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#14

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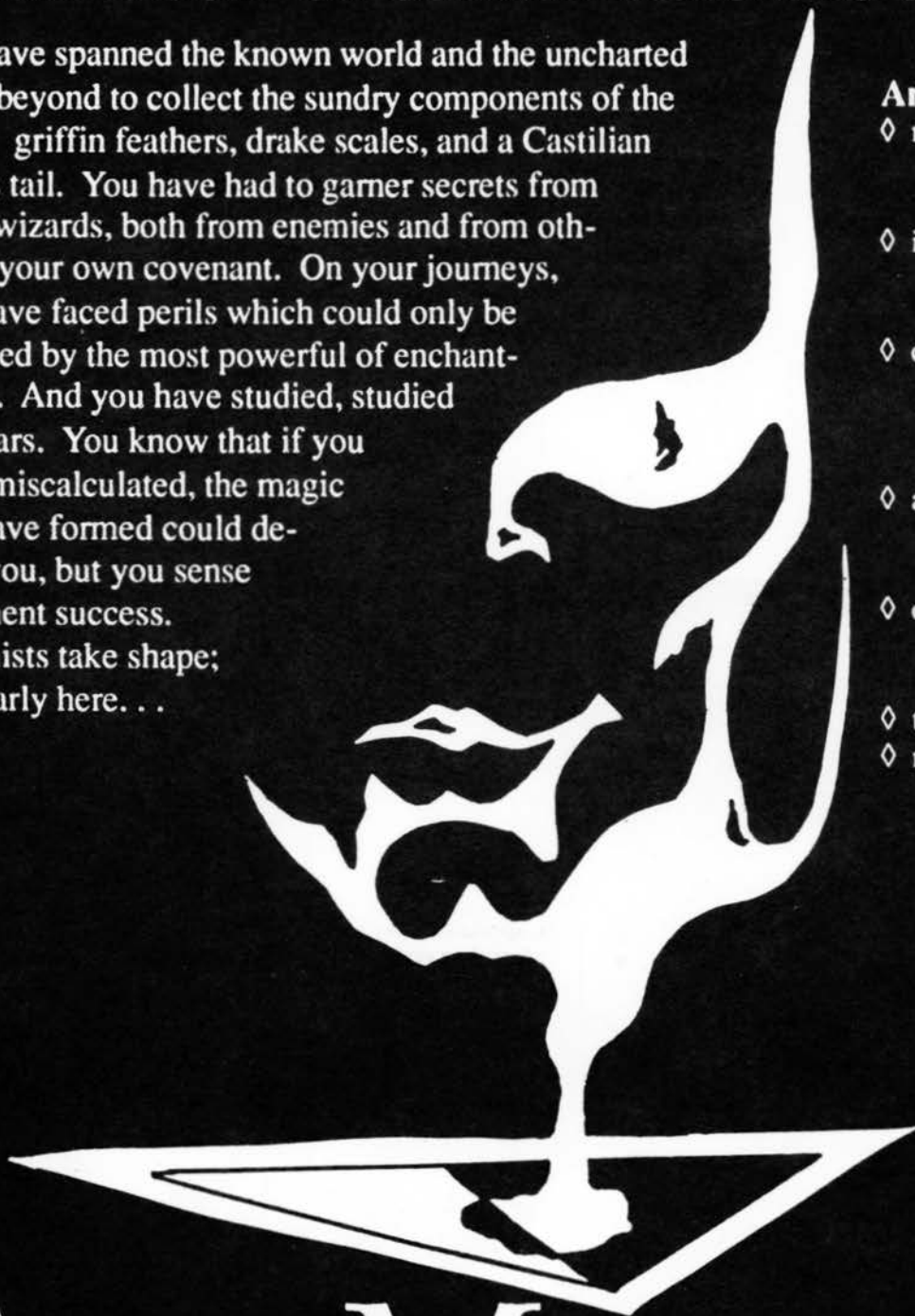
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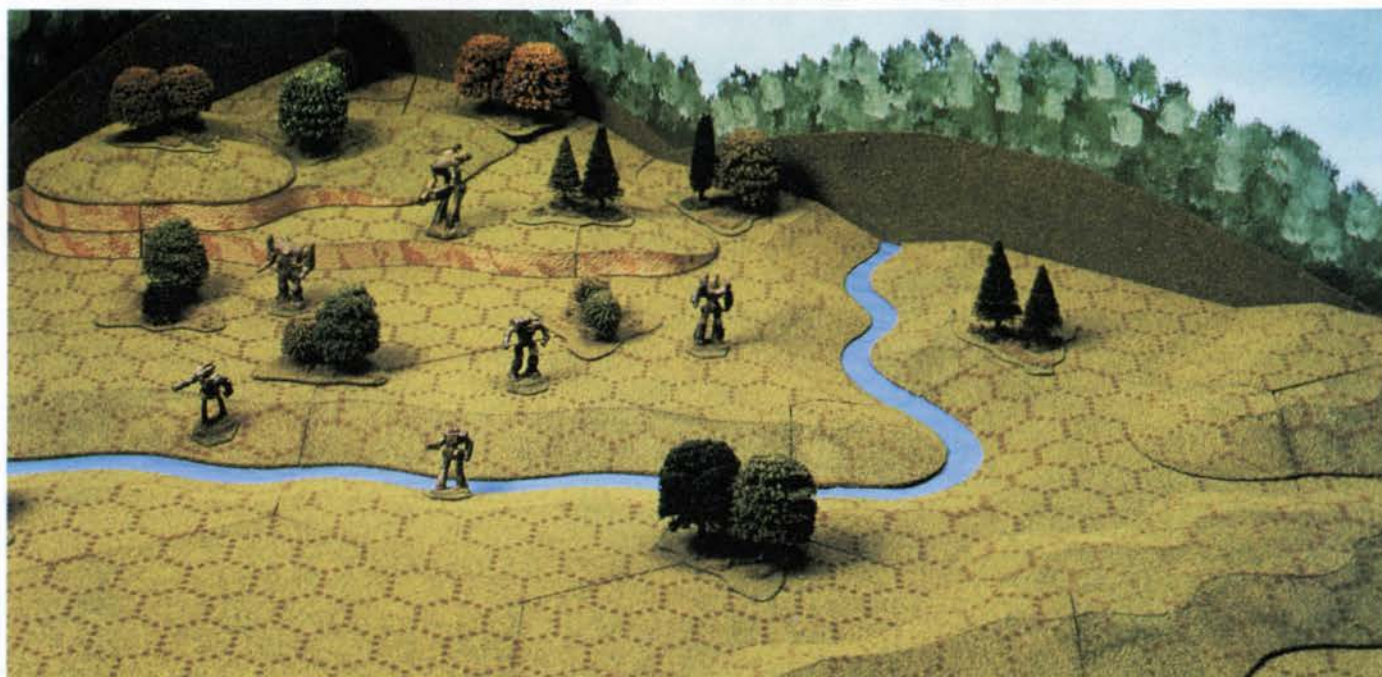
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Evidently, it is possible that some of you may have gotten the wrong idea after reading the promotional letter that was enclosed with the copies of WHITE WOLF Magazine #13 that were mailed direct. In this letter we pointed out the economics of purchasing WHITE WOLF Magazine over The Dragon, TSR, Inc.'s gaming magazine.

This statement was promotional only, and should not be interpreted as an attack on The Dragon. It's like the detergent commercials on TV explaining how one company's product cleans better than "the leading brand" when you can plainly tell that the none-so-subtly wrapped "leading brand" is Tide. Sure, the other may clean better, but how economical is it? Other questions could be raised as well.

In our recent promotional when we pointed out the cost factors we purposefully did not mention that each issue of The Dragon is about twice as long as each issue of WHITE WOLF Magazine. Such promotion is simply bad business. Different products offer different things and no one is likely to be superior in every way.

Whatever our shortcomings may be when compared to such magazines as The Dragon, I obviously feel that WHITE WOLF Magazine is a superior magazine. Otherwise I would spend my time writing articles for The Dragon and fold WHITE WOLF Magazine.

I feel that WHITE WOLF Magazine offers diversity. That is our strength. The Dragon prints articles for its products almost exclusively. And I cannot fault them for doing so. I may resent what I view a shallow approach to the game hobby by ignoring smaller companies run by enterprising individuals with often very fine ideas, but I cannot deny TSR Inc.'s right to promote its products over others. That, after all, is what they are in business to do, isn't it? And if you play AD&D exclusively, then The Dragon is perhaps the best value. Oh, we print material which could be adapted for use with AD&D, but we also print other material which may not be as useful to you.

This brings me to the topic of "house organ" magazines--those magazines which print material in promotion of their own products only. White Dwarf is not ashamed of its "house organ" status. The Dragon is becoming more and more of a "house organ". The games of these respective companies are very popular, so why not publish "house organ" magazines? In the minds of the executives of these companies there is absolutely no reason not to. In my mind, though, there is a drawback.

Where do small companies with smaller budgets go for exposure for their new, brilliantly conceived products? Honestly, they have very few places to go where they will receive equal treatment and exposure. I can proudly say that WHITE WOLF Magazine is one of those places.

And I can promise that WHITE WOLF Magazine will never, no matter what comes, be anything other than a multi-game magazine. Take this issue for instance. We have ar-

ticles for Villains and Vigilantes, Champions, Enforcers, Ars Magica, Rolemaster and some fantasy material which can be used in virtually any fantasy system.

So while I apologize to the people at TSR, Inc. and any reader whose sensibilities were disturbed, I will not apologize for the differences between WHITE WOLF Magazine and other game magazines.

RUNES ???

On a completely different front, there were a few people who made varying comments concerning the use of the "Sacrifice Wish" in my adventure "The Cloud Abode" in WHITE WOLF Magazine #13. The consensus of the comments was that the need for the faerie to give up his life was unnecessarily harsh. Yep, it was harsh. But was it really unnecessary? Not every adventure, even when the characters are victorious in their deeds, needs end with a complete victory. The choice concerning the Sacrifice Wish was meant to induce some deep thought. The characters had the opportunity to gain almost anything they wished, but at what cost? Were they willing to see the faerie Myrm die so that they could receive their just rewards? Role-playing, like life, is not all black and white.

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Letters

Not a very flashy title for a letter's column is it? Well, the title would have been "Howling at the Moon", but "Gateways" took that one from us. Despite the lack of a title at this point, we have been pressured by numerous requests to begin a letter's page so we have done just that. Maybe in your next letter you'll make a suggestion for a title.

Dear White Wolf,

I was pleased to receive WHITE WOLF Magazine #13 just now. That's the good news and probably the first of the bad news as well. I didn't receive 13 as part of my subscription, but as a promotion to subscribe. I am four issues into my 12 issue subscription and so far you have sent me 20 copies of one issue and now have failed to send either #12 (received after I complained) or #13 on time. Quite simply this will not do.

David Carl Argall
La Puente, CA

David, we don't deny having troubles with our subscription mailing, but the fact is that none of the problems you have experienced (or the similar problems of other subscribers) have been the fault of WHITE WOLF Magazine's staff. The reason that you received twenty copies of one issue was because the company that handles our mailing suddenly came up with this brilliant idea that the 20 after your name (which indicates the last issue in your current subscription) was actually indicative of the NUMBER OF COPIES you were to receive. Only those subscribers at the beginning of the alphabet experienced this problem simply because the mailer ran out of copies before they had prepared an issue for each subscriber. You received 19 other subscriber's copy of the magazine! Needless to say, we straightened the problem out and remailed the issue in question.

In the case of #12, you were not sent a copy only after your complaint. The copy you received was simply the delayed regular subscriber copy.

As far as the promotional you received with your copy of #13, that was simply another mistake. Current subscribers were not supposed to have been troubled by that insert. The mailer, however, tucked a copy of the flyer in every envelope. Therefore, the copy of #13 was your subscriber copy.

It's a struggle to get all the ends of an operation like this running smoothly. And while mistakes are being made we hope that they are not too inconvenient for our readers.

Dear WWM,

Thanks for sending me the recent sample copy of #13. I was impressed with the quality of your magazine graphically and editorially. Your writers write clearly, engagingly, and hit the right depth level.

I encourage you not to stop at "keeping up the good work", but to push your promising magazine to continual new heights and frontiers. There is an audience for this.

I have a particular interest in PBM games and hope they will receive plentiful coverage. This area would be well

served to find new voices to balance the style and exposure put forward by the able Jim Townsend.

John Odell
Renton, WA

John, you can count on us always pushing for a better magazine. We have never been ones to rest on our laurels (for very long anyway), and we certainly hope there is a market for WHITE WOLF Magazine as it is now and as what it will become.

As far as PBM coverage is concerned, your new subscription will guarantee that you receive #15, our PBM issue.

Dear Sirs,

I have never written to a gaming magazine before, but when I received a copy of WHITE WOLF Magazine #11 at GEN CON I had to.

At first glance, your magazine seemed interesting. The cover art was incredible, but that wasn't all. The interior art was great and so were the adventures. Everything was perfect. But surpassing all else were "Segment Jorune" and "The Order of Hermes". I would never expect to find anything like that in either "Dragon" or "White Dwarf". They're too busy writing things for their own game systems to write something for these other games. Another thing I liked is how clutter free your publication is.

I don't think I can express on paper how much I love your magazine. It's the perfect unbiased game magazine.

M. Nusbaum
Somewhere, USA

M., it's praise like yours which keep the desire to produce this magazine full steam ahead. We are certainly proud to be recognized by you and many other readers as a fine source of material for a variety of games.

There is only one problem. We appreciate the order for a subscription, but you neglected to enclose your address. As soon as we receive this from you your subscription will begin.





Devil on the Moon

by Stewart Wieck; Stewart is the Editor-in-Chief of WHITE WOLF Magazine. This means he has to catch his own writing mistakes. And that's tough to do!

"Devil on the Moon" is a short encounter/adventure for 21st Century Game's "Enforcers", a super-hero game set in the next century. It has been designed for three or four characters with about 45 TPC's. Because of the variety of alignments possible for characters in Enforcers, two separate introductions have been provided.

For Good Guys and Neutrals

By whatever means is standard for the group in question, the characters are contacted and briefed on a fanatic religious cult known as "Society for Free Expression" (SFE). Still very active on Earth, the SFE purchased land on Luna as soon as U.S. owned territories were offered. This sect on Luna was purportedly comprised of the most talented members of the organization. It was thought that they would be able to hold more effective rites on the "uncontaminated" lunar surface.

Recent news from the hierarchy of the SFE has indicated that no word has come from the lunar base for quite some time (one week). Bi-daily reports had been the previous norm. Because the only the only spaceship in the possession of SFE is at the lunar base, help is being sought.

Because of an outcry against government interference with religious institutions in the last 20th century, government agencies may not trespass on religious grounds. In this case, however, the SFE is waiving these rights in an attempt to get the government to investigate. The government, not concerned about the SFE, has invoked this law to protect itself from need to investigate. The SFE has therefore turned to the heroes for help (paying neutral characters if payment is required). Note that this law and its repercussions are not part of the "Enforcers" milieu as described by the game's authors. This law may, however, be incorporated into

your campaign if you wish to run this adventure as it is presented here.

For the Bad Guys

The SFE may be part of the villains' organization and they have taken it upon themselves to find out what has gone wrong. These villains would have benefit of the knowledge that the cult members were going to attempt to contact a supernatural being. Villains would probably also have access to the maps of the lunar base.

Another option here is to have the lunar base be the pet-project of one of the high ranking members of SFE who authorized its construction secretly and

behind the back of the villains. Not only would the situation at the base need to be addressed by the villains, but the rebellious leader would need some lessons as well. The leader may already have supernatural aid and therefore not totally helpless.

The SFE Lunar Base

The base is actually rather small in square-footage terms, but the base was designed on aesthetic precepts not rational ones. The entire place is a succession of domes of varying size. Each dome is described hereafter. All of the doors between domes slide open unless otherwise noted.

Name: Geevlings

TCP's: 40
ACP's: 7
initiative: 48
Strength: 21
Constitution: 16
Agility/Dexterity: 28
Intelligence: 26
Limb Strength Factor: 17
Healing Rate: 64
Hit Points: 1255
Energy: 101
Danger Sense: 26%
Detective Score: 21%
Knockback Factor: 223
Magic Save: 24%
Carrying Capacity: 926
Running Speed: 462
Flight Speed: 336 mph

Powers/Weaknesses	ABTCH	DAM#	EC/U	CPs
HTH	109%	10	.8	3 .1
Lightning Bolt	142%	25	.8	10 .9
Flight				.6
Invisibility				.6
Super Reflexes				.2
Spells*				.3

History: Geevlings are among the lowest of the servants available to Gevartian. The powerful demon did not wish to expend too much energy when drawing a few servants to this realm with him, so he simply grabbed a few Geevlings.

Each Geevling has the ability to cast one spell. Typical spells are: Fire Wall, Change Other, Shield, Speed and Explosion (like Special Effects but the bombs are real). These spells will be put to good use in the limbo-like realm. Fire Wall might be used to isolate a character on a floating rock to be dealt with later, etc.

Geevlings are slim. They stand over six feet high yet weigh only 160 lbs.

Name: Gevlartian

TCP's: 110
 ACP's: 110
 initiative: 88
 Strength: 95
 Constitution: 90
 Agility/Dexterity: 58
 Intelligence: 118
 Media Rating: 0
 Comeliness: 12 (as human possessed)
 Limb Strength Factor: 93
 Healing Rate: 360
 Hit Points: 6725
 Energy: 331
 Danger Sense: 118%
 Detective Score: 94%
 Knockback Factor: 531
 Magic Save: 95%
 Carrying Capacity: 85737
 Running Speed: 1218
 Flight Speed: 0

Powers/Weaknesses	ABCTH	DAM#		EC/U	CPs
energy bolt	178%	60	39	26	13
HTH	193%	23	39	10	11
psionic attack	234%	20	39	12	9
adaptation				2	4
magic resistance*				0	3
energy transfer*				0	4

Increased Statistics:

STR: +80	16
CON: +75	15
ADX: +45	9
INT: +100	20

Trained Statistics:

none

Innate Invulnerability* 40 points 3

History: Gevlartian is a major demon from another realm. He has great power and that power is only minutely reflected in the statistics above. The figures above represent only the amount of power which can be contained within the fragile human shell. Gevlartian was called upon by the SFE members, but they failed (fortunately for all) in actually summoning him entirely to this realm. With time Gevlartian will be able to accomplish this on his own. That is why he has sealed himself off in the moon base. He hopes to deal with the characters when they reach him and then complete his transfer to our realm.

New Power Descriptions:

Magic Resistance: Gevlartian is extremely resistant to magic and his save will always by 95% unless the source of the magic is a more powerful being than himself.

Energy Transfer: The energy bolts which Gevlartian fires will provide a conduit through which he may drain energy from any victim hit by the energy bolt. At the end of each row on the Combat Initiative Chart, snaking energy filaments of energy emanating from Gevlartian which "stick" to the victim will transfer 5 energy points to the demon. These points are lost by the victim. If the target of an energy bolt attack uses energy ground to disburse the attack, the energy filaments will be spread to everyone within twenty feet of the one who grounded the attack. They will then all be subject the energy transfer. Magnetism powers may be used to bend the energy filament away from a victim, but this costs an entire action and the normal EC/U cost. Teleportation of the victim will also interrupt the energy filament.

Innate Invulnerability: This invulnerability is applied to every damaging attack which strikes Gevlartian. It does not disappear and then return the next round.

1. Bay Dome. This the landing bay. Sensors on the roof of the dome cause the cause the bays doors to slide open so that a spaceship settle down into the air. Signs in the bay display messages such as "please wait, pressurization in process" and "atmosphere integrity achieved" to give notice to those inside a landing ship who wish to disembark. There is only room for two spaceships in the bay at a time. One is always the SFE vessel and the extra space was provided for the infrequent delivery ships. All of the processes of the bay area are automatic but may be overridden from the Command Dome.

2. Command Dome. This dome contains the controls for all of the functions of the base. Most of the functions (oxygen regulation, etc.) are computer-controlled. Any function may be overridden.

3. Food Prep Dome. This dome is where the SFE's android, Dante, prepares the meals. Dante is also in charge of the general up-keep of the base.

All of the modern kitchen appliances/apparati are in here. All of them may be remotely controlled by Dante. Despite the availability of food preparation appliances, however, Dante creates most of the meals by hand. His programming provides him with excellent cooking prowess.

4. Living Dome. This is the dome in which most of the cult's daily activity takes place. There are community video, computer and satellite equipment at hand. A suitable and ever-changing selection of books may be browsed through (including classics like Michael Rein-Hoffen's *The Darker Crowd* published in 2015). A large, permanent collection of books concerning arcane lore is

also available. All meals are eaten in here unless a member has an excuse to dine alone in his Private Dome.

5. Private Domes. There are a total of six of these and while originally of homogeneous interiors, first the occupants and now the effects of Gevlartian's presence have made certain changes. The two private domes which have not been tampered with each contains the necessities of personal living-- toilet, bed, etc.

a) The is Deven's room. Deven is the base leader. Deven is a powerful psychic so his room is one of the few which has not been altered in some way by Gevlartian. These same psychic defenses send out a message to "LEAVE!" which is received subcon-

sciously by those intending to enter. A %INT save is necessary to ignore this command. Additionally, characters with Mental Shield will be able to enter as long as the defense is active.

If the characters have the ability to infiltrate Deven's computer system (computer security skill required) they will (with computer programmer skill) find the base's official journal. The notes will show that the last entry is from a week ago and it notes that "we will all convene in the CD for the summoning and hopeful control". CD stands for Ceremony Dome.

Nothing else of importance may be found here.

b) This private dome was complete over-run and destroyed by Gevltarian's geevlings. The dome is full of blackened debris. Nothing useful or worthwhile may be found.

c & d & f) Gevltarian's geevlings have entirely disrupted the interior of all of these domes. Once the door to any of these domes slides open, a limitless, limbo-like realm will be seen beyond. Floating fragments of rock are the only substance in here other than some geevlings. At random locations but always within sight are five sliding doors. Three of these doors are the entrances to each of the private domes. The fourth opens onto the surface of Luna. The geevlings enjoy romping about on the surface of the moon. The last one opens into the ceremonial portion of the Farming Dome. Characters who enter this limbo-like space will not be harassed by the geevlings until they attempt to pass through that last door. Up until that point, the naive geevlings will gain great enjoyment just by watching the characters. Duty will rule them if the last door is approached and they will attack.

While there is oxygen in this realm, there is still a semi-weightlessness. KBFs should be halved when determining knockback distance. Additionally, there is only a 10% that a character's knockback path will see him collide with one of the rock platforms. If so then calculate knockback damage normally. Otherwise, the character will come to a stop floating in open space. Roll d100 to see how far away the character is from the nearest platform. If the number is greater than the distance he was knocked back, then obviously he is closer to the platform he was knocked from. Because the platforms have noticeable gravitational fields, the character will be drawn towards the nearest platform at the rate of fifteen feet per round. If the character possesses flight capabilities

(even wings in this case) then he may act normally in the empty space.

Only characters possessing adaptation or similar power will be able to survive on the surface of the moon without the proper equipment. Therefore it is not advisable for most characters to exit through one of the doors. If the player insists then the character dies.

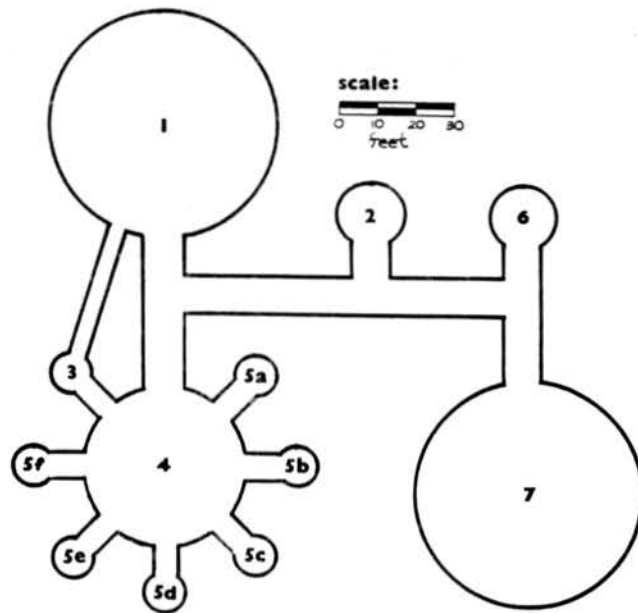
The only way to move about in the limbo realm without flight abilities is to propel oneself from platform to platform. Since each door stands on a rather large rock platform, characters may jump from the platform they are on towards the target platform. A %ADX roll notes success. Otherwise follow the rules noted above under knockback to determine how far away they stop, etc.

There is one geevling in here per character.

e) This is Raymond Stillman's private dome. Raymond is currently in the room as he was too ill to take part in the ceremony. Because of neglect, his condition has worsened so that he is now in a delirious state. He periodically vomits and continually sweats and shivers. Additionally, because of sinus drainage and other complications, Raymond's voice is very hoarse. The android, Dante, continues to bring food which Raymond can stomach (soup, applesauce, etc.) but the android has no knowledge of medicine.

While the characters are in the dome, Raymond will begin to mumble and thrash about. In his delirious state he will chant various portions of the litany

scale:
0 10 20 30
feet



required to summon Gevltarian which everyone in the base had to learn. Phrases like "in a storm of blood", "to destroy a complacent soul", and "to further the ends of darkness" will be decipherable. Remember that Raymond's voice is very hoarse and these phrases will seem that much more unnatural because of that. The whole scene should be played up so that the characters will think that Raymond has been possessed by a demon. If the characters have read Deven's computer files then this idea may come to them much sooner. If the characters follow Dante on the android's rounds, they will see him deliver the soup and some aspirin to Raymond. They may then comprehend the truth.

6. Storage Dome. Mundane supplies (clothing, extra cosmetics, etc.) and various farming implements are stored in here. All of the food is kept in the kitchen. Nothing especially important or valuable is in here.

7. Farming/Ceremony Dome. The cult members grow all the food they need to survive within this large dome. There are all varieties of crops in here as well as some flowers and small trees. The plants also help maintain a breathable atmosphere in the base as the oxygen they exhale is cycled through the ventilation system of the base.

The back third of the dome is blocked from sight by shoulder-height bushes. It is behind these bushes in an out-of-doors environment that the cult holds its rites. It is here that they sum-

moned and lost control of the demon Gevlartian. It is here that all of the cult except the sick Raymond Stillman yet remain.

Gevlartian, in an awesome display of his tremendous power, has created an impenetrable, transparent force field on the farm side of the bushes. No one may pass through this force field and no amount of damage may bring it down. The force field also extends around the inside of that end of the farming dome so tearing a piece of the dome away will not create an entrance. The source of the field's supernatural power is in another realm entirely. Gevlartian erected the force field in order to trap the cult members at the site of the ritual. That was before he was pulled from his realm of existence. Now away from his realm, Gevlartian is unable to bring the force field down himself. This is why he created the interdimensional spaces through the private domes.

If the characters jump or fly above the level of the bushes, they will be able to peer through the force field and see what is beyond. All of the cult members will be seen lying unconscious but one. This one is Deven and he is still resisting the power of Gevlartian. The characters will only be able to enter the area

beyond the force field by negotiating the limbo-like realm described earlier.

The Encounter

Once the characters have found the correct door in the limbo-realm and have entered the ceremony grounds they will find the scene the same as described above. Only Deven will be conscious and he is only barely so. Suddenly, the body of one of the unconscious cult members will be lifted into the air as if it were a puppet. Characters will see a brief swirling of dark energies around the body as Gevlartian enters the body and takes control. In a deep, resounding voice he will order the characters to leave or suffer the consequences of their interference. Combat will likely ensue.

Concluding the Adventure

Once Gevlartian has been knocked-out, Deven can offer the means of returning the demon to his realm of origin. Deven will need some help moving about because he is tired and starving, but he will instruct the characters to circled the body Gevlartian entered and clasp hands. He will then wearily chant a few lines in a strange language (only supernaturally related

characters will be able to make anything of the language and they will know it to be a powerful exorcism spell) and collapse immediately thereafter. The man who had been possessed by Gevlartian will likely be very bruised and battered. Because of this, and only if the characters did something to arouse the antagonism of the SFE, the characters may be prosecuted for assault and battery if they are good guys. Neutrals may have their payment withheld and evil characters will not be messed with.

Despite the fact that the SFE members have been very bad boys, there are no laws against summoning demons, so the characters will have little choice but to let them be. All of them will require medical attention, however, and good characters should see to that. Neutrals will be paid their fees (maybe, see above) by the SFE and asked to go their merry way. Evil characters, of course, may do whatever they wish.

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Automated Champions

by John Habermas; Just days before this article was to be typeset, we discovered that we did not have written permission from John to use the article. John quickly rectified that situation.

Detroit trembles in the grip of the Alpha Insanity, an artificial plague engineered by Viper to rain a storm of chaos throughout the city. While the population encounters imaginary manifestations of their own dreams, Viper agents ransack the city, looting it of all monetary and technological wealth. Detroit's heroes are also caught up in the madness, acting out their secret fantasies by battling invisible foes.

Only one man can wake Detroit from this terrible dream-- that's because he's not a man at all, but the most advanced form of machine. He is Automation, and he's about to take the nightmare back to Viper.

Mechanized heroes play important roles in many of today's best comics. The adventure potential they bring and the fascination they inspire always keeps their readers coming back for more. It's these same qualities that make them especially suited for many Champions campaigns. These characters are always fun to play and GM, but they also require more effort to create than their biological companions.

Mech Conception

As with all character building, conception comes first. With mechanical heroes, however, a few more details must be considered. All powers and abilities can't be attributed to mutations or an alien physiology. Most mechanized characters must have been built by someone (or something) for a specific purpose. How it achieved autonomy and self-motivation (if indeed it has) requires some explanation. This will provide the player with a sharper image of who his character is and what he should be able to do. It will also give the GM a source for future scenarios and plot development.

For example: Mechanon created Automation as part of an intricate plan

to eradicate the Detroit Cavaliers. Discovering that the Cavaliers' leader originated from an alternate world dominated by evil cybernetic constructs, Mechanon devised a grandiose scheme to destroy the hero mentally and physically. After capturing the leader's brother, Mechanon transferred the brother's mind into a great robotic colossus and released this "Automation" in the city with a program of destruction.

During the confrontation with the Cavaliers, the Automation was apparently able to over-ride his programming and put a halt to the battle. It took some time before the leader was able to accept his brother's new form. During this new period, the leader's internal struggles affected his ability to lead the team and this nearly destroyed them in some instances.

But the Cavaliers gained a powerful new member in the Automation. Mechanon's scheme failed-- or had it?

Construction

After the player and the GM have put together a workable origin, the next step is to explain how the mech works. Robotic characters aren't like basebots or security droids that simply take body and ignore stun. If they were, they couldn't be characters-- that's just part of the game system. It wouldn't be much fun anyway. This problem presents more details that must be defined.

Any machine that can think and act on its own volition must be a complex creation. If intelligence could be created artificially, then it follows that other bodily functions could be duplicated as well. Though it would be rare to find a mechanized being that could regenerate destroyed portions of its form, damage control on a lesser scale is probable if not necessary. Some mechs owe their existence to organic circuitry, biotech cells programmed for auto-repair. Others might employ techno-organisms, microscopic repair droids that



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race to damaged areas to perform their tasks.

Stun can represent the maximum amount of energy surges and physical shock the mech can withstand before being forced to shut down its conscious systems for repair. "Stunning" could reflect a violent jarring of delicate internal devices. Whatever the case, as long as the explanation finds acceptance with the GM, the battle is half over.

Power

Mech's can be powered by a variety of sources. The most common method would probably be an internal generator built into the mech. But who wants to be common in Champions? One option might be "broadcast power", energy that feeds in from an outside source providing a constant supply of power-- unless that broadcast is interrupted.

Some mechs run on rechargeable batteries or "power packs" that give them a specific supply of energy for certain periods of time.

Many of these details may seem superfluous or frivolous, but each one further defines the character. Champions is a game of special effects, and the more a player makes use of them the more he should be rewarded. manipulation of

these details might shape the outcome of future scenarios. A mech energized by broadcast power might be able to use his gadgeteering and channel the signal into the villain's death-trap, overloading the system. Creativity is its own reward.

Disadvantages

Defining the character in such detail will also virtually create its own list of disadvantages, especially physical, hunted, and dependence limitations. These may range from "dependent on recharge" to "body can only be repaired in laboratory conditions". This knowledge will also be useful in the building stage.

Character Building

When building a mechanized character, remember that the biggest "advantage" is the focus limitation. This not only helps the player cut costs on powers, but it gives the GM something to work with as well.

A mech is basically a walking focus, and for every one of his body pips that is destroyed, one power, either randomly or by the GM's choice, should be eliminated. Thus, nearly every power can be focused because they can be destroyed when the mech takes body. This leaves the GM in a flexible position to add a taste of chaos into seemingly routine scenarios. One well-placed (or lucky) energy blast might change the tide of battle, or at least slow the heroes enough to allow the villains to escape. While working frantically to deactivate the base's self-destruct mechanism, an energy surge from the computer could short the mech's memory systems.

There are some abilities that shouldn't be focused. These items are usually obvious such as body, stun and speed. The GM should determine what can and cannot be focused and what should carry "based-on" limits.

When characteristics are destroyed by body hits, they should be reduced to zero instead of their original base. Once focused, the new and old points become linked (and a minor reduction wouldn't be much of a disadvantage). Characteristic rolls could still be attempted but without the benefit of a the bonus-- that is at 9-or-less.

Some characteristics represent attributes that can't always be impaired. In these cases, a 9-or-less roll should be required every time a character performs an action relying on that ability.

If a mech who took an intelligence hit needs to access information in his science skill, a 9-or-less characteristic roll might be allowed to sift through his shorted memory circuits. Similarly, a roll might be allowed for a constitution hit to avoid being "stunned".

The GM might make these rolls himself to maintain the element of uncertainty, and to make sure a stray energy blast doesn't end up destroying the world.

Damage systems should remain inoperative until the body is repaired, though mechs may be temporarily "jury-rigged" into operation by characters with gadgeteering skills. In this case, the damaged mech would still later need repairs, but the mechanized character would be capable of action for a short period of time. Repairs made under these circumstances are always uncertain subject to GM approval. Some powers simply cannot be repaired in this fashion.

Of course, most mechs will have enough resistant defenses so as to not get blown apart in every battle, but GMs should have antagonists on hand that can pick of a few body from time to time... just to keep things interesting.

A restful Sunday evening at Cavalier headquarters is interrupted by the unexpected cry of the alert monitor. Rushing into the briefing room, our heroes find a familiar visage on their screens. It's Mechanon-- and he's calling collect!

The evil machine reminds them of his dedication to the painful extermination of mankind-- and of the Cavaliers.

"Get to the point!" Automation demands, stepping up to the main viewer.

"There is no point," Mechanon hisses in his synthetic, metallic voice. "I just called to say... goodbye."

With that, Mechanon triggers a tiny nuclear device that he'd built into the Automation's head. The top half of the Renaissance Center erupts in a brilliant fireball as the passengers of the approaching Cavalier jet witness their headquarters and their team-mates suddenly explode into radioactive dust!

GMing Mechs

Characters are only as good as their GMs allow them to be. A player may have the greatest character conception in the multiverse, but if his GM ignores it, he might as well play a stick figure. The player isn't the only one who loses out. By neglecting to make use of the backgrounds of the characters in his

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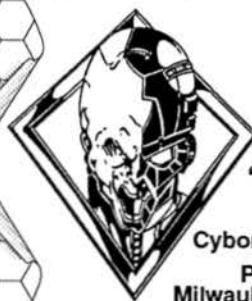
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campaign, a GM closes off a valuable creative arena. Though this goes for all types of characters, it's especially true for mechanized heroes who have inherently more detailed origins than their living counterparts. A good GM will take advantage of the creative foundations that his players have established and build upon them.

Classic scenarios involve the mech's creators. Some mechanical beings may not know where they came from or who designed them. Unraveling this mystery may be an ongoing theme featured in a series of scenarios, each hinting at a climatic ending that might astonish or further confuse the characters.

In some cases when a mech thinks he knows all there is about his origin, the GM might like to throw him some surprises. Sometimes a mech's creator isn't who (or what) he appears to be. If the mech thinks highly of his creators, the GM might drop hints that the humanitarian purposes for which the mech was designed may have been part of a malevolent plot against mankind. The villainous mech who turned on its builders and joined the heroes may discover that the sinister scientific conclave that created him as a robotic killing machine wasn't as evil as he thought. The mech might not be what he thought. The mech might not be what he thought he was either. Subliminal

programming and hidden powers might only manifest in certain circumstances.

Uncharacteristic or strange behavior doesn't necessarily have to be induced by the bad guys. Malfunctions can also lead to some entertaining situations. A damaged computer might send a heroic mech beserking down a busy street, destroying everything in his path. His team-mates may find that the only way to stop the rampage is to destroy their comrade.

It seems the more human a mech is, the less human it looks. Many times we see mechs who were formerly living beings now shelled in old Desoto designs while totally artificial mechanoids, completely assembled in the lab, look like the men on the street. Coming to terms with their forms should be a continuous process of setbacks and progress affecting characters' actions and reactions to nearly every situation.

Death, Deactivation and Resurrection

Nobody lives forever. Even a comic book character can die. Sometimes death is final, sometimes it's just a metamorphosis into a different form. Mechs have an advantage over living characters in that they can usually be rebuilt or repaired if they are "killed".

Of course, damage to personality functions may not be repairable or even detectable-- until it's too late. The heroes might find their formerly gentle friend has become an arrogant megalomaniac, or even a conniving villain who, no longer satisfied with serving humanity, intends to enslave it.

The point is, there's no such thing as a hopeless situation when it comes to the destruction of the mech. Not even in the case of the Automation. It seems there was a major flaw in his design-- a flaw from Mechanon's point of view.

Inspecting the mysterious activation of one of his many "body factories", Mechanon discovered the Automation completely rebuilt, augmented-- and very mad. It seems the evil machine programmed more into his creation than he intended, including his reproductive fail-safe function.

Mechanon made a mental note to get revenge in his next incarnation as his metallic limbs were torn from his body.

A New Experience

by Ken Cliffe; The cartographer for WHITE WOLF Magazine, Ken has also authored numerous Villains and Vigilantes (V&V) adventures which have been published by Fantasy Games Unlimited.

Those of you who have played V&V will be familiar with the experience system created for use with that game. This system (a villain's hit points plus power is multiplied by twice his level) is simple to use but upon closer inspection it proves to be inadequate in certain ways.

The basic flaw of the system is its neglect of an opponent's powers when calculating the experience points gained by his defeat. By overlooking this factor, the formula from the rules may not necessarily reflect a villain's true strength. An example which illustrates this follows.

Death is a first level villain. He has 16 hp, 57 Pr, and only one power, death touch. This one power makes him very dangerous. Ironically, should Death be captured he will be worth only 146 xp. This small figure is contradictory to the sheer threat he poses.

Now let's consider Musketeer, an eighth level villain who is a master swordsman. He has 18 hp and 62 Pr. With these scores he is worth 1280 xp to the hero who captures him. The crook is a good fighter, but he has nowhere near the same potential to kill as does Death. Why is Musketeer worth so much more then? Answered simply, there has been no consideration made for the powers of the two characters.

I am going to propose a new xp system which will solve this problem. My system is meant not to replace the existing xp system but rather to enhance it. In order to do this, each power from the V&V rulebook has been assigned an xp value which reflects the strength or versatility of a power. Whenever a villain

is defeated, you should refer to the following lists. [PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Permission is granted to photocopy these pages for your personal use.]

The experience value allocated to a power should be added to his total xp value. Only those powers used against a hero should be considered for this bonus. It does not matter whether the intended affect took place or not. That is, even if the villain missed when he attacked using power blast, the hero will still get +100 xp. Conversely, a villain with the power of Water Breathing A who is defeated on land should not give the heroes an xp bonus. Multiple use of a power in an adventure will not accumulate xp for the hero. The listed value is awarded only once.

On the flip-side, a hero will lose xp points because of a villain's weaknesses if the hero uses the weakness against the villain. If the villain takes extra damage from fire and the hero uses a fire attack, then the hero loses xp.

This supplementary xp system will provide characters with a small increase in earned xp after each adventure. This should not cause them to progress in levels at a noticeably greater rate. Accordingly, no changes have been made in the number of xp required for each level.

Powers

Absorption: a) experience-- 3 bonus xp per 10 xp drained, b) super powers-- the total bonus xp value of the powers drained plus 30, c) hit points-- 10 bonus xp per hp absorbed plus 20, d) carrying capacity-- 4 bonus xp per 100 lbs. cc absorbed, e) power-- 2 bonus xp per Pr drained, f) damage-- 3 bonus xp per point of damage plus 30, g) substance-- Gm should assign a value based on how the power is used against an opponent, h) knowledge/memories-- 30 plus any extra points the GM determines, i) appearance-- as memories, above.

Android Body: 60 plus points for body power and heightened endurance.

Animal/Plant Control: 30 plus 5 per hp of animal or plant that can be controlled (granted even if the opponent does not use all of the control points available). GM might consider points for powers possessed by those controlled.



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Animal/Plant Powers: All powers are listed elsewhere. Value for "special" to be determined by GM.

Animated Servant: Normal xp plus bonuses for any powers.

Armor: 1 bonus xp per ADR point. Devices built in type B armor earn points as per the powers.

Astral Projection: 60

Bionics: Bonus xp should be determined with consideration to the number, type and effectiveness of bionic parts.

Body Power: Due to the unlimited nature of this power, the GM should determine the bonus.

Chemical Power: See Body Power. Advantageous powers should start at about 25 bonus xp.

Cosmic Awareness: When effectively used against the hero, this power can be worth 70 or more. A false answer which endangers a villain may cost the hero 10 to 40 xp.

Darkness Control: 70

Death Touch: 500

Disintegration Ray: 120

Devilization Ray: 90

Dimensional Travel: This power can be used to escape from the hero or teleport the unwilling hero and his friends (the portal variation). In the first case, 50 xp is awarded if the hero can track the villain down and capture him within the scenario. 100 xp are awarded in the second case if the hero is able to recover his friends and find his way back to (presumably) Earth.

Diminished Senses: The hero loses xp when defeating an opponent with this weakness. The exact amount depends on the severity of the disability.

Emotion Control: About 60 points, though exact figure depends on how the power is used and what emotion is controlled.

Flame Power: "Flame thrower" = 70. "Flame on" = 90 plus points for flight.

Flight: A grounded hero who defeats a flying opponent gains 40 xp. If both can fly but the hero's maximum speed is one-half or less the villain's, 30 xp is gained. 15 xp are earned if the hero can fly one-half to all of the villain's speed. No extra points are awarded if the hero can fly any faster than the villain's speed.

Force Field: The force screen variety earns bonus xp equal to twice the villain's Pr score. The pummeling attack variety earns 50 points.

Gravity Control: Initial score of 30 due to versatility plus 5 per point of strength of the wielder.

Heightened Agility: No bonus. Extra points are already considered in the opponent's hp and Pr and these are reflected in the equation from the rules.

Heightened Attack: 10 xp per point of extra damage.

Heightened Charisma: If usable against the hero, this power is worth 1 xp per extra point.

Heightened Defense: 50 xp per -4.

Heightened Endurance: see Hgtd. Agility.

Heightened Expertise: Type one is base 10 xp. Type two base 20 and type three base 30. For each +4 an additional 20 points are earned.

Heightened Intelligence: see Hgtd. Agility.

Heightened Sense: Bonus points should be determined by the GM.

Heightened Speed: The bonus movement gained divided by five is the bonus xp value awarded to the hero who moves one-half or less than the villain's total speed. A hero moving greater than one-half the villain's speed gains speed bonus divided by ten bonus xp but no xp if he moves faster than the villain. For every extra point of initiative the villain gains, the hero earns 5 bonus xp even if he can move faster than the villain.

Heightened Strength: See Hgtd. Agility.

Ice Powers: 80 plus points for ice armor as Armor.

Illusions: Type A = 20 bonus xp per sense (visual, audible, etc.) that the villain can manipulate. Type B, solid illusions, grant an xp bonus equal to twice the Pr of the villain. Animated solid illusions have an experience value of their own.

Invisibility: 120

Invulnerability: 8 xp per point.

Life Support: 60

Light Control: 120

Lightning Control: 100

Lowered Intelligence: See Hgtd. Agility.

Low Self-Control: 30 for though a weakness, it only makes the battle more difficult for the hero.

Magic Spells: varies

Magnetic Powers: 30 plus 1 per 5 points magnetic capacity of the villain.

Mind Control: 90

Mutant Power: See Body Power.

Mute: Deduction of 30 points if the hero uses this weakness against the villain.

Natural Weaponry: Type A = 25. Type B = 40. Type C = 60. Extra abilities connected with this power must have values determined by the GM.

Non-corporeality: 90

Paralysis Ray: 70

Pet: Normal xp value though its powers may alter the value.

Phobia/Psychosis: Costs the hero an amount determined by the GM if the weakness can be used against the villain.

Physical Handicap: See Phobia.

Poison/Venom: Bonus xp must be determined according to the potency of the venom.

Power Blast: 100

Prejudice: It is unlikely that this weakness can be used against the villain, but the hero who could would earn 20-70 bonus xp (depending on the charisma of the villain and the situation).

Psionics: See Body Power.

Reduced Agility: See Hgtd. Agility.

Reduced Charisma: If used to defeat a villain, the hero must pay 2 xp per point the villain lost.

Reduced Endurance: See Hgtd. Agility.

Reduced Strength: See Hgtd. Agility.

Regeneration: Since this power can be used indirectly against a hero by increasing the villain's hit points, a bonus

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xp of 30 per healing rate point (or fraction thereof) is earned.

Revivication: It is virtually impossible to use this power against a hero, but if it is done the GM should determine an appropriate bonus.

Robotic Body: 70 plus points for any device powers.

Size Change: 100 per level on the height chart. A villain with a permanent height change is worth 100 times the die roll needed to achieve his height. A minimum of 100 is awarded.

Sonic Abilities: 60

Speed Bonus: Movement gained divided by two is the xp bonus.

Special Requirement: The xp cost to the hero should be determined by the GM based on the requirement.

Special Weapon: See Body Power.

Stretching Powers: 40 plus (stretching distance divided by three).

Telekinesis: 40 plus 1 per five points of telekinetic capacity.

Telepathy: 50

Teleportation: See Dimensional Travel

Transformation: a) power activation-- no bonus, b) weaker form-- bonus to be determined by GM, c) shapeshifter: I) disguise-- 40 plus points for powers gained as a result of the new form, II) see Disguise, III) as Disguise but with an initial score of 70.

Transmutation: 100

Vehicle: Bonus should reflect the effectiveness of the vehicle.

Vulnerability: If exploited by the hero, he must pay an amount as determined by the GM.

Vibratory Powers: 80

Weakness Detection: 40 plus 5 per bonus to hit the villain receives. Extra points may be awarded if the villain discovers some weaknesses.

Water Breathing: Type A-- 60 if fighting in water when the hero cannot breathe underwater. Otherwise, no bonus is earned. Type B-- An air-breathing hero defeating the villain underwater gains 90 xp. A hero with Water Breathing A gains 40 xp after an underwater fight. If both have type B then no bonus is gained. A villain with this power who is defeated on land will cost the hero 70 xp.

Weather Control: 200

Willpower: Type A-- 40. Type B-- as determined by the GM.

Wings: See Flight.

Looking back at the example given earlier, we now see how this system compensates for the imbalance in the xp awards. Assuming that Musketeer only has Heightened Expertise type 1, he is now worth (1280+30) 1310 xp. Death, with his single power of death touch, is now worth (146+500) 646 xp. Mus-

keteer is still worth twice as much, but powers can never truly compensate for battle experience.

The values for the xp bonuses given in this article are not etched in stone. Other modifications could be made as well. A hero without a ranged attack who defeats a villain with one may earn extra xp, while in the reverse situation he might lose some.

And remember, villains gain these bonuses for defeating heroes as well!

SEGMENT JORUNE



Segment Jorune welcomes you to its artwork laden pages this month with a feature written for to help Game Masters bring their players to Jorune as a supplement to any role-playing game. As we say, "Leave Your World Behind," and experience Jorune, if even as a campaign.

HELPING THE GAME MASTER PLUNGE PLAYERS INTO JORUNE

While many Game Masters have heard of Jorune and have seen the artwork, they are often satisfied with their current system, desiring only the atmosphere of an alien place for their players to explore. Over several issues in White Wolf Magazine, Segment Jorune will detail the process of bringing characters from other environments into Jorune for the fun and bewilderment of your players. Issue #12 of White Wolf told the story of humans on Jorune, how they faced destruction at the hands of the shanthas and how their society has rebuilt over 3500 years. Read it to learn more about the world of Jorune.

Who's the target audience for such a hyperspace hop? Jorune is a perfect setting for players who have spent one too many days in a dark dungeon, or who have counted more dragon kills than they have gold pieces. Even the galactic gaming types will find themselves befuddled by exotic creatures and cultures more alien than they've seen in one hundred worlds. And whether your players are in a science fiction, a fantasy, or a real world game, there's a way to Jorune for everybody.

HOW TO GET TO JORUNE (KIDNAPPING YOUR PLAYERS)

There are a number of interesting ways to bring your player to Jorune. Players in a science fiction universe could travel to Jorune, an as of yet uncharted world, on orders from superiors to investigate the disappearance of ships in the Stynferrough IV star system. Or they could come across this lush world accidentally, face the fate of many ships...

Travel By Spaceship

Although not generally disclosed to SkyRealms gamers, Jorune's shanthic automatic defense systems are standing ready at full power in the current year 3488. Although more detailed information is pending, the system's sensors are usually sensitive only to ships with cross-sections larger than one 0.01 km^2 (roughly 100×100 meters). The devastating power of the planet's Elip-Ston weapons grid has blasted all but the most powerfully shielded starcraft out of the skies. Jorune's natives have been historically xenophobic dating back more than 5000 years. Historians of Jorune chronicle several turbulent periods of subject rule under star-faring races all of which were terminated. A defense system was created to allay their fears of another term of repression.

A smaller ship approaching orbit might trigger a less catastrophic response should only a single, low-power ground-based tracer-cannon (called a "thosk") be activated and merely track it. The thosk's continuous beam will begin overloading field-coupled circuits within seconds, and the shields of a small ship will start to give way within minutes. This is the perfect time for a hasty crash landing on Jorune. Locations for landings and crash landings are described later.

If your players do much flying from one side of the galaxy to another, you can innocently introduce a defect into their hyperspace transducer that pulls them back to space/time short of their destination. Then they can land or crash-land on Jorune for supplies and time to effect repairs.

Still another way to bring players to Jorune is through the collapse or fluxuation in the space conduit through which the players travel in hyperspace. Jorune, her moons, and neighboring planets in the solar system all produce a powerful field that can deflect or change the local space conduit. Weary travelers have come out of hyperspace to find themselves hundreds of light years from home, low on fuel, near the orbit of a seemingly hospitable, temperate planet with life sustaining atmosphere and near-standard gravity. Many decide to enter orbit, make some sightings, and land.

Of course, if you really want to baffle your players, you can bring them out of suspended animation on Jorune as backup personnel that were never revived after the shanthic assault of the humans. Players will be waking up in Earth's 58th century. They would know little about this world, having been put in the deep freeze before leaving Earth. Their knowledge would be limited to the expectations of the colony leaders --- and would be practically useless when faced with a reality so vastly different.

Enter Jorune from a Planetbound Setting By Warp

There are other ways to enter Jorune besides through space. Players in a Medieval setting, perhaps romping through a dungeon, or characters playing mobsters in the 1920s on Earth can come to Jorune in a less sophisticated way... by warp.

Warps are commonplace on Jorune, but not so in most other places in the Galaxy. A warp looks like a window four meters high and two and a half meters across. The view through a warp gives a somewhat distorted view of the location that the warp leads to. Players can see where the warp leads unless it is a 'dark warp.' The properties of a dark warp differ in that nothing can be seen through them, and they exert a powerful attraction to all nearby matter. The strength of the pull drops off quickly with the distance from the warp. One step too close and your dungeon-digging player will be kissing the sweet soil of an alien world.

Warps can occur spontaneously on Jorune, but are a rarity, if at all existent on most other worlds. Generally, a Jorune crystal

or other object containing "Isho" is needed to open the dimensional manifold. The coincidentally properly proportional shape of a building on Earth near certain radioactive wastes could trigger the effect, just as surely as the activation of a large white crystal brought from Jorune. Crystals are activated by holding them in the palm of the hand and concentrating on thoughts that force the mind to produce the correct type of standing waves that the crystal needs to release its energy. If successful, an orb of white energy will be released from the palms of the crystal user, and flow 2-3 meters away, where it will form into a warp.

The period of time that a warp remains open depends on the energy source, its natural stability, and interference from other parties. On Jorune, the natives have become very good at slamming warps shut within seconds if they don't like who's coming through. The "shanthas," the natives previously mentioned, can also create warps with ease. When players need to return home, it may be a shantha they seek out to open a warp back to their home world.

If undisturbed, a warp opened with a Jorune crystal will close within 20 seconds. Naturally occurring warps, those spontaneous in nature, usually last no more than one hour, but will re-open again at a later date. Shanthas understand this process.

WHERE TO LAND/WHERE TO WARP

The planet Jorune is roughly Earth sized and contains land masses and water in comparable proportions to Earth. Only one half of the globe is mapped in SkyRealms publications, leaving the other side of the world to the imagination of the game's Sholari (a Jorune Game Master). The following is a brief description of each of the major continents.

Continents and Land Masses of Jorune

Ice Fields of Gilthaw: This large, frozen wasteland is home to the "Cleash," an insect-like race of intelligent bipedal creatures that travel the world in their K'crikss ships, large, narrow water going vessels with masts that sway overhead twice the ships length in height. They are feared and despised by most of the other cultures on Jorune for their relentless aggressions against other races. The Cleash dominate and enslave a related race, the Scarmis, by some biological means not fully understood. Scarmis will do the bidding of Cleash only when in their company. The Cleash themselves are not well suited to the frozen wastelands in which they live, and for millennia, scholars have searched for clues that explain their existence so far north.

Voligire: A hot, volcanically active land mass seething with black bogs, swamps, and dead lakes. A race of slender bipeds called "Ramian" live in Voligire. Although not despised like the cleash, their warring passions have brought them in conflict with most of the other realms of Jorune. Their last major war was in 3472, only sixteen years ago. They savagely attacked Burdoth's north coast and destroyed the entire Lelligirian Navy and 3600 seamen in the process. Ramian scour the globe in search of "shirm-eh," an herb that they require in order to heal from injury. They attempt to trade the coveted daij meat with humans for shirm-eh. Only the isholeless rami-an can safely fish for these dangerous enervores. Ships

manned by Humans run the peril of being sunk by daij, fishing for these Jorune sea-devils. Daij is used in human realms to sense illegal energy use.

Lundere: This is the home of Woffen, genetically engineered creatures based upon terran wolves that now stand upright, and are endowed with speech and opposable thumbs. Although they walk on two legs, they can drop down to all fours for speed. Woffen were the product of "Iscin," the Terran biotec engineer who created a number of Earth descendant creatures soon after the fall of the Earth colony.

Lundere is also home to the ancient shanthic land. Shanthas are the original form of intelligent life on Jorune. They do not see with eyes; their "Tra-Sense" allows them to see all around them and without light. Jorune's ambient form of energy, the "Isho," permeates and deflects around life and matter. This is what the shanthas see. Humans can gain this sense through digestion of the daij meat, described elsewhere. Shanthas were apprehensive about allowing humans to visit their world 3500 years ago, but greeted the visitors with lukewarm welcome and the foundation of their laws. When Earth found itself in the throes of nuclear war, the Jorune colony knew that they were cut off and that it was only a matter of time before their supplies dwindled. The humans broke their negotiated treaties with the shanthas and found themselves in a genocidal confrontation with this planet's inhabitants. Most of the humans scattered throughout the 80 colony sites perished, as did millions of shanthas. Only now, 3500 years later, have populations regained previous numbers. Shanthas still occupy Lundere, but their locations are hidden and their contact with outsiders limited.

Dobre: Close cousins of the Woffen are the Bronth, another genetic creation of Iscin, in this case based upon Earth's bears. They stand as high as eight feet, and can weigh in excess of one-thousand pounds. Like their smaller relatives, the woffen, they are bipedal, although they go down to all fours when relaxing or playing with their cubs. Bronth abhor slavery since their early days after Iscin's death when still another bio-tec race, the "Crugar," dominated its cousin races and forced them to do its bidding.

Burdoth: Unquestionably the best place for a human or near human to reside on Jorune. This realm was home to many of the original colony sites 3500 years ago. Humans have made the most progress toward civilization in Burdoth, where many large cities dominate the coastline. The capital of Burdoth, "Ardoth," is home to more than one quarter of a million people. The army of this realm has shown superiority in all of its engagements since the rediscovery of energy weapons forty years ago in a conflict remembered as the Energy Weapons War. Lost caches of Earth-Tec, perfectly preserved underground for millennia, were discovered by Burdoth's military and the new technology has revolutionized both combat and society on Jorune. The tools and weapons of humans' ancestors has for the first time in 35 centuries been again in the hands of humans. Only time will tell how wisely they have chosen to use this awesome arsenal.

Human society in Burdoth relies heavily upon the "Drenn System," in which people eager to become citizens of Burdoth's capital city Ardoth, complete tasks, missions, or assigned duties to show loyalty and devotion to their realm. A "challisk," or metallic plate is worn around the neck and serves to record marks from Drenn who view their deeds as

worthy. A person seeking drennship is called a "Tauther."

Ardoth is the technology center of Jorune. Aside from black market locations on the island of Silipus and the realm of Thantier, Ardoth inventories the greatest selection of goods. Many Earth-Tec devices are strictly controlled and may only be carried by Drenn.

Other Areas: West of Burdoth is the Doben-al, a vast wasteland filled with tribespeople, travelers, marauders and wanderers. To the East lies the realm of Heridoth, a once great realm, now fallen from power and prestige into a nation of warring city-states and factional powers. To the south are the East-Trinnu-Jungle-Lands, a dangerous area separating Burdoth and the more southern realm of Anasan. The East Trinnus, as they are called, have been infested with Cleash for the past 30 years. Burdoth has stepped up patrols in the area in anticipation of attack. More of the other areas of Jorune will be dealt with in an upcoming Segment Jorune.

Living On Jorune Born in Kansas

Now that some of the geography is clear, go wild. Plant your players where you will. Burdoth is the tamest part of the world. Although interaction with other humans is the most accessible, player characters from different worlds and game systems will seem the most odd to those they are closest related to. A human from Ardoth would immediately note the weird clothing that a human from a medieval society might wear: "From what beast are those leather's made? Not thombo! And from what wood is that staff? There are no trees around Burdoth that grow with that grain." Creatures would definitely comment on a character's accent (assuming that the referee desires such a complication). The "Entren," spoken on

Jorune is close to English, but many words have changed their meanings with time. Peoples of Jorune are likely to assume the speaker refers to corondans and gemlinks, though he is weaving yarns of dragons and gold pieces..

Living On Jorune Born on Altair VII

Those entering Jorune from a science fiction setting are more likely to run into trouble in the human populated areas of Burdoth and Heridoth. Because Earth-Tec weapons are strictly controlled, any blaster toting stranger is likely to be brought in for interrogation. Burdoth's ruling power, the Dharsage, is well armed, and ready for any show of force. Those marooned on Jorune are more likely to survive by turning over confiscated weapons and their alien devices and adapting to the world than by fighting it. If they stay for a year or more, they'll adjust over time, and become powerful in their own right.

It may be that the biggest unexpected surprise for characters from advanced societies is the presence of the Isho, and the amazing ways that the natives and immigrants have learned to manipulate it into orbs and bolts. The shanthas evolved around the Isho: they see with it (as discussed under the description of Lundere), communicate through it, and weave it into various forms, some destructive, some powerfully beneficial. This is not a form of psionics. The energy abilities, called dyshas, are not powers of the mind, rather, they are the skills that the mind learns to manipulate an energy that is already there. Although Isho is not unlimited in any area of Jorune, shanthas have learned and physically adapted to draw it in from sources near and far when needed. They read the Isho winds and can follow the currents to large sinks in the crust of the mantle from which the Isho cycles.



Cleash, creatures of the Ice Fields of Gilthaw



KANTISS

ADVANTAGE: -2/+2
CONSTITUTION: 3D6
STRENGTH: 2D6+6
SPEED: 1D6+2/4D6
PERCEPTION: +0

SIZE MODIFIER: +1
AGILITY 3D6 (0)/2D6+6(1)
AIM: 2D6+6 (1)
ISHO: 3D6+50
COLOR: 4D6 (Launtra & Tra)

DYSHAS: Roll for difficulty as for Muadra, but add a 2 point bonus. Kantiss have all Dyshas in Shal of that difficulty and down, and are restricted to the Shal group, except for HEALER dysha, if a roll is successful.

Averages marked within the parenthesis (). For AGILITY, average skill level for hand to hand attacks is shown. For AIM, it is the average penalty or bonus based upon an average aim. Numbers indicated after the / should be used when the Kantiss is under the water.

Kantiss live in the warm/temperate seas of Jorune, amidst the islands south of Anasan and beyond. Decimated during the Human/Shanthic war they are now rare and reclusive creatures. They live in small colonies, each with one dominant male.

Slightly larger than Boccords, Kantiss are armed with long tusks, sharp claws and great thwacking tails! They also employ certain dyshas to great effect underwater, in particular Body Freeze. With this they are able to stun fish, crustaceans, and small sea mammals in a 4 meter radius from their swimming bodies. They use small nets in which to carry food.

They reside in damp caves, grottos and reefs along the island coasts that are kept cool with a kelp-like sea plant which they spread around their dwellings. This kelp (humans call it "mirame") is cultured and farmed by the male Kantiss. It is an obscure plant and grows in only one ocean location on the entire planet, reached by a handful of closely guarded and secret ocean warps, hundreds of feet below the surface. Aside from cooling their caves, Mirame helps keep the female Kantiss fertile, an unfortunate legacy from the war. For 6 to 8 weeks the female Kantiss wraps the long, flat plant around her body, extracting needed nutrients until the limilate dies and

begins to harden.

To humans, Mirame means 1 hour of limited Tra sense; it boosts their color x3 to gain respective Isho sensitivity skills. A single dosage sells for around 4 Gems. Regular use leads to addiction and subsequent loss of eyesight. The addict becomes dependent on Mirame to see, and then only in Tra-vision.

Most Kantiss colonies are violently territorial and react swiftly to intrusions to their domain, the males from various settlements only interacting peacefully when farming the mirame. Recently, however, several have begun occasional trade with the salu. Kantiss find the Ahji fruit an irresistible delicacy for which they exchange the hardened Mirame. Humans will pay a high price to the salu for small quantities of this rare limilate.

Although they spend the majority of their life in the ocean, Kantiss have enlarged lungs, not gills and must surface every 60 minutes. As native Jorune creatures, they are able to wield dyshas, though the race lacks the intelligence and compulsion to explore the intricacies of Sho-Caudal and the Sho-Sen; they have little in common with their distant cousins, the Shanthas.

The Kantiss communicate by altering their signatures, changing the Isho ripples subtly. This also means Kantiss are very good at reading the copras of encountered creatures and reacting in advance of a creature's actions.

Sailors on the southern seas avoid the grottoes and reefs that are the domain of the Kantiss, who rise out of the water like great ocean vindicators, taking out entire ships with their dyshas and weapons. Few fishermen hunt the Kantiss. For those who do, the rewards of mirame and Kantiss tusk (when ground into a power, it is as active as crystal dust) is enough to risk their lives for.

*The Kantiss was submitted by Geoff Gray of
Blackpool England*



Rild and Klafe, blood boiling with chiveer passion, strike out into the black bogs of Voligire, a relentless unthinking wall of carnal agression.



Summary and More Later

Although more material will follow in future issues of White Wolf on this issue, below is a synopsis of some of the alien words your players will become accustomed to hearing:

Ardoth: Capital city of the realm of Burdorth. Human's greatest stronghold on Jorune.

blaster: A high-speed plasma ejecting energy weapon.

Bronth: A race of creatures based upon Earth bears that speak, stand upright and have opposable thumbs. They reside mainly in the realm of Dobre.

Burdorth: The main human realm of Jorune. Many of the Earth Colony ships were based in the lands now referred to as Burdorth.

challisk: A metal plate worn around the necks of people seeking citizenship in the realm of Burdorth. Challisks are made from the remains of hull plates from the original Earth colony ships that were blown apart during the shanthic assault on the humans.

Cleash: A race of warring insect-like creatures that live far to the north in the Ice Fields of Gilthaw and in the East Trinnu Jungle Lands.

corondans: Enormous beasts that inspire terror among all races but Jorune's natives, the shanthas. Corondons have four arms each boasting three razor sharp nails more lethal than swords. The shanthas have mastered the process of crafting blades from these "thailiers" of the dhar corondon.

Crugar: A race of bio-engineered creatures based upon Earth's cougars. Created by Iscin, the Crugar eventually caused his death.

crystal: Jorune crystals absorb some of the planet's ambient energy, the "Isho," over time. White crystals are capable of creating warps.

daij: A marine enervore (energy eating creature) of Jorune that is valued for its use in endowing "Tra-Sense" upon those who eat its meat. Daij are a very dangerous prey because they attempt to sink all of the ships but the isholeless (and thus invisible) Ramian.

dark warp: A warp through which no light can pass through to give a clue as to what lies on the other side. Dark warps exert a strong attractive pull on nearby objects.

Dharsage: The ruling class in Burdorth. The ruler of a realm is a dharsage. (pronounced dar-sidge).

Dobre: A realm to the east of Burdorth inhabited by Bronth.

Durlig: A plant created by Iscin, the Bio-Tec engineer. Although its flavor was far from perfect at the time of the colony's destruction, durlig was created as a mainstay of the human diet on Jorune. It went uncultivated for centuries because early humans on Jorune considered it a foul-tasting, poisonous weed.

Drenn: Citizens of Burdorth. Only Drenn can carry energy weapons.

Drenn System: The system in which Tauther (people wishing Drennship) seek work and journeys to prove themselves worthy of citizenship. Tauther wear challisks hanging from their necks upon which marks of approval are recorded.

dyshas: Energy abilities are called "dyshas." They fall into two main categories: orbs and bolts. Dyshas are woven out of Isho, Jorune's ambient energy given off by the planet's crystal crust.

Earth-Tec: Any device or item from ancient Earth. Thirty-five centuries have passed since the colony arrived on Jorune,

but Earth-Tec preserved in underground cryogenic support tanks are fully operational when taken out of suspension.

gemlinks: The basic unit of currency in Burdorth. Gemlinks are, as their name implies, small, round gems that are linked together like bracelets. One gemlink is worth approximately \$20 in U.S. currency, circa 1980's.

Heridorth: Another human realm located south-east of Burdorth.

Ice Fields of Gilthaw: Frozen ice fields that are the inhospitable home to the even more inhospitable cleash.

Iscin: The Bio-Tec scientist who created the Woffen, Bronth, Crugar, Blount, and Tologra. A person of learned ability is called an "iscin." Scientists and scholars fall into this category.

Isho: The ambient form of energy which permeates and deforms around everything on Jorune. This energy can be woven into orbs and bolts. (see: dyshas)

Jorune: A planet colonized by Earth in the 22nd century. After Earth's demise the Jorune colony was abandoned to an uncertain future on the alien world. Jorune is more than one hundred light-years from Earth.

K'crikss ships: Tall masted-ships of the Cleash.

Lundere: The Ancient Shanthic Lands and home of the Woffen.

Ramian: Tall, slender, exo-skeletal creatures who inhabit the realm of Voligire.

Scarmis: Intelligent insect-like creatures dominated by the Cleash.

Shanthas: Shanthas are the original form of intelligent life on Jorune. They have no eyes, seeing instead with their Tra-Sense which allows them to interpret how the Isho deforms around matter. Shanthas evolved underground, where their large cities still remain.

shirm-eh: A limilate (herb) which is necessary for ramian to heal.

Silipus: An island south of Dobre and Burdorth.

starcraft: Space faring vessels where known as "starcraft" at the time of Earth's demise.

Tauther: One who seeks citizenship in Burdorth is a tauther. The process of seeking citizenship is called "tothis."

Thantier: A realm of humans located far to the west of Burdorth.

thombo: Enormous beasts of burden used for riding and the harvest of durlig.

thosk: A low-power ground-based tracer-cannon used to track space vessels in their approach and orbit of Jorune. Thosk are also used against ground targets.

Tothis: The process of seeking citizenship in Burdorth.

Tra-Sense: The way Shanthas "see." Through Tra-Sense, shanthas can sense Isho all around them as it flows around objects and creatures.

Voligire: The home realm and base of power for the Ramian race.

warp: Large window-like areas that temporarily allow passage between one place and another. Although common on Jorune, they seldom exist elsewhere.

white crystal: The type of Jorune crystal needed to open a warp.

Woffen: A Bio-Tec race based upon wolves of Earth created by Iscin. Woffen inhabit the realm of Lundere, the Ancient Shanthic Lands.

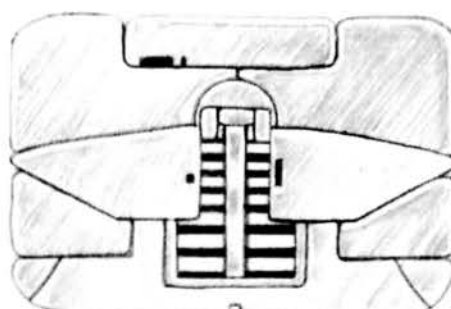
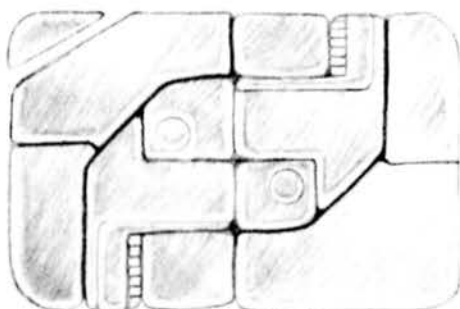
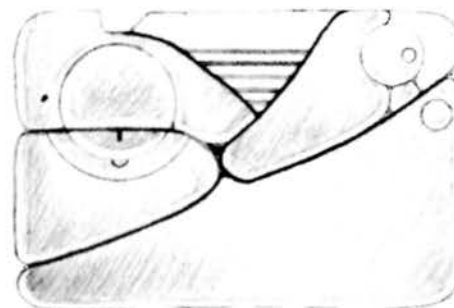
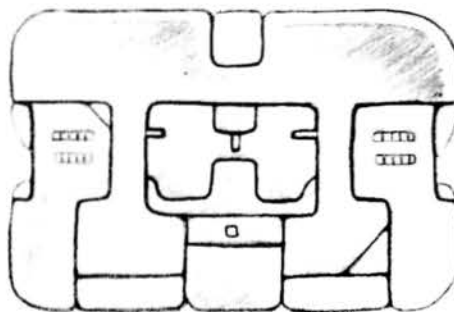
MAIL ORDER

If you can't find Jorune in your local game store, you can mail-order it directly from us. We prefer to send all orders COD. If you live outside the U.S. please send money orders in U.S. dollars. Effective December 1, 1988, the following items will be available at the following prices:

SR101:	The Jorune Boxed Edition	\$25.00
SR202:	Ardoth	\$7.00
SR301:	Earth-Tec	\$8.00
SR851:	Essay Pack #1 (1st ten essays)	\$6.00
SR803:	Character Sheets (10 count)	\$4.00
SR802:	8/87 20 page rules supplement and 5 character sheets	\$6.00
SR600:	Jorune T-shirts. Woffen, Ramian, Eelshon She-Evid, Dhar Corondon. Assortment of colors, 100% pre-washed cotton. M, L, XL. Specify size; list style preference. We reserve the right to substitute another style if your choice isn't available.	\$10.00

Add \$1.00 per item (\$1.50 for Boxed Edition) for shipping (maximum \$5), and \$3.25 to the total order for COD if you live in the U.S. If you live in Canada, add \$5 to your order. If you live elsewhere, add \$10 to help cover the cost of shipping. We will always use the fastest shipping method affordable. Send orders to SKYREALMS, PO Box 5543, Berkeley CA, 94705. Please allow six weeks for delivery, although we will try to act more swiftly with your order.

Please Note: Burdoth is sold out, although there are copies remaining in some retail stores.



Challisk Marks

Next Issue

We'll be back with more specific examples of setting your players down and the kinds of action they're likely to see. We'll also include more artwork and descriptions of characteristics your players characters will need to cope with Jorune.

Earth/Jorune

We appreciate any feedback you may have relating to the segment. Please address all correspondence to: SKYREALMS/WW, PO BOX 5543, Berkeley, CA, 94705 (415)-548-0804

Written and produced by: Andrew Leker, Amy Leker

Contribution by Geoff Gray of his Kantiss submission and Kantiss illustration are duly noted and appreciated.

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The Fate of the Grog

by Lisa Stevens and Jonathan Tweet
with Mark Rein-Hagen; These folks
are the Lion Rampant (publishers of
Ars Magica) crew.

The Story

The grog Torlen grumbled to himself, his teeth clenched in anger. That confounded magus Rastigot had ignored his advice for the entire journey, and now he planned to march straight into La Sairre and save that drunkard Farlen from the fate that he so richly deserved. When Setnae the forester had pointed out the folly of simply attacking the walled city of La Sairre, he had promptly been silenced by a spell from the foul tempered magus. Torlen was loyal to the covenant and to the wizards, to a point, but throwing his life away in such needless and senseless way exceeded even his devotion.

Slowly approaching the grim faced magus, his feet scuffling the ground, Torlen spoke, "Sir, I most respectfully must point out that attempting to enter this town in broad daylight, when they are awaiting us would be sheer suicide, just like Setnae pointed out before, sir." With that he glanced meaningfully to where Setnae stood brooding.

Rastigot turned toward Torlen, one eyebrow arched menacingly, and replied pompously, "Grog, your job is to do exactly as I say and give your life whenever I ask for it. If I desire to attack this town during the day, during the night, during a thunderstorm, or even during the apocalypse, then we damn well are going to do it. Now get your gear together, we depart immediately."

"You may be leaving immediately, sir, but, with all due respect, you are going into La Sairre without my humble services," Torlen replied calmly, and turned to gather his gear and head back to the covenant. No one in the party spoke. Setnae looked at Torlen in shock,

his head shaking from side to side. Torlen had barely gone five steps when suddenly his motions became jerky and uncontrolled. Torlen tried to take another step, but his body and mind didn't seem to be connected any longer. Helplessly Torlen watched his arms clumsily gather his gear, and his legs carry him over to Rastigot. Anger welled up inside of him, but could find no outlet except in words.

"You have gone too far this time Rastigot. We grogs have put up with too much of your pompous attitude and we..." Torlen's words were cut off in mid-sentence with a flippant wave from the magus.

"Come along Torlen, you have some fighting to do for me."

The Real World Result

And Torlen's player sat back dejectedly and paged through his favorite gaming magazine while munching on a cold slice of pizza. All choice of action



had been taken from him by the domineering player who was playing the magus and he had now lost all interest in the game that was proceeding around him.

Recently, we have become concerned over a trend we have uncovered concerning the grogs in some of the newly formed *Ars Magica* troupes in our area. It seems that some of the players are taking the concept "cannon fodder" too seriously, to the point where grogs become nothing but numbered corpses instead of the interesting and dynamic personalities that they were intended to be when the game was first written. Grogs are many times treated little better than the nameless denizens of the countless dungeons we all took such glee in "trashing" in our younger days - the feeble and sacrificial monsters. I would like to attack this problem from a number of angles. First, let's take a look at the symptoms of the problem so you can spot them if they pop up in your own troupe. Then we'll look at the answers to the problem by, 1) Listening to the magus Caecus of Tagelyn covenant and seeing why the course of actions described above would be counterproductive to magi as a whole, 2) Looking at the problem as a problem of players, 3) Giving the grogs some new exceptional attributes; helping make each one of these stalwart warriors an interesting and unique character, one which the adventure's "magus of the day" won't be inclined to treat like an expendable weapon.

Even if you do not play *Ars Magica* you may find this article of interest. All too often in role-playing, those characters with less power are mistreated by the characters with more power. Players act out the roles of their characters without taking into consideration the feelings of the other players that might be hurt by their characters' actions. Just like people everywhere, role-players take advantage of other role-players. We don't mean to preach, but we believe that everyone can have more fun if they watch out for the other guy. This article discusses how characters unequal in power can relate equitably to one another.

The Foreshadowing of the Fall

Does your gaming group bicker and argue over who is taking their magus and who is taking their companion on a certain night's adventure, knowing full well that if they can't convince the other

players to let them play a magus or companion, that they will be relegated to grog status, and the rest of the night will be one of dread boredom?

Does the term "grog" make you wake up in a cold sweat and bring back nightmares of gaming sessions past?

Do your grogs get killed off so often, because of the magi's careless attitude about the worth of a grog's life, that you don't bother giving names to them anymore, using numbers instead because they are more convenient?

Are grogs played mainly by those in your group who have sadistic and masochistic tendencies?

Is playing a grog something that you can adequately do while cooking dinner, recording a tape, doing the evening's homework, and making up gaming puns all at once?

Do your grogs only have combat skills and ignore things like personality traits, reputations and past histories, because they aren't necessary for running a grog and are too much work for a being that will only exist as a brief flicker before its light is extinguished?

Do the magi in your troupe constantly abandon the grogs to their fates?

Is the rule prevalent in your troupe that "grogs should be seen and not heard?"

Do your magi speak only Latin and therefore never communicate directly with the grogs?

Do magi use grogs as the targets of their spells more often than all the demons, knights, faeries, and fantastic beasts combined?

Is "grog" a synonym for "corpse" in your world?

If you answered "yes" to any or (gulp) all of the above questions, you may have a "grog problem" in your *Ars Magica* saga and it's going to take a little troupe effort to restore it to a proper course. Remember that grogs have an equal role within the story, if not equal power as characters and that it is not fair to deny them their proper place.

Listen My Children and You Shall Hear

In A.D. 1227 Caecus, of the House Tylatus, of the master Coracol, spoke to the General Council of Hibernia (Ireland) regarding the treatment of grogs. Caecus' father had been a mercenary, and his wizard's training has not removed his respect for and interest in the military life. His speech, obviously well rehearsed given Caecus' usual trouble with words, was received with a

combination of amusement, apathy, and some genuine interest.

Fellow magi, I speak before you about a part of our lives that many of us neglect, and do so to our shame. Some of you have heard of my views before. Perhaps you've heard that the militaristic blood of my mercenary father has not yet been diluted by the wizards' potions I drink, causing in me a singular empathy with warriors. Whatever the case, I wish to speak to you about grogs, those loyal servants upon whom all our lives depend.

In my own covenant I have seen the magi abusing these essential members of our communities. These magi are as foolish as those who mistreat their laboratory equipment yet expect it to function efficiently and safely. I have seen grogs punished for speaking their minds, assigned to magi who care nothing for their lives or suffering, and expended like so much vis when the magi found it convenient and expedient to sacrifice their lives. I have heard that similar treatment occurs in other covenants as well, perhaps such occurs in your own. We magi, who are so far removed from the grogs' mundane way of life, might find it easy to hold them in contempt, but for your own safety, I urge you to reconsider your attitude towards your grogs.

First, you risk the danger of disloyal grogs. A grog is human, and in even the most loyal heart, some resentment will result from poor treatment. When a spear is hurtling towards you, it is the grog's unhesitating response that puts his body between the spearpoint and your heart. Any hesitation caused by a lack of loyalty could mean your death. It is not even inconceivable that grogs could turn against their masters, should they be pushed to the point at which their own deaths seem little worse than continued service. Remember that the arm that holds the sword at your side is not a mindless tool like a balancing scale in your laboratory. It is connected to a human heart, one capable of revenge like any other.

Some magi, I hear, try to overcome the imagined weaknesses of their grogs' spirits through spells that control the will. Be warned that a mind too manipulated by magic soon becomes no mind at all. It is better to cultivate true loyalty than to try to simulate it with spells.

If these words do not persuade you, let me say that abusing our grogs carries a more insidious risk than disloyalty; the risk of losing our own essential humanity. Some of you may be made un-

comfortable by the assertion that a wizard's humanity is important enough to guard, but hear me out. Though we have drifted far from the mortal society that originally spawned us, most of us still retain some measure of humanity. Those who do not value their humanity are precisely those who fall to the temptations of the demons of Hell. These Wizards give up their humanity to infernal powers, thinking that they lose nothing, only to find that they have lost the only thing that can make their power meaningful. And you know that I do not speak idly of gossip and superstition; seventeen years ago we shared this very chamber with a diabolist magus, one who is still roaming the world somewhere, possibly plotting his revenge against those of us who discovered his dark secret and turned on him.

And even if you claim not to fear the demons, who are ever eager to seduce us magi into their master's service, know that the human heart can wither without infernal influence. Haven't we all seen magi so submerged in their magic that they lose the mental faculties required to lead a rational life? And haven't some of them been swallowed up by their own magic when it became too powerful for their spirits to master? I believe that only guarding our humanity can protect us from these dangers.

And I tell you that to neglect the grog is to take one more step away from humanity, and that is a dangerous direction for anyone to travel. True, grogs lack the virtues we value, such as intelligence and learning. True, they delight in brutal and sensual amusements, such as fighting and drinking. True, they are far from us in motivation, experience, status, and spirit. But we share with them a common humanity. Recognize the grog's humanity, and respect them for it. Thereby will your own body and your own heart be saved.

Do Unto Others...

As players in a role-playing game, we find ourselves in a unique situation. Role-playing is a hobby where you, the player, have to interact with other players in order to get the most enjoyment out of the game. It only takes one bad apple to spoil the entire evening's fun for everyone else. In *Ars Magica*, due to the inherent imbalance between magi and grogs, there is more of a natural inclination to lord it over the grogs. But by doing so, you deprive the

grog's players of the chance to fully play out their character(s) and perhaps ruining the fun for them -- since no one likes to be totally dominated by another person.

If you can't be convinced not to expend grog's lives like so many magic potions by appealing to your sense of character, do it because of your compassion for your fellow players. You should realize how much you would hate it if someone did the same to you when you were playing a grog (remember someday, someone else may treat you as badly as you treated them). Remember the golden rule; "Do to others as you would have them do to you." Living by this motto in role-playing is not only

good advice as far as grogs are concerned, but for all other types of role-playing too. It is a measure of common courtesy.

We Can Rebuild Him, We Have the Technology

Finally, I would like to present some rules for grogs which will help to make them more individual and unique, thus decreasing the chance that any other player will see them as so much more cannon fodder.

Give each grog one positive exceptional attribute worth +1 point, one attribute rated at -1, and any number of attributes rated at 0 (or only attributes

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rated as 0, none positive, none negative). You must pick one exceptional attribute from each of the two sections listed below (Grog Type and Prior Combat Experience). This minimal allowance gives grogs some amount of individualization beyond their characteristics and abilities, and it does not infringe on the companions' role in the game. Grogs should not take exceptional attributes that do not make sense for someone of grog status, such as "Wealth" or many of the background attributes. In addition to those listed in the game, grogs (and only grogs) may choose from the attributes listed below.

Grog Exceptional Attributes

Background Exceptional Attributes

Every grog must have a background exceptional attribute for grog type and prior combat experience. Some of them are worth zero points, so they can be taken without having to pay for them. If a grog hasn't picked both of these attributes, they can be considered Green and Recruits (see below).

Recruit +0: Most grogs fall into this category. Recruits are solitary individuals whom the covenant has recruited as grogs. Many recruits have come to the covenant themselves, looking for work). As a recruit, your Loyal score cannot start above 0 and your Disloyal score cannot start below 0. You are a solitary individual with no friends or ties with the covenant at the beginning of your career.

Covenant Grog +0: You were born and raised in the covenant and, since you had no discernable ability in anything other than combat, you were added to the turb of grogs at the covenant. Your Loyal score cannot start below 0 and your Disloyal score cannot start above 0. You also are used to working with magi and other strange people, thus allowing you to get along better in the covenant than most other grogs, but you have a poor social aptitude amongst the people outside of the covenant.

Mercenary Grog +1: You are a member of a mercenary troupe which has decided to link its fortunes with that of the covenant. As a group, you have close ties with the other members of your outfit, many times blood bonds. Your loyalty is to your troupe first and to your employer second. Thus, you begin the game with two Loyal scores, one for your outfit and one for the covenant. Your troupe Loyalty score cannot start below 0 and your Disloyal-

ty score cannot start above 0. The reverse is true for your scores for the covenant. Being the member of a larger group, you always have the option of leaving the covenant if your treatment at the hands of the magi is poor. (There is always other work to be had.) New members may always be inducted into a mercenary troupe and this usually involves some type of induction ceremony and perhaps an initiation ritual or test.

Criminal -1: You are a criminal who has been freed under the condition that you work with the magi through some arrangement with the locals, or who has escaped and sought refuge with the magi. You aren't particularly thrilled about working with the magi, but under the current circumstances, it is your only way of staying alive. Your Loyal score starts at 0 (since you have no opinions about your loyalty to the magi), but your Disloyal score will start above 0 (you are out to save your own skin first; it wasn't exactly your first choice when you came to the covenant). You also have a hard time socializing with the rest of the grogs, who shun you because of your criminal activities. You start out with a reputation (Level 1) for whatever crime you committed in the area where you committed it. Magi don't care about their grogs' personal histories, as long as they do their job.

Prior Combat Experience

Green +0: You are new to the field of combat and have probably never killed or seriously injured another human being. The life of a grog was one of the last options open to you for survival. Because of your lack of battle experience, your Brave score must start at 0 or below and your Cowardly score must start at 0 or above. Only through courageous actions on the battlefield can these scores be changed.

Veteran +1: The act of killing is nothing new to you. Your eyes have gazed upon the carnage of many a battlefield. This stint with the magi is just another hazardous duty. Start with a Brave score of 0 or greater. Your Cowardly score can be anything you wish it to be, within the -3 to +3 range of course.

Born Coward -1: Though you might not always be a coward, you have always had an innate fear of dying on the battlefield. Now, for whatever reason, you have been forced into grog duty, one of the most hazardous jobs anywhere, complete with a good chance of combat and a high mortality rate. You are not pleased. Whatever got you

into these straits! Start out with a Brave score of -3 and a Cowardly score of +3. It will take extraordinary circumstances to change these scores and allow you a modicum of dignity on the battlefield.

Common sense must be used as to which of the other Exceptional Attributes listed in *Ars Magica* should be allowed for the grogs. Picking an Affinity is a good way to give the grog a little specialization, which tends to make the grogs more unique, and not just nameless faces with swords. Remember that grogs aren't supposed to be wildly unique, with mystifying powers, but rather, unique individuals with a more mundane role, that of protecting the magi from all danger. Choose attributes with this in mind.

Eulogy for the Grog

Eulogy? Eulogies are the final words said after laying something that has died to rest. It is our hope that, after reading this article, everyone who plays *Ars Magica* will put to rest their bad grog habits once and for all, and we can all breathe a sigh of relief, say good riddance, and enjoy the benefits of a truly cooperative group role-playing experience; magi, companions and grogs all striving together, each in their own niche, to create the best storytelling experience possible in role-playing today. This may be a lot to ask for, but I am convinced that, with a little thought and personality put into each of your grogs, you can overcome the temptation to dominate when you play a magus or companion, and allow the grog to share in the telling of your tales without becoming a fatality of immature role-playing.

As we throw the final handful of dirt on the "old" grog's grave, let us welcome in the "new" grog, full of life, individuality and respect. The grog is dead, long live the grog.

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Demon Killer

by Steve Tymon; Steve's story really swings into action in this long 2nd installment of this fine novella. Steve's fiction has appeared in Isaac's Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, Amazing Stories, and as part of a Marion Zimmer Bradley anthology titled Sword and Sorceress among other places.

From The Book of Shadows, Volume XXXVI:
"Let us speak of the Fifth Age.

Of that darkened time, little remains save legends passed down by minstrels' songs or poets' rhymes. They tell of an age of shadow, when demons stood victorious in the ruined halls of the Gods and all the mortal worlds were lost in the shadow of Hell. Of the Gods and Goddesses, most were dead, for even immortals can suffer a kind of death. And of those who remained, they were cleansed of memory and cast out upon the thousand shadows of Earth, scattered across all the worlds of mankind to roam and wander as outcasts, playing the roles of mortal men and women. Of the rest, the most powerful, the most feared --- Meron, ruler and greatest of the Gods; Kysra, God of War; Xy, God of Wisdom and Knowledge --- all of these, and a mere handful of others, had simply vanished. It was rumored that they had committed suicide in shame from their defeat, and the mourning children of the worlds ceased their prayers, for they went unanswered.

Such was the Fifth Age, the great darkness, the time of sufferings and pain, when demons ruled all the mortal worlds and drank souls like finest wine. Yet all was not lost.

The Fifth Age was also an age of powerful magics, and there were ways of protection. There were even men who challenged the demons themselves, who won back the worlds, one by one by one, sealing them off from demon-kind forever. Demon killers, they were called, those who were trained in the ways of war and sorcery that they might bring down the Hellborn. They alone had the secret of the Sixth Age, the times of peace and light, of healing and rest. They alone would bring it about.

But of the war itself, it raged for near ten thousand years, across all the thousand worlds but one---

only the Earth was shielded against them, for there had gathered the most powerful of demons, using the strength of the mother world to raise great magics and barriers against the coming of the demon killers. Yet even in this were they unsuccessful.

For when fell the last of the shadow worlds, a mere handful fought through the shield --- each the strongest, the most powerful of their kind, those armed with the greatest magics and weapons, the mightiest of the demon killers. They found a dying world, cold beneath skies of perpetual storm, where the darkest of demons preyed upon mortal-kind, hiding in their cities and dwellings by day, feeding on mortal souls by night. And the few demon killers set forth to free their final world --- there was no time to train others, for the people grew fewer with every passing day --- and so did they make desperate battle, hunting down the Hellborn when and where they could find them.

But, in time, each warrior fell to death, each demon killer was brought down, for though they were strong, though many of the Hellborn fell with them, they were still too few, and the demons were yet in the thousands. And so, at last, only one remained.

Of him, this is known: he was the first and the last of their kind, he who had trained them and commanded them on many worlds before. And too, he was the darkest, the most powerful, the most feared. By his armor, he chose the colors of death, and in the most ancient of tongues, his name meant "Avenger", yet in his hands was the future of the final world, of the Earth, and by his victory would the wars come to end, or by his failure would the demons be reborn.

And so did it come to pass that the last and greatest of the demon killers did make war against all the demons of Hell, alone, with only the love of a lady to sustain him.

And of those final years, and the final battles in the closing days of the Fifth Age, the songs and poems still carry his name and deeds:

They called him Tereth.

By him was the legend born."

#

She had often dreamed a dream, always the same one, a strange and haunting and somehow frightening thing. She dreamed of a warrior, all in black --- his armor, his long and flowing cape, even his sword --- riding across a vast and desolate plain, a dark place of abandoned weapons and bodies, of drifting mists and smoke--- the aftermath of some gigantic and costly battle. And as he rode toward her, always coming closer, she could never see his face, for his visor was always down, and the thick mists made him one with shadows, without features, his cape flapping behind him like raven's wings. And through all of it, as he rode, she could see images of a thousand battles flowing ghost-like through the air, as if the wind was time itself, carrying memories of war, echoes of death. And then there came voices, overpowering the screams of the wounded and dying --- voices a million strong, crying out in pain and fear and horror, but always crying a name. Yet never could she remember it, never, though she tried.

And through all the sights and sounds of war, through all the voices and smoke, the warrior came riding, closer, closer, and the voices grew louder, wilder, more desperate. They screamed for him, they cried out for him, they would die for him---

And as he was almost upon her, flames suddenly filled the sky and thunder echoed above. The voices became a roar that seemed to shake the world. But as he reached for his visor, to raise it, to show her his face---

She would come awake. Every time. And there never was an answer, only the question of who he might be, of who he was.

And then, one night, the answer came to her, in a dark and frozen place, beneath the winter's moon. One night, he appeared.

#

The wind was a howling thing, raising snow like sea spray over storm-tossed waves. It made travel at night a

dangerous thing, for the nightwinds added greatly to the winter chill, and with the blinding snow, a trail could be lost, a cliff's edge not seen in time, many other things. And too, the night was the time of demons, the dead, and ghosts -- yet these were the least of the dangers she faced, for events had typically gone from worse to even more so, and the things that moved in the shadows around her were of that latter category.

In the dim light afforded by the cloud-obscured moon, her long blond hair still seemed bright --- nearly as long as she was tall, it whirled like a cape as she moved quickly, twisting and dodging, stabbing and slashing, her sword in one hand, an old and damaged leather shield in the other. Her horse lay dead not far from her, brought down by the pack of wolves that surrounded her, and the horrified sound it had made as its throat was torn out still echoed in her mind. Even as she paused to glance at its still living form, another of the wolves tore out a piece of its flank --- blood sprayed, the horse twitched, and there rose a faint mist from the wound. The wolf retreated, shaking its head to pull free a last few strings of flesh, then continued to back away, growling at the others to stay clear as it fell back to feed.

She shuddered as she quickly turned away and resumed her watch against the wolves who circled her. To one side, she saw a blur. Without even thinking, she snapped about, slashing at exactly the right level with her sword --- a quick reflex, conditioned, well-learned --- and there came the heavy sound of sharp metal tearing into flesh, the satisfying dragging sensation of a blade cutting through meat.

With an animal yelp of pain, ending in a gurgle, the wolf --- one of the larger ones of the pack --- fell to the ground beside her, already dead, its head nearly cut free by her stroke. The rest of the pack fell back, seemingly surprised at their meal's tenacity. They circled more slowly, their tongues hanging out, their breath misting in the cold air.

She continued to watch, careful for any attacking sign. There were several trees at the edge of the clearing. If she could make it to just one, perhaps she could retreat up into the branches for the night. If not---

She shuddered again at the thought. Her life had been a long one, very long, even by demon's standards, and though she had found it often more of a curse than a benefit, for many damned her for it, there were surely better ways of drawing it to a close.

Slowly, she began to edge toward the nearest of the trees, the wolves moving equally slowly with her, as, beside them, another wolf tore into the horse. She noticed that it did not twitch this time.

As if in anticipation of what she was trying to do, one of the larger wolves cut off her path to the trees, halting directly in her way. The others had also stopped circling, instead choosing to stare at her with cold, moonlit eyes. Their breaths quickened, as did her heart, for she what it meant.

Raising her sword, she stood ready for their final rush, and it was then the howling wind began to blow even stronger.

It was a sudden thing, as if someone had raised a hand and called for a storm, for above, the clouds were inexplicably growing thicker, blocking out the already partially obscured light of the moon. There was a strange chill in the air, having nothing to do with the snow. She shivered, though her green fur-trimmed clothing and leather armor always kept her quite warm, even in the coldest of weather. The wolves felt it too, for she noticed they had begun to whine, staring nervously out into the dark, as if expecting someone, something.

And so he came, riding a stallion as dark as night. She saw him at the same time as the wolves, an apparition com-

ing toward them through the blowing snow --- tall and slender, black armor and cape, long black hair blowing in the wind from beneath a black helmet, and a visor concealing his face. Yes, she knew him, and the dreams came back to her.

But around her, the wolves stared, then began to retreat, whining as if deeply frightened. Even the horse was forgotten, as well as she, and they retreated to the edge of the clearing, pausing there as if to wait for the apparition to move on.

But it did not. Instead, it raised its visor, and the apparition became a man, clean-shaven, with eyes that were tired and dark, as black as the armor he wore --- the eyes of a warrior who has lived too long and seen too much of pain.

"Leave us," he commanded in a voice familiar with command. "She is with me now."

And the wolves turned as one and ran from the clearing, vanishing into the forest.

The warrior clenched his fist. Around them, the winds suddenly grew still.

"A bad night to ride alone," he began, riding closer. She did not lower her sword. "You might have---"

He stopped suddenly and stared down at her. For a moment, she thought she saw surprise, perhaps something else, but it passed quickly. He shook his head.

"My pardon," he said. "For a moment I thought---"

He paused again, leaving it unfinished, then glanced at her horse and frowned. "A poor way to treat such a good animal, riding it in this place at this time."

"I had no choice," she answered. "The people of my village decided it was time for me to move on."

"You've committed some crime, then?"

"None by law." Her sword remained level and ready for use. "I was with them too long is all."

He smiled slightly as if he understood what she meant, though she knew he could not, then nodded at what was left of her horse.

"Your horse is dead meat." He nodded toward the west. "But if you need a ride, I can give you one as far as Lord Kesroth's castle."

Still she did not lower her sword. "And what business do you have there?"

Above, the moon had come back out, as much as it ever did, which is to say that it was still cloud-shrouded, but that it gave a dim light. He glanced up at it, then back to her.

"Tonight," he answered, "soon, I am to slay a demon."

"Demon killer!" she hissed. She moved back, her sword shaking in her grasp. "I should have thought so. I've heard of your kind."

He did not seem disturbed by her reaction. "And what have you heard?"

"They say you have the power of the demons themselves," she said, "that even the greatest of sorcerers fear your kind."

He shrugged. "Even if that is so, I did save your life."

"You mean you frightened away the wolves with some trick."

"Yes," he said. "Yes, I did. It's all the same thing. Yet you repay that favor by raising your sword against me."

She glanced at her sword, but still she did not lower it. He shook his head.

"If I am as powerful as you say I am," he continued, "then surely you realize your blade means nothing to me."

She glanced at her sword again, but no, she would not lower it. She remembered the dream, and how the wind had come, how the wolves had obeyed him. No, she would not disarm herself.

He sighed impatiently, then glanced again to the west, then back to her.

"I have to go," he said. "If you're coming, then climb up. If not, give my best to the wolves."

She looked at the dark forest beyond the clearing. They were indeed out there, somewhere. They would indeed return. Even with dreams and his spells, some choices were obvious ones.

Slowly, nervously, she lowered her sword, and then, equally slowly, she returned it to its sheath. Still hesitant, she approached the warrior and his stallion. He reached down with one metal-gloved hand to help her up, but paused, now that she was near, again staring intently at her, looking down into her emerald-green eyes.

"What is it?" she asked.

He shook his head slowly, then took a deep breath.

"Nothing," he said quietly, and then, louder, "Come on."

She took his hand. Seemingly without effort, he lifted her into the saddle.

"I am Tereth," he told her, once she was firmly behind him. "What shall I call you?"

"Cimir," she answered. "I was---"

"Hold on, Cimir," he said, then spurred his stallion forward.

The snow suddenly seemed to blur around them, and the night flashed past, the trees hissing as they rode by, their branches lightly brushing against them, yet the accumulated snow fell well behind so quickly did they ride. She knew enough of magics to recognize a spell of speed when she saw one, and though she held tightly to the warrior, his warmth coming through his armor and hers, she once glanced behind them to see their progress and saw sparkles of light --- the residue that marks some magics. Though she had never seen a demon killer except at some lord's castle.

and then only at a great distance, this one, this Tereth, certainly looked his type --- part sorcerer, part warrior --- and his spell moved them across the land as if in dreams. She was not surprised, then, when they came upon Lord Kesroth's castle within the hour, when she knew full well it was at least several hours' distance from where they had been. But as they rode, they suddenly came to the crest of a hill and he reined them to a stop. Below, in a valley, with a small village spread out to one side of it, was the castle, lit with some many torches that it seemed a child's toy in the night.

"The castle, Cimir," said Tereth. "It seems I am expected." Cimir shook her head, still trying to catch her breath from the ride. She succeeded.

"I'm not," she said.

"But you are welcome to attend as my guest."

"And if I don't want to?"

He shrugged. "Then I'll take you to the village just beyond the castle. You'll find several places to eat or sleep there."

She considered for a moment. "Will there be food, something to drink?"

"The best Kesroth can offer." He nodded at the castle.

"He would not want to offend me."

She considered for a moment. The fear of him was rapidly becoming something of the past. Even the dream seemed strangely distant. He had the manners of a gentleman, for all she had heard of their kind, and true gentlemen were most rare. And then there were other things she wanted to know, to learn.

At last she nodded. "On a night like this, I'd be a fool to turn down a good meal."

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"I was sort of hoping you would say that," he said, spurring his stallion forward. And, without any magic at all, they rode toward the castle below.

#

The courtyard of the castle was filled with nobles of Kesroth's court, all dressed in their finest. By the light of the many torches, gold and jewels sparkled and shone, though the bright colors of the robes and cloaks seemed somewhat subdued, much as the mood of the crowd itself. Though Kesroth had commanded a festive appearance, a festive mood, his command had done little to uplift their spirits. Only the children seemed truly happy, and only because they did not understand. Everywhere else, there were whispers of fear and suspicion. Sorcerers were bad enough -- though Kesroth's personal sorcerer, Dravos, was regarded as a bit of a fool --- but demon killers were another matter. Proud men, it was said they were, and dangerous. One would have to be to fight demons, and this Tereth would be no different. Indeed, it was no secret that some had disagreed with Kesroth's choice to send for such a warrior, warning that the cure might be worse than the disease. Gynar, his personal counselor, had been one of those, but the castle lord had ignored him for the first time, and by messenger he had sent for the demon killer. The warrior had answered that he would come.

Impatiently, Kesroth watched the crowd from the steps of his great hall. He could sense the tension --- indeed, anyone could. Irritated, he shook his head. To call his nobles to him had nearly taken force of arms, for the demon of his castle was far more powerful than most, it was said. There had been many deaths throughout the land, strange and frightening deaths, and all blamed the demon. They did not wish to venture anywhere near where it was believed to reside. But he had commanded, and in fear of their lives, they had obeyed. They came.

As for Kesroth, he was an old man, weary with the years of darkness, yet still he was proud --- no demon would frighten him from the lands of his ancestors. And, strangely, the demon did seem content to attack others, most often those in disfavor with the castle lord. It made Kesroth unpopular in that the demon seemed at his beck and call --- at least so far as his enemies were concerned --- but as a ruler, he was better than most, and those who opposed him had grown fewer over the years, by choice, not necessarily by demon.

And so, to free his people of demons --- and to end the rumor once and for all, for he did not need the hellborn to fight his personal wars --- he had sent for the demon killer.

From the wall, one of the guards turned and shouted, "They're here!"

Kesroth nodded slowly. Frowning, for Gynar, his counselor, was nowhere to be seen --- it was his duty to deal with the crowds --- he motioned toward the gates with his hands.

"The gates," he said. "Open the gates."

And to the crowd, he commanded, "Welcome him with song, with music. He is here to aid us. Act pleased."

From somewhere, the musicians began to play --- lutes and recorders, an old song of welcome. As the music began, some began to sing, others joining in uncertainly as the gates began to open. Yet when the black-armored warrior rode through, the music and singing faltered, but only for a moment. Silent, Tereth rode into the courtyard. Hesitantly, the crowd began to cheer.

He paused respectfully, all part of a routine he knew by heart. All around him, there was applause, the noises of a jovious crowd. They seemed pleased. The ancient fortress

were to be blessed by Tereth's magic. No demons would ever haunt the castle again.

And though they did not say it, he knew that they hoped he would also stay away once he was finished.

The cheering continued. Flowers began to cascade down from the walls. Welcome the hero, the demon killer. Welcome Tereth. They celebrated. And danced. And shouted.

He ignored them, though not pointedly so. He knew what they felt for him, but he did not care. He was a demon killer. That was all. Quiet still, he searched for the enemy.

Behind, the heavy oak gates slammed shut. The crowd surged forward, throwing garlands of flowers. They surrounded Tereth and Cimir, yet almost magically cleared a path before them. It was almost as if they feared to touch him, which was the truth. He could feel their fear. And something else. Watching. Observing. Already he sensed the demon. And knew it was waiting for him.

He glanced up. Framed in a window in one of the castle towers was a nobleman, dressed in clothes of fiery red. The look in his eyes was anything but friendly.

Tereth frowned. Even without his sorcery, he knew he had found the demon in human guise.

He turned away.

Surrounded by singing children and cascading flowers, Tereth had entered the battlefield.

#

The great dining hall was even more crowded than the courtyard. Musicians played and couples danced. Several hunting hounds scurried under the table, snapping up scraps. A fire burned in the massive fireplace, and above the flames, spitted meat sizzled.

Of all who attended, only Tereth and Cimir wore armor. The demon killer's sword and knife still dangled from his belt, though he had placed his helmet on the table before him. It was a personal rule of his never to go unprepared into the abode of demons. No one, however, remarked on his appearance, or of his lady. They knew better. Instead, they did their best to appear normal. It was not that good of a performance.

There were two, however, who appeared unperturbed by Tereth's appearance.

One was Dravos, the court sorcerer. Demon killers did not frighten him, even when he was sober, which he was not. He had done business with their kind before, enough to know that they were best left alone. And though Tereth was perhaps more powerful than most, he was basically no different. Let him complete his task and be gone, that was all that mattered. But his sword---

Dravos stared openly at the blade, that which he could see. Though the jewel on its hilt was kept hidden beneath a flap of leather, the workings on its hilt and guard were enough to tell. He knew it from his studies of the most ancient of legends, a hobby of his, but he could not believe that it still existed. The demon killer was most powerful indeed if the weapon was what it appeared to be.

He slowly stood up --- the wine made it difficult --- and then, equally slowly, he approached the demon killer.

Heads turned and voices grew hushed, though the music still continued. Dravos appeared not to notice.

Still unsteady, he stopped and knelt before the black-armored warrior.

"My lord," the sorcerer began. He hesitated, then bowed his head and began to repeat from memory an ancient phrase:

"I swear to protect you, my lord," he said, "with my very life, that this world might be free again."

Cimir frowned in puzzlement. Tereth frowned also, though it was more in amusement. He had doubts of this sorcerer's ability to assist him in anything, much less protect himself. Yet there was the ritual---

"I accept your protection," the demon killer said at last, responding as he should. "Will you accept mine?"

"I do, my lord."

"Then rise, brother, and speak your name."

The sorcerer stood carefully, trying unsuccessfully to conceal the effects of his wine.

"I am Dravos, sir warrior," he said, the words slightly slurred. "Your name, of course, I already know."

Tereth nodded. "Then do you wish anything of me?"

Dravos stared at the sword. He nervously licked his lips, then swallowed loudly.

"Might I---" he began. And cleared his throat. And tried again. "Might I see your blade?"

Tereth frowned. Dravos grew pale.

"It would be unwise," Tereth answered, after a moment.

"Forgive me for refusing, but the enemy---"

"I understand, my lord," Dravos said quickly. He again glanced at the sword on Tereth's belt. "But it is a sword of power, isn't it?"

Tereth's frown deepened. His eyes narrowed.

"It is," he answered. He said nothing more.

Dravos blinked twice, then cleared his throat again.

"My pardon, my lord," he said, "if I give offense. None was meant."

"And none taken," Tereth finished for him. He nodded at the sorcerer. "Is there anything else?"

Dravos quickly shook his head. "I ask nothing more of you, my lord."

"Then good health to you," said Tereth, raising his chalice.

Dravos bowed, then retreated to this seat. Cimir stared after him. Tereth did not. After a moment, still puzzled, she looked at the demon killer.

"An ancient ritual," he said simply, in way of explanation.

"Many sorcerers stand with me and my kind in the war against the hellborn. That was an old means of greetings between allies, but it no longer matters."

"Why not?"

"Because there aren't many of us left," said Tereth. "I'm one of the last."

Before she could say anything else, he turned away to watch another --- the only other individual in the great hall who seemed undisturbed by his presence.

It was the nobleman from the window, still dressed in brilliant red. He stood by the entrance of the hall, aloof and distant from the proceedings, alternating his interest between Dravos and Tereth --- the former for his interest in the demon killer's sword, the latter for more personal reasons. He was aware of Tereth's interest in him, but his only reaction was to nod slightly at the demon killer. Tereth did not return the gesture.

Lord Kesroth stood. He raised a goblet toward Tereth.

"To Tereth," he said, "our visiting legend and saviour."

Tereth turned and raised his chalice. "To a most noble lord and gracious host," he replied. "And to the death this very night of the demon Arek who haunts this dwelling."

A hushed silence descended upon the room. The aged castle lord leaned forward. "You know the demon's name?"

Tereth nodded. "He is watching even now, listening to our every word."

Several of the women shrieked. At least one fainted.

Lord Kesroth grew pale. Tereth's expression did not change. Near the entrance, the red-clad nobleman edged slowly toward the door.

"Your drink," the demon killer continued. "Shall you not drink with me?"

Kesroth looked at the goblet as if noticing it for the first time. He glanced back at Tereth, then slowly took a sip. Tereth did likewise. A moment later, the warrior returned his emptied chalice to the table.

"Are the festivities over, my lord?" he asked. "I expected more."

The castle lord shook his head. He gestured.

"Musicians," he ordered in a voice more nervous than before. "Play for Tereth."

Lord Kesroth resumed his seat, and at the entrance to the hall, the nobleman relaxed. Music began again. The dancing, however, did not. Instead, the people drew together and whispered among themselves, nervously glancing about the room. A demon was nearby, watching. This was no time for festivity. Rather, it was a time to hide.

And then Dravos again staggered to his feet.

"Pardon, my lord, my ladies," he began. Only a few of those closest to him bothered to look. "I must to bed."

If anyone heard or cared, they gave no sign. Those nearest to him turned away again to resume interrupted conversations. Shrugging, Dravos slowly but unsteadily found his way from the hall. But just before the entrance, he was stopped by the nobleman wearing red.

Dravos managed to raise one eyebrow in surprise, and perhaps with a little fear. He knew this one all too well. "My lord?"



"The sword," the other replied. "The demon killer's sword. Is there something unusual about it?"

Dravos hesitated. It was obvious he was planning a lie.

"N - no, my lord," he stuttered at last. "I was just admiring the craftsmanship of the blade."

The nobleman smiled. It was somehow less than pleasant. "Of course," he said. "Of course. Perhaps we might speak of it later."

The sorcerer started to shake his head. "My lord, I don't think--"

"Later," the other finished for him. He walked quickly away, not giving the sorcerer an opportunity to reply. Troubled, Dravos stared after him but, after a moment, he frowned, then turned and departed the room.

Tereth had watched the entire conversation. He had also listened, although he doubted they were aware of his eavesdropping --- it was done by a simple spell. Satisfied, he sipped slowly at a fresh chalice of wine.

At his side, Cimir concluded a hushed conversation with one of the court ladies. She turned back to the demon killer.

"What did you mean that you were one of the last?" she asked.

Tereth shrugged. "Just that," he said. "Few remain. Most of the others are dead."

"How would you know?"

He smiled slightly at the question. "It's my business to know," he answered. "I felt their passing."

Cimir frowned. His answers made no sense. She hesitated, then nodded at the crowd, at the lords and ladies in attendance.

"Can you sense how they feel?"

"It's rather obvious," he said. "They're afraid, frightened by what I've said." He stared at her. "But you're not afraid, are you?"

"No," she answered. "Not really. I've seen what you can do."

She indicated those who sat nearest to them.

"But I don't doubt their fear," she went on. "Look at them."

Tereth shrugged. "I've seen it many times before, Cimir. It seems it's all I ever bring."

"Were you not a demon killer--?"

"But I am," he said, interrupting her. "I always will be in their eyes. I could be nothing else even if I wanted to be."

Cimir paused. Better to speak of something else. She nodded at the table, at the feast spread out upon it.

"It was a good meal," she said, "but I was hoping for ale, not wine."

Tereth looked surprised. "Is that a complaint?"

She shrugged. "I suppose not. After all, it's not often I get treated like royalty."

"Try killing demons for a living. That will change things."

She shook her head. "You can keep your demon killing to yourself." And added, thoughtfully, "Is it true what you said? About the demon, I mean. Does he really watch over us this very moment?"

Tereth nodded at the nobleman in red. "More than that, Cimir. He attends the occasion."

She stared. "Him?"

"Lord Gynar, Kesroth's most trusted advisor, an amusing place for him to hide, at the side of the lord of this castle. His true name is as I said --- Arek, a lord of Hell, one of the most powerful of demons. It will be a fascinating challenge."

"And if he is too powerful?"

Tereth shook his head. "There are none who are too

powerful, though he feels there are."

"You take too many chances, demon killer." Her voice carried a tone of concern. "If he feels so sure--"

"An error in judgement on his part, I assure you," Tereth interrupted. He indicated Lord Gynar. "See? He has noticed our interest in him. He comes. Listen to him, Cimir. This is a demon playing a mortal role."

The nobleman approached. He bowed, a gentlemanly bow, with the proper touch of courtly elegance. He was a studied mime.

"I welcome you to our court, legend and saviour," he said. The mockery was even more evident in the way he spoke.

"A pleasure," Tereth replied. His smile was all gentleness and sweet. He too could play this game.

"Your woman," Gynar continued. "Have I seen her before? Perhaps at the whore house of Isireth."

Cimir reddened in anger. Tereth stayed her hand before she could toss wine upon the insolent demon in disguise.

"Perhaps you mistake her for your father," the demon killer commented. He retained his sweet and gentle smile.

The nobleman sneered. "An impudent man, you are. But perhaps it is just. I have heard that you have killed a thousand or more of the hellborn."

"An improper count, my lord," Tereth replied. "It is easily ten times that number or more."

"By what miraculous luck did these events occur?"

"No luck at all. Stupidity and cowardice on the part of the demons was more the problem. It is common among their kind."

Lord Gynar's arrogant sneer was replaced by a glare of cold hatred. When he spoke, his voice was much colder.

"And when do you intend to begin your duel with the demon who rules this castle?"

Tereth stared deep into Gynar's eyes. "When he wishes, my lord, which should be soon. I am surprised he takes so long as it is. Perhaps he is like the rest --- a coward."

The nobleman's eyes narrowed. He smiled, but it was an unpleasant thing. He nodded toward a far door, bolted shut and blocked with heavy crossbeams. "Beyond, there is a great hall, much larger than this one, and long abandoned. It seems there was once a great number of people killed within, each put to the sword in an act of treachery by one of Lord Kesroth's ancestors. One of those left to die was a sorcerer. Before the winds took his soul, he cursed this castle and opened a gate to Hell. It is said that Arek was the first to step through the portal, the first to claim this castle. It is said that the demon haunts that room. You would find him within."

Tereth appeared amused. "Would I?"

Lord Gynar nodded. "By all means. Even if you were to enter now. You may rest assured that he waits for you."

"Then perhaps I should begin now," said Tereth. "Will you announce it?"

"My pleasure." Gynar turned and began to speak. At his voice, the room grew silent. The words echoed.

"The demon killer," he began, "shall duel with the demon now. He will enter the accursed room and fight him until one or the other is dead. Tonight, the castle shall be cleansed of vermin."

He stared down at the demon killer as he spoke the last sentence. The meaning did not escape the warrior, but he chose to ignore it for the moment. The debt would be settled shortly.

Tereth pulled on his metal gloves, then leaned forward to speak with Cimir as the great hall was emptied. Around them, chairs squeaked against the stone floor and frantic

whispers were heard. The lords and ladies, the musicians and servants, all departed the room. Cimir was one of the last to leave. She hesitated, glancing at Lord Gynar, then back to Tereth. The warrior nodded toward the doors. Quietly, she departed with the last. Only Tereth and Gynar remained.

"You're an amusing actor," Tereth commented, "albeit a rather poor one."

He picked up his helmet.

The other spoke, his voice now changed. It was a thousand voices, of men and women and children, and it echoed around the room. "And you, mortal, are dead."

There was a clap of thunder. The room faded from sight around them, and they were suddenly in darkness, but only for the shortest of moments. Tereth was prepared. He gestured. The walls around them flashed and sparkled with a blue light, enough to see that they were now in the accursed room, a place thick with dust and age.

Quickly, Tereth gestured again. A darker blue glow surrounded him, and his cape swirled and began to glow with a light of its own --- a blazing red.

"One of us is dead," he corrected. And added, "It will not be me."

A chill wind rushed through the ancient hall, over bones scattered across the ruined floor. Arek's laughter echoed through the room. Still laughing, the demon raised his arm and flames burst from his hand. The battle had begun.



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Star Command by SSI

Playability (5)- Complexity (easy)- Graphics (4)- Strategy (3)- Sum (4)

"Star Command" reviewed by Jim Trunzo: A veteran computer product reviewer, Jim currently makes his home in Pennsylvania.

Computer role-playing software cannot be expected to match the flexibility nor the diversity of true interactive gaming. However, the best software in the role-playing genre is capable of presenting both the challenge and the flavor one finds in multi-player games.

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"Star Command", a new science fiction role-playing game for IBM computers and compatibles, not only offers the feel of a multi-player game but also provides the vicarious pleasure of a space adventure.

Part of the reason for Star Command's success is due to its solid science fiction story line. When play begins, Earth is but a charred memory and humans have clustered together in a portion of space known as "the Triangle". At the point of each angle exists a starport, the military headquarters for the Star Command, and the outer perimeter of defense against mounting opposition from two directions.

On one side of the Triangle is the Alpha Frontier, the domain of space pirates under the leadership of Blackbeard. On another side is an intelligent race of insects whose hostility is surpassed only by their powerful war fleet.

The remainder of the galaxy is best classified as unknown, though reports of robotically manned vessels have made their way into Star Command's files.

You, in your role as leader of a group of new recruits, will take command of a military starship and endeavor to complete various missions assigned to you by headquarters. You begin by assembling a crew of eight startrooper, including yourself, assigning them character classes, training and equipping them.

Your crew can consist of a mixture of pilots, marines, soldiers and one "Spock-like" Esper. Training enhances one of the twelve basic skills which a character can possess. The wide selection of skills aids greatly in individualizing characters and challenges you to find the best mix of talents needed to survive your missions.

Outfitting your crew is no small task, especially considering the minuscule budget with which you begin play. With 16 types of armor, 54 different weapons, and 15 pieces of miscellaneous equip-

ment from which to choose, your administrative abilities will be tested before you even leave the space dock.

You must also purchase and outfit a space craft, selecting from nine types. The ship must be armed with any of the 25 different ship weapons offered and protected by the purchase of shields, missile killers and defensive systems.

In order to better both your crew and your ship, money can be earned in numerous ways: first, upon completion of each mission, headquarters pays you a bonus commiserate with the difficulty of the task completed; second, each crew member receives a salary, the amount dependent on rank; third, a bounty is paid for each enemy vessel destroyed or captured; and fourth, cargo gained through space exploration can be sold at any friendly base.

"Star Command" is a linear game, meaning that missions are assigned and completed in a sequential order ranging from least difficult to most difficult. However, the richness of the program camouflages the game's straight forward approach by providing a wide variety of mission types and allowing freelance exploring of the galaxy while on assignment.

Missions can be military, exploratory, scientific or commercial in nature. All missions, though, no matter how innocuous they may appear, involve a certain risk. Even inside the Triangle, encounters with enemy scouting vessels will occur; outside the Triangle, you'll fight for your life!

Although successfully completing a pre-determined number of missions "wins" the game, "Star Command" contains many more missions than are needed to complete the adventure. The missions are assigned at random, therefore, the program has considerable replay value.

Graphically, "Star Command" is a real treat. Whether using one of the five levels of scanning the galaxy or engaging in either ship-to-ship or ground combat, hi-res graphics (often animated) add greatly to the enjoyment of the game as well as to the feel of "being there".

Tactically, the game is demanding. During ship-to-ship combat, gunners must select a target, decide how and when to fire, and when to reload. The pilot must maneuver the ship in order to bring the most guns into play and to protect any damaged portion of the craft.

Ground combat involves many choices as well and can occur anytime

your crew boards an enemy vessel or is discovered while on an espionage mission. Each member of your crew is individually controlled, allowing for a wide range of tactics to be used.

Not every encounter, however, means automatic combat. Like true role playing, "Star Command" gives you the opportunity to establish communications with the ship or ground enemy with whom you've engaged. Negotiations can range from pleading for a truce to impersonating a deity and demanding tribute or surrender. Your choices will not only determine the outcome of the battle but also of the game.

This review has only touched upon the major facets of "Star Command". Many other subtleties make this product an enjoyable and challenging simulation. The graphics are well-done and functional and the mechanics of play are simple in spite of the game's sophistication.

The game runs on any IBM or compatible with at least 256K. A CGA or EGA monitor is required and "Star Command" comes on both 5.25" and 3.5" disks, both capable of being installed on a hard drive. While the game itself is not copy protected, saving a game requires typing in a random word

from the well-written game manual. "Star Command" by Strategic Simulations Incorporated retails for \$49.95 and is highly recommended for the casual and serious alike.

Character Creator by SandBar Software (Sum 4)

"Character Creator" reviewed by Stewart Wieck; Stewart is the Editor/Co-Publisher of WHITE WOLF Magazine.

Many character creating computer programs have become available over the last several years. Personally, I have never really been interested in such game aids. This is why SandBar's "Character Creator" came as such a surprise to me. I had never imagined such a program being capable of such non-glitz functionalism as this program.

Playable characters can be created in moments because this program includes everything. Equipment may be purchased, spells determined, special abilities (for class and race) and secondary skills listed, thief ability percent-

ages are determined, and a psionics test is even made.

The program will print the character's statistics on about two pages. The text is condensed but very organized and therefore readable. Such things as hit points, level, saving throws are left blank so that they may be written in and then changed later. The program will store up to 300 characters on a disk, though, and changes to stats may be made by loading the second of two disks.

The program comes with two 5.25" disks and the program may be installed on a hard drive. 380K is required. The program is available for \$25.00 from SandBar Software, Box 94817, Oklahoma City, OK 73143-4817.

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Something's Rotting in Dankmart

by Kelly Golden and Stephan Wieck;
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GAMEMASTER'S INTRODUCTION

Thirty years ago in the city-state of Dankmart in the valley of Estria, the Wizard Caelius was banished from his city of birth. Thirty days ago the Archmage Caelius took vengeance upon the city he had loved and been spurned by. Now the city of Dankmart is separated from the rest of the world just as Caelius was ostracized from Dankmart.

Three decades ago in Dankmart, King Festrius was crowned upon the death of his father, and carried on the ruling dynasty of the city-state. Festrius was the epitome of the Dankmart nobility. He was proud, impatient, vain, and self-serving. He ruled the city fairly so that his people would love, and him not because he had compassion for their plights. When another noble, Caelius, began to attract the adoration of the people and rose to a popularity level equal to Festrius, the King reacted to an imagined threat and had the noble put on trial.

During the trial, facts surfaced that implied that Caelius had performed magic without divine aid and prayer. While it was not a crime to do so in Dankmart, it was unheard of, and the public reaction was great enough to allow Festrius to banish Caelius without public outrage against the act. A curse was placed on Caelius's heart by the high priest in Dankmart so that the muscle would rupture if Caelius ever again entered the valley of Estria.

Caelius left vowing revenge on the city which had unfairly judged him and on the king whose fear and jealousy ruined Caelius's life. Caelius's house was sealed, his servants dismissed, and his apprentice Rawt imprisoned without sentence.

Caelius became a powerful and reclusive man in the lands outside of Estria, eventually excelling in the magical arts to the supreme status of an arch-

mage. He also became a dangerous man, for his banishment and the shortcuts he took to the top of his profession made him prone to outbreaks of dark rage.

He finally had his revenge on Dankmart in the form of a terrible and insidious curse. All of the residents of Dankmart, except two, have been turned into skeletons. The citizens do not however, realize what has happened to them. As skeletons, they continue to live out "normal" lives. The skeleton citizens work, eat, and sleep normally. Because they are not true undead, they cannot be turned or destroyed by priests. Their bony frames still make them partially impervious to blades however, and they suffer only half damage from blade attacks. Neither the king nor Rawt, Caelius's apprentice, have been defleshed, though for very different reasons.

The adventure is designed for characters of levels 3-5 and stresses role-playing. The adventure is a linear mystery requiring the characters to piece together a few related hints and leads as they go from one scene to the next. Much of the enjoyment of the adventure will come through the characters' interaction with the skeletons, so liven up these scenes. The adventure is intended to be darkly humorous, have some fun with it.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

The players receive the following letter from a merchant. It is left up to the GM to work the merchant into the adventure, possibly as a friend of the family of one of the characters.

Dear Gentlemen,
My name is Milan, and I am a produce merchant by trade. I have encountered a problem which seems to require the adventuresome qualities that I have heard you possess. I have a contract with a merchant in the city-state of Dankmart which rests in the fertile valley Estria some miles to the east. I receive weekly shipments of produce from the man as agreed through the contract. When one of these shipments fell long overdue, I hired a message runner to go to Dankmart and report back what the problem was with the shipments. He returned with insane stories of a curse on the valley of Estria and a

divine voice from the heavens commanding him not to enter the valley. I have no time for such foolishness. My warehouse supply is dwindling and I must have a new shipment. Please go to Dankmart and rectify the situation. I shall reward you handsomely. The merchant you must see has a shop in the bazaar in Dankmart. His name is Aricrus. I have included with this letter a vial of liquid which should magically break the communication barrier so that you may speak the Dankmart dialect. The draught is extremely expensive so use it carefully. It lasts a very short time so I would advise only using it to communicate with Aricrus when you find him. The more of it you drink the longer it lasts. Many thanks.

Milan

THE POTION

The potion included with the letter is a form of a tongues potion. The entire vial will allow a character to converse with anyone, even a voiceless skeleton, for twenty minutes. When the characters use the potion, ask them specifically how much they imbibe and then time them accordingly in real time. For example, a character drinks half the vial and begins talking to a skeleton bartender. Role-play the encounter as normal for ten minutes of real time and then have the bartender lapse back into silent skeletal jaw movements and hand gestures.

CITIZENS OF DANKMART

As the GM, there are several things to keep in mind when role-playing one of the citizens. They do not understand the character's language. When the characters do not understand the citizens' mute jaw flapping speech, the citizens will assume that the characters don't understand the Dankmart dialect not that the characters can't hear them. The characters can bridge this communication gap by sign language, but even this is difficult since they cannot read the facial expressions of the skeletons. The characters can bridge the communication gap for twenty minutes through Milan's potion. Keep in mind that the citizens do not have any trouble com-

municating with each other. Their lives seem to be continuing normally.

Situations will arise where the citizens fail to do something because they are skeletons. You should just play these by ear and remember that the citizens will simply not see or hear anything that would imply that they are anything but normal. Their clothes have been tightened to fit their frames, but the citizens didn't notice that they tightened their belts further than normal. A city guardsman trying to blow a whistle will think the whistle does not work. Play these situations as they arise.

Finally, the citizens have lost all desire to travel out of the valley. Appointments outside of the valley are forgotten. Their knowledge of the world hasn't changed, they simply forget any compulsion to travel abroad. If the characters remind the citizens of duties abroad, or persuade them to leave, the citizen might logically agree or even feel badly for forgetting a commitment, but they will almost instantly forget the entire situation again. If the party abducts a skeleton and leaves the valley with it, the skeleton will quickly begin to disintegrate to dust. If the skeleton is not returned immediately, it will waste away and that living, cursed human being will have died.

ENTERING DANKMART

Warning

The valley of Estria is surrounded by low, broad mountains. A single road winds over the mountains and leads to Dankmart in the southern end of the valley. As the characters ascend the road to cross into the valley, a magic mouth will appear in front of them suspended ten feet in the air. It will say "The valley of Estria has been cursed. All living things are forbidden to enter lest they face divine wrath." A rabbit then hops out of some brush downhill of the characters and runs up the mountain the direction the characters were travelling. After the rabbit goes a few feet beyond the characters, its body will explode in a rather grisly fashion.

The entire scene is an illusion set up by Caelius to scare off travellers to Dankmart. If the characters back off and step forward again, the programmed sequence will start anew, exploding rabbit and all. If the characters continue, they will suffer no ill effects despite the illusion's threat.

Front Gate

Once the characters reach the peak of the mountain, they command a good

view of the valley below. Dankmart lies in the southern half of the valley, surrounded by fields. The northern end of the valley is also sectioned into farming plots. Assuming the characters approach during the day, there will be skeletal farmers working in the fields. These farmers will be the first skeletons the characters see. Farmers will cheerfully wave to the characters as they walk by. If the players stop to talk, the farmers will be polite for awhile and then continue working.

When the characters reach the Front Gate of the city, they will see a city guardsman standing to one side of the open gates. He will flap his jawbone and tilt his head toward the characters. If the characters attempt to walk through the gateway, the guard will step in front of the party flap his jawbone quickly and point to a box hanging on the wall where he had been standing. The box has a slot in the top and a painted sign reading 1cp. The guard is collecting a tax on all incoming foreigners. If the party persists in walking through the gate without paying, the guard will clench a whistle between his teeth and draw his sword. The whistle signals more guards, but naturally it won't work since the guard can no longer blow it. The guard will attempt to arrest the characters and take them to the castle prison tower.

Something IS Rotting in Dankmart

Something is rotting in Dankmart-- the player characters! Once they enter the valley of Estria, they become subject to Caelius's Curse. The characters will begin to go through a gradual transformation as their flesh deadens and then flakes off until the characters, like the citizens, are skeletons. Sometime soon after the characters enter Dankmart have them all save vs. magic. Those who make the save will realize what is happening to them as the transformation progresses to noticeable states. Those who fail the save are doomed like Dankmart's citizens to being totally ignorant of the transformation as it takes place. No amount of coaxing by the characters who made the save will convince the poor fools who failed that they are anything but normal even as their flesh drops off.

The characters should not realize what they are saving against at the time but keep track of which characters made the save. Instead of stating a specific time track by which the transformation progresses, it is more suspenseful and

threatening to the characters if you pace it out over the course of the adventure yourself pretending that you are following a set schedule. The characters should go through the following stages:

Cold-The characters feel chilly, nothing more. It seems every building is drafty.

Freezing-The characters are freezing, as though they're coming down with a fever.

Numb-The characters lose feeling in their extremities. This is a good one to wake up to if the characters spend the night. -1 Agility.

Dead-Total loss of feeling anywhere in the body. -2 Agility.

Festering sores-Sores are breaking out all over the characters' bodies. They suffer no ill effects, but the wounds do not heal even by curing magic. -1 Endurance. -1 Intuition.

Rotting Flesh-This is a drastic state of affairs for the characters. Large chunks of their flesh are dropping off of their bodies and they don't feel a thing. Even slight pressure will cause the skin to pull off the body. If a dwarf strokes his beard, he may pull off his lower face. -2 Endurance. -2 Intuition.

Skeletal-This should only be done if the characters have failed. They become skeletons. Spell casters can no longer use spells with verbal components, though they may think they used them if the caster does not realize he is a skeleton. The characters will become like the citizens of Dankmart. Those who realize their plight will still not be affected mentally however.

Again, only characters who made the save will experience the sensations, the others do not feel the change taking place. The attribute penalties should be applied immediately to all characters when they fall into a new stage of transformation. The effect on the characters' bodies make them physically less dexterous and hardy. The intuition penalties should only be applied to the characters who failed their save to be able to detect the transformation. This represents a loss in their discerning ability and wisdom.

If the characters leave the valley, they will slowly recover by regenerating lost flesh, unless they are skeletons in which case they will begin to disintegrate while outside the valley. Although turning the entire party into skeletons is not recommended unless they fail the adventure, you may select one or two characters to victimize towards the end of the adventure.

THE CITY

Front Yard

Foreigners who enter Dankmart are greeted by three welcoming buildings. As labeled on the City Map, buildings 1, 2, and 3 are in order a tavern, an inn, and a stable. The tavern is rather dull. Not many travelers come to Dankmart and none have of late. There are some off duty city guardsmen spilling ale on themselves as they "drink". The bartender is a knowledgeable man when it comes to the city and can direct the characters to just about anywhere within the city. He is too young to know anything of Caelius. A minstrel in a corner strums a guitar and silently sings. The waitress is very flirtatious.

The inn is almost empty, and if the characters enter, the innkeeper will bustle about madly trying not to lose the only customers in weeks. The stables keep a couple skeletal horses which chew hay that falls through their open mouths. The stable boy will care for any horse for a moderate price.

Bazaar

Dankmart has a spacious trading district stretching from the base of Castle Hill almost to the front gate. The bazaar is extremely busy during the day, not only with general shopping, but also with farmers bringing in crops and merchants haggling over shipment prices. Here more than anywhere else, the city becomes eerie. The players will see hundreds of skeletons hustling about, and yet with the absence of voices, the entire area is almost dead silent. The characters can encounter the following in the bazaar area:

Aricrus-The merchant the characters were sent to see can easily be found in his office adjoining a small warehouse on the east side of the bazaar. If the characters successfully communicate with the merchant, he will apologize profusely for missing the shipment and blame it on poor record keeping by his office assistants (of which he has none). He will tell the characters that a shipment will be off the following morning. A few seconds later he will ask the party what they want and start the conversation all over again, having already forgotten about his responsibilities outside the valley. It will be impossible for the characters to get Aricrus to send the shipment unless the curse is lifted or they forcibly take the goods themselves.

City Crier-A small boy walks around with a piece of paper reading it aloud voicelessly. The paper mentions that King Festrius is quite ill but is expected to recover soon after leeching.

Entertainers-A small acting troupe is performing on stage. On a side stage a sword swallower performs. The swords he uses have fake sliding tips, but that safety feature is rather moot lately.

Tailor-The characters pass by a tailor's booth. It seems the latest fashions for new clothes have a slender look to them.

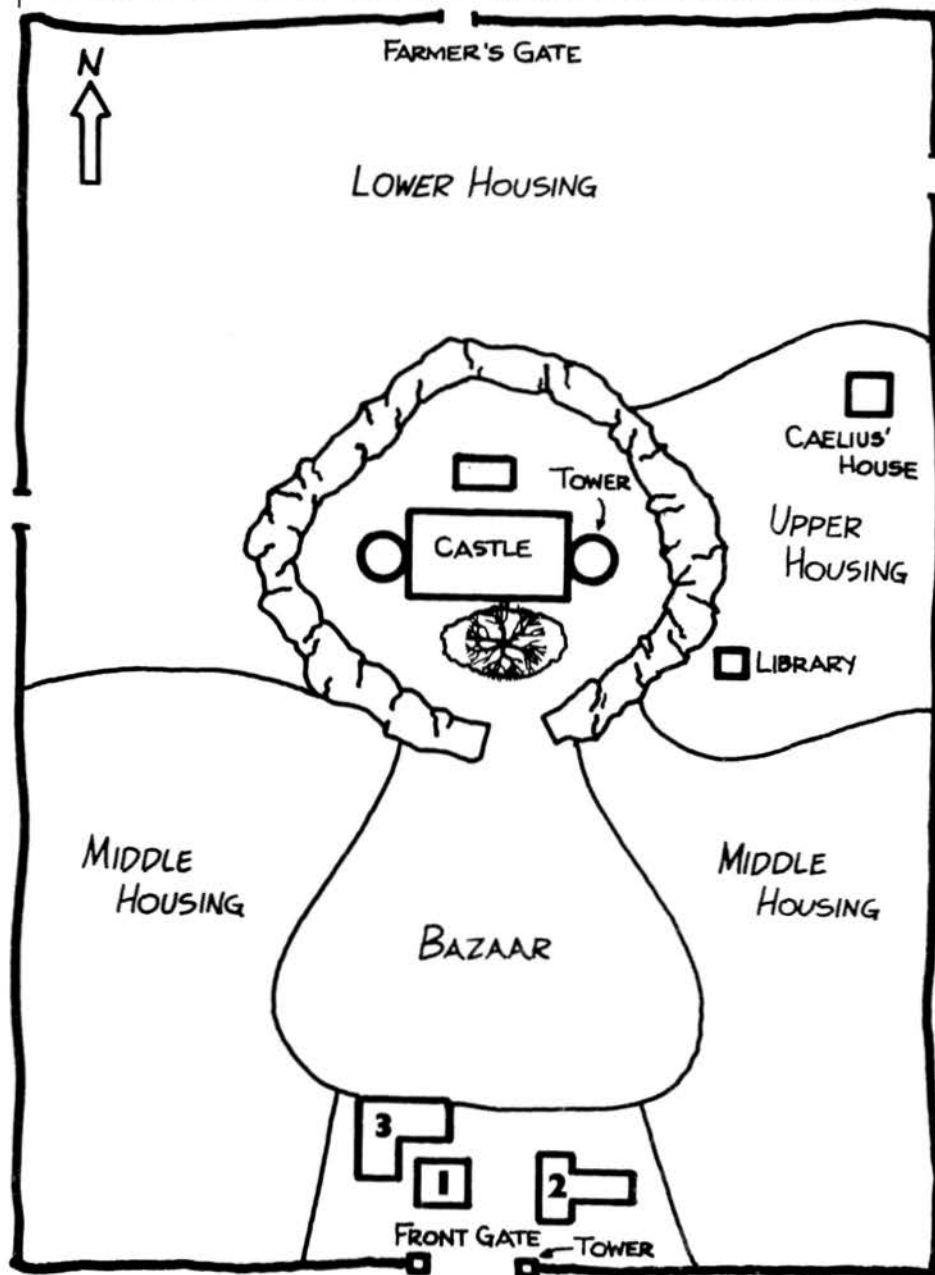
Thief-A pickpocket will attempt to lighten the load of the trailing character. Cutpurse (Thief Lvl 3, AR 8, body points 12, Attacks 1, Damage 1-4, Special Pick pockets 40%). If caught in the attempt, the thief will run, throwing

down caltrops to discourage pursuit. Pursuers must save vs. Agility or step on a caltrop. Caltrops do 1 point of damage and victim cannot walk until it is removed.

Lower Housing

The northern half of Dankmart is devoted to housing the farmers and field laborers who work in the fields of Estria during the day. The characters will probably never even venture here, but if they do, use the following for possible encounters:

Old Servant-One of Caelius's old servants will be sitting by a public water spring reading a book. The man will gladly reminisce about his old work days if the characters ask him any ques-



tions along those lines. He will speak favorably of Caelius, recounting his many generous deeds that made him popular. He will dismiss the rumors of nondivine magic saying that rumor blew it out of proportion. He will also mention that he hopes he passes away before Caelius exacts his revenge.

Refuse-A woman will appear out of a second story window and will dump the contents of an empty bucket into an alley. The woman believes the bucket contains refuse. She will wave a hand in front of her nose and disappear back into the window.

Dead of Night-If the characters wander the Lower Housing area at night, male members of the party will be subjected to the entreats and flirtations of a brightly clad woman. She will attempt to persuade her favors upon them for a small price.

Middle Housing

To the east and west side of the bazaar, are regions of middle income housing for the merchants and tradesman of the city. The east side is generally considered the superior neighborhood of the two. Encounters in the Middle Housing area include:

Chase-A skeletal cat chases a little bone mouse across the street and into an alley.

Funeral-A funeral procession goes down the street the characters are on. The deceased is laying on an open litter and look no more dead than his skeletal bearers. Two children walk in front of the procession with flower baskets. Following city custom, everyone who passes by takes a flower from the baskets and tosses the flower onto the litter.

Theft-At night, a squad of the city guard will approach the characters and ask if they've seen a man with a red beard go by. The squad is chasing a man spotted robbing a house. If the characters are uncooperative or are suspicious looking they may be taken to the castle jail tower for questioning.

Upper Housing

Dankmart is an ancient city with very fixed social classes. The upper class families have owned the land of Estria for centuries, and the plots rarely change hands. No one except nobility are allowed to own land, and no one ever rises to nobility. The nobles of Dankmart are hedonistic and vain. They live in their own little world inside the city walls rarely going outside the city.

A small strip of the Upper Housing area which lies at the base of Castle Hill is devoted to public museums, theaters, and a library. In truth, only the Upper Class visit these places with rare and unwelcome appearances by some Middle Class merchants. The library will prove to be very important to the characters.

The following encounters can be used in the Upper Housing area:

Noble-A noble is walking on the same side of the street heading straight for the characters. If the characters do not move aside, he will stop in front of them and motion them to move aside to let a noble pass. If the party refuses, the noble will not hesitate to use his cane to beat the ruffians aside. Noble (AR 7, Dice 1, Body Points 5, Attacks 1, Damage 1-4). If the characters attack the noble, you may want a squad of city guardsmen to happen along and arrest the players. 4 City Guardsmen (AR 5, Dice 1, Body Points 7,5,5,4, Attacks 1, Damage 1-8). If the characters try to talk their way out of arrest, it will not be easy, since the nobleman is always right in the eyes of the law.

Field Day-A teacher leads a class of young children in single file towards the library for a field day.

Riot-At night, there will be a small riot along the streets where the Upper Housing meets the Lower Housing. If the characters become involved, they may get pelted by thrown rocks (1-3 damage) or arrested by a squad of city guardsmen (use the statistics above).

Castle

The home of King Festrius rests atop an artificial hill in the middle of Dankmart. The castle itself is a two-story stone block structure. The king and his family along with a large cast of servants and advisors live in the castle. To the north of the castle itself is a large stable housing the royal steeds and the few calvary horses of Dankmart's militia. All of the horses are skeletal now. The East Tower houses the Royal Guard and a few of the City Guardsmen. The West Tower is Dankmart's prison. It house only a few criminals and several innocents. Much of Dankmart's justice is physical punishment, imprisonment is rare. In front of the Castle stands a giant oak tree. The tree was supposedly planted when Castle Hill was built and Dankmart was founded. It is a living symbol to the people of Dankmart and harming it carries a brutal punishment.

ORDER OF EVENTS

1. Royal Summons

After the characters have been in the city for awhile, they will be summoned by King Festrius. The king receives a list of foreigners entering the city. Since the curse, the list has been empty, and the king will see foreigners as a hope of lifting the curse or as being responsible for it.

King Festrius has only been partially affected by Caelius's Curse. Caelius planned it this way so that Festrius would actually suffer more. Festrius has advanced to the Dead category of transformation, but will go no further. Also, Festrius realizes and sees the transformations going on around him. When the curse was cast and all his subjects began to change, Festrius was the only one to notice the transformation or feel it. His complaints of numbness and chill concerned the royal doctors tremendously. Word spread that the king was ill and his sanity was questioned because he would keep raving about the people around him rotting. Festrius questioned his own sanity, for he saw his people going through a grisly transformation, and yet when he pointed signs of the change out to his subjects, they thought he was hallucinating.

Now Festrius is a man on the edge of rationality. He no longer allows his doctors to treat him. He does not understand what has happened or who is behind the curse. His people think he is deaf, sick, and crazy. Instead of the love and adulation he expects from them, he knows they fear and pity him. Festrius is a small man with a black beard and moustache. He is tired and unkempt. Festrius (AR10, Dice 1, Body Points 3, Attacks 1, Damage by weapon type)

The king will dispatch a squad of guardsmen to bring the characters before him in his throne room within twelve hours of their entering the city. If the characters come to the castle before twelve hours, they will be granted an audience. Similarly, if the characters are arrested for any reason, they will be brought before the king. When they enter the throne room, they will see Festrius sitting amidst an entourage of skeletal advisors, doctors, and guards. Festrius will practically jump out of his seat in excitement at seeing another flesh and blood human being.

Festrius knows standard common though his speech will be slurred because he has trouble controlling his

tongue and throat muscles. He will talk with the characters for a long time asking why they came and what they have seen. At first he will not give away that he sees his minions as skeletons. He does not want the characters to think he is crazy. Instead he will try to make the characters mention it. For example, he might have an advisor "drink" a cup of water and then ask the characters if they saw anything unusual. Anytime the characters reveal that they think something odd is going on, he will go into hysterics of relief that someone else perceives what is happening.

As soon as Festrius is comfortable that the characters are on his side, he will try to make them convince his advisors and doctors that their king is not a raving lunatic. The end result of course, is that the advisors will either believe the characters are crazy or that they are feigning to believe the mad king to get his favors.

Festrius will then lapse into a bit of paranoia thinking the characters are responsible for what is happening. Assuming that they persuade him that they are not responsible, he will entreat them to find out what is wrong and rectify the situation. Festrius has no idea who is responsible, after all, the trial and banishment of Caelius was thirty years ago. Dankmart has no powerful enemies. If the question of magic arises, Festrius will simply not believe that the gods laid the curse. The priests of Dankmart made sure that the Gods were appeased by the city's offerings. As for nondivine magic, such does not exist in Dankmart, and Festrius will be suspicious of any displays of it.

Festrius will promise rich rewards if the characters find a way to lift the curse. He will not be of much help to the party in their investigation, but if the party absolutely does know what to do next, he will suggest that they start with the Library.

II. Library

Everyone if Dankmart knows that the Library holds the answer to any factual problem. Not only does it act as an archive for the history of Dankmart, it has information from across the land on all manner of subjects as well. The characters will not be well received in the library, as they will undoubtedly not look like nobles. They will receive no help from the librarian concerning the library's overlycomplex filing system, and if they talk above a whisper, the librarian will quickly come over and put

a skeletal finger to her "mouth" and "sshh" the characters.

To further frustrate the characters the group of young students who were on a field day will be here. The little skeletons are thoroughly bored, and will have vast amounts of fun bothering the characters. They will watch the characters look up the location of texts and then run and get the texts from the shelves before the characters do. When the characters seek the text, the children will try to taunt the characters into a chase through the library. The delightful little kids will also climb the shelves and push books onto the characters from above as they walk through the aisles. The librarian or teacher will always appear at the right moments to blame the characters for damaging a book or running in the library.

If the character wishes to look up something, have him make an knowledge save to successfully find a reference to a location. Then an intuition save is required to actually find the volume. Note that many of the texts are written in common language not the Dankmart dialect. This allows the nobles to read the texts but not the Lower Class who know only the dialect.

If the characters eventually consult the general topic of magic in Dankmart, they will run across Caelius's name in the few chapters on nondivine magic. They can eventually piece together most of the information given in the Gamemaster's Introduction up until Caelius vows revenge and leaves Estria. The texts portray Caelius as an evil and conniving man. The descriptions of his magic include unspeakable acts of necromancy and transmutations of humans into animals. Additionally, any magic-users in the party will probably have heard of Caelius the arch-mage.

III. Rawt

The party will probably jump the gun and go straight to the house with no knowledge of what they're facing. If so, the house walls of Caelius will probably prevent them from gaining access to the house until they talk to Rawt. Rawt has been held in the West Tower castle prison for the past thirty years. Festrius has forgotten about him completely.

If the party informs Festrius that they believe Caelius is responsible, the king will won't believe them. He will remind them that Caelius's heart would burst if he came back, so how could he have



cursed the valley. And, more importantly, he never practiced divine magic which is the only force usable by a mortal, powerful enough to cast such a curse. Festrius will allow the characters to go to the West Tower though he no longer knows if Rawt is still alive or not.

Rawt is in the highest room in the West Tower. He is manacled to a wall there. There is one other prisoner held in the same room manacled to the wall across from Rawt. The other prisoner is a skeleton and could easily slip free of his manacles at any time if only he knew he could. Rawt is the only other flesh and blood human in Dankmart except for Festrius and the characters. Rawt has suffered no ill effects at all from the curse and is perfectly healthy despite his long imprisonment.

Rawt has however, much like Festrius, suffered from the mental strain of seeing his cellmate turn into a skeleton. Rawt has unfortunately not held together quite as well as Festrius. He firmly believes that he is dead and is cursed to haunt the tower as a ghost. He sees all living things through a "death vision" as skeletons or zombies.

When the characters visit Rawt, he will believe that they are alive and that he sees them through his "death vision". By this time, the party will probably be displaying enough festering wounds to make such a delusion believable. Rawt will be surprised that the characters can see him clearly and converse with him. He will then believe them to be dead as well.

Rawt has no objection to talking about Caelius. After all, Rawt is dead so why should he feel that he is betraying his old master. He can relate the following to the characters depending on what they ask and how you role-play the encounter.

A. Caelius did practice nondivine magic, and was teaching it to Rawt.

B. Caelius never conducted evil necromancy, though he did search for longevity.

C. Festrius sent an assassin to kill Caelius. Caelius changed the hired killer into a monkey. After this failed attempt, Festrius brought trumped up charges of treason against Caelius.

D. Caelius put many dangerous safeguards throughout his house during his trial since he knew that he would be banished. When the sentence was announced, and he was forced to leave, he sealed his house. Caelius also mentioned that he had already designed the spell that would be his revenge in his house laboratory, but that it would be a

long time before he would be able to cast it.

E. Caelius made Rawt slowly drink a specially prepared potion before Caelius left and said it would hold Rawt together in the years to come.

F. Before he could be restrained, Caelius struck Festrius in the mouth when the sentence was given. Caelius was never prone to violence.

G. Caelius told Rawt that if he ever needed sanctuary, the same part of Rawt's body that was the gateway to his future protection would open the gateway to the sanctuary of Caelius's house.

Caelius prevented Rawt from becoming a skeleton by giving him a potion before Caelius was banished. The potion was not effectively swallowed, but rather seeped into Rawt's skeleton through his teeth. When Caelius struck Festrius at the trial, he actually grabbed the king's teeth and released a trace of a similar potion into the Festrius's skeleton which partially protected Festrius, but also made him the focus of the curse to come. By design though, Festrius was only partly protected by the curse.

IV. Caelius's House

The characters should have no trouble discovering the location of Caelius's house. It is located in the northeastern corner of the Upper Housing district. The house is something of a landmark to the people of Dankmart and is believed to be haunted, cursed, or worse.

The house is a large two-story mansion designed in a beautiful architectural style. The house does show its thirty years of abandonment, but it gives the impression that it would not take much work to return it to its former splendor. A twelve feet high stone wall surrounds the grounds of the house. A solid oaken gate is the only portal through the wall. Caelius has sealed the house so that without very powerful magics, there is but one entrance to the house.

If a character attempts to go over or under the wall, his perspective will be altered so that he constantly sees the wall as being above him and cannot pass through it. For example, if a thief tries to climb the wall, he will see the wall stretching infinitely high above him, and can climb and climb but will not reach the top. Observers will see the thief climb half way up the wall and then begin scrambling around changing footholds but making no upward progress. A magic-user attempting to

levitate or fly above the wall will see the wall stretching up hundreds of feet in the air above him. The only way to bypass the wall is with a spell such as passwall or wish.

The only entrance Caelius left is given in his words to Rawt promising his apprentice sanctuary. On the oaken gate are many carvings and an ornate knocker. Of particular interest to the characters will be a large iron image of a gargoyle's face in the middle of the gate approximately six feet from the ground. True to his promise to his apprentice, the mouth of the gargoyle offers entrance to the house grounds. If the lips of the gargoyle's mouth are grasped and pulled apart, the iron lips will slowly open and reveal a 4' diameter opening through the gate. A magic mouth will appear over the opening and say:

"Welcome Rawt, I hope that you may find peace here. Remember that I have placed snares throughout the house so use caution."

The grounds between the house and wall are overgrown with vegetation from the house's garden. There is an abundance of fruit trees. There is nothing of real interest to the characters here. The areas of the house are numbered and described according to the House Map. All of the spells and traps inside the house are cast at 12th level.

1. The front door is locked and is very sturdy. Halve the chance of any attempt to break the door open. The entrance hall is well decorated with faded tapestries. A narrow stairway leads upstairs. A secret door is hidden behind a tapestry in the hall way below the stairs. The secret door is magically sealed and requires the key from the desk in area 8. A knock spell has the same chance as a dispel magic of opening the door (consider the caster's level vs. level 12 magic seal).

2. This area is a parlor for receiving and entertaining guests. It has several pieces of plush furniture. There are pieces of shattered crystal all about the floor and side tables. One decanter of soured wine sits unbroken on the mantle of the room's fireplace. A fire burns steadily in the fireplace but gives off no heat. The fire is real and magically sustained, but it has the illusion of giving off no heat. If a character gets too close to the blaze, they will be burned, but they will not notice the injury until they leave the room. Damage is 1-2 for getting close and 1-6 for passing a hand through it. The cushions of the furniture are ripped, and rotting fruit lies about

the room. The remaining wine decanter is worth 10 gold and is very fragile.

3. This area is a dining room. It has a door into the hall and one into the kitchen for easy serving. The table is set with ornate silver ware. The silver is tarnished and will not appear to be worth much. If the characters invest several hours of polishing in the set however, it can be sold for a total of 200 gold. A china cabinet rests in one corner of the room. All of the priceless dishes it held are broken. It appears that many of the plates were thrown against the far wall and shattered.

If the table set is bothered, the knives and forks will levitate off of the table and hurl randomly towards the characters. Each character will be attacked by 1-4 utensils. The utensils attack as Dice 1 and do 1-2 points of damage when they hit.

4. When the characters enter the kitchen area, they will be assailed by the smell of rotten vegetation and feces. The kitchen is in disorder. Pots and utensil have been scattered to all corners of the room. In the middle of the room is a hanging rack suspended from the ceiling which still holds a few pans. A woodstove sits in the northeast corner of the room. A counter and wash basin stretches along the western wall. There is a door that leads down to the storage cellar in the northwest corner. Half eaten fruit and excretions from a small animal create the stench. The only thing of note in the room is a magical broom which magically collects dust rather than simply brushing it away.

5. The door to this room is locked. If the door is opened, anyone in front of the door will be pushed gently backwards as if by an invisible ocean wave. The doorway is protected by a form of a push spell. It requires a bend bars roll to fight past the field and enter the room. Once on the other side of the doorway, the effect is gone. If a push spell is cast at the doorway, the effect will disappear.

The room is Rawt's quarters. It is in very good order compared to rest of the downstairs. The room is spartanly furnished and everything in it is in meticulous order. It is furnished with a dresser, bed, and washstand. The dresser is filled with robes and other simple clothes. Under the bed is a pair of slippers which allow their wearer to walk on water or other liquids.

6. This room is Caelius's library. The room extends upward through both levels of the house. A balcony rings the room halfway up, and spiral stairs on the

north and south sides of the room run from the floor up to the second floor balcony level. The walls of the room are packed with filled bookshelves. In the middle of the floor are two work tables each with two cushioned chairs. A silver candlestick worth 15 gold rests sits on each table. Double doors lead to the glass observatory tower to the east. The selection of books covers all topics but will offer the characters nothing pertinent to their search.

The ceiling of this room is supported by a system of wooden rafters. Beerick, the assassin that Caelius changed into a monkey lives in the rafters. Beerick is responsible for the mess much of the downstairs is in, and the fruit trees outside were planted for his diet. Caelius forced Beerick into service guarding the house before Caelius was banished. Caelius extended the assassin's life and promised to restore him to human form when the wizard returned. Beerick will hide among the rafters and watch the characters for awhile when they enter. He will then attack them using his wand. Beerick (AR 7 (3), Dice 1/2, Body points 15, Attacks 1, Damage Bite 1-4) Caelius gave Beerick a wand which projects a pulse of invisible force which hits an opponent like a thrown brick. He made the command word to the wand a monkey's screech (eeh-eeh). The wand does 2-12 points of damage or half damage with a save vs. wands. The wand has 42 charges. Beerick's Armor Rating is 3 because of the cover he gets from the rafters. His body points are high because he was originally a 4th level Assassin. Beerick will stay hidden in the rafters and fire the wand at the party. The party will be assailed by invisible forces out of nowhere. Their only clue will be a small monkey screech before each blow.

7. A glass tower stretches like a transparent chimney up the east side of the house. Spiral stairs made from thick glass travel up the tower from the ground floor to the second. On the second floor, an astronomy telescope is set up. The telescope is made of brass with crystal lenses. The telescope is worth at least 2000 gold if a buyer can be found. Also, one of the lenses in the telescope is magical. When looked through, the lens gives the observer sight power like Eyes of the Eagle. The single lens has the disadvantage of lack of depth perception. The tripod legs of the telescope are set into the glass floor of the tower. The telescope itself can be separated from its stand with a bend bars roll. If the floor is struck to break out the

legs of the tripod, it will collapse. Anyone standing in the tower will take 2-12 points of damage from the fall and shards of glass. The telescope lenses will be destroyed by the fall 75% of the time making it worth only 50 gold.

8. Caelius's private study is protected by an invisible magical sigil on the door. The door is locked, and the first person to touch the door will be electrocuted for 24 points of damage or half if a save vs. magic is made. The sigil may be deactivated for one minute by speaking Caelius's name. Once activated it disappears.

Inside is a plush study furnished with a desk, chair, and a small bookshelf filled with general reference volumes. The desk has two locked drawers. There are also several decorations in the room including a large wall map of the continent and a full suit of platemail on a stand. A painting depicts a waterfall and cliffside. The painting is worth 40 gold, an inkwell on the desk is worth 20 gold, a 15 gold silver candlestick.

If either desk drawer is unlocked, a gas will seep into the room through vents hidden behind the books on the bookshelf. The gas is colorless, but it smells faintly of flowers. Each character must save vs. poison at -4 if they are in the room one round after the drawer is unlocked. Characters who take precautions when they smell the gas save normally.

If a character fails the save, he will suffer from wild delusions for 2-8 minutes. During this time, things around him will become weird and menacing. Possible effects include:

** The waterfall comes flowing out of the wall painting engulfing the character and flinging him into the wall. The character may take some damage as he stumbles over furniture (1-4) and throws himself into the wall (1-3). If he cannot swim, he will drown and be unconscious for 10-30 minutes.

** Platemail comes to life and attacks the character. The suit wields a ball and chain and a shield. It will always hit the character inflicting 1-8 illusory damage. If the character goes down to zero body points, he is unconscious for 10-30 minutes. When he wakes the damage is gone.

** Bugs! Everywhere and in everything. At first they will be around the character, and then on him crawling out of his clothes or armor. The character will rip off his armor while he slaps himself killing the illusory bugs. The damage the character inflicts on himself

should be around 1-3 per minute or more if the character is strong.

If another character attempts to aid one of his crazed friends, he will most likely be viciously attacked by the deluded victim who sees the friend as a threat.

One desk drawer contains rolls of papers and a key to the secret door at the base of the first floor stairwell. The other drawer contains Caelius's diary. The diary ends before Caelius's arrest. It does document many of the charitable projects Caelius organized in the Lower Housing area.

9. A locked door leads into the Master bedroom. There is nothing of note among the room's fine furnishings, but a thorough search by the characters will reveal (2) 50 gold silver rings in a dresser drawer, (4) silk robes worth 40 gold each in a wardrobe, and a purse with 20 platinum in a shoe at the bottom of the wardrobe. There is also a quarterstaff +1 leaning against the wardrobe.

10. Caelius used this room as a secondary laboratory to teach magic and alchemy to Rawt. Rawt was never permitted to go to the private laboratory below the house. The room has a couple magic tomes filled with useful cantrips.

In the middle of the room is a alchemy table. The table is in disarray as though someone used the equipment haphazardly and then left. Magic-users will find many useful components on the table. There is a potion of healing left on the table among many harmless mixtures.

When the door is opened, the room's guardian will be released. Caelius bound a minor air elemental to the room. The elemental utilizes acid vapors in the room to attack. Elemental (AR 1, Dice 2, Body points 11, Attacks 1, Damage 2-8, Special Only harmed by magical weapons, gust of wind will destroy the elemental). The elemental itself is invisible, but it may be easily located by the small, yellow acid cloud it manipulates to attack.

11. This is a nondescript, moderately furnished guest bedroom.

12. The stairs from the kitchen lead down to this cellar. The stairs are rotted and will collapse if anyone uses them. A save vs. Agility is required to step in time or the victim will fall 10 feet into the cellar and take 1-6 points of damage.

The only thing of note here is some potatoes that Rawt magically altered to grow in size. The potatoes have taken

root in the dirt floor of the cellar and continued to grow despite the absence of sunlight. The potatoes are now the size of a man's head.

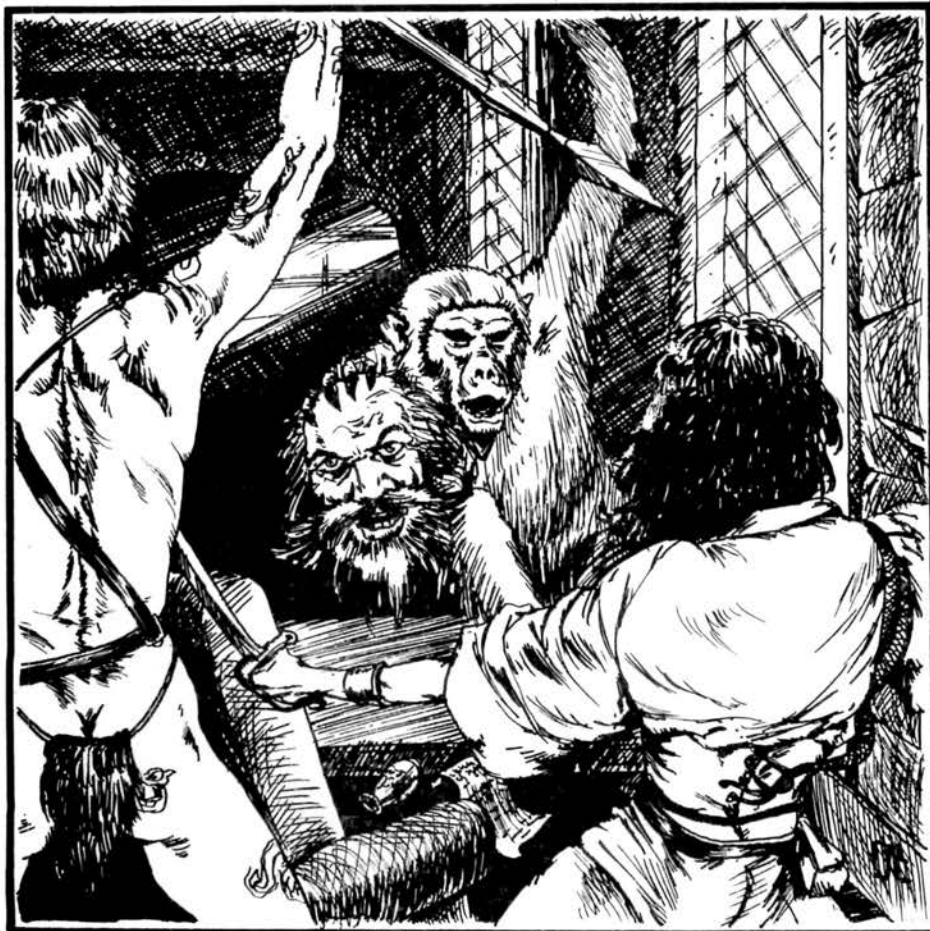
13. The secret door below the stairs leads to another set of stairs that leads down to the private study area of Caelius. At the base of the stairs, there is an illusionary wall that one simply steps through to go to the study area. The passage to the west is just a ruse to snare the unwary.

At the place marked on the map, there is a trapdoor pit. The pit is 10 feet deep and will cause 1-6 points of damage to the first person to step on the trapdoor. At the bottom of the pit are a weird fungi growing on the earthen floor and walls. When a falling body smashes the fungi, they will release a spore which causes sleep when breathed (save vs. poison to resist effect). Once asleep, the victim will never wake up as the fungi will slowly release spores to keep the character unconscious. His body will become overgrown with new fungi which will disintegrate the body for energy. The pit's trapdoor closes and locks after activated. The lock will automatically release after twenty minutes if it is not picked open.

The door at the end of the west passage is false. It opens to an earthen wall. There is a sigil placed on the door which will cause an explosion of fire if the door is touched. The fire does 24 points of damage or half that if a save vs. magic is made. 14. Through the illusionary wall, the corridor runs 20 feet before opening into a room. Halfway down the corridor, an iron porticullis blocks the passage. The porticullis can swing open like a door, but is presently locked. To the north and south of the area in front of the porticullis are alcoves hidden by illusionary walls. In each alcove is an animated stone statue created as guardians by Caelius. The statues will attack anyone except Caelius that attempts to use the porticullis.

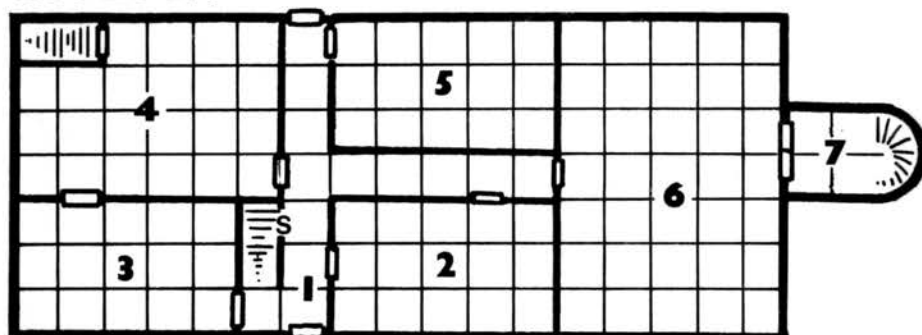
The statues will reach through illusionary walls and strike the characters in front of the walls. To the characters, it will appear as though stone arms appear out of the walls and punch them. Stone statues (AR 3, Dice 3, Body points 14, 12, Attacks 2, Damage 1-8/1-8 Special Take only 1/4 damage from non-magical weapons). Note that if the characters only attack the arms of the statues, and not the body, each hit will cause only one point of damage.

15. This is a barren antechamber leading to the research rooms. The door to

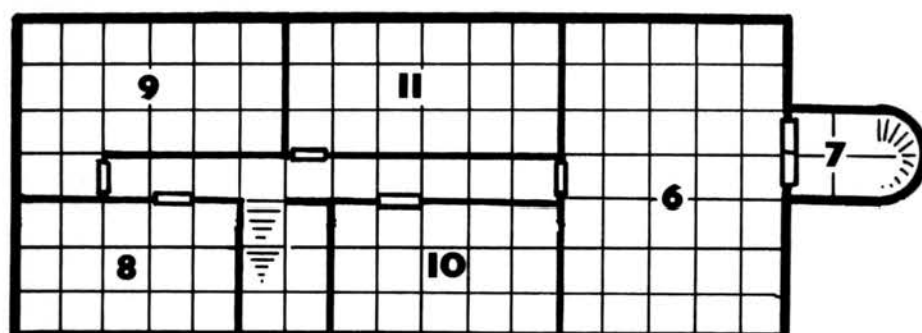


CAELIUS' HOUSE

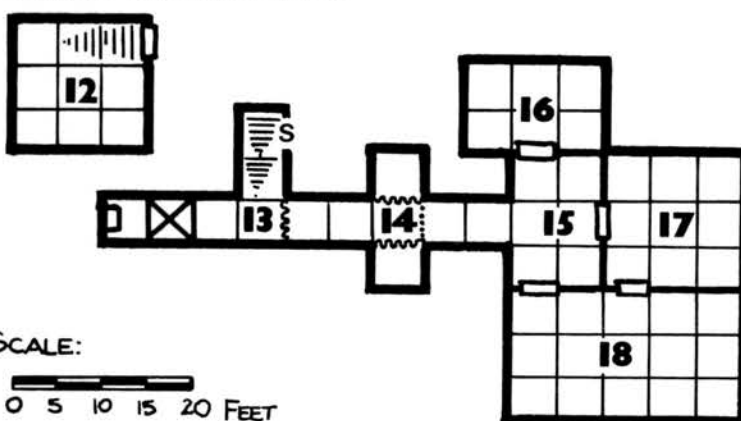
1st FLOOR



2nd FLOOR



UNDERGROUND



SCALE:

0 5 10 15 20 FEET

	FALSE DOOR		STAIRS		ILLUSIONARY WALL
	SECRET DOOR		PORTCULLIS		TRAP

the north has light leaking through the bottom.

16. Caelius has returned to his mansion after thirty years of banishment. He has returned to see his handiwork and retrieve anything in his house he left behind that is still of value to him. Unfortunately, Caelius never found a way to counteract the curse placed on his heart during his banishment. He has found a way to circumvent the curse by returning without his heart. In fact, Caelius has magically severed his head from his own body and teleported it here. With him, he has brought his familiar, a monkey, to carry his head and manipulate the objects around him. Caelius was so pleased with having Beerick as an aid in his final days in Dankmart that he modeled his familiar after the transformed assassin when Caelius began his studies abroad.

Caelius has been sending his familiar out at night to view the city and he has seen the work of his curse through his familiar's eyes. Now, he is satisfied with the curse's effect and is gathering his things to teleport back to his home abroad. He has completely forgotten about Rawt or his promise to Beerick.

Area 16 was originally Caelius's library of spell books and magical tomes. Caelius has now destroyed the books that contain magical works. The room has been magically soundproofed from the exterior to allow study in absolute silence. Caelius will not have heard the characters' approach because of the soundproofing. When the characters enter, Caelius will be somewhat surprised. He will not waste time however, he will have berate the characters for invading his home and then attack them.

Caelius is limited to using spells with verbal components only. He currently has memorized Hold Person (x2), Teleport (x2), Power Word Stun, and Time Stop. He will always reserve one teleport for his escape taking his familiar and his important items with him. He will not use Time Stop immediately because of its long casting time. He will try to hold person as many characters as possible and then power word stun or teleport away anyone not held. Caelius (AR10, Magic-user Lvl 18, Body points (head) 26)

Caelius's familiar will hurl potions at the characters from the table it and Caelius are on. Characters get a save vs. magic against all potions to resist their effect or take half damage. If a potion hits, it will do one of the following (roll 1d4):

1 Transform character into a chicken. The effect lasts 2-12 days.

2 Change the character's clothes and armor to stone imprisoning the character in his apparel. Effect lasts 2-8 hours.

3 Potion explodes on impact in a 10' diameter. All characters within the explosion take 4-24 points of damage.

4 The characters youthens 1-10 years.

Monkey (AR 7, Dice 1/2, Body Points 3) If the familiar is in any danger, Caelius will immediately teleport away with him.

If Caelius wins, he will destroy almost anything he believes the characters can use and then teleport away before his spells wear off. If the characters force Caelius to leave (they should not be allowed to kill him), they can search through the books that remain. Of particular importance to them is a small collection of scrolls rolled together that Caelius wrote before his banishment. On these scrolls, Caelius did all of his formulaic computations for the curse. Any magic-user who looks at them, will probably not understand the note and complex formulas, but he will be able to discern the genius and innovativeness in the work. He will also be able to determine that the curse operates in a field and through a focus. It is obvious that the field of the curse is the valley of Estria. The focus of the curse must be a human skeleton properly prepared. As long as the focus is outside the field, the curse's effects will be lifted.

The party may falsely believe that the focus is Rawt, but Festrius is the focus. Caelius has designed the curse so that the only way it may be lifted is if Festrius leaves the valley forever, effectively banishing the king just as the king banished Caelius.

17. The west door to this room is covered by another sigil. If a character touches the door, he will be struck by forces from the four corners of the door. A pillar of stone, a jet of flame, a bolt of lightning, and a stream of water will all erupt toward the character. Damage is 24 total or half if a save vs. magic is made. The south door is locked but has no sigil.

The walls of this room are covered with black cloth. In the middle of a black marble floor, a ten foot diameter silver ring is imbedded in the marble. Caelius used this room to summon elementals. If the silver is pried out of the floor, it will yield 100 gold worth of the precious metal. Extracting the silver takes one hour if five people work with proper tools.

18. This is Caelius's private alchemy lab. Caelius has already taken out most things of value in the room, but if the characters are adventurous enough to sip at the chemicals left behind, they will find a total of 1 longevity potion, 3 healing potions, and 1 vial of poison (save at +2 or die).

Notes left behind by Caelius include his initial notes on manufacture of longevity potions, and also his work on the formula for the potion he gave Rawt to protect the apprentice from the curse. Careful inspection of the latter notes (save vs. Knowledge to discover) will reveal that two doses were made.

Conclusion

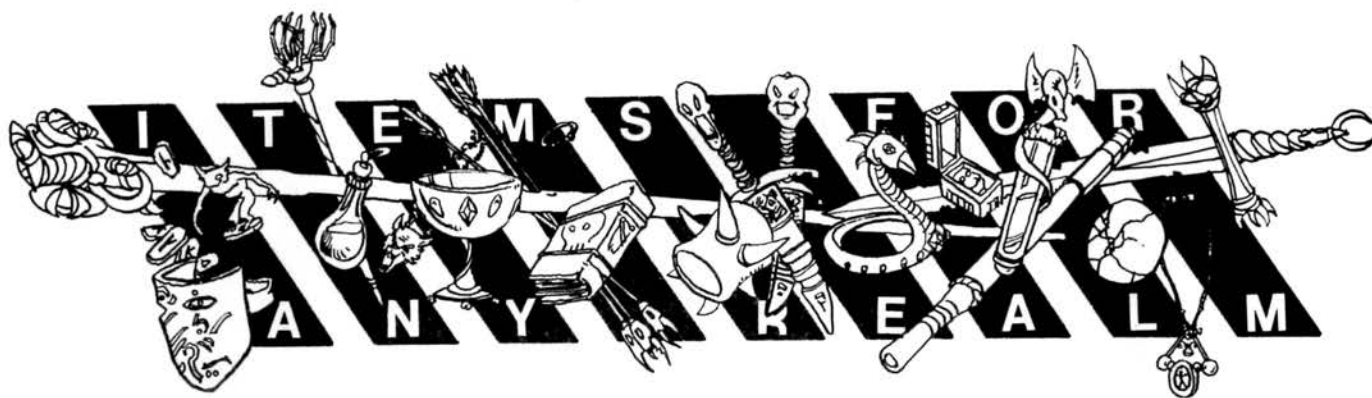
If the characters still believe that Rawt is the focus of the curse, they can easily convince Festrius to have Rawt taken from the valley. Festrius will in fact, be all for killing Rawt to make sure the apprentice never returns to the valley. If Rawt is taken from the valley, the curse will not be altered. Rawt will be happy that he is being allowed to haunt someplace besides the castle tower.

If the characters realize that Festrius is the focus, and present this to him, he will say that the characters are idiots. If the characters mention that Festrius must leave the valley forever, he will physically attack them in rage. If Festrius attacks, his royal guards will join him the following combat round. Festrius will wield a scepter that does 1-6 damage. There are 8 guards (AR 5, Dice 1, Body Points 6 each, Attacks 1, Damage 1-8 longsword).

The curse will disappear if Festrius is taken from the valley. When Festrius is allowed to see that the curse does indeed lift when he leaves, he will sorrowfully agree to leave his kingdom forever. The characters will get no reward from Dankmart for such a sad conclusion.

The Produce

If Milan's shipment of produce arrives in a timely fashion, the characters will be compensated as agreed. Milan will not accept any excuses for late delivery as the terms of the agreement were that the produce was to arrive on schedule.



by Richard Thomas; Richard is the Art Director of WHITE WOLF Magazine. He proves his capabilities as a writer with these creations.

This month's installment of "Items for Any Realm" presents items from my own campaign world which is known as The Crossworlds Continent. CRC has been running almost weekly for more than a decade and is a mixture of many different gaming systems, as AD&D didn't exist at the time it started. This is a very broad selection of items from all over the CRC with an equally broad range in the level of power represented. The items are the ones which are pictured in the logo for this column.

1. Sage Box

Appearance: The box is polished teak inlaid with ivory and bone. Inside is a carved bone "head".

Powers: Once per day, the box can answer any question about the physical and magical worlds which is not a secret. I.e. it would know the names of the past owners of a sword, but not a demon's true-name. Any questions which require deduction or which is phrased in a multi-part fashion (or which the GM doesn't understand) will be answered with, "Sorry, sir, I really cannot say" and the questions for the day will have been expended. The box speaks with a very proper, clipped, aristocratic accent and is always polite.

History: The box is one of six information devices created by the Oovalians, one of the greatest magic-using cultures on the planet, some two thousand years ago. It was recovered from the tropical island ruins of the culture by High Priest D'gr'gr of the evil Dwarven god, now Earl of the Hill of the Fourth Horse. When not on his person, the box is kept in his vault deep beneath the dagger-shaped

temple/fortress which surmounts the hill.

2. Wand of the Spider Goddess

Appearance: Obsidian wand inlaid with ebony surmounted by a blackened silver spider.

Powers: The bearer can 1) spider climb at will, 2) cast a web spell 3/day, 3) is immune to ALL venoms and poisons, and 4) can cast a single 30' strand of web-silk which is extremely sticky.

History: These are given to male dark elves who have passed the test of the Spider Goddess and are favored by the Goddess. Since the wand is powered by the will of the Goddess, she can grant full, limited or no powers to the wand as she chooses.

3. The Mask of Itzama

Appearance: Beaten gold mask inset with platinum tattoos and studded with rubbies, emeralds and diamonds.

Powers: Grants the ability to cast spells up to and including the fifth level to non-magic-users. The number of spells gained is as if the non-spell-caster were the equivalent level wizard. The mask will double the number of spells for wizards.

History: Although proper detection spells will show the mask to be both magical and extremely evil, no form of magic will reveal that it is a cursed item. The curse is that the mask is the receptacle of the life force of an ancient wizard-priest of Tezcatlipoca, the Smoking Mirror, named Itzama. Itzama will never reveal that he controls the mask because his goal is to control the wearer. Each night after the mask is worn, Itzama will take control of the character (no saving throw). Once in control, Itzama will use whatever means available to return to the crypts beneath the ruins of his ancient temple. Since things may have changed since he was

last there, Itzama will not teleport. Although the character regains control each morning, Itzama will take whatever means necessary to return to his temple and rebuild the former glory of his cult.

4. Bubbly Rum

Appearance: Bubbly Rum is deep brown in color, with millions of tiny bubbles which rise to the surface and burst. It has a taste which varies by brand, but which is similar to caramel. All bubbly rums are best served cold.

Powers: Depending on the brand, enough will make you very drunk, very energetic or very gassy.

History: This is an alcoholic beverage created by the gnomes. They jealously guard its secrets. Each clan has its own recipe making the brands vary in terms of flavor, potency and color. Perhaps the most well known, and relentlessly marketed, label is "Hammerstorm B.R." also known as a "Hammerstoicked". Most brands cost the median of ale and wine. The rare and potent "Caliop Classic" costs as much per glass as a bottle of fine wine.

5. The Heart of Light

Appearance: A crystalline, 1' diameter globe with a white light inside which pulses to the heartbeat of whoever it is held near.

Powers: The Heart of Light is an artifact with powers which promote law and goodness. Some of its known powers are: 1) control the minds of evil monsters, 2) undead are unable to approach it and are destroyed by its touch, 3) it has been seen to regenerate lost limbs and heal wounds and 4) energy from the Heart can turn matter into crystal, often with unexpected magical results.

History: The Heart was originally discovered deep within the earth by a family of Black Gnomes who used its

powers to control a group of dragons and perform experiments with crystal. The Heart is not sentient and can be used by evil, but it will usually turn its uses to good purposes despite the intent of its bearer. The Iron Cleric sent a group of adventures led by paladin Dorian Xavier Condor and the monk Kwik Duck who rescued the Heart from its vile keepers. During the series of battles, the Heart was used by the gnomes as a weapon which transformed two of the adventurers' arms into crystal. The results of these attacks were not quite what the gnomes had hoped for. Although the arm of the dwarven cleric Pardu was fragile and easily damaged, it was capable of great acts of healing. The arm of the gnome fighter Bede Diefendocker was turned made hard as diamond but it remained as flexible as a

force while the other may be thrown to create a 6 dice fireball.

History: The earring was designed by the infamous Elven assassin/thief Yain Yarara and created by the Black Temple forces (an alliance of dark elves and evil dwarves). There is only one of these devices now known, but other versions will likely be created.

7. Carrion Arrows

Appearance: The fletching on the arrows is a bright red mounted on a deep red or maroon shaft. The heads are carved from bone into various demonic shapes.

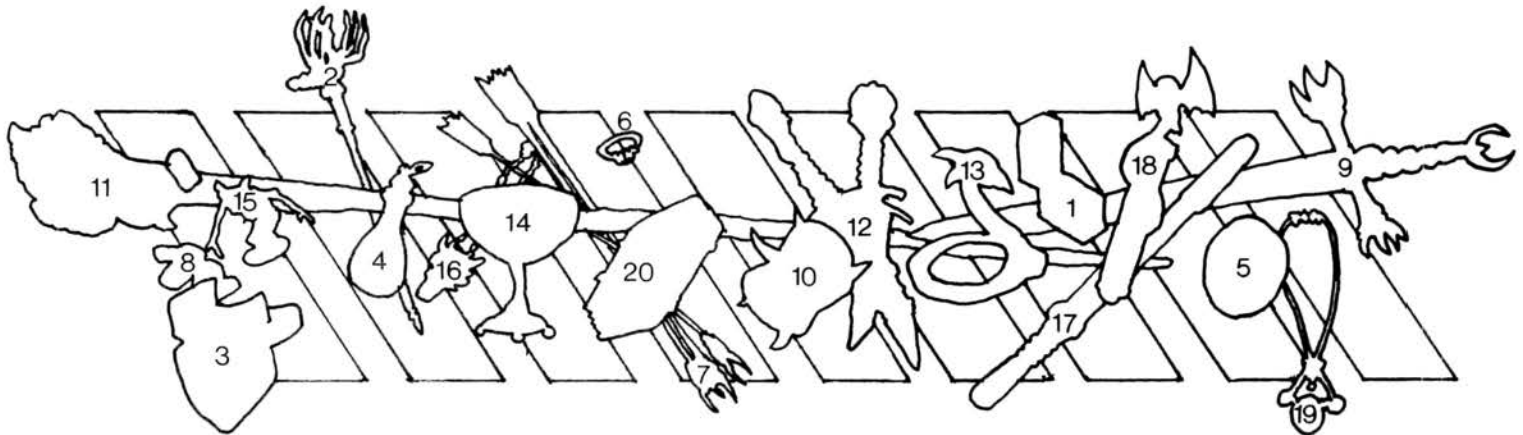
Powers: After a successful hit, the heads animate and begin chewing for an additional 1d4 damage every round they remain in the wound. Once they are

clergy. These dwarves are known as Rune Masters and are often on equal standing with the Archbishop. The runes are inscribed and the Masters are then healed by attendant priests. The Evil Rune Master A'lorn has devised a method of draining the life energy of unwilling victims, which, while not as effective as the Master's own energy, does not put A'lorn at risk.

9. The Beastword

Appearance: The sword was carved from a reddish, rust-colored iron as were the hilt and pommel. It emits grunts, groans, and random animal noises when used in combat.

Powers: Although not intelligent, the sword possesses an animal cunning and intuition which is passed along to the



normal hand and arm. It also had magical abilities like the Heart itself. Thus the Heart turned evil intent into good purposes. The Iron Cleric holds the Heart now and rarely lets it out of the Iron Citadel.

6. Earring of Nightshade:

Appearance: Blackened silver open hoop with a small ball on each end and a larger ball on each small ball between which the earlobe is placed.

Powers: When used by thieves and related classes, it confers the following powers: 1) the wearer is able to hear even the softest noises in a 50' radius; 2) the hoop will magically straighten to become a tube filled with 50% black lotus powder, 50% a small, feathered, poison dart; 3) each small ball unsnaps with a thumbnail to reveal a 1'x1' extradimensional space in which items may be carried and their weight will not felt; 4) one of the larger balls is marked with an inscribed dot and is a bead of

removed they cease animation and are then reusable.

History: These devices were created by the Imperial Hobgoblin Weaponsmiths for the Elite Troopers before the change was made from longbows to repeating crossbows.

8. The Dwarven Runes

Description: There are some forty to sixty different runes which may be carved into stone, metal, bone and wood.

Powers and History: The Runes are one form of magic which the dwarves, well-known as non-magical, have truly mastered. When inscribed into a perfectly made item, a combination of runes imbues the item with magical abilities. Although the activation of the runes costs the user nothing, the actual carving is a dangerous task. This is because each rune draws upon some of the carver's life energy (body points). Thus, the dwarves which create rune magic are traditionally tied to the dwarven

owner. It has a powerful ego and can usually influence its wielder to do as it wishes. It is a +2 broadsword and is +4 vs. avians. The bearer also gains the following powers: 1) speak with animals at will, 2) charm animal 1/day, 3) intensified sense of smell so that the owner may track as a ranger, 4) one half normal chance of being surprised, 5) leap 30' forward and up to 15' high every other round, 6) berserker rage once per day.

History: One of the first weapons forged by the evil dwarven Rune Master A'lorn, this sword was created to be used against the Winged Ones during the War Above and Below. After doing much harm to the Winged Ones, the bearer of the sword, a human mercenary named Otto Krieger, turned on the Rune Master and wounded him severely before escaping into the Kralgon Swamp. Since then, the sword has had many owners, most of which operate from the swamp. A'lorn has never since forged a weapon without a "mastery"

rune to prevent its being used against himself.

10. Bracer of the Gladiator

Appearance: Iron bracer with slightly curved iron spikes.

Powers: The bracer grants +2 to hit and damage with any weapon held in the hand and may be used as a weapon itself doing 1d4 damage. It also confers armor rating 3 and may be used to cast strength spell 1/day.

History: These bracers were relatively common during the rise of the Empire of the Scarlet Gate when gladiatorial events were most popular. Now these are rarely found. The most well-known wearer of a Gladiator Bracer is Carn-Lord Arack, the giant cat-man follower of the Satan Bug.

11. Beholder Staff

Appearance: Tentacles of verdigrised bronze sheathing are attached to a green wood staff with eyes of yellow with red pupils attached to the ends of the tentacles.

Powers: This immensely powerful staff duplicates the powers of a beholder. Fortunately, only the large eye and 1-3 of the small eyes may be used per round. The large eye projects an anti-magic ray out to 60'. This costs three charges. The small eyes project: 1) disintegrate, 10'; 2) flesh to stone, 20'; 3) telekinesis, 80'; 4) cause serious wounds, 20'; 5) charm person, 30'; 6) charm monster, 30'; 7) sleep, 50'; 8) fear, 60'; 9) slow, 40'; and 10) death ray, 10'. These each cost two charges. The staff holds twenty charges and may be recharged. The bearer may also levitate at will with no charge cost.

History: The staff's origins are unknown, although noted magic scholar Father Nicoli Scolari once wrote that he thought it a creation of the evil dwarf savants before their race began to degenerate. Three of these staves are known to exist in the Underworld.

12. Gem Daggers

Appearance: Seven blades, each a different shape, but each pommel is a stone carved into a semi-human head.

Powers: Each blade has a carved gemstone, a name, detects various things and speaks with a distinctively different voice. 1) Ruby- Roger- detects gems- New England accent. 2) Madara quartz- Ogden- detects metals- talks in rhyme. 3) Imperial topaz- Yuri- detects

enemies- says only Nyet or Da. 4) Emerald- Guy- detects secret door-lisps. 5) Aqua marine- Bosco- detects traps- "Duh? Here's one...". 6) Sapphire- Ignatz- detects invisible- speaks Brooklynese. 7) Amethyst- Vern- detects poison- good ol' boy. Each blade is +3.

History: Although no one knows the origin of these blades, it has been theorized that they were created by the gnomes centuries before the dwarves landed on CRC. Certainly the strange nature of the blades would point to gnomish origin. Regardless, the blades were hidden for five centuries in the treasure trove of the sage/hermit Devos the Mad. They passed into the hands of a magic-wielding ogre named Onni after Devos's death at the hands of the Ethereal Marauders. Onni serves General D.W. at the Hill of the Fourth Horse.

13. The Basilisk Crown

Appearance: The crown is greenish tinted metal with rubies and craved red jade in the shape of a bird/lizard.

Powers: The wearer is able to turn flesh to stone (and reverse) like the basilisk via the ruby eyes of the crown. The crown is able to affect one person per round and it must meet their eyes. The wearer is also immune to petrification of any type.

History: The first recorded wearer of the crown was the Matriarch of the Death Adders, a pseudo-religious cult of female assassins which flourished during the ancient Da'Shel Dynasty. When that society collapsed and the remnants fled into the Great Desert, the crown went with them. It is now rumored to be in the possession of Orsin Falas, Bandit King and Grandfather of Assassins in his Maze of Death. Although there is no proof of this rumor, there are many new statues within the maze.

14. The Blackfire Chalice

Appearance: A silver chased golden goblet set with diamonds. The interior is inscribed with a multitude of criss-crossing lines.

Powers: The chalice acts as a gate to the Ethereal Plane. This enables it to fill with raw Blackfire, a potent mixture of the Negative and Fire Elemental Planes. The raw Blackfire acts as an energy source for a variety of magical purposes. Raw Blackfire can also be used purely for its destructive capabilities as

it will burn anything but precious metals and gems. It takes one round for a cubic foot of Blackfire to devour a cubic foot of any other matter. Usually the destruction of a single item will be enough for the Blackfire, which will then just sit and burn, but often it will spread to other adjacent objects, especially if they are of similar matter. Dispel magic spells, energy from the Positive Plane or a substance vastly different than that being consumed will sometimes extinguish the Blackfire.

History: Blackfire is a substance which occurs "naturally" on the Ethereal Plane where elemental fire and negative energy mix. Primarily an energy source, raw Blackfire can be harnessed for magical uses from healing to soul-wrenching destruction. One important aspect of Blackfire is that its use seems to corrupt most people. Some historians maintain that it seduced the once fair dark elves. Certainly they used it to lure the Da'Shel Dynasty to its premature end. The chalice is either from those days or the times of the Blackfire Empire which followed.

15. The Figurines of the Spider Goddess

Appearance: Small grey figure seemingly carved from granite.

Powers: The owner of a figurine may cast it to the ground, causing the item to enlarge to a life-sized and living creature. This creature will then perform tasks for the owner for a pre-determined amount of time. This time period, and the number of times the figurine may be used, are determined by the Spider Goddess when she gives the item as a gift.

History: Another gift from the dark elves' Spider Goddess are the small figurines which are all that remain of victims of her Soul Web. This Web sucks the souls of those caught within it and transfers them to the goddess. If she doesn't feed on a soul she can save them and reanimate their original bodies (now reduced to a small grey figurine by the Web) while maintaining her control over them. At the Hill of the Fourth Horse, Prince Akbar Eilserve owns a figurine of Elmer, the midget troll, which has proven to be an erratic aid at best.

16. The Lupine Talisman

Appearance: A wolf's head carved from bone on a steel chain and enameled black, white, red or green.

Powers: The talisman confers the powers of a werewolf upon non-werewolves and is usable only on nights when the moon is visible in the sky.

History: The talisman was created by the Lycanthrope League for use by its human agents. Each color represents a different division of the league. Besides its basic use, the talisman has also been used as a tool of vengeance by forcing an enemy to wear one. The League's attempts to create talismans for the other varieties of lycanthropes have failed so far. Another version of the talisman is, however, used by the Bear Clans: archenemies of the League. The version is of yellowed ivory and confers the ability without loss of mental faculties.

17. Shadow Baton

Appearance: A blackened steel rod about three feet long.

Powers: 1) +1 to hit and damage. 2) When used as a club the defender must save vs. paralysis after being hit or be stunned for 2-5 rounds. 3) By grasping the concave end, the remaining two-thirds can be thrown while a 50' long thin wire plays out between the two parts. A hit 25% above the needed roll indicates entanglement. The stunning effect still applies. 4) The end opposite the concave end can be telescoped out to form a 10' pole. Again, the stunning effect is still functional. 5) The concave end may be spoken into and will either allow communication with the other

batons or it will project and magnify the owner's voice out to sixty feet in the direction the baton is pointed. 6) Finally, the telescoping end can cast a light spell every other round at a cost of two charges. The baton has thirty charges and may be recharged by the manufacturers.

History: Used exclusively by the officers of the guard in the City With No Name, these devices are rumored to be incredibly expensive (upwards of 50,000 gold). However, the wily Earl of the city must be satisfied as they have already proven quite popular in the guards' continuing struggle against the Shadow Guilds. The manufacturer is reputedly the legendary T.J. McCauley Weaponsmith, Ltd., a company devoted to improving the technology of the CRC (for a price!).

18. The Vial of the Worm

Appearance: A delicate glassteel vial filled with the heart's blood of a dragon, or related species, and usually topped with a detailed carving of that particular creature.

Powers: 1) The vial renders the bearer immune to the appropriate breath weapon and any fear auras. 2) He is able to cast charm monster at that creature with a save of -2. 3) The vial casts a continuous protection 10' radius effective against the creature. 4) The bearer can breathe as the creature three times per day for the user's body points in damage. The vial is usable only by wizards.

History: These extremely ancient weapons of the elves were used frequently in the centuries before humans came to CRC. The High Elven Lord is said to possess a full set of vials, one for each type of dragon species, which he has yet to pass on to Grey Tiger, the Elven Messiah.

19. The Soul Shield

Appearance: It is a delicate necklace of platinum and pearls with a small, flat, round crystal set within. Inside the crystal is what appears to be the flickering silhouette of a man.

Powers: The crystal is a prison for the soul of a hapless victim which is used to deflect or absorb life or soul draining energy attacks against the wearer. Any attacks which deplete strength or energy levels will be drained from this item. The amount of punishment that captured soul can withstand is dependent on

the condition of the person before they were trapped.

History: Only thirteen of these evil devices are said to exist, and these all belong to members of the Order of the Black Cross. Their leader, the Black Prince, Shirulan, devised these items with demonic assistance.

20. Demonone's Necrofolio

Appearance: A large book with slightly glowing black basalt binding carved with the image of a skull and Demonone's worm symbol.

Powers: The Necrofolio is the journal of the once great master wizard, now demi-god, Demonone and contains much information on the other planes as well as his studies on the nature of death. It contains the only known copy of the spell "Limited Planemeld" which enables the caster to create a "pocket dimension" which has the characteristics of two or more other dimensions. Demonone used this spell to implant technological weapons around his treasure vault (machine guns). It also contains information on the creation of his personal war-force, the Basalt Giants. These giants were a sorcerous hybrid of stone elementals and stone giants and they were nearly as strong as storm giants. They would also regenerate id near a planar gate.

History: Demonone was one of the two greatest wizards of his age, the other being his brother Elderone the Good. The two battled continuously until Elderone's son ended their conflict by reconstructing an artifact which elevated the brothers to demi-god status. Demonone's chief agent was a hobbit locksmith named T.J. McCauley who retrieved the folio and used its knowledge to become an interdimensional arms dealer. He also used the knowledge to provide a mechanical, six-armed body to house his head after being decapitated by the Vorpall Blade of the paladin Orvil MacLoc.

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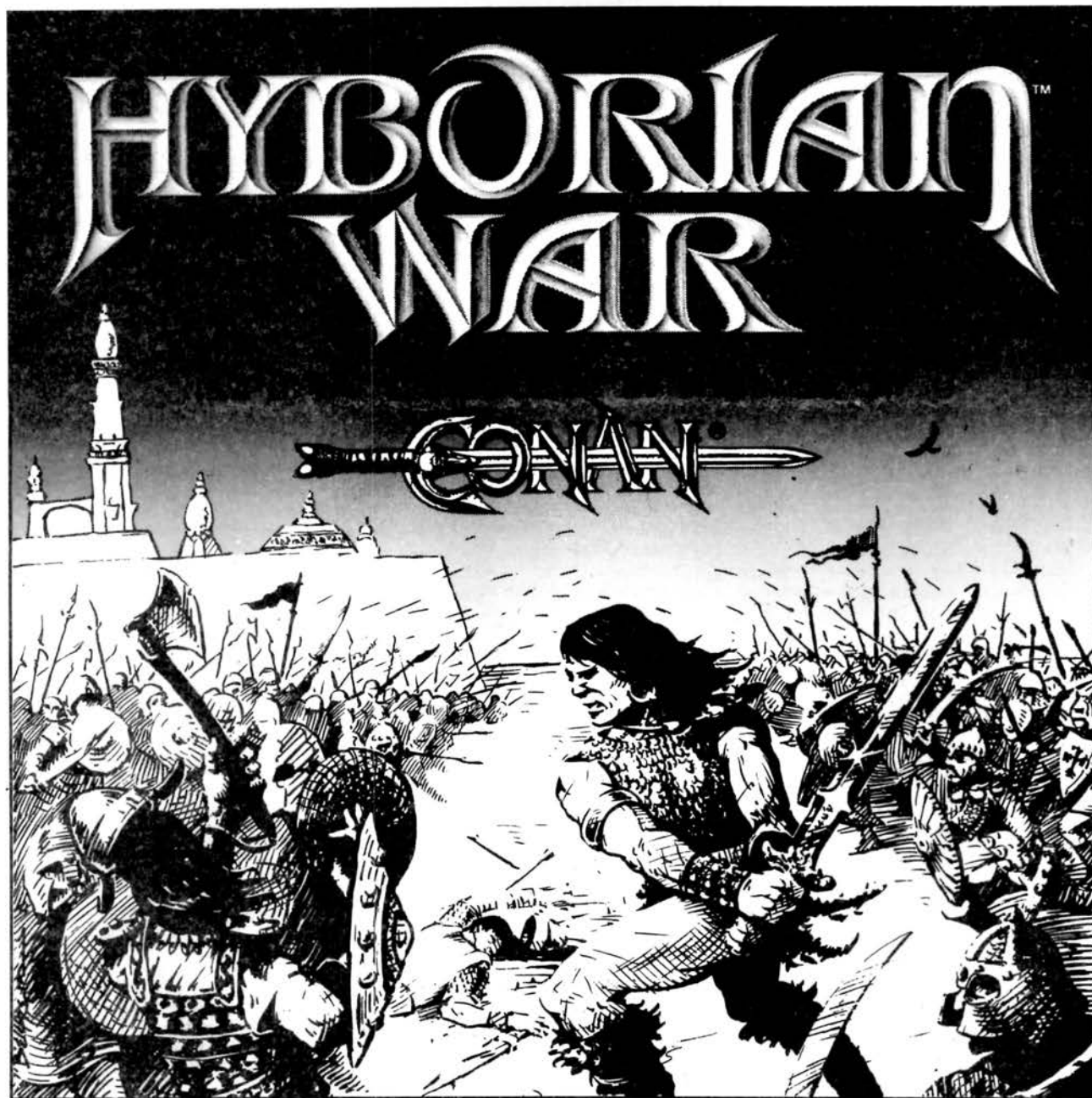
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PBM CORNER

by Jim Townsend; Jim is the owner of Pfodd Enterprises which runs the Xenophobe PBM game.

The cost of running a PBM company is much more than the cost of postage and paper. Many beginning moderators fall victim to the siren call of starting a PBM company thinking that they can undercut the competition by 20% or more and get millions and millions of players into their games. Afterall, they have the better game, right? In this column I will delve into many of the costs of running a PBM business.

Postage

Anyone can figure this one out. Obviously, any PBM company is going to

be mailing turns to their customers. No matter the type of game, you are going to get stuck for at least twenty-five cents for postage in the US (unless you plan on running your turns on postcards!). This is enough to cover roughly five sheets of paper. A return envelope, 3x5 cards containing diplomatic messages, account sheets, longer printouts, larger envelopes and so forth will drive the postage cost up.

Printing

This includes such things as turnsheets for your players, fancy envelopes, rulebooks, charts, quick reference cards and much, much more. You will probably find that a good quarter of your expenses (or more, depending on how nice you want everything to look) will be in this area. Since you must print

everything in bulk to keep the unit price down, you will be required to make an initial investment that you will never recover (ie. You pay to have 100 rulebooks printed, but by the time they are sold you must have already ordered another 100 more so you won't run out of stock. Your original investment is never paid back.) Prices for printing can fluctuate wildly with typesetting, long rulebooks, amount of stock on hand and so on.

Taxes

Yes, Uncle Sam is going to knock on your door just like anyone else's. However, what very few beginners realize is that the Self-Employment Tax is going to hurt you the most. In 1987 they took 12.5% of your profit. In 1988 they upped it to 13.02%, meaning that every



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\$1000 profit loses 130.20 to Uncle Sam. Once you reach a certain level they'll hit you even more. Easily 15% of your net profit can disappear this way. You can cut down on your taxes by incorporating, I think, but that process has its hassles as well.

Equipment

No matter how well equipped you are when you start your company, you are going to need new equipment at some point. A faster printer, a bigger computer, another terminal, and LOTS of floppies are all considerations. Plus, you'll be needing software. A good word processor, spreadsheet, hard drive back-up program and so forth. Also take into consideration repairs and utilities. At the very least you're going to be burning electricity and your modem will be running up your phone bill (not to mention connecting charges with the big networks).

Computer Paper

You should do some basic math and calculate how much paper you are going to need for each game that you have over the space of a year. I went through about 50,000 pages in the space of sixteen months. The turnsheets for Pfood's games are longer than the usual, but keep this amount in mind. Find a wholesale supplier and buy in bulk to reduce your per-page price.

Advertising

There is no limit to the amount of money which could be spent on advertising. I can show you places where you can get a full page for less than \$100 and quite easily point out places where \$15,000 or more is required just to open your yap! And no, players are not going to flock to you because of word of mouth no matter how good your game. Figure on spending about \$20 per paying customer, though this value varies. At this price, however, figure the cost to get 1,000 players. If you had that kind of money, why would you ever want to be a moderator in the first place?

Phone Bill

Most moderators tend to run-up good-sized charges on the phone. You had better plan on a \$50 to \$150 monthly bill. Of course, you can lessen this by communicating more by mail, or simply not communicating, but most moderators are pretty talkative.

Negative Accounts

From time to time you are going to be stiffed by your customers. Many PBM companies refuse to send turns to players who have negative accounts, and I heartily endorse this. You have to cut the player off eventually and it is

much better if he owes you nothing instead of \$20 or more. Plus, the occasional rubber check will come (though I've only had two in as many years of business) and you usually end up eating that as well.

Failures

Now do you wonder why 97% of PBM companies fail within the first year of operation? The answer in most cases, I think, is that the owner expects that he'll have a great time running his game for everyone in the known universe while making a lot of money as well. Reality shows that he is going to be spending many long hours over his program and word processor before he ever sets foot in the PBM arena. Bugs in the program are going to present themselves and they can twist you into knots. Frantic changes in the rules will make errata sheets necessary. All of this assumes that the game is completely computer-moderated. If any hand moderation comes into the picture, you're going to find the time put into the game skyrocketing, errors mounting, and (probably) your company failing.

Just Maybe...

However, there is a glimmer of hope. You are, after all, charging turn fees, so perhaps you can recoup your investments and still make a little money.

Turn Fees

Almost every PBM game charges a basic turn fee for each turn run for the player. These usually come in three varieties: a set turn fee (same all the time), a variable turn fee (varies according to the number of orders written), or an escalating turn fee (one that goes up after a certain period of time).

Special Fees: These are widely used in PBM and have many permutations. The most common are special action fees (you write in prose what you want to do and the moderator evaluates it), expanded turn fees (allows you to do more than during a normal turn; one aspect of

the game is usually concerned, such as exploring), and double turn fees (simply twice the normal turn; it's normally used for players with slow turnaround--overseas, etc.). The use of special fees in PBM games varies so greatly that one can make only general statements about them. Most games that employ them end up giving an advantage to those players who are able to spend more.

Rulebooks

You will probably want to charge your customers for the rulebook. The longer the rulebook, the more you should charge. However, you are not in the PBM business to sell rulebooks. Therefore, it might be wise to take a loss on the rules in order to keep the price competitive enough to get customers to purchase it.

Start-up Fees

Most PBM companies charge some sort of start-up fee to cover the entrance of a player into the game. This varies from company to company but is usually \$5 to \$10. Again, you might wish to take a loss in order to attract more customers.

The Bottom Line

To sum up this piece, I would like to make it clear that the PBM business is rough and ruthless. The new PBM company has such a small chance of surviving that no insurance company would write a policy to cover them. Skydivers are a better risk. Either you have what it takes in your game or you become a statistic. Unfortunately, most moderators, past and present, are statistics.

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GET YOUR MARK...

by Stephan Wieck; Steve is the Assistant Editor of *WHITE WOLF Magazine*.

Well, the scenario design contest deadline has come and gone. The entries have yet to be judged, but from what I've seen there are several quality entries. The results of that contest will be revealed here next issue.

Fiction Galore

WHITE WOLF Magazine receives a lot of fiction submissions these days. So, we thought that with so many writers out there, we should have some sort of fiction contest. But, we don't want you to have to put too much effort into your contest submission, so we've decided to limit the entries to five

hundred words or less. This will save you some time, and save me from judging novels.

If you think this sounds easy though, you probably don't have a good idea exactly how short five hundred words can be when you're trying to tell a story. These stories are going to be the classic little tales with a twist at the end, or maybe an elaborate joke. You could even do some sort of character sketch. Regardless of what you can come up with, you'll probably have trouble fitting it into five hundred words. [Editor's Note: To give you some perspective, this column is 318 words long.]

Contest Entry Requirements

My only restrictions on judging entries are that I will not read a manuscript written in cursive or with a pencil. I prefer typed papers, but printed in pen is certainly acceptable and will not weigh against you. On each manuscript, please include a word count and your full name and address. Send your entry to: WHITE WOLF Magazine, Fiction Contest, 1298 Winter Place, Anniston, AL 36201. Decision of the judge is final,

and all entries become property of White Wolf Magazine.

The Winners

Two winning entries will be selected by the judge. The winning entries will be printed in White Wolf, and I'll be sure and dig up at least one free game for each of the winners. The winners will also receive a free twelve issue subscription to White Wolf. Good luck, and good writing.

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Capsule Reviews

by Stewart Wieck; Stewart is the Editor-in-Chief of *WHITE WOLF Magazine*. He says that it is only coincidence that a couple of the reviewed products this issue had art by Richard Thomas.

The Cyclopedia Talislanta (4), Bard Games, Box 7729, Greenwich, CT 06836

"Cyclopedia" is the latest addition to Bard Game's line of Talislanta material (reviewed in issue #11). Despite lacking any B&W illustrations by the talented P.D. Breeding-Black (our cover artist this issue), "Cyclopedia" may be the most attractive of the line of products thus far. The cover illustration was done by Mrs. Breeding-Black and the general graphics quality is very nice (including some interior illustrations by Richard Thomas, *WHITE WOLF Magazine*'s Art Director). Eight pages of four color maps at the beginning of the book add to the appeal of the product.

The text of the book is divided into an index of map listings; statistics for many interesting new creatures, fauna and insects; details about flora; numerous new character types; and a few pages of miscellaneous additions at the end of the book.

Ownership of this book is a necessity for gamers with campaigns set in Talislanta. Other gamers should take a look just to see what Talislanta offers.

Pizza Wars Imperium (3), Heathen Thorn Enterprises, 4711 Luerssen Ave., Baltimore, MD 21206

OK, I admit that it sounds wierd. But when in the gaming industry has wierd ever discounted fun? This small booklet provides rules for wargaming atop a pizza using the toppings as armies. The slices of the pizza are the territories up for grabs. The winner of a battle gains the honor of eating the enemy armies he defeated. If a territory was conquered during the attack then the slice of pizza must be eaten before the player gets another turn.

There are eleven different groups of people which may be represented by pizza toppings. These range from the Yurian Fungi Fanatics (mushrooms) to the Scholars of Zhuran (green peppers).

Each group has one or two special abilities. The downtrodden Pungul Mud Serfs, for example, may find a "Promised Land" if six of their armies are able to convene in the same territory. They then immediately gain two more armies to protect their land.

Combat is resolved by adding the number of armies on a side to the roll of a d6. Therefore, one army of the Society of the Yellow Death can only hope to tie six armies of the Unholy Horde.

The booklet is very attractively illustrated by Richard Thomas and the wacky idea is actually pulled off reasonably well by designer James LaFond. Now there's no need to take a break to eat; just keep on gaming!

The End of a Legend (2), 21st Century Games, 587-F N. Ventu Park Rd. #806, Newbury Park, CA 91320

This is the 2nd module release for the "Enforcers" super-hero/science fiction RPG. While in many ways superior to the first adventure ("Knights of Beverly Hills"), "End of a Legend" has its own problems.

This product looks much nicer than the first. The cover is very eye-catching. Additionally, the scenario is more involved than that of 'Knights. In "End of a Legend", a national hero is shot down before the eyes of the characters (heroes in this case, though the game system does provide for evil characters as well). The adventure is the heroes' investigation into this occurrence.

Unfortunately, there is little detective work or thought that needs to be done by the players. The characters are essentially able to feed a few bits of info a computer and the computer then solves the problem (ie. locates the bad guy's base). The characters then rush to the base and beat up the bad guys.

The strength of 'Knights was the characters (heroes and villains) provided for use with the module. The characters provided in "End of a Legend" lack inspiration. I will acknowledge that the adventure is somewhat a tongue-in-cheek look at a Captain America vs. Red Skull (characters from Marvel Comics, you know) confrontation. Also, how Dr. Rachen, the mastermind villain, manages to have a 360% defense bonus while confined to a wheelchair is definitely not explained.

The game system provides for this because of Rachen's ACPs (which reflect his combat experience), but an exception should have been made...

Basically, while the "Enforcers" game system is good, I cannot recommend this module.



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Review: Cyberpunk

Published by: R. Talsorian Games,
Box 2288, Aptos, CA 95001-2288

reviewed by: Stewart Wieck

The dark future depicted in "Terminator". The ominous atmosphere of "Blade Runner". The riveting tension of "Aliens". All of these movies contain aspects of the environment in R. Talsorian's GEN CON/Origins release, "Cyberpunk". Action in "Cyberpunk" takes place in the year 2013; and the times aren't good. A continued deterioration of American society has brought on wars, widespread drug-use, clones, cyborgs, ultra-powerful (and often corrupt) corporations, homelessness and more. With this gritty environment, it is not surprising that R. Talsorian Games recommends the game only for those age 16 and above.

The game box comes with the following enclosed items: 3 rulebooks, a couple reference pages, and two dice

(d10 and d6). Of the books, "View from the Edge: The Cyberpunk Handbook" is the most important. It presents info concerning some of the game mechanics, character types and the Net. Cyberpunk is a skill-based system in which characters pick-up their skills as determined by a certain lifepath. A lifepath is followed each time a character is created. For example, you may have begun life as a streetkid and picked up certain skills (out of necessity to survive perhaps) while on the street. Things like higher education are determined later and it is doubtful that your streetkid will get a shot at any kind of higher education.

There are nine types of characters to choose from. These include nomads (part of the huge homeless population that roams the roads like many of Mad Max's enemies), solos (hitmen who often carry out the corporations' style of justice), rockerboys (hard rockers who are trying to bring on revolution with their music), corporates (yuppies of the next century), and others. Each character type has a special ability at his disposal. Cops have the power of authority, medias have credibility, solos have combat sense, etc. Plus, any of the characters have the chance to attach cybernetic parts to themselves if they wish.

The Net is perhaps the best part of the game. The Net is a telecommunications network which connects computers and telephones. While anyone can gain access to the net, the character type called netrunners are the most proficient. Essentially, they are able to enter the Net through Interface programs. Then they may attempt to retrieve programs or information from even protected computers. This is done through a very interesting Net combat. The netrunner must meet defense and defeat defense programs with programs of his own. Unfortunately, some corporations don't like their info to be messed with so they make use of Black Programs, programs which can, through a netrunner's interface, stop the heart or erase the mind. Not pretty stuff.

"Welcome to Night City: A Sourcebook for 2013" is another of the books. This book gives a brief summary of the events between now and 2013, details the technology of the time, contains an introductory adventure, and re-

lates info about many of the huge corporations.

"Friday Night Firefight" is the last of the rulebooks. It's the shortest at about 20 pages, but contains only rules for combat and weapon statistics. Damage is done by body levels in this combat system instead of by body points. While there is lots of information here, the system is itself is relatively wieldy. Rules for special situations and types of firing could be looked at when needed.

"Cyberpunk" brings a before untapped genre to RPGs. The strength of the game certainly rests with the atmosphere created and the interesting characters who could be played. The game does suffer in a few areas. First, though nicely formatted, the print quality leaves a little to be desired. Some of this could be accounted to the computer drawn maps. Also, the adventure lacks excitement and involvement. It is actually not an adventure at all. It is truly a fictional narrative with maps of locales and stats of characters in sidebars. A more comprehensive adventure should have been provided as an example to players who will likely be unaccustomed to creating adventures and situations for this genre.

Primarily, though, Cyberpunk is a fine game set in an environment which is very conducive to role-playing. If you enjoyed the movies mentioned at the beginning of the review (and I suspect that each and every one of you did) or have read and enjoyed Gibson's "Neuromancer", then this game may be for you.

Appearance: 3
Components: 2
Playability: 4
Complexity: 3
Sum: 3

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Protecting the Shield

The ROLEMASTER system prides itself for realistic play through variable skill development. Yet it contains a major flaw. Despite the emphasis on learning skills, the shield has unchanging values; every class and every level uses the shield with the exact same proficiency. A 20th level fighter has no extra bonus with his shield than his 1st level counterpart--- quite unrealistic. Realism demands that the shield become a skill.

As with all skills, development point costs vary, according to fighting ability: lowest for fighters and highest for magic-users. The average bonus of strength and agility scores modifies the skill bonus, in addition to the combat bonus per level of each character class. Of course, magic and/or well-made shield bonuses still apply.

However, several limits must be added to prevent overuse. First, the total bonus applies only to melee combat; missiles move too quickly. For missile defense, the ROLEMASTER values suffice.

Optionally, each skill level could apply, reflecting the benefits of long training.

Second, each shield type has a maximum skill bonus, realistically preventing overly large bonuses. Of course, wall shields have larger limits than target shields.

Third, shield-skill must be specified to one type of shield, similar to weapon specialization. Finally, the melee bonus is a total bonus, and must be split up against multiple attacks. However, any remaining shield bonus can be used to strike opponents as a small bash.

Development Point Costs

Alchemist: 20
 Animist: 9
 Astrologer: 20
 Barbarian: 2/5
 Bard: 6
 Beastmaster: 3/7
 Burglar: 3/8
 Cleric: 7
 Conjuror: 20
 Dancer: 6
 Delver: 6
 Dervish: 6
 Druid: 9
 Fighter: 1/5
 Healer: 20

High Warrior Monk: 4
 Illusionist: 20
 Lay Healer: 15
 Magician: 20
 Mentalist: 15
 Monk: 8
 Mystic: 20
 Necromancer: 20
 Nightblade: 6
 Paladin: 2/5
 Ranger: 4
 Rogue: 2/7
 Runemaster: 20
 Sage: 15
 Scholar: 9
 Seer: 20
 Shaman: 9
 Thief: 3/8
 Trader: 3/8
 Warlock: 20
 Warrior Mage: 2/7
 Warrior Monk: 8
 Witch: 20

Maximum Skill Bonuses

Target Shield: 30
 Normal Shield: 40
 Full Shield: 50
 Wall Shield: 70

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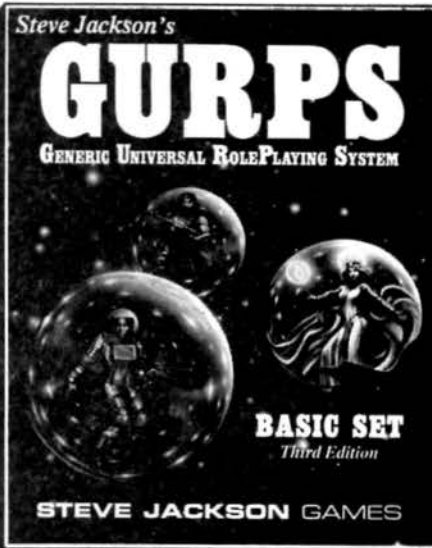
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ON THE



HORIZON

Next issue is our second annual science fiction issue. Just look at what's planned for this fantastic issue.

1. Adventures and articles for games like Battletech, Space 1889, Star Wars, and more.
 2. An in-depth review of GDW's new Space 1889 game.
 3. From the minds of Chaosium comes a cult for use with Runequest (this time we're not kidding).
 4. Another fine fantasy adventure. The exact one has yet to be chosen.
 5. "Demon Killer" will continue with part three. The lines have been drawn; how will it turn out?
 6. And, of course, our regulars: Segment Jorune, The PBM Corner, The Silicon Dungeon, Capsule Reviews and more letters.
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