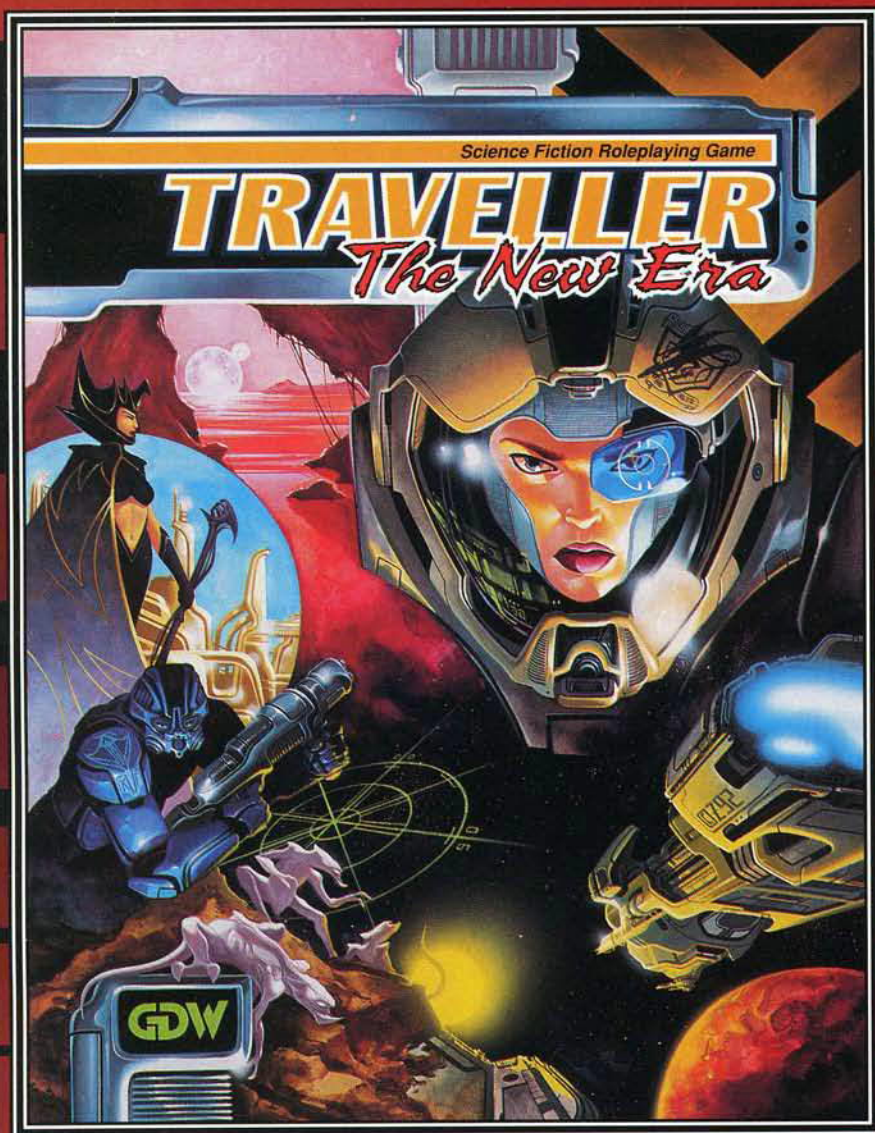


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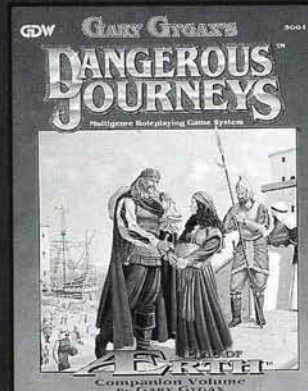
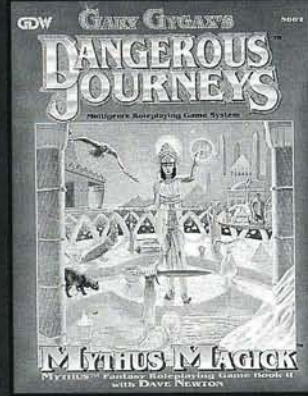
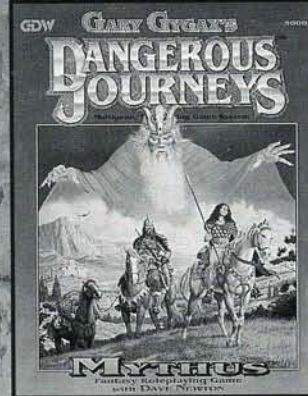
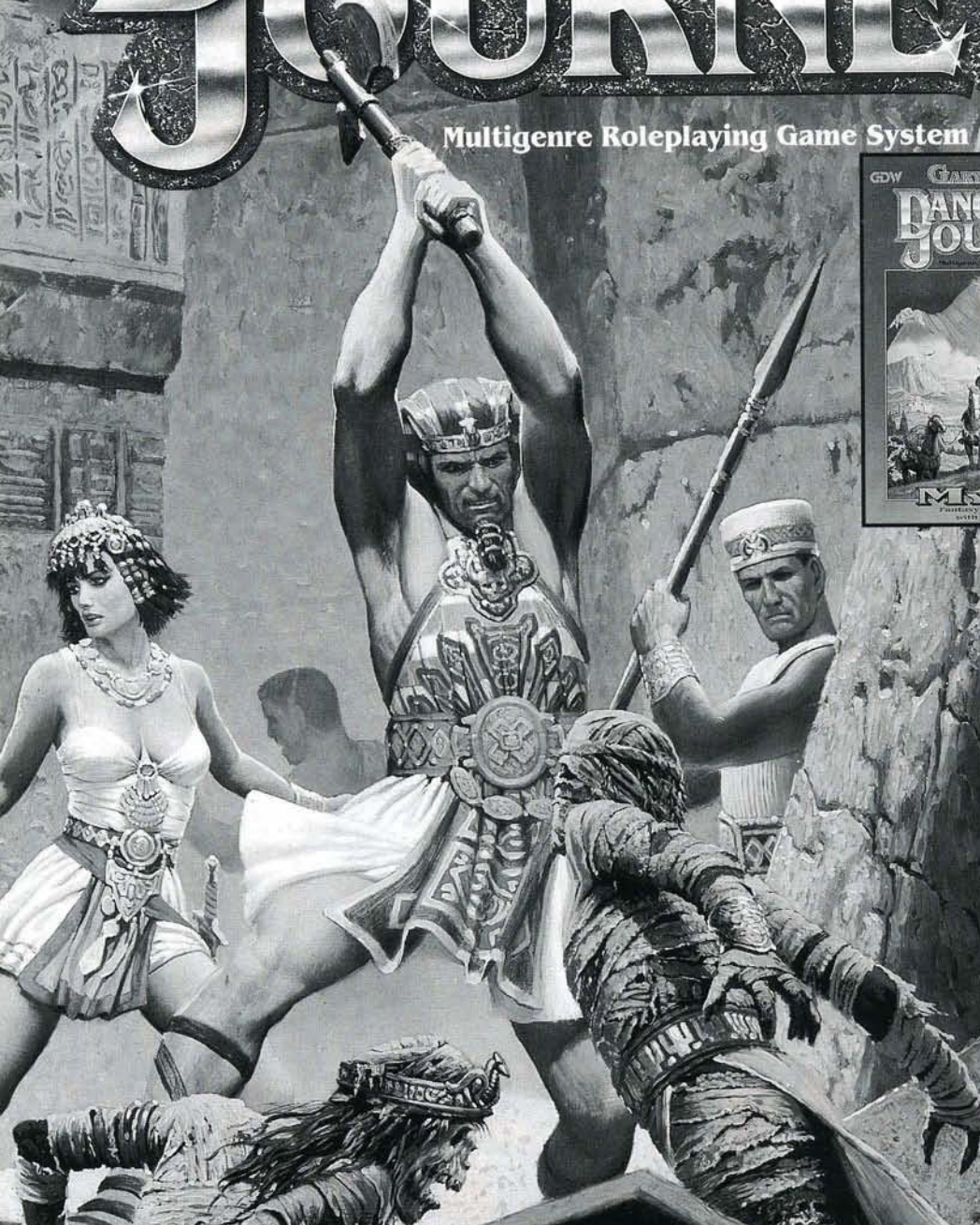
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MYTHUS™ BESTIARY

ÆRTH ANIMALIA

By Gary Gygax, Dave Newton & Michele Newton

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In all the letters and bulletin board queries I've answered, the most popular question seems to be, "How do you figure out personal Heka?" So that's what I'll deal with this issue.

The first step when figuring out a persona's Heka is to determine whether or not the persona has vocational TRAIT Heka. (Every vocation has a Vocational TRAIT—for apotropaists it's Mental TRAIT, for a soldier it's Physical TRAIT, and for an astrologer it's Spiritual TRAIT, for example.) When the persona is a Partial Practitioner—unable to fully channel Heka—you roll 1D10. On a 1-9, the persona gets Vocational TRAIT Heka, and on a 10 (0) the persona does not gain Vocational TRAIT Heka.

In the case of a Full Practitioner, mage or priest, the persona automatically gets Vocational TRAIT Heka.

Should the persona have Vocational TRAIT Heka, you then get to find out if he has a second TRAIT in Heka. Roll 1D10 again. On a 1, the persona has two TRAITS in Heka, and on 2-10, he doesn't. I recommend rolling for the higher of the remaining two TRAITS, unless your referee says roll for the lower.)

A mage-priest (or priest-mage) gets both Mental and Spiritual TRAIT in Heka automatically. A mage or a priest must roll for a second TRAIT in Heka normally.

If the persona has two TRAITS in Heka, you can now roll to see if he has all three TRAITS contributing Heka. On a 1D10 roll, a 1 means the persona does and a 2+ means he doesn't. All personas have to roll for a third TRAIT in Heka.

Once you've found out whether or not your game persona has TRAIT Heka, you now get to find out how much Heka your persona gets from Heka generating K/S Areas. Use the Heka-generating K/S Areas chart (*Mythus*, page 276 and *Mythus Magick*, page 8) to figure out K/S Area Heka, with the following change: Wherever the notation "(att+att)" appears, change it to read " $\frac{1}{2}(\text{att}+\text{att})$." Also, make sure to read the footnotes carefully. Magi, for instance, get Dweomercræft (school) STEEP+Mental TRAIT instead of Dweomercræft (school)+Mental Mnemonic Category in Heka for primary school.

Explanatory note: " $\frac{1}{2}(\text{att}+\text{att})$ " means you use the average of the two ATTRIBUTES. (Yes, I know most of you are aware what " $\frac{1}{2}(\text{att}+\text{att})$ " means, but somebody would ask if I didn't spell it out, so bear with me.)

Since I'm talking about magick use, I'll go on to finding out if your Heroic Persona is a Full Practitioner.

To be a mage, the HP must first have the dweomercræfter, specific school Vocation and second have a Mental TRAIT of 101 or better. If both are true, you then roll against Mental Mnemonic Capacity (MMCap) at DR "Hard." If the roll is successful, then the persona is a mage. For example, an HP with the dweomercræfter, Gray Vocation, a Mental TRAIT of 101 and an MMCap of 19 would have a 19% chance to be a Gray Mage.

To be a priest, the HP must take Priestcræft, Specific Ethos, and have a Spiritual TRAIT of 101 or better. If such is the case, a check against Spiritual Metaphysical Capacity (SMCap) at DR "Hard" is made to find out if the HP is a Full Practitioner in Priestcræft. An HP with Priestcræft, Ethos of Shadowy Darkness, a Spiritual TRAIT of 102, and an SMCap of 19 would have a 19% chance of being a Full Practitioner, for

instance.

In the case of a "dual class" HP, the procedure gets a tad more complicated.

To be a mage-priest, the persona must take the dweomercræft, school Vocation, take the *Priestcræft* and *Religion* K/S Areas and have a Mental TRAIT of 101+ and a Spiritual TRAIT of 91+. If that is the case, you then roll against the lower of MMCap or SMCap. In the case of a Priest-Mage, the HP must have the Priest, Specific Ethos Vocation, a Spiritual TRAIT of 101+ and a Mental TRAIT of 91+, take the *Dweomercræft* and *Magick* K/S Areas, and then succeed in a roll against the lower of MMCap or SMCap. In either case, the rolls are against DR "Hard."

If you feel the above methods for determining Full Practice are a bit restrictive, then all an HP needs for magedom or priesthood would be the appropriate K/S Areas (*Dweomercræft* and *Magick* for Magi, *Priestcræft* and *Religion* for priests), high enough Mental and/or Spiritual TRAIT, and a low enough die roll. Using this method, a soldier with *Priestcræft* and *Religion*, and a Spiritual TRAIT of 101 or better, could be a Full Practitioner with a low roll on 1D100 (an army chaplain, perhaps?).

Finally, let's look at those Heka-generating K/S Areas that supply Heka for limited use.

With the following exceptions, K/S Area Heka may be used for any casting, Power and/or operation. In other words, if your HP needs to use a *Dweomercræft*, *White Casting* and has only *Astrology* Heka left, then he can use *Astrology* Heka to power a *Dweomercræft*, *White Casting*.

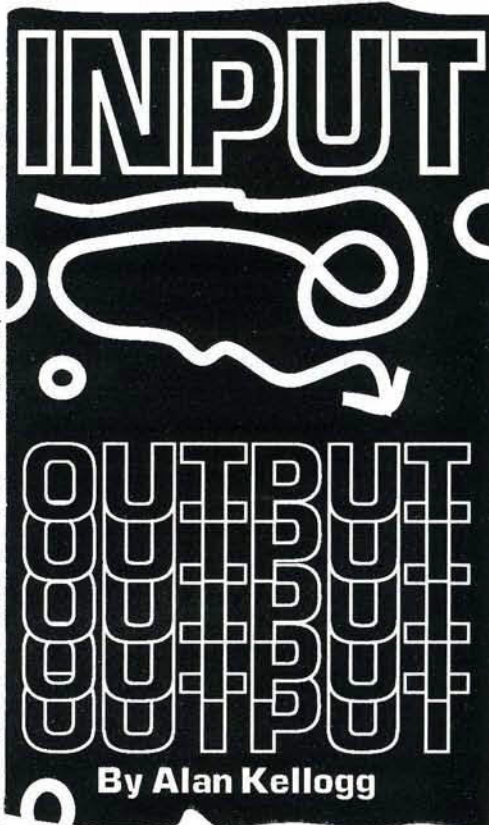
The exceptions are: *Astronomy* K/S Area Heka can only be used for *Astrology* Castings and operations. *Musical Composition* and *Poetry/Lyrics* K/S Area Heka can only be used for *Spellsongs* Castings.

Before I close, *Smithing/Welding* does generate Heka. The formula is: $\text{Smithing/Welding STEEP} + \frac{1}{2}(\text{PMPow} + \text{PNPow}) = \text{K/S Area Heka}$. *Smithing/Welding* K/S Area Heka can only be used for Heka-forging Castings and operations.

Well, that's it for this installment. Next issue I'll discuss the corrections for the OPs' Heka for the "Condemned as Galley Slaves" adventure in the *Mythus* book. And maybe a few other clarifications as well.

Keep the questions coming in.

You can send your *Dangerous Journeys* rules inquiries to Alan Kellogg c/o GDW, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646.



Gamemasters

VIEW

By Gary Gygax

Here is some special information for gamemasters which I am most anxious for those worthies to share with players and utilize in their campaigns. As I've always stressed, the material in this column is by no means confidential, let alone secret. The goal of improving and enlivening the many new Dangerous Journeys MGRPG system campaigns is nearer, but from

the tremendous response we've had, it is clear that you want more! More new rules, further details, greater quantification. I spoke with Mr. Grumbold not long ago, and he passed along some comments made to him by M. Marcelus François, Grumbold's erstwhile companion and guide in Francia. It seems that the actualities on *Ærth* are not accurately reflected in the game rules as regards to the versatility of three special Knowledge/Skill Areas. Read on . . .

Witchcraft Isn't just for Bad Guys Anymore

Why, one might well wonder, would a Heroic Persona not of Evil persuasion—a decent and upright sort, not in the least desirous of making a pact with some monstrous being from the Netherrealms, let alone employing malign practices—have knowledge and skill in sorcery and/or witchcraft? What right-thinking HP would have any truck with *Necromancy*?! All of that is shocking to consider! Yet we have sages and wisewomen/wisemen and even witch doctors possessing the *Witchcraft* K/S Area. Furthermore, any persona can acquire these abilities at any time. What is going on? Now there are some other seemingly malign K/S Areas which can be employed for Good. For instance, we know that *Conjuration* is employed for many benign and useful practices, and neutral ones as well, albeit it is also the principal tool of the Evil sorcerer. Again, *Demonology* is an aid in *Exorcism*, and likely useful in any general investigation of supernatural evil occurrences. Very well, is there any like application of the three, seemingly offensive K/S Areas mentioned—*Necromancy*, *Sorcery* and *Witchcraft*? Yes. The non-Evil persona is able to employ the abilities held in these areas to fight against the malign. The following rule applies:

Counter-Necromancy, -Sorcery & -Witchcraft

To know the *Necromancy*, *Sorcery* and/or *Witchcraft* Area is to have the opportunity to identify such practice and possibly

counter the practices involved. Here is how the counter-K/S practice works:

The persona need never have used or actually be able to employ *Castings*, *Powers* and other practices of the K/S Area in question in order to manage identification and possible countering. The knowledgeable *but nonpracticing persona* can employ the STEEP possessed in the Evil K/S Area by checking against it as follows:

1. *Identify use of the K/S Area*: STEEP at base DR of "Easy." Has a necromancer (sorcerer or witch/warlock) been at work here? If the check succeeds, then the persona will know for sure.

2. *Identify specific practice within the K/S Area*: STEEP at base DR of "Moderate." Was a *Casting*, *Power* or some other sort of action employed by the offender? If not a *Casting*, the *Power* or other activity can be identified by succeeding in the check. Otherwise...

3. *Identify an Archetypical Casting employed from within the K/S Area*: STEEP at base DR as if the persona were actually using such a grade of *Casting*. Ignore prohibitions regarding use above STEEP. That is, one able otherwise to employ *Castings* of given a grade at DR "Hard" can identify those above that grade by three steps, at DRs of "Difficult," "Very Difficult" and "Extreme" respectively. With practice found, and a *Casting* indicated, pinpointing the exact one requires a successful roll as indicated.

4. *Negate an Archetypical Casting employed within the K/S Area*: There are two methods of attempting to accomplish this, depending on the circumstances:

- In the event that a *Casting* is active and operational, the individual checks against his STEEP at base DR as if the persona were actually using such a *Casting*, but at one grade higher than the *Casting* in question is in actuality—Heka cost for negation paid before check but at same grade as the *Casting* is in actuality, however.

The increased DR here is because this is a difficult thing to do, identifying and negating all in one, and at the same time expending Heka to manage the negation. A Special Success means that actual Heka extended was one grade below that of the *Casting* negated.

- In the event that the individual wishes to disjoin or negate a *Casting being employed prior to or at the moment of its activation* within the K/S Area, a K/S versus K/S contest is held. In addition, the persona attempting to disjoin or negate the Evil practitioner's *Casting* must expend Heka as if for a *Casting* two grades higher than the Evil *Casting* in question, such cost paid before the K/S versus K/S contest takes place. However, the disjoining/negation is attempted as if casting the grade of *Casting* in question, not at the higher Heka point cost demanded, so the task isn't impossible!

Here the persona is attempting something really difficult, identification and countering of a *Casting* in progress. The Heka cost reflects energy at play during the contest.

Victory: If the individual wins the K/S versus K/S contest:

Special Success indicates the *Casting* is disjoined/negated, and the Evil practitioner suffers as much D10 damage as the grade of *Casting* paid for by the individual who succeeded. Damage is according to the nature of the *Casting*, Mental, Physical or Spiritual—Physical if there is any doubt. For example, a Grade IV *Casting* is disjoined/negated, and the non-Evil persona so doing paid a Heka cost equal to Grade VI (125 points) to so do. The caster suffers 6D10 points of damage of



some sort in addition to having his Casting attempt ruined and losing the Heka employed for that purpose.

Success means that the Casting is disjoined/negated, and the Evil practitioner suffers as much D3 damage as the grade of Casting paid for by the individual who succeeded (i.e., 3D3 to 12D3). Damage is according to the nature of the Casting, Mental, Physical or Spiritual—Physical if there is any doubt.

Defeat: If the Evil persona triumphs in the contest:

Special Success by the Evil practitioner means that his Casting activated successfully at *no* Heka cost to the Evil individual while the would-be disjoiner/negater suffers as many points of Physical damage as he expended above the normal cost for the activation of the Casting in question. For example, the Grade IV Casting referred to above costs 75 Heka points, and the Grade VI expenditure is 125. In this case, the would-be disjoiner suffers 50 points of Physical damage in losing the struggle.

Success by the Evil practitioner means his Casting activated successfully at *no* Heka cost to the Evil individual. The would-be disjoiner/negater suffers a Heka backlash of as much D6 Physical damage as the activated Casting's grade (i.e., 1 to 9 or 10).

As you can see from the above, this can be risky business.

Examples

Now for some examples of these of the Counter Evil K/S use: The mage, Lucan, possesses STEEP in all three Areas—*Necromancy* (at 57), *Sorcery* (at 43) and *Witchcraft* (at 33). Of course, being right-minded, he would never utilize the actual abilities of these dark, malign practices. He has studied them in order to thwart those foul creatures who would stoop to such wickedness. Someone has been brutally murdered, and there are few clues, save that Heka was used. Lucas tries counter-Sorcery. Was that K/S employed? His base chance of success is 41, and the roll is made at DR "Easy," so there's a 129% chance of Success. Let's assume that *Necromancy* was at work, though. Lucan rolls a 12, which indicates Special Success. He knows that Sorcery wasn't used, and the GM decides that he believes it was indeed *Necromancy*, for he has that K/S at 57 STEEP.

Lucan now tries to discover what sort of Necromancy practice was employed—a Casting, Power or some other thing. The DR is "Moderate" for this, so a score of 114 or less is needed. The roll is 59, a Success. Lucan discovers that some undead thing was involved, one sent by the persona employing Necromancy.

Later on, Lucan and his comrades track down the nethercræfter-necromancer who is guilty of the hideous crimes they have been investigating. This malign foe has utilized a *Summon Deadspirits Spell*, Grade VII Casting to place deadly spirits on guard in his stronghold for his protection. Lucan can theoretically use Grade V Castings at DR "Hard." As this is a Grade VII Casting, he must use a DR of "Very Difficult" to identify it. Since 0.25×57 yields a 14, Lucan's chance of success is only 14%. He gives it a go, adding 2 JFs to help the process. The GM considers. He could lower the DR to "Hard," one step easier for each Joss Factor, or he could allow a -10 per JF on the dice score. He decides on the former, as he doesn't want to allow a big chance (score 01-21) for Special Success. The roll is made, and the score is 52. Because the DR was considered back at a mere "Hard," Lucan has succeeded, and he identifies

the Casting and knows what is opposing his team (and the good guys can counter those nasty things).

A bit later on they confront the villain—who of course has a force of guards—and a major fight ensues. In the course of this conflict, Lucan sees (via a successful *Perception* [Noticing] roll) the vile foe doing something which seems likely to be involving some Heka. Therefore, Lucan attempts to disjoin/negate this activity. It turns out the nethercræfter-necromancer is using a Necromancy Casting, *Arrowbones Charm*, Grade III, the missiles to be directed at none other than Lucan. The Casting is only Grade III, which means that Lucan must pay Heka points as if he were activating a Grade V Casting, so he expends 100 points, and the K/S vs. K/S contest begins.

Lucan is disjoining/negating as if casting at Grade III, the actual grade of the Casting which it in question, so his DR is "Easy," and he has 171.

However, the Evil foe, the nethercræfter-necromancer, has STEEP of 76, and his Casting is only Grade III, so his DR is "Easy" and a 228. The difference (171 minus 228) is a -47 in favor of the bad guy! That means "Extreme" DR for Lucan, who must then roll 17 or less, and "Easy" for the nethercræfter-necromancer, who needs only a whopping 228—and to avoid Failure on 99 or Special Failure with a 00 result.

Again Lucan expends his last 4 JFs to help him in this deadly game. A pair go to mess up the Evil foe, while the other two are used to obtain a better dice result for Lucan. The GM considers alternatives, rules that the foe is in the midst of Casting activation and is thus unable to himself expend Joss, and this time allows a -20 on the result rolled for Lucan, a "Hard" DR for the nethercræfter-necromancer, so his chance is back to 76. Not bad, all things considered, and if it is a tie, then Lucan is in *big* trouble.

The dice roll for Lucan comes up 19, and that translates to a Special Success! That for the bad guy must likewise be a Special Success, or else. The roll is 33. A Success, but that isn't good enough. Special Success vs. Success equates to Success and Failure. The Casting is disjoined/negated, and the nethercræfter-necromancer suffers 5D3 points of Physical damage, because Lucan paid for a Grade V cost to counteract.

Let's suppose that the result of the nethercræfter-necromancer's roll was a 91, a Failure. Then Lucan has managed a Special Success, and not only disjoined/negated the *Arrowbones Charm* but delivered 5D10 rather than a mere 5D3 points of Physical damage to the Evil foe.

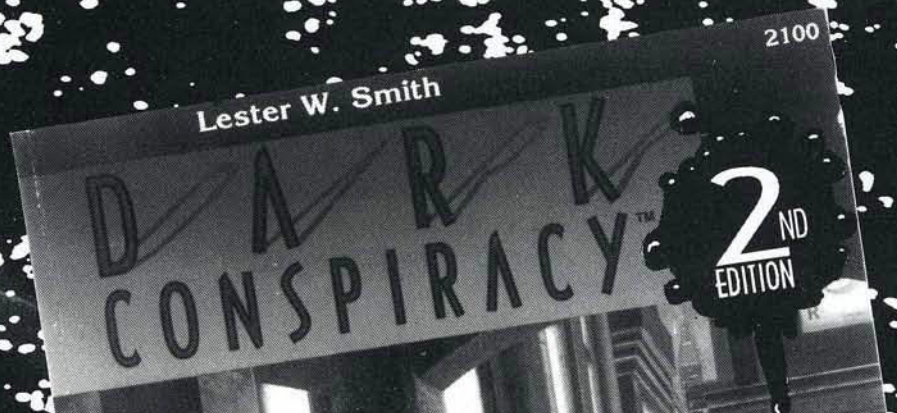
Failure for Lucan is too gruesome to consider.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the above, there is a very good reason for upright personas to know a whole *lot* about the malign practices in question. Identification and the foiling of their use are strong and excellent motivations for acquiring knowledge and skill to counter such Evil activities! However, unless the persona has great STEEP, it is better not to attempt to actually interfere with a bad guy through attempting to disjoin/negate. A lot of Joss and plenty of real luck are in order in such cases. If the HP doesn't have greater ability than the EP, it's tough-going indeed—but that's as it should be. Ω

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Look Who's Coming Back For Seconds...



Coming
Fall
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E

Elemental, My Dear Man

By Ryan McRae and Eric Vance Curl





This mystery adventure is set in the town of Beacon's End, on the southeast tip of Lyonesse, but it can be placed in any small town where there is a lighthouse and a port. It is assumed that the adventurers are just passing through, but they could be in the town for almost any reason. The information is not presented in a linear fashion, which allows more freedom in how the group progresses.

HISTORY'S MUSE

Beacon's End is the best, most reliable lighthouse in the Five Crowns, possibly in all Æropa, and has been for over 100 years. The town gets its name, not to mention its very existence, from

the reliability and quality of the lighthouse, and the port which has built up around it. Five generations, though, have not been long enough for the town to grow to the status of city—it is still a small port, and the lighthouse is used primarily as a navigational device to reach other, more important, ports. A single family has cared for the tower since even before its reputation spread, and that family was surnamed Beacon. The funds to pay the keeper and maintain the lighthouse (as well as all others in the Five Crowns) are taken from taxes levied to ships using the kingdoms' ports. The oldest son has traditionally become keeper, and the other children have almost always gone on to become important members of the town's middle class.

Five generations back, the eldest son took over the lighthouse upon his father's death, and the second-born son went to school to become a mage. This second son, Æron, discovered that he had quite a talent for Elemental Magick, and became a Full Practitioner Elementalist. There wasn't much market for an Elementalist in Beacon's End, so he became an adventurer and grew quite powerful. His older brother never married and, when he died, it was left to Æron to become keeper of the lighthouse. By this time, Æron was ready to retire from the life of an adventurer, and he didn't mind at all settling down to the stable life of the keeper. But once a mage, always a mage, and Æron found a way to make use of his Heka skills in his new position.

During the part of the winter season when no ships were coming into port, Æron cleared out the fire chamber on the top of the lighthouse where a circle of 24 huge tallow candles were enclosed in a large glass, Heka-forged to be fireproof. He polished the granite floor and set to work to make the most powerful, reliable source of light he could imagine. With a Pentacle Wand of his own making, he created a permanent, complex, inclusive Pentacle on the floor, but left it partially covered so it would not yet activate. He then rebuilt the glass chamber around it and, as a final step before he set about his real work, he covered the Pentacle with a couple inches of water and removed all other obstacles. Not considering the cruelty of his actions, Æron then summoned a Greater Fire Elemental, who appeared within the chamber, burned off the water with his great heat, and found himself trapped in a Pentacle.

When the shipping season resumed, the beacon from the lighthouse was one of the brightest, most far-reaching beams any sailor had ever seen (more than three leagues), and its reputation spread, as well as rumors about its keeper. He was known to have been a mage, even an adventurer, and the beacon was obviously Heka-powered. Subsequent keepers installed a clockwork mechanism to power a rotating bull's-eye opening, making the beacon even more distinguishable from any other visible lights on shore, and occupied themselves with caring for this mechanism, since they didn't have much work to do with the beacon itself. Except for Æron, no one ever knew how the beacon was really powered, and, eventually, no one cared. It became just a part of life in Beacon's End.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

OPs likely to be important are described below. Some statistics for minor characters are also included.

Adain Beacon: Adain is the current keeper of the lighthouse,

and the town drunk. It is a testimony to the reliability of the beacon that it continues to function under his care. It is also testimony to the popular (and correct) assumption that it is magick. Adain refuses to believe in Heka Castings beyond petty and deceptive tricks. He has convinced himself that the beacon is not magick, but simply the product of an ancestor's ingenuity, and he will argue this point violently with anyone who even hints at the contrary. He has been in the constable's cell many times for attacking an unwitting visitor who remarked on the "enchanted beacon." He is 5'5", about 225 pounds, 27 years old, has dark hair, a shaggy beard, and an affinity to slobbering and screaming.

Adain's delusions are not a result of stupidity, but of guilt. Growing up, he and his siblings often played on the top floor of the lighthouse (forbidden, of course, to touch the beacon mechanism). He would sometimes go up alone, fascinated by the light and heat, and try to catch a glimpse inside as it turned in its circle. He must have had some of his ancestor's gift for working with the elements, because, not only could he look safely into the beacon, but he could see the fiery shape of a man, sometimes hunched down, head in its hands, sometimes arms raised as if in pleading, and one time—the last time—looking straight at the little boy, hands held out in a desperate pleading.

The title "keeper" has taken on an ironic, accusing double-meaning in Adain's ears, and he has been driven to despair and denial. In his own guilt, he began accusing anyone else he could of any wrongdoing he could think of, and he has made many enemies, especially among those who wield Heka. It may be that the action he will take in this story is an act of suicidal despair, or possibly even of great courage—or both.

Rebecca Hearthman: Rebecca is Adain's older sister. She married the town's innkeeper at 16, and since her husband's death two years later, has run the Candle's Call, the town's only inn (besides the rather disreputable ones by the docks). She is 29, about 5'3", and far too stubborn and confident for most men to notice that she is actually quite pretty. She has long dark hair which she keeps up in a bun, except at night, and which she will not cut despite the trouble of keeping it, because her late husband loved it so. Her inn is slowly gaining a reputation equal to that of the lighthouse, both for food and comfort. She has taken in a number of orphans to help run the place (the only people she said could be trusted) and has developed a skill at throwing knives, which doesn't suit a lady, but is quite useful as a barkeep. She is usually treated as "one of the guys" and would have it no other way, but she has made sure to separate her room enough from the rest of the inn so that only a few of her adopted children can hear her crying sometimes at night.

Despite the pain of losing the one whom she deeply loved, she is basically satisfied with her life (she says that pain is a part of a full life), and there is only one thing she would change—her brother, Adain. She doesn't know whether to pity him, hate him or just ignore him, but she does know that he is no longer allowed in her inn. When he is around, fights increase exponentially. He owes her a large sum of money, and this is not an unknown fact, but she has so far not taken any drastic action to collect.

She is, overall, a remarkable person. She is one of the few literate people, maybe the only literate woman, in town, and

makes sure that her children have this skill as well. She raised her younger brother, Sebastian, after her parents died of the same sickness as her husband (leaving the lighthouse to Adain). She and Sebastian have an ongoing, equally matched tournament of Fidchell, which they continue on his nightly visits to the Candle's Call—there are a number of Fidchell boards in the inn, as it is a favorite among regulars, along with darts for less intellectual competition. On top of it all, Rebecca can do things with mutton that cause sailors' mouths to water from days out of port.

Sebastian Beacon: Sebastian, the youngest of the current generation of Beacons, has set up shop in Beacon's End as a merchant. He is 21 years old, 5'11", has jet-black, wavy hair, a smile that could melt a polar cap, and a temper that could scare a troll. He is very successful, very rich, very handsome and very much the target of his brother's jealousy. He despises Adain and has no pity for him—only hatred. This could be seen as his only fault besides his temper, except that many people don't consider hatred of the town drunk to be a vice.

His primary import is silk, supplied to all of the Five Crowns and sometimes even to the mainland. His primary export is Hekalite and celedonian wool. His roots as a merchant stem from his days as a boy in his sister's inn, where he was often sent as a gopher or delivery boy by merchants staying there. He started to develop his business sense immediately and this, combined with his sister's lessons in reading and writing, plus the inheritance which he received upon turning 18, set him up with the resources he needed to become the first merchant based in Beacon's End, instead of just using it as a secondary port. The town places its hopes in his business, and so does he.

Gerard "Smitty" Smith: Smitty is the town's only smith—blacksmith, silversmith, you name it, but if you don't want to go out of town to get it, you get it from Smitty. He isn't the best smith in the Isles, because he has had to spread his skill so broadly, but he is still invaluable, not just because of his accessibility, but because he is an accomplished Heka-forgers. He is jovial, friendly and generous, but very strict on his apprentice. Smitty has an attractive daughter of about 16 (Kyriana), of whom he is quite overprotective because he has trouble admitting she is growing up, and a wife (Elaine) who is as overprotective of their daughter as he is because she is well aware that their daughter is growing up. Kyriana had taken to talking to Adain, and Smitty has forbidden her to see him. He and his wife are becoming quite concerned with her seeming interest in Adain, and Smitty has even gone so far as to threaten him if he comes near their daughter again. This outstanding threat is common knowledge in the town, as it was made in broad daylight in front of his forge.

Kyriana Smith: Kyriana is the only person in town to show any real kindness to Adain. Her parents' suspicions are unfounded, as she is thoroughly smitten by his brother, Sebastian, and the sentiment is not unrequited. She cannot understand, though, how he can hate his own brother so, and she has set out to find something good about Adain. In her conversations with him, she can sense that he is horribly guilty about something. Anyone who listens to him for even a few minutes finds it obvious that he hates himself. She has sat and talked with him many an afternoon in front of her father's forge, trying to find out what makes him so guilty, and when her father

forbade Adain to come around, she started going occasionally to the lighthouse.

She hates the lighthouse—it is amazing how dark and dingy it can be inside a place known for its light. The last time she went there, she found Adain on the top floor, screaming at the beacon—until he saw the girl and turned his furious ravings on her. She ran home, and, even though she knew he didn't mean what he said, she was crying miserably when she got to her room. When her father found out where she had been, he threatened Adain not to so much as look at his daughter again.

Darius Magus: Darius is the town "mage." He is not a Full Practitioner, but has made a good living at supplying the town with needed Castings, often cooperating with Smitty to make items such as the town's "witch lights." He is a small, wiry man who either says nothing or repeats what he says three or four times. Adain had been fond of standing outside Darius' shop, proclaiming the fraudulence and deception of Heka-wielders, and has had to be removed by the constable a number of times. Darius has even emerged from his shop, wielding a Sceptre of Inferno, threatening to burn Adain to a crisp if he doesn't leave the legitimate customers alone.

Gawain Cuchucail: Gawain is the town constable, and he is very good at it. He is retired from the King's Army, and has brought his military training to Beacon's End's small-town guard. He is in his late fifties, in good shape, big, strong, and a master Fidchell player. He taught Rebecca and Sebastian how to play, and he is the only one in town who can beat either of them (which he always does quite soundly). Gawain is the nicest man you'll ever meet—unless you're a troublemaker. He is well aware of the trouble that Adain causes, but doesn't have time to deal with him, room in the jail to keep him permanently, or sufficient reason to execute him. He has often said that, if he weren't the constable, he would take care of Adain himself.

Simon: Simon is one of the orphans Rebecca has taken in. He was living down at the docks and had picked up some rough habits, but Rebecca usually works him too hard to leave him any energy for violence. He is very vocal, when she is not around, of his disdain for her lazy brother, and has said that, if he had the means, he would "put that slob in his place—six feet under." He has also said that, having lived on the street, if he didn't have the means, he could steal it (he's quick to point out that he doesn't do that any more—but he could if he wanted to). He is in his mid-teens.

Elaine Smith: Smitty's wife, equally ill-disposed toward Adain, if less hostile, and more aware of their daughter's age.

Henry: Smitty's apprentice.

Sally, Richard, Harry and Ann: Other orphans in the inn, ages 9, 12, 13 and 14, respectively. They have heard Simon's bragging.

Elizabeth: Adain's servant (and his parents' before him) until she quit two years ago, due to his rantings and ravings. He was never violent or even mean to her specifically, but she couldn't stand living in the same place with him. He would wander around at night, drunk, saying things like, "You're not in there," "I can't let you out" and "The fire is alive." She now works for Sebastian. She is a meek, old widow, very reluctant to speak to anyone, and very loved by her employer, who has known her since he was born.

Rebecca Hearthman

SEC: 4	JOSS: 9	HEKA:—	AVOIDANCE: 32/29/24		
M: 106		P: 88	S: 87	SM: 44	SP: 43
MM: 53	MR: 53	PM: 36	PN: 52	SMCap: 19	SPCap: 19
MMCap: 18	MRCap: 19	PMCap: 13	PNCap: 18	SMPow: 13	SPPow: 12
MMPow: 18	MRPow: 18	PMPow: 12	PNPow: 16	SMSpd: 12	SPSpd: 12
MMSpd: 17	MRSpd: 16	PMSpd: 11	PNSpd: 18		

Outstanding-Important K/S Areas/Sub-Areas & STEEP (Innkeeper)

K/S Areas	STEEP	K/S Areas	STEEP
Etiquette/Social Graces	36	Keltic	45
Perception (Mental)	52	Phonecian	34
Domestic Arts/Sciences	61	Current Events	46
Jack of all Trades	35	Education	32
Mental Games	42	Combat, Hand Weapons,	
Seamanship	32	Missile	44
Boating	35	Combat, Hand Weapons	29

Weapon	WP	S	ATK	DT	Dam	Bonus	BAC	C	Dur
Dagger	5	2	2/1*	P	1/—*	1	49/34*	M	5/30

*Thrown/Held

Sebastian Beacon

SEC: 6	JOSS: 6	HEKA:—	AVOIDANCE: 37/30/30		
M: 111		P: 93	S: 90	SM: 44	SP: 46
MM: 54	MR: 57	PM: 45	PN: 48	SMCap: 15	SPCap: 16
MMCap: 19	MRCap: 20	PMCap: 16	PNCap: 17	SMPow: 15	SPPow: 14
MMPow: 17	MRPow: 18	PMPow: 14	PNPow: 16	SMSpd: 14	SPSpd: 16
MMSpd: 18	MRSpd: 19	PMSpd: 15	PNSpd: 15		

Outstanding-Important K/S Areas/Sub-Areas & STEEP (Merchant Vocation K/S bundle)

K/S Areas	STEEP	K/S Areas	STEEP
Etiquette/Social Graces	42	Keltic	67
Perception (Mental)	39	Phonecian	74
Appraisal	54	Deception	42
E/F/I	41	Travel	40
Rarities	35	Combat—Hand Weapons	35
Mental Games	42	Boating	45

Gerard "Smitty" Smith

SEC: 4	JOSS: 9	HEKA: 206	AVOIDANCE: 24/33/20		
M: 85		P: 107	S: 63	SM: 32	SP: 31
MM: 42	MR: 43	PM: 56	PN: 51	SMCap: 12	SPCap: 12
MMCap: 19	MRCap: 15	PMCap: 19	PNCap: 18	SMPow: 10	SPPow: 9
MMPow: 13	MRPow: 14	PMPow: 19	PNPow: 18	SMSpd: 10	SPSpd: 10
MMSpd: 10	MRSpd: 14	PMSpd: 18	PNSpd: 15		

Outstanding-Important K/S Areas/Sub-Areas & STEEP (Blacksmith)

K/S Areas	STEEP	K/S Areas	STEEP
Trade Language	33	Geology/Mineralogy	25
Perception (Physical)	32	Arms & Armor	45
Combat, Hand Weapons	42	Physical Games	39
Jack-of-all-Trades	24	Leatherwork	28
Smithing/Welding	42	Construction, Naval	31

Heka producing K/S Areas	STEEP	Heka	Max CG
Heka-Forging	42	98	IV

Weapon	WP	S	ATK	DT	Dam	Bonus	BAC	C	Dur
Hammer (2H)	7	9	1 1/2	B	4D6	8	49	C	5/40

Darius Magus

SEC: 6	JOSS: 7	HEKA: 658	AVOIDANCE: 32/21/23	S: 77	
M: 100		P: 73		SM: 43	SP: 34
MM: 54	MR: 46	PM: 37	PN: 36	SMCap: 15	SPCap: 14
MMCap: 19	MRCap: 16	PMCap: 13	PNCap: 14	SMPow: 15	SPPow: 10
MMPow: 18	MRPow: 15	PMPow: 12	PNPow: 13	SMSpd: 13	SPSpd: 10
MMSpd: 17	MRSpd: 15	PMSpd: 12	PNSpd: 9		

Outstanding-Important K/S Areas/Sub-Areas & STEEP (White Dweomercraeft Vocation K/S bundle)

K/S Areas	STEPP	K/S Areas	STEPP
Ægyptian	35	Combat, Hand Weapons	26
Pantheology	34	Keltic	49

Heka producing K/S Areas	STEPP	Heka	Max CG
White Dweomercraeft	45	99	IV
Magick	45	91	
Aprotopism	38	45	III
Green Dweomercraeft	34	53	III
Alchemy	33	76	III
Divination	33	47	III
Exorcism	25	40	II
Metaphysics	36	51	
Heka Forging	19	56	I

Sceptre of Infernos: By expending 65 Heka, the sceptre causes 5D6 of fire damage on the target.

Gawain Cuchucail

SEC: 6	JOSS: 8	HEKA:—	AVOIDANCE: 30/33/25	S: 76	
M: 93		P: 104		SM: 42	SP: 34
MM: 46	MR: 47	PM: 56	PN: 48	SMCap: 15	SPCap: 12
MMCap: 16	MRCap: 17	PMCap: 19	PNCap: 18	SMPow: 14	SPPow: 10
MMPow: 15	MRPow: 15	PMPow: 19	PNPow: 15	SMSpd: 13	SPSpd: 12
MMSpd: 15	MRSpd: 15	PMSpd: 18	PNSpd: 15		

Outstanding-Important K/S Areas/Sub-Areas & STEEP (Soldier Vocation K/S bundle)

K/S Areas	STEPP	K/S Areas	STEPP
Gambling	45	Mental Criminal Activities	35
Deception	27	Mental Games	55
Military Science	35	Riding	48
Perception (Physical)	52	Perception (Mental)	43
Combat—Hand weapons	42	Criminal Activities (Physical)	40
Escape	39	Handicrafts	35
Combat, HTH, Nonlethal	46	Combat, HTH, Lethal	46
First Aid	30	Jack of all Trades	26

Weapon	WP	S	ATK	DT	Dam	Bonus	BAC	C	Dur
Broad Sword	7	6	1 1/2	C	4D6	8	49	M	5/20

Armor	Avg.	Pierce	Cutting	Blunt	Fire	Chem	Stun	PTY
Half Leather	6	7	9	8	4	4	6	—

THE GAME IS AFOOT

This section details exactly what the mystery is, who might hire the characters or offer a reward and any other necessary information for playing out the mystery.

Adain overheard some visiting travelers comment on "the remarkable magickal lighthouse" as they walked into the Candle's Call. He followed them in, despite his sister's forbiddance, and began yelling at them as coherently as a total drunk can. "There's no magick in that lighthouse! You think 'cause I'm a drunk, I don't know my own business? Ain't no magick involved. My family don't need no magick to run our light-

house, never did. Simple ingenuity. I'm sick o' you outsiders walkin' into town, pretendin' you know everything. Locals 're bad enough..." and so on. He was promptly kicked out, but on his way out he yelled, "I'll prove it, once and for all, there ain't no magick in my lighthouse!"

Adain then preceded to the lighthouse in a stumbling fury, and went straight to the top floor—the beacon's chamber—pausing only to pass out once and to grab a wooden chair on the way up. When he got to the top, he broke the glass surrounding the chamber (and the Pentacle), and the shattering glass broke the Pentacle. The Elemental was freed.

Over a century of captivity had driven the fire Elemental mad with rage. He had watched the children play on the floor outside his prison and recognized this man as the one who saw him. The one who would come up (drunk) and yell at him, "You're not in there. Nobody's in there. There's no magick." All that was left of Adain (and the chair) was a pile of ash.

The Elemental ran down through and out of the lighthouse, and set out across the sandy terrain toward the nearest place he could sense his element—the embers of the blacksmith's forge on the edge of town. He moved slowly, overcome with confusion and terror and freedom, but with rage more than anything.

The blacksmith's forge (and home) is located near the beach, for easy access to water for cooling. The Elemental therefore only had to cross over the sandy beach and through the scorched working room, and crawl into the forge, leaving no discernible marks except for chunks of sand his feet had fused into glass.

Sebastian is expecting a major shipment on the night after the next. Darius has determined that a great storm will begin that evening. If the beacon is not up at full strength, the shipment, and possibly the lives of many seaman, will be lost.

Suspects: For reasons apparent if you read their histories, Sebastian, Smitty, Darius, Gawain and Simon all have good motives to kill Adain, and no concrete alibis (even people they were with were asleep). Of course, unless someone magickally detects that the pile of ashes is Adain, he will be thought to be missing. When the murder is realized, Gawain will accuse Sebastian, and Sebastian will quickly accuse Gawain right back, recalling his wish to take care of Adain himself. Everyone else in town will have their own opinions, and the HPs will easily hear the rest of the suspects accused if they ask around.

Problem: The HPs have two mysteries to solve: Who killed Adain and how did the beacon work? The most urgent problem is getting the beacon back up to full strength. There is a moral dilemma in recapturing the Elemental (along with the problem of simply getting him back up there). His insanity can be cured by any castings which would cure it in a human, and he is a reasonable, intelligent being if so cured. Smitty, being an excellent Heka-forged, does know the Permanency Casting, but finding a Casting which will produce the same light as the Elemental did would be difficult. Remember, also, that the increasing wind and rain atop the lighthouse will make Castings more difficult as the storm increases through the evening, and will make fire-building near impossible (a *Fire Building* roll is "Very Hard" at the beginning of the evening, "Extreme" by night, one level lower to keep a built fire burning). Anything the HPs can devise within their own means and mores will suffice—the main point is to get the ships safely into port.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The following is the general order in which the main events will occur unless their order is altered.

First Day

- *Early Morning:* Adain harasses the travelers, breaks the beacon, and frees the Elemental. The Elemental kills Adain and hides in the blacksmith's forge.

- Adain does not show up in town, which he usually does during the day.

- *Night:* The beacon is not on. Sebastian comes to the inn (as he usually does) and complains to Rebecca, "Our stupid brother has the beacon closed, and it's a good thing there are no ships coming in tonight. I'm going over to see him in the morning and make sure this never happens again."

Second Day

- *Morning:* Sebastian goes to see his brother and discovers the beacon broken. He puts out a reward for the capture of his brother, posting notices and sending out the town crier with this message: "Reward for the capture and return of Adain Beacon, who in spite and avarice sabotaged the beacon of the lighthouse, as he has sabotaged and maligned the name Beacon for years in his drunken insolence. To the man who can capture and return this scoundrel to justice goes 100 pieces of silver, and to the man who can restore the beacon, to its *full strength*, before the shipment arrives on the *morrow's night*, there goes 300 pieces of silver for the rescue of innocent seamen and the salvage of their cargo." If the HPs are reputable, he might hire them directly.

- *Afternoon:* The Elemental sees Rebecca, who goes to the blacksmith on business, and recognizes her. He talks to the fire in the forge, and finds out that she is at a place where Kyriana goes at night. The blacksmith notices that the forge is burning awfully hot, and he scolds Henry for it.

- *Evening:* The Elemental follows Kyriana to the inn, leaving the same glass chunks in the sandy terrain on the outskirts of town, and crawls into the inn's hearth through a door on the outside used for cleaning. Inside, Sebastian has an argument with Kyriana about Adain, and then with Rebecca about his reward notice being too harsh.

- *Night:* The Elemental burns down the inn. The fire starts in the hearth and the kitchen, so it is noticed soon enough for everyone to get out quickly (the characters were the only overnight guests, because there are no ships in dock and no other travelers). The fire seems by all evidence to have started because too hot a fire was left burning in the hearth overnight. Ann is absolutely sure she remembers checking the fire before she went to bed. The Elemental returns to the forge.

Third Day

- The HPs are offered a place to stay in Sebastian's home, where they get a chance to talk to Elizabeth.

- The blacksmith is furious at Henry because the fire is too hot again—so hot it even melts some of what he's working on.

- *Afternoon:* The dark clouds and ominous rumblings of the incoming storm begin.

- *Early Evening (Before Sunset):* If the Elemental has not been discovered, Sebastian will go visit Kyriana, who is in her father's workshop. When the Elemental sees him, he will lose all control and flare up, setting the forge and workshop on fire. He will then attack Sebastian and set out to find Rebecca, who will be on her way to the forge when she hears that there is a fire. It begins to rain, causing enraging pain, but no real damage, to the fire Elemental.

- *Night:* The shipment arrives, amidst wind and rain, and only the brightest lighthouse in the land will be good enough

to get it safely apart. The increasing wind and rain will dispel the Elemental if he is not inside and has not been destroyed.

GET A CLUE

This section contains various information, from things to events to relationships, which will enable the characters to solve the mystery.

- It doesn't take a psychologist to figure out that Adain was guilty over something, and that is what drove him to drink. After talking to the townspeople, especially Kyriana, the HPs should be able to figure out that something was eating at Adain's conscience and that it had something to do with the beacon.

- There is a big Pentacle inside the shattered beacon (it could have contained only Heka energy for a light, though, so it is not an immediate giveaway).

- One of the two piles of ashes by the broken beacon, if magickally inspected, will prove to be the remains of the incinerated Adain (the other was a chair). Noticing the two piles of ashes, separate from the rest of the wreckage, is a "Hard" *Perception* roll.

- Rebecca knows that there was a mage a few generations back in the family. She's never really stopped and thought about the origins of the magick beacon, but if she did, she would probably assume that the mage had something to do with it. She has in her possession a detailed record of the family genealogy, up to her parent's generation, which the oldest daughter always inherits and updates. She hasn't managed to get around to reading it, much less updating it (she's been afraid of what she'd have to write about Adain), but she'd be glad to let the HPs look. It contains detailed information about every member back to the first keeper (five generations before Aeron), including Aeron's status as an accomplished Elemental.

- Sebastian has in his possession the Pentacle Wand, which has been passed down as an heirloom, and which he took possession of because Adain was too irresponsible. They call it "the sceptre," and nobody really knows what it's for, but the fathers used to make a big deal out of giving it to their sons, and Sebastian treasures it as a memory of his father. He is aware that it is probably magickal.

- Where the Elemental walked from the lighthouse to the forge, he left chunks of glass his feet had fused from the sand. It is a "Moderate" *Tracking* roll to notice the glass if the characters are looking to track someone away from the lighthouse, and a "Hard" *Perception* roll if they just walk back and forth to the light house (then an "Easy" *Tracking* roll to follow it to the forge). Remember, the Elemental did not leave any footprints in the forge area because it is already scarred with burn marks. The granite surface of the lighthouse and its interior stairs were not marked because the Elemental ran out and did not make enough contact to leave any burn marks (except where he incinerated Adain and the chair) He walked slower to the forge because by then he was confused more than frightened.

- Elizabeth has stories to tell about Adain's ravings, and if the HPs haven't already talked to her, they will get a chance to hear her account of life with Adain when Sebastian puts them up after the fire.

- Henry, who went out to light the forge on the mornings of

the second and third days, noticed that it was already lit, but assumed someone else had lit it).

- Smitty's forge is continually overheating from the Elemental's presence (if the HPs visit Smitty, they will hear him scolding Henry for it).

PERFECT FIT

Below are hints on how to fit the adventure into existing campaign or formats.

If you are running a detective campaign, this adventure would fit in perfectly. Give Gawain a magick item which lets him detect the ashes as Adain's, and the HPs could be hired by Sebastian to clear his name of the murder, figure out how to fix the beacon, and determine if there is a connection.

If you want to start a detective campaign, this would be an excellent way for the HPs to begin establishing their reputation. It could also be a starting point for characters setting off to become merchants or explorers, as it would provide a good base of operations and some good contacts. The shipment they (hopefully) save could even be setting off on some dangerous journey and may welcome the HPs as hirelings or comrades.

The HPs could also have been sent to town by officials interested in the maintenance or documentation of the lighthouse. This would give the HPs an official, sanctioned status in involving themselves in the affair (and they could be the visitors Adain yells at). Ω

For background information on lighthouses, see "Lighthouses of Aeth" by Eric Vance Curl in this issue.



Lighthouses Of Ærth

By Eric Vance Curl

The following is a letter written to the emperor of Nippon from a servant who was sent to the West in order to investigate the use of lighthouses. As Nippon is an island empire, its rulers were very interested when they discovered the phenomenon of the lighthouse. They do not have what we would consider a navy, because no one else in their corner of Ærth does either, and all fighting is done on land. They do need reliable means of navigation, though, since many of their islands are small or remote, and many even smaller islands can prove a bane to navigation. We have printed this letter because we think it will be of interest to those curious about geography, seafaring or even cultural relations on Ærth.

To the Great Emperor, may his life and reign last through the ages, from his humble and gracious servant, Tanaka Masahiro:

It is my deepest wish that this correspondence finds you in the best of health, and your family as prosperous and growing as your empire. I am well and have found great interest in the lands of the West, although I long for the island of my home and my family.

I have nearly completed my task of documenting the use of lighthouses in the West, as you assigned, so that you and the Shogun can consider their use in Nippon. It is my humble opinion that we will be able to make great use of this navigational aid in our own shipping and, with the results of my humble research and the excellence of our engineers, it will require minimal contact with the West. Even as this letter travels the seas to your hand, Great Ruler, I will begin to formulate my recommen-

dations for which type of lighthouses we should build and where to place them. My purpose in this letter is to inform you of my discoveries and of how the West has made use of the lighthouses they have built, so that you, in your wisdom, can begin to consider the information and share it with the Shogun.

Pharos, the Patriarch of Beacons

My account of lighthouses must begin with the first and greatest of lighthouses, which is in the land of magick, the mysterious land of Ægypt. It is named Pharos, and it is to be found on a small island which gives it its name located on the western entrance to the harbor of the fabulous city of Alexandria. The idea of building a fire on a high place to give a beacon to seagoing vessels is an ancient one and, indeed, ancient sailors here in the West often used the fire and smoke of volcanoes such as the great mountains in our land to guide them. But Pharos is the first known structure built specifically for the purpose of providing a beacon light for seagoing navigation. It is nearly 400 feet in height, built of white limestone, decorated with the purist white marble—a truly magnificent structure, and all the more so considering its age of more than a millennium. It has outlasted empires and knowledge, and it still stands to lend its beacon, much as the royal house of Nippon. It was designed by a man named Sostratus from a place called Cnidos located somewhere in what the westerners call Middle Azir (why, I do not know, since this land is located on the far west of Azir, so as to nearly adjoin with Afrik). He must have been a man of great ingenuity, but very little is known about him, as, indeed very little is known about his tower.

The Ægyptians who know anything of Pharos are very secretive with information about the tower, and those who do not know anything are nearly as secretive with their lack of information. It seems there is more to this tower than a beacon for ships, and rumors abound. One rumor is certain, especially in Ægypt, that the



light at the top of the tower comes from no ordinary fire. Although it is assumed that the beacon was originally produced by a great bonfire, kept burning by the labor of slaves, this arrangement is unlikely now, seeing as no one is ever actually seen entering or leaving the tower. Accounts range from tales of a mages' school (not unlikely in that land), to an exiled deity (unlikely in any land), to a hermit granted eternal life in exchange for seeing to the beacon. Adding to the mystery of Pharos is the fact that in recent history it withstood an earthquake. This is sometimes attributed to the skill of its legendary builder, and sometimes to one of the various rumors in circulation, but either way, it only served to strengthen the reputation of Pharos. All things considered, I learned little and much about the use of lighthouses from the patriarch of beacons—little about how to run or build one, but much about its importance.

Roman Lighthouses

Whereas Pharos came from the ingenuity of the Hellenes, during their expansive but short-lived empire, the majority of the ancient lighthouses I have encountered were built by the Romans (both of these while the decadent and idle empire of Atlantis sat by and milked the greatness of ingenious whelps—indeed, I find no evidence of ancient beacons built by these first of the seafarers). The Romans were (and are) a practical people, and they were not as inclined to the use of Heka in the building of their empire. But they did build solid and dependable structures, and began the development of the lighthouse as an important navigational aid.

There most well known lighthouses were a pair, built on either side of the Avillonian Channel—a hazardous but vital passage. The tower on the Albionian side was erected in Dover, and on the Francian side, in Boulogne-Sur-Mer. They were built during Rome's reconquest of Avillon, during the height of the Atlantean Empire, nearly 1000 years before its fall. All that remains of the tower at Dover is ruins, but the tower in Francia still stands, as it was restored right before the fall of Atlantis. The practicality of the Roman Empire is demonstrated in these towers, in that they were built atop high cliffs, so that, even though the actual structure is a mere 80 feet, the beacon actually stands 400 feet high. The beacon functions through the use of multiple flames, and mirrors which reflect and concentrate the light. Candles seem to be the primary means of illumination in the Western beacons, but not to the exclusion of other methods.

Another Roman-built lighthouse stands in Genoa, Italia. It is named "Lanterna" due to its use of an oil lamp to produce the beacon. This is an attractive method for Nippon, due to the abundance of fish and whale oil, but its drawback is the great amount of smoke and soot, which collect in the enclosed space atop the tower and require frequent and extensive cleaning (although replacing candles, feeding fires and carrying wood to the tops of towers are considerable difficulties as well).

The largest of Roman lighthouses is appropriately located at Portus, the port of Rome. It was built during the decline of the unified Roman Empire (only a few years after the pair on the Avillonian Channel were built), during the decadence of those whom they undeservingly called emperor. Indeed, in front of towers at both Francia and Portus, the reigning emperor had

a statue of his own countenance erected—a tribute to their vanity. Other Roman and Italic lighthouse locations include Leghorn, where stands a stone tower 165 feet high; Ostia, where a tower was erected between breakwaters shortly after the harbor was dredged and constructed, in order to mark its entrance; and Messina, Sicily (which, like Avillon and Francia, is no longer a Roman province), where the volcano Mt. Etna assists the beacon in its duty to mark the harbor.

Beacon's End: Most Intriguing of Lighthouses

As is evident, the Italics are still among the most prevalent builders of lighthouses, but they are joined by most seafaring or harbor dependent countries, such as Francia, Saxony, the nations of Gallia and Iberia, and the kingdoms of the Five Crowns of Avillon.

It was in Avillon that I encountered the most intriguing of lighthouses. It is located on the southeast corner of the Island of Lyonesse, in a town called Beacon's End. Whereas Pharos took its name from its location, the town of Beacon's End seems to have taken its name from its position near the lighthouse. Indeed, not only its name, but the town's very existence, seem to be a result of the lighthouse. The inhabitants of this town were much less secretive with their information, but unfortunately, no one seemed to know anything that wasn't based on rumor. And of rumors, there were plenty. There were more rumors of the lighthouse in this little town than there were people, I think, and if your humble servant were not in service of the Emperor himself and the Shogun who serves him, I would have wearied greatly of the task of sorting them out. One thing is certain, though, for even if I only heard tell of it in rumor, such rumors would not all agree so well if the point of their agreement were not a truth: The lighthouse is magick—possibly a great magick and certainly a secret one. The similarities to Pharos seem great, but I would say the magick is in the lighthouse at Beacon's End, and not in those who run it, and the secrecy seems more a result of ignorance than conspiracy.

The purpose of this lighthouse originally was not to mark a port, but to give a reference for navigation, much the same as the twin towers further up the Avillonian Channel. Its importance in navigation is twofold: First is its location at the west side of the entrance to the perilous Avillonian Channel, and second is its visibility to those traveling along the southern coast of Lyonesse to the port at Shellot, for there are many dangerous reefs, and sudden winds and storms. But, in what seems a particular occurrence, a port has grown up around it, for it has come among seafarers to be called the most reliable and remarkable of lighthouses. It contains an ingenious mechanism which actually rotates the beacon in a beam of light, the likes of which I have seen nowhere else. This was done because there is another lighthouse further west on the southern shore, and sailors lost in a storm often confused the two beacons, and even other fires and lights on shore. When one beam rotates, though, it is distinguishable from all other lights.

The tower itself is not remarkable. It is only a little over 100 feet high, and a dwelling for the keeper stands near it. It is remarkable for the brilliance and clarity of the beacon—which can be seen for leagues out to sea—and not for the structure itself. I approached the tower, for does it not make sense to talk to the keeper of the lighthouse to learn about the lighthouse

Characters for "Elemental, My Dear Man"

By Gabe Usadel

Rebecca Hearthman



Sebastian Beacon



Simon



Adain Beacon



Darius Magus



Gawain Cuchucail



Kyriana Smith



Gerard "Smitty" Smith



he keeps? It stood near the shore of a sandy beach (which is also unusual, since most lighthouses are on rocky outcroppings or practically in the sea themselves), and as I neared, even in the light of day, I could see a light—as near to the light of the sun herself as I have seen—turning atop the tower. I knocked at the door of the house, and a drunkard, not even bothering to open the door, put his head out a window and asked me what I desired. Taking him to be an unruly servant, I asked to see his master, the keeper of the beacon. Imagine, great ruler, my shame to discover that *he* was the keeper. I then understood one of the things I heard in town, "The beacon *must* be magick, if it still works while he's the keeper." I wished him good health and his family prosperity, and he did not respond, not even with one of their simple *good days*, and seemed to just wait for me to continue. I had no more than said, "I wish to inquire as to the workings of your fabulous and magick lighthouse" when he broke into a fury. "There is no magick!!" he screamed, then slammed the window shut. I never was able to find out more about this lighthouse, and I regret the loss of the knowledge. I thank the gods, though, that the rest of my quest was more successful.

Common Traits

I learned that certain traits were shared by most all lighthouses. Most all of the structures I came in contact with were solid stone masonry towers, which we are quite capable of building.

The beacons are produced one of three ways: wood or coal fire, which also produced a column of smoke for guidance in daylight; a large amount of candles, often with reflecting devices to concentrate the light; or oil lamps. Due to the fact that the lighthouses are located in areas in which they will be subject to highly corrosive elements (spray, saltwater, wind, etc.) their construction often makes extensive use of the metal bronze. Also, the towers are often in highly secluded areas.

This last quality proves to make some of the greatest difficulty in the construction and maintenance of lighthouses, but their seclusion can also be a strong point. I encountered a number of beacons which were adjoined to a monastery, providing a secluded place as well as a needed occupation for the religious communities. A number of hermits found residence in lighthouses, as well as retired military officers, looking to end their lives in peace, but still near the sea. (Much of the warfare in the West happens in the water, on boats, and although it is a strange way to fight, there are many honorable warriors, well trained in the art of combat at sea—this is possibly one reason why they have put such effort into developing the use of beacons in the West.)

This was a wise quest, my Emperor, and it has proved a fertile ground for the bettering of the empire. You were wise in sending your servant on this mission, and your Shogun shrewd to advise it. I am eager to share my recommendations with you in person. Until I am once again with my Emperor and my family, I wish you health and wisdom.

Your humble servant, Tanaka Masahiro Ω

For an adventure utilizing this information on lighthouses, see "Elemental, My Dear Man" by Eric Vance Curl and Ryan McRae in this issue.

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April 1993



A Journeyers' Guide to Ærth

By Ernst Grumbold

brief), published by the University of California, Berkeley, 1982, for their confirmation of Mr. Grumbold's work and further enlightenment as well. Please do so, readers! Now, on to what this inveterate traveller and author has to tell us!

Organization of an Ecclesiastical Stronghold

The hierarchy within such a place, along with some miscellaneous details of what is kept and raised there.

When discussing the castle manor, I mentioned that some were held in fief by a temple. In this regard, I would be remiss not to show how an ecclesiastical stronghold, then, is organized, much as I illustrated for readers that detail regarding a noble lord's castle. In order to be as general as possible, I have kept exact details to a minimum. Why so, you might well ask. The answer is as follows. I understand that readers of this publication are interested in playing a game whose setting is based on Ærth. If I were addressing an audience of readers whose potential aim was to travel Ærth, I would, naturally, be far more specific and precise so as to make the work a worthwhile guide.

The basic information herein presented is intellectually worthwhile, but it is aimed at utilization as a basis for gamemasters to develop make-believe places in their campaign extraction of the real Ærth, for players to understand the workings of such a place in actuality and as abstracted for the game. In this regard, the stronghold can have a basis of monastic, socio-political, militaristic, or just about any other kind desired and workable in the scheme of things.

The ecclesiastical stronghold is a fortified place not unlike a castle, possibly an actual castle, although in all cases religious structures within it will predominate over every-

We were again somewhat surprised to find another envelope from this author in our mail. However, upon reading its content, it seemed a natural companion to his information regarding a manor. To be certain, however, we requested Gary Gy-gax to examine the article. He was kind enough to inform us that it was accurate, and to suggest we direct readers to The Plan of St. Gall (in

thing save needed fortifications. The place might be similar to a medieval walled abbey or priory. It will always contain a shrine and chantry in addition to its chapel. It might very well contain a full-scale temple instead of those lesser religious structures.

In times of trouble, those dwelling on stronghold lands will seek refuge in the place. Able-bodied men amongst the refugees will, of course, serve in the defense in such a case.

The reader is alerted to the fact that the head of the stronghold will have a master. That is, the chief cleric will report to some greater one, and that greater one to a yet higher one in all likelihood. If the chief cleric is of lesser sort, the lands controlled by the stronghold will not have any great extent—a village and a few manors, perhaps. As rank of the chief cleric increases, so too should the holdings and estates of the stronghold. A very important ecclesiastical lord might command a town or small city plus various lands.

It must be borne in mind by the reader that not only will the offices be held by individuals who are priests or monks, but that most others within the stronghold are likewise priests, monks or those training to become one or the other. It is generally a self-sufficient place. Priest/monk members of the stronghold community will handle most tasks of artisan, craftsman and labor function. Only a few secular persons (individuals not under a vow) will be employed by the stronghold.

Chief Cleric: This might be a chief monk (in the strict Ærth sense of the word, that is a failed priest under a vow), with some great degree of ability in many areas of knowledge and skill. More probably, though, it is an office held by a priest of some considerable status and power. In terms of socio-economic class, the individual holding this office will be an aristocrat, possibly in the middle tier. Put into Ærth's historical terms, an abbot ranked in the lower tier of the aristocracy, just above a knight, I would think; a bishop fell into the tier of the lesser nobility, coming ahead of a normal baron, possibly; while an archbishop stood in the highest tier above all but the greater princes and their ilk. The chief cleric will sit as chief judge in trials where major religious law has been violated.

Provost: (Four to 116 staff, soldiers separately accounted for.) This is the office of the deputy chief cleric. Its holder will be the second in command. The office combines the functions of the three major offices of a castle: steward, seneschal and constable. *Temporal affairs—almost all everyday affairs in general in the stronghold—fall under the supervision of this office.* Activities of spiritual nature are exempted, as are some other specific activities. The provost will sit as judge in trials where major religious law has been violated.

Stronghold, lands and the military are indicators of how complete the provost's authority is in regards to most matters. The list of concerns shown under the boxes indicates the scope of the office. What is eaten, made, sold and so forth is under the provost's purview. Also, who is there to defend the stronghold is his concern. Of course, most such places will be manned by warrior priests or monks, and few indeed will need to hire mercenaries in this regard.

Dean: (Four to 20 staff.) This is the next most important office. The individual holding it is third in command. This



office is in charge of *spiritual and medical services* such as *religious observances, ceremonies and rituals*, and also *stronghold ports and visitors*. In addition, this office conducts the court for trials of offenders who have broken minor religious laws. Major laws are tried by the chief cleric, provost and dean in conjunction.

Monitor: The office of an assistant dean who observes the residents of the community to see that their spiritual and physical health is sound. Conduct and discipline are a major oversight of the monitor.

Proctor: The office of an assistant dean who travels to the lands of the stronghold, especially hospices thereon, to see that spiritual and physical health of those who reside there is sound.

Porter: The office of the cleric or monk charged with gate security and watch, who greets visitors, allows them to enter (or not), and sees to their welfare and proper conduct while within the stronghold.

Magister: (Four to 16 staff.) This office ranks fourth in the hierarchy. The individual who is magister is fourth in command of the stronghold. *The office is concerned with education, research and services.* Education extends to all levels, from the lowest to the highest, including the training of aspiring priests, further education for monks and/or priests, the schooling of commoners, and the teaching of aristocratic pupils. *This office maintains the library, conducts research as is appropriate to the stronghold, and oversees such attendant functions as acquisition of new works and Materia needed for Heka use, save for such material and Materia obtained by the office of the provost (minimal) or dean (ceremonial and healing).*

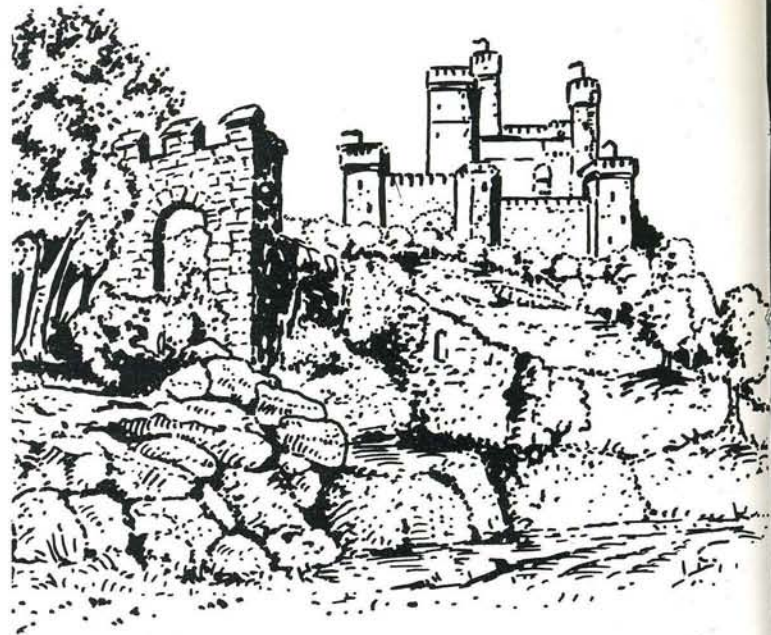
Again, the boxes under the office of magister simply show the extent of concern. Few strongholds will have official titles for the assistants to the magister who are designated to see after each area. Note, however, that the list of materials and sorts of work performed under this office are very broad. For example, in addition to apotropaim, astrology and so forth, Heka-forging, mysticism, demonology, conjuration, necromancy, etc., could well be areas which are studied, researched and experimented in.

Community Proper: Above and beyond members serving in or under a specific office, there will be general members of the community. There will, then, be some number of priests/monks in the stronghold, those training to achieve that status and possibly some laity as well. A small community might number in total only 25 to 50 such individuals, but in such case the number in and serving under offices will be less than shown above. A larger one will have 50 to 100 or more. The greatest in size range well into the hundreds, say from 600 to 800.

Notes on Stronghold Livestock, Gardens, etc.

Livestock maintained within a stronghold will include some or all of the following kinds, the range and number depending on the size of the place: bees, cattle, chickens, ducks, geese, goats, horses, pigeons, rabbits, sheep, swine.

Within the stronghold will be both granaries and fodder storage facilities. Granaries will be extensive where beer or ale is brewed, less so if wine is vinted, although there will



then be a vinting house and grape press instead of a brewhouse and great mortars for cracking grain. There will be a mill for flour.

Note that in siege conditions, grain will be saved for human consumption and for horses used in warfare. Other livestock would be slaughtered and preserved in a fairly short time period after their specific fodder was consumed.

Livestock manure is used to assist in the fertilization of fields, orchards, vinyards and gardens.

Gardens are laid out in beds only five feet wide for easy working. Similarly, beds are raised above ground level by use of timbers or the like. Typical garden crops are:

Medicinal: Basil, cannabis savita, climbing bean, costmary, cumin, foxglove, fennel, garlic, greek bay, horehound, iris, lilly, lovage, mint, mustard, pennyroyal, peppermint, pepperwort, poppies (two varieties), rose, rosemary, rue, sage, tarragon, thyme, watercress, wintergreen.

Regular Consumption: Asparagus, beans (green & wax), beans (various for drying), beets, cabbage, carrots, celery, chard, chervil, coriander, cucumber, dill, fennel, leeks, lettuces (many kinds), lima beans, maize, melons, onions, parsley, parsnips, peas, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes (all kinds), salsify, shallots, spinach, squash, tomatoes.

Bushes bearing berries are sometimes cultivated within a stronghold. These would typically be blackberry, currant or raspberry.

Only small grape arbors are maintained within the fortress. Vineyards are found outside the stronghold.

Orchards within an ecclesiastical stronghold consist generally of trees of one or more of the following kinds:


Cool to Cold Clime: Apple, cherry, chestnut, pear, plum.

Warmer Clime: Almond, apricot, lemon, lime, olive, orange, peach. Ω

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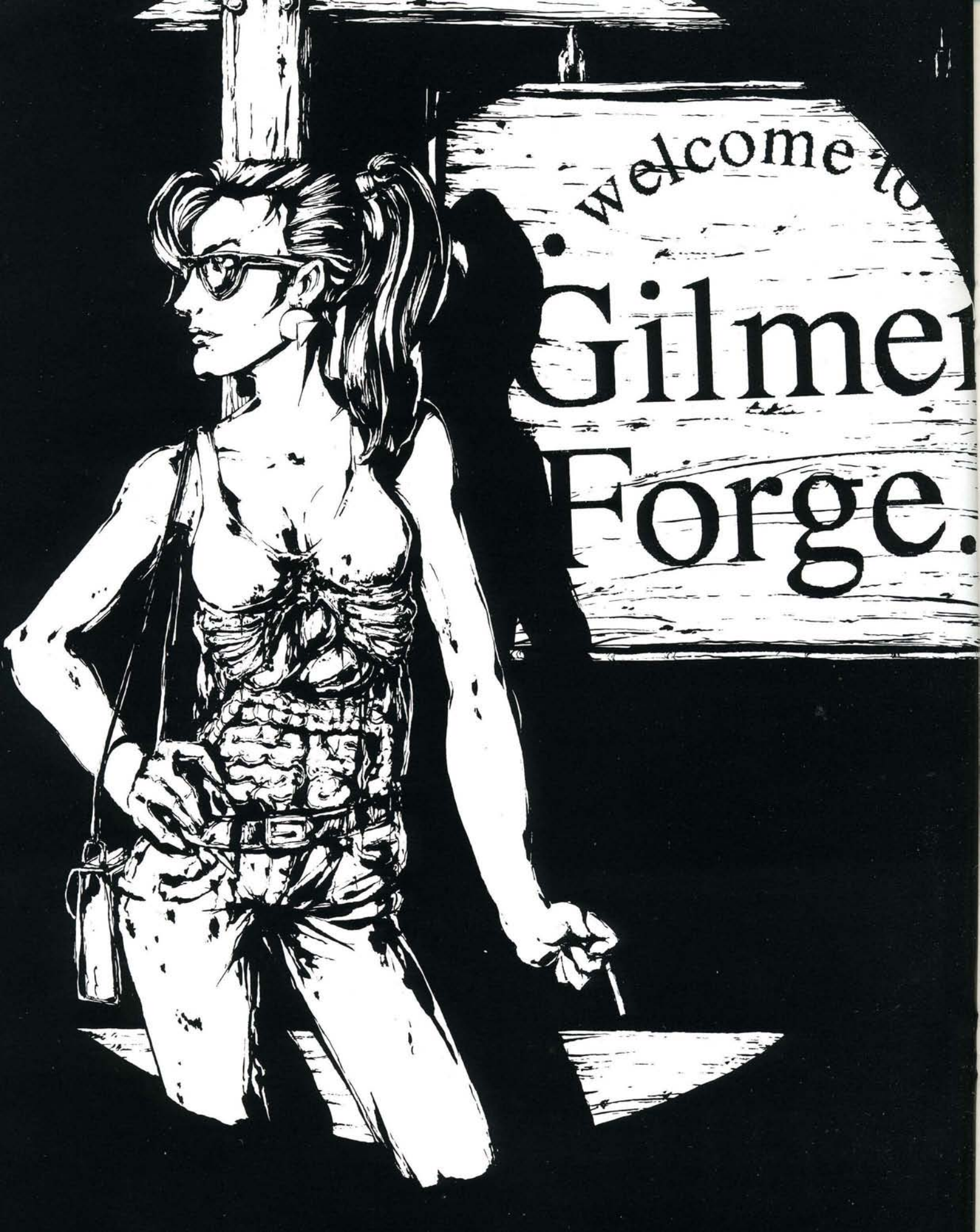
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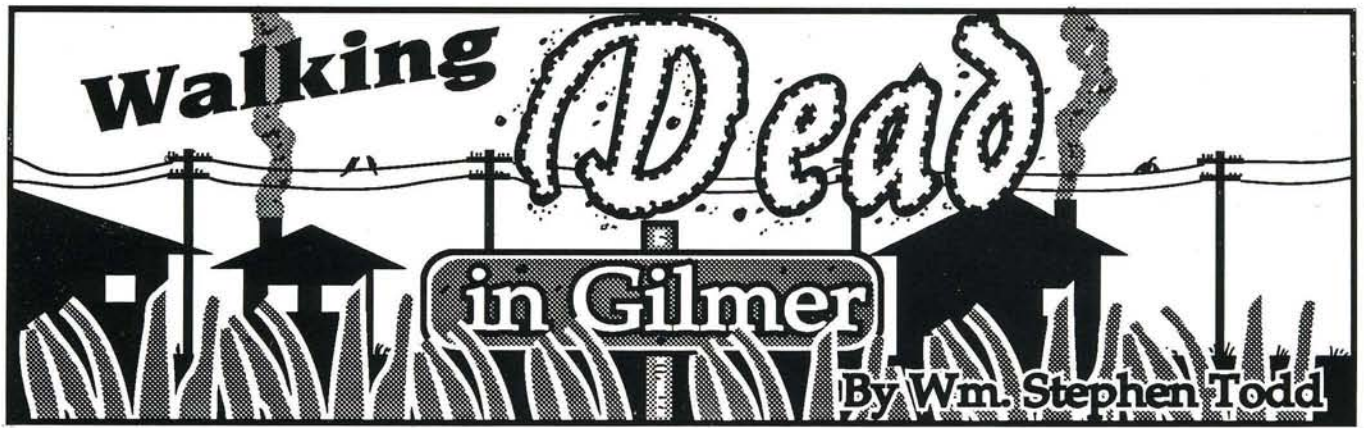


CA/92



Welcome to

Gilmer
Forge.



It's cold, dark, and raining. The perfect night to be lost on a back road in Tennessee. You haven't seen another detour sign for 40 minutes. Then you round a sharp bend and just glimpse someone standing in the path of your headlights. The body hits the front of your car with a sickening thump. You get the car stopped without hitting anything else and jump out to check on the person you just nailed. The stench of a long dead animal fills your nostrils. You finally locate the body. Even in the pouring rain, you can tell the lady is dead. It's only after you check closer, looking for some ID, that you notice the decay—this girl has been dead for a long time. So what's she doing walking around the countryside?

A bit of bad luck introduces the PCs to Gilmer Forge, Tennessee in this modern-day *GURPS Horror* adventure. This sleepy, half-forgotten crossroads can be a very dangerous place for visitors. An anthropologist named Dr. Singh moved into the area several years ago to study some East Indian artifacts. He recently culminated his research by summoning a bhuta, a hideous creature that feeds on humans—dead or alive. Knowing that the bhuta needs human bodies to flourish, Dr. Singh has begun to abduct the visitors at the Gilmer Motel. He doesn't do this himself. The "children" of the bhuta, the darbas, do it for him. And the PCs are next on their list.

(The bhuta and the darbas are both adapted from GDW's *Dark Races* sourcebook.)

DETOUR

The PCs were detoured off the main highway 40 minutes ago. It's night, and the heavy rain is making driving difficult. They come around a small hill and there, directly in the car's path, is someone walking across the road. The driver should make a Fright check. The vehicle slams into the person, throwing the body up and over the vehicle. The driver should make a Driving skill roll to bring the car to a safe stop. If the driver missed his earlier Fright check, adjust his Driving skill roll by that amount. The PCs will notice an awful stench in the air—like that of a long dead animal. They find the body of a young woman laying crumpled in the road. The woman is dead. Her clothes are worn and ill fitting. If any of the PCs have medical skills, have them roll against them. A success tells the PCs that this woman has been dead for a lot longer than a few minutes.

Checking the car will reveal that it's not going much further. The radiator is cracked. Looking down the road, the PCs can see lights, possibly from a town, on the horizon.

There has been no other traffic on the road, so the PCs must resort to walking. If the PCs have a two-way radio in their vehicle, the storm will be causing too much static to get through to anyone. After they have walked for several minutes, they can see that the lights are coming from a cluster of buildings about a mile away. The PCs should make a Hearing roll. Those PCs who are successful hear something moving in the woods. The sound is becoming louder and getting closer.

Whatever is making the noise sounds big. Suddenly, a large creature breaks from the woods and heads straight for a random PC. All the PCs should make Fright checks. Success means that the PC recognizes the creature as a horse. The horse has been frightened by the storm and will try to run down one PC. *Horse's Attributes:* ST 29, DX 9, IQ 4, HT 12, Speed 12, Dodge 6. It can rear and attack doing 1D crushing damage. It will only do this if cornered.

GILMER FORGE

The PCs cross a short bridge, and a weathered sign greets them, "Welcome to Gilmer Forge." It appears that Gilmer is no more than a small truck stop built at a crossroads, although you can't imagine why any trucks would be travelling on these roads.

One corner has a two-pump service station and a small food mart. Across the street is a building with a few cars parked in front. The old electric sign above it used to read "Hart's Diner," but the n and r in the word Diner are no longer lit. You can see the flashing vacancy sign from a motel just past the diner. An 18-wheeler is parked at the motel.

If the PCs go to the service station or the food mart, they see that the lights are on, but the doors are locked. A sign on the door to each says, "Go to diner for service."

The diner is a relic from the 1950s. The tables and booths are made of dull chrome and worn plastic. A large sit-down bar spans most of the diner's back wall, complete with spinning stools. Everyone will stare at the PCs when they enter. A pretty young woman in a pink polyester waitress uniform will come out of the kitchen area. She heads over to the PCs and asks them if they'd like some coffee. Her name tag identifies her as Sarah. The others in the diner are Betty Hart, Eddy Burke, Hank Billard, and Dave and Sandra Martin. From here, the PCs can arrange for their vehicle to be towed and repaired. They'll also need a room or rooms for the night.

About the Body: If the body is shown to any of the residents of Gilmer, they will want to call Sheriff Varney. The woman will look familiar, but no one can place her. (She was passing through Gilmer two weeks ago and stayed in the Gilmer Motel. She was abducted by the darbas.) Once the sheriff arrives, he

will want to inspect the body. He'll tell the PCs he is going to take the body to Crossville for an autopsy. (He is really going to take it back to the cemetery and feed it to the bhuta.) The sheriff will take some information from the PCs and tell them that he may have more questions for them in the morning.

WHO'S WHO IN GILMER FORGE

Below are partial stats on the people in and around Gilmer Forge. The referee should feel free to add or change information as he sees fit.

Betty Hart: Betty and her husband opened the diner 30 years ago when the traffic on these roads was pretty steady. Her husband died four years ago. Betty still runs the diner and does all the cooking. *Attributes:* ST 10, DX 10, IQ 11, HT 10, Speed 5, Move 5. *Skills:* Cooking 14, Merchant 12. *Advantages:* Common Sense. *Disadvantages:* Duty (to diner), Honesty.

Sarah Cantrell: Sarah was born and raised in this area. Most people think she is crazy for staying here. She has a small house that belonged to her folks before they died. She also owns a couple of horses. She loves country music and dancing, and is a fair shot with a rifle. She keeps her rifle, a .30-30 Winchester, in her car. *Attributes:* ST 10, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 11, Speed 5.75, Move 5. *Skills:* Brawling 10, Guns (Rifle) 11, Fast Talk 12, Riding (Horses) 12, Savior-Faire (Rural) 12. *Advantages:* Appearance (Pretty). *Disadvantages:* Gullibility, Stubbornness.

Eddy Burke: Eddy loves cars and girls, not necessarily in that order. He runs the service station and food mart for his uncle. Eddy is usually at the diner when Sarah is working. Saturday night, he drives into Crossville to pick up girls and street race. Eddy can tow in the PCs' vehicle in the morning. The charge is \$25 for the tow. Fixing the radiator will cost \$55 and take him half the day. Eddy lives at a house in town that he rents from his uncle. *Attributes:* ST 12, DX 13, IQ 10, HT 10, Speed 5.75, Move 5. *Skills:* Brawling 13, Carousing 12, Drive (Car) 13, Mechanic (Cars) 15, Sex Appeal 12. *Advantages:* Double-jointed. *Disadvantages:* Overconfidence, Lecherousness.

Sheriff Otis Varney: Varney has been sheriff in White County for over 20 years. He has always been a courageous and honest man. Unfortunately, this is not the real Otis Varney. The real sheriff was one of the bhuta's first victims, thanks to Dr. Singh. This Sheriff Varney is a darba under the control of Dr. Singh and the bhuta. The sheriff is rejoined with the bhuta and reborn every five or six days, before his decomposition starts to be noticeable. He has terrible body odor. Sheriff Varney carries a Smith and Wesson .44 Magnum in his holster. He has a 12-gauge shotgun and a night stick in his car. *Attributes:* ST 14, DX 12, IQ 10, HT 15, Speed 6.75, Move 6. *Skills:* Area Knowledge (White County) 14, Brawling 12, Criminology 12, Detect Lies 10, Driver (Car) 13, Fast Draw (Pistol) 12, First Aid 11, Gun (pistol) 13, Gun (shotgun) 13, Interrogation 11, Short Sword (Night Stick) 12, Stealth 12. *Advantages:* Same as for darbas, plus legal enforcement powers (to anyone who thinks he is the real sheriff). *Disadvantages:* Same as for darbas, plus Overconfidence, Sense of Duty (to Dr. Singh).

Hank Billard: Hank is a truck driver. He thinks Betty's cooking is the best he has ever tasted. So whenever he is driving through this area, he swings by the diner. *Attributes:* ST 12, DX 11, IQ 10, HT 10, Speed 5.25, Move 5. *Skills:* Brawling 12, Drive (18-wheeler) 14, Gun (pistol and rifle) 10. *Advantages:* Alert +2,

Toughness (DR +1). *Disadvantages:* Honesty, Skinny, Stubbornness.

Dave and Sandra Martin: The Martins are biking (the pedaling kind) around Tennessee. They stopped here for the night and have taken a room at the Gilmer Hotel. They are both in their late twenties.

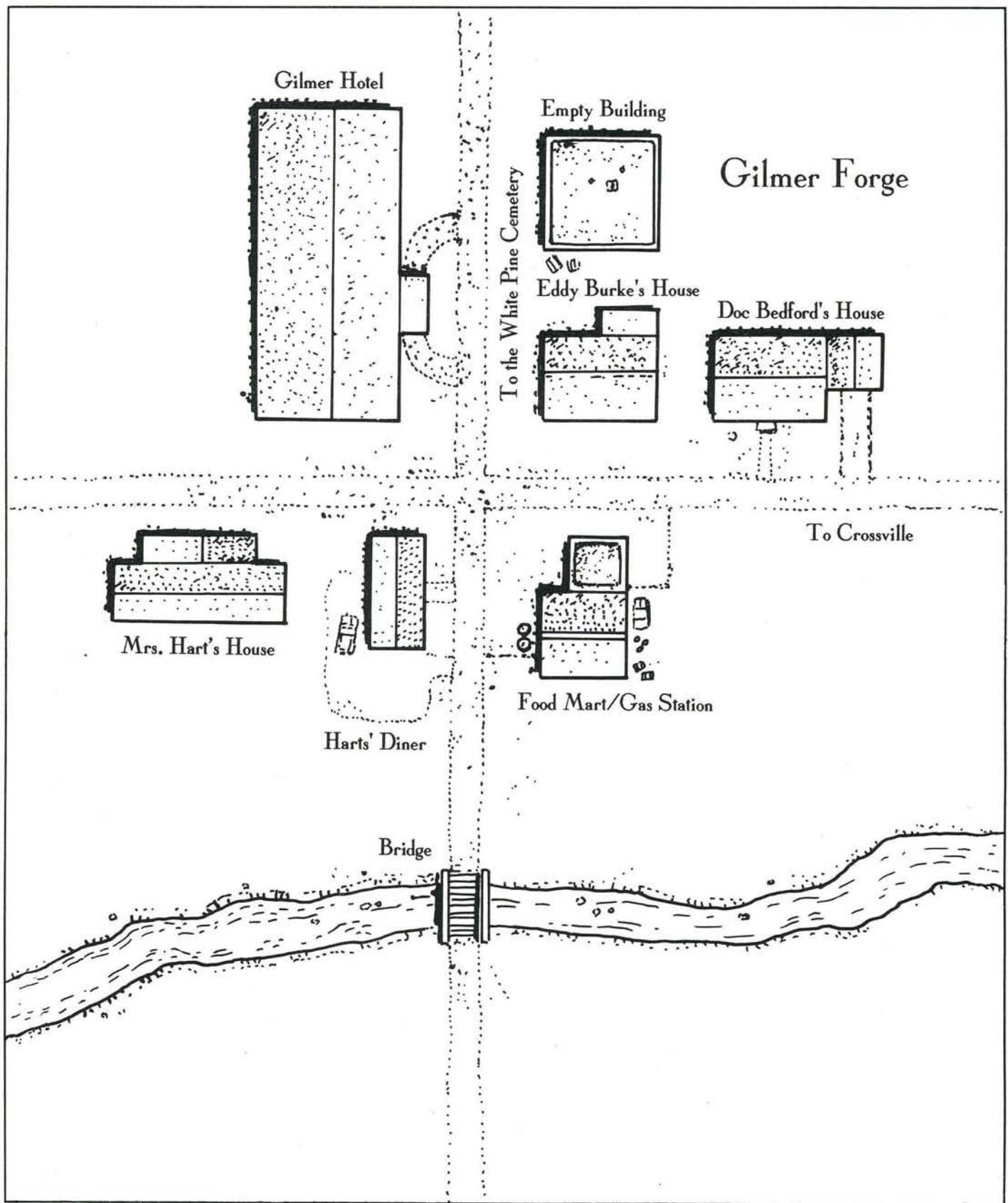
Bob and Lois Gruner: The Gruners retired several years ago. They bought the Gilmer Motel and settled back to enjoy the peace and quiet. The few customers they get are just enough to keep the place going. (The Gruners may or may not be involved in the abductions at the GM's discretion.) Both of the Gruners have the Hard of Hearing disadvantage. They wear hearing aids to compensate for this. A room at the Gilmer Motel is \$21 per night. Be sure to give one of the PCs room number 13.

Dr. Juanita Bedford: Doc Bedford has spent most of her life treating the poorer folks in the back country of Tennessee. She always said that if she wanted to be rich, she would have married a doctor; not become one. She is retired now, but old patients still show up at her door from time to time. Doc Bedford still has her old hunting gun, a Remington 12 gauge. *Attributes:* ST 9, DX 11, IQ 13, HT 9, Speed 5, Move 5. *Skills:* Area Knowledge (Tennessee Back Woods) 13, Diagnosis 15, Fast Talk 14, Gun (Shotgun) 11, Naturalist 14, Physician 15, Riding 11, Savior-Faire (Rural) 12, Surgery 13, Survival (Mountains/Woods) 11. *Advantages:* Common Sense, Strong Will +2. *Disadvantages:* Age (68), Bad Sight (wears glasses), Sense of Duty (to anyone she can help), Stubbornness.

Dr. Jonathan Singh: Dr. Singh is a well educated anthropologist. He has spent years doing research in Africa and India. During this time, Dr. Singh uncovered some mystic Indian tablets. After years of studying them, he just recently summoned a bhuta. The summoning has broken Dr. Singh's mind, driving him to believe the bhuta is a god. The bhuta lives under the White Pine Cemetery. It hungrily desires more bodies to fuse unto itself. Dr. Singh sees that it has them. *Attributes:* ST 10, DX 12, IQ 15, HT 12, Speed 6, Move 6. *Skills:* Anthropology 16, Archaeology 14, Area Knowledge (Africa/India) 13, Botany 11, Climbing 12, Detect Lies 12, First Aid 13, Gun (Pistol/Rifle) 12, Hunting 11, Karate 12, Languages (Various African/Indian Dialects) 15, Occultism 14, Research 15, Stealth 11, Survival (Desert/Jungle) 13, Tracking 13, Traps 12. *Advantages:* Intuition, Language Talent (+3). *Disadvantages:* Bad Temper, Fanatic, Major Delusion (Believes the bhuta is a god), Paranoia (from headdress). *Grimoire:* (Skill with each is 13) Beast Soothing, Continual Light, Fear, Flash, Itch, Ignite Fire, Light, Purify Air, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Simple Illusion, Sound. *Equipment:* Beretta 9mm. *Artifacts:* Headdress of the Ancients, Shaman beaded necklace, Mohenjo-Daro Tablets.

WAKE UP CALL AT THE GILMER MOTEL

The PCs should decide how many rooms they will need. The GM can assign them room numbers. The Martins are staying in room 8. Hank Billard is in room 5. At 1 a.m. the darbas will break into everyone's rooms. Unless someone in the room is awake, roll a contest between the PCs' IQs and the darbas' Stealth skill. Successful PCs are awakened. The number of darbas attacking each room should equal the number of PCs in the room. The darbas are all carrying baseball bats.



Any PCs entering the hallway will see the Martins' limp bodies being carried off by a couple of darbas. The PCs may choose to fight the darbas or follow them back to the cemetery. The door to Hank Billard's room is open. From inside the room comes the sounds of a scuffle. Inspecting the bodies of the darbas will reveal, of course, signs of decay, but will also show that the darbas have keys to all the rooms. This may or may not implicate the Gruners (GM's discretion). The darbas may have stolen the keys, or Dr. Singh could be paying the Gruners to keep quiet.

MORNING AFTER

The following incident will occur if the bhuta has not been discovered.

Sheriff Varney calls on the PCs the next morning. He wants them to come with him to Crossville for some additional questioning. If the PCs refuse, the sheriff will pull his pistol and force the PCs into his car. Once in the car, he will drive the PCs to the cemetery. If the sheriff did not have to force the PCs to come, he will now pull out his shotgun. He directs the PCs to the caretaker's shack. Inside the shack wait a number of darbas equal to the number of PCs. They will ambush the PCs. On the way to the shack, the PCs can make a Vision roll to notice someone standing on the porch of the house near the cemetery. This is Dr. Singh.

THE HOME OF DR. SINGH

When Dr. Singh discovered this area eight years earlier, he knew it would be perfect for his research. He purchased the property and converted the large country church into something of a country manor house.

Dr. Singh spends much of his time doing research in his basement. The basement contains an extensive library, computers and many exhibits from Dr. Singh's past exploits. If found here, he will be wearing his headdress and shaman necklace. The Mohenjo-Daro tablets are laid out carefully on a table. Dr. Singh has summoned one other creature as his personal protector—a marut, a particularly nasty air spirit.

CEMETERY

The cemetery covers about two acres and is dotted with large, old trees. Many tombstones, large and small, cover the grounds. The cemetery has two mausoleums and a caretaker's shack. The shack contains old shovels, picks, an ancient riding lawnmower and various other tools. The man who used to take care of the place is now part of the bhuta, so the cemetery is beginning to look overgrown.

THE BHUTA'S WARREN

The bhuta lives at the center of a maze of tunnels under the cemetery. The tunnels have entrances in both mausoleums, the caretaker's shack and Dr. Singh's basement. Each tunnel is roughly five feet wide and six feet high. Anyone travelling in the tunnels will see lots of evidence of grave robbing from the graves above. The rotted remains of caskets and their occupants litter the tunnels' floors. The entire warren is filled with the putrid smell of the dead.

The warrens are guarded by the darbas who roam the tunnels. Anyone travelling in the tunnels should make occa-

sional Stealth skill rolls to avoid these guards. Upon failing a Stealth roll, the PCs will encounter 1D6 darbas. Half will be carrying firearms (pistols, rifles, shotguns), while the rest are armed with knives, clubs or machetes. As the PCs draw near the bhuta, the darbas will become more hideous and bizarre. These darbas will have multiple sets of arms and heads.

The bhuta sits in the large central chamber among piles of old bones and skulls. PCs approaching this room from the tunnels will hear all sorts of gibbering, wailing and occasional screams coming from the chamber. These sounds are coming from the various heads of the bhuta. Upon entering the chamber, the PCs will witness a badly decomposed darba being fused back into the bhuta's writhing mass of shifting limbs and heads. The PCs should make Fright checks at -5.

BHUTA, DEVOURER OF THE DEAD

Attributes: ST 20, DX 10, IQ 13, HT 15/60, Speed 7, Move 3, Dodge 3, Parry 8. The bhuta is a grotesque mound of hideous flesh made up of fused corpses. The arms, legs, heads and bones of its victims move within it and extend out from it. Anyone seeing a bhuta must make a fright check at -5. The bhuta is not silent. Each of its many heads will jabber, scream, wail or even talk in unison. The bhuta has a natural DR of 2. It has no vital organs. The bhuta gets six attacks per turn in melee combat due to its "multitude of biting heads, skeletal limbs, and slashing pseudopods of bone-encrusted flesh." (See GDW's *Dark Races* supplement.)

Biting Heads: Each head can bite for 1+1 crushing damage. Some heads are attached to long stalks. This allows them to bite at an opponent up to three hexes away.

Skeletal Limbs: The limbs of the bhuta can pound on an opponent for 2-2 crushing damage. Their range is also three hexes. Any stalk or limb can be severed by 7 points or more of cutting damage.

Stalks of Flesh and Bones: The bhuta uses these pseudopods to grapple with a victim up to three hexes away. Once grappled, the victim may try to free himself at the beginning of the next turn. If the victim fails to break free, the hapless person is pulled into the bhuta's writhing mound of flesh. On subsequent turns, the victim will begin to be fused with the bhuta.

Fusing with the Bhuta: Once a victim is pulled into the bhuta's mass, he begins to be fused, taking 3D6 damage per turn. Roll three random hit locations and take 1D6 damage to each location. The DR from any armor protects that area for the DR number of points damage and is then destroyed. Natural DR (Toughness) protects the person only on the first turn that the area is fused.

Gas Attack: The bhuta has one last attack it can use. It can expel a putrid cloud of gas. The cloud can cover up to a 20-hex radius, centered on the bhuta. Just seeing the cloud will cause PCs to make Fright checks. Those PCs not wearing gas masks must avoid being overcome by the fumes. Anyone who breathes the fumes must make a HT-2 roll. Persons failing the roll will become incapacitated by coughing and vomiting. They also will suffer disorientation and confusion—treat this like a physical stun. If the PCs are removed from the cloud, they can make HT rolls each turn to recover. The cloud remains for 3D6 minutes. It takes an hour for the bhuta to build up for another gas attack.

DARBAS, BHUTA'S CHILDREN

Attributes: ST 14, DX 10, IQ 9, HT 11/15, Speed 5, Move 5, Dodge 5, Parry 6. The bhuta fashions the darbas from its own body, using the parts from its earlier victims. The darbas can be as bazaar as the bhuta wishes, or, with a little makeup, can pass for human. Although similar to other walking dead, a darba retains much of the memories and intelligence of the head used in its creation. The attributes given above are for a typical darba. The darbas have a natural PD 1, DR 1. A normal darba will have Brawling 12, Stealth 12, and a weapon skill of 12. They also have the disadvantage of being odious—they can't seem to rid themselves of their foul smell. Darbas have the same gas attack as the bhuta. The attack can be unintentional (any puncturing of a darbas' body will cause it), or the darba can expel the cloud from its mouth. The effects are the same as with the bhuta, except the radius is only two hexes, and the duration is 1D6 minutes.

MARUT, AIR SPIRIT

Attributes: ST 17, DX 12, IQ 9, HT 22, Speed 6, Move 12, Dodge 6. The marut is a vaguely humanoid mass of swirling air. The only substantial part of it is its heart, a small organ nestled in the marut's body that resembles a brain in shape and size. Only the heart is subject to physical attack. It is -7 to hit. The marut can use the Air Jet spell with no roll required to cast it. Its skill to hit is 16. It can also focus on a part of its body so it will become momentarily substantial. This allows it to bludgeon an opponent for 1+1 crushing damage. When a marut dies, it dissipates, leaving only its heart.

THE ARTIFACTS OF DR. SINGH

Headdress of the Ancients: The headdress is adorned with feathers, polished stones and small gems. One stone is actually a 15 point powerstone. The stone has a quirk that only allows it to regenerate its lost power while in darkness. Due to a flaw in the stone, long contact with it bestows the Paranoid disadvantage to its owner. The headdress is also endowed with the Planar Summons spell at a power of 15. This is how Dr. Singh was able to summon the bhuta and the marut.

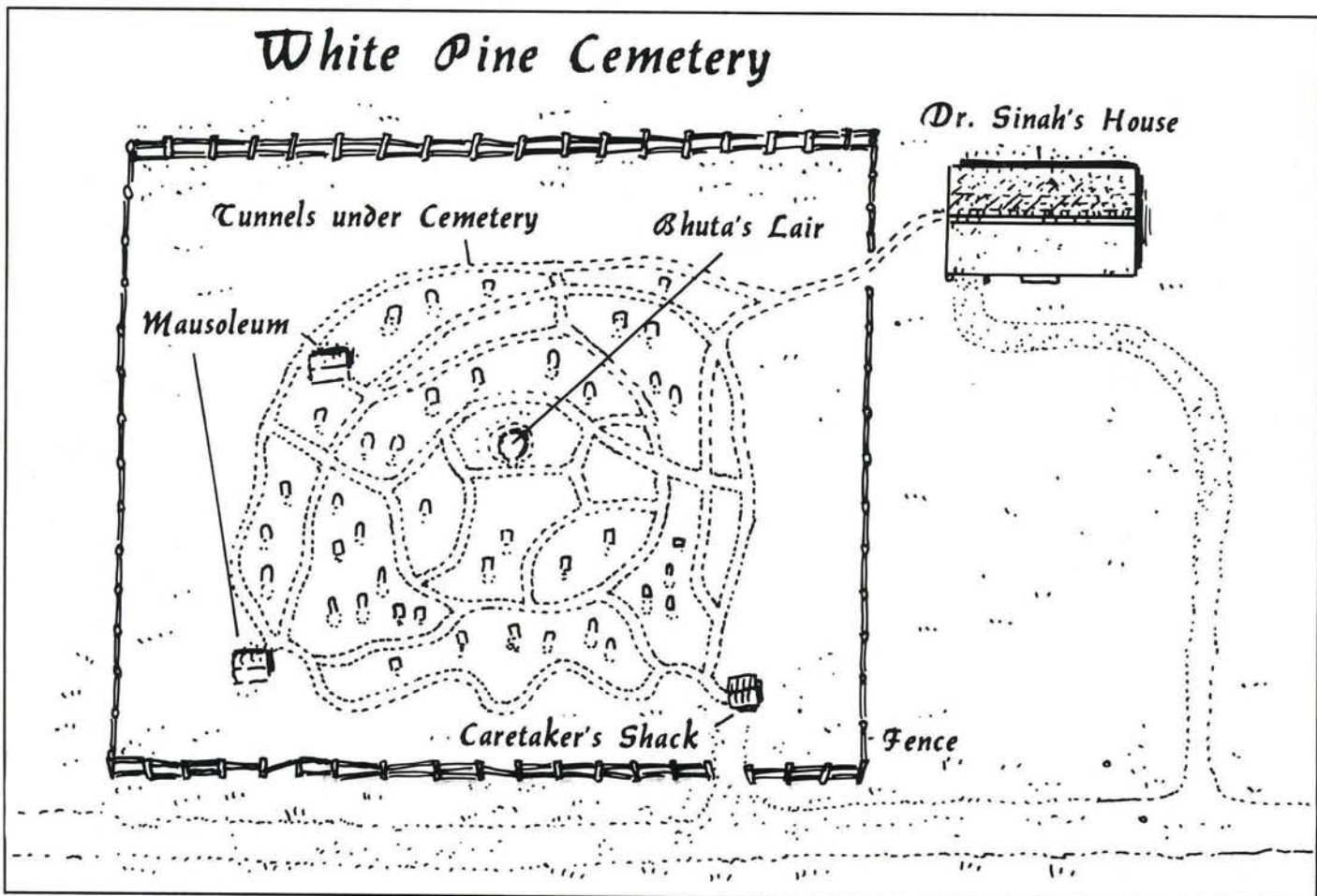
Shaman Beaded Necklace: Dr. Singh got the necklace from an African tribe which believed the necklace contains the souls of its great warriors. The necklace grants PD 2, DR 3 to its wearer.

Mohenjo-Daro Tablets: The Mohenjo-Daro people lived in India over 4500 years ago. Dr. Singh was at some Mohenjo-Daro ruins, studying the artifacts being uncovered there, when he discovered a sealed chamber. The chamber contained a set of thin, stone tablets. After studying the writings on the tablets, Dr. Singh has gained the spells he now possesses. He has only deciphered half the tablets.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs are successful at destroying the bhuta, the darbas will eventually rot away and die. Whether anyone will believe the PCs' tale of a gibbering mound of flesh that eats humans is another story. More than likely, authorities will explain it all away by blaming some cultist group. If Dr. Singh escapes, he'll mysteriously disappear. If possible, Dr. Singh will take the Mohenjo-Daro tablets with him. The PCs have made an enemy here. Who knows what loathsome creature Dr. Singh will summon up next? Ω

White Pine Cemetery





Curse of the Conqueror

By Marcus L. Rowland

This is a short adventure for *Time Lord*, a *Doctor Who* time travel RPG from Virgin Publishing. Use with other systems is discussed at the end of the scenario. Any Doctor and companions may be used in the adventure, but at least one character should be familiar with 20th-century Earth. The Doctor must have a fully functional TARDIS, within the normal limits of TARDIS reliability.

Referee's Overview

History can be distorted, but it is almost impossible to make long-term changes. Unfortunately, there are moments of unusual sensitivity, eddies and loops in the time stream, and the TARDIS is about to hit one.

In 1955, John Wayne promised to make a film directed by Dick Powell, and called in at RKO studios to discuss possible projects. He arrived early and happened to pick up a screenplay called *The Conqueror*, which was accidentally left on Powell's desk. He liked it so much that he insisted on taking the starring role as Genghis Khan. During filming in the Utah desert, the cast and crew were exposed to fallout left by atomic tests at Yucca Flats. Eventually, 91 members of the cast contracted cancer, and 46 died, the victims including Wayne. Or that's what should have happened.

But in the time loop the TARDIS has entered, Wayne reached Powell's office in a bad mood and barely looked at the script before rejecting it as "garbage." He didn't appear in the film and was never exposed to radiation. The role of Genghis Khan eventually went to Ronald Reagan, who suffered the fate that should have been Wayne's. Meanwhile, Wayne became interested in politics, wasn't handicapped by repeated illness and went on to become the 40th president of the United States.

Wayne was in most ways an exemplary president, but wasn't prepared to leave "our boys" at a disadvantage in the SALT disarmament talks. America retained its full arsenal of nuclear weaponry and started to develop "Star Wars" weaponry. The obvious threat of American military dominance unified the Warsaw Pact, which never showed any sign of collapsing. In 1988, with tensions running high, a Russian submarine shadowing a NATO exercise was harried by American destroyers and retaliated by torpedoing the carrier *Nimitz*. Within an hour, the Third World War had begun.

In 1991, all animals larger than rats are extinct. The world is shrouded in nuclear winter, and the ozone layer has been destroyed. The ruins of London are buried in radioactive snow, illuminated by the eerie flicker of the Northern Lights.

The team should eventually learn that Wayne's dislike of the

script changed history, but the exact reason will be a mystery. When they go to 1955 to find out, the jaws of a major paradox will close; on that crucial day, Wayne arrived at the RKO studios and found a peculiar blue box in his usual parking space. By the time he found another space, parked and reached Powell's office, he was in a bad mood and rejected the script.

To prevent disaster, the team must somehow ensure that he'll be in a good mood when he reaches Powell's office, or stop him seeing the script that day. If all goes well, he'll go on to make *The Conqueror* and will later be too ill for serious involvement in politics. This may seem callous, since it eventually results in Wayne's death, but that was fated to happen anyway.

Despite its gloomy premise, this adventure can and should be played as a light-hearted romp. Imagine John Wayne meeting the Doctor. Imagine K9 meeting Lassie. If players seem to be too weighted down by the seriousness of their mission, there are ample opportunities for the referee to cause endless confusion and silliness, and keep things moving to a rapid climax.

Players' Information

Alarms ring and chime as the TARDIS spins through transdimensional space. Running to the control room is difficult, and as you get closer, you feel as though you're swimming through Jell-O.

The Doctor yells, "We've hit a time vortex!" His voice sounds deep and slow as he stretches out his arms in a desperate attempt to reach the controls before it's too late. With agonizing slowness, his hand creeps across the panel and presses a switch. The TARDIS spins, blurring fast, and you're thrown back to the control room walls as it gives a last lurch and materializes.

The scanner shows a ruined city, crumbling walls covered in snow. The sky is black, streaked with the flickers of electric blue, and the TARDIS control console clicks loudly. You know the noise means that the radiation out there would kill you in hours.

Someone says, "Where are we?"

The Doctor presses some switches, pulls tape from one of the consoles, then moves to another panel to check more instruments.

"Apparently, this is Earth. London. In the year AD 1991. I think we have a problem."

Cue theme music, and cue action.

The Morning After

The adventurers should soon guess that something changed in history. Recorders reveal that the TARDIS hit a time vortex

while passing 1955, and that it is still powerful in 1991. This may be a coincidence, or it may pinpoint the date that history changed. More information is needed.

There aren't any radiation-proof suits aboard the TARDIS, but there are Skaro antiradiation drugs; each dose gives full protection for several hours, and the TARDIS carries several doses per character. If adventurers don't take them before venturing outside, start injuring them (as a slow-acting, one-wound poison that doesn't stop causing damage until characters are dead) after 20 research rounds. A dose of the drug at any point before death will repair all damage. The TARDIS environmental systems will keep out radiation, even while the doors are open, and will automatically decontaminate any object brought in from outside. If K-9 is a character, he doesn't need drugs, but will need recharging after a few hours, less time if he uses his weapon.

Gallifreyan instruments can easily establish that London was hit by several multimegaton warheads sometime between May and August 1988. They will also show that conditions are extremely unfavorable for any sort of controlled time jump; don't reveal the difficulty, but imply that it would be very high. In fact, all rolls must fail, and the TARDIS will always end up when and where you want it!

The TARDIS has materialized to one side of a large London square. Most of London has been reduced to rubble, but to one side a steel-railed entrance and the remains of a smashed red sign indicate the entrance to a station below the square. There are some other openings, but the rest are rather less obvious. All are chock full with snow and wreckage, but something about them seems to suggest that they might need closer investigation.

Underground Station

Stations of the London Underground (the American term "subway" isn't used) have often appeared as sets in *Doctor Who*. They can be eerie, and this one is no exception. The plan shows the ticket hall and escalators down to the tunnels. All the staircases are littered with debris, including the remains of skeletons, but the stairs are usable with care. The skeletons are stripped clean of flesh, and close examination suggests that something has gnawed the bones. If you are using K-9 as a character, someone must carry him on the stairs.

The station is completely dark, apart from glimmers from the entrance corridors, and any lights the adventurers are carrying. Snowdrifts and rubble (from parts of the ceiling that have collapsed) cover the floor in several areas, and more bones protrude from the drifts. If anyone crosses any of the areas of rubble, dirt and shards of concrete shower down from the weakened ceiling. If the area isn't left within one round, a large chunk of concrete breaks loose, causing 1D4 wounds if it isn't dodged (difficulty 3 to dodge). This only happens once.

The escalators aren't working and are littered with skeletons. Anyone venturing down will find that the tunnels are awash with water, and marks on the walls suggest that they are sometimes completely filled. Flood devices were destroyed in the war, and much of Central London and all the deep tunnels are flooded at high tide.

A ticket office and four kiosks are in the station. Nothing useful is in the office, apart from a few hundred pounds in coins

and badly rotted notes.

Kiosk 1 is a heel bar, and skeletons are sprawled beside the stools and behind the counter. The leather and heels behind the counter are ragged and look chewed.

Kiosk 2 was a florist, and a few dried stems are still in some of the pots. Another skeleton is behind the counter.

Kiosk 3 was a sandwich bar. It is occupied by several hundred rats, which stream out and attack intruders if the door is opened. Companions with the Screaming skill may want to take this opportunity for practice.

Rats: Hordes of rats look like a horrible threat, but only one to three animals in the pack will try to bite each character each round. The pack will retreat if 10 or more rats are hurt. Bite damage is 1 wound, but rats should be played for their horrific effect, not to cause serious damage. Their bites can't penetrate leather boots or thick trousers. Strength 1, Control 0, Size 6, Weight 1, Move 2, Knowledge 0, Determination 0.

If the adventurers leave this kiosk alone, you may still want to treat them to a rat attack elsewhere in the station.

Kiosk 4 sold books and newspapers. An old newspaper sign reads "Wayne: Time to Talk Turkey." This shouldn't mean much to anyone, even adventurers with some knowledge of the 1980s, which suggests that it might relate to the change in history.

Most of the shop is a mess, a tangle of unreadable decayed papers and rat litter, but some publications in the back room are intact, stored in tough shrink-wrapped packages. They include novels, cook books, astrological yearbooks and film books. The most important discovery is a bundle of copies of the European edition of *Newsweek*, for July 4, 1988, which have a cover picture of John Wayne in a hard hat, captioned "President Wayne: Home on the (Missile) Range." The story describes a visit to the White Sands missile testing grounds, and emphasizes Wayne's robust good health and commitment to nuclear defense and SDI, the Star Wars program. In passing, it mentions "This week's NATO exercises, which the president will monitor from the NORAD missile tracking facility under Cheyenne Mountain." A small information box accompanying this story compares American and Soviet missile capabilities, and makes it clear that there has been no nuclear disarmament.

The books include a copy of *Western Movies*, a huge coffee-table volume which has a picture of Ronald Reagan, with a black eye-patch, on the front cover. Anyone with a knowledge of 20th-century cinema will soon realize that Reagan starred in many of the films they associate with Wayne, including "True Grit" and "The Alamo." It should be obvious that Reagan and Wayne somehow swapped careers. The snag is that neither clue explains when and why it happened.

Characters may assume that the cause of the disaster must be in 1955, when the time vortex began, and decide to travel back to the 1950s immediately. If so, run the 1955 sequence that follows, with the optional They Blew It endings (below) if they aren't very lucky.

All The President's Men

President Wayne and a few hundred other Americans are still alive in the NORAD communications complex, a "hardened" site capable of withstanding near-miss missile strikes. They are sure they won the war, and since no one else is alive, they are possibly right. The *Newsweek* story is the clue that suggests that

Wayne might have been there when the war started. This will be noted by anyone looking for clues in the story.

Optionally, if the team has a radio (as carried by Ace and built into K-9), they might hear a message transmitted by a search party which is looking for survivors in a city near the NORAD complex. By an atmospheric fluke, it's receivable in Britain: "Search party 9 to NORAD control. No survivors in area G-10, moving on to H-1. Message ends." There will be no other messages, and no reply to any messages sent on this frequency.

The TARDIS instruments can home in on the NORAD complex, if someone thinks of it, and a spatial jump with no time change is comparatively simple; it will succeed on a TARDIS roll overcoming difficulty 1.

NORAD is a huge tunnel complex, run with firm military efficiency. For three years, it has been occupied by the last survivors of the human race, who have been living on stock-piled rations and know it will be decades before it is safe to leave the mountain. Parts of the complex are dark and deserted, evacuated to save energy. The TARDIS materializes in one of these areas, near a series of gigantic crates labeled "A-10 Antitank Aircraft. Some assembly required."

The team members can spend as much time exploring as you like. The first exit they'll find is a huge tunnel, 50 feet wide and 30 feet high, leading several hundred feet to a gigantic steel door and a switch box with buttons marked "open" and "shut." If the "open" button is pressed, motors hum loudly, and the steel door slowly rises, with a gust of cold air and snow blowing in as it clears the lower frame. Simultaneously, a klaxon starts to beep, and a mechanical voice shouts, "Radiation alert! Radiation alert! External door four open!" Repeat this as loudly as you can, and make whooping noises, until someone presses the "shut" button; the tunnel does indeed lead outdoors, and there's nothing outside but more radioactive devastation.

There are several other smaller tunnels; all lead to long, dark corridors, occasional deactivated computer terminals and more huge rooms with sealed crates (mostly electronic components and spares). The air is dry and cold, not radioactive. There is no noise, apart from sounds made by the team.

At a dramatic moment, the team members start hearing furtive rustling sounds. Try to screw up the tension, then pin the characters in several spotlight beams. Even though this part of the complex is evacuated, the security systems are still active and notice little things like a 200-ton door opening. Additionally, the characters have crossed dozens of alarm beams and pressure pads, and have appeared on numerous monitors, so guards have been sent to capture them.

The guards are typical modern soldiers, four squads of six armed with submachine guns and TASER pistols. They ride near-silent electric carts, equivalent to Land Rovers, and will corner the team from either end of a tunnel or in a dead-end corridor. The carts are equipped with searchlights, loud-hailers and other useful items. The guards are naturally eager to capture the intruders and find out how they got in. They will assume that the team members are Russian agents, since no one else had the really deep shelters needed to survive the war. Acting and Con skills may appear to be useful here, but no story, however good, will convince the guards that the characters should be released.

TASER Pistols: Special one-shot guns, range 2, firing a fine

electrified wire at the targets for Wounds 4. If you use the optional Safe Combat rules (*Time Lord* Appendix 2) they cause Shock 8 instead.

The characters may be tempted to fight or run, but capture is actually the easiest way to reach President Wayne. Eventually, after a full search and screening, prolonged probing with radiation detectors and other instruments, decontamination and confiscation of any weapons or unidentifiable equipment (such as K-9), a heavy guard escorts the team to President Wayne. The route is a bewildering maze of curving corridors, ramps and branching tunnels; the adventurers will soon be thoroughly lost, and won't be allowed to make notes or draw a map.

Wayne was once leader of the most powerful nation on Earth and is now effective ruler over what's left of the human race. Unfortunately, he's over 80, short sighted and just becoming a little senile.

President Wayne (1991): Age: 84, Human, Earth. Equipment: None carried. Strength 3, Pain Resistance 3, Control 3, Brawling 1, Marksmanship 1, Size 3, Weight 4, Move 2, Riding 2, Knowledge 3, Wilderness Lore (Wild West) 3, Law 3, Determination 4, Indomitable Will 4, Command 4, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 5.

So, Where Do You Hail From, Pilgrims?

Wayne speaks with a slow, deliberate drawl and has a habit of calling everyone he meets "pilgrim" or "little lady," depending on gender. Let the characters say what they like. Wayne doesn't seem to be paying much attention, but stares intently at the Doctor or a companion, eventually saying, "I've seen you somewhere before, pilgrim" (or "little lady").

This should encourage the characters to find out more. If not, Wayne will eventually decide that he played poker with someone who looked just like the character "In 'Frisco in '43." It should soon become apparent that Wayne has never really met any of the characters, and doesn't believe any nonsense about time travel or alternate histories. He will not agree to detailed questioning or hypnosis, and the guards will stop anyone who tries to capture or harm him.

If anyone mentions Reagan, or Wayne sees the cover of the film book, he says, "Shucks, I remember poor Ron. Died in '79. The big C got him. They called it the curse of *The Conqueror*."

Perhaps someone will ask what "the conqueror" means. If not, Wayne tells them anyway: "A film about what's-his-name, Attila the Hun. No, it was Genghis Khan. A real stinker. RKO made it back in '55, filmed it on some patch of desert that was loaded with fallout. They even brought sand back to the studio for continuity shots. Cancer got poor Ron and half the crew eventually. Lucky it wasn't me."

Someone should ask why; if not, Wayne seems to be in a reminiscing mood: "The script was on Dick Powell's desk, and I had a contract to make a film with him. Good thing I hated it when I read it."

If the team members don't follow up on this, try holding up a large neon sign saying, "This is an important clue!" If they still aren't interested, try finding some new players. If they do ask the obvious question, Wayne just says, "It was a lousy script, and I was in a bad mood that day. Can't remember why." No amount of questioning will drag out any more, and he can't remember the exact date of the incident, except that it was February or March. He will soon lose interest and tell the guards to take the characters away.

Meanwhile, the guards have decided to trick the team members into revealing their real route into the complex. On the way back, their escort will be small, and the guards' guns will be loaded with blanks. They expect the team members to make a break, steal weapons, and head for their "tunnel" or whatever other route they used to get into NORAD.

If the characters don't try to escape, the guards escort the Doctor and companions to captivity. Eventually, they pass through the room where they were searched; their equipment is still laid out on a bench, and if someone stages a diversion, the other characters can each pocket any one small device or weapon, such as a sonic screwdriver or a can of Nitro-9. Attempts to take several items will fail; the guards will notice the action and confiscate the equipment, then search the party again. If K-9 was confiscated, he will be in this room; this may be a good moment for him to use his stun gun.

If the PCs reach a cell, it has a ventilation grille just large enough for the smallest to escape; naturally, this should involve a long squirm through claustrophobic ducts, which lead to the corridor outside the cell area, and a "dozing" guard who has conveniently propped his gun (also loaded with blanks) against a wall.

If another escape route is wanted, some shouting and acting should trick one of the guards into opening the door and turning his back for a few seconds. Remember that the guards want the team to escape!

Once out, adventurers will probably recover the rest of their property and head back to the TARDIS. Whichever route they take winds up back in the warehouse, even if they just choose corridors randomly; this is in the best tradition of the TV series. Don't let the adventurers reach Wayne again; he will be defended to the death, and he doesn't have any more useful information. If possible, run this as a prolonged chase through the tunnels. Just as the team members reach the TARDIS and think they're safe, guards with real guns step out from behind one of the crates and demand that they show how "this box thing" works. A view of the inside of the TARDIS should confuse the guards long enough for the characters to jump in and slam the doors. Bullets ricochet off the TARDIS doors as it dematerializes; if there is much delay, the guards start to use bazookas and other heavy weapons, also without effect.

If the characters don't try to escape, the guards eventually take the team members to the TARDIS and insist that someone open the door. If your players can't find some way to turn this to their advantage, they don't deserve to own a TARDIS. Leave them stranded in 1991, while a group of heavily armed security guards set off on a totally uncontrolled journey through space and time. The Time Lords will eventually note the problem and deal with it. See *They Blew It*, on page 37.

Observer Effect

Characters should eventually be en route to 1955. If they have other ideas, such as heading for Andromeda and leaving Earth to rot, it's time to hit them with the effects of an unresolved paradox. They'll start to age extremely rapidly, then time will run backward until they're back at the moment when they made the wrong decision.

The players will probably prepare some elaborate plans to find out what happened. It's likely that these plans will involve

the TARDIS materializing early, and in some quiet location. You can safely ignore such plans, since the TARDIS isn't renowned for accurate navigation, and there's a time vortex to foul things up even more than usual.

The TARDIS materializes in the RKO studio parking lot. Seconds later, before the adventurers have time to take any action, a Pontiac station wagon driven by John Wayne tries to park in the space that is now occupied by a large blue police box. He blows his horn twice and then reverses out, smashing his rear light against another car, and screeches off to look for a parking space further away from the studio buildings. Wayne is seriously annoyed by the damage to his custom-built car.

The Doctor and companions have approximately 20 minutes to intercept Wayne and improve his mood. In the first five minutes, he'll park, walk back to the studio building and tell a studio guard that "some low-down hombre from the props department" has left a heap of (expletive deleted) in his parking space. The next five minutes will be spent inside the building en route to Powell's office, in a warren-like maze of twisty corridors and sets. Some of the sets are in use, and if any action develops at any stage, it can be fun to take it in front of the cameras. Think of *Blazing Saddles*, and you'll get the idea.

If nothing happens before Wayne reaches Powell's office, the remaining 10 minutes will be spent in conversation. Then, Wayne looks at the script while Powell completes other business.

John "Duke" Wayne (1955): Age 48, Human Earth. Equipment: Ten gallon hat. Strength 5, Pain Resistance 4, Control 4, Brawling 4, Marksmanship 4, Size 4, Weight 4, Move 2, Riding 4, Knowledge 2, Wilderness Lore (Wild West) 4, Determination 4, Indomitable Will 2, Awareness 2.

Wayne is an active adult in excellent health. He speaks with a slow, deliberate drawl and has a habit of calling everyone he meets "pilgrim" or "little lady," depending on gender. He drives a customized Pontiac station wagon with the roof raised to make room for a 10-gallon hat (vehicle performance as Land Rover).

Now Here's My Plan

At this point, matters are up to the ingenuity of your players. They are certain to come up with a plan, and if it is remotely plausible, it should be allowed to work. Here are a few sample plans and their likely outcomes.

1: Beat Wayne to Powell's office (which is conveniently empty at that moment) and hide the script of *The Conqueror*. Wayne doesn't see it that day and turns down another idea. He eventually sees the screenplay later in the week, when he's in a better mood.

2: Hypnotize Wayne and put him in a better mood. Difficult in a busy building, but characters can catch Wayne in an elevator or empty corridor.

3: Entertain him with street theater, mime, juggling, etc., to put him in a better mood. Make the players act this out!

4: Stop him, apologize for leaving the "prop" in his space and offer to buy him a drink. Get him so drunk he misses the meeting. You can resolve drinking contests by treating booze as quick-acting poison causing shock instead of normal damage. Wine, beer and lager are treated as 2 Shock poison, spirits as 3 Shock poison. Wayne's Strength and Iron Constitution

mean that there is little or no chance of drinking him under the table.

5: Stage some sort of diversion and hope it distracts Wayne. If it's a fight, there's a good chance that Wayne will join in, which is likely to be painful for everyone else involved.

6: Persuade Wayne to make the film. In playtesting, the Doctor pretended that he was Leela's agent and that Leela was a foreign actress auditioning for the role of a barbarian princess in the film. Wayne liked the idea of appearing with "the little lady" and looked at the script more favorably.

Any plan which delays Wayne by five or more minutes will work; he won't have time to look at the script, will reject something else, and will eventually see the script for *The Conqueror* at a later meeting.

Any plan which involves the team doubling back on their own movements, so that the TARDIS never takes Wayne's parking space, should fail. The TARDIS was built to prevent this sort of tampering, and that part of its circuitry still works well. If someone can suggest a way of beating these problems, the characters must then meet themselves. This causes more paradoxes, and the time storm will be so violent that it rips reality apart and destroys the game universe!

Assuming that the characters do somehow switch history back on course, there is one minor problem to resolve. While they are away from the TARDIS, a crew from the props department arrives to recover their "property." By the time the team returns, the props men have put a chain around the TARDIS and are winching it onto a truck. As the characters duck under the chin and step inside the TARDIS, the workmen's puzzled faces should be their last glimpses of 1955 and the end of this adventure.

They Blew It

If the team members don't find a way to return history to its original course, it isn't necessarily the end of the world.

One way to restore history with minimal changes would be to stop *The Conqueror* from being made at all. Howard Hughes owns RKO and can stop it with the flick of a pen if the characters can find a way to persuade him to help. Reagan isn't handicapped by years of illness and eventually becomes president, filling the historical niche which might have otherwise been taken by Wayne. The results aren't ideal, because hundreds of lives will be changed, but the long-term historical effects are minor; the lives of a few actors and actresses are extended, and some younger performers fail to make their mark because there are fewer roles available. There is no war, and Wayne retires with three Oscars.

If the players don't think of this, perhaps they'd like to make Wayne a better president. If he moderated his views slightly, Wayne's career might resemble that of Reagan, and in a few hundred years, only a few historians would know (or care) which film actor spent time in the White House. The easiest way to persuade him to cooperate would be to take him to 1991 and show him the remains of America, then prove that the war was at least partially America's fault. Give him the details of "real" history, and he can change his behavior to be more like Reagan. The *Doctor Who* TV series has never named the American president; perhaps time is already irreversibly changed by the activities of the Time Lords.

Players may think of other solutions, such as feeding Reagan some Skaro antiradiation drugs to ensure that he survives *The Conqueror*; he'll have one more bad movie on his record, and Wayne will live to a ripe old age, but Reagan will still be politically active, and Wayne will never take his place.

Finally, if all else fails, the Time Lords have the technology to put matters right, but will exact stiff penalties for the team's carelessness. The Doctor can expect to spend more time exiled on Earth, with his knowledge of the science of time travel removed, while his companions will be returned to their origins, with all memories of time travel erased. Optionally, his companions are exiled to Earth as well.

Use With Other Roleplaying Games

This adventure avoids the use of game-specific details. It should work reasonably well with any system that uses time travelling vehicles and has some flexibility in its approach to historical reality.

The Doctor Who RPG (FASA): All skills mentioned, apart from screaming, have parallels in FASA's system. FASA's Celestial Intervention Agency should *not* be used; the "CIA" was originally a casual joke in one episode, has no real place in the continuity of *Doctor Who* and makes it far too easy for players to receive powerful help.

GURPS Time Travel (Steve Jackson Games): This adventure works best in a universe in which time changes are possible but difficult and in which the "Observer Effect" (GTT page 47) is a major limitation on time travel. In other words, players should not be able to change their own actions, or anything that they have seen, except by intervention in prior or subsequent events.

Paranoia (West End Games): The *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* supplement contains the grammatically correct *Time Laird Dr. Whom*, who should fit into this adventure extremely well. Given the normal behavior of troubleshooters, it seems unlikely that they will be able to prevent WWII, but this just means that history switches to a time track in which the Alpha Complex was originally NORAD. This might even be an improvement!

Dream Park (R. Talsorian Games): Simply run this as *The Conqueror Game*, substituting crotchety Professor Thrintwhistle (from *The Key of Time*) for the Doctor.

It Came from the Late, Late, Late Show (Stellar Games): For this and other cinematic RPGs, run the adventure as an episode in a TV series. Emphasize details like the props man scuttling out of camera shot to move the robot, the fake snow, actors running from side to side, technicians rocking the camera to simulate the motion of the TARDIS and so forth. John Wayne doesn't really appear; a stand-in is seen from behind, with suitably matted clips from Wayne's films and dubbed-in dialogue creating a rather shaky illusion. Ω

For more information on Time Lord, see the review in this issue.

Thanks to Roz Kaveney, Alex Stewart, Mary Gentle and others for their help with cinematic details, to Ian Marsh for his help with Doctor Who lore and Time Lord game details, and to play testers at the 1992 Gamesfair, Illuminatio, and Contraption conventions.



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Hunting High-Tech is Fun and Easy

By Sandy Addison

Many *Torg* players feel that characters from the higher-tech realms such as the Cyberpapacy and Tharkold are too powerful in combat, unbalancing the game. Granted, in sheer firepower, characters and villains from the high-tech realms have an advantage when it comes to combat. However, this does not make them undefeatable. More than any other game, *Torg* allows for characters who are not extremely powerful in physical combat to play an important part in combat. If players and gamemasters are patient and plan well before combat, they can defeat villains from high-tech realities.

The main strengths of high-tech characters in combat revolve around three areas: *weapons, armor, and cyberware or bioware*. The weapons allow them to kill a player character or villain in one shot, better than almost anyone else. The armor makes them immune from many of their opponents' weapons. Cyberware can give them tremendous advantages in both combat and noncombat situations. In order for such characters to be beaten, these strengths must be turned into weakness.

Combating High-Tech Weapons

On D-Day during WWII, a Canadian general was approached by a soldier in combat for the first time. The soldier reported to the general that he had learned the most important secret to modern infantry combat: Keep your head down. While the soldier did not have to face a rampaging Tharkoldu, his revelation is just as relevant to *Torg* players. In order for the most massively damaging weapon to kill your character, it has to hit first.

There are several ways in which a character can improve his chances of not being hit.

Dodging Skill: The most important means is by having a high Dodge skill. If the defender's Dodge is just 2 points higher than the attacker's Attacking skill, then the attacker must roll a 15 or better; if it's 3 points higher, the attacker must roll a 16, etc. Therefore, even having a marginally higher Dodge skill than normal can be of a great advantage when facing an opponent.

The use of high-tech sighting equipment gives people from the Cyberpapacy, etc. some important advantages, but the basic concept can still apply. If your opponent has a high skill either naturally or through a tech advantage, always use your first action to duck for the best cover available. Actively dodge when necessary, perhaps in an attempt to get into or out of melee combat with your opponent. The opponent might have a great energy weapons skill, but how about hand-to-hand? Use flurry actions with Haste, Opponent Fails cards to counter-

attack in the same round that your character is actively defending. Always give your opponent multiple targets so that while one gets shot at the other can make a counterattack. And most importantly, never be afraid to spend possibility energy—it and the card pool are your two biggest advantages within *Torg*.

PC Armor: An alternative to dodging high-tech weaponry is, of course, to have good armor yourself. This choice is a better option for some more so than others. Aysle characters can get magical armor which can be just as effective as the high-tech equivalents. Nile Empire characters can get weird science armor, like the Guardian's woven steel coat, which also provides good protection. Other types of armor are available to character from other realms, including armor from the high-tech realms that the characters find themselves in. Characters can improve their Armor Value just by including limb protection and a helmet. This aspect of the *Torg* armor rules are often forgotten by both players and gamemasters and can be a potential life saver.

Breaking Through High-Tech Armor

Even if the characters are able to avoid being hit by the laser beams of plasma explosion by dodging or using armor, this is only half the battle. They still have to remove the high-tech opposition so that they are able to continue their objective. This can be rather difficult because the armor of Tharkold and the Cyberpapacy is often able to stand up to their own weapons, and is therefore very resistant to, say, a 9mm Beretta. There are, however, ways in which this advantage can be overcome.

Improved Firepower: The easiest way to counter improved armor is, of course, through improved firepower. This can be accomplished through various means.

One means to increase firepower is through the use of the fire combat rules within *Torg*. Remember that simple round weapons, like the .45-caliber automatic, can fire three rounds in an attack instead of the normal one, increasing the damage by 3. Use a full auto weapon like an Uzi or an M-16 and you not only increase your damage by 3 but also your bonus to hit. If a character has a very high combat skill, then consider a vital blow attack. While such an attack decreases your chances to hit, it does increase your damage by a significant margin. As a gamemaster, I also allow my players to make a vital blow attack to bypass armor against opponents which do not have a full suit of armor, such as when the armor just covers the torso, but not the limbs and/or head. If the attack succeeds, no armor is added to the opponent's toughness, but the bonus for damage is *not* added to the attack.

A low-tech character's firepower can also be increased through the use of armor-piercing ammunition listed in the *Kanawa Personal Weapons Guide*, or simply by using more powerful weapons. The concept of what constitutes a more powerful weapon may vary depending on where the character is from. For some it might mean a weird science weapon; for others, a magical weapon of some sort. Of course, it can also mean using an M-60 instead of an M-16. While increasing a character's firepower can be relatively easy, it also can lead to problems because these more powerful weapons tend to be rather oblivious. (The church police may not notice the Uzi SMGs that the characters have under their cloaks, but they will notice the general-purpose machinegun.)

Interaction Skills: An option unique to *Torg* for overcoming tough armor is the use of various interaction skills. Characters may try to Maneuver or Trick their opponents into a position for a blind side attack. Intimidate and Test of Will can be used to force a high-tech opponent into surrender. Taunt could be used to force an opponent into taking a rash action which could be to a character's benefit.

Miracles and Magic: A final option to counter high armor values is to not even make a physical attack by instead using miracles or magic. Many miracles use spirit or faith to defend against or do not even have a defense. Therefore, they are excellent means by which to take out tough opponents. Magically charming an opponent and reversing gravity are also quite effective in these cases.

Cyberware or Bioware

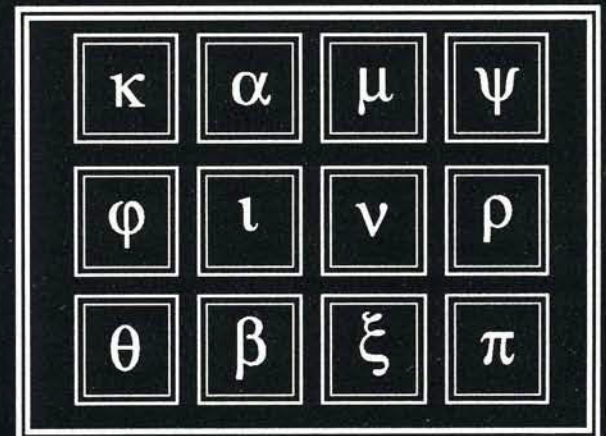
Cyberware is often the ace in the hole for high-tech villains. With it they are often equal or superior to player characters in attributes and skill levels. Add this to superior weapons and armor, and a character's life could be measured in seconds.

Possibility Energy and the Drama Deck: Often the only equalizer in such instances is possibility energy and the drama deck, and players should not be reluctant to use either.

Cyberpsychosis: Cyberware does have one major disadvantage—cyberpsychosis. In *Torg*, cyberpsychosis is caused when a character with cyberware suffers a setback whether because of the conflict line or due to character interaction. When a person makes a cyberpsychosis roll, it will have some effect. With any luck, it will cause a systems failure or lost action, which means that the opponent is open to attack. Whatever the result, causing cyberpsychosis is an excellent means to turn the tables on a heavily cybered opponent.

Conclusion

Opponents from the *Cyberpapacy*, *Tharkold* and the *Space Gods* are, by their access to high-tech weapons and equipment, very dangerous opponents. However, if characters plan ahead, make effective use of their own equipment, use the rules to their advantage, and realize that straight firepower is not always the answer, high-tech opponents can be defeated. Ω



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Time Lord

A *Doctor Who* time travel RPG from Virgin Publishing.

Review by Greg Unger

The second incarnation of the *Doctor Who* RPG is here!

The sterile and uninviting FASA edition of the mid-1980s has been replaced by a juicy, compact, affordably priced softcover from Doctor Who Books. This is definitely a treat for fans of *Doctor Who*, but role-players who are looking for something new will no doubt be impressed as well. For those not familiar with

Doctor Who, it is a long-running science-fiction series originating in England in the early '60s, continuing almost nonstop until 1991. Its central character is the enigmatic figure of the Doctor, one of a race of near-immortal Time Lords, from which this game's title is derived. The Doctor is a good-willed renegade, travelling with his various companions throughout the universe in the TARDIS, a space/timeship in the unlikely shape of a blue British police call box. In his travels, he encounters all manner of strange races and technologies, periodically saving the universe from destruction at the hands of one deranged megalomaniac or another.

Time Lord is as much a reference work as it is an RPG, so those who couldn't tell the Doctor from Trapper John, M.D. will quickly become acquainted with the *Doctor Who* phenomenon.

Characters

In designing *Time Lord*, the authors chose a far different approach than FASA, focusing on established characters in the *Doctor Who* universe. As a result, *Time Lord* contains no rules for character generation, usually a staple for any RPG. Players are expected to portray the Doctor and his companions, which can present problems concerning most players' inherent dislike of pre-made characters, as well as potential for disagreement over who gets to play the Doctor. Appendix One gives guidelines for translating real people into the *Time Lord* system, an interesting concept that is vaguely reminiscent of the old *Villains and Vigilantes* game. Also lacking are rules for experience and advancement over time, though this is explained by the fact that the small scale of the skill system renders even a single-point gain in an ability equal to several year's worth of experience.

Characters have eight abilities—Strength, Control, Size, Weight, Move, Knowledge, Determination and Awareness. These are supplemented by special abilities representing skills, talents or special characteristics such as Acute Hearing. *Time Lord* places key emphasis on detailed descriptions of the

pre-made PCs. Each incarnation of the Doctor and his many companions are colorfully detailed, giving a range of options in what at first might appear a quite limiting game.

Mechanics

Game mechanics are simple, employing 2D6 exclusively. The dice are used unusually, with the lower die score being subtracted from the higher in all cases, giving a range of 0-5 with unconventional probability.

Task resolution involves the referee assigning a difficulty rating from 0 to 10. The character then subtracts his appropriate ability (plus applicable special abilities) from this difficulty. The remainder must be exceeded by a dice roll. This system is employed for everything from combat to damage resolution, giving beginners an easy handle on the game. A notable result of this system is its tight probability curve, with many results being automatic successes or failures. This intensifies the value of specialized skills, with an increase of only a few points denoting a major shift in ability.

The mechanics seek to simulate the reality presented in the series, thus containing abstractions which place the emphasis on roleplaying and common sense instead of rules-crunching. The best example of this is the lack of initiative rules. Since fast-paced activity uses action turns of variable time, the flow of combat is rendered an arbitrary function of the referee. This is a big incentive for referee neutrality, while also being a powerful way for the referee to influence the game. Despite this, the mechanics are simple enough to allow for tinkering without the danger of unwittingly destroying integrity.

Campaigning

The potential for extended campaigns is obvious, considering the wealth of resource material (from books and television) supporting the game. *Time Lord* includes descriptions and statistics for all the various doctors and his companions, and key monsters and races from the series. Brief sections outline the basics of time travel, the TARDIS and the game universe. The unlimited flexibility of the TARDIS as a plot device makes it easy to launch players into adventures or just as a pick-up game. The Templar Throne, the sample scenario included, delineates both the flavor of a typical *Doctor Who* episode and the potential for expounding on the basic concepts in the game universe.

Evaluation

Time Lord is long overdue and is the first to bring the imaginative premise of *Doctor Who* to the gaming community. It is perfect for beginners or fans of the series, though those looking for a numbers-heavy game will be disappointed. Its campaign suitability might be limited by the unfamiliarity with *Doctor Who* on the part of the players and the lack of a character generation system, potentially relegating it to novelty status.

Still, the mechanics are sound, and the game universe is large enough and creative enough to be appreciated by the gamer. *Time Lord* will prove a fresh and engaging addition to anyone's gaming library. As the Doctor says, "Travel broadens the mind."

The Primal Order

Wizards of the Coast.

By Peter Adkinson, et al.

Published in 1992.

Review by Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

Gods can be such pesky entities. Ever run a game where the players are to encounter a deity, and some ingenious or lucky player comes up with something you didn't think of? Whammo! It seems that no matter how high the stats go, no one—deity or mortal—is fully invulnerable. But shouldn't the gods be pretty much immune to mere mortals? That's the contention of *The Primal Order*, a capsystem released by Wizards of the Coast. The term "capsystem" is used by WOTC to describe a supplement not meant for one single system, but for nearly all roleplaying games. The supplement is a "game designer's handbook," a guide for the creation of deities and religions in any fantasy system.

The Primal Order opens with a short story which relates from both sides of reality (the GM's and the PCs') an encounter between a group of powerful characters and Set, a more powerful evil deity. The story describes the conflict, then describes the same scene again, using *The Primal Order*. The differences are quite logical and amusing.

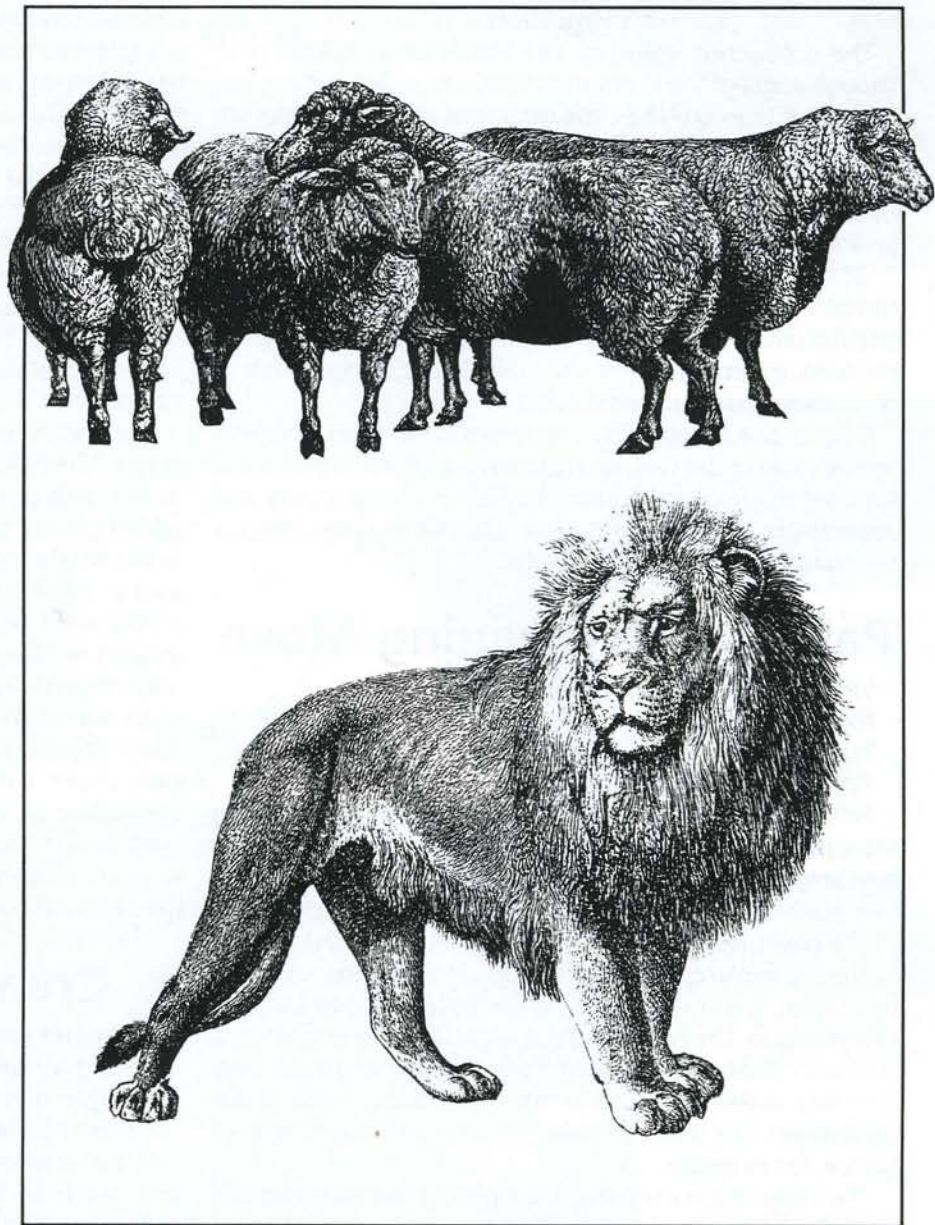
The remaining chapters of the book detail the workings of deities and religions in a fantasy realm from a gaming perspective. The first and foremost concept established is the distinction between god and mortal. What separates a mere mortal, of finite power and limited existence, from an infinitely powerful and eternal living deity?

Primal energy. You either have it or you don't. If you got it, you're immortal. One point of primal energy is more powerful than an infinite number of mana, spell or magic points. A spell laced with primal energy will shatter lesser defenses like the proverbial hot knife through butter, and the primal laced defense is invulnerable to lesser attacks.

In *The Primal Order*, the "normal" characteristics and attributes of the deity are defined using whatever game system you choose. The god-like powers of a deity are described in primal terms. Ever wanted to be omniscient? No problem. Spend the points, and you got it.

Primal energy is divided into two types, primal base and primal flux. Primal base is that energy which is the "body" of the deity. Dearly earned and spent wisely, it is extremely potent. Only powers which are of a grand scale require the expenditure of primal base, and they are costly and rarely cast. Primal flux is a pool of primal energy which can be used as the deity sees fit. It is gained daily from worshipers and sacrifices, and is cast about with much abandon.

Though intended primarily for the gamemaster's use in



creating deities for his campaign, *The Primal Order* also provides options for converting a player character to "god-hood." Thoughts on the manner of ascension, as well as the newly formed deity's following, are determined. On the whole, the process is logical and rewarding.

Quantifying the deity is not the end of the process, however. What is the use of having god-like powers to rule over mortals if one has no realm to rule. The second half of the book deals with the design of planes and civilizations. Options are given for temples, number and fanaticism of followers, and church organization.

The final section of the work deals with conversion to many fantasy game systems. Conversion notes are given for such systems as AD&D 1st and 2nd editions, *Ars Magica*, *Warhammer*, *Shadowrun*, *Torg*, and a host of others too numerous to list. Making this process easier is the fact that the system uses its own stats and attributes, and converts them to those of other systems, as opposed to being written for a specific system and converted from that system. The conversions are well thought out and complete.

Evaluation

The production value of *The Primal Order* is excellent. Though some of the humorous "cartoon-style" pictures are little more than sketches, the quality of the serious artwork is well above average. Many of the cartoons are quite funny while driving home a rules concept. The tongue-in-cheek writing style manages to convey some heavy rules concepts on a serious subject while maintaining reader interest.

One of the more serious drawbacks of the work is its complexity. The basic concepts are rather simple, but the calculations of primal base and primal flux can be rather involved, especially when one considers that primal flux is accumulated daily in some cases.

Despite the complexity, *The Primal Order* is an excellent sourcebook for the GM, no matter what system is preferred. For GMs who put much stock into internal consistency and believability in their campaigns, *The Primal Order* offers a smorgasbord of food for thought.

Pawns: The Opening Move

Wizards of the Coast. \$15.00.

By Nigel Findley.

Published in 1992.

Review by Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

Hot on the heels of *The Primal Order*, *Pawns: The Opening Move* provides a plethora of minions for use in any roleplaying campaign. Like *The Primal Order*, this supplement uses its own statistics, then converts them to those of other games.

The creatures presented run the gamut from the benign to the malevolent, from the beautiful to the hideous, from monstrous to all-too-human. All are well developed and, like everything in *The Primal Order*, logical. Every creature has a silhouette illustration showing comparable human size, plus a picture showing the creature's appearance. Some of the illustrations are quite stunning. Check out the Knight of Justice, for example.

The information in *Pawns: The Opening Move* is useful and logical, and any gamemaster can probably put it to good use. The supplement can also be used as a straight monster book without owning *The Primal Order*.

If you're looking for more monsters, especially unique ones, *Pawns* would be a good investment. The quality is good, and there are few, if any problems with the product.

Normals Unbound

Hero Games. \$13.00.

By Brannon Boren and Patrick E. Bradley.

Published in 1992.

Review by Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

Let's have a show of hands. Based on the title, how many out there can't guess what this book is? Yep. A compendium of normal level characters for *Champions*.

Held between the covers of *Normals Unbound* are more than 50 NPCs for your *Hero System* campaign. The characters are grouped by category. For instance, characters dealing with the legal system (police officers, judges, etc.) fall in the chapter called In the Name of the Law. Every character

comes complete with picture, full game statistics and a complete background. All power levels from incompetent to heroic are represented.

The uses for such characters in a *Champions* campaign are obvious. Ever need a DNPC on the spur of the moment? How about a snitch? A cop? You got it.

Another use which is not so obvious lies with the *Hero System Genre Books*. While the characters given are relatively insignificant on the grand, superhero scale of things, when used as villains, allies and extras in a lower-level campaign, the characters take on a whole new light. Many in the book would be quite at home in a *Ninja Hero* or *Cyber Hero* campaign.

The book's single drawback is the lack of "generic" characters. The NPCs are well fleshed out and complete, but a dozen or so goons, cops, gang members, etc., would have added greatly, though officer Patricia Garrett is an excellent example of a rookie cop, what if six or eight are needed? Re-use her stats? It works, but the detail given Patricia makes her distinctive; it would be a shame to waste her individuality by making her the norm.

On the plus side, the supplement does have the characters cross-referenced in several different ways. For instance, you'll find Patricia listed in the section In the Name of the Law, under competent Normal, and under Cop Rookie, depending on which list you use.

All things considered, *Normals Unbound* is an excellent sourcebook and a valuable reference guide which will enhance any *Hero System* campaign.

Creatures of Tharkold

West End Games.

Edited by Greg Farshtey.

Published in 1993.

Review by Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

Introduced in *Storm Knights*, the first *Torg* novel, the cosm and realm of Tharkold has fascinated players endlessly. Following up numerous Tharkold supplements, *Creatures of Tharkold* provides the *Torg* gamemaster with a horde of unique entities to harry players.

The cosm of Tharkold is one of eternal conflict. Battle-hardened humans, known as Race, are locked in mortal combat with technodemons for control of their world. Now that cosm spills over into Core Earth, and the "City of the Angels" is transformed into a realm more suited to the creatures of Tharkold.

Creatures of Tharkold contains 60 monsters unique to the realm. Ranging from microscopic to gargantuan, these creatures have one common bond: cybernetics. Every creature, from the Ferrovirus to the Horgon, has numerous cybernetic implants. Each creature's entry contains a narrative description and explanation of the creature's abilities, along with game statistics, size references and habitat maps for both the realm and cosm of Tharkold.

Creatures of Tharkold is a valuable sourcebook for gamemasters interested in running games in or around the Tharkold cosm. The originality of the entities is sure to keep players on their toes. Ω

The Magic Primer

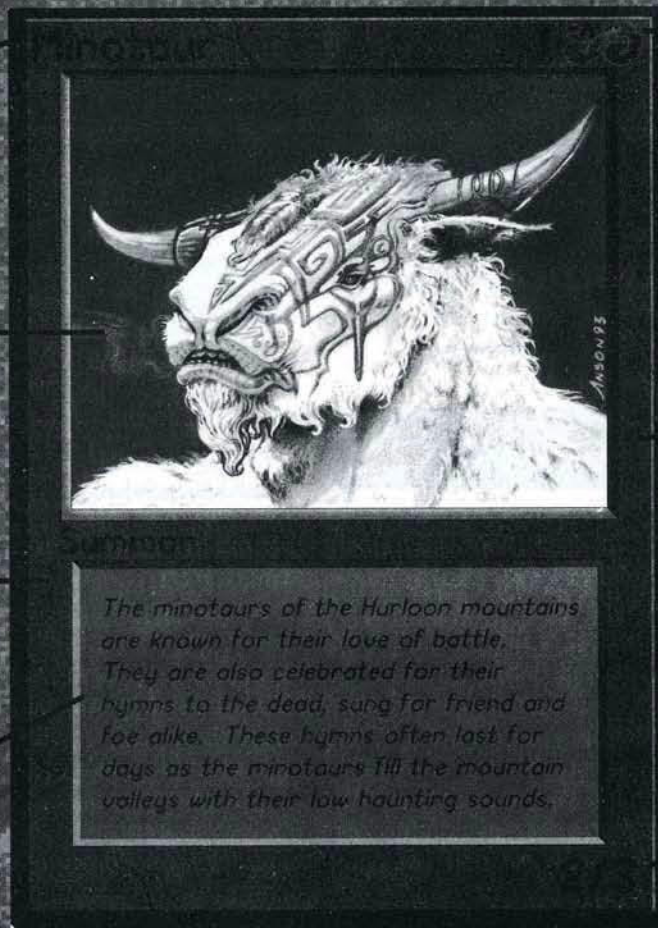
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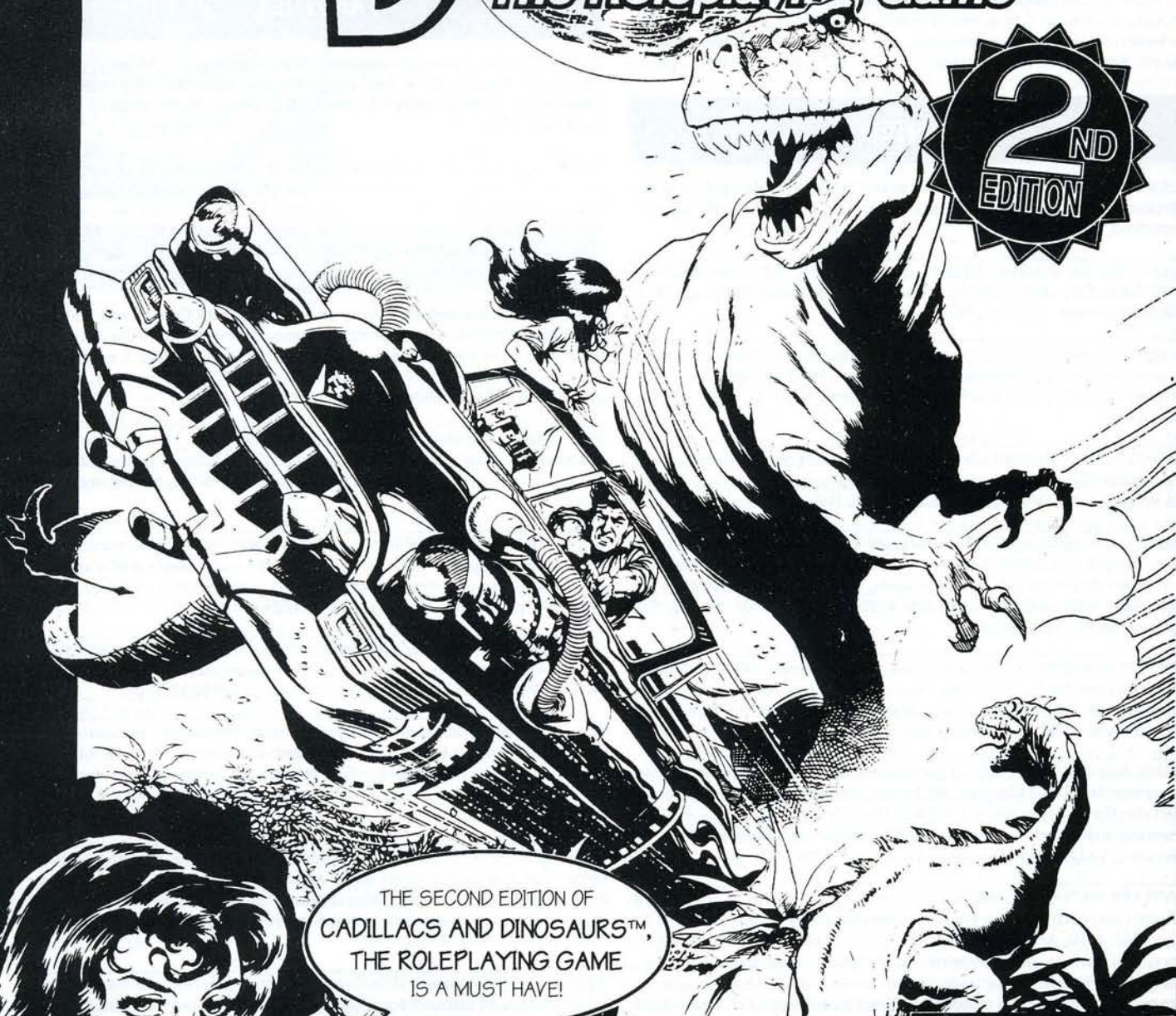
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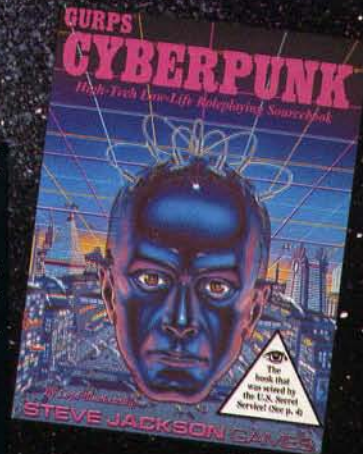
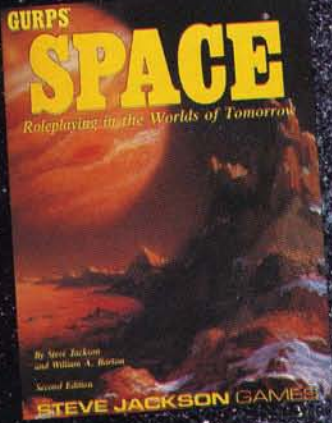
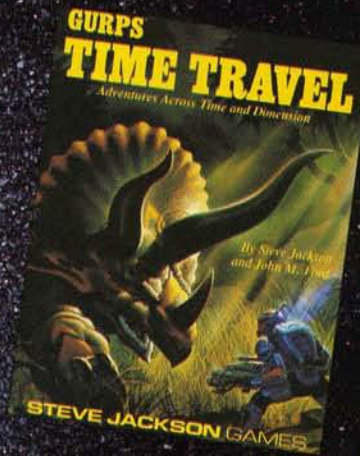
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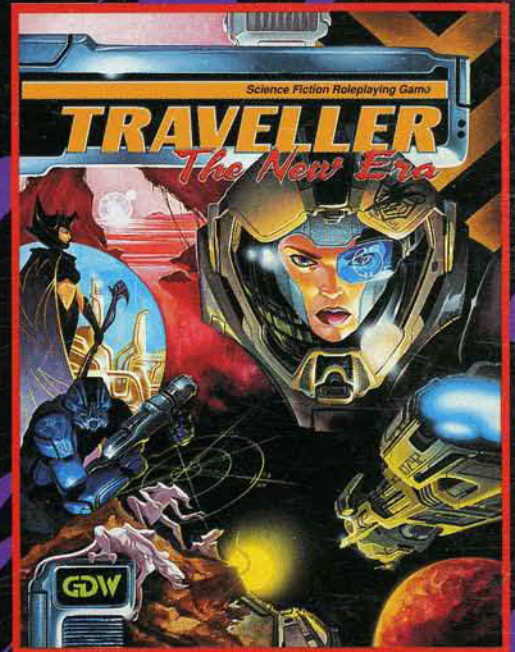
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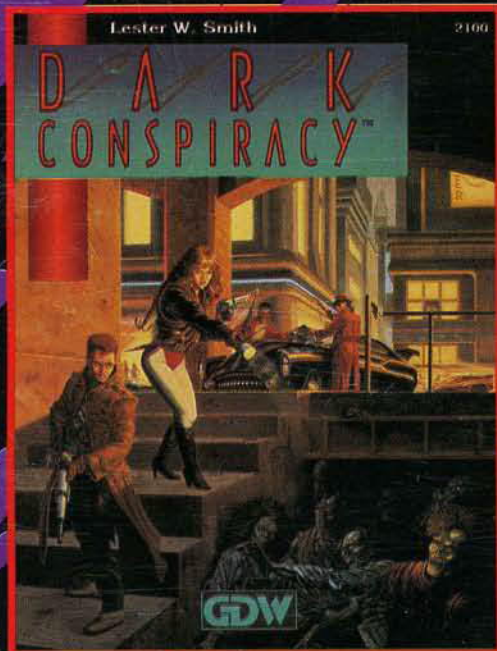
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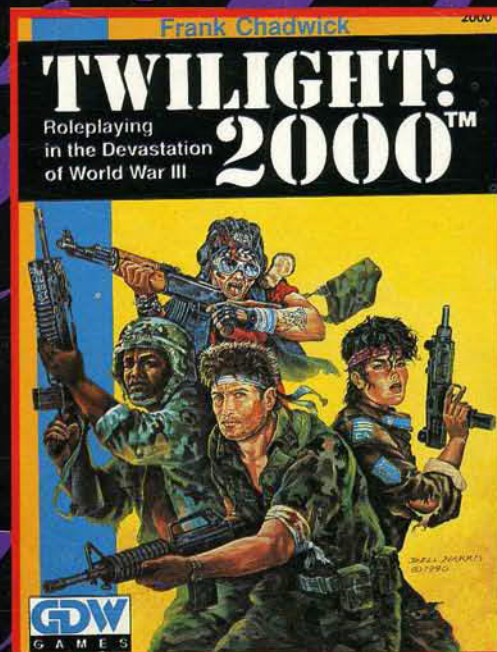
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