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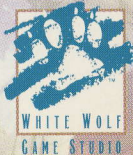
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Time Flies

It has only been about two years since a group of gamers and writers here in Vancouver got together and said, "Let's do a game magazine!" Many things have changed in the adventure gaming hobby over those last two years. We have all ridden with Wizards of the Coast on the *Magic: TCG* roller coaster. Over 100 other collectible card games tested the market. RPG sales all but ground to a halt as card games sucked up more and more of people's attention, energy, and money.

Now we seem to be out the other side. Card games are now an accepted and reasonably stable part of the game market. RPG's are beginning to recover. A number of companies are producing new roleplaying games or polishing up old favorites.

One area of steady growth seems to be miniature tabletop wargames. FASA's *Battletech* and GW's *Warhammer* lines have been solid for years but there are now some newcomers rising to the challenge: Heart Breaker's *Mutant Chronicles*, *WarZone*, Grendel's *Leviathan*, Global Games' *Legions of Steel*, to name a few. Bootstrap Press's August release **MARS: Adventures in Miniature** will collect articles for all these games and more.

Thanks for picking up our sixth collection of RPG Adventures! Even if you don't play any of our featured games, we hope you'll find many ideas and characters you can use in your own campaigns. If we aren't covering your favorite game, please write us at the address below and let us know. Heck, write us even if we do—we want your feedback.

John Fletcher

President Bootstrap Press Inc.

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BPI and AU are moving house as of May 1996! Please address all future letters, subscription requests, and business correspondence the address below.

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Adventures Unlimited Magazine #6
Summer 1996. Published quarterly
by **Bootstrap Press Inc.**
P.O. Box 48854,
Vancouver BC Canada, V7X 1A8

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Subscription Information

Annual subscription (4 issues), US
\$15.80 for US residents, CAD
\$21.00 for Canadian residents
(includes GST) or US \$18.00 for
Overseas residents

Single Issue rates (copies of AU
#1, #2, #3 and #4 still available):
US \$4.95 for US Residents, CAD
\$6.50 for Canadian residents, US
\$5.50 for Overseas residents

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Cover

Our cover for this issue features *art*
from the *Shadowfist* Collectible Card
Game published by Daedalus
Entertainment Inc. It appears
courtesy of the Daedalus
Entertainment Inc and the artist,
Hannibal.

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SLEEPING DRAGON WAKE

Scenario by Bruce Baugh Original Art by Duncan Shields & Mike Crippin

Introduction

This is an adventure intended for a group of Feng Shui characters in modern Hong Kong without special powers or knowledge of the secret war. (Garden-variety fu powers are not "special" in this context.) Nothing in it will break if the characters do have powers or connections, though.

It helps if each character has some sort of connection to at least one other. While not much justification is needed for leaping into heroic action, at least a bit of explanation is a good idea. Cops of various kinds may be former partners, or at least have worked together in the past. Cops and criminals encounter each other in the course of their respective trades. Techies, Scrappy Kids, and Big Bruisers can know almost anyone.

The GM may wish to arrange it so that various PCs' melodramatic secrets tie together behind the scenes. It won't matter now, but it's a good source of fun for later.

The Story So Far

In history as it used to be, one or more of the PCs got involved in the secret war some months ago. One of these had an older brother, Lon Lin, who took up doing good deeds at the same time. They and their friends sometimes fought alongside the famous champions of virtue, the Dragons, but weren't generally considered part of the Dragons

themselves. They were beginning to make a name for themselves among the well-connected.

Then it all went wrong.

A techie in their group encountered rumors of strange devices being used by conspirators in 1850 Shanghai. The heroes went to investigate. It turned out that the Ascended were supplying modern-day computers to a covert league of traders trying to monopolize the Shanghai trade; the computers were being used for economic simulations and analyses. Unbeknownst to the would-be monopolists, the Ascended were also using back rooms to breed mutant strains of various diseases. In the late 1850s there would be a widespread uprising known as the Taiping Rebellion, which the Ascended intended to help by spreading new diseases among cities remaining loyal to the emperor. Civil disorder, they figured, would render China more susceptible to their manipulations.

The heroes, being heroes, attacked. They shot up the schemers and Ascended on the scene, downloaded dozens of megabytes of database onto a removable hard drive cartridge, encrypted the whole thing with state-of-the-art cryptography software, and set the lab on fire. They didn't quite manage to stop the release of some of the disease strains, though most got destroyed. Nor did they manage to avoid setting off alarms.

Ascended assassins were waiting for them when they returned to the Netherworld. Lon Lin alone escaped, and he was badly injured. Word got out among other factions about Ascended records being available for the seizing, and complex battles broke out throughout the Netherworld. Lon Lin barely managed to get to a gateway back to modern Hong Kong.

That was when he found that history had been changed. No sweeping reversals had taken place, but the mutant diseases brought ill-fortune to many loyalist families...including his own. His family had been comfortably upper-middle class merchants. Now they were working-class shopkeepers. None of his brothers or sisters had ever gotten involved in the secret war. Even worse, he had never been born. He's a man without a place in the world.

Desperate, he's managed to find out where the PC relative of his lives. He's on his way to see what to do next. And he's being pursued.

The Story To Come

Lon Lin arrives at the apartment of his PC relative. He's closely followed by Architect agents, who promptly attack. In the aftermath of the battle, police officers (all Pledged followers of the Ascended) arrive to see what's going on and hush things up. Lon Lin escapes them, barely.

A little later, Lon Lin tells the PCs how to make contact with his occasional allies the Dragons. The PCs get to sample some of the Hong Kong social scene while getting pointers.

The PCs rendezvous with Lon Lin and the Dragons at Hong Kong Park. They also rendezvous with a police ambush. Things get even more complex when followers of the Guided Hand attack, seeking to get Lon Lin's secrets for their own use. In the end, the heroes escape into the Netherworld.

The PCs get to sample some of the Netherworld social scene, too, as the Dragons try to hook up with a group of Jammers called the Cipherpunks, who can help them. After some argument, the Cipherpunks agree.

The Dragons try to avoid the attention of Architect patrols out looking for them, only to end up in an Architect ambush. As at the

Feng Shui, The Shadowfist Role Playing Game is a trademark of Daedalus Entertainment Inc.



park, things get complex. The Architect scientist in charge proves to be a double agent for the Eaters of the Lotus. Demonic wizardry meets arcanowave technology in a head-on collision. The surviving PCs return to the modern day.

Act I Kwong Yuen Housing Project

One of the few exceptions to Hong Kong's governing philosophy of "positive non-intervention" is the housing market. More than half of the colony's apartments are owned and run by the government. In recent years, serious efforts have been made to build places that are something more than basic concrete boxes. The Kwong Yuen housing project is one of the major success stories.

Kwong Yuen is perched in a valley to the north of the mass of Kowloon. On its east and west ends are residential towers, twenty and thirty stories high, each with three or four wings arranged around a circular core. Between the towers is an expanse of brownstone courtyards, gardens and park spaces, and two- and three-story buildings holding everything from restaurants to stores to tai chi pavilions. An open amphitheater and clock tower mark the center of the project.

It is early evening. Day workers are home, or arriving; night workers are getting ready to leave. Individuals, couples, groups of friends, and families meander the pathways, or munch on take-out meals, or simply enjoy the view of night descending on Kowloon and the harbor.

Play begins in an apartment in one of the residential towers, a few floors above the ground.

Lon Lin Arrives

Suddenly there's urgent knocking at the door. When it's opened, Lon Lin ducks in and slams it shut behind him. He is tired and wounded, and his clothes bear stains from 1850 Shanghai and various temporary sanctuaries in the Netherworld and modern Hong Kong.

His resemblance to his PC relative is strong. Everyone in the apartment will notice it immediately. He turns to greet his relative, and passes out.

If anyone checks his pockets while he's unconscious, they'll find a variety of pieces of ID. The PC relative, of course, has never heard of him: in this version of history he doesn't exist. None of the documents are forged, either, they're simply from another version of history.

In a few minutes he recovers.

Lon Lin

"Look, I've seen more weirdness than you can imagine, so take my word for it, okay?"

Attributes: Body 6, Chi 0 (Fortune 3), Mind 6, Reflexes 6

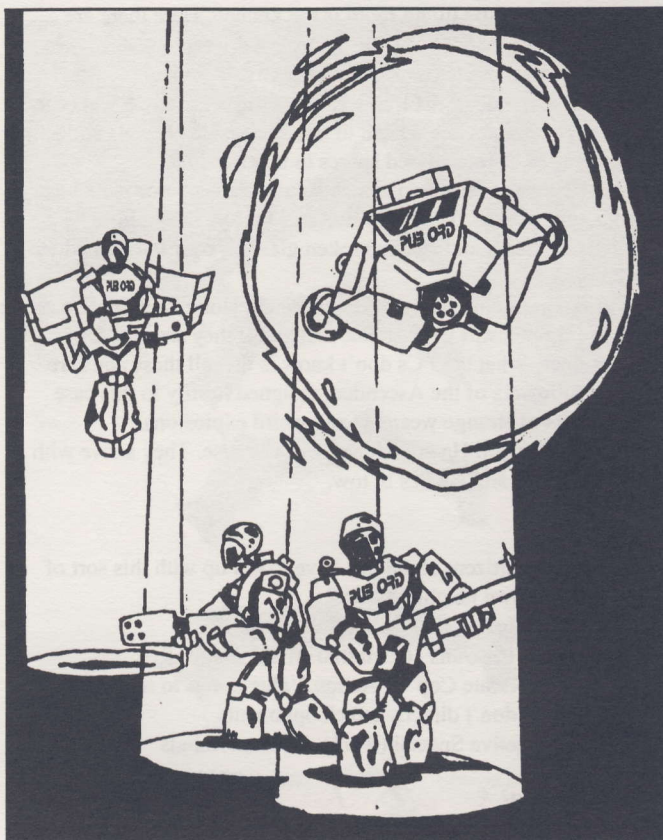
Skills: Driving 13, Fix-It 15, Guns 11, Info/Science 9, Info/Secret War 7

Schticks: The standard Techie schtick (the ability to make a Fortune check and lay hands on precisely the right tool)

Gun: Llama Large Frame (10/2/7+1), two extra magazines

He has time to explain a few basic points:

- He really is the PC's brother, but from a different version of history.
- Bad guys of different kinds are coming after him to get the information he's got. (Here he produces the hard drive cartridge.)
- He needs help finding a place to hide and making contact with people who will know what to do next.



Once these basics have been covered, the first of his pursuers arrive: a band of Buro cops with arcanowave weaponry. There's one Buro cop for each PC and another for Lon Lin.

Buro cops

"Stop or I'll reload!"

Attributes: Body 5, Chi 0, Mind 4, Reflexes 5

Skills: Arcanowave Device 6, Guns 6, Martial Arts 6

Arcanowave Devices: Slap Patch, 1 Twister Bullet per magazine

Gun: Buro 9A (10/1/17+1), 1 extra magazine

These are natives of 2056, but they've worked a few times in the modern day - enough to know their way around, at least. Their strategy is very simple. They want to incapacitate Lon Lin and kill everyone else in the room, then grab Lon Lin and haul him off to some nearby gateway. When half of them are down, the survivors suffer a point of morale impairment; when only one quarter of them are still standing, the survivors try to flee.

The GM should be sure to emphasize the peculiarities of their equipment. The pseudo-organic sheen of ARB guns and armor is unmistakable, and helps alert PCs that something unusual is going on.

Here are some things that can liven up the fight.

The fight is happening a few floors up. The GM should look at the rules for falling damage and pick a reasonable height. Characters can be thrown through the window and smack into grass below. This should hurt, even incapacitate for the time being, but not kill.

- The Buro cops kick in the front door. But it's still on one hinge, which means that it can be swung back to slam into a Buro cop standing in the doorway.



- To one side of the living room is the kitchen. Here there are knives, frying pans, and other improvised weapons. Refrigerator and cupboard doors can be used offensively, too.
- To the other side of the living room is the bedroom. Sheets can be thrown over someone's head to obscure vision. Towels and shirts can be used as improvised snares to tangle a limb.
- The television and stereo can be smashed over someone's head with a loud crash. The implosion of a picture tube adds a satisfying bang, and strews broken glass all over the immediate vicinity.

If things are going badly for the PCs, the Hong Kong police arrive while the fight is still in progress. Otherwise they arrive a few minutes later. What the PCs don't know is that all these cops are Pledged followers of the Ascended, assigned hastily to this case upon reports of strange weapons and weird explosions.

Officers Shu and Ha are in charge of the case. They arrive with a half-dozen cops and medics in tow.

Steven Shu

"Golly. Decent citizens shouldn't have to put up with this sort of thing in their own neighborhood."

Attributes: Body 5, Chi 0, Mind 6, Reflexes 7

Skills: Driving 10, Guns 10, Martial Arts 9, Police 9

Schticks: The Karate Cop +2 Action Value bonus to martial arts maneuvers that don't directly attack opponents

Gun: Colt Detective Special (9/1/6), 12 extra rounds

Tang Tai Ha

"Oh, wow. This is, y'know, really something? Let me think what the manual says to do."

Attributes: Body 5, Chi 0, Mind 5, Reflexes 6

Skills: Driving 9, Guns 7, Martial Arts 7, Police 8

Guns: Colt Detective Special (9/1/6), 12 extra rounds; Remington 870 (13/5/7), 14 extra rounds

Generic Pledged cops

Attributes: Body 5, Chi 0, Mind 4, Reflexes 5

Skills: Driving 8, Guns 6, Martial Arts 5, Police 7

Guns: Colt Detective Special (9/1/6), 12 extra rounds

Shu is a genial man in his fifties. He joined the Lodge decades ago, and has risen to precisely where he wants to be. His superiors are intrigued by the phenomenon of ambition with real limits, and find him very useful for cases where questions of power struggle might arise. He's willing to do whatever it takes to maintain his position, but really hates to harm anyone who isn't directly interfering with Ascended operations. Tang Tai Ha is an edgy woman in her early thirties. She joined the Lodge just a few years ago and is only now finding out how deep things run. She has the distinct feeling of being in over her head, is scared stiff by the power her superiors wield, and hides the fear beneath ruthlessness. Together they've been on Lon Lin's trail ever since he emerged from the Netherworld a few days ago.

The other cops are more or less mindless followers, willing to do whatever they're ordered to in the conviction that their bosses must be right.

Lon Lin notices the cops approaching the apartment tower, recognizes his pursuers, and decides to flee. With a hasty "These guys are trouble, watch yourselves, I'll be in touch," he's out to a

fire escape and gone into the crowds. Moments later, the cops are in the shattered apartment.

Shu and Ha don't expect the PCs to know anything useful. If any PCs are injured, police medics attend to their wounds. The officers in charge ask questions, but are looking more for a consistent story told by everyone than pressing hard for every detail to have the ring of truth. After all, they'll be leaving a couple plainclothes officers behind to keep an eye on things.

The Pledged resolutely conceal any knowledge of what's going on. The most Shu or Ha will say, if pressed, is that there have been reports of strange guys like these in the last few days, and the whole matter will be referred to some special task force. In the meantime, the PCs should keep an eye out for anything unusual and get in immediate touch if they find anything. The city's emergency fund will help cover repairs.

With that, they're gone.

Spotting the plainclothes officers would require a perception check against their Deceit scores of 7.

Searching for the Dragons

This is a series of small scenes, opportunities for the PCs to gather information and to get pointed to the next major scene.

Lon Lin Again

The PC relative gets a phone call from Lon Lin the following evening. The phone is tapped, and he knows it, but he thinks the risk is worth taking.

Hurriedly he tells the PC that the relative (and friends) need to help him find the good guys called the Dragons. He has names and places to check.

The Bird Market

This is the place that gets shot up in the opening scene of *Hard Boiled*. It's a huge indoor plaza devoted to the buying and selling of all kinds of exotic birds. Lon Lin has heard that his old friend Kwan Tung can be found here. Inquiries among the merchants reveal that:

- Kwan Tung sells exotic birds from time to time. He's a dabbler, though, just doing it when he needs the money.
- These are fine birds right here. The PC would be very happy if these were in his home, making beautiful music.
- Kwan Tung was around just the other day, but he didn't stay long.
- This is a marvelous parrot, brought from Vietnam by a family of refugees. It can recite seventeen major sutras, thereby blessing all in the vicinity. Why not buy it?
- Kwan Tung did say that he's been working on his tai chi lately, and that he'd be at the big tai chi demonstration and instruction session in Hong Kong Park tomorrow night. He invited the merchant to join him, but the merchant has no time for such things.
- The PC can hardly imagine the happiness that a good songbird will bring her.
- Kwan Tung might stop by. Would the PC like to leave a message, just in case?

The Space Museum

This is a domed building right on the Kowloon waterfront, a few blocks east of the big Star Ferry Terminal. Lon Lin says that he's heard that Augustine Lee Mun, a grad student in Hong Kong



University's engineering program, works at the museum as general maintainer of gadgets. PCs can go see the sights, including a solar telescope, rotating exhibits (right now, on unmanned space probes and on the solar wind), and an Omnimax theater, and ask questions of the staff. Answers available include:

Yes, Augustine works here.

No, he's not around today. Said something about some urgent family business.

He had a date with one of the theater ushers, then canceled it. He tried to make a new one with her for Hong Kong Park tomorrow night, but she isn't free. And he knew it. She's thinking about dumping him, because he's kind of flaky.

There's a voice mail system, and a receptionist can get the number to call to leave a message for him.

Wong Tai Sin Temple

This is a sprawling compound on a hilly outskirt of Kowloon, dedicated to a shepherd boy said to have healing powers. Crowds gather to pray, have their fortunes told, and enjoy the gardens. Lon Lin says he understands that Wong Ti-Tsu often plies his fortune-telling here. If the PCs are willing to pay up for some fortune-telling, they can ask questions of their own, and learn:

- ☉ Wong was around earlier today; the PCs missed him.
- ☉ No, he's not coming back, or at least he said he wouldn't be back today.
- ☉ The PCs have bad luck. This magic charm would remove it, or shunt it away harmless.
- ☉ Wong's a strange one. He talks about different times as if he'd actually been there. No doubt he's got his last incarnation not as well integrated as it might be.
- ☉ Poorly integrated incarnations cause bad luck. But the right herbs, which I have right here for sale, can cure the problem by restoring the flow of chi.
- ☉ Wong said something about meeting an old friend in Hong Kong Park tomorrow night. Is the PC that friend?
- ☉ Bad luck is no joke. The PC should buy this fine protective charm with the power to draw on healing chi energy from places with good feng shui and then release it when there's bad feng shui around.

Act 2 Hong Kong Park

The park occupies a somewhat orca-shaped arc of land half a kilometer long on Hong Kong Island. At its center are a lake, greenhouse, and Greek theater. Grassy areas, aviary, tai chi pavilion, soccer stadium, and other gathering places are woven throughout the park.

Even late at night, when the PCs arrive to meet Lon Lin and the Dragons, there are other people. The buildings are closed to the public at this late hour, but people walk around the ponds, look in through windows, and enjoy the cool breeze.

The Dragons Arrive

Kwan Tung, Augustine Lee Mun, and Wong Ti-Tsu come upon the PCs in some out-of-the-way corner. They and Lon Lin are delighted to see each other; the Dragons thought Lon Lin had been killed, and he's counting on them for help in doing something about his current mess.



Kwan Tung

"The bird is a symbol of the spirit, and therefore your own heart in flight. We fight to the end that we need fight no more."

Attributes: Body 6, Chi 1 (Kung Fu 8), Mind 5, Reflexes 5

Skills: Info/Eastern Philosophy 11, Leadership 8, Martial Arts 12

Kung Fu Shticks: Hands Without Shadow, Dim Mak, Lightning Fist, Claw of the Tiger, Tiger Stance

Weapons: nun-chakus

Augustine Lee Mun

"Um. Well, y'know. It's a matter of valences and Heisenberg loss within the parameters of acceptable throughput. Y'know?"

Attributes: Body 5, Chi 0 (Fortune 2), Mind 6, Reflexes 5

Skills: Driving 12, Fix-It 12, Guns 10, Info/Science 10

Shticks: The Techie ability to spend a Fortune point and pull out precisely the right tool

Guns: Grendel P-12 (9/1/12+1), three extra magazines



Wong Ti-Tsu

"I see many things. You would too, if you had your eyes open instead of relying on others to see your fortune for you."

Attributes: Body 5, Chi 0 (Kung Fu 7), Mind 5, Reflexes 6

Skills: Info/Eastern Philosophy 8, Leadership 6, Martial Arts 10

Kung Fu Schticks: Crane Stance, Wing of the Crane, Beak of the Crane, Talon of the Crane

Weapons: nun-chakus, Glock 17 (10/1/17+1), 3 extra magazines

Kwan Tung is a jolly man in early middle age, stout (but with lots more muscle than fat). Augustine is a wiry young man with a nervous tic and an almost total lack of basic social skills, a classic nerd. Wong is actually not much older than Augustine, but is in makeup and chi-assisted disguise as a bearded old man with a wise look. All three share a somewhat foolish optimism, feeling that Lon Lin's escape with data somehow vastly improves the balance sheet of the Shanghai slaughter's aftermath, and even makes the consequences of Operation Killdeer better.

This is the chance for the PCs to ask questions. The Dragons take turns fielding matters of their respective expertise.

- ④ The Architects of the New Flesh come from the 21st century, when they rule the world. Their super-technology is actually based on magical manipulation of demons. They want to make the 20th century like their own time.
- ④ The Ascended are the powers that be behind the scenes in Hong Kong and elsewhere. The cops the PCs dealt with belong to their Lodge, and are reporting back to their secret masters as well as to their nominal commanding officers. The Ascended are trying to stamp out magic.
- ④ Public-key cryptography, like Lon Lin's dead friend used on the hard disk cartridge, is pretty well uncrackable in the here-and-now. It would take millions of years of computing time to stumble on the right key. Even with the most sophisticated mathematics around, it would take many thousands of years of computer time. But there are ways around this. The Architects have magic-boosted factoring protocols that can rip open a public-key system in a matter of minutes. And in the Netherworld the flow of time can be altered to speed the process.
- ④ The Netherworld? That's this weird place outside time. It's what

Lon Lin, the Architects, and the other groups use to move from one time to another. It's like a world of caves.

- ④ Yes, there are other groups. For instance, there's the Guiding Hand, who want to make China a pure Confucian regime: morally upright, but also socially cast in stone, taken away from modern technology, and generally locked away. They got hurt by the diseases set loose in 1850 Shanghai.

Then there's no more time for explanations. Shu and Ha show up leading a contingent of Pledged cops, one for each PC, Lon Lin, and the Dragons. They shout warnings, but open fire before anyone could comply. Their masters have decided that it's time to take Lon Lin and his associates out of the picture, since after all he's not needed to decrypt the stolen data.

The park offers many advantages for a fight.

- ④ A twenty-foot waterfall cascades from the greenhouse down into the first of three ponds. This provides cover and distraction.
 - ④ The aviary is a hundred meters away. Gunfire will shatter the glass and release countless tropical birds into the night.
 - ④ The conservatory is very humid inside. If its windows are shot out or otherwise broken, dank mist rolls downhill to obscure things in the vicinity for the next full sequence.
 - ④ There's a thirty-foot-tall clock tower, with a spiral staircase inside glass walls opening onto a circular balcony. This is a wonderful vantage point, but anyone heading up there makes a pretty obvious target.
 - ④ There are koi in the ponds. A fish thrown in the face can seriously distract an opponent.
 - ④ Public toilets dot the park. Each can be ducked into. The walls are solid concrete. Some have open roofs, and a toilet made to explode would be powerfully distracting.
 - ④ The Greek theater has peculiar echoes, certain to confuse a noisy pursuer. And the amphitheater seats are suitable for the classic Woo maneuver of leaping down toward one's target, gun in each hand, blazing away.
 - ④ The Guiding Hand's maneuvers should be startling to PCs new to this: the tremendous leaps, the lightning speed, and so on. The GM should be sure to take time to pile on the details.
- As before, the cops take a point of morale impairment when half their number are down, and flee when three-quarters are down. But there's a complication. Guiding Hand students of chi use have



detected the disturbances surrounding Lon Lin's activities. They believe (rightly, more or less) that he and his friends are to blame for setting loose the diseases that complicated resistance to the Taiping Rebellion. Now they're here for vengeance. On the third sequence of combat, one Guiding Hand disciple shows up for each PC and Lon Lin (but not extras for Dragons or cops).

Guiding Hand disciple

Attributes: Body 5, Chi 2 (Kung Fu 6), Mind 4, Reflexes 5

Skills: Martial Arts 7

Kung Fu Shticks: one of the following combinations:

- a) Natural Order, Backlash of the Turtle, Mirror of the Turtle
- b) Creative Thunder, The Wandering Cow, No Medicine
- c) Clothed in Life, Armored in Life

Weapons: nun-chakus

They are resolute in the pursuit of their enemies, and will not stop till they or their enemies have all been slain.

Into The Netherworld

Eventually the heroes will have defeated the opposition, or it will become clear that the opposition has the upper hand. In either case, it's time to enter the Netherworld. Any surviving Dragons (or Lon Lin) call the PCs to gather around what appears to be a manhole cover near the central waterfall. Opening it reveals a ladder descending into infinity. Quickly (if pursued) or more leisurely (if not), the Dragons guide everyone down it and close the cover behind them, sealing it with heavy bolts from the inside. The ladder goes down the equivalent of several stories, then opens onto a horizontal passage. The group is now in the Netherworld. Any pursuers there may be batter on the manhole cover without effect.

The GM should take some time to describe the peculiarities of the Netherworld. The heat, the humidity, the dust, the lighting all deserve mention. The Dragons and Lon Lin take it all more or less for granted now, and may well be amused (or bemused) by any bewilderment on the part of PCs.

The Dragons will spend some time asking around for a group of Jammers who call themselves the Cipherpunks. Augustine speculates that they'll be able to crack and publicize the Ascended data Lon Lin is carrying. In the course of this, the PCs can be briefly exposed to a number of Netherworld landmarks, including:

- ① The Genocide Lounge. This is a Jammer-run nightclub featuring the best in alternative music from the modern day and 2056. Here the PCs can learn a bit about the Jammers and their role as arch-enemies of the Architects.
- ② Inner Kingdom Television. The Cipherpunks are big IKTV fans, and help keep things running. But they're not around at the moment.
- ③ Davey's Wall. This is a grotto with a living, sentient wall which collects graffiti from different junctures. (Nobody's sure who Davey was, but that's how the wall identifies itself.) The wall knows that the Cipherpunks have gone to hang out in the Lymph Node, and will write this out if the characters offer it some new graffiti.

The Locale: Lymph Node

The Lymph Node is the sole remaining trace of an effort some centuries ago to construct a giant golem out of the Netherworld's substance. It didn't work. The Lymph Node is a network of chambers like a human lymphatic system for a person several hundred feet tall. In recent years it's become a coffeehouse, very

popular among the Netherworld's intellectuals and poseurs.

The main room is roughly circular, with coffee urns, espresso machines, and ovens in the center. Smaller rooms linked to the main one by short passages hold tables and couches for patrons.

The Cipherpunks

Three Cipherpunks are present. Fast Code is a teenage girl who favors traditional nerd garb: plastic-rimmed glasses, black slacks, white oxford cloth shirt with pocket protector. This clashes somewhat with her fondness for rainbow-dyed spiky hair. Big Brother is a middle-aged man who looks exactly like the Heroic Leader figures of countless Communist and Nazi propaganda posters. The Other One is heavily cyborged, and is working on making himself look like Robbie the Robot.

The Cipherpunks want to get the hard disk cartridge so they can crack its contents. The Dragons want them to do this. But the Cipherpunks want to keep it for exclusive Jammer use, while the Dragons think that the safest thing is to publicize it far and wide, so as to remove incentive to wipe out one particular group of people. This argument can be played out in whatever length the GM and players are interested in. PCs who wish to contribute anything to the argument are welcome to do so, and will favorably impress the Cipherpunks.

In the end, the Cipherpunks agree that they'll do as the Dragons ask. They use one of their laptop computers to duplicate the hard disk cartridge, then head out a side passage to do the code-breaking somewhat less public.

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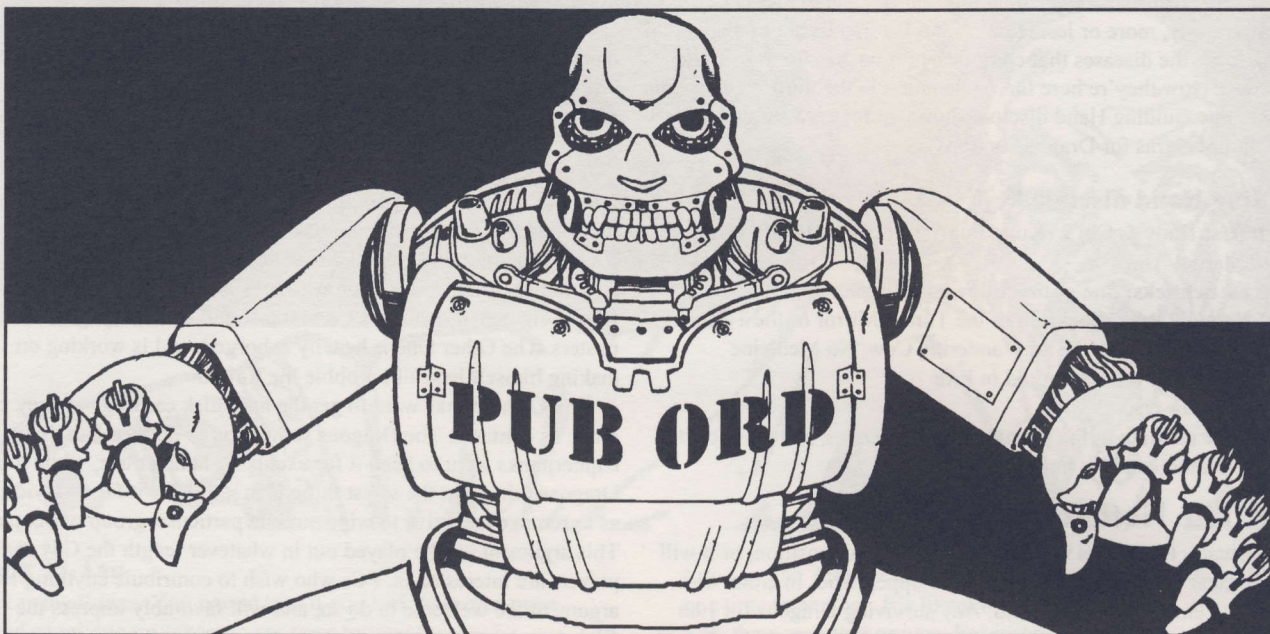


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Act 3 Into Ambush

The Dragons notice Architect patrols, who are probably looking for Lon Lin. They lead the PCs through a tangled network of side passages to a safe gateway.

Unfortunately for them, the Architects have been busy building more specialized research facilities. In what was an empty cavern the last time the Dragons came through, there's now the Architects' Netherworld center for cryptographic centers. The patrols were deployed to shepherd the party in this direction.

The Locale: Toad Hall

The cavern is dozens of meters across. Toad Hall itself is a two-story building perched somewhat off-center, for obscure feng shui reasons. The building has a rudimentary idiot savant intelligence dedicated to evaluating encryption algorithms, and it shows its work. Equations appear, rearrange themselves, and vanish against a constant background stream of 1s and 0s. The Architect cryptographers can thus devote themselves to theory and innovation, leaving the grunt work to their offices.

Tentacles of data extrude from the walls in response to Architect commands. Usually these are to make models of data structures, catastrophe surfaces, and other mathematical forms in three (or more) dimensions, but they can also be used as weapons.

The Cryptographic Security Force

There's one heavily armed Buro Security Cyborg for every two PCs, Lon Lin, and Dragons. They are led by Bei Su, a junior Buro scientist with an interest in enforcement (and a secret of his own).

Bei Su

Attributes: Body 5, Chi 2 (Magic 7), Mind 7, Reflexes 5

Skills: Arcanowave Device 9, Guns 8, Martial Arts 7

Arcanowave Devices: Feedback Enhancer, Juicer, Spirit Shield Generator

Sorcery Schticks: Blast, Fertility, Heal, Movement, Summoning

Weapons: Buro Godhammer (12/4/5)

Buro Security Cyborgs

Attributes: Body 5, Chi 0, Mind 4, Reflexes 5

Skills: Arcanowave Device 6, Guns 6, Martial Arts 4

Arcanowave Devices: Slap Patch, Agony Grenade

Guns: Buro Godhammer (12/4/5), Buro 9A (10/1/17+1), 1 extra magazine; Tracer Resin Projector

Toad Hall's Tentacles

Attributes: Body 8, Chi 0, Mind 0, Reflexes 4

Skills: Creature Powers 6

Creature Schticks: Tentacles

Weapons: tentacles 6

This fight will call for substantial player ingenuity. The battlefield is straightforward: the cavern and Toad Hall. Architect patrols can be heard approaching down any available passageway, so flight isn't an option until the forces at hand have been dealt with.

Things that can be done in the fight include:

- ① Energetic, lucky, or cooperating characters can manage to get on top of Toad Hall. The tentacles can't reach here.
- ② One tentacle can emerge from a two-meter square area of Toad Hall. Fast-moving characters can tie tentacles together, temporarily using up the resources of a whole section of building to free them.
- ③ The Toad Hall cavern light dims and flares. For each shot of delay, characters can add 1 to their Dodge value, taking advantage of sudden changes in lighting.

The Buro goons don't lose morale. But there's a complication coming up when one side or another seems to be getting the decisive advantage.

A Demonic Intrusion

Bei Su is actually an infiltrator for the Eaters of the Lotus who succeeded in escaping Architect detection. The work being done in



Toad Hall poses a threat to his own operations, as secure communication channels are rendered insecure, one by one. He has orders to destroy the place; he chose this dramatic moment on his own.

When either two-thirds of the Buro goons or half the party are down, Bei Su turns to shoot the goons nearest him and does a summoning spell. Eater-controlled demons emerge from the substance of the cavern to attack the Architects. They ignore the party unless specifically attacked.

Demons

Attributes: Body 6, Chi 2, Mind 3, Reflexes 5

Skills: Creature Powers 7, Martial Arts 7

Creature Schticks: Abysmal Spines, Tentacles x 3, Armor or Foul Spew

Weapons: tentacle barbs 9, bite 6

As the Architect patrols approach, Bei Su turns to the party and says, "My masters think you're more useful as live nuisances than as dead subjects. You hurt our enemies. We are grateful. Now go." He points out a concealed passage leading to a gate to modern Hong Kong that the Architects aren't using at the moment.

The Destruction of Toad Hall

By this point, Toad Hall is ripping itself apart, with demonic help. The approaching patrols have heavy rocket gear - the PCs should be motivated to take the gateway passage after the first few massive explosions. As they head down the passage, the cavern behind them is reduced to rubble. That's one Architect project that will have to start all over.

Conclusion

And so the party returns to the modern world. Now there are a few loose ends to tie up.

The Dragons and Lon Lin

If Lon Lin is still alive, the surviving Dragons invite him to join them in the Netherworld, where he can live with his fellow survivors of changes in history. He'll accept. The PCs can contact the Dragons through the means Lon Lin taught them this adventure.

The Police

If either Shu or Ha is still alive, they'll deliver this message personally a few hours after the party returns. Otherwise it comes from a generic cop who visits the PC relative. "We know what you've been up to. But matters are out of our hands now. Watch it. The next time we'll be faster."

The Cipherpunks Get the Last Word

If one of the PCs has a computer, this will happen to that computer a day or so after the party returns. If not, have one of the PCs visiting with a friend who does.

The computer, powered off, unexpectedly turns itself off. Simple ASCII letters type out this message: "Thought you'd like to know. Code snapped like old cookies. It's making the rounds around here. Have fun. TTYL, Fast Code." Then the machine shuts itself off again.

9 out of 10
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Borealis: The Kin Strife

Scenario by Legion,
Original Art by R. Crowe Gray

We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams.

— Willy Wonka, **Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory**

For my brother Jim.

Storyteller's Preface

Well now we are going to begin...

— Hans Christian Andersen,
The Snow Queen

Borealis: The Kin Strife is a short story for **Changeling: The Dreaming**. Although brief, storytellers should be able to embellish it simply enough to develop it into the framework for a longer northern story or chronicle. The opening of *Borealis: The Kin Strife* can be set in any city, town or freehold in Concordia. Storytellers should read through this story, making notes as desired, before leading their troupes through it.

This adventure is fairly straightforward. The characters are presented with a mystery, but one with a seemingly direct course of action toward solution. However, their success or failure can have serious consequences for the future of their chronicle, should storytellers desire such.

The story involves the characters in the search for a missing firebrand from High-King David's court shortly after the festival of Imbolc. This firebrand disappeared en route to the freehold of Northold, at the north pole, where she was to deliver her balefire lantern to Claus.

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Prelude

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in faeries!

— Francis Church,
in reply to Virginia O'Hanlon

The freeholds ruled by Claus and the Ice Queen arose out of the mists surrounding the aftermath of the Sundering and the coming of the Age of Travel. Prior to the Shattering both were mere motleys. During the Shattering, however, the two realms solidified into semi-formal households, one Seelie the other Unseelie.

During the Interregnum both Claus and the Ice Queen formalized their motley-households into strong freeholds, he Northold, she the Snow Palace. Both now house balefire hearths which burn to keep the two domains warm through the coldest of winters and feed the Glamour needed to keep the freeholds hidden from mortals and protected from Banality. Their inhabitants never appear in mortal seemings within them. Occasionally, however, they do leave their freeholds. During these forays, they assume mortal seemings. Typically the dress of whatever Arctic peoples are nearest, or of geologists, oceanographers or adventurers.

Of all fae realms on Earth, Claus' Northold remained the strongest throughout the Shattering and Interregnum. Most faeries suffered the ravages of Banality caused by the near Glamour-lessness of mortals through the Black Death years, the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment. But Claus and his followers received annual surges of Glamour every December from the earliest tenth-century on, through 1969 to the present, from ever-growing numbers of people. This winter

bolstering of belief in things fae among mortals was a critical factor which enabled the Kithain to survive in both Europe and North America during those centuries.

Both freeholds, although ruled by commoners, were left unmolested by the sidhe nobles returning from Arcadia during the Accordance War. Many theories have been put forth to justify this fact. For his part, Claus believes he was left alone by the good graces of the returning nobles. Her Ladyship's opinion is that no glory-hound sidhe would want to lord over a freehold so far removed from the social-climbing action of the south.

After centuries of habitation in the extreme north, both Claus and the Ice Queen have become inseparably linked to the expansion and recession of the Arctic ice. As the ice expands in winter to cover the entire Arctic Ocean, so the powers of these two northernmost fae rulers increase. As the ice recedes in the summer, so the influence of Claus and Her Ladyship decreases. Likewise, this cyclical ebb and flow of their powers is reflective of the waxing and waning of Banality among mortals through the year, increasing in summer, eroding in winter.

Their usually quiet struggle occasionally escalates to involve both Seelie and Unseelie fae from Queen Laurel's Kingdom of the Northern Ice. Indeed in the records of Tara-Nar both of these northern freeholds are named as Duchies within Laurel's Kingdom. In spite of this, both are self-governing and essentially autonomous. And so, quarrels do flare up. Sometimes even the Kithain of Iceland and Lapland are drawn into their conflicts, not to mention the much closer nunnehi of the Inuit and Dene lands. The Aurora Borealis itself is believed by many



Kithain sages to be a manifestation of the unending struggle between Claus and Her Ladyship, literally brought to light by spent Glamour in conflict.

Dramatis Personae

*I come from the land of the ice and snow
From the midnight sun where the harsh winds
blow*

— Led Zeppelin, "Immigrant Song"

Black Peter

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Regent/Wretch

Seeming: Grump

Kith: Troll

Household/Motley: Northold

Attributes: Strength 7 (Broad Shoulders),

Dexterity 2, Stamina 5 (Determined),

Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2,

Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 4 (Bodyguarding), Brawl 3, Intimidation 5 (Social)

Skills: Leadership 4 (Commands), Melee 5 (Hammer), Survival 4, Security 4

Knowledges: Linguistics 1 (Dutch), Occult 3, History 1

Arts: Primal 3, Soothsay 4

Realms: Actor 4, Fae 2, Scene 3

Backgrounds: Treasures 4, Gremayre 3

Glamour: 6

Banality: 5

Willpower: 7

Image: In his faerie guise this dour troll wears naught but blackened seal skins from head to toe and carries a massive black leather-bound record book and raven quill pen. He is never without his terrible war hammer, Icebreaker. Should he need it, Black Peter also possesses a suit of plate mail forged from the ebony kraken hide.

Roleplaying Hints: You speak not but to your lord Claus. Only he brings light to your darkened days. Guilt-ridden over your oath-breaking, you glean what little pleasure there is in your life now only through service to your chosen master.

History: Peter was once the oathbound love of Her Ladyship, the Ice Queen. Together they plotted the downfall of Claus' hegemony over the north. As part of their plan, Peter travelled to Northold to ingratiate himself into Claus' confidence. Once he had befriended Claus, Peter planned to slay the boggan and join the realm of Northold to Her Ladyship's domain.

However, when Peter arrived at Claus' thorpe, he was won over by the old boggan's



kindliness and cheerful comradere. After much anguished consideration, Peter converted to the Seelie court and broke his oath of truehearts with Her Ladyship. These actions weighed heavily upon Peter. So heavily in fact, that he prematurely aged in seeming, Wilder to Grump. In remorse he assumed the title "Black" and swore an oath of guardianship to Claus. His task now is maintaining Claus' list of meanspirited, misbehaved or cruel mortal children undeserving of a gifting.

Merrill James

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Crafter/Rogue

Seeming: Childling

Kith: Boggan

Household/Motley: Tara-Nar

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2,

Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2,

Perception 4 (Keen-Eyed), Intelligence 4

(Discerning), Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Empathy 1, Expression 2,

Subterfuge 1, Dodge 2, Kenning 1

Skills: Crafts 2, Etiquette 4 (High Society),

Melee 1, Performance 2, Stealth 3, Disguise 1

Icebreaker

Few in the south know of Icebreaker's existence. It is a talismanic treasure and faerie weapon of great power. In its form visible to mortals it is a beat up ice axe, as used for mountaineering or glacier hiking. In its faerie seeming Icebreaker is a five foot-long war hammer of handsome appearance and fine craftsmanship. On a successful strike in melee, Icebreaker ignores chimerical armor worn by its wielder's target. This penetrating power extends to the "natural" armor of such chimerical creatures as dragons and kraken.

Icebreaker is magically linked to the lands of the north. If it is ever taken south of the Arctic Circle, its faerie seeming fades and it loses its powers. It becomes a purely mundane ice axe.



Knowledge: Enigmas 1, Mythlore 1, Investigation 1, Computer 2

Arts: Chicanery 1, Legerdemain 1, Wayfare 2

Realms: Actor 2, Scene 2, Prop 1

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Mentor 3, Resources 1

Glamour: 6

Banality: 1

Willpower: 4

Image: In both his faerie and mortal seemings Merrill's head is covered by a shock of tousled black hair. In his faerie seeming he usually wears the livery of a page at the court of Tara-Nar. In his mortal seeming he often wears a black tee-shirt, for days at a time, decorated across the chest in large white gothic letters with the words "Black Irish". Merrill is rarely seen without his laptop computer.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a playful childling, but not silly or irresponsible. When there is work to be done you do it. There's no harm in whistling while you work, though.

History: The son of an upper class couple, both of Irish descent, living in Manhattan, Merrill lives the quiet, uneventful life of your average imaginative twelve year old mortal. His faerie seeming, though, is that of a page and Herald-in-training at the court of High King David. He is often entrusted as a courier by the High King's Chamberlain.

Merrill is taking this mission as seriously as a childling boggan can, for two reasons. First, this is the first time he has been entrusted with such an important task. Second, he is a child in both his seemings, and all kids love Claus.

Claus

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Saint/Fool

Seeming: Grump

Kith: Boggan

Household/Motley: Northold

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4 (Light Touch), Stamina 3, Charisma 4 (Outgoing), Manipulation 2, Appearance 4 (Cherubic

Demeanour), Perception 5 (Insightful), Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Kenning 4 (Glamour), Instruction 3, Empathy 3

Skills: Crafts 5 (Toys), Etiquette 2, Performance 2, Piloting 4 (Sleigh)

Knowledge: History (Christmas) 5

Arts: Wayfare 5, Soothsay 3, Primal 3, Legerdemain 5, Chicanery 4

Realms: Fae 3, Prop 4, Actor 5, Scene 5, Nature 3

Backgrounds: Holdings 5, Dreamers 5, Chimera 4 (satchel, sleigh and reindeer)

Glamour: 10

Banality: 4

Willpower: 6

Image: Glamour surrounds and penetrates Claus. Everything he is and does radiates an aura which makes him appear to everyone who sees him in a way familiar to them. It is therefore impossible to describe him, as almost all Kithain will see him differently. Everyone's mind's eye holds the picture of how Claus will look to them.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the epitome of kindness, but you never work at it. It is simply not in you to do anything unpleasant, insulting or cruel. It's not that you go out of your way to do right by others. You just can't do otherwise.

History: Early in the tenth century Claus and his little motley fled a Kithain conflict in Europe, to the north pole where he founded a thorpe away from the cares of the world. In time he assumed the mantle of the growing mythology attributed to Saint Nicholas, encouraging its popularity

among mortals with his Glamour and the help of his followers. His faerie name

Claus' Satchel

This chimerical treasure looks like a plain grey canvas bag. It can hold a seemingly-infinite amount of mass. No matter how much material is placed in the satchel, it remains weightless.

Claus' Sleigh

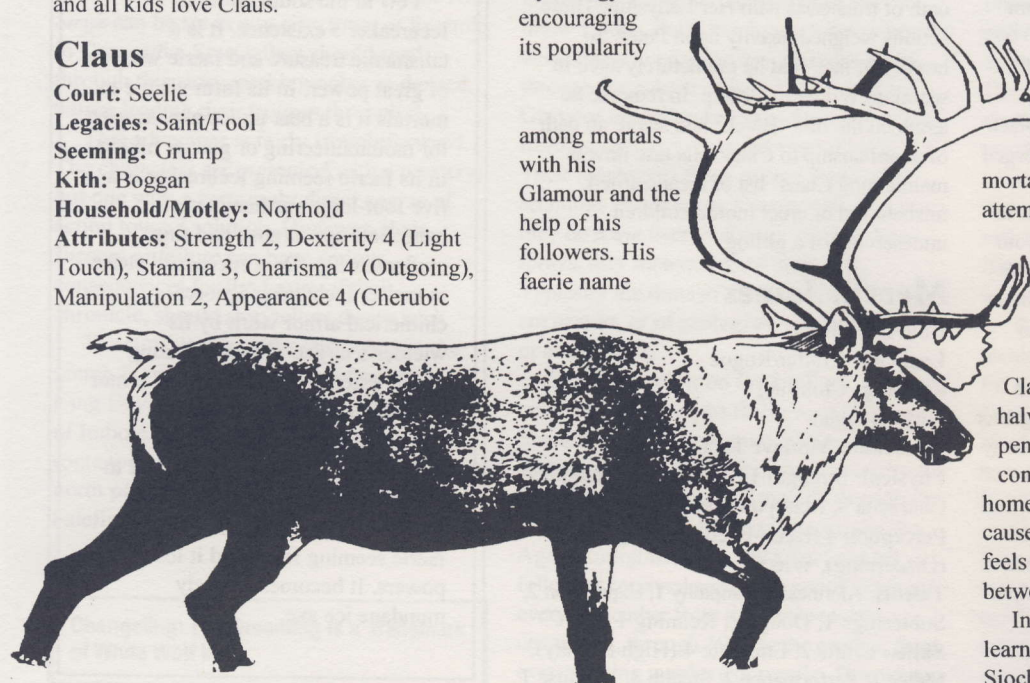
Another of Claus' chimerical treasures. The sleigh is an elaborate affair, red with green and gold trim. It was originally created for him by his nocker foundry and workshop elves, centuries ago. The sleigh can carry an infinite amount of mass and remain at only its own weight (about 400 chimeric pounds). It has seats for four and a space in the back for Claus' satchel. The sleigh has a harness assembly for nine reindeer attached to its front.

before he became Claus is now unknown to all Kithain. His assumption of the identity and mythology of Saint Nicholas makes him the direct beneficiary of more mortal dreaming than any other single fae. His centuries of vigour and lively character are the result. He is as spry and active as he has ever been, despite his grump seeming.

While he does not in fact travel around the world on Christmas Eve — though not even Kithain sages know whether or not he can actually do it — he does use his freehold's trods to journey to many parts of the globe that night to leave gifts and miracles (cantrips) for mortal children most in need. Claus engages in Glamour Reverie among all mortals, but he also aspires to Rapture. He attempts each year to create a toy masterpiece which he then bestows upon the most deserving mortal child in the world, in what he calls a gifting, on Christmas Eve.

From April through September, all of Claus' Attributes, Arts and Realms are halved (round up). This is somewhat a penalty he suffers for being so intimately connected to the cyclical changes of his homeland's environment. It is, however, caused largely by the increase in Banality he feels as he drifts out of mortals' minds between Christmas times.

In his centuries of travel Claus has learned the locations of most of the Siochains' dwelling places. He has a





personal friendship with Uar Coracle and sometimes visits him at his fishing cabin on the coast of Newfoundland. Of all inhabitants of Northold, only Black Peter has also seen Uar Coracle's hut, and only because Claus trusts him implicitly. Every Christmas Eve Claus takes the ancient Uar Coracle a gift of fine Guinness. Some Kithain sages believe that Claus' relations with the Siochain are an indicator that he is on the verge of achieving his own spiritual balance between Glamour and Banality.

Claus' Reindeer

The first eight chimera described below were crafted long ago for Claus by the fae of Lapland as symbols of eternal goodwill. Since that time Claus has had a special relationship with the Lapp Kithain, often choosing to summer among those Scandinavian folk.

The ninth of his reindeer, Rudolph, was created for Claus by the nockers of Goblin Town (see **Freeholds & Hidden Glens**) much more recently, less than a century ago in fact. Even most of Concordia's Unseelie freeholds recognize the benefit Claus reaps for all Kithain.

Claus' reindeer can speak rudimentary forms of all Kithain languages. In a pinch each reindeer could serve as a mount for one rider. They can still fly while being ridden.

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer & Vixen

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2
Abilities: Athletics 4, Dodge 3, Survival 4 (Arctic)
Glamour: 5, **Willpower:** 7
Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -2, -5
Attack: Hooves 2 dice; Antlers 3 dice
Powers:

Flight - Not only can these reindeer fly, but they can also travel trods while doing so. The faerie path to be followed must be opened first, however.

Comet, Cupid, Donner & Blitzen

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2
Abilities: Athletics 3, Dodge 3, Survival 3
Glamour: 6, **Willpower:** 6
Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -5
Attack: Hooves 1 die; Antlers 2 dice
Powers:

Flight - Not only can these reindeer fly, but they can also travel trods while doing so. The faerie path to be followed must be opened first, however.

Rudolph

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Abilities: Athletics 3, Dodge 3, Survival 3
Glamour: 7, **Willpower:** 5
Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -2, -5
Attack: Hooves 1 die; Antlers 2 dice
Powers:

Flight - Not only can these reindeer fly, but they can also travel trods while doing so. The faerie path to be followed must be opened first, however.

Illumination - Rudolph can cause his nose to emit an amazingly bright beam of light. The beam can penetrate any non-solid obstruction of sight, such as fog, snow, rain, smoke, cloud or leaves. Any fae upon whom the beam is focused must make a roll against Dexterity + Dodge (difficulty 6) or be blinded for 1-10 turns.

Foundry & Workshop Elves

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Bumpkin/Fool and Crafter/Riddler are typical

Seeming: Childlings and Wilders

Kith: Boggans and Nockers

Household/Motley: Northold

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4 (Clever or Practical)

Talents: Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Dodge 2, Expression 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1
Skills: Crafts 3, Melee 2, Performance 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Mythlore 1, Science (Various) 2

Arts: Chicanery 1, Legerdemain 2

Realms: Actor 2, Prop 4

Backgrounds: Chimera 1, Resources 1, Mentor 4, Dreamers 1

Glamour: 5 or 6

Banality: 1 to 3

Willpower: 1 to 3

Image: While at work most of Claus' crafters dress in garb appropriate to their specialty. Aprons and toolkits are ubiquitous. When relaxing all enjoy a little levity and fool around all over Northold, dressed in various kinds of attire.

Roleplaying Hints: You have found your sanctuary from the chaos of mortal life. Claus has done you a kindness, and you'll do your damndest to live up to his faith in you. It is hard work, though, being positive all the time.

History: Many of the foundry and workshop elves were streetkids, runaways, in

Yule, December 21st

We had a glorious bonfire and fireworks to celebrate the Coming of Winter

— J.R.R. Tolkien, "The Father Christmas Letters"

Yule, the day of the Winter Solstice, is the single most important and powerful festival date in the year for the fae of the extreme north. It is celebrated in both Claus' Northold and on Her Ladyship's Snow Palace isle. While Claus revels with feasts and games, though, Her Ladyship's retainers celebrate with orgiastic drinking, brawling and duels. Though Claus invites many southern fae to attend his festivities, outsiders are unwelcome at Her Ladyship's court during the Yule festival. Nor would many wish to be present in the Snow Palace at these celebrations.

The primary reason the Yule festival is so important in the north is that on this day every trod leading to and from Claus' Northold opens. There are dozens of these faerie roads, leading to all parts of the globe. Twelve days later they all close again, until next year's Yule solstice, and festival.

their mortal seemings. Fleeing the carnage of their disastrous home lives they turned to the one person they had known and loved in both their mortal and fae seemings. Some of these fae are listed as missing children by the mortal authorities. Claus takes in all who turn to him for aid. But even his is no free ride. After living a time in Northold and learning what it is that goes on there, Claus invites his charges to take the oath of the accepted burden. The burden being to never commit an unkindness, to always look out for those, especially children, in need. The very few who decide not to swear this oath are found safe homes at Seelie freeholds in the Kingdom of the Northern Ice.

Bedlam is a constant danger to all the inhabitants of Northold, especially these young ones. Because of this, elves regularly journey to the mortal cities in the south to be exposed to healthy doses of Banality.



The Ice Queen

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Fatalist/Orchid

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Sluagh

Household/Motley: The Snow Palace

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4 (Cunning), Appearance 5 (Captivating), Perception 3, Intelligence 4 (Clear Thinker), Wits 3

Talents: Intimidation 4 (Veiled Threats), Subterfuge 4 (Finding Weaknesses), Intrigue 5 (Scheming), Seduction 2

Skills: Etiquette 2, Leadership 4 (Commands), Melee 1, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Geography 3 (Arctic), Politics 4 (Oration)

Arts: Sovereign 5, Primal-Cold (see sidebar) 5, Legerdemain 3, Chicanery 3, Soothsay 4

Realms: Scene 4, Nature 5, Fae 3, Actor 3, Prop 4

Backgrounds: Treasures 4, Holdings 4, Title 5, Chimera 4 (wolves and guards)

Glamour: 8

Banality: 5

Willpower: 9

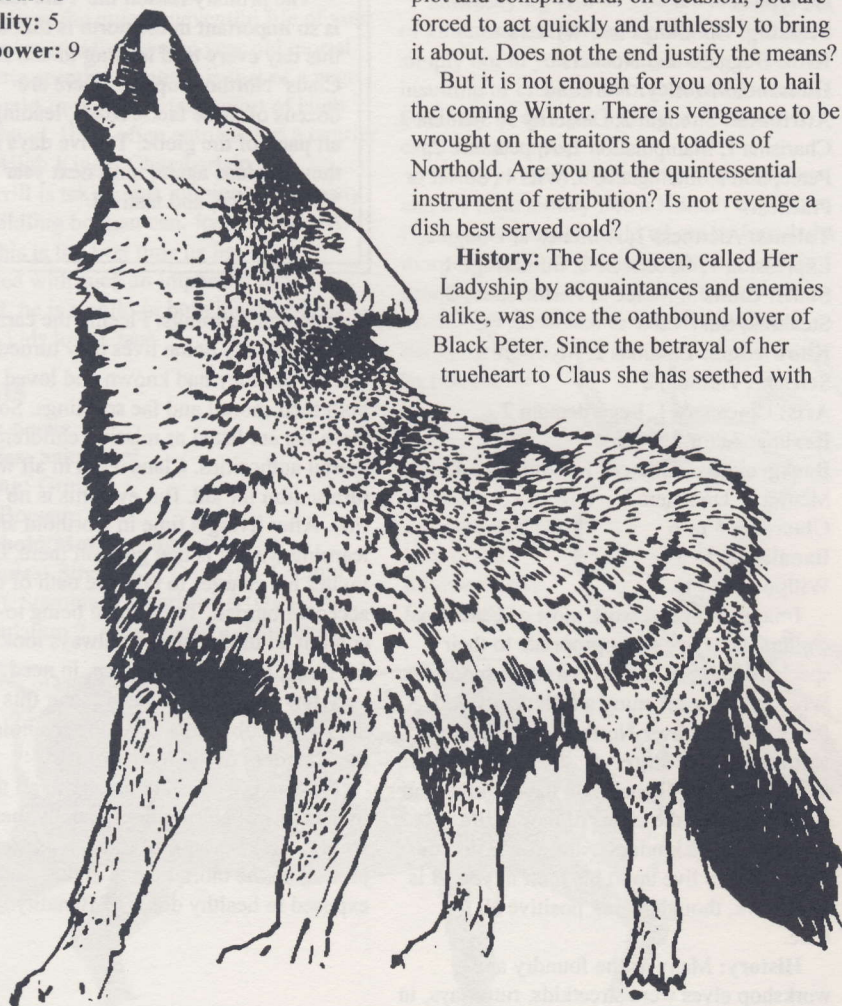


Image: Her Ladyship is a terrible beauty; skin too white and taut, eyes too blue and crisp, lips too red and thin, hair too blonde and straight. Unusually tall, even among sluagh, she stands over six feet in height. Her countenance, height and rigid posture grant her gaze severity enough to wither even haughty sidhe and stern trolls. From her throne, surrounded by wolves and chimerical guards, the Ice Queen rules with a rod of ivory, namely her staff and spear Wintermute. This frigid monarch dresses in white robes and adorns herself with a silver belt and shoes. Atop her head she wears a crystalline four-icicle crown. Her mithril signet ring bears her emblem, a spear-pointed snow flake. From her belt hangs an ivory poniard, carved from a walrus' tusk.

Roleplaying Hints: You revel in the cruelty and bitterness this sorry existence has dealt you. You remain aloof from even your most trusted servants, and they are few. The one passion in your life is the pursuit of the coming Long Winter. Toward this end you plot and conspire and, on occasion, you are forced to act quickly and ruthlessly to bring it about. Does not the end justify the means?

But it is not enough for you only to hail the coming Winter. There is vengeance to be wrought on the traitors and toadies of Northold. Are you not the quintessential instrument of retribution? Is not revenge a dish best served cold?

History: The Ice Queen, called Her Ladyship by acquaintances and enemies alike, was once the oathbound lover of Black Peter. Since the betrayal of her trueheart to Claus she has seethed with

not just jealousy of Claus' power and popularity, but also a personal vendetta and hatred toward both Black Peter and Claus.

The Ice Queen believes completely in the power of true names. In order to protect herself from the magic of others she does not allow anyone to know her real names. All address her as "Your Ladyship". She uses the "royal we" in reference to herself. But it is likely that Black Peter knows her true names. If this is so, however, he has never so much as hinted at them.

From April through September, all of Her Ladyship's Attributes, Arts and Realms are halved (round up). This is somewhat a penalty she suffers for being so intimately

Wintermute

This talismanic treasure is the sceptre and lance of Her Ladyship's office as Ice Queen. It is an eight foot-long spindle of narwhal ivory, ornately carved and inlaid with silver. It has the power to strike mute any person, fae or mortal, at whom it is pointed for 1-10 turns. This condition prevents speech, making it impossible for anyone to employ Bunks which require vocalization. The target may roll Willpower, each success reducing the duration by one turn, or assume his mortal seeming to escape the dumbfounding effect immediately. However, the latter is not advisable, north of 60 in February.

Wintermute's mortal seeming is a simple cross-country ski pole.

connected to the cyclical changes of her homeland's environment. But it is caused largely by the increase in Banality she feels as the northern fae drift out of mortals' minds throughout the summer. Because of these apparent limitations on her powers, some Kithain sages have postulated that Her Ladyship is in fact not a changeling at all, but a chimeric creation from the imaginations of the northern fae themselves. Although unlikely, if so she would rank as perhaps the single most powerful chimera in all Concordia, if not the world.

She actively works to hasten the coming of the Final Season, the Long Winter of this Earth. She frequently allies herself with the chimera Jack Frost to this end. She believes that when the Long Winter finally comes her strength will cease its endless waxing and



waning, and that her power over the fae world will be limitless.

Her Ladyship engages in Glamour Reverie and Ravaging among the mortal inhabitants of the polar regions and instigates and orchestrates a campaign amongst unwitting mortals to destroy their belief in Claus. Her agents whisper in the ears and dreams of meanspirited elder siblings, Autumn People and others, to shake and shatter the beliefs of the young. She has been responsible for the creation of not a few Dauntain, who have subsequently been unleashed upon the Kingdom of the Northern Ice.

Her Ladyship's Dire Wolves

These nine enormous chimerical canines form the Ice Queen's personal guard. When hitched to pull Her Ladyship's sleigh on the rare occasions when she ventures out of the Snow Palace, they are able to tow the sledge over open water as well as land, snow and ice. As the Ice Queen's most, perhaps only, trusted servants, the wolves have free run of the Snow Palace's rooms and halls. They can sometimes be seen bearing messages to Her Ladyship's raiding parties in, and even beyond, the furthest reaches of her domain.

Her Ladyship's dire wolves are able to growl the languages of all Kithain.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 4 (Bodyguard), Intimidation 3, Stealth 4 (Prowl), Survival 4 (Arctic)

Glamour: 5, **Willpower:** 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Bite 4 dice

Powers:

Traveller - The Ice Queen's dire wolves are capable of traversing any terrain, including open water, marsh, snow and ice.

Ice Queen's Guards

Dozens of these chimerical soldier-creatures roam the halls of the Snow Palace. They take almost as many forms, many being unique. There are fiendish little bears, fur-covered snakes and porcupines with icicle quills, among others. All are creations of snow and ice, crackling with every stride.

The Ice Queen's guards are mute automatons.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

Abilities: Melee 3,

Glamour: 5, **Willpower:** 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5

Attack: Short picks, axes and swords 3 dice

Powers:

Spring Thaw - The Ice Queen's guards, as constructs of chimerical ice, take double damage from fire, whether mundane or chimerical in origin.

Candlemas Packet

Court: Seelie

Legacies: Courtier/Peacock

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Eshu

Household/Motley: Caer Graceland

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3,

Charisma 4 (Smooth), Manipulation 3,

Appearance 4 (Sexy), Perception 2,

Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 4 (Running),

Expression 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Drive 2, Firearms 3, Security 2,

Stealth 2

Knowledges: Computer 3, Investigation 4

(Trail), Law 2

Arts: Chicanery 3, Legerdemain 2

Realms: Actor 2, Fae 3, Prop 1

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Resources 3

Glamour: 5

Banality: 3

Willpower: 3

Image: A lithe black woman in her mid-twenties, Candlemas Packet takes her look seriously. She is a clothes horse, though not obsessively so, and can often be found at her regular hangouts attired in stylish crop-tops and short skirts. She wears her hair cut fairly short and often wears a denim or tapestry pillbox. She works out regularly and runs hard; she is a regular at marathons throughout the southern states. Running alone has taught her to carry her Glock-17 in her pouch belt everywhere she goes.

Roleplaying Hints: You definitely have a life outside the Dreaming. You're part mortal after all, and loving every minute of it.

History: Candlemas Packet, called "Candle" by her friends, "Candy" by the more saccharine, was led by her kith-borne love of travel and personal passion for long distance running to become one of High King David's Imbolc firebrands three years ago. This is the first year she has been lotted a firebrand's path to a far northern freehold since joining their ranks.

She is not a fan of the cold; she doesn't live in the Kingdom of Willows for nothing. Back in Memphis, which she calls home, she is a freelance journalist for a smallish local newspaper. She digs up and writes her own stories, and takes her own photos to boot. Her interviews are always fun to watch because Candlemas is a flamboyant

Primal-Cold

Primal-Cold is a sub-school of the Primal Art of faerie cantrips. The Primal-Cold cantrips may only be cast from a location within sight of frost, snow or ice. This can include meat lockers, ice cube dispensers and hockey rinks. It does not include things like watching a TV weather report or televised figure skating. They may be cast in conjunction with any of the Primal bunks already described in either **Changeling: The Dreaming** or the **Changeling Players Kit**. Storytellers can make up their own cards for these new cantrips by photocopying the card blanks on page 288 of **Changeling: The Dreaming** and filling them out with colored pens or pencil crayons.

• Ice Cube

Encases target, either fae or mortal, in cocoon of chimeric ice. Only living things may be targeted with this cantrip. Targets successfully entombed are frozen instantaneously in place. Whatever actions the subjects are carrying out at the time of casting will be halted, as though caught in a still photo. Encased targets are effectively held in suspended animation, they suffer no damage from this cantrip. Encased targets may not be physically aided in their escape from the ice cube, though they might be helped with cantrips. The ice cube, and the target it encases, can be picked up and moved around by other people.

Realms:

Actor — Describes the subject of the cantrip.

Fae — Describes the subject of the cantrip.

Nature — Describes the subject of the cantrip.

Prop — Describes an object currently being held or touched by the subject of the cantrip.

Scene — Describes the current location of the subject of the cantrip.

Successes: The number of successes determines how solidly the target of the cantrip is encased in ice, and for how long.

1 success — Target is encased; must succeed in a Strength roll (difficulty 5) in order to break free. Target is entombed for five turns, or until he breaks free.

2 successes — As above, but Strength roll is difficulty 6. Target entombed for ten turns, or until he breaks out.



Primal Cold cont.

3 successes — As above, but Strength roll is difficulty 7. Target encased for one scene, or until he breaks free.

4 successes — As above, but Strength roll is difficulty 8. Target entombed until sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first, or until he breaks free.

5 successes — As above, but Strength roll is difficulty 9. Target is encased for one full day, or until he breaks out.

•• Cold Snap

This cantrip damages non-living physical objects, both fae and mortal. Target objects are frozen until they are so brittle they shatter under their own weight. Items successfully affected by Cold Snap are unusable afterward.

Realms:

Actor — Describes a person holding or touching the object to be damaged.

Fae — Describes a person holding or touching the object to be damaged.

Nature — Describes the physical feature to be damaged.

Prop — Describes the object to be damaged.

Scene — Describes the area containing the feature to be damaged.

Successes: The number of successes gained determines how large or strong of an object can be snapped.

1 success — A wooden door.

2 successes — A firearm.

3 successes — A lamp post.

4 successes — A car engine block.

5 successes — A wooden house roof.

••• White Out

By summoning a blizzard of snow, White Out blocks vision into or through an area, or might obscure a route behind the caster to prevent pursuit. Neither cantrips nor treasures which grant powers of vision or clairvoyance can be used to penetrate the drifts blowing through and around the target location. This cantrip can be especially dangerous if cast around moving vehicles because vision is totally impaired within the White Out. People caught in the storm can literally not see their hands in front of their faces.

Realms: The Realm describes the point upon which the White Out is centered.

speaker and waves her hands about to get her point across.

Jack Frost

The origins of this harsh and spiteful chimerical being are lost in time. Some Kithain say this monster predates the arrival of the fae from Arcadia. Others say he is a nocnitsa, born of Kithain fears of the cold of the "Northern Wastes". What is known is that he is a creature of fearsome power and malevolence. He leads a solitary, nomadic existence, and is able to travel to any location on Earth as long as his entire route is experiencing below-freezing temperatures.

Jack's stick-like body stands eleven feet tall. When not in motion, though, his back is badly hunched, his chin resting nearly level with his ragged belt. He is surrounded by a haze of whirling snow, and biting cold follows in his wake. His fingers, nose and chin end in crooked icicles and his eyes are shards of ice. He has never been known to remove his pointed blue cap.

His voice is a chill wind. Jack totally believes he fills a role as a force of nature among the Kithain.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4 (Swift), Stamina 4 (Tough), Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 5 (Clever)

Abilities: Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Subterfuge 4 (Little White Lies), Stealth 4 (Lurk), Survival 5 (Arctic)

Glamour: 10, **Willpower:** 10

Health Levels:

OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Claws 4 dice

Powers:

Frigidity - In addition to the damage he may deal with his claws, the merest touch of one of Jack's fingers can freeze his victim to the bone. Every time he touches a Kithain, the target must make an immediate Willpower roll or be frozen solid and rendered immobile for 1-10 turns.

Trespass - Jack is able to peer into and enter all fae regions, including trods, from any direction at will. For instance, he can not only observe travellers on a faerie path, he can step onto the trod to harass and harm them. Walls and gates of freeholds are no barrier against him.

The Snowman

The Snowman is a kindly, gregarious and cheerful chimerical being frequently found in Claus' freehold gaily cavorting with the workshop elves. He is rarely of a serious mind and loves a good joke or party. He often goes to great lengths to put a little joy

into Black Peter's unhappy life. He speaks the languages of all Kithain in a cheerful tone.

He is a large, round fellow, similar in appearance to the mascot of one well known tire company. He "smokes" a corncob pipe and carries a straw broom wherever he goes. His eyes appear to be simple flakes of coal, his nose a red button.

He wears a plain black stovepipe hat, which animates him. If he loses the hat he reverts to a simple construct of mundane snow, and will melt if the temperature rises above freezing or he is exposed to direct heat.

Her Ladyship desires possession of the Snowman's hat for the power she perceives it to have. The covetousness of the Ice Queen is known to the Snowman, and for this reason he always gives her isle a wide berth in his constant journeying to and fro throughout Concordia's northern reaches.

Like Jack Frost, he is able to journey to any point on Earth as long as his entire route is experiencing below-freezing temperatures.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5 (Fleet-Footed), Stamina 3, Perception 4 (Attentive), Intelligence 2, Wits 4 (Clever)

Abilities: Athletics 3, Dodge 3, Crafts 2, Performance 3, Survival 4 (Arctic), Enigmas 2

Glamour: 9, **Willpower:** 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Broom 2 dice

Powers:

Wandering - The Snowman is able to see into and enter all fae regions, including freeholds and trods, from any direction at will. For instance, he can not only observe passersby on a faerie path, he can step onto the trod to meet them. Walls and gates of freeholds pose no barriers to him.
Spring Thaw - As a construct of chimerical ice, the Snowman takes double damage from fire, whether mundane or chimerical in origin.

Top Hat

The black top hat worn by the Snowman is a chimerical treasure which has the power to animate any unliving construct, mortal or fae, as long as the statue is basically humanoid. When this stovepipe is placed upon the head of an inanimate figure, the Glamour infused in the hat causes the statue to become self-aware and fully mobile.



The Adventure:

Scene One

*It don't help to be one of the chosen
One of the few, to be sure
When the wheels are spinning around
And the ground is frozen through, and you're
Driven, like the snow.*

— The Sisters of Mercy, "Driven Like The Snow"

It is a day or two past Imbolc, and the characters are resting after their festival of merrymaking and revelry. While lounging within the halls of their freehold they notice a childling boggan, dressed in the livery of the High King's court of Tara-Nar, enter and approach the bartender. After a brief conversation, during which the bartender points at them, the young boggan turns and walks briskly over to the characters' table. He introduces himself as one Merrill James and says that he is a royal page and has in fact just recently arrived from Tara-Nar.

Merrill explains that he has been sent by the High King's Chamberlain to enlist a group of adventurers to go to the north pole on a mission of investigation and assistance. He tells them that asking around at the local freeholds, he was informed that the characters are an adventurous troupe, usually willing to undertake a journey. Because of his investigations Merrill already knows some of the characters' names.

Merrill also tells the characters that he is empowered to offer them certain rewards in return for their services rendered to the High King. Storytellers should feel free to offer the characters whatever rewards they deem appropriate to their chronicles. A good example for a list of possible rewards is given on page 23 of the **Book of Storyteller Secrets**.

If pressed for more details, Merrill will explain that one of the High King's firebrands, an eshu by the name of Candlemas Packet, has gone missing en route to Northhold to deliver to Claus his lantern from Tara Nar's Great Balefire, the Well of Flame. She departed well in advance, to make the journey in time for Northhold's Imbolc ceremonies, however, the High King has just received urgent word from Claus that his balefire bearer never arrived. Claus' letter included an equally urgent request for help.

High King David is deeply concerned. Having just been tapped to replenish the balefires of all of Concordia's freeholds, the

Well of Flame is now burning too low for it to safely give up yet another lanternful of its own Glamour. And if the balefires of Northhold go out, all fae throughout the world, not just Concordia, will suffer. Every year hundreds of millions of mortals around the globe engage in willing suspension of disbelief for the month of December, while they prepare for the Christmas holiday. Stories, TV, movies, songs and plays about elves, faeries, and all manner of magic and miracles are eagerly taken in by humans on every continent. The Glamour, and accompanying break down in Banality, which this holiday engenders among mortals is a boon to all fae, charging as it does the balefires of every freehold on Earth.

Candlemas Packet was last seen in the characters' city before her disappearance. Merrill has learned through his investigations that she did depart their city on schedule, headed for Northhold.

The characters are therefore requested to journey north to Claus' Northhold. Once there, they are tasked with assisting Claus to the utmost in locating and retrieving both Candlemas Packet and her balefire lantern. The latter must then be delivered to Claus without delay.

Merrill informs the characters that he bears a key which will allow him to open a firebrand's trod nearby. The same one used previously by Candlemas Packet, for their journey to Northhold. He has been commanded to accompany them on their trip but is forbidden to assist in the investigations, as he is too young and has not yet completed his Herald's training. Instead, he will wile away his time in Northhold while the characters work to solve the mystery. When they are ready to return home, Merrill will reopen the trod and depart Northhold with them.

Scene Two

It's grim up north.

— The JAMs, "It's Grim Up North"

If and when the characters set out, their journey along the firebrand trod should be a fairly quick one. It is a broad and bright faerie path, well marked and lit. While on the trod the characters will travel north through the Kingdom of the Northern Ice, ruled by Queen Laurel of House Fiona. In the northernmost regions they will move through a number of nunnehi tribal lands of the Inuit and Dene. However, the characters

Primal Cold cont.

Actor — Describes the person upon whom the area of effect is centered.

Fae — Describes the person upon whom the area of effect is centered.

Nature — Describes the animal or feature upon which the area of effect is centered.

Prop — Describes the object upon which the area of effect is centered.

Scene — Describes the location of the feature upon which the area effect is centered.

Successes: The number of successes gained determines the duration of the blizzard and its area of effect.

1 success — The cantrip lasts for five turns; 50 yard radius.

2 successes — The cantrip lasts for ten turns; 100 yard radius.

3 successes — The cantrip lasts for one scene; 150 yard radius.

4 successes — The cantrip lasts until sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first; 200 yard radius.

5 successes — The cantrip lasts for one full day; 250 yard radius.

●●● Wind Chill

This cantrip hampers flying animals, fae, chimera and aircraft by creating freezing winds which drive impossibly in all directions at once. Flyers affected by this cantrip are not able to remain airborne and fall toward the ground, at least until they escape the cantrip's area of effect. By then, however, it may be too late to avoid impact.

Targets which hit the ground or a building will suffer falling damage as per the rules in **Changeling: The Dreaming**. Due to debris and burning fuel most people aboard a crashing aircraft will suffer damage far beyond that listed in the falling rules, however.

Wind Chill must be cast at a particular target and the area of effect radiates out from that point. If targeted upon a mobile subject, like a person, helicopter, car or griffin, the area of effect will travel about as the target moves, often downward.

Realms:

Actor — Describes the person on whom the area of effect is centered.

Fae — Describes the person on whom the area of effect is centered.

Nature — Describes the animal or feature upon which the area of effect is centered.

Prop — Describes the object upon which the area of effect is centered.

Scene — Describes the location of



Primal Cold cont.

the feature upon which the area of effect is centered.

Successes: Successes indicate the types of flyers the cantrip affects, the duration of the wind storm and its area of effect.

1 success — Affects natural flyers, such as insects, birds and bats only; lasts for five turns, 100 yard radius.

2 successes — Affects the above, plus helicopters; lasts for ten turns; 250 yard radius.

3 successes — Affects the above, plus fae and chimeric flyers; lasts one scene; 450 yard radius.

4 successes — Affects the above, plus propeller aircraft and dirigibles; lasts until sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first; 700 yard radius.

5 successes — Affects all flyers, including jet aircraft; lasts one full day; 1,000 yard radius.

•••• Frost Bite

The Frost Bite cantrip is used to harm and immobilize people or animals, fae or mortal, by chilling them to the bone. Frost Bite can only affect one target with each casting and movement penalties last until the Health Levels of damage suffered with them are healed.

Realms:

Actor — Describes the subject of the cantrip.

Fae — Describes the subject of the cantrip.

Nature — Describes the subject of the cantrip.

Prop — Describes an object being touched or held by the subject of the cantrip.

Scene — Describes the area which the subject of the cantrip is in.

Successes: The number of successes gained determines the amount of damage that is caused and how the target's movement is affected, and for how long.

1 success — One Health Level; movement reduced by one quarter for two turns.

2 successes — Two Health Levels; movement reduced by one third for four turns.

3 successes — Three Health Levels; movement reduced by one half for six turns.

4 successes — Four Health Levels; movement reduced by two thirds for eight turns.

5 successes — Five Health Levels; completely immobilized for ten turns.

will be as unaware of their passage through these lands as will the regions' inhabitants be of them.

Their trip should be uneventful. But, if storytellers wish to liven the journey up they can introduce the characters to either Jack Frost or the Snowman, depending on whether a rude awakening or a cheerful companion seems to be in order. Either way it will be a shock for both the characters and Merrill to watch one or both of these chimera step onto the silver path the troupe is following, seemingly from out of nowhere. Since it is widely believed to be impossible to enter a trod through other than a gate, the characters should be unsettled. Especially if a malevolent monster like Jack appears in front of them.

Scene Three

*No witches here to scream and scare them,
Or ensnare them
Only little cosy things secure
Inside their dreamland.*

— Jack Skellington,

The Nightmare Before Christmas

Claus' freehold of Northold is a small thorpe afloat on the eternal Arctic ice at the Earth's northern pole. A quaint little village of twenty or thirty A-frame cottages, workshops and stables, it has a Glamour level of 5. In the centre of the hamlet's square stands the forty foot tall North Pole, white with a red ring round its midst.

Northold arose from the coalescence of a commoner motley into a formal household during the time of the Age of Travel. It weathered the storms of Banality during the Shattering and Interregnum in serenity, strengthened by the faith of millions of mortals. Turmoil does touch even this peaceful little town, however, personified by the Ice Queen. And due to the bad feeling caused by the Beltaine Night of Iron Knives and the Accordance War, not to mention the ongoing conflict with Her Ladyship, Claus has banned cold iron from Northold to foster harmony. He has also banned the reaving of Northold's balefire hearth for Glamour, to keep cheer and glad tidings high. Indeed everyone who visits Northold is cheered by a feeling of kindly mirth, which seems to fill them like a warm cup of tea.

Claus is kept informed of the goings on in the freeholds of the south by a number of selkies who frequent the polar seas. There are also a few eshu wordsmiths who brave the northern cold to bring news from the

south and collect tales.

In accordance with his love of all fae, Claus has decreed that all nunnehi are welcome within Northold's halls. Few deign to visit the freehold in spite of this friendly gesture, however. This is a point which always pains Claus when he thinks of it.

On the outskirts of the village is a dumping ground for misfit toys. Many of the creations of Claus' nocker elves end up here because of imperfections. All of these items are infused with small amounts of dross.

Upon their arrival at Northold the characters will be met by Black Peter, Claus' right hand. He will silently show them to their lodgings — all will be given rooms in one of the village's guest hostels — and then usher them into Claus' parlour to await an audience. Once Claus arrives he will greet the characters cheerfully, offering them something to eat and drink. After light-hearted chit chat over their snack Claus will describe the predicament he, Northold and possibly all of Concordia are in.

All in Northold were ready for the arrival of their firebrand from Tara-Nar to begin the Imbolc festival on the 2nd of February. Unfortunately, and to the dismay of all the would-be revellers and their guests, Candlemas Packet did not arrive. Nor did she arrive the next day. That is when Claus dispatched his plea to High King David for assistance.

From the local selkie population Claus has learned that Her Ladyship, the Ice Queen's firebrand arrived at the Snow Palace on time for Imbolc and departed in due course. It is Claus' firm suspicion that the Ice Queen has kidnapped Candlemas Packet and stolen Northold's balefire lantern. For her part, Her Ladyship, when asked regarding the whereabouts of Northold's firebrand, denied knowing anything about the matter. Despite his lack of evidence, however, Claus is sure that both firebrand and lantern are being held on the Ice Queen's Snow Palace isle, to the southeast of Northold. Black Peter silently nods agreement with Claus' suspicion.

The apparent course of action for the characters is to begin their search for Candlemas Packet and Northold's missing balefire lantern on the Ice Queen's isle. As diplomacy is useless when dealing with Her Ladyship, Claus will suggest the characters sneak into the Snow Palace and search for the firebrand and lantern clandestinely. Claus offers to have his reindeer carry the characters to the Snow Palace. He warns them, however, that there will be dire



consequences for any caught uninvited within the frigid confines of the Ice Queen's freehold.

Creative characters may realize the great help the Snowman can render to their cause by accompanying them to the Snow Palace. Using his ability of Wandering he would be able to enter the Snow Palace and look for both Candlemas Packet and the missing balefire lantern. However, convincing him to go that close to the Ice Queen should be a feat of diplomacy, to say the least.

Scene Four

Never any card-parties, with tea and scandal, but empty, vast, and cold, were the rooms in the Snow Queen's palace.

— Hans Christian Andersen,
The Snow Queen

The Ice Queen's freehold, the Snow Palace, is located on an enchanted isle hidden from mortal eyes in Canada's Arctic archipelago. This isle is near the current location of Earth's north magnetic pole, off Ellef Ringnes Island. The Snow Palace, like its mistress, is at once beautiful and terrible; it is a single grand structure, ornately decorated and sprawling, yet also cold and severe. There is only one floor to the Snow Palace; its walls of driven snow, its window panes of crystalline ice. Unlike Northold, all who enter the Snow Palace are stricken with a feeling of lonely desolation and dread which descends upon visitors like a shroud. The Snow Palace's dungeon is known throughout the fae north as the "Ice Bucket"; its cells are barred with icicles. Within the Palace, Her Ladyship attends to the affairs of her Unseelie court from her frigid throne.

You know those candles shaped like Claus, his reindeer and elves that your grandmother has had for fifty years and never burned? Well, whenever she is in attendance at her court, Her Ladyship's throneroom is lit by hundreds of them. She has her retainers steal and import them from mortal stores throughout the Kingdom of the Northern Ice.

In addition to Her Ladyship's wolves and chimerical guards, the Snow Palace is home to a small Unseelie court of North American Kithain. Sluagh and redcaps dominate, however, there are a number of nockers and satyrs, and even a couple of depraved trolls in Her Ladyship's retinue. The local nunnehi avoid the Ice Queen's isle at all times as they believe her to be completely mad and bent on the destruction of all things fae. The



chimerical monster Jack Frost is a frequent visitor to the Snow Palace's halls, however.

Her Ladyship's freehold is the direct recipient of far less mortal Glamour than is Claus', a fraction of a fraction, if that. As a result, the Snow Palace has a Glamour level of only 3. Because of this, and out of jealousy and spite, she conducts a continual campaign of seduction and conspiracy against Claus' followers. Many a nocker and boggan have been gulled away from Northold to serve the Ice Queen. In a short time even these once happy-go-lucky Kithain are corrupted to remorseless Unseelie ways.

Whereas Claus has outlawed cold iron from his realm, the Ice Queen hoards it. She sees cold iron weapons as a means of evening the odds of her numerical inferiority to that of Claus' lackeys. Although quick to arm her vassals with cold iron during open conflicts with Northold, she is just as quick to gather the weapons back into her locked armories when peace reigns, lest one of her underlings assassinate her.

The Ice Queen orders frequent expeditions to Northold's dumping ground to collect the nockers' flawed toys. These she painstakingly situates within the rooms and halls of the Snow Palace, displaying them as objets d'art. Woe to the underling who jostles or shifts one of Her Ladyship's decorations.

As suspected, the Ice Queen did indeed intercept Candlemas Packet as she travelled nearest to the Snow Palace on the firebrands trod. Her Ladyship enlisted the aid of Jack Frost, to utilise his ability of Trespass to waylay Candlemas on the faerie path from the south. Her Ladyship now has two lanterns from the Well of Flame. She intends to use both to fuel her freehold isle's balefire hearth in a ceremony during Carnival on the upcoming 28th of February. It is her hope of hopes that this ritual will usher in the beginning of the impending Long Winter, the arrival of which she so ardently desires. She views her planned celebration as the ultimate wake for the current age and a birthday party for the one upcoming, in



which she will be all-powerful.

The Snow Palace is alerted against attempts to retrieve the stolen balefire lantern. If the characters get into the Snow Palace, they should find it difficult to sneak around. Not only the Ice Queen's Kithain underlings, but also her chimerical guards and wolves regularly prowl the Snow Palace's halls, on the watch for intruders.

Candlemas Packet is being held in a frigid cell in the Ice Bucket, near the northern end of the Snow Palace. The Ice Queen has set one of her dire wolves to watch Candlemas from the prison's guardroom at all times.

Her Ladyship has secreted the stolen balefire lantern in her apartments at the northernmost tip of the Snow Palace, surrounded by six chimerical guards led by a dire wolf. There is a good chance that, if the characters get into the Snow Palace, they will find the Ice Queen at rest in these rooms.

Beside her apartments, off the same hall, are the former rooms of Black Peter. The Ice Queen has declared them a forbidden zone, and not a thing has been moved or changed in them since Peter left for Northold. She often sits in these rooms to brood upon her next course of action. If not in her throneroom or her apartments, Her Ladyship will probably be found here, planning her Carnival balefire ritual.

How the characters' decide to conduct their rescue of Candlemas Packet and her lantern is up to them. What happens to them during said mission is left up to individual storytellers. Whether or not the characters run into any guards, and how many, should depend on how imaginative their plan of action is and how many are in their troupe. Of course it is possible they may even encounter the Ice Queen herself. And Jack Frost may still be lurking around the Snow

Palace. However, storytellers should beware of having their troupes meet both Her Ladyship and Jack Frost at the same time as together they would be a force difficult to reckon with, especially if they are supported by some of the Ice Queen's henchmen or chimera. It should not be a cake walk either, though. The characters should have a run-in with **some** denizen of the Snow Palace during their raid, if only for dramatic effect.

Epilogue

And now, who has won?

— C.S. Lewis,

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

If the characters succeed in recovering Northold's balefire lantern prior to the 28th of February the freehold will be saved before grief comes to its inhabitants. The characters will be hailed as heroes in this northernmost fae realm, and will always find a warm fire and cheerful friendship awaiting them whenever they may return.

Should the characters fail to retrieve Claus' balefire lantern from the Ice Queen, storytellers will have to decide for themselves, and their individual chronicles, whether or not Her Ladyship's demented ritual has the effect she desires. Understand that if it does, the future of a chronicle will be drastically altered as the Long Winter opens, with a hurricane of torrential Banality sweeping the globe. Individual storytellers will have to determine how the Long Winter affects their chronicles.

If the Ice Queen's ritual does not succeed, then the chronicle can continue unchanged, except that the characters may not know for quite some time whether Her Ladyship's ceremony bore any fruit or not. If they have discovered the intent of the ritual, this should

serve to cause them some concern.

The minimum fallout of the characters' failure to retrieve Northold's balefire lantern, however, is that the freehold's Glamour level will decrease by one point per week, counting from the 28th of February, until it goes out for good. There is a fear among many Kithain that it will not be possible to relight Northold's balefire once it has been extinguished and that it will detrimentally affect the winter dreams of mortals. In the long run, this could result in the arrival of the dreaded Long Winter, bringing the Ice Queen's insane hopes to fruition whether or not her ritual succeeded. Each week the freehold will seem to fall into worse disrepair, and no matter how steadfastly it is maintained, it will keep deteriorating.

This time frame should allow storytellers to tailor some more adventures for their troupes around the salvation of Northold. Perhaps the characters' troupe is again recruited by Claus or the High King, this time to travel to Tara-Nar to pick up a balefire lantern from the Well of Flame and bring it back under guard to rekindle Northold's hearth before it goes out, once the Well's flame is burning strongly enough. But when will **that** be?

Inspiration

Andersen, Hans Christian.

The Snow Queen.

Burton, Tim.

The Nightmare Before Christmas.

Lewis, C.S.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

Tolkien, J.R.R.

The Father Christmas Letters.

The Author

Legion

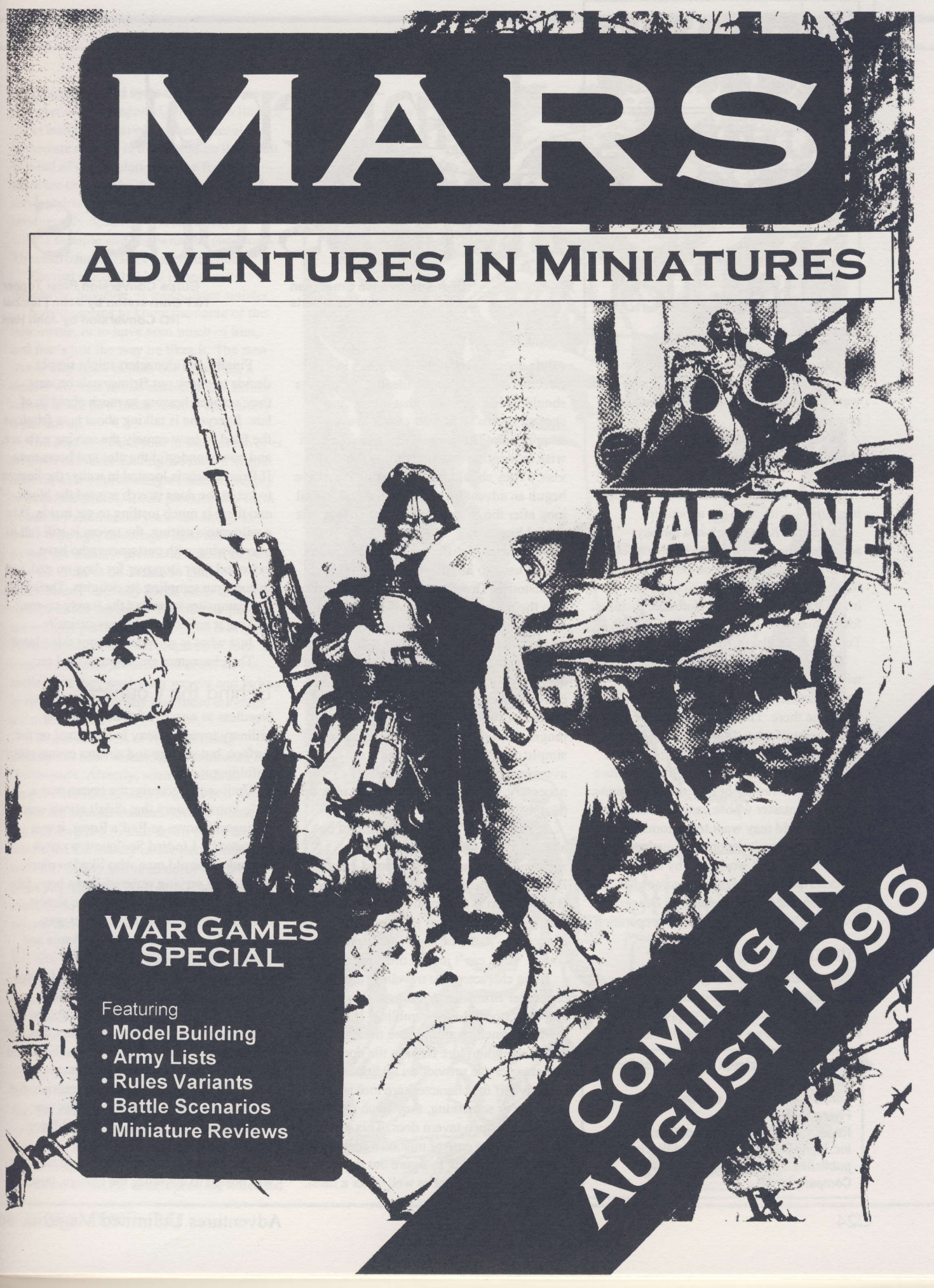
Remember when basic D&D® was only a single blue and white-covered booklet? That's when Legion began his love affair with roleplaying games. After having many of his game ideas appear in print, under others' bylines, he had the novel thought to actually start writing his stuff down.

Since that moment of revelation in 1985, his work has appeared in Challenge magazine and Adventures Unlimited.

And yes, that is his real name.



MARS



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Dinner at Brimstone's

Scenario by Lisa Smedman
Art by Charles Morris

Gurps Conversion Peter Tupper
T&T Conversion by John Fletcher
RQ Conversion by John Hart

Brimstone's is the hottest new eatery in town. Once you've tasted its food, you won't want to eat anywhere else. And that's a promise.

Good food, good service, and excellent entertainment. It seemed to be the perfect eatery.

Nobody warned the customers that their immortal spirits were the appetizers.

Dinner at Brimstone's is a fantasy adventure for a small group of characters. It can also be run as a one-on-one adventure for a character who is experienced in investigation and stealth. Notes are included for running the adventure under GURPS, Tunnels & Trolls, or RuneQuest rules.

Dinner at Brimstone's takes place entirely within a restaurant-style tavern that is somehow exerting a deadly charm over those who dine there. The tavern can either be set in the heart of a bustling city, or can be a stopping place for weary travelers along a lonely highway, thus making this adventure suitable for a variety of different campaigns.

A gamemaster whose campaign is set in a specific world may want to customize the tavern by giving it decorative touches that help it fit into that world and by changing the description of the patrons somewhat. But aside from these minor changes, *Dinner at Brimstone's* should require little preparation.

Starting the Adventure

Dinner at Brimstone's begins when the characters first dine at Brimstone's Tavern. The gamemaster will have to provide them with a reason to go there, yet should be

subtle about steering the characters in the direction of Brimstone's. Ideally, the players should be led to believe that this is "just another tavern" that their characters are stopping at. (The gamemaster may not even wish to mention its name during the first visit.) They should not realize that they have begun an adventure until it is too late – until long after the characters have taken that first fateful bite.

A number of different adventure hooks can be used to lure the characters into Brimstone's Tavern. Each should be woven into the general story line of the existing campaign. If the characters are trying to set up a rendezvous with someone, for example, their contact suggests Brimstone's as a meeting place. Naturally the conversation takes place over a meal and a pitcher or two of ale. The cost of a meal ranges from the campaign average for a simple meat pie, to two or three times average for a multi-course feast. If necessary, the contact is willing to pick up the tab.

Alternatively, the characters might be already trying to hide from or avoid someone. They are nearly spotted – but Brimstone's provides a handy hiding place. By holing up at the tavern for a few hours they can shake off their pursuers. They'll be expected to purchase food and drink, of course. They can't just sit there for free.

If the characters are traveling, they encounter Brimstone's just as night is falling and their stomachs are rumbling. If the delicious smells wafting from the building aren't enough to lure them in the door, the gamemaster can provide an additional incentive. If the characters are looking for someone or something, they catch sight of it through the open tavern door. This may later turn out to be a case of mistaken identity, but while they're trying to figure out the truth of the matter, they might as well order a meal.

Finally, the characters might simply decide to check out Brimstone's because they've been hearing so much about it, of late. Everyone is talking about how fabulous the food is, how comely the serving girls are, and how wonderful the ales and beers taste. If Brimstone's is located in a city, the lineups to get in the door stretch around the block and there is much jostling to get inside. If in a wilderness setting, the tavern is still full to overflowing with customers who have extended their stopover for days on end, just to continue sampling its delights. Their tents and campsites surround the lonely tavern, making it a place of obvious curiosity.

Just what is so special about this place?

The characters are about to find out.

Behind the Counter

Needless to say, Brimstone's is not an ordinary tavern. It may look normal on the surface, but strange and sinister events are unfolding inside.

Until quite recently, the tavern was a little-known eatery that didn't attract much business. Known as Red's Roost, it was operated by Lindred Snelquest, a rather cantankerous old man who liked to pinch pennies by serving watered-down beer, fat-and-gristle "meat" pies, and thin, almost tasteless soups. No entertainment was provided, and the serving girls Annie and Mabel weren't much to look at.

Ten days ago, the tavern changed hands. The menu was replaced by an exotic collection of wonderfully savory dishes, new and very beautiful waitresses were hired, and the bar was stocked with the finest beers and ales available. The name was changed to Brimstone's (a rather trendy reference to the newfangled sulfur-heated oven that was installed) and the tavern re-opened for business one day later.

Despite the fact that not a single handbill was posted to advertise the change, business

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immediately picked up at the tavern. A mere day after it had re-opened, there were lineups to get inside. The tavern's phenomenal and immediate success is thought to be the result of word of mouth alone, for the food and drink are truly the best in town and the serving girls Annabella and Maeve are unbelievably beautiful and are always willing to smile and flirt with the customers. The entertainment isn't half bad, either.

The real reason behind Brimstone's' popularity, however, is much more sinister...

Nobody seems to know the name of the new owner, or to have seen much of him, and that's just the way he likes it. The new owner may seem human but is, in fact, a demon who has left its station in the nether realms to see how much trouble and misery it can stir up.

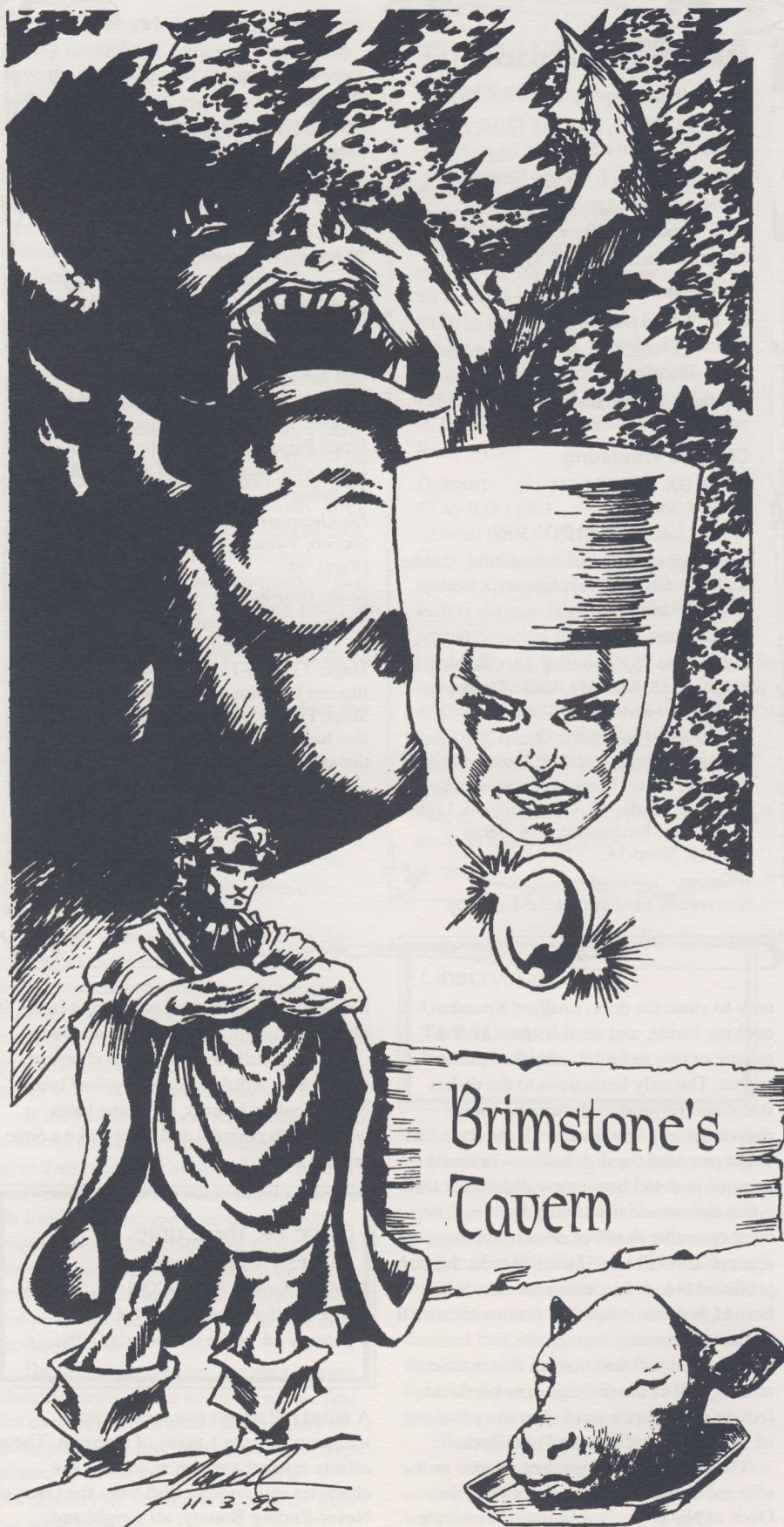
The demon's chief tool in this endeavor is an Oven of Never-Ending Bounty, a magic item capable of providing a limitless supply of exquisite dishes. It can produce any form of baked food that the cook can imagine. Some time ago, this magic item was cursed so that the meals it produced caused those who ate them to be unable to gain nourishment from any foods other than those cooked inside the oven. The hunger pangs are initially perceived as a simple craving for the exotic tastes of food prepared in this oven; those who are affected often do not realize that they are losing weight and fading in strength on each day that these cravings are not fulfilled.

The cursed Oven of Never-Ending Bounty has been installed in the kitchen at Brimstone's. Already, several hundred people have succumbed to its tainted food. When the number reaches several thousand, the demon plans to shut down the oven and feast upon the misery of the poor wretches who will slowly starve to death when its bounty is withheld. The demon will then to move on to a new location, purchase another tavern, and begin the process anew.

Oven of Never-ending Bounty

This magic item resembles a large, cast-iron oven with a burner compartment on the side into which firewood would normally be fed. Ever since the oven was cursed, however, wood will not burn inside it. The wood simply will not ignite, even if magical flame is used in an effort to start the fire. The only fuel the oven currently accepts is sulfur.

The Oven of Never-Ending Bounty is capable of turning out a limitless supply of baked meals. As long as a fire was burning within the oven, the cook operating it needed





GURPS Characters

Bjorn (Half-Ogre)

ST 17/12, DX 11, IQ 8, HT 12/16,
Speed 5.75, Move 5

Advantages: DR +2, Magical Resistance +1

Disadvantages: Appearance: Ugly

Skills: Brawling-13, Broadsword (Club)-13

Weapons: Fist: 1d, Club: 3d

Average Patron

ST 11, DX 11, IQ 10, HT 10,
Speed 5.25, Move 5

Skills: Brawling-12, Shortsword-12

Weapons: Punch: 1d-2, Shortsword: 1d+1
sw/cut, 1d-1 thr/imp

Chelsea Windsong

ST 12, DX 15, IQ 14, HT 13,
Speed 7, Move 7

Armor: Leather Vest PD1 DR1

Advantages: Appearance: Beautiful, Combat
Reflexes, Charisma +2, Magery, Literacy,
Musical Ability +2

Disadvantages: Gluttony

Skills: Bard-15, Carousing-13, Climbing-12,
Fast Talk-13, Knife-14, Knife Throwing -
14, Musical Instrument (Lute)-15,
Sword-14, Singing-15

Spells: Continual Light-12, Darkness-13,
Daze-12, Detect Magic-13, Foolishness-12,
Haste-12, Hinder-13, Invisibility-13, Light-
12, Remove Enchantment-14, Sense
Foes-13, Sleep-14

Weapons:

Shortsword: 1d+2 sw/cut, 1d-1 thr/imp

Demon

ST 12/20, DX 13, IQ 10, HT 12/30,
Speed 6.25, Move 6, Fly 12

Armor: (Natural) PD 4, DR 7 (+5 vs.
cold)

Claws: 1d thr/imp, 1d+3 sw/cut

Tail Stinger: 2d thr/imp plus venom

Advantages: Flight, Extra Fatigue +8,
Extra Limb: Striker, Full Coordination/2
(makes 3 attacks per turn), Talons,
Instant Regeneration (1 HT/turn, cannot
heal damage from magic weapons or
holy water), Immunity to Poison, Doesn't
Breathe, Invulnerability (Fire), Venom:
Blood Poison. Stinger must penetrate
DR. Victim must make HT roll or suffer
4d damage.

Disadvantages: Appearance: Hideous,
Sadism, Vulnerability: Holy Water
(Rare), 3d

Skills: Brawling-13

Spells: Aura-15, Charm-15, Create Fire-
13, Complex Illusion-15, Detect
Magic-13, Fear-13, Ignite Fire-13,
Illusion Disguise-15, Persuasion-15,
Shape Fire-13, Zombie-13. The demon
also has a variant of the Teleport spell
that can take it back to its own plane.

Strength lost up to that point are regained at
the conclusion of the meal. But then the
cycle begins anew...

This curse can not be removed by casting
spells upon the affected character. The only
solution is to remove the curse from the
Oven of Never-Ending Bounty itself. This
will instantly remove the curse from every
character that it has effected, and will return
the oven to its normal, magical function. It
will, of course, necessitate getting past the
demon somehow, since the oven must be
touched by the spellcaster...

Swords vs. Cookery

The oven is tough to destroy. It is a
massive, cast-iron device that is five
feet wide and weighs more than a ton.
Non-magical weapons bounce off it or
break. Although magical weapons can
inflict damage, the oven is impervious
to all forms of fire. It is affected by
magical cold.

GURPS - DR 12, 100 HT

Remove Enchantment to remove
curse.

T&T - Armor 14, 50 Hits

Curses, Foiled to remove curse.

RQ - Armor 5, 30 hrs

Counter Magic 3 to remove curse.

If the Oven of Never-Ending Bounty is
instead destroyed, those characters who were
affected by it will simply waste away and
eventually die – either when their Strength
reaches zero or when their weight is reduced
to one-quarter of their original weight
(rounded down to the nearest whole number).
Unless the oven can somehow be repaired
they will have no way of regaining the
weight and Strength they have lost. Healing
spells and other magical foods will be of no
assistance, since they do not affect the
underlying cause – the curse itself.

Incidents and Investigations

Once the characters have dined at
Brimstone's and at least one of them has
succumbed to its cursed food, they will
likely want to go back to the tavern and
learn more about it. The encounters and
investigative leads that follow can be used
in any order by the gamemaster. Each may
either be initiated by the characters (by
asking questions of appropriate people), or
may be dropped into the characters' laps if
the gamemaster feels that the players are
struggling with what to do next.

only to close the door, imagine a meal
cooking inside, and open it again after a
minute or two to find the finished product
within. The only limitations to the dishes
that could be produced were the cook's
experience and imagination. If the cook had
either prepared the dish before – or could
imagine in detail how a new dish might taste
– that dish would materialize within. (The
cook operating the oven must make the
appropriate skill test. If the roll fails, the dish
produced is inedible, either because it has
burned, because it failed to rise, or because it
contains the wrong ingredients.)

The oven still functions in this manner,
although all of the dishes it now produces
(edible or not) are cursed. Anyone partaking
of them (even a single bite!) is affected.

The curse becomes evident as soon as the
affected character eats food not from the
Oven of Never-Ending Bounty. No matter

how nourishing the food really is, it tastes as
bland as gruel and gives no satisfaction.

For each full day an affected character
does not eat a dish prepared by the Oven of
Never-Ending Bounty, he or she loses
weight (1d6 pounds) and must make a *Save
vs the Curse*.

Save vs. the Curse

GURPS - Make a Health save.

T&T - Level3 SR on CON.

RQ - Roll a resistance test: Curse,
potency 16 vs the character's CON.

A failed roll means that the character
temporarily loses 1 point of Strength. These
effects instantly vanish as soon as the
character eats another dish from the Oven of
Never-Ending Bounty; all weight and



These encounters assume, of course, that the characters are able to gain access to Brimstone's. At any given time during its hours of business (9 a.m. to midnight) there is a lineup of several hundred would-be patrons clamouring to get in the door. The tavern only seats 30 people, and the average time that a group of diners spends at a table is 30 minutes. The turnover, therefore, is roughly 60 people per hour. Each time the characters return to the tavern, the lineup outside the door will be longer – and so will the wait. Unless they can sneak into the tavern (either through the washroom window or by picking the lock on the employee entrance) or can bribe or trick their way past the bouncer at the door, they are faced with a wait of 1d6 hours to get inside. The next time they go back they'll be kept waiting 1d6/2+1 hours, then 1d6/2+2 hours, and so on. If the tavern closes before they get in, they may need to wait in line through the night to hold their places.

The bouncer is an ugly brute named Bjorn who has been hired by the demon to manage the crowds. He stands in the door, using his fists and powerful muscles to subdue anyone who tries to force their way inside Brimstone's. If necessary, he can grab a massive club that stands just inside the door.

Bjorn really doesn't care whether anyone jumps the line; he's simply there to ensure that only 30 patrons are inside the restaurant at once. Fortunately for the characters, he's not very good at counting and can easily be tricked into letting additional people inside. He's also willing to take a bribe; two gold pieces will suffice to get someone a spot at the head of the line. Unfortunately, competition from other would-be diners who also want to get inside is fierce. The characters are likely to find themselves in a bidding war in which the cost of a bribe will rapidly increase beyond their means to pay.

Any characters who line jump incur the wrath of the others who are waiting. Unless they are especially charming or persuasive (this should be roleplayed, but a successful Reaction roll will also suffice) they are attacked by 1d6+1 of the others in line. The fight begins as a fist fight, but may rapidly escalate if the characters choose to draw their weapons...

Service With a Smile

Annie and Mabel, the two serving girls who worked at the tavern when it was known as Red's Roost, continue to work there still. They have simply taken new names for themselves: Annabella and Maeve.

Each of the girls has been granted great beauty through the demon's magic. They have the appearance of voluptuous women with perfect figures, melodious voices, and expensive clothes. A hint of exotic perfume fills the air each time one of them passes by. Now, when they flirt with the customers, they get an instant – and very positive – response. All of this attention makes the girls more than willing to work the long hours the demon demands.

The girls realize full well that their good looks are merely illusory, and that this magical effect ends as soon as they set foot outside the tavern. Because they know the truth, "Annabella" and "Maeve" see "Annie" and "Mabel" each time they look in a mirror. For this reason, they ensure that the large mirror that takes up one wall of the tavern is kept covered by a cloth. They react with alarm if a customer tries to take off this makeshift curtain, believing (erroneously) that patrons who look in the mirror will see them for what they really are – two dumpy and rather plain girls with unkempt, food-stained clothes and chapped hands.

There are a number of ways in which the serving girls can be brought to the characters' attention. The first is obvious – one or them flirts with someone in the party. If this character is even moderately attractive, both girls may vie for his attention, eventually getting into an argument over which of them should be waiting on the characters' table.

At some point, one of the diners in the tavern, a laborer named Adam Lockley, leans over and comments to the characters on how much more attractive the "new" serving girls are. "Annie and Mabel were as plain as pudding," he confides. "But these two... wow! What lookers they are!"

If the characters show any willingness to continue the conversation, Adam proceeds to give them a capsule history of the tavern. He mentions its previous name and the name of its former owner, and goes on at length about how Lindred Snelquest tried to cheat his customers by watering down their drinks and serving substandard fare. He has nothing but praise for the new owner – whose name he doesn't know.

During this encounter, the gamemaster should secretly make an *Observation Test* for each of the characters to see if any of them pierce the illusion that the demon has placed upon the serving girls. On a successful roll, the character sees the girls for what they are.

TUNNELS & TROLLS Characters

Bjorn

Troll MR50

Average Patron

Human, Elf, Orc or Hob, MR15

Chelsea Windsong

Female Elf 5th Level Rogue

ST16 IQ15 LK18

CON14 DEX17 CHR18 Adds+15

Weapon: Club (3d), Dirk (2d+1)

Magic: 1st - Detect Magic, Will-o-Wisp, Oh-Go-Away, 2nd - Glue You, Hidey Hole, Little Feets. 3rd - Curses Foiled, Rock-a-Bye

Demon

ST45 IQ20 LK3

CON50 DEX16 CHR-50 Adds+31

Weapon: Claws&Tail (8d+5) + Poison

Poison: One opponent per round who suffers damage is stung by the demon's poison scorpion tail. They must make a level 3 Saving Roll on CON each round for four rounds. Each time they fail, they lose 4CON and 4DEX. If they survive, the CON and DEX return at the rate of 1 point/round. A Too-Bad-Toxin will nullify the effects of the sting.

Magic: Access to all 1st-12th level Wizard spells at full strength cost.

Observation Test

Gurps - IQ roll

T&T - Level 2 SR on Int

RQ - Spot Hidden skill test

Another way to reveal the illusion to the characters is by having one of the serving girls exit the tavern through the employee entrance – perhaps just as the characters are about to pick the lock. Those who watch either "Annabella" or "Maeve" step through the door and onto the street should be told that a "beautiful girl" opens the door. A moment later, the gamemaster should add that this seems to have been a "trick of the light" and that the girl, upon closer inspection, is actually quite plain.

The final way to reveal that something is amiss is to have one of the patrons yank the covering cloth away from the mirror on the wall. One or both of the serving girls



immediately scurries over to replace it, and reprimands the patron. At least one of the characters should be told that he or she notices that the girls "seem to be unwilling to look in the mirror."

Once the characters' interest has been whetted by any of the above incidents, they are likely to initiate a conversation with the serving girls. If pressured, either Annie or Mabel can admit that their beauty is merely an illusion. They believe the new owner of the tavern is a "handsome young wizard" who cast a spell upon them. If asked, they can describe him as a dark-haired man in his early 20s with sensual pouting lips, a muscular build, and beautiful brown eyes. They haven't seen him since the day the tavern opened, but can give his name: Chad Fabinitto. Although they think he is fabulously gorgeous, they did notice one odd thing about him: instead of using a knife and fork to eat his meals, he raised his plate to his mouth and lapped the food off with his

tongue. They think this weird eating habit must be the result of his "foreign" upbringing.

The truth is that "Chad" was, in fact, the demon under the guise of an illusion spell. (The serving girls do not even suspect this.)

Annie or Mabel can also mention another odd fact, if asked about the tavern's former owner. Lindred Snelquest at first demanded an exorbitant price for sell Red's Roost, but then changed his mind abruptly and sold it for a fraction of what the property was worth. This was very odd, in light of his penny-pinching ways. He has not returned to the tavern since it was sold – which is also odd, because he failed to take with him his most treasured possession – a framed gold piece from the tavern's first sale. It still hangs on the wall next to the store room door.

If the characters roleplay this encounter well, they may earn the friendship of either Annie or Mabel. This may serve them in

good stead later; each has a key that opens the locked employee entrance, although neither has a key to the kitchen itself. They can also provide a description of the cook – a quarrelsome, heavysset woman they know only as Prudence – and will mention the fact that Prudence is responsible for locking up the tavern each night (by sliding home a bar after the girls have locked the door) and opening it up in the morning (by sliding open the bar on the door when Annie or Mabel knocks). If specifically asked, either of the serving girls can relate that they have never seen Prudence leave the kitchen, even to use the washroom – although they assume that they were just too busy to notice when she did exit.

The truth is that "Prudence" is the demon's current disguise. The serving girls were right: "Prudence" never leaves the kitchen.

Asking Around

Assuming that Brimstone's is located in an urban setting, the characters can ask questions of other merchants in the area. If in a wilderness setting, they can ask questions of those encamped around the tavern. They can learn the following facts by doing so:

- ✗ The day after the tavern was sold, a large cast-iron oven was delivered. Part of the tavern's rear wall had to be torn down for it to be taken inside. The wall was subsequently rebuilt, and the bricks of the old stove, which had been demolished, were left outside in an untidy heap.
- ✗ The person who oversaw the delivery and installation of the oven was a bald man in his 50s or 60s, with a long gray beard. He was quite rude to those who spoke to him about cleaning up the bricks.
- ✗ No one has seen any food being delivered to the tavern since it changed hands, although casks of beer and wine are delivered regularly. These are brought in through the employee entrance at the back by delivery men from Pibs Brewery & Wines. The men are let in by the serving girls.
- ✗ The only other thing delivered to the restaurant on a regular basis are large sacks, apparently of grain. One of these was leaking its contents, which turned out to be crumbly, sour-smelling lumps of yellow "clay."

If the characters observe for themselves, they can see that the sacks in question are marked with the words "Bower's Chymistrie." A visit to this chemist's shop



(or a chat with the man who delivers the sacks) can reveal that a large sack of sulfur is delivered daily to the tavern. The owner of the shop, Byron Bower, can confirm that the sulfur is being used to fuel the new stove that was delivered recently to the shop.

A Little Mood Music

One patron of Brimstone's has all but taken up residence inside the tavern. This is Chelsea Windsong, a bard who succumbed to the cursed food a day or two after the tavern reopened. She alone of the patrons realizes that eating the food has somehow placed a curse upon her – but so far has been unable to figure out what to do about it. In the meantime she's broke and needs to eat. So she performs three times daily at Brimstone's in return for a meal. The demon is more than willing to keep her on; her music soothes the fears of those diners who are starting to catch on to the fact that the food has a sinister and magical effect upon them.

Chelsea is a middle-aged elf with hair that is just starting to go silver at the temples. She has expressive gray eyes and dresses in dark blue velvet pants and vest that have obviously seen much wear. She is a woman completely engrossed in her music. She cares little for wealth or comfort, only for learning the ancient elvish celebration songs and performing them in taverns across the land. She likes fine wine and a good meal, although she's rarely able to afford them. Performing at Brimstone's is exactly to her taste – although she's starting to worry that the weight and Strength loss may one day become permanent.

Chelsea is intended as someone who can aid the characters. She can describe for them the effects of not eating regularly at Brimstone's, once the curse takes hold (Strength and weight loss) and is game for any course of action they might suggest – but the gamemaster should ensure that the plan is that of the characters; Chelsea herself will not offer up any ideas.

At some point during one of the characters' visits to Brimstone's, one of their fellow diners – a portly fellow named Jimson Brown, realizes that he has fallen under a curse but mistakenly puts the blame on the wine he is drinking. He leaps to his feet, hurling his mug of wine against the wall. "No!" he screams. "I won't drink any more of the stuff. It's tainted, I tell you! Tainted!"

Everyone in the tavern reacts with alarm as the man continues to rant and rave. He picks up jugs of wine and beer from other

RuneQuest Characters

Bjorn, Troll

STR 20 Move 4
CON 12 Hit Points 17
SIZ 21 Fatigue 33
INT 8 Magic Points 14
POW 14 DEX SR 3
DEX 11
APP 5

Hit Locations	AP	HP
R. Leg	3	6
L. Leg	3	6
Abdomen	2	6
Chest	2	8
R. Arm	3	5
L. Arm	3	5
Head	2	6

Weapons	SR	Att%	Damage	Par%	AP
Hvy Maul	5	50%	1d10+2d6	45%	10

Spells: Bludgeon 2, Darkwall, Heal 3, Disruption

Skills: Listen 35%, Search 25%, Scan 5%, Hide 20%, Sneak 20%

Chelsea Windsong, Elf

STR 12 Move 3
CON 13 Hit Points 11
SIZ 9 Fatigue 25
INT 14 Magic Points 16
POW 16 DEX SR 2
DEX 16
APP 13

Hit Locations	AP	HP
R. Leg	1	4
L. Leg	1	4
Abdomen	1	4
Chest	1	5
R. Arm	0	3
L. Arm	0	3
Head	0	4

Weapons	SR	Att%	Damage	Par%	AP
Club	4	70%	1d6	80%	5
Daggers	5	70%	1d4	20%	6

Spells: Bludgeon 2, Coordination 2, Counter Magic 4, Glamor 1, Heal 2, Protection 3

Skills: Climb 70%, Dodge 50%, Throw 70%, Orate 80%, Sing 90%, World Lore 70%, Sleight 65%, Play Instrument 95%, Listen 70%, Scan 50%, Hide 30%, Sneak 30%

Average Patron

STR 12 Move 3
CON 13 Hit Points 13
SIZ 13 Fatigue 25
INT 10 Magic Points 11
POW 11 DEX SR 3
DEX 10
APP 9

Hit Locations	AP	HP
R. Leg	2	5
L. Leg	2	5
Abdomen	2	5
Chest	2	6
R. Arm	2	4
L. Arm	2	4
Head	0	5

Weapons	SR	Att%	Damage	Par%	AP
Dagger	6	45%	1d4+2	20%	6

Spells: Heal 1

Skills: Scan 35% Listen 30%

Demon

STR 16 Move 3/5 Flying
CON 20 Hit Points 17
SIZ 14 Fatigue 36
INT 10 Magic Points 20
POW 20 DEX SR 1
DEX 18
APP 2

Hit Locations	AP	HP
R. Leg	3	6
L. Leg	3	6
Abdomen	3	6
Chest	3	8
R. Arm	3	5
L. Arm	3	5
Head	3	6

Weapons	SR	Att%	Damage	Par%
Claw x2	6	85%	2D4@	0%
Tail	5	85%	1d4+1	0%

Tail wounds inject POT 20 poison

Spells: Access to all Spirit Magic Spells, but only 70% to cast

Special Abilities:

- Immune to non-magical weapons.
- Regenerates 1hp/rd in most damaged area.
- Flight
- Dodge 80%

tables, smashing them on the floor and admonishing the patrons not to drink another drop.

In the middle of this outburst, Chelsea enters the room. Unslinging her lute, she quickly begins a soothing tune in a foreign tongue. The man's attention is caught by the music, and he immediately begins to calm down. Within a moment or two he is seated back at his table, humming in time to the

music. He still refuses to drink any wine, though.

This encounter may give the characters the impression that Chelsea is somehow in league with the sinister happenings at Brimstone's. In fact, however, she is willing to offer the characters whatever assistance she can. She may be less willing to do so, however, if they are blatantly antagonistic toward her.



A Body Discovered

When Lindred Snelquest refused to sell Red's Roost for a "reasonable" (below market value) price, the demon used a Persuasion spell to force him to sign the bill of sale. When Lindred later shook off the spell and returned to confront the demon, he saw the new owner in its true form. The demon immediately killed Lindred in order to keep its secret.

Lindred's body has been hidden in the store room inside a barrel of fortified wine. For a while the alcohol preserved the body, but now the corpse is starting to rot. A faint sweetish odor can be smelled in the corner where the wine barrel stands. If anyone drinks this wine, they will notice its extremely foul taste. If anyone pries off the lid of the barrel, the bloated corpse of Lindred can be found inside. His chest has a large puncture wound and the skin around it is an angry red. It looks as though he were stung by a gigantic bee (in fact it was the poisonous tail stinger of the demon).

The serving girls have been warned not to tap this barrel. Annie has concluded that the reason is that Lindred's reputed treasure trove is hidden inside. She wants to find it before the new owner does. Since she hasn't seen the "young wizard" in several days, she's ready to take a peek inside the barrel.

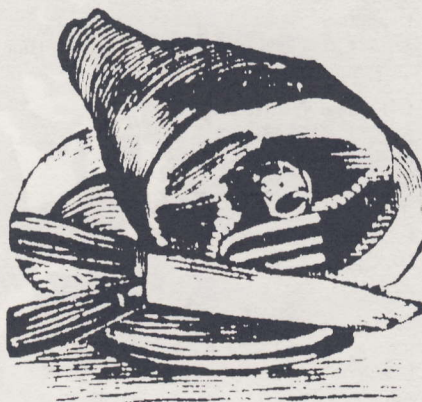
At some point during one of the characters' visits to Brimstone's, Annie enters the store room and uses a crowbar to open the barrel of wine. Seeing the body inside it, she lets out a shrill scream. Only the characters hear it (the heavy door muffles most of the sound). A moment later, they see "Annabella" hurry out of the store room, her face white. Unless they use magical means to compel her to talk, she refuses to explain why she is so agitated.

Annie had the presence of mind to pound the loosened top of the barrel back into place before leaving the store room. In her hurry, however, she left the crowbar lying on top of the barrel. If the characters find some excuse to enter the store room (and Annie will do her best to subtly prevent them from doing so) and look closely at the barrel, they can readily conclude that it was recently opened. By making use of the convenient crowbar, they too can discover Lindred's corpse. Either of the serving girls – or perhaps one of the patrons in the tavern – can identify the body as that of Lindred Snelquest.

The Kitchen

The demon spends all of its time in the kitchen, ceaselessly "cooking" the meals that are gradually spreading a curse among the populace. It has locked the door that leads to the dining room, and has installed a sliding wooden door on the narrow, windowlike passage through which the serving girls pass their orders and collect the finished meals. Whenever this sliding door is open, the demon uses an illusion spell to assume the likeness of "Prudence" the cook.

It is up to the characters either to find a way to sneak into the kitchen without alerting the demon to their presence, or to persuade the demon to leave the kitchen long enough for a character to cast a Remove Curse spell upon the magical oven. Any



number of schemes might be tried, but the key will be stealth and trickery.

If the characters can make an *Observation Test* and see through the demon's disguise they may see the creature for what it really is – a loathsome gargoyle-like creature with folded wings and a scorpion's tail. Unless they are able to keep a poker face, the demon may realize that its cover is blown; to determine if this is the case, have the character make an Fright check.

Fright Test

Gurps - IQ roll

T&T - Level 2 SR on Int

RQ - Roll under 5xPow as %

Success means that the character is able to hide his or her revulsion – and that the demon believes that its disguise is still firmly in place.

The demon should prove a difficult opponent if directly confronted by the characters. It cannot fly indoors, but it can make good use of the poisonous stinger.

The bouncer might choose to wade into any fight that erupts, taking on the characters just for the sheer fun of it. In addition, the demon may take a prisoner, perhaps seizing one of the serving girls and threatening to kill her unless the characters retreat. (This tactic can prove especially effective if one of the characters has struck up a romance with either Annabella or Maeve.)

If the characters do mount a direct attack on the demon and succeed in seriously wounding or incapacitating it (if they reduce it to less than six hit points, for example) the demon uses its Teleport spell to return to its home plane. The demon is not able to take the Oven of Never-Ending Bounty with it, however, since the oven weighs more than 250 pounds. The characters will have succeeded in their goal, and can tinker with the magical oven as they wish.

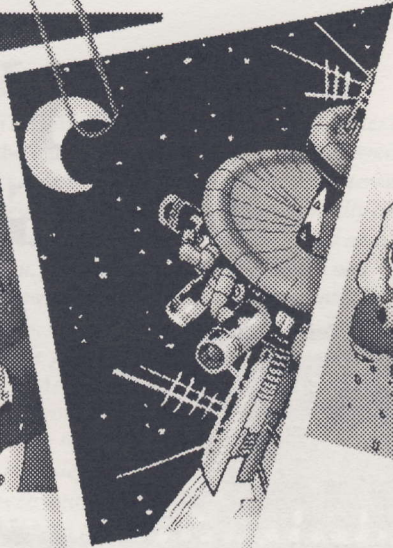
Concluding the Adventure

Ideally, this adventure will conclude with the characters lifting the curse from the Oven of Never-Ending Bounty and saving themselves and their fellow tavern patrons from a slow and painful death. The latter will be in debt to the characters, and may, at the gamemaster's discretion, offer them a small reward for this valuable service.

Unless they were destroyed, the characters might wish to claim the oven ro tavern as their own. No one else wants them. There may be legal complications, especially if the local militia come to suspect that the characters are to blame for Linden's murder. And if much of the truth of what happened at Brimstone's leaks out, the tavern may have even fewer patrons that it did when Lindred owned it, despite its excellent fare. The gamemaster will have to base these decisions on how the adventure plays out.

With luck, the characters will acquire a valuable magical item – and a profitable business, as well. Of course, there are no guarantees that the demon will not return to this world at some point in the future to exact its revenge.....

CONFIDENTIAL



AGAIN--
AM RETURNING TO YOU.
THESE PHOTOS PROVE NOTHING.
I AM NOT CONVINCED THAT
THIS "ORDER" EXISTS AT ALL.
NONETHELESS, PROCEED WITH
EXTREME CAUTION. AS USUAL,
TRUST NO ONE.
WATCH YOUR BACK.

-D

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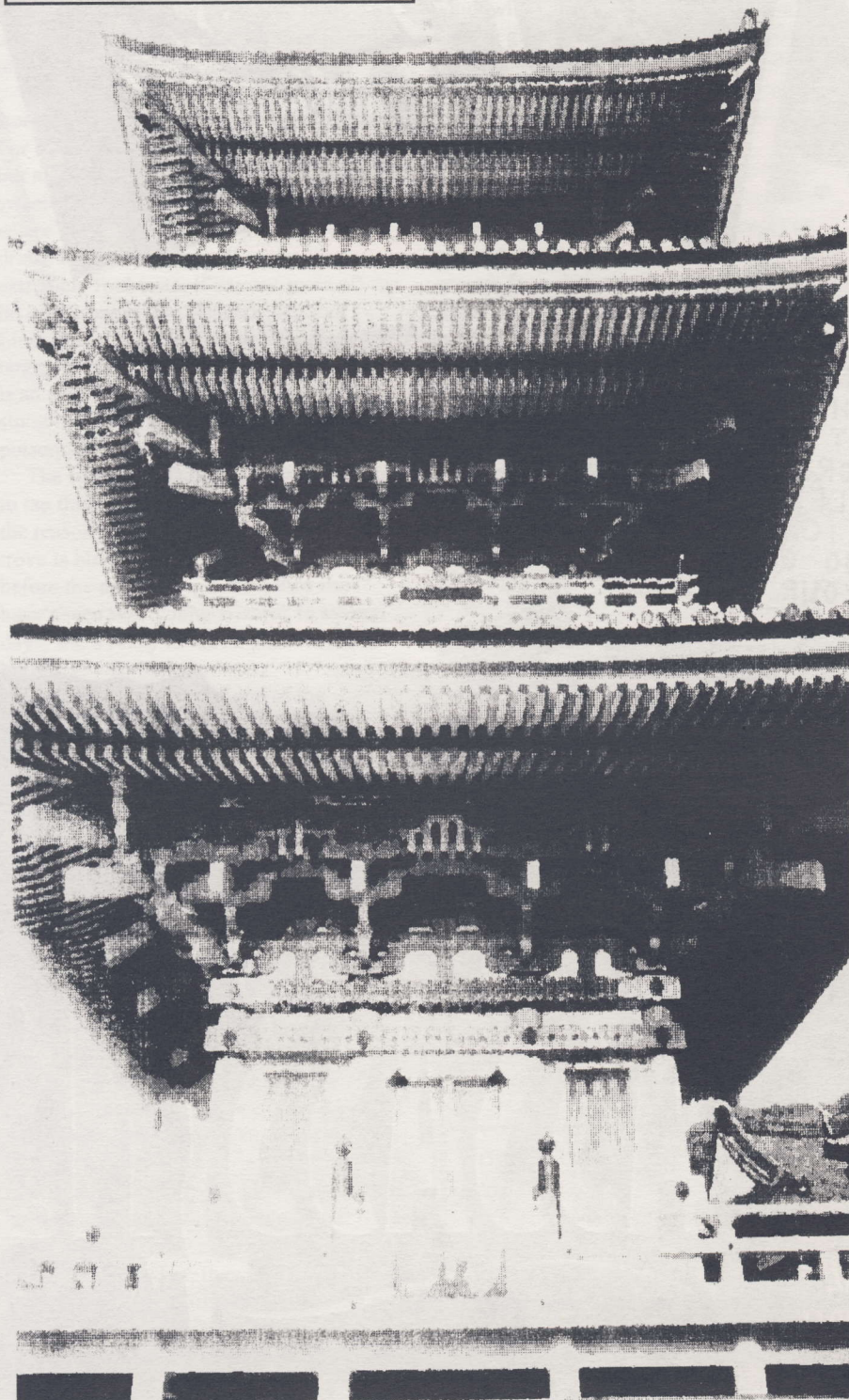
BUSHIDO

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GURPS®

YUREI-JI The Ghost Temple

Scenario by Mark Arsenault,



Introduction

This is an adventure designed for 3 to 6 characters with a combined total of 12 Levels. Encounters can be adjusted for higher or lower level PC groups. Stats for important NPCs are given with each encounter. All Skill scores for Bonus Skills include the NPC's Level, if applicable.

If you are a player, it is important that you do not read any further, for it will spoil the mysterious encounters and surprises that lurk within.

Synopsis

The PCs come upon a small valley containing a near-desolate village with very few inhabitants. The local peasants, as well as many of the local samurai, are fearful and warn the PCs away. Upon investigation, the PCs discover that the local temple has been desecrated and now stands haunted, inhabited by evil kami, oni, and all matter of other nasty creatures. The PCs, upon request of the local peasants or perhaps the local buke, must investigate the ruins and drive out the evil kami and return fertility to this small valley.

Note to the GM

Sakumi village has fallen victim to a plague. Gamemasters are encouraged to re-familiarize themselves with the rules dealing with Plagues, Illness and Healing in the Bushido 2nd Edition rules. These topics are addressed in the Bushido Book 1: Heroes of Nippon in sections 1095.2 Healing (p. 49), and 1095.3 Disease (p. 50).

While the stats for the NPCs are listed at the end of this adventure, the stats for the creatures are not. The GM may simply use the stats listed in Book 2, on the following

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pages: Bakemono (p. 11); Mukade (p. 10). The stats for the evil kami are listed at the end of the adventure.

In addition, GURPS conversion stats are provided for all of the NPCs and creatures, for those GMs who wish to run this adventure in a GURPS Japan campaign (or any other campaign for that matter). The GURPS stats are listed at the end of the adventure, after the Bushido stats.

Involving the PCs

Perhaps the easiest way to get the characters involved in this adventure is to simply have this adventure follow another in which the characters were left traveling a road. Because the adventure takes place in a small valley village, it would be best to have the characters traveling toward some destination through or beyond mountainous or rough terrain.

Individual motivations for characters is more complicated, but needn't be excessively so. Some suggestions for involving PCs of different Professions are listed below.

Characters may have a relative in the local village or, for those of samurai caste, in the local samurai clan, such as Tadaka Roshiro. Others may be spurred on to help by the rumors of evil creatures of bandits to fight (after all, Budo is an important aspect of a developing warrior).

Those of theological persuasion, including pious characters as well as Gakusho, will definitely be motivated by a desire to battle. Overcoming foes of one's religion, besides earning the character extra Experience (Budo or Shugendo), is one of the mainstays of religious characters, especially those of a martial bent. At the very least, providing religious assistance to the townsfolk should be of some inspiration to such characters.

Shugenja characters can exercise spirits just as can Gakusho, and such a setting provides ample opportunity to test one's mettle in the spirit realm as well.

Ninja characters can be hired by an outside religious sect that is allied with the one which owns the haunted temple. Another option is for the local samurai clan to hire the ninja to investigate the temple and discover the secret to restoring it to its original divine nature.

Budoka may find ancient, lost teaching scrolls containing the secret Okuden taught by the Buddhist monks. And last but not least, there is the possibility of finding some wondrous magical artifacts, which are so rare in Nippon.

PART 1: The Warning

The following passage, and any other text in the italic, may be read aloud to the players.

"As you walk along the road, the terrain begins to change, becoming more hilly and rocky. Trees stretch across the road above you, forming an umbrella of green and brown. As you continue to climb into the hills, the road becomes narrower, barely three yards across."

"As you walk over the crest of a large hill, you see a beautiful, basket-shaped valley below. The canopy of trees obscures the valley floor, but wisps of smoke can be seen against the golden, dusk sky, rising between the pines and bamboo. Suddenly, you hear the sound of horse hooves beating the earth, as four mounted samurai approach."

The samurai are patrolling the area for the local fief-holder, Tadaka Yaemon, who is their master. They are dressed in partial light samurai armor (AC 3), each carrying a yari and wearing a dai-sho (katana and wakizashi). The samurai will approach the characters from behind and inquire as to their business.

The samurai will question the PCs' business in the area. They will offer to escort the PCs through the village, but will tell them that no one is allowed to stop at the village. If asked why, the samurai will explain that the village has fallen victim to the plague and that their master has ordered it off limits to all travelers.

Although they speak with a sense of urgency, they will not be rude. A successful Wit ST to spot a Hidden Thing will reveal that the samurai are actually somewhat frightened (an unusual condition for a samurai, to be sure). If this is pointed out, the samurai will deny being afraid, merely stating that they are due back to their master's estate by nightfall.

If the samurai are treated appropriately, they will respond in kind. If treated rudely, or if the PCs are evasive, the samurai will accuse them of being graverobbers and attempt to run them off. If engaged in combat, they will fight for only two turns before riding off to their master's house. If there are any samurai in the party and the samurai are treated appropriately, they will invite the PCs back to their master's house, giving them directions.

"Travel down this road a short ways, then take the path to the left. Our master's house is but a half Ri down the pathway."

The samurai will then depart.

The Cast for BUSHIDO

Tadaka Yaemon (Level 0 Bushi)

BAP: 6 MNA: 1 ZAN: 1 BMA: 4
AC: 3 DAM: +0 HPT: 6
Skills: Kenjutsu (9), Sojutsu (5), Bajutsu (6), Japanese Classics (4), Heraldry (5), Calligraphy (10)
Equipment: Good quality samurai court garb, fan, Master quality wakizashi (the matching katana is in his room).

Tadaka Yaemon's Bodyguards (Level 2 Classic Bushi)

BAP: 13 MNA: 2 ZAN: 1 BMA: 6
AC: 1 (4) DAM: +3 HPT: 36
Skills: Kenjutsu (21) with Precision Strike (14) and Disarm (6) okuden, Sojutsu (17), Kyujutsu (21), Bajutsu (14), Jujutsu (15)
Equipment: Good quality Dai-sho, Fine quality samurai garb (AC1) with chainmail armor underneath (AC4)

Takada Roshiro (Level 4 Bushi)

BAP: 12 MNA: 2 ZAN: 1 BMA: 5
AC: 1 DAM: +3 HPT: 49
Skills: Kenjutsu (23) with Precision Strike (16) and Disarm (12) okuden, Sojutsu (18), Kyujutsu (20), Bajutsu (16), Jujutsu (12), Theology: Shinten (12), Japanese Classics (8), Go (14), Heraldry (11), Tea Ceremony (9)
Equipment: Superior quality Dai-sho, Fine quality samurai garb (AC 1)

Common Tadaka Samurai

(Level 1 Classic Bushi Rabble)

BAP: 10 MNA: 2 ZAN: 1 BMA: 5
AC: 1/4 DAM: +2 HPT: 10
Skills: Kenjutsu (14), Sojutsu (13), Kyujutsu (14), Bajutsu (11), Jujutsu (7)
Equipment: Average quality dai-sho, Yari

Evil Kami (Araburu-kami)

BCS: Magic-14, Skills-16 HPT: 40

Saving Throws:

STR 12 DFT 12 SPD 7

HLT 7 WT 2 WL 2

Powers: Astral Presence, Control Phenomena (Plague), Decrease Attribute (Wit)

Spells:

Fire: Burning Touch, Cloak of Smoke, Flame Sphere, Storm of Fire

Metal: Adamant Bonds, Confusing Gaze, Conquering Gaze, Iron Sphere

Skills: Bojutsu, Sumai, Torture, Gambling



The Cast for **GURPS**

Tadaka Yaemon (Level 0 Bushi)

ST 8 DX 12 IQ 9 HT 9

Basic Speed 5.5; Move 5

Dodge 5, Parry 5

Wears samurai court garb (PD 0, DR 1)

Advantages: Status-3 (minor clan head);

Wealth (Comfortable)

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Bushido);

Sense of Duty (to clan); Truthfulness;

Vow (to avenge father's death);

Youth (13 yrs old)

Skills: Administration-3; Area Knowledge

(Sakumi village and surrounding fief)-12;

Calligraphy-10; Diplomacy-5; Heraldry

(Japanese mon) -5; Katana-9; Literature

(Japanese Classics)-4; Riding-6; Spear-5

Equipment: Samurai court garb, fan

Weapons:

Wakizashi* (cutting 1d-1, impaling 1d-2);

Katana* (cutting 1d, impaling 1d-1)

* both weapons are Master quality

Tadaka Yaemon's Bodyguards

ST 16 DX 14 IQ 10 HT 15

Basic Speed 7.25; Move 7

Dodge 8, Parry 10

Wears samurai garb reinforced with chain (PD 1, DR 3)

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; Status-2 (minor clan member)

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Bushido); Duty (to clan head)

Skills: Archery-18; Judo-13;

Katana-18; Riding-12; Spear-15

Weapons:

Katana (cutting 2d+3,

impaling 1d+3);

Wakizashi (cutting 2d+2,

impaling 1d+2).

Takada Roshiro

ST 17 DX 15 IQ 11 HT 15

Basic Speed 7.5; Move 7

Dodge 8, Parry 11

No armor, no encumbrance

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; Intuition; Status-2

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Bushido); Sense of Duty (to clan head)

Skills: Archery-16; Go-10; Heraldry-11;

Judo-8; Katana-20; Literature (Japanese

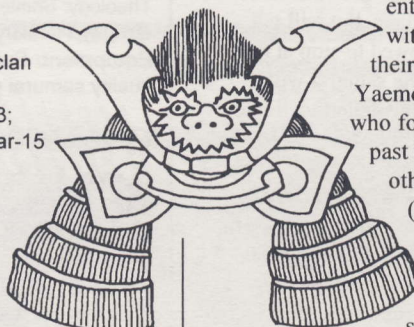
classics)-8; Riding-12; Spear-15; Tea

Ceremony-5; Theology (Shintenn)-12

Weapons:

Katana (cutting 3d+1, impaling 1d+4);

Wakizashi (cutting 3d, impaling 1d+3)



PART 2: The Fork

"As you walk down into the valley, you come upon a fork in the road. One path runs off to the left and the other continues straight ahead. A signpost to the right, next to the road, reads:

Sakumi village off limits due to a plague. Do not enter. All travelers must divert to the left and report to Tadaka Yaemon, master of Sakumi village and these surrounding lands. By order of Tadaka Yaemon."

If the characters continue straight ahead toward the village they will encounter the checkpoint. If they take the path to the left, they will eventually reach the home of Takada Yaemon (Part 4: Takada Yaemon).

PART 3: The Checkpoint

Approximately a 1/4 Ri from the village (roughly half way between the warning post at the fork and the village, there is a checkpoint. Present are four samurai from the Tadaka clan. They are wearing AC 3, and each is armed with a yari, MR:2 dai-kyu with 24 willow leaf arrows and 12 armor piercing arrows, and average quality dai-sho. There are also two riding horses tethered to a nearby tree.

The samurai will forbid anyone from entering the village without permission from their master, Tadaka Yaemon, in writing. Anyone who forcibly attempts to get past the guards, or otherwise bypass them (by sneaking past, circumventing the checkpoint, etc.) will be cut down. The samurai will use their dai-kyu to stop anyone not in HTH range. If necessary, two of the samurai will pursue offenders on horseback and attempt to eliminate them, with their bows first and with their katana if all else fails. The samurai will send word to their master in the event of any such incident.

PART 4: Takada Yaemon

When the PCs reach the estate of Tadaka Yaemon, they will see several samurai guards around the outer wall, each holding a torch. There are 10 guards total, 2 on each side of the compound, with 2 additional samurai guarding the gate. The guards are all Level 1 Classic Bushi Rabble (use the stats for Common Tadaka Samurai, at the end of this adventure).

If the party was invited, the guards will recognize them from the descriptions given by the returning patrol. If the PCs are unexpected, the guards will question their presence and report to their master. Ultimately, unless the PCs initiate combat with these samurai, they will be invited inside.

For a map of the estate, Gamemasters may use the standard floorplan of the Inn printed on the back of Bushido: Book 2.

Making Introductions

Once inside, they will be met by Takada Roshiro, Yaemon's senior retainer, and two other samurai guards. Roshiro will be very polite and cordial to the characters, trying to put them at ease. In fact, he is trying to downplay the "plague" situation. Several heimin servants will approach to take the PCs' large weapons (katana, yari, no-dachi, etc.). The characters will be allowed to maintain any weapons not larger than a wakizashi.

Roshiro will explain that the PCs will be meeting with his master over dinner in one hour (one Nipponese hour). They will then be offered a chance to bathe, have their clothes cleaned and sip cha (tea) before eating. The courtesy and sincerity of their hosts are sincere, and players looking for a conspiracy will be disappointed.

The Dinner

In the main hall, the PCs will be given seats of honor. Roshiro will make a formal announcement and introduction as Takada Yaemon enters the room. All of the occupants bow, as the PCs see two samurai along with a young boy, no more than 13 years old, all dressed in superior quality samurai garb, enter the room. This is Takada Yaemon. He sits at the head of the group and Takada Roshiro sits next to him. His bodyguards sit behind him. Once introductions are made, several female servants will bring in trays of fine Nipponese fare, sake, and anything the characters request that can be reasonably obtained and prepared.

Takada Yaemon is a very reserved young man, but friendly. He is the son of Takada Binzaemon, who recently disappeared during an expedition to the haunted temple. After his father's disappearance, Yaemon assumed his place as rightful heir to the Takada fief. All of Takada Binzaemon's retainers have vowed to remain loyal vassals of his son, Yaemon, until Binzaemon returns or until



their death, whichever comes first. Yaemon relies on his father's senior retainer, Roshiro (now Yaemon's senior retainer), for counsel.

At dinner, Takada Yaemon will explain the situation as it truly is. The Gamemaster may relate the following to the PCs:

"My father disappeared one month ago while investigating the Yurei-ji — the haunted temple. A year ago, the Fire Lotus sect, who once occupied the temple, sought exceptional financial tribute from our clan. More than 2,000 Koban each year. Their absurd request was denied by my father and the Fire Lotus monks swore curses against us.

"That year the crops fell to famine, and less than half of the normal harvest was recovered. This infuriated my father, as he blamed the Fire Lotus sect's curse for the famine. My father took his samurai and raided the temple, killing all of the monks.

"As time went by, the temple, which now stood empty, fell into disrepair. The peasants were forbidden to visit the temple, although they erected a small shrine in the village for the slain monks. Then rumors of strange creatures and evil spirits occupying the temple began to circulate. My father thought the rumors to be the result of overactive imaginations of superstitious peasants, and paid them little credence...until the plague.

"Last month the local villagers contracted plague. My father believed all of these things to be the result of the monks' curse and he went to the temple, alone, to try to find a way to placate the spirits of the monks to restore the village and valley to health."

The above soliloquy represents the sum of what Yaemon knows. He has not sent any of his retainers to the temple for fear of losing them as well, and he has posted the village off limits to all travelers in order to prevent the spread of the plague.

Yaemon will humbly ask the characters for assistance in dealing with the curse on his family, the village and the valley. He will tell the PCs that they may keep any treasure they find and that he will personally reward them, so long as they lift the curse. As he does so, he will bow abjectly, head to the tatami mat,

in Inferior Polite mode. If this doesn't motivate the characters, nothing will.

If the PCs offer to help, Yaemon will provide them with written passes to enter the village, a horse for each party member, and any other reasonable supplies and equipment that the PCs ask for.



PART 5: The Village

The village consists of several dozen farming-style homes, with wood and plaster walls and thatched roofs with high peaks. The dirt road winds through the center of the village, with homes interspersed among the rice paddies. There is little activity in the village, as most people are tending to the fields in the day and staying indoors at night. Smoke from kitchen fires can be seen rising from several homes.

The original population of the village was 70, consisting of 18 families. The village was recently hit by a plague, however, and nearly half of the villagers have died as a result of it. Most of the remaining villagers and

Common Tadaka Samurai

ST 13 DX 13 IQ 10 HT 12

Basic Speed 6.25; Move 6

Dodge 6, Parry 7

Has partial samurai armor available (see below)

Advantages: Status-2

Disadvantages: Duty (to clan head and Roshiro)

Skills: Kenjutsu-14; Sojutsu-13; Kyujutsu-14; Bajutsu-11; Jujutsu-7

Equipment: Samurai garb, hachi-maki (headband).

Weapons:

Katana (cutting 2d+1, impaling 1d+2);

Wakizashi (cutting 2d, impaling 1d+1);

Yari (crushing 2d+1, impaling 1d+2).

Note: When patrolling, the samurai wear the following armor:

Steel kabuto (helmet; PD 3, DR 4),

Steel cuirass (PD 3, DR 4),

Leather sandals (PD 2, DR 2).

Bakemono-sho

ST 13 DX 14 IQ 8 HT 12

Basic Speed 6.5; Move 6

Dodge 6, Parry 5

Has scraps of old armor (PD 2, DR 3)

Skills: Kenjutsu-11; Sojutsu-13; Kyujutsu-14; Bajutsu-11; Jujutsu-7

Weapon:

Katana (cutting 2d+1, impaling 1d+2)

Mukade

ST 24 Move/Dodge: 12/7 Size: 2 hexes

DX 16 PD/DR: 2/4 Weight: 600 lbs.

IQ 3 Damage: 2d+1 imp

HT 14/28 Reach: C

Habitats: Varies

The Mukade is a giant centipede with glowing eyes, which allow it to see in total darkness (IR Vision). The Mukade is the mortal enemy of the tatsu (dragon) of Japanese mythology. The Mukade is amphibious, and its movement is not reduced in water.

The Mukade's bite injects a powerful and deadly poison into the victim. Failure to resist the poison (i.e., failing to make the HT roll) causes 1 die of damage per minute, for 1d3 minutes.

The Hand of Jubei

The Hand of Jubei is a powerful religious artifact. If placed within the pagoda located on the temple grounds, and then prayed over by a Buddhist Gakusho (priest) or pious Buddhist layman, the relic casts a powerful Exorcism spell. The item needn't touch the target of the Exorcism. The target must simply be known to the person praying and named in the prayer. Use of the Hand of Jubei will permanently Exorcise the evil kami and remove the plague from the village.



Evil Kami (Arabru-kami)

ST 19 Move/Dodge: 8/8 Size: 1 hex
DX 19 PD/DR: 0/2 Weight: 150 lbs.

IQ 8 Damage: 1d6+2 cr

Origin: ML (Japan)

HT 14 Reach: C, 1

Habitat: Astral

Skills: Gambling-16, Staff (Bo)-16,

Sumo-16, Torture-16

This evil kami exists in the astral plane and is able to float about observing the physical plane unseen. The kami may manifest in physical form, although it can affect the physical plane (using its special powers, casting spells, and so on) while remaining in its astral form as well. Destroying the kami's physical form merely cause it to revert to its natural, astral form. The only way to completely eliminate the kami is to exorcise it.

The kami has the following semi-divine abilities (the use of each power requires a successful roll of 14- by the kami):

The kami can create a plague in a 10 square Ri area (roughly equal to 64 square miles). All HT rolls to resist the plague are at -2 (see GURPS B133).

The plague reduces the victim's HT by 1 each day, for 3d days. Additional symptoms include fever, vomiting, and a general reduction in Fatigue (reduce ST by one half of the HT loss, only for purposes of calculating Fatigue).

In addition to the special powers listed above, the kami has the following spells (from GURPS Magic): Charm-15, Counterspell-14, Enslave-14, Explosive Fireball-14, Fireball-16, Flame Jet-18, Fog-16, Mindlessness-14, Rooted Feet-15, Stone Missile-17.

livestock are infected (75% chance of any villager or animal that the PCs encounter is a carrier). At present there are only 9 families remaining, with a total population of 38.

The Villagers

The villagers will be generally shy around the PCs, and will become fearful and skittish if any Tadaka samurai enter the village. If asked about the disease, they will say that they have been cursed by the kami of the slain monks, and that even though they have erected a small shrine in their honor, the spirits of the monks are still angry. Although the villagers know that they are dying, most have taken an attitude of acceptance. After all, karma is karma, neh?

If asked, the villagers will tell the PCs where the temple is located, but they will not under any circumstances lead them there, for fear of being executed by Tadaka's samurai. If threatened with death by the PCs, the villagers will choose death at their hands rather than defy Tadaka Yaemon's decree. The temple will be easy enough to find following the villagers' directions.

The Plague

The plague in the village has an overall Level of 3. Any characters merely entering the village must make a Health ST at -1 or contract the plague. Anyone drinking water or eating food from the village must make a Health ST at -3 to avoid contracting the plague.

Characters with Physician skill (Igaku) may make a BCS roll to determine if the plague exists on a specific specimen (person, animal, food, etc.). To keep players on their toes, GMs may wish to make this roll for them, revealing only the information gleaned and not the actual die roll. Shugenja using Astral Senses and Gakusho using Perception of Truth can also detect the plague's presence.

PART 6: The Temple

The temple consists of a handful of raised buildings surrounded by a 12' high stone wall. There are four small houses (the priests' quarters), a large temple building, a teahouse, pagoda, a storehouse, a privy, and two gardens, one of stone and the other of plants and shrubs.

All of the buildings are showing signs of wear and lack of maintenance. Much of the grounds are overgrown with weeds and vines (allowing a +1 to Ninjutsu BCS rolls). The entire grounds smells of decay and a cool breeze chills all those who enter.

There is an evil kami who lives on the temple grounds. It is the displaced spirit of the leader of the Fire Lotus monks who were slain by Takada Binzaemon. The kami will actively harass anyone who enters the temple grounds, using its spells and powers freely. Their goal will be to frighten the interlopers into fleeing, but the kami will attack with more ferocity if their opponents refuse to leave, killing if necessary. The kami will prefer to let the bakemono deal with trespassers first, however, so as to reserve its power and size up the opposition.

The Gate: The wooden gate is closed, although the wooden bar is set against the

inner wall. The gate may be pushed open with a Strength ST, or by multiple characters with a combined Strength score of 50. The spell Bursting Bonds will also open the gate with ease.

Nailed to the outside of one door is a crudely written signpost. It is written in Hiragana and reads:

"Beware the dark masters, kami of the darkened hills and muddied waters. Death comes to those who enter, as it came to the human warrior-leader, Tadaka Binzaemon."

The signpost was written by Fuko, the bakemono leader, as a warning to any mortals foolish enough to consider trespassing in his new home.

Houses: There are five houses on the grounds. Several of the wooden shutters, or windows covers, have since fallen off. There are 1D3 Bakemono-sho in each house. During the day they will normally be napping (80% chance), requiring two Detailed Turns to awaken and prepare for combat. Otherwise they will be sharpening their weapons, chewing on the gristled meat of their latest kill, telling grossly exaggerated stories, and so on.

Temple Building: The temple building consists of a large, 20' high bronze statue of Buddha. The statue sits against the center of the north wall, facing the village. Various texts in the form of decorative religious scrolls are hanging from each of the walls.

The temple building is the gathering place for all of the bakemono when they pray to the kami. There will be two Bakemono-sho guarding the temple at all times, although there is a 1 in 6 chance that each will be sleeping (roll for each separately).

Pious Buddhist characters and Buddhist Gakusho characters who read all of the scrolls (requiring one half hour) and who make a Wit ST to understand them will receive 1 point of Permanent Ki as well as +05 points to their Butsu-do (Buddhist Theology) score. Characters who do not have the skill gain it at an initial score of 05.

The kami has chosen the statue to reside in. When not wandering about the temple grounds causing one calamity or another in the village, it rests here. Characters defiling or insulting the statue will cause the kami to emerge and attack the offender at once. Destroying or removing the statue will cause the kami to be "exorcised," and it will not return to the temple or village again. Likewise, if a Shugenja or Gakusho performs a successful Exorcism, the kami will be cast out and will not return again.



Teahouse: The teahouse is extremely dirty, and contains the decaying remains of countless slaughtered animals and humans who have since been devoured by the bakemono. Characters making a successful Wit ST to spot Hidden Things will discover 1D6 copper pieces and an ordinary-looking, but magical tanto, which as been enchanted to kill a Bakemono-sho outright if the tanto inflicts even a single Hit Point of damage. It is otherwise a normal tanto in all respects.

Pagoda: The pagoda is a two story tower of Chinese architectural design. There is a door in the base, opening into a small room. The room, large enough for two adults to enter, contains a small shrine with an empty cushion. The interior is dusty and has not been used, nor cleaned, in several months.

Privy: While this item needs little description, it can be said that it is particularly foul, not having been cleaned or tended to in several months. Flies are abundant, and anyone actually entering it and taking a deep breath must make a successful Health ST or become violently ill for 1D3 Detailed Turns.

Well: The well on the grounds is the least polluted of all of the items. Fresh water can be

obtained from it by using the winch and bucket, which are also located here.

Stone garden: The stone garden is unkempt and in no particularly neat order. Weeds are growing up through the white stones, and the faint smell of urine can be detected. Anyone making an effort to clean up the garden will gain 5 On. Those making a successful Craft: Stone Garden BCS will gain an additional 5 On.

Plant Garden: This garden has become overgrown with weeds and unkempt. Besides its degrading beauty, it is also the home of a deadly Mukade. It has nested in the garden and laid a dozen eggs. The protective mother will attack anyone approaching within 10 yards of the garden. The bakemono-sho have learned to stay well away from the garden. Also hidden in the brush is a helmet bearing the Tadaka mon (it is the helmet worn by Tadaka Binzaemon on his last day on this world).

Storehouse: The storehouse contains piles of dirty, soiled cloth, loose rice, several kegs of old sake, rubbish, and the like. There are also several valuable items intermingled with the rest. It is essentially all of the "treasure"

belonging to the bakemono. Among the piles of goods, investigative characters will find: 86 copper; 14 silver; 5 gold; a black bamboo flute (Level 3 Semi-Precious Artwork), an ivory netsuke of an otter (Level 1 Precious Artwork), a wakizashi (Weapon Artifact, +4 BCS), and a mummified hand.

The last item, the hand, is of particular value to the party. It is the Hand of Jubei. It was once possessed by the founder of the Fire Lotus sect, and has since become an artifact of great spiritual power (a Relic, in game terms). The hand was enshrined in the main temple building, but was removed and tossed into the storehouse by the Bakemono-sho (because it wasn't deemed appetizing). Any of the Tadaka samurai or villagers will recognize the hand as a Relic and know that it must be enshrined to function.

The Hand of Jubei may cast the Exorcism spell as a Level 6 Gakusho, but it will function only if enshrined within the pagoda, located elsewhere on the grounds. It has an Effective BCS of 19, and its Religious Power is 24. It has only 3 Charges remaining, however.



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BLOODLINES

Vampire Clans of the Far East

Article by Graeme Davis,
Art by Dan Smith

CLAN PENANGGALAN

Penanggalan is a small, independent Clan, which has traditionally taken little interest in the world outside its Pacific homeland. The majority of European and American Cainites are unaware of the Clan's existence. However, they may be of interest to Storytellers whose Chronicles are wholly or partly set in the Pacific area.

Clan Penanggalan takes little action outside of the Pacific islands where it is based. A player-controlled Penanggalan will be a novel character, to be sure, but will need reasons to leave its home area. Penanggalan might be found associated with immigrant communities from Indonesia or the Philippines, but will still be rare outside their home range. It is on their home ground southeast Asia where they are strongest.

Clan Penanggalan is widely distributed among the islands of southeast Asia, especially Indonesia and the Philippines where folk traditions speak of the *penanggalan* and *manananggal*, the *aswang*, *iqui*, *mangalok* and *boroka*. One bloodline of the Clan has established a foothold in the islands of Japan, where it is known as the *rokuro-kubi*. The Penanggalan are based mainly among the rural population in their home range, although there is an increasing drift towards the growing cities, following the flow of kine in that direction.

Colonialism had little effect on the bulk of the Clan, who continued to exist alongside the rural community as they always had—each individual claiming a village or a group of villages as a hunting-preserve, and taking only what was needed in the way of prey. Since the end of World War II, however, there have been enormous changes in the mortal societies of the Pacific Rim, and the effects have been felt by the Penanggalan.

Widespread industrialization has led to the rapid growth of cities, while basic services and amenities have remained very basic except for the wealthy few. There is now a large and restless stratum of urban poor, who are open to any influence from revolutionary Communism to fundamentalist Islam. The wealthy own and operate businesses, normally manufacturing, run on a Euro-American model and often funded by investment from the West, attracted by the cheapness of labor, the scarcity of labor protection legislation, and the highly flexible attitude of many minor officials when offered the right price. Entrepreneurs

and business mavericks from Europe and North America operate in this region as busily as they did at the height of the colonial era, and, now as then, not all of them are mortal.

The prevailing economic and social conditions lead to regular unrest and occasional civil war, and the Penanggalan can nearly always be found backing the side which takes the most nationalist stance. While the Penanggalan are seldom seen in the great cities, it is not unknown for Ventrue and others with business interests in the islands to disappear while visiting them.

Although they take little interest in outside affairs, the Penanggalan are fiercely territorial and deal harshly with those they regard as exploiters or trespassers. Invitations to meet with the Camarilla or to negotiate visiting rights to their islands are almost always ignored, although the younger generations of the Clan are a little more communicative than the Elders, and may sometimes deal with outsiders if they see a chance for personal gain without distancing themselves from their Clan. Over the last couple of decades, a very few foreign Cainites have obtained permission from the Penanggalan to live in the islands, but this permission is always contingent upon guarantees not to interfere in local matters, and the promise of support to the Penanggalan if called upon, even against one's own Clan if need be.

Appearance

Penanggalan are almost exclusively of southeast Asian racial origin, and look very much like their mortal counterparts. Build and skin tone change little if at all after the Embrace, and Penanggalan are very difficult to tell apart from local mortals by casual observation. Those who live in the countryside tend to favor traditional garb, while the increasing number of city Penanggalan wear Euro-American styles from jeans to power suits, according to the image they wish to project. Their clothes may have Western designer labels, but are nearly always locally-made copies, of equal or better quality than the original.

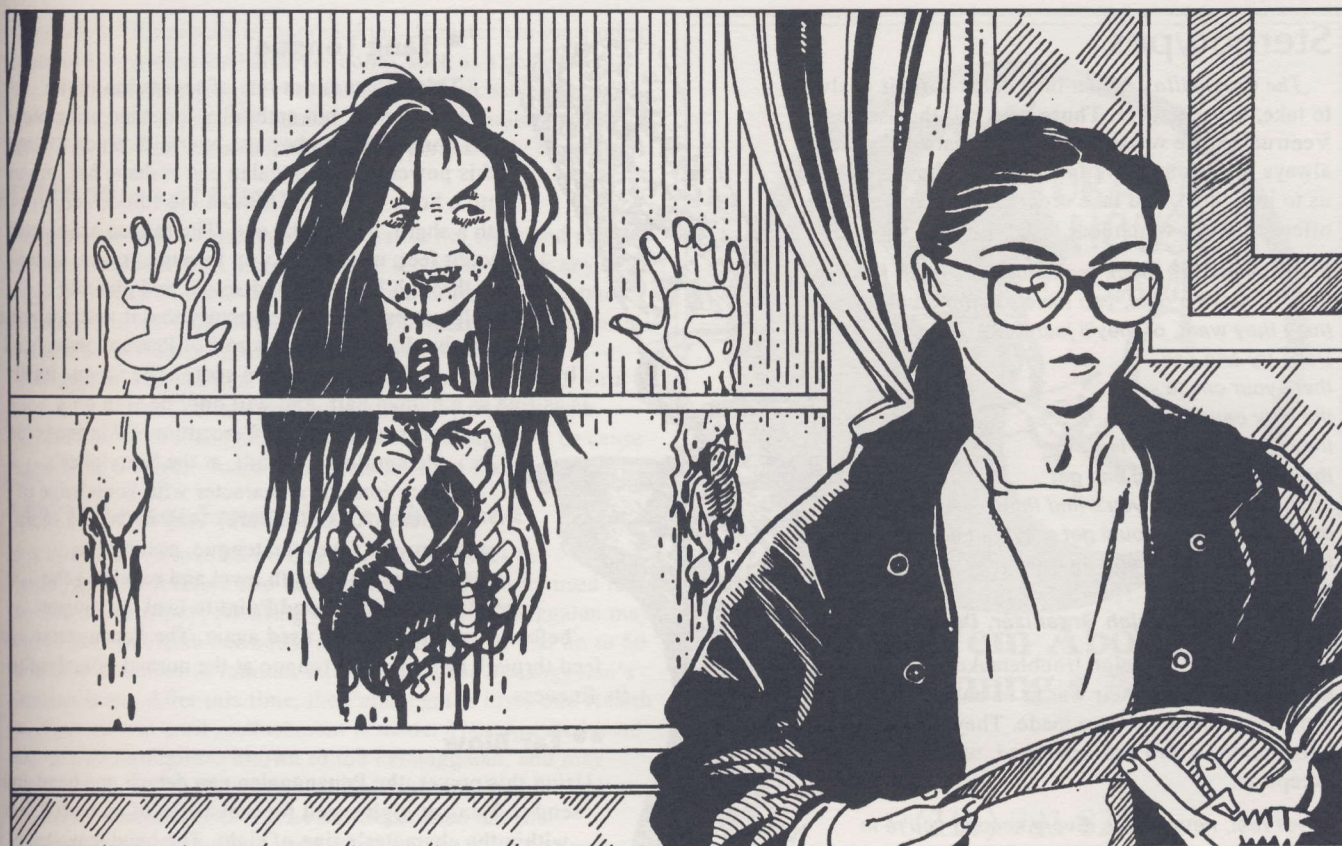
Haven

Rural Penanggalan often live in villages alongside mortals, giving them a ready-made Herd. The use of Domination and Obfuscate enables a Penanggalan to live indefinitely in these surroundings, unsuspected even by those villagers who know that a monster is preying on them and their neighbors. Close ties with the mortal family can provide a willing Herd, daytime protection and a source of Progeny. Urban Penanggalan live much as their European and American counterparts do, hunting among the slums and entertainment districts of the city. Some take pride in feeding only on foreigners, or on those who the feel are betraying their homeland and native culture.

Background

Penanggalan invariably create Progeny from their mortal relatives, and see the traditional extended family as a unit for unlife as well as mortal life. However, they choose very carefully those relatives who will be Embraced—they are always the most intelligent and resourceful members of the family, and those whose personal philosophy is most in harmony with the Clan's values and goals. Descent is counted through the mother's bloodline instead of the father's, and nearly three-quarters of all Penanggalan are female.

Vampire: The Masquerade is a trademark of White Wolf Inc.



Character Creation

Almost all Penanggalan are from the Asia Pacific region, mostly Indonesian, Malay, or Filipino. Most were farmers, factory workers or entrepreneurs in life, and almost all have Natures which lead them to value the independence of their homelands and resent foreign intrusion and exploitation. Popular backgrounds include Mentor (the character's Sire, usually a close relative), and Herd (urban neighbors or fellow-villagers). Many Penanggalan are highly knowledgeable about the politics, history and traditions of their homeland.

Clan Disciplines

Dominate, Obfuscate, Separation

Weaknesses

Penanggalan are slow to digest blood after feeding, and a recently-fed Penanggalan is bloated and sluggish, like a mortal who has over-eaten. Female Penanggalan often avoid notice after feeding by pretending to be in advanced pregnancy. Every point of blood ingested adds one-half point (round up) to the difficulty of all rolls involving Dexterity until the blood is digested; a Penanggalan can digest a number of blood points per hour equal to his or her Stamina score. For example, a Penanggalan who drains a human of 10 Blood Points suffers +5 difficulty to all rolls involving Dexterity immediately after feeding. If Stamina is 5, then five points of blood are digested per hour after feeding, one every twelve minutes, so the penalty is reduced by one point every twenty-four minutes.

Organization

The Penanggalan are divided into a number of bloodlines, each centered around one extended family and operating as a clan within a clan. The head of each family - almost always the most ancient—deals with problems and disputes just as among local mortals, and also represents the family in dealings with other families. Each family head is also a Clan Elder. The Elders meet as a group only rarely, when there is serious business to discuss, but most are in touch with each other informally.

Gaining Clan Prestige

The Penanggalan value freedom from foreign interference above all things, and an effective way of gaining Clan prestige is by doing something which contributes to local independence or sees off trespassers. Destroying trespassing foreign Vampires will almost always contribute to Clan prestige, as will taking a significant role in any mortal unrest which leads to the loosening of foreign control. Several Penanggalan played a part in the end of the Marcos regime in the Philippines, although the Western powers applauded publicly, their influence in the region was ultimately diminished by his fall.

Quote

You are trespassing here. Go home. You will not be warned again."



Stereotypes

The Camarilla - When they come here, it is always to take, never to give. Those who call themselves Ventru are the worst; they are untrustworthy, and always want something for nothing. They even want us to join them, and take orders from them, and act offended when we choose to go our own way.

If you ever meet them, remember you're on their turf. To make a deal, you have to offer something they want, or they'll just throw you out.

Don't try and sell them your cause - the only cause

they're interested in is their own. But if you can get on their right side, you'll find they deal straight. We could get on beaut if they'd just look beyond their own backyard.

Raf, Brujah Organizer, Darwin

The Sabbat - Foreign troublemakers, they want to bring their war to us and spoil everything we have made. They are to be hunted down and destroyed, without exception.

Never rest, never relax. Every second you're in their territory you're in danger. These people are not like the Camarilla, they're not complacent and they're not distracted by internal disputes. They're watching for trespassers all the time, and as soon as they know you're there, they'll be hunting you. And when you kill one, always destroy the head. Don't just cut it off - burn it. Always.

Morton, Black Hand

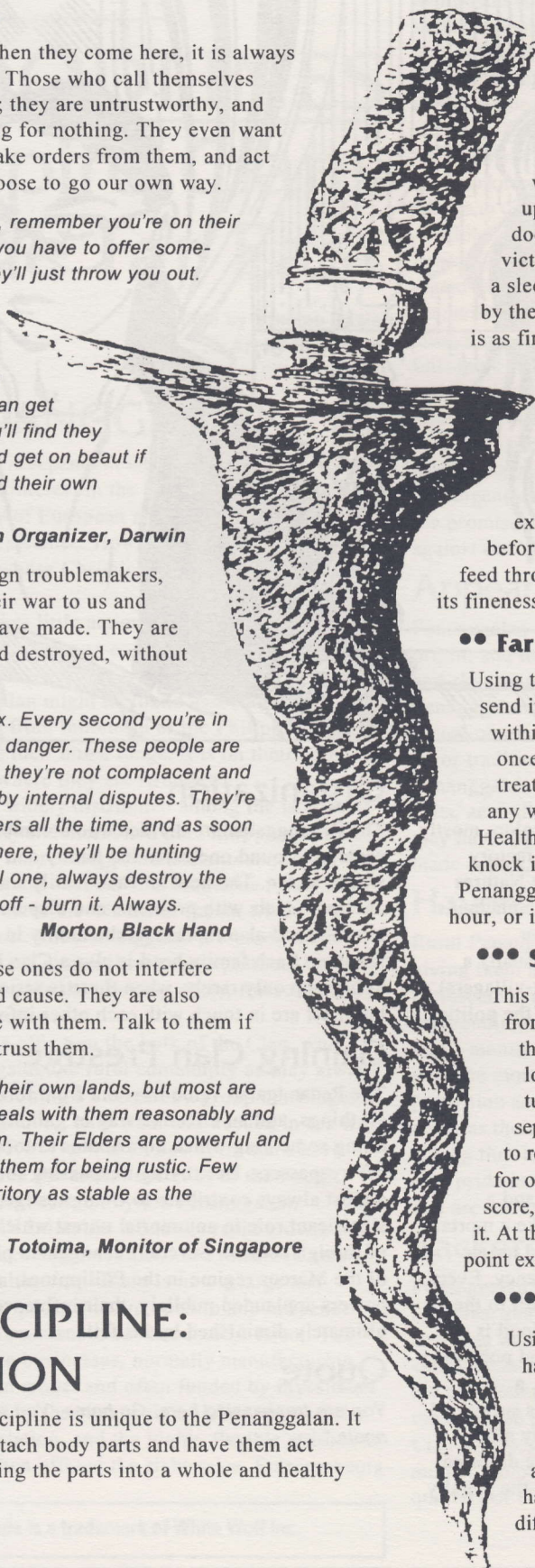
The Inconnu - These ones do not interfere often, or without good cause. They are also powerful, so take care with them. Talk to them if you wish, but do not trust them.

They are powerful in their own lands, but most are approachable if one deals with them reasonably and does not provoke them. Their Elders are powerful and wise - do not despise them for being rustic. Few Princes keep their territory as stable as the Penanggalan.

Totoima, Monitor of Singapore

NEW DISCIPLINE: SEPARATION

This gruesome Discipline is unique to the Penanggalan. It enables the user to detach body parts and have them act independently, reuniting the parts into a whole and healthy body when desired.



• Fang Tongue

This power is not one of separation in the literal sense, but embodies the same principles of controlling body parts over a distance. Using this power, a Penanggalan can reshape her tongue into a hollow filament almost too fine to see, tipped with a sharp, needlelike end. The tongue can stretch up to 20 feet, making its way through cracks, under doors, through keyholes and so on, and piercing a victim almost painlessly—so gently that it will not wake a sleeper who does not make a roll of Perception resisted by the Penanggalan's Separation score. The tongue itself is as fine as a human hair, and will only be seen on a successful roll of Perception + Alertness (or Perception + Occult, at the Storyteller's discretion, for a character with knowledge of southeast Asian folklore). Any hit with a sharp weapon will sever the tongue, costing the Penanggalan one health level and requiring the expenditure of one Blood Point to heal the tongue before this power can be used again. The Penanggalan can feed through this filament tongue at the normal rate, despite its fineness.

•• Far Blow

Using this power, the Penanggalan can detach one hand and send it flying at high speed for a distance of up to 100 feet within the character's line of sight. The hand may strike once at any target before returning to its owner. This is treated as a close combat attack, modified as normal for any weapon held in the detached hand. The hand has one Health level while detached, and any damaging blow will knock it out of the air and render it inactive; the Penanggalan must spend a Blood Point to heal it within one hour, or it will die and cannot then be reattached.

••• Separate Senses

This power allows the Penanggalan to separate an eye or ear from her head. The Penanggalan can still see or hear through the detached organ while within 20 miles of its location, simply by concentrating; the eye or ear may be turned at will, but cannot move about by itself. One separation roll is needed to detach the organ, and another to reattach it. The organ can survive in its detached state for one day for each point of the Penanggalan's Separation score, but each day one blood point must be spent to sustain it. At the end of this time, or if it is not sustained by blood point expenditure, the organ dies and cannot be reattached.

•••• Far Hands

Using this power, the Penanggalan may detach one or both hands. The detached hands can fly at up to 30 m/sec, and perform tasks under the Penanggalan's command at a distance of up to 100 yards per point of Separation score. The hands can use all the character's Dexterity and Skills, and half the character's Strength; if the hands are not in the character's line of sight, all difficulties are doubled as the character is effectively



acting blind. This penalty is ignored if the character has some other means of seeing what the hands are doing, such as a detached eye (see level three above) or clairvoyant ability. Each hand has one health level, and if a hand is injured, the character must spend a Blood Point to heal it immediately, or it is permanently destroyed.

••••• Storm of Claws

Using this power, a Penanggalan can cause her teeth and nails to separate from her body, flying through the air to attack any target within 20 feet and line of sight and returning to reattach themselves to the body automatically. The attack is treated as a 3-round burst from a light submachine gun, using the Penanggalan's Separation score instead of Firearms skill, with a base difficulty of 7. Damage is normally 1; by expending a Blood Point the Penanggalan can raise the damage to 2 or cause Aggravated wounds. To do both costs 3 Blood Points.

••••• Lesser Separation of the Head

It is this power, above all others, that characterizes the Penanggalan in folklore and rumor, although it is only used in the direst emergency. By using this power, the Penanggalan may detach her head from her body, and the head may fly at up to 50 m/sec for a number of minutes equal to 10 x the Penanggalan's Stamina score. After this time, the Penanggalan loses one Health level per minute until reattachment is made. The separated head may use all Disciplines known to the Penanggalan, and may speak and feed; the body, meanwhile, is immobile and helpless, treated as incapacitated. The Lesser Separation has the disadvantage that the organs and intestines go with the head, dangling from the neck; they are needed for the Penanggalan to digest any blood she takes while detached, but make her extremely vulnerable. Any blow or shot aimed at the detached head has a 50% chance of hitting the exposed viscera instead, causing double normal damage. The sight of a Penanggalan performing the Lesser Separation is so grisly that all who witness it (Kin or kine) must make a Self-Control roll; Vampires who fail the roll go into Frenzy, while mortals are rooted to the spot and/or violently ill, as the Storyteller wishes.

••••• •• Hiding the Heart

This power allow a Penanggalan to remove her heart from her body. The provided it is kept warm and moist, the heart will survive indefinitely provided the Penanggalan expends one Blood Point per day to sustain it. The removal of the heart means that staking through the body has no effect on the Penanggalan, although if the heart is found and staked, the Penanggalan is affected as usual. Needless to say, the location of a hidden heart is a Penanggalan's most closely guarded secret.

••••• •• Greater Separation of the Head

This power is identical to the Lesser Separation of the Head described above, except that the head no longer needs to be attended by the viscera, making it less vulnerable. A Penanggalan with this power is not harmed by decapitation unless taken by surprise; otherwise, the head can be detached and flee on its own. Destroying the body will mean the eventual death of the head, though, unless the Penanggalan has a spare body hidden within reach (see *Lesser Separation of the Head* above and *Steal Body* below).



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••••• ••• Body of Vapor

This power effectively separates every molecule of the Penanggalan's body from every other molecule, for a period up to 10 minutes per point of Separation score. At the end of this time, or earlier if the Penanggalan wills it, the molecules coalesce and the body reforms. This process takes a full minute, during which time the Penanggalan is helpless. Otherwise, this power is identical to the Protean power of *Mist*.

••••• •••• Steal Body

This power permits a Penanggalan to attach its head to any decapitated body, and use the body as if it were its own. The body must be dead no longer than a day, and a Separation roll is required to attach successfully. Once attachment is made the Penanggalan's vampiric system takes over the host body; the process takes a number of hours equal to 10 minus the Penanggalan's Stamina score, during which time all the Penanggalan's Physical Traits are halved. Once a body has been 'converted' in this way, it remains ready for reattachments at any time; most powerful Penanggalan have a number of spare bodies hidden at strategic locations.



CLAN SHUTEN

The *Shuten-doji*, as they call themselves, may provide a surprise for players who have read *A World of Darkness*, and think that Gaki and Cats are the only supernatural creatures their characters will meet in Japan.

There was a time when the *shuten-doji* were feared throughout Japan; a time when Emperors ruled, then Shoguns; a time before the Black Ships came.

Nowadays, though, almost everyone lives in cities and almost everything is done by machines. Hardly anyone has respect for the old ways, and traditional Japanese culture is changing, eroding. Soon Japan will be just another *gaijin* nation.

That is how it seems to the Shuten, who have clung to their traditional ways through two turbulent centuries while the Gaki and the Cats adapted to suit the new conditions. It is not known how many Shuten survive, but rumors say that there are no more than fifty individuals, clinging to small territories in the countryside where tradition and superstition are slowest to die.

The tradition obsessed Shuten have only attempted to expand their power outside Japan once in their long history. Before and during WWII, certain shuten made themselves available to the most conservative elements of the Imperial government. Acting as diplomats, spies and commandoes, they were deployed to the Asian mainland to neutralize both mortal and supernatural threats to Japan. These shuten did not find a revival of bushido - only the impersonal butchery of the modern battlefield. Chastened, they either committed seppuku after Japan's bitter defeat, or retired to become the most insular of their isolationist community.

The Clan is only known to have Embraced one Neonate in the last fifty years: the reactionary writer Yukio Mishima, who committed ritual suicide in the 1970s after his attempt to lead a traditionalist uprising ended in farce.

Appearance

Members of Clan Shuten are always of Japanese racial stock, and invariably dress in traditional garb - normally that current in the century of their Embrace. Their nature is made very obvious by their pale complexions, long nails and non-retracting fangs. Many of the males grow their hair into the traditional Samurai topknot and shave their foreheads; the females - of whom only two are known - cultivate a medieval ideal of beauty, and look very much like a noblewoman character from a *noh* play - if one overlooks the fangs.

Haven

The *Shuten-doji* tend to be reclusive. Each claims an area of countryside as his or her own private estate, and most will attack Vampires who dare to hunt there. Most will try to drive out trespassers, although they may be somewhat mollified if approached with extreme politeness and a thorough knowledge of feudal Japanese etiquette. The Haven of a *Shuten-doji* will often be an ancient tomb, ruined temple or deep cave roughly at the heart of the territory, although there are persistent rumors that an ancient and powerful *Shuten-doji* dwells undetected beneath the mound of Edo Castle.

Background

Theoretically, *Shuten-doji* are free to create Progeny at will; each is considered to be sovereign within his or her own realm. However, the increasing shortage of suitable territory, coupled



with an almost total lack of suitable candidates, has meant that Shuten Neonates are almost unknown.

Character Creation

As mentioned above, the Clan is not numerous, and does not Embrace Progeny lightly. The Storyteller should consider very carefully a player's request to generate a character from this Clan; it is presented here primarily as a group of non-player Vampires for players to run into while visiting Japan. Prospective Neonates must always be of pure Japanese stock and high social status, according to the old feudal order. Someone who was not born into a samurai family stands very little chance of acceptance. In addition to this, the character must, like Mishima, have shown a great attachment in life to the feudal history and culture of Japan, and must share the Clan's wish for a return to traditional values.

Clan Disciplines

Presence, Potence, Dominate

Weaknesses

Clan Shuten suffers from two weaknesses: one physical and one psychological. As mentioned above, the fangs of the Shuten-doji do not retract and are almost impossible to hide; their nails, unless clipped each night, are 2-3 inches in length as well. No Shuten-doji may have an Appearance score of more than 1. The psychological weakness is that members of the Clan are prone to obsessive-compulsive behavior. This varies from individual to individual: some Shuten-doji are compulsive counters, while others find it almost impossible to make mundane choices, such as which way to go at a crossroads. This has engendered a good deal of folklore, including the superstition that throwing rice at a Shuten-doji was a good defense, since it could not attack until it had counted every grain, and the belief that they could be trapped at a crossroads while they tried to decide which road to take. This weakness is treated as a Derangement; the player and Storyteller should decide on the exact nature of the obsession-compulsion during the Prelude, and when suitable circumstances arise during play, the character must spend a Willpower point to avoid giving in to the obsessive-compulsive behavior.

Organization

The Shuten-doji keep mainly to themselves, although on the rare occasions when one visits another everything is conducted to the utmost degree of feudal protocol. Older individuals demand respect from their juniors, and usually receive it, although a character can normally only be commanded by his or her Sire. The oldest member of the Clan has the title Shuten-no-shogun, and in theory commands the loyalty of every member of the Clan. This has never been put to the test, though, and it is now far from certain who actually holds this position.

Gaining Clan Prestige

Clan Shuten prizes tradition above all things, and Clan prestige may be gained by successfully turning back the tide of modern times in some significant way, or by some great deed which is thoroughly in accordance with the old feudal values and traditions. An example of the first might be the preservation of a large area of countryside in the same condition as it might have been two hundred years ago, with oxen rather than machinery used for plowing the rice fields,

and every member of the mortal community participating wholeheartedly in Shinto rituals and other traditional observances. The latter might involve the creation of an outstanding traditional artwork, from a painting to a haiku poem, or a more warlike act, such as the killing of a zaibatsu head in a manner traditionally reserved for traitors.

Quote:

You do not belong here. You understand nothing. You may not simply come here and behave as you wish. Leave now - go back where you belong.

Stereotypes:

The Camarilla - foreign barbarians, they want to rule everything but we want nothing to do with them.

The word pathetic springs to mind. They sit in their paddy fields trying to pretend it's still the sixteenth century - which had little to recommend it, as I recall. The only reason they survive is that no-one has yet found it profitable to destroy them.

Mats Havermans, Ventrue Elder, Macao

The Sabbat - More barbarians, who make war upon the barbarians of the Camarilla. Let them - it is none of our concern.

Who cares? A couple of dozen paranoid recluses out in the hills, big deal. They can keep the hills - we'll take Tokyo.

Pham Lac, Lasombra, Seoul

The Inconnu - They may do as they will, so long as they do not trespass or interfere with our lands. We have no interest in them.

They cling to their own little world, not wishing to see that it is changing around them. It is possible to feel sympathy for them, for who among us has not felt the same from time to time? Their bloodline may not exist for much longer, though few will feel its loss.

Hsia Yu, Monitor of Shanghai

The Gaki - They are little more than bloodsucking goblins. They play at being Shuten the way that Yakuza play at being Samurai. They claim to uphold tradition, but take only those things which suit them, and discard the rest without understanding the whole. Let them have the cities - but let them beware if they trespass on our lands.

Oh, such great and ancient lords, the Shuten-doji! They are so full of their traditions they can't see how they are slowly dying. We will have their lands, when they finally die out. We need only be patient.

Hideyoshi-sama, Gaki daimyo

The Hengeyokai - They are beneath contempt.

At least, being dead, they have the grace to behave in a dead way. They are welcome to their damp and squalid villages - Chiba for me!

Miyomuki, Cat of Tokyo

The Lupines - They are animals, nothing more. They rant and posture, but understand nothing, and respect nothing.

I have never seen anyone bury their heads in the sand with such determination. Still, at least they do not stand in our way. We have greater enemies to face for now, and in the meantime they will probably die out by themselves.

Sleeps Dancing, Stargazer Shaman



MASKS

Scenario by Ken Walton, Original Art by R. Taylor Hirschfeldt

Introduction

This adventure is set in the port town of Rol-Katel, and assumes the ACs are Clondis from the Sancto's Temptation. If they are not, the Narrator will need to change minor details accordingly.

(Special thanks to Sanctuary Games, for allowing me to use unpublished information about Rol-Katel.)

All page numbers refer to the Tales of Gargentihir rulebook.

An Unexpected Mission

It is late evening. The ACs are having a quiet drink in the Sancto's Temptation, when Lighter, the bald, white-eyed barman (see "Enter the Clondis" in the rulebook) rushes up to them, looking agitated. "Master Spry wants to see you! He's waiting in a carriage outside - says it's urgent!"

Tales of Gargentihir is a trademark of Sanctuary Games

The ACs should be a little surprised by this. Master Spry is the High Shevin, master of the Clon-hall, and the ACs rarely see him.

When the ACs get outside, they find a horse-drawn carriage awaiting them, one of the many which act as taxis around Rol-Katel. Master Spry is inside. He is a man in his fifties, with pointed gray beard and gray hair pulled back in a pony-tail. He is well dressed, but wears the scars of a veteran dust-merc. Spry nods to the ACs as they get in, then leans out of the carriage and says to the driver "The Canyons." The carriage sets off across the city, as Master Spry explains the problem.

Murder!

As the carriage clatters through the darkened streets, Master Spry leans forward to speak to the ACs. He speaks quietly, and the ACs must strain their ears to hear him above the sound of the horses' hooves and the wheels rattling on the cobbles.

"We have a problem, which could lead to

big trouble in the city. I've just received a message from a trusted contact to say that the head of Clan Moun has been assassinated. That would be bad enough, on the eve of the Festival of Spirit Battles. But my informant has reason to believe that Formweaving played a part in his death. If this gets out, we'll have Witch-hunters swarming through the Ha'esh slums on festival day, which could put Karro-Ha'esh relations back twenty years.

"Now, I've been a friend of Re-Jin for many years, and am a regular visitor to his house. My turning up with a small group of friends at night time will not cause any suspicion. So far, no-one else knows of the death. I want you to try to find out what you can from his servant and any other clues at the scene, before the streetmen or the Witch-hunters get involved."

As Master Spry is telling the ACs this, the carriage crosses the entire city. Through the market stalls of the Bazaar (shuttered now with the fall of night); across the bridge over the River Katel, and through the smog of Engine Isle; across the huge steam-powered cantilever bridge from Engine Isle to the South Bank. The carriage is now passing through old run-down houses, on gravel roads. The street-lighting is poor here, and the few people about are all Ha'esh. Soon, they are passing through a merchant district, and the carriage skirts the edge of the Chinte' canal. The ACs can see the huge blue stone Windbays towering against the night on the other side of the water.

This is a rough part of town; drunken Chinte'Fhar stagger down the streets, cursing at a winged Ryamis who passes them in a cloud of flies. A sinister Khostran steps back into the shadows and watches them pass. (He's nothing to do with the plot, but the players should always feel paranoid when there are Khostrans about!)

Finally, the carriage comes to a halt. The driver shouts "The Canyons - can't take you no further!" Master Spry gets out and pays the driver, and the carriage rattles off into the night, looking for other customers.



What's Going On

This information is for the Narrator only. The ACs should only piece this together slowly, as the adventure progresses.

A Wild Ha'esh Kai-cha (shaman) has recently arrived in the Gei-slums of Rol-Katel, preaching an end to "collaboration" with the Karro, and a return to the old ways. Most reasonable Ha'esh consider him to be a troublemaker and refuse to have anything to do with him, but he has gained supporters in the Therrazha. In his preachings, he has constantly invoked the name of the Kyashi Lost Channi, a spirit of hatred. Unbeknownst to the Kai-cha, his constant mentioning of the Kyashi's name has actually called him from the Darklands, and he is following the Wild Ha'esh around, killing anyone the Kai-cha dislikes enough.

In the afternoon on which the adventure begins, the Kai-cha visited the Head of Clan Moun. The Head of Clan Moun is a moderate, who teaches that the Ha'esh should live in peace with the Karro.

Naturally, his opinion does not go down well with the Kai-cha, who storms out of the Clan Head's house, vowing revenge.

The Kai-cha goes back to his friends in the Therrazha, and persuades them to assassinate the Clan Head. But before the Therrazha can carry out their plan, the Kyashi, Lost Channi does their job for them.

The Canyons

A small bridge leads across the canal, which looks dark and sinister in the dim light. The opposite side of the canal is a strange sight. It looks like a jungle, but an inhabited jungle. Huge Gei- trees soar four hundred feet high into the night sky. In among their branches, lights twinkle. A gusty breeze is blowing from off the river, and a constant sighing fills the air, the sound of wind in the leaves, mixed with the quiet melodic tinkle of wind-chimes. Lights twinkle in clusters around the bases of the trees and high in the branches. Clouds scud across the green crescent of the moon Nedra, high in the sky. As the ACs eyes grow accustomed to the darkness, they see that what was at first sight a jungle can now be seen to be part of the city. Around the bottoms of the trees are groups of squat, dome-shaped buildings, packed together with hardly room to walk between them. Catwalks and ladders lead up into the tree branches, where more buildings can be seen, built on platforms attached to

the mighty branches of the trees.

Ha'esh characters should be familiar with this type of settlement, but for Karro who have never ventured into Ha'esh areas of the city, it should be strange and alien. Master Spry leads the ACs through a warren of twisting streets, with walkways above their heads.

Green vines sometimes hang down in the character's way, and they must push their way through them. To the Karro, it seems eerily silent, but for the sighing of the wind in the branches, and the tinkling of the pottery wind-chimes which hang by many of the house doorways.

Turbanned Ha'esh occasionally pass the ACs on the street, always in silence. When in their own homes, Ha'esh speak using the Silent Way, so the usual quiet chatter of distant voices is absent in the Canyons.

Beneath the trees, the only light is that which leaks out from the curtained windows of the squat buildings.

Spry says "This way," and leads the ACs up a swaying rope ladder which climbs the huge trunk of one of the Gei-trees. It passes numerous platforms and walkways as it ascends higher into the sky.

Anyone failing an Easy Athletics test will slip, and hang precariously by one hand for a moment. Not dangerous, but worrying.

Finally, the ACs come out onto a wide platform high in the branches, and a strange sight meets their eyes. They appear to be standing on the edge of a series of fields. This is the Ruanto Sky- farm, where the Ha'esh grow herbs and medicinal plants for sale across the continent. Narrow walkways criss-cross the upper branches of the trees, with huge vine nets in between, coated with soil and green with growing things. The whole sky-farm covers an area of one square mile.

As Spry leads them along one of the walkways, the ACs find it is a disorienting experience, because the apparent fields around them sway and ripple in the wind, giving off aromatic scents as they do so. Any one with Herb Lore will realize that there is a fortune in rare herbs growing up here. If any of the ACs are tempted to stop and pick some, point out that they cannot stop and bend down to pick any without attracting the attention of Master Spry. If they still do it, Spry will give them a good talking to, and they will lose 2 Honor Points.

Finally, the ACs will reach the other side of the Sky-farm, and cross a swaying vine bridge to a large, squat dome, built on a

platform of its own in the fork of a particularly high Gei-tree.

The Scene of the Crime

The wooden door to the house is closed, and Spry knocks on it.

The door opens a crack and an old, wizened Ha'esh woman peers out.

"Han-Spry! It is indeed good to see you on this most tragic of nights." She peers out at the ACs standing behind. "Friends, Kai-Pallo," says Spry, and the door is opened to let them in. The old woman bows to each of the ACs as they enter. Those who bow in return will gain 1 HP.

The house consists of a number of irregularly shaped rooms, off a round entrance hall. The walls are adorned with simple, painted silk wall-hangings, and there are rugs on the floor.

"My master is in there," the old woman says, pointing through a dark opening opposite the front door. "I will not enter again - the sight distresses me." She hands one of the ACs a corn-lantern.

The Clan Head's room is a bare, utilitarian room, with a curved back wall. Mats are spread on the floor, and cushions scattered about. There is a low table, with the bowls and plates of a half-finished meal scattered across it.

At first sight, in the dim light, the figure seated cross-legged on the cushions on the other side of the room appears asleep, his head sunk down on his chest. But as the lamp is brought further into the room, the true extent of the carnage is made plain. A smell of blood fills the air, and the ACs can see huge splatters of blood all across the table in front of the figure. It soon becomes obvious what has killed the old man. A large tree branch has burst through the back wall of the building and impaled him through the back. The end of the branch thrusts through his ruined chest, finished with a cluster of blood-smeared leaves.

Everyone seeing this bizarre and frightening sight must make a Medium KAI test, or lose their lunch and/or faint (GMs call - it depends on the character.)

If the ACs look around the room, they will find nothing which gives any clue as to what happened, or why. Gei trees have not been known to attack people in the past, even in legend. Someone has been using powerful Formweaving powers around here, and it does not have the hallmarks of a Kyromancer.



A character with Rites - Dreampath skill may begin the 3-4 hour ritual in order to detect Dreampaths, if he so wishes. This ritual will be interrupted before it's finished, so information will only be gained on an Impossible roll. If this roll is made, the AC will get a clear picture of a swirling Black Dreampath, dying away slowly, retreating into the heart of the tree and draining away into the ground.

Anyone inspecting the dead man will discover that he has a look of utter horror and despair on his face.

Speaking to Pallo

Pallo was the clan head's housekeeper (his wife died many years ago). She is very old, and a little deaf, and worshipped her master. His death is a terrible blow to her, but she will not show her grief in public. She will answer all the ACs questions forthrightly and honestly, and will end the questioning session with an impassioned plea that they find the terrible person who did this deed and return honor to Clan Moun.

Pallo has the only information which is likely to be of use to the ACs. When questioned, she will give the following information:

Jin had only one visitor that day, a wild Ha'esh Kai-cha (shaman) from the swamps beyond Rol-Katel. He was a young man, decked out in raggedy clothing, with a cloak of red feathers. His hair was also dyed red, and shaved in the peculiar swirling patterns of the Swamp Ha'esh. It is not often that Wild Ha'esh visit the swamp-towns, since they believe them to be evil places. Pallo saw the Kai-cha go into the Clan Head's room. Later, she heard raised voices. Coming from her own room to see if anything was wrong, she was in time to see the Kai-cha come storming out of the room. "You have not heard the last from us!" he shouted as he left. He stormed past Pallo, shoving her out of the way. He only looked at her briefly, "... but you should have seen his eyes! Such hatred there was in them, for everyone and everything. I think he was an evil man." There were no more visitors that day, but in the early evening, a strange thing happened. The entire house began to shake violently, and the wind-chimes clanged like an alarm bell. An evil cackling laugh rang through the house, followed by a horrendous scream of fear and pain. Then all was silent. Pallo rushed into her master's room to find him already dead. There was no sign of



anyone else, no clue as to who could have made the horrific scream. You may spin out the investigation and questioning as long as you like. The ACs should get most of the information given above, but will find little else of any use. When it looks like they're getting bogged down, hit them with this...

Therrazha Attack

Suddenly the door bursts open. A figure in mujo dress, with his (or her) face covered by scarf and hood pulled down, throws a ball of Labassh into the room. (Anyone making a Difficult sight test will notice the figure is wearing a red armband). The ball explodes into a fiery mass of flame in the center of the entrance hall. At the same time there is the sound of an explosion from one of the other rooms - another Therrazha guerrilla has thrown another Labassh through one of the windows. Anyone actually in the hall, or standing in the doorway of one of the rooms will be damaged by the Labassh, as described on p.192.

The fiery gel sticks to everything, quickly turning the house into an inferno. There is no water available to put the fires out (Ha'esh only need 4 pints a week, remember!) and there are many blankets, cushions and wall-hangings about the place, which will burn easily. The PCs have three options here:

1. Escape. This will involve climbing out of one of the windows. The house is built right up to the edge of the platform it's standing on, so there's nowhere to drop to except the ground, 300 feet below. An agile character can jump to a nearby branch (Easy Athletics roll), and from there climb across various branches to the next Gei-tree. Anyone falling will (luckily!?) have his fall broken by the lower branches, and will end up clinging to one, able to climb down. But he will take 1d10 DAM and 1 Easy Wound to a random location. Only on a Set-back will he fall, and even then, he'll hit a platform 8 yards down. (See Falling, p.139)

2. Go after the attackers. This will involve leaping through the fire, since by the time a character has climbed out of the window, the Therrazha will be miles away. The fire counts as a Large Fire (see p.140). If the ACs do pursue the Therrazha, use standard Pathsilker stats on p.204. Remember they will be fleeing across the Sky-farm - it is possible to walk on the vine netting, but a Difficult Athletics roll is required to stay standing each round, and on a Set-back, the AC will put a foot through the netting and be

left dangling 300 feet above the ground. The Therrazha are not interested in stopping to fight, but will do their best to escape. If they are captured, they will bite on the poison capsules which they hold in their mouths - the Therrazha do not give up their secrets easily.

3. Get the Clan Head off the branch. It may occur to the ACs that if the house burns down, the toasted remains of the Clan Head will be found impaled on the branch in the morning - not a good start to the Festival. Far better if he is found burned in the ruins of his home, with no clue as to the magical nature of his death. His death by fire might bring the streetmen out, but will not get the Witch-hunters sniffing round. If none of the ACs think of this, Spry will begin tugging at the body, explaining the above between tugs as he does so.

It is an unpleasant business. It requires three STR rolls (against highest STR of those involved). With one pulling it is an Impossible roll, with two, Difficult, and with three Medium. More than three will not help any more, since the ACs will just get in each other's way.

Each roll takes a round.

All the time, the fire is spreading, getting hotter. Emphasize the choking smoke (see Asphyxiation rules, p.139), the heat, the crackling of the flames advancing toward the room they are in. When the ACs have got the Clan Chief off the branch, they will need to make their escape, as in 1, above. Pallo will refuse to come with them.

"I'll not desert my Master now." She throws herself onto her Master's body and can only be brought by force. Anyone attempting to do so will lose 2 HPs. If Ha'esh decide to die, it is dishonorable to attempt to stop them.

Going Home

The ACs and Spry will probably find themselves squatting on one of the wide branches of a Gei-tree while the burning Clan Chief's house lights up the night. Soon, other Ha'esh will come running, trying to put the fire out (it's too late of course). Spry suggests its best if they're not seen anywhere near there, as they may be accused of having done the deed. What follows is a long slow climb through the branches of the Gei-trees (luckily close together and wide-branched) until they reach a tree far enough away from the scene of the fire to be unnoticed. This climbing will take about 2 hours, and will

cause 2d10 FAT. Eventually, the ACs, tired, filthy, covered with soot and blood, will be able to let themselves down to ground level, and call for a carriage to take them back to the Sancto's Temptation. The carriage driver, a canny Karro, will refuse to let the ACs enter unless they pay double the going rate. "What about my upholstery?"

When the ACs get to the Temptation, Spry suggests they get some sleep, and he'll meet them at the Clon-hall again, first thing in the morning, to discuss what they can do next.

Masks

Morning finds the ACs a little rested. It is a fine, hot, sunny morning. At the Sancto's Temptation, Lighter tells the ACs to go up the back stairs to Master Spry's office.

The High Shevin's office is a luxurious room, paneled with Gei-wood and equipped with comfortable sleth-skin covered armchairs.

Spry sits behind a large desk, which today is cluttered with an odd assortment of masks, cloaks, and other colorful items of clothing.

He invites the ACs to sit down, then says "How much do you know about the Festival of Spirit Battles?" If no-one knows anything, he will tell them the following. Anyone with Cultural Lore - Ha'esh at level 2 or above, will know this (you can give the player a copy of this information):

The Festival of Spirit Battles takes place on the fourth Sanday in Gathering. It is one of the old Ha'esh festivals which has been taken over by the Church of Sandis and made into little more than an excuse to dress up. People of all pages dress in costumes representing Kyashi spirits and spend the day feasting, dancing, listening to the old stories (Lysh are in great demand) and engaging in mock battles of one sort or another. Certain spirits are known to be rivals. In the Festival, if someone dressed as a particular Kyashi meets someone dressed as his rival, a ritual challenge will be issued (usually a loud, bellowed "Hai-CHA!"). The crowd will part to make room for the combatants, who will then fight with light wooden davins. Most people yield when they take the first successful hit, but some will fight on. No real damage is done, but people have been known to get some nasty bruises. The following is information which would be known by an AC with Cultural Lore - Ha'esh at 2, but which Spry doesn't bother to tell the ACs. One of the features of



the festival is that children dress as the spirit Mischief-Maker, who looks a little like a Delt (see p.239). They go round throwing over-ripe fruit at each other, and begging adults for treats. These pests can be got rid of in two ways - either give them a cyl or two, or some fruit or dried fish, or tap them on the head lightly. If tapped on the head, they are obliged to go and bother someone else (though adults should be aware that they may be subject to a fruit attack later in the day!)

When Master Spry has finished telling the ACs this, he will explain what he wants them to do. "I want you to go to the Festival, dressed as Kyashi, mingle in the crowds, and try to find information about the Kai-cha and his whereabouts. If you can find him, I want him captured and taken to the Clan Moun elders, at the Clan-hall near the Ruanto Sky-farm. I don't see any need to bring the streetmen in on this - the Ha'esh are quite capable of sorting out their own affairs in their own way."

He points to the stuff on the table. "I've got costumes for all of you. I've had to get them in a bit of a hurry, so some of them are perhaps not quite what you might choose to dress in, but they'll do. It's quite normal for Karro to join in the Ha'esh festival - few do, but the Ha'esh don't mind. It's sponsored by the Church of Sandis, after all."

Spry has the following costumes, which he explains as he gives them to the ACs:

Silt-Mother: Spirit of the Silt. The costume is a green-brown bodysuit, with a wide-brimmed hat, from which dangle lots of green and brown ribbons (which reach the ground), making the person underneath virtually invisible. The person wearing this must also paint her face green. Silt-Mother moves in a swirling dance, which makes the ribbons flare and float about. Rival: Rice-Root.

Rice-Root: Binder of the Lands. This costume is a tight-fitting green and gold bodysuit, topped by a head-dress of tufted yellow feathers, like the top of a rice plant. He moves in great stiff-legged leaps, and is famous for his high-stepping dances. Rival: Silt-mother.

Kan-gee: the Path-eater (See p.179). This costume is a huge, bulky round costume, with thick padding to make the wearer look much fatter and bulkier than he really is. It is made to look like green, slimy pondweed. The head is like a huge helmet bearing a hideous face - the AC looks out through the slit-mouth. Anyone wearing this will lose 2

FAT per hour, from the heat. Kan-gee moves slowly and solemnly, then pounces and roars at small children, who run away, giggling. Rivals: none.

Vhannis: Watcher of the Five Trees (see p.179). This costume is a form-fitting bodysuit in pale blue, under which is worn a bulging and suggestive codpiece. The mask covers only the top half of the face, with big, soulful eyes surrounded by long painted eyelashes. The AC must wear bright red lipstick to emphasize his mouth. Vhannis moves in a seductive way, and tries to steal a kiss from passing girls. He carries a sprig of Gei-leaves, and anyone who has them waved over their head must take their mask off and kiss him. Rivals: none.

Lysh, the Peacemaker. This costume is an exaggerated parody of a standard Lysh costume (see p.80). The shoulders are four feet wide and the robes are very stiff and bulky. The head is of a beautiful, androgynous Ha'esh, with huge golden eyes. He moves through the crowds with great assurance, and people are obliged to bow to him as he goes.

He will often be called on to adjudicate the winner of a mock battle, if the outcome is in doubt. Rival: Lost Channi.

The Narrator should feel free to make up other Kyashi and their costumes for the ACs. Silt-Mother and Rice-Root must not both be chosen - if they were both in the party, they would be obliged to fight all the time. The sex of the wearer of the costume doesn't matter - this is half the fun, and can cause great amusement for those dressed as Vhannis.

The important thing is that the Kyashi Lysh *must* be one of the costumes chosen. (If you think your players are unlikely to pick that one, limit the number of costumes to the number of players, so they have no option. When Spry gives the ACs the Lysh costume, he explains a little about Lysh's rival:

Lost Channi, the Hateful One. Lost Channi is the spirit of hatred and discord. It is said that he is the spirit of a

Channi warrior who has lost all patience with the ancient ways, and wants revenge on the Karro race for their destruction of Ha'esh lands and culture. He is a relatively new addition to the Ha'esh pantheon, a spirit of the urban

Gei-slums. Wearing his costume is a political statement, since he is seen by many as the patron Kyashi of the Therrazha. He wears a blood-red bodysuit and a grotesque demonic mask, with long dangling tongue.

His wooden davin is always painted black, to symbolize the Nightsilver blade he carries. When the ACs have decided on their costumes, he gives them each a light wooden davin. This looks similar to a military davin, but has a DAM of only 1.

The ACs may want to take other weapons along with them. Remind them of the tight-fitting nature of many of the costumes, and the fact that it is thought dishonorable to wear real weapons openly at the Festival.

If there is a Kyromancer in the party, he is likely to be feeling a little left out by all this dressing up. Spry tells him that many Ha'esh believe that Kyromancers *are* Kyashi. In fact, there is a Kyashi named Leather-Metal, who dresses just like a Kyromancer. The ACs may see Ha'esh dressed as Kyromancers, in black body-suits with boxes and wires added in a parody of a real Kyromancer. A real Kyromancer may be mistaken for someone in a very good costume, may be mistaken for a real Kyashi (to great consternation among superstitious Ha'esh) or recognized for what he is. Either way, he doesn't need to dress up (and lets face it, he's got the most impressive costume anyway!)

Festival!

The Canyons is a different place today than it was in the dark last night. As the ACs head toward that part of town, they will begin to see more and more people dressed in costumes heading toward the Gei-tree dwellings. Most are Ha'esh, but there are some Karro, and even one or two other races. A Je'hansh dressed as Vhannis is one of the most amusing sights.

As the ACs cross the bridge into the Canyons, they see that the whole area has been decorated for the festival. Colored streamers hang from the walkways, colored corn-lanterns light up the dimness beneath the dark branches, beams of sunlight slant through the dark green leaves and a smell of warm greenery is in the air, mingled with the smells of fruit and spicy Ha'esh cooking. A clamor of chattering voices fills the air, for no-one uses the Silent Way on festival day.

How the Narrator runs the festival scene depends very much on who the ACs are. The Ha'esh are unlikely to tell Karro very much about the Kai-cha unless they are good friends. Although most of the town Ha'esh dislike this wild Ha'esh and his disruptive ways, they do not believe in running to the Karro for help - they are more likely to



ignore him, in the hope that he will go away.

The Kai-cha has been hanging around the festival, preaching his hatred, and many people will have seen him. He is not dressed as a Kyashi, since he refuses to have anything to do with such a travesty of an ancient Ha'esh custom, so he is instantly recognizable. Many Karro will have seen him, and will happily talk about him. Some may be worried by his rabble-rousing ways, others amused, since he is obviously gaining few converts.

Possible Encounters

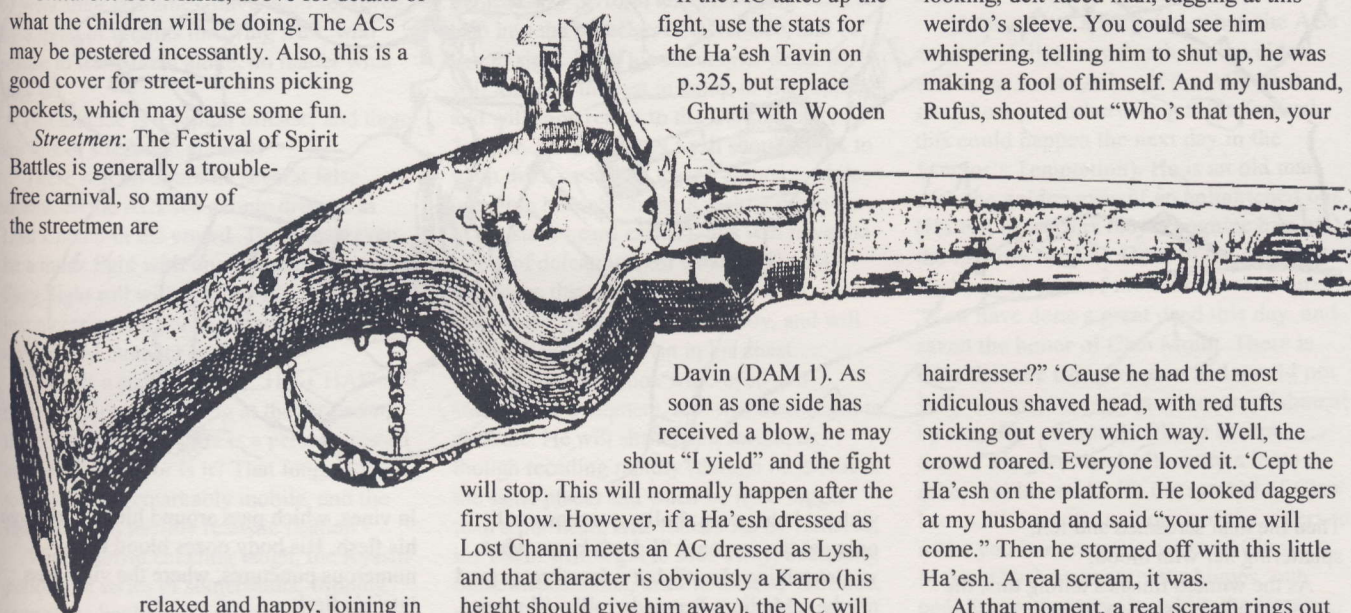
Children: See Masks, above for details of what the children will be doing. The ACs may be pestered incessantly. Also, this is a good cover for street-urchins picking pockets, which may cause some fun.

Streetmen: The Festival of Spirit Battles is generally a trouble-free carnival, so many of the streetmen are

before the later events of the Festival, so that they become used to the idea. The event goes something like this:

The ACs are pushing their way through a crowd of masked and costumed people, when a cry of "Hai-CHA!" goes up from somewhere ahead. Immediately the crowd parts on either side, and the ACs see the rival of one of their assumed characters approaching, wooden davin drawn. It is possible for an AC to get out of this by walking away, but the crowd will boo and hiss, and he will be persecuted by fruit-throwing children for the rest of the day.

If the AC takes up the fight, use the stats for the Ha'esh Tavin on p.325, but replace Ghurti with Wooden



relaxed and happy, joining in with the dancing, when their superiors are not about.

Food stalls: Many food-stalls line the ground level streets, selling rice, noodles, salty dried fish and the like. They also happily give bags of over-ripe fruit to the children, and to adults who are covered in fruit-juice and looking for revenge!

Lysh: on many of the intersections between streets, Lysh are telling stories to crowds of seated individuals. They tell tales of the spirits and their rivalries. One story the ACs may hear, which could give them a clue to finishing the adventure is as follows. When Lost Channi and Lysh, the Peacemaker fought, Lost Channi was winning. But then Lysh took Lost Channi into an embrace of love and friendship, even as Lost Channi's davin stabbed Lysh to the heart, and his power of hatred was diminished.

Mock Battles: The Narrator should let the ACs get into or witness at least two of these

Davin (DAM 1). As soon as one side has received a blow, he may shout "I yield" and the fight will stop. This will normally happen after the first blow. However, if a Ha'esh dressed as Lost Channi meets an AC dressed as Lysh, and that character is obviously a Karro (his height should give him away), the NC will do the best to beat the living daylights out of the AC. He may even pretend not to hear a call of "I yield" on the part of an AC. If this happens once, the crowd may allow it, if the fight is entertaining, but a second ignored call will cause them to begin pelting the "deaf" NC with fruit, and he will be forced to yield to them.

The GM can throw any number of these fights at the ACs. As long as they are enjoying them, keep on, but if they are obviously bored, move on to the next bit of the adventure.

The Heckler

When the ACs have been asking around for a while, they will meet a Karro woman in a poorly-made Chinte' mask, who is selling "genuine High Chinte' jewelry" from a tray around her neck. (Anyone making a successful Easy Cultural Lore - Chinte' roll will recognize it as fake, though it is pretty

and well-made). She remembers the mad Ha'esh earlier in the morning, haranguing a crowd.

"Stood up on a platform he was, calling down the Kyashi on us Karro, saying our time was over. You should have heard him - a real scream, he was. "The day will come," he said, "when all your proud cities will lie in ruins, and Lost Channi, the Hateful One, will feast on the bones of your children." Well, the Ha'esh didn't seem to be taking much notice of him, and the Karro were mostly laughing at him.

There was this little Ha'esh, shifty looking, delt-faced man, tugging at this weirdo's sleeve. You could see him whispering, telling him to shut up, he was making a fool of himself. And my husband, Rufus, shouted out "Who's that then, your

hairdresser?" 'Cause he had the most ridiculous shaved head, with red tufts sticking out every which way. Well, the crowd roared. Everyone loved it. 'Cept the Ha'esh on the platform. He looked daggers at my husband and said "your time will come." Then he stormed off with this little Ha'esh. A real scream, it was.

At that moment, a real scream rings out across the crowd, a man's scream of pain and horror. The woman shouts "Rufus!" and pushes through the crowd. The ACs may follow. A man wearing the ruins of a mask similar to the woman's, and wearing a tray, is sprawled on the ground. His head is a bloody mess, and jewelry is scattered all over the walkway. If the ACs investigate, they will discover that he is dead, and the cause of death is a corn-nut, which has hit him in the forehead, puncturing his skull and embedding itself in his brain.

The jewelry selling woman is hysterical, alternately calling her husband's name, crying, and scanning the crowd, shouting "who did it? Who did it?" A woman witness will come forward. She was looking at his jewelry, when he looked up as though startled, and pointed over her shoulder. She turned to look where he was pointing, into the high tree branches above her. She caught a glimpse of a long-limbed figure in a grotesque mask peering through the leaves.



Then the man screamed and fell, splattering her with blood.

As the witness finishes telling this, the jewelry-seller points and shouts "That's him, that's the one who did it!" She is pointing at a shifty-looking Ha'esh with a face like a delt (well, a little anyway). ACs should recognize him from her description of the man who was with the Kai-cha. As she points, he turns and ducks through the crowd, dodging and weaving. He has Crowd Maneuver at 16/12/6/2, and will do his best to get away. (See p.92 for how to run a chase through a crowd.)

Finding the Kai-cha

The Ha'esh takes the ACs away from the busy walkways, into seedier Gei-slums, where the buildings are poorly maintained and the walkways rotting and wobbly.

One of the ACs should eventually catch up with him. He is basically a coward, so while he will struggle a little, he will not make any big attempt to fight. The ACs will be away from the crowds now, so should be able to question him

without being seen. Polite questions will only get the response "I don't know what you're talking about", but a few threats (and maybe a Medium Persuade roll) will cause him to crack and tell all.

The Ha'esh, whose name is Milo, doesn't know what happened to the jewelry seller. Certainly it wasn't the Kai-cha who did it, because Milo just left the him asleep in his own hut, not half an hour ago. On being threatened again, Milo will agree to take the ACs to the Kai-cha, but he is obviously almost as scared of the wild Ha'esh as he is of the ACs. He leads them along several rickety walkways, past crumbling huts, where the stench of rotting vegetation is in the air, and the floor underfoot sways in the summer breezes. Eventually, they come to a small, one-roomed hut, perched precariously on a narrow limb, almost covered over with tangling vines.

When the ACs enter (the door needs a shove, and almost comes off its hinges) a horrible sight greets them. The Kai-cha, his red-feather cloak flung back, lies writhing on the floor, his face contorted in silent agony. He is almost completely wrapped up

in vines, which pass around him and *through* his flesh. His body oozes blood from numerous punctures, where the vines pass into his flesh.

When he sees the ACs, he tries to say something (there is a vine tightening around his neck, which makes speech difficult) his eyes pleading with them. If a character bends down by him, he will whisper "Lost Channi ... fickle ... helped me, then turned on me ...

Take this ..." He fumbles in his clothing, produces a Longknife (a Kyromancer will immediately recognize it as a Moonmetal blade) "...only thing ... hurt him ... find him ..." His back arches suddenly and he slumps dead at the ACs feet. As he does so, the vines suddenly wither, turning brown and dry in a few moments, and falling away from him.

Lost Channi

The ACs should now realize that they are hunting a *real* Kyashi through a crowd of people dressed as Kyashi. The AC dressed as Lysh may be a little disconcerted by the thought, and the Narrator should give them



the opportunity to change costumes with each other, so that the best fighter is dressed as Lysh (he has ample room in his robes to hide the longknife).

What the ACs do with Milo is entirely up to them. He has not actually done anything wrong, other than cause a little trouble. He's scared enough at the sight of what happened to the Kai-cha and might well give up his dubious ways, or at least leave town, at the earliest opportunity.

Going back into the crowds will be rather a nerve-racking affair, especially with challenges still going on. (If the ACs refuse to wear their costumes, have them followed by a gang of urchins throwing fruit, who refuse to leave them alone, no matter what they do.

(Infanticide is a capital offense, and there are lots of streetmen about!))

There will no doubt be several false alarms, as the ACs see people dressed as Lost Channi in the crowd. There may even be a mock fight with one of them, though an Easy Sight roll will tell the ACs that this is just a person in a mask. Eventually however, the dreaded moment arrives.

There is a sudden cry of "Hai-CHA!" and the crowds part. Standing at the far end of the suddenly open space is a person dressed as Lost Channi - or is it? That long, dangling tongue seems remarkably mobile, and the face leers in a terribly realistic fashion.

With a horrid cackling laugh, the Kyashi performs a series of somersaults, flipping toward the hapless AC dressed as Lysh. Each time he lands he gets a bit bigger, so that by the time he gets to stand within davin range of the AC, he is ten feet tall. The ACs will have to make a successful Impossible Fear Test, or be rooted to the spot for a round. With an evil grin, the Kyashi puts both hands in front of himself, in a fighting posture (as though holding a davin), and with a shimmer and a whoosh, a dark davin appears in his hands. (Kyromancers will immediately recognize it as being made of Nightsilver (+6 to DAM, and able to hurt Kyromancers in the Fade). Use the Lesser Cyatim stats on p.238.

The Kyashi is not invincible, but does have one or two surprises, and can only be damaged by the moonmetal blade, his own davin, or Formweaving. The surprise comes in the form of an extra tongue attack.

Any time that the AC lunges forward, doing an Easy or Medium attack, Lost Channi's long tongue will whip out and wrap around the unsuspecting ACs neck.

Chances for a tongue attack are 20/16/10/7, and each round that the tongue is round the ACs neck, it does 2d10 DAM.

The AC held in this way is at -2 to all COM rolls, due to his inability to move far. And the Kyashi still gets his normal roll as well.

There *are* ways of winning this fight, which could otherwise be pretty nasty.

1. If the character dressed as Lysh is fighting on his own, and no other ACs have joined in, the AC may yield. Since the Kyashi is bound by the rules of the game, he will be forced to break off the attack. He will immediately perform an astonishing vertical leap into the branches of a Gei-tree, and be lost to sight. With his summoner dead, he will lose any interest in being in Gargentihr, and will soon return to the Darklands.

2. If the AC dressed as Lysh should think to wrap the Kyashi in a loving embrace while impaling himself on the Kyashi's davin (as in the story heard earlier), this will have the effect of defeating Lost Channi. The AC who does this will take normal DAM, plus an Impossible wound to the body, and will fall back with the davin in his chest. Lost Channi will look wide-eyed and stunned for a moment, and will then begin to dwindle. He will shrink and shrink, as though receding rapidly (though he is still in the same place) and when he is no bigger than a pin-head, will vanish. As he vanishes, the davin will begin to fade away, becoming more insubstantial, until it, too has vanished, and with it, the wound it caused. The AC will still have any other wounds he gained in the combat, but the effects of the last, fatal blow will be gone.

3. If the ACs are lucky, they can beat the Kyashi in straight combat, particularly if they have a Kyromancer with them. If it looks like they're going to get slaughtered, you could have a Ha'esh mujo arrive and throw one of the ACs a moonmetal blade, or a Channi Warrior with a moonmetal Chantin Va arrive and finish the job. Whatever happens, the Kyashi should eventually receive a killing blow. He will lie sprawled on the ground for a moment, then will begin to become more liquid than solid. His form will lose its substance, until only a pool or red blood remains, trickling quickly away and soaking into the ground.

Whether the Nightsilver Davin will remain, or will vanish also, is up to the Narrator. See p.276 for ideas on nasty things which could happen to the owner of a Nightsilver blade.

Whatever the final means of finishing off the Kyashi, the crowd, who have been watching in stunned silence, eyes wide with fear, but unable to tear themselves away, will begin to cheer. The cheering and clapping will spread among the normally reticent Ha'esh, and the ACs will find themselves lifted on the shoulders of the crowd and carried round the festival. Eventually, they will be dropped outside a Ha'esh koul-den, where the proprietor will ply them with free drinks for the rest of the festival. If any characters are badly injured, a Ha'esh mujo will come and heal them for free.

At the end of a long day, when the ACs are (hopefully) very drunk, a clan elder will come to the ACs. (If the ACs have gone home, or otherwise left the festival, this could happen the next day in the Sancto's Temptation). He is an old man, with the golden eyes of an enlightened one (Ha'esh characters may recognize him as the favorite for next Head of Clan Moun). He bows to each of the characters in turn. "You have done a great deed this day, and saved the honor of Clan Moun. There is little than we can give you, and would not sully the greatness of your accomplishment by the offer of money. Please accept these." He gives each character a lanto robe, emblazoned with the symbol of Clan Moun. "I have the authority of the elders to make you honorary members of Clan Moun. Our homes are your homes, our people are your people, while the Great Wheel turns." He bows again, and shuffles away, to be lost in the festival crowd.

Rewards

Each player should receive 5HPs for finishing off the Kyashi, as well as 2-5 XPs each. Remember that HPs gained or lost also add or subtract from the XP total.

Further Adventures

Being an honorary member of Clan Moun isn't all sweetness and light. ACs may be asked to perform dangerous missions on behalf of the Clan Elders at some time in the future. Lost Channi is not dead, he has merely returned to the Darklands. He may be back, looking for revenge. And the Kai-cha's people may try to disrupt the town Ha'esh again. The Therrazha too, may have an axe to grind with the ACs.



A ire Plot

PROLOGUE,

In which a plot is hatched

Lord Anton Dire sat in silence in the great library of his ancestral home, sipping occasionally from the goblet of fine wine that sat near his elbow and staring for long minutes into the fire that blazed in the great stone hearth. He seemed to be considering matters of great weight and all of the servants of the House of Dire knew to give their lord a wide berth when he sank into one of his thoughtful moods. To disturb him would mean courting Lord Dire's wrath and that was too terrible for any of them to contemplate.

Hans had been Lord Dire's manservant for many years now and knew well his Lordship's moods and how to deal with them. He entered the library as silently as a shadow, carrying the day's dispatches on a silver salver, which he placed at the right hand of Lord Dire without a word, then just as silently withdrew. Dire took a few moments to look through the correspondence, most of which was quickly laid aside. One seemed to catch his eye, however, and he quickly opened and read it, scanning the few terse lines within quickly. With a flourish, the Lord of Dire Castle surged to his feet and called Hans' name. The butler reappeared in an instant.

"Yes, my lord?" he inquired. Lord Dire turned to him with a fire in his eyes as bright as that which burned in the hearth and a smile tugging at the corner of his lips.

"Hans, call Colonel Bruhardt to me at once. The final piece of my plan has fallen into place. Soon all of Europa will know the name of Anton Dire!" The butler bowed and withdrew immediately to summon the Colonel while Lord Dire sank back into his chair and sipped his wine while reading the telegram over once again. Yes, Dr. Reinhardt, he thought, soon the world will know of your invention but not I think in the way you have planned...

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WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Lord Anton Dire is the ruler of the tiny European barony of Trevania; a land with an abundance of the mysterious element Radium beneath one of its mountains, where sits Castle Dire itself. Lord Dire uses this vast supply of Power to fund and supply his secret plans for conquest. Currently, Lord Dire has created a powerful flying platform, a rival of Robur's *Albatross* that can challenge even the mightiest of the Bayernese aeronavy. He plots to acquire the prototype and plans for a new magnetic ray developed by Dr. Reinhardt, a Bayernese scientist. The ray will allow Lord Dire to baffle the magnetic engines that provide the motive force for the aeroships, paralyzing the Bayernese forces and making him the unchallenged Master of the Skies!

CHAPTER ONE, A Man in Need

In which the characters are witness to a dastardly assault

The dramatic characters become involved in the plot when they are witness to an assault on the scientist and his beautiful daughter by a group of ruffians in the employ of Lord Dire. They are gathered at a train station in Bayern. If the characters are not yet acquainted, they may be traveling individually or they might be traveling together. Shortly after the afternoon train arrives they hear a call for help and see an older man in a somewhat rumpled suit and a young woman being set upon by a group of lower-class toughs at the far end of the platform (a number that the Host feels will be a modest challenge for the dramatic characters).

If the characters intervene — and who could refuse innocents in distress — they should be able to rout the ruffians with little difficulty. The assailants will flee if they are able, before the police arrive to take them into custody. Dr. Reinhardt will be very grateful to the characters, as will the lovely Aileen. The



characters will discover that the Doctor is in fact traveling to Munich to demonstrate his plans for his new magnetic ray to the Bayernese government.

Dr. Reinhardt provides the characters with a small practical demonstration of the incredible power of the Reinhardt Magnetic Ray, which has the potential to be a powerful tool in the arsenal of Bayern; if a suitable radium source can be found to provide sufficient power to mass-produce it. If none of the dramatic characters suggest it, Aileen will ask if they would be willing to accompany the good Doctor and her on the remainder of the train trip to the Bayernese capital. They take a two o' clock train from the station and are soon on their way through the rolling countryside.

CHAPTER TWO, Train of Terror

In which the characters are set upon by Lord Dire's men

The train ride takes the dramatic characters and their traveling companions through the picturesque Bayernese countryside, allowing them the opportunity to chat amongst themselves and with Dr. Reinhardt and his daughter. The Host should take this opportunity to allow for improvisation and interaction amongst the characters for a time (as long as it remains interesting to the story). Then, without warning, comes the attack.

The train car occupied by the characters is attacked by black-uniformed men with a Gothic "D" on their breasts, carrying pistols and sabers much like pirates. The dramatic characters can attempt to repel these attacks, allowing them the opportunity for some swordplay or fisticuffs.

Just as the characters or their opponents seem to be gaining the upper hand, the train is rocked by a sudden force, and the characters find their entire car being separated from the train lifted off the tracks by a powerful winch and cables attached to the corners of the car by men on the roof. They are lifted into the belly of a massive airship hovering above the tracks, where they become the prisoners of Lord Dire.

The Reinhardt Magnetic Ray

Dr. Reinhardt's invention is a metallic globe about 50 centimeters in diameter, filled with a complex of wires and coils. The whole device is stored in a steamer trunk the doctor has brought with him. A set of control grips, dials and knobs bristle on one side of the globe. A slim wand projects from the opposite side, wrapped in a thick metallic coil and the whole mechanism pivots on a tripod-like base. The wand serves as the projector for a ray of magnetic force generated by the mechanisms within the globe. The model the Doctor is carrying generates sufficient magnetism to levitate several hundred pounds of weight. Larger models could move literally tons of material!

Cost: 11 days and 1,100c

Operates with: A complex set of dials and knobs

Range: Thousands of feet

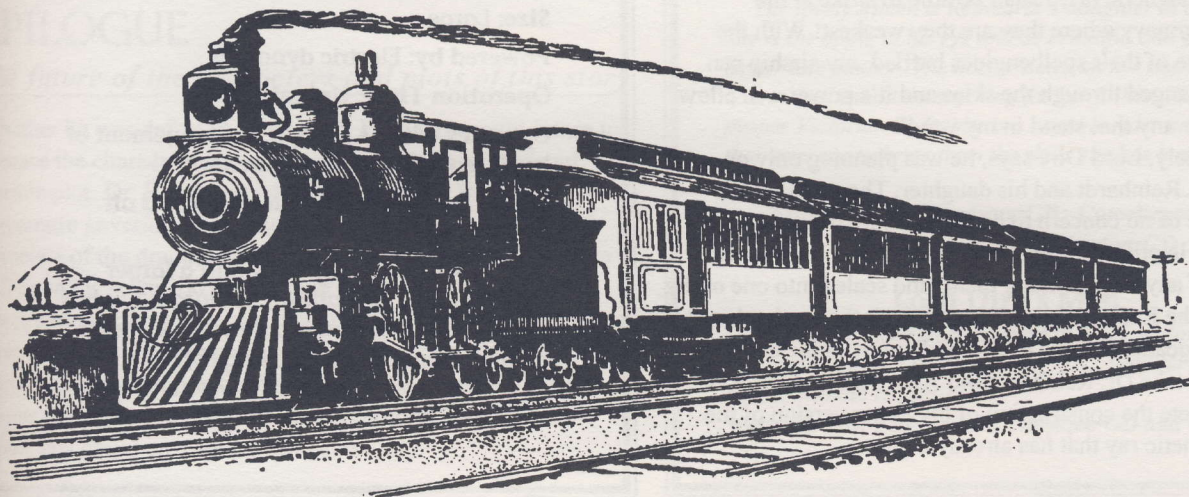
Affects: Small objects

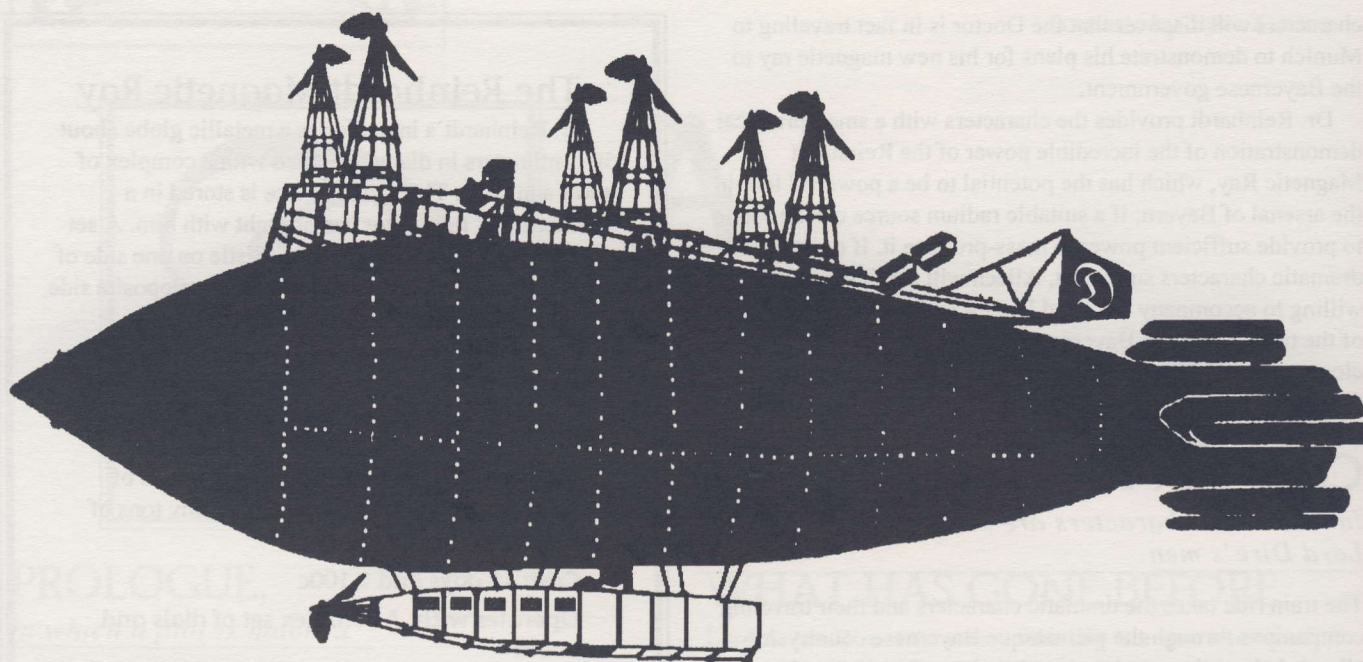
Damage Level: Fearsome (only against metallic targets)

CHAPTER THREE, Prisoners

In which the characters encounter Lord Dire and learn his diabolical plan

After a short but swift flight, the airship arrives at Lord Dire's castle in the mountains. A set of massive concealed doors in the very side of the mountain open up to admit the giant ship into a hollowed-out cavern hangar in the mountain. The dramatic characters and the Reinhardts are brought by a group of soldiers





Der LuftSchiff Dire

to Lord Dire's massive library in the castle above to mountain complex. There his Lordship greets the characters like long lost friends he has been expecting and invites them to sit down with him as though they were his guests and not his prisoners. He will then tell them why it is that he has brought them to his stronghold.

"You have already seen," he says, "the incredible power of my air-ship. It far outstrips those of Bayern in terms of size and capacity, but it is still vulnerable to attacks from those aershops as a tiger can be stung by a wasp. But, with the power of Dr. Reinhardt's magnetic ray, I shall be able to strike at the Bayernese aeronavy where they are they weakest! With the magnetic drive of their spell engines baffled, my airship can move unchallenged through the skies and it's power will allow me to conquer any that stand in my way!"

Unfortunately, Lord Dire says, he was planning only on abducting Dr. Reinhardt and his daughter. The dramatic characters are of no concern to his plans and will have to be disposed of. He orders the characters clapped in irons (to limit the powers of any faerie among them) and sealed into one of the chambers of the Radium mines deep beneath the castle, there to suffer a slow death from the baleful radiations of the elements there. He will take Dr. Reinhardt and Aileen aboard his sky-ship to complete the construction of the larger version of the doctor's magnetic ray that has already begun.

Lord Dire's Airship

Similar to Robur's Albatross, Dire's airship is a large platform kept aloft by a combination of gas cells and large propellers. It has several interior decks, with catwalks running between the vast gears and shafts of the mechanical propellers. The ship is controlled from the forward control cabin.

Cost: 84 days at 8,400c

Size: Large

Powered by: Electric dynamos

Operation Time: Unlimited

Operates with: A complex arrangement of levels, cables and a captain's wheel

Moves with: A series of forward and aft rotors

Armed with: A bomb rack and a larger Magnetic Ray (see above, the larger ray has a range of miles and is a Terrible damage weapon against metallic targets).



CHAPTER FOUR, Sky Battle

A final conflict with Lord Dire aboard his airship

The dramatic characters must escape from imprisonment in the radium mines and get past Lord Dire's guard in order to get on board the airship before it departs the hangar. The Host should consider the plans of escape offered by the players, keeping in mind that they are in an underground tunnel sealed with a ton of rock. Magick or the use of faerie powers might be able to liberate the characters, as could the application of technical skill and knowledge. The Host should make escape challenging, but not impossible.

However the dramatic characters escape, they should reach the hangar just as Lord Dire's massive airship is departing. A Great Athletics feat is required for the characters to leap onto the airship before it leaves the hangar. The Host can spice this action up with precarious near-misses that leave one or more characters dangling from guide cables or struts as the ship flies over the craggy mountain peaks.

The characters have to sneak or fight their way past Lord Dire's crew to reach the control cabin of the airship, requiring either Great Stealth or the appropriate dramatic combat. A fight on board the airship could very well damage some of the mechanisms if the characters are not careful.

When the characters confront Lord Dire in his control room, he is defiant and orders his men to kill the characters. He seizes Aileen and flee with her through a secret panel in the wall, taking her down a ladder to where he has concealed a balloon that will allow him to escape with the doctor's daughter held hostage. This can lead to a running duel along the narrow ladder and catwalk, high above the Earth. If Lord Dire is defeated, he plunges from the airship and disappears into the clouds below.

Once Lord Dire is either defeated or captured, the airship will begin to plunge out of control, requiring the characters to arrest its fall if they are to survive. This will require Great Piloting or Tinkering ability to make the necessary adjustments. The Host can also allow other appropriate abilities or even magick to enable the characters to bring the ship to a safe landing.

EPILOGUE

The future of the characters and plots of this story

Whether he was defeated or escaped, Lord Dire could return to menace the characters again some day, with some new and terrible plot. Dr. Reinhardt will begin working for the Bayernese government and he will remain a good friend and associate of the dramatic characters. Perhaps they will need to call upon his scientific expertise in the field of Magnetic and Electrical Forces again some day. The lovely Aileen might well have fallen for a dashing dramatic character and could try and pursue a relationship with him or might be inspired by the events of the story to become an adventuress herself that the characters could cross paths with some day.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Lord Anton Dire, Mastermind

The hereditary ruler of the tiny Germano-Slavic kingdom of Trevania near Bayern, Lord Dire is a mastermind of the first order. He is a brilliant criminal scientist whose penchant for invention is equaled only by his talent for villainy. He plots and schemes to turn the whole of New Europa into a kind of technological utopia under his benevolent and absolute rule. His wealth and many of his plots are based around the large deposits of radium to be found deep within the peak where his hereditary castle sits.

To Dire, the great majority of humanity is nothing more than cattle in need of protection and the guidance of a superior mind, only a select few are worth to be part of the ruling class that Lord Dire envisions (he is in fact very fond of Plato's Republic). He believes in a certain amount of aristocratic superiority, but also recognizes that accident of birth does not necessarily confer worth.

Lord Dire is a tall and imposing figure of a man, with noble, aristocratic features. His hair is iron gray, as is his carefully groomed mustache and beard. His eyes are a steely blue that flash with brilliance and madness.

Charisma•GR; Fencing•GR; Social Graces•GD; Tinkering•EXC

Doctor Karl Reinhardt

The good Dr. Reinhardt is the very soul of the brilliant but absent-minded scientist and inventor. His daughter Aileen is his only child and his most precious treasure and the good doctors dotes on her a great deal. He cannot imagine why anyone would wish to use his discoveries for anything other than the betterment of mankind and society and is shocked and outraged to discover Lord Dire's plans for his magnetic ray.

Athletics•PR; Education•EXC; Fencing•PR; Fisticuffs•PR; Tinkering•EXC

Aileen Reinhardt

The lovely Aileen is Reinhardt's daughter in every way. She is the apple of his eye and as beautiful and graceful as her late mother. The doctor dotes on her and she adores and would do anything for her father. Though a proper Victorian Lady, she is a capable rider and better than average tinkerer from the skills she has learned from her father.

Athletics•GD; Charisma•GR; Comeliness•GR; Social Graces•GD; Tinkering•GD

Lord Dire's Men

Villainous shock troopers clad in black uniforms emblazoned with a golden gothic "D". They serve their master without hesitation.

Fisticuffs•GD; Fencing•GD; Physique•GD and Health (6)

A Slice of Life (or An Order of the Gods)

THIS IS AN INTRODUCTORY MURPHY'S WORLD ADVENTURE, designed to be played within two hours. It uses material directly from Murphy's World, so have your copy handy. Between one and eight people can play the adventure, but four to six players is optimum.

If your players are new to Murphy's World, emphasize that Murphy's World is not a typical roleplay setting. It is a silly place where the unexpected occurs more often than the expected, where reality is elastic, and where what may seem familiar at first glance is more likely twisted beyond recognition.

Most importantly, have fun.

How to Read This Adventure

Standardized descriptive headings make this adventure fast and easy to understand. The 'Introduction' and 'Background' sections contain GM information. All other sections describe PC interactions. Headings are numbered for easy reference.

The Rules

Option 1: None. This is not a complex, life-and-death adventure. Relax and let things flow naturally. Roll dice only when an element of chance seems appropriate. Follow the guidelines in the section entitled Three Ways to Play: GM Option One: Fly, Be Free!

Option 2: Choose a rules system that all of your players are familiar with and adapt it to the adventure. See Murphy's World for hints on how to do this.

Option 3: If you are familiar with the rules in Murphy's World, use them. Explain enough rules so that your players won't run into nasty surprises, but don't go into minute detail. The object of this adventure is to get a feel for the setting of Murphy's World, rather than its rules.

The Player Characters (PC)

The Player Characters are on foot, and their equipment is restricted to what they can carry while walking.

Option 1: Each player uses one of the sample Characters from the section Once a King, Always a King.... The Characters' stats are less important than their background and description. If your players have difficulty with the idea of playing insurance salesmen or union organizers, give them a few hints on how such Characters fit into the Murphy's World background. No matter how seemingly weird or useless, every Character has strengths that can be taken advantage of when played imaginatively.

Option 2: Each player uses a Character from another gaming system. They should fully describe their Character for you to avoid problems later in the adventure. ("Oh, did I forget to tell you about my Mace of Planetary Destruction?") Make sure that each Character is amenable to a silly adventure. Deadly serious or psychotic Characters are generally not much fun.

If you have Characters from various gaming systems, we suggest you use the No Rules option to avoid rules clashes.

Don't worry too much about the mix of Characters. Fantasy, military, science fiction — it doesn't matter. Murphy's World itself puts no formal limitations on Character types.

PART I GM BACKGROUND THE PREMISE & DILEMMA

The Characters are going to gather the ingredients to make the Pizza of the Gods. Don't explain this final goal at the beginning; instead, drop little hints along the way. Let the players figure it out for themselves.

The adventure is difficult, but not deadly or time-consuming. Subtly guide the party along if things get bogged down. If you wish, slow the pace of events and build the adventure into a multi-session game. The adventure should be humorous, and the players should find it fun, rather than an onerous task.

1.1 Background: All Revved Up With No Place to Go

The Characters are members of a small band of adventurers. They have been wandering Murphy's World looking for excitement, romance, money, and food. The adventuring business has been tough lately. Most of the dungeons have 'For Rent' signs on them, the monsters having cleared out for greener pastures. Peace has broken out in the surrounding region. The local bad dudes are on the other side of the planet attending the Fifth Annual Morally-Challenged Sentient Beings Conference sponsored by Bob, Lord of Evil. In a word, things are quiet. That is until the party reaches the village of Domino, just in sight down the road.



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1.2 Background: A Call From the Gods

The people of Domino are in a panic. Generations ago, the original inhabitants built the city using the strange black obelisks they discovered strewn about the plain. Unknowingly, they built their village on the site of a favorite pastime of the Gods. The Gods periodically played their game and destroyed the village in the process.

After several generations of rebuilding, the villagers attempted to appease the Gods by transforming the village from a playing field into a restaurant supreme. They scoured the land for the finest and rarest of foods to offer the Gods. The Gods are fine gourmets (fat pigs is the more accurate, though less diplomatic description) and were intrigued by the 'villagers' efforts.

The village bakers produced an exotic pizza pie that pleased the Gods greatly. The Gods agreed to play another game (everyone was getting into collector cards anyway) and destroy some other village, and Domino would prepare a pizza whenever called upon.

Generations passed, and the Gods did not call. The villagers breathed a sigh of relief, believing the pizza deal forgotten. Not so. Time moves differently for the Gods than for mere mortals. (For a start, the Gods never get up before noon.) The day before the arrival of the Characters in the village, the Gods told the villagers to get baking, or they would hold the Cosmic Domino Finals in the villagers' living rooms. The villagers have a big problem — they don't have all the pizza ingredients.

The village elders consulted ancient tomes, and looked up the ingredients and where they could be found. They also found the dangers that accompany gathering the ingredients. The elders decided the task was too dangerous to risk anyone they knew and cared for. They needed a group of schmucks to do the dirty work for them. That's when the Characters arrive in town.

PART 2 THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

2.1 Area: The Village of Domino — a Happy Place

It is the height of the Tinfoil Age. Noon. The PCs are standing on an unpaved, muddy road in the middle of a plain, halfway between Nowhere and Somewhere Else (or so the signpost says.) Just down the road they see the roofs, chimneys, and billboards of a humble village. As the party approaches the town, they can make out writing on the billboards: "Domino. Everything for Commerce and Industry," "Home of the World's Largest Zucchini," "Provincial Girls' Squamish Ball Champions, Year of the Wombat," "Everyone Welcome," and "No Vagrants — This Means You."

Domino seems to be a typical Murphy's World village, full of a wide assortment of races, liquor stores, and bowling alleys. Interestingly, the walls of the buildings in the central section of the town are constructed from black lacquered panels. Each panel has one to six red or white dots indented in its surface (i.e., dominos). Despite the 'No Vagrants' signs, the people are friendly. Disgustingly friendly.

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2.2 Event: A Special Welcome

The villagers turn out in full force to greet the PCs. Everyone is happy to see the party. Young

women loop garlands of flowers around the PCs' necks. Men slap them on the back. Children cling annoyingly to their shins.

The mayor and town council greet the Characters in the village square. The mayor gives a speech. "Congratulations! You are the 1,000th adventure party to pass through our fair town. In recognition of this honor, we are giving you the keys to the village. As well, you get 50% off at any of our fine stores and taverns. Please accept these other tokens of our appreciation."

Each PC receives a key with flaking gold-plating. Each PC is also given a medal, trophy, or certificate. They have inscriptions like "Best Dental Hygiene, Year of the Cow," "Nice Guy of the Week Award," "Girls' Squamish Ball Champion," "The Grand Certificate of Excellence in Achievement," and "Biggest Zucchini in Creation." Other villagers give them tickets to the Seniors' Home Hoe-Down, discount coupons to Keruski Fried Platypus, and a guarantee of one unwatered drink at the Dew Drop Inn.

The mayor offers a toast to the PCs, and everyone drinks from a vat of cheap wine brought to the town square for this special occasion.

2.3 Event: A Favor is Requested

After giving the PCs time to enjoy themselves, the mayor takes them aside and asks for a favor. "We want to do a big banquet in your honor, but we don't have all the ingredients. Would you mind helping us out? It won't be danger... er, difficult, and won't take you very long."

If asked why they don't gather the ingredients themselves, the councillors reply with excuses like "I've got a dentist appointment," "I just had my hair done," "I go bowling Tuesday nights," "It's my lumbago," "My wife would kill me," "I got flat feet," "I work the night shift," "God told me I can't go," etc.

2.3.a Plot Option: The PCs Refuse to Help

If the party refuses, the mayor becomes very serious. "You must. The wine you just drank contained the Elixir of Altruism. Without the antidote, you will spend the rest of your lives giving your possessions away to anyone who asks for them. We will not give you the antidote unless you undertake this quest."

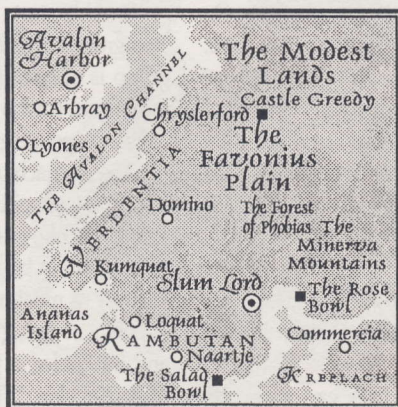
2.3.a.1 Description: The Elixir of Altruism

If any PC doubts the effects of the Elixir, the mayor will ask that PC to hand over their most valuable object. The PC must do so immediately. If necessary, to prove his point, the mayor will strip the party naked. There is no defense against the Elixir. If a player denounces it as unfair, reply "Yep, that's life," and move on.

The mayor and council have already taken the antidote, and are immune to the Elixir. Another way to avoid the Elixir's effects is to lie down until the feeling of altruism goes away. No other Non-Player Characters the party meets in this adventure knows about the Elixir and thus will not take advantage of it.

2.3.b Plot Option: The PCs Accept

Once the party agrees to help, the villagers escort them to the 'Sacred Scullery'. It is a long, roundabout, secret route. The mayor and party



Domino is located inland from the coasts of Verdentia, on the Favonius Plain. It is a region of beautiful green rolling hills, crystal clear lakes, and showers with disgustingly poor water pressure.



must pass through a dozen doors, use secret passwords, duck under sharp spikes, avoid nasty animals chained to the walls, pass carefully over trap doors, etc. The journey ends on a catwalk above a large room. On the floor below people in tall white chef's hats are stomping down a huge mound of dough. The mayor explains that it is for the banquet, but if asked what they are cooking, says that it's a secret.

The mayor announces, "Please put on your sacred headgear," and dons a chef's hat. Each of the councillors takes out and puts on a hat. They wear top hats, fishing hats, Blue Jays baseball caps, propeller beanies, fur hats, etc. When the mayor asks where their real sacred headgear is, the councillors reply, "Mine's in the wash," "It's sacred to me," "Oh, that sacred headgear," etc.

At a nearby lectern, the mayor reads from a huge and dusty book. "May the Gods look favorably on our sacrifice... Sorry, wrong page." He begins again. "This is the Sacred Shopping List. Procure the following:

- Four (4) firkins Hot and Spicy sauce.
- Six (6) pecks fruit from the Candied Orchard.
- One (1) short ton piebald goat cheese.
- One (1) gross Tooting Toadstools.
- Twelve (12) Bom-Bom Beast Sausages."

The mayor hands the party a copy of the list. "It has a handy-dandy metric conversion table at the bottom."

The mayor continues, "You'll need a few other things." With great ceremony he hands the party the following items: a roll of **Plastic of Preserving**, the **Sacred Shopping Bag**, the **Disk of Displacement**, and **money saving coupons** for discounts on Bom-Bom Beast Sausage and Piebald Goat Cheese.

2.3.b.i Description: The Plastic of Preserving

Like typical plastic wrap, the Plastic of Preserving comes on a cardboard roll. You can rip off as much as you like, and use it to wrap food, or whatever. It will keep food wrapped in it fresh for one week, one month if refrigerated.

2.3.b.ii Description: The Sacred Shopping Bag

The Sacred Shopping Bag looks like a typical plastic shopping bag. On one side is a picture of a wild-eyed pig stuffing its face with food. Below that are the words, 'Piggy Paul's Food Trough — Where Your Buck Won't Get Stuck'. The Bag is magical, and can hold any amount of food without breaking or weighing anything. Any non-food item placed in the Bag will have weight and strain the Bag. If the Bag is used to hold garbage, it will break four steps from where the garbage is supposed to be put.

2.3.b.iii Description: The Disk of Displacement

The size of a small dinner plate, the disk has seven brightly colored buttons on top. The buttons are labeled 'Cheese', 'Sauce', 'Sausage', 'Fruit', 'Toadstools', 'Home', and 'Wooga'. The Disk can magically transport the party to the location listed on the button pushed. The 'Home' button works only after all the other buttons are pushed. When the 'Wooga' button is pushed, the Disk makes a sound like a U-boat fog horn.

The Disk is restricted in its use. It only works if everyone who was

there for the first jump is there for every subsequent jump. Thus, the party cannot split up, or the Disk will fail to operate. The mayor will explain this carefully to the party. (If for some reason a player leaves the game before it ends, go on without them and explain that the mayor lied.)

2.3.b.iv Description: Money Saving Coupons

When used before the end of the Tinfoil Age, these coupons give 10% off the purchase of Bom-Bom Beast Sausage and a free sample of Piebald Goat Cheese Whey. If used before the end of the Second Millennium of the Tinfoil Age, the purchaser gets double Thrifty Trading Stamps.

After giving the PCs these items, the mayor escorts them to a nondescript wooden door. Unlike the passage in, this door opens immediately onto the town square. The sign above the door reads, 'Secret Door to Sacred Scullery'. The mayor and councillors wish the party bon-voyage and good luck.

If the PCs wander the town and purchase supplies they will be warmly received. The locals will praise the wonderful task the party has undertaken and wish them well in their quest. After an hour the town will close down and the PCs asked to leave any establishment they are in. The townsfolk excuse themselves, claiming they need time to prepare for the night's celebrations. This is a big hint for the PCs to get on with their quest. Eventually, the townsfolk become completely preoccupied with their preparations and have no time for the PCs.

PART 3 COLLECTING THE INGREDIENTS

Pressing a button on the Disk will transport the party to the appropriate destination. Each destination is self-contained. The order the party collects the ingredients in is not important.

3.1 Area: Sauce Destination — The Good, the Bad, & the Stupid

The party materializes in the middle of a dusty street beside a fountain. Around them are mud-colored adobe houses. The smell of spice fills the air. Spicy tomato sauce flows from the fountain. This is what they've come for!

Trouble starts the moment the party moves toward the fountain. Two groups of dusty men approach from either end of the street. Each group is at least four times the size of the party. All the men wear sombreros, cowboy hats, or fezzes, and carry pistols on their hips. All have a desperate gleam in their eyes.

The mustachioed leader of the first group to reach the party makes a big show of spitting on the ground at the party's feet (not a mere little spit, but a big, manly, green, official vigilante spit.) "Hey, muchachos. That fountain belongs to the Alakazim family. You want the sauce, you pay us mucho dinero."

"Not so fast, guacamole breath!" By now, the second group arrives, and its leader, a pig-eyed, portly type, shouts at the leader of the Alakazim clan. "This fountain belongs to the Alakazam family, and we don't take kindly to others laying claim to it. You want the sauce, you pay us a gross of grupniks."

Should the party ask, they will be told (with many insults between the groups) that the two families have been fighting over the fountain for as long as anyone can remember.



3.1.a Event: Knock 'Em Down, Drag 'Em Out

Things are tense. Each warring group is eyeing the other and the PCs with equal distrust. If one of the PCs makes a false move, the families will draw their pistols and fire!

Fortunately for the PCs, this is not dangerous at all. The pistols are water pistols, and at worst, the PCs will get a good soaking. On the Alakazims and Alakazams, however, the effect is extraordinary. Any villager struck by water will scream, clutch at the moist area, and roll around in the dirt to get rid of the water. Shortly after the fighting starts, the Alakazims will get the worst of the water, and run away. The leader will shout to the PCs, "Come with us!". The Alakazams will then concentrate their 'firepower' on the PCs.

It should not be clear to the PCs at this time that the guns are filled with water (they might observe a liquid and deduce it to be water, but the reactions of the victims should give them pause — perhaps it's acid?) Certainly the locals behave as though they have been struck by something seriously harmful.

3.1.b Plot Option: Cry, Baby, Cry

If the party fights in earnest, the villagers will be taken aback. If a villager is hit with a weapon, or wounded, he will look stupidly at his assailant, sit on the ground, and cry. After a couple of villagers do this, the rest will stop, and step back wonderingly from the PCs. The Alakazam leader will say, "Hey, you're hurting people. That's... that's not nice!" A few other villagers will cry in sympathy with those sitting on the ground.

The Alakazim leader will throw his arm around the shoulders of the Alakazam leader, and waving his fist shout, "Go ahead, take your nasty old sauce. We don't need it anyway!" With that, he will bury his face in the shoulder of the leader of the Alakazams. The leader of the Alakazams will pout and say to the PCs, "Now look what you've done! He's a sensitive type, you know."

Sniffing, both groups will shuffle away. The PCs are free to gather all the sauce they like. Make them feel really guilty about it though.

3.1.c Plot Option: Taking Sides

If the party runs off with the Alakazims, the leader will try to draw them into a complex plan to take control of the fountain. The plan involves things like tunneling under the street, creating a diversion, recruiting foreign mercenaries, undermining the economies of neighboring nations, and creating international incidents. In other words, unrealistic nonsense. If the PCs agree to get involved, the Alakazim leader, Luiz, will give them the longest, most complex part. This task will take the party far past the deadline for returning to Domino.

If a PC suggests an alternate plan, no matter how simple or straightforward, Luiz will pause for a moment, then say, "Sounds good. Let's do it."

Just about any plan will work (both the Alakazim and Alakazam are dim), and the party will be granted all the sauce they can carry by the grateful Alakazim.

3.1.d Plot Option: Revealing 'The Truth'

This assumes that the party has run off with the Alakazims, since it is difficult to have a serious discussion with people who are squirting you with water pistols.

Some of the PCs may figure out that the villagers are afraid of water. Indeed, they believe it is a vile poison. They use the sauce in the fountain in place of water. Unfortunately, the sauce is so spicy that it gives everyone constant stomach upset, part of the reason they fight all the time.

By washing in water and drinking it in front of the horrified eyes of the Alakazims, the party can convince them that water doesn't hurt after all. The Alakazim leader, Luiz, will set an example to his men, after much hesitation, by drinking some himself. Astonished, he says, "Wow. It's cool and refreshing. My stomach feels better already!"

Carrying the party on their shoulders, the Alakazim parade in triumph back to the sauce fountain. If one of the PCs doesn't do it, Luiz will dare the Alakazams to squirt him. They will happily comply, but will fall back in confusion when he enjoys it.

Soon, the whole village will be drinking water and having long overdue baths. Together, the Alakazim and Alakazam leaders will approach the party and tell them that they can have all the sauce they want, since the village will be using a great deal less of it in the future.

Smiling, Luiz says, "Please, you may have our sauce. And, in keeping with the spirit of the time, the Alakazim will share their water with everyone in the village!"

Furrowing his brows, the Alakazam leader will look at Luiz. "Hold on. You mean the Alakazam's water, don't you?"

"Bah! A fat pig like you wouldn't know good water if it bit him on the nose!" Luiz replies.

With that, the villagers will battle over the water well across the street from the sauce fountain, leaving the PCs to get their sauce and head out.

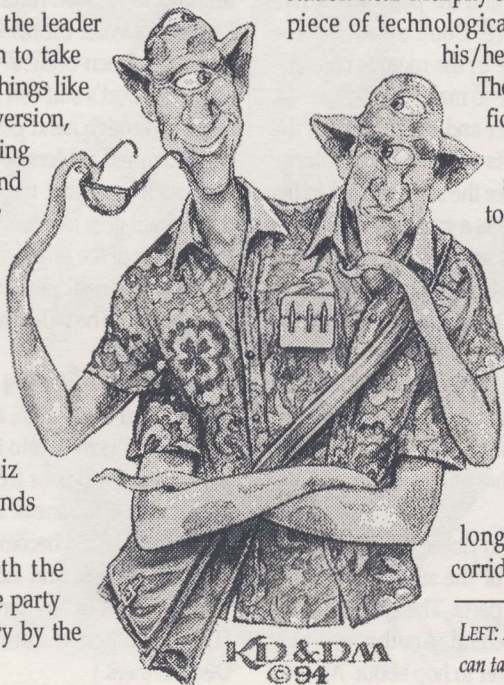
3.2 Area: Cheese Destination — The Piebald Goat

This portion of the adventure takes place on a Langosian space station near Murphy's World. Its sole inhabitant is trapped on this piece of technological space-junk awaiting a replacement from his/her homeworld.

The station's primary functions are run by an artificial intelligence — PAL 10,000. In a soothing male voice, the computer continually reassures the station's inhabitants, "I feel well today," or "There is nothing to worry about."

Because the Langosian has occupied the station for so long, and believes unfalteringly in the function of technology, magic does not work in this environment. Take your time about revealing this to the party. Remember, this doesn't mean that stupid things can't happen. While Ludo's effects are localized, stupidity is universal.

Upon arrival, the PCs find themselves in a long, seemingly endless curving corridor. The corridor is 10' [3 m] wide, and its vertical 'horizon'



LEFT: A Langosian on vacation. Even the simplest of decisions can take hours, such as: "Do we eat Chinese or Indian?"



seems to be about 1 mile [1.7 km] away. The walls are metallic, and the floor beneath their feet is a soft, bouncy, rubber-like substance. The interior design of the station is 1960's high tech (but very lived in). All corners are rounded. Most surfaces are white, black, orange or tan. Posters cover the walls (e.g. 186,000 miles per second. Not just a good idea: it's the Law!) The air has a strange smell to it, like a combination of old socks and mouldy pizza, but is perfectly fine otherwise.

If the PCs listen carefully, they hear sounds in the corridor. For the most part, the sounds are strange and atonal. (Erk! Bloop! Eeeeeesplort! —up and down the musical scale is the best way to represent it.) If they listen long enough, they will hear the Beatle's 'Yesterday', as played by a large orchestra who wouldn't know fine music if it bit them on the nose. Once 'Yesterday' is over, the sound reverts to the strange harmonies. (They are listening to alien Muzak.)

3.2.a Event: Meeting the Management

Whichever way they choose to wander, the PCs will soon be approached by a strange figure. It is wearing a strange, tinfoil-like jumpsuit, has three legs, four arms ending in tentacles, and two heads. The alien is a Langosian. (Read the description of Xor-Xan of Langose in the section of Murphy's World entitled Once a King, Always a King....) Doo-Dad carries a tall glass of Tang in one tentacle. Tang is Doo-Dad's favorite drink. (There is a *huge* supply of it on the station.)

Upon reaching the party, the alien smiles, waves its tentacles, and says "Erp florp?" No matter what language any member of the party replies in, Doo-Dad will understand it. "Ah, foreigners!" he says. "Take me to your leader. Ha, ha!" If the party fails to laugh appreciatively at this fine bit of Langosian humor, Doo looks disappointed, and Dad looks positively morose. "That usually slays them," she/he'll complain bitterly. "Ah well, what can I do for you sentient beings?"

Doo-Dad will perk up when the piebald goat is mentioned. "You pronounce that well," he/she will reply. "I'll take you to the piebald goat. Come right this way."

3.2.b Event: Getting the Party's Goat

After a tiring 2 mile [3.3 km] walk, Doo-Dad and the party will arrive at a large, open area full of strange furniture. Doo-Dad invites the party to sit, but not a single piece of furniture in the room is comfortable to humanoid bottoms. The party will have to make do.

With a flourish, Doo-Dad pushes a button and says, "Behold the piebald goat!" The far wall of the room lifts up, revealing a large window. Through the window the party can see the stars shining in the airless void of space. In the center of the view is a massive object. It is an off-yellow (the kind used on prison walls and college halls), with huge tentacles waving about, deep craters in its surface, and gas vents spewing out clouds of dust. If asked, Doo-Dad will explain that the 'thing' is over 1500 miles [2500 km] across, and that the party is aboard a space station orbiting it. But what about the piebald goat? Doo-Dad explains: "Piebald Goat' is a Langosian term that literally translated means, 'Humongous off-yellow planetoid being with big tentacles and gas vents that spew dust'. And yes, it does give milk, but you have to get it yourselves."

Doo-Dad will provide enough spacesuits to clothe the entire party. Unfortunately, just like the furniture, none of the suits fit correctly. Most have extra, or not quite enough, body parts. The extra leg on a suit may constantly kick its wearer in the behind. Another suit may have only one extra-large leg, forcing the wearer to hop about. Another

may have an extra arm which waves about in front of the wearer's face, the middle finger on the glove rigidly extended. Yet another helmet may be too small, forcing wearer's nose up against the faceplate, causing them to speak strangely. Whatever the problem, choose something annoying rather than crippling.

3.2.c.1 Description: Piebald Goat Cheese Whey

If the party presents Doo-Dad with the coupons for free samples of Piebald Goat Cheese Whey, he/she will hand them large bowls of a gooey, off-white substance. It tastes truly foul. If asked, Doo-Dad explains that the coupons are the only way to get rid of the stuff, since absolutely no-one will buy it.

3.2.c Event: Milking It For All It's Worth

Donning his/her perfectly fitting suit, Doo-Dad guides the PCs into a small space-tug and flies them to the piebald goat. She/he gives them one container each and gives them instructions. "Strap the container to your chest, and place the open end over an udder. Squeeze the udder with both hands, and slap the top on the container as soon as it is full. When you have filled your containers, I'll pick you up." With that, Doo-Dad opens the door on the space-tug, dumping the PCs onto the surface of the piebald goat.

Gravity is very low on the piebald goat. A PC who leaps too high will have quite a wait before returning to the ground. Only dextrous PCs or PCs experienced in low-gravity environments will have few problems getting around. The stupid space suits make it worse.

There are two vaguely udder-like types of bumps on the surface of the piebald goat. Unlike goats' udders, they point upwards rather than downwards, and come in two colors: red and green. They have markedly different effects.

Any party member who chooses to milk a green udder will provoke a response from the piebald goat. The moment they place the container over the end of the udder and squeeze, one of the piebald goat's tentacles will whip down, grab them, shake them silly, and throw them back to the ground. It will take the party member 1d6 minutes to recover. (Immediately after the first PC is treated like this, Doo-Dad's voice breaks in over the suit radios, "Did I tell you not to touch the green udders?". The aggrieved PCs are unable to reply, as only Doo-Dad's suit can broadcast. The PCs will have to express their feelings through hand gestures.)

When red udders are milked, the milk spurts into the container with such force that the PC will be pushed away from the surface of the piebald goat at a high velocity. So fast, in fact, that they will escape the gravity of the piebald goat entirely and drift into space.

Doo-Dad will pick up each PC squirted away. Once they are all collected, she/he will take them back to the space station.

3.2.d Event: Getting Cheesed Off

Back aboard the station, Doo-Dad collects the containers from each PC and pours the milk into a strange contraption. With a few cranks of a lever, cheese will pour from one end into a vat.

Should a PC sneak a taste of the piebald's goat milk, they turn Prussian blue and become as stiff (and as responsive) as a board. Doo-Dad will tsk-tsk, and explain that the PC is in no danger. They will come out of it in any time between two minutes and fifty-eight years. (The PC will come out of it the next time the party uses the Disk of Displacement.)



Before the PCs can take the cheese, Doo-Dad will stand protectively in front of it and say, "Not so fast! This stuff isn't free, you know. How will you pay for it?"

Doo-Dad will reject any valuables — coin, bills, jewels, or plastic — that the PCs offer. He/she will explain that none of them have any value to Langosians. Once things come to an impasse, Doo-Dad looks the PCs over carefully. Pick some seemingly innocuous article of clothing or possession that one of the PCs has. For example, have Doo-Dad focus on a pair of boots.

Doo-Dad stares at the feet of one of the PCs. "Are those cowboy boots?" he/she asks. After being told they are, Doo-Dad pauses, then hesitantly says, "I will give you the cheese for those boots. What do you say?"

Some PCs may want to bargain Doo-Dad down. She/he will settle for a single item, but no less. Upon being handed the boots, Doo-Dad will lovingly stroke them for a moment, then, with a wild gleam in his/her eyes, wave them over her/his head, shouting, "Yes! With these vast riches, Langose will be mine! All mine!". Doo-Dad will then run off down the corridor, shouting in triumph. The PCs are free to pack away the cheese and head for their next destination.

(And yes, the cheese tastes very nice.)

3.3 Area: Sausage Destination — A Sausage Dog Day Afternoon

This will probably be the shortest of the party's tasks, simply due to the nature of the beast. First, read the description of the Bom-Bom Beast in the section of Murphy's World entitled 'All Creatures Great & Small'. Armed with that knowledge, read on.

The party materializes outside a small shack in a quiet, pleasant grove. The sign above the shack's door says 'Lorbert's Fine Sauserges'. A sign beside a bell near the door says 'Ring or Wooga for Servis'.

Lorbert himself is a scruffy, crabby Dwarf. Spitting a gob from between his few remaining teeth, he greets the party. "May yer underwear never ride high. Whaddayer want?"

Informed that the party wants 'sauserges', he spits again. "All out. But if yer can git me a Bom-Bom Beast, I'll make up some pretty quick."

If asked how much it costs, Lorbert replies, "How much yer got?" Lorbert will settle for cash, booze or a roll in the hay with an attractive party member. He's not fussy.

When asked where to find a Bom-Bom Beast, Lorbert spits again and replies, "Just go off yonder," (pointing vaguely) "and yer can't miss one. Kill it, and I'll make the sauserges." He describes a Bom-Bom Beast, but leaves out its lack of aggression and stink.

3.3.a Event: Questing for a Bom-Bom Beast

Finding a Bom-Bom Beast is easy. Let the party hear the sounds of one crunching through the forest almost immediately. Do

your very best to frighten the party with the sights and sounds of this massive, hairy, fanged, and clawed Beast. Once the party works up its courage and actually attacks the Beast, have it die in its normal messy and disgustingly smelly manner. As soon as the Beast is dead, Lorbert appears.

3.3.b Event: Preparing the Sausages

Lorbert is dressed in a radiation decontamination suit including a self-contained breathing apparatus, and is pulling a cart of equipment. Handing each member of the party a shovel, his muffled voice shouts, "If yer want yer sauserges, git ta work!" He begins shoveling Bom-Bom Beast remains into what look like giant condoms partially filled with spices. The party must work slowly, being almost overcome by the stench.

Once the sausages are made, Lorbert informs the PCs that they have to burn their clothes, and offers to sell them new ones. His clothes are limited, ugly, poorly fitting, poorly made, and expensive, but at least they don't smell. There are polyester leisure suits in brown checks, plaid bell-bottom jump suits with gold chains around the waist, ripped black jeans, T-shirts, skirts, and knee-length socks.

Lorbert will accept the money saving coupon with ill-grace, and hand over a double amount of grimy, unreadable Thrifty Savings Coupons. He has no idea what the coupons are good for, he just gives them out.

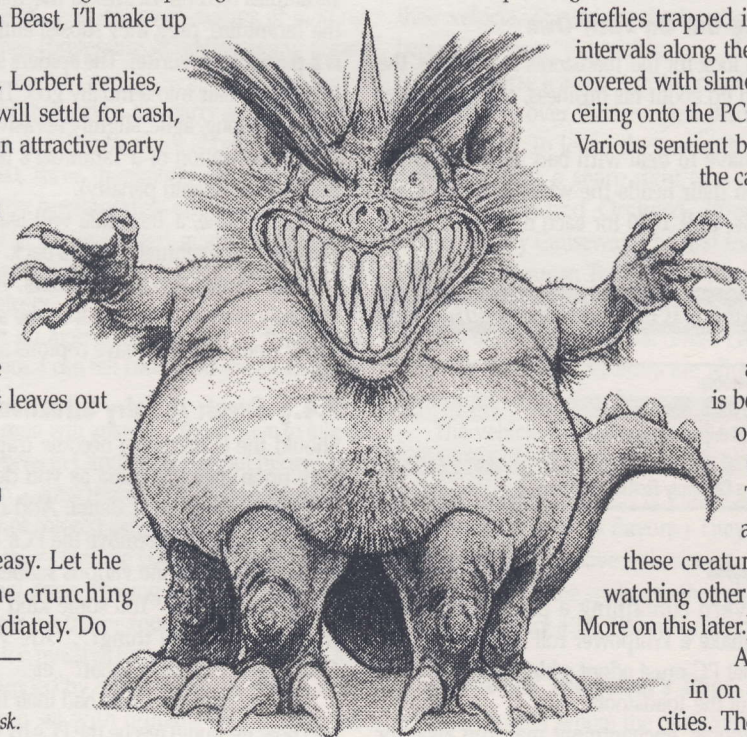
Any PCs who insist on keeping their old clothes will stink for the rest of the adventure, no matter how hard they wash their garments. They and the other party members should constantly be reminded of the stench throughout. It makes it difficult to deal with other people, since walking around smelling like you've been dead three weeks is impolite, to say the least.

3.4 Area: Toadstool Destination — Down Under

The PCs materialize in the center of a large underground cavern. Dank, dark, and depressing tunnels lead off in all directions. It is dimly lit by fireflies trapped in glass globes set at irregular intervals along the walls. The walls and floor are covered with slime, and this slime drips from the ceiling onto the PCs. It is not an ideal picnic spot.

Various sentient beings are passing in and out of the cavern. Most are carrying mining tools. The creatures vary tremendously in race, age, health, and cleanliness, but all have one thing in common. None have any hair anywhere on their bodies. (This is because they have all fallen afoul of the Tooting Toadstools and their Tarantula companions. They will not notify the PCs about the possible dangers from these creatures since they get a kick out of watching other people get their hair dissolved. More on this later.)

All these beings are here to cash in on a boom in brass jewelry in the cities. They are all looking for the brass



RIGHT: A ferocious Bom-Bom Beast.
Best approached while wearing a gasmask.



motherload. Unfortunately for the miners, brass is an alloy, and does not occur naturally. Should a PC point this out, the miners will assume that the PC is just trying to trick them out of their potential claim, and become very annoyed.

If the party stops one of the scurrying beings, the creature will look them over carefully, and say, "New here, ain't ya? Well, don't bother looking around this area, it's all mined out, and anyway, it's all claimed."

If the PCs explain that they are looking for Tooting Toadstools, the being will be incredulous. "You want to find Tooting Toadstools? It's a joke, ain't it?" Turning to some of the other beings wandering through the cavern, the creature will shout, "Hey, guess what? This bunch wants to find Tooting Toadstools!"

3.4.a Encounter: Chatting Up the Natives

If the PCs ask about the Tooting Toadstools, the miners have a standard reply. Heck no, there ain't no problem with Tooting Toadstools. Leastwise, they won't kill you or nothing really nasty like that. Gosh, some of my best friends have spent a lot of time in the company of Tooting Toadstools." (This last statement causes much merriment amongst those gathered around.) "You all just follow me, and Ah'll gladly take you to the Toadstools. This is goin' ta be a lot of fun. An' Ah mean that." (The gathered miners will laugh again and follow.)

3.4.b Plot Option: Following a Guide

The party's native guide leads the party (followed by a group of snickering miners) through the tunnels to the mouth of a large cavern. The guide stops in the passage, motions toward the cavern, and quickly moves away. "You'll find the Toadstools in here. Enjoy!"

Under no circumstances will the guide go into the cavern himself. If asked, he will give the same excuses the natives of Domino gave for not going along on the quest in the first place. He will assure the PCs that there is nothing dangerous in the cave. The other miners have an identical attitude.

3.4.c Plot Option: Striking Out On Their Own

If the PCs ignore the guide and look for the Toadstools themselves, the miner will wish them luck, and go about his business, cackling under his breath.

Meanwhile, the PCs will have to deal with bad air, treacherous footing, and slime dripping on their heads the whole time they are wandering the winding tunnels. Roll 1d10 for each new tunnel with the following results:

Random Tunnel Encounter Table (Roll 1d10)

No. Rolled	Tunnel Encounters
1	Cavern of Tooting Toadstools.
2-3	Encounter a miner (see 3.4.b. above).
4-7	Major slime on walls and dripping from above.
8	Bad air.
10	Slippery footing (make a Dexterity Roll or fall down).

3.4.d Event: Thar She Blows!

When the party enters a cavern containing a patch of Tooting Toadstools, each player must make a Willpower roll for their PCs. A failed Willpower Roll means that PC must adopt a blank stare, sit, and listen to the enchanting music' of the Toadstools.

PCs who escape the Toadstools' enchantment may run away or

attempt to break their companions free from the spell using one of the methods described in 3.4.e. An unenchanted PC may also battle the Tarantulas who live amongst the Toadstools.

An unaffected PC moving about the patch will discover a hairless miner or two hidden among the stalks. If broken free of their trance, these miners will simply get up and walk away, grumbling about their hairless condition and lost time. They will not help free any PCs.

3.4.e Encounter: Tooting Toadstools

It won't take long after arriving in this area for the party to find out just how gross a gross of Tooting Toadstools is. These fascinating fungi vary widely in size, with caps from 6" [15 cm] to 4' [1.2 m] across and stalks up to 6' [1.8 m] tall. Though the Toadstools are physically harmless, air passing through their porous caps causes a melodious tooting sound which can enchant anyone within earshot. Anyone hearing the music must make a Willpower Roll or be forced into a trance-like state.

While in this trance, victims are unaware of anything around them unless disturbed by a physical event (i.e., being shaken, struck, or having water thrown in their face). Each such disturbance allows the victim another Willpower Roll.

A successful Willpower Roll means that the PC resists the spell of the fungus, and can function normally. Once resisted, the PC is immune.

The Toadstools have no other means of attack or defense.

This tooting is actually a pollination procedure. Pollen is blown into the air to be carried to other toadstools by the Tooting Toadstool Tarantula. As well as being great pizza toppings, Tooting Toadstools make a good cream soup.

3.4.f Encounter: The Toadstool Tarantula

Immune to the enchanting effect of Tooting Toadstools, this spider is big, hairy, and menacing. Tarantulas range from 10" [25 cm] to 3' [88 cm] across, and lurk under the caps of Tooting Toadstools. The Tarantulas feed off victims of the Toadstool's enchantment. Luckily for the Tarantulas' prey, they subsist entirely on hair. (Dwarvish beard hair is a particular favorite). The spiders spray their victims with saliva that turns their hair into a mushy goo. The Tarantulas then lick up the goo with their long, agile, slightly abrasive tongues.

The sensation of a Tarantula's licking allows a PC one Willpower Roll (with a -3 shift penalty).

Given time, a Tarantula will leave their prey completely hairless. Victims' hair eventually grows back. Usually.

The Tarantulas are pacifists. If their victims awake and react violently, they will flee back to the shadows. They can spin extremely sticky webs, and will leave copious amounts behind to slow pursuers.

3.4.g Event: A Hairy Situation

Should the entire party become trapped by the Toadstools, have fun. Play upon their paranoia as you describe the approach of the large, hairy spiders in great detail. Add insult to injury by describing just how the Tarantulas remove the PCs' hair. Use this in all their following encounters. Have the various sentient beings they meet ask questions along the lines of: "You some kind of religious group?", "Is this some fraternity/sorority thing?", "Are you from the Planet of Follically-Challenged People, or what?", etc.

After the spiders have had their fill, have a miner (a previous victim, and now immune) rescue the PCs by shaking them out of their trances.



3.4.h Event: Slice 'Em, Dice 'Em, Make Julienne Fries

Hairless or not, the party is now free to harvest Tooting Toadstools. The Toadstools will toot in distress, but offer no other resistance.

3.5 Area: Fruit Destination – Candyland

The party appears on a hilltop. A land of bright, primary colors and scrumptious smells lies below them. They are in Candyland, the Land of Chocolate and Severe Tooth Decay. To their right is Sugar Mountain. To their left towers Big Rock Candy Mountain. Between these two peaks lies the Bitter Chocolate River, and its tributary, the Milk Chocolate River.

The PCs need to locate the Candied Orchard, and pick its products. At first glance, this is not a difficult task. The multi-colored candy path they are on passes by several lollipop signposts, clearly showing the way to the Orchard.

However, the local residents pose an obstacle. Known as the Sugar Daddies, these people are a society of sentient humanoids with four distinct qualities. First, not one of them has a good set of teeth. Their constant diet of sugar-filled food has left them all with blackened stumps in their mouths, if anything at all. Second, they are all morbidly obese, and the entire land is built to their scale (i.e., wide and heavily reinforced). Third, they are all hyperactive. Each of them is on a permanent sugar high, and no longer even remembers what it's like to be calm and relaxed. And finally, due to the old adage 'you are what you eat', they all mutated into a semi-candied form. Their skins have the bright and shiny look of candy and they come in a range of bright and attractive colors.

3.5.a Event: A Massive Welcome

The Candied Orchard can only be reached by crossing the Bitter Chocolate River. The path leads to a rickety bridge made of Turkish Delight. Any PC who falls in the river will be coated in Belgian-style dark chocolate, bitter but very tasty. The chocolate hardens quickly, imprisoning the PC in a delicious bondage. The chocolate can be broken (or eaten) away, but the PC will discover clumps of melting chocolate throughout their clothes (preferably in embarrassing areas) for the rest of the adventure.

Upon reaching the far side of the bridge, the party sees the village of the Sugar Daddies. Suddenly they hear a voice shout, "Hold on a minute there, please!" With that, three immensely fat men wearing large floppy hats, peanut-brittle breastplates, and wielding huge candy-apple maces, waddle out of a gingerbread guardhouse nearby. Their names are Private Neilson, Corporal Cadbury, and Sergeant Toblerone. They are three musketeers.

Waving his candy-apple in an aggressive manner, a musketeer wheezes, "You're new around here. I can tell cause you are all scrawny. What do you want?"

Whatever the PCs reply, the man will answer, "You'll have to talk to our leader, Mr. Big! Nothing happens in Candyland without his say-so."

The musketeer leads them to a gingerbread palace, decorated with white icing and a dazzling array of colored candies (most of the ones at ground level are broken off). As they enter the palace they pass a house guard of sentient turtles in formal dress. Passing through two massive doors of black liquorice, they enter the throne room.

On a rock candy throne sits the massive form of Henry the Ate, Mr. Big of the Sugar Daddies, surrounded by his staff and his queen, Lady Godiva. He wears a toffee crown set with brilliant yellow, red, and

green ju-jubes. As the party is escorted toward him, he pauses from his inspection of new candy coatings, and turns to the newcomers. Pausing to take a bite from his candy cane scepter, he says, "What do you severely undernourished strangers want here?"

3.5.b Plot Option: Food for Thought

If the PCs admit that they want to take fruit from the Candied Orchard, Henry smiles, and laughs a sinister laugh that makes his body quiver like a bowl full of jelly. "All right, but you have to face a challenge. You must race our champion in the Rumball Rally. If you defeat him, you can take all the fruit you want from the Orchard. If you lose, you will spend the rest of your lives in the mines of Sugar Mountain!" (Add maniacal laugh.) "Is it a deal?"

If asked for further details, Henry says, "It's quite simple. You have your pick of one of our vehicles: a Bugatti Brittle, a Ferrari Fondant, or a Tatra Taffy. Then you must race around our champion around our race course. What do you say?"

3.5.c Plot Option: Rally 'Round the Flag

Should the party take up Henry's offer, everyone gathered around will cheer (and jiggle) wildly. The Rumball Rally is a major event in the life of the Sugar Daddies, and everyone will gather along the route to watch.

Henry introduces the party to Norbert, the village champion. Norbert is a mountain of flesh, held together by a skin-tight silver racing outfit (a truly frightening sight), and is second only to Henry in sheer bulk. Hi, soon-to-be-defeated opponents!" Norbert says toothlessly.

Henry leads the way down to the courtyard. It is a miracle that he can walk at all considering the huge mass of flesh he carries on his body. The ground trembles as he moves.

Henry raises his hand for silence, and the crowd slowly calms down. The rules are simple. You start here," indicating a spot about 10 yards [9 m] behind the racing machines.

When they hear the sound of a popcorn pop, the PCs must race to their vehicle. The driver climbs aboard, while the others push from behind to power' the vehicle.

The course leads out of the courtyard, southeast toward the River of Molasses, over Butterscotch Bridge, then west toward the Gum Drop Forest. To leave the forest, the racers must cross the Treacle Tributary, then, a sharp right turn takes racers over Bonbon Ridge, past the Candied Orchard, then back to the palace via the Confectionary Causeway. The first team to cross the finish line doesn't have to mine sugar. To add an element of safety (and to give the spectators something to munch on) bales of cotton candy are piled up at every corner as crash barriers. The race gets its name from the rumballs that the spectators are allowed to throw at the drivers and crew of the vehicles as they pass by.

The vehicles in the courtyard are remarkable. Made from various types of candy, they are built large in order to hold the massive bulk of a Sugar Daddy. The wads of gum holding the joints together are huge (and come in various flavors.) They are painted with food coloring racing stripes, and have little rice-paper flags on top. Someone has put playing cards in the spokes so they click as they go.

"So," Henry asks, "Who is your champion?"

3.5.d Event: The Racer's Edge

It doesn't matter whom the party picks as their champion. Only in the



weirdest of circumstances could the outcome be other than the expected one. In short, any party member who is in even remotely better physical shape than Norbert is able to sprint to the machine, get on board, and be propelled a good distance before Norbert and his team can even maneuver his massive bulk into the seat of his vehicle.

During the race, have a few tense moments. Let one PC be stunned by the impact of a rumball. Let another fall into the River of Molasses. In the Gum Drop Forest some dishonest Sugar Daddies cut down some candy canes and used them to throw a roadblock across the path. To cross the Treacle Tributary, the racers must encounter the Tooth Fairy and pay an appropriate toll. Melted taffy is placed across the road in the home stretch to slow the PCs down. If Norbert ever gets ahead and is about to win, have his vehicle collapse under his own weight.

Norbert's loss upsets the crowd and stuns Henry. The village is genuinely awestruck at the magnitude of their defeat. They simply have no understanding of how their champion could lose. Some ominously mutter things like "Black Magic!", "They cheated!", or "I can't believe I just lost 500 grupniks!" Norbert is completely downcast. Henry blinks a few times, then says, "Best two out of three?"

Should the PCs take Henry up on his offer, they will handily beat Norbert again. Just after Henry suggests best three out of five, Norbert will order lunch, eat too much, and explode; Henry will be forced to concede.

Should the PCs politely decline, Henry shrugs and points them in the direction of the Candied Orchard. "Take all you want. We're all going to go and sulk now." The Sugar Daddies proceed to do just that.

3.5.e Plot Option: Under Heavy Attack

If the party attempts to sneak into the Candied Orchard to steal the fruit, they will anger the Sugar Daddies. The PCs will be attacked by Sugar Daddies outnumbering them at least five to one. The Sugar Daddies don't fight in a usual manner. They disable and disarm their enemies by overwhelming them with their bulk. Typically, one Sugar Daddy distracts an enemy while two more charge the enemy from both sides. If a PC is between the two charging Sugar Daddies when they meet, he or she will be thoroughly smushed and take 2d10 of crushing (meaning blunt, not cutting) damage. When two tremendously fat beings collide with you in the middle, you feel it! Alternately, one Sugar Daddy simply leaps on an enemy, doing 1d10 crushing damage and knocking that enemy to the ground.

The Sugar Daddies are surprisingly fast (due to their high level of blood sugar) and they outnumber the party significantly. Unless the party is very powerful, they will soon be overwhelmed by the Sugar Daddies. The Sugar

Daddies will not kill any of the party, and are very philosophical about their own losses. (The average Sugar Daddy only lives 40 years.) If they overwhelm and capture the party, Henry will offer them the choice between the Rumball Rally challenge and leaving the village. If they choose the later, they will have to sneak back in and try again.

3.5.f Event: The Quest Comes to Fruition

Having defeated or distracted the Sugar Daddies, the PCs can pick the fruit from the trees at their leisure. It comes in various fruit flavors: lemon yellow, orange orange, goofy grape, raspberry red, and lively lime. The fruit is similar to 'real' fruit, but is four times larger, much brighter in color, and sugar coated.

PART 4 THE DESTINATION HOME

The village will greet the PCs with relief and praise when they return. Many villagers will approach them and explain how sorry they were they couldn't come along, but you know how it is with the job, the family, lumbago, dentist appointments, etc. If asked about the Elixir of Altruism, the mayor promises to give the party the antidote as soon as the banquet ends.

The ingredients will be whisked away to the Sacred Scullery. The PCs may watch if they wish, and will be invited to help toss the dough if they are there.

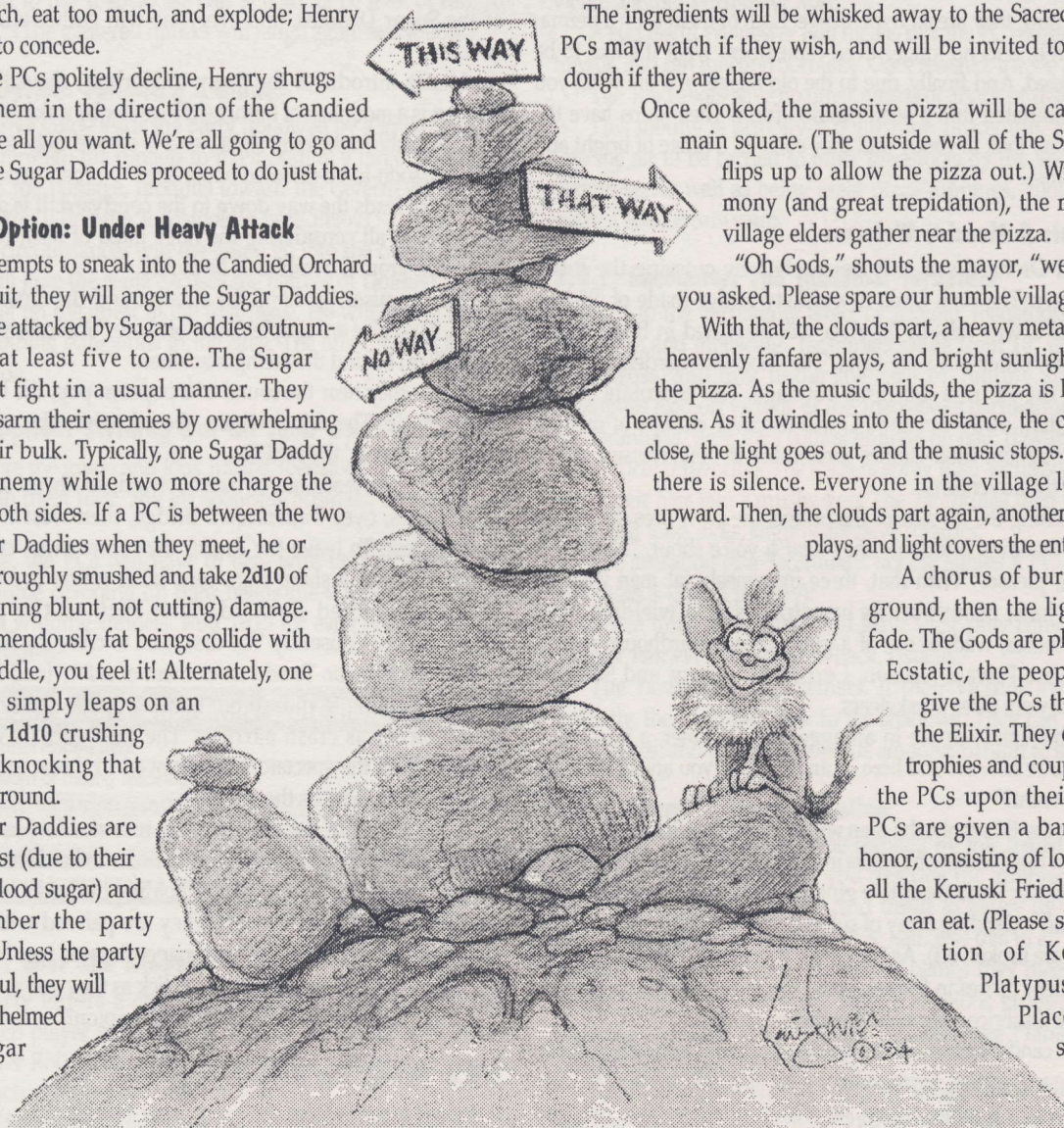
Once cooked, the massive pizza will be carried into the main square. (The outside wall of the Sacred Scullery flips up to allow the pizza out.) With great ceremony (and great trepidation), the mayor and the village elders gather near the pizza.

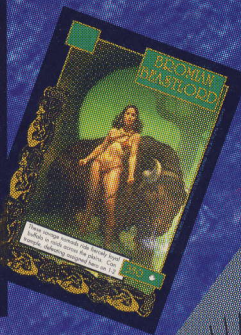
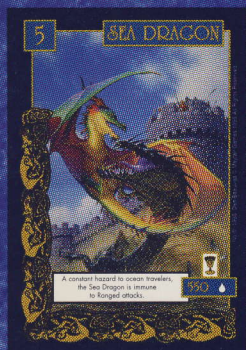
"Oh Gods," shouts the mayor, "we have done as you asked. Please spare our humble village!"

With that, the clouds part, a heavy metal electric guitar heavenly fanfare plays, and bright sunlight shines upon the pizza. As the music builds, the pizza is lifted up to the heavens. As it dwindles into the distance, the clouds abruptly close, the light goes out, and the music stops. For a moment there is silence. Everyone in the village looks fearfully upward. Then, the clouds part again, another electric fanfare plays, and light covers the entire village.

A chorus of burps shakes the ground, then the light and music fade. The Gods are pleased!

Ecstatic, the people of Domino give the PCs the 'antidote' to the Elixir. They even honor the trophies and coupons they gave the PCs upon their arrival. The PCs are given a banquet in their honor, consisting of local rot-gut and all the Keruski Fried Platypus they can eat. (Please see the description of Keruski Fried Platypus in the 'Your Place or Mine' section of Murphy's World).





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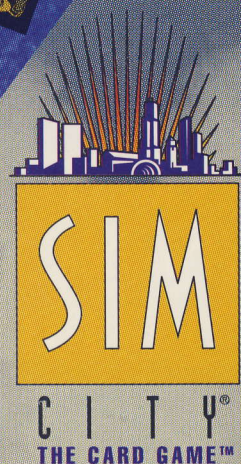
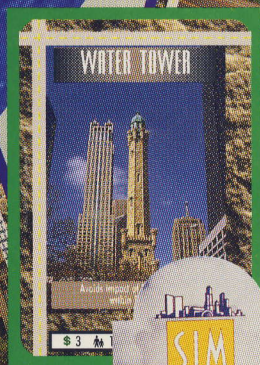
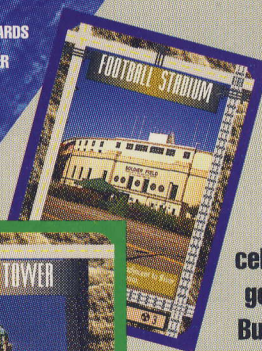


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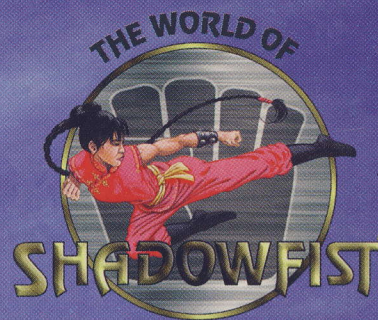
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