

# ADVENTURES

## UNLIMITED



Issue #2  
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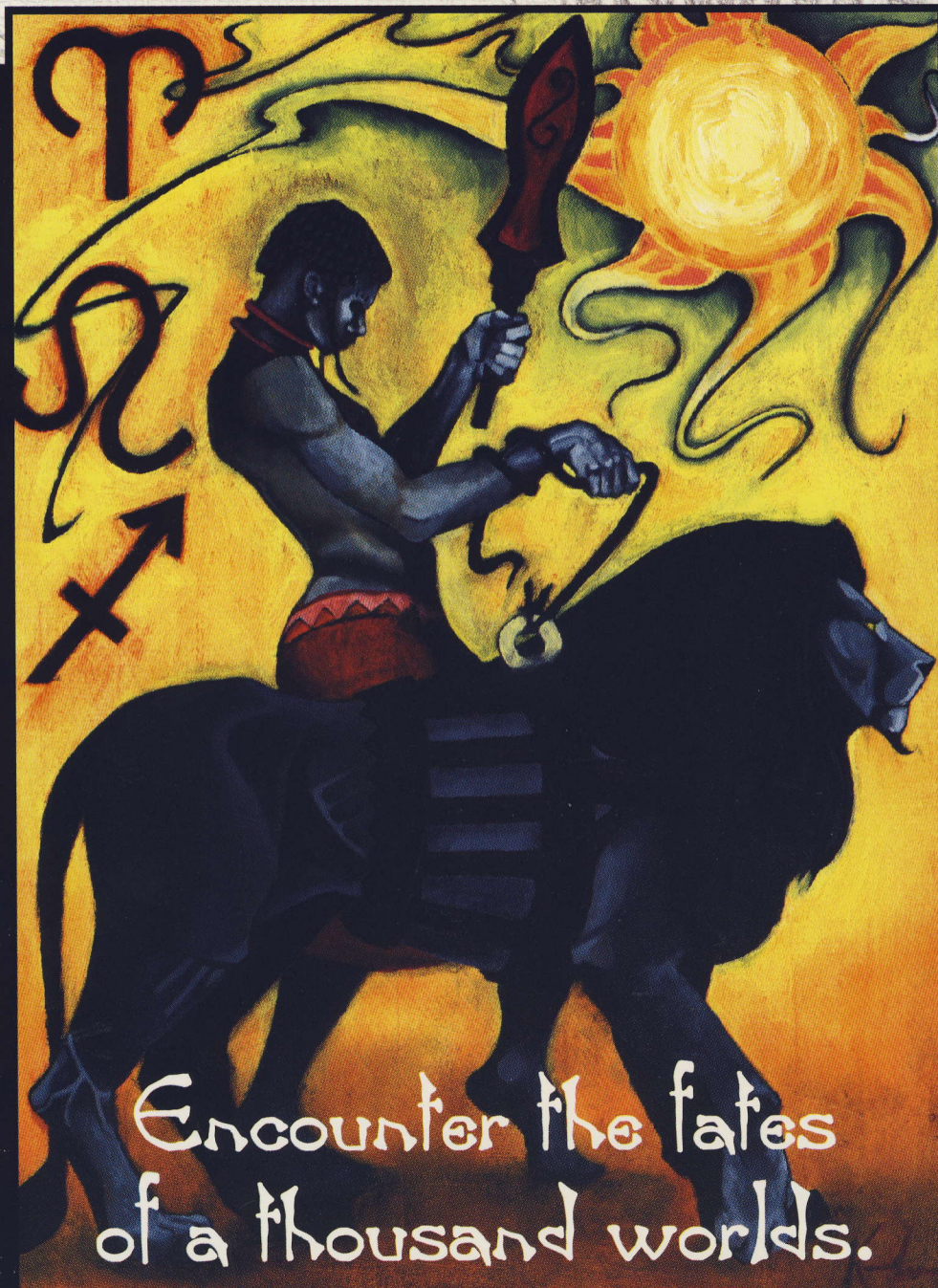
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# A Tribute to Nigel D. Findley

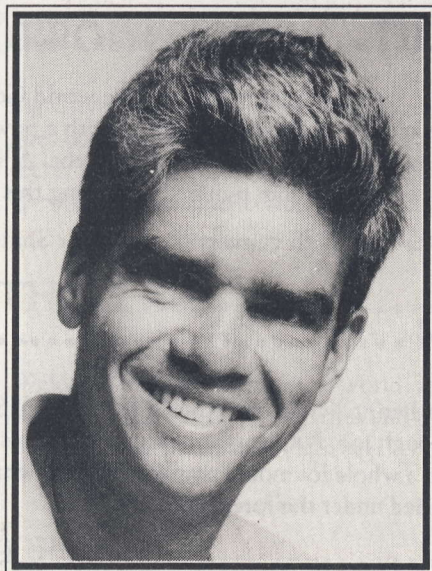
**O**n Sunday, Feb. 19, the gaming industry lost one of its giants. Nigel D. Findley, one of the most prolific writers to ever work in the roleplaying game industry, died at his home of a heart attack at the age of 35. His death was both sudden and completely unexpected. It has hit the gaming community like a brick between the eyes, and the ripples of sadness and sense of loss that it has produced will be felt by a great many people.

Nigel began designing games more than a decade ago. In 1990, he turned to freelancing full time. Over the course of his career, he produced more than 100 adventures, gaming articles, sourcebooks, and novels – and contributed to many more. Such was his productivity that novels and game books that he had only recently completed will continue to be published for some time to come.

Nigel was known wherever roleplaying games are enjoyed as not just a prolific writer but also someone who consistently produced works of high quality. If a novel had his name on it, readers could be guaranteed that it was fast-paced, fun, and action-packed. If an adventure bore his byline, players could be assured of Machiavellian plot twists, innovative settings, and authentically motivated characters.

Some of you knew Nigel by his work alone. Others of you had met him at conventions, or chatted with him via e-mail or on-line game forum discussions. Those of us who worked with him directly or knew him as a friend can testify to his easygoing nature, his willingness to work with others, his refusal to brag about his many accomplishments, and his generosity of spirit. He was also a great guy to game or party with.

Nigel lived in Vancouver, B.C., a city noted for its unusually high per-capita concentration of game designers. Many of these people owe the start of their career to Nigel, who served as their mentor. Nigel was always willing to read through an adventure manuscript and offer his advice, and on several occasions agreed to co-author projects with amateur game designers who were completely unknown and unpublished at the time.



- Sharing a byline with Nigel was an honor – and was a guarantee that the work would be well received.

- Every Thursday night, about a dozen fellow game designers met with Nigel for beers at a pub near his home. In these informal networking sessions, we would plan future game design projects, critique new product releases and rules systems, share information on which companies were buying or what the latest roleplaying trends seemed to be, and grumble about those companies that had stiffed their freelancers by not paying them. We also tried out the latest collectible card games, swapped personal stories, and bragged about the most recent exploits of our game characters.

The Thursday night sessions will continue, but there will always be something missing from them: Nigel's laughter, his warm smile, his wisdom.

Even to those of us who were published long before we met him, Nigel was the respected elder statesman of the roleplaying industry. We looked up to him, sought his advice, and listened carefully to what

- he had to say about game design.

- Out of those Thursday night bull sessions, Adventures Unlimited magazine and our fledgling company, Bootstrap Press Inc., were born. Nigel was in the thick of it from the start. Not only did he have a firm grip on where the roleplaying industry was going (and what pitfalls to avoid), he also had a good head for the nuts and bolts of business. And when the first issue came out, this "bestselling" game designer – who never let the fact that he could write for any company he pleased turn his head – looked at the magazine, nodded, and said, "This looks great. I'm proud to be associated with it."

- That was the kind of guy Nigel was. He really loved this industry, and always had a word of encouragement and advice for fans, friends, and fellow gamers.

- Nigel, we will miss you dearly. We wish the dice could have come up in your favor, on the fateful morning of your death. See you in gamer heaven, chummer.

- Lisa Smedman,  
• Editorial Director



# ADVENTURES UNLIMITED

Issue #2  
Summer 1995

## FORBIDDEN FRUIT ..... BY NIGEL D. FINDLEY 4



The freedom fighters of the slave world Goroth have found a way to strike back at their oppressors – with a powerful weapon from the planet's turbulent past. Your orders, from Rebel Alliance High Command, are to prevent the freedom fighters from using this weapon against the Empire.

>>>> With conversion notes for Shatterzone.

## PROFIT MARGIN ..... BY MARK FREIN 18



Gathering lichen from the Cliff Forests of Sillipus sounded like an easy enough job. But dangerous jungle denizens and pirates are sure to make life a whole lot more complicated. And what is that metal object that lies buried under the forest floor?

## SMUGGLER'S RUN ..... BY ANDREW J. LUCAS 28



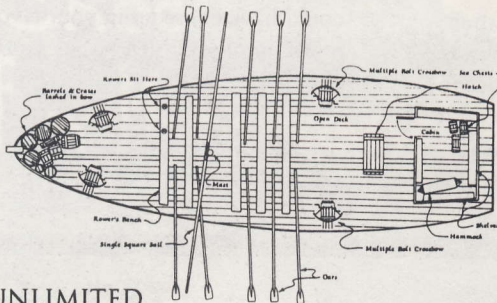
Al Capone. Machine Gun Kelly. Prohibition. The 1930s were a time of adventure and self-indulgence. Naturally the Unseen would be drawn to this decade. And where the unbidden go, will not a Circle soon follow?

>>>> With conversion notes for Call of Cthulhu.

## A WHIFF OF DANGER ..... BY LISA SMEDMAN 39



The airship seemed harmless enough. The captain had turned from raiding to trading, and the cargo was a rather unusual but obviously harmless herd of pigs. What could go wrong? Plenty.



### OUR CENTERFOLD

Our centerfold is a 25mm scale deck plan for an Earthdawn airship. It could also be used, however, as an oceangoing vessel.

## ON OUR COVER

Our cover illustration, for the adventure *Forbidden Fruit*, is by Gavin Lonergan. It was created using the Painter program from Fractal Design. Gavin sketched out a rough, scanned it into his Macintosh computer, and painted in the colors. The "original" artwork exists only on disk.



### NEFARIOUS PORPOISES ..... BY JOHN FLETCHER 48



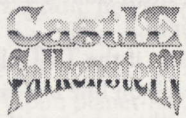
Big City trembles as a wave of fish filching strikes the metropolis. The call goes out for the Supertoons to save the day. Will they emerge from their secret headquarters, only to suffer the indignity of a cream pie in the face? Or will they be able to stop the blowhole burglars before it's too late?

### A TIGGER BY THE TAIL ..... BY JOHN HART 58



Welcome back to the physical world, and to the year 1995. You've been warned about the secret societies and their magical artifacts. But nobody told you how to deal with Science!

### TO KEEP A SECRET ..... BY NICOLE LINDROOS-FREIN 72



An unconventional woman with a mysterious past has become the talk of polite society. Why is she meddling in European politics and what is the "urgent message" that she must deliver? And if those rumors about her past are true, is it worth your reputation to get involved?

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

Editorial Director / Layout & Art Direction: Lisa Smedman  
 Advertising Sales: Nicole Lindroos Frein  
 Distribution: John Fletcher  
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 Distributors should contact John Fletcher at (604) 438-3260 or FAX (604) 438-5673  
 Comments on the magazine? Requests? Send e-mail to [AdvUnltd@aol.com](mailto:AdvUnltd@aol.com)

# FORBIDDEN FRUIT

BY NIGEL D. FINDLEY

**F**orbidden Fruit is an adventure for use with Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game® from West End Games. It is designed to tie in with the recently-released sourcebook, *Goroth: Slave of the Empire*. Many elements in the story relate directly to material from that sourcebook.

If you don't own *Goroth*, however, don't worry: you can still play this adventure. The section Historical Background gives you the information you need to understand the situation on the world of Goroth. Throughout the adventure, sidebars provide the other background data you'll need.

*Forbidden Fruit* is intended for characters who are working directly for, or who have close ties with, the Rebel Alliance. (In other words, for characters who'll go where Rebel leaders tell them to go.) Maybe the characters are active members of the Alliance – pilots, warriors, or special-forces operatives following orders. Or maybe they owe the Rebel command a Big One for services rendered in the past. (Like most large organizations, the Rebel Alliance doesn't give gifts... it makes investments. Now one of those investments has come due.)

The adventure is designed for players who are skilled at problem-solving and role-playing, who enjoy *thinking* about the missions they undertake. There are a couple of moral and ethical dilemmas in *Forbidden Fruit* that will be lost on characters (and players) who shoot first and don't even bother with the questions.

## MISSION BRIEFING

The characters are summoned to a meeting with their commanding officer (or with a Rebel leader they have reason to respect and trust). Read the players the following:

"We've received word from our operatives in the Goroth system. For those of you who don't know the system, background data has been downloaded to your personal datapads. Review that data at your leisure.

"Since the, um... tragic circumstances of seven centuries ago, everyone – especially the Empire – has believed that the high-energy ion cannons tasked to defend the planet of Goroth Prime were destroyed

in the catastrophe, or soon thereafter. Our operatives have discovered that such is not the case... and that certain factions within Gorothite society have discovered this. Specifically, the borderline terrorist organization known as T'B'Deli'Mai, which translates as 'Freedom Action Council.' Intelligence assets on the planet warn us that the terrorist group is planning a mission to take over one of the orbital ion cannon installations, and to bring the weapon back on-line. Once they have done so, it seems certain that they will open fire on the Imperial Navy vessels in Goroth orbit. Such is the power of these cannon installations that our analysis section predicts serious damage to the Imperial Goroth task force.

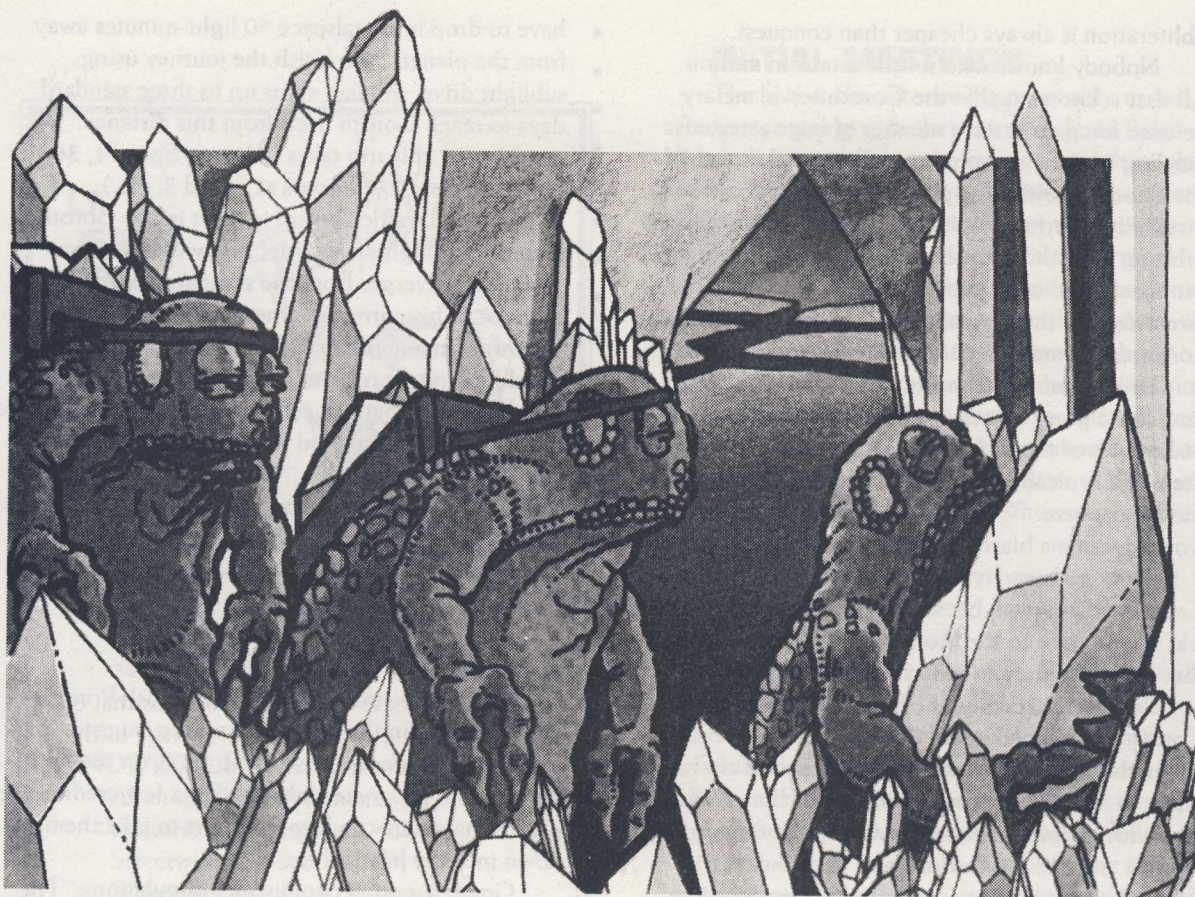
"Alliance command has determined that this is counter to the best interest of the Rebel Alliance. Most importantly, it is counter to the best interests of the Gorothites themselves. The probability has been calculated at 96.5% that the Empire will respond to a major attack of this kind with a sterilization of the planet Goroth, using chemical-biological weapons. Although the task force isn't thought to carry suitable chem-biol weapons, obtaining them from a sector capital will take less than a month.

"According to best estimates, if the T'B'Deli'Mai manage to bring the cannon back on line and fire into the Imperial formations, within one month all life on the world of Goroth Prime will cease to exist.

"Your mission is to prevent this from happening. You are to travel to Goroth Prime and prevent the T'B'Deli'Mai from re-activating the ion cannons – or at least prevent them from firing them. You have the freedom to conduct this mission in whatever manner you deem fit – with one major constraint. You are to prevent the Empire from discovering that a plan to re-activate the ion cannons was ever in the works. Ideally, you are to prevent the Empire from even learning that it is possible for the ion cannons to be reactivated.

"Our analysis section calculates the probability at 49.1% that the Empire would react to such knowledge with sterilization, simply to eliminate any possibility of the ion cannons being reactivated in the future.

"We are unable to establish contact with the leadership of T'B'Deli'Mai. The terrorist organization



has broken off all links with our on-planet intelligence assets. The intelligence-gathering capabilities of these assets are at your disposal. Our on-planet agents have been ordered not to take any direct action, however, since this would compromise their long-term cover on the planet. You and you alone will conduct all active operations.

"Upon planet-fall, contact Lt. Jered Pole of the Rebel Alliance Special Action Team. His cover identity is Jerth Merin. He can usually be located at the casino within the civilian pressure, in the city of Graith. He will provide you with any further information you need.

"Are there any questions?"

The player characters are expected to leave within 12 hours. If they don't have a ship, the Alliance will provide them with something nondescript – and unarmed. They can acquire whatever personal weapons and equipment they think they'll need from the base armory. They won't be allowed to stock up on heavy weapons, however (E-Web blasters are too much of a giveaway).

As for the covers they'll assume to penetrate Gorothe society, the player characters can come up with anything they like. The Rebels will supply them with simple resources to support whatever covers they choose – simple falsified datawork, for

- example – but nothing elaborate or massively expensive. (Characters covered as galactic playboys won't be issued a million-credit pleasure yacht, for example.)
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### BACKGROUND DATA

- **Goroth System Data:** The Goroth System is in the Trans-Nebular Sector, within the region of space known as the Slice. A standard three-leg hyperspace route from the margin of the Slice takes 12 days, and is Moderate difficulty. A two-leg route cuts the time to 10 days, but the difficulty becomes Difficult.
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- Goroth Prime is the second of five bodies orbiting the system's primary, Goroth Alpha. (The fifth of these is Goroth Beta, a brown dwarf and the second star in a binary system that never achieved fusion.)
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- **Historical Background:** Goroth Prime had the bad luck to be caught in a major war, many centuries ago. Break-away Corellian colonies were fighting against colonizer/pilgrim factions of Aqualish in the region, and the people of Goroth were supplying resources to both sides. For decades, Goroth enjoyed its position as middleman. But then each of the two combatant factions realized that Goroth was too valuable to its opponent. Neither faction had the resources to take and hold the Goroth system. But
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obliteration is always cheaper than conquest...

Nobody knows who set the attack in motion. All that is known is that the Gorothises' planetary defense force detected a number of huge asteroids hurtling into the system on a collision course with their home world. The planetary defense force had installed powerful weapons on the three small moons orbiting Gorothis Prime, but those weapons were ion cannons, of no use against unguided, unpowered asteroids. All the Gorothises could do was watch in horror as the massive chunks of rock approached.

Under multiple impacts, the planet of Gorothis rang like a gong, its crust splitting along the boundaries of tectonic plates. Earthquakes wracked the world; volcanoes hurled megatons of poisons into the atmosphere. What had once been an idyllic world became a blasted, radioactive hell-hole.

Through tenacity – and not a little luck – the Gorothises survived, but their advanced civilization was driven back to the Stone Age. In the centuries that followed, they tried to rebuild their civilization.

Relatively recently, the Empire discovered Gorothis and learned it was a source of valuable raw materials. The local sector authorities didn't have the assets to exploit the world alone, so the Empire cut a deal with various megacorporations, granting rights to mine and exploit Gorothis (and its population). Today, Gorothis is a slave world, totally under the domination of the Empire.

Various factions of freedom fighters and terrorists are operating within Gorothisite society. Most of these realize that they have to operate carefully; it wouldn't take much to convince the Empire of the economic sense in sterilizing Gorothis and bringing in other, less troublesome slaves to work the mines and hyperbaric cracking plants. Unfortunately, not all of the freedom-fighters have figured out that they're balanced on a knife-edge...

## THE GOROTHITES

Gorothises are roughly humanoid, standing 2.2 meters tall on average. They appear to be reptilian, with flattened snouts and low, sloping foreheads. Their eyes are positioned in the front of the skull, giving true binocular vision. Wattles hang beneath the chins, and are elaborately tattooed with clan markings. They have four small nostrils, arranged in a diamond configuration, between their eyes in the center of their foreheads. Their skin is rough and knobby in texture, ranging in color from dirty green to muddy brown. They typically wear simple robes.

## PLANETFALL

After an uneventful journey, the player characters' ship drops out of hyperspace in the Gorothis system. Because of local conditions, they

- have to drop into realspace 50 light-minutes away from the planet, then finish the journey using sublight drive. It takes ships up to three standard days to reach Gorothis itself from this distance. (In game terms, this trip takes 3 days at Speed 1, 36 hours at Speed 2, 24 hours at Speed 3, etc.)

- Imperial traffic control is strict in the Gorothis system. TIE fighters will definitely intercept any vessel that diverges from the standard approach corridor. This corridor comes nowhere near any of the three small moons, and the player characters should definitely realize this. Breaking out of the standard traffic pattern and making a bee-line for one of the moons isn't a good way to get the mission underway.

- Once the player characters have passed through the gauntlet of customs and immigration inspection, they can de-orbit and land at the spaceport outside the capital city of Graith.

## GRAITH

- The administrative capital of Gorothis Prime, Graith nestles in the bottom of a deep, rugged canyon. The spaceport, in contrast, is on the lip of the canyon, 500 meters above. For a few credits, the player characters can hire transport to take them down into the heart of the city.

- Graith supports two distinct populations. The native Gorothises – by far the most numerous – live in subterranean neighborhoods (the Imperials call them warrens), and in cliff-dwellings excavated from the sheer walls of the canyon. The Imperials – the slave-masters of Gorothis – and the various megacorp reps doing business in-system live in huge sealed domes (locally known as pressures), connected by environmentally sealed walkways.

- Non-Gorothisite visitors to the world are allowed to enter the subterranean warrens and the cliff-dwellings – although they might attract a little unwanted attention if they seem too eager to do so. In contrast, Gorothises are severely restricted in their access to the Imperial and corporate pressures.

## IMPERIAL PRESENCE

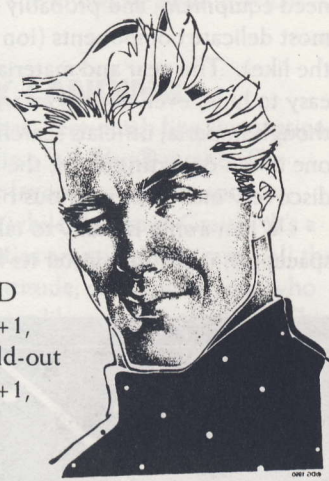
- As a de facto slave world, Gorothis Prime warrants a lot of Imperial attention. At any given time, two Star Destroyers are in the Gorothis system. Two 12-ship squadrons of TIE/In fighters are on detached duty at the Graith spaceport, ready to scramble in response to an emergency.

- There are about 750 Imperial Army troopers, an equal number of Gorothis Planetary Police (or Imperial "goons"), and a few hundred corporate security personnel within the city. Obviously, Graith isn't a good place to start trouble – not if you want to live to tell about it, at least.



**LT.  
JERED  
POLE**

*Type:* Rebel  
undercover  
operative.



**DEXTERITY 3D**

Blaster 5D+1,  
Blaster: hold-out  
blaster 6D+1,  
Brawling  
Parry 5D,  
Dodge 5D,  
Melee Combat 4D+1,  
Melee Parry 4D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 3D+2**

Alien species 5D, Business 4D,  
Cultures 4D, Languages 4D,  
Streetwise 5D, Survival 4D,  
Willpower 4D

**MECHANICAL 3D**

Communications 4D, Repulsorlift  
Operation 4D+2, Space Transports 4D

**PERCEPTION 3D+1**

Command 5D, Con 6D, Forgery 4D,  
Gambling 5D, Hide 4D,  
Investigation 6D, Persuasion 4D,  
Sneak 5D+1

**STRENGTH 2D+1**

Stamina 4D

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Demolition 5D, First Aid 5D,  
Security 6D

*Force Points:* 3

*Character Points:* 4

*Move:* 11

*Equipment:* Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink,  
breath mask, datapad, envirosuit, blast  
vest (+1D from energy, +1D from  
physical), V'Jar Technologies Silver  
Falcon rotorcraft.

**INITIAL MEETINGS**

The player characters will presumably try to arrange a meeting with their contact, Jered Pole. He's well-known within the casino – and throughout Graith, for that matter – as a professional gambler. Unfortunately, the player characters will quickly learn that Pole hasn't been seen around his usual haunts over the last three days. He doesn't answer his comlink, and his quarters within the civilian pressure haven't been slept in for days. Nobody knows where he's gone, or what's happened to him.

If the player characters decide to check things out for themselves, they'll find the rumors are all true. Pole hasn't been home for several days. There are no signs of a struggle in his quarters, however, and no indication of foul play.

After the player characters have been asking around for a while, a Sullustan named Delbana approaches them tentatively. She's a friend of Pole, she claims, and will take them to him if they'll just follow her.

Feel free to toy with your player's paranoia. Delbana, however, is telling the truth: she is a friend of Pole, and she will lead the player characters to where he's recuperating from an injury. She'll do what she can to persuade the PCs to follow her (getting more and more agitated, the longer it takes to convince them). Finally, if the PCs will allow it, she'll lead them out of the sealed civilian pressure and down into one of the underground warrens.

**DELBANA**

*Type:* Sullustan undercover operative.

**DEXTERITY 1D**

Blaster 2D+1, Blaster: hold-out blaster 3D+1,  
Dodge 3D

**KNOWLEDGE 1D+2**

Business 3D, Cultures 2D, Languages 2D,  
Streetwise 4D

**MECHANICAL 3D**

Communications 4D

**PERCEPTION 2D**

Con 4D+1, Forgery 4D, Hide 4D,  
Persuasion 3D, Sneak: 3D+1

**STRENGTH 1D**

**TECHNICAL 2D**

First aid 3D

*Force Points:* 0

*Character Points:* 1

*Move:* 11

*Special Abilities:* Enhanced Senses, Location Sense.

*Equipment:* Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, breath mask, datapad, envirosuit.

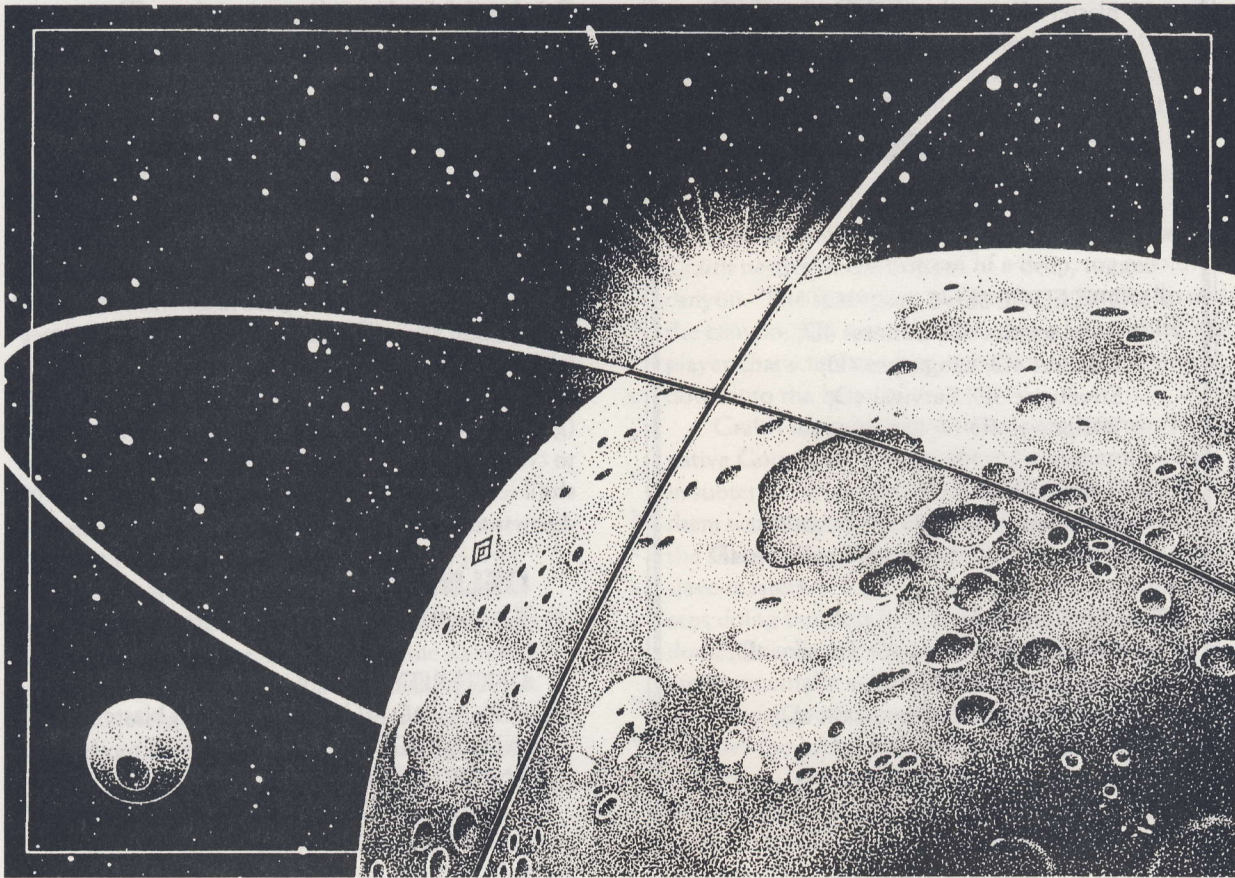
## POLE AT BAY

Delbana leads the PCs to a family of Goroithes who are sheltering Pole. The Rebel agent is badly injured; three days ago, he took a shot in the back from a Goroithite weapon (a lightning gun). Instead of going to an Imperial clinic and having to answer all kinds of prying questions, he took shelter with some Rebel loyalists among the Goroithites – actually, members of the Gor'Jen'Ar (Committee for Free Goroth) from the *Goroth* sourcebook.

Pole doesn't know who shot him or why, but he can make a pretty good guess. The odds are his

- Pole will gladly explain to the PCs the difficulties the T'B'Deli'Mai terrorists will face. After seven centuries, the ion cannon is going to need some serious repairs – which means the terrorists will need equipment, and probably replacements for the most delicate components (ion flux capacitors and the like). The gear and material they'll need won't be easy to hide, even aboard a cargo vessel. Even though Imperial officials search an average of only one in ten departing ships, the consequences of discovery make this a serious risk.

- When a ship is ready to take off from a Goroth spaceport, it has to register its flight plan with



would-be assassin was a loyal member of T'B'Deli'Mai (Freedom Action Council), the organization bent on reactivating the orbital ion cannon. Pole figures that somehow the T'B'Deli'Mai leadership discovered that he knew of their plans, and decided to eliminate him before he could interfere.

Before he was shot, Pole managed to find out which one of the three orbital ion cannons the T'B'Deli'Mai intend to reactivate: the one located on V'Sar, the smallest of the three moons. What he doesn't know – and what he was trying to find out when he took the shot in the back – is how the would-be terrorists plan to get to the moon V'Sar, and when.

- Imperial traffic control. If the ship deviates from its registered course, TIE fighters will pursue, and will shepherd it back for processing. Obviously, no legitimate flight plan would let a departing ship put down on one of the moons. Further, the Goroithes are in effect a slave race (no matter how much the Empire may call them "indigenous assets"), and thus can't just hop an outbound ship. The terrorists must have some allies among the off-worlders on Goroth, and those off-worlders must be planning to smuggle the T'B'Deli'Mai personnel along with the equipment and supplies.

- Pole suggests that the PCs try to find out which ship the terrorists plan to use. He gives them the

name of a contact – a Rodian by the name of Heera who hangs out at a spacer bar called The Happy Landing, located in the civilian pressure. He explains that Heera is plugged into the spacer rumor mill, and that she will tell what she knows to anyone who'll pay her price.

### THE HAPPY LANDING

A typical spacer bar very much like the cantina at Mos Eisley, in the first *Star Wars*® movie, The Happy Landing is the favored carousing spot for pilots and hangers-on while they're in Graith. It's a rough place, but fatalities are still pretty rare. All the clientele pack major attitude, scorning anyone who doesn't look, talk and act like a hot-shot pilot. (This is another great chance for the PCs to get into deep trouble.)

As Pole promised, they'll have no difficulty tracking down Heera. Although she's not a pilot herself, she's accepted by the clientele. Getting Heera to tell any of what she knows is a tough battle, even with the exchange of credit. Heera has an overblown perception of her own importance, and this will color her negotiations. Note that Heera is a sort of adoptive spacer, and the other patrons of the tavern will come to her rescue if the PCs try to intimidate her.

Once the issue of payment is settled, Heera will explain (truthfully) that she knows nothing about T'B'Deli'Mai, or about any attempts by Gorothites to acquire a ship and pilot. For suitable considerations, however, she will look into it. She suggests the PCs meet her back at The Happy Landing the next day.

### HEERA

Type: Rodian sneak/con-man.

#### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D+1, Blaster: hold-out blaster 5D+1, Dodge 4D

#### KNOWLEDGE 2D

Business 3D, Streetwise 6D

#### MECHANICAL 1D+1

#### PERCEPTION 3D

Con 4D+1, Sneak 4D

#### STRENGTH 2D

#### TECHNICAL 1D

First Aid 2D

Force Points: 0

Character Points: 1

Move: 11

Story Factors: Reputation.

Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, breath mask, datapad, envirosuit.

### INVESTIGATION

While they're waiting for Heera to get back to them, the PCs will probably want to carry on their own investigations. This is a great opportunity for them to get involved in some of the conflicts and dynamics beneath the surface of Goroth society. (If you don't have the *Goroth* sourcebook, think in terms of the infighting between the different megacorporations present on the planet – TaggeCo, Karflo, Trigdale and many others.)

Although the T'B'Deli'Mai organization seems to have vanished from the face of Goroth, in fact it's only the leadership that has gone underground. Members of the organization (and various fellow travelers) are still out and about. Many of them will take an unhealthy interest in the PCs, should they be less than circumspect in their investigations. (A T'B'Deli'Mai assassin has already taken a shot at Jered Pole; there's no reason that the same gunman won't try his luck against one of the PCs.)

### THE RUSTY GULL

During their investigation, the PCs encounter a human tramp freighter captain by the name of Marc Botryas. In a business where reputation is all, Botryas' rep is, in a word, lousy. His ship – a Ghtroc freighter named *The Rusty Gull* – looks like a rusted piece of junk, ready to fall apart at any time. (As is so often the case, appearances are deceiving.)

Botryas has suffered a run of terrible luck over the last five years, and he's responded to the downturn of his fortunes by hitting the bottle pretty hard. He looks and sounds as disreputable as his freighter. Somehow, he managed to get a contract to fly replacement parts to one of Trigdale's operations on Goroth. In the two months since he landed, however, he's been looking for paying cargo to take out-system – with no luck whatsoever. He's running out of money, and it's doubtful that, without some kind of up-front advance on a paying cargo, he'll even be able to get *The Rusty Gull* spaceworthy.

Actually, appearances are as deceiving in regard to Botryas as with his ship. He's a highly competent, innovative pilot (when he's not soused) who has years of experience running Imperial blockades. In his youth, he was considered one of the up-and-comers, a potential rival to Han Solo himself. Despite his ill luck, he hasn't lost any of his skills.

Botryas will certainly approach the PCs at some time, fishing for a contract. At their first meeting, Botryas is just coming off a three-day binge; he smells like the aft end of a bantha – and doesn't look much better. Almost certainly, the PCs will blow him off. Let them. He'll turn up again later.

## PAYDIRT

The next day, Heera shows up for the meeting in the tavern – an hour later than the time she specified. She's found out what the PCs need to know, but she won't tell them until she's shaken them down for a larger bribe. (Again, if the PCs try to put pressure on her in a public place, her friends among the clientele will step in to protect her.)

Heera has found out that a representative of the T'B'Deli'Mai has been negotiating with a freighter pilot and suspected smuggler by the name of Karlo Broch. She doesn't know what kind of deal the terrorists have struck with Broch, but she does know that Broch's ship – the *Tiroga* – is due to take off from Graith spaceport sometime today, from Landing Bay 9.

She claims she doesn't know the *Tiroga's* scheduled boost time. Actually, she does know it; it's half an hour after the time she set for her meeting with the PCs. Since she was one hour late, that means the *Tiroga* has been in trajectory for 30 minutes by the time she tells the PCs about it. (Heera has taken a bribe from a T'B'Deli'Mai collaborator to delay her meet with the PCs, making it impossible for the off-worlders to interfere. Or so the collaborator thinks, at least.)

It's quite possible that the PCs will discover Heera's duplicity via various Force powers, or through sheer intimidation. But even if they do, it's too late to stop the *Tiroga* from taking off.

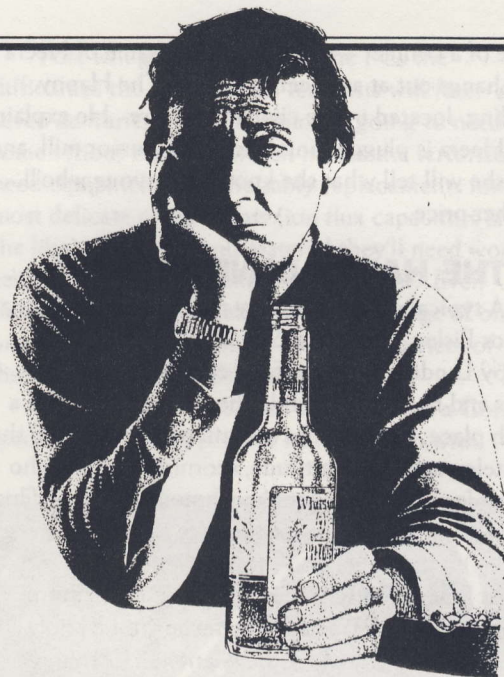
## AT THE SPACEPORT

If the PCs haven't discovered Heera's duplicity (or even if they have) it's likely that they'll take a trip out to the spaceport for a look at Landing Bay 9.

Security at the spaceport is extremely high around the military vessels. In the civilian areas, it's much less stringent. Generally, customs officers and other bureaucrats make up the only Imperial presence around the civilian landing bays. Thus, it should come as something of a surprise when the PCs pass a detachment of six Storm Troopers leaving the vicinity of Landing Bay 9. Unless the PCs do something stupid (or unless there's an alert out for them) the Storm Troopers will totally ignore them.

When they reach Landing Bay 9, the PCs discover that the *Tiroga* took off more than half an hour ago.

With a little fast-talking – and maybe some judicious bribery – it should be possible to get a copy of registered flight plan for the *Tiroga* from the Imperial traffic control authorities. (The PCs are on their own as to how to do this.) If they acquire the plan, they'll find that – officially – the *Tiroga* isn't supposed to be lifting off until tomorrow.



## MARC BOTRYAS

Type: Human freighter pilot/smuggler.

DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 5D+1, Dodge 4D,  
Vehicle Blaster 4D

KNOWLEDGE 2D+2

Business 4D, Planetary Systems 4D,  
Streetwise 5D

MECHANICAL 4D+1

Astrogation 5D, Space Transports  
6D+1, Starship Gunnery 5D+2,  
Starship Shields 5D+2

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 4D, Sneak 4D

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D

TECHNICAL 3D

Space Transports Repair 6D

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 2

Move: 10

Equipment: Heavy blaster pistol (5D) (aboard his ship), hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, breath mask, datapad, envirosuit, Chtroc freighter.

Apparently, the freighter has taken off in flagrant disregard of its registered flight plan. Yet for some reason, there's no activity in the military region of the spaceport – no TIE fighters scrambling to intercept the illegal launch. (This, and the presence of the Storm Troopers, should clue the PCs in that something strange is happening here.)

The PCs should come to realize that their next logical step is to get to the moon V'Sar. But how?

## THE STORY SO FAR

In fact, an Imperial agent (an ambitious Special Forces operative by the name of Tol Vadarr) penetrated the T'B'Deli'Mai plan some time ago. Rather than reporting the matter to his superiors and stopping the plot before it could get going, he decided to keep the whole thing to himself.

His reasoning was that he'd draw much more attention to himself from his superiors if he courageously blocked the Gorothite plot at the very last minute – and at great (apparent) risk to his own life. Vadarr recognizes that handling things his way will almost certainly lead to the sterilization of Goroth Prime – but that's a small price to pay for career advancement.

Vadarr has been subtly manipulating things from behind the scenes. It was he who arranged for the T'B'Deli'Mai agents to "coincidentally" find Karlo Broch and cut a deal. (Broch himself has been well-paid by Vadarr to carry out the charade.)

Broch has promised the Gorothite terrorists that he can get them and their gear to V'Sar without Imperial involvement. He's spun some fanciful tale explaining how he plans to do this. In fact, Vadarr has arranged for the *Tiroga* to have special clearance to land on the moon V'Sar without interference. (Broch doesn't know that Vadarr plans to kill him, destroy the *Tiroga*, and frame a terrorist sympathizer in the traffic control authority for issuing the release.)

By the time the *Tiroga* took off with its cargo of terrorists and equipment, Vadarr was already waiting on V'Sar – with a detachment of Special Forces troopers personally loyal to him. Once the terrorists are inside the ion cannon facility, the troopers will secure the *Tiroga* and eliminate Broch. Then, when the time is right, they'll blast their way into the ion cannon installation and defeat in fierce battle the raiders who are trying to bring the great weapon back on-line. If everything works out according to plan – and Vadarr has no reason to think it won't – the only voice still capable of describing what happened will be his own.

It was Vadarr, of course, who sent the Storm Trooper detachment to Landing Bay 9, to make sure the *Tiroga* got off-planet without interference from

- any of the other factions among the Gorothites.
- Neither the terrorists nor Broch knew of their presence.

## BOTRYAS AGAIN

- At some point, the PCs should overhear a drunken Botryas arguing with some other spacers that it is possible to reach the moons of Goroth without interference from the Imperials. "I told that idiot Broch how to do it the other day," Botryas slurs, "but he told me to go piss in my helmet. That guy just doesn't wanna know. Its freakin' easy if you do it right."

- Hopefully, this little gem will attract the PCs' attention, and will get them talking to Botryas. If the PCs buy him a couple of drinks (or even if they're polite to him) he'll gladly explain his plan:

- "It's right simple, if you look at it the right way. Here's how I'd do it.

- "First off, I'd make a big fuss around the spaceport, telling everyone how *The Rusty Gull* has got problems with its sublight engines – a cracked impeller, or something – and asking around for cheap ways of fixing it. Once everybody knows I've got a flaky engine, then I'd schedule my boost time and register a flight path that takes me near – but not too near – the moon I'm interested in.

- "Time comes. I boost. I follow the flight path perfectly – until I'm about 80 thousand kilometers out, near the orbit of the moons. Then I kick the *Gull* way the hell off course, heading straight toward the moon. Sure as hell, that's going to get the Imperials' attention.

- "When it looks for sure I'm going to land or crash on the moon, I honk her around again and blaze outbound as fast as my engines can handle. Probably I've got a squadron of TIEs on my ass by that point. And that's when I start my emergency beacon screaming, putting out a mayday on every freq there is.

- "Then I let the Imperials rescue me. When they come on board – which they will – what are they going to find? They find that the impeller in my sublight engines blew itself to shrapnel, throwing me way out of control. Sure, I get a few tense moments, but they can't hang anything on me.

- "And what about the cargo I'm supposed to deliver to the moon? Buddy, that's in the ship's gig – my little 5-meter captain's launch. Just before I make my second course correction and go blazing for the stars, the gig launches – transponder off, all power systems off – and just freefalls toward the moon. Real hard to spot a vessel that's dead, right? By the time it has to light off its systems again for a controlled landing, the Imperials ain't going to be

watching the moon any more; they're going to be watching me. Problem solved.

"Am I a genius or what? How's about buying the genius another drink?"

### SHIP'S GIG

*Craft:* Corellian Engineering Corp. ship's gig.

*Type:* Stock small gig.

*Scale:* Starfighter.

*Length:* 5.5 meters

*Skill:* Space Transports: ships gigs.

*Crew:* 1            *Passengers:* 4

*Cargo Capacity:* 0.5 metric tons.

*Consumables:* 3 days.

*Hyperdrive Multiplier:* None.

*Hyperdrive Backup:* None.

*Nav Computer:* None.

*Maneuverability:* 2D

*Space:* 3

*Atmosphere:* 260; 750 kmh

*Hull:* 2D

*Shields:* None.

*Sensors:*

Passive: 25/1D            Scan: 40/2D

Search: 60/3D            Focus: 4/3D+2

*Weapons:* None.

### IN TRANSIT

The PCs can arrange their trip to V'Sar however they like. If they hire Botryas to get them there they'll find that the drunken pilot is as skilled as he claims, and that the *Gull* is actually a perfectly functional ship despite its appearance.

Botryas' plan – if they decide to follow it – works perfectly. But the PCs have no way of knowing this beforehand. Play up the tension of the situation as the small ship's gig free falls toward the moon. The PCs should know just how close they have to cut things. If they light up the gig's systems too early, the Imperials might pick them up. If they activate the engines too late, they'll crash.

Remember, too, that the PCs will have to make the initial descent blind. Even low-level sensors will give them away to the Imperials. They'll have to calculate everything out ahead of time (lots of astrogation rolls!) and time the descent perfectly.

### V'SAR

By the time the PCs come in for their landing on V'Sar (however they eventually get there) they don't see anything to alarm them; everything looks just as they expect it to look. The *Tiroga* will already have landed and will have been secured by Vadarr's Special Forces troopers. The terrorists will have penetrated the ion cannon installation and have started their repairs. Broch has not yet been executed, but his

minutes are definitely numbered.

As for Vadarr's team, they don't spot the descending ship's gig. (They have other things on their mind, namely preparing for their assault on the ion cannon installation.)

The PCs' first task is to reach the ion cannon installation. V'Sar is too small to maintain an atmosphere, which means they'll have to use envirosuits. The Rebel agents should realize that they'll have to keep comlink communication to a minimum, so as not to attract Imperial attention.

Once they reach the installation, they'll have to work their way inside. Fortunately, the terrorists have already opened the vacuum-sealed airlocks, and have re-pressurized the interior of the installation.

### INSIDE THE INSTALLATION

When Gorothe Prime was knocked back to the Stone Age, the crews operating the ion cannons on the three moons died when their supplies ran out. Since then, the atmosphere in the installations outgassed through the walls, perfectly preserving everything within. Throughout the installation, there's no dust. The mummified remains of the operators (Gorotheites, of course) lie where they fell when they finally succumbed. The GM can place them wherever s/he thinks it would be cool to encounter them.

The lights are on and the terrorists – seven of them – are occupied throughout the facility with their repairs. They have repressurized the facility and re-activated its airlock system. If the PCs are quiet about it, they can possibly pick them off one at a time. If they make too much noise, however (Wookies howling and blasting everything in sight, for example) the terrorists will respond to the noise, coming to find out what's going on.

### GOROTHITE TERRORIST

*Type:* Gorotheite terrorist.

DEXTERITY 2D

Blaster 3D, Blaster: blaster carbine 3D+2,

Blaster Artillery 3D, Dodge 3D,

Melee Combat 2D+1, Melee Parry 2D+1

KNOWLEDGE 1D+2

MECHANICAL 3D

PERCEPTION 1D+1

STRENGTH 3D+2

TECHNICAL 2D

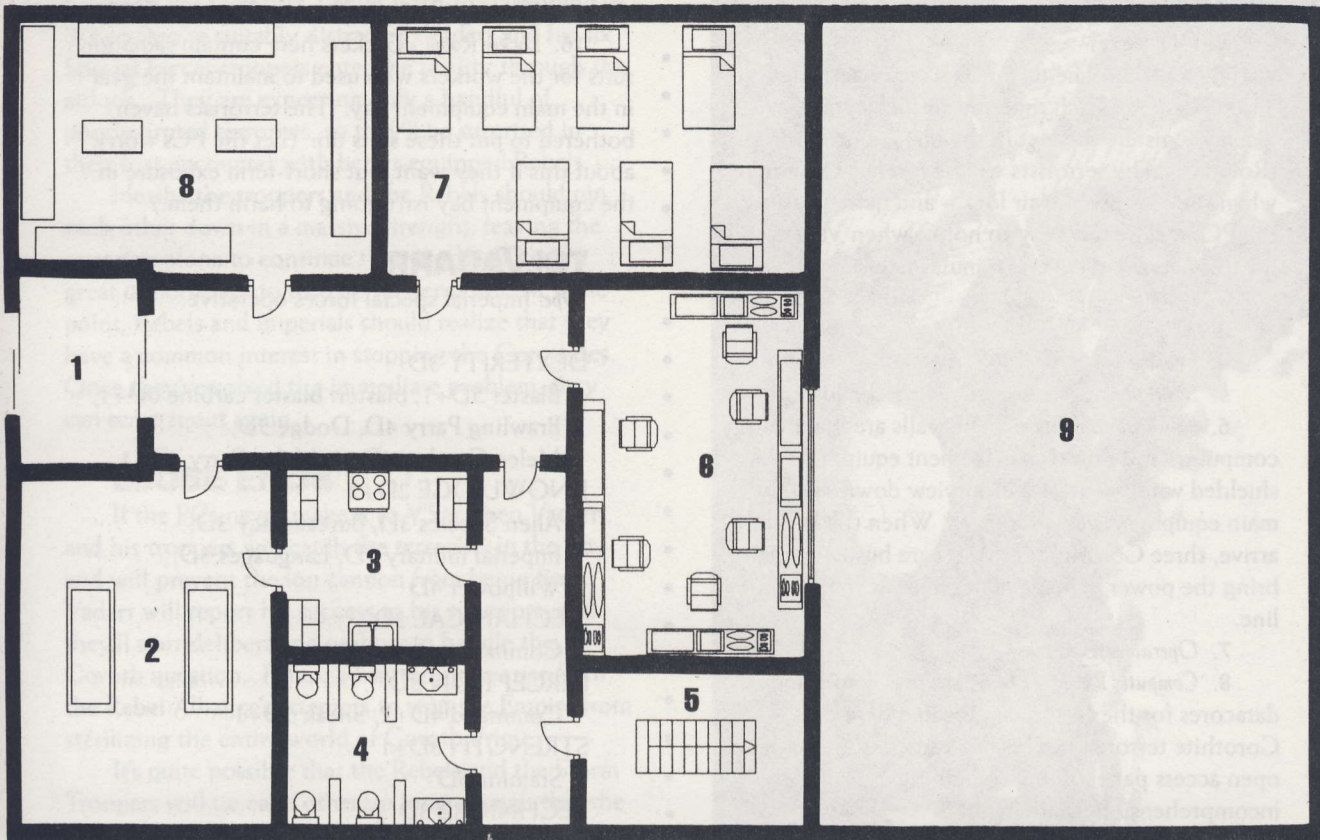
*Force Points:* 0

*Character Points:* 1

*Move:* 11

*Equipment:* Lightning gun (5D+2), comlink, envirosuit.

## ION CANNON INSTALLATION UPPER LEVEL



## ION CANNON INSTALLATION LOWER LEVEL



## MAP KEY

### Upper Level

1. *Air Lock*. The terrorists have re-activated the airlock system. Each time the air lock cycles, a display registers the fact in the main control room (Room 6). The terrorists will be too busy to notice when the PCs use the air lock – and quite possibly the PCs will be too busy to notice when Vadarr and his troopers use it several minutes later.

2. *Refectory*.

3. *Kitchen*.

4. *Washrooms*.

5. *Stairway*. Stairs lead down to the lower level.

6. *Main Control Room*. The walls are lined with computers and power management equipment. A shielded window gives a clear view down into the main equipment bay (Room 9). When the PCs arrive, three Gorothite terrorists are busily trying to bring the power management computers back on-line.

7. *Operators' Barracks*.

8. *Computer Room*. The main processors and datacores for the facility are located here. A Gorothite terrorist has his head stuck in through an open access panel, doing something incomprehensible to the tech.

9. *Main Equipment Bay*. This huge chamber, two stories tall, contains the main power focusing equipment, flux capacitors and other high-tech machinery that powers the planetary defense cannon. (The cannon itself is located outside the pressurized area, in case of mishaps.) When the PCs arrive, there are two terrorists working on the equipment.

### Lower Level

10 & 11. *Primary and Secondary Relay Room*. The equipment in these rooms hums with barely-controlled power. If the PCs want to bring the ion cannon off-line in a hurry, they can break just about anything in either of these rooms. (The consequences, of course, should be highly pyrotechnic.)

12. *Targeting Subsystem Room*. While the main control room handles power management, it's the operators in this room who actually target the ion blasts. When the PCs arrive, there's one terrorist present, happily centering the systems crosshairs on an orbiting Imperial Star Destroyer.

13 & 14. *Primary and Secondary Ion Charge Containment Relay Room*. When the PCs arrive, these rooms are deserted, silent and dark. At some dramatically appropriate point, however, all of the displays and systems in both rooms light up and start humming – a reminder that the PCs have limited time to stop the Gorothites from bringing the system

to readiness.

15. *Stairway*. Stairs lead up to the upper level.

16. *Locker Room*. Lockers here contain radiation suits for the workers who used to maintain the gear in the main equipment bay. The terrorists haven't bothered to put these suits on. (Let the PCs worry about this if they want, but short-term exposure in the equipment bay isn't going to harm them.)

## TOLVADARR

*Type*: Imperial special forces operative.

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 5D+1, blaster: blaster carbine 6D+1, Brawling Parry 4D, Dodge 5D, Melee Combat 4D+1, Melee Parry 4D+1

### KNOWLEDGE 2D+2

Alien Species 3D, Bureaucracy 3D: Imperial military 5D, Languages 3D, Willpower 4D

### MECHANICAL 3D

Communications 4D

### PERCEPTION 3D

Command 4D+2, Sneak 5D+1

### STRENGTH 3D+1

Stamina 5D

### TECHNICAL 3D

Demolition 4D, First Aid 4D, Security 4D

*Force Points*: 1

*Character Points*: 2

*Move*: 11

*Equipment*: Blaster carbine (5D), comlink, envirosuit, blast vest (+1 from energy, +1D from physical), fragmentation grenades (4).

## SPECIAL FORCES TROOPERS

*Type*: Imperial Special Forces Troopers.

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D, blaster: blaster carbine 5D+1, Brawling Parry 4D, Dodge 4D, Grenade 3D+2, Melee Combat 3D+1, Melee Parry 3D+1

### KNOWLEDGE 1D+2

### MECHANICAL 2D

### PERCEPTION 2D+1

### STRENGTH 3D+2

### TECHNICAL 2D

*Force Points*: 0

*Character Points*: 1

*Move*: 11

*Equipment*: Blaster carbine (4D), comlink, datapad, envirosuit, blast vest (+1 from energy, +1D from physical), fragmentation grenades (4).



Give the PCs about five minutes of game time to deal with the terrorists – or, at least, to start doing so. When they're suitably distracted, Vadarr and his six Special Forces troopers enter the facility through the airlock. They are expecting only a handful of poorly-armed terrorists, so they'll be surprised in their first encounter with better-equipped Rebels.

Ideally, the troopers and the Rebels should pin each other down in a massive firefight, leaving the terrorists alone to continue their work. (This is a great opportunity to turn up the tension.) At some point, Rebels and Imperials should realize that they have a common interest in stopping the Gorothites. Once they've solved the immediate problem, they can scrap it out again.

### LOOSE ENDS

If the PCs never make it to V'Sar, then Vadarr and his troopers will catch the terrorists in the act, and will prevent the ion cannon from being fired. Vadarr will report his success to his superiors, and they'll start deliberating on how to handle the Goroth question. Future adventures can arise from the Rebel Alliance's attempts to stop the Empire from sterilizing the entire world of Goroth Prime.

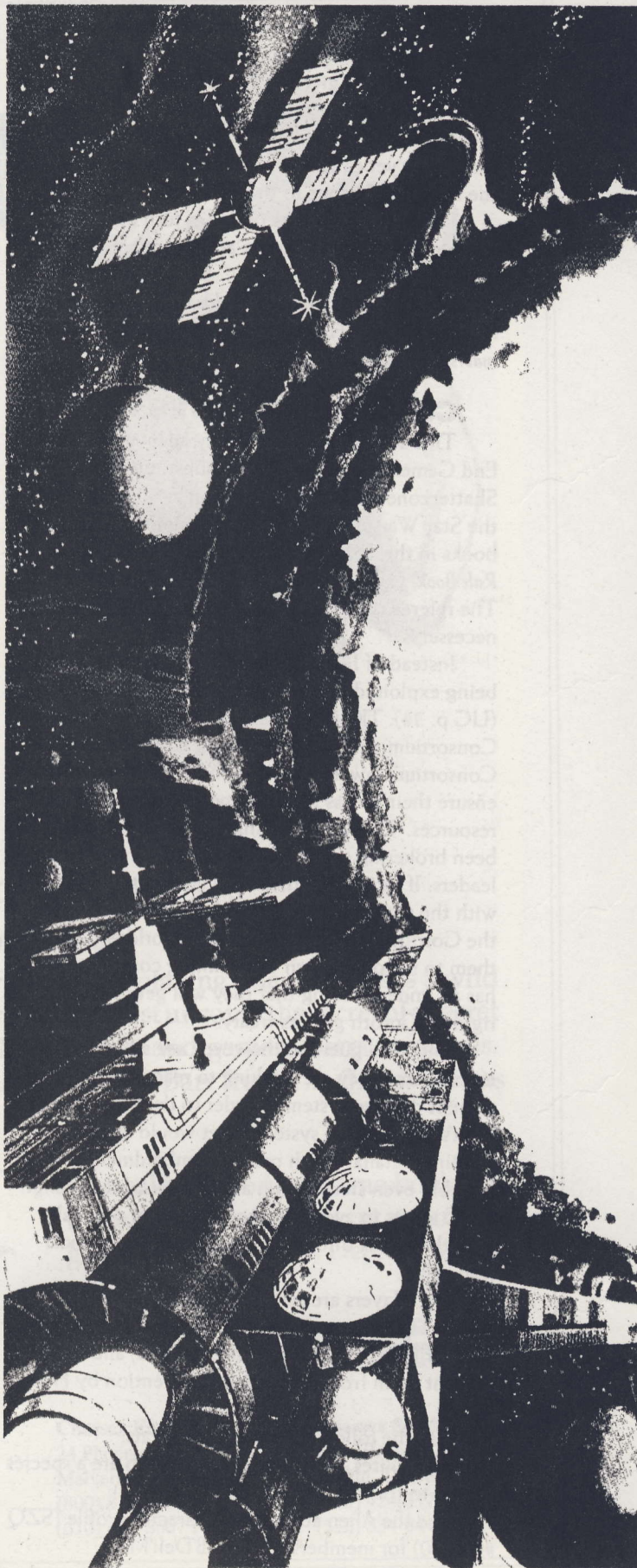
It's quite possible that the Rebels and the Storm Troopers will tie each other up long enough that the terrorists will manage to bring the ion cannon on-line and get off at least one shot. If any of the Imperial vessels in orbit take damage from the cannon, then it's almost certain that the Imperial command will decide to sterilize Goroth Prime. (Again, the Rebels can certainly get involved with trying to prevent this – but how?)

If the PCs handle things right, they should be able to defeat Vadarr and his troopers, plus stop the terrorists from firing the ion cannon. Unless all the troopers were killed in the battle, the Rebels have a moral problem on their hands. If they let Vadarr get away, he'll report to his superiors that the Gorothites – with Rebel aid – were trying to get the cannon functional again. The consequences of this revelation will be dire. So what are the PCs to do? Are they morally justified in executing any survivors of the Special Forces team? The GM should definitely play up this quandary.

### GETTING HOME

Even if they succeed, how are the PCs going to get off V'Sar? They could use the ship's gig from *The Rusty Gull*, but the Imperial traffic control network will definitely detect the lift-off of an unauthorized vessel from V'Sar. And a ship's gig certainly isn't the best vessel for avoiding TIE fighters...

Ideally, the PCs should remember the *Tiroga*. Broch is currently under guard by two Special Forces



troopers, and is scheduled for termination. Rescuing him would not only be an appropriately heroic act, but it would also give the PCs access to a hyperspace-capable ship – one which still enjoys the special clearance that Vadarr arranged, a clearance that hasn't yet cancelled. Broch will be indebted to the PCs – and hence to the Rebellion – for his life.

However the events on V'S turn out, there are many possibilities for future adventures.

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## CONVERSION NOTES

This adventure can be easily adapted to West End Games' Shatterzone™ by substituting Shatterzone characters and organizations for those of the Star Wars universe. All page numbers refer to the books in the Shatterzone boxed set: *Player's Guide*, *Rule Book*, *Universe Guide*, and *Shatterzone Quarterly* #0. The referee can change the planet's name if necessary.

Instead of Imperial domination, Goroth Prime is being exploited by the Randall-Hollings megacorp (UG p. 34). The locals have no treaties with the Consortium and therefore no legal rights under Consortium law. Fleet is present in the system to ensure their access to the planet's important mineral resources. The Xeno-Mining Corporation (XMC) has been brokering secret negotiations with the local leaders. If successful, these will lead to treaty status with the Consortium of Worlds. Status would give the Gorothites ownership of their world and allow them to negotiate their own mining contracts. XMC has an understanding that they will get the mining rights if Goroth gets its treaty.

The local guerillas, however, see all humans as interlopers. They are working to reactivate an ancient defense system in order to destroy some of Fleet's assets in the system. Fleet would almost certainly retaliate with orbital bombardment and possibly even sterilization and seizure of the planet. XMC wants to avoid this because it can only take over the mines through manipulation of the local leadership.

The Players are sent to Goroth as agents of XMC. Their mission is to stop the local terrorists from firing the ancient defense systems, and thus prevent them from provoking intervention by Fleet.

Use the following Shatterzone stats:  
Gorothites – The natives of Goroth are a species similar to the Rednas (UG p. 45).

Use the Alien adventurer character profile (SZQ #0 p. 10) for members of the T'B'Deli'Mai.

- Pool – XMC's agent on the ground on Goroth
- Prime. Use the Megacorp Freelancer (PG p. 88).
- Delbana – Pool's aide. Use the Bolter refugee (PG p. 93).
- Botryas – A local trader captain. Use an Old Scout (PG p. 85).
- Heera – A Vizzben information broker. Use the Con Artist (PG p. 91).
- Vadarr – The local Fleet Intelligence agent. Known and feared by the garrison commander, he has the complete cooperation of Fleet and has broad access to Fleet resources. Use the Man from Intelligence (SZQ #0 p. 12).
- Imperial Stormtrooper – Standard Fleet Marine (UG p.24).
- Imperial Special Forces – Fleet Special Forces (UG p. 25).
- Tiroga – Typical Cargo Freighter (RB p. 72).
- Rusty Gull – Typical Merchant Vessel (RB p. 72).
- Ship's Gig – An escape pod carried by the Rusty Gull. It is usable only once in a non-combat situation, so no stats are necessary.
- TIE/In – Light "Dart" Fighter (RB p. 70).



### Nigel D. Findley

In the eleven years that Nigel Findley was involved in the gaming industry, he wrote source material, adventures, and – most recently – novels for most of the major (and many minor) game companies. These included *Goroth: Slave of the Empire*, a sourcebook for West End Games' Star Wars game.

Nigel also worked as a freelance journalist concentrating on the computer industry; he was also an avid skier, cyclist, and tennis player. Born in Venezuela and raised throughout the western hemisphere, Nigel most recently made his home in Vancouver, Canada.

Sadly, Nigel died a month after he wrote this adventure. He will be sorely and deeply missed by his friends and fans alike.

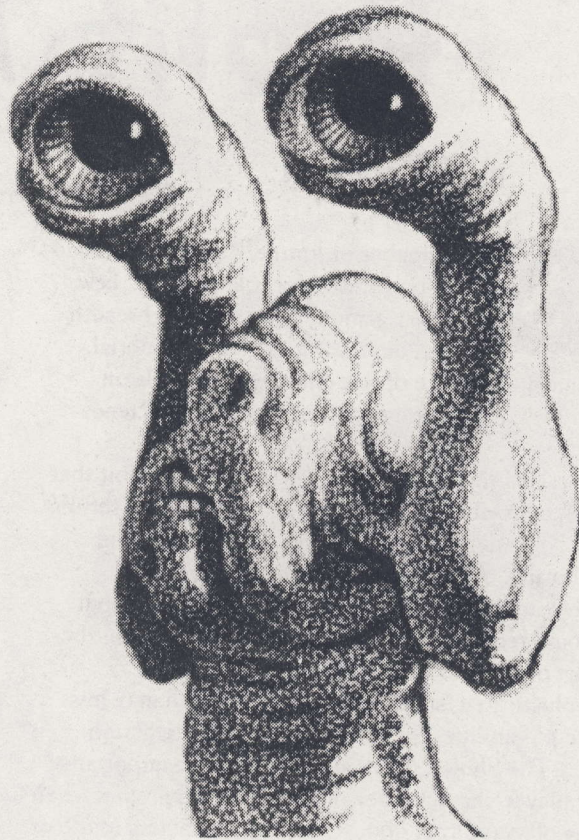


### Gavin Lonergan

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

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

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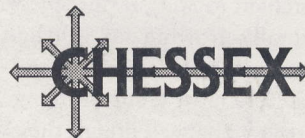
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BY MARK FREIN

**S**kyrealms of Jorune™ provides unique opportunities for role-playing. Few other game systems have its breadth and depth of background material.

Almost any genre of role-playing is possible on Jorune – mystery, horror, high fantasy, or science-fiction.

This short adventure is designed to exploit that rich background and the flavor of the Jorune setting by challenging the PCs physically, socially, and ethically. A hack-and-slash approach to this adventure will probably get the PCs through, but would require some pretty callous decisions on the part of the PCs (and players). Even a more sophisticated “sneak-and-slash” approach may miss the possibilities for interesting social interaction.

The Sholari (GM) should stress the importance of player-character personality and background when the players either choose existing characters to use or create new characters for this adventure. The Sholari should have an idea of the biases, beliefs, and values of the PCs, and the players should be encouraged to role-play their characters consistently and with conviction.

To play this adventure the Sholari will need a copy of the 3rd Edition Skyrealms of Jorune game book. The Sholari's Companion is not needed, but would be useful for reference.

This adventure also takes place in the same geographical area as part of the recently released adventure sourcebook *The Gire of Sillipus*. Though it is not necessary to have *The Gire of Sillipus* to run this adventure, this adventure does contain a few references to the background material it contains.

## Plot Synopsis

The PCs are approached and hired by a woffen merchant looking for people who can help her find naturally-growing ambri lichen in the Sillipian Cliff Forests. The PCs are dropped off along the Sillipus coast and must scout the dangerous coastal rainforest for the limilate. Though they will find a valley rich in the lichen, they also find another group of fortune-seekers, led by a muadra tauther. The tauther, along with her group of trarch slaves and human mercenaries, is excavating an Earth-tec site. It will be difficult at best for the PCs to find a way to

accomplish their mission without coming into conflict with the muadra and her crew.

## Getting the PCs Involved

It is the season of Auss, a time of heavy commerce on the seas of Jorune. A woffen merchant from Lundere named Arva Salsk is looking for some folks to help her in a business venture.

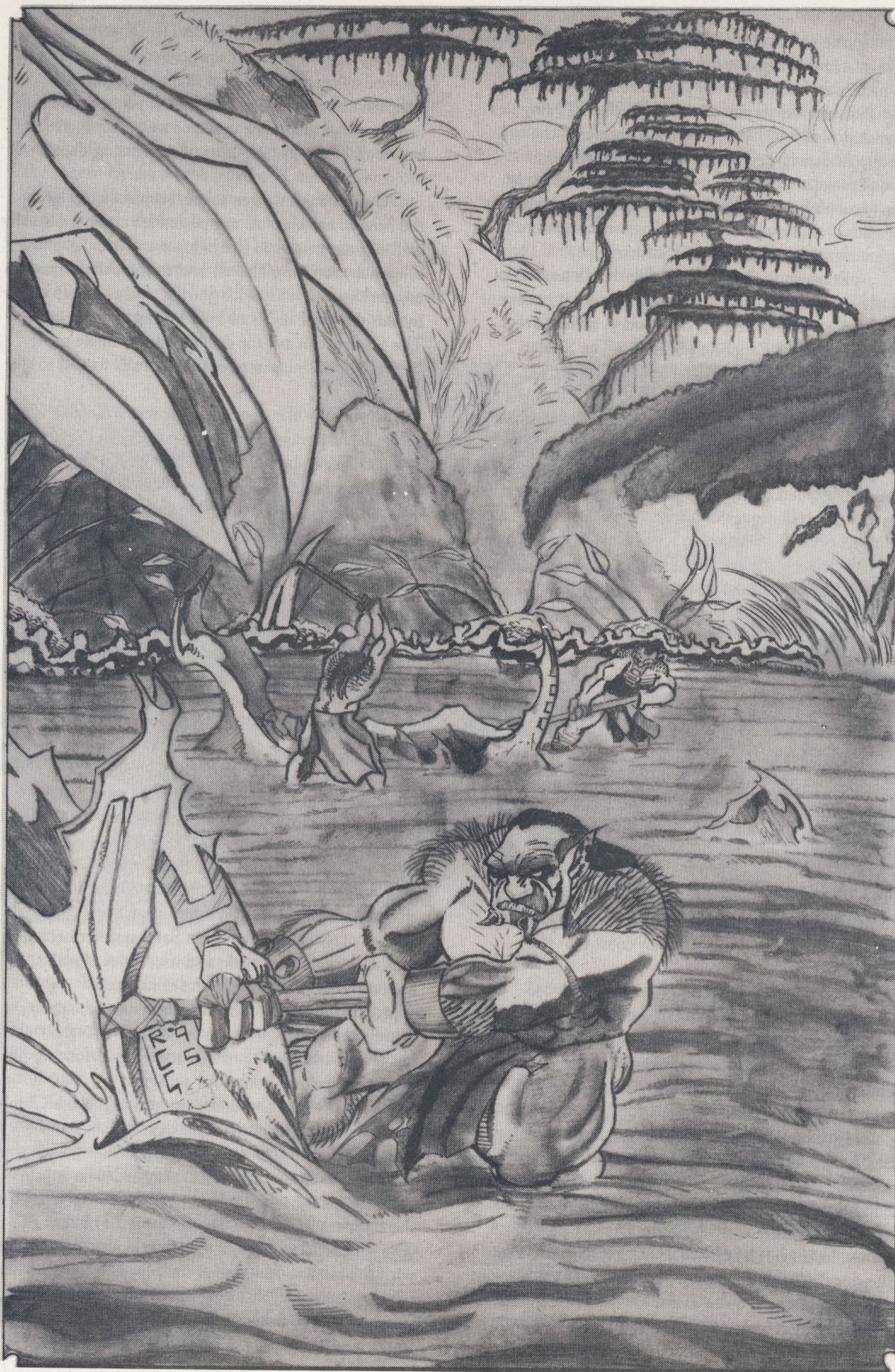
Exactly how Salsk comes into contact with PCs isn't important. If the PCs are residing in a major city (especially a major port city), they might meet Salsk at an inclep or hear that a woffen merchant is looking to hire certain professionals for a jungle-running mission. Salsk also has contacts in various klade organizations and can use these contacts to advertise for explorers.

What is important is the pitch that Salsk gives to potential employees. She knows that she must be careful about advertising a mission to the island of Sillipus – especially if she is advertising in Burdoth. Salsk will first talk about the mission in general: she has received information that a particular area may be rich in the naturally-occurring yellow lichen that yields the ambreh limilate. Ambreh is highly valued for its memory-enhancing properties by groups ranging from academics to diplomats. Salsk wishes to see if there is indeed ambreh to be found, and, if so, to establish a permanent camp to begin farming and processing operations. The PCs would be hired to scout the area and help set up the camp.

Salsk is looking for specialists in a few different areas. She has a small crew for her ship and will be pleased to hire anyone with sailing experience. She also would like to hire a caji, because her sources tell her that the coastal region of Sillipus has strong ambient isho and shifting isho weather. Anyone with jungle-running background and experience in the wild would be highly valued by Salsk, as would individuals with limilate skill or flora and fauna knowledge. Finally, Salsk can always use muscle and combat experience. (The Sholari can stretch Salsk's wish-list of specialists to include any PCs with useful skills or knowledge.)

Once she feels comfortable that the PCs are trustworthy and employable, Salsk will quietly discuss the fact that the mission will take them to Sillipus. If any of the PCs happen to be tauther or

SKYREALMS OF JORUNE



ART BY R. CROWLE GRAY

ADVENTURES UNLIMITED 19

drenn, she will assure them that their participation in the mission will be confidential. (Travel to Sillipus is typically forbidden by the Burdotherian government.)

Salsk offers to pay each of the PCs 30 gemyules per day, plus a 175 yule per person bonus if the group finds a large ambreh supply. This income won't make anyone rich overnight, but it certainly isn't bad pay, especially considering that much of the period of employment will involve nothing more strenuous than riding aboard Salsk's ship.

A PC with Bargain skill could, with a successful skill check, talk Salsk into raising the pay, on account of the particular problems involved in travel to Sillipus. (Salsk's Bargain rank is 15.) The Sholari could also use the Income table in the *Sholari's Companion* to accommodate PCs with specific professions or special skills who want more than 30 yules per day.

Salsk is friendly and polite, but also a shrewd businesswoman. She won't put up for underhanded bargaining techniques or general "bad behavior" during contract negotiation – or at any time during the adventure.

If the Sholari runs this adventure with new players or characters, he or she may want simply want to open the adventure with the PC group en route to Sillipus on Salsk's ship, the *Tarda*. If the players and PCs were involved in the adventure *The Gire of Sillipus*, the PC group may receive the job offer before departing Sillipus or through the NPC Kado Barre, depending on how that adventure unfolded. Salsk would certainly be happy to hire people with prior experience travelling in the Sillipian coastal rainforest.

Successful skill checks with Geography may provide the PCs with details on Sillipus and the Cliff Forests. Salsk herself has never been to Sillipus and can only show the PCs the cartographic maps that indicate the area on the Sillipian coast that she wishes to search.

### En Route to Sillipus

The route that the *Tarda* will take to Sillipus and the time the journey takes depends on the point of departure. Salsk, always the opportunistic trader, has a small store of Scolian rusper (50 bottles) and 400 pounds of pickled creshi. She'll be happy to swing deals at port stops or with ships met at sea.

The *Tarda* should be stocked to make it to Sillipus without having to stop for additional supplies, regardless of where the PCs are picked up. If the Sholari has a copy of *The Gire of Sillipus* he or she may find the Encounters at Sea section at the end of the supplement quite useful for throwing in some high-seas encounters.

### Arrival

Any experienced sailors on board the *Tarda* will become aware that the ship is approaching the Sillipian coast long before the mist-enshrouded cliff forests are visible. The crash of waves on the rocky beach and the tell-tale signs of decreasing depth will indicate the treacherous coastal waters.

One of Salsk's three salu crewmen hangs over the bow of the ship on a rope-ladder and periodically calls out directions to the helmsman (who is diligently checking charts) and to the other salu who adjusts the sail. PCs with Sailing skill can help either by watching for rocks or by working the rigging. The Sholari can ask for skill checks or make some concealed but inconsequential die rolls to add to the suspense.

Eventually the deep green forest will show through the spray and mist. No break in the sharply rising cliffs can be seen, but a thin beach shoreline runs along the coast. The *Tarda* can drop anchor only long enough to lower the ship's rowboat that will carry the PCs and their gear. Once the PCs are rowing through the surf to the beach, Salsk and the ship will start off toward the port town of Kithaq, two days away. The plan calls for the ship to resupply in Kithaq, then return in seven days. Salsk recommends that the PCs first find a suitable site for a base camp.

The rowboat requires two rowers with a combined total of 24 Strength. If this requirement is not met, each rower must make a successful Strength roll or lose a point of Stamina and the rowboat makes no progress in the surf. Both rowers must simultaneously make their Strength rolls for the boat to reach shore.

High tide waters prevent a campsite on the beach, so the PCs will have to ascend into the forests after unpacking and securing the rowboat. (The Sholari may wish to require a Sailing skill check or similar skill roll for a safe and successful mooring of the rowboat.) In this area the cliffs rise approximately 100 feet. The cliff is not sheer, but it is rocky and the rocks are slippery. Small trees, bushes, and vines do provide some good footing but they also provide homes for scragger.

Each player should be required to make a Climb roll. Those failing the roll make some slips and stumbles on the way up. Those succeeding with the roll don't have much trouble. Any PC who rolls a natural 20 has a serious tumble and receives a roll on the Incidental Damage, Falling table. The first PC who succeeds with a 1, 2, or 3 has almost no trouble with the climb and – unless the player states that he or she is being careful and proceeding cautiously and slowly – fails to notice a group of 4 scragger anxious for lunch. The scragger immediately leap upon the

PC and attack. (The Sholari should use the PCs' Climb rolls to gauge how far away from the unfortunate PC others are.)

If no one succeeds with a 1-3, the Sholari can either ignore the encounter or spring it anyway (especially if no one in the group recommends that the ascent be taken carefully). PCs who ask to make a Flora or Fauna roll before tackling the climb and succeed with their rolls recognize that the cliff is a perfect home for scragger. Thus forewarned, the PCs should be able to avoid the scragger encounter.

Once up the cliff, the PCs find themselves in the midst of the peculiar Sillipian Cliff Forests. Here,

- mood by emphasizing the constant dripping from above, the mushy forest floor, and the fact that all of the PCs equipment and clothes are soaked.
- A PC with Wilderness Travel skill and successful roll at a -3 bonus can find a comfortable and safe campsite within half an hour. Otherwise, any campsite is likely to be wet and infested with small, biting bugs. Though these nuisances do no immediate harm to PCs, they add +10% to rolls on the Disease Chart at the end of this adventure.
- Additionally, the Sholari can roll once on the encounter tables referred to below for each night that the PCs spend at an unsafe campsite.



most of the activity occurs far above the ground, the animals that inhabit this forest live in its canopy. The Joruni trees and Earth conifers support vine-like plants, including a hanging version of the tumbernaw vine (home of the duradon). The effect is quite striking.

The sun's rays barely filter down through the thick tangle of branches, bushes, and vines. The leaf-covered floor of the jungle is dark enough that, on overcast days, travellers need light sources to see clearly. During the night, the darkness is total.

The dense forest is watered by large amounts of seasonal rain. The season of Auss just happens to be the wettest season for the Sillipian coast. The temperature is mild but humid during the day and occasionally cool at night.

During the adventure, the Sholari should set the

### Scouting Around

The Cliff Forests may be uninhabited by "intelligent" life but they are teeming with predators and prey. If the Sholari has a copy of *The Gire of Sillipus*, he or she should roll once on the In the Cliff Forests encounter table (p.40) for every five hours spent wandering the rainforest. (Feel free to roll again if the roll indicates Travellers, since more people running around in the jungle might over-complicate this short adventure.)

If the Sholari does not have *The Gire of Sillipus*, the table that follows can be used and the appropriate creature entry in the *Skyrealms of Jorune* rulebook consulted. The creatures attack from above, leaping down from the trees.

Roll:	Encounter:
1-4	scragger
5-6	cougar
7-8	duradon
9-13	No encounter
14-17	tarro
18-19	scrade
20	natural crystals*

\* The crystals will be either launtra or shal, numbering 1d6. They are partially buried in rocky outcroppings and require skilled removal.

### The Discovery

Approximately one day of hard travel from the coast is the pay-off for the rain, mud, and nasty critters: a deep but narrow valley filled with the moss from which ambreh limilate is distilled. (The Sholari should feel free to locate the valley in whatever direction he or she wishes to either shorten or extend the time it takes the PCs to find it.)

The walls of the valley are steep – and unclimbable in many places. A character with Wilderness Travel skill can find a suitable but slippery descent within a half an hour by making a successful roll with a -5 bonus to the roll. Otherwise, the PCs will have to scout around for 1-3 hours and perhaps chance more encounters with dangerous Cliff Forest fauna. A shallow stream cascades down from one end of the ravine and runs through the valley toward the sea.

The valley bottom has fewer tall trees than the rest of the forest and consequently more light falls on the floor of the forest, allowing smaller bushes and ferns to grow. The ambri lichen grows in patches under the shade of these plants, and is easily recognizable by anyone with a Limilate Finding skill (-10 bonus to the skill roll). Working from Salsk's sketches of the moss, any PC with a Flora Recognition skill can make a skill check as if they had Limilate Finding (but without the -10 bonus).

### The Other Discovery

For every hour the PCs spend in or around the valley, each PC can make a Spot or Listen roll, rolling against whichever characteristic score is higher. (Alternately, the Sholari can roll for the PCs in secret). If one or more players state their desire to carefully survey the area, the Sholari should give each PC who does so a bonus of from -1 to -5 to the roll, depending on what the PCs do.

If the first PC making a successful roll is rolling against Spot, he or she sees small wisps of smoke rising above the treetops at the far end of the valley, in the opposite direction from which the PCs entered the valley. If the PC makes a Listen check he or she

- hears faint sounds of metal striking metal.
- If one PC sees the smoke or hears the clanking and informs other PCs, the others can make Listen or Spot rolls with a -5 bonus every 10 minutes to also take notice.
- Apparently the PCs aren't the only ones in the valley.

### The Excavation

- The noises and smoke are coming from a camp not far away from the valley's waterfall. Here, a muadra tauther named Gesh Keynass is leading (and financing) an expedition to uncover the remains of an unmanned survey vessel that crashed here after being launched from one of the first human colony ships.

- The expedition includes two human condrij (mercenaries) and seven trarch. Their camp is situated in the middle of a large, roughly circular clearing in the forest. Trees and ferns have obviously been cut and moved from the area. Vines still cling, however, to the metallic debris that is scattered across the clearing.

- Under Keynass' direction, the trarch have dug through the upper layers of mud, dirt, and rock to expose eight large chunks of the pod and numerous smaller bits of the survey vessel. The large pieces make up the interior systems of pod; the smaller pieces are the wings and retros. The dig has uncovered approximately 40% of the vessel.

- Two small, square tents and one long lean-to make up the temporary structures of the camp. Keynass sleeps in one tent and the two condrij sleep in the other. The trarch rest and sleep under the lean-to. A large fire pit has been dug in the middle of the encampment, and dry firewood is stored in the condrij's tent. The food supplies – mostly durlig – are stored under a canvas in the lean-to. The camp obtains its water from the valley stream.

- The organizational structure of the camp is simple. During the day Keynass directs the trarch's efforts to uncover more of the debris. The trarch receive one short lunch break and an early-evening break, during which they rest and light lanterns. Everyone has a late-evening meal by the fire pit. The condrij rotate guard shifts between day and night.

- Though no one in the camp is expecting an encounter with other intelligent beings, they are prepared for threats from Cliff Forest fauna. When a warning is issued by either a watching condrij or by Keynass, the trarch ready themselves to use their picks and shovels as makeshift weapons. Keynass directs the trarch from behind, where she throws her various cleash capsules. The condrij fire their crossbows at distant opponents or close with their hand axes.



## What Could Happen Next

Keynass and the encampment are not presented as an obstacle for the PCs to overcome, but rather as a complication. The PCs are caught between two opportunists – Keynass and Salsk – both of whom want to lay claim to the general area of the valley, and both of whom want to lay claim in secret.

If the PCs set up camp in the valley they are likely to attract the Keynass' attention. Together with one condrij and two trarch, Keynass comes to investigate.

The outcome of a meeting between the PCs and Keynass' group will depend on the circumstances, the PCs' actions, and what kinds of people the PCs are. It is very important for the Sholari to get inside the head of Keynass so that Keynass can be played as a complex character, rather than a stock NPC. She will be inclined to warn or possibly even threaten the PCs away from the general area.

If the PCs enter the area of the wreckage and Keynass' campsite they will be treated warily. Keynass will likely be torn between the standards of conduct appropriate to a Burdotherian tauther and her desire to keep her enterprise secret.

This adventure can end any number of ways. There is a chance that open conflict could erupt between the PCs and Keynass. The PCs could turn

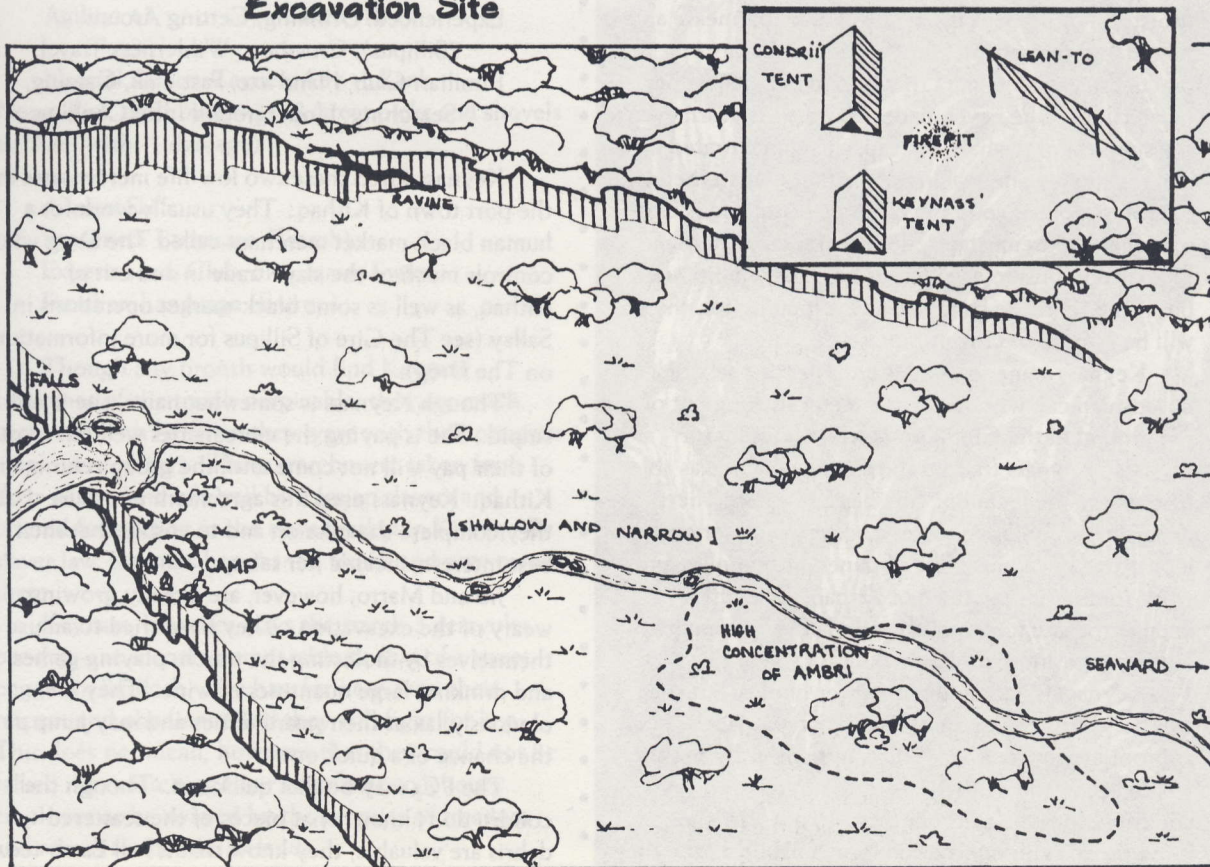
- greedy (especially if the condrij sway them) and try to take the Earth-tec site by force. The PCs could provoke Keynass to attack them to ensure the safety of the secret. The PCs might work out any number of various business deals with Keynass – and might even choose to ditch the Salsk operation and help Keynass.

- The Sholari should try to avoid any indirect communication or suggestion to the players that there is a specific task or goal to the adventure (since there isn't). The players will probably be looking for something in particular that they are supposed to do or accomplish. The only thing they are supposed to accomplish is the job they were hired to do by Salsk: find ambi lichen and establish a camp.

- Any reasonably intelligent PC who is aware of the Keynass camp will realize that it will be impossible to set up a ambreh operation in the valley without coming to Keynass' attention. Don't let players off the hook in terms of role-playing their characters' personalities. For example, only a very odd bronth would be willing to wheel and deal with Keynass – the near slave-labor conditions for the trarch will be too objectionable to most.

- If the Sholari wants to add extra incentive for the PCs to come into contact with Keynass, he or she could delay Salsk and the supplies for a week or

## Excavation Site



two. If the PCs don't have good foraging and survival skills they may be forced to approach Keynass for food. Injuries received from the forest critters could also spur PCs to ask for help.

## Gesh Keynass

Muadra

Size/Injury Mod. -1/-1

Age 36

Constitution 10      Strength 12

Speed 10              Social 11

Education 15        Aim 13

Color 14              Learn 16

Spot 11                Isho 14

Agility 10            Listen 10

### Relevant Skills

Seasoned: Language (Entren).

Experienced: Bargain, Earth-tec (Basic),

Current Events, Contacts, Bureaucracy.

Familiar: Wilderness Travel, Rock or Capsule (Thrown), Geology, Knife, Dyshas (Thrown), Faint Dysha.

Keynass was born and raised in the city of Ardoth, and is the daughter of two potent and respected caji. Perhaps it was her parents' over-expectation that their daughter would follow in their footsteps, or perhaps it was the climate of unease and hatred and the acceptability of discriminatory practices against muadra that turned her against her race's talent. She never made any effort to learn even the simplest of dyshas. Instead, she concentrated on making money and making important human friends.

She's done a good job of doing both, and is close to achieving drenn status, despite her racial heritage. Her current business venture is her most ambitious, but if she finds the Earth-tec she is looking for, she will be assured of citizenship.

Keynass came to Sillipus after hearing talk of a Burdothian caji who ran across metal sticking out of the ground in the Cliff Forests while hunting for crystals. Keynass tracked the caji down and was able to estimate the location. She has had to keep her departure to Sillipus a secret since it would seriously jeopardize her tothis. She obtained her supplies and work-force from the town of Kithaq. They have been at the site for a month and plan to re-supply at Kithaq after another two weeks.

Keynass is paranoid and power-hungry but she still tries to maintain the standards of conduct appropriate to a tauther. She is not cowardly but she would prefer to risk the lives of the trarch and condrij before she risks her own – that's why she hired them. Though she can form a naull and use the

- Faint dysha she doesn't like to do so. She would only throw a Faint orb if she exhausted all her cleash capsules and was in imminent danger.

- In her tent Keynass has her important equipment: 3 bags of cleash capsules (1 Smoke capsule, 2 "TJ" capsules, 3 Flare capsules, and 1 Blinder capsule); 2 doses of arrigish limilate, a diary recording the expedition with sketches of the unearthed debris; and a knife. She purchased the limilate and the capsules on the Kithaq black market.

- The diary could easily be used to implicate Keynass in a few different crimes if given to Burdothian authorities. Earth-tec iscin would be especially interested in her descriptions of the debris.

## 2 Condrij: Jib and Marro

Human males

Size/Injury Mod. +0/+0

Age 29, 34

Constitution 13      Strength 14

Speed 11              Social 11

Education 10        Aim 13

Color 10              Learn 9

Spot 12                Isho 11

Agility 12            Listen 11

### Relevant Skills

Seasoned: Language (Entren).

Experienced: Drinking, Getting Around (Sillipus), Crossbow, Wilderness Travel.

Familiar: Club, Hand axe, Fast Talk, Gaming, Searching, Underground Info, Cooking.

- Keynass hired these two low-life mercenaries in the port town of Kithaq. They usually work for a human black-market merchant called The Dreg who controls much of the slave trade in and out of Kithaq, as well as some black-market operations in Sallay (see The Gire of Sillipus for more information on The Dreg).

- Though Keynass is somewhat naive, she is not stupid. She is paying the mercenaries well but most of their pay will not come until the group returns to Kithaq. Keynass used this agreement to ensure that they complete the mission and to ensure that their best interests include her safety.

- Jib and Marro, however, are already growing weary of the excavation. They have tried to amuse themselves by molesting the trarch, playing games, and drinking large quantities of wine. They are obviously lax at their guard duties and may jump at the chance of a quick out.

- The PCs may be that quick out. Though the condrij don't know what pieces of the scattered debris are valuable, they know that it's all Earth-tec.

They may be willing to risk losing their wages to sell their knowledge of the site to black-market Earth-tec merchants.

The trarch pose an additional risk that, so far, the condrij have not been willing to take. Their plan would probably require the murder of Keynass – something the trarch would not permit. The possibility of being beaten to a pulp by eight shovel-wielding trarch has daunted the rather cowardly condrij.

If the condrij believe that the PCs can be convinced to help them slay Keynass and either kill or drive off the trarch they may try to split possible profits from selling the location of the site. Marro, the elder condrij, tries to use his Fast Talk skill to sway PCs whom he believes may be interested in such a deal.

Both condrij have crossbows, hand axes, and leather armor. Between the two of them they have 40 crossbow bolts and 10 more bottles of wine.

### 7 Trarch

Size/Injury Mod.: +1/+1

Constitution 16	Strength 16
Speed 11	Social 6
Education 4	Aim 11
Color 7	Learn 7
Spot 12	Isho 11
Agility 13	Listen 12

Natural Armor, Carries, Adv.+, Rank: None, Pick or Shovel, +2, 13 (treat picks and shovels as "Axe" with -1 damage)

#### Relevant Skills

Seasoned: Language (Trarch).

Experienced: Club, Fist, Jump, Swim.

Familiar: Language (Entren).

Though any bronth would find Keynass' treatment of the trarch despicable, they are much better off with her than they were with their previous employers/owners. These trarch were taken from their native land of Drail by Ramian slavers and offered for auction at the slave market in Kithaq. By slaver law, Keynass bought the trarch and now owns them.

Keynass, however, pays the trarch 3 gemyules per day – an income comparable to that of a street beggar in Burdoth. She has, for now, won their respect and obedience and they will fight for her. This does not mean, however, that they could not be talked into switching their allegiance to a better employer or be swayed by the promise of freedom and return to their homeland.



## Other Factors

**The Earth-tec Wreckage:** As with any kind of "big payoff" item in any role-playing game, Earth-tec must be managed carefully by the Sholari. A successful Earth-tec (basic) skill check will tell a PC that the debris is Earth-tec of some sort. A PC would need the Earth-Tec Operation/Modification skill to tell much more about the pieces of the wreckage. If a PC has this skill and makes a successful check with a +3 penalty to the roll he or she can tell that the debris is part of a larger, destroyed unit (and not a cache, for example).

This adventure leaves the decision up to the Sholari as to what Earth-tec could be salvaged from the wreckage and what consequence that Earth-tec could have. Some possible functional or repairable components could include a force-wall, a locator device, a holocam and soundcam, and energy cells. The debris would be worth the most to the Burdothian government – but whoever brings it to their attention must be very cautious about demanding monetary compensation (since Burdoth would tend to consider it property of the Burdothian realm).

**Disease:** There are many small parasites, bacterium, and worms thriving in the moist Cliff Forests. For every two days spent in the forest, the Sholari should ask each PC for a roll against Constitution with a -5 bonus to the roll. (Remember that a natural 20 is always a failing roll.) If a PC is unaffected after 8 days (four rolls), he or she has effectively become acclimated.

A few factors, all cumulative, can modify this roll. If the PCs are staying at an unfit campsite, they receive a +3 penalty. If they are using only carried-in or boiled water for drinking and cooking they receive a -3 bonus. If any PC is wounded and treated only with bandages (and not arrigish or a Medicine skill, for example), that PC suffers a +4 penalty to the roll. If any PC has spent time in the Cliff Forests previously, he or she receives a -2 bonus.

Any PC who catches something will begin to show signs of disease two days after infection. The Sholari should feel free to describe the outward signs (boils, coughing, etc.) however he or she wants. The affected character loses 1 point of Stamina on the day that symptoms first appear, 2 Stamina on the second day, 3 on the third, 2 on the fourth, and 1 on the fifth. A PC who falls to 0 Stamina during the course of the disease (from either the disease or wounds) will go into a feverish coma for three days and must make a Constitution roll. If the roll succeeds, the PC comes out of the coma and makes a

- full recovery within a week. If the roll fails, the PC dies.
- Healers in the various towns of Sillipus can cure a forest disease relatively easily. To cure a disease in the field, however, the PC group will need Medicine (to identify the illness), plus Limilate Finding and Limilate Preparation skills. The search for the limilate could take anywhere from one to three days.



### Isho Storms: The background Isho Geography

- rating of the forest/valley area is +1. The isho weather of the area tends to also add a +1 to the total isho rating. Any isho storm activity will quickly put the total over the 4 necessary for isho difficulties (see p. 91 in the *Skyrealms of Jorune* gamebook). There is a cumulative 5% chance per day spent in the forests that an isho storm will sweep through the area. If a storm occurs, this chance "restarts" at 0.



### Mark Frein

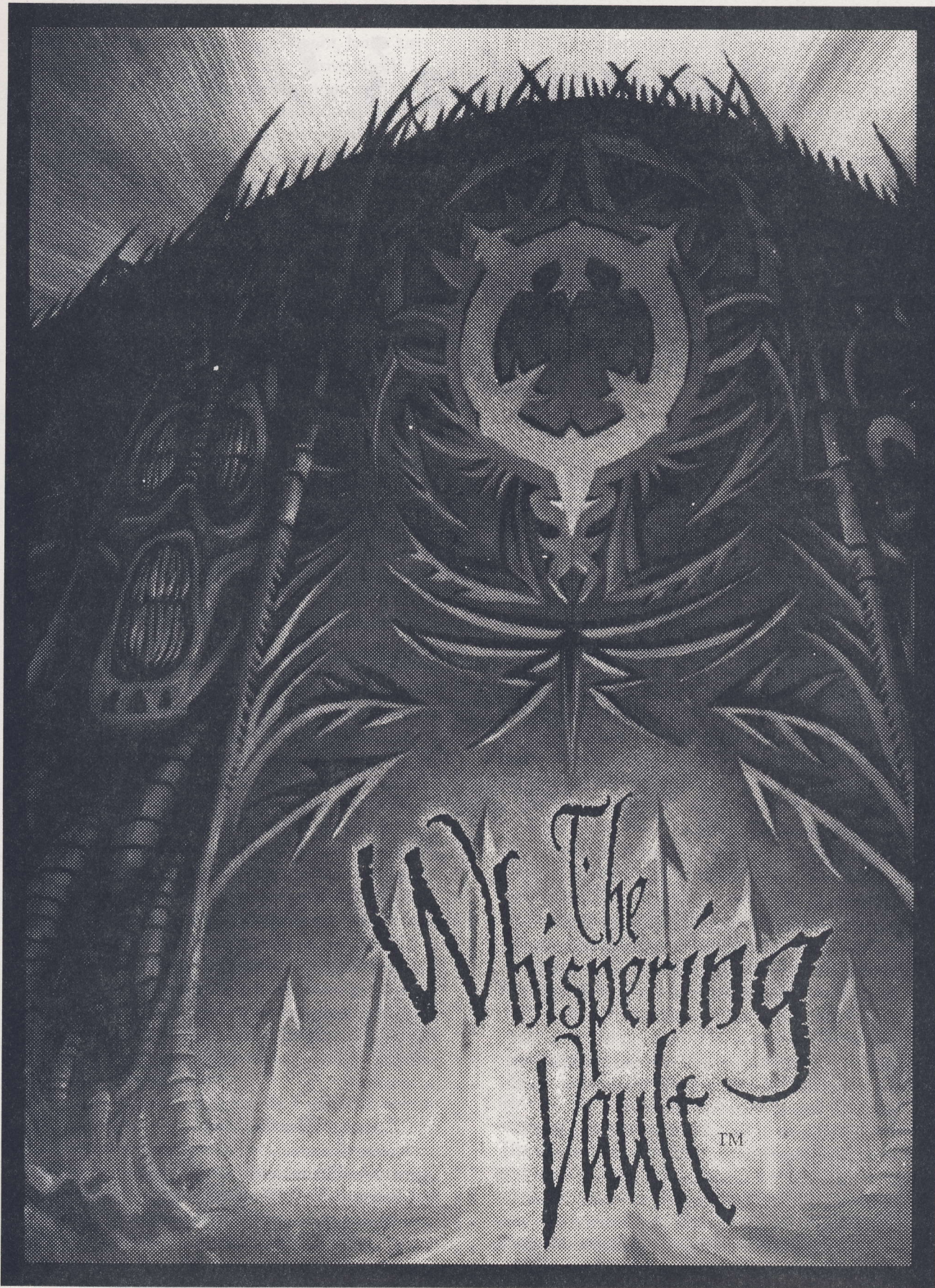
- Originally from North Dakota, Mark moved to Vancouver, B.C. just over a year ago to attend the University of B.C., where he is working toward his PhD in Curriculum and Instruction. Mark has written adventures and source material for the *Skyrealms of Jorune* and *Over the Edge* games, and claims that all of his best ideas come from his wife.



### R. Crowle Gray

- R. Crowle ("Ross") Gray was born in Edmonton spent time in the Northwest Territories, and finally settled in Vancouver. He is a self-taught artist and fan of the original *Star Trek* television series. His work appears regularly in the fanzine *Skylarking Digest*.

- Ross is also an avid gamer, and enjoys both Cyberpunk and AD&D.



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# Smuggler's Run

BY ANDREW J. LUCAS



gain We hear the summons. We can feel the delicious call of the others. The Circle is gathering, soon there will be need of our talents.

Even now the Advocate's attendants are entering our Domain. We must prepare, for the trip will be long and arduous, and the tasks which await perilous.

We gather the sterile implements of our youth — tools of the healing trade, now imbued with our Essence to serve Us again. We mold from our flesh a plain black bag and lovingly place our devices of cleansing within its warm pink interior. The satchel sighs contentedly as it receives the probes, hypodermics and sutures of wire. It quivers excitedly as We distill the bonesaw from the Essence of our Domain. Greenish light pours from the maw of the bag as it devours our saw.

Then We wait for the emissary of the Gathering, seated upon a simple stool, clutching our satchel before Us and contemplating the many good works to come. The wait is neither long nor short, for time passes fitfully in Our Domain. The call comes again, stronger this time. A pool of brackish water forms at Our feet, and within its murky depth We see the Supplicant. We feel his pain, his longing for justice and revenge. Stepping into the pool, We travel to meet the others, the warm waters softening Our passage. Gushing rose elixir announces Our arrival to the others.

The Doctor is in.

## *Stamemaster Note*

*Smuggler's Run* is set in the city of Chicago, Illinois, and is designed to be used with The Whispering Vault™ role-playing game. The adventure may be played with only the basic rulebook, although play will be greatly enhanced by using any of the Whispering Vault supplements. *Smuggler's Run* is intended for a group of up to four Stalkers; more can easily be accommodated by increasing the number of Minions at the Unbidden's command. Shadows presented in this adventure use the standard attributes from the Whispering Vault rulebook, unless otherwise indicated.

The format of *Smuggler's Run* progresses in a somewhat linear manner, but there are a couple of sections where the action can diverge in a number of directions as the players investigate various leads. It is important that the Gamemaster read the adventure in its entirety before playing the scenario, in order to be prepared for these diversions.

## *Straight Talk*

A renegade Aesthetic has descended upon Chicago in 1930, and is intent upon controlling the population and feeding its perverse desires. The creature inhabited the form of an aging hood called Nicoli Franco, who had never quite made it big. In this guise, and utilizing the numbing properties of the Enigma which accompanied it, the creature rocketed into a position of control in the city's underworld. Using the Corruption, which has infected an illicit gin still and perverted its product, Nicoli has attained a very powerful position in the city. He's also used Shadows he summoned to manipulate the legal and bureaucratic powers within the mundane population to make himself untouchable... to all but one ambitious young Treasury agent.

Agent James Cutler is a man with a mission: to make the city (and the world) a safer place. If that means striding boldly into Nicoli Franco's insidious web, then so be it. Cutler is a man willing to take on the world in order to save those he's charged to protect. Unfortunately, he's been struggling against forces from two worlds: that of Flesh, and also that of Essence.

So far, he's been unsuccessful even in locating the elusive Franco. The brass downtown has thwarted his every move and cut back on his manpower. Even his partner has abandoned the quest for justice. It seems that everyone in power has been subverted to the crime lord's will.

James has been forced to rely upon his own resources to pursue the criminal and combat his gin empire. Against the forces of Flesh and Essence, Cutler's meager resolve has failed him, and in despair he's cried out for help. Tonight his cry has penetrated into the Realm of the Primal Powers, and the Circle assembles.

## *Evening Constitutional*

James Cutler is an up-and-coming Treasury agent, a real Elliot Ness wannabe. He's been working in Chicago to stem the tide of illegal rum-running, and has had some success over the past five years. He is well known and respected in his field due to his intuitive understanding of the criminals he hunts. Recently, however, his track record has been

drastically reduced. There's a new player in the bootlegging game, and try as he might, James just can't seem to get a handle on the elusive Nicoli Franco's activities. The extremely potent and addictive gin the mobster is peddling, and the dire threat Nicoli poses to Chicago has caused James to become very frustrated with his own ineffectiveness.

James is a sensitive but is unaware of his talent, which manifests as an ability to subtly read the intentions of a suspect. He can't read minds as such, but does get hunches as to what a mobster might be planning. He calls it "God's way of evening the score."

This talent has served James well in his career with the Treasury department – until now. The servants of Nicoli Franco (who is, in fact, a renegade Aesthetic) are immune to the ability which James unconsciously relies upon in his work. To compound this dilemma, James is watched around the clock by servants of Nicoli. Franco's gang seems to know Cutler's every move, in much the same way that he once tracked lesser criminals in the city. Now, in desperation, he has prayed to the God he doesn't quite believe in to help him bring Franco to justice. It's this prayer that summoned the Circle.

Whenever he has a problem, James has a habit of taking long walks along the Chicago docks to think through his dilemma. Tonight his problems have come to seem insurmountable; he has settled himself on a bench in the shadows of a ore freighter and cried out for help. In his despair, Cutler doesn't notice the grating, surging sound, as of something massive scraping across metal decking, or the greenish glow emanating from somewhere above him. When he does look up from his cupped hands, he sees a fading greenish light emanating from the gangplank of the freighter and the Circle.

### *The Supplicant*

James instinctively trusts the Circle and looks to them as allies in his war on crime. He doesn't understand why he trusts them, especially with their outlandish appearance; he just does. If the Stalkers talk to him (as they logically should) he explains his problem with the crime lord Nicoli Franco. Other than his certainty that Franco is involved in bootlegging, James has no concrete proof of the man's guilt – no witnesses (none that survived long

- enough to testify, at least) no informers, no evidence.
- Even Cutler's superiors and partner, Charles Davis, aren't convinced that Franco has done anything criminal. (Cutler is starting to doubt the reliability of his partner, but won't volunteer this information to the Stalkers. It's just not done to air dirty Treasury Department laundry in public, after all.) The only lead the agent has on Franco's operation is the location of one of his speakeasies.

- If the Circle investigates the location of the speakeasy, go to the section titled A Good Book. If they decide to look for Cutler's partner, go to the section called Partners.

<i>James Cutler</i>			
Fortitude	4	Vitality	6
Initiative	10	Defend	11
Perceive	11	Resolve	12
Attack	10	Strength	2
Sensitivity	1		

(This ability manifests as an ability to psychically read the intention of people he talks with. James is unaware of his talent, which does not influence creatures of essence.)

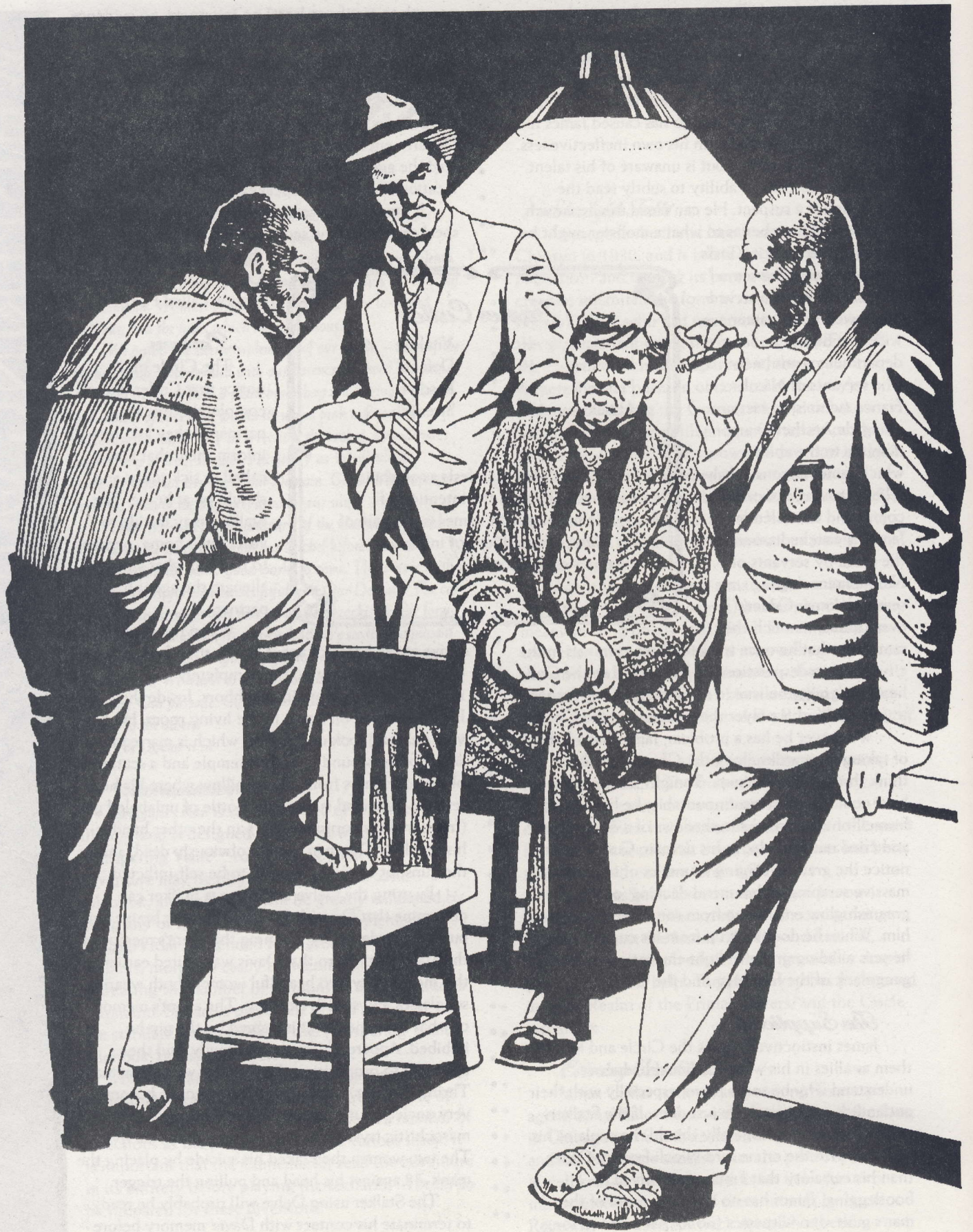
### *Partners*

The Circle may notice that Cutler doesn't completely trust his partner. If they ask, he will inform them that Davis called in sick today and should be at home. The Stalkers may decide to visit Davis' home, perhaps to find out what would alienate the agent from his partner.

- When the players arrive at the home of agent Davis, they find an ordinary three-story house, completely indistinguishable from its neighbors. Inside they find Davis, slumped on a sofa in the living room. He has a very peaceful look on his face, which is marred by a single bullet wound in his left temple and a scattering of white feathers from a burst pillow where his head rests. In one hand is nestled a bottle of unlabeled gin (from Franco's corrupted still); in the other hand is his revolver. The man is quite obviously dead, and the gunshot certainly appears to be self-inflicted.

- By using the Delve discipline, a Stalker can determine that Davis didn't blow his own brains out, but was murdered. By scanning the agent's memories, the Stalker can learn that Davis was visited earlier this morning by two beautiful women, both wearing sunglasses and stylish clothing. The agent's memory of what happened next is fogged by the gin he imbibed. Apparently he drank heavily, and then appeared to proposition the women (who are actually Thritch Kalvarr). After that, the memories become very unclear, but it seems the three engaged in a masochistic tryst – one which Davis didn't survive. The two women then faked his suicide by placing the man's .38 against his head and pulling the trigger.

- The Stalker using Delve will probably be ready to terminate his contact with Davis' memory before





the agent's death. Unfortunately, the Circle will probably assume that Davis' death was caused by a bullet to the head, and will wait until his hand touches the revolver before breaking the connection. In fact, of course, the Treasury agent died minutes earlier, and his death came without any warning. Any Delving character sharing Davis' memories of his death will suffer damage as explained in the *Whispering Vault* rulebook (p. 40).

The two women are the Du'math twins, who have been using their special talents to ensure the cooperation of Agent Davis. Unfortunately Charles has been attempting to exert his own will, forcing the Unbidden to intensify the indoctrination of the hapless agent. The intensity of the pain and pleasures inflicted upon him (while he was under the influence of the gin) unfortunately killed the poor agent. Further examination of Davis' memories indicate that he frequently met the twins in a local speakeasy which operated under the cover name of the Chicago Reading Room.

"Speakeasy" is a general term for an establishment which traffics in illegal alcohol. They were renowned in the '30s as hotbeds of criminal activity. While the activities within the business are considered tame by today's standards, most were controlled by organized crime, and occasionally became targets during gang wars.)

### *A Hood Book*

If the Stalkers wish to investigate one of Franco's establishments, Cutler directs them towards The Chicago Reading Room. James has known for months that the business is merely a front for Franco's gin peddling – but knowing and *proving* are two completely different things. Cutler has no evidence against the well-respected business which caters to the city's intellectual population... or so it would seem. In fact, there is a secret passage in the rear wall of a storeroom that leads to a bar in the basement.

James suspects that this covert bar exists, but has been unable to find it. To date he has raided the Chicago Reading Room three times, each time finding nothing suspicious. Now James suspects that Franco was tipped off prior to each raid. He doesn't yet know that the source of the information was his partner Charles Davis, who was subverted by Franco's otherworldly minions.

As the Hunters enter the establishment, they find a number of intellectual types reading quietly from the scores of books arranged on shelves throughout the building. Near the rear of the building is a rail-thin man reading the latest issue of *Life*. A perceptive Stalker may notice that this is a Rethett in human guise. He is guarding a secret

## *Jenas & Nikol Du'math*

### Pain Mother (Personalities)

*Of the twin sisters of severity and ecstasy, little is known. Amongst the shadows named Pain Mothers, the two are shunned – even feared. Not, as one might think, because of the bestial savagery of their desires, or the manner in which they fulfill them by chain and hook and lash, but because they let their suitors survive. This is a cruelty far worse than anything of flesh should endure.*

Fortitude	7
Vitality	9
Initiative	13
Defend	15
Perceive	14
Resolve	19

Twin sisters, these shadows are inseparable, preferring each other's company to that of any other... save their prey. During their years of service to their master, the two have become something of an oddity in the social circles of Chicago. They are well known and well liked by the socially and politically powerful of the city. Jenas thrives on the attention, while Nikol views it only as a means to feed her carnal desires.

The Unbidden has enchanted the husks of the sisters in such a manner that they are irresistible to mortal men and women (requiring a Difficult challenge to ignore), making it much easier to lure prey into his clutches. The Unbidden enjoys watching the delicious torments the pair inflict upon their lovers; their vacillation between ecstasy and agony brings him much pleasure. Occasionally the Unbidden will set the pair upon some mortal rival, watching as the twin predators passionately consume their prey, only to call them off at the last instant. The longing for the sisters' tormenting caresses allows the Unseen to subvert the mortal's passions to his own ends. Many powerful mundanes within Chicago have savored the delicious taste of the twins' passion, and will fulfill the Unbidden's every whim to experience it again.

passage into the speakeasy.

If the Stalkers threaten the Rethett in any way, or reveal their true nature by using Disciplines or summoning Servitors, he rushes to Franco and relates what he's seen. Once he learns that the Stalkers are in the Reading Room, Franco will use his political influence to have the joint raided by the cops. A squad of eight of Chicago's finest, armed with pistols and truncheons, will arrive within 10 minutes of Rethett sounding the warning (use the Thug stats from the section Visit from the Boys). The sole objective of this raid is to arrest the Circle; the cops ignore all other patrons of the club.

### *Into the Speakeasy*

The secret club is reached by a stairwell concealed behind a false wall in the storeroom. This stairwell leads beneath the Chicago Reading Room to a riotous speakeasy. A band in one corner is playing upbeat music, and dozens of couples are on the floor dancing. In the corners of the club, a few people can be seen sleeping or quietly talking. Of course, plenty of Franco's gin is being passed around and everyone seems to be having a good time – a little *too* good a time, in fact. Along one wall is a bar being run by two huge bartenders who are actually Ogyrs in human shells. There appears to be only one drink being served, an slightly amber fluid which reeks of the Enigma.

If the Stalkers look closer at the dancers, they will see that they're locked in an almost-maniacal, ecstatic fervor. A perceptive Stalker can tell that the dancers (all the patrons of the club, for that matter) are under the influence of the Enigma.

The Enigma has mutated Franco's illicit gin still into a corrupt machine which produces an equally corrupt product. The gin is highly addictive,

- instilling in its drinker a longing for it while also
- enhancing the perception of pleasure. Once under
- the influence of the Enigma, a mortal will find an
- intense enjoyment in any sort of physical activity, be
- it an energetic jog... or a more destructive form of
- exercise. The majority of the club-goers are
- indulging their addiction to pleasure by dancing –
- though from the sounds emanating from a couple of
- side rooms, it appears that other less wholesome
- activities are also underway.

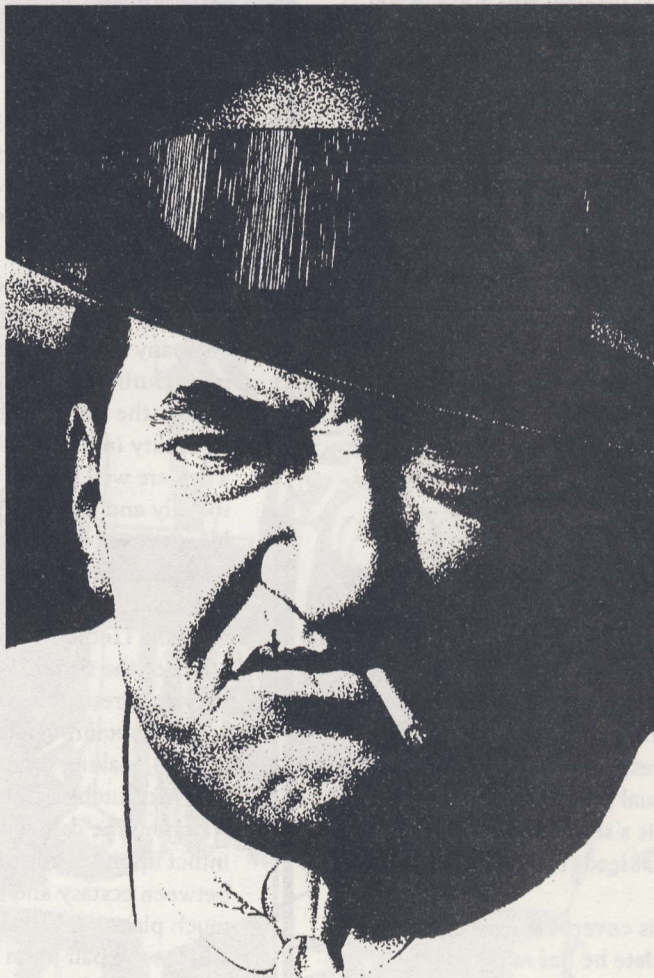
- Glancing into the eyes of any of the patrons
- reveals the extent of the Enigma's effect on these

hapless people. A weariness emanates from the dancers, whose features alternate between sheer ecstasy and abject exhaustion. They all have the vacant, glazed look of extreme addiction; a few can barely keep their eyes open but valiantly try to keep dancing to the music. At odds with the apparent fatigue of the dancers is their frantic pace. The Charleston is preferred for its frenzied pace and the pleasure it produces.

Occasionally a dancer collapses, and a bouncer (one of two Ogyrs in human husks) strides onto the dance floor to drag the near-dead mortal to a booth. The other dancers are too far gone to notice their own ravaged condition, their fallen companion – or the crimson trail left by the

- victim's mangled feet.

- If the players talk to the bartenders, they find it
- very difficult to learn anything from them. The
- creatures are just too stupid to be aware of their
- surroundings. The only information they have
- concerning Franco and his operation is that it's based
- out of the Ritz hotel. The gin comes from there, and
- Franco lives there as well. The Stalkers may be
- unaware that Nicoli Franco is the Unbidden, but will
- definitely realize that the gin he produces is
- corrupted by the Enigma. Unless threatened, the



bartenders mind their own business.

Each night, Nicoli Franco sends either the Du'math twins or Snappy Jim (see a later section) to select one of these exhausted dancers to be brought to him. The Unbidden knows that the Enigma will match any pain inflicted upon a victim with a pleasure which exceeds the pain. Many of the club patrons have already discovered this and have turned to more violent indulgences than simple dancing. Some of these unfortunates turn to self-mutilation for their kicks, while others are picked up by Nicoli's minions and have no choice in the matter.

Franco uses the Enigma to strengthen his hold over Chicago's politically powerful by manipulating their access to the vicious rapture that only his servants can supply. Cutler's partner Davis was one such unwilling tool. He knew that he was selling his partner out but couldn't help himself. He needed the pleasure that only the Unseen could give him.

If the Stalkers wait long enough, the Du'math twins arrive to capture the evening's repast for Franco. The two Pain Mothers are dressed in the highest of 1930s fashion, and have a radiance about them which is unearthly in its beauty. They look around the club with their sightless eyes, until they notice one specific woman. The woman is barely more than a girl, and is sprawled in a booth near the back of the club. The two shadows walk over to the girl and, each supporting an arm, lead her out.

The twins are taking the girl back to Nicoli Franco's penthouse suite at the Ritz to satisfy his carnal desires. They leave the girl with Franco in the hotel's lobby and return later to dispose of the remains. It is possible for the Stalkers to follow the twins and their captive to the very doorstep of the Unbidden's lair, wait for them to leave and then confront Franco alone. This is the wisest course of action, but not the only one.

The Stalkers may decide to confront the sisters

- in the speakeasy. If they do, they'll have to deal with
- both Pain Mothers and two Ogyrs – not an easy task.
- The Circle may instead decide to wait until the
- Du'maths leave the club before jumping them. If a
- melee does occur, the Ogyrs fight to the death, not
- knowing any better. The twins, however, flee if they
- lose more than 3 points of vitality.

### *Visit from the Boys*

- As the Circle hunts, they will undoubtedly come
- to the attention of Nicoli Franco. This can occur in
- any number of ways. If the Circle meets Cutler again,

they will be discovered by the Unbidden, as Nicoli has two Rethrett watching the cop at all times. These shadows keep him appraised of the movements of the Treasury agent, and have allowed the Unbidden to know James' every move and to thwart his most carefully laid plans. These watchers will immediately recognize the Stalkers for what they are, and scurry off to alert Nicoli. If the Stalkers interfere with Nicoli's operations within the city, he will also be alert to their presence.

Once the Unbidden knows of the Circle's appearance in Chicago, he will use his Tracker ability to find them. At this point the players will get a visit from the Franco Mob, in the form of Snappy Jim and three human enforcers armed with Tommy guns (D10).

Snappy Jim's orders are simple: find the Circle and kill them. Unfortunately, Nicoli has neglected to inform Jim that he's facing

- creatures of Essence. Jim strides up to the Circle,
- completely oblivious to their actual origin, and
- announce that, "Franco says youse guys been
- muscling into his turf. Youse looks like smart guys.
- Too bad youse weren't smart enough to stays out of
- Chicago. Boys, explain it to them."

- Jim then motions to his three friends, who open
- up on the Circle with their Tommy guns. Nicoli
- wants to make a statement to the cops and to the

## *Snappy Jim*

### Bogey Man

*Bound into the skin of a strikingly handsome mortal, Snappy Jim is a fearsomely huge minion. Justifiably proud of the comely shell he wears, the Bazreth fancies himself a ladies' man and spends much of his time courting the DuMath twins. This attraction frequently requires his Unbidden master to re-weave Jim's husk.*

This Bazreth serves as Nicoli Franco's lieutenant in the city, and is similar to others of his kind... save for his vanity. The renegade Aesthetic is a skilled Weaver and has given Snappy Jim a beautiful husk. The creature appears to the unenlightened as a strikingly handsome man with an incredibly charismatic bearing. The vanity of the creature causes it to go to great lengths to preserve its appearance, and Stalkers threatening to mar or rupture its casing may be able to force it to their will.

The attractiveness of Snappy Jim and the Du'math twins have served Nicoli well; he has no shortage of flesh to satisfy his twisted desires.

Primal Powers – namely, that they'll never take him in.

Snappy Jim watches the action from the sidelines, initially unaware that his victims are creatures of Essence. If the Stalkers reveal their avatars or exhibit preternatural powers, he flees in fear. If the players deal with the thugs in an obviously mundane manner (by Rending them and Masking the attack as a pistol shot, for example) he joins the battle by grappling with the enemies of his master.

If James Cutler or other civilians are present, the Circle may be forced to protect them, making it more difficult to subdue Jim and his henchmen. Snappy Jim is smart enough (barely) to use any advantage he can in the combat, and won't hesitate to endanger innocent lives.

If the Stalkers successfully subdue or dominate Snappy Jim, they may interrogate him. If the shadow's husk hasn't been broken and the stalkers threaten to mar its beauty, Jim will answer all their questions freely. (He's so proud of his handsome features that any threat to their perfection will ensure his cooperation.)

Jim knows little about the operation of Franco's criminal organization, but he *does* know that it's centered in the Ritz hotel. Nicoli runs his empire from the penthouse suite, which he rarely leaves. Snappy Jim also knows the following information:

- Jim or the Du'math twins bring one (and sometimes more) mortals to serve his master each night, and return in the morning to remove the victims' lifeless corpses.
- The night's feast is always selected from one of the many gin joints which use Franco's corrupted gin.
- The gin is produced by a still in the basement of the Ritz.
- Jim is never allowed into the basement but knows that the still is there.

Franco is well aware that the Circle will be able to defeat Jim and the pitiful forces he sent to destroy them. Furthermore, he knows that the Circle won't give up the Hunt until he is incarcerated in the Vault or destroyed. He's sent this force merely to weaken the Stalkers (and also to lure them into his lair where he intends to take them apart, slowly and painfully).

If the Circle is particularly efficient, the Stalkers might be able to avoid Snappy Jim's attentions entirely. The player characters may be able to track the Unbidden within hours of arriving in the realm of Flesh. However, if they become sidetracked or begin chasing dead ends, the Unbidden will become aware of their presence in the city. Once he knows they are here, Franco will send Snappy Jim and his leg-breakers to deal with the group.

### *Thugs*

Fortitude	4	Vitality	4
Initiative	5	Defend	10
Perceive	9	Resolve	6
Attack	8	Strength	3
Tommy Gun (D10)			

### *Putting on the Ritz*

If the Stalkers follow the Du'math twins to the Ritz, they see the sisters leave the exhausted girl they kidnapped with a handsome man of swarthy build and Latino blood. This is Nicoli Franco, whom the Stalkers may or may not at this point be aware is the Unbidden. The lobby is a bustling mass of humanity; any attack here by the players will be sure to invoke the Forbiddance – not to mention the fact that it would mean facing an Architect and two Thritch Kalvarr (Pain Mothers). The player characters may also seek out the Enigma, which is located in the basement. If they do go to the section titled A Quick Nip.

After a brief discussion, the two shadows leave the girl with Franco and seek their pleasures elsewhere. Franco then walks the girl to a private elevator and proceeds to the penthouse. The elevator is the only access to the penthouse, and is operated by a gold key, of which only Franco, Snappy Jim and the twin sisters have copies. Of course there are many ways a Stalker may gain access to the penthouse; the elevator is merely the most mundane of their options. It may also serve another purpose.

It's conceivable that the Stalkers may corner the renegade Aesthetic before he gets to the penthouse. The elevator would be perfect for this. Up to three Stalkers are able to fit in the enclosed space with the girl and Franco. Franco is unable to use his Teleport ability, which requires line of sight, and there isn't enough room for him to summon help. Then again, the space is limited and close combat with the Unseen can be deadly for all concerned – doubly so for the hapless girl, who Nicoli *will* use as a shield.

Attacking Franco in the elevator without trying to protect the girl or take her to safety will anger the Primal Powers. Each Stalker involved in such callous disregard for innocent life will suffer 1 point of Vitality loss.

A far safer course of action (for the captive) is to wait for the elevator to reach the penthouse, or perhaps to beat it there and wait for its occupants to emerge. If the Stalkers confront the Franco in the penthouse, they find it to be richly upholstered with only the finest furniture and artwork. The entire suite is beautiful and very elegant, save for one room. The master bedroom is filled with monstrous instruments of torture and the wall is splattered with dried brown stains, obviously blood. Small piles of gore litter the

## Nicoli Franco

### The Unbidden

*Nicoli was once a well-respected Chicago socialite, but those days have long passed. The old man's respect has departed along with his mortal soul, consumed by the Unbidden creature that now inhabits his shell. The renegade feasted upon the poor souls infected by the corruption, tightening its stranglehold upon Chicago's alcohol trade.*

Fortitude .....	5/6	Vitality .....	16/18	Initiative .....	13/12
Defend .....	15/15	Perceive .....	17/13	Resolve .....	19/17
Attack .....	15	Strength .....	4	Attack .....	13
Damage .....	5				

Special Abilities: Chameleon, Summoner, Healer, Weaver, Track\*, Translocate\*\*.

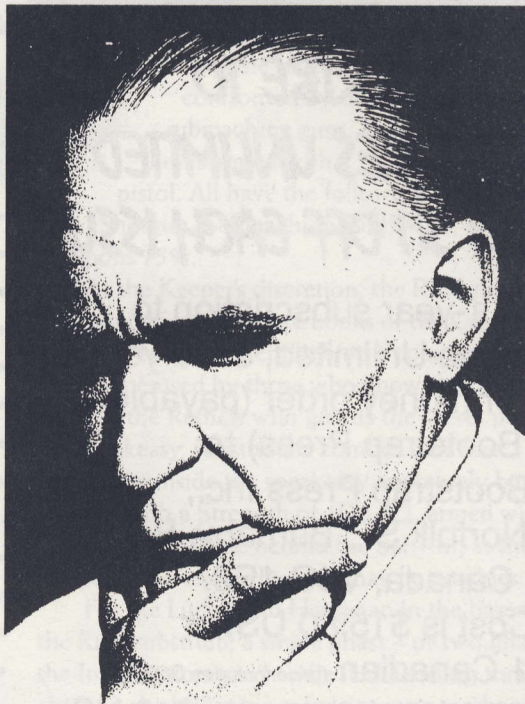
\* This is an ability similar to the innate ability of the Tracker servitor. By using this ability, the Unbidden can seek out any creature of Essence in a given area. It is commonly used to locate awakened shadows, but can also be used to pursue Stalkers.

\*\* As the Stalker Discipline, except that the Unbidden can only Teleport Shadows... and Stalkers. Nicoli will use this power to Teleport allies to him or enemies away from him. The range is line of sight, which partially explains Nicoli's preference for the penthouse suite, with its wide view of the city.

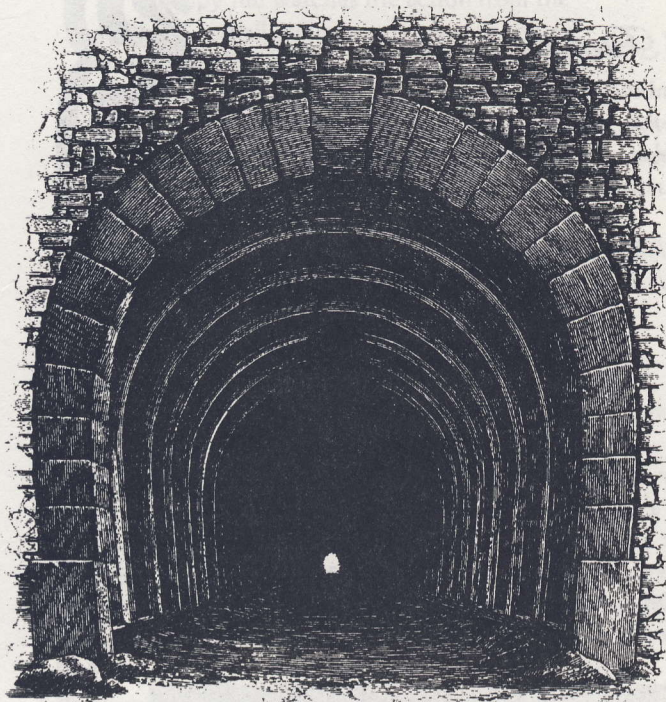
The Unbidden has advanced to the Architect stage and has developed an iron grip on Chicago by fostering an insatiable thirst in the population for the gin his still produces. He practically controls the underworld from his stronghold high atop the Ritz-Carlton hotel. Disguised within a human shell, he masquerades as crime-lord Nicoli Franco, and rarely leaves the luxurious suites where he indulges his vulgar pleasures. He prefers to have his indulgences brought before him by his lieutenant, the Bazreth Snappy Jim.

Nicoli has a mild aversion to silence and constantly surrounds himself with sound. His suite is filled with blaring Italian operas or loud radio programs. On his infrequent trips into the city, he is always accompanied by two Rethrett who are masked as babbling gun molls, and who constantly discuss current affairs and fashion.

His overwhelming fetish is his desire for control. The creature called Nicoli desires to dominate the entire city and reign like a god. He sees the criminal underworld as a good starting point, and has decimated the other rum-running outfits in town. He also has an irresistible attraction to sadism, and frequently selects one of the clients from a speakeasy to satisfy his urges for the evening. His rooms are littered with the remnants of his entertainment and the walls adorned with the tools of his pleasure. The Du'math twins often assist him with these indulgences.



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floor, each a feast for scores of flies.

When they open the door to this bedroom, the Circle is assaulted by a stench far worse than any abattoir. Where the bed would be is a steel table, spotlessly sterile in contrast to the rest of the room.

If the Circle gives the Unbidden enough time (10-15 minutes), the Stalkers find the girl strapped to this table, and Franco preparing his tools. If the Circle arrive much later (an hour or so), they interrupt the Unbidden in the process of horribly mutilating the innocent girl. The girl appears to be experiencing equal measures of pain, terror and ecstasy, due to the influence of the gin Franco has been feeding her.

At this point it's still possible to save the victim, but if the Stalkers do nothing or arrive any later the girl will be beyond help and hope. The Unbidden won't kill her, but her mind will have fled the horror her body has undergone. Once sanity leaves the flesh, the Unbidden can no longer draw any sustenance from the shell. The girl will be useless to him.

Later that night, Snappy Jim arrives to remove the girl. Franco believes she is to be destroyed (as all his victims are) but such is not the case. Jim doesn't enjoy the torture his master inflicts upon the innocent, but is bound to serve him. Snappy Jim bundles the girl in a blanket and takes her to an orphanage just outside of town, where he knows she'll be well cared for. The orphanage contains dozens of Nicoli's discarded casualties, as do others scattered across Chicago.

If the Circle can locate, heal or dispatch these living corpses, the Primal Powers will be very pleased, and heal any lost Vitality and award the Circle extra experience (GM's discretion).

Franco repeats his feast of terror every night and never leaves his penthouse lair, save to meet his new meal or attend to emergencies. The final battle between the Circle and the Unbidden will most likely occur here.

### *A Quick Nip*

The focus of the Enigma is a small still in the basement of the Ritz-Carlton. This Focus produces the corrupt gin which Nicoli's crime syndicate distributes. The still is hidden in the dark basement of the hotel, nestled between huge rusting boilers. The heat in the basement is oppressive, and few people venture into its shadowed depths. There was an accident here three months ago, involving the death of two of the hotel's janitorial staff. Since their mangled bodies were carted out of the Ritz, the staff have avoided the basement. Franco has taken over the area as an ideal place to keep the source of the Enigma close and safe.

To protect the still from prying eyes and the law, Franco has summoned two guardians. One is a Sanguinalan (Lurker, pg. 110), which has squeezed its enormous bulk into one of the hotel's colossal water heaters, where it enjoys the warmth of the scalding water. When it emerges, it attacks ferociously, devouring any living thing to satisfy its hunger. It then pushes its bulk back into the boiler and sleeps contentedly until the next meal stumbles across it. The poor creature is kept so hungry by Franco that it emerges hopefully at the slightest sound, hoping for prey. It is eerily silent and won't betray its presence until it strikes.

The second guardian is a Ghann Galowey (Hangman, pg. 108) which lives amidst the pipes and conduits dangling from the basement's ceiling. Here it waits for the unwary – be they Stalkers or mortals. When anyone walks below, the Hangman attacks with its hook and noose. It is well aware of the Lurker living in the hotel's hot water tank, and attempts to lure the Circle within striking range of its ally.

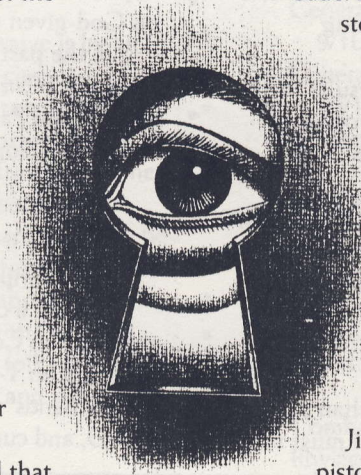
If the Hangman makes a successful noose attack, it hangs the victim within easy reach of the Lurker. Stalkers hung above the Lurker may choose to defend, attack or get loose from the rope. It's recommended that the Gamemaster give the affected player a die cap of 4 on any actions other than getting loose. Naturally the Lurker will prefer to attack this "gift" over more active prey.

Once the guardians are vanquished, it's a (relatively) simple task to mend the Enigma and destroy Franco's stockpile of corrupted gin... unless the Circle hasn't yet dealt with Franco himself, of course.

### Experience

The GM should award experience according to the guidelines set out in the main rulebook (p. 79), with the following additional bonuses awarded depending on the Stalkers' performance (and GM discretion). These are *individual* bonuses:

- 4 points if all the victims of Franco's hunger (Putting on the Ritz) are released.
- 2 points if James Cutler is not killed.
- 3 points if no innocents are killed in the adventure.
- 3 points if no Shadows are destroyed.
- 2 points if the Forbiddance is not invoked.



### Conversion Notes

To convert *Smuggler's Run* to a Call of Cthulhu® adventure, begin by altering the opening sequence slightly. The Investigators are called in by a longtime friend, Treasury Dept. agent James Cutter, to investigate the death of his partner, Charles Davis. The death appears to be a suicide, but Investigators can use Spot Hidden to spot scratches on Davis' neck. He was strangled by a clawed creature. The other clue is that the gun is in his right hand; Davis was left-handed. Neighbors can describe the twin sisters who came to Davis' home the night before.

A second Spot Hidden roll is used to see if the Investigators find a book written by the Marquis de Sade. Inside its cover is the address of the book store where it was purchased: the Reading Room. Reading this gruesome book results in a loss of 1d6 Sanity.

Snappy Jim and his thugs are normal humans; determine their basic characteristics as you would an Investigator. If the Investigators are unarmed, give them an equal chance by having the thugs fight with switchblades and baseball bats. More capable Investigators may be confronted by thugs with Thompson submachine guns. In either case, Snappy Jim is armed with a .32 caliber automatic pistol. All have the following skills: Handgun

- 65%, Shotgun (Submachine Gun) 40%, Melee Weapons 75%.
- At the Keeper's discretion, the Reading Room may contain one or more books of the Cthulhu Mythos. These are kept behind a counter and may only be perused by those who know the password.
- For the Rethett who guards the secret passage to the speakeasy, substitute a zombie. The two bartenders inside the speakeasy are merely burly humans with a Strength of 1D6+12, armed with clubs that they hide behind the bar – or, at the Keeper's discretion, they too may be zombies.
- For the Lurker and Hangman in the basement of the Ritz, substitute a single ghastr – or two ghastrs, if the Investigators can handle it. The thing thrashing about in the boiler is a gigantic worm, perhaps six feet long and six inches in diameter, coated in putrid-smelling yellow slime. Even if let out of the boiler it does not attack, but serves as a mere distraction; it holds the Investigators' attention while the ghastr moves in to attack.
- For the two Pain Mothers, substitute two werewolves (use the statistics for the first type). They can change, at will, from beautiful women into half-wolf monsters. They delight in torturing and killing their victims, either while they are in human form

(satisfying their sexual appetites through sado-masochistic orgies) or while in bestial form (satisfying their hunger with raw meat).

"Nicoli Franco" is really a wizard who took over the body of this gangster upon his death – and in the process, gained wealth and power. His dried husk of a body has the same immunities to impaling weapons as a zombie. His statistics are: Str 16; Con 18; Siz 12; Int 11; Pow 15; Dex 12; App 6; Edu 9; San 20; HP 15. He knows the following spells: Bind Animal (Werewolf), Consume Likeness, Create Zombie, Heal, Mental Suggestion, and Curse of the Stone. He uses the latter spell to cause hallucinations, in the mind of the target, that convince the victim that he or she is strapped to a surgical table and suffering gruesome mutilations at Nicoli's hands.

Viewing the penthouse bedroom results in the loss of 1D6 Sanity. If Nicoli is in the process of mutilating a victim, the loss increases to 2D6 Sanity.

Create James Cutler using the normal rules for creating an Investigator. He's an experienced treasury agent, so add an extra 60 points to his occupation (private eye) skills, and an extra 30 points to his other skills. He's armed with a police-issue .38 caliber revolver.

Investigators who drink any more than a single sip of the gin produced by Nicoli must roll their Con on 1D100 to avoid falling under its spell. Those who fail are driven to engage in the violent and masochistic physical activity that gives them such pleasure, possibly losing Hit Points as a result. This mania lasts for one hour per ounce of gin imbibed (the typical drink served at the speakeasy contains three ounces).

The gin is highly addictive. Those who taste it must roll Intx5 each day thereafter, or succumb that evening to an overwhelming urge to return to the speakeasy to drink the gin again. (Trying to forcibly prevent the addict from doing this may result in a fight, although stealthier Investigators may employ a ruse to slip away from their companions.) This addiction continues until the victim has abstained from the gin for five full days.



#### Andrew Lucas

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

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

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



#### Mike Crippin

Mike is a commercial artist who took his training at Kwantlen College in Vancouver. His designs have appeared on T-shirts, as well as on the covers of various bands' recordings. Mike formerly played AD&D, and currently enjoys Warhammer 40,000.

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# A WHIFF OF DANGER

BY LISA SMEDMAN

ART BY GARY HUDSON



*Whiff of Danger* is an adventure for the Earthdawn™ game. This short scenario takes place aboard an airship. It is best used as an interlude between longer adventures, and can be introduced any time the characters need to travel quickly from one place to another.

The fastest means of travel in Barsaive is by air, but few airship captains are willing to carry passengers. Airships are normally military vessels, mining ships, raiding vessels, or slave transports – few of which a character would board willingly. The *Fair Wind*, captained by Lugash Stormsailor, is one notable exception to this rule. The characters may be wary, given Lugash's background as a former crystal raider and the somewhat patched-up appearance of the airship itself, but several people at the airship's current port (many of them reputable folk) can vouch for the trustworthiness of this captain and the airworthiness of her vessel.

## LUGASH STORMSAILOR

Troll Sky Raider (3rd circle)

### Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10  
Strength (16): 7/D12  
Toughness (15): 6/D10  
Perception (13): 6/D10  
Willpower (13): 6/D10  
Charisma (15) 6/D10

### Talents

Air Sailing (7): 13/1D12+1D10  
Avoid Blow (3): 9/1D8+1D6  
Battle Shout (3): 9/1D8+1D6  
Fireblood (3): 9/1D8+1D6  
Karma Ritual (3)  
Melee Weapons (3): 9/1D8+1D6  
Great Leap (5): 11/1D10+1D8  
Shield Charge (3): 10/1D10+1D6  
Swift Kick (1): 7/1D12  
Wind Catcher (3): 9/1D8+1D6

### Movement

Full: 60  
Combat: 30

### Skills

Knowledge/Barsaive Geography (4):  
10/1D10+1D6  
Knowledge/Airship Construction (2): 8/2D6  
General/Bribery (4): 10/1D10+1D6  
General/Navigation (5): 11/1D10+1D8  
General/Speak Dwarven Language (3):  
9/1D8+1D6  
General/Speak Human Language (4):  
10/1D10+1D6  
Artisan/Wood Carving (5): 11/1D10+1D8

### Initiative

Dice: D8

### Karma

Dice: D4  
Points: 10

### Combat

Physical Defense: 7  
Spell Defense: 7  
Social Defense: 8  
Armor: 5  
Mystic Armor: 5

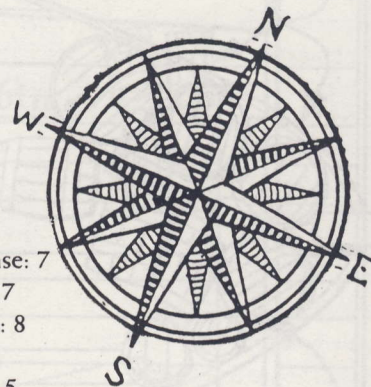
### Damage

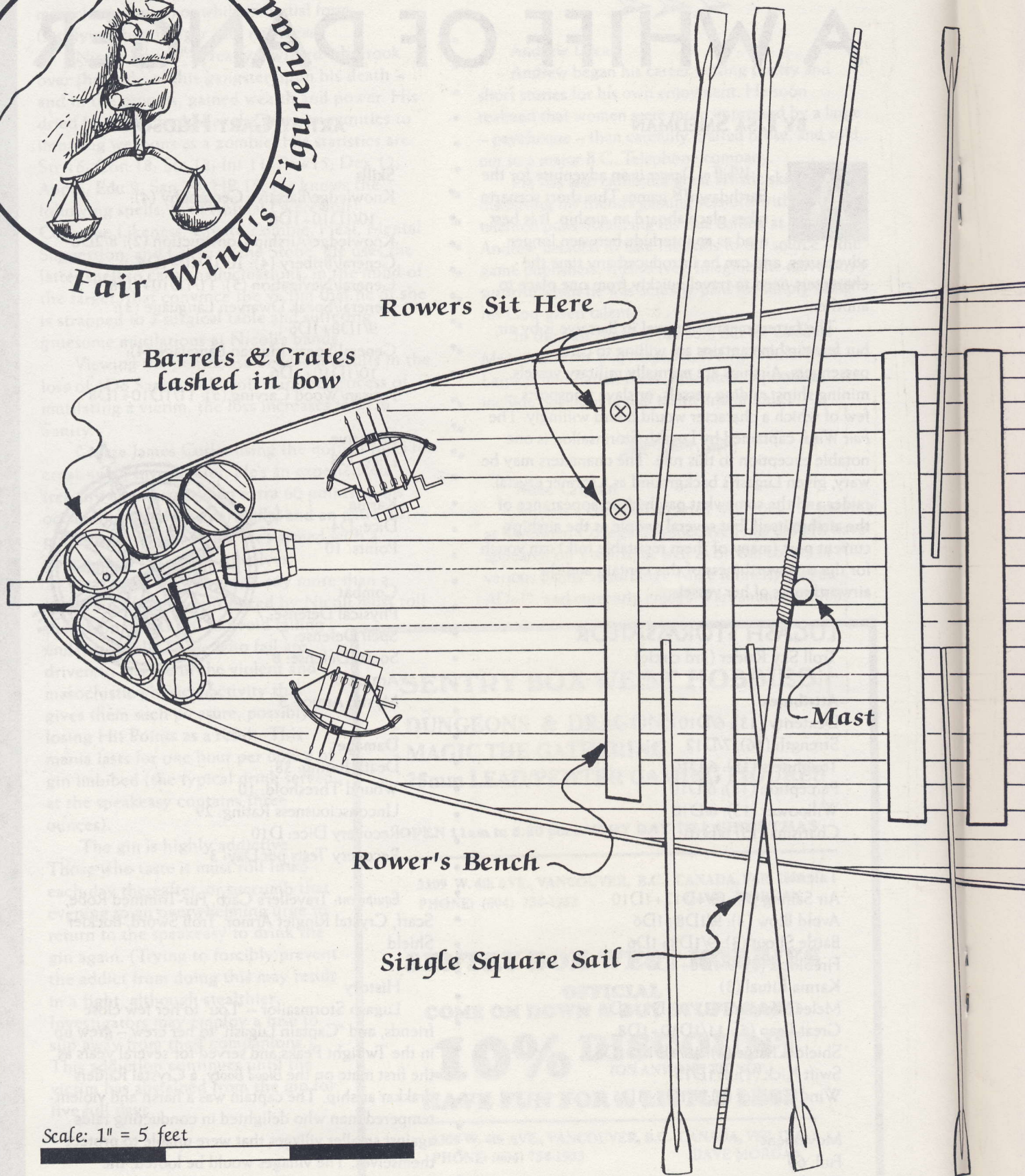
Death Rating: 38  
Wound Threshold: 10  
Unconsciousness Rating: 29  
Recovery Dice: D10  
Recovery Tests per Day: 3

*Equipment:* Traveller's Garb, Fur-Trimmed Robe, Scarf, Crystal Ringlet Armor, Troll Sword, Buckler, Shield

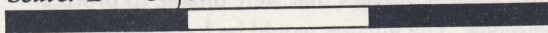
### History

Lugash Stormsailor – "Lou" to her few close friends, and "Captain Lugash" to her crew – grew up in the Twilight Peaks and served for several years as the first mate on the *Blood Booty*, a Crystal Raiders drakkar airship. The captain was a harsh and violent-tempered man who delighted in conducting raids against smaller villages that were unable to protect themselves. The villages would be looted, the inhabitants put to the sword, and their homes

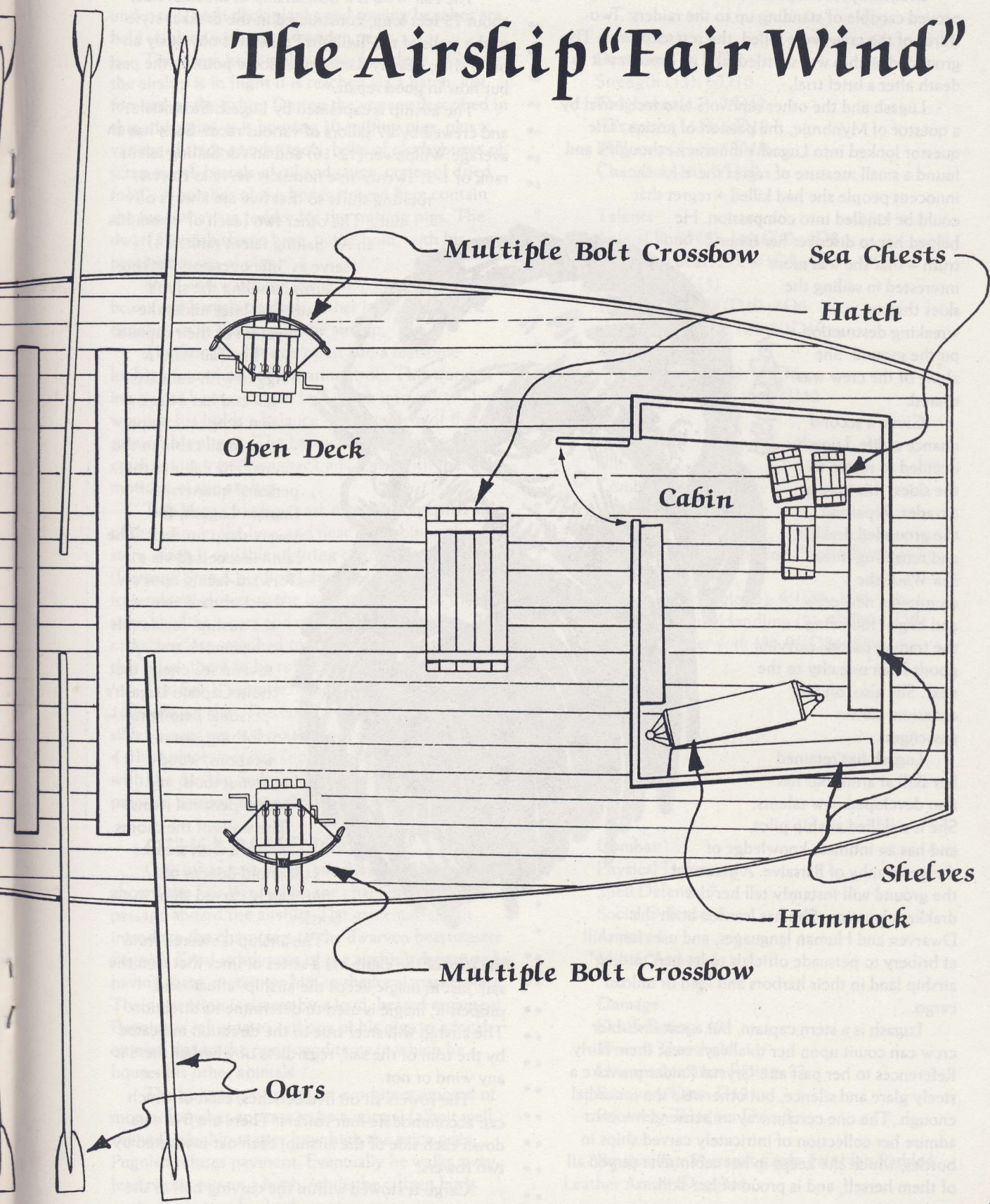




Scale: 1" = 5 feet



# The Airship "Fair Wind"



- Hotz

reduced to ashes.

Eventually, the captain's luck ran out. A village proved capable of standing up to the raiders. Two-thirds of the crew were killed, the rest, captured. The grounded airship was scuttled, and its captain put to death after a brief trial.

Lugash and the other survivors also faced trial by a questor of Mynbruje, the passion of justice. The questor looked into Lugash's innermost thoughts and found a small measure of regret there for the innocent people she had killed – regret that could be kindled into compassion. He helped her to discover her inner truth – that she was more interested in sailing the skies than in wreaking destruction on the ground. She alone of the crew was spared.

Given a second chance at life, Lugash decided to return to the skies, this time as a trader. Repairing the grounded drakkar and renaming it the *Fair Wind*, she recruited a new crew and began following the trading routes, carrying goods from one city to the next. She also, on rare occasion, carries passengers.

Lugash has retained her skill at arms, but has also developed new talents. She is a skilled airship pilot, and has an intimate knowledge of the geography of Barsaive. A glance at the ground will instantly tell her the drakkar's location. She has learned both the Dwarven and Human languages, and uses her skill at bribery to persuade officials to let her "raiding" airship land in their harbors and load or unload cargo.

Lugash is a stern captain, but a just one. Her crew can count upon her to always treat them fairly. References to her past as a Crystal Raider provoke a steely glare and silence, but otherwise she is cordial enough. The one certain way to befriend her is to admire her collection of intricately carved ships in bottles, which she keeps in her cabin. She carved all of them herself, and is proud of her skill.



## THE FAIR WIND

- The *Fair Wind* is a troll airship of medium size, about 75 feet long, constructed in the drakkar style of the trolls of the Twilight Peaks. It is obviously an older ship, heavily damaged at some point in the past but now in good repair.

- The airship is captained by Lugash Stormsailor and crewed by 27 sailors of various races. Each has an average Willpower (12-16) and an Air Sailing talent rank of 1-3. Twenty-five normally serve as rowers, rotating shifts so that five are always off-duty. The other two (each of whom has an Air Sailing talent rank of 4) serve as "line operators," taking turns handling the ship's steering lines under the direction of their captain.

The *Fair Wind* is rigged with a square sail and has a deck that is open, except for a small cabin in the stern. The cabin is the personal quarters of Captain Lugash; the rowers sleep on deck. The cabin is accessed via a forward-facing door on the starboard side of the airship. Inside it is a hammock and several sea chests that hold Captain Lugash's personal belongings – clothing, armor, weapons, wood-carving tools, and other personal items. The walls of the cabins are lined with shelves that hold dozens of intricately carved ships in bottles.

- The airship is steered from the roof of the cabin via a series of lines that trim the sail. Just as magic keeps the airship "afloat" and propels it, magic is used to determine its direction. The airship will steer true to the direction indicated by the trim of the sail, regardless of whether there is any wind or not.
- The rowers sit on five benches, each of which can accommodate four rowers. There are five oars down each side of the airship; each oar is worked by two rowers.
- Cargo is stowed within the curving hull of the airship, beneath the planks that make up the deck.

The deck planks are removed during loading and unloading, as are the benches. When the airship is under sail, both deck planks and rowing benches are held in place with stout wooden pegs.

The cargo hold is about five feet deep. When the airship is in flight it is reached via a hatch, just forward of the cabin. During the voyage described in this adventure, it is housing 30 sniffing pigs, plus a variety of trade goods (tools, bolts of cloth, boxes of scrap metal, barrels of oil and sauce, crates of dried food). A number of the boxes stowed here contain the fungi that are fodder for the sniffing pigs. The dwarf Pugnish sleeps here, in the hold, with his precious cargo of pigs.

Food and water for the airship crew are stored in boxes and barrels on deck, either lashed under the benches or in the bow of the airship.

The *Fair Wind* at one point had a fearsome looking figurehead of a snarling troll. This wooden image has been recarved by Lugash into a fist. This wooden fist holds a balance – the emblem of the passion Mynbruje. The balance is of metal, and creaks as its trays sway back and forth with the motions of the airship.

Two huge crossbows are mounted on either side of the ship, in the bow and near the cabin in the stern. Each is capable of firing eight bolts at a time (Damage Step 6 per bolt). In times of trouble, the four rowers closest to the bow and closest to the stern ship their oars and operate these weapons. The crossbows are attached to the deck on swivel mounts that allow them to be rotated and aimed.

The *Fair Wind* travels the standard 300 miles or 16 hours per day. The cost of shipping cargo is 4 silver pieces per 100 pounds per day. Passengers pay 4 silver pieces per day (not including meals). Those with the Airship Sailing talent can work off their passage, earning themselves meals along the way.

## OTHER PASSENGERS

One other passenger (and his cargo) are already aboard the *Fair Wind* when the characters take passage aboard the airship. The gamemaster can introduce the characters to the dwarven beastmaster Pugnish Kraal in advance of the airship's departure by having them encounter him in the local marketplace. Their attention is drawn by a loud, heated argument. Pugnish is refusing to sell one of his pigs to a local citizen, due to the poor conditions in which he houses his other animals.

The citizen is offering an exorbitant amount of money for what appears to be a normal (albeit well trained) pig. No matter how high the price goes, Pugnish refuses payment. Eventually he walks away, leading his pig on a leash, while the citizen hurls nasty epithets at his back.

## PUGNISH KRAAL

Dwarf Beastmaster (2nd circle)

### Attributes

Dexterity (7): 4/D6  
Strength (15): 6/D10  
Toughness (17): 7/D12  
Perception (13): 6/D10  
Willpower (13): 6/D10  
Charisma (15): 6/D10

### Talents

Animal Bond (5): 11/1D10+1D8  
Dominate Beast (3): 9/1D8+1D6  
Karma Ritual (3)  
Tracking (4): 10/1D10+1D6  
Unarmed Combat (2): 6/1D10

Animal Training (2): 8/2D6

Creature Analysis (1): 7/1D12

### Movement

Full: 35  
Combat: 18

### Skills

Knowledge/Underground Flora & Fauna (4):  
10/1D10+1D6  
Knowledge/Haggle (3): 9/1D8+1D6  
General/Animal Handling (3): 9/1D8+1D6  
Artisan/Leatherwork (3): 9/1D8+1D6

### Initiative

Dice: D10

### Karma

Dice: D6  
Points: 10

### Combat

Physical Defense: 5  
Spell Defense: 7  
Social Defense: 8  
Armor: 4  
Mystic Armor: 1

### Damage

Death Rating: 40  
Wound Threshold: 11  
Unconsciousness Rating: 32  
Recovery Dice: D12  
Recovery Tests per Day: 3

Equipment: Peasant's Garb, Felt Hat, Padded Leather Armor, Daggers.

## History

Pugnish Kraal grew up in Bannorth, a small Dwarven kaer deep in the Throal Mountains. He lived and worked in its caverns, raising pigs as his father and grandfather had done before him.

After centuries underground, the pigs of Bannorth Kaer developed some unusual characteristics. Having lived so long in darkness, they lost their sense of sight. At the same time, they developed an astrally sensitive sense of smell that allowed them to sense the magical energies of beings in astral space.

For some reason, the pigs refused to enter a tunnel leading to one of the deepest caverns, even though it was filled with a fungus they normally loved to eat. The reason turned out to be a long-buried horror, whose astral aura the pigs could smell.

After the discovery of the horror, Bannorth was quickly evacuated. Pugnish and his family moved to a nearby Dwarven village. There, his pigs thrived. Their fame as animals that could "sniff out" horrors grew, and they came to be in demand. Today, a trained "sniffing pig" is worth nearly as much as a war horse – roughly 1,000 silver pieces.

Pugnish is travelling aboard the *Fair Wind* with his cargo of 30 young sniffing pigs. He plans to sell them at the airship's next port of call, then return home. He's already a wealthy man, but still dresses and acts like a peasant farmer. He appears simple, but is actually a shrewd haggler who rarely gets the worst of a transaction. He cares for his pigs with the same amount of attention and affection that another would lavish on a pet dog, and will only sell them to kind masters.

To while away his time on board the airship, Pugnish crafts elaborately engraved belts and pouches from hardened leather.

## SNIFFING PIGS

DEX: 4. STR: 3 TOU: 3  
PER: 6 WIL: 3 CHA: 3

Initiative: 3  
Number of Attacks: 1  
Attack: 4  
Damage: 3  
Number of Spells: n/a  
Spellcasting: n/a  
Effect: n/a

Physical Defense: 4  
Spell Defense: 4  
Social Defense: 3  
Armor: 2  
Mystic Armor: 0  
Knockdown: 3

Death Rating: 22  
Wound Threshold: 4  
Unconsciousness Rating: 13  
Recovery Tests: 1  
Combat Movement: 16  
Full Movement: 32

Legend Points: 25  
Equipment: none  
Loot: none

Sniffing pigs evolved in the system of caverns that once housed Bannorth Kaer. They look like normal pigs, except that their eyes are a milky white. They are completely blind, and rely upon a highly developed sense of smell to find their way around.

Sniffing pigs are able, through their sense of smell, to sense beings in astral space. They can sniff out pockets of astral space that have been tainted or corrupted, and are thus able to provide a warning that a horror is either in the area or is approaching. The range of this sense is well in excess of astrally sensitive sight – a sniffing pig can smell a horror at 500 yards. The dwarves of Bannorth Kaer have trained them to trot on leashes and to squeal when they sniff a taint in astral space.

Sniffing pigs are only available through the dwarves who once lived in Bannorth Kaer. An adult pig that is trained to the leash sells for 1,000 silver pieces, while an untrained piglet sells for 500 silver pieces.

## ABOARD THE AIRSHIP

The first few days aboard the airship are without incident. The characters should have a chance to meet Lugash and learn about her past. Perhaps they are invited to dine with her in her cabin – Lugash will be especially interested in talking to any character who shares her skill in wood carving, or her passion for justice and the teachings of Mynbruje. She is always keen on expanding her knowledge of the geography of Barsaive, and will be delighted if an opportunity arises to question characters who have visited areas that she has not. She is also interested in expanding her knowledge of trading.

At the gamemaster's discretion, the journey could be livened up with the sighting of a crystal raider or a Theran slave ship. These airships should appear in the distance, and should easily be outrun.

Eventually, the gamemaster should contrive to have the *Fair Wind* cross a section of Barsaive that is not conducive to a landing – at least, not to one that the characters can walk away from. This inhospitable terrain may take the form of a large, storm-tossed body of water. Alternatively, the airship may be sailing over the molten lava of the Death Sea or an

ice-capped mountain range whose jagged peaks would tear the hull to pieces. At the very least, the airship should be sailing over terrain filled with monsters or hostile tribes.

If the route that the characters want to follow would not normally take them over this terrain, the sighting of the hostile airship, as described above, can be used to force the *Fair Wind* off its charted course.



As the airship is sailing over this inhospitable terrain, a horror attacks it. This horror manifests itself not with a direct attack on the characters (or any of the airship crew) but by silently and invisibly invading the bodies of the sniffing pigs.

The horror will probably strike at night, when most of the characters are asleep. Its presence is announced by a frantic squealing – the pigs smell the horror as it nears the ship. But so fast is its approach that nothing can be done. It kills 5D6 of the pigs and takes them over before the characters can react.

After a second or two of squealing, the pigs fall

- into a complete silence. The transformation is complete. Even those pigs that have not been infested by the horror have become one with the herd and are being telepathically
- commanded by the horror.

- By this time, the characters should have learned of the special talents of the sniffing pigs, and will be aware that a horror approached the airship. The gamemaster should give the impression that the characters' actions (whatever they were) successfully drove the horror away. The pigs appear perfectly normal, and all is quiet aboard the airship – for the time being.

## HERD HORROR

DEX: as per host

STR: as per host

TOU: as per host

PER: 20

WIL: 20

CHA: 18

Initiative: as per host

Number of Attacks: as per host x number of hosts in herd

Attack: as per host

Damage: as per host

Number of Spells: 1

Spellcasting: (10)

Effect: see below

Physical Defense: as per host

Spell Defense: 10

Social Defense: 10

Armor: as per host

Mystic Armor: 4

Knockdown: as per host

Death Rating: as per host

Wound Threshold: as per host

- Unconsciousness Rating: immune
- Recovery Tests: as per host
- Combat Movement: as per host
- Full Movement: as per host

• Karma Points: 10

• Karma Steps: 7

• Powers: Animate Dead 12, Thought Worm 12

• Legend Points: 100 per host in herd

• Equipment: n/a

• Loot: n/a

The herd horror is unusual among horrors in that it does not occupy a single body, nor does it have a distinctive form. Instead, it is a creature that exists primarily in astral space, entering the physical world only partially via a parasitic relationship with a "herd" that is typically comprised of 10 to 30 hosts.

A herd horror is invisible, except in astral space. There, it appears as a loose grouping of jellylike blobs, each about a foot in diameter. To enter the physical world, it must occupy the bodies of its hosts. Typically, the host creatures range in size from small birds to large dogs. Children may sometimes be used as part of the herd, but the adults of most races (except windlings) are too large. The host creatures need not be of the same species, although herd horrors seem to prefer to ride a herd composed of a single type of creature.

The herd horror enters the bodies of the host creatures, kills them by stopping their hearts, then uses its ability to animate dead to manipulate their corpses. The herd horror does this by making a successful Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the target creature.

Many of the herd horror's statistics are those of its host, and determine the attacks and defenses of each of the host creatures that make up the herd. Other statistics are those of the horror itself and continue to function until the horror has been driven back into astral space. This happens when the last member of its herd has been destroyed; the herd horror must then seek out a new herd to infest.

A herd horror gets one attack per host, but must sacrifice one of these attacks when spellcasting.

Aside from the attacks gained by manipulating the bodies of their hosts, herd horrors primary attack is via a unique form of Thought Worm that requires one of the host creatures to touch the victim. The horror then makes a Spellcasting Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the victim becomes one of the herd. He or she is telepathically commanded to assume the posture of the host creatures, and to behave as they do – approximating (to the best of the victim's abilities) their movement and attack forms. It should be noted that those under the horror's telepathic control are not able to pass the Thought Worm on to others;

- only an actual member of the herd can do this.
- Herd horrors use their host herd's ability to blend in with other, normal creatures to full advantage. They seek to cause pain and suffering in intelligent creatures by forcing victims of the Thought Worm to run with the herd and thus injure, degrade, or even kill themselves by being driven to exhaustion.

## THE HORROR LASHES OUT

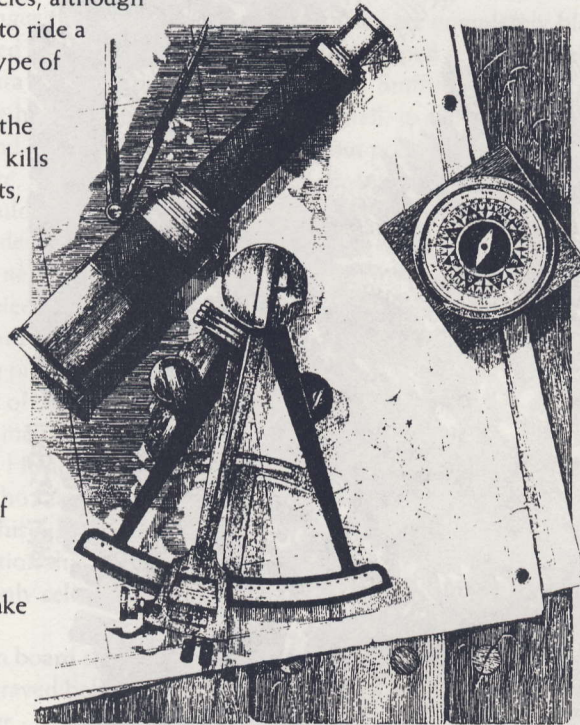
- The horror's plan is to inflict maximum terror by eventually taking telepathic control of all of those on board the ship. To do this, it needs to be subtle and crafty; its herd members must physically touch a victim to inflict this state. If the horror is careless and allows its presence to be discovered too quickly, the characters may simply lock the pigs in the cargo hold and be safe from it. (Of course, anyone under the horror's telepathic control may open it again, but will do so as a pig would, using their "snout" and scrabbling at it with their hands.)

The horror chooses Pugnish, the dwarven beastmaster, as its first victim. Just before succumbing, Pugnish is overheard voicing concern for the pigs' well-being. He mutters that the pigs "don't look right." He adds, "They're acting peculiar, somehow, but I can't quite

- put my finger on it." He insists on bringing two or three of the pigs up onto the deck, where he can inspect them in the daylight.

- At this point, the horror makes its attempt to take over Pugnish. Whether or not this attempt is successful, the pigs that he brought up on deck bolt, each trying to touch as many of those on deck as they can. Their first victims are three sailors who automatically fall under the sway of the horror.

- These sailors (and all subsequent victims) immediately drop to all fours and start to run and snort like pigs. The horror drives them mercilessly, causing them to smash into objects and injure themselves, to bite at themselves or at others – or perhaps even to leap off the airship to their deaths. Unless the cargo hatch is closed and bolted at this point, the rest of the infested pigs surge up out of the hold by climbing the short staircase that leads to the





upper deck, touching as many people as they can.

The characters can avoid falling under the telepathic domination of the herd horror by simply not allowing any infested pigs to get close enough to touch them. An easy way to do this is for the characters to lock themselves inside the captain's cabin – or to climb on top of it or up into the rigging. But eventually, the horror will take over so many of the airship's crew (or force them to leave their posts) that the airship begins to lose headway. If enough of the crew leave their oars, the airship will crash to the ground – a result which may have disastrous (and fatal) consequences for the characters, especially if they are sailing over the Death's Sea at the time. A kindly gamemaster might allow the airship to drift over terrain that gives the characters a chance of surviving.

At least one-quarter of the oars must be manned (by a minimum of five sailors) for the ship to stay afloat. A lesser number of sailors, however, might be able to keep the airship aloft if any of them get a Good, Excellent, or Extraordinary success on their Air Sailing test.

Each time an infested pig is "killed" or otherwise disposed of, the herd horror simply takes over another, as-yet-uninfested pig. Short of finding some way to drive the horror away, the characters are faced with the task of disposing of all 30 sniffing pigs. The easiest method might simply be to toss them overboard – although each time a character touches a pig, there's a chance that he or she will succumb to the horror's telepathic control.

When the last of the pigs has been tossed or cleansed of the horror, those characters who fell under its sway regain control of themselves.

## AFTERMATH

The characters should eventually gain the upper hand on the herd horror – if they don't, they're dead. By the time they do, the airship may have crashed and may not have enough crew left to take to the skies again. The gamemaster can use this forced landing as the hook for a new adventure; the characters must find their way out of a hostile, possibly unexplored area. Depending upon whether Lugash is alive, they may or may not know what part of Barsaive they have landed in.

If Lugash is alive, she insists on patching up the *Fair Wind* and sailing on again. If she does not have enough crew to continue safely, she may recruit new sailors from the local area. Alternatively, she may wish to sell her remaining cargo to lighten the airship's load. In either case, she may ask the characters, if they proved themselves worthy in dealing with the horror, to serve as her bodyguards during any negotiations. Further adventures may

- occur as the result of these dealings in unfamiliar – or possibly hostile – territory.

- If Pugnish did not succumb to the telepathic control of the herd horror, the sight of his prized sniffing pigs being killed proves too much for him.
- He is devastated by their "senseless slaughter" and is critical of whatever actions the characters took to deal with the horror. When he finally gets over his grief, he becomes belligerent, demanding 1,000 silver pieces per pig killed.



### Lisa Smedman

- Lisa has designed a number of adventures for TSR's *Dungeons and Dragons* Ravenloft and Dark Sun product lines. She has also written for both Chameleon Eclectic Entertainment, Precedence Games, and West End Games.

- Lisa also writes science fiction and fantasy. Her short stories have appeared in *Dragon Magazine*, in Dark Sun boxed sets, and in various SF and fantasy publications. She is currently working on a *Shadowrun* novel for FASA, due for release in 1996.

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



### Eric Hotz

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



### Gary Hudson

- Gary trained in fine arts and graphics at Kwantlen Collge, and currently works as the lead artist for Coronon Productions, a fledgling computer gaming company. His art has appeared in the independent comic *Freeflight*, and in the fan omnibus *Refractions*. He enjoys playing Albedo, Villains & Vigilantes, and the AD&D game's *Council of Wyrms*.

# Nefarious Porpoises

BY JOHN FLETCHER

ART BY GARY WILDEMAN

**S**ome people take their super heroics very seriously. They should stop reading right now. This Toon™ Short Subject is inspired by heroes like The Tick, Megaton Man, Darkwing Duck, Mighty Mouse (and Batbat!) and Ren & Stimpy's Powdered Toast Man, champions who save the day while having fun with the conventions of super heroics.

"Doc" Cross' excellent book, *Tooniversal Tour Guide* is the definitive resource for Super Toon adventures. It has detailed rules for character creation and lists dozens of super power Shticks. The villains and rival super characters included in *Nefarious Porpoises* were created using the *Tour Guide*. If it is not available, players can still create Super Toons using the guidelines below.

## Creating a Super Toon

Creating a Super Toon is like making a regular Toon character, except they have "super Shticks". Super Toons can have 100 or more points of skills and Shticks, and don't pay any extra for multiple Shticks. They can even spend their skill points for starting attributes above 6, but only one or two attributes per character – otherwise they succeed too often. If the *Tooniversal Tour Guide* is not available, the Animator and players will have to create their own super Shticks. Use the point values in Toon as a guide. An interesting ability of moderate power, like Stretching Limbs, should cost 2 or 3 points. A powerful ability like Incredible Strength costs 5 or 6 points. Super Toons are also allowed multiple gizmos.

Players who are stuck for a character concept can roll on any of the Species Tables. After the Toon's abilities, skills, and powers have been determined, the player must assign the Toon a secret identity. She can roll on the Occupations Table in Toon, on the Secret Identity Tables included here, or make it up herself.

## Toon Super Groups

It is only natural that player character Super Toons should gather together in Super Teams. Let the players name their team, or roll on the Super Team Name Tables. Every Super Team has its own

- secret headquarters, with features like a crime computer, super vehicles, and a "Danger Room".
- The Animator and player should collaborate to create the features of the heroes' secret base. Personalizing it for the character is part of the fun. ("We gotta have a Scratching Post for Alphonse the Wonder Cat!")

## Today's Adventure

- The Animator should recruit two to five Superheroic Toons to combat the seditious cetaceans, the Nefarious Porpoises. Many super powers will come in handy. If there are only a couple of players, fill out their super team with some Animator characters.

## Location

- The adventure is set in Big City, a city overrun by crime. Luckily, it also has the state's largest concentration of alien do-gooders, mutant marvels, and costumed vigilantes. The action takes place in the heroes' secret headquarters, at the scene of several crimes, and at the world-famous Oceanland Marine park.

- Anytime the players have to speed across town to the scene of a crime, there is ample opportunity for mayhem. The driver of any vehicle will have to make any number of Drive Vehicle rolls to avoid traffic, parked cars, etc. If a roll is failed consult the Big City Driving Challenge Table.

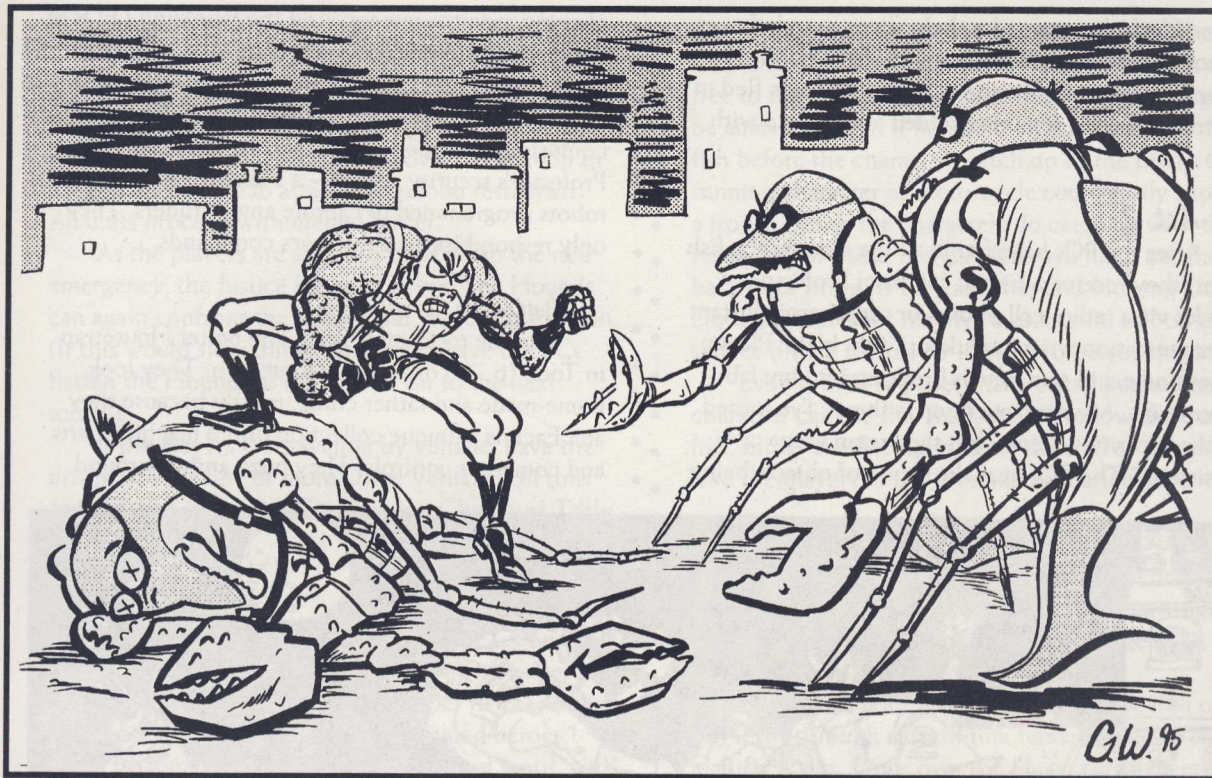
## Situation

- Big City is suffering under a wave of fish filching. The first theft was of a refrigerated truck full of herring. The truck was then used in robberies at two fish packing plants, and a grocery store. The thefts occurred early in the morning when no one was around. If this keeps up, fish will be off the menu in Big City in less than a week!

## Act 1

- One or more players are on duty at the Secret Headquarters while the rest pursue their secret identities.

- The player's main duty while at HQ is to monitor the MegaTronicElectroCrime Scanner, a towering machine with a dozen TV monitors and four big loudspeakers. This morning, the feet of



Professor Sparkz protrude through an open panel in the base of the Crime Scanner. He can be heard rattling around inside with his tools, causing the screens to flicker and change channels. With a loud pop and a burst of sparks, the Prof is suddenly propelled out of the machine. Satisfied but slightly singed, he announces that the scanner is fixed (it may never have been broken...). His work done, he calls a cab (Toon p. 204) and departs.

Moments after Professor Sparkz leaves, the Crime Scanner crackles to life. On its various screens and speakers are news reports and police calls, all describing a burglary at a fish plant at the water front.

This should be the signal for the characters who are on duty to alert the rest of the PCs. This can take any form the Animator wants. Have the players describe exactly what their characters are doing, and then tell them how their summons arrives. Players could receive a signal on a secret radio, an embarrassing phone call "from you-know-who", or a messenger pigeon. A discrete taxi cab might arrive to collect the hero, though a not-so-discrete costumed sidekick can be much funnier. ("Dear, there's a kangaroo in tights at the door. He seems to think Major Marsupial lives here...") If you think of a funny idea, use it. Once informed, the PCs can either make their own way the crime scene, or they can carpool in their group's super vehicle.

When the heroes arrive at the crime scene, they see a gaping hole in the wall of the fish plant. Plant

- workers in parkas pick up bricks and fish from the street while police examine the scene. Just as the heroes reach the scene, the Justice Hounds vehicle, a menacing black van called the Hundwagen, screeches to a halt. The three Justice Hounds – Doc Schnauzer, Tornado Terrier, and Power Poodle – leap out and attempt to take control of the investigation.

- The PCs will have to compete with the Hounds for the attention of the police, and with the media for access to the clues. The animator should play the Hounds as, well, glory hounds. They are out to make themselves look good and any other crime fighters look bad. If this leads to blows, so much the funnier. The Hounds will fight tooth and nail for the right to investigate this crime. If they Fall Down, they will stay down for the remainder of the scene. The police will defer to whichever super group comes out on top.

- When the PCs finally have a chance to examine the crime scene, they will find the following clues:

- The plant's safe was not touched. The robbers only took fish from the freezer.

- There are no footprints in the frost inside the freezer, but there are strange triangular marks and criss-crossing lines.

- The Truck seen fleeing the scene was the same one used in previous robberies. It is a large refrigerated van that was hijacked two weeks ago.

- If the PCs want to track down and question the van's driver, Graham Bear, he will recount his ordeal. While making an early morning delivery to Phil's

Phine Phish, he stopped to help some stranded motorists. He remembers being hit from behind by something hard, cold and scaly. His attackers fled in his truck, leaving him blindfolded and tied up with kelp.

## Act 2

After the PCs have found all the clues at the fish plant, they receive a frantic call from Professor Sparkz via a radio, cell phone, or superheroic instant communication wrist modulator. "Oh! Help! Please! I'm at home and someone is breaking into my lab downstairs. My new invention is there! I've turned on the security system – but they seem very persistent." The PCs hear the sound of objects being

- glowing monitor screens. And the twinkling LEDs of the Prof's weird science equipment. AND the three or four small fires. In any case, the over head lights are NOT on and there is great possibility for confusion. Anyone entering will be spotted by the Professor's security system – a squad of rattle-trap robots programmed to capture any intruders. They only respond to the Professor's commands.

### Battling the Robots

- Use the robot stats from The Better Housetrap in Toon (p. 77) or make up your own. They look home-made and rather crude, mostly because they are. Each is a unique collection of old machine parts and computer controls. They buzz angrily around



smashed. The last thing the Prof says is, "Oh my! What are you doing here?" The players hear a high pitched squeal before the connection is cut off.

The Professor lives in an old warehouse building. His lab is on the ground floor and he lives in the loft. When the players arrive, they will find the door ajar and a large hole in the brick wall. The hole is shaped like a giant spider or crab – something big with eight limbs. Bricks are all over the road, suggesting whatever made the hole burst out from inside the lab.

Inside, it's kind of dark. Except for the sparking Jacob's Ladders (ZZZZZitch. ZZZZZitch). And the

- the lab on squeaky casters, using their glowing electric eyes to look for intruders.

- They have various attachments and strategies for catching intruders. One or more will attack each player. They will attempt to net, glue or cream pie the heroes into submission and haul them upstairs to face Professor Sparkz. Unfortunately, the thieves also kidnapped him, so caught players will stay caught unless they can break free! The battle will continue until the Animator decides the players have had enough robot bashing or one of the players reaches the large red "Robot Shutdown" button in Prof's

upstairs apartment.

Searching the lab reveals only that the Prof is gone, along with his new invention, whatever it was.

At that moment the players receive word of a new crime. The police radio crackles "Code 246S In Progress. Giant Crab attacking seafood restaurant. All units proceed with melted butter."

As the players are about to head off to the new emergency, the Justice Hounds arrive. The Hounds can again confront the heroes and vie for jurisdiction. (If this would slow things down, just have the PCs flatten the Hounds as they zoom on to the next scene.)

If the players are traveling by vehicle, have the driver attempt one or more Drive Vehicle skill rolls and referred to the Big City Driving Challenge Table as necessary.

### Act 3

The characters race across town to CC's Seafood Palace. The Seafood Palace is popular with Super Toons because the owner, retired super hero Captain Crustacean, gives a discount to costumed heroes.

The restaurant is decorated in a naval motif, with ropes, anchors and a mast. The dining room is at the bow and the kitchen in the stern. Above the kitchen is the wheelhouse, the Captain's private room.

A scene of carnage greets the characters. They arrive in time to see a large metal crab lay out Lobster Lad, Capt. Crustacean's former sidekick currently maitre d'. Already on the floor are some of Big City's best loved heroes: the Amazing Spiderspider, the arachnid with the powers of, well, a spider; Dump Thing, the shambling pile of vigilante trash; and three of the famous philanthropic Fabulous Five.

What chance do the players have against something that this powerful? Not much, actually. Inside the giant crab is one of the Nefarious Porpoises, who is using the Prof's Crustacean Robot Armored Battlesuit, C.R.A.B. for short, to conduct these vile deeds. The Animator should allow the Porpoises to escape but not before some superheroic violence. The C.R.A.B. will engage the players in an all-out slugfest, causing mayhem and wrecking the restaurant. Let the players explore various means of attack: physical attack, energy, boggling etc. and find them all ineffective. During the fighting, have a stray punch or blast strike the Porpoises' truck, rupturing the side. When the C.R.A.B. has made all the players Boggled or Fallen Down, the Porpoises will make their escape in their refrigeration truck full of fish.

Fortunately for the characters, the rupture in the truck leaves a trail of fish. Following the trail requires several Drive Vehicle rolls or Shtick rolls for characters pursuing with Incredible Speed or Flying.

- Those who fail rolls should expect to consult the Big City Driving Challenges table. The Animator is also free to throw in any complications he thinks might be amusing. What if hungry alley cats carry off the fish before the characters catch up to the truck? Or, a running character or motorcycle could easily slip on a frozen fish. If the characters do catch up with the refrigeration truck, the C.R.A.B. will hang out the back door firing its Pie Launcher and Herring Gun. Dodging each shot requires a successful roll on the skill or Shtick the player is using to pursue the truck.
- Even if the Porpoises shake off all pursuit, any character can use the Track skill to follow the trail of fish. Either the fleeing truck or the trail of fish will lead the players to the Oceanland Marine park.

### Finale

- Oceanland is strangely quiet. It would normally be teeming with tourists, but a crudely drawn sign on the gate says "Closed. Under New Management. Will Re-open Soon."

- All entrances are securely locked. The trail of fish leads through a chain-link fence and up to the loading docks. Once over the fence, the players can enter the aquarium building through the loading dock or the front door. Inside, the halls are dark and scary – the only light comes from inside the fish tanks.

- As the characters make their way through the darkened halls, they will run into several challenges the Porpoises have prepared for any intruders.

### The Pernicious Piranha

- The floor is covered with puddles. The puddles are much deeper than they look – actually deep enough for characters to fall in over their heads. And they're full of hungry piranha! Any player who fails an Identify Dangerous Thing roll will fall in. Victims can attempt a Swim roll, Dodge roll, a Fast Talk roll, any kind of roll they think can help! Success means they make it out alive. Failure means they disappear in a swirl of buzz-sawing piranhas! (This is the equivalent of falling down. Just before the final confrontation, they reappear, their costumes in tatters, to rejoin the action.)

### The Cranky Crustaceans

- The Porpoises have turned loose all the crabs and lobsters from their tanks. These nasty little critters now roam the aquarium looking for a fight. When the players least expect it, two or three will drop from above latching onto each character. Each has three hits and a fight skill of 7. They get two attacks a turn, each doing 1 point. The players can make them Fall Down, or try to get them back in their tanks somehow.

### *The Despicable Dolphins*

After facing the piranha and the crabs, the characters finally reach the dolphin show arena. It is an open amphitheater with seating, a pool in the center and, at one end, a covered stage. Dangling by his feet over center stage is Professor Sparkz.

On the stage are various props from the show, colorful balls, bouncy floats, and poles with hoops and bells on the ends.

When the players approach, the pendant Prof tries to explain, "It's my fault, I wanted to see what they would do if I made them hands. Now look what's happened!" Who, the players will ask? "The dolphins Flashy and Splashy, and, yes, even Blubby. I made them hands and now they have gone mad with power!"

"We'll see who's mad, Professor!" squeaks Splashy jumping to the stage. "Get them, Flashy!" he crackles. Flashy strides out from backstage in the C.R.A.B. Bubbly appears beside Splashy and their robot "Hands" obediently scoot up along side.

The stage is set, literally, for the final confrontation between the heroes and the Nefarious Porpoises. The dolphins will fight to the finish, except for Blubby, who will surrender if given the chance. Flashy will fight on his own, using his "Hands," and improvising weapons from anything he can find on the stage.

Now is the time for the players to come up with ideas on how to fight the C.R.A.B. The C.R.A.B. has a fatal flaw (see its description). If the players come up with any plausible way to defeat the C.R.A.B., or even an implausible but amusing one, run with it.

If all the heroes have Fallen Down they will be captured by the Nefarious Porpoises. The Animator can have them freed by an anxiety riddled Blubby, or horror or horrors, rescued by the obviously superior Justice Hounds!

If the players can make the C.R.A.B. Fall Down, Splashy and Flashy will surrender to the heroes. The Justice Hounds, if not forced to save the heroes, arrive on the scene just in time to see the heroes hand the Nefarious Porpoises over to the police. The adoring Big City media clamor for pictures and interviews with the heroes of the hour, the players!

### *Plot Points*

Every hero who helped make the C.R.A.B. Fall Down gets a plot point. The player who first suggested how to defeat the C.R.A.B. gets an additional point. Any player who made a Justice Hound, robot or Nefarious Porpoise Fall Down receives an additional point. Any player who thought of a particularly clever and/or amusing way to track down the fish thieves can also receive a plot point.

### *Further Adventures?*

- It's possible the Porpoises cannot be rehabilitated and will return to a life of crime. Until then, our heroes will stand on guard for truth, niceness, and workplace safety.

### *Secret Identity tables*

- Roll once on the Toon Occupations Table or one of the following. Use Animal for humans or anthropomorphic animals. Use Vegetable for alien or mutant plants. Minerals is robots, appliances or anything the Animator thinks is appropriate.

### *Super Group Name Tables*

- Roll once on Table A and Table B. Combine as desired. Instead of rolling on B, the players could select a plural name that represents them. If the entire group are cats, for example, they could be the Righteous Rexes or the Titanic Tabbies.

### *Big City Driving Challenge Table*

- Roll 2 dice and add them together. Any pursuing vehicles suffers the same result as the lead vehicle. This table can also be used for characters running at Incredible Speed or Flying through the streets in pursuit of criminals.

- 2-3: Collision with Bakery truck! Cream Pies thrown everywhere. Everyone on street must make a Chutzpah roll on 1 die, or be Boggled.

- 4: Swerve through construction site, knocking various workers off scaffolds. Attempt another Drive Roll. If you fail, you drive into a trough of cement. It hardens, stopping car and freezing characters in place.

- 5: Vehicle goes up on sidewalk demolishing a display of fruit. Possible Boggle for anybody in vehicle.

- 6-8: Swerve to avoid other car. Attempt another Drive Roll.

- 9: Turn wrong way up one-way street. Driver must make 1d6 additional Drive Rolls to avoid oncoming traffic. Failure means a head on collision for 1d6 damage to all passengers.

- 10: Make wrong turn up closed street. Vehicle barrels up inclined planks and flies through the air.

- 11-12: Rear end slow moving truck. Its cargo of anvils is thrown high in the air. Everyone on street must make a Zip roll on 1 die, or be squashed for 3d damage.

### ***Animal Occupations***

- 11 Prospector
- 12 School Bus Driver
- 13 Dishwasher
- 14 Puppeteer
- 15 Talk Show Hostess
- 16 Piano Tuner
- 21 Crusading Reporter
- 22 Certified Public Accountant
- 23 Personal Injury Lawyer
- 24 Computer Nerd
- 25 Insurance Salesman
- 26 Road Line Painter
- 31 Parking Lot Attendant
- 32 Bike Courier
- 33 Millionaire Philanthropist
- 34 Texas Line Dance Instructor
- 35 Children's Photographer
- 36 Golf Caddie
- 41 Pirate, Marine or Software
- 42 Zoo Animal
- 43 Organ Grinder
- 44 Washington Lobbyist
- 45 Telephone Operator
- 46 Roadie
- 51 TV Producer
- 52 Tele-Marketer
- 53 Disc Jockey
- 54 Cartoonist
- 55 Hot Dog Vendor
- 56 Circus Clown
- 61 Stage Magician
- 62 Elvis Impersonator
- 63 Cowhand
- 64 Repoman
- 65 Receptionist
- 66 Full Time Super Toon

### ***Name Table A***

- 11-12 Avenging
- 13-14 Niceness
- 15-16 Justice
- 21-22 Law
- 23-24 Vigilance
- 25-26 Wholesome
- 31-32 Judgment
- 33-34 Virtuous
- 35-36 Righteous
- 41-42 Watchful
- 43-44 Diligent
- 45-46 Attentive
- 51-52 Good
- 53-54 Super
- 55-56 Power
- 61-62 Friendly
- 63-64 Benevolent
- 65-66 Decency



### ***Name Table 2***

- 11-12 Team
- 13-14 Society
- 15-16 Guys
- 21-22 Squad
- 23-24 Force
- 25-26 Association
- 31-32 Defenestrators
- 33-34 Avengers
- 35-36 Club
- 41-42 Alliance
- 43-44 Institute
- 45-46 Organization
- 51-52 Defenders
- 53-54 Corp
- 55-56 Enforcers
- 61-62 Legion
- 63-64 Titans
- 65-66 Heroes

### ***Vegetable Occupations***

- 1 House Plant
- 2 Xmas Tree
- 3 Plastic Restaurant Fern
- 4 Shade Tree in Park
- 5 Fruit Tree in Orchard
- 6 Desert Cactus

### ***Mineral Occupations***

- 11-12 Deep Fat Fryer
- 13-14 Espresso Machine
- 15-16 Golf Cart
- 21-22 Hackintosh Computer
- 23-24 Amoeba Computer with CD ROM
- 25-26 Vending Machine
- 31-32 Crash Test Dummy
- 33-34 Pencil Sharpener
- 35-36 Exercise Treadmill
- 41-42 Shopping Cart
- 43-44 Typewriter, Electric or Manual
- 45-46 Automatic Teller Machine
- 51-52 Circular Saw
- 53-54 Mail Box
- 55-56 Photocopier
- 61-62 Parking Meter
- 63-64 Toaster
- 65-66 Toaster, 4-Slice Model

### ***C.R.A.B. Failed Control Roll Table***

- 1: Accidentally shoot closest ally with Pie Launcher or Herring Gun.
- 2: Grab closest character and Polka.
- 3: Limbs tied in knots, miss next turn.
- 4: Spill slippery oil out onto floor. Everybody make Zip rolls or Fall Down.
- 5: Ejection seat fires, flinging operator high into the air. Or against the ceiling.
- 6: Visor opens and operator gets Seaweed pie in face. Operator Boggled.

## Professor Sparkz

The Professor is a scientist. Mad? No. Obsessive, paranoid, and anxiety ridden? Yes.

He is a small bald man with large thick glasses. He always wears a white lab coat and carries a big tool box filled with gadgets and spare parts.

He finances his research into robotics by building and maintaining gizmos and computers for Super Toons, business and the Government.

Using his Smarts, he can repair almost any machine.

### Beliefs & Goals

Robots are the future. If he can perfect his robot designs, the world will be a much better place. He worries a lot about how his creations are used. He must always make sure that his robots are not used for crime or oppression.

He collects any interesting bits of machinery he finds, storing them in his tool box.

### Muscles 3

Fight 3  
Break Down Door 3  
Pick Up Heavy Object 3

Climb 3  
Throw 5

### Zip 2

Dodge 4  
Fire Gun 2  
Ride 2  
Swim 0

Drive 6  
Jump 2  
Run 4

### Smarts 6

Hide/Spot 6  
Read 10  
See/Hear/Smell 6  
Track/Cover Tracks 6

Identify Danger 8  
Resist Fast Talk 6  
Set/Disarm Trap 10

### Chutzpah 3

Fast Talk 3  
Sleight of Hand 3

Sneak 3  
Pass/Detect  
Shoddy Goods 6

### Powers/Shticks/Gadgets

Tools Box of Many Things. 8

## Doc Schnauzer

Herr Doktor Fritz Hund is a gray whiskered terrier with a German accent. On patrol with the Justice Hounds, Doc wears white coveralls with his name across the back. He has no natural super powers beyond his amazing intellect. His super abilities come from a bewildering array of gadgets and gizmos. These are stored in or attached to the broad utility belt he wears.

### Beliefs & Goals

Use your amazing intellect to stop crime and make the city a better place to live. Don't let any other Super Toons show you up – The Justice Hounds are the best.

### Muscles 3

Break Down Door 3  
Fight 5  
Pick Up Heavy Object 3

Climb 4  
Throw 5

### Zip 3

Dodge 6  
Fire Gun 6  
Ride 3  
Swim 3

Drive 4  
Jump 8  
Run 4

### Smarts 8

Hide/Spot 10  
Read 10  
See/Hear/Smell 10  
Track/Cover Tracks 8

Identify Danger 10  
Resist Fast Talk 12  
Set/Disarm Trap 10

### Chutzpah 3

Fast Talk 4  
Sleight of Hand 5

Sneak 4  
Pass/Detect  
Shoddy Goods 7

### Powers/Shticks/Gadgets

Utility Belt of Many Things 8  
Jet Pack (Flight) 7  
Gizmo Tool 9

- Folds out into any tool needed, like a Swiss Army knife.
- Glue Gun (Fire Gun Skill 6)
- Target stuck for 6 turns unless they make a Muscles -2 roll.

## Tornado Terrier

Jackie Russell is a small white and brown terrier, who is, in real life, a bicycle courier. To fight crime in Big City she dons a black body suit and silver goggles to become Tornado Terrier.

### Beliefs & Goals

Speed is good. Speed is clean. Use speed to catch crooks and put them away. Don't let any other Super Toons steal your thunder.

### Muscles 3

Break Down Door 3  
Fight 6  
Pick Up Heavy Object 4

Climb 5  
Throw 5



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### Zip 7

Dodge 9	Drive 7
Fire Gun 7	Jump 8
Ride 7	Run 10
Swim 7	

### Smarts 3

Hide/Spot 4	Read 4
Identify Danger 3	Resist
See/Hear/Smell 4	Fast Talk 4
Set/Disarm Trap 3	Track/Cover Tracks 7

### Chutzpah 3

Fast Talk 6	Sneak 4
Sleight of Hand 5	Pass/Detect
	Shoddy Goods 4

### *Powers/Shticks/Gadgets*

Incredible Speed 8

Bouncing 7

• Ricochet off obstacles. Half damage from attacks or falls but bounce uncontrollably for 2 turns.

Perfect Balance 7

• + 4 on Zip rolls.

Super Leap 6

• Jump up to 120 feet.

Tunneling 6

• Dig 30 feet per turn. Leaves tunnel.

### **Power Poodle**

Vince LaFayette is a tall powerfully built poodle. He is always expertly coifed and is very vain about his appearance. As Power Poodle he wears gym shorts and coordinating tank top, and a small domino mask to conceal his identity but not his good looks.

### *Beliefs & Goals*

It's great to be buff. Since you're so good at lifting weights, you might as well do it as a Supertoon out in public where all the women can see. They seem to like it when the good guys win, so you always fight on the side of right.

### Muscles 8

Break Down Door 10	Climb 8
Fight 10	Throw 8
Pick Up Heavy Object 10	

### Zip 2

Dodge 4	Drive 3
Fire Gun 2	Jump 4
Ride 2	Run 6
Swim 2	

### Smarts 1

Hide/Spot 1	Identify Danger 1
Read 4	Resist Fast Talk 2
See/Hear/Smell 2	Set/Disarm Trap 2
Track/Cover Tracks 1	

### Chutzpah 4

Fast Talk 4	Sleight of Hand 4
Sneak 4	Pass/Detect
	Shoddy Goods 4

### *Powers/Shticks/Gadgets*

Incredible Strength 9

Toughness

• Lets character shrug off 2d6+2 points of damage from any physical attack.

10 Extra Hit Points

### **The Nefarious Porpoises**

Actually, they're dolphins, but Splashy, Flashy and Blubby don't mind being called porpoises because it obscures their real identities as performers at the Oceanland Marine Park. They look like normal dolphins, but they can talk and can come out of the water and hop around on land. Using their fins they can sort of hold things. They use this secret to steal fish and make trouble for the people they don't like. When committing crimes as the Nefarious Porpoises they wear small bandit masks.

At the start of the adventure, Blubby has a pair of "Hands" created for him by Professor Sparkz. These robot hands are so useful that Splashy and Flashy pressure Blubby into their first major crime - breaking into Professor Sparkz laboratory.

Being sea creatures, they are not as proficient when using some attributes and skills on land. For skills or Shticks with entries like 6/3, the first is the Porpoise's skill in water and second on land. An "X" mean they can't use the skill.

### *Beliefs & Goals*

We want more fish, and not just when the keepers decide to give it to us! We're gonna take all the fish in the city and then everybody will have to come to Us!

### Muscles 5/2

Break Down Door 5/2	Climb X
Fight 6/3	Throw X
Pick Up Heavy Object 7/X	

### Zip 8/2

Dodge 9/2	Drive X
Fire Gun X	Jump 10/2
Ride X	Run X/2
Swim 14/X	

## Smarts 2

Hide/Spot 3

Read 4

See/Hear/Smell 6/2

Track/Cover Tracks 8/2

Identify Danger 6

Resist Fast Talk 2

Set/Disarm Trap 4

## Chutzpah 4

Fast Talk 8

Sneak 4

Sleight of Hand X

Pass/Detect

Shoddy Goods 5

## Powers/Shticks/Gadgets

Incredible Speed 8/X.

Sonic Blast 8/4

- The Porpoises can screech loudly inflicting 1d6+2 hits.

"Hands," Robot hands built by Professor Sparkz.

• As an experiment, Professor Sparkz created a set of Hands for dolphins. The Hands are a pair of robot arms attached to an upright pole that scoots around on wheels. The Hands respond to the dolphin's voice commands. The Prof tried to program them with safe guards so they couldn't be used for crime. This means the dolphins have to use Fast Talk to convince the Hands to do something illegal. Using the Hands, the dolphins have the following skills all at level 6: Pick Up Heavy Object, Throw, Drive Vehicle, and Sleight of Hand.

## The C.R.A.B.

The Crustacean Robot Armored Battlesuit. The dolphins steal the suit when they break into Professor Sparkz lab. It is a huge armored suit with eight limbs, 4 legs, 2 tool arms, and 2 giant claws. The Prof intended it for deep sea construction work, but the Porpoises intend to use it for robberies. When they get their Hands on it, they mount a frozen fish shooter on one tool arm and a pie launcher on the other.

Unfortunately for the Nefarious Porpoises, the C.R.A.B. has a flaw – a fault in its design. Exactly what it is is up to the Animator and (to a certain extent) the players. Possible flaws include:

- Dousing it with melted butter.
- Snapping it open with giant crab crackers.
- Pushing it into a large pot of boiling water.

Splashy will immediately eject.

- Slipping big rubber bands over its claws.
- Tricking Flashy into opening the visor, and Boggling him.

- Making it slip and fall on its back.

## Wearing the C.R.A.B.

The pilot stands inside the body of the suit, looking out through a blast proof visor. Getting into the C.R.A.B. takes one turn. Each round the user

- must make a Smarts roll. If the user fails, the suit does something unpredictable -roll on the C.R.A.B. Failed Control Roll Table. If successful, the suit gets two actions. These could be a shot with each weapon, a pinch with each claw, or one of each. Each action requires the appropriate Shtick roll.

## Muscles 8

### Powers/Shticks/Gadgets

Incredible Strength 10

Giant Claws 8

- Each pinch does 1d6 damage, +3 for incredible strength.

Herring Gun 8

- Shoots frozen fish that do 1d6 damage.

Seaweed Pie Launcher 6

- Catapults unusual but delicious kelp pies.

- Targets are Boggled when hit.

Wind shield wipers. 8.

- These automatically scrape any pie off the visor and prevent pie induced Boggling.)

Invulnerability : Energy Blasts 9

- On a roll of 9 or less, the C.R.A.B. takes no damage from any kind of energy blast, heat, cold, lasers, etc.

Extra Hit Points

- The C.R.A.B. has 20 hits of its own that are subtracted first from any damage received. When the C.R.A.B. Falls Down it is broken and cannot be fixed by the dolphins.



## John Fletcher

John's first exposure to adventure gaming was in 1979. He received a catalog from Lou Zocchi filled with products from Avalon Hill and SPI, and many cryptic references to something called Dungeons and Dragons. He and his friends were soon playing AD&D, as well as Tunnels and Trolls, Traveller, Villains and Vigilantes, and RuneQuest.

Since then, John has been a retailer, an archaeologist, and a teacher. Today he is a writer.



## Gary Wildeman

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

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



# A Tigger by the Tail

BY JOHN HART

**A**

fter a moment without duration, you awake. Your Ka-vision reveals that you are within an Air Plexus. Nearby are the Sun Kas of several humans, and a Nephilim whose Ka-elements shine so brightly it must be close to Agarthā.

Obeying instinct – and the logic of the situation – you move toward one of the humans and take possession of him. He struggles against your strength, but in moments you dominate him. You are incarnate once more.

A *Tigger by the Tail* is an adventure for the Nephilim game, published by Chaosium Inc. It is intended to be played out as a single scenario or the beginning of an ongoing campaign, and can accommodate five players. The PCs should be of the Sun Arcanum, or of an Arcanum that is sympathetic to the goals of the Sun Arcanum.

A *Tigger by the Tail* may be placed in any community in a first world nation. (It is suggested that the gamemaster set this adventure in a community that he or she is familiar with.)

The players will need to generate characters appropriate to the Sun Arcanum – perhaps Nephilim of the Angel metamorphosis. Their simulacra should be taken from the ones provided herein, or, if these are too few, others of comparable Sun-Ka and skill levels should be generated using the procedure outlined on Page 82 of the Nephilim rule book.

## BOREUS

*Title:* The Solar Wind.

*Simulacra Identity:* Victor Pittman, male, age 65.

*Human Livelihood:* Reclusive writer, mystic, philosopher.

*Major Arcanum:* XIX. The Sun.

*Social Status:* 19

*Opportunity Roll:* 57

*Found at:* Beautiful old heritage house on wooded lot. Often goes for walks or trips to parks, libraries, or to visit friends in the Arcanum.

*Important Past Lives:* the apostle Thaddaeus of Judaea; a Perfected Kabbalist if Montsegur; an American astronaut who was killed in a cockpit fire caused by assassins of The Order of Rhodes.

*Metamorphosis:* Angel 81 (Head 20, Limbs 16, Skin 14, Smell 11, Voice 20).

*Stasis:* one of the nails of the cross.

Air 49 Fire 23 Water 11

Moon 9 Earth 5

STR 25 CON 25 INT 28

DEX 22 CHA 16 HP 25

Actions 5

DB 3d6

Ch'awe 29

*Ka:* Air 82; Water 66, Fire 49, Earth 33, Moon 16.

*Skills:* Arcanum Lore: Sun 100%, Astrological Lore 150%, Climb 95%, Computer Use 80%, Hermetic Lore 90%, Kabbalistic Lore 155%, Pilot Jet Fighter 170%, Research 110%, Tarot Lore 75%.

*Weapons:*

Sword 110%, as sword +3d6

Spear 95%, as spear +3d6

Bow 85%, as bow

Handgun 55%

Grapple 95%

Dodge 85%

*Magic:*

Lower Magic 108%

Higher Magic 93%

Grand Secret 91%

Seals 91%

Pentacles 25%

Black Stone 50%

*Spells Inscribed:* Mercuriality, Babel Unbound, Caduceus Press, Balance the Humors, Pelagic Survival, Sword of Sun Tzu, Ka Shout, Shoal of Air, Scry of the Wise, Hermetic Satori, Spear of the Valkyrie, Winds of Lifting, Companion Winds, Chameleon Skin, Manifest Air Plexus, The Swift Flame Portals, The Silvery Scales of the Ocean Meadows.

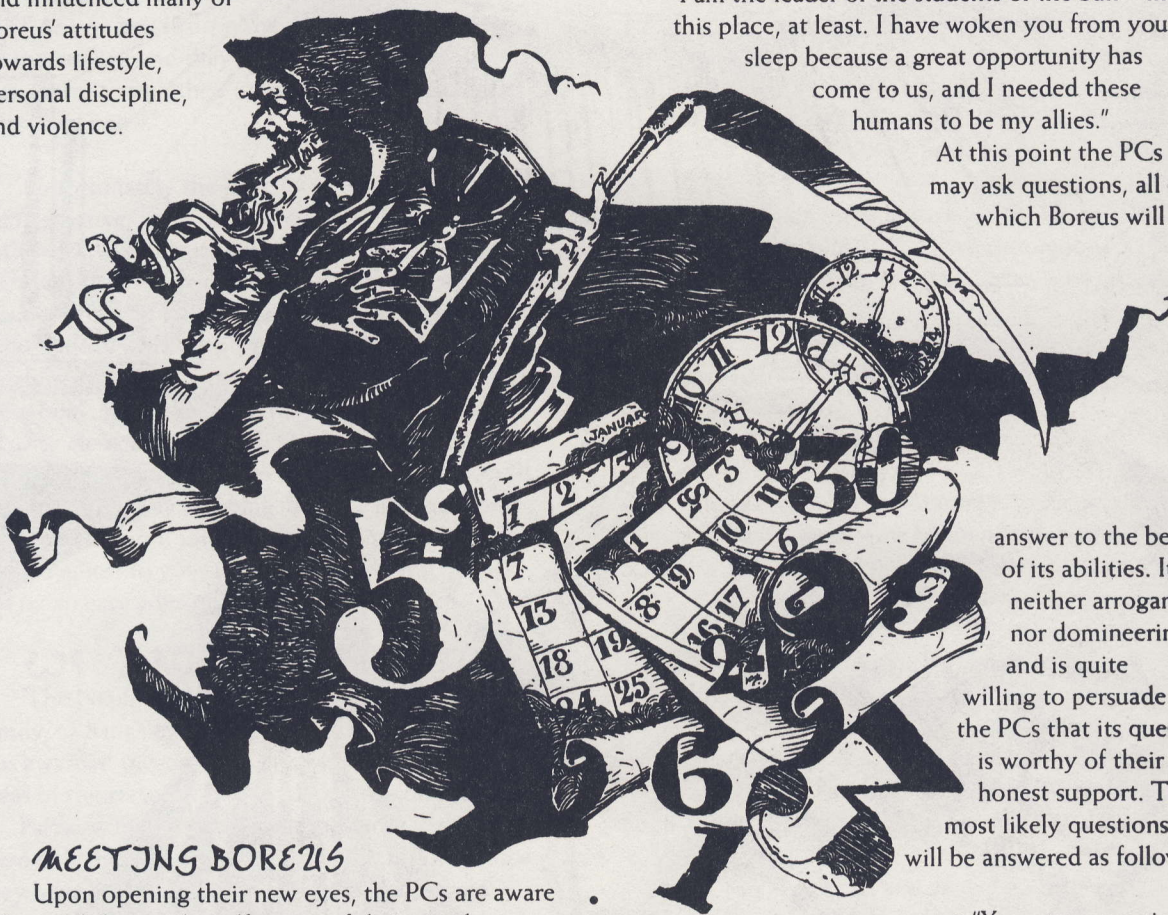
Boreus is the leader of the local Sun Arcanum. It has the respect and trust of all who know it.

Boreus is very soft-spoken and diplomatic. It invariably tries to use persuasion and reason to achieve its goals, only using violence as a last resort.

In this lifetime it only partially plays the role of reclusive writer. While it refuses all publicity and ignores all correspondences, it will entertain anyone who comes to its door in genuine friendship and respect. (Boreus chose Mr. Pittman as a simulacrum in part for the writer's connections, so it is not entirely disdainful of Mr. Pittman's image.)

In its many lifetimes, Boreus has been an avid mountain climber, and this incarnation is no exception.

One of Boreus' lifetimes was as a Samurai in 16th century Japan. This incarnation was very formative, and influenced many of Boreus' attitudes towards lifestyle, personal discipline, and violence.



MEETING BOREUS

Upon opening their new eyes, the PCs are aware of several things: the self-image of their simulacrum; a plethora of bewildering facts that the simulacra takes for granted; and of greatest immediate significance, that the Angel standing before them is named Boreus.

A look around reveals a softly lit room, almost empty of furnishings. It is decorated in a style which the Nephilim are unlikely to recognize from previous lives, and which is alien to their simulacra. The style is ascetic Japanese. The floor is covered in rice-straw mats, the walls are off-white paper, there are no windows, and the only piece of furniture is a low wooden table that holds the stases of the PCs. The stases are jarringly incongruous with the rest of the room.

- Boreus waits calmly until the last of the PC
- Nephilim has dominated its simulacrum. Boreus' eyes are white, and they trembles slightly as it observes the process through its Ka-vision. When the last human stops shouting or crying and turns
- expectantly to it, Boreus uses a brief spell to free the magical shackles that bind each Nephilim, and begins to speak.

- "Welcome back to the living. You are in my home, which you may consider yours." Boreus makes several gestures – recognition signs among members of the Sun Arcanum.

- "I am the leader of the students of the Sun – in this place, at least. I have woken you from your sleep because a great opportunity has come to us, and I needed these humans to be my allies."

At this point the PCs may ask questions, all of which Boreus will

answer to the best of its abilities. It is neither arrogant nor domineering, and is quite willing to persuade the PCs that its quest is worthy of their honest support. The most likely questions will be answered as follows:

- "Your stases are right there. You may take them if you wish, though you may choose to leave them with me. I can guarantee their safety, and there may be danger in what I want of you."
- "I found you years ago, on another continent. It came to me then that I had found you for a purpose, and that I must keep you safe until that purpose was revealed."
- "That purpose has, I think, been revealed. A few days ago, I saw a unique occurrence – one I did not expect: a great flash of Sun-Ka, here, in the city. I approached the source, but I could not enter. It was a guarded compound, a facility that supposedly dealt with the disposal of hazardous

In this lifetime I only partially played the role of  
technician. When it comes to religion and  
technique the dominant is the last of the  
• In the world of the future, the last of the



chemicals. But I knew it was a laboratory by the Sun-Kas of those who were within.

"While I stood, frustrated, outside the fence, I saw something wondrous. A current of the field of the sun suddenly collapsed into a perfect golden ring. It shrank and intensified until I was almost forced to look away. Then, just at the moment when I expected something miraculous must occur, it exploded in a blinding flash, leaving nothing.

"I - we - must learn what the humans are doing."

• "I had your simulacra kidnapped three hours ago, and brought here. Then I made an Air Plexus to fill your stasis and free you to take them.

"As you must know, they are they night janitors for the facility, and they may know some of what we must learn. Search their memories now and tell me what they know."

Unfortunately the janitors are somewhat unimaginative, and not at all curious. They know nothing of what actually happens in the facility, but are aware that it is really a research laboratory. They know it is run by a Dr. Farzady, and that the thing the scientists work with is named "Tigger."

Boreus is disappointed but not surprised. Had these humans been at all curious, it is likely that the security elements of the lab would have removed them. It gives the Nephilim the following advice: "It is now Wednesday morning. You are not expected back to work until tonight. I suggest you use this time to adjust to your new era. I assure you, it will not be an easy adjustment."

## LIFE AMONG THE JANITORS

The Nephilims' new simulacra are the Kingsley family, of Kingsley Kleaners. This family business was awarded the contract to clean the non-sensitive areas of the research facility after the administrator, Dr. Farzady, interviewed them to ensure that they were dull and unimaginative people. Since that time they have exceeded his hopes in this regard and guaranteed themselves jobs for life by never showing a keen interest in anything other than the wondrous complexities of mops, wastepaper baskets, and gum that is stuck to floors. The Kingsleys are not exactly the best simulacra the PCs could hope for, but they are healthy and free of any annoying complications.

The Kingsleys live together in a large house a few miles from the facility. They have few friends, and spend their days-off watching TV, playing video games, and eating junk food. If the Nephilim were forced to emulate this lifestyle it would be a mundane hell, but fortunately, no one would take the slightest notice if they abandoned it altogether for pursuits more relevant to their goals. As long as they show up for work and pay their bills, all will be well.

## THE KINGSLEYS

• Social Status: 12  
• Opportunity: 36  
• Education: 12 (high school graduates).  
• Life Experience: 35 (read National Geographic).  
• Culture: as per adventure setting, middle class.  
• Profession: Janitors.  
• Income: \$100,000 per year, collectively.  
• Residence: Family house.  
• Family Relationship: 18 (only know each other).  
• Appearance: Clean-cut Wal-Mart patrons.  
• Possessions: House, two cars, Ford Aerostar with company logo, big-screen TV, large library of wrestling videotapes, Super Nintendo system.

• *Ken Kingsley, Father, 45*

• STR 13 CON 15 INT 11  
• DEX 9 CHR 9 Solar Ka 9

• Skills: Bargain 20%, Business 25%, Craft:  
• General Construction 20%, Drive Automobile 35%,  
• Read/Write Modern English 35%, Scan 80%, Speak  
• Modern English 30%.

• *Sara Kingsley, Mother, 46*

• STR 10 CON 13 INT 12  
• DEX 14 CHR 10 Solar Ka 8

• Skills: Accounting 45%, Business 35%, Drive  
• Automobile 25%, Read/Write Modern English 45%,  
• Scrutinize 35%, Smell 25%, Speak Modern English 35%.

• *Nigel Kingsley, Oldest Son, 26*

• STR 10 CON 16 INT 12  
• DEX 11 CHR 8 Solar Ka 11

• Skills: Bargain 50%, Craft: Brew Beer 65%, Drive  
• Automobile 25%, Fast Talk 65%, Read/Write Modern  
• English 30%, Speak Modern English 45%.

• *Chris Kingsley, Second Son, 24*

• STR 13 CON 10 INT 9  
• DEX 15 CHA 9 Solar Ka 9

• Skills: Craft: General Construction 30%, Craft:  
• Remove Stubborn Stains 90%, Drive Automobile  
• 35%, Mechanics 45%, Read/Write Modern English  
• 20%, Scan 50%, Speak Modern English 20%.

• *Al Kingsley, Third Son, 22*

• STR 10 CON 11 INT 14  
• DEX 11 CHA 12 Solar Ka 10

• Skills: Computer Use 70%, Drive Automobile  
• 25%, Read/Write Modern English 25%, Speak  
• Modern English 25%.

## GETTING ADJUSTED

On examining the memories of their simulacra, the Nephilim will find that the most appropriate thing for them to do is simply go home, get some sleep, get cleaned up, and go back to work.

The day passes with the Nephilim half bemused and half overwhelmed by the changes and advances the humans have made since they were last incarnate. It would be fair to say that the changes in lifestyle that took place in the last hundred years absolutely eclipse the changes of the previous several millennia, should anyone have been incarnate that long ago.

The fact that their simulacra are very blasé and unsurprised at their world is not as much help as one would expect. For the Nephilim to overcome their own astonishment and view the year 1995 with the same acceptance as their simulacra would be to intentionally court Shouit.

Despite their discomfort, the day passes – as it inevitably must – and it comes time to go to work. The Kingsleys pile into their mini-van, father at the wheel, and drive to the front gate of the Hazardous Chemical Disposal Facility.

The facility is a windowless three-story structure, pastel green in color, with the look of a government building. It is completely hidden from public view by a high electrified fence and a strip of forest that runs around the perimeter of the city-block-sized compound.

The front gate is a serious affair, with an armed guard outside the power gate and another inside a guard house. As their simulacra expect, the guard shines his flashlight in the windows of the van for a moment, then, recognizing the Kingsleys, signals his partner to open the gate.

## THE FACILITY

As Boreus expected, the facility has nothing to do with chemical disposal. It is, in fact, a secret, government-funded lab in which scientists are studying a unique approach to nuclear fusion. The building contains a number of offices, a lounge, two meeting rooms, a powerful computer mainframe, support facilities, utility rooms, and the TGR.

The TGR, or Tropic Gradient Reactor, is an experimental fusion reactor of the magnetic bottle type. The reactor builds a donut-shaped or torus-shaped magnetic field that is strong enough to contain plasma for long enough to (hopefully) allow it to fuse. It also somehow contains and compresses the field of the sun, creating the bright golden ring that attracted Boreus' attention.

And it doesn't work yet. Each time it is tested, at the critical moment the containment fails, releasing the plasma and the sun field.

It is no coincidence that the Kingsleys referred

to the TGR as Tigger; the director and leading physicist, Dr. Bulent Farzady, came up with the rather awkward name because he is a great fan of Winnie the Pooh; he wanted an acronym that could be pronounced "Tigger."

Tigger itself is visually disappointing, being only a 25-foot-wide, 20-foot-high dark green cylinder. It has numerous access hatches and electrical connections, but is only interesting when it is actually functioning (once every two or three days). On these occasions, it is covered with a golden nimbus. At the moment of containment failure, numerous bolts of electricity leap from the casing, striking the steel beams that support it, and grounding away harmlessly.

Tigger is located in a room that runs from the foundation to the roof of the facility. One wall in this room is composed largely of windows, allowing visitors to watch Tigger in action from a adjacent corridors on the ground and 2nd floors.

## FIRST NIGHT ON THE JOB

Following their simulacra's impulses, the Nephilim drive to a rear loading dock and park in the almost empty parking lot beside it. There are only three vehicles here – two belong to the gate guards, and the third to a security guard who patrols the interior of the facility.

The Nephilim enter the building by a back door (for which they have a key). They find themselves in a service corridor, which leads to the large closet that contains the tools of their trade: a garbage cart, several mops and buckets, some brooms, and a floor polisher.

A moment's reflection reveals that the Kingsleys have been having an easy time of it; they only need to work three or four hours a night to fulfil their duties. They spend the rest of the night in the lounge watching TV. (They felt that if they left before eight hours had passed, their contract would be renegotiated for a lesser amount of money.) The Nephilim will probably change this habit, spending the surplus hours in exploration.

## EXPLORING THE FACILITY

The only obstacle to the Nephilim's freedom in the facility is a new member of the staff – a night patrolman whose nametag reads "Adair." This fellow, a large, stern-faced man in a guard's uniform and carrying a sidearm, examines each of the Kingsleys in turn, comparing their faces to photographs he has clipped onto a clipboard. Having satisfied himself that they belong, he ignores them henceforth, and after a few hours is not seen again for the rest of the night. He rebuffs or ignores all attempts at conversation. He seems to think that janitors are



beneath the notice of a security guard.

The Kingsleys do not normally enter the offices of the physicists. They generally only collect the trash where it has been left outside of the office doors. Similarly, they don't enter the meeting rooms, as these, like the offices, are deemed "sensitive areas." (That should make them good places to start.)

An Idea roll (or an appropriate question to the gamemaster) reveals that the maintenance chief, in order to allow him to respond to potential emergencies like broken pipes etc., has a set of keys that give access to every room in the place. These can be found just inside the door of his office, hanging on a peg beside the light switch.

## THE OFFICES

If the Nephilim manage to gain entry into any of the six offices, they find that things are not at all as their simulacra remember them from the rare occasions when they were allowed in before.

All personal items have been removed from each office. In their place are a few books completely unrelated to physics, a token collection of stationary (suitable for minor administrative work), some personal gear such as a set of barbells or a camp cot, and very little else. It is immediately obvious that

- whoever is occupying these offices is not connected with the operation of Tigger.

- The only exception is found in the office nearest the secretaries. Here, a small stack of computer printouts records the performance of the TGR for the last three days. Each printout has a handwritten note on it. These notes appear to be calculations relating to the tests. There have been three tests, and the notes are, respectively:

P.F. = 12.793 vu/km<sup>2</sup>

P.F. = 13.552 vu/km<sup>2</sup>

P.F. = 14.919 vu/km<sup>2</sup> (probable maximum)

- Another indication that something is amiss here is found on the desk of the first office the Nephilim search. New nameplates - presumably to be attached to the doors of the offices - bear the names Dr. White, Dr. Grey, Dr. Black, Dr. Green, Dr. Brown, and Mr. Smith.



## THE MEETING ROOMS

- The two meeting rooms - which until recently only contained blackboards, computer terminals, coffee makers, and comfortable chairs - now contain all the previous contents of the six offices as well. The personal belongings and research notes of Drs. Farzady, Manninen, and Hamman have been piled in boxes and set on a table in one room; those of Drs. Ingham, Hodgson, and Lewis are in the other room.

- Each box is labelled with a post-it note bearing the name of one of the researchers. Those papers belonging to the second group of researchers are more orderly and give some evidence that the scientists were trying to continue working under the present regime, but those of the former director and his roommates seem to have been piled in the box at random and left that way.

- The most diligent researcher seems to have been Dr. Ingham. He appears to have been working on a large file, which lies open on the table beside the box of her personal effects. This file contains numerous computer printouts chronicling the testing and operation of the TGR.

- Each test is represented by a graphed curve, labeled "Energy Levels," that shows energy smoothly

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building in the reactor, to a point where it suddenly falls off. The graphs bears numerous handwritten, cryptic comments and references to an "ideal curve."

If the Nephilim spend the effort – at least an hour of careful examination – they can deduce what the "ideal curve" must be, based on the changing results in Tigger's "belly" and Dr. Ingham's reaction to these results.

This series of tests was halted ten days ago. A second series of tests was then run, a series that ended three days ago. (These latter tests were the ones that produced the results observed by Boreus). The graphs from this more recent set of tests look completely different; the energy builds far more rapidly, to a much higher level, then drops to nothing. Dr. Ingham has only one comment: "NONSENSE!!!"

In the other meeting room, the most fruitful box to search on is the one in which the papers of Dr. Farzady have been piled. On the top of his heap of papers is an official looking letter to him, from the government. It reads:

*Dr. Farzady,*

*Congratulations sir. Your brilliant efforts on behalf of your government have not gone unnoticed. I am pleased to be able to inform you that the senator overseeing the financing of your project has taken a personal interest in your brainchild. For this reason, he has chosen to increase your budget by 0.2% per annum, and to send you several hand-picked men from his department.*

*The physicists Drs. White, Black, Grey, Green, Brown, and the accountant Mr. Smith, will be able to assist you directly, and have some innovations from another project they will wish to introduce.*

*I trust you will be cooperative, in order to allow this time of transition to pass with as little disruption as possible.*

*Uriah Wezle*

*secretary to Senator Proxmeyer*

The time available to the Nephilim before they must leave the facility will allow them little opportunity to do anything other than browse through the rest of the documents. (They will have to search them more thoroughly on subsequent nights.) In tonight's browsing, they can learn the following:

- "Tigger," or TGR, stands for Tropic Gradient Reactor.
- The project involves fusion, and something called "magnetic bottles."
- The project has been taken over by the government; a senator has appointed five physicists and one accountant as its new directors.
- Ingham, Hodgson and Lewis resent the

- intrusion of the new directors, they work with them grudgingly. These three researchers were acting in a supporting role under the previous administration, but seem to have been even further demoted by the change of directors, who haven't assigned them any specific tasks. Their current "work" is clearly without direction or aim.

- Doctors Farzady, Manninen, and Hamman have not worked since the new directors came to the research facility. Manninen and Hamman were previously directors of the facility, and reported to the administrator, Farzady.

## REPORTING IN

- The Nephilim can leave the facility without incident. They may either return home, or may go directly to Boreus' house. If they go home, Boreus will join them shortly thereafter, and will excitedly press them for every thing they have learned, however trivial it might be.

- If Boreus is informed of the facts given above, it will be impressed and excited about the reactor. It will be only passingly interested in the government takeover of the facility. Boreus seems to think that its research group can learn from the reactor, regardless of who controls it.

- After discussing the situation with the party and making a phone call to his companions, Boreus gives more instructions: "Find a way to get me and my companions inside. We must observe the reactor at closer range. We will need a place to hide.

- "Also, continue your surveillance. Learn what you can. We may not be able to get anyone other than yourselves in, and this is the most promising thing I have ever seen."

## THE POLITICAL POOP

- The secret fusion energy lab is funded by government money (with the attendant strings attached), and was, until recently, operated under the direction of Dr. Bulent Farzady. The Nephilim should have learned this much by now.

- What they have not yet learned is that the lab is both more – and less – than it seems. Dr. Farzady is an absolutely brilliant man, but he is not looking for cheap energy from fusion. He is, in fact, an member of the innermost circle of the Societae Antiquae Rosae Crucis (SARC), as are doctors Manninen and Hamman. They have used SARC's influence with the government to fund a lab, the true purpose of which is to study the magical fields of the sun.

- It is therefore no accident that the TGR could cause an effect that attracted Boreus' attention. It did, however operate for several months before doing so. It is readily apparent from the records that only the meddling of the new arrivals upset TGR's operation

enough to cause the wasteful loss of Solar Ka that Boreus first saw.

Since losing control of his facility ten days ago, doctors Farzady, Manninen, and Hamman have not come in to work. They believe (quite reasonably) that the new physicists and accountant appointed by the senator will see through the smoke screen that was designed to hide the TGR's real function. The newcomers probably won't be able to deduce the true purpose behind the facility (which they wouldn't believe, anyway) but they will certainly be able to learn enough to ruin the academic careers of Dr. Farzady and his co-conspirators – perhaps enough try them for mismanagement of government funds.

Drs. Ingham, Hodgson, and Lewis are all patsies, used as part of SARC's misdirection. None of the three have the brilliance to have gotten where they are without SARC's help.

The three SARC members are currently at Dr. Farzady's home, collating the data they have managed to gather so far, and preparing a report for their superiors. They are hopeful that their members in the government will soon be able to return control of TGR to them, but if not, they are trying to realize as favorable a return on SARC's investment as possible.

Soon they will be contacted by a messenger from their order, and will receive unsettling news.

### BACK TO THE MOP

Dutifully returning to work the following night, the Nephilim experience a repeat of the previous night's security routine, including an encounter with the security man who patrols the inside of the facility.

Upon finishing their sanitation-related duties, the Nephilim may return to the task of exploring the lab. Arranging to get Boreus and its companions inside may take several nights, during which the following avenues may be pursued:

#### *Searching The Maintenance Chief's Office*

A successful Idea roll (or an appropriate question to the gamemaster) reveals that the interior of the research facility doesn't conform to its outside dimensions. Perhaps the maintenance room holds a clue to its true layout.

A search of the maintenance room will turn up a complete set of architectural plans for the building. If the Nephilim in either Ken or Chris has brought their Meta-INT up to at least 14, they will be able to read these plans with ease. Otherwise, it will be a task of several nights to learn that several rooms and

- corridors have been hidden from view. They are in effect, secret passages.

- These secret passages form a single, interconnected system which may be accessed (rather conveniently) by the simple expedient of cutting through the back wall of the closet that holds the Kingsleys' cleaning supplies. This should prove safe enough, as the Kingsleys firmly believe that no one would disturb their things during the day.



- If the Nephilim do make this breach, they find that the secret areas are apparently entirely unused. A thin layer of gypsum dust from the construction of the building lies on all surfaces. The areas seem to be little more than several connected rooms, all unfinished, with concrete floors, unpainted walls, and no fixtures of any sort.

- They are only poorly separated from the rest of the facility. The partitions, while for the most part sturdy, are in places no more than a single sheet of gypsum board over 2x4 studs.

The rooms run from one end of the ground floor to the other, with the Kingsleys' closet falling near the middle. The plans indicate that these rooms were to be "Public Displays," and a "Media Lounge." The Kingsleys spacious mop closet is indicated as being the "Reception" area.

Perhaps when the facility was designated as secret, these areas were deemed unnecessary, and were walled over and never finished. These possibilities strike the Kingsleys as plausible, being themselves aware of the affect budgetary restrictions have had on their decreasingly lucrative contract.

In several places, some of the building's oversized duct work passes through the secret rooms. If any of the players are clever enough to be suspicious of these ducts, they may attempt to Scrutinize them. A successful roll reveals that they are not ducts, but soundproof, secret shafts that include doors leading to the offices of the three former directors:

A ladder inside one of the ducts leads up to the roof of the building. Here, canisters have been attached to the ventilation system. If the characters try to figure out the purpose of these canisters, a successful Craft: General Construction or Mechanics roll reveals that the canisters contain a pressurized gas of some sort that, when a valve is turned, can be released into the building's ventilation system. (See the section *Meanwhile, Back at the Lab...* for details on the use to which these are to be put.)

The ducts also lead down to an underground passage that comes out beyond the security fence behind a large bush.

#### *Contents of the Trash*

It might occur to the Nephilim to check through the research facility's garbage for clues. The Kingsleys' usual procedure involves dumping all the recyclable paper into one large bin for eventual shredding and recycling. If this bin is searched, a successful Scrutinize roll finds a piece of hard evidence that Dr. Farzady definitely ought to have destroyed: a small handwritten note.

Any Nephilim will unquestionably recognize the script immediately: it is Enochian. The note itself is written in Greek. If it can be read, it proves to be a short letter from "Imperator" congratulating the recipient(s) on their initial success, and urging them onward to Agartha.

If this note is read, any Nephilim who can make a Hermetic Lore Roll will recognize it as a SARC communication of the highest level and will know something of SARC's activities and history up to the time of that Nephilim's last incarnation. At least one member of the group should know that SARC is by nature non violent, and that it is more interested in

reaching Agartha than in bringing any harm to Nephilim.

Other documents in the recycling bin give clues as to the true nature of the research conducted by doctors Farzady, Manninen, and Hamman. If one of the Nephilim can make a successful Kabbalistic Lore roll it is revealed that they were studying Sun-Ka!

#### *The TGR*

The Nephilim can not reach the TGR without getting themselves into a world of trouble: it is in a "clean" environment, with several airlocks, locked doors, and alarms between itself and any area the party might access.

Through windows, Tigger may be freely examined from almost any angle. But no amount of scrutiny will reveal anything about its true function.

If examined with Ka-Vision, TGR will appear much as expected – as a complex and incomprehensible artifact of human construction. It is unfortunate that Nephilim can not detect Litharge; if they could, they would learn much more.

#### *The Night Guard*

Adair simply will not converse with the Nephilim. They get the impression that he is either unwilling to speak – or has been ordered not to. Perhaps this is some sort of security measure.

If an emergency forces Adair to address the party he will keep his sentences as short as possible. A successful Psychology roll reveals that he feels some hostility towards the Kingsleys, but no motivation can be determined.

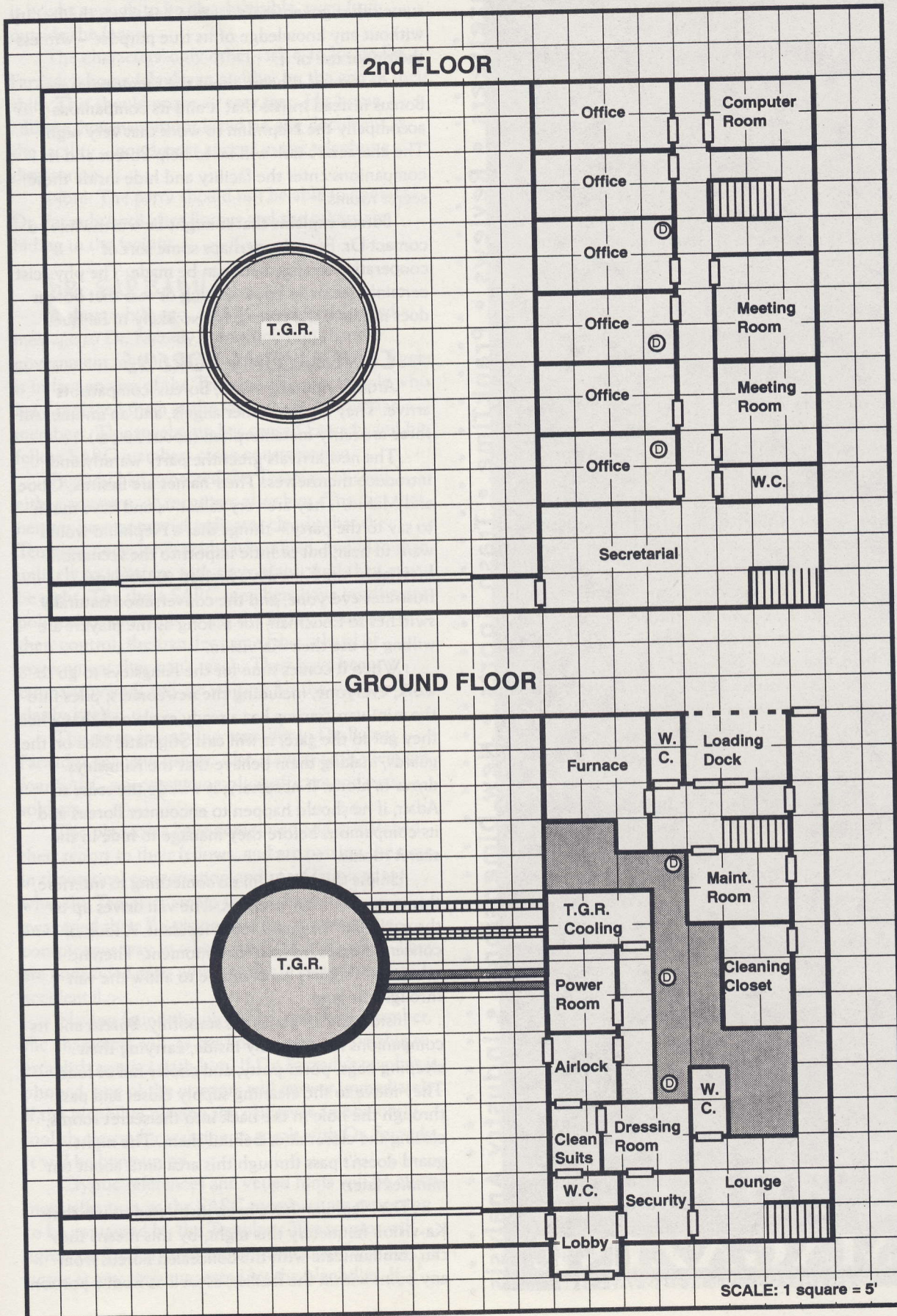
If Adair is followed, he will simply continue to patrol until the Nephilim leave him alone. Should he be watched by Ka-vision, his actions are rather cryptic: he patrols the building for an hour or so, then retires to the security room, where he sits for the rest of the night. His Solar Ka is very bright, and during the times when he is sitting in his office, he shows periods of intense mental activity on a regular basis each hour. Since this activity only occurs for a few minutes at a time, it is unlikely that it will be observed unless Adair is watched continually for a relatively long period of time. A chance proportional to the length of time watched should be given for any Nephilim to see him do this – for example, 50% for a half hour, 25% for a quarter of an hour, etc. The purpose of this mental activity cannot be determined.

#### **DEBRJEFJNG**

If the party learns of SARC's involvement, Boreus is very pleased; this explains in part why the TGR influences Solar Ka. It seems that SARC feels that this is a possible approach to Agartha.

It is unfortunate that political machinations have

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cost SARC its research lab. Boreus speculates that some other government faction has taken the facility without any knowledge of its true purpose – witness their poor use of it.

As soon as it hears about the secret passages, Boreus instead insists that it and its companions accompany the Nephilim to work that very night. The character's task will be to help Boreus and its companions enter the facility and hide inside these secret rooms.

Boreus explains that it might be worthwhile to contact Dr. Farzady; perhaps some sort of cooperative arrangement can be made. The physicist certainly seems to know a thing or two that Boreus does not, and the reverse is also likely to be true.

## CONCEALING BOREUS

Around mid-afternoon, Boreus' compatriots arrive. They are two other angels, and an undine. All three are fairly metamorphed (about 50 pts).

The new arrivals greet the party warmly and introduce themselves. Their names are Sesirus, Oboe, and Marlin. They are very talkative and have much to say to the party – things that a Nephilim would want to hear, but of little import to the scenario. Inevitably, the Kingsley's limited vocabulary frustrates everyone, and the conversation naturally switches to Enochian, for as long as the players are willing to use their Ka-vision.

When it comes time for the Kingsleys to go to work, everyone, including the newcomers, piles into the mini-van. Sesirus has already explained that when they get to the gate, it will cast Stigmatic Idea on the guards, making them believe that the Kingsleys drove in alone. If necessary, it will do the same to Adair, if he should happen to encounter Boreus and its companions before they manage to hide in the secret rooms.

Unless the Nephilim do something to interfere, this is exactly what happens. The van drives up to the gate, and the guard looks inside it. A look of concern crosses his face for a moment. Then he relaxes and signals his comrade to allow the van through the gate.

Inside, things go just as smoothly. Boreus and its companions move calmly inside, carrying their sleeping bags, porta-potty, and cooler full of food. They move to the cleaning supply closet and pass through the hole in the back into the secret rooms, closing the closet door behind them. The night guard doesn't pass through this area until about ten minutes later.

The Nephilim have been instructed to use their Ka-vision frequently this night; by this means they can communicate with the concealed Boreus from any point within the facility, as well as from a portion

of the grounds outside. All realize that Boreus' Air-Ka is bright enough to be clearly visible, even from outside the fence.

The characters' only other task is to locate Dr. Farzady's home telephone number by the end of their shift. This should prove an easy task. His home address, however, is not listed on any document at the facility – nor does it appear in the telephone directory.

Note: The party should not be able to contact Dr. Farzady until after Boreus and the others are hiding in the facility.

## DR. FARZADY

A short while ago, a SARC courier delivered a message to Dr. Farzady, informing him that the government faction responsible for his loosing Tigger is in fact an arm of the Templars. The six people who have replaced them at the facility are all Templar members. This revelation has caused Farzady and his fellow SARC members some consternation.

Farzady had expected the Templars to send either assassins, or recruiters after him. The fact that neither have appeared indicates clearly that the Templars consider Farzady, Manninen, and Hamman unlikely to interfere with their plans. And they may be right. The three SARC members have insufficient political connections to get the facility returned to their control; the transfer came from a level of government they can't reach. They have been outmaneuvered, and are waiting for the situation to clarify itself.

The three are staying together in Dr. Bulent Farzady's spacious house. Also staying with them are four SARC warriors: two police officers and two soldiers.

The physicists have completed and dispatched their report to their fellows, and are passing the time in theoretical conversation and speculation as to what the Templars are up to. All three have awakened their Ka-vision, and have noticed the conspicuous way in which the TGR is flashing. They are undecided as to whether this is intentional or accidental.

Having found the physicist's telephone number, the characters will, as per Boreus' request, be able to establish contact with him. If Dr. Farzady's number is phoned, one of the warriors will answer immediately. If the Nephilim placing the call gives an obviously foolish reason for wanting to speak with Dr. Farzady, it will be hung up on.

Cryptic references and veiled hints will be much more effective, as the SARC members are expecting to be contacted by the Templars. The warrior will agree, on Dr. Farzady's behalf, to a meeting at his home at any time suggested by the Nephilim. If

asked, after a brief conference with someone in the background, he will agree to allow several people to come – but they must come unarmed.

Should the caller actually admit to being a Nephilim, the warrior will be confused, but will relay the word to Dr. Farzady, who will come on the line after a startled exclamation.

Dr. Farzady will be very excited, and rather surprised. He will start to question the Nephilim, then, remembering his manners, will invite the party to his home, provided they come unarmed.

On entering the house, the characters will be expertly frisked by the warriors, two of whom stand within the front hall. They are heavily armed and obviously tense.

After satisfying themselves that the characters are unarmed, the warriors will conduct the party down a hall into a parlor decorated with Victorian furniture. Present will be: Dr. Farzady (a tall, dark athletically handsome man of about forty); Dr. Manninen (a very tall, slender and beautiful woman of obvious Nordic ancestry); and Dr. Hamman (short, heavily muscled, fiftyish, and Mediterranean).

Dr. Manninen is using Ka-vision, which will be immediately obvious to the Nephilim. The fact that they are Nephilim will be immediately obvious to her. She will either reveal or confirm this fact, depending on whether the players have informed Dr. Farzady of their nature beforehand.

If this is a surprise, Farzady (who thinks very quickly indeed) will reveal the following emotions: astonishment, consternation, curiosity, comprehension, and concern. He will invite the characters to sit, offer them tea, and surprise them.

"You are the cleaning staff at my research facility. Or should I say, you were the cleaning staff."

Whether or not the players confirm or deny this is immaterial; Dr. Farzady is far more intelligent than any of them. He has made some very astute guesses.

"You took these people because they worked in the facility, and you – or someone you work for – was curious about the place. The bright flashes of Solar Ka attracted your attention."

If the Nephilim interrupt at any point, he merely tries to calm them so that he can continue: "I have more to say that you need to hear."

"The fact that you are here means that you penetrated the facility, learned that I was no longer in control of it, and came looking for me. This suggests that the Templars..."

If the Nephilim don't interrupt him at the mention of Templars, Dr. Manninen will. She is still employing her Ka-vision, and at this point she looks away from the group and states, "They're running Tigger again."

Should the characters guess what she is looking

at and make their Ka-vision rolls, the Nephilim will see several very bright flashes from a point several miles away – the TGR.

"Yes, it is the Templars who have stolen our Tigger, and until you... beings... presented yourselves at my door, we had no idea why."

The inference is obvious, but for any Nephilim who don't get it, Dr. Farzady spells it out: "Those flashes are now bait, and our facility a trap. The Templars are hunting Nephilim."

This is said with enough bitterness that it is obvious to even the dullest mind which side Dr. Farzady is on.

### MEANWHILE, AT THE LAB...

Dr. Farzady is, of course, absolutely correct; the Templars have guessed that, if properly distorted, the emanations of the TGR would certainly attract the attentions of powerful and curious Nephilim – exactly the sort who should be made into homunculi if possible, or else destroyed.

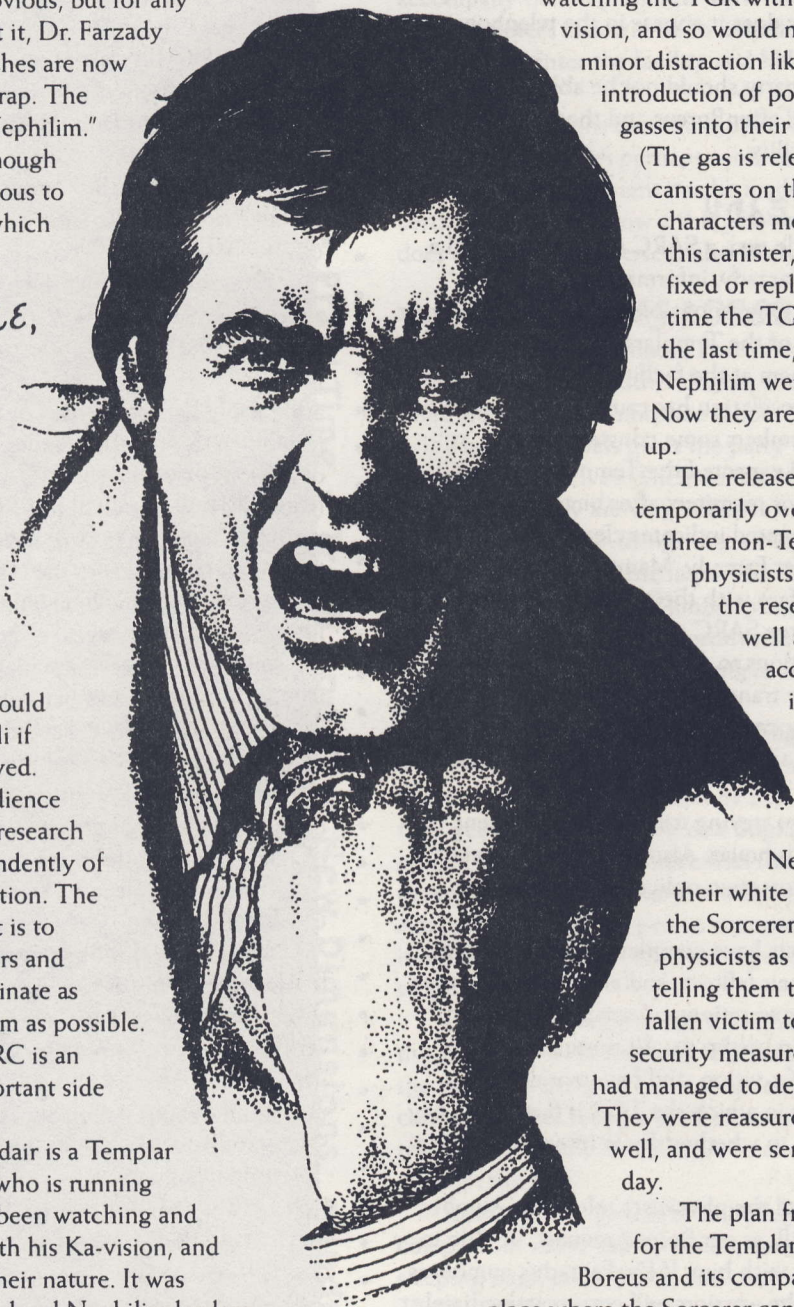
The Templar Obedience that has control of the research lab is operating independently of the rest of the organization. The purpose of their project is to provide them with elixirs and homunculi, and to eliminate as many powerful Nephilim as possible. The antagonism of SARC is an unfortunate but unimportant side effect.

The night guard Adair is a Templar Sorcerer. He's the one who is running this operation. He has been watching and examining the party with his Ka-vision, and has correctly guessed their nature. It was obvious to him that the local Nephilim leaders would not kill their own simulacra just for the chance to possess such restrictive identities as those of the Kingsleys. Whoever those Nephilim may be, he knows they were not the leaders. This guess was confirmed when Boreus, Sesirus, Oboe, and Marlin were smuggled in by the Kingsleys.

This morning, Adair's physicist partners – Templar Knights all – came in to work to find that

- their gamble had paid off. The great expenditure of political influence necessary to gain control of the SARC facility was not wasted.

- They made their preparations, and, when they were ready, put the TGR through its paces. They guessed (correctly) that Boreus and the rest would be



watching the TGR with their Ka-vision, and so would not notice a minor distraction like the introduction of powerful sedating gasses into their hiding space.

(The gas is released from the canisters on the roof; if the characters meddled with this canister, it has been fixed or replaced.) By the time the TGR flashed for the last time, all four Nephilim were unconscious. Now they are firmly trussed up.

The released gas also temporarily overcame the three non-Templar physicists still working at the research facility, as well as the accountant (who is also not a Templar).

While the Knights carried the Nephilim out to their white Ford Bronco, the Sorcerer calmed these physicists as they awakened, telling them that they had fallen victim to a secret security measure, and that he had managed to deactivate it. They were reassured that all was well, and were sent home for the day.

The plan from this point is for the Templars to remove Boreus and its companions to a safe place where the Sorcerer can determine how

- powerful they are. The sorcerer will then either begin to convert them immediately into elixirs, or
- may keep them as they are in the hope that their Stases can be found and that they can be made into homunculi. He has an Orichalka sword, with which he will weaken them one by one until he feels he stands a reasonable chance of overcoming their Ka-elements with his own Sun-Ka.



## CRESCENDO

If the Nephilim guess the truth in time, they can ask Dr. Farzady for help. His group includes three physicists, two cops, and two soldiers – all SARC warriors. If the characters hurry, they can reach the facility in time to intercept the white Ford Bronco as it leaves the compound. This group can engage in an exciting and successful battle with the Templars to rescue Boreus, Sesirus, Oboe, and Marlin.

Failing this, the party can, at any later time, recruit Dr. Farzady and the other SARC members to help rescue their friends from the hateful clutches of the Templars. Whether or not this is successful depends on how long the characters delay, and how well they prepare. SARC assistance will be wholehearted so long as they do not have reason to resent the Nephilim.

If the party has not contacted Dr. Farzady, they will not know that the facility is now run by Templars. Chances are good that they will return to work as innocently as the Templars hope they do.

If the gamemaster is merciful (or the players are lucky or clever) they may employ their Ka-vision as they approach the gate. At that range, Boreus' Air-Ka should be clearly visible. When it is not, they may take alarm in time to save themselves. But if they enter the building without looking first, they are ambushed by six Templar Knights (the five physicists and accountant) and a Templar Sorcerer (Adair) bearing an Orichalka sword. (At least they go down fighting. And how bad can it be being a homunculus anyway?) This should establish a lasting fear of and wariness toward Templars and other "mere humans."

## VICTORY

The ideal solution to this adventure will see the senior Nephilim rescued, most or all of the player Nephilim incarnated into the (excellent) Templar simulacra, and the TGR restored, through the collective influence of the winners, to SARC hands. In gratitude, doctors Farzady, Manninen, and Hamman take on the senior Nephilim as full partners in their research, to the ultimate advantage (and possibly future Agartha) of all.

If Boreus survives, it will make an Air Plexus, guaranteeing that any Nephilim who tries to incarnate in the Templars succeeds with its Air-Ka roll. Failing this, Marlin can make a Water Plexus.

## CHARACTERS

When skills and attributes are needed, the characters in this scenario may be approximated by using the following NPCs from the Nephilim rulebook, and changing a few skills and magics as logic dictates:

- Dr. O. Bulent Farzady: Freemason Archeologist (p. 210).
- Dr. Rita Manninen: Order of Rhodes Corporate Hacker (p. 210).
- Dr. Thom Hamman: Order of the Solar Temple Inquisitor (p. 210).
- SARC Warriors: two US Marine Privates (p. 88) and two Police Officers (p. 87).
- Templar Knight #1-2: Templar Knight (p. 207).
- Templar Knights #3-5: Thule Bruderschaft Commando (p. 210).
- Templar Knight #6: Teutonic Knight (p. 210).
- Templar Sorcerer: Black Star Sorcerer (p. 208).
- Incorporate homunculus spells, and treat homunculus as elixir. The Orichalka sword has 100 pts.



### John Hart

Born in Germany, John has lived in every one of Canada's provinces and territories except Prince Edward Island. He spent five years in army as field engineer, "blowing stuff up." He also spent time in society for creative anachronism, learning weapons from a different millenium, and hitchhiked around Europe for six months.

John was introduced to AD&D in 1979 and has been gaming ever since. Runequest and Call of Cthulhu are his current favorites. Although he spends his days working for a roofing company, his longterm aspirations are toward writing fiction.



### Trisch Lohner

Artist, designer producer – those are the titles Trisch would like to have, and in that order. Originally from Victoria, B.C., Trisch moved to Vancouver in 1986 and one year later entered Emily Carr College with design in mind. The wild years had begun.

Graduation, thankfully, came in 1991 and Trisch was ready for the real world. A few months later she took a job with U-TV and in three years has found herself in a senior position with three international awards to her credit. Always willing to try something new, Trisch has only recently begun exploring the fantasy and science fiction genre.

# To Keep a Secret

BY NICOLE LINDROOS FREIN

**T**o *Keep a Secret* is designed to be an evening's adventure for Castle Falkenstein and is ripe for the insertion of glorious gadgets from R. Talsorian's *Steam Age* sourcebook. (Rest assured that the adventure can stand on its own if you do not have *Steam Age*.) The adventure can be set around any city center, but uses Paris as default.

Letters like the one shown here have begun flying through the city as the rumor of Eugenie Aulard's return to society becomes the talk of the gossip circles. The Grand Duke Luchaire's annual ball is coming up, to which all members of polite society can expect an invitation. This year, it seems, even members of not-so-polite society are expected; Madam Aulard's attendance would be quite scandalous if the Grand Duke were a man of lesser status and respectability.

- resulted in the Grand Duke having greater prestige than he deserves. (In actuality, the Marquis was
- passed up because he was an obnoxious boor.) The
- Marquis intends to have his revenge and so has
- constructed a dire scheme designed to bring down
- the name of the Grand Duke once and for all.

- After many years of investigation, bribery and
- blackmail, the Marquis has discovered that the Grand
- Duke has an illegitimate child. He does not know the

identity of the child and this is precisely what he must find out to succeed in his plot. His twisted mind concocted the idea of assuming the persona of the Grand Duke for a period long enough to determine the identity of the child. The two tools he has decided to use in this quest are the a Steam Mole that will help him burrow under the Grand Duke's residence (thus avoiding the ever-

*My Dear M,*  
*I send this message to you by the fastest possible courier to tell you the most delightful news. My beloved, if unconventional, cousin E. has returned from abroad with delightful tales of intrigue and the Bohemian life she has been leading. Do not be dismayed at that, I beg you! E. is a capital girl and intensely interesting. Her enthusiasm is contagious and already she has filled my head with the most wonderful dreams and visions. Do not be concerned by her somewhat odd behavior, for she is a brave and right-minded woman – not in the least frivolous or impertinent.*

*I have shamefully neglected the splendid purpose of this note. I must confide the true reason for her return, for E. has received the attention of M. L. and will be sponsored at his annual ball in a fortnight. She hints wickedly that something more is afoot, but I cannot pry another word from her on the matter. You simply must attend the ball, and with watchful eye observe it in its entirety, making note of everything for my sake. I have felt so gay at the prospect I can scarcely contain myself.*

*Keep me well informed, and for now adieu.  
With fondest affection, J.*

## BEHIND THE SCENES

### Background

Eugenie Aulard is illegitimate child of the Grand Duke Alphonse Luchaire. If this fact came to light it could quite possibly ruin both Eugenie and the Grand Duke. Even her exceptional skill as a spy and adventuress cannot protect Eugenie from the social scandal that would result if her intimate connection to the Grand Duke were to become known.

The Marquis Georges Rambaud is a very bitter man and has a long-standing grudge against the Grand Duke for a "social slight" which he believes

- watchful eyes of the Grand Duke's loyal guards) and
- a serum he purchased from an alchemist. The serum
- allows him to assume the features of the one person
- whose blood is mixed with the potion before it is
- drunk.

### Recent Events

- The Grand Duke has long been suspicious of the
- Marquis and has had Eugenie (who in addition to
- being his daughter, is also an excellent spy) trailing
- the Marquis, gathering information about his
- activities. Over the last few years she has been able
- to confirm that the Marquis is up to no good and is

plotting against the Grand Duke. She is not aware that the Marquis knows that the Grand Duke has an illegitimate child. She is, however, aware that the Marquis has acquired the Steam Mole.

Eugenie sends the following telegram to the Grand Duke:

MOLE HAS BEEN STOLEN! MUCH NEWS ABOUT G.R. ON MY WAY BACK. WILL BE ARRIVING BY TRAIN ON SATURDAY AT NOON. E.

After receiving this message, the Grand Duke asks the PCs to escort Eugenie (whom he describes only as a "guest") to his estate as a personal favor when she arrives in Paris the next day. He fears for her safety – but does not tell the PCs this.

Later (on the same day that the Grand Duke contacts the PCs) the Marquis uses the mole to burrow under and into the Grand Duke's estate. He overcomes the Grand Duke and assumes his identity.

The Marquis sees the message from "E." and knows an agent of the Grand Duke will be arriving the following day with news that seems to strike very close to home. (The Marquis may be dastardly, but he is not an idiot.) He hires a man to plant a clockwork explosive at the train station, hoping to take out the agent. While this is being carried out, he drinks the alchemical potion and gets ready to host the ball in place of the real Grand Duke.

On Saturday morning, the Dragon Lord Denault arrives at the Grand Duke's estate. The Dragon Lord has an interest in gadgets and he and the Marquis/Grand Duke hit it off smashingly in the afternoon before the ball. Denault has only just met the Grand Duke and doesn't feel at all suspicious of the imposter; having heard what a wonderful host the Grand Duke is, he has no reason not to think his host would be other than who he claims to be.

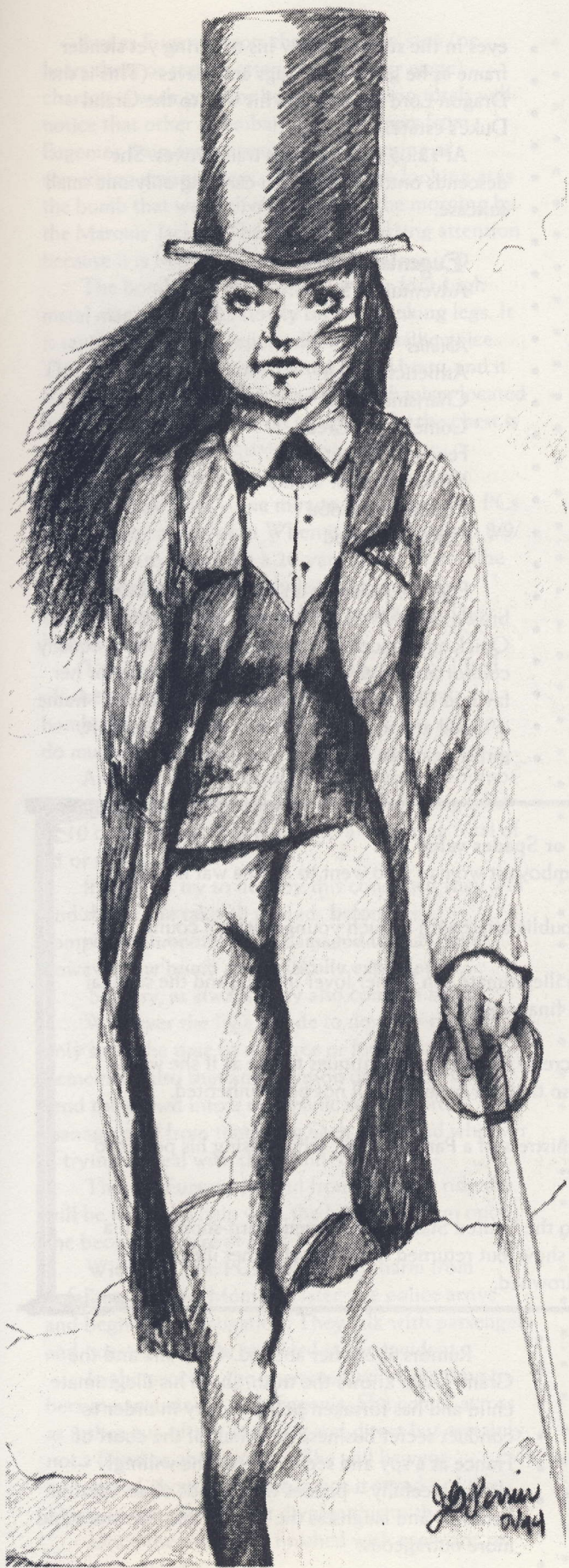
## CHAPTER ONE

### Entering the Scene

*In which the Grand Duke Luchaire enlists the aid of the unsuspecting characters and clockwork bombs run reckless in the train station.*

It shouldn't be difficult to get the characters involved in the unfolding predicament of the Grand Duke and Eugenie. There are only two conditions: that the PCs be known by the Grand Duke and that they be respected members of society.

Characters with above average Connections will have already heard about the Grand Duke's ball and the expected arrival of Eugenie Aulard. Everyone who is anyone is speculating on the arrival of



Eugenie, and the characters should receive an invitation to the ball and hear about Eugenie almost simultaneously.

The adventure begins as the Grand Duke, knowing the PCs' reputation as intrepid and heroic individuals, asks them do him a favor. The Friday before the ball (the same day the Marquis accosts him) he sends a message to whomever he perceives as the most "soldierly" of the PCs. It reads:

*Most courageous (PC's name):  
I must ask of you a favor. A dear friend of mine is arriving at the train station tomorrow at noon. She will be disembarking from the Brussels line. I am unfortunately too occupied with preparations for the Saturday evening ball and need someone to meet her and accompany her to her hotel and then to my estate. Her name is Eugenie Aulard; perhaps you have heard of her.  
Luchaire*

Characters will either be pleased or reticent to help the Grand Duke – their reaction will probably depend on their opinion of Eugenie Aulard. They will have heard rumors about the mysterious "Madame." (She prefers the title of Madame to the diminutive Mademoiselle, though she won't admit to having married.)

Any PC who has at least an average Connections score will know that Madame Aulard is unusual and the subject of much gossip. Additional rumors that characters are aware of depend on any Spades they might play; the Host should ask if any of the PCs wish to try to recollect gossip they overheard at a lounge or dinner party: All of the rumors are untrue, but they do accurately reflect Eugenie's flamboyant nature.

Regardless of whether or not the PCs want to meet M. Aulard, they would be committing a grievous social offence if they refuse to respect the Grand Duke's request (not to mention, ruining the adventure). We shall assume that they proceed to the train station before noon and make some preparation, such as a sign, that will attract the attention of Eugenie.

As the characters are waiting in the station, a tall and regal-looking man exits from a train that arrives at 11:50 am. The man is quite clearly a dragon; many

- eyes in the station follow his towering yet slender frame as he gathers his bags and leaves. (This is the Dragon Lord Denault, on his way to the Grand Duke's estate.)

- At 12:05 pm Eugenie's train arrives. She descends onto the platform carrying only one small suitcase.

### **Eugenie Aulard** Adventurer/Spy

- Abilities
- Athletics: Good
- Charisma: Great
- Comeliness: Great
- Fencing: Exceptional
- Marksmanship: Good
- Perception: Good
- Physique: Good

- Eugenie Aulard is an attractive brunette whose brown eyes have an irreverent, mischievous twinkle. Quick and graceful in her movements, she is equally comfortable in the latest high-society styles or her favored (if unusual) tailored uniform. Her 5'7" frame is toned and muscular; she lost most of her soft, girlish features during her long absence.

#### Off-suit cards, or Spades value 1-4:

She is a flamboyant woman who went to fight a war in Italy.

#### Spades 5-6:

She had a public affair with a much younger Italian count.

#### Spades 7-8:

She had an illegitimate son by her lover in Italy, and the scandal ruined him financially.

#### Spades 9-10:

She was secretly married, but continues to live as if she was unmarried so that her husband will not be disinherited.

#### Spades J-Q:

She is the mistress of a Parisian duke, who is using his power to protect her.

#### Spades K-A:

She went to the United States and learned sharp-shooting in a Wild West show, but returned to France after her illegitimate child was drowned.

- Rumors about her abound. Only she and the Grand Duke knows the truth; she is his illegitimate child and has forsaken polite society in order to conduct secret business on behalf of the court of France as a spy and secret agent. She willingly – almost gleefully – presses the bounds of acceptable behavior and laughs as the rumors become more and more outrageous.

Just as Eugenie spots the characters' sign (or hears them or station attendants call her name) characters with good or better Perception totals will notice that other disembarking passengers from Eugenie's train are murmuring and pointing at something among them. What they are looking at is the bomb that was delivered early in the morning by the Marquis' lackey. The bomb is attracting attention because it is MOVING and TALKING!

The bomb is in the shape of a four-foot-high metal man who walks slowly on two clinking legs. It is saying "Ka-boom" repeatedly in a metallic voice. The bomb's frame is constructed out of brass, and it is powered by a complex wind-up mechanism located behind the locked panel on its chest. On the chest is the face of a clock.

Unless stopped, the bomb will explode at precisely 12:07 pm – one minute from when the PCs first become aware of it! When it does, it will do 8/9/10 wounds to all within a 20-yard radius of it. (The evil Marquis has apparently lost all regard for innocent life.) The PCs will have to act fast. They have several options:

The bomb can be easily held in place or lifted off the ground. One strategy might be to grab the bomb and running it to some area where it will not do much harm.

Another strategy would be to disarm the bomb. The construct can be opened with a Tinkering total of 10 or more and disarmed with a Tinkering total of 15 or more.

If the PCs try to destroy this construct, they will find that it can take 30 wounds before it is completely inoperative. If damaged to that point, however, the bomb automatically explodes.

Sorcery, as always, may also come in handy.

Whatever the PCs decide to do, they should only have the time to do three or four things. Remember also that any mention of "bomb!" will send the crowd into a mad panic and require management from trampling each other and whoever is trying to deal with the bomb.

Though Eugenie is tired from her train ride she will be happy to help with the bomb problem once she becomes aware of it.

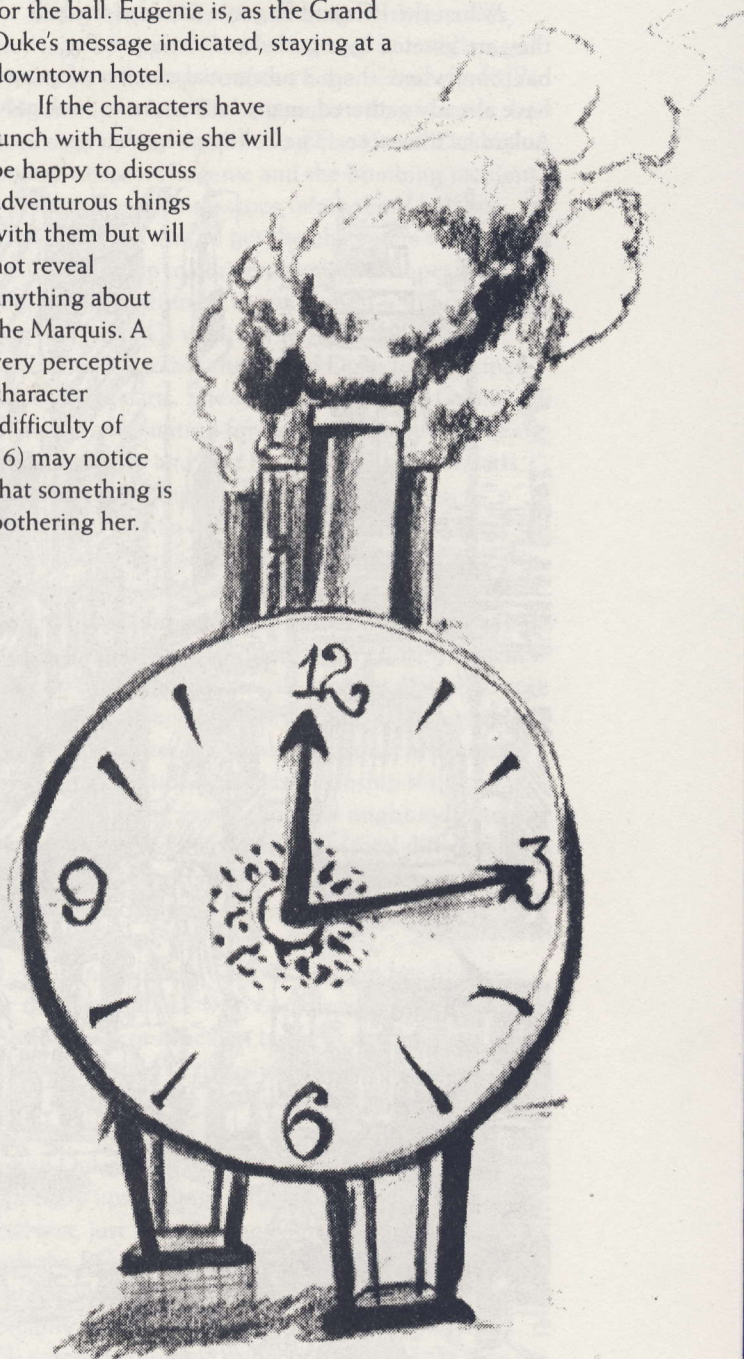
With luck, the PCs will prevent harm from befalling anyone. Moments later, the police arrive and begin an investigation. They talk with passengers and question anyone involved in the incident

In the process, the characters will have time to become acquainted with Eugenie. She comes across as rather out-of-the-ordinary and direct but certainly not a fiend or abomination. She will be very concerned about the bomb, since it smacks of the Marquis, but she will not divulge this to the PCs.

Once the police are finished with everyone on

- the scene, Eugenie will recommend that the
- group have a late lunch and then prepare
- for the ball. Eugenie is, as the Grand
- Duke's message indicated, staying at a
- downtown hotel.

- If the characters have
- lunch with Eugenie she will
- be happy to discuss
- adventurous things
- with them but will
- not reveal
- anything about
- the Marquis. A
- very perceptive
- character
- (difficulty of
- 16) may notice
- that something is
- bothering her.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Night of the Ball

- *In which the attendees at the ball have the chance to*
- *meet the dastardly Marquis posing as the Grand Duke Lucbair,*
- *the Impressive Dragon Lord Denault and in which the much*
- *talked about Eugenie Aulard finally makes her appearance.*

- Eugenie, true to form, wears a tailored military-
- style uniform to the ball instead of a traditional
- gown. If asked about this she quips that gowns are

not good for escaping from walking clock-faced bombs.

When the PCs and Eugenie arrive at the ball they are greeted by a butler and shown to the ballroom where there a substantial number of guests have already gathered, many heads turn to look at M. Aulard as she enters. The ballroom has been

- exquisitely decorated for the occasion.
- The most impressive guest at the ball is by far the reticent Dragon Lord, known only as Denault, whom the PCs may recognize from the train station.
- Give them a moment or two to mingle with the crowd and exchange pleasantries. (Players are
- encouraged to take a look at p. 74 of the *Castle*



*Falkenstein* rulebook for tips on social conduct in such formal situation as a ball at a Grand Duke's estate.)

The "Grand Duke" makes his appearance and nervously surveys the scene. Eugenie does not immediately approach him; if the PCs go toward the Grand Duke, she instead heads for the punch. She has recognized that something is wrong with the Grand Duke when he doesn't greet her with his usual, affectionate wink. But, not wanting to reveal the intimate nature of her association with him, she does not yet confide her worries to the PCs.

Characters who previously met the Grand Duke may want to re-introduce themselves to him or otherwise draw close to him during the evening. Those characters with Great or better Perception notice that the Grand Duke seems a bit more tense than they remember him being. He is not nearly as talkative or as vivacious as he usually is, and despite the fact that he knows both the PCs and Eugenie, he does not seem to pay them any special heed. If the escorting request is mentioned, he will look puzzled, then, nodding, say "Oh yes," and excuse himself to talk with some other guests.

In reality, the Marquis is doing only a fair job of impersonating the Grand Duke. His bitterness over imagined slights against him by the Grand Duke colors all of his actions throughout the evening. He cannot bear to hear gracious comments about "himself" from the guests, cannot stomach the sight of them approaching him with obvious expressions of pleasure and expectation on their faces. Nor can he keep up Social Graces in the same way as the true Grand Duke.

Staying at the side of the "Grand Duke" for much of the evening, the Dragon Lord cannot be missed. Denault is absolutely unaware that his host for the evening is not who he claims to be. He will defend the "Grand Duke" if any fights break out, but will immediately and angrily switch sides if the Marquis' plot is revealed to him.

The PCs might incorrectly suspect the Dragon Lord of being connected to the train station bomb. If asked about the bombing at the train station, Denault appears shocked and profess ignorance of the incident. He becomes quite upset if accused of any involvement in the incident.

Dancing commences shortly after the PCs arrive. Eugenie accepts any invitations to dance from any of the male characters with Comeliness of Good or better or with Social Graces of Great. She pointedly avoids talking about the Grand Duke, though a character with a Perception of Good of better will notice that she keeps stealing looks at the Grand Duke and that she wears a troubled expression.

The PCs will have already attracted the attention of many of the guests by entering with

- Eugenie. Any PCs dancing or chatting with Eugenie will notice that many curious eyes are upon them.

- If any of the PCs are standing by themselves, they may be approached by a group of middle-aged aristocrats who inquire about Eugenie and the PCs' relationship to her. These gossips will, of course, be fascinated by any details about the Grand Duke's request to escort Eugenie and the bombing incident.

- After the dancing stops (after about half an hour), Eugenie tries to get the characters to engage the Grand Duke in conversation. She hopes this will help her to confirm he is not himself – though she won't tell the PCs what her motives are. Eugenie prods the PCs to ask the Grand Duke to participate in chess and darts. She tells them that the Grand Duke has a reputation for loving chess but not being very good at it, and that he enjoys a game of darts and is an exceedingly skilled player.

- If the PCs can get the "Grand Duke" to agree to either game, they will soon note how his abilities differ from Eugenie's description. The Marquis is quite good at chess, but is irritable and will only play if pressed to do so. He is completely unable to win a game of darts, though he will agree to play this more willingly than chess. (The Host may treat both chess and darts as either "Contested Actions" or Duels based on Education and Marksmanship respectively.)

- During these games, Eugenie might indicate to an exceptionally Charismatic PC (total difficulty of 12) that she suspects that the Grand Duke is "not himself" – though she will not indicate what she means by that.

- Eugenie will ask a PC to perform her final test for the Grand Duke with confidence if the Marquis wins at chess or is beaten badly at darts. She discloses to the PC that she believes that the Grand Duke is an impostor and asks that PC to "accidentally" spill a drink down the front of the Grand Duke's coat. (The Host may want to pick an especially upstanding or tight-buttoned PC for this final test, just to add some comic flavor.) She pleads with the PC if the PC shows reluctance, and states that she would do it herself, except that she wants to carefully monitor the Grand Duke's reaction from afar when the drink is spilled. She points out that the Grand Duke is wearing a coat given to him by an annoying cousin – a coat with which he should be happy to part with, once it is soiled by spilled drink.

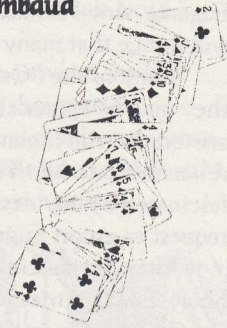
- If the PC agrees to spill the drink, the following occurs: the drink splashes on the white coat and the Grand Duke's face turns a deep red despite any apologies. The Grand Duke begins to hurl phrases about the PC's stupidity and clumsiness, commenting on how the coat is both expensive and dear to him. Eugenie then steps forward, levels an accusing finger at the Grand Duke and begins her accusation...

## Marquis Georges Rambaud

Mad Scientist

### Abilities

Courage: Good  
Education: Exceptional  
Exchequer: Good  
Fencing: Great  
Perception: Great  
Tinkering: Exceptional



The Marquis is a scrawny, weasel-faced man with a long, dark moustache and beady eyes that shine like dark rocks. His raspy voice has a nasal pitch and annoys many if he talks for very long – which he is prone to do, especially when the subject is himself.

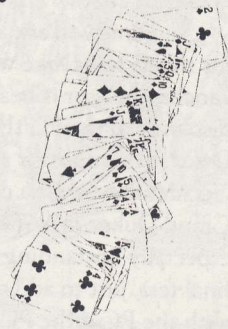
Marquis Rambaud suspects that he is a genius and it is this suspicion that makes his life so miserable. He feels intense jealousy over the successes of others and believes he deserves money, fame, and status because of his intellect alone. He is unwilling to admit that his personality is abrasive and his presence dull. A glimmer of compassion or joviality might have salvaged his social position but he has neither. He has twisted his jealousy and anger over an imagined slight into a personal vendetta against the Grand Duke, who possesses all the Marquis does not (and prospers for it). He has spent the past seven years plotting his revenge.

## Dragon Lord Denault

Steamtech Enthusiast

### Abilities

Athletics: Great  
Charisma: Good  
Exchequer: Exceptional  
Fencing: Great  
Firecast: Exceptional  
Marksmanship: Good  
Physique: Great



The Dragon Lord is a tall, slender figure, with reddish tinged blonde hair and huge, oval, greenish eyes. He is normally quiet but becomes enthusiastic if the topic of Steamtech is raised.

Where other Dragons seem to have a natural bent for Sorcery, Denault has a nearly fatal fondness for Steamtech and other gadgetry. His impressive social position as a Dragon has given him access to many inventors of Steamtech, who hope to have the backing of the magnificent Dragon to help give their experiments more exposure.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Rumblings

*In which the shanghaied Grand Duke manages to bring the stolen Steam Mole crashing up through the floor of his own house, and during which the characters discover the Marquis' fiendish plot.*

As soon as she begins to speak, Eugenie is interrupted by the sound of an ominous rumbling. The PCs have the sensation that the floor is shifting under their feet. Characters will need a Courage of Good or better to avoid being frozen in their tracks.

Seconds later, a giant steam-driven automotive with whirling drills bursts up through the floor of the ballroom, causing dancers to scatter and creating a cloud of dust and steam. The Steam Mole creates a roughly circular 30-foot hole in the middle of the ballroom floor. It immediately moves out through that hole and is heads in a straight line across the room, towards the many-windowed set of doors which open onto the rear terrace and garden. Unless stopped, it crashes through them, then circles back to smash and grind its way through more of the Grand Duke's residence, bobbing up and down through the earth like a crazed mole.

Judging by its erratic path, it would seem that the Steam Mole is either moving of its own accord or is being driven by a reckless maniac. In reality, the real Grand Duke, tied up and held captive inside the Steam Mole, managed to free one foot and randomly kicked and prodded at the controls until he achieved a result. Unfortunately, he managed to kick the controlling lever out of his own reach, and is now at the mercy of the rampaging machine.

The Marquis, seeing the unfortunate turn of events, turns to flee with the rest of the guests. Eugenie urges the PCs to chase after him. She leads the charge, and, if none of the PCs attempt to do so, tries to grapple him to the floor.

The Dragon Lord, one of the few not to flee in panic, perceives any action taken against the man he believes is the Grand Duke as part of a kidnapping plot involving the Steam Mole. He assumes dragon-form and does his best to protect the Grand Duke.

The PCs will have much to do amid the chaos. Stopping the Steam Mole may be seen as a priority, as well as dealing with an angry dragon. Eugenie, while wrestling with the Marquis, will shout for help declaring, "This man is an impostor!"

Characters trying to stop the Steam Mole from proceeding on its destructive course will need Athletics of Good or better to clamber up onto the vehicle. Once aboard, they will only have a minute or so to get inside it before the Steam Mole either crashes through a wall or burrows down into the



earth. Characters clinging to the outside of the Steam Mole when this happens risk being thrown to the ground or hit with flying debris.

Once inside the compartment, the characters can find the (real) Grand Duke tied to one of the comfortable, sturdy seats. He is unable to free himself or reach the controls. A character with Great Tinkering or better can figure out how to operate the Steam Mole and bring it to a stop. Others will simply have to go along for the ride. (The Steam Mole is a new and complex piece of steamtech and is terribly confusing to anyone without a good working knowledge of such things.)

When the Grand Duke is at last freed, he shouts, "The Marquis Rambaud! He is behind this. We must stop him!" and exits the mole.

Whatever is happening within the ballroom between the dragon, the masquerading Marquis, the PCs, and Eugenie comes to an abrupt halt once the real Grand Duke makes an appearance. He will, of course, declare that the other Grand Duke is an impostor. Though the real Grand Duke is fairly convincing in his declaration, the dragon, if conscious, will want some confirmation.

Denault asks the PCs to restrain both of the Grand Dukes while he whips up a quick spell. Once satisfied as to which of the men is the real Grand Duke, the dragon apologizes to him and to any PCs he may have injured.

The PCs will be thanked by the real Grand Duke for all their efforts and possibly given monetary reward (the Host can decide what would be a suitable reward). Eugenie will also express her gratitude to the characters and will be happy to stay in touch with them or even accompany them on further exploits.

### Grand Duke Alphonse Luchaire

#### Abilities

Charisma: Great  
Connections: Exceptional  
Exchequer: Great  
Fencing: Great  
Marksmanship: Good  
Social Graces: Exceptional



The Grand Duke is approximately 60 years old, with thinning gray hair and a neatly trimmed beard. He has a great, bushy moustache that hides his upper lip, but not his pouty lower one. His grey-blue eyes sparkle with life. He is often seen talking or laughing with those in his company; his voice is robust and richly toned.

A popular man, the Grand Duke is almost never without company. Many people feel that they know

him well. In reality, he leads a very private life. He is exceptionally skilled at redirecting probing questions and almost never reveals anything about his activities or personal feelings. He maintains the illusion of being an open book in order to better act in the role of gatherer and disseminator of information on behalf of the Court of France. It is his business to know much about others while making them believe they know much about him. His special charge, Eugenie Aulard, has been particularly invaluable as an informant and infiltrator.

### Steam Mole

The Steam Mole, as noted at the start of this adventure, is detailed in *Steam Age*. For those who do not have the sourcebook, the stats are as follows:

Size: Large (120 wounds).

Powered by: Steam Engines, with huge metal boilers studded with brass and iron rivets.

Operation Time: 24 hours.

Controlled by: A Complex Arrangement of Levers, Cables, and a Captain's Wheel.

Moves with: A Large Iron and Steel Drill Bit and dozens of small wheels on the circumference of the hull.



### Nicole Lindroos Frein

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

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

Nicole likes to sample game systems, trying them one after another on her unsuspecting group. She has run through everything from *Amber* to *Vampire* (and many things in between).

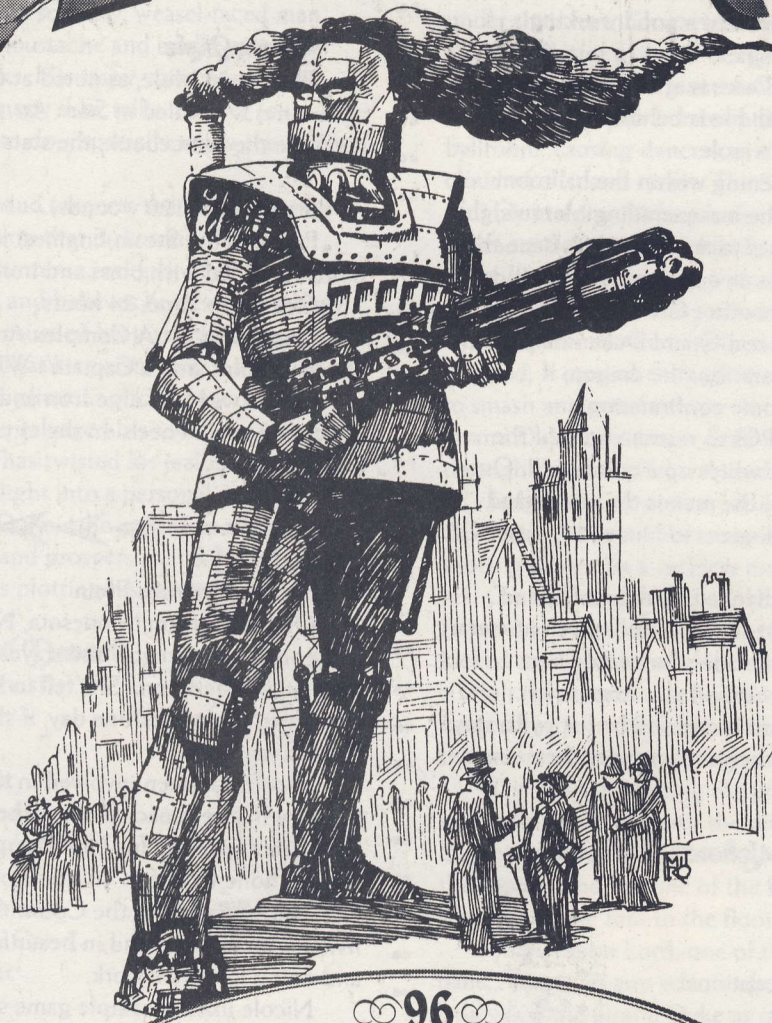


### Jan Perrier

Jan lives in Fort Langley, B.C., and has worked in the graphic arts field for the past 20 years. She trained at the Emily Carr School of Art, and enjoys watercolor painting and doing pencil drawings of cartoon characters. She is also an avid hiker, skier and cyclist.

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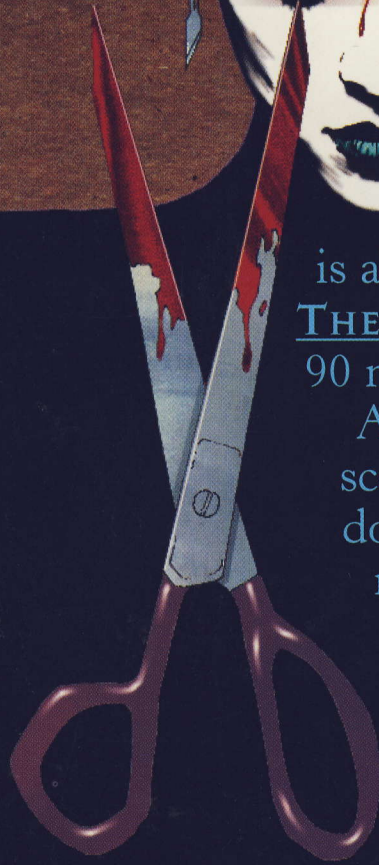
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