

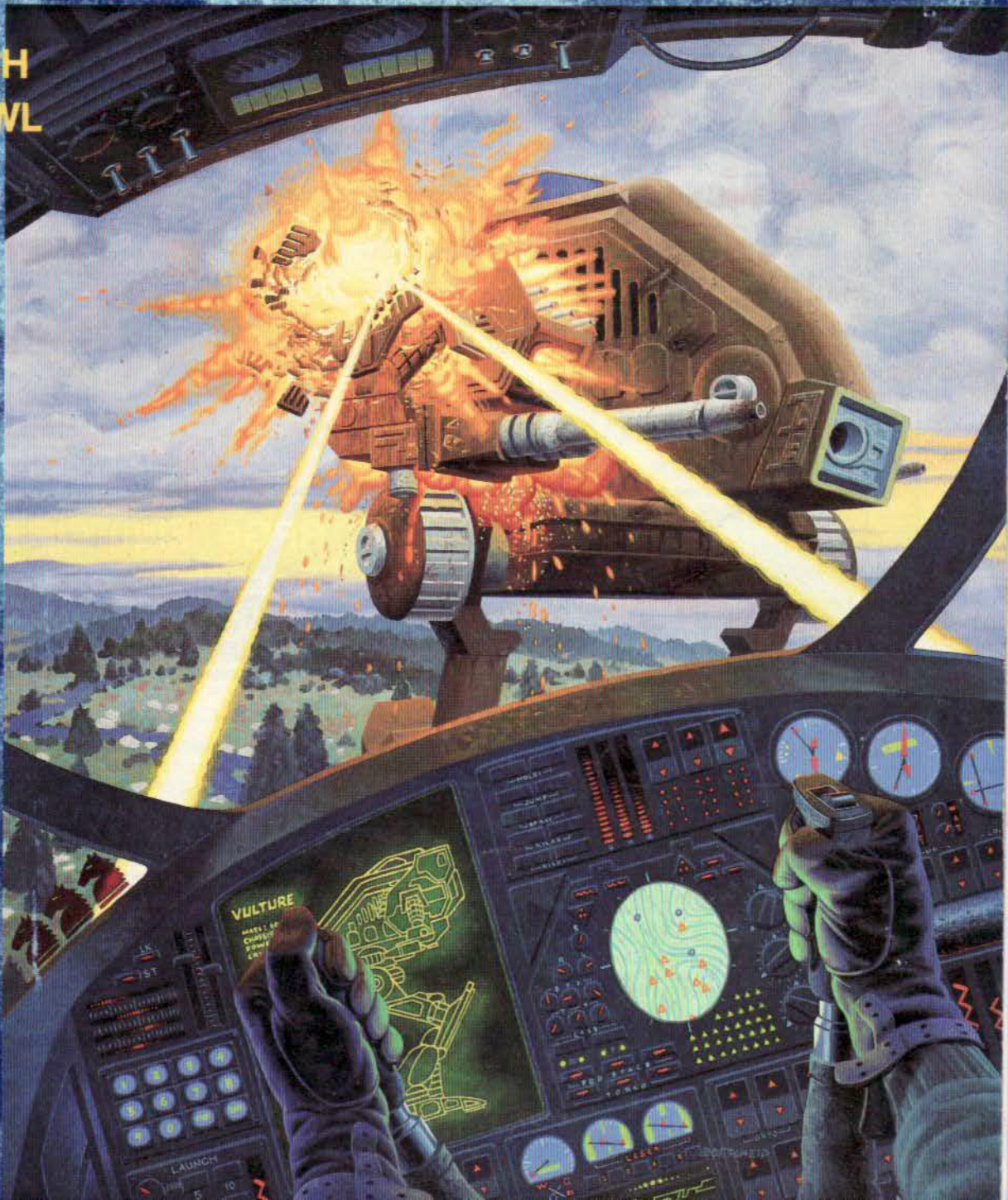
ISSUE
10

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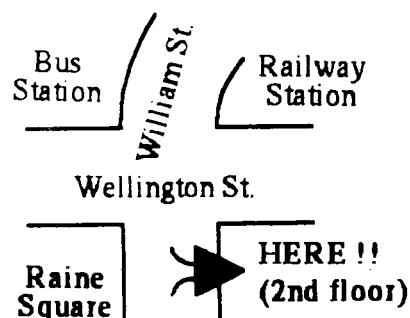
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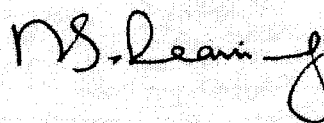
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Choice is a wonderful thing. It is one of the hallmarks of our democratic, 'free' market system. Choice enriches our lives with variety. The consumer's decision to buy one product instead of another is the driving force making continuous improvement an imperative; a market force which guarantees quality. Until recently, Australian gamers did not have a choice - either they bought an overseas publication (usually a house organ with nothing to say except "buy ours") or they didn't buy at all. Now that *Australian Realms* is on the hustings (read newsstands and shop counters) Australian gamers do have a choice. The wonderfully exciting news is that gamers are voting with their hip pockets by buying the magazine in large numbers. Issue 9 was a virtual sell out!

We thank you all for that vote of confidence and re-assure you that we will continue to look for ways to improve the magazine, to deliver maximum value for money to you. We make this promise with no intention of reversing our position now we've become, with your help, the market leader in this country.

Oh, one other thing while I'm up here on my soap box. If you are eligible to vote on March 13th - please vote wisely!



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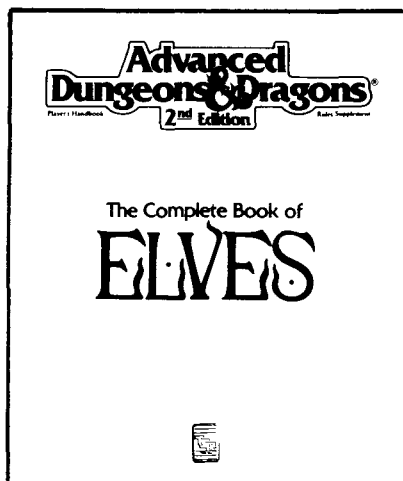
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Reviews

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF ELVES

AD&D 2nd Edition Sourcebook
by TSR RRP \$30.00

Reviewed by Brad Smart



The new TSR handbook is the long awaited Complete Book of Elves, containing all that you did and didn't want to know about the pointy eared gits. The book answers those oft asked questions such as; do elves sleep and what do they do if they don't so that they won't run around when the poor humans and others have to, and where do elves go when they die, they don't they just go on holiday - forever!

The Book of Elves includes descriptions of the general attitudes and characteristics of all AD&D 2nd Edition elves, along with a family tree showing how they are inter-related. With the advent of Spelljammer, all seven AD&D campaign worlds can be considered linked, however tenuously. Unfortunately these descriptions of the various elven sub-races are too short for my liking, providing little additional information over what is set out in the individual campaign source books. The vast majority of the information on elven life, society, attitudes, culture and legends is useful only to players in generic 'standard' AD&D campaigns. Great for those that wish to flesh out the role playing of elven characters in these campaigns, but I found it useless for an elf in say a Dark Sun world, where attitudes and environment are so totally different that much of what is presented here becomes irrelevant.

So what is in this book? Presentation is as per the previous books in the series. As usual, the colour plates are a pleasure to look at (even if we have seen them all before), but the black & white illustrations, following in the style of the other handbooks, are generally very bland. The typeface is big and the margins generous.

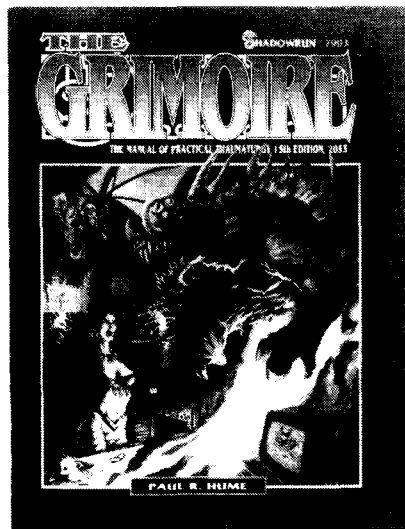
The 128 page book is divided into thirteen chapters including a lot of new material - Optional Rules, Character Kits, Elven Equipment and Elven Magic. These are a mixed bag, but unless playing in a specialised campaign will need to be introduced to even the balance with the other 'optional' rules in the rest of the handbook family. One of the Character Kits, the Bladesinger resonates with distant echoes of another elven class in another highly popular game. And hidden amongst the magic items is another time bomb waiting to explode in your campaign - Artificial Limbs. These inventions are almost cyberware and are set to turn the already powerful PC race into unstoppable Robo-Elves! "Come quietly, orc, or else there will be trouble."

Compared with the other handbooks, The Complete Book of Elves holds it's own, but does not stand out, useful for elf players, and those who buy every release, but otherwise read someone else's.

THE GRIMOIRE

Shadowrun 2nd Edition Sourcebook
by FASA RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Malcolm Adler



The Grimoire is the only book for Shadowrun second edition that is being reworked. The main reason why the book has been rewritten is due to the fact that the foundations of the first edition of the book now form the basic magic system of Shadowrun 2nd edition. The new edition of the Grimoire carries a lot of the same information as the first, but it's been cleared up and greatly improved, in alignment with the core rules. Many of the topics covered have been developed and refined presenting Shadowrunners everywhere with more choice and danger than ever before.

The book is a hefty 144 pages filled with black and white art and colour plates, some of which are very good. Mind you, much of the artwork, even the layout is a straight reproduction of the first edition version. I guess this saved on production time, and doesn't really offend as it is the new text which we are interested in. Overall, the presentation is fine and the value for money can't be argued with.

While a glance at the contents page will show many of the same titles as the first edition, read those chapters thoroughly as the information has been further detailed and clarified. Many new topics are covered and an eight page spell directory at the back of the book gives new ammunition for mages. The book also includes information from the London Sourcebook and the Universal Brotherhood pack which details Druids and Insect Spirits. Other subjects

covered are general background essays on the effect magic has had on society in 2054AD, Initiation, Geasa, Magical Groups, Beings, Allies, Watchers, Free Spirits, Places (Astral Space), Magical Threats, Spell Design and the Directory.

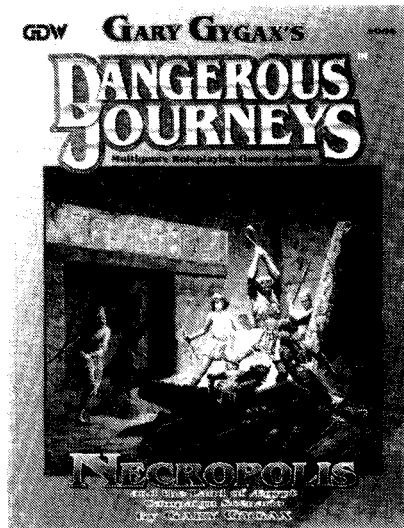
I suppose many of you who have the first edition are waiting for me to say whether you should invest your cash in the second edition. I think I can only say that you don't really have a choice. It is worth getting as it is reasonably priced, you won't be disappointed. As the book explains, the return of magic is very recent, people are busily exploring, experimenting and discovering new ways all the time. A revised Grimoire makes sense. The book also contains interesting sections on new totems, prominent mages in the field and important organisations. You should bear in mind that FASA is only updating The Grimoire, so you're not going to be forced into the position of having to repurchase any other first edition sourcebooks.

It is good to see that FASA is not out to rip off its customers with reissued rules for the new edition, which no doubt was at the very least a temptation. The only complaint I can make is that it would have been better to have *more* new material in The Grimoire. For existing players, this release of The Grimoire is a satisfying expansion of the Shadowrun second edition, for new players it is pretty much essential reading.

NECROPOLIS

Mythus Campaign Scenario - GDW
RRP \$27.00

Reviewed by Adam Whitt



Gary Gygax's Necropolis is the first scenario released for the Mythus role playing game and plunges the players into the darkly mysterious world of Aegyptian pantheology and politics. A world where gods, mythical beasts and their willing servants meddle in the affairs of men. A world where the dead don't know when to give up the ghost and leave the land of the living to the living. The beautiful Keith Parkinson cover shows this to perfection... but what is lurking inside?

I must confess to being slightly disappointed with the product overall. It has all the elements of a good adventure - hugely powerful evil NPC, secret and evil sects, political machinations, exotic locations, a legion of undead and demons, magic, traps, tricks, puzzles, a veritable labyrinth of interwoven subplots, and more authentic Aegyptian lore and background material than a research scholar could digest in a semester of Sundays - and yet, somehow, the whole fails to come together, to shift back the lid of the sarcophagus and rise up to grip you by the throat with excitement. Largely, Necropolis is one long dungeon bash - elaborate, superbly researched, well presented and clever in places, but a knock-open-the-door-avoid-the-trap-kill-

the-monster-and-loot-the-treasure bash of the oldest water. Roleplaying has advanced beyond this and I had hoped for more after reading the Mythus rules and Epic of Aerth.

But it is not all bad. Like all the Dangerous Journeys books to date, you certainly get a generous helping of material for your money. At 220 pages, there is enormous amounts of useful background information in Necropolis to enable you to start up a fascinating campaign. The Aegyptian setting has a very strong historical fantasy feel with many opportunities for ongoing adventure for any group. And you can always take the author's advice and rework the scenario to suit your party.

The production of the book is solid, the full colour fold out map of Rahotep's tomb is a bonus, whilst the black and white interior art is a variety of styles ranging from comic book art to highly evocative atmosphere pieces. The text is also of varying quality. Sometimes Mr Gygax really hits the spot with his text steeped in the mythos that he obviously loves dearly, but he struggles to maintain this pace throughout and I think it is this along with the elderly format of the scenario that has left me with the taste of centuries old dust in my mouth. A good start, but I hope better to come.

THE SABBAT

A Sourcebook for Vampire
by WHITE WOLF

Reviewed by Malcolm Adler



I must say, even though I am fairly new (like everybody else in Australia) to the Vampire RPG, I do really like its setting. The work that has been put into its background, mythology, rules, atmosphere and supplements is admirable. With this latest sourcebook White Wolf again delivers the goods.

The Sabbat comes with a beautiful cover and inside is decadently coated in dark, bloody Vampire style illustrations - some of these are truly disturbing and not for the faint at heart. Perhaps, as the publishers suggest, younger players should talk to their parents before they buy Vampire products in case they might object to its content.

The Sabbat are a secretive order of Vampires with definite goals and plans. The content is written entirely from the Sabbat's point of view, and thus if you are playing from the other rival organisations (eg. the Camarilla) you, should, as it suggests, take all the information and claims in the book with a pinch of salt. The body of the text itself details many interesting aspects of the Sabbat. The book is broken up into six chapters and two appendices. The chapters deal with the inside machinations and history of the Sabbat, running with the Sabbat and creating Sabbat member characters. Also detailed are the paths of enlightenment, Sabbat traits, of course templates. The short appendices dole out a mixture of weapons, relics and magical devices. The chainsaw has to be seen to be believed - gruesome.

As mentioned above the amount of information presented is impressive and captivating. While I won't go into full detail on the Sabbat, as the book warns against reading it unless you are planning on actually using it (due to the lessening of the mystery surrounding the Sabbat) I will say that I was pleased with the details given, it all fitting into the ever expanding picture of the 'Storyteller' system and world. The Sabbat's goals, true enemies and purposes are exposed here, they make for potentially very good chronicles, emphasising the Sabbat's desperate struggle with its enemies.

Some of the specifics of the work are new clans, bloodlines, abilities and rituals. Something I was personally pleased to see was the details on the Sabbat groups around the globe, giving at least true options on play.

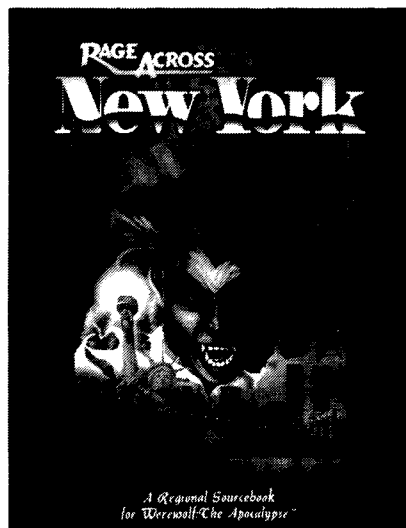
As a summary I would say I was happy with the Sabbat, in fact very happy. The book looks great, reads great and as a result is great. I would suggest storytellers who are going to involve the Sabbat in their chronicle should get hold of the book, otherwise it is at the very least a good, long, interesting read. While not necessary it would be a shame to involve the Sabbat in your game without using the colourful ideas within this book.

Another high quality product. In my view White Wolf are leading the pack.

RAGE ACROSS NEW YORK

Sourcebook for Werewolf
by WHITE WOLF

Reviewed by Colin Taber



This a release I have been waiting for since I heard of its scheduling. The book is the first in what will no doubt be a long line of Werewolf supplements from White Wolf, it is in the standard Wolf format, coming across as a very attractive product.

The book is over one hundred pages, and includes a small (approx A4) colour map/floorplan sheet, showing a sewer (nice touch). On the reverse side of the map is printed templates of characters that can be cut and stuck on to cardboard to give 'figures' to use on the map. Two copies of the map/templates are given, so one gets cut to ribbons while the other is, I suppose reusable (I personally don't like the idea of using anything I have to rip out of the book, but at least we have been given the option).

The actual text of the book is very, very good. This has got to be one of the most interesting sourcebooks I've read in a long while. It was fascinating reading about the Garou fending off the colonists which were being directed by forces of the Wyrm from the Old World as they settled in the New World. White Wolf has worked in aspects of Amerindian culture with incidents of true history to create a timeline that seems very

plausible. This section of the book I found to be the most absorbing and should be read to at least give examples of how the Garou (Werewolves) and the servants of the Wyrm compete for the lands of the New World.

The general background material for the contemporary setting is good and well conducted. While not as captivating as the introduction and history, it is still at a high level. I was pleased also to see the thought and planning which has gone into the topics of clan territories and the use of the geography (the sourcebook covers the state of New York, not just the city). The study of the power groups and characters is again well considered, while not integral it is always a blessing. The fourth chapter is about encounters, while not all are exceptional it is a reasonable guide and suggestion to the Werewolf Storyteller as what to do with a party of Garou. Such sections are invaluable for their education value alone.

I would suggest Rage Across New York as a very good place to set a Werewolf chronicle, my only complaint is that more information on the Big Apple itself would have been good but being Werewolves, I suppose the city is the last place you would actually want to be.

BATTLETECH

3rd Edition Rules
by FASA RRP \$39.95

Reviewed by Ron Fielding

Seasoned Battletech players should not be looking for a major overhaul in this latest edition of the base rules system. Things have not changed significantly. All the same, any edition of Battletech has to be recommended as an excellent entry level wargame for younger players and this boxed set offers the added bonus of 14 plastic 'Mechs.

The figures are made of a polypropylene plastic which is much the same stuff plastic buckets are made out of. The figures are virtually unbreakable! They are conveniently mounted on hexagonal bases which fit to the usual colourful dual fold out play area maps. The figures do have a couple of problems - they are not easily glued, paints tend to flake off and they don't match the 1:285th scale Ral Partha metal figures already in circulation. But they are a huge improvement on the pop up cards of previous editions.

Battletech is a simple game, soon learned, but hours of fun and supported by heaps of material. At this price, every gamer should own a copy!

VICTORY AT SEA

Wargame
by JEDKO GAMES RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Ron Fielding

This strategic level World War II naval combat game evolved out of Jedko's previous effort - War At Sea. It is a two player game allowing players to refight the Battle of the Atlantic. The rules are easily learnt in a night and before long you are wondering whether you are going to want to play this more than a few times. I guess it has been designed for beginners and so simplicity is the essence, but a few more optional or advanced rules would have been a good idea to present more of a challenge. That way, beginning players can evolve into more sophisticated wargamers.

The presentation is good. The cover art is functional without being overly exciting. The counters are well cut and the map board solidly mounted. The rules book is slim, logically laid out and easily understood. The mechanics cater for Admirals, port repair facilities, U-boat technology, limited intelligence, air power, mines and convoys.

If you fancy dicing with the Bismark and you have little boardgame experience - try Victory At Sea.

TREASURE MAPS

AD&D Accessory
by TSR RRP

Reviewed by Adam Whitt

I love this stuff. Cute maps and diagrams that you can hand to your players as adventure teasers. As with a lot of TSR stuff, its not really necessary 'cos you should be able to devise your own - but who has the time and equipment to create something of a similar quality?

Treasure Maps contains 16 adventure hooks in 64 loose leaf pre-punched pages. Each adventure seed has two maps - one to give to the players and the referee's version. The players version is invariably misleading and on the back are rumours and tit bits of information to entice the players into the adventure. The referee's map is more accurate and has explanatory notes on the back telling how to place and use the map, and what the players encounter when they follow it. These mini scenarios are fairly portable between the various TSR campaign worlds and readily slotted into existing non-TSR campaigns. Some of the hooks are quite good, I especially like the map tattooed on the back of a dwarf! Like I said, far from being a required purchase, but if you have the spare cash - enjoyable interludes.

CAMPAIN TESSA PART 1 MINI

THE WINDS OF CHANGE

The blinding orb of the amber sun slipped below the waves.
A brilliantly hued sky lit the way home for the fisherman, steering empty boats.
No catch at dawn, no sign of stock during the day and all knew, feeling it, that the sea would offer none tonight. The first time that all the boats had returned with empty nets.
Something was afoot.
Something *wrong* was happening.

How to use this Campaign

The campaign is given below as a series of adventures. Each begins with a suggested plotline followed by a description of the encounter areas. At the end you will find the background material, major NPC's and further suggested plotlines. It is important that you read all of this to best use this campaign. We suggest you play through this mini campaign in the order described on these pages. The major plotlines for this installment are the *Herder Murders* and the *Gold Rush*. The players should be encouraged to investigate Caldari, meet the NPC's and explore the island as much as possible during the plots, by doing this they will discover much more (such as the gold). You may care to add your own tales as you go, I would suggest you don't meddle with Grandmother and the Gold Rush as these will be further developed in next issue's concluding installment.

Introduction to Tessa

Tessa is a small island off the coast of the Kramer Confederation, a member state of the Helitian League. While technically a part of the City-State grouping this claim would only be argued by the cartographers of distant Baimiopia far to the north west of the confederation. The island is populated by the people of Caldari (a small fishing town) and a few miners. The island also holds a ruin and the deserted abode of a great but long since dead warlock.

This windswept island is a land of rolling green hills, goat herders, fishing boats and crudely constructed silver mines. A wild and untamed environment that cradles the stable relationships of the hardy Tessian community. The island has, in its own elemental way, nurtured the islanders' uninterrupted and comfortable lives for centuries. Unfortunately things are changing.

To Tessa

The players are heading to Tessa for any one of many reasons, the three we offer are briefly described below;

1. One of the PC's is from Tessa and is returning home to see his widowed mother and younger sister (bringing them coin).
2. The PC's are hired to guard a shipment to Tessa by an agent of the Calvanni family (fine wines and furniture from Burvoy). While waiting for a return voyage they get embroiled in the happenings of Tessa.
3. The PC's played through *The Forest* scenario (see issue 8), and learned of the Abode from Le Coarn. They go to Tessa seeking the Warlock's magical treasure.

The Plotlines

The Catch Fails

This is an introductory plot, introducing the players to Tessa, and Tessa to them. It is short and requires a degree of simple role play to complete, one session max.

1. The day that the PC's arrive has been one of light winds and no catch. The sky has been completely clear, yet the sunset is of a vibrant, burning amber. The fisherman of Tessa never return with empty nets, something is afoot.
2. When it becomes known that some travellers have been brought to the island all superstitious hands will point at the PC's for the blame of these 'strange' happenings. While the PC's can't do anything to avoid this they can diffuse the situation a number of ways, buying drinks is possibly the quickest.
3. If the players don't do anything to soothe the situation they will invariably get involved in some weaponless scuffles with some of the young hot-headed fishermen. If a fight does commence it should be concluded without serious injury, if the party is considered victorious they will be left to themselves by the rest of the townsfolk. No one will willingly talk to them (apart from Bardi), not until a need arises. The Urbestro may be used here to break the ice if the PC's are at a loss.

A Herder Slaughtered

This should only be commenced well after *The Catch Fails* has been concluded, otherwise the backward and superstitious inhabitants of Tessa are likely to lynch the party. What this plot involves is the first of several mysterious and grisly murders of Tessa's few herders while they are tending their flocks on the far side of the island.

1. Maria is uneasy and has been asking at the inn about her husband. He hasn't been seen and he should have been back with his herd from the far side of the island this afternoon. It is now dark outside and she is worried. The men laugh and make crude jokes about her husband preferring the company of goats and tell her if he is not back by morning they will go out and look.
2. The following day some of the men lead by Giovanni (who has been watching Maria with hungry eyes) go to look for her husband

Calbro, they return that night with no sign of him, they have not found his flock either.

3. The night the men come back Widow Fatima searches Caldari for her only son, also a herder, Mario is tending a flock on the far pastures. He hasn't returned either. This revelation will greatly upset Maria, and the men of the town will be forced to act. If the party is still alienated by the townsfolk this is the ideal time to get in their favour by leading the search.

4. The discovery of the bodies and any investigation the party may do into the victims past should be paced over several game days. If the widows/mother are questioned they will not say too much and shall be greatly distressed, it is the custom of the islanders to mourn in black for the rest of one's life. They take death very seriously here.

5. The stalker has killed three herders (the thirds name is Thano - he leaves a wife and young child). The bodies are scattered across the island, many of the flocks have also been slaughtered. No tracks are evident, no clues have been left, if the party is not careful they will be accused of witchcraft.

6. As the party is new to the island they will be treated with mistrust, and asked by the Caldari Urbestro (mayor) to investigate the killings and thus to clear their names as some Tessans clearly suspect them. If they have already volunteered to lead the search for the bodies they will be asked to investigate the killings. It is at this point that the party should start exploring Tessa. Some NPC's such as Old Joseph and Bardi will be able to help. Hints should be dropped to lead the party to search the old mines, Ruins and the abandoned Warlocks Abode. Some of the men of Tessa will believe the killings are the work of the Stalker (see below). Around four sessions.

The Stalker is the name given to Tessa's 'beastie'. It is the proverbial boogey-man of the island. The Stalker is described as a winged near-man, part Ogre, part Gargoyle. This minion of the Horned God is said to wander the island at night, spreading the Blood Plague and killing those who don't know the wards of safety or carry a holy medallion of Baimiopia. While some adults don't believe in the Stalker, many do, believing the herders are either blessed or have made devilish pacts to guarantee their own safety when out in the grazing lands over night.

The Stalker does not exist, but this is something you should never tell the players. Make the NPC's who don't believe in the Stalker (such as Urbestro Falgri and Pierre) seem smug and so sure of themselves that the players will start to have doubts. Meanwhile, other manly figures in Caldari will be petrified of the idea of travelling beyond the town lights after dark.

While the Stalker is the likely scapegoat for the herder murders it is not responsible. The Carrion is. This is just a passing predator, who stopped briefly on Tessa for four days (starting the day the players arrive). It killed all three shepherds and many of the flock, it will reside for the four days at the old mines. The huge bird is very hungry (and angry when awoken!) and will attack without hesitation (treat as Hp 140, THAC0 5, AC 5, 3 Attacks 1-12, 1-8, 1-8. Should the party be capable of hurting it, it will fly into the sky, not

stopping until it reaches another island.

While the Stalker is non-existent and the Carrion just a visitor, most townspeople will tell the players that there are many night-beasts that haunt the island and that the worst of them are escaped souls from the *Abode*. Many Tessans will point to the Abode as the source of much of the islands upcoming disaster and misfortune.

Thief!

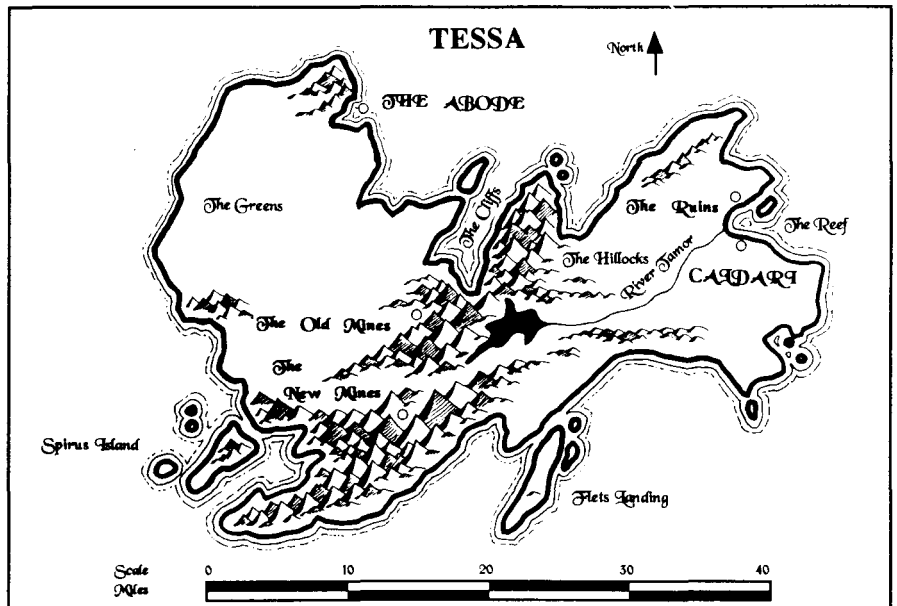
Should the party spend any time at one of the two inns or at the small market area they will eventually notice that one of them has had something stolen. A clever pick pocket is at work in the town and targeting the party. This plotline should be interwoven with the *Herder Murders*.

1. The first item is stolen well after the commotion of the *Failed Catch* and should be pointed out to the player concerned when they reach for the item (or purse) later that night. The item will be small and the thief good, no roll is required, success is automatic.
2. The following day if the players are still in Caldari for any length of time (at the markets or inns) another player will have something stolen. The theft being discovered later, well after the event.
3. If the party is getting annoyed, and has stated that they are keeping a particular watch out for pick pockets you should give the party members all a 20% chance of spotting the third theft, for thieves in the party and the victim - 30%. If not caught no item will be stolen on the fourth day but the thefts will continue on the fifth and so on. All thefts will occur at the markets or inns.
4. The pick pocket is a young man who is a wiry lad, dirty looking and very good at his trade, enter Bardi. He is a stable hand for the Calvanni's *Tessan Lodge* but finds plenty of time for other activities. If caught he will plead for his life, should the party take the matter to the Urbestro it will be dealt with in a civil manner. Should the party try and exact its own form of justice they will be frowned upon by the Tessans, and depending on how severe the action will possibly have trouble with the Urbestro and his guards.

A Mining Dispute

This plot is based at the mines, where the miners will be suspicious of anyone enquiring about the ores or works in general. Refer also to the background on the Mines as it will help explain the full situation.

1. When the players approach the mines they will see two men standing by a cart, emptying its load of rubble onto a slag heap. They look up at the players as they approach and greet them, eyeing the PC's equipment eagerly. The miners are Seph and Marcus, and as soon as the players were spotted they decided to play a nasty joke on them. It is a joke that only the two cruel men know of, Pierre and the other miners will be as ignorant of it as the players.
2. The two miners will try and lure the party into mining the shafts with them "*Plenty of silver for everybody.*" They will not take 'no' for an answer. This is far from the truth and as the players finally agree (even if it is just to have a quick look around in the mines "*Silver paves the tunnels.*") the other miners including Pierre will exit the mines for a break. When they do Seph and Marcus will call them and tell them that some new miners have happened along. This will upset the other miners no end as they think of their commissions being split up for even more work hands. This will end in the miners (led by Pierre) threatening combat and taking the opportunity to fight the players. While the miners will be after blood, should any of their number be killed they will flee down their mines and ambush the party at any of a dozen suitable sites if pursued.
3. This is more an incident than a plot line



but it depends how it pans out, should the party flee (or the miners) eventually the remaining miners will want to get back at the party and they will follow them, hoping to attack the party in the dead of night. These guys are brutal and have no morals, they will be quite happy to slaughter the party while they sleep if they feel their pride has been damaged, stalking the party for several days if need be. Any dead PC's will have their bodies thrown down one of the *Old Mines*.

The Mines While the silver is of poor quality it is relatively easy to mine, the workers follow the few worthwhile veins of metal with shallow shafts. There are two shafts currently being worked by five and three men. Both are in the same valley, not far from the original shafts which are known locally as "the Old Mines". They are owned by the Calvanni's and the miners have a wage paid to them by the family (2 gold per week), a commission is also paid to ensure their honesty. Even though the commission is paid Pierre is skimming about ten percent off the silver mined.

The miners are all big, ignorant and bestial fellows who are going to treat any unknown travellers rudely and possibly brutally. They will be angered by anyone coming to the mines, regardless of what is said, expecting that the party is here just to work in the mine and thus reduce their commission payments. They will not take kindly to enquiries about the mines and should the party stay in the area over night the selfish miners are very likely to seek them out to 'end' their enquiries. The miners always dig at least in groups of two and all stay in the one exhausted shaft that they use as a night shelter (between the two current mines). Every three days an agent of the Calvanni family comes to the mine to collect the silver, pay commission and also bring fresh food supplies, this agent only deals with Pierre.

The miners, if grouped together have one natural leader, Pierre. A Burvois sailor who came to grief ten years ago on a Tessian reef, he has since worked in the mines and established a reputation as a good miner and fighter (among other things - it is said he has fathered eight children to different women in Caldari, while this is rumour, the truth about his occasional lover is far more scandalous - see Father Penazza). His goal is to steal enough silver and earn enough gold to leave the mine and get back to Burvoy, or at least off Tessa.

The miners go to Caldari every Dimanco (the holy day, 7th day of the week) to go to the Chapel and to spend the night drinking cheap Kramer wines and Flets ales.

Into The Abode

At some time during the previous plots the party will inevitably have been directed to The Abode. If the reason for the party being on Tessa is The Abode, they will certainly go to explore it.

1. For whatever reason, the party approach the Abode. They find a way inside and explore (use the Abode map and room descriptions).
2. The party encounter the ghouls and other distractions which make life unpleasant for them for a time.
3. When the players find the Laboratory they are locked inside, their only method of escape is to spill blood and teleport to Spirus Island and discover the gold.

The Abode The Warlock's tower has been abandoned for one hundred and fifty years. It is built atop a rocky pinnacle-island and was no doubt crafted by magic. The seas surrounding it are choppy and treacherous, it only being safe to approach at low tide when a small rocky beach is revealed at the island base. Then the rock face can be scaled to gain access to the ruined building's Entry Hall, where a ruined landing for long ago destroyed steps protrudes.

This is a taboo place, if the locals discover the party is trying to enter it the PC's will have to bear responsibility for 'bad' happenings as they will have trespassed where none are allowed to tread. The party should be made clear on the points that The Abode seems to be a dangerous place and just as dangerous is the repercussions of going to this ruin and then having tragedies befall the superstitious Tessans shortly after (such as the *Herder Murders*).

There is a map of the floorplans for The Abode, as mentioned this is a chilling place of dark horror, the dead and chilling magic. You should draw out their search of the ruin, turning it into a goose chase if need be with rats and more. This is a place of power and when the players get out they should be in no hurry to come back. Details follow below covering the various main chambers and levels:

The Entry Hall

This room has pools of water on the floor and contains only rotting seats, a table and a tapestry.

The Lounge

This once formal room has several ornaments of various values (10-100 Gold Crowns) scattered amongst the rotting and destroyed furniture. A thick layer of dust is upon everything apart from the strip of floor linking three exits, something travels through here regularly.

The Libram

These rooms have windows on all three sides, there is little in the way of dust as the roof has long since gone from the third level, letting the rain wash in with every shower and storm. The rooms walls are lined with bookshelves, the shelves themselves full of rotting books. The rooms have a musty smell and pools of water upon the floor. While this would have once been a treasure trove over a century of rain damage has reduced its value to nil. With three levels and a linking spiral staircase it will make any academic want to cry seeing the lost lore of the Libram.

The Resto

The Dining room is beside the Kuirejo and contains a great oaken table. The room, while devoid of valuables (apart from silverware) is still in fairly good shape, the windows allowing enough light in to see clearly the intricate carving of the weathered chairs.

The Kuirejo Kitchens

The kitchens contain a well. Down the well live several Ghouls. While being inactive during the day, at night they stalk the house and hunt seabirds who perch on the roofs, towers and window sills of the building. The kitchen's windows have been covered by the ghouls, and many piles of bones cover the floor (mainly sea birds and the Warlock's). The Ghouls were originally the Warlock's servants, now they are mindless hunters. They will stalk any who enter the building, hungry for a change in diet (there are eight in total, usually operating in two groups).

The Stores

These rooms are full of waterlogged and rotting rubble. The rooms are roofless.

The Bed Chambers

While being a grand room this suffers from decrepid roofing like many of the other rooms in the Abode. The bed has been shredded (by the Ghouls) and the furniture overturned, if searched coinage worth 130 GC will be found.

The Balcony

This area is bare, but the safest place for the characters if the Ghouls are becoming a problem. The complete lack of shade will ensure the Ghouls will be at a disadvantage during daylight hours.

The Ruined Rooms

These rooms are covered by the collapsed roofing, there is nothing of value here.

The Hidden Stairs

The door which is disguised by a stone facade has a small horned statuette worked into a cavity. If the statue is pulled forward the door will slide away to reveal descending stairs. Deep scratches from the door's motions on the floor will give it away easily to the players.

The Laboratory

This is a testing chamber for powerful spells, the secret door entry is actually broken and once opened will automatically close (and lock). With the escape lever broken on this side they can't get out! The door is very strong and magically bonded so as to not weaken, once in this chamber the party will only be able to get out one way. In the room is a small central table and a Ghoul who has been trapped in here for quite a while. The weakened Ghoul will attack the party immediately, when defeated it will collapse in a magic circle marked on the floor. This will trigger a spell as blood has been spilled in the power circle at the centre of the chamber. A swirling mist will rise, this vortex of power will engulf the party and teleport them to Spirius Island, and the start of the Gold Rush. The spilling of blood will trigger the previously miscast teleport spell, and this will happen as often as blood hits the circle.

Gold Rush! The teleport experience will be very unnerving (unless the players have teleported before) and leave them gasping for breath, spinning dizzily and retching. As this ten minute period of disorientation passes the party will discover that they are in a natural cave.

Should a light source be handy the party will find themselves in a small cavern with pools of water scattered about the majority of the floor, also with them are the bones of a human, only



rusted metal rings and an amulet remain on the body. The Amulet is magical, a device of teleportation but must be used in conjunction with petty magics and in the correct manner for the user to teleport where they wish.

The body before the PC's is that of Minias, the Warlocks apprentice. Minias had stolen the item and fled in terror after the Warlock's murderer, Marc Marie Le Coarn had turned on him. Minias not knowing what to do exactly with the amulet did his best to escape, teleporting himself randomly, to Spirius Island and consequently starvation as the weak academic did not have the strength or skills to physically climb out of the cavern he found himself in. The Warlock being the paranoid that he was had only taught Minias a collection of useless cantripts that could not save the desperate apprentice who eventually died, mad from salt water and hunger, his spirit now haunts this erie place and is centred on the amulet.

Twinkling in the water are a number of small gold nuggets. The party will probably be quite excited, you should get them as hyped as you can here. If they dig they will find many more and much more exciting is the fact that as they dig through the loose stones of the pools they will find veins of gold in the rock floor, looking above they will see some in the ceiling. Also in the ceiling (eight feet above) is a small tunnel which carries fresh salty air to the players and the sounds of the sea. The party are on Spirius Island, when they climb out they will have to swim or flag down a fishing boat to get to dry land which is one hundred meters away.

The discovery of gold by the PC's is the turning point of the campaign. This is where the real adventure will start, everything else is just introduction material to Tessa. What you should encourage to happen is for the players to fill their

pockets with gold and then to return to Caldari. Once there they will eventually try to cash the gold or tell someone about it. Should the players do neither and slink off to get some more nuggets suspicious locals will follow and learn about the discovery in any case.

Within one week word will have spread to the extent that Miners and Prospectors will be arriving from the mainland. The first day of the second week after the discovery of gold will see twelve miners arrive on a boat, the next will see thirty on three boats, the next will see forty on two ships, following the day after will be fifty on a ship and two boats. These men are all Heletians and will continue arriving in such amounts as word spreads through the Kramer City States. Two weeks after the discovery there will two hundred miners and prospectors, a week later four hundred, a week after that seven hundred. A gold rush can be a very destructive thing...

If Grandmother is being dealt with at all at this time she will say if questioned that she is aware that there is gold on Spirius, and that there is more on Tessa itself. She will seem very quiet and reserved (even more so than usual), she will seem... *deathly*.

Campaign Background

A Brief History of Tessa

Records kept by the Church of Baimiopia indicate that the first recorded Heletian settlement on the island occurred around three centuries ago. The fishing settlement was decimated eighty years later by the *Blood Plague* which killed three in four inhabitants, the survivors abandoned the original town site and founded Caldari.

Many believe that the Blood Plague sprang from the *Abode*, in which dwelt a powerful warlock. It was said he had been on Tessa before the first Heletians, was a user of wicked magics and was in league with devilish princes.

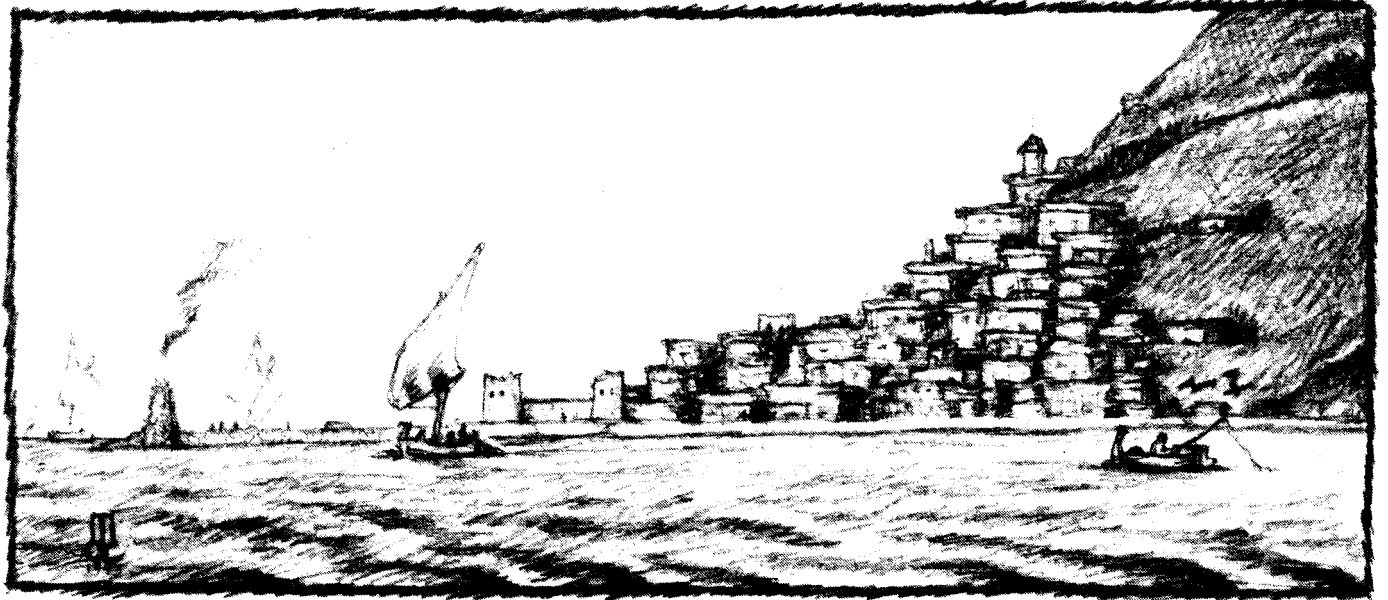
Sometime after the plague a young Templar of Rosemaigne from Burvoy came to Caldari. He claimed he had been called to Tessa by his God, brought here to purge a servant of the Horned God. He hunted down and destroyed the Warlock, mutilating the body as per the *Rituals of Cleansing*, submerging the heart in the salt-laden sea. Finally he returned to his native Burvoy. This templar was Marc Marie Le Coarn, for more information on this templars later fate read "The Forest" scenario in issue #8.

One hundred and twenty years after the Blood Plague the first ships of a small fleet carrying Flet refugees arrived. The homeless and desperate Flets converted to the Church of Baimiopia and thus gained acceptance in Tessa, forty years after their arrival the Church bestowed the title of town upon Caldari. While the Church has limited powers in most Kramer Confederation towns its base in Tessa is strong, the people are superstitious and will always listen to the local Priest, his word is *moral law*.

The people of Tessa carry their beliefs to every portion of their lives, the sea is master, magic is evil, when a spouse dies remarriage is not allowed and only the Gods of Baimiopia are true. Tessans fear the unknown, the entire population is human, with no exceptions, any non-humans will be viewed in *typical* rural Heletian fashion; with suspicion, fear and sometimes anger. This deep rooted dislike of all things foreign will include the players. When anything goes amiss on the island, the PC's will be the first to come in for blame.

Caldari

The town and its environs are simple and somewhat bleak. The town is built on the sheltered curve of a bay, not far from the Ruins (all Tessans keep away from this place). For the layout of the town see the map, important buildings are noted, all others are residences or small shops (current population 283). Caldari is now over two centuries old. When the Flets arrived as refugees from Wairanir (the Elven



lands) they were welcomed and assimilated into the local population, adopting Heletian names and customs. They soon lost their cultural roots, retaining only the blonde hair that makes the intermingled Tessans a peculiarity of the Heletians.

One family in particular put great efforts into helping the refugees, spending time, energy and coin. As reward for the kindness shown by the Calvanni family and the avid work that the family head had put into converting the Flets to the Church of Baimiopia, the local Bishop granted the Calvanni's title to the island. The godly and hard working family has since turned more toward money grabbing, but they are still far better landowners (allowing flocks to be grazed across the island) than most.

The Powers That Be

The Calvanni family, Urbestro Falgri and Father Penzanna are the true powers on Tessa. The Calvanni family owns the mines, and via a century old deed most of the island. The township of Caldari is not owned by the family, this was relinquished eighty six years ago and in return the Calvanni's are *above* the law. The Family is headed by **Antony Calvanni**, a fifty six year old man with two daughters. Both have their own families of two sons each, it is these who are likely to cause trouble for the players. The hot headed young men are often looking for an opportunity to prove themselves, this means picking on the less fortunate townsmen or travellers. All four of the young sons captain small fishing ships that are owned by the clannish Calvanni's.

The family has a great deal of economic power. They employ forty people directly in Tessa, via one of the inn's, some stores, the mines, a ferry/cargo service to the mainland and several fishing ships. In summary the family is very important to Tessa and the townfolk are well aware of this, needless to say the Calvanni's overall goal is to make more coin.

The past thirty two years has seen the Urbestroship held by Tessans other than the Calvanni's. At the moment **Urbestro Falgri** reigns. He is Judge and general law maker on the island. The players are going to have a lot of interaction with Urbestro Falgri who is a reasonable and wise thirty five year old man. Falgri is well respected, but lacks the material or moral wealth of the Calvanni's and Father Penzanna. If the players start to get bogged down anywhere in any plot Falgri is the ideal life line to throw them, his motives are simple- friendship and curiosity, his overall goal is to make Tessa a better place (and *be* in control of it all). He sees the Calvanni's and Father Penazza's influence over the people as dangerous and outdated.

Lastly the Tessans are guided by **Father Penzanna**. He is a devoted and fiery priest of the Church of Baimiopia with a very strong sense of right and wrong. His forty one years have seen that he sports grey hair. Father Penzanna can usually be found at the Chapel and occasionally in Caldari itself. While being the perfect priest he has some things to hide, he has on occasion had liaisons with Pierre of the most un-priestly manner. Should the players kill Pierre from the mines he will use any subtle avenue possible to avenge his lover's death. Father Penazza has no specific goal other than preaching, if the players are unbelievers he will do his utmost to convert them. Should they kill Pierre he will make no efforts for conversions, wanting them to burn in the fires of damnation.

In the case of these three major 'powers' in the Tessa community, no one can go against the wishes of the other two without angering the towns people. Urbestro Falgri commands great respect, the Calvanni's great wealth and Father Penzanna holds the lantern that lights the road leading to salvation.

Sango Drajo - The Warlock

The Warlock is a Sango Drajo, a blood drinker. While he is now dead it is possible that he will be regenerated by the party's actions. If his heart is retrieved from the reef one hundred metres south of Ruins, hidden amongst shallow coral and brought back to Tessa his body will reform and his ruby like heart disappear (the players may find out this from the Old Ruins or Grandmother). If regenerated he will get his house back in order and start his spell research again. While he is a vampire he does not want to encourage the Tessans to lynch him, his philosophy will be that if he leaves them, they will leave him. The prospectors the gold rush brings will be another matter, he will not take kindly to people trying to enter his Abode or gawking at his residence. He will watch them and possibly attack, feeding upon them if he feels threatened.

Grandmother

The individual known as "Grandmother" is the spirit of the island, she is Tessa's soul, a nature spirit. While not requiring any form of worship from the human inhabitants they all know of her and treat her with great respect, most have only seen her from afar, standing on a hill top or sitting on a bluff. She has never been in Caldari, but has on more occasions than will be admitted been sought out by townfolk for advice or 'potions' which she cannot supply - many maidens have sought love potions as it is said amongst the women folk that Grandmother is but an aged aspect of Venus, the Love Goddess. The Tessans don't comprehend the truth of what Grandmother is, but they do realise she is more than an old hag. Not even Father Penzanna would be game to

suggest burning her for witchery.

While Grandmother is very important to the campaign she will mainly come into play when the party discovers gold and in next issues concluding installment. Paint her as an old but wise woman, whenever she is sought by the party they will be able to find her (not easily though), she will speak with them and will always talk about the doom laden future that is coming to Tessa. Watching the party, she will always have a sad look in her eyes, if asked how the party could stop the doom of the future she will answer something along the lines of "*You cannot stop yourselves, you are but of nature, mortal, as are all things but time itself.*"

What she means by this is the PC's *are* the islands doom, it is *they* who will discover gold and cause the gold rush that will destroy the Tessa of today and birth the Tessa of tomorrow. So that the party feels they can do something you should have Grandmother talk of an evil on the island (gold and greed). This may cause the party to search for this wickedness, not knowing exactly what they are looking for, but trying to find and put a stop to it, this is of course one method of getting them to the Abode if they haven't already been "*There is a strong evil on the island, a great, mournful fate and greed.*"

You should steer the players towards Grandmother for advice, she will be able to provide them with more of the islands true history than the Tessans. Establishing an early relationship will better emphasise the effects of the players actions later.

Grandmother can tell the players the following if questioned directly;

1. The carvings in the Ruins are of a cursed rock hidden beneath the waves off Tessa's coast, one hundred yards south of the ruins (this is the heart of the Sango Drajo, the Warlock). If brought back on shore the Warlock will regenerate. While she will admit it is but a prophecy of the original Tessans, she believes it to be true. Describing it as a ruby. Grandmother will hesitantly encourage the players to fetch it, suggesting it to be powerful. She will be seeing the possibility of having the Warlock back as a method to stop or slow the Gold Rush. This is only a desperate hope.

2. Another island was at one time adjacent to Tessa, but was destroyed by a magical civil war, its inhabitants were followers of the Horned God. These Sango Drajo were killed to the last by their battles, with the one exception being the Warlock. Eventually the island sank beneath the waves.

3. Grandmother will not want to inflict any suffering on the Tessans, she feels great love for them, thinking of them as her children. But, as time runs out, when the gold rush starts, she may suggest a great many things to stop the hordes of prospectors who will come. This may include fetching the Warlocks's heart from the reef. She

knows the Warlock (regardless of what the Tessans think) did not harm them, he would feed from stray livestock, nothing else. But, she sees hope in the possibility that the Warlock would defend his quiet island of Tessa should thousands of uncontrolled prospectors arrive.

In her heart she knows she cannot stop the gold rush, as it is as inevitable as death itself.

Other Areas

The Ruins

The *Blood Plague* was a sickness of devilish cruelty and speed. Its victims drowned in their own blood, seeping from infected sores spread throughout their lungs. Once the scourge had passed through the old settlement the survivors fled, settling where present day Caldari is situated. The new village eventually grew enough in size to become named a town by the Church of Baimiopia. The Ruins stand as a reminder, what remains is made of stone and forms but a series of walls and unroofed rooms. Only information is to be found here, from a carving in an old wall. It shows a gem glowing beneath the sea off shore. Only Grandmother or Father Penazza can expand on the scene. It is from an old, now forgotten prophecy, Father Penazza will assume (correctly) it is about the Warlocks heart being submerged by Le Coarn, saying it is pictorial history. A clever party will be able to point out that the village was deserted before Le Coarn came to Tessa, due to the plague.

Grandmother knows the carvings truth. Should the heart be brought back to Tessa the vampiric Warlock will regenerate on the night of the next holy day, appearing in the Abode.

The Reef

One hundred metres south of the Ruins, offshore, is a shallowly submerged reef. Strong swimmers, or trained divers swimming the two metres below the surface may be fortunate enough to find the slightly pulsing red stone which is Sango Drajo's unliving heart - the source of his power. The salt water both preserving and imprisoning it. If the players take the heart to the island and it dries, the vampire will begin to reform in his Abode.

The Extras

Old Joseph is a fisherman who lost an eye in a fishing accident many years ago. He knows a lot about the island and the various people of Caldari. He is very approachable and spends a great deal of time in the inns where the innkeepers humour him and give him cheap drinks. He is most likely to be the players first true friend and will perhaps point them in the direction of Grandmother.

Bardi will befriend the party early as he works at the Tessian Lodge Inn. He will act as guide if the party asks him to. He will use this opportunity to start stealing from the PC's, he is the most accomplished of pick pockets, a true artist.

Lolita is a lady of pleasure who stays at the Tessian lodge. While no Tessian would speak to her in the street when in the inn many of the young men (including the Calvanni boys) will seek her attention and pay for her services. She is not yet too old for her trade but with her services come unpleasant risks and rashes.

Secondary Plots

There are dozens of simple plots that can be mixed in with the gold rush. Urbestro Falgri will be needing more watchman to control the unruly miners, prices will start increasing as demand soars for all items, disputes will break out regarding things as varied as mining claims to innocent daughters. The Tessans will feel very threatened by the sudden influx, and the mainlander Heletians will not trust the "blonde" Tessans, even though they are also Heletians.

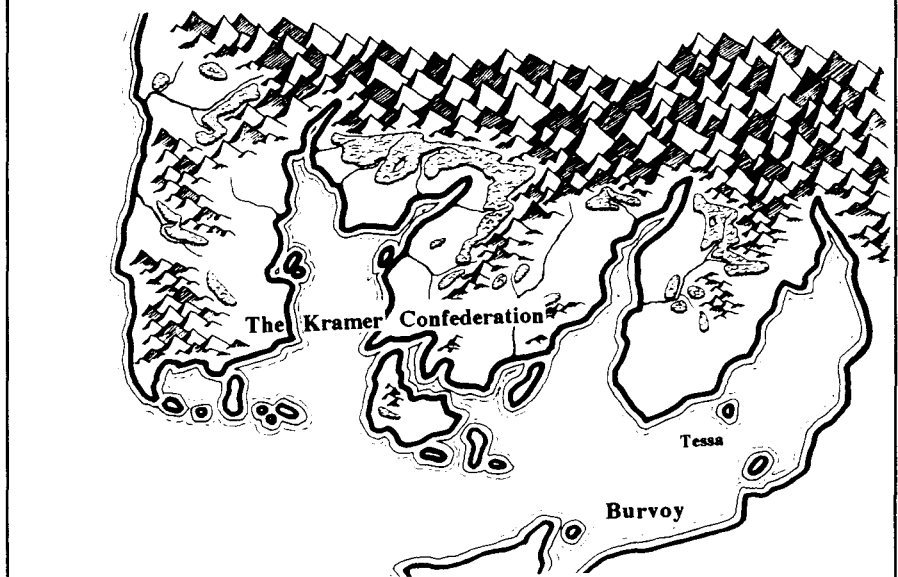
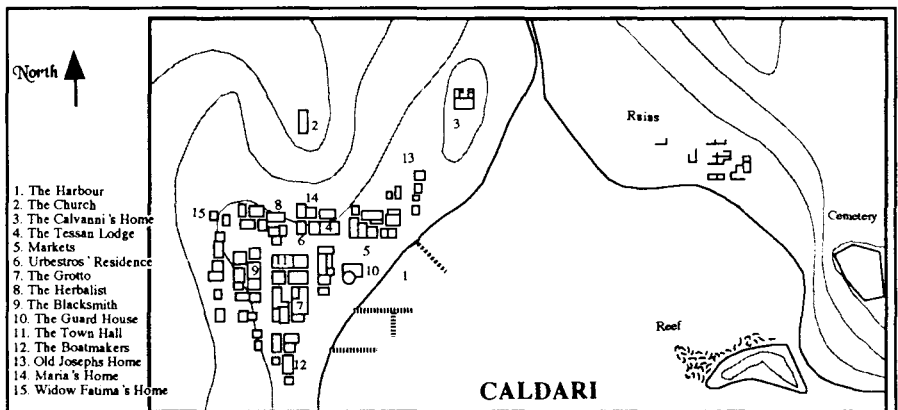
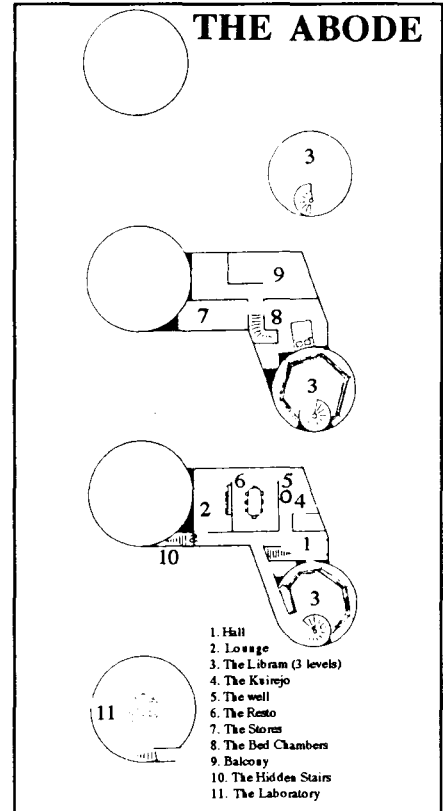
Other problems will involve weirdroot, other drugs, smuggling, the collection of taxes and the buying/cashing of ore. Very soon two inns will not be enough for rich young men, and Caldari not big enough, this is not to mention the chances of increased disease and a possible vampire hunt.

Final Advice

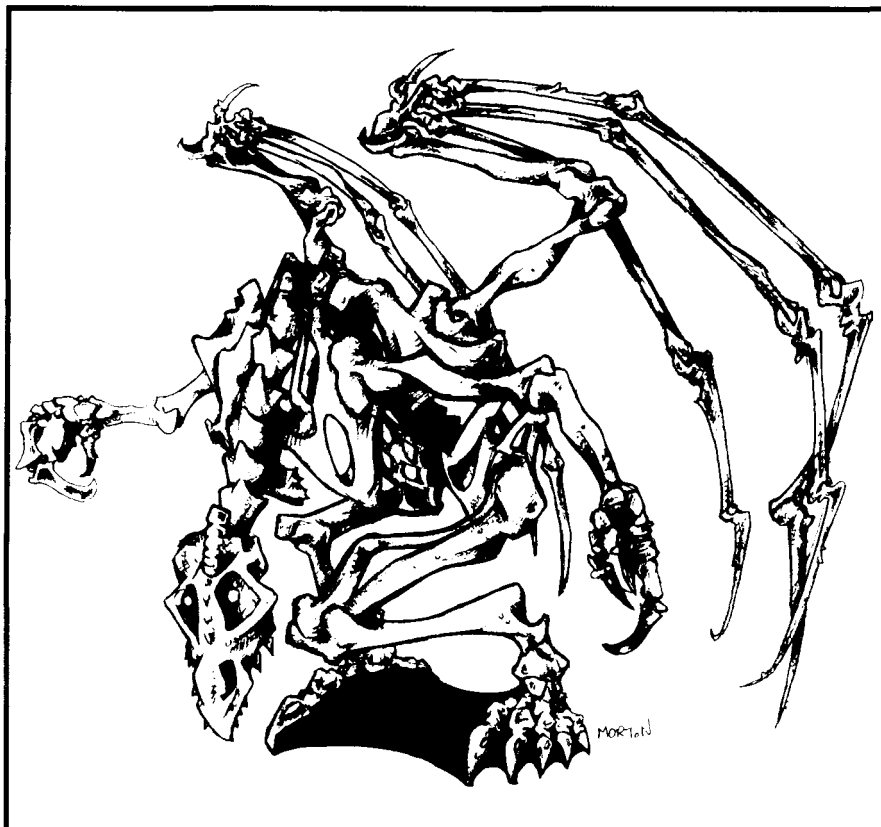
The focus of the campaign is ultimately the gold rush and how it destroys Tessa, therefore to achieve maximum results you should get your players involved in Tessian life, as the island is swamped by prospectors they should be made to feel threatened personally, as Grandmother weakens the players should be made to feel *sad* perhaps even *responsible*.

For those of you who referee groups who often see an adventure to a good end I issue a warning. This campaign cannot have a happy ending, it is about death, rebirth and evolution. If your players will be upset about what their actions are going to cause I suggest you warn them beforehand that this campaign is aiming to teach them something. This, for some of you will be nothing new, but to others this may leave your players wondering why they bothered. This will not have a happy fairy tale ending with Grandmother (the victim) thanking the party for their valiant efforts, it will instead end with the party trying to control a mess that they created, it is an exercise in damage control, responsibility and greed.

Yes, role playing is suppose to be fun, and this can be, but it can *also* be a lesson. I hope they learn something.



MONSTER GALLERY



Microbes

New Creatures for RIFTS™

By Dave Capon.

Not strictly 'monsters' in the classical sense, these microscopic creatures infect their host and give them certain 'desirable' powers. Sadly these parasites also have their down sides. Let the players be warned.

Name: *Hyparobes*

Host Type: Any animal, human, D-Bee, but not super-natural beings or Juicers.

Host Environment: Lungs & Bloodstream. Typically inhaled as a snuff-like substance.

Reproduction: N/A

Lifespan: 1 Hour

Powers: Enhances body systems ie. +4 Roll with Blow/Pull punch, +4 Initiative, Automatic Dodge (like parry), 2 Additional attacks per melee, +2 Parry, +6 Dodge

Side Effects: Ages the body by 1 month per usage. The after-effects are dizzying and disorienting for 2 hours after use. Penalties: -1 attack per melee, spd 1/2, -4 strike/parry/dodge.

Size: Microscopic

Elimination: No need, dies within 1 hour and absorbed into the body

Cost: 200,000 Credits

Name: *Gigantrobes*

Host Type: Humans and Humanoid D-Bees
Host Environment: Entire body. Typically injected or inhaled.

Reproduction: By cellular division, continually for years.

Lifespan: 15 + 3D6 Years

Powers: Microbes mutate and enhance the growth of the host - Becomes a Mega-Damage creature - SDC + Hit Points become MD. Add 2ft in height per level or every 3 years. Add 2 MDC per additional foot of growth. Strength considered Supernatural! Add 1 point of Strength per additional foot of height. Characters of over 20ft tall gain +2 Strike and Parry.

Side Effects: Add 50lbs per additional foot of height. Characters over 20ft tall -4 Dodge, -1 initiative. Gets Slower as gets taller -2 spd per level (stop at 3). -1 pp per level (stop at 3). Reduced Life Expectancy - 40 + 3D6 Years

Size: Microscopic

Elimination: Within first 2 months: 15% chance a Purobe will destroy Microbes (can try once a week). 30% chance Magic restoration will kill Microbes. After 2 months - Irreversible, no known cure.

Cost: 1 million credits

Dracholiche

(Undead Dragon)

by Alan Ogden

Climate/Terrain: Any

Frequency: Very Rare

Organisation: Solitary

Activity Cycle: See below

Diet: Nil

Intelligence: Exceptional

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Treasure: HST x3, V

No. Appearing: 1

Armour Class: -11

Movement: 9" Fly 30" (C) Jump 3"

Hit Dice: 21

THAC0: -5

Dam/Att: 1d10/1d10/3d10 (all +1d10+12)

Breath Weapon: spectral flame 24d10+12

Special Att: Spells - Wizard (2/2/2/1), Priest (2/1) at 21st level of ability.

Special Defence: +1 or better wps to hit, immune to normal missiles, fire/cold/electricity based attacks, death and mind affecting spells.

Magic Resistance: 65%

Size: H (Body 174', Tail 162')

Morale: Fearless (19-20)

XP: 30000

Appearance: The dracholiche is the undead form of an ancient red dragon that guards its hoard for all eternity. Its life force is held in a glowing gemlike reliquary concealed somewhere amongst its hoard. The dracholiche initially appears to be the skeletal remains of a dragon twined through its treasure. The dracholiche will remain in this dormant state as long as its hoard remains intact. If even the smallest portion of the hoard is removed, the dracholiche will animate. This process requires three full rounds to complete.

In the first round a chill wind will begin to blow. The glowing reliquary will dim. In the second round the sound of dragon bones stirring, the joints knitting together with old magic can be heard like the rattling of death's dice over the howling wind. Flickering blue magefire plays around the reviving bones. In the third round the wind will die as quickly as it awakened. The chill deepens to an intense cold. The reliquary will be inert but the horrifying form of a skeletal dragon bathed in a nimbus of ghostly blue light will be arisen. Creatures looking on the dracholiche are affected by *fear* - all 5th level & below must save or flee. The dracholiche will attack until every last scrap of treasure and more is replaced before it returns to dormancy.

NB: Readers contributions to the Monster Gallery are most welcome. Please send your creations to: Monster Gallery PO Box 220 Morley WA 6062.

'Good Fellows All'

by Gary Gygax

Wherein *Gary Gygax* talks about the *Dangerous Journeys*TM multigenre roleplaying game system and other things of interest...

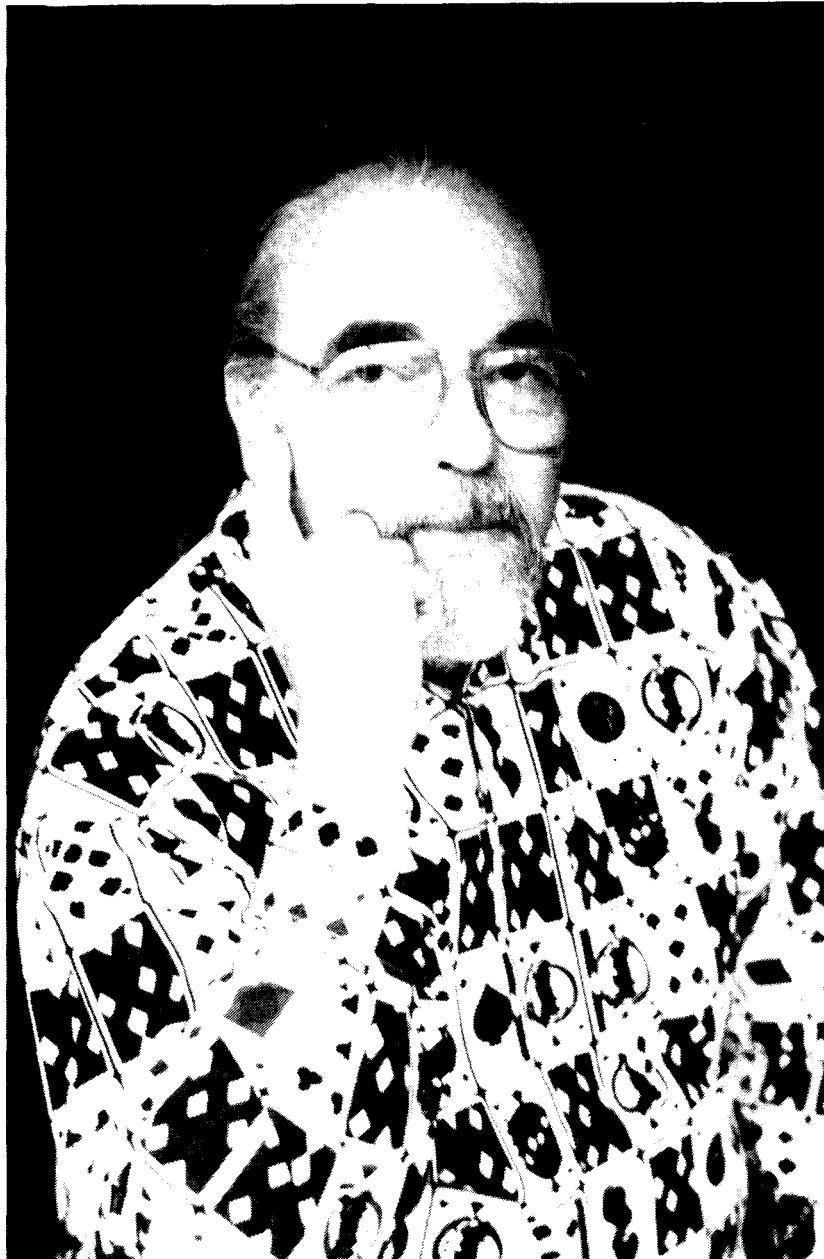
When Nick Leaning, the Kindly Editor of *Australian Realms* asked if I would be interested in doing an article for the magazine, I was naturally flattered and pleased at having the opportunity... and annoyed at the same time.

Why so? Lately it seems as if all I have been doing in my theoretical free time is appearing at conventions and autograph sessions and talking about the new game system. No. I have to be honest. That isn't entirely true. I have also written a couple of dozen articles and responded to heaps of fan correspondence too. Thus, as you might empathise, I was a bit hesitant in agreeing. Noting this, your Kindly Editor suggested that perhaps one of the many pieces done for GDW's *Journeys*TM Journal here in the States could be run concurrently in *Australian Realms*. "Of course," I responded with an hopefully inaudible over-long-distance-telephone-communications sigh of relief. "That should work marvelously. "

Shortly thereafter I had a pang of doubt. The pertinent material being run in that publication is presented as an ongoing series, and the various bits are interrelated and sometimes a bit esoteric as the series have developed over several issues now. Under the circumstances I thought it was a better idea to sit down immediately at the computer and do something special.

What follows, then, is something similar to what develops during the course of one of my convention lectures after I finish my usually brief "canned" segments, or the chats I engage in with fellow gamers at an autographing. This article simulates a question and answer exchange between speaker and audience, sans audience. What I am asked most frequently lately serves as the basis for this sort of "good-fellows-all" approach to authorship.

Some might say that it is a retreat in good writing, but I scoff at such detractors in advance. There! Considering how much of my life has been spent recently in dealing with interested game enthusiasts wanting to know what I've been up to and about the



new material I've produced, writing this piece is a natural step for me. There is interest in this topic, and satisfying it in the form of an article serves the gamers well. What is related hereafter, then, is a bit of the history of the new

game system, from just prior to its creation through what is going on with the project now, with a few pauses for explanation as we go, personal asides thrown in at no cost whatsoever. With me? Good! Let's be off.

I stopped game mastering and playing *AD&D*™ in 1985 for several reasons, and since that time I haven't had anything much to do with the game. As of a year later that is absolutely so.

No, I had nothing whatsoever to do with their revision, nor do I know anything other than hearsay about certain other products which seem to be based on my original work, *Greyhawk Castle*, for example. The reason for this is simple. All connection with TSR, Inc. was severed in 1986.

At that time I had thought of doing a multigenre game system, but such thoughts had revolved around one which meshed the leading products of that company into a new whole which would incorporate immediately four or more genres thus. With the break the idea had to be re-thought, for a whole new rules system was obviously called for. Of course this was a challenge, but what an opportunity. I could throw out everything I didn't like about roleplaying as expressed in my old work and present something new, innovative, and even revolutionary. I began to formulate just what needed to be done to create a new approach to the game form.

Why did I create the new system? Because I love gaming, roleplaying gaming in particular. I created the *Dangerous Journeys* system because I thought it would be a better game than any other out there—my previous attempts included. A tall order for me, but one which I felt motivated to undertake nonetheless. The most satisfying part of having done what I have is to hear enthusiast after enthusiast thank me for the years of enjoyment they have had because of my games. The fact is, I too have had lots of fun, but that enjoyment had slipped considerably. The new game system is meant to return the level of freshness and excitement that had existed previously, and to provide a vehicle which would continue to furnish the high level of performance for a much longer time than possible in other games.

The editor for the project was Les Smith. He and I spoke a bit at the very beginning, for as creator I retained control of the material as regards editorial change. Les Smith's initial reaction after a quick reading of the manuscript was somewhat guarded. At first blush he assessed the system as little more than a logical step in advancement of the roleplaying game form. I wasn't pleased, but my assurance remained unshaken. Les delved into the work, perused it, grasped the whole. He then changed his stance. I can't quote him exactly, but his statement to the president of GDW was most enthusiastic and went something like this: "This

system is what I have always dreamed of. With it I can do anything, everything I have ever wanted to do in a roleplaying game." Needless to say, we got on splendidly thereafter.

Well, there's little point in talking much more about that, for with the *Mythus*™, *Mythus Magick*™, *Epic of Aerth*™, and even *Necropolis* works available, they obviously speak to whether or not I succeeded far more eloquently than can I in a brief article. However, the parts which I believe to be outstanding are:

1. A truly multigenre roleplaying game system, viable in any imaginable milieu, with the game master and players not having to switch core rules, wherein personas created in one genre are viable entities in any other. The game system is all-encompassing, and that was my first aim. I am convinced it succeeds and is also more fun to play than any other roleplaying game available.

2. The creation of the Heroic Persona with the three, I believe heretofore ignored, traits of mind, body, and spirit interrelated and quantified in game terms so as to be most meaningful indeed.

3. The development of the Heroic Persona, including the skill groupings by vocation, socioeconomic class, "quirks", and special connections. That does away with the single-dimensional stereotype of the "class" and makes each persona unique, just as we are in reality. All of this, and the rest involved, assists in development of a realistic persona which is natural to the player and easily role-played and well known to the game master because of the detailed information furnished to him by the player who developed that persona.

4. The extensive and overall useful quantity of knowledge/skills for creation of differing multi-faceted personas.

5. The system used to simulate functioning of knowledge and skills, as well as to determine any similar question by applying it to a related area of the persona's mental, physical, or spiritual make up.

6. The system developed to recognise excellence of performance of Heroic Personas, the Award Point of general, special, or exceptional sort.

7. The physical combat system which is fast and simple, yet can be made most realistic by following all of the detailed steps surrounding combat, arms, and armour.

8. The many different sorts of abilities which generate the ability to employ castings, and the magic power point system for activating them. Tied to

this, and of greater importance than the hundreds of detailed castings, is the system for creating more, the "Specific Castings System". This truly allows the imagination to be the only limitation to the creativity of players.

9. The system is so designed as to enable immediate playing enjoyment with able and viable personas who have meaningful roles in the campaign milieu, but even after years of such playing, with attendant gain in ability and power, the challenges and enjoyment of interacting with the fantasy milieu, and others too, will not lessen but grow.

Of course I am proud of this new system. I believe that the milieu provided by the concepts of and the material comprising the *Epic of Aerth Companion* are as fresh and exciting, innovative in truth, as the game module itself, and with the combination the enthusiast is empowered far beyond what either alone offers. Either can stand alone, the system material to run a campaign, the milieu as a basis for one run with some other rules. Neither is as good that way. As the author of the system, I should believe that.

So in 1988 I began to get down to work. I devised a few core rules, tried them out in play. Was that in fantasy? Not at all. It was in a modern supernatural setting, in fact. Soon I had several hundred pages of manuscript drafted, and after meeting Mike McCulley we collaborated to produce the first genre rules module for the system, the *Unhallowed*™ Supernatural (Horror) Roleplaying Game.

This game, in fact, served as the basis for the subsequent development of the *Mythus*™ and *Mythus Magick*™ game works which Dave Newton and I wrote in 1990-91. In case any reader is wondering why the initial work wasn't published first, it was because JVC asked that fantasy be developed and released as the premier of the *Dangerous Journeys*™ system. I listened to that voice . . .

During this same interval I was also at work doing a number of other things, including development of the world setting, *Aerth*, which required more research than I care to think about now. I also wrote and revised the three novels about Setne Inhetep and Rachele—*The Anubis Murders*, *The Samarkand Solution*, and *Death in Delhi* (May release). To keep my multigenre perspective, while the fantasy rules were being developed, I ran a supernatural campaign, only terminating it in the beginning of 1991 when the demands of finalising the *Mythus*™ game precluded time for playing.

That the *Dangerous Journeys*[™] system is multigenre is indisputable, as a quick look at the appendices in the first book will show. The *Unhallowed*[™] game will soon be in print, and so two genres will then be available for play. Yes, there are many more to come. No, I can't spill the proverbial beans and tell everyone what is next . . . besides, it isn't really my decision. As far as I know, the plan is to release a new genre game module every year until the market is satisfied that the system covers all those in which they have an interest in utilising in play.

Some devotees have questioned the format used. That is, they have asked why the core rules applicable to all genres will have to be repurchased for each new genre game module. The answer is simple. The cases and sub-cases, changes and revisions necessary to enable coherent game mastering for any given genre needs be self contained. Yes, the core system does carry over at somewhere around 80%. No great amount of learning or even re-learning is needed to go from one genre to another, and that included players and their Heroic Personas too. However, a few gross differences and many subtle changes are best furnished in a separate work.

Why not hard cover books? The current world economy discouraged GDW from publishing the initial works thus, but as far as I know there will eventually be hardbound editions available. When I can't say.

Why two parts to the *Mythus*[™] game. Now that's a tale! The final draft manuscript I turned over for Game Designer's Workshop to publish ran to some 3,000 pages. I think I felt the shock waves when they got their first look at that tall stack of computer printer paper. Eventually, the Good Editor there devised the division as you now see in print.

Now I am writing articles to develop details of the game system and the milieu as presented in the *Epic of Aerth*[™] Companion, researching for the next game module and various other things as well, including a trilogy of adventure novels featuring Setne and Rachele again. Others are likewise busy creating information to be published this year and in the future. There will be continued support for the *Mythus*[™] game such as the first bestiary and pantheon data books. I am given to understand that there will be limited adventure scenarios, but that when they are done the works will be large and contain considerable source material—as is the case in *Necropolis*. When the *Unhallowed*[™] Game is released there will be support for it as well. In fact, each separate game and the whole system too will be handled thus.

Now about the other things to come in the line. It seems that the electronic forms of the game are delayed. This is due, I am told, to the developers being much behind schedule. As of this writing I am given to understand that the PC versions are coming in the late spring, and then others will follow that. Miniature figurines too have been delayed, but because I get to create interesting stuff, not deal with contracts and negotiations, I am not able to tell you more.

Am I satisfied with the new system? I am as pleased and happy as any true game freak can be. That is, I view it as nearly perfect... only a few little touches and—oh, never mind. Yes. I find the *dangerous Journeys*[™] system everything I had meant it to be. Things worked out as I had planned (and hoped). My main complaint is that it is so extensive in scope that I have years of work ahead of me yet. I love to write and create, but I also enjoy playing. However, until the whole project is further along, say five years or so from now, my prospects for doing much in the line of recreational gaming are bleak indeed. Obviously I will be writing more material for the project, including game works and novels as well.

Do I play the *Dangerous Journeys*[™] game system myself? I hope to begin GMing a new campaign soon, so with luck as you are reading this I will actually have it going. I love computer games, but I always overdo playing, as there's no limit to the time I can sneak in. Not only that, but I love just about all forms of military and naval miniatures games, conflict simulation boardgames, chess, shogi, bridge and many other card games, backgammon, railroad games, *Monopoly*, *Big Business*, etc. (Didn't I tell you I was a game freak?).

I no longer have to choose a favourite character, because my new system makes the tailor-made Heroic Persona individual, not a stereotypical figure of cardboard. However, back in the days I was stuck with that narrow option, I think I enjoyed the magic-user most, although I never minded playing any sort of character class.

Most of my reading is of the sort needed for research to produce game material, but, fortunately, the subject is such that this means I can include fiction. I love fantasy, SF, horror (of the old school as typified by Lovecraft), murder mysteries and crime detection (including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, of course), historical fiction, and adventure yarns. I have at my disposal a large library containing a few thousand each of paperback and hardbound books on most subjects imaginable. Most of the works found in the Bibliography for the *Mythus*[™] game are indeed in that library. I also read a lot of magazines and watch TV for information and ideas. No, I still refrain from reading most other

roleplaying games. Why? Because I want to keep my ideas as original and uniquely mine own as possible. Perhaps it is an affectation, or as some suggest, worse. However, I did manage to create the roleplaying game form and author a game which remains the best selling of all to date; and I'll continue muddle along as I think best, thank you!

One further bit of information I must relate to you Long Suffering Readers before I close. I very much wish to come to your country for at least a visit, possibly more. You see, I am not at all fond of winter and its short days and their attendant gloom. I am more productive in warm climes with long days and plenty of sunlight too. A friend here in Lake Geneva is a cartoonist, and his comic strips appear in many newspapers. Perhaps you've seen his work—*Boffo*, *Porterfield*, and *Willey & Ethel*. His name is Joe Martin, and when my wife, Gail, and I were at Joe and Marie Martin's place for dinner and a game of bridge some time back, Gail happened to poke fun at my desire to divide the year between Australia (November - April) and the US. Joe said instantly that he too had frequently thought the same. Groans from wives ignored, we exchanged thoughts on the subject, and I lent him my book from the Australian tourist bureau. We mention the dream nearly every time we get together. So while my current situation precludes such, don't be too surprised if in a year or two you hear I'll be bumming around in your country a lot of the time. Maybe then I'll have some time to actually play games, including a little tabletop miniatures action or some of the new boardgames I've seen. Until then!

George Sayer

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VICTORY AT SEA

THE CRUCIAL BATTLE FOR NAVAL SUPREMACY
IN WORLD WAR II EUROPE



VICTORY AT SEA is a strategic level game developed from JEDKO GAMES' popular naval game WAR AT SEA*. This new two-player game refights the Battle of the Atlantic in every detail. VICTORY AT SEA is a game of Grand Strategy with each player assuming the role of an Admiral of the Fleet and trying to control the sea areas that are important to his nation's interests. The rules are easy to learn, and yet require cunning strategies to achieve ultimate victory. After a few games the rules will become second nature to you, and the game will be as easy or as hard to play as you care to make it. An ideal wargame for beginners, VICTORY AT SEA also serves as a fast-playing, tense contest for experienced gamers.

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VICTORY AT SEA allows you to recreate every major aspect of the naval war. The game mechanics include Admirals, port repair facilities, the invasion of France, U-boat technology, surface raiders & oilers, the British Home Fleet, critical hits & damage control, limited intelligence, airpower, mines, and convoys. Components include a colourful 16"x24" mapboard plus 117 large counters representing all major German, Italian, British, American and Russian capital ships of the European theater. VICTORY AT SEA is available now through your local games shop.

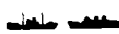
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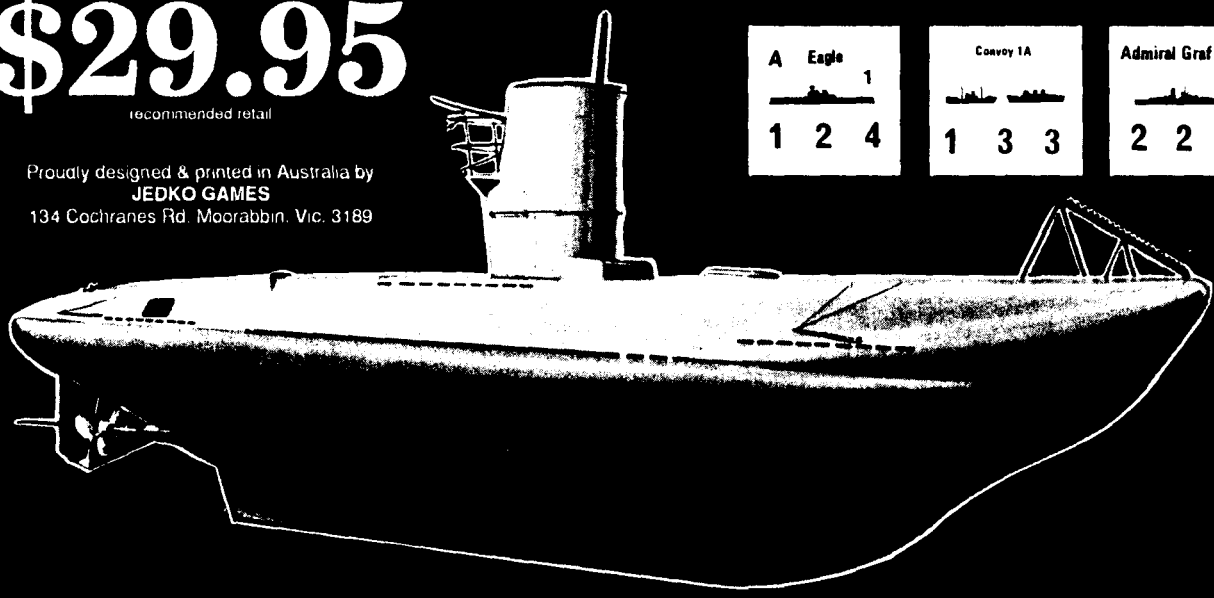
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Walking With Your Head in The Clouds.

HOL!

An occasional **Shadowrun** column
By Malcolm Adler.

Fellow Runners. In this irregular column we will discuss the latest street happenings in 2054AD. From the general to the specialised, news and ways to abuse. This issue we're talking *info-ovo's*. So follow.

In sprawls across the globe Corp ritz kids, street glitter boys, techno brides and more meet at one off locations to let loose.

This is the Youth Movement, the latest 'fad' among the rich, 'rebellion' among the middle class and 'cry of anguish' for the masses of the streets. Ritz beside Runner, Pimp and Whore, this is the final score.

The Youth Movement is the latest thing in the hard and fast culture of 2054. It is centred around wild communal simsense gatherings called *Info-Ovos*, in which audio, trideo, sims, BTL's, live rockers and pyrotechnics are all used to blast the senses of the 'Goer'. These one off venues are bedecked in lighting, speakers, sub woofers, screens and a thousand other curiosities. The point of the event is the immersion of one self in information, and thus the name **Information Ov(o)erload**. They are viewed by many as some sort of matrix simulation, an attempt to make the unreal real. In short - *escapism*. Others believe it is just an avenue to dump BTL chips by dealers. Both of these are true to various degrees. The Info-Ovo's are certainly full of Chippers and the end of the event always sees fatalities among the chip heads.

Violence is not common at such events, well organised security is visibly present (supplied by the BTL dealers). This security force makes its own rules and while not usually causing unwarranted trouble they are artists of intimidation.

An entry fee is paid at the door, ranging from 50 Nuyen to 150 Nuyen, while expensive much is within...

Amid such an environment of cluttered sounds, lights, structures and thousands of people it is very easy to do business. Using the barrage of sensations as cover, deals can be done, people tagged, followed, abducted, and even assassinated with many of the Goer's (the majority of which are the bored sons and daughters of wage slaves from Corp sanctuaries) being oblivious, due to their state of mind.

Typical gatherings are held in abandoned warehouses, office blocks and other large spaces. Such events are very underground, gathering anywhere between one and fifty thousand people in the one place. Such events draw a crowd in comparison to what is on offer. A full production would have the latest in lighting, sound, chips, entertainments (usually of a sideshow and gladiatorial variety) and bands. The size of the crowd will be as many as five thousand per million people in the sprawl. It is at such events that Corp ritz-kids first start to experience the real world. Tasting danger, the criminal and shadow worlds. Many become prey for dark elements at such gatherings, but this is all part of the thrill of being there.

The truth of the matter is that such events are free for all. While security and calm is a strong force and usually retained this is not a place that Lone Star is going to enter, even Doc Wagon™ has left clients to their fate (of course it depends on their colour of coverage, Plats always get picked up).

Many Corps have picked up on the drawing power of Info-Ovo's, recognising the 'in' nature of the events. They prepare specially labled lines of products which with careful marketing is sold on the sprawls as an independent "street" lable, giving it street



cred. Many lines of clothing, music and sim-chips are available to capture the young market. This is a bandwagon that the Corps are jumping on, to a further degree, it seems to be a by product of the very world the Corps have created, as some have put it:

"They can now label, package and sell their own waste!"

This is indeed what they are doing, media hype-stars launch vocal careers at the occasional 'sanctioned' gathering, where the Corp organises and secures the Info-Ovo. Such an event is an ideal time for a *snatch and grab* style operation to relocate a willing client to a new Corp, as they always take place outside of the more secure sections of town. Such operations face more opposition from the large mindless crowd than from the paranoid Corps who while running the show can't really be said to be in complete control. Corp sponsored events are often targets for street gangs who work over the crowd for chip dealers and other less savoury characters, feeling that they are not with a *true* street crowd, and therefore having no second thoughts about taking advantage of the *plastic* people at the event.

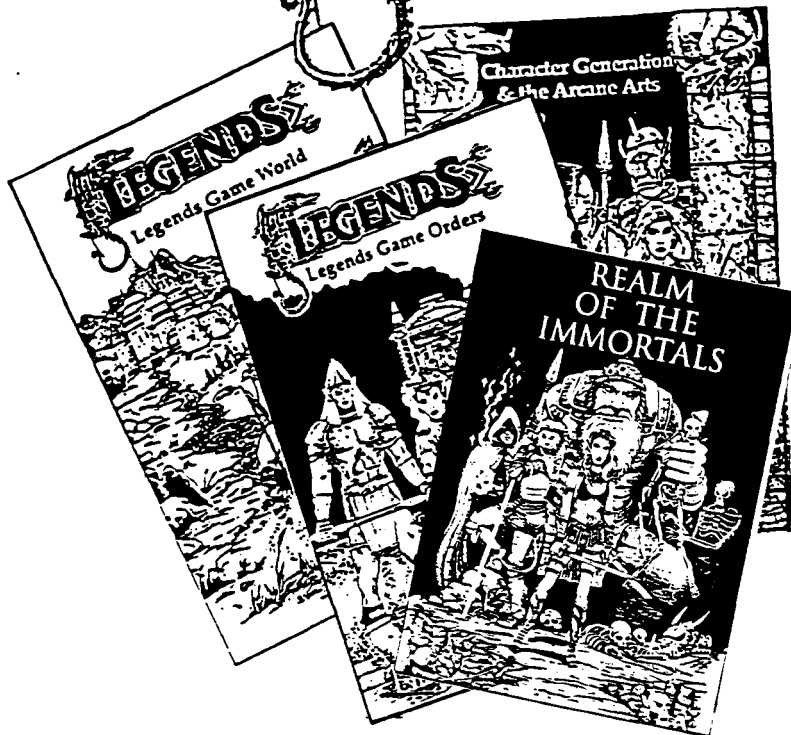
While somewhat of a phenomenon the gatherings are part of the ever evolving global subculture. Some point back to similar events that have occurred in past youth culture. Suggesting the Info-Ovo is just 2050's version of the 1970's rock festivals, the 1980's Warehouse parties, the 1990's Raves, 2010's French Trance-alongs, the 30's Korean Shocks and the 40's Laced fad, which saw music and magic merged into a *charming* experience, until banned by all national governments.

Whether a fad or a foundation the Info-Ovo is an integral part of the Youth Movement in '54. The events are constantly evolving. As things get grittier on the street the gatherings take on a rougher tone, filtering into such events via music, setting and chips. The innocence of youth (Corp youth in anycase) is no longer safe, perhaps it is just a reflection of the dark times we live in.

Wakarimasu-ka?

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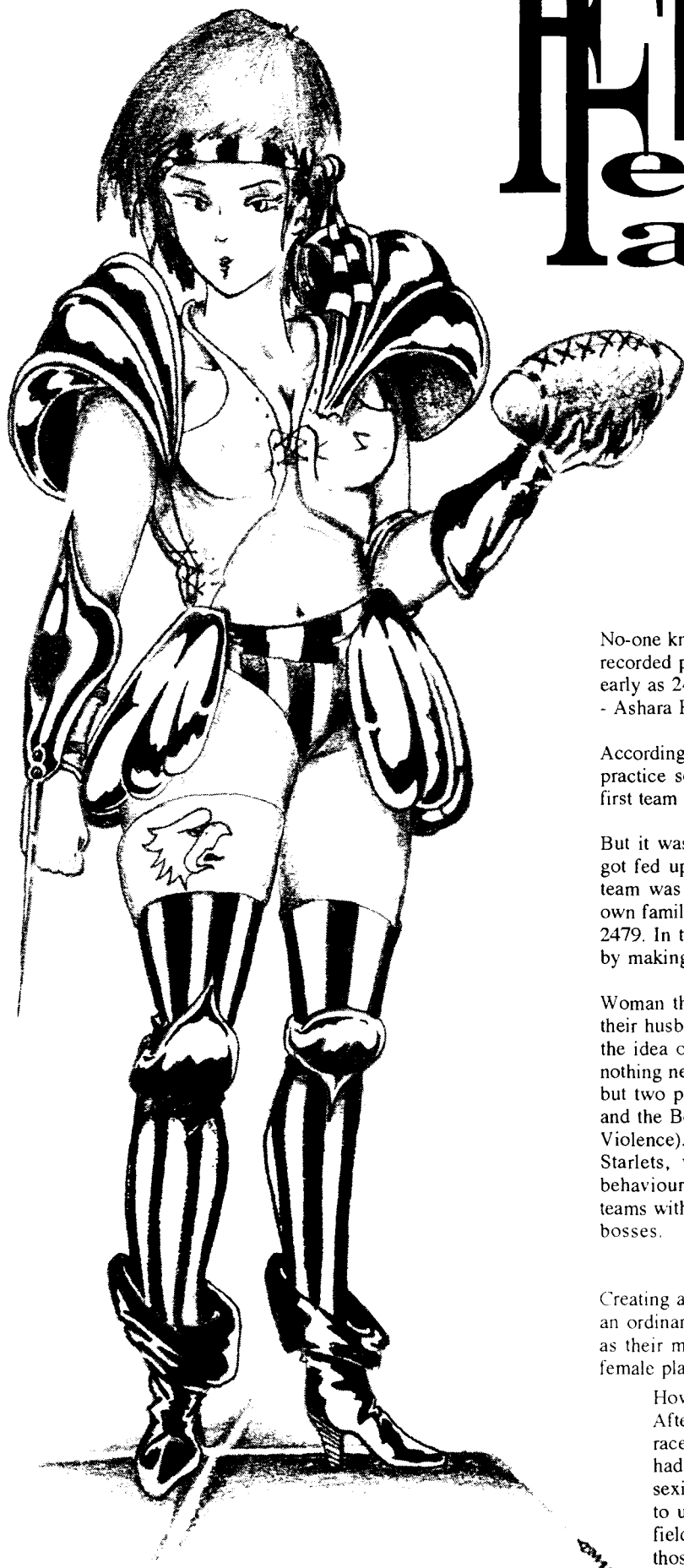
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Unofficial Rules Women & Female Teams in Games Workshop's **BLOOD BOWL** BY MARTIN EVANS

Femmes atales



It is a proven, scientific fact that women in the Old World should *never* be allowed to participate in the rough, tough, violent arena of blood-soaked Astrogranite™ that we call Blood Bowl.

Why? Because they are too good at it!

Yes sir, there can be no denying it - the average Ogre Blocker is a terrifying opponent for anyone mindlessly insane enough to run onto the Astrogranite, but you should see his *mother*.

"Should You Be Here, Miss?"

No-one knows who the first woman player was. The Dwarf Giants have recorded proof of Cheerleaders making up the numbers for the team as early as 2438, but the Elfheim Eagles can claim the first regular player - Ashara Rosethorn, one of the finest Blitzers of the '69-70 season.

According to legend, Ashara wandered into the Eagles' stadium during a practice session, picked up a spare ball, and ran straight through the first team to a touchdown. She was signed up on the spot.

But it wasn't until ex-Orcland Raider's Cheerleader Maggo Flatrump got fed up with "Neva being' allowed to avago" that the first all-girl team was formed. Maggo got recruits from fellow Cheerleaders, her own family, and local mother's meetings to form the Deadly Damez in 2479. In the local Orc league, the Damez made their presence known by making it into the Semi- Finals in their first season.

Woman throughout the Old World, fed up with sitting at home while their husbands went to the stadium, quickly became enthusiastic about the idea of forming their own teams. In Elvenlands, the concept was nothing new - two amateur leagues for women had existed since 2445 - but two professional teams were put together, the Elfheim Exquisites and the Beautiful Violets (more commonly referred to as the Beautiful Violence). The Dark Elves, not to be outdone, formed the Darknight Starlets, who have been banned twice for terrifyingly merciless behaviour. Today, there are Human, Skaven, Dwarven and Goblin teams with teams from other races waiting for approval from the league bosses.

Creating a Female Team

Creating a women's' team follows exactly the same process as creating an ordinary team in Blood Bowl. Women have exactly the same stats as their male counterparts, and suffer the same restrictions (a human female player can't play on a Chaotic team, for example.)

However, women also have a new skill added to their attributes. After the AV (Armour Value) on the characteristics Table for a race, add on 'CU' - Yup, you guessed it, CUTeness. Women have had to come up the hard way in Blood Bowl - there's a lot of sexism on the League Chairman's Board, and the girls have had to use every means possible to obtain their equal rights on the field. Of course, making eyes at corruptible officials was one of those means, but now that the girls have their equality, does not mean that they abandoned their underhand methods of getting what they want! Don't be so silly!

Female players, competing in a male-dominated sport, quickly realised the value of wide, emerald-green eyes adorned with long, fluttering lashes, accompanied by sweet, rosebud mouths, and luscious, trim, and firm figures. A female player's Cuteness Characteristic is reflective of her ability to convince a male player that he doesn't want to take the ball from her, he doesn't want to dodge her, and he DOESN'T want to pound her into a fine pate garnished with parsley.

However, cuteness only works on races that are similar to that of the cute players. After all, how many Elves do you know who are going to be impressed by a Skaven girl with wide, emerald-green eyes, etc....

Cuteness Table (See Table 1)

Chaotic races have the same CU as Good and Neutral races, (Cuteness is a universal trait.) Mutants lose their cuteness if their mutation alters their body odour, their head, or if they wind up with some disease or other. Undead never have cuteness, nor are they affected by it.

Using Cuteness

When a female player is the victim of a Block or Tackle, (including Shoulder Charges) committed by a male opponent, her coach may elect to add her Cuteness to her Strength or Agility, (depending upon the circumstances) to reduce the effects of the attack. To do so, however, the Coach must announce his/her intention immediately after the attack is announced.

Alternatively, the coach may announce his/her player will try to Turn The Tables. This means that the player will try to survive the assault, and then turn it against her foe. As with using cuteness, the intention to Turn The Tables must be announced right after the attack is declared. The combat is resolved as normal, and if the result leaves the female player standing, then she suddenly becomes dew-eyed... her little chin starts to wobble... she snuffles and sobs and inflicts her attacker with overwhelming pangs of guilt!

Roll a d6 - if the roll is equal to or less than the players Cuteness attribute, then she has succeeded in making her opponent stand around and apologise deeply and meaningfully until the end of the next turn. He can do nothing else - he's too guilt-stricken!!

In ganging up, the female player may roll for each player in the gang. If half of the gang fall under her spell, they will not allow the rest of the gang to hurt the female player. Should a player not affected by the above conditions run into attack the female player, she may not use her Cuteness against him, but gets a +1 for every apologising player as they try to protect her from their teammate. To indicate that a player is under the influence of his lady companion, place an infatuation counter on his base at the end of his next turn, or if the female player moves out of his tackle zone, the big lug suddenly says to himself, "Wha - what am I DOING!???" and may return to play as normal. Remove the counter.

Warning! Warning!

Note that you cannot use Cuteness if you try to dodge an attack, but you can use it in Stripping the Ball. ("Oh, please can I have the pritty bally-wally, big-boy?") Add the Cuteness Attribute to the players Strength.



Table 1 - CUTENESS TABLE

RACE	CU	RACES AFFECTED
Human	3	Human, Elf, Dwarf, Halfling, Were
Elf	4	Human, Elf, Dwarf, Halfling, Were
Dwarf	3	Human, Elf, Dwarf, Halfling, Were
Halfling	2	Human, Dwarf, Halfling, Were
Slann	1	Slann
Were-beings	3(0)*	Human, Elf, Dwarf, Halfling, Were
Ent	2	Ent
Goblin	1	Goblin, Orc, Snotling
Orc	3	Goblin, Orc, Snotling
Skaven	2	Skaven
Snotling	1	Snotling
Lge. Monster	2	Lge. Monster

* Werewolves lose their cuteness if they metamorphose into their true form.

Star Players

Of course, women's teams are allowed Star Players, with the same skills and advantages as those listed in Star Players. However, if you like, here's an alternate Any Player Skill Table for female players.

Table 2 - ANY PLAYER SKILL TABLE

D66 ROLL	SKILL	MAX LEVEL
11-16	Incredibly Cute	4
21-23	Seductive	-
24-26	Oh- Woww!!	-
31-36	Motherly	-
41-56	Giggle!	4
61-63	Blonde	4
64-66	Really Blonde	4

Skill Descriptions

Incredibly Cute (Levels 1-4)

The player has huge liquid gems for eyes, long, lovely hair and a sweet smile. She gets +2 to her Cuteness per level.

Seductive

The player is a man-eater, perhaps literally! She's stepped straight out of every man's dominant female fantasy. She has a +1 to her Cuteness- He follows her around!

Oh-Woww!!

The player has a body that makes Elle look like Rosanne Barr. Add 2 to her CU. Once per game, she can lead an infatuated player into her dugout... and clobber him! Roll on the injury table for the poor fool, and no, he don't get no armour save.

Motherly

The player reminds opponents of their own mother. Once per turn, she can march up to a player and scold him for playing "such a nasty, rough game." Roll a D6. If the roll is equal to or less than the players CU, the opponent walks off into the Stunned box, shamed.

Giggle! (Levels 1-4)

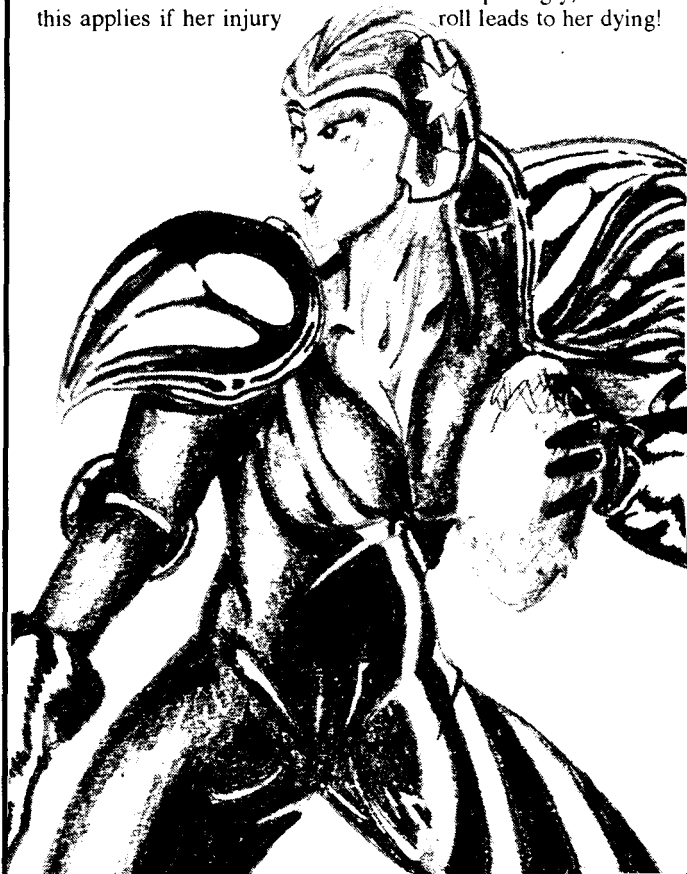
This player has a sweet bell-like, laughing voice that instantly makes her friends with anyone. Roll a D3 per level at the start of the game - this is the number of players she can befriend, up to a maximum of 8. Choose the players from your opponents team and write down their numbers. These players will not attack the Star Player during the game.

Blonde (Levels 1-4)

The player has lots of lovely blonde hair - and the rather bubble-brained look that goes with it. However, this is all a facade - she is just as cunning and skillful as her comrades, but the opposition don't know that! To reflect their ignorance, the player may add +1 per level to her Strength and Agility when attacking.

Really Blond (levels 1-4)

This player has lots of lovely blonde hair too - only she really is a bubble-head! She's so stupid, she doesn't realise she's been injured until someone tells her, whereupon she falls over! When she has to roll on the injury table, roll an additional D6: 1-3 she doesn't suffer her injury for one turn, 4-6 she continues on her merry way for two turns. Add +1 to the roll for each level above level one. Unsurprisingly, none of this applies if her injury roll leads to her dying!



BACK ISSUES

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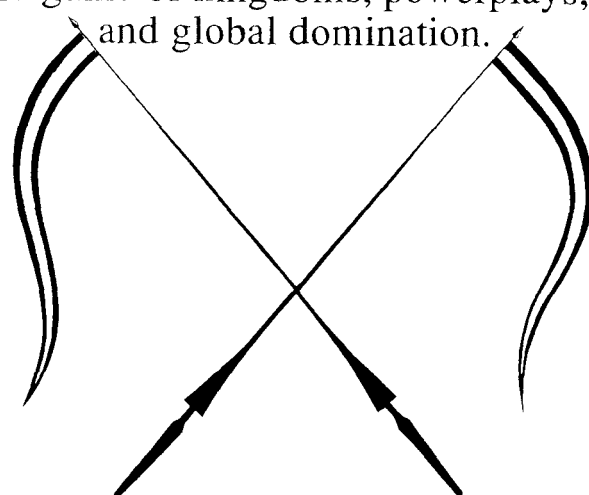
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Letters

PO BOX 220, MORLEY, WA, 6062

Chris Scull
Thomastown Victoria

Dear Nick,

I have only just come across your publication, and I must say very well done. *Australian Realms* is most impressive, and I think it stands up there with the best. Although I buy few RPG magazines often, I will make yours one that I do. I would have to say that only *Challenge* is a better publication so far, but with each of your issues getting bigger and better, I am sure you will soon be on a par with them.

- Stop it, Chris, you are making us blush!

Brent Heustess
4305 Duval St #107
Austin Texas ZIP 78751

Dear Nick,

I am compiling a complete bibliography of the *Call of Cthulhu* game. I am including everything related to *Call of Cthulhu* - rule/scenario books, magazine articles, miniatures and ephemeral material. And in any language, not just English. Chaosium have adopted me as the unofficial bibliographer. What I need from you is descriptions of *Call of Cthulhu* material that you know of. There are three main areas I need help with: magazine articles (small presses, fanzines, apazines etc.), foreign material and ephemera (coffee mugs, buttons, t-shirts, bumper stickers etc.). I will be listing everyone who helped in the credits when I get published. If you know anyone who might want to assist, please give them my name or give me theirs. Thanks in advance for any help.

We've published your letter, Brent. Hopefully some of our readers have some information that may be of use to you. Good luck.

Glenn Murdoch
Carlton North, Victoria

Dear Nick,

Your front covers keep getting better and better - full marks to Vince and Steve. The A-Team is my favourite though I prefer it as straight text rather than comic. If you skip the graphics you can spend more time on stories and dialogue. Last issue's instalment consisted of one fight and it was all over - I was just getting interested! How about including a one-page article each issue describing the mechanics of some other game systems? Its easy to get stuck with one product since it costs big money to get started and few people invest without at least knowing what the game is like beforehand. I normally use conventions to try out new games - how about listing upcoming conventions in Australia?

Glenn, I'm sorry you didn't take to the change in format for the A-Team. So far, it seems our readers are evenly split over whether they prefer the text only or graphic version. Our subscribers are lucky enough to get both with Andrew's A-Team scripts appearing in Gargoyle - the Subscribers Only fanzine. As to a Convention calander - we'd be pleased to print one. To all Convention Organisers - contact Realms now with details of your 1993 Convention.

Bryn Pears
St Kilda West, Victoria

Dear Nick,

Issue # 9 was the best yet. I found the Gary Gygax interview interesting, although I'd have to say that he strikes me as a bit self-centred. I guess that much success would make arrogance almost inevitable. I also thought that the AD&D scenario was of a higher standard than some of the earlier ones you have published.

What I'd really like to see in a magazine is a bit more discussion, rather than the average "scenario shop" type format. Perhaps you could publish more articles like the earlier one on playing monsters intelligently. That, along with the one this time on dungeon adventures (about ten years too late, but interesting all the same), made decent reading. Some sort of forum for discussion might also be an interesting idea. Another thought would be publishing the odd short story. Of course, one has to beware of spreading oneself too thinly. To try to be all things to all men is to be nothing to anyone.

Bryn, you're opinions are much appreciated. The more we listen to our readers the better we understand what people do and don't want in their magazine. Next issue we plan to run a Reader Survey to find out exactly what you'd all like to see. Me sacked perhaps?

Jenny Raine
Liverpool, NSW

Dear Nick,

Thought I would write to compliment you on issue 9. I was most impressed with the cover, the Woad article was good and to see you started coverage of Vampire was great, well done Marianne, good stuff!

The A-Team comic was good, I suspect in the long run better than text as it is better to re-read compared to the text version. Nonetheless perhaps more pages for the comic would help fill the principal problem, which is it being a fairly short bout of story compared to the text.

The scenario was also good, when can we get some source information on this UNAE world that you guys are putting together, and what system will it be for? While the

text in the scenario is small, I suppose it is to optimize your use of space, but is the difference worth it? In any case, well done.

As at writing we are currently finalising a series of articles detailing a corner of UNAE, the Realms campaign world. UNAE is a systemless world, with the first installment appearing in issue 11. Realms is trying to provide value for money with this material, the same goal that sees us use smaller print in scenarios. This issue's scenario is spread over 5 pages, if it was in a standard text size it would, with artwork, be closer to ten.

Shane Ericksen
Noble Park, Victoria

Dear Nick,

Just recently some friends of mine commented on the lack of good RPG magazines in Australia. Then just when we'd given up hope we found an issue of *Australian Realms* (obviously we'd been looking in the wrong places). Anyway, I'd like to congratulate you on the great job you're doing and "keep up the good work" (old cliche but, oh so appropriate).

Recently, my friends and I started up an RPG club and I was wondering if maybe you could provide us (and the readers) with some of the do's and don'ts involved.

One thing I would personally like to see in 'Realms' is something on West End Games' TORG. I've played many different RPGs over thirteen years and have rarely come across such a brilliant game. Last but not least, how about a series of articles on some of the Australians who've taken roleplaying in this country and made it what it is today (maybe Wes Nicholson, Richard Dennis, etc.)

Shane, we have taken your suggestion about clubs and have approached someone with experience in setting up a club to write the article you asked for. Look out for Clubbin' in next issue. Talking of old cliches, its a fact that editors can only print stuff they recieve. As yet nobody has submitted any material for TORG, when they do, we can consider running TORG articles.

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Lizards!

Lizards! is one of the growing new breed of Play-by-mail games (PBM) that are 100% computer moderated. There are 16 players in each game of **Lizards!** and each player controls a single Clan of lizards. These unfriendly little reptiles have developed a simple civilization of their own on a small watery world. Each lizard Clan seeks to dominate all of the "dry" land on their world. Naturally, this leads to a little conflict now and then!

Each turn, players may submit a maximum of 30 orders, selected from 15 types of orders available. On the due date, all player orders that have been received are processed simultaneously and the results (The Turn Report) mailed back to the players. Examples of which are shown on the following pages.

Each player begins **Lizards!** with a single Home Den and a number of other dens and lizards. The Clan Home Dens are spread more or less evenly over a randomly generated, 32 by 32, wrap-around hex map.

Each player's lizard Clan begins the game with one Home Den of great antiquity and tradition. Clan Home Dens are of enormous importance and a source of much prestige. No matter how many other dens a clan owns no recruit will join a Clan that has no Home Den.

Capturing the Home Den of other Clans is the main objective of **Lizards!**

The **Lizards!** world contains five species of lizard. Fortunately evolution has made identification of these species easy, as each is a different colour. Most of the lizard species possess a special ability. The lizard colours and their abilities are listed opposite.

• **Red Lizards**

These lizards are the most common, and do not possess any special ability other than mediocrity.

• **Green Lizards**

Green Lizards have developed the agricultural ability to fertilise and poison hexes and can construct simple rafts from tree trunks.

• **Grey Lizards**

Grey Lizards are natural builders and in sufficient numbers and given enough time, can build both rudimentary bridges and lizard Dens.

• **Yellow Lizards**

Yellow Lizards possess unusually strong arms, and can throw things a good distance, with lethal effect.

• **Black Lizards**

Black Lizards are the most mysterious species and possess the ability to chant, causing occult effects. Black lizard chants are more or less powerful depending on how many of their fellows are nearby.

Objective of the Game

The first Clan to have a points total of more than 1000 points for each of the "Home Dens" remaining in the game is said to have gained "**Domination of the Swamp**" and the player controlling that Clan is the winner. At the start of the game 16000 points are required to win, but this number may be reduced as some Dens are wiped out in the vigorous pursuit of victory ■



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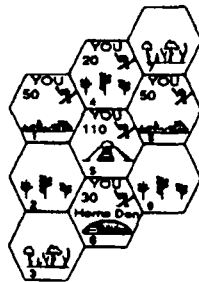
What to do First!

Below are four default start-up options numbered 1 through to 4. Choose one of these as your beginning situations. Indicate the number of your preferred choice in the entry coupon attached. Please note that if no start-up selection is indicated your start-up will be allocated option 3 as a default.

On the default views, the hexes denote 'YOU' contain your starting lizard forces and dens. The three letter code will be replaced by your clan abbreviation on subsequent maps. The name of your clan can be up to 20 characters long. It should be imaginative and colourful. So, give it some thought. Remember also, this name will be abbreviated to three letters for positional notations on turn maps. Once you have chosen the type of position you desire, fill out and send the entry form over page to us at Roma Games.

DEFAULTS

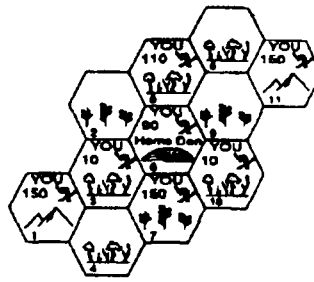
1 Black Home Den



1: 50 GRY 4: 20 GRN 5: 110 BLK
6: 30 DEN 8: 50 GRY

260

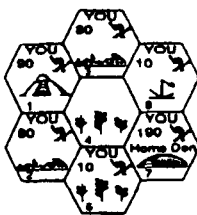
2 Red Home Den



1: 100 RED, 50 GRY 3: 10 GRN
5: 100 RED, 10 GRN 6: 90 DEN
7: 100 RED, 50 YEL 10: 10 GRN
11: 100 RED, 50 GRY

670

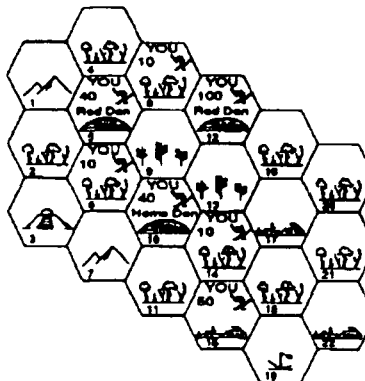
3 Yellow Home Den



1: 90 RED
2: 10 GRN, 50 GRY, 10 YEL, 10 BLK
3: as 2 5: 10 RED 6: 10 GRN
7: 50 DEN, 80 RED, 10 YEL, 50 BLK

460

4 Grey Home Den



5: 30 DEN, 10 RED 6: 10 GRN
8: 10 GRN
10: 30 DEN, 10 RED
12: 30 DEN, 70 RED 14: 10 GRN
15: 50 GRY

260



Den



Ruin



Plains



Swamp



Scrub



Fertile



Peak



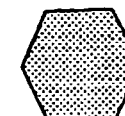
Volcano



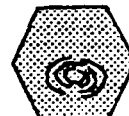
Temple



Cursed



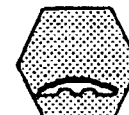
Water



Whirlpool



Raft



Bridge



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Lizards! is a fun game and one from a selection of quality Play-By-Mail (PBM) products **Roma Games** is justly proud to offer for your enjoyment. We look forward to providing you with many exciting hours of entertainment, filled with the magic and fantasy generated in part by your own design.

If you like what you have seen, from the small sample we were able to show you here, drop us a line by either writing to the postal address below or call us directly on the number provided. There will always someone on hand to help. Ask about one of our other popular PBM games and I can assure you will not be disappointed. As a special introductory offer to **Lizards!** we are offering 3 free turns with every \$5.00 set up. That's right! Normally for a setup and 3 turns you would expect to pay \$28.00 but for a limited time you pay only \$5.00. All you have to do is fill out the registration coupon below. It's just that easy.

• **What is Play-By-Mail?**

For those of you new to Play-By-Mail and curious about this thoroughly absorbing leisure activity the most popular question often asked is understandably: **What is Play-By-Mail ?**

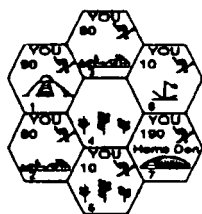
Well the concept is simple....

You sign up for a game with us and we will send you your first turn. Thereafter, each player sends in written instructions for each turn and we process them each week or fortnight. Our computers keep track of your account, make sure all moves are legal, calculate combat and other results, and print out individual maps and reports with which to plan your next turn.

Depending on the type of game, you might be the ruler of a nation, the commander of warrior bands or dictator of a galactic empire. Alliances may be made and broken, bribes offered and as a final resort, war declared, all at your command. With time player reputations become established and known both locally and world wide for their victories and playing style.

If you haven't played PBM before, you're in for a novel and exciting experience. If you have played before, you will undoubtedly benefit from the clarity of our laser printed graphics and carefully edited rulebooks ■

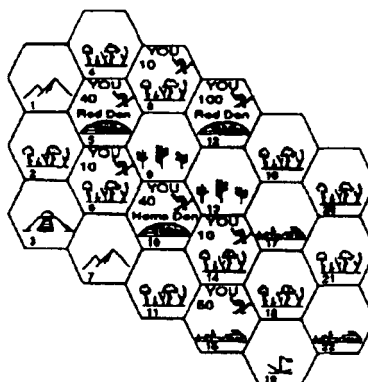
3 Yellow Home Den



1: 90 RED
2: 10 GRN, 50 GRY, 10 YEL, 10 BLK
3: as 2 5: 10 RED 6: 10 GRN
7: 50 DEN, 80 RED, 10 YEL, 50 BLK

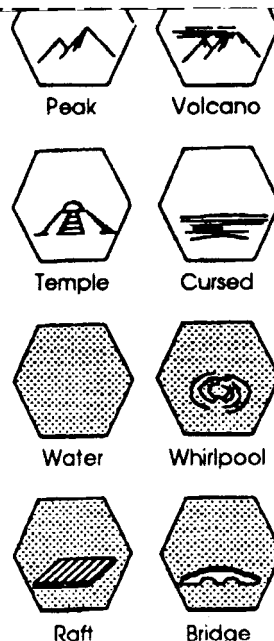
460

4 Grey Home Den



5: 30 DEN, 10 RED 6: 10 GRN
8: 10 GRN
10: 30 DEN, 10 RED
12: 30 DEN, 70 RED 14: 10 GRN
15: 50 GRY

260



LIP SERVICE

LIP SERVICE

Welcome to the second edition of *Lip Service* where we get to tell you all about happenings within **Australian Realms**, office gossip (what does the editor do when Colin Taber on roller blades crashes into the water fountain), ongoing project updates and general chat on life, the universe and everything.

NEW STAFF

Kerri Valkova has now officially joined the team, even after we misspelt her name last issue. Oops. Her illustrations adorn Seng Ann's Dark Sun article - *Partying Under the Sun*. Another move is the promotion of Gary Morton to the position of Assistant Art Editor - Gary is a fast gaining a reputation with several letters of appreciation received from our thousands of readers.

STAFF PROFILES

Something we have in store for you is some mug shots of the people who bring *Australian Realms* to you - the staff. We'll also include a short blurb telling you about ourselves. We want to do this to re-assure you that we are all near human - except perhaps, Taber whose ears look distinctly pointed.

A-TEAM BOOK

Andrew and Scott's success with the *Adventures of the A-Team* has generated a lot of interest in our doing an A-Team graphic novel. We anticipate this will be an A4 format softback, colour cover by Gary Morton and around 64 pages of comic strip and text scripts. This is just one of many proposed publications *Australian Realms* is looking at, Unae being the other major pot simmering away at the moment. Speaking of which...

UNAE

Since issue #7 *Realms* has been planning and publishing material for the magazine's own campaign world. This world is going to be a general fantasy setting, something which is a great deal more authentic than some of the 'worlds' on the market. While we have published bits and pieces in every issue since seven, we are slowly getting various staff writers to finalise their text on certain areas and over the next few issues starting from issue #11 we will publish this source material in article form.

Each article will detail a separate but neighbouring area to the last. For the

many of you who have been following the articles that have already seen publication, Burvoy (which was mentioned in issues #8 & 9) will be left this issue as we travel north. This issue's mini-campaign set in Tessa takes place on an island separating Burvoy from the Heletian League member state of the Kramer Confederation (an article detailing this grouping of city states will be published next issue with the concluding instalment of the Tessian campaign). From there we will continue to move north, visiting adjacent areas, and expanding the Unae campaign world. All of this you will be receiving inside *Realms*, along with scenarios and articles. We want your feedback on this, on anything concerning Unae.

This campaign world has been designed to use with any system and we will eventually put the material we have published as well as additional new material into a world book. While the Unae world will not be dominating the magazine it is, we consider, an important part of the content. Here is a world in the making that any of you can have a say on. I say again, when you see material for Unae drop us a line to let us know what you think. Read it, play in it, use it! This project is what we believe will be Australia's most significant gift to roleplaying, if you want to be a part of its development we suggest you start a campaign in it now, ideally at Tessa. Travel with us as we take you to a new, Australian Realm.

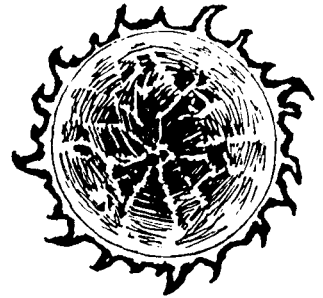
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We welcome requests for Submission Guidelines as we are always on the look out for new ideas and inputs to the magazine. What we would ask, however, is that you enclose a Stamped Self Addressed Envelope with your request and a short proposal detailing what it is you have in mind. That way we can fast track your good ideas without wasting our and your time. And another thing - please be patient as we have received hundreds of letters in the past few months and although we like to respond to all of them, it does take time!

SPECIAL ISSUE PART 1

Something we have decided to do is to feature a particular game or genre in each issue. This issue has been a *Battletech* special with the cover, review and additional *Battletech* pages. Next issue we are looking at running extra *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* material, ideally

we will
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Mage
issue #1



Good *Mah*
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issue #

poster some psionic or magical control that

SPECIAL ISSUE - PART 2

Whilst issue #10 is out on the streets our Assistant Editor, Karen Leaning will, at some stage, be producing a very special issue - Nick and Karen's third child. All the staff at *Realms* wishes her and the baby-to-be good luck, and an easy labour and hurry back after you've had the baby as we are running out of paste-up glue again!

CLUB CONTACTS

We are still asking clubs to contact us with information about themselves so that we can print a Club Directory listing which includes representatives from every state. Obviously Clubs are very important as they are excellent places for new players to learn about role playing, and they promote greater awareness of the hobby in the wider community. The Directory is a free service we are offering to Clubs to help you attract new members. Something else we have promised to do for fledgling clubs is to run an article in issue #11 explaining how best to go about setting up a Club. It's all part of our ongoing commitment to role playing in this country.





mm, I am impressed by their very large range of superb wargames, although my own storm-laden campaigns aren't represented!

Orrgh! Der's lotsa lead fig'as n stuff, wif paints n udda fings my brain 'urts! *

Some target practice, how convenient! I thank the Emperor

Lizards! is a fun game and one

range of roleplaying games

The next catalogue is due in March (I hope!), and will feature TSR's complete 1993 release schedule!

Yo dudes! These jerk-weeds forgot ta mention magazine subscriptions, novels, computer games, and the freakin' CRAZY SPECIALS! Have a nice day

Ya wanna FREE catalogue fanboy? Cut dis cheap coupon out n post it today!

Mil Sims 'ave been serving Oz gamers for 18 years 'Ere cop dis brat!

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Artwork by Alain Gassner, from Chaosium's Stormbringer supplement Perils of the Young Kingdoms. Miniatures are a Citadel Terminator, Ork Oddboy, and 2 Madboys. Please don't sue me, I'm too poor!

TACTICS

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SWAP MEET

Saturday 17th April
10AM - 12AM

PERTH & ADELAIDE

Let David or Dale know you will be attending by calling
(09) 321 4860
(08) 212 5977

Or just turn up on the day.

GO FOR IT!

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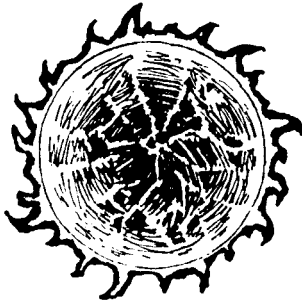
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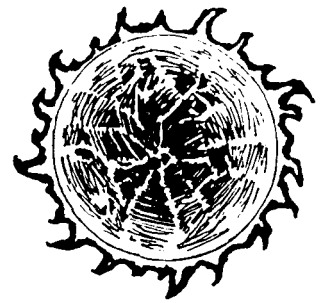
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Partying Under The Sun



Party Kits for the Dark Sun Setting - by Seng A. Mah

The AD&D milieu, Dark Sun, sets a unique challenge for anyone designing a campaign for Athas. The Dark Sun character classes have been devised along strict social and cultural lines which make many of them incompatible for players wanting to mesh them into a unified party. To make things easier for the already overworked referee, I present to you several kits, or frameworks, for organising PCs into a relatively smooth running party. Each party kit has its own array of classes, races, restrictions etc.; you should select a kit which would most suit your campaign tastes. Each kit places the party firmly against a background based on aspects of Athasian culture and society. Suggestions for the roles specific classes might play are described, along with ideas for potential adventures and campaign development. As with all optional material, you're are invited to ignore, adjust or embellish anything you read here to best suit your own Dark Sun campaign.

The Bounty Hunter Kit

In a slave economy, there will always be a need for those whose living it is to hunt down runaway escaped slaves. In city states, bounty hunters are found in the employ of those with money and power. Sorcerer kings, high level templars, and the nobility all own valuable slaves who have at some time in their lives sought escape. Criminals too are quarry for bounty hunter

bands. On Athas, the definition of criminal can be loose to say the least, making for some interesting situations; bounty hunter characters might find themselves chasing firebrand politicians as easily they might a skillful thief.

Many escaped slaves tend to flee to the desert, hoping perhaps to find succour with a slave tribe. hunters sent to recapture them will have to contend not only with belligerent slaves who prefer death (and the death of their would-be-captors) to servitude, but also the monster and other denizens of the Athasian wilderness. Of course, a band of bounty hunters' real enemy is the slave tribe; fearing discovery, tribes of escaped slaves offer no quarter to their most hated enemies.

While a wilderness adventure is typical for those hunting renegade slaves, bounty hunters commissioned to track down notorious criminals could find themselves in a search-and-eliminate scenario in the violent underclass of any city, or immersed in the corruption and political intrigue of the upper echelons of bureaucracy. a good living can be made as a bounty hunter and bands with good reputations find regular and high-paying employment.

Fighters usually make up the bulk of any such band. Gladiators found with bounty hunters are either loyal to their masters, or

under some psionic or magical control that they may add to the combat strength of the party. Rangers, while expert trackers - a skill invaluable to any bounty hunter band - do not usually remain long with any bounty hunter band. Sooner or later, their alignment tendencies will come into conflict with group activity (hunting escaped slaves is hardly a "good" occupation). Rationales are, of course, possible: a band that only hunts down the criminal element is one a ranger will not feel out of place in. Psionics are indispensable in any band of bounty hunters. When even the strength of arm is not enough to bring in the quarry, *domination*, *mass domination* and *control body* come in handy restricting intractable captives.

Acceptable Classes: All warriors, all rogues, defiler, psionist, templar and cleric.

Primary Classes: Fighter, psionist.

Races: Any

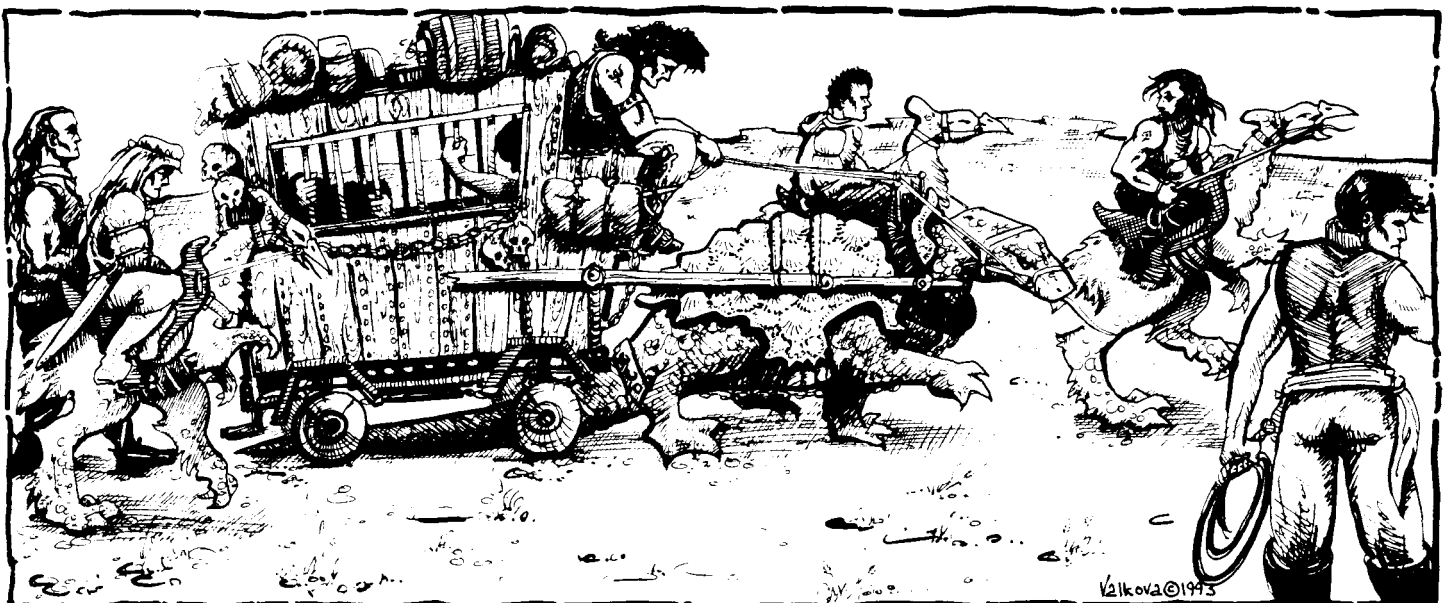
Restrictions: Most bounty-hunters are of non-good alignments.

Skills: Tracking, rope use, survival, direction sense.

Accoutrements: Cage, wagon, manacles, giant-hair rope, whip or scourge, mounts (varies, but usually crodlu for riders and an inix drawn wagon for the cage).

The Trader Kit

The trader as a character class is detailed in DSR2 Dune Trader. A trader party kit



assumes that PCs belong to or work for one of the many merchant houses described in that supplement. Obviously, one or more of the PCs must be a trader class character, while others can act as guards or providers of magical or psionic back up. Many merchant houses purchase gladiators, granting them a broader freedom in return for loyalty to their houses.

Trader parties brave trade routes for merchant houses, ferrying goods to and from the city states. They are also deployed on missions to secure new areas for trade or for new bases, or are employed in the maintenance of client villages and holdings in frontier regions like the Ringing Forest or the Sea of Silt. Adventure types range from the simple (cross-country delivery), to the typical (scouting out a prospective base), to the complex (administrative problems and a persistent assassin). For playing convenience, equip player traders with light caravans - ware carried in small enclosed wagons drawn by kank or crodlu, or in howdahs borne on the backs of the inix if they are required to convey goods overland. Unlike the great mekillot drawn leviathans, these light caravans are favoured for their speed. Have the player characters hire on additional hands, or use slaves, if they don't feel confident about guarding and engaging their own caravans. Who knows? One of their hirelings could be a spy from a rival merchant house.

Gith, elven traders and slave tribes, sandstorms and monsters that dwell in the wild pose ever-present threats to the trader's caravan. Less apparent than these are the sinister machinations of rival houses. Trade on Athas is very competitive. Assassination attempts and sabotage are some of the nefarious schemes PC traders will have to cope with. On the other hand, a party of particularly nasty traders could themselves be the instigators of 'unfair trade practises'.

Acceptable Classes: All warriors, all rogues, all wizards, clerics, psionists.

Primary Classes: Traders, fighters.

Races: Primarily human or elves (see Dune Trader for the list of elven merchant houses), though folk of other races are employed as aides and agents. Elves are hesitant to hire on other races.

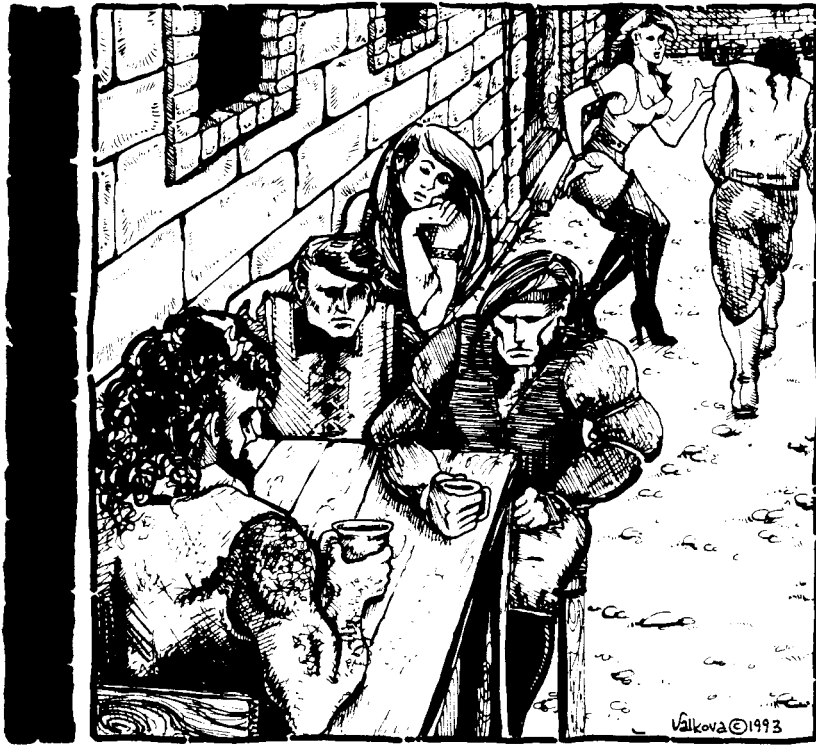
Restrictions: None

Skills: Navigation, direction sense, bargain, appraisal.

Accoutrements: Mounts and beasts of burden as described above. These will have to be purchased during the creation of the trader party (see Dune Trader).

The Slaver Kit

Combining elements of both the bounty hunter and the trader, slavers capture and market their own 'merchandise'. Defenceless villagers, tribes people and escaped slaves are potential targets. Slavers are also known to capture monsters and exotic sentient beings for rich collectors and for the arena.



Much of the adventure involved with a party of slavers will be in the hunting of slaves, and in this, its structure is identical to that of a bounty hunter party. Once caught, the quarry is transported and sold. This is where the trader kit comes in. On the road from Urik to Raam with a cage full of sweltering unhappy slaves, what would happen if one of the more persistent captives were to engineer an escape attempt. These caravans are also prime targets for slave tribes intent on freeing their fellow slaves.

Acceptable Classes: Trader, thief, fighter, defiler, psionist, cleric.

Primary Classes: Trader, fighter.

Races: All

Restrictions: This kit is most suitable for neutral or evil characters.

Skills: see bounty hunter and trader kits.

Accoutrements: see bounty hunter and trader kits.

The Slave Kit

On the surface, a party composed of slaves might not seem the most viable of adventuring propositions. Scratch a little beneath the surface and you'll find a campaign with interesting long term possibilities.

Player characters in this kit are going to start disgruntled. Lets face it, no sane player would want to begin with nothing - no money, no weapons, no armour, no equipment - but the rags on his or her back (and even this luxury is not assured!). Worse still, they're going to be told what to do by their owner or overseer, and they've got no choice but to obey. But like all kits, this allows the most diverse combinations of races and classes and requires the least referee interference in creating a feasible interactive party.

The first thing this kit assumes is that the PCs belong to the same owner (sorcerer king, templar, noble, merchant house) and have come into contact with one another. Then things happen. Their owner might send them on missions, where only the expendable need apply. Missions can encompass a host of different situations: clearing an area known to be infested with dangerous vermin, standing guard over an important artifact, accompanying a caravan across inhospitable territory, or fighting for their owner's pleasure in the arena.

Ultimately, enslaved PCs will want to make a bid for freedom. This can be a major scenario in itself, a great part of which is spent on planning and finally executing the great escape. Once free, PCs become fair game for bounty hunters and slavers. If they've run into the desert (there is, after all, nowhere else to go) the priority of escape is transformed into the imperative of survival. Without weapons, provisions and equipment, how are they going to survive? In times like this, a sun-bleached jagged thigh bone, effectively a bone dagger, becomes a godsend! Eventually, escaped slave PCs form or join a slave tribe (see the Tribal Kit below). Their adventure continues there...

Acceptable Classes: All except wizards (with exceptions as shown below)

Primary Classes: None

Races: Any

Restrictions: All PCs in this framework are slaves. In most cases, only low-level (3 to 6) priests are kept as slaves since higher level ones usually escape, or are put to death because of their burgeoning powers. It is possible for wizards, particularly preservers, expert in the proficiency of somatic concealment and who are discreet in their spell casting, to be slaves. There is also the

problem of the spellbook - how would they conceal it from their overseers?

Skills: Any

Accoutrements: None.

The Rogue Kit

The underclass of any city state is teeming with ne'er-do-wells: crooks, thieves, murderers, thugs, renegades. Constantly hunted down by the authorities, the disenfranchised have ignored that old adage and found some semblance of 'honour' - precarious though it might be - among thieves. Player characters in this kit are such individuals, driven by fear and desperation to form a group, the Dark Sun version of modern day street gangs.

Most members of a gang are rogues, fighters (the muscle), or escaped gladiators (bigger muscle), although psionicists and mages on the run from templars find comfortable sanctuary among them, trading their unique abilities for protection, even friendship. Unlucky circumstances may lead characters from other classes to the ranks of these thugs - the decision lies with the referee.

This kit promotes an urban adventure campaign, a setting a druid or ranger might feel out of place in. PCs in a gang should give it a name, something gritty and intimidating. When not rough living, gangs find work with

some kind of shady 'patron'. Patronage comes in the forms of paid missions: thefts, assassinations, smuggling operations, kidnapping, extortion, or vendettas. The thugs seldom know who their 'patron' is, the mission is conveyed via a chain of middlemen.

Gangs often get involved in clashes of arms and arcane powers with rival gangs over concepts like 'territory' or rogue's honour', or even for the sheer hell of it. On regular intervals, templars and their guards round up the low-life on the flimsiest of charges, consigning them to slavery and the dreaded arena.

Acceptable Classes: Primarily rogues and fighters. Other classes are available at the referee's discretion.

Primary Classes: Rogues.

Races: Any. Half-giants might experience difficulty when urgent concealment is required.

Restrictions: Gang members are usually, but not exclusively, of non-good alignments.

Skills: Any rogue non-weapon proficiencies are appropriate.

Accoutrements: None.

The Tribal Kit

Player characters from this kit all hail from one of the many tribes inhabiting the

wilderness of Athas. Class and racial make up vary from tribe to tribe. Slave tribes consist of individuals of different races and classes; PCs from these tribes tend to reflect this broad racial and cultural mix. Other tribes are racially oriented - elven tribes are extremely insular, even xenophobic.

Tribal activity is directly linked to tribal economy and this can be developed into larger-scale scenarios. Young tribe members embark on rites of adulthood, involving perhaps the slaying of a tribal enemy, or the theft of an enchanted item from a city state. Characters might raid caravans, hunt, or even wage war against a rival tribe. Tribes must, furthermore, be ever vigilant against the threat of gith, belgoi, and other terrors of the desert. A complete heroic campaign can spring up from apparently innocuous tribal beginnings, PC tribesfolk stumble upon a force of great malice (a dragon?) threatening not only their tribe, but all Athas!

Acceptable Classes: All.

Primary Classes: Fighters, rangers.

Races: Any.

Restrictions: None other than the fact they will not be welcomed in city states.

Skills: Survival, herbalism, tracking, direction sense, animal handling, find water, heat protection.

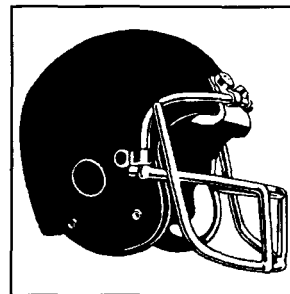
Accoutrements: None.



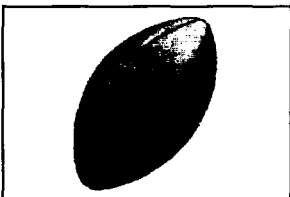
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LOVE WILL TEAR US APART

By Marianne Payne

Waiting for the hurricane

The hunters are currently based in the attic above an old church in New Orleans. Being from the Society of Leopold, the resident vicar has hesitantly given the hunters access to this space, although his patience is rapidly running out. Chances are that the players will attempt an assault upon the building, resulting in a brutal fight with the hunters complete with lots of guns, fire and sharp stakes! This will probably result in the deaths of more than one hunter, and the vampires fleeing the flames, as Stephen is not adverse to lighting the church to kill kindred. Another possibility is that they send in members with high obfuscate and/or stealth skills to case out the joint, or attempt to assassinate some hunters. With any luck this will result in the death of a vampire (these people are not amateurs, and know some of the powers of vampires). Attempts to talk to Stephen will prove fruitless and frustrating, any show of allies on Vanessa's side will prompt a call for backup.

In any case, neither Tom nor Natasha are in the church, Natasha having moved to the 5th floor of the Royal Inglebottom Hotel after the first attack, with Stephen being the only other hunter knowing the location. Too bad if he gets killed. Having her hopes of quickly recovering her love dashed, Vanessa will enter a deep depression, and become very pessimistic about any further plans. If Stephen survives, he will eventually make his way, with any other survivors to the Royal Inglebottom.

Destination unknown

Unsure as to whether Tom is still in the city, and the number of hunters with him, the players will need to find some way of acquiring this information. In the mean time, Vanessa has been working on Tom, who initially was convinced that he was kidnapped by a band of crazies. Now, after being captive for a few days, the combination of uncertainty, fatigue, and the manipulation/seduction by Natasha is telling upon his mind. Vanessa was different sure, but a vampire? Every day that it takes the party to find Tom will give Natasha more time to manipulate him, and she is very persuasive. If it takes longer than a week to find them, then Tom will have been convinced that Vanessa is a vampire, and will be both hurt and outraged that he was lied to, but he does love her, and if Vanessa shows that she retains a large degree of humanity, he will find that he can look past what she is, and accept who she is. Although this will also be dependant upon how her 'friends' act also. If the characters handle situations badly, and practice acts of low humanity, then he will pretend to be overwhelmed with joy at being reunited with his love, and then stake her when he gets the opportunity (this may not be for several days after)

The Story

Meeting with Vanessa, and introduction to the story.
Encounter with the hunters, who are better prepared than expected, and Tom is not with them.
Search for the hunter's base.
Recovering the hostage.
Outcome and loose Ends ?

*Waiting for another war and
waiting for my valentine*

- Sisters of Mercy "Valentine"

Somebody stole my man

Vanessa will approach the characters at a inconvenient moment, either at home, or out, and explain her situation. She will be known to at least one of the characters through a past encounter. She has already attempted a rescue (unsuccessfully) and is desperate and lost as to what to do next. She knows that the hunters are hiding in a large church in New Orleans, and are waiting for her to come to them.

The party's mission is to find the hunters and rescue Tom without giving away the fact that they're vampires, or if they must show what they are, to show as little of the beast as is possible. That means no extreme violence, no flying into frenzy, and no drinking of blood in pleasant company.

History never repeats

After finding the location of Vanessa's hideout the story may turn into a repeat of the church (but without the kerosene, unless Stephen is there!), or the players may find another way of rescuing Tom. Unless she has the upper hand, Natasha will flee at the first sign of danger, leaving her hostage and anybody else.

This series of events could lead to more than the players expected, with the possibility of a full inquisition hunt called down upon them. Also if Vanessa or the characters are revealed as vampires, then the masquerade has been broken, and kindred society must be answered to. If Tom has been swayed by the hunters, then news of Vanessa's final death should reach the players after a week or two (perhaps they now have to hunt down Tom, who is seeking solace in Natasha's arms, or face the wrath of the Carmilla). Additional experience should be given if the players manage to rescue Tom without revealing themselves.

The characters

Vanessa Lymont

Clan Toreador, Apparent age 21, Nature - Fanatic
Born in Southern France in 1769, Vanessa was a wealthy artist caught up in the revolution, her lover at the time, was an aristocrat and a vampire. He brought her into the kindred just as the chaos in France was awakening. Her education in the ways of the kindred was cut short by the untimely beheading of her lover and mentor. Escaping to the countryside, she learnt the limitations and benefits of her new life the hard way, this drove her to the edge of her sanity, then after a nearly a century of living like that, an encounter with the ghost of a noble in Bordeaux brought back to her a glimpse of what she had lost. In an attempt to recapture her humanity, Vanessa made the arduous journey across the Atlantic to begin a new life in New Orleans where she has lived ever since.

A few years ago, Vanessa became entranced by a mortal who closely resembled her creator and former lover. She quickly became involved with him, but resolved never to see him burdened with the 'curse' that she suffers. To this extent she has hidden her true nature from Tom, and explained away her pale skin and reaction to sunlight as a strange and rare form of albinism. She has rarely taken blood from him, and when she has, he has not known.

Vanessa is primarily a pacifist, and is attempting to find a path to Golconda. She has much patience, and carefully considers all ideas before deciding on a course of action, this will often lead to indecision, and her changing her mind on a course of action.

Str-1, Dex-3, Sta-2, Cha-3, Man-3, App-3, Per-4, Int-3, Wit-4
Acting 1, Alertness 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Subterfuge 2
Drive 1, Etiquette 3, Firearms 1, Melee 2, Music 3, Stealth 1,
Survival 3, Politics 2, Linguistics 3, Occult 1, Contacts 2,
Resources 3, Courage 2, Self Control 5, Conscience 3,
Willpower 7, Humanity 8, Blood Pool max 13, Auspex 3,
Celerity 2, Presence 1

Natasha Watson

AKA Elizabeth Doe, Sarah Conner : Hunter, Nature -Conniver
Natasha Watson, is a very attractive woman, who has been killing kindred for many years. She understands that the ways of the kindred are often subtle, and that direct violence will be highly likely to fail, and in doing so end the hunters life. Thus she follows a more manipulative path to leading the vampires into a situation where they can be more easily dispatched. She has her own reasons for the hunt, and she keeps these hidden (see flaws). Although not religious, Natasha has teamed up with

Steven Banks and the Society to give her access to resources that she would not otherwise have. Her income being that which she can con or seduce out of rich men. Although Steven has been designated leader of this particular hunt, she manipulates those around her to move it in the direction that she wishes

Str-1, Dex-3, Sta-2, Cha- 3, Man- 3, App- 4, Per- 3, Int- 3, Wit- 2
Acting 3, Alertness 2, Dodge 2, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2,
Subterfuge 4 Drive 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Security 1, Stealth
1, Bureaucracy 1, Investigation 1, Finance 2, Investigation 2,
Kindred Lore 2, Allies 2, Contacts 2, Resources 2, Courage 2, Self
Control 4, Conscience 2, Willpower 9, Humanity 6, Flaw -
Addicted to vampire Blood. Personal Equipment - Lighter, Light
pistol, Pocket Flash unit (blinds vampires, allowing her to run
away!), Hairspray (Read Flamethrower).

Stephen Banks : Hunter, Nature - Fanatic

Entering the priesthood straight from a Christian Brothers school, Stephen has lived quite a sheltered life. His involvement with the Society of Leopold began after he was forced as the new pastor of an New Hampshire church to be the host for a vampiric trial and execution. This awakened a burning desire within him to destroy the 'unholy host'. This is his first 'command' and the society are interested in watching his progress. A firm believer in the 'burn them into the ground' method of hunting, he is resentful that the Society allowed Natasha to join 'his' group and has become frustrated after she convinced him to kidnap Tom.



Str- 3, Dex- 3, Sta- 3, Cha- 3,
Man- 1, App- 2, Per- 3, Int- 2,
Wit- 2

Alertness 3, Athletics 2,
Brawl 3, Dodge 2,
Leadership 2, Drive 2,
Firearms 3, Melee
4(stake), Investigation
2, Occult 2, Kindred Lore
2, Allies 3, Resources 2,
Courage 4, Self Control
3, Conscience 2, Faith 5,
Willpower 8, Humanity
7, Flaw - Hatred of
Vampires, Merit - Iron
Will. Personal
Equipment - Industrial
Sparklighter, Holy
Cross, Heavy Pistol
(Auto), Neck Guard, Fire
Resistant Clothing.

The Hunting Group

This consists of Stephen, Natasha and 3 others. The others are less experienced members of the order, and can be detailed by the storyteller as necessary, although all will have some level of true faith and some combat skills. Equipment consists of stakes, a pistol for each member, long burning torches (fire) and lighters, and much to the vicar's distress, 5 litres of kerosene.

'X' Marks the Spot

by Alan Ogden

The cavern reeked of spilt blood and burning flesh. Mugwamp dragging the smouldering troll from the fire reduced the stench somewhat. Bobbo was already searching the cavern.

"It's gotta be around here somewhere" he muttered, "Ah, here it is!"

His fingers scrabbled at the hidden latch until it clicked open. Keeping the door between himself and the cavity beyond, he eased it open. Swinging the door wide he gazed on the troll's hoard with glowing eyes. The cavity was filled with bulging sacks. Each was of a uniform size, with coin shaped ridges in the tightly stretched leather. Each bore the inscription "300 GP" in thick black lettering. A parchment stuck on top of the pile.

"Ahhhh!" breathed Mugwamp "Gotta be at least 3000 gpeepees in there."

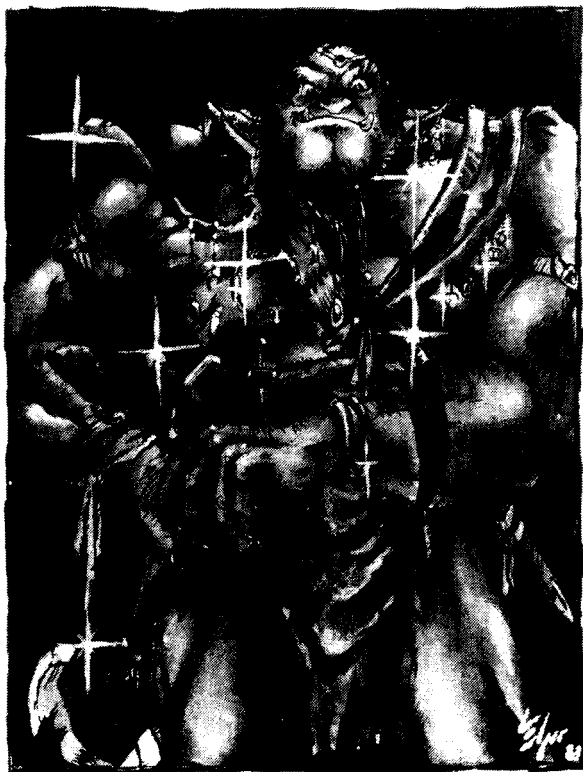
"Thirty-six hundred" Bobbo announced, glancing at the parchment, "C'mon let's get this lot loaded up."

Sound familiar? It is a pattern set by the designers of 'professional modules' which has stuck in many AD&D campaigns. The wealth of underground lairs is nearly always expressed in terms of coins, gems and jewelry neatly stored in chests and sacks hidden in some secret vault or cave. This is a game mechanic convenience for rewarding players that makes little sense if you want to run a smart campaign. These lists of treasure rarely include mundane items like weaponry, armour, clothing and trade goods.

Not everything found while adventuring should be monetary treasure. A lot will be of little value to adventurers; the heavily defended areas they breach may turn out to be food larders, stores of equipment or sacred sites. Stocking a monster's lair with treasure should take this into account. Every home (including your own) contains items of value only to the owners. Potential thieves, especially adventurers, will pass these mundane items over while looking for the good stuff. While of little importance to the players it is the finishing touches like this that add depth to an adventure and which provide opportunities

for innovative role-playing. Imagine a heroic goblin shaman dying to defend the remains of his ancestors, cursing the bold invaders as they cut him down, and the heroes disappointment when they discover that all they have won are a few old bones.

If you insist on placing bags of gold, ask the question - where the did all this stuff come from? Raids on caravans? Nearby villages? Wealthy adventurers? All of these sources tend to have mundane goods as



well as cash. If the coinage is kept, where does the rest of it go - the fine silks, beautiful art objects, jewellery, furs, household and trade goods. Large heavy items of value may well be left behind by fast travelling raiders but smaller items wouldn't. Non-magical weaponry, armour and work tools are ignored by civilised bandits only interested in material gain but they are invaluable to tribal savages who have to fight daily for survival. They are especially valuable if the equipment is of a better quality than the raiders are able to produce themselves. Primitives raiders will take bright, shiny objects that look good but are of little intrinsic value purely for their aesthetic appeal. Yet how often do items like this appear in a hoard?

While generating an overall value for a hoard of treasure is a good idea, try to avoid presenting it as a pile of coins. Make it an assortment of coins, art objects and useful equipment suited to the culture possessing it and the areas from which it was obtained - players actually enjoy inventories like this more than you might imagine. It tells them more about the world they inhabit and makes players think beyond bash, cash and carry!

Finely crafted weaponry and armour would be the rule in a warrior culture. Ornaments like necklaces, arm and wrist bands in a culture where status is determined by wealth. Long lived monsters may possess items valuable for their antiquity more than anything else. In mines the treasure could occur in both raw and refined conditions. A vein of gold embedded in a chunk of quartz may be recognisable as valuable but is very bulky. Most adventurers would recognise the value of a cut and polished gemstone but ignore the same in its rough form as a valueless rock. All of these forms of treasure provide opportunities for role-playing and spin off adventures as the heroes try to extract the treasure and then convert it into more liquid assets. Hagging with wizened gnomish shopkeepers over the value of a finely crafted statue, explaining how you came to be in possession of a sword belonging to a wealthy nobleman; these scenarios can add zest and credibility to your campaign world.

The placement of treasure is another area needing careful thought. Having treasure lumped in one central location may be fine, but it does not make sense if the monsters possessing it are part of an intelligent community. Apart from making it easy to lose the lot, some (if not most) of the treasure will have been distributed amongst the members of raiding parties, sub-chiefs etc. In this case the treasure should be found as personal items, hidden in bedding or personal caches. The largest single hoard would belong to the chieftain or leader. This may be hidden or may very well be on display to show the chief's power, might and luck. Other items could be found on, or in, refuse piles. Spell books, scrolls etc.

would be valueless in an illiterate society whose only magic use is in the form of shamanistic rituals and as such they would be very likely to be thrown away or used for other purposes. Think of your mage's dismay when he finds the *wish* scroll ruined after it has been used to wipe some orc bratling's nose!

Monsters who collect treasure wouldn't keep coins unless they had a means of using them implying a cash economy. If they don't have a place to use the coins as money then they are likely to become ornaments - strung together to form necklaces, riveted or sewn to clothing - or even melted down and recast. If this is the case then the coins may become devalued because of the damage done. Monsters who collect treasure to hoard, would also be attracted to other items which may appear valuable as well, such as glass beads and costume jewellery.

Non-intelligent monsters possessing treasure are attracted to the appearance. These creatures would collect anything shiny or bright and may include in their treasure troves worthless pieces of scrap metal and brightly coloured cloth.

Even traditional treasure hoards don't have to be packaged neatly unless actually

part of a treasury or bank. If the treasure has been accumulated over time as a result of raids and pillage, it likely to be in damaged chests, ripped and torn sacks, or loosely scattered or piled. Treasure stored for long periods of time may deteriorate - metals tarnish and rust, wood, leather and cloth rot - as will the containers. While the loot stored inside these containers may be alright, it will be difficult to carry it away. Time must be spent packaging and counting loot before removal. This leads to increased chances of discovery by the current owners or other raiders.

Treasure should never be reduced to a simple game mechanic for rewarding the players. And remember, after overcoming the defences, finding the treasure, counting it and packing it away for cartage, the adventurers still have to hang on to it. This can be the hardest part...

As Bobbo and Mugwamp staggered into the bright sunlight under the weight of several large clinking sacks of gold, they heard a dozen loud clicks. The sort of click a crossbow makes when it is being cocked ready to fire...



**Paper Tiger Games
Presents
Gang City
by Peter Mackay**

Friday May 27th 1996 - 7:00 pm. The Bourke St Mall was packed with shoppers as Johnny's small patrol elbowed their way toward Swanston St. Four green recruits, two regulars, Johnny and Mojo, his second in command. Not much, really, if there were trouble.

Up ahead a scuffle erupted out of Bevilles as a group of emaciated - looking youths wearing black singlets and white bandannas burst from the store. As they took off across the mall shouts of *Stop! Thief!* rang out into the night air.

"Shit!!" said Johnny, "Skulls!!"

"And on our turn!" rejoined Mojo.

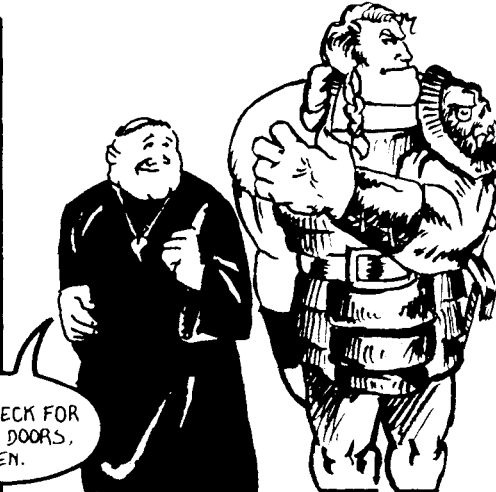
Johnny whipped the switchblade from the pocket of his leather jacket and snapped it open.

"O.K. boys," he said, "let's waste 'em."

Gang City is a play-by-mail game of street gang rivalry in near - future Australian cities. The game postulates a breakdown of law and order and the onset of urban chaos. Youth gangs roam the cities, fighting and dying over possession of "turf". Decent citizens are afraid to walk the streets at night and strong men band together for protection. What little law enforcement remains is provided by small groups of ex-soldiers and policemen who band together to form their own "law gangs" in an attempt to make the streets safe.

- Play in either Sydney or Melbourne.
- Twenty - five player games.
- Wide range of orders affecting gangs, units and city areas. Move units, fight battles, commit crimes and much more.
- Turn fee a flat \$5.00. No extra charges.
- For more information write to:

Paper Tiger Games, P.O. Box 2196, St Kilda West, Victoria 3182, Australia





FOLDING FLOOR. DEEP HOLE, YOUR STANDARD PIT TRAP.

ACID, I'VE DROPPED INTO A VAT OF BLOODY ACID!

NASTY VARIATION, THAT.



IT'LL STING A BIT.

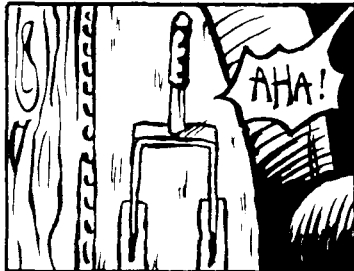
MIGHT IMPROVE HIS LOOKS, THOUGH.



SHOULD WE NOT THROW HIM A ROPE?

BUGGER IT!

I'LL CLIMB OUT MESELF.



AHA!

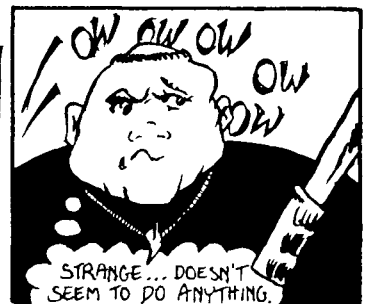


NEARLY THERE!



SHIT!

THE TRAP IS RESETTING!



OW OW OW OW OW

STRANGE... DOESN'T SEEM TO DO ANYTHING.



THIS TIME, I'LL TAKE THE GLORY.



WONDER WHAT MADE THE TRAP RE-ARM?



ZEEK!

OW OW OW...



Noooooooo!!!

THUMP! AAAASPLASH! OW OW OW OW OW



BLOODY HELLFIRE, ZEEK! ARE YOU DOING THIS ON PURPOSE?

ONLY TRYING TO HELP...



Dice Are Dead



*Play-By-Mail &
Live Role Playing
Column compiled
by Glenn Oakes*

Address Submissions To:

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Surrey Hills
Victoria 3127

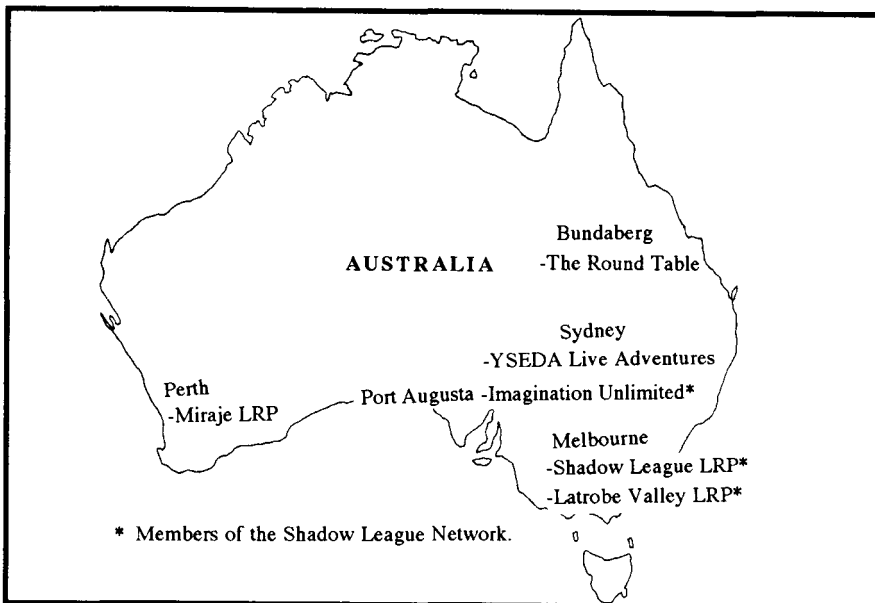
Companies mentioned this issue:

Athena's Avatar, PO Box 3534,
Weston Creek, ACT 2611
Dynamic Games, 4 Tarana Ave,
Kanhooka NSW 2530
Goblin's Sketchbook, 65
Gladstone St, Bendigo, VIC 3550
Ken Scammell, 37 Lambie St,
Cooma, NSW 2630
PBM Enterprises, PO Box 709,
Bayswater, VIC 3153
Paper Tiger Games, PO Box 2196,
St Kilda West, VIC 3182
Roma Games, PO Box 1957,
Toowoomba QLD 4350

Live Role Playing

Where Can You LRP in Australia?

If you ever thought about LRPing in the country, but didn't know where to go for an organised game, here's some help - a map showing where you can LRP. Unfortunately, if you live in the Northern Territory, ACT or Tasmania, you'll have to travel to another state to participate in an organised LRP event. Otherwise you might consider forming your own group. Australian Realms will help by putting you in touch with current clubs who will be happy to give advice and assistance in setting up. You'll note that the interior of the continent is not covered by a single LRP group. Maybe the rumours of elves over running the outback are true...



1. The Shadow League LRP Association Inc.
P.O.Box 489, Blackburn, Victoria 3130.
Phone: Adrian Whitehead (03) 889 5242.
Group Details: Established 1988. Huge membership. Run events in and around Melbourne. Suppliers of LRP weapons, costumes and other equipment. Produces and distributes the fanzine "Shadow Runes" free to members.
Membership fees: \$25.00 (\$15.00 conc) per annum.

2. Latrobe Valley LRP
Location: Gippsland, Victoria
Contact: Matthew Grady (051) 942 296 AH
Group Details: A small, but rapidly growing group. Part of the Shadow League network. Owns an extensive site which features an on-site tavern!
Fees: \$25.00 (\$15.00 conc) per annum.

3. Imagination Unlimited
Location: Port Augusta, South Australia.
Contact: Simon De Bortoli (086) 422 880.
Group Details: Members of the Shadow League Network catering for South Australian LRPers. Plans to hold many events over the next 12 months.
Fees: \$25.00 (\$15.00 conc) per annum.

4. YSEDA Live Adventures

Location: Sydney, New South Wales
Postal Address: 63 Beecroft Road, Beecroft, NSW 2119.
Contact: Michael or Nick Cook (02) 484 4314.
Group details: Second oldest group in Australia. Events organised on demand basis. Extra emphasis on role-playing.
Fees: \$20.00 per game.

5. The Round Table LRP

Location: Outside Bundaberg Queensland
Postal Address: 2 McPherson Street, Rosedale, QLD 4674.
Group details: Run both LRP and PBM games. The club has over eighty members.
Fees: \$5.00 for membership (which includes a free T-shirt and newsletter) \$10.00 for 3 hour games and \$20.00 for 24 hour games.

6. Miraje LRP (Perth)
Location: Perth, Western Australia
Address: 30 Bernice Way, Thornlie, WA 6108.
Contact: Keith Jackson (09) 459 5327
Group Details: Formed in 1990. Regular events including 24hr games, science fiction games, weapon making workshops.
Membership Fees: \$15.00 (\$12.00 conc),
Other groups known to be in the works: Canberra, Newcastle, Bairnsdale, Gold Coast. If these groups, or any others we have missed would care to drop me a line we will tell our readers all about you!

DREADNOUGHT STRATEGY GAMES

Artwork is desperately required for the rulebook of a new PBM. Artists are urged to submit fantasy drawings as soon as possible. Payment is by credit in our postal games. Send a stamp to:
**DSG 18 Reign St Kingston
QLD 4114**

Play-By-Mail

Quest PBM

Dynamic Games

Reviewed by Glenn Oakes

Peter Read, the proprietor and GM of Dynamic Games has a history of offering PBM players quality games at an affordable price. QUEST follows this tradition; value for money combined with a game with depth, playability and longevity.

Quest is the perfect introduction to the multi-faceted world of PBM gaming for role-players. It is not a role-playing game in the true sense of the word - only hand moderation can offer role-playing - but a table-top RPG style game simplified to the tactical level.

The game is open-ended. After designing your team of adventurers, you are free to explore the world of Kharne as you see fit. My party consisted of three fighters - Aldian, a human proficient with swords; Fendal, a mace-wielding dwarf and Uftar the half-blood axeman: there was also Zen, an elven mage, Cardinal Palin the cleric and Shule the thief.

These six (you can have up to fifteen in your party at later stages in the game) began in the mighty city of Mexbrille. Being new to the city, I decided to purchase the local paper to see what Mexbrille offered to enthusiastic adventurers such as my own rowdy bunch. In the paper I discovered various useful tidbits of information as well as a few 'job' vacancies. These jobs or, more appropriately, quests, are an important feature of the game. If you like the description of a particular quest, you can have your party accept it. To succeed in a quest, you must first complete its instructions. Upon completion, you will be given a substantial reward. My first quest involved the simple task of delivering a message to a nearby town. I still haven't completed it as I have been sidetracked killing wolves, experimenting with spells and getting lost!

As well as quests to fulfil, you can explore dark dungeons and mighty fortresses, search for knowledge and power, fight a plethora of beasties and much, much more. You can pray to any of the eight gods, rob shops (something I have been unsuccessful in doing with my party) and trade information with other players. You can even ambush and kill other players!

The rulebook is well presented and is short and to the point. It has a sprinkling of good-quality illustrations and is written in a reader-friendly style. The game orders are quite simple to execute, but contain enough options to keep you interested. Start-up is free (at the time of writing) and includes the first three turns. Further turns are only \$3.00. Turn printouts usually run to a length of three to four pages, but this increases as your party grows in size and experience. These printouts consist of the outcome of your orders, an area map showing each of the provinces you have moved through, a map of the whole of Kharne showing the

area in which your group is operating, group statistics, spell lists and finally, messages and information. So if you have always intended to give PBM a go, this is the game to try. If you're an experienced PBMer, you will be surprised to find that QUEST offers just as much as other 'Big' games for half the price. The best value for money in Australia. How can over 400 players be wrong?



The Goblin's Sketchbook

Above is a detail from Dynamic Games' Quest PBM by Danny Willis. Other works to Willis' credit are Legends (PBM Enterprises), Adventurer Kings, Warriors and Wizards, Darkness of Silverfall (all Roma Games), and Tales of the North (Wraith PBM). Danny has also had colour work published on the cover of the US PBM magazine - Paper Mayhem. If you need art in your PBM, Danny can be contacted at the address given at the head of this column for the Goblin's Sketchbook.

Canberra 2001 - Gang City

Athena's Avatar

Reviewed by Nick Leaning

Have you seen 'Romper Stomper'? This game isn't quite that bigoted, but does portray some of the gangland violence in a non-graphic way. I have been playing the game for 9 turns and failing miserably, but having fun all the same. The neatly printed A5 rulebook reads easily enough and the range of orders is straight forward, but each time I get my turnsheet back I seem to be further and further behind the game leaders.

Starting out you chose from eight gang types, all of which have differing strategies to employ - my business gang is supposed to be good at making money but so far all I've achieved is a few encyclopaedia sales and a burglary or two. Each gang then vies for control of the various sectors Canberra has been split into. The big gains are to be made by securing 'special sites' which are scattered throughout the city: these provide victory points, trained recruits, equipment and most importantly - money.

Each turn the player recruits and trains new gang members, equips them as best his treasury will allow then sends them out on

missions to establish control of their part of town before moving in on neighbouring turf. When you encounter rival gangs you can run, hide or stand and fight like a cornered rat - then the blood flows. All the while you have to balance your finances as you pay rent, transport costs, and invest in the security of your leaders, gangs and turf. Tricky. Gang city is a medium complexity PBM for players who enjoy exploration, diplomacy, economic planning and raw violence. Call up Athena's Avatar and ask Nick Argall for an "offer you can't refuse".

Postal American Football League Roma Games

After the Dallas Cowboys trounced the Buffalo Bills in last month's Superbowl, a lot of you gridiron fans out there might be hankering for more first downs. Well Peter Catling has the perfect answer to tide you over 'til next season. PAFL is a PBM simulation of American Football. You play the role of coach as you guide your team through the season consisting of 4 preseason trials, 16 regular games and up to 4 playoffs culminating in the big one, the Superbowl. Another big new new release scheduled for Roma Games in May '93 is **Worlds in Conflict**, a computer moderated game for 22 players, 8 of them aliens trying to invade earth. Which side would you like to be on?

Lizards!

Roma Games

New out from Roma Games is this game of conflict and conquest. I have not played the game as yet, but judging by the Start Up sheets (see centre of this issue) it will be a fun, fast paced laser printed game very reasonably priced. Australian Realms readers who send in this issue's Start Up form gain set up and their first 3 turns for \$5.00 - this represents a \$23.00 discount!

Paper Tiger Games Developments

Work on Musketeer continues apace. This is a barroom brawl style game based on the fight scenes of the Three Musketeer films featuring Michael York. The game will be fairly light, and fast-paced with players plotting moves roughly 15 seconds in advance. Turn sheets will include full line-drawn maps of the playing area and obstacles clearly marked along with character statistics and a textual summary of activities during the turn. Successful characters may advance to future games with enhanced skills. The game should be in playtest in April and ready for release around June or July.

Play Testers Wanted

A new PBM GM is looking for playtesters for his game. It will cost nothing during the playtest period, except a 45 cent stamp per turn. The game is called "Racing Manager" and is a computer-moderated simulation of running a horse racing stable. Are your training techniques going to produce winners? To find out, send a SSAE to Ken Scammel, 37 Lambie Street, Cooma, NSW 2630.

See you all next issue!

The Analytical Engine

BOOK REVIEWS

by Peter Crank

This month we have six books from four authors all writing around one corner of the S.F. map. As I'm generous and not too fussy about definitions I'll call it Cyberpunk.

What is Cyberpunk all about? Is it really the child born of an unnatural union between Raymond Chandler and Johnny Rotten? Or is it a cheap marketing trick pulled by cynical, jaded publishing execs? Is it the sick outpourings of twisted minds deformed by one too many rejection slips from Women's Day? Or is it really a picture of our world to come? (God I hope not).

George Alec Effinger has been around a while and until recently I hadn't really cared much either way (actually I hated his Nick of Time stories - about as funny as a holiday in Bosnia). That changed a couple of years ago with the publication of **When Gravity Fails** (Bantam Spectra, pprbk, 276 pgs \$12.95). Practitioners of Cyberpunk took "sex and drugs and rock'n'roll" and turned it from a song lyric into a recipe for the future. Mr Effinger followed that recipe closely, but used Middle eastern ingredients and when George cooks, he COOKS! If you haven't tried it, do so immediately, its well done, appealing to most palates.

George followed up the success of 'Gravity' with **A Fire in the Sun**. Same cast, more character development, less action, less interest. Trouble is MarÓd Audran, our hero, does some heavy duty stuff in volume one and George hit the old "now how the hell do I top that?" syndrome. 'Fire' is still a good read but lacks the shock value of volume one. The by-play between MarÓd and his friends on the street is still good value, Effinger is good with dialogue and the Arab/Islamic flavours are tantalising. The use of personality modules and data add-ons (moddies and daddies) are central to these stories and George has been very creative in his thinking. Imagine plugging in the recorded personality of someone dying of cancer, this pastime is the favourite diversion of MarÓd's chief antagonist in 'Fire' - sick eh?

In the OK-but-wish-it-was-better category is volume three in the sequence **The Exile Kiss**. Its the poorest book of the lot with our hero and his mentor stumbling round the Rub al-Khali for a hundred pages with the action thermostat set to lukewarm. A lot of what happens seems contrived to generate a suitable end-game for MarÓd. It leaves enough dangling ends that a further sequel seems likely. Make up your own mind. If you're going to read the first book you've got to read the rest to stop that nagging feeling and you MUST read "When Gravity Fails". Recommended.

If you're like me you stand in your favourite Fantasy and SF bookstore perusing the new titles, or if there is nothing new waste your whole lunch with your neck bent at 90 degrees, shuffling up-and-down the stacks wondering, "What's that book like? Is it

worth \$12.95? Will it give me that 'Damn! wish I'd written that, the bastard', sort of feeling?" I love books like that. A book that you can't stop reading til its all gone and then you wish you hadn't read it quite so fast and you wonder how long before you can reasonably read it again. A book that makes you rush out to buy anything else by the same author. I LOVE books like that! Thats why I hate buying lemons, books that fool you in the bookstore with a good first page into thinking they are *that kind of book* when they're not. I HATE that.

A book that compelled me to rush out in search of the author's other works is **Destroying Angel** by Richard Paul Russo (Headline Feature pprbk 309 pgs \$12.95). All the Cyberpunk elements are there: burnt-out ex-cop slowly disintegrating under his load of guilt, loneliness and self-loathing; a city (San Francisco, with its Tenderloin "no-go" zone) slowly disintegrating under it's load of poverty, crime, a global warming climate and mountains of garbage; a serial killer with an unusual MO, whose mind is slowly disintegrating under...you get the picture. Works well, and Russo is a good craftsman, may end up a damn good one. Beware there is lots of blood in this one - the Tenderloin crime lords have a novel way of offing their opposition by public defenestration. Recommended.

Actually, as far as good-reads go I've done well this month. I've just finished **Synners** by Pat Cadigan (Bantam Spectra, pprbk, 435 pgs \$12.95). Hot!

Real Hot! This is *my* pick for best read of 1992. More ideas tumble off a single page of this novel than most writers manage in a single book. Be warned though, this is hard-core computer oriented cyberpunk. The lady writes at mach-3 and it starts on page one. You must get a handle on the jargon immediately or you will not make it. No concessions are made for idiots, if you can't stand the heat get out of the boiler-room. Corporate shakedowns and takeovers, double-crosses, drugs, rock videos, computer viruses, cranial implants, hit-and-run parties, LA after the Almost Big One, bands of teen hackers, Hollywood without actors, really really bad traffic jams, you name it they're in there. Highly Recommended. (Liked it so much I rushed out and bought **Fools**, I'll let you know about that one).

Speaking of LA., a recent novel set in that weird place (man the smog is bad, *and* you can get high on it!) is **City Of Angels** by Greg Bear (Warner Books, pprbk,420 pgs, \$12.95). Greg Bear is not a name you would normally associate with Cyberpunk, and this book is not marketed as such, but it has all the elements. Really the boundaries are disappearing between mainstream and Cyberpunk, if they ever really existed at all. Its murder again, but a real puzzle, what would you find in the mind of a psychopath if the means existed for you to visit it? Imagine a mind link with Hannibal Lector! Lots of food for thought here and some wonderful gadgets. Bear gets heavily into some psychologically based extrapolation in "City"and it is mind stretching stuff. Nano-tech plays a big part in the story (*you know*, molecule sized machines). The female cop, who is our principal character, smuggles a vial of nano-machine-paste into the enemy's lair as cosmetics - just pour onto the room-service cutlery and hey presto! a couple of hours later a nano-manufactured hand-gun. Like it; come in handy at the next convention. Highly Recommended.

Hit picks from the "Golden Oldies" time. Thinking about the origins of Cyberpunk got me to thinking about Alfred Bester who wrote very hip books when William Gibson was just a pup. If you want to read two great novels with that *nasty* feel we've grown to love try **The Stars My Destination** (aka "Tiger!Tiger!" in the UK rights part of the world) and **The Demolished Man**. Don't even know if they are still in print, if not check out the local library or a friend with a good collection.

In the words of the eloquent Austrian - 'I'll be back!' next issue with a new batch of victims for the Engine - including a few rpg game related books. In the meantime; stay clean, fight dirty and as the wizard said to the Magical Photographer -

"Don't develop any bad Hobbits."

MECHWARRIOR BREWER

Clan Unit Organisations

Clan combat units are organised in a very different way to their Inner Sphere counterparts. Before we can discuss the Clan tactic of "bidding" for forces, it is important to have a good idea of how Clan forces are organised. The basic Clan units are described below:

Point: 1 'Mech, or 2 Aerospace fighters, or 2 Vehicles, or 5 Elementals.

Star: 5 Points (can be assorted 'Mech, Fighter and Elemental Points).

Binary: 2 Stars

Trinary: 3 Stars

Nova: 1 'Mech Star and 1 Star of Elementals

SuperNova: 1 'Mech Binary and 2 Elemental Stars.

Cluster: 4 or 5 Binaries or Trinaries.

Galaxy: 3 to 5 Clusters.

The flexible nature of the Clan system allows units to be added and deleted quickly, which means units all the way up to Galaxy level can be specifically tailored for particular missions and mission requirements. This flexibility is also required because of the way the Clans bid away forces. Often only part of a Binary or Trinary will be committed to an attack, with the other part having been discarded during the bidding process. Bidding away forces is an integral part of the way the Clans fight, and will be more fully described later.

As you can see, the nature of the Clan organisations means you can't be sure of the exact composition of Units. For example, a Cluster may be composed of as little as 40 points (4 Binaries), or up to 75 Points (5 Trinaries). When someone bids a Cluster, make sure you look carefully at its composition, or you could be in for a nasty surprise.

Bidding Forces

Bidding is an integral part of the way the Clans conduct operations. Units in the attacker's forces bid amongst one another for the honour of conducting the attack. The basic idea is to use the minimum forces to perform a specific task. It is also a matter of honour amongst commanders to bid well - right down to the barest minimum (and sometimes below), and still win. The commander who offers the lowest bid wins the right to conduct the battle.

First Bid

The first thing to determine is who makes the first bid. There are differences of opinion as to whether it is an advantage or not to get first bid. I prefer to bid second, to see what the other commander is willing to risk. The best way to determine the first bid is to roll for initiative as you would on any other battlefield. The winner chooses whether they want to bid first or not.

Bidding Process

After determining who bids first, the opening bid (listing all forces to be used in the operation) is revealed. The opposing bidder then offers a counter-bid. Each bid must be smaller than the last bid for it to be valid. The latest bid may be counter-bid again, and this process continues until a bid is offered that the opponent cannot or will not counter-bid. The commander offering the lowest bid wins the right to conduct the operation with the forces listed in that bid. It is customary for the losing bidder to compliment the winner with the traditional phrase "Bargained well and done" as a salute to the the victor's bidding skill.

The Challenge

It is customary before the attack for the Attacker to call the Defenders. After identifying him or herself and the forces to be used in the attack, the Attacker will ask "What forces defend this Planet/Area/Object?". After this exchange of information, the two commanders will arrange a suitable time and place for the battle. Note: Defending Inner-Sphere warriors have, on several occasions, understated the size of their forces during the Challenge. Such deception is not common amongst the Clans, and several defeats have been suffered by believing Inner-Sphere defenders. Caution is urged with dealings with the Inner-Sphere. They do not fight with honour.

What Happens When Things Go Bad

Contrary to popular Inner-Sphere belief, Clan attackers are not restricted to the forces listed in the challenge. They may only use the forces bid for the opening of the attack, but, if things go badly, may call down re-inforcements. The re-inforcements allowed are equal to the forces that were the difference between the last bids. For example, if the losing bidder has bid a Cluster of 'Mechs and two Stars of Elementals, and the winning bidder had counter-bid by deleting the Elemental Stars, the available re-inforcements for that Cluster would be two Stars of Elementals. These re-inforcements can be called by the commander of the attacking force at any time, but it involves a slight loss of honour for having miscalculated the bidding.

And When Things Go REALLY Bad

If total defeat looks imminent, the assault commander may request to be granted re-inforcements equivalent to all the forces deleted from that commander's opening bid. Access to these re-inforcements is not automatic - the losing bidder must agree that these forces can be released. The losing bidder may demand special compensation from the assault commander before agreeing to grant access to the additional re-inforcements. Having to call on these re-inforcements involves a major loss of status, and some commanders have chosen the lesser dishonour of total defeat rather than call for this level of re-inforcements.

SHADOW LEAGUE

LIVE ROLE PLAYING CLUB

Have you ever imagined what it is actually like to play one of your favourite characters, dressed up in costume, carrying your weapons and equipment through dark forest paths or dank tunnels? If you have, you might like to try Live Role Playing! Live Role Playing creates the atmosphere of true adventure, as you play your chosen character, in a life sized, gaming environment.



Shadow League is one of Australia's longest running and most dynamic Live Role Playing (LRP) clubs. We run a wide variety of events from our regular 3 hour Adventures, to Weekend events, Free Forms, and the epic 4-6 day adventures held in January. Your first 3 hour adventure with *Shadow League* is free, and includes use of a costume and weapon. After that 3 hour games cost \$15 (\$10 concession) with a \$5 reduction for members.

Membership costs \$25 (\$15 concession) and entitles you to cheaper games, a bimonthly newsletter, and discounts at various gaming stores. Weekend games cost on average \$35-\$45 with discounts for members and concession holders.

Shadow League is based in Melbourne, with additional clubs in the Latrobe Valley and Port Augusta. In 1993, we will be expanding to the Gold Coast, Newcastle, Bairnsdale, and Denmark (That's right folks Denmark!).

Shadow League's next major event is the three day "Summer Festival", being held over the Australia Day long weekend, at Maribyrnong Park, Keilor, 30 minutes from Melbourne.

MELBOURNE / AUSTRALIA
ADRIAN WHITEHEAD
03 889 5242

LATROBE VALLEY
MATTHEW GRADY
051 942 296

PORT AUGUSTA
SIMON DE BORTOLI
086 422 880

For more Information on rule systems, where we play, what we do, and the club in general, remove and post this form to "Shadow League Australia" P.O. BOX 489, BLACKBURN, 3130, VICTORIA.

.....
Please send me more information on LRP. I would also like information about the following (tick boxes.).

- The Australia Day '93 72hr Event Weapon Smith Products Setting up a LRP Club

Name: _____ Address: _____ Post Code: _____

These proposed Battletech rules variants by Robin Issel, based on an idea supplied by Stewart Bennington, are not recommended to those commanders who have a weak heart. If, however, you have what it takes to think and act swiftly in a deadlier game of Battletech - read on!

The Problem

Do your mass battles take too long? Would you like to take out an atlas in one round? Is a Stinger just too underrated? Do you want your battles to run like those in the novels? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions then Sudden Death Battletech may be just what you are looking for.

The Solution

Sudden Death is a more 'realistic' look at the capabilities of the weapons systems of the 31st century. Given the technological advancement of lasers, PPC's autocannons, missiles, etc. FASA just have not presented an accurate picture of the destructive potential of these weapons. Sudden Death has changed all this by effectively doubling the capabilities of the different weapon systems without doubling armour. Sudden Death is mainly designed for Battletech miniatures combat, that is floor, table, sand table etc., but can be used on normal mapsheets with a few alterations. If miniatures are to be used, I recommend a scale of 1 inch equals 1 movement point while a 60 degree turn or part thereof also equals 1 movement point. Movement through woods, forest, rough, buildings, etc. should be decreased accordingly.

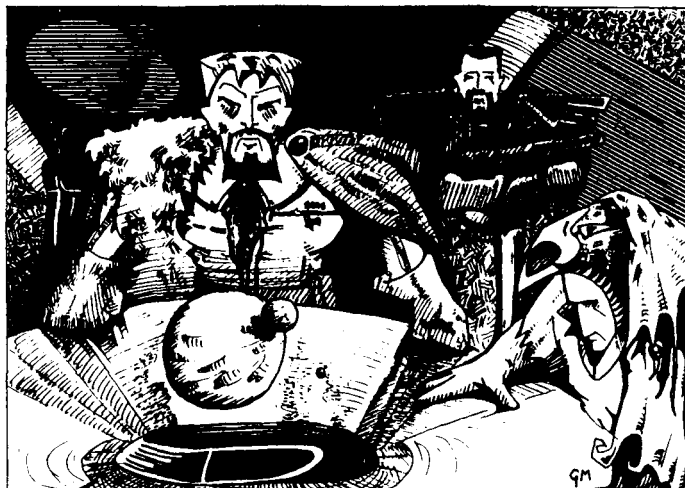
How Does It Work?

The first thing about the Sudden Death system is that the ranges and damage of all the weapons have been doubled. Minimum ranges have not been doubled though so PPC's LRM's AC5's and AC2's still keep their minimums of 3, 6, 3 and 4 respectively. Note that no damage is scored by LRM's if the target is within minimum range as the missiles will not have had time to arm. LRM missiles fired within minimum range which hit do not count towards impact damage in determining piloting skill rolls.

Secondly, the concept of scatter damage has been introduced resulting in multiple hit locations from a single weapon system. Energy weapons are the only exception to this rule doing full damage to the primary location. When a hit has been determined, roll two dice and consult the charts below to see what locations have been hit. Then consult the weapons damage table to determine the amount of damage inflicted to each location.

For Example

A Crusader fires an LRM 15 at a Jagermech and scores a hit. The player rolls an 8 for hit location and scores the following damage :- LT-8, CT-5, LA-5, LT-5. The Jagermech returns fire with all four autocannons and hits with all of them. Location rolls are as follows, 3,7,11,12. Consult the charts and after recording damage and making consciousness rolls, the Crusader pilot wisely decides to retire, but finds he cannot get out of the increased range of the AC2's so the battle continues.



HIT LOCATION TABLE

Die Roll	Front/ Back		Right Side		Left Side	
	Primary	Secondaries	Primary	Secondaries	Primary	Secondaries
2	CT	RT LT CT	RT	CT RA RT	LT	CT LA LT
3	RA	H RT CT	RL	RT CT RA	LL	LT CT LA
4	RA	RL RT CT	RA	RT CT RL	LA	LT CT LL
5	RL	RT CT RA	RA	RT CT RL	LA	LT CT LL
6	RT	CT RA RL	RL	RT CT RA	LL	LT CT LA
7	CT	RT LT CT	RT	CT RA RT	LT	CT LA LT
8	LT	CT LA LL	CT	RT RA RL	CT	LT LA LL
9	LL	LT CT LA	LT	H CT LL	RT	H CT RL
10	LA	LL LT CT	LA	LT CT LL	RA	RT CT RL
11	LA	H LT CT	LL	LT CT LA	RL	RT CT RA
12	H	CT LT RT	H	RT CT RA	H	LT CT LA

PUNCH HIT LOCATION TABLE

Die Roll	Front/ Back		Right Side		Left Side	
	Primary	Secondaries	Primary	Secondaries	Primary	Secondaries
1	LA	LT CT H	RT	CT RA H	LT	CT LA H
2	LT	CT LA RT	RT	CT RA H	LT	CT LA H
3	CT	RT LT H	CT	RT LR RA	CT	LT RT LA
4	RT	CT RA LT	RA	RT CT H	LA	LT CT H
5	RA	RT CT H	RA	RT CT LT	LA	LT CT RT
6	H	CT RT LT	H	CT RA RT	H	CT LA LT

If You Want a Real Good Fix Try This...

Use these rules in conjunction with the variant initiative sequence proposed by Mechwarrior Brewer in issue #7 and combat exchanges get very heated, very quickly. Very lethal!



F. SCHOLZ '92

URBAN 'MECHS

A LECTURE FOR CADETS
BY
GARY JERRAM

Professor Julius McNamara, Senior Lecturer in Urban Combat at the New Avalon Institute of Science (NAIS) prepares to address the new batch of trainees, recruited to serve in the 2nd Robinson Rangers - if they pass his course. The Robinson Rangers are a unit respected for their skill in city fighting. They earned this reputation since the clans were halted at Tukayyid. Training is the key to their success. McNamara knows how important these days of theory are to the practical success of the cadet, he does not take his job lightly.

Professor McNamara rises to the podium. He pauses for a second to adjust the notes in front of him, clears his throat then begins the lecture...

"Cadets, even the most experienced Mechwarrior experiences a bile-at-the-back-of-the-throat when faced with a mission in an urban environment. This is because the rules of engagement are different in a city. Bigger is no longer necessarily better. The abilities to take advantage of cover, to cope with short range exchanges and to be able to manoeuvre in tight spaces all take on fresh importance in the ruined streets of an urban battleground. Take, for instance, the Urbanmech, the mainstay of House Liao. Beyond the city precincts this apparently puny 'Mech is mere Autocannon fodder. And yet, in its own environment, the city, it poses a deadly threat to that shiny new Assault 'Mech of yours. Believe me, I have seen it.

So, what should you be looking for in a Battlemech that is able to handle these special conditions? Firstly, we take a look at the various weapons systems available."

Here, the Professor turns on a laptop and overhead projector to bring up electronic slides diagrammatically displaying the weapons he describes.

"Any weapons systems that has problems targeting an enemy at thirty metres or less has to be discounted. There just isn't enough open killing ground available in the urban landscape for the LRM and PPC. As you will discover in the simulator, most Urban combat gets down to hand-to-hand. You will find SRM systems and Autocannons something of a mixed blessing in this sort of combat. While they are able to provide a larger punch than laser based systems, and for much less heat, they do have to have the ammunition stored inside the 'Mech. Since rear armour is inevitably sparse in most 'Mechs, this makes them vulnerable to well placed infantry units whose weapons can penetrate to, and detonate, internally stored ammo, even if it is equipped with CASE.

By far the most useful of weapons systems for the urban 'Mech is the humble laser. With the rediscovery of Star League technology, one particular type of laser - the Pulse laser, has become something of a weapon of choice. It has good damage potential and has excellent targeting abilities. Its high heat cost, in comparison with other lasers, can be compensated for by the inclusion on Double Heat-Sinks.

I make special mention of the Small Pulse Laser. This weapon is the most viable anti-infantry and Elemental systems a 'Mech can mount. Mounted in arrays of three or four enables the so-equipped 'Mech to deal with a star of Elementals with comfortable ease. For a similar application of the grouped weapons theory I refer you to your vids of the Solaris campaign where you can see the Cudgel and Paladin succeeding with large groupings of MGs.

"The recovery of Star League tech has also led to the re-emergence of the XL Engine. This has been rushed through development to be fitted to many standard 'Mechs to better equip them for urban combat due to its low weight. However, the forced placement of the XL Engine in left and right torsos has made these designs a serious liability as Elemental Stars have targeted the paper thin armour of these locations in order to seriously cripple otherwise pristine 'Mechs. It is much safer to save weight in other areas by utilising Endo-Steel technology. Although bulky, it has the benefit of allowing an important additional half-ton of armour or an extra heat sink."

Pausing to take a sip from his glass of water, McNamara smiles inwardly to see the cadets furiously scribbling notes with their light pens.

"The Beagle Active Probe is another necessity for survival in city warfare. This device enables you to detect an enemy Battlemech well in advance of visual contact. Urban ruins offer many opportunities for ambush, your sensors will not always be able to locate enemy positions inside or behind buildings. The Beagle Active Probe can alleviate this difficulty especially when coupled with the Guardian ECM system as this latter device will nullify the enemy's attempts to pin down your position."

"Getting back to the question of mobility. The Awesome becomes little more than a heavily armoured target in the city, unable to match the speed and mobility of other 'Mechs such as the Spider. The Spider is perhaps a poor example, as its mobility is dependent on having almost half its weight taken up by the engine leaving precious little room for anything else. If you slow a 'Mech like this down by a mere 10 klicks per hour, allowing the inclusion of a greater variety of weapons systems. Then it can run rings around the lumbering Awesome, picking its moment to break cover, fire and disappear before the bigger 'Mech has time to react.

In the jumble masonry of a war torn city, the ability to jump is also very beneficial. When caught in a blind alley, a 'Mech without jump jets has to resort to running through a building. Not recommended."

This last remark causes a slight ripple of humour among the cadets. Professor McNamara allows it to subside before continuing.

"This concludes today's session, cadets. Behind me you see the diagrams of two 'Mechs dedicated for city fighting. A copy of each is available on the disks located at the front of the class. Take one as you leave and prepare a paper for the next class discussing the relative advantages and disadvantages of each. Dismiss."

CLV-14 Cleaver

Tonnage: 50

Movement:

- Walking: 5
- Running: 8
- Jumping: 5

Heat Sinks: 10 (double)

Armour: 169 points

	Internal	External
Head:	3	9
Centre Torso:	16	22/10
Lt/Rt Torso:	12	16/8
Lt/Rt Arm:	8	16
Lt/Rt Leg:	12	24

Weapon/Component	Tons (each)	Crits (each)	Tons Location	(Total)
1 x Hatchet	4	4	RA	4
1 x LargePulseLaser	7	2	LA	7
2 x MediumPulseLaser	2	1	LT/RT	4
2 x SmallPulseLaser	1	1	LT/RT	2

Design Notes:

The Cleaver with its Ferro-Fibrous Armour and Endo-Steel Internal Structure, is intended as a competent hand-to-hand fighter. Its excellent mobility combined with the hatchet enable the 'Mech to do immense damage at little cost for heat. This allows the Mechwarrior to fire most of the weapons array for long periods of time without having to worry too much about heat. In previous years some cadets have come up with a variant that moves the Small Pulse Lasers to the rear of the 'Mech to counter the possibility of infantry sneaking up from behind.

RNG-2A Ragnarok

Tonnage: 30

Movement:

- Walking: 6
- Running: 9
- Jumping: 6

Heat Sinks: 10 (double)

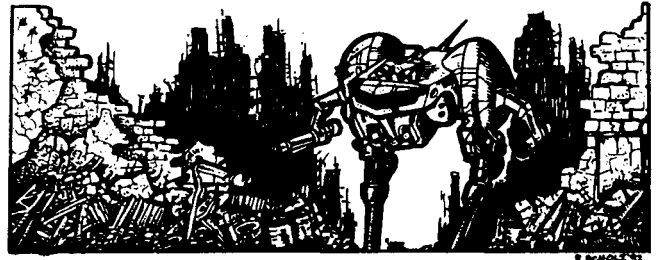
Armour: 89 points

	Internal	External
Head:	3	9
Centre Torso:	10	12/6
Lt/Rt Torso:	7	8/4
Lt/Rt Arm:	5	9
Lt/Rt Leg:	7	10

Weapon/Component	Tons (each)	Crits (each)	Location	Tons (Total)
2 x MediumPulseLaser	2	1	CT/RA	2
2 x SmallPulseLaser	1	1	LT/RT	2
1 x Beagle Active Probe	1.5	2	LT	1.5
1 x Guardian ECM Suite	1.5	2	RT	1.5

Design Notes:

The Ragnarok, again fitted out with Endo-Steel and Ferro-Fibrous Armour is a reconnaissance 'Mech which is designed to get into and out of its target area as quickly as possible since it is not designed for a prolonged fire fight with enemy units. The weapons array is such that Mechwarrior can fire all of his/her weapons in one salvo without fear of overheating. In the past some cadets have removed some of the weapon systems to either increase the armour protection, or to speed the 'Mech up with a MASC.



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NEWS

Arnie's Back

Leading Edge are about to unleash a swag of product tie-ins to the *Terminator 2* movie. There are two board games, a role playing game and a host of miniatures scheduled for release in the near future. Asta la vista, baby!

Dan Simmons

The Hugo Award winning author of *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* is due to visit Australia from 2 to 7 March to promote his new releases - *The Hollow Man* and *children of the Night*. You can catch up with Dan at the **National Word Festival** in Canberra 5 to 7 March.

SwanCon

SwanCon 18 is on for the Easter weekend, 8-12 April at the Ascot Convention Centre down on the Swan River. Although primarily a science fiction and fantasy fiction 'Con with Guest of Honour including **Terry Pratchett** and **Robert Jordan**, SwanCon does cater for role players and others with AD&D, freeforms, tabletop games and Japanese Anime. Contact SwanCon PO Box 318, Nedlands, WA 6009.

Conquest '93

Conquest '93 is happening at Melbourne University High School over the Easter weekend. This is a full on role playing convention - so if you live in Melbourne and want to know more, contact David on (03) 874 1890 or else ask at your local games store for details. If all goes well, and his car holds together, *Australian Realms* will be represented at Conquest by Glenn Oakes.

White Wolf

The twisted folk from Georgia, have been grinding out releases for their Storyteller games. First of the Clan sourcebooks, *Brujah*, is now available; 70+ pages of blood curdling facts, spray paint and artwork for Vampire. *Children of the Inquisition* is an art format sourcebook for Vampire, featuring several archetypical bloodsuckers from Dracula to Dominique. Ars Magica fans are not forgotten, *The Maleficium* is a diabolist's sourcebook complete with disclaimers that this material is not 'real' but is sure to scare the pants of your mum anyway!

Something intriguing that we know **White Wolf** have been working on is a large scale Vampire game called *The Masquerade* which they have been play testing with up to one hundred players at a time. This is due for release in May 93.

Support Our Advertisers

We've mentioned this before, but if you can, please support our advertisers, and when you do patronise their services, don't forget to mention where you heard about them - in *Australian Realms*. Your supporting them reinforces their desire to support us which helps us service your needs. Makes sense, huh? One of our regular advertisers, **Paper Tiger Games** has asked us to tell the readers that he has a couple of pending startups for his PBM - **Gang City**. As Bryn says "Nice cheap game, fixed turn fees, upright, solid, moral moderator, blood, violence, etc. What more could you ask for?"

Aphelion Publications

In keeping with our pledge to keep you informed about Australian made products, here is some interesting news. *Aphelion Publications*, a credentialed group of authors based in Adelaide led by Terry Dowling, have teamed up with a mysterious group calling themselves *MSS Gaming* to produce a series of game book novels set in MSS' as yet unseen game world - **Galaxy**. We'll give you more information as it becomes available. In the meantime, you can contact *Aphelion* at PO Box 619 North Adelaide SA 5006.

The Great LRP Story

Remember in last issue's *Dice Are Dead* we told you Glenn would be covering Australia's biggest LRP event - *The Shadow League Summer Festival* - well it didn't eventuate. Not the event, that was a great success we hear, but Glenn's story. Unfortunately, Glenn's transport was smashed from under him when some yuppie company director in a very expensive car crashed into Glenn just before the long weekend. Glenn is unharmed, but his car was off the road for a few days.

As we say, the event went well, a good turnout and plenty of exciting, exhausting, Live Role Play action. And to top it all, some real life drama - the site was hit by lightning after everyone went home, burning the 'tavern' to the ground!

Snow! Fire! Flood!

It must be something in the stars at the moment, everybody is having strange accidents. FASA's Jill Lucas tells us that early in the morning of January 10th, when all good FASA employees were home dreaming about their beautiful new offices, a fire broke out. In the water tank on the roof. During a snowstorm. Yes, it sounds silly, right up to the part where the fire

department had to punch a hole in the water tank to keep it from toppling, and several thousand gallons of water flooded FASA's art department and several of their offices. That is why they lost our address, and why this issue's cover almost didn't arrive here on time. Thankfully no-one was hurt. Thanks to Jill and the team at FASA for the Mechwarrior art. Next issue we will be going back to using original art - a fantasy cover.

New Releases

TSR - *Creative Campaigning* is another handbook in the *Dungeon Master Guide* series. A 'How To' book for AD&D referees. Who needs it? *Assassin Mountain* is an Al-Qadim sourcebook with three adventures. *Krynnspace* takes Spelljammer into the *Dragonlance* setting and Carl Sargent's *The Marklands* should please the World of Greyhawk diehards. **R.Talsorian** - *Agents of Falkenberg* for Cyberpunk. **Games Workshop** has the *Empire Army Book* out now. **Ral Partha** is releasing a boxed set of 20 AD&D monster miniatures. GDW are working on a boxed city set - *Ascalon* - for *Mythus* along with a much needed *Bestiary* for the same game. **Jedko Games** has released the soft cover Australian print run of *Shadowrun* 2nd Edition and it is selling very quickly.

FASA's *Battletech* releases in March are *Ideal War* (a novel), *BattleMechs* - the plastic models as per the 3rd Edition rules boxed separately, and the *Intelligence Operations Handbook*. There's also a couple of *Shadowrun* products ready to hit the streets, namely *Paranormal Animals of Europe* and later on, the *Tir Tairngire* sourcebook. Get into 'em, chummer.

New Assistant Art Editor

Gary Morton, a promising artist from Adelaide whose designs have been sculpted by **Inquisition Miniatures** has been appointed to the position of Assistant Art Editor. Gary is one of several staff who we plan to introduce to you in a number of staff profiles - for more information check out Lip Service on page 25.

Gargoyle

The first issue of the *Subscribers Only Fanzine*, *Gargoyle*, has gone out with this issue of *Australian Realms* to all subscribers. It contains, amongst other things, additional Unae material and the Andrew Daniels A-Team scripts as well as more rpg coverage. This fanzine will slowly grow in pages but remain an irregular offering. If you want to receive *Gargoyle* all you have to do is fill out the Subscription Form on page 43, write out a cheque and post both to us.

Final Words

Well that's all for issue 10, folks. Until next time...

...See ya 'round like a d100!

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