

D I G I T A L

O G R E

NOVEMBER 1996

Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, and Historical Fiction Fanzine  
Published Monthly



### Previews

New Creatures: Enha

Reviews: Vangelis' *Bladerunner*, *Ghost In The Shell* anime

Part I of a New RPG Released Exclusively in Digital Ogre: Mission ONE

Demons Forgotten: "Invidia House"

More...

# DIGITAL OGRE

About The Cover: A Mystic from Jim Henson's *The Dark Crystal*©.

## Letter From The Editor

Here we are again, as unlikely as I presumed it would be. This issue we have added several pages, more information, and more art. Gluttons as we are, however, we always want more, and look forward to seeing your own contributions to fantasy, science fiction, horror, and historical fiction appearing in our pages. But that part is up to you. Seriously, I am beginning to think of Digital Ogre as run by the "Mad Monopoly Triad" since there are only three contributors so far. Personally, I want to establish that I am not egotistic about my art. It's ok, but I don't WANT to do 50-75% of all material in Digital Ogre as I have been. I am forced into this predicament, believe me.

Switching gears...

My Dad sparked my love of science fiction and fantasy. One of my earliest movie memories is pulling into a drive-in movie theater to watch *The Empire Strikes Back*© and *Alien*© double feature in 1980. Of course, I remember very little about *Alien*©, as my fingers were glued over my face (and not because of the sticky butter popcorn, malted milk balls, and spilled RC that we snuck in). We also went to see the *Star Trek's*© as they came out, *The Dark Crystal* ©(a big one for me) and various others. My point is that I am very lucky to have parents who exposed me to different genres including (of course) science fiction, fantasy, and horror. These genres are as valid as any other, as it is the producers who determine whether or not they are "appropriate", not the genre, nor anyone else. There is not a time in my life were I have not been able to hear "Would it help if I got out and pushed?" (very applicable to Digital Ogre's contributors), "Gelfling, friend! Gelfling, friend!" (in an appropriately nasal voice), or "This is Ripley, last survivor of the Nostromo" and smiled, putting my problems in their place for a while.

Again, if you have any comments please feel free to send them our way, the Digital Ogre address is located on page 15. See you next month.



Dylan Hartwell  
Editor

## Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Article: "Ad Gamemaster: Contextualize Player Information"	2
Article: "Movie Review: <i>Ghost In The Shell</i> "	2
Article: "New Creature: Enha"	2
Article: "Music Review: <i>Bladerunner</i> Movie Soundtrack"	2
Article: "Mission ONE, Introduction & Character Generation"	3
Article: "The Crystal Lake"	4
Article: "Review: Cheez Ballz"	6
Art: "Crystal Lake Region" (Map)	7
Mission ONE Character Sheet	8
Short Story: "Invidia House"	9
Crossword Puzzle	14
Bibliography	15

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## Ad Gamemaster: Contextualize Player Information

by Dylan Hartwell

As a gamemaster, I acknowledge the need to describe a colorful, detailed, and vivacious world for player characters to interact in. Lately I have been trying a new technique that perhaps some of you use already, or have already used: contextualizing player information. That is, I attempt to present the pc's with information as their characters are seeing it, rather than using direct description from text and announcing events that the pc's characters would not know.

For instance, instead of simply saying "it's dead" after you pc's hack away a fleeing kobold (the vicious accumulation of xp) say "the exhausted kobold crumbles to the forest floor, its dark blood flowing urgently from a deep cut in its chest. It begins to gasp and clutch at the air." The pc's aren't sure if it is dead.

Also, when pc's encounter creatures, you may want to avoid saying "it's a goblin" or "it's a ghost". Instead, describe how the creature appears. Not all hell hounds look the same and perhaps the pc's will not even identify it as such with significant effects on their decision how to deal with it.

Overall, this is a small and simple philosophy that, I feel, enhances game play for the serious role player.

## Movie Review: Ghost In The Shell©

by Dylan Hartwell

Genre: Science Fiction/Cyberpunk  
Animation Director: Mamoru Ishii  
Initial Response: "Wow. Amazing. A clear and respectful addition to cyberpunk."

The team that brought you *Akira*© is back with another big budget and high quality anime, this time based on Masamune Shiro's original manga *Ghost In The Shell*©. "Ghost" refers to soul and "shell" means body, cybernetic or otherwise, in which the soul is contained. The title is accurate for the philosophical nature. *Ghost In The Shell* © is an excellent anime for characterization, philosophical exploration, background music, weapon depiction, and respectful treatment of cyberpunk and its audience.

The year is 2029, a highly technological and political time. A high tech police force, Security Police Section 9, is the agency hunting down an elusive hacker known as the Puppet master, and later as Project 2501. GITS can be appreciated for its provoking depiction of government politics and clashing powerful organizations alone. The characters are well well rounded and entertaining. The main cast are members of the Security Police Section 9. They include the wise Chief Aramaki,

"Major" Motoko Kusanagi as the cyborg cop and central character, Bateau as Kusanagi's partner, and Togusa as the young and mostly human partner transferred in from the police department. Of course there is also Project 2501, The Puppet master. An illusive and brilliant hacker whom Kusanagi and her team are assigned to track down. All characters are believable and, unlike many others, the dubbing is decent.

The soundtrack for GITS is involving and complements each scene well. At times it is reminiscent of *Bladerunner*©, and at others, like *Akira*'s© haunting chorals. The music is very fitting for GITS's statements and environment.

Quite simply put, this is an amazing piece of anime. Some of the effects need to be seen by any self respecting otaku or cyberpunker to be fully appreciated. With *Ghost In The Shell*©, you will not be disappointed.

Rated: R

WARNING: *Ghost In The Shell* © contains components that some people may find offensive: Explicit violence/depiction of death. Explicit language. Nudity.

## New Creature: *Enha*

Genre: Suited best for fantasy  
by Dylan Hartwell

Enha: [in - yuh] Everyone who looks upon an Enha sees someone they have once known and loved, but who has since passed away. A father or mother, best friend or spouse. This phenomenon has a regressive effect on the Enha's personality. Ultimately they become hermits, shy of anyone. The mother Enha always dies in childbirth, it is thought that her spirit enters into the child as it is born. The father, left to raise the infant alone, eventually leaves the delicate child in the care of the Great Forest because they can not bear the painful memories reflected in their son's or daughter's face. Enha have a natural predisposition for Ranger-like skills and the ability to communicate with animals.

## Music Review: Bladerunner Movie Soundtrack

by Dylan Hartwell

Genre: Science Fiction/Cyberpunk  
Composer: Vangelis  
Running Time: 57:36  
Initial Response: "Relaxing."

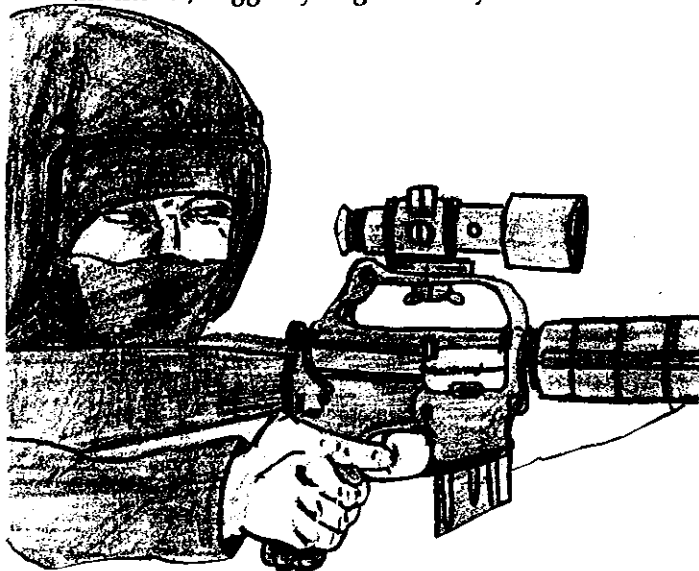
I often listen to *Bladerunner* soundtrack before going to sleep. The songs are soft synthesized pieces, almost bluesy. They are comforting and recall scenes

from Ridley Scott's depiction of a dreary future. I hope not to suggest that the *Bladerunner* soundtrack is bad or boring, it is simply melancholy and slow. If one is wanting to relax and envision Ridley's dirty world of constant rain and confused humanity, the soundtrack is perfect. If one is looking for an upbeat, happy piece, you will probably want to avoid the *Bladerunner* soundtrack.

Vangelis, a somewhat famous musician, doesn't seem to diverge much from the same type of sound. About halfway through the disc, the songs begin to sound very similar. This is not to say there aren't exceptions, but there are several times when it is hard to tell when one song ends and other begins.

The soundtrack is peppered with sound bites from the movie, this is something that I appreciate. I wish that more soundtracks would do this in greater quantities. This helps me visualize along with the soundtrack. The sound bites in the *Bladerunner*© soundtrack are predictable, but appropriate and increases the enjoyment for a *Bladerunner*© fan.

Overall, *Bladerunner* © soundtrack is slow and hypnotizing. I enjoy it often, and if you enjoyed the movie, suggest you give it a try.



## . Mission ONE .

### An Introduction to a New RPG Released Exclusively in Digital Ogre

by Mitch Shelton

Mission ONE is an installment game of special operations combat that will be published in Digital Ogre fanzine. The game will have an independent system of its own, but will be designed to be used with other games as well. In the future there may be installments with elements of science fiction as well as fantasy. You may or may not choose to incorporate them. For now let us concentrate on realism.

With this first article of Mission ONE, I will be addressing only one facet of military: spec.ops. There is a growing need world wide for highly

trained and disciplined personnel to react to the unconventional form of aggression known as terrorism. There are countless military and police anti terrorism forces around the world, such as U.S. F.B.I. hostage rescue team, U.S. Navy S.E.A.L. team six, U.S. Army Delta Force, and the British special air service and special boat service. You as the gamemaster can use these examples or feel free to create your own.

Mission ONE was designed to be simple and quick. The gamemaster should always keep the players reminded of the turmoil going on around them. Whether it be a terrorist holding, a hostage, or a south of the border anti drug operation, there are always lives on the line. This game more than any other is confrontational combat where the GM shouldn't be afraid to impose time limits on the players as to what there characters can do. For example, a French terrorist has a twelve year old girl by the throat with a nine millimeter pistol to her temple. The GM asks what the player characters want to do. As the GM, do not let the player waste time thinking it over, give him five "real time" seconds before the terrorist kills her. This should make the player sweat and add some drama and maybe even tragedy (depending on the outcome of his or her decision) to your gaming.

I hope you have fun playing this fast paced hack and slash spec. ops. game. You will find that the more missions you take your characters on the more real they will become. Go ahead, make a couple characters for laughs, shoot the hell out of the bad guys and think it's just a game, that there aren't black OPS in South America right now, or S.E.A.L. team six wasn't in Atlanta for the Olympics. Just in case.

### MISSION ONE CHARACTER GENERATION

Character generation for Mission ONE was designed to be quick and easy. You should be able to create a character and begin play in less than half an hour.

GM's should feel free to use any game system they like in conjunction with Mission ONE.

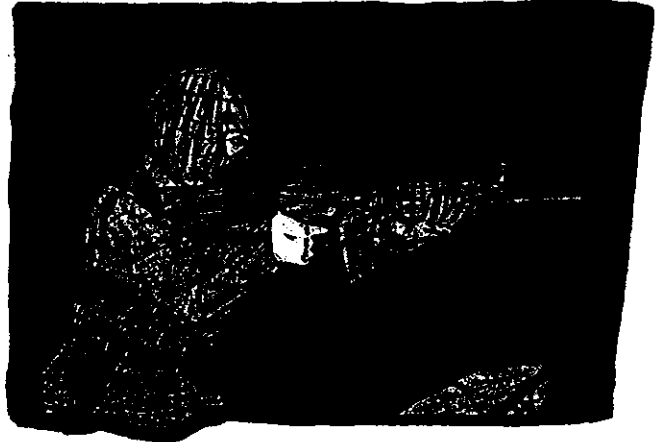
Note-Round up on all divisions.

1. To determine attributes roll D10 for each of the five attributes.

Note-Special operations characters should have at least a 5 in each attribute. If a number below 5 is rolled, the GM automatically adjusts the attribute to 5.

2. Add all of the attributes together, then divide by 5. The resulting number indicates your LUCK.

3. STRENGTH+FITNESS=BODY.



4. DEXTERITY+ALERTNESS=REACTION BASE.

5. INTELLIGENCE+ALERTNESS=STRESS FACTOR.

6. Characters automatically begin with two actions. The character will receive other actions with his skill package later.

7. STRENGTH+2=STRENGTH BONUS.

8. Characters get their LUCK rating in extra skills.

**TERMS**

**Body Points:** The amount of damage a character can withstand before being incapacitated/comatose. This number also lets the GM determine endurance.

**Reaction Base:** This score is an all purpose for skills, combat, and physical checks such as balance.

**Stress Factor:** This score represents the amount of stress the character can take before s/he cracks. This score also determines leadership ability.

**Special Forces Character Skills**

- |                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Air Assault           | Air Borne                  |
| Assault Rifle         | 4 Weapons of Choice        |
| Basic Comm.           | Basic Demolitions          |
| Climbing              | Counter Insurgency Warfare |
| Detect Ambush         | Detect Booby trap          |
| H.A.H.O.              | H.A.L.O.                   |
| H to H Military       | Land Navigation            |
| Language of Choice    | Knife Fighting             |
| Map Reading           | Patrolling                 |
| Propaganda/Subterfuge | Repelling                  |
| Swimming              | Tactics                    |
| Teaching              | Unconventional Warfare     |
| Wilderness Survival   |                            |

**Delta Force Team Member**

Pick Two Skill Packages (1-4)

1. Combat Arms

- Armorer
- Basic Electronics
- Physics Basic
- Sniper
- Trained with all firearms

2. Demolitions

- Basic Electronics
- Basic Engineering
- Chemistry
- Demolitions Advanced
- Demolitions Disposal

3. Medic

- C.P.R.
- Combat Medicine
- Field Surgery
- First Aid

4. Radio Comm

- Advanced Electronics
- Codes
- Computer Op.
- Radio comm.
- Satellite Relay
- Scramblers

Weapon Skills

- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 60mm Mortar      | Assault Rifle        |
| Bayonet          | Bolt Action Rifle    |
| Club             | Cross Bow            |
| Flame Thrower    | Garrote              |
| Grenade Launcher | Heavy Machine gun    |
| Knife            | Light Machine gun    |
| Pistol           | Semi Automatic Rifle |
| Shotgun          | Sling Shot           |
| Sub Machine gun  |                      |

Non Weapon Skills

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Investigation     | Jury Rigging            |
| Mechanics         | O.N.B.C. Warfare        |
| Photography       | Pick Locks              |
| Rafting           | Security/ Anti Security |
| Sniper (+2 aimed) | Stealth/Camouflage      |
| Surveillance      | Tracking                |

**The Crystal Lake**

by Aaron Gilkison

*excerpt from:*

- The Peoples of The Crystal Lake
- The Unnamed Year After The Year of Woncs
- Cardean Princedom Survey
- Commander Galnik Linostof

I had not been to The Crystal Lake since I was but a small child, traveling to Cardea on the back of the cart of my father. Because of the fact that I had never actually come into contact with the people of The Crystal Lake I volunteered for this job, hoping that my inexperience in the area would lead me to be as objective as possible. However, I have been recipient of many stereotypes about the region; namely that all of the people are conspirators allying themselves with the Princedom's enemies, that the people are ignorant peons who do not know anything beyond their fields, that their women prefer the company of orks, that kobolds and necronians run the governments, and that they participate in the enslavement of wild elves for sale to Yuskad. As

likely as these rumors are, I am going to attempt to void them from my mind so as to be as accurate about the peoples and their future potential in the workings of our Great Princedom as possible.

### Dominant Racial Characteristics

I have found the people of The Crystal Lake region to be very diverse in their parentage and ancestry, and it is evident from village to village from whence came the original settlers. In the South, as I made my way up The Hardtrail from Svarn, the predominant racial background is almost pure Wildric human. That is, the race of humans that developed on The Frozen Plains of Wilderlin; tall, fair-skinned, muscular, and hairy. Many even continue to carry the heavy brows of the far Eastern Wildric tribes, leading me to believe that these peoples had migrated in from the East through the Plains of Savage and the City-States, and subsequently through the Trolome Mountains to rest here, probably being the first humans to have settled in the area. From asking questions of the few farmers in this area I have found that the original settlers, supposedly, lived side by side with the native necronians for at least one hundred years before explorers from Yuskad entered the area. That means that these people and their ancestors have been living in this area for almost two centuries. Their cultural practices seem to have been lost when Yuskad came into the area and flushed out the necronians and enforced assimilation.

These racial characteristics became less distinguishable as I came into the village of Elber, located at the source of The Crystal River, flowing out of it namesake lake. The pure Wildric stock, however, remained consistent; the strong-brows of the far-Easterners probably having been culled by extensive inter-breeding between them and the Westerners during and since the time of the Yuskad expansion into the area.

Race varied very little as I made my way North, along the Eastern bank of The Lake, and continued interviewing and consulting with the people. The people in these areas, moving closer to Salice, have a bitter distaste for those in Elber and almost outright hatred towards the Selvers and Hepebens. Indeed, after I mention the fact that I am surveying for the government and that race would be a significant part of my analysis, many people divulge rumors and bits of advice concerning those inhabitants across the lakes; namely that the Selvers all have ork blood and that the Hepebens are half-necronians. In these cases I thank the people for their information and graciously tell them that I must be as objective as possible and that I must see these racial characteristics myself.

It was on this road to Salice that my caravan was attacked. I had taken The Hardtrail because it is known to be one of the most safe and most used routes of traveling from Cardea City to The North. However, I think now that no road is too safe for

lawlessness and wandering humanoids. The ambush was quick and efficient; arrows and spears killed our horses, a few men, and pierced the wood of our carts. Most of us were on the ground by now; having been thrown off of our dying horses or reacting out of warrior instinct. My descent was due to the former. There was a long period of silence, so long and so silent that not even the wind could be heard in the trees. My gut tightened and I felt the hairs of my neck grow. It was at that moment, that instant, when fear implores you to shout out, when you want to pray for forgiveness, that a group of tall, bush-covered people stepped into the clearing. One stepped forward and revealed his face. His pointed ears, gold-lustre skin, and albino hair betrayed his necronian heritage. He knew I was the leader of the caravan somehow, and came my way. The necronian muttered something to his comrades and they began to search our luggage. It was at this time that I noticed that those men who had fallen in the hail of missiles just happened to be our warriors; us scholars could do nothing but obey. The man coming my way stopped and spoke to me in perfect Wildric. He asked if I would relay his sentiments to the "bastards" in Salice and if I were truly a Cardean Princedom employee that I would tell the Prince that the displaced people of Cardea Forest will no longer be without a say in the land, or something along those lines. After this, they grabbed everything they could and disappeared into the forest. Five minutes later a group of mercenaries headed North happened by and we were able to pay them for escort and riding privileges.



## Fanzine Review: Cheez Ballz by Dylan Hartwell

Although focusing on the music industry more than Digital Ogre, Cheez Ballz overcomes its shaky start in issue 1 with solid laughs and original, if not bizarre, short stories in issue 2. Packed at nine pages front and back, Cheez Ballz is consistent music related and comedic entertainment.

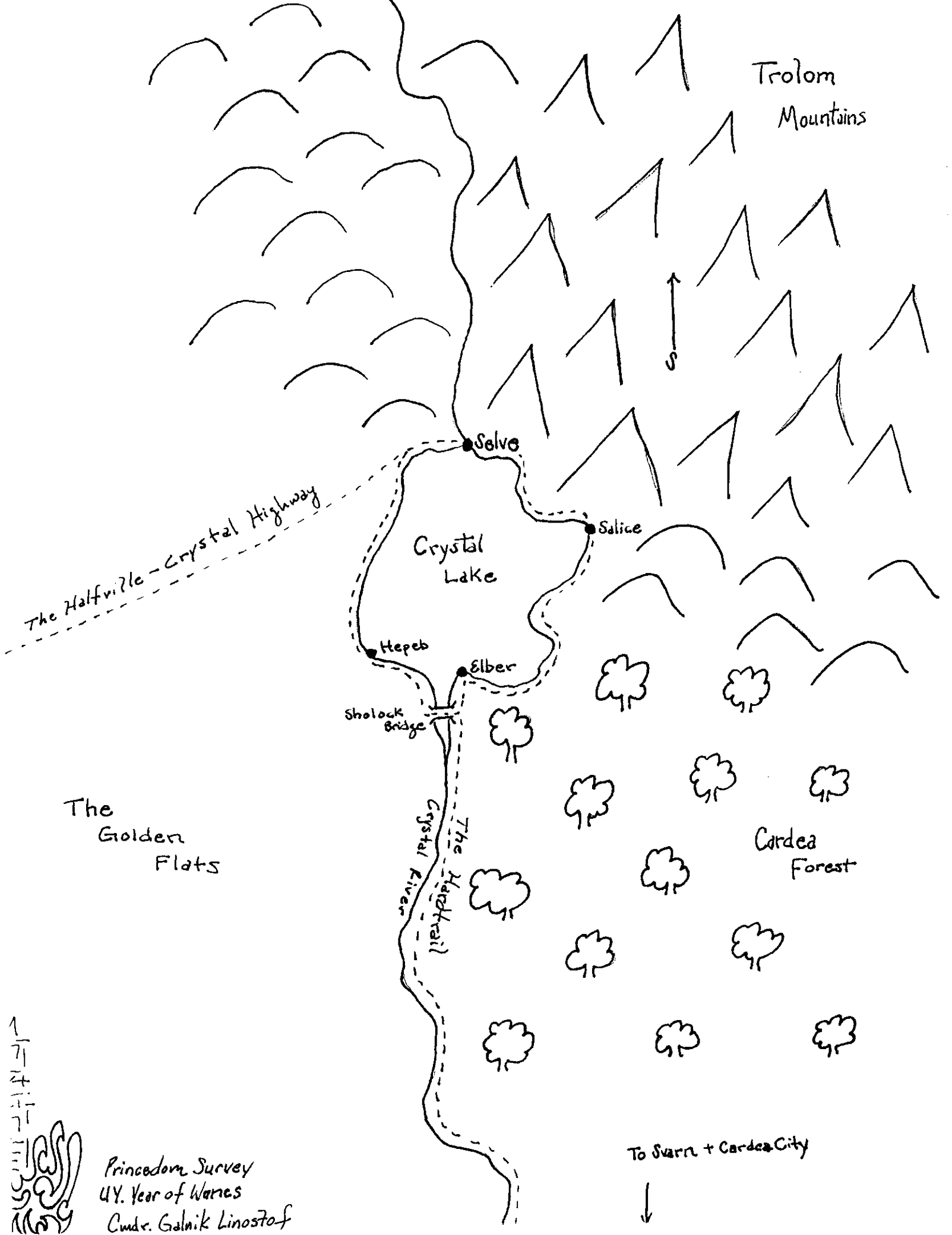
Another good aspect of Cheez Ballz is its accessibility through a www site, P.O.Box, and Email address.

([http://ourworld.com/homepages/Sslattery\\_2](http://ourworld.com/homepages/Sslattery_2))

(Cheez Ballz c/o/Shawn Shelton P.O. Box 406,  
Harrison, Ohio, 45030) (104256424@compuserve.com)

Overall, Cheez Ballz is a valiant and successful attempt at a fanzine, we at Digital Ogre applaud any such attempts.





Trolom  
Mountains

The Halfville-Crystal Highway

Crystal  
Lake

Solve

Salice

Hepeb

Elber

Sholock  
Bridge

The  
Golden  
Flats

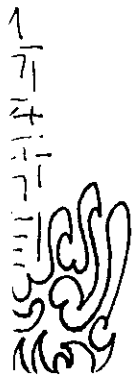
The  
Crystal  
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The  
Handtrail

Cardea  
Forest

To Svann + Cardea City

Princedom Survey  
4Y. Year of Wares  
Cmde. Galnik Linostof





# MISSION 1: File Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_  
Branch: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

## ATTRIBUTES

\_\_\_\_ Strength  
\_\_\_\_ Intelligence  
\_\_\_\_ Fitness  
\_\_\_\_ Alertness  
\_\_\_\_ Dexterity

\_\_\_\_ Luck  
\_\_\_\_ Body Points  
\_\_\_\_ Reaction Base  
\_\_\_\_ Stress Factor

\_\_\_\_\_ Hand To Hand Type

\_\_\_\_ # of Actions

\_\_\_\_ Strength + BODY POINT RECORD STATUS

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## EQUIPMENT

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## EQUIPMENTS CARRIED

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# INVIDIA HOUSE

by Dylan Hartwell

*"It gazed upon the house unkindly; illuminating broken windows, rotted wood, and crumbling brick. It did not see what I saw. I saw not what was, but rather what could be. And it was perhaps this optimism which first drew me to the house on Tempus drive."*

I reclined on the thick cushions of the Greyhound bus as it rumbled through Ohio countryside. It was indeed beautiful, but I did not choose to see the beauty. Instead, I would see Lauren's face floating into the window when I looked into it. I saw her gray eyes and the ocean at midnight as it crested below the moon. Then, I would feel the pain of despair wring my hands in frustration as I saw her face again. From across a lawyer's table of formica.

"Mr. Yaden, do you understand these statements that I have announced?" Her lawyer had been tall, and balding at the top. His forehead gleamed in the fluorescent lights that littered the stark ceiling as he stared at me through thick glasses.

She sat as a poised marble statue across from me at the table. I stared into her and saw none of the love I had in marriage. I was left in the shadow of love. She was no longer my wife, through richer, or poorer, for better or worse. Till death do us part.

"I do."

The bus rustled along its narrow track, summer glimmering through the tinted windows. Green trees filled them like television sets, scrolling past me. I stared through the glass into the world as it was. A book, untouched, lay on my lap. Reading was indeed useless, for such tragedy overwhelmed my comprehension to remember what I had read. I glanced down at the red cover and unwrinkled binding.

"Paul. Paul? Are you listening to me? You have to get over this. You need to come to terms here, accept what is happening and go on. It happens all the time, forget about it not happening to you, it doesn't work that way and you know it."

Now I was sitting at a desk with my head lowered, Mike Crain, a colleague and friend, glared at me through his horn rimmed glasses. His round face was flushed and his graying hair disheveled.

"Paul. You have to get over this. Why don't you take some time off. You know I might be able to get you back in here if you want to come back."

"You sound like you don't want me here." I said, the pain balled into a fist and slamming the insides of my chest.

"You bet I don't. Not like this. You really need to get a grip."

"What?" I asked returning my gaze to the woman behind the ticket booth. I turned, and saw a small line behind me. We were waiting to get bus tickets.

"Were do you want to go on your trip Mr. Yaden?" She was speaking quickly, her face flushed. I was getting a ticket, taking Mike's advice, and going to spend some time with my parents.

"I need to go to Ohio... I have the address here." I quickly pulled my worn leather wallet from my slacks and began to rummage through it.

"Are you going get a ticket or not?" Came a loud voice from behind me. I quickly read through the note.

*Paul,*

*I am so sorry to hear of your divorce. I wanted to extend my hopes, and love to you. I am sorry for the pain she has caused you. I realize that it may be difficult for you to find a place to live now that she has the house. Why don't you come live with us for a while. I want you to know that your father and I always welcome you here in times of trouble.*

*your loving mother*

Below the note was a quickly scrawled message indicated directions, and the location of their new home. As well as a phone number hastily written in my mother's looped writing.

"Uh, Morine... Morine. I guess." I managed, attempting to correctly pronounce a town I had never seen. I looked up at the ticket holder with a raised brow. "One ticket for Morine."

"One ticket for Mor-ine. Twenty three dollars, forty cents."

It was a warm summer day of green as the bus plodded through the countryside, leaving its trails of vapors and smells. I had tried to read several times but after two attempts I simply gave up, and tossed the book into the trash can. I returned my attention to the countryside, which was the only thing that seemed to capture it, and hold my memories at bay.

I could see my reflection vaguely in the window. Dark hair, uncombed, and falling over my pale forehead. My glasses were sitting crookedly on my nose. Rings of darkness encircled my eyes.

There was a large gathering of trees near a bend in the road. They seemed to reach across the road like hands. As the bus leaned around the corner I saw the house. A big sign in front declared it the Invidia house. Odd name, but that was no concern. My eyes drank in the vision in seconds. It was old, but not yet run down. The trees had protected it from the harsh winters. The paint was of gray, and the windows were broken, yet the fragments blared

sunlight.

The picturesque day of summer was shining about it. The yellow blaze of sunlight illuminated the earth. It gazed upon the house unkindly; illuminating broken windows, rotted wood, and crumbling brick. It did not see what I saw. I saw not what was, but rather what could be. And it was perhaps this optimism which first drew me to the house on Tempus drive. But whatever the reason, if one existed at all, the conclusion was lucid: I wanted the house and I would not be swayed from it. I had no firm reasons for such emotion so unexpectedly evoked. It had been as if the idea had built for some time, hidden by the static environment that had been my life. It was as if I had just waken up.

"When would you like to stop at the house?" asked Mr. Remington who was the Realtor responsible for selling the house. He was an older man, likely to be in his seventies. His eyes were brown as solid wood and well hidden under his gray eyebrows.

"I would love to see the house as soon as possible. I'm living with my family in Morine right now, and want to get out. So, I guess it's the sooner the better." Mr. Remington's brow crinkled, and he stopped shuffling his papers to look up at me.

"I just got a divorce." I added, and Mr. Remington resumed his paperwork.

"How about now?" He asked.

"That would be great," I stopped to look into my watch, "can you drive?"

"Yes, yes. Of course." Mr. Remington stood and walked to the door. "I wouldn't have it any other way Mr. Yaden."

Traveling to the house took several minutes since Mr. Remington's office was located in the center of town and the house was just out of town. I took the opportunity to study him as he drove. He was elderly, but held himself in a very proud and regal way. A neatly trimmed wave of iron gray hair covered his head, and he had a small mustache which did not seem to move when he spoke. His clothes were well fitted, stylish, and simple. He had a faint scent of tobacco about him, and spoke in a soft but firm voice. His dialect lent no clue as to his geographic origin, I would guess he had lived in Ohio all of his life, although I couldn't be sure.

"So. What made you interested in the Invidia house?" He asked, his soft brown eyes leaving the road for a moment to look into mine. I took time to think, and gather my response as we began to smoothly roll through the quite neighborhood. Finally I replied.

"I can't say Mr. Remington. I liked how it sat in the yard, how the trees surrounded it, and how it is alone." Yes alone, I knew that word now. "Maybe I liked it because I want to be alone." It felt strange to say that, almost as if I didn't want to. But he didn't seem to notice that I was getting nervously pensive.

"I understand what you are going through. My wife left me at an early age. She had just turned forty when she died. I do understand you, even though you haven't lost a life, you have lost a loved one. There is a time when you need to be alone for a while after it happens. Take time to sort out your thoughts and clear a few things up. Prioritize, I believe that is what I am trying to say."

I looked out the window and stared into the sky for a while thinking on what he had said. Was he right? Maybe I was taking time to prioritize, clear a few thoughts up. Heal.

Mr. Remington turned onto a small street which led out of town. I saw the number of houses decline as we drove by. Beautiful countryside took their place. Soft hills of green grass and full trees harbored small creatures. Gentle turning creeks trickled through the forest. The land seemed to sparkle with vivacity. I rolled the window down and allowed the push, late summer air to flow into the car in gentle waves. I smelled the creek, with its small crayfish, and minnows. Lined with green moss, tall cattails spread their seeds across the breeze. A sure sign of summer's end.

"Well, we have arrived at the Invidia house." Mr. Remington declared with a firm voice. He gently turned the wheel and guided the car through the tall grass that was to be my front yard. He parked directly in front of the facade and put the gear lever into park turning the key as he did. As the sound of the engine slowly died, the choir of insects rose to fill the air. I stepped from the car and inhaled deeply, absorbing the atmosphere in one giant breath. Life, I thought. Life surrounds me. I looked out across the yard of grass into the dense forest beyond. I will own some of that forest. The thought of owning so much life had never occurred to me before.

"Nice view isn't it?" Asked Mr. Remington as he pulled a worn pipe from his jacket. I looked across the gray car at him and saw his smile. He knew I was enthralled with the land. Perhaps he remembered a time in his life when he had found something beautiful.

"It is lovely." I managed with a grin, and walked over to the front door where Mr. Remington was fitting a key into the tarnished lock.

"This is all original. The house has remained untouched for decades." He said briefly gesturing to the door before opening it with a small shove, "the same key is used on both the front and back door." He showed me a large rusted key on a shiny new Realtor's key chain. It was gold and presented the blue Collet's Realtors service emblem with the small but proud declaration of "established in 1898" stamped on the side.

"Thank you Mr. Remington." I responded, returning my gaze to the forest.

"Please," Came his dimmed voice from inside the house, "call me Walter. Come on in Mr. Yaden." And so I took my first step into Invidia house.

Darkness loomed in every corner. Cobwebs lay scattered about, and spun between the legs of broken furniture. They were also draped across the walls and ceiling. The faint smell of mildew permeated the air, and the dust sifted through the house which caused me to cough.

I wandered across the old boards that moaned as if they were alive beneath my shoes. This house had seen itself in the prime: clean and well kept, free of dust and freshly painted. It had observed, unable to stop the inevitable process of decay. And so the house deteriorated, losing its majestic appearance as it gained age. If it was alive, then surely it would moan.

I turned to where Mr. Remington had been standing, and had managed the first words of a question before I realized that he was no longer in the room with me.

"Mr. Remington...?" I asked, the limp words dropping to the floor. I heard the floorboards creaking before I saw him emerge from a corner. "Walter, I was just getting immensely curious. As to, how old this house is? How long has it sat here uninhabited by people?" He gazed at me with his brown eyes over his pipe, then removed it and turned to look out a stained window.

"Paul. I suppose that I should tell you this. I probably should have told you before," his dark eyes fell into mine, "but its nothing that should frighten you."

He replaced the pipe between the soft folds of mouth and moved to the window which allowed very little sunlight to illuminate the room. The thick smoke streamed from his mouth, and he turned to face me. "As far as my knowledge goes, this house was built in the early 1920's by a man named Edgar Williamson. No one is sure why he built such a large house for one man. Some say he was not mentally stable," he stopped to suck thoughtfully on his pipe, "he had just returned from a archeological expedition in France when he built the house, thus the architectural design." His eyes roamed the ceiling, and he began to walk to the stairs. "Come on. I want to show you something." He started to ascend the massive staircase of wood without looking back. His hands gripping the dark wood finish hard enough to whiten his dark skin in harsh contrast against the railing.

I followed without a word, slowly following Walter up the staircase into a long windowless hallway where he stopped.

"I never did ask you Paul." His eyes stared deeply into mine, his rich eyebrows covering his brow like moss. I saw his dark irises open like a window into darkness as he grew accustomed to the gloom. "What is it, that you do for a living?" His eyes remained fixed on me, and I felt the house creak and settle about me as I stood in momentary silence.

"I am a Philosophy professor at a University

in Indiana. I was a professor, that is." I glanced down the hall, and felt Walter's eyes steel over my face.

"Take a look at this." His steps moved steadily over the floorboards until he stopped before a solid door displaying a thick lock." I stared intently at the massive metal ornament, as Walter unlocked the door, and showed me the key before opening it. The key was large, ornately carved, and silver, or, at least, it had resembled silver at one time. Now it was old, and had deteriorated as had the rest of the house.

*"I wandered across the old boards that moaned as if they were alive beneath my shoes. This house had seen itself in the prime: clean and well kept, free of dust and freshly painted. It had observed, unable to stop the inevitable process of decay. And so the house deteriorated, losing its majestic appearance as it gained age. If it was alive, then surely it would moan."*

The walls were dark with mildew and the hardwood floor was dusty, and cracking. One great window allowed the sun to strike the floor. It displayed the mounds of moldy furniture and rows of books set atop rotting bookshelves. I was nearly ill by the pure smell of the place. Had it not been for the window, the room would be completely dark. Perhaps it was that thought that was terrifying.

Regardless, the room was also magnificent. The bookshelves, though moldy, were still solid, they were salvageable. Such beautiful, strong wood. I found myself walking to the immense bookcase that was at least several yards tall. It was made of thick, and intricately carved oak. Vivid scenarios were carved onto the bookshelf. There were trees, and what appeared to be Nymphs. Sacred groves, with elves, and even demons, or at least what appeared to be demons. I found myself very interested in the bookcase, and was lost in thought when Walter said: "That is not what I brought you here for though." I turned, and saw that Walter was opening a large crimson drape which had been hanging over another window. The drape was so thick that it had completely covered the windows in the door. It had not allowed any sunlight in either.

This door was not unlike the others in the house. It was large, and of course, locked. Walter fit another ancient key into the door's metal facade, and with a deep moan, the door was opened.

Sweet country air, swept into the library. I relished it, and drank it in as if I had gone without oxygen while in the house. The soft summer breeze carried with it the scent of the forest, and of the creek. The whisper of the trees permeated the air with sound, replacing the dank stillness that sat within the house. Walter stepped through the doorway onto a

balcony. I stepped out onto the balcony also. The fresh summer breeze was stronger on it.

The balcony was built into the decline of the roof. We were two stories high, on the back of the house, facing the forest. Level with the trees that surrounded the backside of the house. The view was magnificent. Trees stretched into the horizon like many hills of green. The creek, glistening in the falling sun, ran crookedly across the back yard into the forest. Birds sang quietly, and beneath it was the sound of gurgling water. I smiled despite myself, and turned to Walter.

"I love it." His look had taken on a serious frown since he had entered the house, yet he smiled when he saw me so enthralled.

"It is beautiful. That is why I hate to tell you what I am going to." He spoke very softly, the words barely audible over the sound of the surrounding trees.

"What's wrong with the house?" I asked, fear beginning to seep into my stomach. "The house is fine, right? I mean, it is old after all. I expected this." I seemed to lose train of reason. My mind wandering, wondering what could possibly be wrong.

"Oh, it's not the house, Paul." He stopped to press another wad of tobacco into his pipe, then turned from me, facing the orange setting sun above the trees. "Rather, it's what happened here."

I had no idea what to say, the fear was lessening, but I felt a new sensation. I was feeling nervous.

"Mr. Williamson died in the house." He turned to face me. "He committed suicide to be exact. Did it right here." Walter took one step to the edge of the balcony and rested his bronze hands on the black metal fence that enclosed the balcony.

"I'm sorry to hear that. But I still want to buy the house." I couldn't help but feel relief. I returned my view to the forest. "Perhaps we should finish going through the house. It is getting late."

"Yes, let us go on." Walter turned from the balcony and quickly strode into the house. "I still have so much to show you Paul. This house is basically one antique filled with others. And of course, if you'd like, the furniture will be included with the house." His voice weakened as he left the room.

I stood in the balcony a moment longer, his words gradually sinking in. Why should it bother me? I raised my finger to my chin in an old habit I hadn't consciously used since my last class, and left the balcony, being careful to close the door securely. I left the drapes open. It would do the room good to allow as much sunshine in as possible. I left the library with regret, though I knew that I would return. After closing the door, the musty scent of the house once again rushed to my nose. The smell was not as bad now, I didn't expect the house to smell at all after a couple of days of good cleaning. I found Walter waiting for me in the hallway. He smiled warmly and pushed his pipe into his jacket.

Snow, virgin white, lay about the Invidia house. The silver moon glistening off the clear windows. Dark smoke slid from the chimney in a thin stream, curling through the winter night, stretching to the stars. The forest was silent, the creek having been frozen for over two weeks. The trees were hollow skeletons of what they had been in the summer.

It was a bitter night when I had the dream. The house, whistling, and moaning. I had been especially tired after the long day on the balcony, repairing some of the old floorboards. It had been one of the last jobs for the house.

Yet the cold had seeped into my very blood. I had laid under the sheets for hours before finally dropping into a disturbed slumber. Then, the dream had come. In the early hours of the morning. Sparking light fire, then roaring into full emotion. I awoke in a dripping sweat, mouth open in a silent scream. All I could do was sit in his bed, surrounded by darkness, and moan.

Then, I knew, and realized with uneasy affirmation, what was happening.

It was four thirty two in the am when the soft glow of a light flipped on in the library. Outside the house, snow was beginning to fall again. Wind whistled softly through the pines, all else was silent. The moon was a drop of silver in the cloudless, dark sky. It cast shadowed specters about the skeleton forest. It fell onto the house also.

Inside the library, I knelt in front of the library wall facing inward. I tapped it softly and a hollow echo reverberated back. My face was unshaven and it rasp along the cool plaster as I slid down the wall, tapping it in several other places. I caught a reflection of my eyes in a chrome lamp and saw that they were a mockery of the blue they had been. Framed in blood, they were unblinking.

I stood back, unsteady on bare feet. Moonlight poured into the library from the window on the balcony. Outside, the trees were still, the creek was still, and the moon hung posed in the sky. The wind was no longer.

With an explosive thrust, I kicked into the plaster. It caved in easily. Cracks split across the entire wall like a giant spider web of night. A short breath whistled from my lips.

My god, it exists. I stumbled forward and stood in the threshold of my sanity. How could I have know? Terror pulsed through me, and I wanted to run from the house. To run away, and not turn back. Yet I walked into the dark hole.

I fell into dark wetness. The floor was thick concrete, and layered in liquid. The sharp sound of suction poked holes in the silence as my bare feet grasped on the coating of slime on the floor. Finally my eyes seemed to adjust and the room made itself known to me.

The room was entirely of concrete, though as I

have said, the surfaced seemed to secrete some sort of liquid. The room was chilly and humid at the same time. Causing me to shake and sweat in the same moment. I was advancing to the center of the room where a dull red light seemed to be emanating. I could seem to make out strange marking on the walls, but it was so dark, I could not confirm such ideas.

Once I got there, I could see that the soft light came from a large figure bled onto the floor. A giant rune etched onto the floor that seemed to glow. It extended like a spider on the floor. The five points stretching into darkness. Candles were placed in several parts of it. They flared to brightness as I looked upon them.

I felt a hot wind blow across my neck, fear trembled within my legs. The urge to run was imminent, but not to be obeyed. A high pitched scream slowly began to fill the room and fear such as I have never known invaded my very soul.

It existed.



# DIGITAL OGRE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

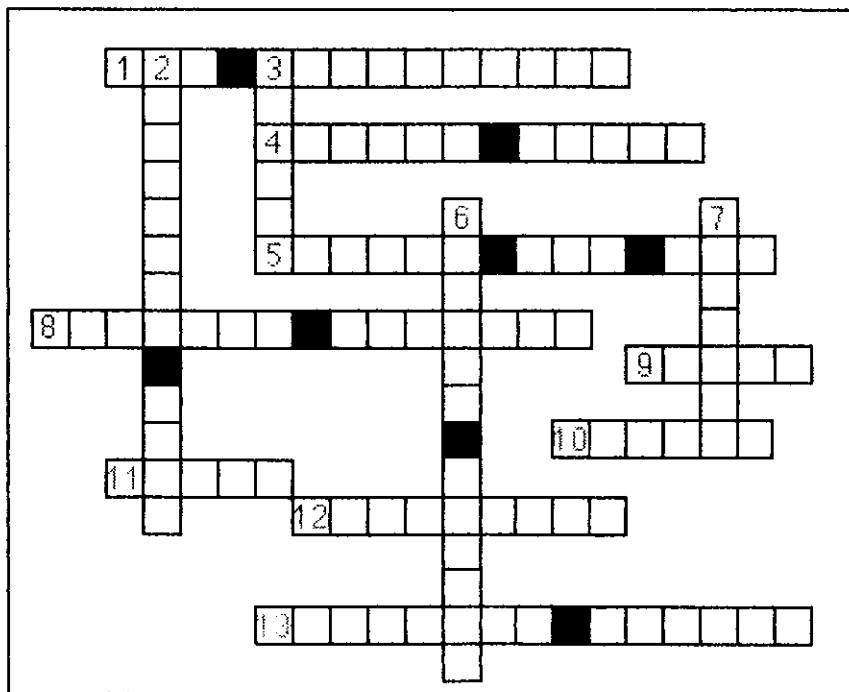
## Across

(Name the movie of the direct quotes)

1. "Plasma rifle in the 40 watt range." "Hey buddy, only what you see."
4. He directed *Alien*© and *Bladerunner*©.
5. "I always felt bad about killing that Pawnee. I never meant to kill him, I only wanted to distract him."
8. Has directed several famous movies including *A Clockwork Orange*©, *Dr. Strangelove*©, and *Barry Lyndon*©.
9. Legolas' Dwarven friend.
10. "Yeah sure! With those things running around our there? You can count me out!"
11. Lead singer of "The Replicants".
12. John Carpenter's early film that propelled him to fame.
13. "Wherever you go, there you are."

## Down

2. From a dashing smuggler to a tired cop who shoots "women" in the back.
3. The corporation whose motto is "More human than human."
6. Filmed his famous cult classic at night while doing beer commercials at day.
7. Raistlin's twin brother.



The answers are on page 15.

## RESOURCES/RELATED

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across The 8th Dimension©. 1984. Twentieth Century Fox.

Alien©. 1979. Twentieth Fox Film Corporation.

Aliens©. 1986. Twentieth Fox Film Corporation.

Barry Lyndon©. 1975. Warner Home Video.

Bladerunner©. 1982. Columbia Tri Star Home Video.

A Clockwork Orange©. 1971. Warner Bros. Inc. and Polaris Productions Inc.

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Little Big Man©. 1970. Hiller Productions Ltd. and Stockbridge Productions, Inc.

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<http://kzsu.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/uwi/bred> (*Bladerunner*©)

<http://kzsu.stanford.edu/uwi/br/off-world.html> (*Bladerunner*©)

<http://www.hollywood.com/movies/ghost/bsghost.html> (*Ghost In The Shell*©)

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### Crossword Puzzle Answers

Across: 1. *The Terminator*© 4. Ridley Scott 5. *Little Big Man*© 8. Stanley Kubrick 9. Gimly 10. *Aliens*©  
11. Priss 12. *Halloween*© 13. *Buckaroo Banzai*©

Down: 2. Harrison Ford 3. Tyrell 6. George Romero 7. Caramon  
by Dylan Hartwell 1996

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