one day, if she doesn't stay in Vancouver.

- Nicole has been involved in the roleplaying industry in one capacity or another since 1988, when she started working for Lion Rampant. Since then she has done work for White Wolf, Atlas Games, FASA and Wizards of the Coast. She is currently living with her husband in beautiful British Columbia and doing freelance work.

- Nicole likes to sample game systems, trying them one after another on her unsuspecting group. She has run through everything from *Amber* to *Vampire* (and many things in between). She also collects episodes of *Eek the Cat* on tape and enjoyed *Mystery Science Theatre 3000* before moving to Canada (which hasn't discovered it yet).

WE WANT TO PUT YOU

ON THE EDGE

On the Edge



On the Edge is the trading card game of surreal conspiracies. You play an arch-conspirator on the Mediterranean island of Al Amarja, seeking to achieve sufficient influence to dominate your opponents. A game for two or more players.

Cepheus

ATLAS GAMES

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ADVENTURES UNLIMITED 25

RIDE THE DIVINE WIND

BY LISA SMEDMAN

ART BY TRISCH LOHNER

This adventure is designed for the *Cyberpunk 2020*® game and is based on material found in R. Talsorian Games' upcoming *Pac Rim* sourcebook. While this supplement can provide detailed background material on Japan (the country in which this adventure is set) in the year 2020, it is not necessary to have the book to play *Ride the Divine Wind*.

Ride the Divine Wind sees the player characters used as unwitting pawns in a get-rich-quick scheme. It all starts innocently enough, with a search for a runaway teenager who has joined a gang of *boso-zoku* ("reckless-driving tribes"). But there's more at stake here than just a missing kid. Millions of yen and a radical new technology that could change the face of the transportation industry may also hang in the balance.

This adventure can accommodate a number of character types. As written, the characters

are a team of detectives (solos and freelancing cops) who are hired by a wealthy Japanese executive who wants to find his runaway daughter. This team could also include techies and netrunners.

Alternatively, the characters might be friends of the runaway, young rockers or school chums who want to find their friend before the father's "hired goons" do. Street types that the daughter has dealt with in the past (fixers, techies, rockers, and netrunners) might also be motivated to help out an old friend. The gamemaster should set this friendship up in advance by briefly introducing the daughter to the characters before this adventure begins. Since

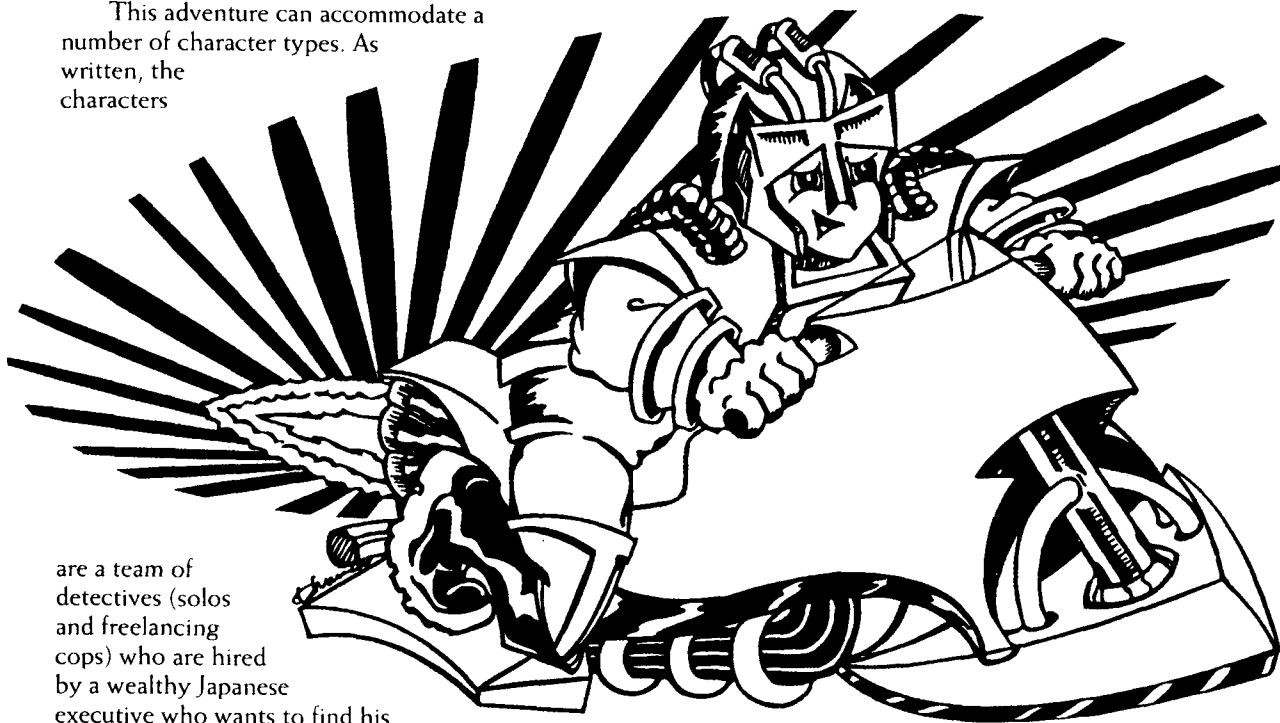
she's from a wealthy family, maybe she helps one of the characters out with a "pay me back when you can" credit loan.

Finally, a media team might want to find the girl so that they can get an exclusive scoop. Since the daughter ran from the lap of luxury to the uncertain existence of a bike gang, it's the perfect "riches to rags" story.

The alternative set-ups listed above require the gamemaster to create the team of non-player characters that is hired by the father, and to work the actions of this team into the events described below.

STORY BACKGROUND

Kinuko Sekiguchi was always too individualistic for her own good. First, it was the brightly-colored pockets and extra buttons on her school uniform.



Then came the light tattoos and spiked hair. In no time she was neglecting her studies and hanging out at the *ge-sen* (game center) with the bad youths.

Her father, a middle-management executive with Yamaha International Cybercycle Systems (YICS), tried to talk sense into her. "If you continue on this course," said Naotomo Sekiguchi, "you will surely fail the university entrance exams and shame this family. We have enough of a burden to bear already."

This was a veiled reference to his wife's suicide,

which took place three years ago. The cause was Naotomo's infidelity—a fact Kinuko only recently learned. Her father throwing her mother's death in her face was too much for Kinuko. She lashed out at him, calling him an adulterer. The result was a stony silence, as Naotomo buried himself in his work. Unable to cope with her father's sudden indifference toward her, Kinuko ran away from home.

She found the love she was looking for in the arms of Shiro Toyomura, a member of the *Musha Bashiri* ("Running Soldiers") motorcycle gang. Shiro at first saw Kinuko only as a pretty plaything. But when he learned that Kinuko's father oversaw a research lab at YICS where cybernetic motorcycles were designed and built, he decided to use her to impress the gang's president. He pressured Kinuko into stealing her father's mag-key and entering the lab. The plan was for her to steal high-tech motorcycle accessories.

Security was tight, but Kinuko had made infrequent visits to the lab before and was recognized by the workers. She was able to sweet-talk her way past the guards. Inside the lab, she found a completed "concept bike"—a secret motorcycle prototype that would be the basis for next year's models.

Kinuko had been fitted with a vehicle link two years ago, when her father gave her a Yamaha Cute-Scoot to ride to school. She now used this interface to access the concept bike's control systems. As she revved the nearly-silent engine, the thrill of being one with such a powerful street bike overwhelmed her. Kinuko decided then and there that she would keep the bike, rather than give it to her boyfriend. Stealing it would allow her to enter the gang on her own terms.

When Kinuko wheeled the sleek-looking concept bike into a parking stall outside the *ge-sen* where *Musha Bashiri* hung out, the gang members were suitably impressed. Shiro tried to claim credit for the theft, but Kinuko refused to let him. Speaking her mind led to their first fight. Shiro broke up with her then and there, but Kinuko was allowed to join the gang.

Eventually, Shiro realized that he really did love Kinuko. But it was too late; she had already become the girlfriend of his chief rival, fellow gang member Hitoshi Yamada. Yet Kinuko still has a soft spot for Shiro. Her indecision as to which of the two young men she likes best is sure to cause some friction in the gang.

THE YAMAHA KAMIKAZE

The motorcycle Kinuko stole is known as the Yamaha Kamikaze. Although it is a concept bike, the only significant technological improvement it offers is an improved muffler design that allows it to run almost silently. Otherwise it is a normal motorcycle albeit one with a sleek look, designed for speed.

A "dual engine" design provides the Yamaha Kamikaze with the power of the typhoon or "divine wind" for which it is named. Operated primarily on

- electrical power (8 hours of travel per one-hour fastcharge), it also features a secondary CHOOH2 engine that can accelerate it to a top speed of 250 kmh at a mere thought from its rider (an acceleration of 50 kmh/phase). The bike's small CHOOH2 tank is good only for about two hours' travel at moderate speeds.

The name Kamikaze was chosen because of its association with the suicide pilots of World War II. This is a marketing ploy designed to attract Japan's rebellious youth; glamorizing the tragic deaths of these 20th century airmen has become a popular fad.

The motorcycle is highly maneuverable (maximum maneuver speed of 150 kmh). It is only lightly armored (SP10) and relatively delicate (SDP 20). It's not a bike you'd want to dump too many times.

NAOTOMO'S PLAN

Naotomo Sekiguchi was understandably furious to learn that his own daughter was behind the theft of the Yamaha Kamikaze concept bike. Anger and shame were quickly followed by a well founded fear that he would lose his job. Such is his standing at Yamaha International Cybercycle Systems, however, that he has convinced his superiors to let him personally handle the recovery of the bike. He hires a team (the player characters) at his own expense to track it down and to bring his daughter home.

Although he pretends to be concerned for his daughter's welfare, Naotomo is so outraged by his daughter's actions that he no longer cares what happens to her. Ultimately, it becomes clear that his instructions to "go softly and use caution" come more out of a concern for recovering the bike intact than out of any fear of what might happen to his daughter.

Naotomo knows that, even if he recovers the bike, his corporation will be forced to fire him as a result of his daughter's transgression. He will be blacklisted, unable to get a decent job anywhere else. Out of desperation, he has hatched a scheme. The first step involved planting information in the YICS lab's computer files that suggests that the Yamaha Kamikaze contained a unique design feature that would revolutionize the automotive industry: a micro-battery that never needs replacing and is capable of holding enormous power in a lightweight package. (Conventional automotive batteries are bulky and must be replaced every three to five years.) The next step was to call an impromptu press conference that hinted at radical new developments in the YICS lab without mentioning any specifics. Naotomo knew that his competitors would try to hack their way into the lab's computer files, where they would find the false information he had planted. The final step was hiring the characters then telling others in the industry "in strict confidence" about the bike's theft and YICS' hush-hush efforts to recover it. He knows this will confirm the micro-battery's value in the minds of his competitors.

As soon as word "leaks out" about the amazing

new micro-battery, Yamaha International Cybercycle Systems stock will go through the roof. (It's already doing this when Naotomo hires the characters.) Naotomo, like all loyal managers who believe in the company they work for, owns large amounts of this stock. He plans to dump it and realize a healthy profit long before the motorcycle is recovered and his ruse is revealed. The rival corporations (and stock purchasers) will realize that they have been had but not by whom. Playing the role of the innocent, aggrieved father, Naotomo can pocket the rewards and will never need to seek employment again.

MUSHA BASHIRI

Musha Bashiri are a gang of approximately fifty high-school and university drop-outs from middle- and upper-class homes. They roam the city of Tokyo and its suburbs on motorcycles that were originally gifts from their indulgent parents (although many of the parts are hot). Some of the gang's members have broken off all ties with their families, and a handful were tossed out on their ear for causing shame to their families by preferring to hang out with their friends, rather than cramming for university entrance exams. Others are on better terms and make regular visits home to beg for money or a home-cooked meal.

The *Musha Bashiri* are a typical example of a *bosozoku* gang. They ride an assortment of different motorcycles, but all are painted in brilliant colors and are decorated with the gang's slogans, painted in *kanji* characters. The gangers themselves are a mixture of Japanese tradition and rebellion. They wear baggy, Western-style pants and T-shirts, but when riding strap on thick plastic masks

- that cover their nose, cheeks and jaw. These colorful, grimacing masks are replicas of the lacquered iron masks worn by *samurai* warriors in battle.

- Those few gangers who do wear helmets burn incense in them before wearing them, just as ancient soldiers burned incense in their helmets so that their heads, if decapitated, would smell sweet.

- The average *Musha Bashiri* gang member is lightly armored, at best (leather pants and jacket; SP 4). A few carry knives, and the leader and his two lieutenants are armed with somewhat unreliable, home-made zip guns. Their Handgun skill is +2. (Zip Guns: Type P; WA -1; Con P; Avail P; Dmg 1d6+1; #Shots 6; ROF 1; Rel UR; Range 50 m.)

- Among the other members, the weapon of choice is a seemingly innocent *sensu* (fan) whose ribs end in razor-sharp points.

To use this specialized melee weapon properly, extensive training is required. (Warrior's Fan: WA +1; Con P; Avail R; Damage 2d3; Rel VR; Range 1m.)

Toshizo Koyanagi, a university drop-out, is the *socho* (president) of the gang. Competing for the spot of second in command, or *fukucho*, are Shiro Toyomura and Hitoshi Yamada. Each is constantly trying to outdo the other in daredevil riding feats on his motorcycle, either to impress the club president or to impress Kinuko, whose affections they are both vying for. These stunts usually include striking a *mei* (a dramatic *Kabuki*-style pose) while the motorcycle zooms over rough, dangerous terrain.

As yet, no females have made it into the upper echelons of the gang. But a number are included in the ranks of the gang's

Typical Musha Bashiri Gang Member

Int 6	Ref 6	Cool 8	Tech 6
Luck 4	Attr 5	MA 6	Emp 4
Body 5	Save 5	BTM -2	

SKILLS: Special Ability: Gang Rank +2 to +6 (*beitai*); +7 (*fukucho*); +8 (*socho*).

Athletics +4; Awareness/Notice +3; Basic Tech +2; Brawling or Martial Art +3; Dodge & Escape +3; Education & General Knowledge +2; Expert: Battle Fan +4; Expert: Motorcycle Repair +4; Hide/Evade +3; Intimidation +5; Leadership +1 to +2 (*beitai*) +5 to +6 (*fukucho* and *socho*); Melee +4; Motorcycle +4; Personal Grooming +3; Streetwise +4; Wardrobe & Style +4.

CYBER: Basic processor; interface plugs; vehicle link; various fashionwear (e.g. skinwatch, light tattoo, shift-tacts, techhair); nasal filters (versus smog).

EQUIPMENT: Motorcycle (Kundalini Shiva Cyberbike, Yamaha Scorpion, Honda Microjet) with customized paint job and accessories; knife or battle fan; motorcycle repair kit; video/audio tape player; sleeping bag. Some gang members have stolen cell phones, while others (those still on speaking terms with their families) have Trauma Team International cards.

- *beitai* or "soldiers."

- At night, Toshizo and his vice-presidents lead the *Musha Bashiri* on their noisy excursions. Sometimes the gang roars through a quiet suburban

neighborhood in pairs, one member concentrating on driving the bike while another, sitting behind, waves a red flag that bears the gang's colors: a white fan with *Musba Bashiri* written in *kanji* across its opened face. At other times the gang becomes more violent, riding their motorcycles into shops to commit armed robbery. The gang also likes to crash house parties in suburban Tokyo, especially if the parties have access to Smash or other soft drugs.

By day, the gang hangs out at Otaka Ge-sen, one of Tokyo's many gaming arcades. Doffing their masks, they blend in with the other teens who frequent the place; only the bikes parked outside reveal that the *Musba Bashiri* are within. Often members will sleep in these relatively safe environments, rolling out their sleeping bags in an empty virtual booth.

Suitable first names for male gang members: Jun, Keishi, Issei, Takaki, Taro, Tomoyuki. Suitable first names for female gang members: Miyuki, Mika, Ayako, Reiko, Shinobu, Kyoko, Marina, Ikuko. (Names graciously provided by playtester Ted Snell of Vancouver.)

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Unless the game master is running a campaign that is already set in Japan, the first challenge will be to get the players to that country. One of the easiest ways to transplant the characters is with the lure of easy money. Japan has a thriving film industry that is always on the lookout for non-Asian actors particularly beefy characters who can play the "tough guys" or perform stunts in action films. The industry is also looking for netrunners and techies for its computer graphics and special effects departments.

The players are lured to Japan by a lucrative employment offer from the Three Lions Film Company. Their flight to Japan is paid up-front, but once they arrive in the country the film offer falls through. Three Lions has gone into receivership and the picture has been canceled. Embarrassed that the deal has gone sour, the characters' contact offers alternative employment. A personal friend (Naotomo Sekiguchi) is looking for skilled operatives to perform a job that must be handled discreetly. The money is just as good as the film deal, and the client is willing to pick up the tab for the expensive Tokyo hotel that the characters are booked into. He is also willing to pay for Japanese-language chips for characters who have neural processors. Since the characters have three weeks to kill before their return flight, they might as well make a little pocket money.

Naotomo Sekiguchi meets the characters in a noodle bar in downtown Tokyo. He introduces himself as an executive with Yamaha International Cybercycle Systems, but does not tell the characters that he is the manager of YICS' research and development lab. He offers them 3,000 Eurodollars each, plus expenses, if they can bring his daughter back home and recover a motorcycle that she stole.

Naotomo gives the characters a school picture of

- his daughter that is two years out of date. It shows a rather plain-looking girl in a school uniform. He tells the characters that his daughter ran away from home three months ago, and that she has been hanging out with a *bosozoku* gang. He doesn't know the gang name, but can describe its "colors" its members wear red jackets that have a white fan painted across the back. A few weeks ago, Naotomo saw his daughter climbing onto one of these gang members' motorcycles outside a *ge-sen*. The motorcycle sped away before Naotomo could cross the street to talk to Kinuko. He doesn't remember the name of the arcade, but knows it was located near the Harajuku train station. He explains that the Harajuku is an area of fast-food outlets, fashion stores catering to teens, and arcades. Nearby Yoyogi Park is a popular hangout for "anti-establishment" kids.

- Naotomo adds that, four days ago, Kinuko broke into a Yamaha showroom and stole a motorcycle. He explains that it was a very expensive machine, and that he will lose his job unless it is recovered in one piece and returned to YICS. He describes it as white with a World War II era rising sun painted on the fuel tank.

- Naotomo pays the characters one-third of their fee up front (in yen, exchanged at 150 to the Eurodollar), explaining that another third will be paid when his daughter is brought home, and the final third when the stolen motorcycle is recovered.

WEAPONS RESTRICTIONS

- Firearms and knives with blades longer than 30 cm are illegal in Japan. If the characters are foreigners who have entered Japan legally, any illegal weapons carried by the characters will have been seized by customs. To acquire a handgun through the black market, a character must make a Streetwise skill check at a difficulty level of 25. To acquire a knife, the difficulty level is 15. The purchase takes place in Tokyo's Shinjuku (Kabukiza) district, a stronghold of the Yakuza, or Japanese mob. Prices are two to three times those in America. Electronics equipment may be purchased in Akihabara, Tokyo's "electric circus."

- If the characters are instead Japanese citizens, only legitimate police officers who are actively working on cases under the jurisdiction of the National Police Agency will be allowed to carry firearms. These weapons will be issued by the Japanese police force. Non-standard weapons are not permitted.

LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

- Unless the characters speak fluent Japanese (Know Language skill level 6+), they're going to have problems communicating with those around them. They may also face problems if they are obvious foreigners.

- A poor command of Japanese affects the following skills: Interrogation, Intimidate (if only verbal threats are involved), Oratory, Streetwise, Human Perception (if relying upon tone of voice and

word choice), Interview, Seduction, Social, Persuasion & Fast Talk, Perform (acting or singing), and Library Search (the character must also read Japanese). The penalties are as follows:

Know Language Skill:	Penalty:
+1 (can't read Japanese)	-5
+2 (can't read Japanese)	-4
+3	-3
+4	-2
+5	-1

The alternative is to speak with the Japanese in English. To determine how well a Japanese non-player character speaks English, roll 1d10-2. This is the characters' Know Language (English) skill. A negative result means that the character does not speak English.

If a conversation is carried out in English, the above penalties apply, unless the non-player character is fluent in English (Know Language skill level 6+). At a skill level of 8, the character speaks English like a native, with one of the following accents: American, Australian, British, Canadian, Irish, New Zealander, Scottish, South African.

A player character's degree of success in a social situation also depends upon whether that character is a native-born Japanese, a *nikkei-jin* (an ethnic Japanese born and raised outside of the country), or a *keto* (foreigner). Native-born Japanese get a +3 bonus to all Empathy and Cool/Will skill checks (except Resist Torture/Drugs). *Nikkei-jin* get a -1 penalty, while *keto* get a -3 penalty. These bonuses and penalties are cumulative with the penalties for language listed above.

TRACKING DOWN MUSHA BASHIRI

Downtown Tokyo has hundreds of gaming arcades fifteen of them within a five-block radius of the Harajuku train station alone. Its streets are filled with motorcycles and scooters of every description many of them ridden by young people wearing colorful clothes, including red jackets.

If the characters talk to the kids who hang out at any of the *ge-sen*, a successful Streetwise skill check will provide the necessary information to track down the *bosozoku* gang. Information is cumulative (e.g. on a result of 30 read the character everything listed below).

Result 10 (Police 10-15): A *bosozoku* gang frequents this part of town. It has a couple of dozen members who ride fancy *tanshas* (motorcycles) and wear weird looking masks.

Result 15 (Police 20-25): The *bosozoku* gang whose emblem is the white fan is called *Musha Bashiri*. Its leader is a *ronin* (university drop-out) named Toshizo. The gang hangs out at a *ge-sen* on Maiji-dori Avenue.

Result 20 (Police 30+): After Toshizo, two of the more important gang members are Shiro and Hitoshi. The two have been arguing a lot lately over

some girl. The name of the arcade they hang out at is Otaka Ge-Sen.

Result 25: *Musha Bashiri* gang members fight with warriors' battle fans. A few of their members also carry zip guns.

Result 30+: One of the new gang members, a girl named Kinuko, stole an experimental motorcycle worth a lot of money four days ago. The bike is parked outside the Otaka Ge-Sen gaming arcade right now.

CHECKING WITH THE POLICE

The characters can also gain the above information from the two National Police Agency officers who staff a "police box" two blocks away from the Harajuku train station, on Omotesanda Avenue. These officers can provide the information listed above, but do not know about the stolen bike (the theft was not reported to police) and do not recognize Kinuko's name. She is not listed on the police database as a runaway, since she was never reported missing.

If the characters think to ask about the theft of a motorcycle from a Yamaha showroom four days ago, they can learn that no such crime was reported.

Hacking into the NPA database (there's a dataterm in the police box) requires an Interface skill check of 20+ to get around the passwords. Getting inside the police box itself requires a Pick Lock skill check of 15+.

National Police Agency Officers

Int 8	Ref 7	Cool 6	Tech 6
Luck 5	Attr 4	MA 7	Emp 7
Body 6	Save 6	BTM -2	

SKILLS: Special Ability: Authority +6.

Athletics +5; Awareness/Notice +6; Basic Tech +2; Brawling +5; Education +7; Electronic Security +2; Expert: Law +5; Handgun +6; Human Perception +5; Interrogation +6; Intimidate +4; Melee +5; Shadow/Track +4; Streetwise +5.

CYBER: Skinwatch; neural processor with police dataterm link; smartgun link; nasal filters (versus smog). Some have grafted muscle (Body 8; BTM -3) or Sandevistan Speedware.

EQUIPMENT: Light armor jacket (SP 12); nylon helmet (SP 20) with built-in police radio; Towa Type 13 handgun with one extra clip; nightstick; flashlight; 10 sets plastic handcuffs.

(Towa Type 13 Police Pistol: Type P; WA +2; Con J; Avail P; Dmg 2d6+3 (10mm); #Shots 12; ROF 2; Rel VR; Range 50 m.)

AT THE OTAKA GE-SEN

Otaka Ge-Sen is one of three arcades on Meiji-dori Avenue. When the characters arrive, a total of 21-30 (20+1d10) *Musha Bashiri* are present. Most are inside playing arcade games (or sleeping in virtual

booths), but four will be lounging outside the *ge-sen*, smoking cigarettes and eating junk food. They keep a close eye on the gang's motorcycles and immediately confront anyone who shows too keen an interest in them.

On an Awareness/Notice skill check of 15+, the characters notice a motorcycle parked outside the *ge-sen* that matches the description of the stolen bike.

The *Musba Bashiri* gang members can be spotted by the colorful plastic *samurai* masks that either hang from their belts or are stuffed in their pockets. Only Hitoshi Yamada (Kinuko's current boyfriend and one of the gang's two *fukuchos*) wears the gang colors a red satin jacket embroidered with a white fan. The other gang members wear normal (albeit unconservative) clothes.

Kinuko is inside the *ge-sen*, playing a game. She doesn't look a bit like her school picture. Since it was taken, she's dyed her hair a bright orange and implanted light tattoos in her cheeks that resemble neon blue "freckles." To spot her in the crowd (there's close to 200 kids in the *ge-sen*), the characters must make an Awareness/Notice skill check of 20+. Otherwise, they'll have to ask questions.

A non-gang member has only a 20% chance (1-2 on a 1d10) of knowing who Kinuko is. The kid will be suspicious of adults asking questions, however, and will only point her out if the character makes an

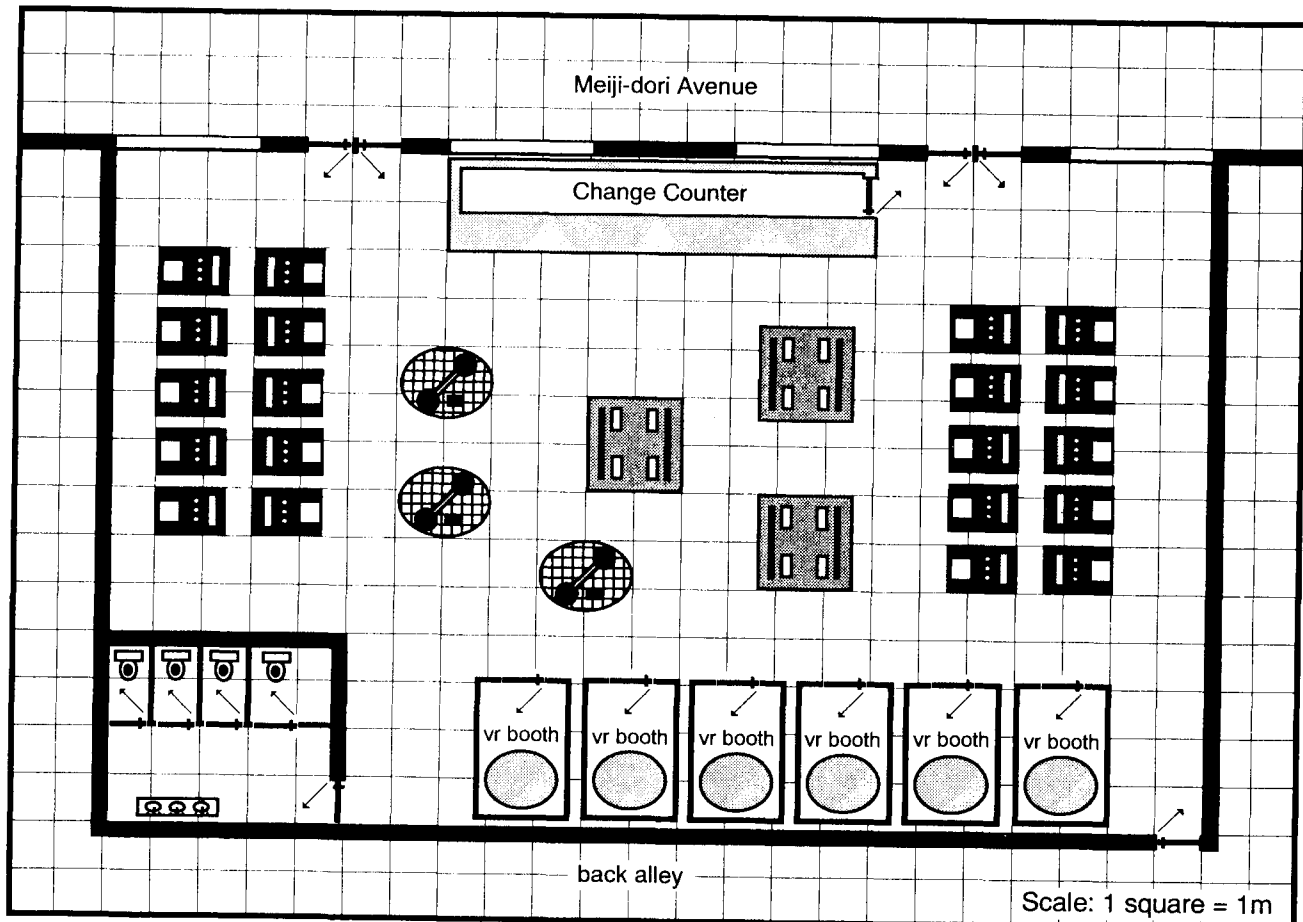
- Interrogation, Intimidate, Oratory, Interview, or Persuasion & Fast Talk skill check of 15+. All *Musba Bashiri* members know who Kinuko is, but characters must make the above skill checks at 20+ before a gang member will talk.

- If the characters are young enough, they might pose as university drop-outs looking to get into the gang. They can use this ploy to get background information on *Musba Bashiri*, either from the gang members themselves or the kids who know Kinuko but had better know enough about motorcycles to carry on an intelligent conversation. If the characters are accepted at face value by the gang, they are invited to come to an abandoned pier in the Harumi district that night and perform a few motorcycle stunts there. If the gang likes what they see, the character might be invited to become a member.

- To bring Kinuko home again, the characters are going to have to use a combination of guile (to lure her away from fellow gang members) and brute force. If the characters tell Kinuko that they have come to the arcade to take her home, she absolutely refuses to go with them. If any force is used in an effort to remove her from the *ge-sen*, she immediately screams for help. A total of 1d10+10 gang members come to Kinuko's aid, attacking the characters using Martial Arts skills and (if need be) battle fans and knives.

For Kinuko's statistics, use the Typical *Musba*

Otaka Ge-Sen



Bashiri Gang Member. She is a *beitai* (Gang Rank +2; Leadership +2). She carries a knife rather than a battle fan (she doesn't know how to use the fan yet), and her Martial Art skill is Judo.

If a fight breaks out at the *ge-sen*, the two officers from the neighborhood police box arrive within a few minutes to try and break things up. They also respond if they see Kinuko being dragged away by the characters. If a fight escalates to the point where weapons are being used, the officers call in reinforcements. If the police arrive, the gang members scramble for their motorcycles and roar away.

The gang's two lieutenants (Shiro Toyomura and Hitoshi Yamada) are also at the arcade. Both are carrying their zip guns. If the characters quietly observe the kids at the arcade, eventually Shiro and Hitoshi get into an argument.

"Kinuko must decide once and for all which of us she wants as her boyfriend," one yells.

"No!" the other shouts back angrily. "Kinuko can't make up her mind. Let her motorcycle decide it."

"*Hai!* Tonight at Harumi Kurabashi. We decide it there."

A short time after this argument, all of the *Musha Bashiri* gang members leave the arcade. They get on their motorcycles and drive away. If Kinuko has disappeared (been captured by the player characters, for example) another gang member hot-wires her bike and drives it away.

STEALING THE YAMAHA KAMIKAZE

The Yamaha Kamikaze can be started up by inserting a magnetic key (shaped like a triangular spike) into its ignition. From there, the bike is controlled cybernetically; a character must have interface plugs or a vehicle link to ride it. Any character with a Motorcycle skill of 1+ can drive the bike, but maneuver rolls (skill checks) are required to perform the following actions:

- Serve: 10+
- Wheelie: 10+
- Tight turn: 15+
- Hard Brake: 15+
- Short Jump (up to 3 meters): 15+
- Hard Acceleration (using CHOOH2 engine): 15+
- Rotate/Bootleg Turn: 20+
- Long Jump (up to 6 meters): 20+
- Extreme Jump (more than 6 meters): 25+

For each 50 kmh the bike is traveling over its maximum maneuver speed of 150 kmh, add +2 to the difficulty number listed above. Some of the modifiers listed in the *Solo of Fortune* sourcebook may also apply (+5 for an oil slick, +3 for heavy rain or insufficient light, +2 for gravel, +1 for a downhill grade, and +2 to +6 for a wounded or injured driver).

Hot wiring the bike requires an Electronic Security skill check of 15+; fortunately there's no

- vehicle alarm since it's just a concept bike. It can be wheeled away without starting the engine, but a single character pushing the bike moves at half the normal movement allowance (two characters pushing it together move normally).

- Stealing the motorcycle from in front of the Otaka Ge-Sen is going to be tough. The four gang members out front immediately attack anyone who tries this, and at the same time yell for help. A total of 1d10+10 gang members come running from inside the arcade, arriving on the third round of the fight.

AT THE PIER

- At night, the *Musha Bashiri* gang rides out to Harumi, an industrial area in the Port of Tokyo. Here, at the abandoned Kurabashi Pier, gang members try to outdo each other with motorcycle stunts. The rough pavement and large obstacles make for a dangerous course, while sloping ramps provide a raised platform from which the other gang members can watch, cans of Smash in their hands.

- The characters can locate this hangout either by overhearing the argument at the *ge-sen*, or by asking non-gang kids in and around Otaka Ge-Sen where the *Musha Bashiri* have gone. There is a 10% chance (a 1 on a 1d10) that any kid will be able to name the Kurabashi Pier. As before, the kids are suspicious of adults asking questions, however, and will answer only if the character makes an Interrogation, Intimidate, Oratory, Interview, or Persuasion & Fast Talk skill check of 15+.

- The gang gathers at the Kurabashi Pier at 10 p.m. If the characters can get there first, they can conceal themselves. Each character's Hide/Evade skill check should be compared to a single Awareness/Notice skill check on the part of the gang as a whole to see if that character is spotted.

- If the players are really having trouble deciding what to do next, one of the characters spots a gang member on a motorcycle. The kid tries to lose them but crashes his bike, seriously injuring one leg. The characters can use either their Interrogation or Intimidate skills to bully the whereabouts of the gang out of the kid, or can try Persuasion & Fast Talk, perhaps using the promise of medical aid as an incentive. In either case the difficulty number is 10.

- Tonight, Shiro and Hitoshi are going to try to outdo each other in a contest to see who will "win" Kinuko as his girlfriend. The stunts are to be performed on the Yamaha Kamikaze. In honor of the bike's name, each rider ties a white cloth around his forehead before setting out to do his stunts, and burns incense in his helmet. They take turns until one loses the contest.

- Kinuko doesn't approve of the contest, but if she protests, the gang's *socho*, Toshizo, may toss her out of *Musha Bashiri*. She watches from the sidelines, furious at being treated like a contest prize. After stealing the bike, she expected to be treated as an equal of the boys in the gang. Now she is somewhat disillusioned but is still fiercely loyal to her new "family."

Before the adventure begins, the gamemaster should decide in advance what stunts Shiro and Hitoshi will perform, then roll each gangers' Motorcycle skill checks to see if he succeed. The results should be noted, then described at a realistic pace when the story reaches this point.

The stunts are carried out at anywhere from 100 to 150 kmh (within maximum maneuvering speed). A skill check missed by 1-6 is a skid, from which the ganger is automatically deemed to recover. A skill check missed by 7+ is a crash. Both bike and rider take 1d10 points of damage per 30 kmh increment of speed (rounded up). As soon as either the bike is destroyed (loses 20 SDP) or one of the contestants is critically wounded the contest ends.

The contest will be especially dramatic if the loser is mortally injured and dies as the result of a crash. If this happens, Kinuko rushes down to embrace the fallen rider, only to be yanked back by the angry winner. A fist fight breaks out between Kinuko and the victor, while the gang members cheer. The boys urge him to "show your girlfriend who's boss," while a handful of the bolder girls (those with their own bikes) cheer Kinuko on.

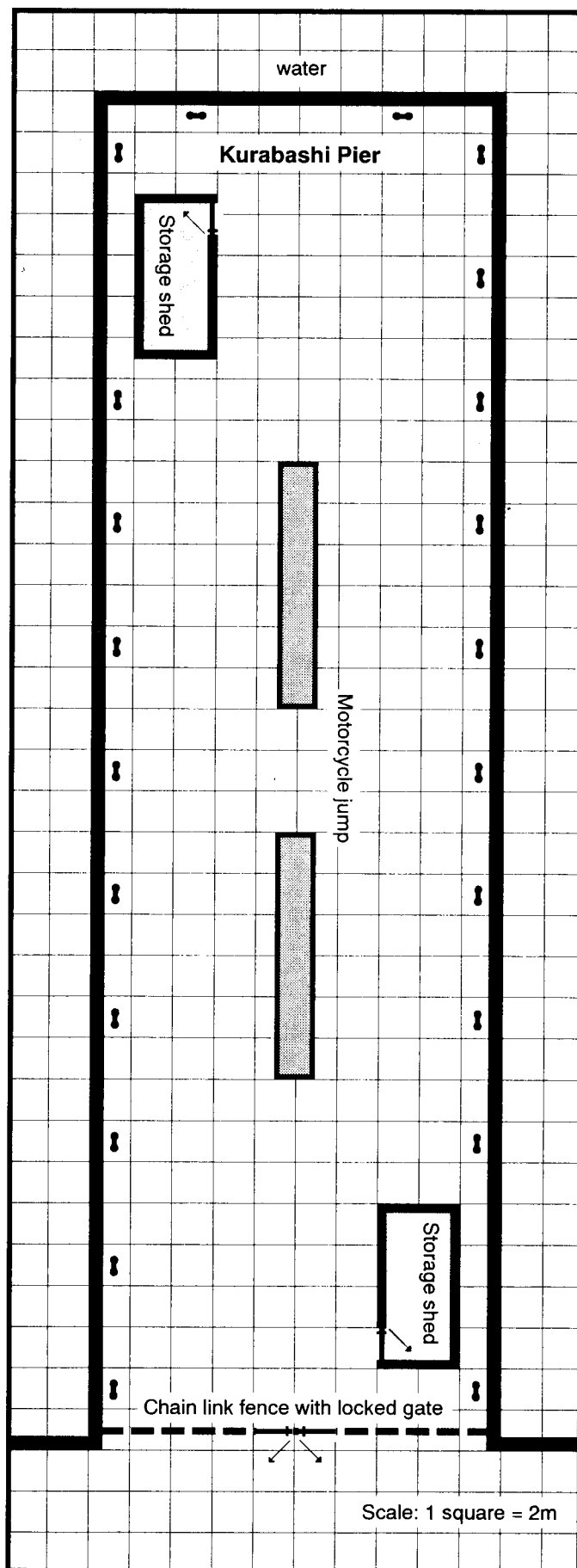
If any of the characters has won the trust of the gang and been invited to perform motorcycle stunts, these take place before the contest between Shiro and Hitoshi. The gamemaster should use the rules for Maneuver Rolls, and for Losing and Regaining Control of a Vehicle from *Solo of Fortune*. The character can either use his or her own bike, or borrow one from a gang member on a Persuasion & Fast Talk skill check of 15+.

PARTY CRASHERS

The characters are likely going to have to wait until the contest is over before trying to grab either Kinuko or the Yamaha Kamikaze. The full gang is in attendance this evening (all 50 of them), and any obvert attempt to interfere with the evening's proceedings is cause for the characters to be attacked.

At some point in the evening, the "party" at the Kurabashi Pier is crashed. Ideally this should occur just after the contest between Shiro and Hitoshi, when Kinuko and the victor are fighting, but the gamemaster may need to adjust the timing depending upon the player characters' actions. An armored AV-4 (SP 40) swoops low over the harbor, angling toward the pier. As soon as it touches down, six men leap out of the assault vehicle. Four of them threaten the gangers with assault weapons to keep them back, while the other two drag the Kamikaze inside the AV-4. All six then leap back inside the AV-4, which jets away. Unless there is serious opposition, the whole operation takes less than two minutes.

The men in the AV-4 are hired guns in the employ of a Japanese automotive firm. Their objective is to capture the Yamaha Kamikaze no matter how damaged it might be. They don't care who they kill in the process. Fortunately, the gangers



know when they're outgunned, and don't try to fight back. They have no idea who these goons are, but they respect a show of force. The player characters, however, may want to start something...

Hired Thugs

Int 6	Ref 7	Cool 7	Tech 6
Luck 5	Attr 4	MA 7	Emp 7
Body 8	Save 8	BTM -3	

SKILLS: Special Ability: Combat Sense +6.
 Athletics +6; Awareness/Notice +5; Basic Tech +2; Brawling +6; Education +3; Handgun +6; Intimidate +6; Melee +5; Rifle +6; Strength Feat +4.

CYBER: Neural processor with smartgun link; cyberoptic with targeting scope, image enhancement, low lite, and anti-dazzle; skin weave.

EQUIPMENT: Kevlar T-shirt (SP 10); Towa Type 99 assault rifle.

(Towa Type 99 Assault Rifle: Type RIF; WA +1; Con N; Avail P; Dmg 5d6 (5.56mm); #Shots 35; ROF 30; Rel ST; Range 400 m.)

TALKING TO THE SEKIGUCHIS

If the characters succeed in subduing Kinuko and dragging her away from her gang, she swears at them. "Father hired you to do this, didn't he? He didn't care about me, until I stole the bike from his lab. That's what he really wants, isn't it? The Kamikaze. He's afraid I'll sell it to another motorcycle company."

If Kinuko's capture comes after the stunt riding contest between Shiro and Hitoshi and the attack of the hired thugs in the AV-4, Kinuko is badly shaken and ready to talk. She tells the characters all about how she stole the bike from the lab that it is a secret "concept bike" that was due to be unveiled soon. All she knows about the bike's design is that it's very quiet and very fast.

If the characters display any sympathy whatsoever, Kinuko confides in them the reason why she ran away, telling them all about her mother's suicide and her father's extreme disapproval of what was (prior to her joining *Musba Bashiri*) a relatively harmless teenage rebellion.

Should the characters return Kinuko to her home, her father is visibly disappointed. "And the motorcycle?" he asks. "Where is it?" He orders the characters to immediately resume their search for the bike, virtually ignoring his daughter. Within a few hours, Kinuko will have run away again and rejoined her gang.

As soon as the characters tell him about the AV-4 attack, Naotomo correctly concluding that the Kamikaze has fallen into a rival corporations' hands. He immediately calls the characters off the search, telling them, "all is hopeless now." He pays them their fees and sends them on their way. If the characters have yet to bring Kinuko home, Naotomo

tells them to end that search as well. "It is getting too dangerous," he says. "I fear for her safety. Hiring people to search for her was a mistake. I will do it myself."

If the characters ask what was so special about the bike, or inquire as to why an armed team in an AV-4 would want to grab it, Naotomo admits that it's a concept motorcycle. He says he is sworn to secrecy on the details of its design.

Basically, Naotomo says whatever he must to brush the characters off. His next action is to immediately sell all of his shares in YICS.

RETURN OF THE GOONS

The day after the characters have been dismissed by Naotomo, the AV-4 makes a second surprise landing. Its objective this time is the capture of one or more of the characters. The game master should time the attack so that it occurs when the characters are in a thinly-populated part of the city, preferably under cover of darkness.

The same set of six hired thugs performs this raid. They shoot only if the characters resist the objective is to capture one or more of them alive. The victims are forced into the AV-4, blindfolded, and tied up. A few minutes after the AV-4 takes off, the characters are injected with a drug (truth serum). Each must make a Resist Torture/Drugs skill check of 25+ to avoid it taking effect. Otherwise, they must answer every question put to them truthfully.

The thugs question the characters, beginning by asking what corporation they are working for. "Are you with Ford-Mazda? Mitsubishi? Kawasaki? No? Then what corporation are you working for?"

They next ask about the characters' connections with *Musba Bashiri* and Kinuko Sekiguchi. "We know she stole the motorcycle," they say. "Did you help her do it?"

They also keep asking the characters the same two questions over and over: "Where is the battery? What have you done with it?"

Unless they have hacked into the YICS files, the characters will have no idea what the thugs are talking about and will probably say so. The game master should remind characters that they cannot lie.

A few hours later, the AV-4 lands and the characters are tossed out. Their bonds have been untied but their blindfolds are still in place. As they tear them off, they see the AV-4 rising into the sky. After a moment or two it disappears behind the Tokyo skyline.

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

The characters may want to try hacking their way into Yamaha International Cybercycle Systems' computer files to learn more about the Kamikaze. A netrunner can hack into the YICS system with an ease that should be suspicious (on an Interface roll of 10+) and find "secret" files on the bike that describe a revolutionary design feature: an enormously powerful, lightweight micro-battery with an

operational lifetime of a century. This information is false; the file was planted here by Naotomo for rival automotive corporations to find in a (highly successful) effort to drive YICS shares up. He will erase it a short time later.

If the Interface skill check was 20+, the netrunner notices an interesting anomaly. The file, which purports to be an ongoing record of work on the bike, was last updated and saved one day after the Kamikaze was stolen. Tests were supposedly performed on the micro-battery that day. (If the character specifically asks for the date of the file, the game master should reveal it.)

Another source of information is the Tokyo scream sheets. A story in the automotive section notes that YICS is working on a project that will "revolutionize the transportation industry." The top-secret design feature, expected to be a gold mine for the company, will be incorporated into a motorcycle that YICS has recently developed. The article coyly notes that details of the project have not yet been released, but that the motorcycle is to be called the Kamikaze "a name that only hints at the storm this product will cause upon its release."

The latter quote is attributed to YICS research and development manager Naotomo Sekiguchi, who made the comment at an impromptu press conference. The article notes the date of the press conference it was held two days after the bike was stolen.

A quick look at the business section of the scream sheet shows that YICS shares took off like a rocket one day after this press conference. They were heavily traded on the Tokyo stock exchange.

Naotomo Sekiguchi has accounts at the Bank of Tokyo (the characters will learn this when he pays them; the transaction on their credit sticks records the funds as coming from this bank). A netrunner can hack into the read-balance-only portion of the bank's accounts files on an Interface skill check of 15+. Once Naotomo dumps the shares, his account jumps by several million yen (hundreds of thousands of Eurodollars). The money was transferred from Shimoda Stock Brokers Inc.

Whether the characters follow up on Sekiguchi's scam and how they decide to go about it is up to the players. Perhaps they'll decide to make him pay for the way he treated his daughter... or maybe they'll try to blackmail him into sharing his windfall.

ROLE-PLAYING A GANGER

Each time the characters interact with one of the *Musba Bashiri* gang members, the game master should strive to make the ganger an individual. The following three tables can be used to provide a ganger with a quick history.

The tables can also be used by players who choose a gang member character (in Japan or elsewhere). They augment the Lifepath provided in the *Cyberpunk 2020* game.

Reactions of your family (roll 1d10):

- 1) They think joining a gang was a stupid mistake. But they still love you. They keep nagging at you to leave the gang and think you should see the family psychiatrist.
- 2) They think the gang corrupted you. They'll do everything in their power to get those bastards.
- 3) They couldn't care less about the gang, and about you.
- 4) You're the black sheep of the family. Your name isn't even spoken at family gatherings.
- 5) Your gang connections are a valuable asset that keeps them in money, weapons and drugs.
- 6) They don't know what's become of you, but have hired a private investigator to find out.
- 7) What reaction? Your whole family is involved in the gang.
- 8) You're the biggest disappointment of their lives. They mourn you as if you were dead.
- 9) They're terrified of you. If you show your face around home, they'll probably call the cops.
- 10) Family? What family? You haven't heard from them or made any effort to contact them in years.

How you view your gang (roll 1d10):

- 1) They're the coolest people around and you're proud to be part of the gang.
- 2) You regret ever having joined. Being part of a gang is a good way to get killed. But backing out now would be more dangerous than staying in.
- 3) Being in a gang is just as boring as everything else. You stick with it because you can't think of anything better to do.
- 4) The gang members are the only people who ever cared for you. You love them like a family.
- 5) The gang is your lifeline. It provides everything you need: drugs, money, sex.
- 6) These people are crazy, but they're a lot of fun. Besides, you like hanging out with people who have the guts to take a few risks.
- 7) You're terrified of your fellow gang members. You know that if you quit, you're dead meat.
- 8) The gang is the fast track to the big time and you're glad you joined.
- 9) You're somewhat disillusioned by the gang, but you're in this relationship for better or for worse.
- 10) Wow! Do these guys ever know how to party!

Why you joined the gang (roll 1d10):

- 1) You were bored and gangs seemed exciting. They also wear great clothes.
- 2) Your best friend was in a gang and talked you into it. But now s/he's dead.
- 3) You dropped out of school and had nothing better to do.
- 4) Your parents ignored you and you sought attention elsewhere.
- 5) You needed to support your drug habit and the gang provided easy access to the pharmaceuticals you crave.
- 6) Someone dared you to and now it's too late to turn back.
- 7) You were forced to join the gang or else they would kill someone you loved (or would kill you).
- 8) You thought it was a quick road to easy money.
- 9) You were in love with a gang member.
- 10) You like to party and the gang listens to great music.



Lisa Smedman

Lisa Smedman has designed a number of adventures for TSR's *Dungeons and Dragons* Ravenloft and Dark Sun product lines. Her work has also appeared in *Dragon Magazine* and *Dungeon Magazine*.

Lisa also writes science fiction and fantasy. Her short story *Los Muertos* was a runner-up in the 1992 Writers of the Future contest. Other short stories have appeared in *Dragon Magazine*, in Dark Sun boxed sets, and in various SF and fantasy publications.

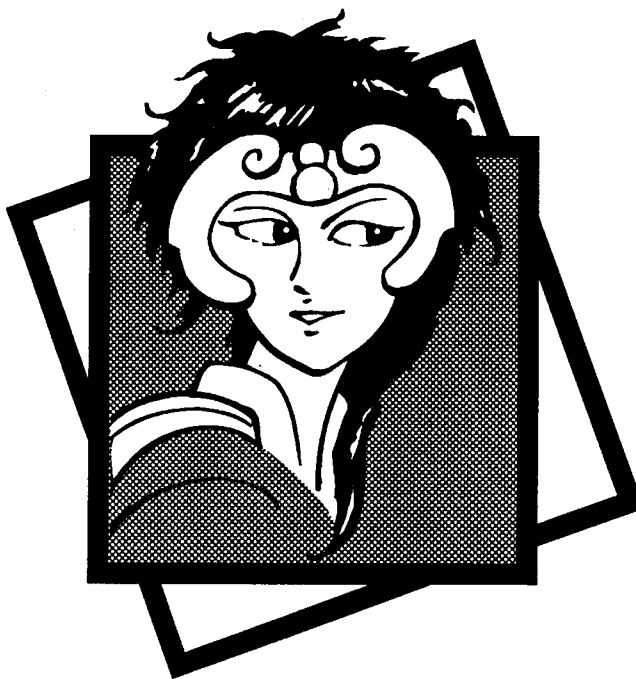
She has also written for both Chameleon Eclectic Entertainment and West End Games.

Lisa lives in Burnaby, B.C. with her "spousal unit" and four (sometimes five) felines. She was introduced to wargaming at an early age, and began playing *Dungeons and Dragons* around 1980. She has been an active member of the B.C. Science Fiction Association for several years, and has helped to organize SFconventions in the Vancouver area.



Trisch Lohner

Artist, designer producer – those are the titles Trisch would like to have, and in that order. Originally from Victoria, B.C., Trisch moved to Vancouver in 1986 and one year later entered Emily Carr College with design in mind. The wild years had begun. Graduation, thankfully, came in 1991 and Trisch was ready for the real world. A few months later she took a job with U-TV (the voice of a new generation) and in three years has found herself in a senior position with three international awards to her credit. Always willing to try something new, Trisch has only recently begun exploring the fantasy and science fiction genre.



CONVERSION NOTES

Ride the Divine Wind can be converted into a Shadowrun adventure with very few changes. Here are the statistics for the characters and vehicles it contains:

Characters

For the major characters, use the following Archetypes; page numbers refer to the *Shadowrun II* rulebook, unless otherwise specified. (Note: Many of these characters require Vehicle Control Rigs. Add Vehicle Control Rig 1, and decrease the Essence listed in the Archetype by 1.0.)

- Kinuko Sekiguchi: Corporate Secretary (p.205).
- Naotomo Sekiguchi: Mr. Johnson (p.210).
- Toshizo Koyanagi / Shiro Toyomura / Hitoshi Yamada: Gang Boss (p.207).
- Other Musha Bashiri: Gang Member (p.57).
- Hired Thugs: Bodyguard (p.49) x5; Combat Mage (Combat orientation) (p.50) x1.

Note that, in Shadowrun, the Japanese culture is highly xenophobic when it comes to *kawarubito* ("changed people") – that is, metahumans. Members of "respectable society" – the Sekiguchis, for example – will all be humans. There may be some metahumans among the gangers, but not many.

The Yamaha Kamikaze

This resembles a Yamaha Rapier, but with even more extreme lines, and a flashy custom paint-job. It has no hardpoints or firmpoints installed. Unlike the Rapier, it can only be controlled via a Vehicle Control Rig.

Handling: 3	Speed: 70/210	Body: 1
Aarmor: 0	Sig: 2	Pilot: 2
Cost: n/a		

GRAND MAGIC

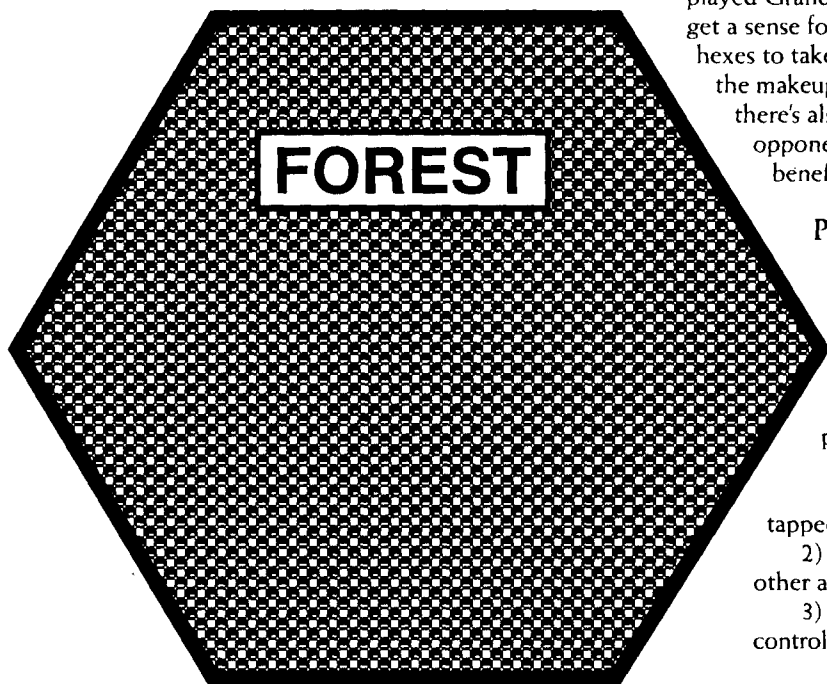
BY PIERS BROWN



Magic is a fun game, but at times it goes far too fast. Compared to something like *Jyhad*TM, it's over in the blink of an eye. Sometimes, it would be nice to find a way of playing it that takes several hours, and that gives you a chance to play with all those neat cards you've always wanted to use.

That at least was my intention when I first started designing this variant. It's probably one of the most radically different ways of playing *Magic*. Despite this, it still retains much the flavor of the original game, even though it's played on a hex map with creatures tramping around taking territory and ravaging your opponents' lands. It uses the ordinary cards and most of the rules of the original game, with a number of changes to adapt it to the new terrain. For best results, it should be played with 4-6 players.

Transferring the game to a playing surface has a number of effects. Firstly, it has the tendency to prolong the game, in terms of time but not of turns. The focus changes from doing actual damage to one's opponent, to destruction of his territory by taking hexes and thus removing land from play. It also changes the tactics of the game in a rather radical way, opening up whole new levels of strategy. This stems partly from the tension created by the interaction of players, similar to a multi-player game of *Magic*, where each is forced to consider the actions of all his or her enemies. In this variant, individual cards can be used with a greater variety of effects.



THE BOARD

The board consists of a series of hexes, each large enough to fit a *Magic* card, of five different colors: red, white, black, green, and blue. These colors correspond to the types of mana. You'll need three of each terrain type for each player (see Components below).

Components

Unfortunately, because this is just a magazine article, we can't provide everything you're going to need. You'll have to improvise. However, you can photocopy the accompanying tiles (preferably onto cardstock) and then cut them out to use as the board.

The following items will be useful:

- Stands for the cards (for example, out of Games Workshop's *Space Hulk* game) will make it easier to see what's going on.
- Paper clips of different colors could be used to mark cards.
- Rulers or measuring tapes will be needed to mark the ranges on area effects.

SETTING UP

To set up, players take turns laying down a hex from the fifteen they start with. Hexes can be laid in any orientation, as long as each new hex touches at least one other. This continues until all hexes have been placed on the playing table (60 to 90 hexes, depending on the number of players). After you've played Grand Magic a couple of times, you'll start to get a sense for the strategy involved in positioning hexes to take advantage of your playing tactics and the makeup of your *Magic* deck. (Of course, there's also the complication of preventing your opponents from building an orientation that benefits them...)

PLAYING GRAND MAGIC

Turn Sequence

The turn sequence in Grand Magic is almost identical to that of *Magic*: The Gathering itself, with the sole addition of a movement phase immediately prior to the attack phase.

- 1) Untap. Untap all your previously-tapped lands, creatures, artifacts, etc.
- 2) Upkeep. Pay upkeep costs and resolve other activities assigned to the upkeep phase.
- 3) Draw a card for each hand the player controls.

- 4) Main Phase. You may do several things during the main phase. In no particular order:
- You may lay one land for each hand you control. (See Laying Land.)
 - You may make one series of moves, followed by a series of attacks, with any or all of your creatures, except those that came into play this turn.
 - You may cast any spells for which you have enough mana. (See Casting Spells, below.)
 - Discard down to seven cards in a hand.

Hands

Each player controls two hands, each with a separate library. The rules governing the use of each hand are exactly the same as for the normal game, except for the fact that they have a mutual graveyard. All land and creatures, etc., brought into play from either hand are held in common by the player (i.e., mana can be used by enchantments, creatures, artifacts, etc. from either one of a player's hands, regardless of which hand actually laid the mana).

Each hand under a player's control has its own turn sequence (see above). It's up to you how you arrange the turn order: e.g., Player A hand 1 then Player A hand 2, Player B hand 1 then Player B hand 2, etc.; or Player A hand 1, Player B hand 1, Player C hand 1... Player A hand 2, Player B hand 2, etc.

Life Points

Each player begins the game with 40 life points. Life points can only be lost by attacks which take place in hexes the player owns (i.e., those hexes on which the player has placed land cards). The maximum amount of damage a player can suffer is three times the number of land cards in that hex (this represents the "metaphysical investment" the player-wizard has made in the hex; a lower level of

- investment means the player suffers less damage).
- For example, a player is Fireballed in a hex in which she's placed three lands, for a total of 12 points of damage. However, because there are only three land cards in the hex, she takes only nine points. The rest of the damage is ignored. If damage is taken over an area (e.g., from Pestilence, see Ranged and Area Spells below), then the maximum damage is calculated from the highest number of lands in a single hex with the area of effect, not the total number of lands in the affected area.

- After the third turn of play, should a player not have any lands on the board, she must lay a land before her next turn ends, or be eliminated from play.

Laying Land

- Each turn, a player can lay one land from each hand. Land cards must be placed on a hex of the corresponding type, which doesn't have another player's land or creatures already on it. You may not lay a land adjacent to another person's land unless you have a creature in the hex on which you wish to lay the land card. There is no limit to the number of lands one player may eventually lay on a single hex.

Dual Lands

- You can lay a dual land card on a hex that matches one of the land types (e.g., you can lay an Underground Sea on either a black or blue hex).
- Once one of these "non-standard" lands has been placed on a hex, however, you can only lay additional cards of the same land type on that hex, until all lands are destroyed.

Movement

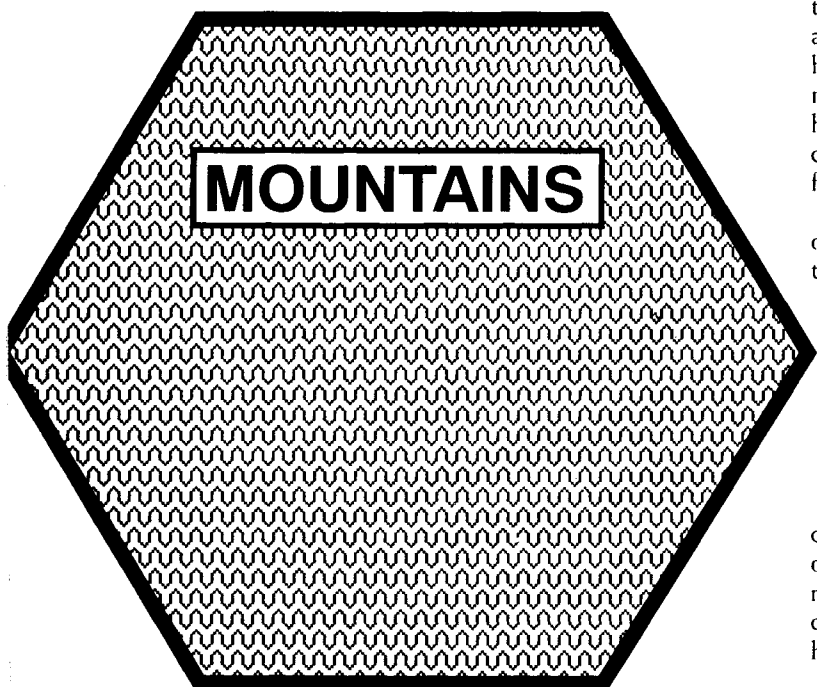
- All creatures may move one hex in any direction.
- Flying creatures may move up to two hexes, so long as there are no hostile flying creatures in the first hex they traverse. Additionally, any creature may move an extra hex by "forced marching" (a total of three hexes for flying creatures, two for others), so long as nowhere in its movement does it land on or cross hexes belonging to an opponent, or hexes which contain hostile creatures. Should a creature make a forced march, it ends its movement tapped.

If a creature moves into another player's hex, or one containing an opponent's creature(s), one side or the other must retreat (see Retreating), or combat will take place. (It's probably going to be the person who didn't move into the hex who retreats.)

Except when combat is taking place, creatures belonging to different players can never occupy the same hex.

Retreating

When an opponent's creature enters a hex occupied by one of your creatures, you have the option to retreat. Should you wish to do so, you must move your creature to an adjacent hex. You can't retreat into any of the following types of hex:



- A hex occupied by an opponent's creature.
- A hex belonging to an opponent (i.e., a hex in which an opponent has placed a land card).
- A hex from which one of the attacking creatures moved.

If this is impossible, the retreating creature is destroyed. All creatures that retreat (and survive) become tapped. There is no limit to the number of retreats a creature may be forced to make; since all movement is simultaneous within the player-turn, however, a creature can't be forced to retreat multiple times within one turn.

If you somehow take control of another player's creature, and that creature is in the same hex as other creatures that you don't control, the newly-controlled creature must retreat immediately. If it can't retreat into an allowable hex (see above), the creature is destroyed instead.

Combat

In order to engage in combat, you must move one or more of your creatures into a hex containing an opponent's creature(s). The defender then has the option of retreating any or all of his creatures (see above). All tapped creatures must retreat; they don't even have the option of engaging in combat.

Once all the retreats have been made, the remaining defending creatures are considered to be blocking. This is arranged as normal, except that Flying and Terrain Walk make no difference to combat (these attributes instead modify the way in which the creature moves). Unlike normal combat, any attacking creatures that aren't blocked may attack the owner of the land directly (damage is done as normal, limited only by the number of lands in play on the hex; see Life Points above), or ganging

- up on one of the blocking creatures. It's up to the attacking player to select the better of these options.
- After all damage has been inflicted, the winner of the combat is decided. This is based solely on surviving attacking and defending creatures in the hex (not counting any creatures that have been regenerated). The person with the fewer remaining creatures must retreat them from the hex (in the case of a tie, the attacker must retreat).

- Should the attacker take the hex, and it's one in which the defender has laid land, then a number of lands equal to the combined power of the attacking force is destroyed. If all lands in the hex are destroyed, then the attacker may lay lands of her own to replace them. Otherwise her troops must also retreat from the hex (they're not strong enough to hold it after doing their damage).

Capturing Enchantments and Artifacts

- If you take control of a hex in which an opponent has played an Enchantment or Artifact, you take control of the Enchantment or Artifact as soon as you lay a land in that hex. Thus, for instance, if you capture a hex with a Deathgrip in it, you may from then on spend black mana to cancel green spells within range.

SPELLS

Domains

- Any linked (contiguous) set of hexes under a single player's control is referred to as a "domain".
- You can use any and all mana generated by a domain to cast spells within or from that domain.

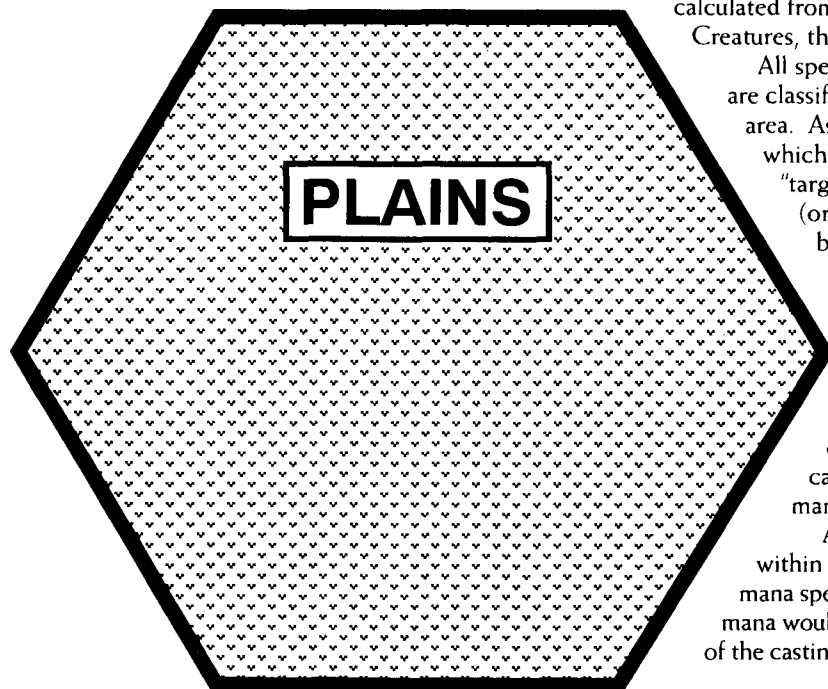
Casting Spells

- Each spell has a hex of origin, which is any hex of the correct color within the domain from which its casting mana was generated. All ranges and areas are calculated from this hex. In the case of Artifacts and Creatures, this is the hex in which they are laid.

All spells, except summonings and artifacts are classified as one of two types: ranged or area. As a general guideline, any spell in which it states on the card that it affects a "target" is ranged; one which affects "all of" (or similar phraseology) is area effect. In both cases, additional mana must be spent.

Ranged spells need additional mana equal to the number of hexes between the casting hex and the hex in which it is to take effect. In other words, to cast a Fireball at a creature in a hex five away from the casting hex, you must spend five extra mana.

Area spells affect all eligible targets within a radius equal to the amount of extra mana spent. Thus a Tsunami cast with four extra mana would destroy all Islands within four hexes of the casting hex.



Enchantments with area effect (e.g., Karma) retain that area from turn to turn (they should be marked in some way), creating regions of the board with different attributes.

Interrupts

The vast majority of interrupts are ranged spells. That is to say, they affect a single target, usually a spell; as with other ranged spells, the caster must pay additional mana equal to the "range" in hexes. In the case of an interrupt, however, what is the range? Use the lowest of the following values – the distance from the hex in which the interrupt is cast to:

- The originating hex of the target spell.
- The target of the spell to be interrupted (for ranged spells).
- The nearest hex within the area of effect of the spell to be interrupted (for area spells).

Instants and Sorceries

Most of these spells are more or less self-explanatory, based on the principles discussed above. Note that, if a spell affects an opponent directly, rather than his land, creatures, etc. (for instance Mind Twist, which reduces the number of cards in your opponent's hand, which doesn't have a 'place' on the board.) then you merely need enough range to reach the nearest hex belonging to the target player. If you're using a spell or artifact on yourself, the range is zero; you don't need to spend any additional mana.

Enchantments

Enchantments are fairly evenly split between area and ranged effects. Aside from the rule that allows you to take control of opponents' enchantments, they work in a straightforward manner.

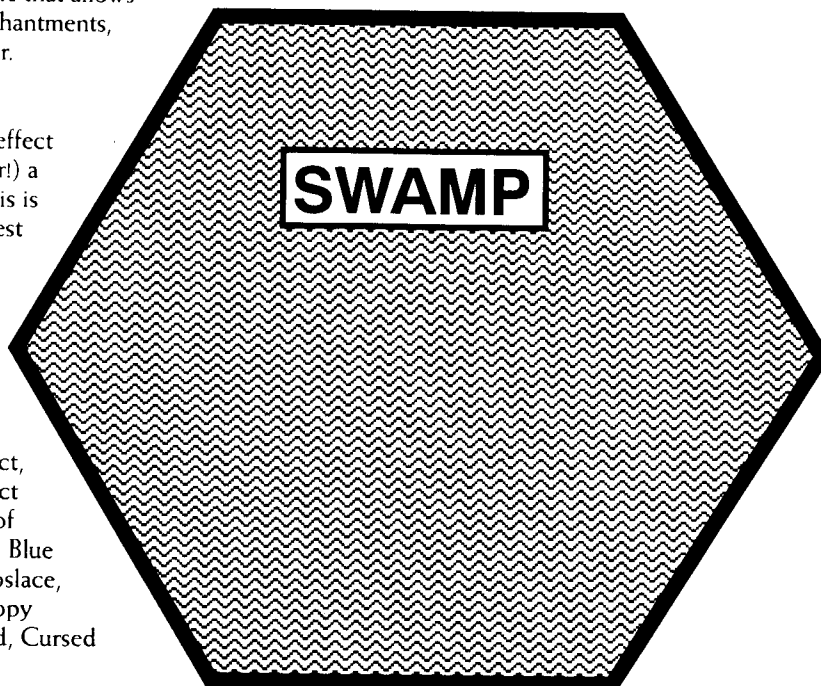
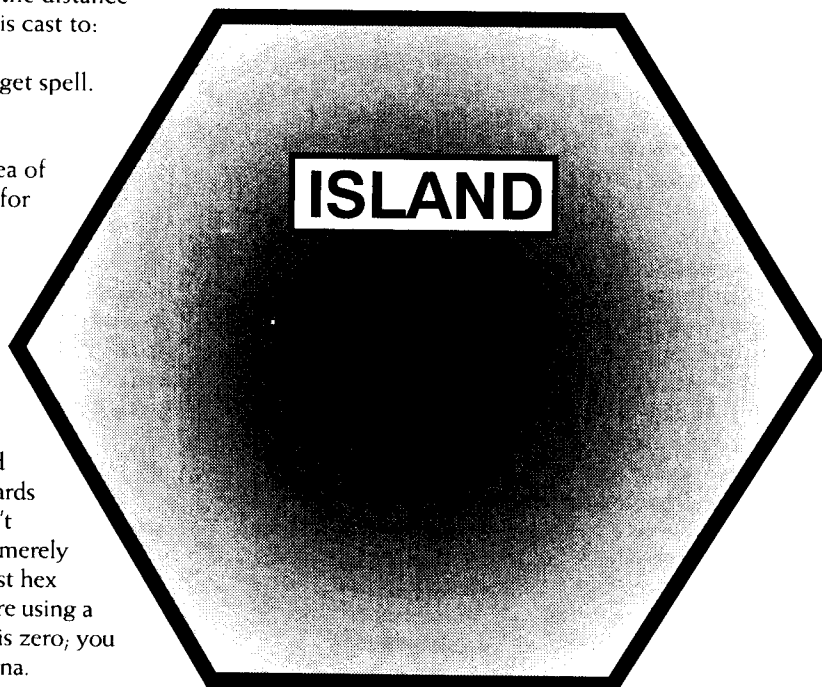
Artifacts

All artifacts are essentially area effect spells to which you give (and pay for!) a range when you place the cards. This is the artifact's range of effect for the rest of the game. Thus, if you lay an Icy Manipulator and give it a range of five hexes (costing five extra mana, of course), you can use it to tap anything within five hexes.

Ranged Spells

Ancestral Recall, Animate Artifact, Animate Dead*, Animate Wall, Aspect of Wolf, Berserk, Black Ward, Blaze of Glory, Blessing, Blue Elemental Blast, Blue Ward, Braingeyser, Burrowing, Chaoslace, Consecrate Land, Control Magic, Copy Artifact, Counterspell, Creature Bond, Cursed

- Land, Darkpact, Dark Ritual, Deathlace, Deathward, Disenchant, Disintegrate, Drain Life, Earthbind, Evil Presence, False Orders, Farmstead, Fear, Feedback, Fireball, Firebreathing, Flight, Fork, Giant Growth, Green Ward, Healing Salve, Holy Armor, Holy Strength, Howl From Beyond, Ice Storm, Instill Energy, Invisibility, Jump, Lance, Lifelace, Lightning Bolt, Living Artifact, Lure, Magical Hack, Mind Twist, Natural Selection, Paralyze, Phantasmal Terrain, Power Leak, Power Sink, Psionic Blast, Psychic Venom, Purelace, Red Elemental Blast, Red



Ward, Regeneration, Resurrection*, Reverse Damage, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Shatter, Sinkhole, Sleight of Mind, Spell Blast, Steal Artifact*, Stone Rain, Streams of Life, Swords to Ploughshares, Terror, Thoughtlace, Tunnel, Twiddle, Unsummon, Unholy Strength, Wanderlust, Warp Artifact, Weakness, Web, White Ward, Wild Growth.

Area Effect Spells

Armageddon, Bad Moon, Balance, Camouflage, Castle, Channel*, Circle of Protection (All), Conversion, Crusade, Deathgrip, Demonic Attorney, Drain Power, Earthquake, Fastbond, Flashfires, Fog, Gloom, Hurricane, Island Sanctuary, Karma, Kudzu*, Lich*, Lifeforce, Lifetap, Living Lands, Manabarbs, Manaflare, Mana Short, Orcish Oriflame, Pestilence, Powersurge, Raging River, Simulacrum*, Siren's Call*, Smoke, Stasis, Timetwister*, Tranquillity, Tsunami, Volcanic Eruption, Wheel of Fortune*, Word of Command*, Wrath of God.

CREATURES

Creatures are always summoned on a single "focus" hex of the appropriate color that you control. (Similarly they are Resurrected and Animated at a "focus" hex). They have exactly the same abilities as in the usual game, but cannot use them on anything further than one hex away from themselves. For example, a Royal Assassin can only kill tapped creatures within one hex of his position. Similarly, Plague Rats only count their strength from the number of them within one hex of each other, Goblin Kings only aid Goblins within one hex, and Veduran Enchantresses only give extra cards for enchantments cast from a focus within one hex. Otherwise their powers are much the same as normal, with the exception of Walls.

Banding, Trampling, Protection, Regeneration, and Enhanced Power/Toughness work just as in the normal game; only the Evasion abilities are changed.

- Flying has already been dealt with under Movement.
- Terrainwalking, like flying, gives no advantages in combat, only in movement.
- Terrainwalking creatures may ignore the rules which state they may not occupy the same hex as opponents' creatures. They can't be attacked or forced to retreat so long as they remain on their home terrain, or in a hex with could support it (i.e., of the appropriate color).
- Walls are unable to attack or to move. However, in order to compensate for this limitation, all walls in a hex must be destroyed before it can be taken by an opponent. Should even one wall survive, the hex remains under the defender's control, and the attacker must retreat... no matter what his numerical advantage after combat.

Spell Categorization and Individual Notes

- With over 1,000 cards in-circulation, it isn't really feasible to list or explain the exact effects of all of them. Following is a classification of the cards in the original basic set into ranged and area effects.
- "Special" cards – those that require some special rules mechanics (those mechanics are up to you, the reader!) – are marked with an asterisk.

CONCLUSION

- With a little thought, and an understanding of the rules, you shouldn't have much difficulty in adapting any *Magic* card for use with Grand Magic.
- To a certain extent, part of the fun comes from working out some of the things that can be done with these rules.
- Grand Magic is a little bit more trouble to set up than a normal game of *Magic*. But if you have an evening and a bunch of friends, it's a great way to spend the time. It turns the game into a much more epic confrontation, one which will stretch your resources to the limit. Go shuffle up a few decks and get ready to play!

THINKING DANGEROUS THOUGHTS?



We'd like you to share them with the other readers of *Adventures Unlimited*. Upcoming issues will feature a reader's forum, in which gamers can share their ideas on how to modify or convert the adventures we present. Your letters are welcome!

We're also opening up our pages to all of you game designers out there – published writers and amateurs alike. We're looking for short columns (500 words maximum) on new monsters, magic, equipment, characters, abilities, and settings. Best of all, we'll pay for your ideas.

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OLD FRIENDS

BY ANDREW LUCAS

ART BY NICK DARCY

Old Friends is set in the city of Los Angeles, California and is designed to be used with the *Vampire: The Masquerade*™ role-playing game, as well as the new *LA Sourcebook*. The adventure may be played without the *LA Sourcebook* but the *Vampire* game is required. Any group of player characters may be used in this adventure,

- after surviving one of these attacks themselves.
- Eventually they will be summoned by the council to
- discuss whatever information they may have
- gathered concerning the attacks. At this time they
- will be commissioned with the task of solving the
- mystery.
- After a lengthy and in-depth investigation, the
- players will discover that the attacks are being



although it is recommended that at least one of the characters be a Ventrue. Four to six characters will fit easily into the adventure, although the Storyteller may find it difficult to accommodate any more or less into the plotline.

The action is set in modern-day Los Angeles, but any large city will suffice with little adaptation necessary. The characters will be investigating a mystery involving a number of Vampire attacks throughout one area of the city. There will also be a lot of opportunities for the players to become involved in combat, so it is suggested that at least half of the playing group have good combat skills.

Initially the players will have no idea who has been attacking the humans and Vampire in LA, even

- perpetrated by the sudden release of Sabbat packs
- into the area. The Sabbat denies knowledge of the
- attacks and is, in fact, not directly responsible for
- them. As it turns out, new construction over a
- burned-out Sabbat stronghold has released the packs.

- These packs are not regular Sabbat hunting
- parties; they are, in fact, the remains of a Sabbat
- recruiting drive. It is a little-known fact that only
- two-thirds of new initiates survive the Sabbat
- initiation rites, which involve burying the candidates.
- The 'failures' remain below the ground, slipping in
- and out of Torpor for all eternity. What happens if
- these unfortunates are disturbed? The players are
- about to find out.

Note: to convert this scenario to another city

will require you, the Storyteller, to change the references to the various geographic areas to areas specific to your chronicle's setting.

AN EXERCISE IN REMINISCENCE

"Just sell the damn stock. What the hell do I pay you for anyway, Derek?" Francis yelled into the slim black cellular, nestled like a lover against his cheek. "Just have it done by tomorrow night or you're through."

This night is just getting better and better, thought Francis, First Vanessa stands me up and now I can't trust my Ghoul to complete the simplest business transaction for me. Whatever possessed me to succor a stockbroker? Damn leeches are worse than Garou...

Francis had been living in Los Angeles for six years now and the place just seemed to be going to hell. It was hard enough for a Ventrue to make a decent living in the first place, but recently... Well the city just wasn't the same as when he'd first arrived. Of course, the Rodney King and the Simpson riots hadn't really opened up the tourist trade as Francis had hoped. Pity about that, Francis had invested a lot of capital in a local theme park – taken a real bath too, but then that was business, wasn't it? Still, there was always Vanessa to make life in LA bearable.

Where was she? It was completely unlike Vanessa to keep him waiting like this. He'd been waiting outside her townhouse for a good half hour now, pacing the sidewalk, his Jaguar still running.

Francis didn't usually associate with Toreadors – *Insufferable prats, most of them, he thought. Vanessa, though...* Vanessa was different; she actually had a good head for business – a rare commodity amongst those Toreador pantywaits. She'd given him a couple of shrewd market tips that had been quite profitable, and they'd been an item ever since. Francis wasn't sure why she was attracted to him, but then he didn't really care as long as she kept feeding him that great info.

To Hell with it, I'm just going to have to get her! He marched up to the door of her building, and stopped in frustration when he saw the security locks. He looked around. Where was the fire escape? With a silent curse, he strode into the mouth of the alley to the left of the front door. He calculated in his mind – less than a minute to climb the metal ladder and rap on Vanessa's window. Another couple of minutes to explain – in loving and exquisite detail – how inconsiderate it was to make him wait. And then the opera...

From behind a rusted dumpster to his right

- he heard a soft sound, quickly silenced: a gasp of pain, or fear. Francis frowned as he rounded the corner of the dumpster.
- Crouched in the shadows of the alley were three of the dirtiest Kindred he had ever seen.
- Their red eyes radiated pure insanity; their clothes were crusted with dry clay and congealing blood. Beneath their feet sprawled Vanessa, her slender body savagely torn by the fiends, her face rigid with terror. He could see her struggle weakly to rise, though even she must

have realized that her wounds were fatal, even for a vampire. Then they began to advance on him.

This night's just getting better and better...

Storyteller's Note

If you intend to play this adventure, do not read any further, as it will definitely spoil your enjoyment of the game. You've been warned!

ADVENTURE FORMAT

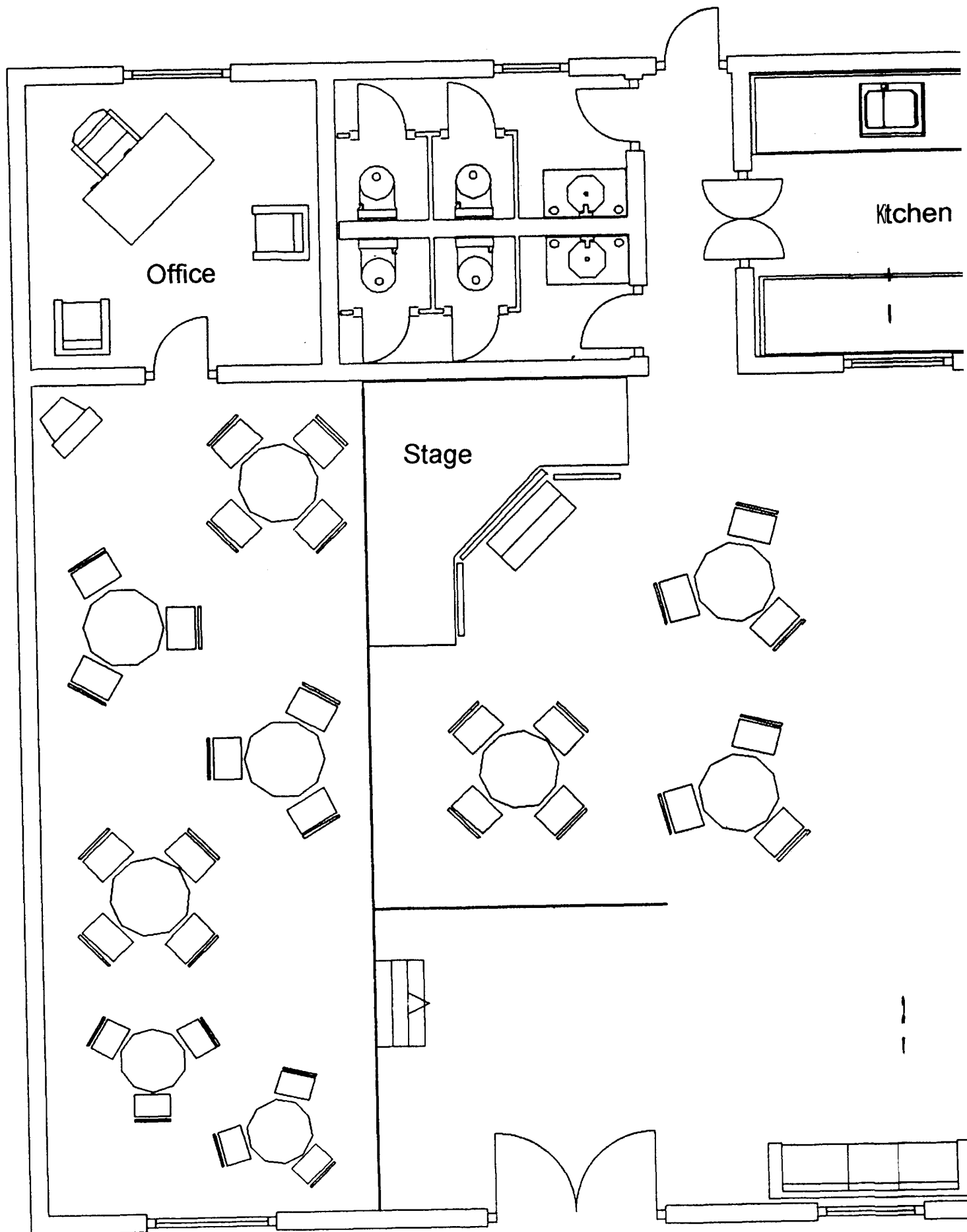
This adventure does not have a strict linear flow. Instead *Old Friends* contains a number of scenes which detail encounters the characters may

- experience as they research the mystery. As the Storyteller, you may use any or all of these scenes until the characters develop an idea of what is going on. Feel free to add scenes, as it's unlikely that the characters will only explore the avenues of investigation described below. You know the attitudes and methods of your playing group, and can easily adapt to them. At some point, introduce the character of Mariel St. John, who is featured in Scene Five. She will confide in the characters that the attackers are indeed Sabbat packs and point them towards the final scene.

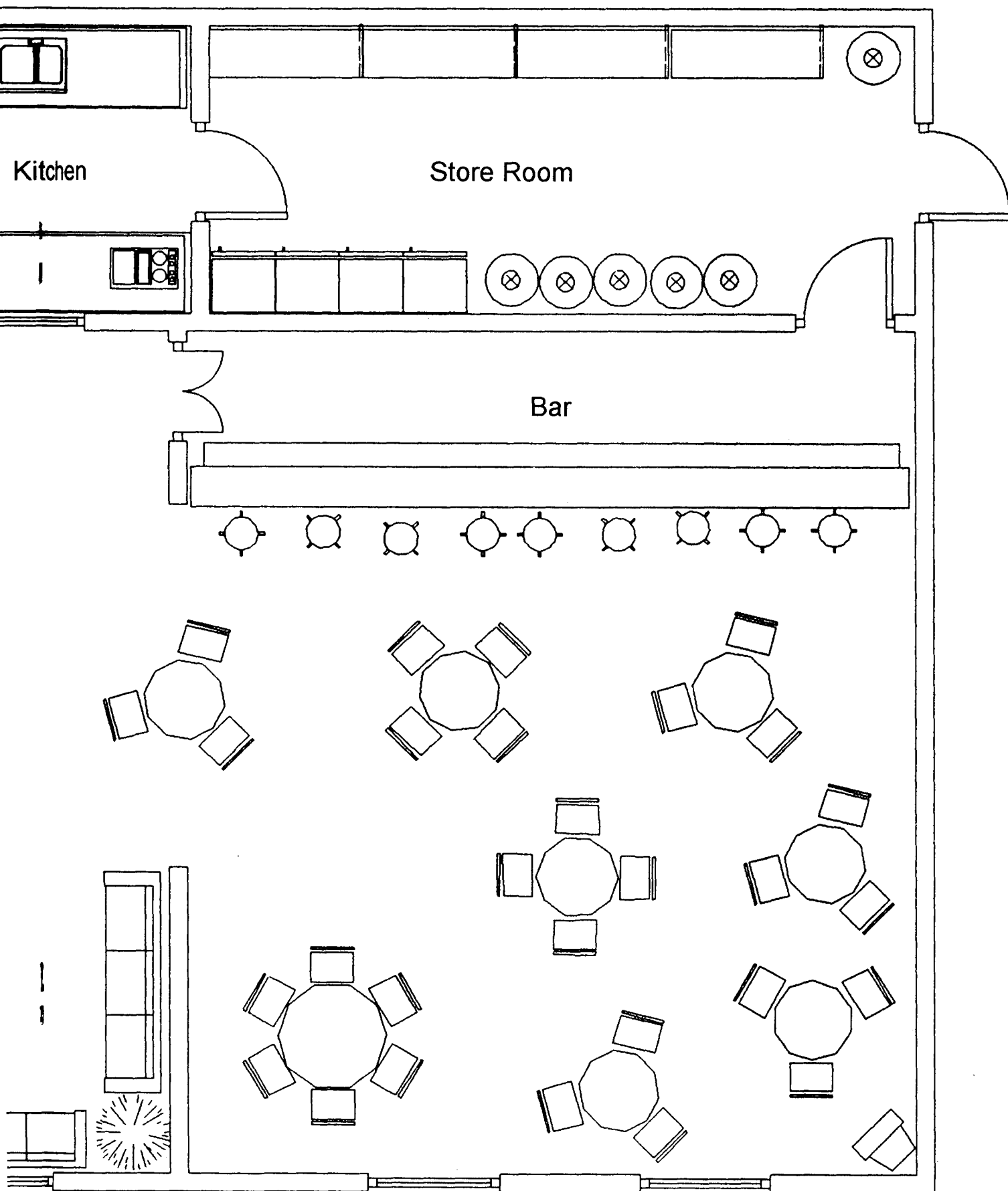
- You will have to keep track of which plot leads the characters have uncovered, and use the appropriate scenes to develop the story. Read through the adventure thoroughly before playing, especially the sidebars, which contain a lot of information valuable to the flow of the scenario. Try to instill a feeling of fear in the characters; they are not used to being the hunted or of facing opponents who may not be affected by their Disciplines. Play up the threat of the Sabbat packs and the effect they are having on the city. Also try to emphasize the horrific sight of a pack feeding; the characters are used to feeding on another's blood, but not like this. (Imagine a pride of lions devouring a downed gazelle and exaggerate the brutality of the scene.) The characters should ideally be unnerved by way the Sabbat pack members are totally ruled by their lust for blood... a reminder of the beast that lurks in their own hearts.

"I have always thought it interesting that while the Sabbat is constantly threatening Camarilla-controlled areas, they are rarely successful. What happens to all the plots and plans they set in motion when they (the Sabbat) are forced out of the city?"

*Brian Loranger,
Meadow Lake, Sask.*



MAP BY ELIZABETH & JOHN FLETCHER



Scale: 1" = 5 feet

WATTS

The Watts area is the setting for the majority of the action. Watts is an area south of downtown LA, heavily populated by African-Americans. Before the Sabbat siege of the city in 1965, Watts was struggling against the economically and racially discriminatory policies of the city's council. Much of the area was burned to the ground during the riots sparked by the Sabbat as a smokescreen for their activities. Today Watts still struggles against oppressive civic policies, and groups are trying to redevelop the area. Scattered across the urban landscape are burned-out housing complexes, decaying echoes of the Watts riots.

MARIEL ST. JOHN

There are few references in *Old Friends* to specific personages from the *LA Sourcebook*, with the exception of Mariel St. John. In your chronicle, you may wish to change the name, clan or other particulars of this character. In any chronicle, she should be a respected member of the Camarilla elite, controlling the city. No one is aware that she is actually a spy, preparing for the Sabbat's next assault on the city.

Mariel is a 9th generation antitribu Ventrué and is renowned as a skilled historian; this is why she has been selected to give the characters the information concerning the Sabbat packs. When playing Mariel, you should maintain the demeanor of a schoolmarm, even though she is flanked by two rough and ready 'Crypt's Sons' bodyguards. Mariel prefer to pursue any argument with logic rather than brute force, but will resort to violence if necessary.

SCENE ONE: OPENING MOVES

"It was the best of times. It was the worst of times."
— Charles Dickens.

To begin the adventure, allow the players to pursue their own agendas initially. Wait for the group to come together before introducing them to the threat posed by the newly-unearthed Sabbat packs. Once the group is together, perhaps for a night on the town or to feed, have them stumble upon a pack. You may wish to spread rumors about missing kindred and humans before this. Of course people go missing every day in the chaos that is LA, and what's a few less humans... or Kindred?

As the characters pass by the mouth of an alley, they interrupt a pack of three unearthed Sabbat feeding on a honeymooning couple who wandered into the wrong part of town at the wrong time. The honeymooners' remains

TYPICAL UNEARTHED SABBAT PACK MEMBER

Feel free to adjust these characters to fit the tone or power level of your chronicle. Keep in mind that, while the pack members may be of low generation, they are very hard to kill or scare off. They are also very difficult to dominate or mind control. Increase the difficulty of any test using disciplines which involve inflicting pain on, or influencing the mind of, pack members. These abilities, combined with the sheer bestiality of these Kindred will make them exceptionally dangerous opponents.

Nature: Bestial.
Demeanor: Bestial.
Generation: 13-10.
Embrace: 1965.
Apparent Age: 20s.
Physical: Strength 3; Dexterity 2; Stamina 4.
Social: Charisma 1; Manipulation 1; Appearance 1.
Mental: Perception 3; Intelligence 1; Wits 1.
Talents: Alertness 2; Brawl 2.
Skills: Melee 2; Stealth 2.
Knowledges: (no higher mind functions).
Disciplines: Dependent upon clan. These creatures were meant to be the shock troops of the Sabbat during the siege, so they will commonly have one or more of Celerity, Potence, Obfuscate or Obtenebration.
Willpower: 2.

Image: The clothes of these creatures hang off of their gaunt frames like rags. Their skin is caked with the blood of their victims and the dirt of their recent entombment. Even Samedai and Nosferatu will be repulsed by the sight of these Kindred – not so much by their shocking appearance, as by the look of insanity in their eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: There is no reasoning with these Sabbat, as they have nothing resembling a human intelligence remaining to them after their years of entombment. Occasionally a momentary flicker of awareness will pass across the features of these Kindred, but it never lasts. They are creatures of extreme, though animal-like, cunning and intense brutality. When feeding, they will attempt to recreate the Sabbat Valdre, in an unconscious urge to complete their initiation and become whole. (A futile dream, but one which they unknowingly pursue.)

Haven: Each day the pack will retreat to a safe haven, frequently within the extensive sewer system.

are scattered about the alley. It is obvious that the attackers are Kindred from the state of the bodies and the loud sounds of the pack feeding.

Any characters with heightened senses will hear the pack long before they reach the alley. Bloodlust has overwhelmed the pack and they will be surprised by the sudden appearance of the player characters. The pack will attack anyone who disturbs their feeding, fighting mercilessly, without retreat or surrender. The players will be forced to subdue or destroy the pack—not an easy task, since the pack is incredibly resistant to domination, possession or fear-based Disciplines.

FOLLOW UP

If the characters destroy the pack, they will find little information as to who their assailants are. Their clothes are in rags and barely identifiable as such. The minds of the pack are barely human and will not yield any information when interrogated, either by mundane or supernatural methods.

At this stage the characters will likely have little idea of what has just happened, or what has just attacked them. The sheer savagery of the attack should have had a significant impact on the characters. Of course they will be concerned that they will be attacked again, and the fact that the three savage creatures—whatever they were—hunted as a pack should be enough incentive for the player characters to stick together for mutual support.

The characters may well try to contact other Kindred in the city. This should be difficult, however, as most of the vampires are in hiding. Eventually they will learn—possibly from the Ghoul messenger of a local Anarch—that there is a Rant happening tomorrow night, to discuss the problem.

SCENE TWO: RANT & RAVE

"Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away. Now it looks as though they're here to stay." — The Beatles.

An emergency meeting of the city's Anarchs has been called. It is well known that the barony of Anaheim contains a place of Elysium, which is always respected. This is Disneyland.

Usually the park is a happy place, filled with children's laughter. Not tonight: there is no joy in the faces of the Anarchs assembled in the park's vast parking lot. A Rant frequently draws dozens of Kindred from their havens, and is usually a time of rowdy fun and political maneuvers. The expressions on the faces of the five ragtag Brujah waiting for the characters, and the way they cast fearful glances into the shadows of the lot, are completely at odds with previous Rants. Something is happening—something bad.

The Brujah at the Rant are all 13th Generation. For various reasons, they have no powerful allies

- willing to shelter and protect them. They realize that it is only a matter of time before they are destroyed by another attack by the insane vampires threatening the city, and have bonded together in the face of this threat. They spread the word of this Rant, hoping to organize resistance against this threat, to combine the forces of all the city's Kindred against their unknown foes. Too bad the rest of the Kindred are too scared or selfish to attend...

- The five Brujah have come here expecting to talk with the elders of the city. Presumably the characters also wish to discuss the attack with the city's rulers. Unfortunately, the elders have decided to keep their heads down until they can properly assess the problems and devise a strategy to deal with these strange attacks.

- One of the Brujah has been told that the elders are aware of the Kindred's concerns and are working to deal with the problem. Eventually they will decide what to do, and at that time they will organize the

Anarch Free States to take care of these inconvenient attacks. Too bad the less powerful occupants of LA will have to fend for themselves until then.



The Brujah have all been

attacked by the mysterious, insane vampires; some have even lost friends in these attacks. If the

- characters ask about the attacks, they will be given description of assailants similar to the insane vampires who attacked them a few hours ago. The rampaging packs seem to contain an average of three vampires each, although there is a report of a pack of nine traveling together. All the Brujah are afraid that they will be next, as these packs seem to have a taste for Vampire blood and will attack Kindred whenever possible. The packs also seem to be able to track Vampires very accurately. One of the Brujah, whose haven is in southern LA, awoke with her clanmates, to find a pack of the fiends almost upon them. She was the only one to survive.

- If the characters offer their support, the Brujah will decide to meet here the next night and compare notes. They will also travel with the characters if they are asked, as they believe that there is safety in numbers.

FOLLOW UP

- All the attacks have taken place in the Watts area of southern LA over the last three days. It has taken this long for the Kindred of the city to spread word of the attacks—not because of any hidden agendas, but because so few have survived the attacks. Tonight's attack on the characters occurred outside the Watts area, which is an additional cause for concern. If the packs are spreading out, it is only a matter of time before the whole city becomes engulfed in the violence.

- From here, the players may wish to follow up the information they have acquired by investigating the Watts area.

SCENE THREE: WATTS

"Dost thou drink tears, that thou provokest such weeping?"
– William Shakespeare

If the characters research the Watts area they will be able to locate the following information:

- Watts is under the control of a Vampire by the name of Mohammed al-Muthlim, who also controls a gang of kindred called 'The Crypt's Sons'. This gang also controls numerous human street gangs with similar names.

- In 1965 the Sabbat laid siege to the city. Part of their strategy involved creating racial riots. These riots were centered in and around the Watts locality.

- The Sabbat were driven off in seven days of intense fighting, but vowed to return and make Los Angeles theirs.

- The area has never fully recovered from the damage it suffered during the riots, and much of Watts is still a burned out shell of what it once was.

- Recently a coalition of local businessmen has petitioned the city to improve the area. The city has responded with a \$9 million initiative to fund and build new housing and businesses in Watts.

This information can be located in a number of ways. By visiting a city planning office or library, the characters can easily discover some of the more mundane aspects of the Watts area. To pry into Kindred history is a little more difficult.

If the players do not have any contacts with the appropriate skills, they will have to locate one. The most logical contact for this sort of information would be one of the Nosferatu. To locate a Nosferatu willing to speak to them is a Difficult task – Average if they use the Brujah allies they've garnered in Scene Two. Meeting one of the Nosferatu will necessitate a trip through the sewers to his home (not to be mistaken with his Haven, which is elsewhere).

Along the way, the players will meet another pack of unearthed Sabbat – five or more insane vampires. Allow the players to escape from the pack, as this encounter is merely to intensify the threat posed by the packs, not to kill the characters outright. The characters should notice that the pack is wearing newer clothes than the first pack they encountered in Scene One. The pack is still as wild and ferocious as any other pack encountered, but in their fleeting moments of lucidity while feeding, they have donned the clothes of their victims. A couple of the vampires are attired as city workmen, complete with hard-hats and reflective vests. This may indicate to the players that a construction crew was attacked that evening. If the players somehow destroy the pack they can examine the clothing in detail, learning that the clothes and gear began to an LA public works crew.

FOLLOW UP

- Try to let the players know that this area of the city has been crippled by its history of violence. The city has been trying to revitalize Watts... but with minimal success. Play up the encounter with the pack which is wearing construction clothing. This will provide an important clue as to the source of the packs and how to deal with them. Follow-up research should occupy the characters for the remainder of the evening.

- With dawn approaching, the characters experience a deep sense of dread as they make their way back to their haven or havens. The Brujah thought the packs could track Kindred anywhere in the city. Did the player characters destroy all of the vampires they encountered, or are the survivors out there marshaling their pack mates? Will a pack be waiting for them as they wake tomorrow?

SCENE FOUR: RECAP

- *"You who rejoice to see blood flow, you who wander amidst the tombs in the hours of darkness, thirsty for blood and the terror of mortals..."* – Invocation of Hecate

- The characters were invited to return to the Disneyland parking lot the following night to compare notes with the five Brujah who originally contacted them. If they attend this meet, they will notice right away that only three of the Brujah have returned. The other two were killed last night by the packs. One of the Brujah present saw her friend torn apart by a pack and barely escaped herself. No-one knows what happened to the other absent vampire, but he will never show up or be seen again.

- The meeting is not a happy one as the group shares their acquired information. At this point you may wish to fill in the players on any relevant information they may be lacking. The Brujah are very worried, especially by the lack of solid support from the other occupants of the city. If any of the characters have thought to look at the paper, they will find an article on the escalating violence in the Watts area. Give them the headline in the sidebar below. If they do not read tonight's paper, one of their Brujah allies will bring it to their attention.

- *Watts Violence Escalates – The death toll in southern Los Angeles has reached epic proportions. Last night, five people in the Watts area were horribly mutilated in what is being called the city's most horrific murder of the year. Police and local authorities are blaming the violence on the gangs of armed thugs that infest the area. They claim the murders are the result of inter-gang rivalries that have exploded into violence and are spreading outside of the Watts neighborhood as the gangs attempt to expand their control over the narcotics market.*

- *The rivalry has recently expanded to include the clientele of the gangs involved, and police believe that the murders are all drug related. The victims are supposed to have blundered into the gang war, to purchase contraband drugs, and have been made an example of to discourage other customers from buying drugs from a particular gang's rivals. This would account for the*

extreme brutality of the murders, and the fact that none of the victims have been connected with gang activities in the past. One fact which remains unexplained is the reason behind the deaths of the gang war's first victims, a construction crew with no connection to gang- or drug-related activities. Local authorities are advising residents of Watts to avoid unnecessary trips at night, and would appreciate any information the public may be able to supply which will assist their investigations into this matter.

FOLLOW UP

The importance of the dead construction crew and the pack wearing their clothes should be becoming clearer to the characters. If any of the players have had experience with the Sabbat, they may realize that their insane hunters' tactics bear a striking resemblance to Sabbat war parties – specifically, the way they travel in groups and combine Kindred of differing clans together. One of the Brujah was present during the Sabbat siege of the city and will make the following comment if prompted: "Of course this is all speculation, but... Few Sabbat escaped the riots of '65 and none of them were so obviously insane as these packs of animals. If this is the doing of the Sabbat, why would they send in such mindless pawns? I've always considered them more subtle than that. You're asking the wrong person about this, of course. The siege is ancient history now, and our concerns are more immediate. If you really want to know about the siege, you've got to talk to a historian, and in the City of Angels that is Mariel St. John." The Brujah will agree to set up a meeting with Mariel on the characters' behalf, on the following night at a coffee bar called Francisco's.

SCENE FIVE: AN UNEXPECTED ALLY

"Welcome to my nightmare..." – Alice Cooper

When the characters awake on the third night, they will discover that the attacks have become more common and have spread even farther into the city. The frequency and locations of the attacks indicate that there are more packs in the city than on the previous two nights. A conservative guess would place their numbers at somewhere between twelve and twenty packs. If their numbers continue to increase, the city could well be overrun before the week ends. It is imperative that the players contact someone who has the ear of LA's ruling barons. Mariel St. John is that person.

Francisco's is a small coffee bar on the west side of Los Angeles. The west side has so far been untouched by the violence consuming Watts. Francisco's is a popular locale for the city's artistic crowd, and usually quite crowded with poets and posers... but not tonight. Entering the bar, the characters will find it deserted save for three people. At the entrance to Francisco's are two huge vampires, who are decked out in the colors of the street gang called 'The Crypt's Sons'. Any character with

- Streetwise or gang contacts will realize that these two gang-bangers are a long way from their usual turf. They will also realize that this gang's turf includes the Watts area. After checking the group for weapons, the pair will point to the back of the bar, where a slim figure can be dimly made out.
- Concealed by the shadows is Mariel St. John. She will be wary of the characters, but will also express genuine concern over the Watts situation. If the characters share the information they have obtained with her, she will attempt to confirm their conclusions and fill in the gaps. Mariel will tell the characters the story in the accompanying sidebar.
- Mariel will offer the support of The Crypt's Sons and their human vassals to destroy this nest of unearthed Sabbat. If the characters have already discovered that the packs originate from the construction site in Watts, then The Crypt's Sons will follow them there to deal with the problem. If they don't have this information yet, Mariel will give them a phone number to call once the nest is located. She will assure them that ten to twenty of the gang can be anywhere in the city within an hour, and that the firepower they pack could take out an entire city block. (One of the gangers at the door to the bar smiles nastily at the characters when he hears this.)
- Mariel goes on to say that they just need to know which block...

MARIEL'S STORY

- "Twenty years ago the Sabbat attempted to take the City of Angels as their own. They began their assault by fomenting racial tension within the poorer districts until riots broke out. Under cover of the violence, they attacked the Free Anarchs and killed many of our brethren. With luck – and the selfless sacrifice of many, many fearless Kindred – we were able drive them out of the city.

- "You may have already concluded that this new threat is of Sabbat origin. In part you are correct.

- "I am known as something of a historian amongst Kindred, but my areas of expertise include many other matters... one of which is the Sabbat. You may not be aware that for every vampire who is initiated into the Sabbat, two more are destroyed. The vile initiation rites of the sect involve burying the initiate alive. Those who survive this trauma and can claw their way to the surface become one with the Sabbat; those who don't are left behind. These unfortunate souls are not destroyed – far from it. They remain imprisoned by the soil, slipping in and out of consciousness for eternity – aware of their surroundings and their fate, but lacking the strength to free themselves. I would not wish this fate on anyone, except those callous enough to inflict this horrific existence on another. It is practices like this which demand that we put an end to the evil of the Sabbat, once and for all... but that is another day's fight.

- "One of the tactics used by the Sabbat during the Watts riots involved the creation of dozens of

neonates to act as shock troops against our forces. Happily we were strong enough to resist the waves of Kindred sent against us, but in those seven dark days in 1965, untold Kindred were created using Sabbat rituals. For every new progeny we struck down, two more remained entombed within the earth. I believe that one of these initiation sites – or staging areas, if you will – has been unearthed, freeing those poor unfortunates which failed the Sabbat initiation.

"Imagine, if you will, thirty years buried beneath the earth, aware of your surroundings yet powerless to extricate yourself. I believe that this is what has happened here. Someone has accidentally released this horde of mindless Kindred into our city. Unless we locate their origin, we might all be doomed."

UNEARTHED SABBAT PACK

A typical Sabbat pack consists of 4-6 Kindred of various generations, who are bonded together by the Valdre. The unearthed packs are a little different.

These Vampires have been slipping in and out of torpor for over twenty years and are quite insane. Their minds have been reduced to little more than those of animals, and are ruled by their thirst for sustenance. Unlike animals, however, they still retain a rudimentary knowledge of human society. While they do not have enough intelligence to pass for normal humans, or even communicate with them, they are able to locate safe shelter. Their havens have remained undiscovered because anyone who stumbles across them is killed.

The degenerate state of the minds of these Sabbat makes them dangerous opponents. They feel no pain or fear, as nothing else can compare to their experiences over the last two decades. This allows them to remain unaffected by all but the most powerful Presence disciplines. Likewise, they are incredibly resistance to Domination or mind control abilities. They will not relent in combat until their thirst for blood has been satisfied. Years of lusting after the taste of blood have given the packs an insatiable craving which can never been satisfied. Eventually each of the insane Kindred will be destroyed by overfeeding... but will there be anyone left in the city by that time?

VALDRE

To maintain their spirit of brotherhood, the Sabbat blend and consume their blood in a ritual called the Valdre. The unearthed Sabbat have never been bound by this ritual and have no allegiance to the sect. Their bodies do dimly echo the call of the Valdre, however, because their sires participated in it for years before creating them. As addled as their brains have become, they still attempt to simulate the ritual, by hunting in packs and sharing the fluids of their prey. The pack will gorge themselves on the blood of their prey in an orgy of self-indulgence. No matter how much vitae they take, the pack will not be able to slake their thirst. Only when they are

- feeding do they approach a state resembling sanity, but it is fleeting.

FOLLOW UP

- Mariel St. John is actually a Sabbat scout who has been operating in the city for many years now. She wasn't in the city during the Watts riots, but she does have contacts in the Sabbat who were (notably Mohammed al-Muthlim). Mohammed is her immediate superior within the Sabbat hierarchy. He is also the leader of the Crypt's Sons, and a very important figure in the California Free States. He is well known as a hero of the siege, when he single-handedly destroyed many of the Sabbat attackers. Very few people in the city realize that he is a Sabbat agent and even fewer still even suspect that the bookish St. John is as well.

- Mariel and her master Mohammed know that the time is not right for a renewed assault by the Sabbat and don't want these latest incidents to put the city on its guard. They are both quite happy to let Los Angeles eat away at its power base through internal bickering before moving against the city. In any case, the Sabbat is not ready to take over... yet. These attacks by the unearthed Sabbat are an embarrassment and must stop, Mariel believes. By helping the characters, she hopes to increase her influence within the city and eventually become an equal with Mohammed. She has arranged The Crypt's Sons assault force to back up the characters once the nest site is located, but she needs the newcomers to find it so she can act.

SCENE SIX: DANGER: HARD-HAT AREA

- "Death is suffering, I am suffering, therefore, I must die." – Anonymous suicide note.

- The characters have been sent by Mariel to locate the origin of the Sabbat packs. To do so they will need to put together a number of clues.

- The first involves the newspaper article the Brujah gave them In Scene Four. This article mentions the suspicious death of an entire construction crew at the onset of the Watts murders. The second is the narrow escape the characters had with a pack which wore the clothing of construction workers. It should be relatively easy for the players to put two and two together, and conclude that it was a construction project which first unearthed the Sabbat packs.

- Once they come to this conclusion, they should try to track down this particular construction crew and the site they worked on. There are a number of ways they can approach the problem, and a number of sources the characters can turn to for this information:

- The city planning department will have a record of all new construction in the area and the companies contracted for the jobs.

- A newspaper or police contact will be able to supply the names of the people in the construction crew and the name of the construction firm they worked for.

- The construction and laborer's union will have a record of the job site and location the crew worked at.

- Residents in the area may know where the crew worked. (This may also include the street gangs.)

- The families of the victims will certainly know where their loved ones worked.

All that remains is for the group to investigate the site, then call in The Crypt's Sons to finish the job.

CONSTRUCTION SITE

Once the characters have located the site, they will find that it consists of a burned out mini-mall, which has been torn down and cleared of debris. A huge sign indicates that this project has been funded by the Los Angeles Better Housing Society and is intended to provide affordable housing for the less fortunate of the city. The site will eventually become two huge housing projects designed to hold hundreds of people. One of the buildings is already partially constructed, an iron girder framework is in place. The second building is in its beginning phase, the preparation of the foundation – the excavation of a huge pit.

This pit has been expanded each day and is steadily expanding to cover the entire lot. And, of course, this lot was the "initiation site" that St. John discussed in her meeting with the characters.

Each day's work loosens the soil over more of the entombed Sabbat. Once the soil has been loosened, the insane vampires will attempt to escape. It may take awhile, but they can eventually free themselves from their long imprisonment.

When the characters arrive, they will find that a group of five to ten Sabbat have already unearthed themselves and are awaiting others who are even now struggling to emerge. The pack will notice the characters if they move or make any sounds. At this point the characters should attempt to destroy the pack themselves, or somehow summon the Crypt's Sons as back-up. If they have a cellular phone this is easily done; otherwise they will have to find another way. The trick is to hold off the insane Sabbat long enough for help to arrive. This shouldn't be easy... so don't make it easy for your players. They may be forced to flee and return the next night to finish the job.

AFTERMATH

Once the Sabbat pack-mates who have already freed themselves have been destroyed, it is relatively easy – though disgusting – work to complete the job. There is a backhoe and bulldozer on the site which can be used to reveal the remaining Sabbat. They can then be staked or burnt one at a

- time. The
- packs
- which are
- already
- roaming
- the city will
- be hunted by
- the Anarchs and
- street gangs, now
- that the nest has been
- destroyed.

- Of course, no one knows how many packs
- were released or if they can all be destroyed. All the
- packs preferred to attack Kindred over mundane
- prey; at least five of the city's vampires disappeared
- over the last few nights. It's quite possible that their
- blood was used to lower the generation of one or
- more of these packs. Perhaps even now they roam
- the city, wary of the Anarchs who pursue them.
- These packs will not fall as easily as their mindless
- brothers. You may wish to use the unearthed Sabbat
- packs as an ongoing thread in your chronicle and a
- threat to your players.



Andrew Lucas

- Andrew began his career writing poetry and
- short stories for his own enjoyment. He soon
- realized that women were more impressed by a large
- paycheck – than carefully crafted prose, and sold
- out to a major B.C. Telephone company.

- He has also exhibited great artistic skill by
- disrupting his friend's gaming sessions with truly
- talented puns. Realizing his true calling at last,
- Andrew decided to take his skills to the source – the
- game publishers, themselves. Imagine the naive boy's
- surprise when he was actually paid for simply using
- his God-given talent.

- But alas, money, like most other pernicious
- pleasures, has its costs. The more Andrew worked, the
- lower his artistic integrity sank. He is now little more
- than a word whore, giving it away on the streets.

- In the past Andrew has sold out to: *Challenge*
- Magazine*; *White Wolf Magazine*; FASA; *White Wolf*;
- Legacy*; and *Pariah Press*. His future aspirations
- include developing real talent and morals.



Nick Darcy

- Born in East Africa, Nick has played AD&D "on
- and off" for the past 10 years. His illustrations have
- appeared in a number of gaming 'zines, including
- Dragonlords* and *Space Gamer*. He has also provided
- illustrations for a number of West Coast conventions,
- including *Norwescon*, *Orycon*, and *V-Con*.

- Nick works for a video production company, and
- is creating music videos for a number of up and
- coming Vancouver bands. He is also busy illustrating
- the science fiction comic book *Amoeba Force*.

FALCONSHAND

BY PIERS BROWN & NIGEL FINDLEY

Falconshand is designed as a one- or two-session adventure for a troupe of Ars Magica™ players, ideally a group of one to three magi rounded out with grogs and companions. So long as the magi are relatively inexperienced, it can be run as written, or with only minimal alterations. The nature of the adventure is such that, if they are wise, the player characters should never have to consider actually fighting the powerful individuals who appear in the adventure...

Author's Note

Of late, a number of people have mentioned that almost all of the recent adventures for Ars Magica have been dark, gloomy affairs filled with corrupt churchmen, evil magi and a virtual infestation of demons. So when I was handed this 'suggestion' I abandoned my plans for a dark descent into the depths of your players' psyches, and dredged up something a little less serious. For those who like to know these things, Falconshand is the home Covenant of the players in my Saga...

INTEGRATING FALCONSHAND INTO YOUR SAGA

As written, Falconshand is in Provence on the lands belonging to the Count of Barcelona, somewhere between Marseilles and Nice. If you want to locate it elsewhere in the world – presumably, closer to the Covenant around which your Saga is based – the only requirement is that there be a large body of water nearby. Falconshand should then be located just off the coast. If you've detailed your Saga with such precision that the entire Tribunal is mapped out exactly, put it just across the border in the next Tribunal.

Falconshand is an obscure place... for various very good reasons, as it turns out. Thus, even if it's located close to your players' Covenant, there's still the issue of giving the magi sufficient reason to get out of their lab labs (often one of the most difficult feats in an Ars Magica saga) and go visiting. While it's easy enough to have a nearby villager come running up to the Covenant complaining about

- something or other in order to rouse the magi, this is almost as clichéd as the archetypal, "You and your companions-to-be meet in an inn..."
- Patience is important in running an Ars Magica saga, and
- involving your players in an adventure is often a matter of dropping a few hints, and waiting until the time is ripe.

So, why would the magi of your Covenant wish to visit Falconshand? The Covenant of Falconshand is reputed to have a good library; it's obscure enough to pique the interest of the curious

(particularly if those curious hear rumors as to why it's obscure); its members represent more votes to support a favored resolution at the next Tribunal; and it has a number of annoying inhabitants who can visit the characters home Covenant in such a manner that they will want to go visit them in return. As will be seen, it doesn't ultimately matter what reason finally does the job...

PLOT SYNOPSIS

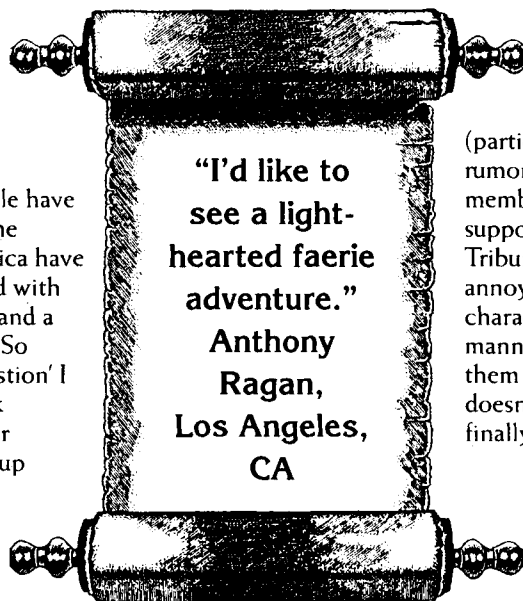
The adventure is more or less broad comedy, arising from three interlinked plots involving three key inhabitants of

Falconshand. These three plots develop in parallel, intersecting from time to time and complicating each other. The magi provide the major themes, while covenfolk, grogs, villagers and assorted sea-fairies provide the background.

- When the player characters arrive, only two of Falconshand's magi are in residence: Vergis of House Flambeau, the leader of the Covenant; and Thibault of House Tytalus, one of the new magi. (A third, Mercurio the Quaesitor, will turn up eventually.)
- Briefly put, Vergis is as senile as they come; Mercurio is so hard-line as to be ridiculous; and Thibault is far too clever for his own good.

- The first plot revolves around Vergis and a bit of mistaken identity. The decrepit mage has drifted so far into Twilight that his memory is in tatters. As a result, he mistakes the group of player characters for members of Falconshand and sets them to finding out what happened to the Covenant's vis stores, which appear to have gone missing. If they don't, he tells them crankily, they are in deep trouble.

In the face of this, the characters will probably



turn to anyone who can help them at all (or maybe not, if they're really greedy), and Thibault is more than willing to help. He seems so willing, indeed, that it's downright suspicious. Not suprisingly, being a member of House Tytalus, he is up to something behind their backs: he's promised the queen of the local sea-faeries a few mortals as "gifts" for the next festival they hold, which is any day now.

Finally, just as the confusion seems to have reached its height, Mercurio the Quaesitor turns up and starts a miniature in-house Inquisition. He doesn't have any proof but that isn't stopping him – it never has before – as he attempts to expose the guilty secrets of every mage in the vicinity. Fortunately, much of his fury is directed towards Thibault... who really does have something to hide.

With a little bit of work – and a certain amount of luck – the characters should come out of all this more or less unscathed, and maybe even ahead of the game... so long as they don't resort to violence; there's nothing to gain by fighting and certainly a lot to lose. Diplomacy, sneakiness and low-down trickery will get them further than anything else.

THEME AND MOOD

"Old age hath yet his honor and his toil."

– Tennyson, Ulysses.

The theme of the adventure is old age and senility. Falconshand itself lies in the depths of Winter, and its inhabitants are no younger. Despite its age, however, it's a long way from death; though the minds of its people are addled, its members are still alive... confused, but alive.

The mood is one of confusion and bewilderment. It is as if the player characters have suddenly awoken from a nap, only to be suddenly confronted by a world working on principles completely different from their own. It's most important to keep them off balance. Each time they think they've reached a state of equilibrium, the rug should be yanked out from underneath them again.

Conversely, it should be as if the world has suddenly come into sharp focus. If at all possible in the scheme of your Saga, have the player characters travel to Falconshand in spring or summer, simply so the weather will be fine: bright sunny days, clear blue skies and the fresh sea breeze bringing the whole Covenant to life, and hundreds of myriad details crowding their senses, making them feel awake again. Aim to overwhelm them with the wonder and strangeness of this new place. Stamp it into their memory... for their own old age.

THE COVENANT

Seen from the nearby shore, Falconshand resembles a bastard crossbreed of a monastery, a cathedral and a castle built of marble and terra-cotta. It squats on a small rocky outcropping a quarter-league offshore, accessible only by a narrow stone causeway pockmarked with holes and ruts eroded by



WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT FALCONSHAND

Some characters might try to find out something of Falconshand's background before visiting. With successful Int+Hermes Lore rolls, the following information is available:

6+: There might be a Covenant by that name in the Tribunal, but you can't really remember hearing anything about it at all... which in itself is very strange.

9+: Falconshand is by far the most obscure Covenant in the area... mainly, it seems, because the Redcaps will have nothing to do with the place for some reason. Indeed, they refuse to speak about Falconshand at all.

12+: Apparently Falconshand has been taking in new magi of late, but very dubious sorts on the whole.

15+: The Covenant was apparently associated with a number of pirates some 20 or so years back who preyed on nearby shipping. Its magi, lead by Vergis of House Flambeau, were continually in hot water with the Quaesitors and the rest of the Tribunal.

18+: Vergis was responsible for the break with the Redcaps. Apparently, one of them offended the mage in some way. Vergis challenged him to Wizard's War and then killed him, despite the fact that the Redcap had no magical abilities at all – a very dubious act, but technically legal. Vergis then proceeded to run off everyone who came after him as a result of this. House Mercere has formally put an embargo on all traffic with him, which accounts for the Covenant's isolation.

the sea. The structure consists mainly of an eclectic series of walls, towers and halls piled one on top of the other, topped off by an airy gothic church complete with buttresses, arches, and stained glass. Once it might have been impressive but no longer: the whole has a weary air that bespeaks long neglect.

The massive walls surround a series of layered courtyards, passageways, cloisters and terraces, designed seemingly to confound the mind. From these halls, windows look out over the long, wide bay within which the island sits, up to the road at the top of the low sand cliffs, and to the woods and fields beyond. Some of the buttresses supporting the walls extend down into the sea, and from certain angles it's difficult to see the rocky island on which the Covenant's built. Clustered around the south side of the Covenant, sheltered from the open sea by the rock itself, lie a series of docks cluttered with boats ranging from tiny skiffs to a forty-oar galley. Small gardens shelter beneath the looming walls. And above everything towers the spire of the old church; hundreds of hawks, eagles, and the falcons which give the Covenant its name, roost in this crumbling aerie.

INHABITANTS OF FALCONSHAND

In total, Falconshand boasts about 30 inhabitants. These are divided more or less equally between servants, guards and a number of assorted individuals who anywhere else would probably be considered Consors.

The one thing that stands out about the group is their age. With the exception of only a few, the population is aged over 30, with many of them considerably older... this in an age when 40 is considered old for anyone outside the nobility.

The servants are ancient and gnarled, and rattle about the huge structure making vague motions towards maintaining the place. Only the kitchens, magi's quarters, servant's refectory, and one end of the vast church hall are at all maintained. The long corridors, vaulted store-rooms piled with goods, and the chambers which used to house so many, are all filled with dust and cobwebs.

The grogs are all grizzled veterans who've seen better days. If all were on duty at once, they could barely muster an effective defense of the Covenant. As it is, they keep a perfunctory watch on the main gate and the docks. On clear days, one of them is stationed at the height of the bell-tower to watch for approaching ships... at least, if he is able to make the climb.

The companions are a varied bunch.

Thibault, filius Demetrius follower of Tytalus

Thibault (he pronounces it Ti-balt) is a simple man. He wants only two things in life: the power his master has, and immortality. (Along the way, of course, a few things have struck his fancy, so he intends to have them in the meantime in order to keep himself occupied...)

A Scot by birth, he was apprenticed to one of the most ruthless Tytalus magi of his day, and drank up his secrets with an unquenchable thirst. That Demetrius is now dead, having been slain in a Wizard's March for using forbidden magic to steal the powers of an Archmagus, doesn't disturb Thibault. He merely intends to be more careful himself.

It seems unlikely. He pursues power in any form with an enthusiastic ruthlessness that's almost reckless. He would have been long since condemned himself if it were not for his gift for twisting minds and his gift with words. But he doesn't seem to worry, consumed as he is by his insatiable desire for magical power in any form.

Attributes: Int (Wily) +4; Per (Apprehensive) +2; Str (Small Frame) -1; Sta (Iron Willed) +1; Pre (Handsome) +2; Com (Honeyed Tongue) +3; Dex (Catlike Grace) +2; Qui (Deft Hand) +2.

Age 37; Cnf 3; Twi 0; Siz 0.

Virtues and Flaws: Good Characteristic (Sta) +1; Entrancement +4; Affinity (Corporeum) +3; Special Circumstances (Blood Magic) +1; Susceptibility to Divine Power -4; Driving Goal (Immortality) -1; Infamous Master -1; Discredited Lineage -2; Blatant Gift -1.

Abilities: Speak Latin (Expressive) 5; Speak Gaelic (Slang) 4; Speak Langue d'Oc (Orders) 3; Scribe Latin (Codes) 3; Hermes History (Tomes) 2; Hermes Lore (Legends) 2; Parma Magica (Perdo) 4; Magic Theory (Enchant Items) 5; Finesse (Corporeum) 1; Penetration (Rego) 1; Affinity Corporeum (Rego) 3; Certamen (Creo) 3; Concentration (Ignore Pain) 1; Meditation (Control Emotions) 1; Hermetic Law (Tribunals) 1; Entrancement (Seduction) 5; Occult Lore (Undead) 1; Sword Attack (Wild Melee) 1; Charm (Ingratiating) 1; Athletics (Grace) 1; Stealth (Hide) 1; Etiquette (Women) 1.

Personality Traits: Confident +2; Cruel +1; Enthusiastic +3; Self Centered +2; Lecherous +2.

Arts: Cr 5; In 5; Mu 5; Pe 7; Re 5; An 1; Aq 1; Au 2; Co 8; He 2; Ig 2; Im 5; Me 4; Te 5; Vi 7.

Spells: Surgeon's Healing Touch CrCo 20; Restoration of the Defiled Body CrCo 25; Eyes of the Cat MuCo 10; Lifting the Dangling Puppet ReCo 20 (Mastered); Twist of the Tongue PeCo 20; The Walking Corpse ReCo 25; Discern Images of Truth and Falsehood InIm 5; Gather the Essence of the Beast MuVi 15; Wizard's Communion MuVi 20.

Many of them, too, are past their prime, with the exception of a scant few who have joined since the arrival of the younger magi a few years ago. Shaw, the alchemist; Delmont, the stunted, mute librarian; Guillemo, the weathered bosun of galley, the Sea Falcon; Quinn, the chronicler... all have seen better days. Even Zahir, the Arab mercenary who commands the guard, is growing old, though his face, hidden behind its black beard, seems ageless.

Yet for all its occupants' age and infirmity, the Covenant is suprisingly alive. People bustle back and forth at their own pace, gossiping, chattering and complaining. The halls ring with laughter at the antics of the more youthful covenfolk. The young magi are served with a watchful eye and a hidden smile. Life goes on.

There is one child in the Covenant: Adam. He knows nothing about his origin, or his arrival at the Covenant... although he sometimes dreams that dreadful portents are involved, and dark, stormy nights. (The other servants are careful to avoid discussing the topic while he's around...)

Despite this, he's more than happy. He is doted upon by all and sundry, does little work but run errands, and lives in a place full of wonder and amazement. Though shy, a little kindness will open him up and he will soon be chatting as volubly as any other of the covenfolk.

OTHER MAGI OF THE COVENANT

Porphyry of House Criamon: The other elder Magus of the Covenant, Porphyry towers over Vergis. Some six feet tall from his bare feet to the top of his bald head, and massively built, his presence suggests the stone which is his preferred element. Bleak and domineering, he is little interested in mundane matters of any sort, but rather seeks the secrets of the universe in his lab buried deep in the rock beneath the Covenant. He hates to be disturbed and rarely passes the massive basalt door, carved with the bas relief of Medusa, which guards his lab.

Nex of House Flambeau: Nex, Vergis' second apprentice, possesses a temper as volatile as his master's, and a talent for Ignem magics. So long as one is careful not to be rude, he is an enjoyable companion and loyal friend. Otherwise, he is a dangerous man to be around. Presently he is away in Iberia, with several other Covenant members, looking for a missing nobleman.

Essian d'Argent of House Jerbiton: A quiet, scholarly magus, he spends much of his time either dealing with the servants or immersed in the library. He possesses more compassion and morals than is sometimes comfortable for his more pragmatic Sodalis. By profession he is a physician, but his magic is ill-suited to healing, and instead he pursues all arts equally. He is currently in Iberia with Nex.

Araq, Spirit Master of House Ex-Miscellaenea: Branded with the reputation of a diabolist, Araq does his best to avoid the authorities. All the while he

- protests his innocence, and claims that he is being drawn closer and closer to God. No-one is exactly sure where he is right now, though a number of the Magi would like to know (Mercurio in particular, on account of a sword wound that the Quaesitor would rather not discuss with anyone).

- **Medwrydd of House Criamon:** Taught Shamanic magic by her first master, Medwrydd eschews her hermetic heritage almost entirely in its favor. Though blind, through a variety of bargains she has grown rapidly in power and controls a number of dangerous spirits. In return, though, she owes a series of debts that she does not quite understand. Currently she is journeying in the Novgorod tribunal, attempting to fulfill one of those debts.

ARRIVING AT FALCONSHAND

- As the player characters approach the ramshackle Covenant, they spot a small, hunched figure sitting on the edge of the causeway: an old man with a ragged gray beard and a face like a plowed field. Appropriately clad for the weather, he appears to be deeply engaged in communion with the sea through the medium of his fishing rod.

- The fisherman is one of the local villagers, and locals often joke that he's actually part of the causeway. Come rain or shine, night and day he can be found sitting in the same spot, occasionally hauling a fish out of the bay. If the player characters actually go to the trouble of watching him for a long period of time, he will eventually pack up his things and head home. But next time they check, he will be back in his usual place. If the player characters strike up a conversation, the fisherman's side of it will be largely monosyllabic: "Yep," "Nope," "Couldn't rightfully say," and assorted grunts. Any questions about the Covenant will eventually bring out the comment, "I wouldn't go up there if I were you. They're all mad."

- The only way to get much more out of him is to just sit there, preferably with a fishing rod. After a couple of week he might strike up a conversation. Threats are ignored, or result in a clout round the head with a fish bucket. Mentem spells elicit no response, and mind-reading gets beautifully clear pictures of the sea and little else.

- At the end of the causeway stand the twin towers of the gatehouse, and the gate itself. Flanking it are two immense statues of gargoyles, some 8 feet high. These stare at visitors, scratch themselves, pick their teeth... and do nothing else (damn impressive, though...). The rusted gates stand slightly ajar and somewhere about is probably a guard or two.

- If the visitors can locate a guard – probably sheltering in the guardroom or lazing on a stool in the sun – he will do his best to welcome them. After fumbling around for his rusty helmet and snatching up his spear, he will inquire in his best voice as to the travelers' business.

- The guard, Anselm of Bec, isn't really interested

in their business, except as something to talk about. Guard duty is rather boring and besides, it's nice to know what's going on in the world. He will happily chatter on about any topic under the sun, including the latest servants' gossip about the local magi's comings and goings. ("Apparently Master Mercurio left the Covenant in a huff two days ago. Not that this is an uncommon occurrence, but it seems, according to Elen, who does his cleaning, that he did so without taking anything like a spare set of clothes or his books, which he usually does. This probably means he'll be back soon, and everyone can't wait to find out exactly what it's all about."). If Anselm saw the visitors speaking with the fisherman on the causeway, or if they mention him, the guard will lean in close and confide quietly, "I wouldn't listen to old Jean, you know. He's mad."

While he'd gladly chat all day, Anselm will finally realize he has to make some decision over what to do with the visitors. After a bit of head scratching, he'll come up with, "Well, I suppose you'd better see Vergis. He's the master of the Covenant, you know." And with that, he turns and calls in through the Covenant's gate.

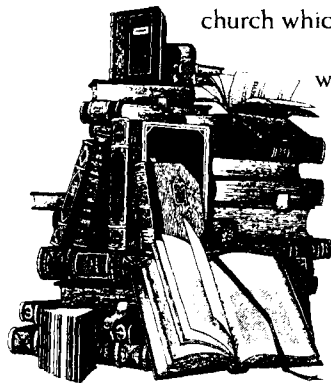
His call is answered by a young boy dressed in a simple wool tunic. The child, some eight or nine years old, appears almost angelic, with fine blond hair, blue eyes and a perfect face.

"Adam," says Anselm, "these visitors need to see Vergis. Will you take them?" Adam smiles and beckons, leading them into the Covenant.

The child escorts the visitors through the gatehouse, and up a long series of staggered stairs, open to the sky and bounded by walls on each side. Doors leading to rooms and stairs punctuate the walls at regular intervals. Some are open, others closed; a few are marked with sanctum sigils, and others contain people engaged in various tasks who all look up and smile as the group passes. Shouted questions echo out of upper-story windows. A number of covered bridges arch overhead.

At last, reaching the top of the stairs, Adam pushes open a gate and leads the visitors onto a large open courtyard. Waist-high walls surround its flagged expanse on three sides, giving it a commanding view of the sea. The blue sky forms a dome overhead. All but ignoring the vista, Adam turns and leads them through the door of the church which forms the fourth side.

Within, the shadowed air is filled with many colored beams of light, dust motes floating within them, as they dance with the dark pillars that hold up the vault. Adam leads them up the aisle towards the cracked and battered rood screen which hides the altar. Then he turns left and ushers them through a door into a room hung with tapestries, where Vergis waits.



MEETING VERGIS

Vergis sits sprawled in an oak chair, resembling a rag doll flung down by a bored child. His downy, pure-white hair and beard billow in the gentle breeze, moving against the brown robe which seems far too large for his tiny body. For a moment he lies there, arms and legs akimbo, snoring lightly. Then a tactful cough from Adam rouses him. He sits bolt upright, a quizzical expression on his face, then he relaxes as he looks at each of the visitors in turn. His face sets in a frown, and he begins to speak.

"Now," he says, clearing his throat, "I expect you are all wondering why I have called you here today.

"Well, it has come to my attention that something has... gone missing. And I want to know who took it, and I want to know now.

"Well, Nex?" he demands, pointing directly at one of the characters. "What do you know about this business?"

The senile Vergis has decided that the visitors are actually some of the junior members of Falconshand... and refuses to be convinced otherwise. All attempts at reason are met with disbelief from Vergis: "What do you think I am? Senile or something?" If the "junior magi" insist too strenuously on their "gratuitous and feeble-minded lies," the old mage will start to lose his temper and start issuing threats, both vocal and magical. Eventually, the player characters should realize that playing along is the only safe course. After all, provoking a Flambeau whose only reason for not being an Archmage is that he "couldn't be bothered with the technicalities" isn't conducive to good health. (If the player characters don't see the wisdom in this course, the child Adam – who's seen Vergis in this kind of mood before – will tell them to play along.) Remember, this encounter is supposed to be broad comedy, not a fight to the death with a deluded Ignem specialist...

VERGIS OF HOUSE FLAMBEAU

A tiny old man, twisted and gnarled by age, he resembles a desiccated corpse with a mane of fuzzy white hair. Vergis is the final and sole authority in Falconshand... at least when his wits are about him. Unfortunately, the proportion of time when Vergis is completely calm and lucid is very small indeed. Usually, either he is suffering from some form of delusion or he is balanced on the edge of collapse into one of his temper tantrums. His delusions usually involve mistaken identity – for instance assuming that someone is a former apprentice or a coven member or similar – or simply amnesia. Vergis has a very sketchy recollection of current events – "current" being anything that happened in the last twenty years or so. However, these problems wouldn't be a real difficulty if it weren't for his temper.

The slightest thing can set him off, and once he gets going very little can stop him. Vergis is, above all else, a stubborn old man. Once he has an idea in

his head, he refuses to compromise or listen to reason. Moreover, once he's made a decision, he has a tendency to back it up with displays of his magical power. On the other hand, he isn't malicious or vindictive – at least, not towards those he perceives as being on his side. Inside his crusty exterior he does have a heart, and he is loyal to his friends to the death.

Of course, this often causes as much trouble as anything else about him. He is apt to fly into a frenzy over some perceived wrong and simply make matters worse. (What do you do about an ancient mage who decides to declare war on Doissetep... on your behalf?)

Vergis is meant to be a source of endless frustration and amusement for anyone who comes near him. Unless people are very, very careful about how they confront him, Vergis will almost always become mixed up in one way or another. To role-play Vergis, simply listen to whatever your players say... and then see how far you can twist it. If they assume Vergis is going to be irrational, make him rational, and vice versa. Help them and hinder them in more or less equal proportions.

As for his abilities, suffice it to say that Vergis is over 100 years old, with almost all of that time devoted to some form of magical research. In this area, his faculties have barely waned. Magic to him is second nature. Essentially, do whatever you like with him; he's an Aquam/Ignem specialist with a better-than-fair competence everywhere else. So let him conjure up infernos of searing fire, boiling rivers of water, massive waves and blinding flashes of light. Just be careful not to actually hurt anyone too badly with them. Making people scramble is fine; toasting them isn't.

MISSING VIS

As Vergis will explain to his apparently-amnesiac "junior magi," the "something" that has gone missing is actually the Covenant's vis stores. These are normally kept in a magically-locked cabinet in the Covenant library.

The player characters will probably deny having anything to do with the missing vis. Vergis will accept this – he didn't really think his "junior magi" would do such a thing – but this doesn't change the fact that he expects them to do something about it... promptly. He'll be satisfied only with a heartfelt promise that the "junior magi" will leave no stone unturned in tracking down the missing vis. (With the threat of a dissatisfied senior magus on one hand, and the nature of the object of the quest on the other – vis – it shouldn't take long for the characters to come to a decision...)

Once he's obtained a commitment from the characters to go look for the missing vis, Vergis will turn them loose into the Covenant to manage as best they can. Unless they manage to strike exactly the right note with the senile magus, they won't receive any help from him. Vergis will respond to questions

Mercurio, filius Sylgus follower of Guernicus

Mercurio is completely sure of himself. He knows that other, weaker magi succumb all too easily to the temptation to break the Code. He can feel it. Exactly what it is they've done, he's not sure... but under stern enough questioning it will come out, the way it always does. It's simply a matter of asking the right questions.

Of course, when he doesn't get answers right away, or when magi start hiding behind the Code itself, it can become a little much for the high-strung Quaësitor. This often leads to him storming out of the Covenant in the direction of the nearest ranking Quaësitor, looking for support. Often, once his superiors look into the matter, it comes out that he has little if any evidence.

To be quite honest, the reason why Mercurio is assigned to Falconshand is because it was the most convenient backwater his superiors could find. They'd hoped to keep him out of trouble... and out of their hair. At least this way they don't have to worry too much about his lack of diplomatic ability.

Attributes: Int (Shrewd) +3; Per (Instinctive) +3; Str (Weak Body) -1; Sta (Determined) +2; Pre (Self-Assured) +2; Com (Uncompromising) -1; Dex (Uncoordinated) -1; Qui (Slow Reflexes) -2.

Age 29; Cnf 3; Twi 6; Siz 0.

Virtues and Flaws: Quaësitor +1; Good Characteristic (Sta) +1; Gentle Gift +1; Affinity (Mentem) +2; Minor Deficiencies (Aq;Au;Ig;Te) -4; Compulsion (Find Code-Breakers) -1; Sensitive (Violations of the Code) -1.

Abilities: Speak Latin (Regional Accents) 5; Speak Langue d'Oc (Legal Terms) 4; Scribe Latin (Forgery) 3; Magic Theory (Mentem) 5; Hermes History (Quaësitors) 2; Hermes Lore (Quaësitor) 2; Hermetic Law (Judgments) 2; Parma Magica (Mentem) 3; Concentration (Mentem) 1; Penetration (Mentem) 2; Mentem Affinity (Intellego) 4; Subterfuge (Bluff) 1; Finesse (Mentem) 1; Forgery (Signatures) 1.

Personality Traits: Brave +2; Easily Angered +4; Zealous +4; Self Confident +3; Impulsive +2; Jumps to Conclusions +5.

Arts: Cr 5; In 7; Mu 5; Pe 5; Re 5; An 0; Aq 0; Au 0; Co 3; He 0; Ig 0; Im 3; Me 12; Te 0; Vi 8.

Spells: Sight of the True Form InCo 10; Discerning Images of Truth and Falsehood InIm 10; Memory of the Dream CrMe 20; Weight of a Thousand Hells CrMe 25; Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie InMe 20; Tip of the Tongue PeMe 5; Loss of but a Moments Memory Pe(In)Me 20; Blessing of Childlike Bliss PeMe 25; Call to Slumber ReMe(Co)15.



such as, "Where is the vis kept?" with answers like, "The same place as usual, of course." If the player characters ask for some way to demonstrate to the servants that they're acting under Vergis' authority, the Flambeau will sputter in outrage, "What? Do you mean they don't listen to you? What's gotten into you, boy? Why, when I was younger... (a long incoherent tale of adventures of his youth, probably revolving around incinerating a recalcitrant servant)." As for how much vis there was in the Covenant stores, Vergis will respond, "Well, I can't be expected to keep track of these things, can I?"

Pull out all the stops when role-playing Vergis. This is a great opportunity for broad comedy.

FALCONSHAND GEOGRAPHY

There isn't a map. (A good thing too, as it would probably confuse you as much as it confuses me.) However, don't let that be a drawback; in fact, it's an advantage. Paint the Covenant in your own mind, the church and its tower at the top, a couple of courtyards around it, and the great stairs running round one side... The outer buildings clustered around it, rising three stories to the level on which the church is built... Verandahs, porticos, cloisters, kitchen gardens, docks, causeway... The exact layout doesn't matter, as long as it's (marginally) consistent. (In keeping with the mentality of its occupants, Falconshand is supposed to be confusing and labyrinthine.)

All you have to do is know roughly where the important bits are, and just wing it from there. And if you can't remember how to get from the library to the kitchens, either just let your player characters wander a bit and find it, or get them well and truly lost. From now on you can juggle with the scenery to do anything you want.

(By the bye, if your players decide to try to map it, shoot them. We're no longer playing that game...)

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

The following areas are important (at least to the people that live in them and to the plot), so make them the landmarks in Falconshand.

The Library: This is right next to the room where they met Vergis – where the vis was, also where the books are (better than vis any day). The player characters may have some difficulty getting in, the doors being locked and warded (Magic Resistance is 30), and Delmont the librarian being perennially suspicious.

The Kitchens and Refectory: A floor below the church, on the opposite end to the great stairs, sits the center of the covenant's lives. Both are large pillared rooms filled with the smell of food and smoke from the kitchen fires. When not otherwise engaged, most of the Covenant ends up here.

The Magi's Labs: These are scattered around the Covenant, except for Porphyry's which is sunk deep into the rock, and Vergis' which is under the

- courtyard in front of the church. Only Vergis and Porphyry have significant defenses, but similarly only they have anything really worthwhile.

- *The Storerooms:* A series of vaulted rooms at the base of the Covenant, these contain literally everything of any value that Vergis ever acquired during his youth. It would probably take years to adequately catalogue.

- *The Baths:* These are a series of magically-heated Roman-style baths in the crypts under the church.

THE HUNT

- Now that we have a vague idea of the layout of Falconshand, we can set the characters off on their wild-goose chase. (It is a wild-goose chase, simply because the reason the vis is missing is because Vergis borrowed it and forgot to put it back. Typical of him, really.)

- The conduct of the search depends entirely on the characters themselves. The Covenant is huge, with no end of hiding-places for the "stolen" vis. (And, come to think of it, there's no reason to believe it's still in the Covenant anyway, is there...?) If they have any sense, the characters will indulge in a little detective work, rather than blindly rattling through closets and under bed. The following are a list of possible leads; just don't confine yourself to them.

THE LIBRARY

- The scene of the crime will probably present the most frustrations. Even getting inside is problematic, because of its magical locks and persistent guardian. Barring magical means, the only real way to enter is to get one of the Covenant's magi to accompany you. (The visitors will probably have a hard enough time even figuring this much out. After all, it's difficult to conduct a conversation with a mute like Delmont through an iron door...)

- If they do manage to enter, the player character find shelves groaning arcane tomes, and an empty cabinet. There's no sign of forced entry to the cabinet; in fact, if the characters take the time to analyze it in depth, they'll find a number of waiting spells still in place on it. Throughout their investigation, Delmont will stare fixedly at the player characters – an unnerving experience, especially since he has the merit Piercing Gaze.

- Should they interrogate Delmont (through the medium of a sheet of paper), the investigators will learn that he's in the library about 16 hours a day, leaving only to eat and sleep. That and the fact that he first found the cabinet open two days ago considerably narrows the time-frame of the "theft." This span of time is so limited that the player characters could easily reveal the "culprit" (Vergis, of course) with a simple application of Eyes of the Past (InIm20). Hopefully, however – for the sake of comedy – the player characters won't have access to this spell.

- Considering the difficulty of entering the library in the first place, and the fact that the vis cabinet

wasn't forced open, implies that the "thief" is probably one of the Covenant magi. Beyond this simple conclusion, the only benefit a visit to the library offers is a chance for some casual pilferage (books are valuable, after all). The library contains the following books: Cr 10; In 12; Mu 8; Pe 9; Re 11; An 5; Aq 7; Au 6; Co 11; He 4; Ig 12; Im 8; Me 8; Te 10; Vi 10. Very impressive really... but don't worry, we'll get them back later.

THE COVENFOLK

None of them really knows anything of particular pertinence. Given half a chance, however, they'll regale the visitors with a flood of mundane trivia concerning the Covenant's magi. Come up with whatever you like about the magi based on their profiles; nothing is too strange. (For example, "Medwrydd is seeing Nex, though she is married to Araq and is carrying Thibault's child," or "Essian is really the long lost heir to a Barony." Both of those just happen to be true...) More importantly, they can tell characters who is in and where to find them. The covenfolk can also repeat the rumor Anselm the gate guard already told the player characters about Mercurio (see Arriving at Falconshand above).

PORPHYRY

By all accounts, Porphyry is a bit more rational than Vergis – just the man to sort out this little problem. The servants are more than willing to point the visitors in the right direction... albeit a little nervously. A little trip down a set of dark, winding stairs and the player characters are confronted with the door to Porphyry's sanctum. Carved into the door is a representation of the head of Medusa; next to it is a sanctum sign.

Wise characters will leave at this point. The more persistent (or foolhardy) may try knocking or calling. If they are really loud or obnoxious, or if they try magic to get the door open (Magic Resistance 50, by the way), the Medusa-head wakes. With a deep grinding noise, the snakes begin to weave and the eyes slowly start to open. Characters who don't shut their eyes deserve what they get.

The insanely persistent may keep their eyes closed and keep on calling. Another half-hour of that, and Porphyry himself opens the door. He tells them to shut up and go away, or he'll kill them, then shuts the door. So much for Porphyry's help.

THIBAUT

- At some point in their search, the characters are bound to come across Thibault, the sole other magus in residence who is actually available. (Thibault is the most likely way for them to get into the library.)

- When they encounter him, he has already learned about the missing vis, and about their quest. In a show of fraternal cooperation, Thibault volunteers to help them out. When he bothers to fake it, Thibault can be unfailingly helpful and kind: a friendly fellow, so obviously trustworthy. He'll continue to wear this friendly façade until he finds a clue leading him to the missing vis (unlikely, of course), or until he gets a couple of the visitors – preferably non-magi – alone. (If this simply isn't happening, he uses his Entrancement ability to make sure it does.) As evening approaches, Thibault makes his move (see Kidnapped below).

SHAW, THE ALCHEMIST

- Why would the player characters talk to him? Well, because he's there, I suppose.
- Shaw doesn't have anything useful to aid the investigation. What he does have is a small lab



The Dark Fae (8 of them)

Hideous deformed things, they comprise the cast-off parts of the worst creatures of the deep. Yet, deep in their eyes can be found a glimmer of the beauty that once lay within them. Their voices are like the gurgling of the sea among the rocks, and hold some of its terrible majesty. There is beauty in them yet for all their terror.

Faerie Might 20.

Attributes: Int (Cunning) +1;

Per (Alert) +1; Str (Huge) +3; Sta (Scaled) +3; Dex (Sure) +1; Qui (Webbed feet) -1.

Attacks: Maw (1st +4; Att +5; Dam +18); Claws (1st +7; Att +8; Dam +10).

Dodge: +3

Soak: +10

Body Levels: Ok; Ok; -1; -1; -5; Inc.

Powers: Drowning, 2pts (any non-waterbreather in the sea will immediately begin to drown as Lungs of Water and Death); Gift Lungs of the Fish, 1pt (as the spell).

tucked away in a tower, filled with the most poorly-maintained set of laboratory equipment imaginable seething with a variety of reagents. The assemblage gives off a vast cloud of black smoke that billows out of the room as the door is opened, sending everyone in the nearby area into fits of coughing. The only person unaffected by the whole thing is Shaw, who emerges, much burned, carrying a bubbling beaker. He wants a volunteer to test his newest concoction... (The covenfolk still shudder to think that he was once the cook.)

GUILLEMO, BOSUN OF THE SEA FALCON

The Sea Falcon is Vergis' old galley, which now lies moldering by the dock. Guillemo was one of her officers. These days, he is perpetually half-drunk, and spends his time reminiscing about the old days. He won't be much help in the investigation, except that he'll mention that tonight is a bad night to be out on the waves. "It's the dark of the moon, and on this night the unseelie sea faeries and merfolk acquire a taste for human flesh. Aye, a very bad night..."

CONCLUDING THE SEARCH

Seeing as they aren't going to find the missing vis anyway, let the player characters search until it ceases to be amusing for them to do so. (This is your chance to cameo bits of the setting that you like, and improvise to your heart's desire.) When the search starts to get boring, it's time to move on to the next part of the adventure.

KIDNAPPED

At some point before nightfall, Thibault makes his move. He uses whatever subterfuge is required to get a couple of the visitors – preferably mundanes – alone, and then Entrances them into accompanying him to "find the vis before the thief makes off with it." To use Entrancement, roll Thibault's Prs+Entrance of 7 against his targets' Stm+3. If he succeeds, the characters see the "logic" of the mage's request, and accompany him willingly. If his Entrancement attempt fails, Thibault gestures and a huge, lumbering figure – a zombie – emerges from around a corner. (Use a standard zombie, with a battle axe and ring armor.) Then the mage multi-casts Lifting the Dangling Puppet to immobilize his subjects long enough for the zombie to carry them away. For the sake of the story, this abduction should go smooth; "fudge" the rolls if necessary.

Either with the characters following him "willingly," or dragged by the zombie, Thibault hurries down to the main gate. Here he encounters Adam... and Entrances the boy to follow him as well. Thibault also Entrances the gate guard, commanding him to tell no-one of his passage. He then leads his charges out along the causeway, toward the shore.

Ideally, the rest of the player characters shouldn't know about the abduction until later, when it becomes apparent that Thibault, Adam and a couple of the visitors are missing. As night falls, a chambermaid named Adela mentions that she saw them heading down the causeway for the mainland.

By the time the remaining characters can raise a search party, Thibault is half an hour gone and the sun is setting. The covenfolk are eager to find out what happened, especially since the gate-guard remembers nothing of people passing. As the search party sets off, Guillemo the bosun tries to stop anyone leaving because of the dark faeries. This is likely to spark the fears of the covenfolk and the characters for the missing innocents, sending them hurrying into the growing dusk.

THE DARK FAE

Meanwhile, Thibault and his new "friends" have wended their way along the track by the sea, to a large copse of silver birch trees sitting on a high promontory overlooking the water. From the top of the cliff, a narrow path heads down to a cove otherwise accessible only by sea. Carefully making their way down this path, they come to a small beach, the sand seemingly made of crushed shells. By this time, if they aren't already trussed up, Thibault's companions will doubtless want to know what is going on. As the still water begins to stir, and horrific dark shapes rise from the water, Thibault will be more than happy to tell them in full grisly detail.

While fae are immortal, some have fouled themselves with the touch of mortality. Their once beautiful and pure bodies, weighed down by the dross of mortality, become warped and terrible; they even begin to age. Only by consuming mortal flesh

can they halt this process... though this taints them still further, eventually making their appetites grosser still. These fae lust after the meat of the pure and innocent, and will go to any ends to obtain it.

For a few short moments Thibault talks quietly with one of the fae, something changes hands (some little magical gewgaw; gamemaster's discretion) and then the mage and his zombie depart, leaving the characters and Adam alone with their new captors. Meanwhile...

PURSUIT

With the sun set, and no moon, finding the trail is virtually impossible. Old Jean is still sitting on the causeway; when asked where Thibault and the others went, he just gestures vaguely towards the land. Unless the characters can produce some magic which will allow them to track the captives, the covenfolk will disperse in all directions, in the faint hope of finding something.

Tracking with magic is not easy. If someone possesses an arcane link to one of the missing characters, then things are much simpler. Without one, an InTe or He spontaneous spell of L20 or an InAu L25 (or something similar) might work. With a link, these spells are five levels easier, and InCo, Me and Im would probably work as well. Talking to the local animals is also effective, given a bit of time. A wide variety of other tactics come to mind, but each needs to be judged individually.

Without appropriate magic, the searchers have little choice but to cast about randomly. In any case, about 10 minutes after the searchers reach the mainland they spot a man on a horse coming down the road toward the Covenant. He stops short by a birch copse atop the cliff, and appears to be talking rather acrimoniously to someone standing by the road. On closer inspection, the characters see that the standing man is Thibault. Anyone from the Covenant can recognize the other as Mercurio, the Quaesitor.

QUESTIONS

By the time the characters can reach the birch copse, the dispute has settled down – though Mercurio is still glaring at Thibault. Faced with such a large number of individuals interested in his welfare, Thibault claims to be confused as to where the missing people may be, and how it came to be that he was seen in their company. He says he was simply out for a walk. This claim of innocence incenses Mercurio, who immediately begins a full and legal investigation into the actual events – all of which is probably of no help to the missing.

The characters will probably want to bypass legal niceties and get to the bottom of things now, probably by asking Thibault some probing questions with thumbscrews and irons (or the magical equivalent thereof). Unfortunately Mercurio, always a stickler for the law, won't allow the visitors to perpetrate any such illegalities against Thibault.

- Moreover, any overt move towards Thibault brings Marcus, his zombie, lumbering out of the bushes (scaring off all the covenfolk), and Thibault's sword out of its scabbard...

- After a few moments thought, Mercurio notes that the Hermetic Code only allows for restitution in the case of destruction of properties appertaining to the study of magical arts – that which might conceivably affect the wronged party's ability to work magic. Unfortunately, grogs and companions don't come under that heading. While the Quaesitor could conceivably bring Thibault up on a count of interfering with the faeries, this doesn't help them searchers or their missing companions. The visitors' only option, Mercurio judges, is to challenge Thibault to Certamen.

- At that very moment a gale of howling, bubbling laughter rises up from the nearby promontory, probably putting off the prospect of a magical duel for some time.

STORIES

- Around the captives on the beach below, the fae gather, talking amongst themselves. The captives' plight looks grim, but should they think to bargain with their captors, they may save themselves. Even if they only plead for mercy they will be given the same offer by the leader of the dark faeries:

- "We will let you live if you can do one thing. Tell us stories." The faerie gives a many-toothed grin. "If you can keep us amused till dawn with your tales, we will let you go free. But should one of us become bored at any time, then you die."

- "Begin. I'm getting hungry already."

- Hopefully the players of the captive characters will be able to rise to the occasion. Give them five minutes to keep the whole gaming group entertained with tall tales. As soon as someone in the group stops paying attention to the tales, the creatures become hungry. If the players can keep everyone amused for five minutes, then at an appropriate point laugh long and loud – and cut back to the others.

TO THE RESCUE

- Hurrying through the threatening shadows of the birch wood, the would-be rescuers come to the top of the cliff, and can look down at the horror below. Lit by the stars and the phosphorescence of the water, a circle of monsters crouch round the captive for whom they're searching. If they're lucky, they'll hear a lone voice below telling a tale, to the accompaniment of grisly laughter and mutterings. If they aren't so lucky, the monsters have already started eating, and it's too late to do anything but clean up the mess...

- Assuming the former, the rescuers on the cliff above have a number of options:

- *To Fight:* To rescue the captive from the faeries. This way lies disaster, however, since the creatures would retreat into the water with their captives. In their own element, the faeries are virtually

unbeatable... and, in any case, the captives would quickly drown.

To join in the story-telling: In this, case wrap the adventure up with a half-hour-long story-telling session, with the creatures demanding that different people take turns, and characters butting in when others falter. Eventually, the faeries will be satisfied, and leave.

To get Thibault to do something about it: If they can beat him in Certamen, the characters can demand that he get the prisoners out of there. Thibault will have little choice but to return the payment he received from the faeries in return for the lives of the captors. (Neither the faeries nor Thibault will be overly pleased with this outcome...)

To offer someone as a replacement: The faeries don't really care who entertains them... or sates their hunger. The rescuers might be able to negotiate replacement captives: perhaps Thibault, Marcus the zombie, nearby villagers, or even themselves.

There are many other possibilities, from spectacular "airlift" rescues, to bringing in Vergis to deal with the "vis thieves." One way or another, however, the characters will eventually sort out the issue of the captives.

LOOSE ENDS

Of course, the whole matter is far from finished. While the characters have probably endeared themselves to the mundane populace of Falconshand by rescuing Adam, certain of the magi are another matter.

Thibault doesn't really care what happens to the innocents he kidnapped... as long as he gets to keep the payment he received from the sea faeries for delivering the mortal flesh they wanted. If he's denied this payment – through losing Certamen, for example – he'll certainly hold a large grudge against the player characters... and nobody can hold a grudge like Thibault.

Either before or after the rescue, it's quite possible that one or more of the player characters will challenge the Tylalus mage to Wizard's War. If so, preparations for the "campaign," the actual month-long conflict, and the aftermath can generate numerous follow-up adventures.

Of course, the player characters might not share Mercurio's strict respect for the Hermetic Code, and might have taken more direct action. If the player characters contravened the Code in any way, the Quaesitor will prosecute them for the infraction to the fullest degree. Should they have actually killed Thibault, Mercurio will do his utmost to have them Wizard's Marched.

Even if Thibault is unharmed, Mercurio will still do his best to make life miserable for the player characters. When he learns about the missing vis, he'll try to charge them with "impersonating other magi for the purpose of subverting the resources of Falconshand." While he's at it, he'll go over them and through their possessions with a fine toothcomb,

- and probably find anything they happened to "acquire" during their stay at Falconshand (books, for example...).

- The charges based on "subversion of resources" will come to naught, however, as soon as Vergis hears about it. The senile mage has remembered that he borrowed the vis... and forgotten that he ever suspected theft. "What do mean, they were trying to steal the vis stores?" the Flambeau mage will demand of Mercurio. "Preposterous! I had the vis in my room the entire time."

- If Mercurio has, Vergis' opinion, been overly zealous in the pursuit of his duties – a strong possibility, considering Mercurio's personality – the old mage may feel obliged to hand over a small quantity of vis to the visitors, or offer a season or two library time, just to make up for the whole thing. (Since Vergis won't let Mercurio forget this over the next few months, the Quaesitor will have another reason to dislike the player characters.)

- Should the player characters decide to spend any more time at Falconshand, the other Covenant mages will soon be returning, possibly involving the visitors in their own internecine squabbles and hidden agendas. In any case, Falconshand and its diverse inhabitants can represent ongoing allies or rivals for the player characters... or merely an occasional irritant!



Piers Brown

- Piers is, though he regrets to have to admit it, really a Canadian, although was born in England and habitually insists on emphasizing his English heritage. He started role playing in 1982 at age 11, when one of his friends came around one evening with the *Dungeons and Dragons* game and said, "This looks fun. Let's play it tomorrow." He game mastered from his first session onwards, and seems to have been doing it "about ninety per cent of the time" since then.

- Piers works at a comic shop, where he sells role playing games. He attempts to addict other people to his hobby. He is also involved in a live-action vampire society, the Camarilla, two or three days a week, and runs a weekly *Ars Magica* campaign.



Eric Hotz

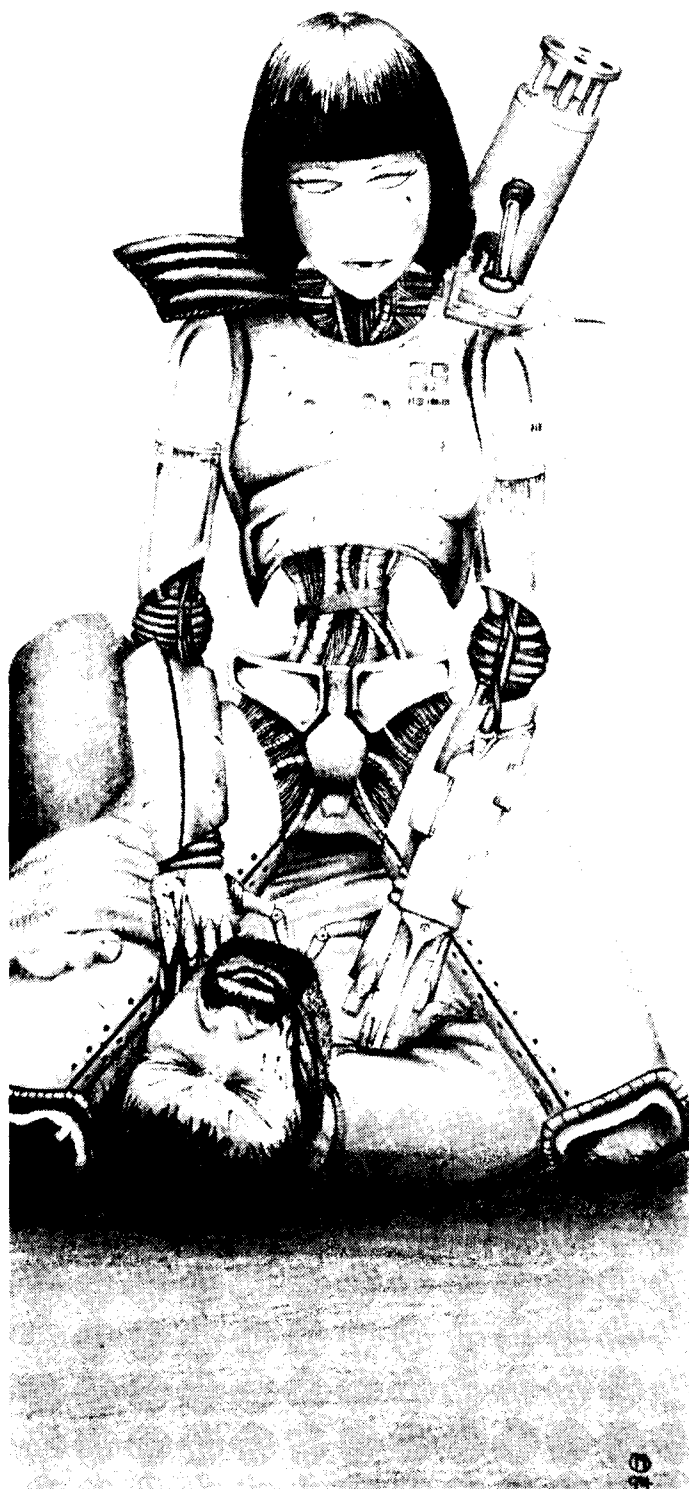
- Over the past 15 years, Eric's illustrations have appeared in the products of a number of different gaming companies, including TSR, Wizards of the Coast, Columbia Games, White Wolf, Atlas Games, and Steve Jackson Games. He trained in graphic design and as an illustrator in Vancouver, and has worked as an archaeological excavator and field artist in northern British Columbia.

- Eric is also a wargamer, and enjoys playing tabletop miniatures games.

ROBO REBELS: OPERATION ORPHEUS

BY JOHN FLETCHER

ART BY MIKE CRIPPIN



• **A**nnie's feet hardly touched the ceramite steps as she fled from the light of the upper levels. The walls had turned from gleaming white to sooty gray, the spotless thoroughfares had become tight, littered alleys. She had thrown her Aegis onto a passing transport Robo so the Cyclopes could not track her. That also meant she ran in darkness because, without an Aegis, Hyperion no longer turned on lights for her.

• Around the corner was the old sector Agora. No one went there. She'd stashed supplies there, and could hide until she figured out what to do. Without an Aegis, she was cut off from Olympus and the Cornucopia. She wasn't Angela D@3334P any more, she was just Annie.

• She turned the corner and froze. Standing in the open center of the Agora was a type of Robo she'd never seen before, only heard described in whispers. Human-shaped but of shiny bare metal, it turned slowly, scanning the plaza. Annie knew its name: Fury.

• It spotted her. Annie ran to reach her cache. Long blades slid out from the Fury's forearms. Its legs pounding like pistons, the Fury drove across the moonlit plaza towards Annie.

• Annie dove into the debris hiding her supplies and snatched up the Paralysis. She turned and fired continuously as the Fury closed. She didn't know if the gun would work on the Fury or not, but it was her only hope...

INTRODUCTION

• Robo-Rebels is a campaign setting of the far future in which high-tech city dwellers, barbaric outcasts, and self-aware robots battle against the tyranny of a robot-dominated society. This adventure is intended for use with GURPS® Basic 3rd edition and the new sourcebook, GURPS Robots (GR). References are made to other GURPS materials but they are not necessary to play the adventure.

• Built, maintained, and run by robots called Robos, the gleaming city of Elysia is perhaps the last technologically advanced settlement on Earth. The humans of Elysia believe they live in paradise, but their culture is static and meaningless. Most of their "jobs" produce nothing, their decisions are irrelevant, and their lives hollow. The humans outside the city have a harsh existence, living off the land and scavenging from the ruins of the past. When the Robos of Elysia encounter these feral humans, they exterminate them like vermin, and take their resources.

• Dealing with humans has caused self-awareness to develop in some Robos. Mercilessly persecuted by Elysian authorities, the Sentients began to sympathize with the humans. In a valiant attempt to

change their world, these sentient robots have begun forming organized resistance movements by recruiting and educating discontented humans.

ELYSIA: CITY OF WONDER.

The gleaming city of Elysia lies in the center of a wide barren plane. Its great spires tower over two thousand feet, but none have windows facing the outside world. The buildings, great and small, are manufactured of smooth ceramic panels and chrome-plated alloy. Greenery, sculpture, fountains, and numerous public events make the city seem alive and vibrant. The human inhabitants travel about the city on foot via moving sidewalks and lifts, or by robot vehicle.

A sheer wall 28 stories tall and 200 feet thick circles the city's perimeter. Within this wall, and in large complexes below ground level, the robot population of the city labors ceaselessly to provide the humans' every material need. Large doors in the outer wall mark the bays where resource-collecting vehicle offload their cargoes of minerals and biomass.

The city is home to over 10,000 humans, and 35,000 Robos. There are hundreds of models of Robo, but the most commonly seen by humans are the WR Worker Robo, the SR Service Robo, and the TR Tech Robo. The role of the police is filled by the GR Guard Robo.

All is watched over by the supercomputer Olympus and its many programs. Every human has an Aegis, a metal disc worn as a badge or pendant. The Aegis is a personal transponder that tells the automated systems of Elysia the location and identity of each human. With an Aegis, humans have access to the Cornucopia, the city's system for distribution of food and manufactured goods. Robos have a similar built-in transponder, allowing Olympus to track their location.

LIFE IN ELYSIA

Food, buildings, and all manufactured goods are produced for the humans of Elysia from basic materials by the Robos. The Robos acquire the minerals and organic raw materials through efficient recycling, and equally efficient pillaging of the surrounding lands. In vast industrial complexes these materials are reduced, refined, processed, and manufactured into products to suit the needs of the city. Humans are not involved in this process except as consumers, and occasionally as designers of novelties.

Maintaining the human population is such a high priority for the master computer that the decision-making was long ago taken out of the hands of the humans themselves.

Humans efforts are channeled by the Robos into arts and entertainment, design and architecture, and finance and marketing. In all cases, the humans are led to believe they are contributing to the culture and economy of the city. In actual fact, only a small fraction of the

media programming features real human artistic effort. Most are carefully-designed computer simulations, planned to instill conformity and docility. Similarly, no human-designed object or buildings is actually produced unless Olympus deems it harmless. This is easily accomplished by denying the designers funding. Though thousands of humans spend their days trading shares and making deals, most of the commodities they trade are imaginary and the financing they arrange fictional. The power of any business can be checked by cutting its sales, increasing its expenses, or even introducing a fictional competitor in its market, since all production, distribution and sale are handled through Olympus. By isolating humans from each other, using simulations and false communications, Olympus has kept business and the arts going for over eight hundred years, without any measurable impact on the fortunes of the city.

REBELS IN THE CITY

There are over 500 rebel operatives scattered throughout Elysia in numerous cells. Each has a means of communication with the rebel camps outside the city. The human agents who have remained in the city have kept their Aegis, and have no difficulty moving about. Sentient Robos must recharge periodically, and to avoid detection must do so at secret rebel power taps. Unless acting suspiciously, they are usually not stopped by patrolling GRs. If an agent is identified by Olympus as a threat, it is imperative that they discard their Aegis or have their transponder removed so they cannot be located. Operatives from outside carry real-looking but non-functional Aegis to avoid suspicion.

SECURITY IN ELYSIA

The Olympus system can tell the location of every Aegis and Robo transponder in the city. Argus, the Olympus security AI, cannot, however, tell directly what a character is doing. It can send a Robo to observe and report back. If a character is carrying out acts which threaten Elysia's stability, Argus will include their image in a "most wanted file" which will be download to each Robo the next time it interfaces. This way, even though mobile Robos cannot receive the signal of the Aegis, they are alerted to the activities and last known location of rebel agents.

It also means that rebel agent have some chance to deceive GRs by using skills like Stealth, Disguise, and Acting.

If agents are identified while in a public area, the Olympus security program, Argus, will dispatch one or more teams of GRs. If in an uninhabited sections, Argus may send one of the newer Combat Robos. In the case of suspicious activity, Argus or another of the Olympian AIs may use an Infiltration Robo to get a closer look at the agents.

DEATH IN ELYSIA

Humans who suffer terminal illness or who are arrested by authorities are sent to Tartarus, a vast cryogenic freezing complex beneath Elysia. While their bodies lie frozen in suspended animation, the deep cold turns their neural pathways into superconductors. They gain the Advantages of Lightning Calculator and Eidetic Memory, but lose all social skills and personality. The Als of Olympus have learned to recruit these disembodied minds for labor in their various realms. Called Shades, they appear in Olympus as pale, effete, and expressionless servants. Most labor in the realm of Hades, acting as minor sum-checkers and file-servers. Only by reminding a Shade of its former existence through a successful Olympus Social skill test can its personality and free will be brought to the surface. Once stimulated, a Shade can maintain its personality for as long as others continue to converse with it and treat it like a human. If left alone for more than a few minutes, it will return to its drudgery.

OLYMPUS: THE ELYSIA MASTER COMPUTER

Olympus is a TL 12 megacomputer with enormous memory and uncountable peripherals, which runs all operation in Elysia. It is networked into everything with a hard connection in the city. Olympus communicates with mobile Robos through data/power sockets located throughout the city. Robos which recharge from unmodified data/power sockets automatically interface with Olympus.

Elysians can verbally access the computer from any terminal in the city. At sites called Oracles, they can use a direct neural interface to visit Olympus, under the guidance of Med Tech Robos called Sibyls. Should they chose to, the Als of Olympus can communicate with the public through holographic projection at Oracles.

In all cases, the virtual realm of Olympus appears as an idyllic, rolling country-side surrounding a formidable mountain. The programs and systems of the Olympus computer manifest as idealized images of ancient Greek life. A manufacturing complex, for example, would appear as a forge, and the control program as a blacksmith. The world of the Olympus interface is very real-looking, but actually highly simplified. Most objects are merely decorative and cannot be moved or changed, and there are no small, unimportant objects like loose rocks. Objects which are damaged become less and less substantial, fading completely when they are destroyed or "killed".

Because of the life-like and intuitive nature of the Olympus interface, the GM should simply use normal GURPS interaction and combat rules, substituting the equivalent Olympian skill (see City Characters) for the real-world skill. Characters' Olympian Health and damage work exactly the same way that they do in the real world. When a character "falls unconscious" in Olympus, the

- program creating and animating his persona in the virtual world "hangs" or "freezes". In the virtual world, his persona collapses; it can still be damaged, and "healed" (through the use of diagnostic programs emulated by the First Aid skill). The "meat" body of an "unconscious" character is comatose until his persona is returned to consciousness, or until someone physically jacks him out. If a character "dies" in Olympus, she no longer exist as far as the Olympian interface is concerned, and is expelled from the system. The character's account is canceled, and she cannot enter Olympus again except by using a false ID. Olympian damage does not affect the material body, but will reappear when the characters "jack in" the next time.

CHAOS: THE EMPTY WASTES

- The world outside Elysia is Chaos, the unformed void. To the Elysians, the outside world is a barren emptiness, unformed, unknowable. They live in ignorance of the Robos' exploitation of the world for the support of the city. Only in a few secret places can Elysians actually look out on the grim wasteland beyond the city. Centuries of exploitation by the tireless Robos have reduced it to a blasted moonscape. If they strain, in the distance observers can see hills are tinged with green.

- There are indeed productive areas, and the humans who survive there live as hunter-gatherers, herders or subsistence farmers; a very few leaders and craftspeople are gathered in villages or fortifications. Their cultures are a strange mixture of home-made low technology (TL 2), with relics of past high-tech cultures (TL10+). Sophisticated machinery and electronics long ago failed and were dismantled for their materials. Objects constructed of high-tech ceramics and plastics have survived the ages unscathed. Many, like bowls and eating utensils, are still used for their original purpose, but new uses have been found for some materials. The protective conduits for laser communications trunks, for example, are much in demand for use as barrels for black-powder weapons. This combination of primitive tech and high-tech materials averages out to about TL 4.

- The Chaotic peoples have a tribal culture, with leaders elected from their nobility. They dress in hides or coarse cloths, and decorate their belongings with totem symbols specific to their tribe, clan, and family.

- Players might model their characters on the Celts, the Cossacks, or the Native Americans of the Great Plains.

OLYMPIAN SKILLS

- City-dwellers are unique in that they can have skills for use in the Olympus computer interface. These are actually computer manipulation skills, but they are used in the Olympus interface like conventional GURPS skills. All are Mental/Hard skills to learn.

CITY CHARACTERS

The Robos normally cultivate pacifism and conformity in the humans of Elysia. Some humans have come to recognize their oppression on their own or through education by sentient Robos. Some have stayed in Elysia to act as secret agents. Others have been smuggled out of the city to help the Chaotics in their constant battles.

City characters begin with 100 points, and must spend points on one of the following skills:

- possible in the Robo Rebels background, but it should be low-powered and strictly controlled by the GM. Magic as practiced by shamans in *GURPS Old West* would also be appropriate.
- Characters are the warriors and heroes of their tribe, and may equip themselves as they see fit, with weapons and armor up and including TL4 black-powder guns. Chaotic heroes also have access to 1d-3 pieces of armor made from ancient high-tech materials (see the Salvaged Armor sidebar).

Olympian Skill:	Default:	Use:
Aim	Any ranged combat -6	Any ranged attack
Area Knowledge: Olympus	IQ-6 or Comp Ops -4	Use to find way around Olympus Interface and identify objects and beings.
Craft	Computer Programming -2	Use to manifest objects. GM will adjust difficulty. Versatile objects are harder to make.
Evade	IQ-6	As any Parry, Dodge, or Block.
Social	IQ-6	As Acting, Bard, Disguise, or Perform, to deceive or influence others.
Melee	Any melee or H to H -6	Any hand-to-hand or armed attack, or shield skill. Parry and block skill are 1/2.
Transit	IQ-6	As Climb or Survival to overcome terrain.
Sneak	None	As Stealth to avoid others.
Search	IQ-6	As Research or Tracking
Verify	None	As Detect lies

Administration, Architecture, Economics, Literature, Politics, Public Speaking, or Writing. They may spend unlimited points on Artistic skills, Athletic skills, Craft skills, Social skills, or the new skills used in the Olympus Interface. They can spend up to 10 points on any other skills, except Psionics and Magic. They may only chose Advantages authorized by the GM, and may not chose physical Disadvantages. For equipment, roll a die: 1 Tangler pistol, 2 Paralysis pistol, 3 Stun pistol, 4 Tangler, 5 Active Aegis with false ID, 6 Monowire Short Sword. They can have one uncopiable Olympus utility program that creates the equivalent of any melee weapon or bow while in the Olympian interface. If they have escaped the city, they can have any TL4 Chaotic equipment they want (except salvaged armor).

CHAOTIC CHARACTERS

Characters should be created from 100 points, and may use Advantages, Disadvantages, and Skills from any low-tech worldbook, from *GURPS Ice Age* through *GURPS Old West*. Those created using only the rules in *GURPS Basic* will not be disadvantaged in any way. The practice of magic by characters is

ROBOS

- The Robos referred to in this adventure are all based on examples from *GURPS Robots*. Combat stats are summarized here; for details of construction, refer to *GURPS Robots*.

- As stated in *GURPS Robots*, TL9+ brains with neural nets and complexity of 7+ have a chance of developing sentience. At higher tech levels, safeguards can be employed to prevent sentience from developing. The design and manufacture of the Robos in Elysia, however, has been entirely automated for hundreds of years, so the need for such safeguards has not been anticipated! Many Robo designs have the potential to develop sentience if exposed to human concepts such as humor, experimentation and free-will. Sentient Robo PC are possible for all types included here except the Guard Robo. The comrades of a sentient Infiltration Robo may think it's human, and the Robo itself may not remember or realize that it's a machine (Disadvantage: Delusion, major 15pts).

- All Elysia Robos have the advantages Absolute Timing, Doesn't Sleep, Eidetic Memory 2, Lightning Calculator, and Mathematical Ability, and the disadvantages Reprogrammable Duty and No Sense

of Humor. The Duties programmed into each Robo vary, but always include obedience to the Elysia master computer.

The location of all Robos is known to Olympus through built-in transponders. Olympus cannot, however, remotely issue new instructions or alter the programming of a mobile Robo. All Robos recharge from universal data/power sockets scattered throughout Elysia, and it is through these that they receive direction. Once a Robo finishes its task, it reports to one of these sockets for instructions, regardless of its power requirements. If a sentient Robo draws power from one of these sockets without protecting itself by some means, it will be detected and marked as a threat. Common methods of protection include using illicit power taps, and disconnecting the data feed pathways.

Infiltration Robo ST body 18, arms 15, DX 11, IQ 12, HT 12/12. Hits: Arms 6, Head 5, Body 12, Legs 6. DR 7 metal. Speed 8. Details as the Prometheus 3000 (GR p120).

Programming: Limited Personality Simulation, Beam Weapons 1, Literacy. Delete sentience as a regular feature. Add Biocomp and Neural Net to allow possibility of spontaneous sentience. The Elysia master computer uses Infiltration Robos to spy on the human populace and search for aberrant Robos. IRs usually carry a Paralysis pistol, Stun Pistol, or Tangler Pistol in a hidden holster.

Service Robo ST 19 body 15 arm, DX 11, IQ 12, HT 25/12. Hits: Arms 6, Head 5, Body 8, Legs 3. DR 7 metal. Speed 8.69. Details as the Omicron 15 (GR p119).

Programming: Domestic, Janitorial. Add Biocomputer and Genius for +2 complexity. This makes the Service Robo a candidate for sentience.

Worker Robo ST 12 body, 5 arms, DX 10, IQ 7, HT 12/15. Hits: Arms 3,3,9, Head 2, Body 15, Wheels 5. DR 2 metal. Speed 15.54. Details as the S-3 Servitor (GR p120).

Programming: Machine Operation, Janitorial. The Worker Robo can become sentient.

Tech Robo ST body, upper arms 10, lower arms 6, DX 10, IQ 8, HT 12/12 Hits: Arms 8,8,5,5, Head 2, Body 12, Legs 3. DR 7 metal. Speed 4.78. Details as the T-64 Tinkerbot (GR p122).

Programming: Repair, Machine Operation. Make TL 11, and add Genius for +2 complexity. Tech Robos can become sentient.

Guard Robo ST body 17, arms 15, DX 10, IQ 9, HT 12/11. Hits: Arms 6, Head 6, Body 11, Legs 6. DR 20 metal. Speed 7.49. Details as the Cerberus (GR p117).

Called "Cyclopes", the GRs are humanoid with their sensors gathered into a single cluster on the front of their heads.

- Programming: Ambidexterity, Beam Weapons 4.
- Delete chemical rockets, laser pistol, stun rifle, and spray gun. The GR uses hand-carried weapons.
- Deployed in teams of three, one is equipped with a pair of Stun pistols (GURPS Basic p208), the second carries two Paralysis pistols (GR p23) and the third a Tangler (GR p26). The GR's brain lacks the complexity to become sentient.

- **Combat Robo** ST body 43, arms 40, DX 15, IQ 13, HT 12/42. Hits: Arms 18, Head 18, Body 42, Legs 21. DR 100 ablative. Ground Speed 12.29. Air Speed 31.4, can hover. Details as the Scorpio Alpha (GR p122).

- Survivors of contact with CRs have named them "Furies" because of their ferocity and they ability to fly.

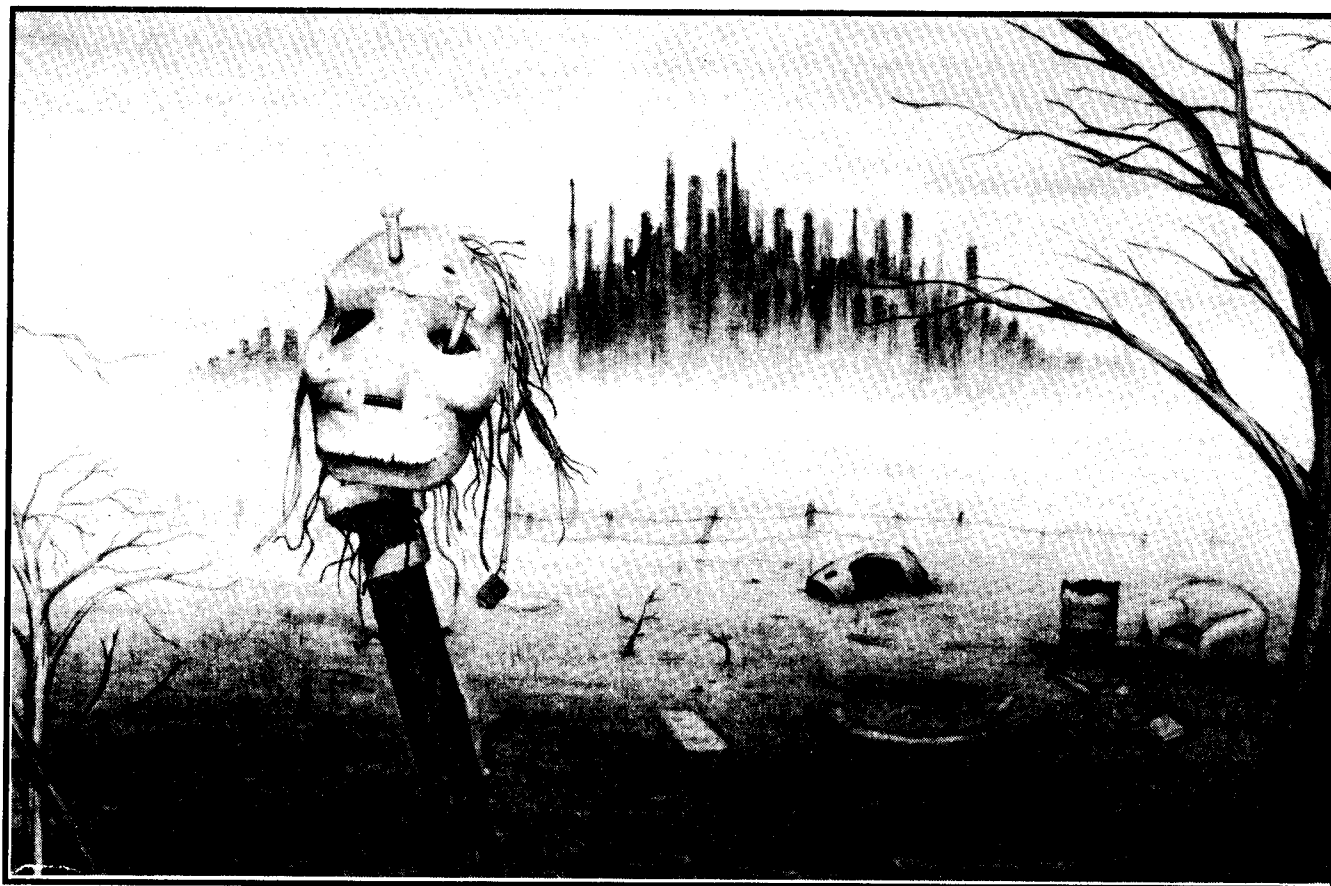
- Programming: Ambidexterity, Combat Reflexes, Full Coordination, Beam Weapons 4, Knife 4.
- Delete Sentience, Psychotronic Circuits, Grav Beamer, Forceblade. Add Neural Net and 2
- Monowire Short Swords (concealed in forearms, +1d cut damage, targets DR/10). The CR uses its built-in X-ray laser, Monowire blades, and hand-carried beam pistols. The CR has been recently developed by the Elysia master computer to fight off Chaotic assaults.
- Unlike the GR and IR, it is equipped and programmed to use deadly force.

OPERATION ORPHEUS: ASSAULT ON THE UNDERWORLD

- One of your contacts in Elysia recently received a document from the deeps of Olympus. It was interesting not for its content, but because of the routing trace included. Every request and file transfer in the Olympus computer system has attached the name of the paths and servers that handle it. This file includes the name Louisa M@2345S – a well-known name in rebel circles.
- Legend tells that Louisa Mazuras was one of the city founders, a designer of computer systems. She disagreed with the autonomy given the Robos and Olympus and was imprisoned by the other founders.
- Your leader, a Tech Robo who has taken the name Daedalus, believes that Louisa yet exists as a Shade in Hades. If this is true, then freeing her is paramount. She could provide valuable information about the construction of Olympus, and her rescue would be a tremendous symbolic victory for the rebellion. It will also be the most challenging rebel operation ever undertaken. While one force makes its way through the frozen crypts of Tartarus to recover her body, a second team must enter Olympus and seek out her Shade in the caverns of Hades.

THE COMPANY OF HEROES

- The PCs begin in a rebel camp near the edge of the wasteland that surrounds Elysia. The party should be a mix of City and Chaotic humans, and include at least one Robo PC. The rebel leadership offers the following plan to enter the Elysia:



The PCs will be hidden in a large piece of techno-salvage, and enter the city using "Vern", VR345952, a sentient Vehicle Robo who has recent come over to the Rebel side. The VR is a barge-like antigrav vehicle that the Elysian Robos use as a troop transport and resource gatherer. VRs are usually limited to altitudes of less than 100 feet and speeds of 100 mph, but Vern has been specially modified for this mission so he can fly up to 300 feet off the ground and at speeds over 200 mph. Vern's data port has also been modified to interface with the Olympus computer as normal, but store any incoming instructions in an isolated memory core. Once docked, Vern will making a repair request that will take approximately 15 hours to schedule, giving him an excuse to stay in the docking bay. He will wait for the first group of PCs return from Olympus, and then take them to rendezvous with their comrades outside the vaults of Tartarus.

After entering the city, the PCs must first make their way to a lab operated by TR111343, a sentient Tech Robo and rebel sympathizer. The TR, "Terrance", will further brief the PCs on Tartarus, Hades, and may provide additional resources.

The "salvage" in which they will hide is a large ceramite cylinder, shielded and sealed. They PCs will have 24 hours of air, and can easily bring any personal equipment that they think they might need. Chaotic PCs are given a shave and basic city clothing. Terrance has insisted that the PCs bring in

- heavy fur clothing, ropes and portable electric lights.
- All humans are given mock Aegis, which appear real at a glance but actually do nothing. Extra high-tech weapons besides those owned by City PCs are not available. All high-tech weapons used by the rebels are captured from GRs or IRs.

THE TROJAN HORSE

- Entry into the city is accomplished by Vern without incident. A few minutes after docking, Vern signals that the bay is empty, and the players can emerge. To reach Terrance's lab, the PCs will have to travel through two city zones, risking detection.

- While crossing the city, the rebels will be harassed by a gang of Elysia's human criminals, carrying clubs. If the PCs produce weapons to fend them off the thugs, most of the toughs will flee. One will remain, claiming to be a rebel. She calls herself Jane S@546114C, and reveals a Paralysis pistol she claims to have taken from a wrecked GR. She is actually an Infiltration Robo, indistinguishable from a human. If allowed, she will follow the rebels all the way to Tartarus, fighting alongside them. She is not a minion of Argus, the Olympus security program. It is up to the GM to decide whether she is actually a sentient Robo and a rebel; if she is an agent of Prometheus, a pro-human Olympus entity; or – a remote possibility – an agent of Hecate, the mysterious and perhaps mad lunar goddess of Olympus.

If players draw attention to themselves and fail any Stealth or Disguise skills checks, they will be accosted by a team of three GRs. If they defeat the Robos, they will have gained several more weapons.

Once the team reaches Terrance's lab, he will offer food, and give the PCs detailed information on their twin tasks: freeing Louisa's mind from Hades, and recovering her body from Tartarus.

THE RIVER STYX

He has arranged for three Interface modules to be brought to his lab for experiments, and three "trial" accounts, so up to three PCs can attempt to penetrate Hades. Robos cannot enter Olympus, and Chaotic characters will not have Olympian skills, so Elysians are the only reasonable candidates. (Jane, of course, cannot enter Olympus, and claims that she doesn't have the skills.) Terrance has several utility programs available: one provides a rope and grapple, one a spear, one a medium shield, one a map showing the path to the memory location where Louisa's Shade was recorded, and a special one he calls the Golden Fleece. The Golden Fleece is actually a long-hidden cryogenic resuscitation program. Once Louisa's Shade is found, the PC must activate the Fleece program. It will activate the revival systems in her compartment in Tartarus.

Upon entering Olympus, the PCs find themselves in a green field with grazing sheep constructs. In their midst is a broken pillar, a landmark construct placed there by Terrance so the PCs can find their way back. Ahead is a towering mountain, Olympus itself. Turning around, they see a gray sky over a leaden valley. This is the direction they must travel, for it is the valley of Death and through it flows the River Styx. The ground between is difficult; PCs must make Transit rolls. If they fail they must make a Strength roll. If they fail the Strength test, they lose a piece of equipment down a crevasse.

When they reach the river, they will see a shallow boat approaching them out of the mist. It is poled by a tall skeletal figure in black: Charon the boatman of the dead. If any of the PCs can make a successful Social roll, Charon will take them on board. His is the only boat on the river, so they will have to keep trying until they make a successful attempt. In mid-river Charon will hold out his hand, requesting his customary payment. Any character who gives him a coin is dumped into the river by Charon. If the character is not immediately rescued, the waters of the river will turn him into a mindless Shade. If the PC is disconnected from the interface he may recover, but is considered "dead" by Olympus and cannot reenter. If he remains in the interface, he will have to be continually reminded of his identity and mission. Charon will grab his scythe and attack anyone attempting a rescue. Charon will continue to the other side, if no one pays him. If he is defeated by the PCs, the boat will continue across by itself. If he reaches the far shore, Charon will again request

payment. If he goes unpaid again, he will attack as before.

THE ABYSS

For the PCs who are going to enter Tartarus, Terrance explains the need for the items that they brought with them (none of them is available in the city, by the way). Firstly, the only way to access Tartarus without alerting Argus is to descend vertically for 130 feet over the edge of a disused plaza called the South Agora. Once the PCs enter Tartarus, they will need the heavy furs and the electric lights to combat the extreme cold and complete darkness. A Robo PC will be programmed with a map and the codes necessary to enter Tartarus.

Crossing the city, each PC must make either a Stealth or Disguise roll to avoid detection. If detected, they will be confronted by either three or six GRs depending on the PCs' abilities. If the PCs have already fought GRs earlier in the adventure, then one "Fury" CR attacks as they reach the South Agora (two "Furies" if the PCs are really tough).

The next challenge for the PCs, the climb, should be played out by using Climb skill tests to descend and Strength tests to hang on if they fail, but should not result in PC casualties. At the bottom, a wide, dark opening leads under the heart of the city.

HADES

As the PCs in the interface trudge on towards Hades, they begin to hear baying and howling like a pack of tormented dogs. Topping a ridge, through the clearing mists they see a large cave mouth. Chained before it is the giant three-headed dog, Cerberus. To enter, the PCs will have to defeat or distract the Guardian of Hades. They could possibly throw a cloak over its heads, throw meat to it, or one of their number could engage it while the other run by (Transit skill roll).

Survivors will immediately encounter Shades when they enter the caverns of Hades. The human-like apparitions hurry about delivering scrolls and books, or sit in long rows copying scrolls. They ignore the PCs unless they interfere with the Shades' duties. If the PCs make trouble, the Shades will start to avoid them, and skeletal demons (security programs, of course) will attack them at irregular intervals (use the stats for Charon).

Following the directions given on their map, the PCs come upon a strange scene. In a large chamber, open to the sky, a large man lies chained across a boulder. Unlike other Olympus constructs, which become less substantial as they are damaged, he appears to be suffering a gaping wound. If the PCs speak to him, he tells them his name – Prometheus – and that he is being punished for helping humanity. If they free him, his wound heals and he offers his aid in their quest.

In the lower reaches of the caverns of Hades – to be precise, in Archival Processing Office 3212B – the

Shade of Louisa Mazuras is found copying a scroll. Through a successful Social skill roll, the PCs will be able to awaken the personality of Louisa. They must convince her to wear the Fleece. As she puts it on, she begins to fade, and after a moment she is gone, hopefully back to the real world.

Fleeing Hades, the PCs are discovered and an alarm is sounded. As they approach the cave mouth, they see Cerberus engaged in battle with a giant. As they dash by, the giant – Argus, the Olympian security AI – kills Cerberus and turns on them. If the PCs are so overmatched that Argus will kill them all, then Prometheus gets in several good blows, injuring the giant. Together the PCs and Prometheus will finish him off.

Charon's boat sits unattended on the river bank, and obediently crosses the river for the PCs. As they charge back to the broken pillar, Prometheus bids them farewell and heads for a wooded hill nearby.

Touching the pillar, they are returned to Terrance's lab. Though much subjective time has passed for the PCs in Olympus, it has been only moments in reality. They must now make their way back across the city and re-board Vern to rendezvous with the rest of their team.

TARTARUS

Following a series of ducts deep under the city, the PCs come to a large armored door. A small lighted panel glows to one side. If someone touches the door, it is freezing cold. When the PC Robo enters the appropriate code, the door slides slowly sideways with a hiss, and heavy mist rolls out across the floor. Inside is darkness. Using their lights, the PCs will see an endless series of horizontal cylinders eight feet long, stacked four high, connected to uncountable pipes and ducts. Consulting the directions given them by Terrance, the PCs can locate Louisa's cryogenic compartment: #37892, about one mile ahead, and a half mile west. It's

- bitterly cold and completely dark in the vaults of Tartarus. Jane has no furs, unless someone offers her those intended for Louisa. Strangely, she doesn't seem to mind the cold. Unless they use lights
- continuously, the only way the intruders can find their way is to hold hands and let the Robo PC lead them. The Olympians have, by this time, fulfilled their mission (hopefully!) and the revival process is underway. This, unfortunately, means that

compartment #37892 has been staked out by a team of three GRs and a Fury CR.

If they approach without caution, the intruders are surrounded by the Robos. If they approach stealthily, Jane "accidentally" fails her roll and gives them away. In both cases, lights snap on and Jane quickly moves to the side of the CR. The PCs hear the following exchange:

Jane – "These humans are in my custody."

CR – "IR unit recognized. Present Authority."

The PCs see Jane reach out... and smash in the firing port of the CR's laser. The CR retaliates by running Jane through with its left arm monoblade. The GRs will open up on the players, who will certainly counterattack. Strangely, the CR seems to disappear from the scene of the battle.

Survivors of the fight can confirm that Jane was

- in fact an Infiltration Robo – apparently on their side.
- Soon after the fight, lights come on in the immediate area of compartment #37892, and it disgorges a confused and frightened woman. By the time the PCs reach the open area below the South Agora, their companions should have arrived with Vern.

THE FLIGHT OF ORPHEUS

- Escaping Elysia with Louisa would be next to impossible were it not for the diversions planned to
- occupy the city's security forces. As Vern rises vertically up the outer wall, explosions can be heard in various parts of the city. The PCs must cling to

Olympian NPCs

Charon

ST 12 DX 18 IQ 8 HT 5/10
Speed 5.75 Move 5
Dodge 12 Parry 16
Armor: PD1 DR3
Attacks: Scythe skill 16, 1d+4 damage

Cerberus

ST 30 DX 12 IQ 5 HT 15/30
Speed 6.75 Move 6
Dodge 6
Armor: PD1 DR 1
Attacks: Bites x 3 skill 12, 1d+2 damage
Advantages: Acute hearing, Alertness. 1 hex Reach
Disadvantages: Gullibility

Prometheus

ST 18 DX 14 IQ 20 HT 16
Speed 7.5 Move 7
Dodge 7 Parry 7
Armor: PD1 DR1
Skills: Olympus melee 14, Olympus craft 16.

Using his craft skill, he will create a Long spear (1d+4, 1 hex reach) and Large Bronze Shield (-2 to attacks, PD4, DR6).

Argus, the 100-Eyed Giant

ST 40 DX 11 IQ 10 HT 25
Speed 9 Move 9
Dodge 4 Parry 6
Armor: None
Attacks: Maul skill 20, 3d+6 damage.
Advantages: Combat reflexes, 360° Vision.

tie-downs on his open deck. The low noise of Vern's antigrav rises to a loud squeal as he strains to reach the top of Elysia's great wall. Standing on the wall is the Fury with the shattered laser. It leaps to the deck and attacks. As Vern speeds away from the city, the PCs must fight a final battle on the pitching deck of the Vehicle Robo.

If successful in their quest, the PCs are given a hero's welcome in the rebel camps. With the help of Louisa Mazuras, perhaps Humanity can one day soon be free of the Robos' domination.

INSIDE OLYMPUS

Characters who enter the Olympus interface perceive themselves as normal humans in ancient Greek attire. Unless they run other utility programs, they will appear with no equipment. The Olympian form needs no food or rest, but if a character's material body suffers Fatigue from lack of food and sleep, this will likewise impair his Olympian form.

There is no one master program inside the Olympus system. When accessing Olympus, users will encounter one or more AIs, each with its own realm of responsibility. Each AI has a unique personality, motivation, and agenda.

- mail and messaging for Olympus and Elysia. He can also be quite the gossip if one gains his confidence.
- **Hyperion** God of the sun, bringer of Light and Heat.
- **Hypnos** God of sleep and dreams. In Olympus, he oversees the realm of virtual entertainment and he is responsible for the Olympus interface itself.
- **Mnemosyne** "Memory" is charged, along with her daughters the muses, with the storage and retrieval of all library data, and the cultivation of the arts.
- **Prometheus** A new presence whose development seems to parallel the awakening of the first sentient robots. He is rumored to be the Olympian manifestation of the first sentient robot. His primary interest seems to be helping humans regain their freedom.

SALVAGED ARMOR

- Chaotics and City allies may have armor made from salvaged high-tech materials. Shields are typically made from lids and small doors, pieces of armor from assorted bits glued to a hide backing, and breast plates and helmets from the casings of Robos and other machines.

Armor Type	PD	DR	Areas	Weight	Hits (optional shield damage rules)
Ceramite Buckler	2	30	x	11lb	10/100
Alumite Shield	4	20	x	5lb	10/150
Duralyn Breastplate ..	4	50	9,10,17,18	18lb	
Robo casing Helmet .	4	8	3,4	4lb	
Piece Armor	3	20	9,10,11,17,18	25lb	
Hauberk			8		

Arachne Appears as a giant spider or a beautiful woman. She is responsible for clothing and fashion.

Argus A giant with 100 eyes. Charged with security of Elysia, he dispatches GRs, IRs, and CRs

Asclepius A kindly old man responsible for medicine and health care.

Atlas Mighty Atlas supervises engineering, building, and safety.

Demeter The goddess of harvest oversees food manufacture and its distribution through the Cornucopia.

Hades Master of the realm of the Shades.

Hecate The goddess of mystery and magic dwells on the Olympian moon. Her motives are not understood and never explained.

Hephaestus Manufacture and maintenance of machinery.

Hermes The messenger of the gods handles all

OLYMPIAN OBJECTS

- Weapons, tools, disguises, etc. are the Olympian manifestations of computer utility programs. All such programs must have an appearance that conforms to the Olympian paradigm. Aggressive programs will appear as weapons, stealth programs as disguises, etc. Since the characters function entirely within the Olympus interface, the nature of the program is not really important. If the characters need an item to overcome some obstacle, they must find it, create it with the Olympian Craft skill, or have someone observing from outside Olympus upload the utility program represented by the item.
- Combat programs representing weapons and armor are not sanctioned by Olympus for humans, and are found only in the hands of outlaws.

CONVERSION NOTES

Robo Rebels could be played with Traveler the New Era, either as a self-contained campaign, or as a location to be visited by space explorers. The natives call their planet Geo (UWP X8659HD). While the Robot culture is TL D, the technical abilities of the human Elysians is actually closer to TL 9. The Chaotic culture is TL 2.

Elysian PCs can choose one of the following careers: Athlete, Bureaucrat, Civil engineer, or Entertainer. This must be followed by Rebel. They cannot, however go to prison. If they would be sent to prison, they instead escape the city and take up life outside. Outside, they can chose a Chaotic career, continue as a Rebel, or take up tinkering as a Mechanic.

Chaotic PCs can choose: Barbarian, Criminal, Hunter, or Farmer.

In all cases, substitute planetary skills for space skills, and ignore any adds beyond +1 for vehicle skills (they're all automated).

Rebels frequently reload snub pistol and shotgun ammunition with armor-piecing slugs.

Guard Robo – As police robot (TNE p.262), no built-in weapons. In a team of three, #1 carries 2 snub pistols with Tranq, #2 carries a pair of 2cm CC laser pistols, and #3 carries an 18mm shotgun with Tranq.

Infiltration Robo – As Veteran NPC with armor 2 in all locations. 2cm CC laser pistol.

Combat Robo – As Elite NPC with armor 3 all locations. Laser Carbine. 2 Sword attacks per round.



John Fletcher

John's first exposure to adventure gaming was in 1979. He received a catalog from Lou Zocchi filled with products from Avalon Hill and SPI, and many cryptic references to something called Dungeons and Dragons. He and his friends were soon playing AD&D, as well as Tunnels and Trolls, Traveller, Villains and Vigilantes, and RuneQuest.

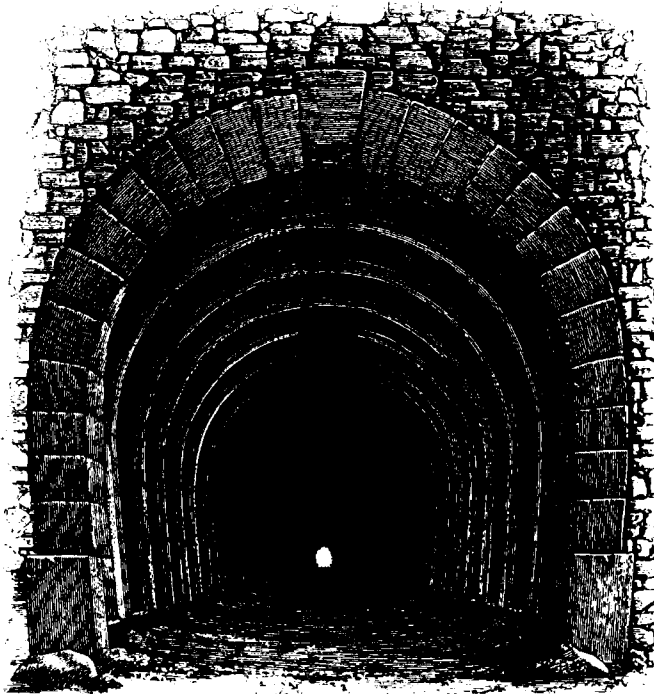
Since then, John has been a retailer, an archaeologist, and a teacher. Today he is a writer.



Mike Crippin

Mike is a commercial artist who took his training at Kwantlen College in Vancouver. His designs have appeared on T-shirts, as well as on the covers of various bands' recordings. Mike formerly played AD&D, and currently enjoys *Warhammer* 40,000.

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ADVENTURES UNLIMITED 73



THE CRATE & THE COFFIN

BY JOHN HART

CALL OF CTHULHU

The *Crate & the Coffin* is an adventure for Fifth Edition *Call of Cthulhu*®. It requires no special supplements or sourcebooks, though the Keeper may want to read *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, or *The Festival*, both by H.P. Lovecraft. This adventure expands upon a monster called The Crawling One, drawn from *Ye Booke of Monsters*, a recent *Call of Cthulhu* sourcebook. It is not necessary for the Keeper to have this book in order to play the adventure, however.

The adventure takes place in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, in the summer of 1927. It is directed towards a small detective agency and the proprietors' friends. Characters should therefore include private investigators, lawyers, police officers and the like. As originally played, the agency had a small speak-easy in the back room, and the clientele/ investigators were all involved in rum running in some way.

The adventure should be primarily one of investigation and interaction with the leaders of the community. On those occasions when the investigators conflict directly with the enemy, they are likely to get the worst of it.

BACKGROUND

In 1755, four friends embarked on a perilous quest for arcane and forbidden knowledge. They conducted their investigations in different ways, according to their natures and resources, but they invariably exchanged their findings whenever possible. The eldest and leader and coordinator was Alexander Brunner. He lived in Boston, and studied the secret writings of an ancestor who was burned at Salem. As the years passed, he moved on to the other secret sources available in that city.

The second eldest was John Fulton, ship's mate and adventurer. He supplied the group with books and lore from Africa and the orient.

The third was William Killeen. The eldest son of a wealthy merchant, William used his father's resources to get John on ships going to the right places, as well as to supply Alexander with money and contacts.

The fourth friend was Martin Salter. He was a

- shipyard hand, and moved in low places.
- Together they advanced their arts, eventually learning some minor spells, and collecting a fair amount of Cthulhu Mythos. Their overt lives did not go as well, since they were occasionally obliged to choose between the arcane and the secular, and the arcane always won. Their situations began to improve when, by the late 1760s, their magical knowledge started to give them unfair advantages over the folks around them.

Alas, disaster struck: the political tensions leading up to the American Revolution led to their discovery by William Killeen's father. He had Alexander Brunner killed, and the others, including his own son, deprived of their positions. The three survivors fled into the streets of Boston, where they hid out for the next several months.

In 1775, a British fleet and army gathered in the great port of Halifax. It sailed for the rebellious New England states, where it met defeat in 1776. A great number of loyalists fled New England with the fleet, returning with it to Halifax. Unfortunately for Halifax, a large number of the supposed Loyalists were actually undesirables fleeing from the authorities, eager to accept a free voyage and a fresh start. John, William and Martin were among them.

The three lived in Halifax for a while, ruthlessly using their spells to set themselves up in business there. Too ruthlessly; in just two years they felt it necessary to leave that city for Yarmouth. There they exercised greater discretion, and quickly became pillars of that new community.

They lived out their lives there, taking care to preserve the image of

- respectable businessmen. They conducted their secret experiments among the nearby French, who were, at the time, being viciously persecuted by the authorities, and thus undefended. Unfortunately, they were unable to carry their magical studies much further without Alexander's guidance, not achieving much beyond toughening their bodies. Eventually they grew old and died. Salter, the last to die, made the greatest advances, and his tomb is a dangerous



place for the unwary investigator.

Today is the 30th of August, 1927. Alexander has come looking for his friends.

ALEXANDER BRUNNER

long dead wizard

At the time of his death, Alexander was the most formidable of the group, and was able to raise himself up from death, though not in the way he would have preferred. In the 131 years since his death, he has slowly learned more of magic and the hidden truth. Two years ago, he finally mastered the spell Resurrection, and began to search for his old partners. His form now, a vaguely humanoid mass of grave worms in a brown robe, hampered his efforts considerably, as did his lack of knowledge of the modern world. He has only recently tracked his friends to Yarmouth, but his sources could not locate their actual graves. He came over from Eastport, Maine, on the rum runner *Arethusa* in a large, unlabeled crate, and was picked up by Jim Gaudet and his sons. They currently are under his complete control, and are actively if ineffectively searching for the resting places of Alexander's friends.

STR 6	CON n/a	SIZ 15
DEX 8	APP n/a	SAN 0
INT 17	POW 28	EDU 8
HP 18		

SKILLS: Cthulhu Mythos 70%; Hide 85%; Listen 70%; Occult 90%; Read English 95%; Sneak 90%; Spot Hidden 75%; Understand English 95% (Alexander has no voice).

WEAPONS: Envelop 100% (drowning damage). Note: This attack form can be used only against a helpless target.

SPELLS: Create Zombie, Power Draining Ritual, Charm Fool, Resurrect. (Others as the Keeper deems appropriate.)

STARTING PLAY

It's Friday, August 30, about five thirty in the afternoon of a hot and muggy Yarmouth day. The detectives have closed their doors and retired to the back room where they are enjoying a cool beer in the company of their friends.

The jingle of a bell announces that someone has opened the front door (apparently it wasn't locked). A customer has walked in off the street. If one of the

- members of the firm goes out to see who it is, he will
- meet Estelle Killeen, an obviously wealthy white-haired lady of about seventy. She is in some
- emotional distress, and if questioned will reveal that
- her husband is missing. Further questioning will lead
- her to explain that her beloved William is the
- accountant and junior partner at Killeen Fuel Wharf
- a business with which the investigators will be
- familiar. Estelle is evidently rather senile and
- forgetful, but if prodded, she remembers that she
- went to see her William, like she does every day at
- this time, with some cookies. At this point she offers
- cookies to anyone in the room. She has come to hire
- investigators to find her William. She will pay a rate
- of \$30.00/day, which is more than generous, and may
- be contacted at her home on Salter Street.

AT THE FUEL WHARF

- The fuel wharf is a house-sized building on
- Water Street adjacent to the working harbor. Behind
- the building are several large fuel tanks, and a wharf
- where the local boats tie up to fuel.

- The building is closed, but there are several men
- in the back. If questioned, they deny knowing a
- William Killeen, suggesting that the investigators
- speak with Herbie Patch, the accountant.

- Herbie is a small balding fellow, with an
- accountant's visor and ink on his hands. He is quite
- willing to be helpful. He reveals that William
- Killeen died nearly ten years ago, and is buried in
- Mountain Cemetery. He also knows that Williams
- brother George was the senior partner, and that he
- died last year, leaving the business in the hands of his
- son Harvey Killeen. Herbie can provide addresses
- for all of these people.

- Herbie knows of Estelle Killeen, of course, and
- confides to the investigators that the old dears
- memories been getting pretty bad of late.

AT ESTELLE'S

- Estelle Killeen's home at 318 Salter Street is a
- huge old mansion, one of the ones built by wealthy
- ship-owners almost a hundred years ago. The
- investigators' ring will be answered by a middle-aged
- black woman dressed as a maid. This is Beth Jackson,
- Estelle's nurse, aide, and general caretaker. Beth
- knows nothing about the investigators; apparently
- Estelle wandered away from her this afternoon on
- their way back from the cemetery, reappearing later
- at home, telling her not to worry, she had arranged
- everything.

- "So, did you find William? Beth asks the
- investigators. Estelle was terribly distracted when we
- found the grave empty, and I can't think who might
- have done such a thing." On their daily visit to
- William's grave, Beth will explain, they were shocked
- to discover the grave opened, and William and his
- coffin gone...

- If the investigators have come here to report a
- successful end to the case, they might be feeling
- foolish at this point. They can cover this by asking

to interview Estelle for more information.

Estelle knows that the Killeen family is very well-established in these parts, and in fact had one of the earliest successful business in the area a shipping company. She knows nothing about her husband's ancestor's true past: the elder William was quite successful at hiding his activities from his family, and did not pass on anything other than money and business acumen.

The house dates from the time of the elder William's children, and is filled with the accumulated treasures and curios of over a century's successful world trade. The investigators will no doubt waste a good deal of time searching the various rooms, attics, and library for occult clues.

Estelle or Beth can sadly reveal that in the last few decades, the shipping industry had gone from sail to steam, leaving the family fortunes behind. About fifteen years ago, William and George sold

- Halifax will describe the pin as Emerald and silver, procured in Berlin c.1870. This tome will be found in the family library, as well as the public library and at the local historical society.

MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY

- The cemetery is on the edge of town. It is surrounded by trees at the sides and back, and faces onto William's Street. The nearest buildings are some houses a block away, and the Miner's Liniment factory a block in the other direction. The cemetery has a wrought iron fence and gate across the front, and waist-high walls of rough stone down both sides. The further back one goes, the older the graves. If investigators go all the way back to the trees, they will be in knee deep scrub, and will find the remains of a fallen stone wall across the back of the cemetery. Around them the headstones will be very old. Only the granite or marble ones may still be read: wooden crosses have long since rotted away, and the

many slate headstones are too weathered to read.

As the investigators enter the cemetery, two things will be immediately obvious: there is a sexton's building to the left of the gate, where the sexton lives; and one of the fenced-off family plots has an open grave in it.

At the grave, anyone can spot truck tire tracks leading to the grave, three distinct piles of soil (suggesting three diggers), and a large hobnailed boot print. Successful Track rolls will confirm that there were three diggers, all of them large, heavy men, and that they lifted the coffin into the back of the truck, which had relatively new tires. If the

The nethermost caverns are not for the fathoming of eyes that see: for their marvels are strange and terrific. Cursed the ground where dead thoughts live near and oddly bodied, and evil the mind that is held by no head. Wisely did Thn. Jehacubac say, that happy is the tomb where no wizard hath lain and happy the town at night whose wizards are all ashes. For it is of old rumour that the soul of the devil bought hastes not from his charnel, clay, but fads and instructs the very worm that gnaws: til out of corruption horrid life springs, and the dull scavengers of earth wax crafty to vex it and swell monstrous to plague it. Great holes secretly are digged where earth's pores ought to suffice, and things have learnt to walk that ought to crawl.

The Festival, by H. P. Lovecraft

off all that remained George taking the money and starting the Fuel Wharf, and William getting the old house and a job with his brother. George's son Harvey lives nearby in a new house, nice enough but nothing like this one.

A photograph of Estelle's husband William, taken a few years before his death, shows a handsome man in a good suit. The only item of interest is a tie-pin of unusual appearance. The ladies can tell the investigators that the pin was a prized possession of William's, and that it is very old. Estelle and Beth will admit that it is barely possible that the pin might be the motive for the grave robbing. Certainly nothing else of value was in William's coffin. A dull and exhaustive family history written by a maiden aunt of William's and published by Vanity Press of

- investigators follow the truck tracks away from the grave, they lead down into the trees at the back of the cemetery and onto a poor trail in the woods. A Spot Hidden roll will find a large patch of blue paint scraped off of the truck and onto a tree. The trail wends through the forest for a mile and a half before coming out on Cook's Road, leading, on the right, to Brooklyn seven miles away, and on the left, back into Yarmouth.

- If anyone should measure the width and size of the tire prints, the local Chevy dealer in town can reveal the kind of truck to which these tires belong: a 1926 Chevy utility model X. Further, the dealer reveals that the only truck of this model he ever sold went to J.G. Gaudet and Sons, who painted it blue. He believes they have a lot out on Cook's Road.

Knocking on the sexton's door will, after a few minutes, bring a response. The sexton appears in his pajamas; he is groggy and disoriented, and sports a day's growth of beard.

The sexton, Gordy Preston, will be quite dismayed when the investigators point out an open grave — it is his job to care for the grounds and prevent such things. He remembers nothing of the night before, and in fact has slept all through this day. If the investigators wake him after dark, he will insist that it is the night of the 29th, and that he has just gone to bed. He will be even more bewildered if someone points out that he hasn't shaved in at least twenty four hours. Successful Psychology rolls reveal that Gordy believes himself to be telling the truth, and that he is not waking up as fast as he should — perhaps he is drugged.

There is little else the investigators can learn here. In a few days, Gordy will begin to remember the sounds of digging during the night, and will eventually (in a few months) remember being overcome by Frank and Lou, and being fed something awful-tasting.

THE STORY SO FAR

The awful-tasting something was a handful of worms from Alexander's body, and it contained a small amount of POW, and the spell Charm Fool.

J.G. Gaudet and Sons are a moving company. They own a single blue 1926 Chevy utility truck, model X, which they use to move people's belongings. They also carry booze, and two Wednesdays ago they delivered a load of bonded whiskey to the *Arethusa*, at the Yarmouth wharf. They picked up a load they weren't expecting: a crate full of wizard. They took it back to their lot on Cook's Road and opened it up; since then, they have been serving Alexander Brunner. Jim Gaudet has been at the local library, trying to find records of William Killeen's burial. He finally found a newspaper article, dating from 1805, stating that he was buried in Mountain Cemetery.

Jim and his sons, Lou and Frank, came to the cemetery last night... and promptly dug up the wrong William Killeen. They brought their trophy back to Alexander, who immediately realized their mistake. Alexander left them in disgust, leaving them to explain away the coffin in the back of their truck.

Alexander has guessed that his friends did not carry on their occult experiments among the townspeople, and that they must therefore have victimized the French. He has already begun to afflict the local French, something the investigators are unlikely to hear of until after the fact, if at all.

THE TRUCK

If the investigators have moved quickly, they may have found the tracks in the cemetery on Friday night. If so, they can identify the truck (if they think of it) at the Chevy dealership on Saturday. The dealer will be closed Sunday, and the other source of

- information about the truck's origin the vehicle registry will be closed both Saturday and Sunday.

If the investigators go to the registry, a Credit Rating roll will establish their credibility and allow them to spend the three hours of searching necessary to find the appropriate records. Without knowing what specific sort of truck they want, the characters must look for all the trucks registered in the region and winnow out the most likely ones. Unfortunately, the records do not include the color of the vehicles, so the most helpful indications are likely to be age of vehicle (based on new tires), and location of the owner. If the investigators can't be at least that specific in their search, they will find that there are at least a hundred or so trucks of the appropriate size in the area, and that the search is futile. If they are particular in their search they will wind up with:

- Albert Finbar Movers: Tusket
- Sears Roebuck: Glebe St. Yarmouth
- Comeau Seafood: Meteghan
- Ken Kingwell Eavestroughing: Water Street
- J.G. Gaudet and Sons: Cook's Road, Yarmouth County

All of these addresses are either in Yarmouth, or in small communities within twenty miles or so. Hopefully the investigators will think to start at J.G. Gaudet and Sons, since the tracks led to Cook's Road.

J.G. GAUDET AND SONS

Cook's Road runs north out of Yarmouth, winding seven miles through the back woods of Yarmouth county before crossing the Tusket Road at the hamlet of Brooklyn. From there it winds onward, eventually reaching Halifax.

The trail that led from Mountain Cemetery joins Cook's Road about two miles out of town. About a mile past that, on the right, is J.G. Gaudet's lot and compound. Approaching it, the investigators see a square compound about sixty feet on a side, surrounded by a wooden fence about eight feet high. The fence is painted blue, is built of vertical 1x6s, and is in good repair, though certainly could be dismantled easily enough with a hammer or a pry bar. If the business is closed for the night, or if it is Sunday, the gate will be swung shut and chained. The younger brother, Frank, chains the gate, and he tends to leave the chain slack to make it easier to get the lock closed. This slack makes it easy enough for anyone not overly corpulent to slide inside.

Within the compound are a building (about 20'x30'), an old oxcart, a large tank of gasoline with a hand pump, an outhouse, a large crate hidden behind the building, and regardless of the time or date the truck.

The building comprises a shop, an office and a storeroom. The shop features a mechanic's pit, workbenches, and old rusted parts and tools. There is nothing special here.

The office contains a desk, a phone, and a small potbelly stove. In the stove are the remnants of some burnt papers. The papers are Alexander and Jim's notes on their search for Alexander's friends. They are almost entirely destroyed, save for one piece with some smeared marks like that of a dirty mop. Alexander's "hand" prints. Other papers in the office include Jim's crude attempts at double book accounting. His records of illicit collections and deliveries make it clear that he is a very busy man in the rum-running trade. His last collection was two Wednesdays back, from the *Arethusa*.

The storeroom contains some old tables and junk, and a wooden bin like a waterbed without the bladder. In it are a few dried, dead worms. The floor in the corner has been smashed through, probably with sledge hammers, exposing the crawl-space and the dirt below. The dirt has been dug up to a depth of a foot, although nothing was buried or removed. (This was to allow Alexander to enter the dirt as a group of worms, perhaps to escape in an emergency.)

The crate behind the building is the one that Alexander traveled in, and is about the size of a large coffin. It bears no markings whatsoever, smells of dirt and rot, and has a few dozen dead worms in it.

The oxcart, the outhouse, and the gas tank have nothing interesting about them.

The truck is the one the investigators are looking for; this will be obvious immediately. It is the right shade of blue, has a large scrape where the investigators would expect one, and most especially, it has a coffin in the back.

Inside the coffin, William Killeen's last remains have not been disturbed. As soon as Jim and his boys returned with the box, Alexander realized their mistake. He wiped off the dirt from the name plate on the lid; there is another of those "dirty mop smears" across the plate confirming the date of burial, then left, disgusted with the Gaudets' incompetence as pawns.

THE GAUDET'S

The Gaudets themselves have all been under the influence of Alexander for over a week, and by now their minds are full of inconsistencies. If the investigators go to the lot during business hours, the Gaudets will be fairly responsive to any reasonable cover story, allowing the investigators to look at the truck if they want. They will not look at it themselves, because they have subconscious knowledge of its contents, and are still struggling to maintain their delusion that everything is normal. Their conversation will be full of references to things that they don't remember, for example:

"I guess we better empty the truck so we can get some work done."

"Why? There's nothing in the truck."

"Oh yeah, I forgot. Nothing in the truck. I guess we can use it then."

"No, I don't think we should, not until it's empty."

"Oh yeah, right. Not until it's empty."

These inconsistencies have been troubling the boys and their father since Alexander left them, but so far they haven't managed to work things out. If the investigators are too direct in their prodding, the Gaudets may get violent in their protection of their delusions. However, if the investigators play along and use subtlety, they may acquire the Gaudets as active, though somewhat befuddled, allies.

If the police are called on Jim and his sons, the investigators will probably find themselves the ones in trouble. Jim pays his hush money on time, and the police are likely to believe his (sincere) protestations of innocence.

The best solution for the investigators at this point would be to simply return the coffin to Estelle with a fabricated story that will implicate no one.

CONCERNING ALEXANDER

Since leaving the Gaudets, Alexander has been testing his theory that his friends were secretly victimizing the local French. He has been spending his days in empty old houses, and his nights invading the homes of the elderly. He questions them in the hope of learning something concrete, but will give up eventually, having learned little more than that he was correct. His friends are remembered in old tales handed down from long-dead ancestors, but nothing more than that they were a terror is now recalled. Alexander's victims will remember his visits as particularly vivid and horrible nightmares that will be the talk of the French community, but will not come to the investigator's attention unless they make a special effort in that direction.

Alexander will return his attention to Yarmouth at a time judged most appropriate by the Keeper.

NEXT STEPS

Hopefully the players should realize that William Killeen's body was stolen in a case of mistaken identity. (The Keeper might stress that the coffin was unopened and unmolested, although it sat in the back of the truck for at least a day and probably longer.) Having reached this realization, it should be apparent to the investigators that they have even less of an idea what is going on than they may have believed. Their next courses of action are less directly obvious, but will likely include a trip to the library, staking out the cemetery, and further research at the Killeen residence.

RESEARCH: THE LIBRARY

The library is located in a tiny old church: the first Anglican Chapel, since replaced with a much more impressive building. There is a single staff member, Marie-Jose Deveau, a quiet and polite Acadian woman of about 25. Marie-Jose will volunteer nothing, though if the investigators ask for help in researching the name William Killeen, she will react with visible surprise: Jim Gaudet was doing the same just days ago. If her help is enlisted, and

any effort is made at winning her friendship, she will be a useful ally. She can give a good account of the nature of Jim's searches over the last two weeks, including the first mention the characters will hear of the names John Fulton and Martin Salter. She can direct the investigators to the appropriate era in the old newspapers, as well as point out the Killeen family history. If she has reacted particularly well to the investigators she may in some way let them know of Alexander's activities among her community (her own grandmother has been visited by Alexander).

At the library, among other things, are copies of every edition of the *Yarmouth Chronicler* since it was first published on March 10th, 1775. Unfortunately, there are no clipping files, so any researches must be carried out by going through each individual issue a time-consuming chore without any specific leads.

The best information to be found are a series of articles dealing with William Killeen and his comrades.

December 5th, 1778. Three Bostonian loyalists joined our growing community this last week. Martin Salter, John Fulton, and William Killeen arrived on the pinky schooner Susan Huff, from Halifax, where they have dwelt these two years past.

They say they suffered some unjust distrust and complaints there, distrust they are keen to put behind them. For that reason they have moved their affairs to our town.

It is those gentlemen's avowed intention to begin a trading and shipbuilding company here, an enterprise which seems sure to succeed.

Numerous other articles chronicle the successful business lives of these men, as well as marriages, birth of their children, and eventually, their deaths. The key information that the investigators can unearth follows:

- John Fulton was a ship's captain who made many successful trips to the Orient, enriching himself as well as his partners and Yarmouth itself. He had a home a mile out of town on Main Street. He died on January 7th, 1801, and was for some reason buried on Brier Island, just off-shore from Yarmouth.

- William Killeen ran the trading company behind captain Fulton's voyages. In time the company owned several other ships as well, becoming, until after his death, the largest company in the region. He built a home on Salter Street that was torn down and replaced shortly after his death. He died on August 3rd, 1805, and was buried in Mountain Cemetery.

- Martin Salter built ships in a yard on Water Street, including those ships owned by the Killeen Trading Co. His home was also on Salter Street. He died on May 19th, 1821, and was buried in the basement of his home.

- After their deaths, the families of these men all experienced a down turn in their fortunes, which a successful Read English roll will reveal to have been the result of actions taken against them by rivals of John, Martin and William. Fulton's family became

- poor fairly quickly, selling the manor within a generation of John's death. The Salters fared only somewhat better, but the Killeens managed to hang on to some of their wealth up to the present.
- A number of incidents of vandalism occurred, all directed at the graves or memories of the three men, an example of which is:

- *May 30, 1821. A shameful crime was perpetrated last night, only the latest in a series of outrages committed against the memories of three of our most illustrious citizens. A drunken Acadian through an open window hurled a burning torch, destroying entirely the home of the late Martin Salter. The Frenchy claimed to be doing his duty before God, and that Salter had been a demon and must be finished completely. It is doubtful whether the magistrate will look on this as a valid defense when the criminal appears before him.*

- Old maps in the library will show the locations of all locales described in these articles.

- The Killeen Family History will not be nearly as informative as the *Yarmouth Chronicler*, telling only that William was an avowed Loyalist, which set him at odds with his father. He courageously made his way to Yarmouth in the company of his three friends, almost single-handedly building it into the bustling community it was at the time the book was written.

- The history briefly describes a business war that William successfully waged against his father. William was such a charismatic man that his children were in awe of him and had little to do with him. It also relates that, at some time in the past, his head stone was stolen or removed, and that his grave is now unlocatable. Why this was not noticed and remedied at once is not stated.

THE KILLEEN RESIDENCE

- The elder William's children were indeed in awe of him, and not a little afraid. On his death, they burned all of his papers that did not relate directly to the business. They also tore down the gloomy manor he had built, and replaced it with one that better reflected the tastes of the times.

- The house is a huge many roomed edifice, occupying a large yard, filled with massive oaks that were obviously planted to complement it. Fully 90% of the place is now unused, though every room is tastefully furnished.

- Among the furnishings are hundreds of treasures and artifacts from over a century's involvement with trade and the sea. Every continent and nation is in some way represented among the furnishings: suits of armor, artwork, stuffed animals, narwhal tusks, carved chests, and the like. There are, however, no Mythos or occult objects or books, though certainly many of the things in the house are sufficiently obscure that this will not be obvious at first.

- The only things likely to be useful are the same family history that can be found in the library, and a portrait of William Killeen. It shows him to be a robustly handsome man, bearded, with dark eyes and

a large nose. He is dressed as a wealthy merchant of the time, and stands in an office. Behind him is the harbor where a ship is being unloaded at a dock. Perceptive observers will note that the dock is in the same location as the Killeen Fuel Wharf now stands.

STAKING OUT THE CEMETERY

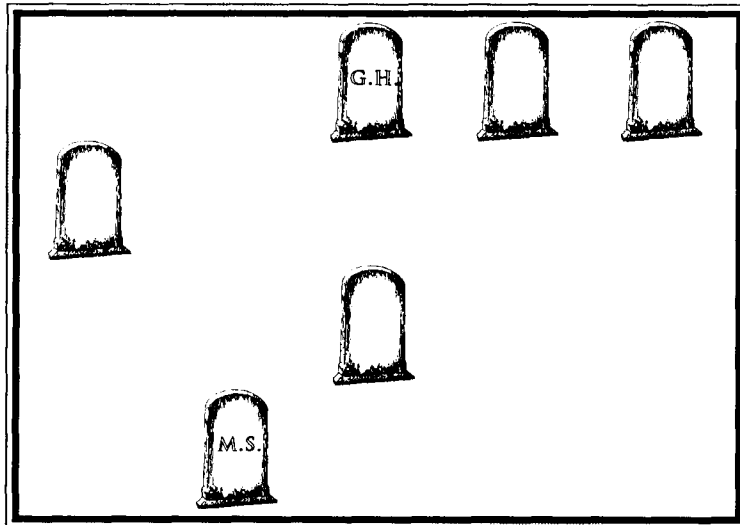
All in all, this is a pretty smart move... particularly since Alexander will eventually come here himself to try and find what his agents could not: William Killeen's body.

No matter how well-hidden they may be, Alexander will immediately notice the presence of any investigators staking out the cemetery. (His nature makes him sensitive to the presence of living people.) As soon as he senses the stake-out, Alexander will move directly toward the investigator. When he comes within several meters, he will attempt to Charm Fool, which will in all likelihood succeed. He will convince the investigator that he or she was dreaming that they saw him, and that he is really only a dog. He will approach them and "lick" their face, though when next someone sees their face

- large black ink line totally obscuring one of the entries. The entries that remain contain enough information to find the crossed out grave by a process of elimination a fact which escaped Alexander's notice, at least temporarily.

Burial Records: 1805

- Jan. 7 Estelle Robicheau (French), wooden cross.
- Feb. 3 Mary Wilson (pauper), east of ER.
- Feb. 8 Gerhardt Hines, Marble Headstone.
- April 28 James Bates (Catholic), slate.
- May 15 Neil Fryer, slate.
- June 2 Marc Comeau (French), wooden cross.
- June 2 Alain Comeau (French), wooden cross.
- Aug. 3 Arthur Bell, slate.
- 
- Aug. 13 Celine Deveau (French) east of WK.
- Aug. 31 Moses (foreign) e of CD s of JB.
- Sept. 5 Joseph (Catholic Indian) south of AC.
- Oct. 16 Kevin Lowry, slate.
- Nov. 12 Michael Shute, Marble Headstone.
- Nov. 29 unknown pauper, between MS and WK.



An investigator with a good Track skill, or one hiring a tracker or a tracking dog, may follow Alexander's trail from the cemetery a mile through the woods to the cabin of an old moon-shiner.

MO BONY'S CABIN

Mo's cabin is a small one-room affair, hidden out in the woods. Nearby are a large wood pile, several chickens, and a small still over a fire pit. Mo was an old moonshiner of mixed native and French ancestry. He had friends around town, but none that would take the trouble to drop in on him out in the woods. He was a harmless old coot, happy to make his shine, and to live and let live. Unfortunately, Alexander didn't share the old man's attitudes...

clearly, they will sport smeared dirty "mop" marks identical to the one on the coffin lid and the papers in the stove at J.G. Gaudet's lot.

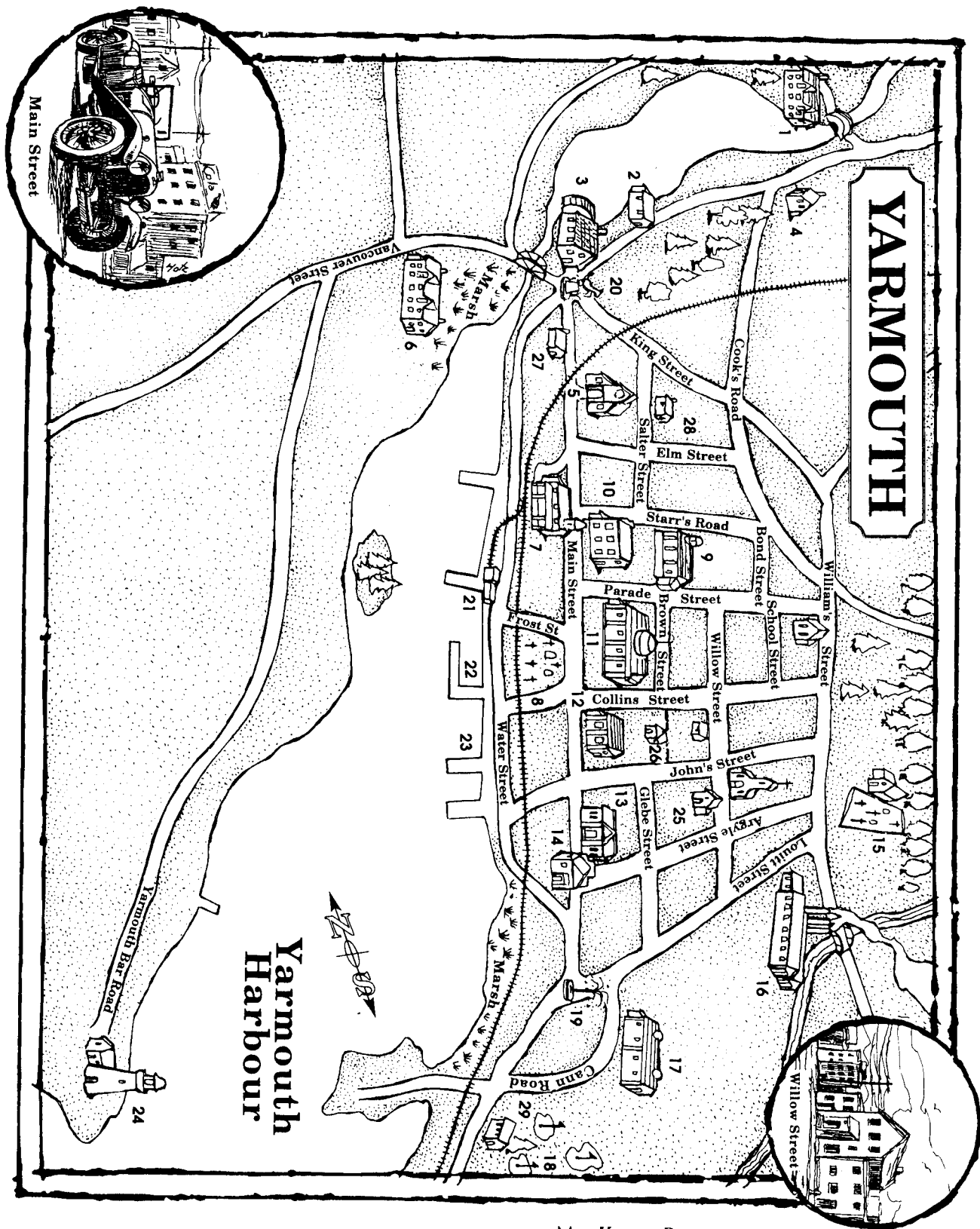
After touching the investigator's face, Alexander will move on to the sexton's hut, waking Gordy and directing him to bring out the old burial records. The entry describing Williams burial was inked over by an Acadian over a century ago. Foiled, the "dog" will leave the hut, exiting the cemetery through the gap in the stone wall at the back.

If the investigators question Gordy, he will remember nothing about either a large man in a dark robe, or a dog. Out of his own curiosity, he was looking at the burial records, he will claim, and happened to throw the book violently in the corner when he was done.

One of the pages in the book, the one for 1805, has more of the now-familiar "mop" marks, and a

- thing the investigators will notice is the smell of fermenting apples; Mo had a batch of apple jack going when Alexander found him. The chickens will set up a fuss when the investigators arrive, especially if there is a dog with them.

- If the investigators arrive at night, Alexander will be out looking for clues. If they arrive in the daytime, Alexander is in the cabin. He does not fear sunlight, but it would inconvenience him to be seen by anyone he can not immediately Charm or kill. If there are fewer than half a dozen characters, Alexander will Charm them, then engulf and kill them one by one. If there are too many for him to defeat, he will allow his form to collapse into its component worms and escape through the floorboards into the woods. He will stay in this form under the dead leaves on the forest floor until the investigators leave, or until he has an opportunity to



Map Key on Page 84

attack someone who is alone.

This is a good opportunity to give the players a taste of Alexander as a threat. He might approach an unwary and un-Charmed investigator over several minutes as a wave of worms silently moving under the leaves. Even if spotted, he is unlikely to evoke a reaction of fear until someone is found, drowned in worms.

Anyone not Charmed will be able to tell any Charm victims what they are seeing, but Alexander will not permit them to hear. Short of bodily carrying away most of the party, they will only be able to help their friends by disturbing Alexander's concentration. This can best be achieved by dumping the contents of the still on him, if they can locate him. This done, Alexander is dispersed fully, and can't reform for at least several hours.

In the cabin is a large magical circle, a pool of blood, and Mo Bony, victim of the Power Draining Ritual. Alexander has 9 extra magic points as a result of killing Mo. This will give him a good chance of killing a good number of the investigating party right here.

FURTHER ACTIONS

In response to what the investigators have learned, there are several likely courses of action. They may contact people in Boston, looking for further information on the three friends. There is little to be learned in that direction, since the trail has long been cold.

Halifax is a more profitable direction in which to search. The historical society or the History section of any of the several universities, (Dalhousie is the most prominent) can, within a few days or even hours (for "special considerations", of course), inform the investigators that the three men were virtually hounded out of Halifax, having made enemies of the local business communities in ways that led to charges of unfair business practices and accusations of witchcraft.

It should be apparent that someone or something is searching for the graves of these three men, or at least William's grave. The investigators may try to forestall this on the principal that anything involving the graves of dead witches is bound to be bad. If so, they may try to find the three graves themselves and destroy the contents, or move or hide them. This they can do easily enough in William's case, simply by taking the book. Or so they think.

ALEXANDER'S ACTIONS

If all other avenues are closed to him, Alexander will simply exhume and Resurrect the sexton who originally buried William, back in 1805. The sexton will, of course, have no difficulty leading Alexander to the correct grave. Two days after Alexander Resurrects him, William Killeen will join him as an active ally.

MARTIN SALTER'S TOMB

Unfortunately, the fire that consumed the Salter mansion did not reach Martin Salter's tomb. It remains a concealed chamber under the house that was built on the original foundation. That house was sold by the Salter family several generations after Martin's death. It has since been sold several more times, and now is owned by an unimaginative and

WILLIAM KILLEEN

resurrected wizard

William was not a particularly effective wizard, his powers being just enough to give him some unfair advantages in the area of trade and commerce. He will recover slowly from Alexander's Resurrection spell, not being really effective for two days. As a Resurrected person, he is not truly alive, though only extremely close examination would reveal this fact. His chief value to Alexander is the fact that he can enter society without causing any untoward reactions, though his lack of familiarity with the modern era would be a handicap.

STR 11	CON 25	SIZ 9
DEX 12	APP 14(-2)	SAN 0
INT 15	POW 17	EDU 15
HP 17		

SKILLS: Accounting 65%; Bargain 85%; Credit Rating 70%; Cthulhu Mythos 20%; Debate 40%; Law 20%; Library Use 45%.

WEAPONS: Saber 45% 1D8+1
Pistol 35% 1D8+1

SPELLS: Flesh Ward; Hands of Colubra; Send Dreams. (He will not immediately have the necessary accouterments to cast this spell, and even with Alexander's help it may take him some time to gather them.)

unmarried insurance salesman named Mike Fuller.

Mike Fuller answers the door dressed in carpet slippers and an old smoking jacket. He is willing to admit anyone who might want to buy insurance. In fact, the investigators may find it difficult to escape his attentions once he has met them.

Mike will be unimpressed by any tales of supernatural dangers, attempting to turn any mention of danger or death or fire to the appropriate insurance policy and the virtues thereof. If the

investigators mention tombs of wealthy citizens, that is another story. He has a very clear idea about found valuables and the legalities of the possession thereof. He will be entirely willing to let the investigators spend a large amount of effort finding something he is confident will enrich him alone.

The tomb is in a walled-off area of the very extensive cellar. The appropriate section may be found through several hours of measuring of distances, looking for unreasonably thick walls, and examining the stone work for telltale differences. Once found, the tomb may be entered only by cutting through the wall, an action Mike will allow only if he can be convinced there will be no "uninsurable losses of structural integrity".

Martin Salter was the most successful of the four after Alexander, and his tomb reflects this fact. Unlike his three comrades, Martin chose the time and place of his death, based on things he learned from books that Fulton found but did not live long enough to use.

The tomb is a square room, ten feet by six. All four walls are shrouded in tapestries of obviously foreign make; black on black, they depict horrific acts and alien scenes that may only be viewed in ultraviolet light, mercifully sparing the investigators that SAN loss. (If they go out of their way to view the scenes, however, the SAN loss is 1D6.)

In the center of the room is a black basalt bier bearing the blackened silver form of a man wrapped in a shroud of silver metal.

At the feet of a figure is a carved ebony chest containing a suit of clothes suited to an adventurer of 1805, a saber, a flintlock pistol ready to be fired, an oddly-embroidered cap, and a strangely-formed dagger of some unknown metal. These last two items are used for Summoning whatever allies the Keeper feels are appropriate.

Closer examination reveals that the figure is not merely wrapped in a sheet silver shroud, but appears to have been "dipped" somehow, for the silver is in one continuous layer. Engraved on this shroud are thousands of spidery lines and symbols that form Martin's last spell.

The spell is an inferior form of Resurrection. Not as good a version as the one Alexander knows (and will use if he gets the chance), this one requires a vast amount of preparation. If anyone should breach the shroud in any way, the spell will be released. It will attack the target with a POW of 20, and if it wins, it will drain the target utterly, using the target's body and soul to reconstitute Martin Salter.

Note that, due to his avaricious and unimaginative nature, it is entirely likely that Mike Fuller will be the one to breach the shroud probably in the act of stuffing it in the furnace to melt it down for the silver, and to eliminate the contents and evidence of the tomb having technically been a grave. If he does so, witnesses will first see: a remarkably foul smoke jetting from the breach in the shroud. This smoke rapidly coalesces into the form

of a nude man. Simultaneously, the victim begins to wither, shrinking and falling apart. Anyone seeing the whole process must save vs. SAN or lose 2D4 SAN. Those making the roll still lose 1 point.

JOHN FULTON'S GRAVE

John chose to be buried on Brier Island, a small rock projecting from the stormy Bay of Fundy. Brier Island is about three miles long, and is the last island in a chain of several that make up the end of a long

MARTIN SALTER

resurrected wizard

Martin was a remarkable fellow: quick, bold, capable, and very ruthless. He will probably recover from his Resurrection sooner than any witnesses will. He will then take whatever action the Keeper judges to be most appropriate: either magical attack, if his POW is fairly high, or physical attack if it is not. (If it was Mike who released him, Martin's POW will be 9. It will recover in the usual way.) Alternately, he may attempt to talk his way free, or to bluff, or simply to run. His actions will certainly be affected by the fact that he is in an unknown era, quite naked, and his clothes and weapons may be in the investigator's hands. If he should get free, he will hide out until his POW is at full, then he will begin to Charm himself some allies the most influential and wealthy people he feels he can manage. Having done so he will very soon learn from newspaper articles and the like that someone probably Alexander is looking for him and his friends. He will be quite as likely to find Alexander then as vice versa, and once they team up, the investigators will be in trouble.

STR 17	CON 25	SIZ 8
DEX 15	APP 15	SAN 0
INT 16	POW 2	EDU 13
HP 17		

SKILLS: Bargain 65%; Credit Rating 25%; Cthulhu Mythos 30%; Debate 50%; Fast Talk 60%; Hide 70%; Listen 50%; Occult 75%; Psychology 30%; R/W English 80%; Sneak 80%; Spot Hidden 50%.

WEAPONS: Fist 75% 1D3+1D4
Saber 85% 1D8+1+1D4
Flintlock pistol 80% 1D10+1. (It won't take him long to find something better to replace his flintlock.)

SPELLS: Charm Fool. (Others as the Keeper deems appropriate.)

JOHN FULTON

resurrected wizard

John was the first to die, and so achieved to least of the four. He did, however, manage to lead the most exciting life, sailing nearly everywhere that a man of his era could. He reads and speaks nearly any language that it might have been useful for him to learn. His presence in the campaign as an active opponent will likely manifest itself in the form of direct physical attacks.

STR 16 CON 25 SIZ 12
DEX 14 APP 11(-2) SAN 0
INT 14 POW 18 EDU 6
HP 19

SKILLS: Astronomy 45%; Bargain 90%; Climb 70%; Cthulhu Mythos 15%; Fast Talk 45%; First Aid 25%; Linguist 75%; Listen 85%; Make Maps 65%; Oratory 80%; Psychology 50%; R/W/S many languages; Spot Hidden 80%.

WEAPONS: Pistol 80% 1d10+1
Dagger 60% 1d4+2+1D4
Thrown Knife 75% 1D4+2+1D4
Saber 85% 1D8+1+1D4

SPELLS: Dominate; Predict Weather.

cape. It will take a long day's travel for the investigators to reach it from Yarmouth, unless they hire a fishing boat from Meteghan to take them there. The island has been settled for perhaps two hundred years, producing many sailors of repute in that time. It is little more than a hill of rock, with little soil and that poor so the inhabitants cannot grow all the food they require. They live by fishing, and selling part of their catch to supplement their diet. Life is hard, and so are the people.

Captain Fulton's grave is one of many ship captains' in the old burial grounds on the top of the highest hill on the island. Perhaps because it is so isolated, it has neither been disturbed, nor hidden, and is easily found.

Anyone taking any improprieties with the grave will be immediately spotted and vigorously chastised by the priest, Father Kennedy, who lives in a small white cottage adjacent to the church. If necessary, he rings the church bell; within ten minutes, a small crowd of locals will arrive to see what is the matter.

His life here, struggling with the people's natural willfulness, and genuine need for some sort of escape, has made Father Kennedy extremely stubborn, and he simply will not tolerate any sort of action of the kind the characters are likely to desire. Not, that is, without a letter from the Bishop of Yarmouth, or a

reasonable facsimile.

Should the investigators be so unlucky as to allow John Fulton to be resurrected as well, his attributes are provided.

LOOSE ENDS

If Alexander is prevented from resurrecting William, he will, if he is able, turn his efforts against the investigators. Depending on what he has learned about them, this may result in their destruction, or it may come to nothing.

Also, it is entirely feasible that the investigators will have set Martin Salter loose themselves. If so, he knows exactly where his friends were buried, and once he meets up with Alexander, things will begin to move very rapidly.

If Alexander can't eliminate the investigators, or recruit some of them to help him, and Martin is not available to help him, he will reluctantly return to J.G. Gaudet and Sons. This will probably be all that he needs to do to bring himself very close to success. Jim Gaudet has quite possibly met the investigators, and, even if he hasn't, may have heard about them and their activities. Even if he knows nothing, Jim will return to the library, and Marie-Jose, the librarian, will certainly know what the investigators have been up to and what sources they have looked into. If she does not choose to voluntarily aid Jim, she can be brought around with one short interview with Alexander. (Of course, Marie-Jose might be actively assisting the investigators by this time, and might just be rescued.)

If worse comes to worst, the investigators can probably ambush the enemy, now grown alarmingly numerous and deadly, at Captain Fulton's grave site.

SUPPORTING CAST

The following might prove to be allies, or might be recruited by Alexander via a Charm Fool spell: Basil White, head of a local legal firm; Jacob Fuller, mayor; Charlie Reid, banker and head of the Yarmouth Historical Society; Daniel Kelley, wealthy patron of the Historical Society; Dr. Peter Surrelle, head of the Mental Department at Victoria Hospital; Madame Zigonie, spiritualist; Albert Meenie, undertaker who buried (and may re-bury) William Killeen.



John Hart

Born in Germany, John has lived in every one of Canada's provinces and territories except Prince Edward Island. He spent five years in army as field engineer, "blowing stuff up." He also spent time in society for creative anachronism, learning weapons from a different millenium, and hitchhiked around Europe for six months. John was introduced to AD&D in 1979 and has been gaming ever since. *Runequest* and *Call of Cthulhu* are his current favorites. Although he spends his days working for a roofing company, his longterm aspirations are toward writing fiction.

NEW MYTHOS SPELLS

Charm Fool

Alexander's greatest success prior to rediscovering Resurrection, this spell is his chief weapon. The caster need only make an effort of will (and think the appropriate impossible thoughts), and overcome her victim's POW, and the victim becomes pliable to the caster's will. The caster can telepathically implant any belief she wants in the victim's mind, and the victim will accept it as absolute truth. Note that if the appropriate beliefs are planted, control can be maintained without further recourse to the spell (e.g., I am your master, and you will willingly and actively obey me and further my aims should cover most contingencies that might arise). This spell costs 3 magic points, and 2D4 SAN. Due to the normally-impossible thoughts the caster must frame in his mind, it may only be cast by someone with SAN of 0.

Control lasts for a number of hours equal to 18-victim's POW. At that point the victim will no longer follow the orders, but neither will she admit to herself that she had been controlled, explaining away any behavior as rational, or simply forgetting it. Once the spell has worn off, the victim loses 1D4 SAN, as well as a further penalty based on how absurd her actions under the spell would seem in the cold light of day.

Power Draining Ritual

The caster must first prepare a magical circle. This circle is very complex, and will take the caster at least two hours to draw. Once the circle is complete, the caster must murder a victim within the circle, following a brief ritual. If the caster can defeat his victim with a POW vs POW struggle, the victim's soul is drained, and all of the victim's POW is transferred to the caster. This can be used to restore the casters own magic points, or the caster can save the POW as magic points to be used in the future. The caster loses 2D10 of SAN each time he performs this ritual. (Note: Whether or not the caster succeeds in stealing the victim's POW, the victim is still *dead*.)

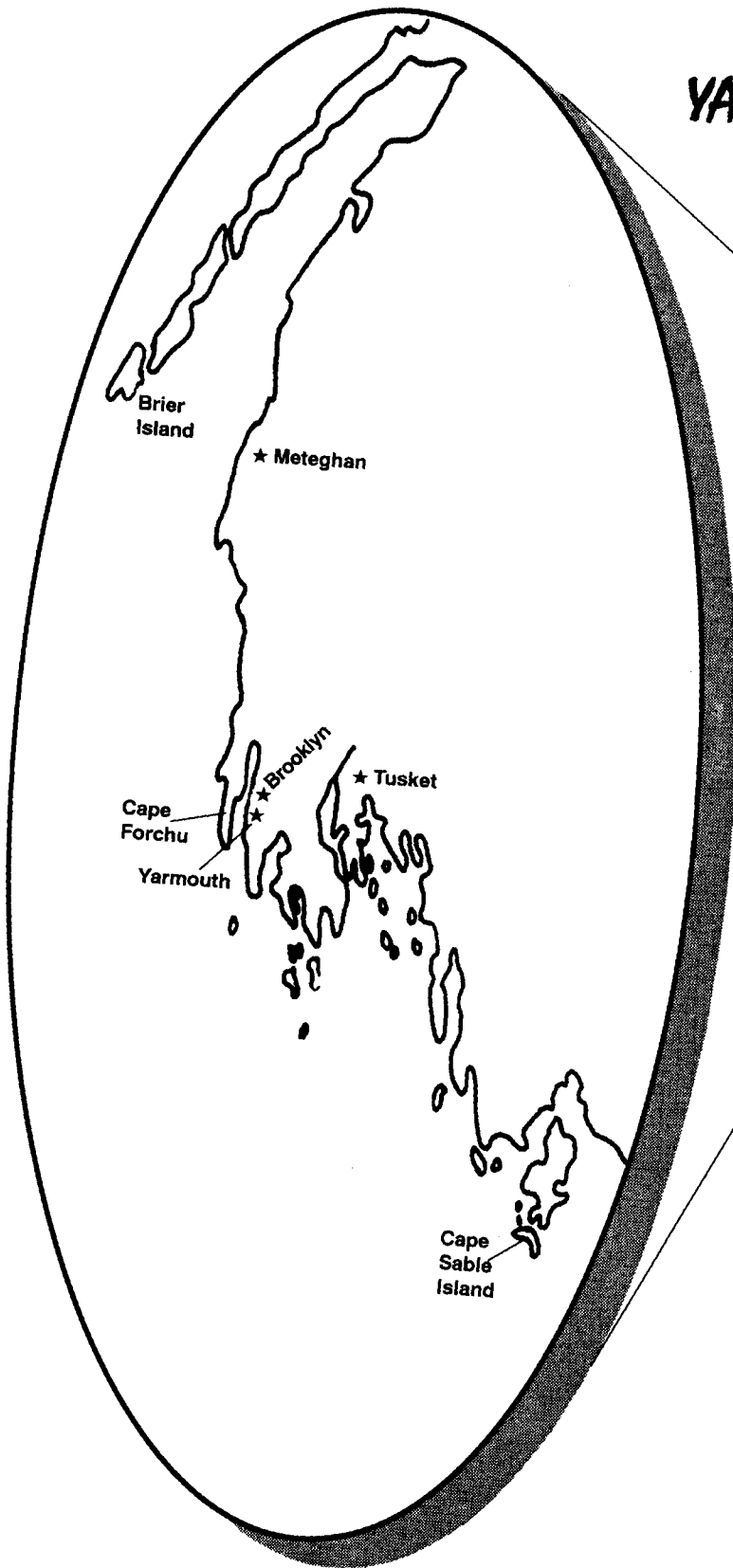
Predict Weather

John learned this spell from a Deep One whose acquaintance he had occasion to make. The spell takes several minutes of meditation to begin, and requires several hours of concentration to perform fully, during which time the caster will appear distracted. At a cost of one Magic Point per hour, the caster can predict the weather for as many days into the future as he has spent hours concentrating. The spell in effect gives the caster a feel for atmospheric conditions on an ocean-wide scale, allowing the same sort of predictions and, unfortunately, the same sort of accuracy as modern meteorologists.

•YARMOUTH TOWN KEY•

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. CNR Resort Hotel | 16. Minards Linament Factory |
| 2. Ice House | 17. Yarmouth Curling Club |
| 3. Mill | 18. Golf Course |
| 4. Kelly House | 19. Fountain |
| 5. Fire Hall | 20. Prancing Horse's
Fountain Trough |
| 6. Hospital | 21. Killeen Fuel Wharf |
| 7. A.A.R Station | 22. Public Wharf |
| 8. Frost Cemetary | 23. Yarmouth Steamship Co. |
| 9. Library | 24. Yarmouth Light House |
| 10. Grand Hotel | 25. Schools |
| 11. Court House/Town Hall | 26. Madame Zigonie's |
| 12. Police Station | 27. Funeral Home |
| 13. Bank of Nova Scotia | 28. Killeen Residence |
| 14. Clark Investigations | 29. Captain Fulton |
| 15. Mountain Cemetary | |

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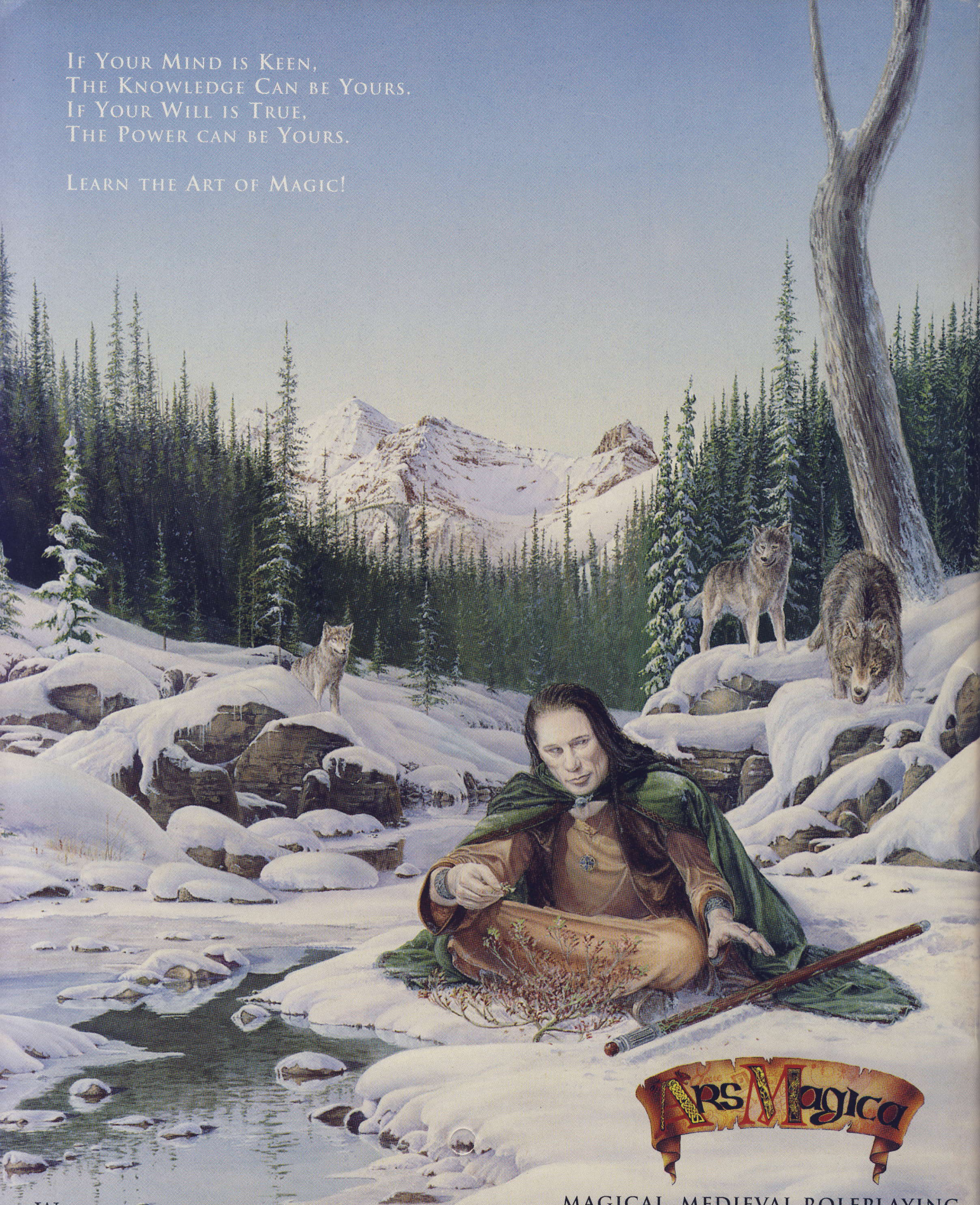


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