

PS Signs & Portents

Also This Month: Cthonian Stars - Planet Preview • Conan - Faith and Blood • Traveller - Armed Free Trader



SEX, DICE AND

GAMER CHICKS

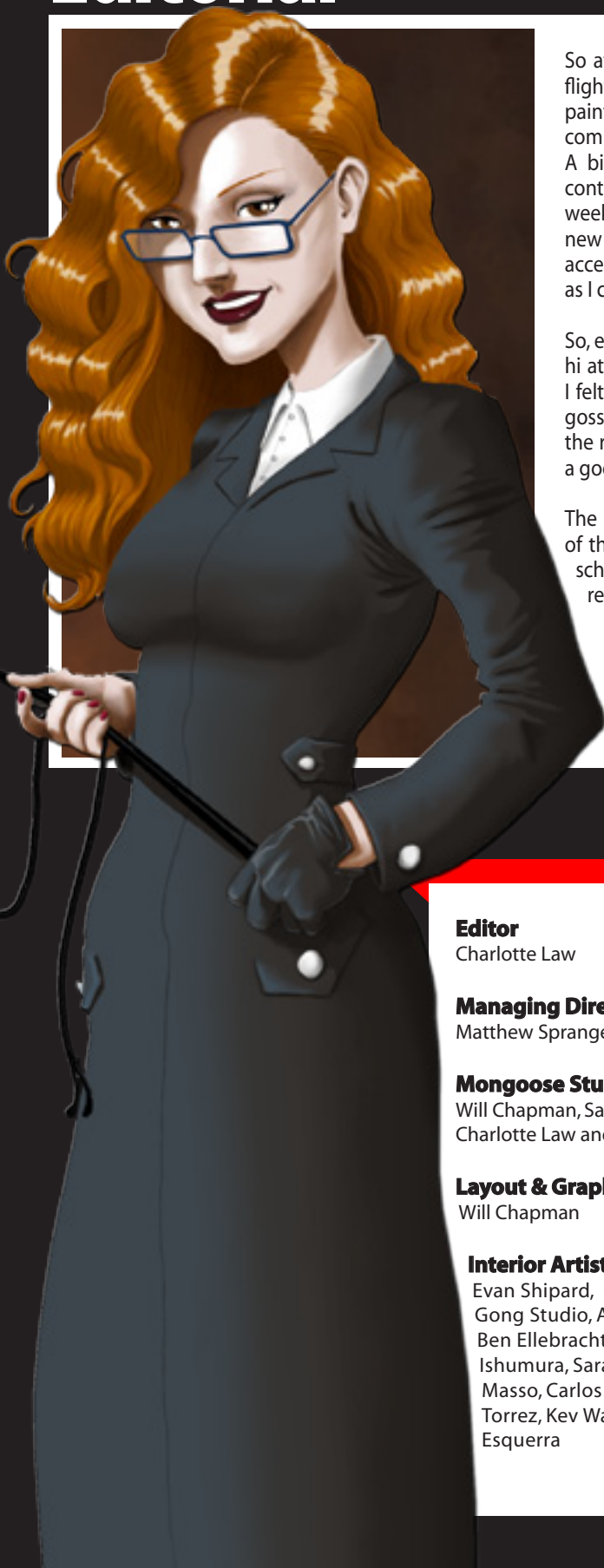
OUT THIS MONTH

COMING THIS ISSUE

□ □ □	Mongoose News	4
□ □ □	Convention Diary	5
□ □ □	Featurettes	6
□ □ □	New Releases	8
□ □ □	Darrian Characters	12
□ □ □	The Naked and the Dead	18
□ □ □	Augmetics & Prothetics	24
□ □ □	Preview of the Planets	34
□ □ □	Faith & Blood	38
□ □ □	Armed Free Trader	58

- □ □ Mongoose
- □ □ Features
- □ □ Traveller
- □ □ Lone Wolf
- □ □ Conventions
- □ □ Conan
- □ □ RuneQuest
- □ □ Paranoia
- □ □ Flaming Cobra
- □ □ Information
- □ □ Miscellaneous

Editorial



So after a long, hard month of carrying all of my worldly goods up two flights of stairs into my gorgeous new apartment, along with many walls painted and accessories carefully placed, my new home is finally a haven, complete with a lovely bright home office to enable the magic to happen! A big thank you to all of the S&P contributors (and potential future contributors) for putting up with my lack of contact this month. Due to my week off I have been working away like a hamster in a wheel in my shiny new editor's cave (office) and unfortunately I still will not have internet access until mid July, so thanks but please be patient for a few more weeks as I can only check my mail when I am in the Mongoose office!

So, enough of my mammoth move! Thanks to all of you who came to say hi at Games Expo last month. It was my first time at this convention and I felt very welcome, it was good to see so many S&P readers and have a gossip, as well as to see so many people from the industry. The pub across the road earned a fortune from the traders every evening and we all had a good laugh.

The rest of the crew will be at Continuum in Leicester at the beginning of this month. I was supposed to be joining them but unfortunately my schedule will not allow it. Still, be sure to go and have a natter with the rest of the Mongoose gang.

Have a great month whatever you are doing.

Charlie

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Mongoose News

By Matthew Sprange

Ancients Continues

The second part of the legendary *Secrets of the Ancients* campaign for *Traveller* will be appearing on our website this month. Continually growing into a 10 part epic, this complete campaign will be given to you absolutely free – just keep your eyes peeled for the download when it appears!

Living Campaign Open Day - July 10th

Missing out on Continuum on the first week of July, one of the best conventions in UK and where we will be debuting our Living Glorantha and Traveller campaigns? Have no fear, as the next weekend (on the 10th) we are throwing open our doors and inviting all-comers to join in on a full day of gaming! Entry is completely free, as is registration for our Living Campaign events. Stay tuned to our web site for details on how to join in.

Empires of the Hyborian Age

In response to passionate pleas from Conan fans, Mongoose has posted the entire draft manuscript of *Empires of the Hyborian Age* on our web site for you to use, peruse and enjoy. This supplement

will allow you to topple kings and rule vast empires in the Hyborian age - at least, until another usurper comes along to displace your dynasty! You can grab *Empires of the Hyborian Age* from the Conan pages of our web site.

Living Glorantha/ Traveller

Debuting at Continuum, Mongoose's Living Campaigns, covering Traveller and Glorantha, are launched this month! Pop along to our web site where you can download all the rules and character creation documents and, after the 5th, adventures that you can run at your local convention, store, club - or even at home! We have a great rollercoaster of a campaign lined up for you, whether you choose Glorantha or Traveller (or both!), putting you right in the front seat of major events in these universes.

A Bridge Too Far

Mongoose has started to supply *A Bridge Too Far*, the WWII Operation Marketgarden boardgame from Battlefront, creators of *Flames of War*. The game comes with very high quality boards and oodles of plastic miniatures, so grab a box and refight the war!



Convention Diary

Continuum

John Foster Hall, Leicester,
United Kingdom
Fri 2nd - Mon 5th July 2010

<http://www.continuum.uk.net>

More events will be added to this list on a monthly basis as they are confirmed

The Awesometer

Generic events that get our hearts racing (or sometimes not) each and every month!

AWESOME

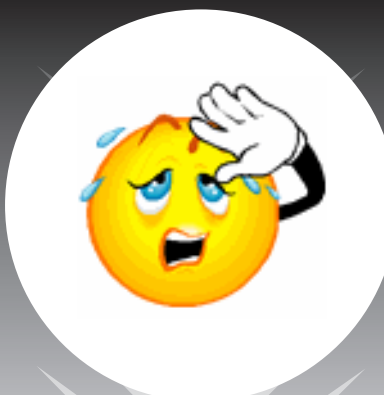
Will Chapman's TOP 5

Arnold Schwarzenegger Films & Corresponding Quotes

- Predator** - 'Stick Around' - 'If it bleeds, we can kill it' - 'She's your baggage. You fall behind, and you're on your own.'
- Running Man** - 'Killian, here's your Subzero, now plain zero.' - 'I live to see you eat that contract, but I hope you leave enough room for my fist because I'm going to ram it into your stomach and break your god-damn spine!'
- Total Recall** - 'See you at the party, Richter!' - 'What about the guy you lobotomized? Did he get a refund?' - 'If I am not me, then who the hell am I?'
- Terminator 2** - 'John Connor: Is it dead? The Terminator: Terminated.' - 'I need your clothes, boots and your motorcycle.'
- Conan the Barbarian** - 'Crom., grant me one request. Grant me revenge! And if you do not listen, then to HELL with you!' - 'Crom laughs at your four winds. He laughs from his mountain.' - 'To crush your enemies, to see them driven before you, and to hear the lamentations of their women.' - Subotai: 'He is Conan, Cimmerian, he won't cry, so I cry for him.'



We Are going to go with the incredible heat wave hitting the UK this month, apparently were all going to evolve into molten madmen/women by the end of the Summer.



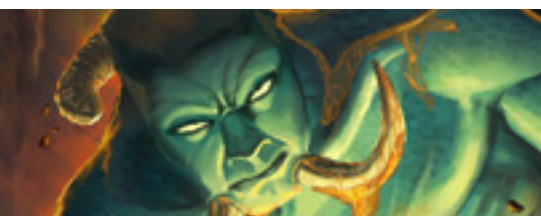
Then again predicting a surge in evolutionary activity might be premature, maybe the intake of gallons of water to compensate for the perspiration might hold us back.

GRUESOME

The Timeline

A visual guide to get your tails wagging for future Mongoose releases

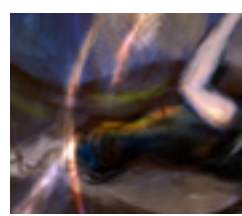
July: The Definitive Cults of Glorantha



August: Elric returns with a brand new Edition!



September: Cults of th



Quote of the Month

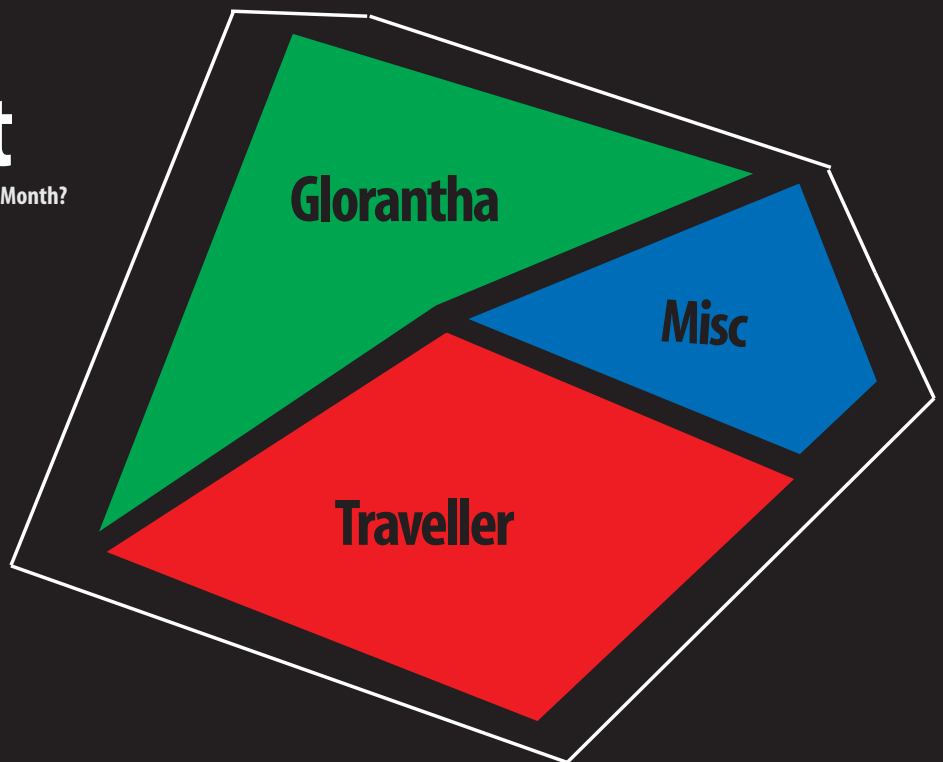
Which phrases have been flying around the office more than the dogs ball?

Hands off the PANDA!!!

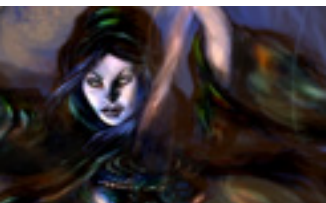
For anyone who recognises this phrase, please give yourself a tasty treat. This quote comes from the genius work that is BlazBlue - Calamity Trigger, Currently available for the Xbox and PS3. The quote has become a staple in my home after having it drilled into my head on several occasions, it takes the idea of Panda hoarding to a whole new level.

The Time Chart

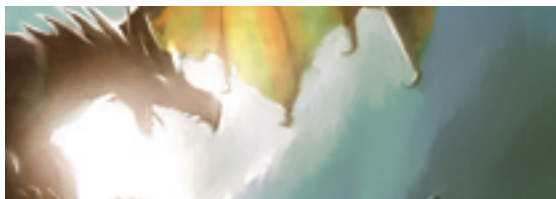
What have we been spending our time on at Mongoose this Month?



Young Kingdoms goes forth!



October: Wrath of the Magnamund Bestiary



November: Its a surprise... we'll keep you posted!

???

June 10 Releases



In a world where the gods are real and shape the daily lives of their adherents, cults are an everyday necessity for every culture in Glorantha. This book provides the structures, myths and modus operandi for the key human and non-human cults of the Orlanthy, Solar Pantheons, God Learners and EWF. From the barbarian cults of Prax through to the esoteric mysticism of the draconic orders; from the ancient Storm Tribe to the Saints of the Invisible God. Fully revised and compatible with RuneQuest II, Cults of the Glorantha is an indispensable RuneQuest resource.

Cults of Glorantha
Price: \$39.99
Format: Hardback (256 pages)

Sex, Dice and Gamerchicks
Price: \$24.99
Format: Softback (128 pages)

The funniest gaming book of the year!

When Jonny Nexus (The Jonny Nexus Experience and Game Night) and James Desborough (The Munchkin's Guide to Power Gaming) come together to cast an irreverent eye on gamers, expect weirdness and much hilarity!

Sex, Dice and Gamer Chicks casts an introspective and irreverent eye onto gamers themselves. Just what drives a rules lawyer? What are the secrets to fame, success and riches as an all-star games designer? Are female gamers weird?

These questions and many others are ignored as Sex, Dice and Gamer Chicks tweaks and teases apart the very fabric of gaming and those who call themselves gamers. Written by James Desborough and Jonny Nexus, both World-class Gaming Personalities themselves, Sex, Dice and Gamer Chicks will have you in stitches from beginning to end!

Essential reading for gamers, gamer spouses, gamer family members and gamer widows – provided they have a sense of humour.





The Little Black Books return! Harking back to the original release of Traveller in the 70's, the Little Black Books from Mongoose bring the latest version of Traveller to your gaming table in a handy and collectible pocket size.

Scout is a detailed expansion for the Traveller game, and continues the line of core books expanding the main rules to give you more options, and depth of play.

This book is dedicated to Scout characters, providing them with new career options, equipment, and detailed exploration rules. Characters will be able to scan planets and asteroids to gain a wealth of detail about their surroundings, survive in the harshest environments, and explore mysterious worlds in the furthest depths of space - literally going where no one has been before!

LBB3: Scout
Price: \$19.99
Format: Softback (112 pages)

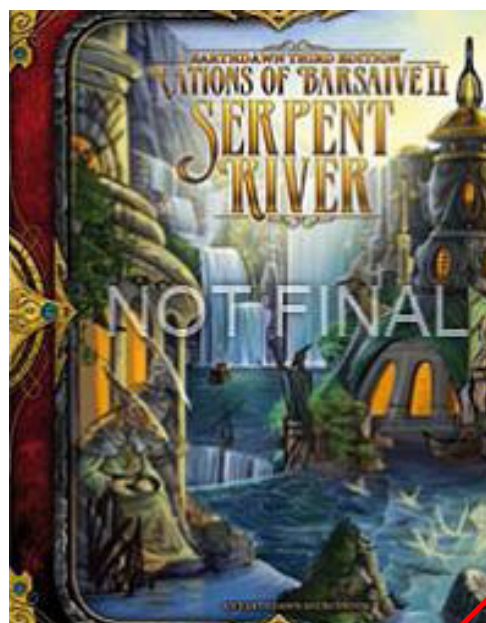
THE LIFEBLOOD OF BARSAIVE

The t'skrang call the Serpent River Shivoam, the River Dragon. On the Dragon's broad back they can ride anywhere. From the gates of Throal to the depths of the Servos Jungle, to the treacherous edges of the Mist Swamps, and even into the dark heart of the Blood Wood. The Serpent reaches throughout Barsaive, tying everything together.

Mighty t'skrang Riverboats of the t'skrang trading houses, loaded cargo boats, and fishing skiffs of a hundred hinterland villages ply the waters of Barsaive's mightiest river, risking its dangers for profit or adventure. Dangers abound, from hidden currents and swirling rapids over fearsome pirates willing to kill for booty, to the recently established Theran fortress of Triumph near Lake Ban.

Nations of Barsaive Volume Two: Serpent River offers gamemasters and players an in-depth look at the Serpent River. Running the entire breadth of Barsaive from the Grand Cataracts in the North to the Mist Swamps in the South, the Serpent River has been used by traders for thousands of years. This book provides detailed descriptions of the six great t'skrang trading houses, featuring revised and updated content, and new material for adventures in the world of Earthdawn. Requires use of the Earthdawn Player's and Gamemaster's Guides.

Nations of Barsaive 2: Serpent River
Price: \$24.99
Format: Softback (128 pages)



June 10 Releases



In the Lone Wolf rulebook, you played one of the Kai warrior monks. With Heroes of Magnamund, you can now select from a huge range of different characters, and tailor each to your own preferences. When you get together with your friends to embark on new adventures, you will find they will all be very different to you. Instead of being part of a Kai warrior band, you might find yourself in the company of a Knight of Sommerlund, a vicious barbarian from the ice caverns of Kalte, and a dwarven gunner of Bor!

Heroes of Magnamund
Price: \$19.99
Format: Softback (128 pages)

Traveller Compendium 1
Price: \$34.99
Format: Hardback (176 pages)

This first volume of the Traveller Compendiums collates all the most popular articles that have appeared in Signs & Portents over the years, and presents them for the tabletop! Inside you will find new careers, new ships, adventures, patrons, advice on running games, new equipment, newly revealed aspects to Aslan society, and much more!





Glorantha
THE SECOND AGE

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING

www.mongoosepublishing.com

Darrian Characters

By Pete Nash

A Sneak Peek at the Forthcoming Darrians Alien Module

Character generation for Darrians is the same procedure as human character generation in *Traveller*. However, several changes are involved to take into account physiological and cultural differences between Darrian characters and humans.

Initial Character Generation

Darrian characters, like most races, are basically defined by six personal characteristics: Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, Intelligence, Education and Social Standing.

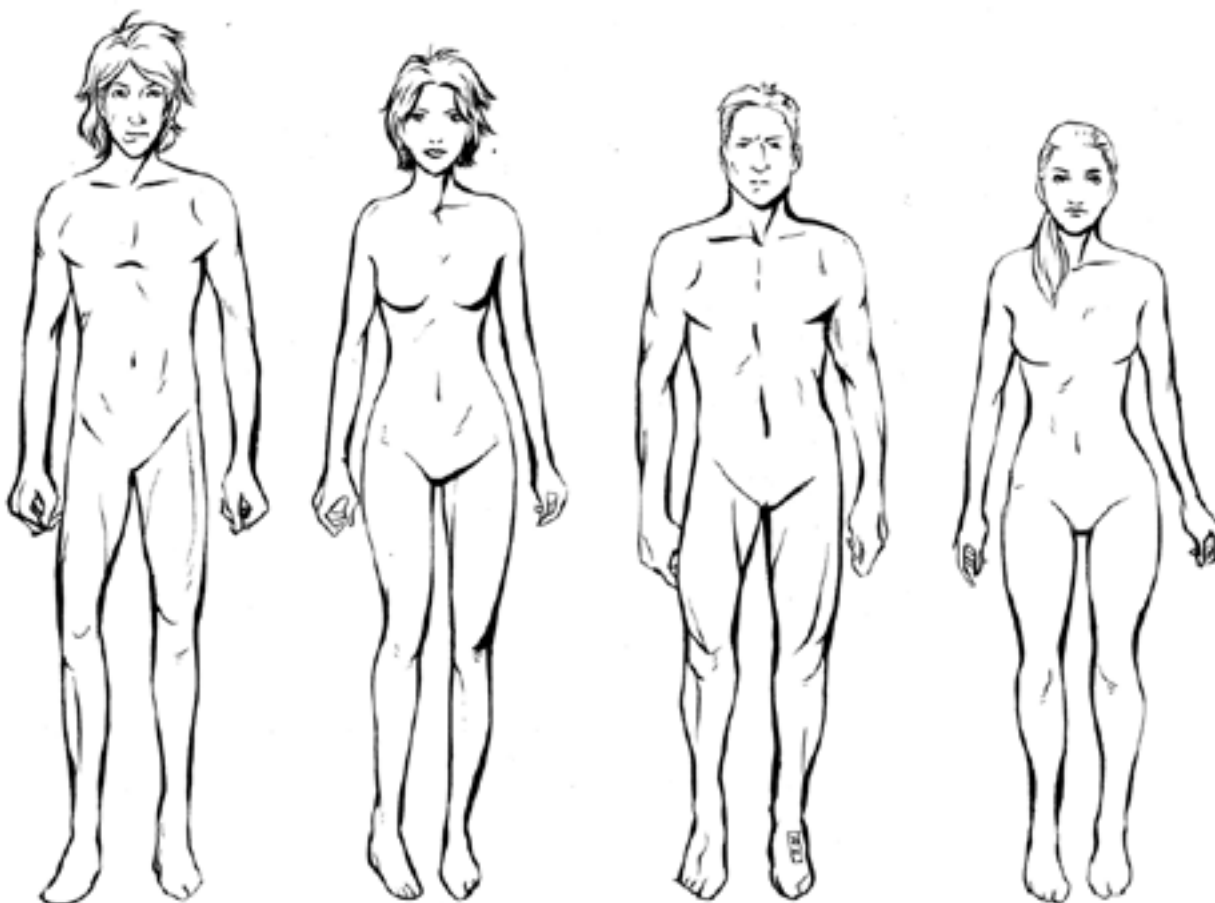
Due to their evolution on a low gravity world, Darrians are, on the average, weaker and frailer than humans. Their reduced body mass however, makes them a little faster and more agile. Intelligence and education are superior due to cultural conditioning. Since Darrians are a fairly egalitarian civilisation, Social Standing usually refers to their status in academic and research circles.

To generate Darrian characteristics, throw each characteristic in succession: Strength (2D6-2), Dexterity (2D6+1), Endurance (2D6-2), Intelligence (2D6+1), Education (2D6+2) and Social Standing (2D6). The lower limit on characteristics is 1 (below 1 can happen only temporarily from wounding); the upper limit is 15 plus or minus the characteristic modifier.

Darrian Citizen Characteristic Modifiers

Characteristic	Native Darrian
Str	-2
Dex	+1
End	-2
Int	+1
Edu	+2
Soc	—

Average height for pure-blooded Darrians is between 2.2 and 2.5 metres. Those with recent Solomani genes in their ancestry reach between 2 and 2.25 metres tall. Darrians growing up on planets with higher gravity than Daryen have their height ranges reduced by 5 centimetres per 0.1g difference. Those brought up on worlds of over 0.7g reduce the Strength and Endurance penalties by 1.



Traits

Darrians have slightly better hearing and vision than humans, giving them a +1 DM to any Recon or Survival checks involving these senses. Wide pelvic structures give Darrian females less chance of birth complications but make balancing upon narrow beams or ledges more difficult.

Darrians are genetically predisposed towards water conservation, sweating far less than humans and possess white or light toned hair combined with a slightly reflective, gold coloured skin; both of which help reflect excess heat. Additionally the golden protremelanin pigmentation protects against high levels of ultraviolet radiation. Darrians are also able to adjust their core temperatures via unconscious metabolic control and are therefore more comfortable in colder climates.

Another Darrian trait is their ability to safely metabolise Ozone, normally mildly

poisonous to humans, due to a naturally occurring retrovirus present on the homeworld.

Gender

Darrian society has sexual equality. Darrian men are as likely to stay at home to raise children as women and wages are based on capability and knowledge, not gender. However, although every career is open to both sexes, certain professions do exhibit gender bias; the professional armed forces being one notable example. Men tend to dominate close combat troops whereas women prefer naval service.

Family and Ancestral Respect

Due to their extended life spans, Darrian families can be sprawling complex affairs. Depending on resources and living space available on their home world, Darrian parents usually produce between two and three children.

Assuming that characters have not yet settled down to start their own family, players can use the following tables to generate an idea of the number and state of their immediate relatives.

Roll 2d6	Grandparents
2-3	Both dead
4-5	Grandmother alive
6-8	Both alive
9-10	Grandfather alive
11-12	Both dead

Roll 2d6	Parents
2	Both dead
3-4	Father alive
5-9	Both alive
10-11	Mother Alive
12	Both dead

The character should then work out how many siblings they have and where they came in the sequence. Roll a d6 twice and cross reference the results.

d6	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Single child	Single child	Single child	Single child	Single child	Single child
2	Single child	One sibling, first born	One sibling, first born	One sibling, first born	One sibling, first born	One sibling, first born
3	One sibling, first born	One sibling, second born	One sibling, second born	One sibling, second born	One sibling, second born	One sibling, second born
4	One sibling, second born	Two siblings, first born	Two siblings, first born	Two siblings, first born	Two siblings, first born	Two siblings, second born
5	Two siblings, second born	Two siblings, second born	Two siblings, second born	Two siblings, third born	Two siblings, third born	Two siblings, third born
6	Two siblings, third born	Three siblings, first born	Three siblings, second born	Three siblings, third born	Three siblings, fourth born	Five siblings, roll 1d6 for birth order

To add a little mystery to the family, roll up to three times on the family deeds table. The first roll concerns the deeds of the grandparents, the second to the parents and the third to any siblings.

Darrian Characters

Roll 2d6	Family Deeds
2	Relative is (or was) stripped of their citizenship and exiled from the Confederation for committing a terrible crime, bringing shame and stigma to the family. Roll 1d6: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Relative was a murderer.2. Relative claimed a rival's scientific discoveries as his own.3. Relative spied for the Sword Worlds.4. Relative was designing bioweapons.5. Relative experimented of sophonts.6. Relative sold scientific secrets to the Zhodani.
3	Relative made an important scientific breakthrough of great benefit to society.
4	Relative disappeared in unusual circumstances, with no warning and no record of leaving planet.
5	Relative is a founding member of a major corporation.
6	Relative has a well publicised addiction.
7	Relative has travelled extensively outside of the Confederation.
8	Relative was lampooned Confederation-wide for precipitating an infamous accident through their crass stupidity.
9	Relative is a famous author who has sold millions of copies of their work.
10	Relative had their educational qualifications stripped for cheating.
11	Relative uncovered a priceless artefact of archaeological or historical import.
12	Relative is (or was) a lauded hero of the Confederation. Roll 1d6: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Relative discovered a vaccine to cure an ancient plague.2. Uncovered a Zhodani plot against the Confederation.3. Made a daring freefall leap to rescue children trapped in a falling grav car.4. Braved a fatal radiation leak, to shut down a power plant going critical.5. Rammed a cargo hauler into a suicide ship on collision course with a space station.6. Relative took out a Sword World platoon single handed in the Fourth Frontier War.

Starting Age

Darrian characters begin their careers at 21 years of age. At this point, they have the mandatory choices of either entering an advanced post-graduate education or joining one of the military branches. The first four year term must be spent completing this service, before a Darrian is allowed to continue with a career more conducive to their interests.

Naming Customs

Every Darrian has three names; the family name, the birth name and the taken name.

Family names are passed down from the father. They cannot be changed for any reason, not even for marriage into another family. They generally refer to an object or phenomenon in the natural world. This can range from animals or plants, to types of weather or eclipses.

Birth names are granted exclusively by the mother, although most wives consult

with their husbands prior to the naming in order to avoid undue irritation for disliked names. Birth names are granted soon after birth, due to an unspoken superstition that the name moulds the child to be. These names generally describe a personal characteristic (expressed or to be hoped for) or a type of flowering plant. The child is addressed and known by this name until it reaches its age of majority.

Taken names are what the youth chooses for themselves, once they have graduated to adulthood. From this point onwards the Darrian is known by this name, usually based on something greatly significant to the individual. It can literally be anything, from the name of an ancestor or great scientist, to a type of career or philosophical ideal. Whatever is selected normally provides an insight into the psyche of the Darrian and can be quite subtle or possess many levels of interpretation.

Only family members or friends address a Darrian by their taken name only.

Formal address is used by strangers, work companions or social services, comprising of the family name and taken name combined. The full three name version is only ever used for legal documentation or civic records.

Titles

Darrians do not have titles in the sense of Imperium nobility, since such archaic feudal posturing is the antithesis of Darrian egalitarian society. Any Darrian granted an Imperial title cannot use it within the Confederation where it carries no weight; but might utilise it at diplomatic events where representatives of the Imperium may be present.

Darrians with high Social Standing are recognised for their contributions to academia. These are often based on (once) holding an administrative position at a university or by making important discoveries, which furthered their subject. Attaining such a title does not require the

scholar to be well versed in scholarly skills, although it helps; but rather reflects the efforts made by the Darrian to support and further the course of knowledge as a whole – by funding, volunteer teaching, revising historical data or even editorial work on research papers.

Most honorary titles are granted from the university that they attended during their education, in order to reflect well upon the institution. The number of titles granted however, is strictly controlled by the Confederation Ministry of Information.

Holders of official titles are treated with respect in Darrian society but gain few benefits beyond that. Some titled scholars in administrative positions use their Social Standing to find better funding, request new equipment or simply to be promoted into more prestigious university or corporate posts.

Darrian Titles

Social Standing	Title
10	Pedagogue
11	Preceptor
12	Adept
13	Doyen
14	Master
15	Savant

Intellectual achievement has its own titles. Any character with an Education of 10+ may request to be addressed as Professor. Those with an Education of 12+ are addressed as Emeritus Professor.

Background Skills

In addition to the 3 + your Education DM background skills gained from homeland and education, a Darrian gains an *additional* Science skill, selected from: Life Science 0, Physical Science 0, Social Science 0, or Space Science 0. This reflects the

more intense and broader base of study prevalent in Darrian society.

Careers

Darrians lack a few careers common to other cultures; namely nobility, rogues and scouts. These professions either have no ability to function in Darrian society or have atrophied from lack of application. Characters use the normal rules for generation from the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.

Aging

Darrian aging is much slower in its onset and generally less severe than in human characters. The first roll on the aging table is not made until the age of 61 (after 10 terms of service have been completed); thereafter, it is checked every eight years and *half* the character's number of terms served is applied as a negative DM to the 2d6 roll.

Referees worried about the generation of excessively skilled characters should place their own limit on the number of terms served.

Benefits

The armour and weapons provided on the benefits table do not include powered armour (Battle Dress), plasma/fusion weapons or light support weaponry. Such equipment is never allowed out of military control. Other munitions are granted to retiring military or law enforcement personnel in the implicit understanding that they are only for civil defence purposes, if and when the character is recalled to service.

Vehicles gained as benefits are limited to civilian transports. Unless directly related to a space faring career, ship shares are very rarely handed out as benefits.

Private ownership of vessels is somewhat contrary to Darrian philosophy, since wealth should be more evenly distributed across society to prevent cultural stress. Ships tend to be owned by businesses, universities or government agencies and are loaned out as necessary to responsible crews with up to date crew licences.



Darrian Characters

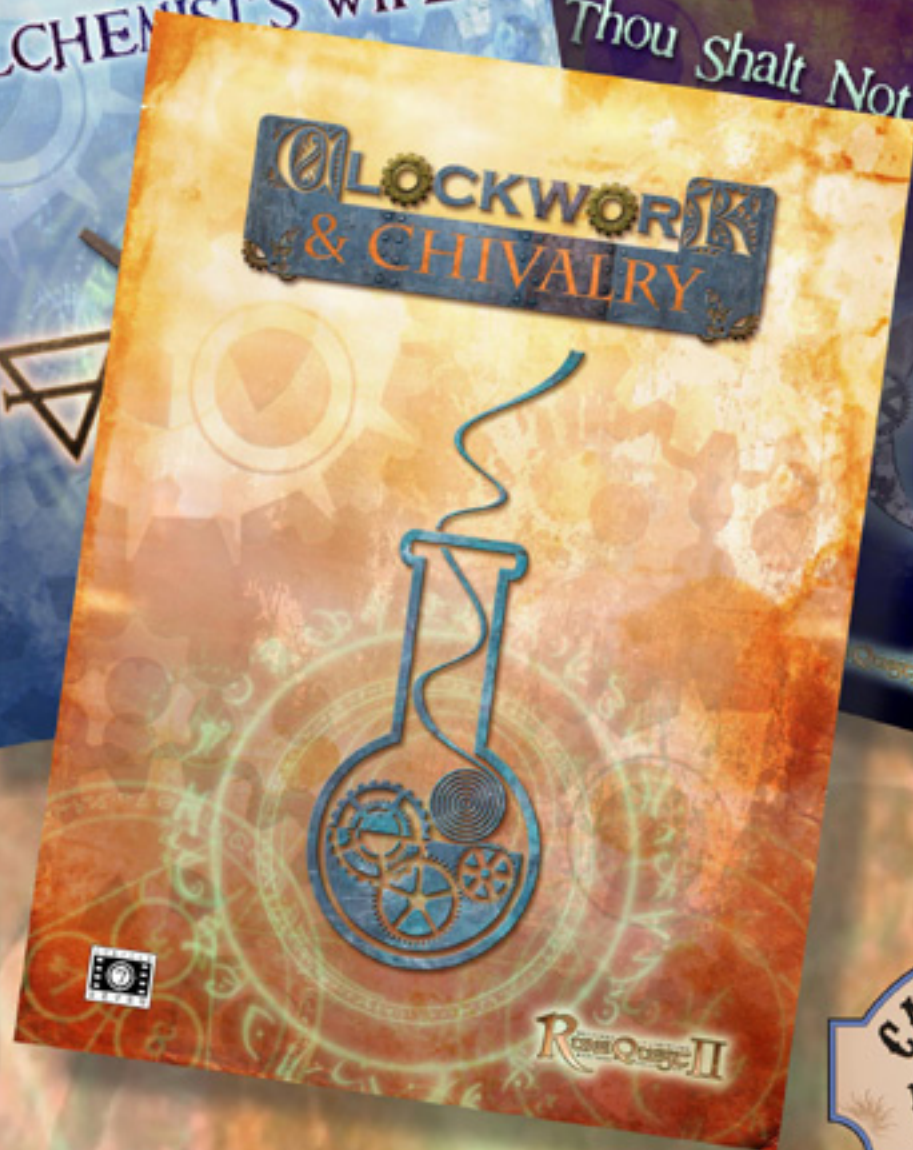
TRAVELLER

CAREERS

Career Agent	Specialisation	Qualification	Survival	Advancement
	Police	Int 7+	End 6+	Int 6+
	Intelligence		Dex 5+	Int 7+
	Analyst		Int 7+	Int 5+
Entertainer		Int 5+		
	Artist		Dex 7+	Edu 5+
	Author		Edu 6+	Int 6+
	Performer		Soc 5+	Int 7+
Envoy		Edu 7+		
	Advocate		Soc 5+	Edu 7+
	Diplomat		Soc 6+	Int 6+
	Observer		Int 7+	Dex 5+
Guard		Str 6+		
	Cavalry		End 6+	Edu 6+
	Infantry		End 5+	Edu 7+
	Support		End 7+	Edu 5+
Merchants		Int 6+		
	Merchant Marine		Edu 5+	Int 7+
	Free Trader		Dex 6+	Int 6+
	Broker		Edu 7+	Int 5+
Militia		End 5+		
	Flyer		Dex 7+	Int 5+
	Infantry		Str 6+	Edu 6+
	Support		End 5+	Edu 7+
Navy		Edu 6+		
	Engineering		Int 6+	Edu 6+
	Bridge		Edu 5+	Int 7+
	Marine		Dex 7+	Edu 5+
Scholar		Edu 7+		
	Physician		Edu 5+	Soc 7+
	Researcher		Edu 7+	Int 5+
	Technician		Int 6+	Edu 6+
Special Arm		Int 9+		
	Commando		Dex 8+	Int 6+
	Psion		Int 7+	Psi 7+
	Scientist		Int 6+	Edu 8+
Worker		Edu 5+		
	Bureaucratic		Int 5+	Soc 7+
	Corporate		Soc 6+	Int 6+
	Industrial		End 7+	Edu 5+
Wanderer		Auto		
	Drifter		Int 7+	Edu 7+
	Exile		End 8+	Int 6+
	Nomad		Int 6+	Soc 8+

Darrian Life Events

The life events of a Darrian are similar to those of humans. Use the Life Event table in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*.



Requires the
RuneQuest II
Core
Rulebook,
available
from
Mongoose
Publishing.



The Seventeenth Century – a time of romantic Cavaliers and dour Puritans, religious strife and political upheaval.

England – a land riddled with hunger, pestilence and superstition, gripped by Civil War.

Competing factions struggle to survive. The King has been executed. Cromwell has usurped power. In this richly-imagined alternate history, the conflict continues. Two great armies lay waste to the country, the Royalists aided by fearsome Alchemical magicks, the Roundheads by mighty Clockwork death-machines. Old beliefs are crumbling. The future is up for grabs. With a heart filled with Righteousness and a cause worth fighting for, you enter the maelstrom...

Clockwork & Chivalry Core Worldbook published July 2010

And don't miss the epic Kingdom & Commonwealth Campaign, starting August 2010!

From Cubicle 7 and Cakebread & Walton: Purveyors of Fine Imaginings

www.clockworkandchivalry.co.uk

The Naked and the Dead

By Ken Walton and Peter Cakebread

An adventure and source material for *Clockwork & Chivalry*

Here is a new Profession (Iconoclast) and a new Faction (Adamite) for *Clockwork & Chivalry*, plus an adventure (which can best be described as a deadly romp) set in a small village somewhere in Parliamentarian-controlled lands. The adventure stands alone but can easily be slotted into *The Alchemist's Wife*, the first volume of the *Kingdom & Commonwealth* campaign, due out in August. Games Masters will need the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* from Mongoose Publishing and the *Clockwork & Chivalry Core Worldbook* from Cakebread & Walton and Cubicle 7.

The Dead

The Adventurers are travelling together through the Parliamentarian lands when they come upon a small church on the outskirts of a village. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You have been travelling along the country lane for a couple of hours when you come to a small stone-built church with a square tower, set in its own graveyard, a few minutes walk from the next village. The door is ajar and you notice that all of the windows appear to have been smashed from the inside, leaving shards of coloured glass scattered on the grass.

Have the Adventurers make Perception rolls; on a success they will notice that it seems very quiet – there are no birds singing and the sound of bleating sheep, which has been a constant background to their journey, is now absent. At the side of the path leading up to the church door, several dead songbirds lie on the ground with their legs in the air. There is not a mark upon them.

Assuming that the Adventurers decide to look in the church (it doesn't matter if they don't, they can come back later), this is what they see:

When you enter the church, a scene of utter devastation meets your eyes. The windows

are all smashed; the altar rail has been toppled and lies chopped and splintered on the floor; and several painted statues of saints have been cast down from their alcoves and are now broken. An intricate mural of the Last Judgment has been defaced with whitewash and there is a scattering of bent golden candlesticks and a crumpled communion cup near the altar. Sprawled in the aisle is a middle-aged Priest, obviously dead, with a look of utter horror on his face.

A Culture (Own) roll will tell the Adventurers that the damage is probably the work of Iconoclasts (see the Profession description at the end of the adventure) – though they are not known for killing Priests in cold blood.

The Priest has probably been dead for a day at most, though there are no wounds on him, only a look of complete horror on his face.

Searching the church further will reveal little of interest, except in two places:

Office: This is probably the Priest's vestry; there are several ornate silk priestly robes hung up here and a desk, its drawers open and contents scattered about the room (only boring notes for sermons and the like). There is also a bookshelf, which looks as though it has been emptied recently; a couple of books of theology are scattered on the floor but the rest are gone.

Laboratory: An unusual feature in a church, this is obviously an Alchemist's laboratory. It too has been smashed, the contents of flasks and bottles puddle on the floor. In the middle of the room is a smashed crate with soiled straw in the bottom and a scattering of corn, as though some animal or bird had been kept in it. A Difficult (-20%) Perception roll will allow an Adventurer to find two unbroken Potion jacks, containing a Bladesharp Potion (Magnitude 6) and a Cure Disease/Poison Potion.

Backstory

This is what has happened. Yesterday, a Puritan Iconoclast by the name of Zeal-

for-the-Lord Harrison and a couple of his assistants, visited the church and began smashing the place up. They were especially incensed that the Priest (the Reverend Richard Holmbyke, a Laudian) was dabbling in Alchemy – a mostly respectable Profession in Royalist lands but outlawed here. They smashed up the laboratory, including the crate. Inside the crate was a Basilisk (see *Clockwork & Chivalry* p.100), which the Reverend had recently bought, at great expense, from a gypsy. The Basilisk fled from the violence of the Iconoclasts into the church hall, only to meet the Priest coming in the other direction. Killing the hapless vicar with its deadly gaze, it fled into the countryside, where it has been killing things ever since.

Village of Fear

When the Adventurers leave the church and head for the village, they will see several dead sheep in the fields, as well as more dead birds, a number of dead rodents and a dead dog. In the village, the chimneys are all smoking, as though people are at home but there is no-one around. The curtains of all the windows are drawn, or if the house is too poor to afford curtains, cloth or wooden boards have been hastily put over the insides of the windows. If the Adventurers call out in the street, no-one will answer – the curtains will not even twitch. If they knock on the door of a house, the first couple they try won't reply (though they may hear muttering within) but at the third house, a voice from behind the door will call out, *'Have ye seen the Devil's Chicken?'*

Whatever the reply, the man on the other side of the door will begin a rant:

'Aye, the Devil's Chicken, I tell ye! Seen it with me own eyes, I did. With four legs and a tail like unto the tail of Satan himself! 'Tis a punishment on this poor village for its sinful ways! It'll kill you, soon as look at you! You'd better come in, mean miserable sinners though ye be, lest the vengeance of the Lord be upon ye!'

He will open the door just wide enough for the Adventurers to slip through, though any horses or mules they have will be left to the mercies of the 'Devil's Chicken.' Any Adventurer with the Alchemy skill or Lore (Zoology) or similar will, on a successful Difficult roll (-20%), be able to identify the 'Devil's Chicken' as a Basilisk, though they will know little more than that, other than that they are reputed to be extremely dangerous, poisonous in some way and able (so it is believed) to kill with a glance. The Adventurers' host is Repentance Halliwell, a devout Puritan shoemaker (Righteousness Points: 78). He is a tall, stoop-shouldered, gaunt-faced man with grey hair. His cottage is full of shoe-making equipment and pieces of cut leather. His wife Constance, a demure, rotund little woman, says very little, though she will occasionally admonish her husband with a gentle 'Oh, Repentance,' if he becomes too righteous. She offers the Adventurers pease porridge (a plain but wholesome porridge made from split peas with small pieces of bacon in it), while they can ask questions to find out what has been going on.

Repentance blames it all on the Vicar and his ungodly ways:

'A Catholic and a Witch, he were! Not that there's much difference, if you want my opinion. What with his robes and incense and fancified gold candelabras, not a proper man of God at all. And then the potions he used to make – noxious vapours coming from the vestry at all times of the day and night. Devilish, it were! Almost sent for the Witch Finders more than once, I did. But then that proper Godly man turned up yesterday – Zeal-of-the-Lord Harrison – Iconoclast General he called himself, reckoned he had orders from Cromwell to purify the churches of their heathenish popery. Had a couple of assistants with him, proper young men, all righteousness and muscles. Off they went to the church to cleanse it of its devilish trappings. Well, a lot of us proper Godly folk cheered 'em on, though some folk stayed in, hidin' like. We could hear the smashing and banging from here, quite warmed the heart it did. But then it all changed. There

were screaming come from the church, and then the three of 'em came galloping back through the village on their horses as though the Devil 'imself were on their heels. 'Lock your doors,' they shouted, 'shutter your windows! Satan's curse is abroad!' An' off they went.

And that's when the dying started. I saw the beast with me own eyes, though it didn't see me, thank the Lord. Nasty scraggly thing, like a chicken it were, but with four legs, an wings like a bat, and a slimy serpent's tail. One of the village dogs went for it and it raised its tatty wings and glared, and the dog just dropped dead. We've been hidin' ever since. There's no-one in the village knows what to do, we're not learned folk. Only one with any proper book-learning were the Vicar – unless you count Crazy Giles, he knows everything about everything, though he's tormented by demons something rotten. How do you fight the Devil's Chicken?'

Under the Gaze

It should be apparent to the Adventurers that they are going to have to sort out the situation; either that or run away and leave the village to its own devices. Some of what Halliwell said may have raised the ire of some of the Adventurers – any Catholics or Laudians will have to make Righteousness tests to avoid getting into an argument with him. But things should not get too heated, what with a Basilisk waiting outside to kill everyone.

If no-one else thinks of it, Halliwell will suggest that there may be something in the Vicar's library that will tell them how to deal with such a beast. When the Adventurers reveal that the library was empty (assuming they know this), the shoemaker will immediately suspect *'...that Crazy Giles. He were always trying to get in the church and steal the Vicar's books. Book mad he is. Well, just plain mad, really. Believes every word he reads, even if it contradicts what he read the day before.'*

The village is arranged in a square, the cottages surrounding a village green, with a duck pond in the middle. The church is a little way out of the village, as the original

tiny old church burned down in the last century. A much larger new one was built, outside the village, where there was more space. Giles lives across the village green from Halliwell, so the Adventurers will have to either cross the open space or creep around the edge of the green to get to his house.

Recruiting others

The Adventurers (either before or after visiting Giles) may want to recruit other villagers to help them hunt down the Basilisk. Halliwell and his wife say they are much too old for that sort of thing and cannot be persuaded. Anyone making a successful opposed Persuade roll (Difficult, -20%) against the villagers' Persistence of 80% (it's so high due to their, probably sensible, fear of the Basilisk) will get 3D6 young men to come out of their houses. It's a small village, so further successful rolls will not add to this total. After getting information from the books at Giles' house, if they failed in their earlier recruitment attempts, they can make another roll without the penalty, as long as they sound like they know what they are talking about. Games Masters may give a bonus if the plan sounds particularly convincing.

Avoiding the Basilisk

The Basilisk is currently asleep, in a barn, on the edge of the village closest to the church but of course the Adventurers do not know this. The trip to Giles' house should be a fraught affair. There seem to be dead creatures everywhere, as well as live creatures that look a lot like Basilisks when seen out of the corner of the eye. The Adventurers could use up quite a lot of powder and shot killing innocent hens before they reach their destination.

The Naked

When the Adventurers knock on Giles' door, they will be confronted by a short, tubby, hairy and completely naked man, who gives them a welcoming, joyful smile and attempts to hug them! This is 'Crazy'

The Naked and the Dead

Giles Whimshurst, a somewhat deranged Scholar who retired to the village from Cambridge, to live with his aged mother (now dead) after a having a breakdown at university. He would be the 'village idiot' except that he is far too clever. As Halliwell said, he believes everything he reads. Just now, he read a pamphlet about the Adamites (see the new Adamite Faction at the end of the adventure), which he found among the Vicar's books and he has become a convinced convert to the cause. *'Come in, come in, my friends! My home is yours. I shall bring you beer. But surely, you must feel constricted and uncomfortable in all that clothing. Come, cast off your worldly trappings and let us be as the Lord God made us!'*

It is, of course, extremely unlikely that anyone will take him up on this offer – even a Ranter is only likely to strip off in order to make some sort of political point and there is not really a reason for that here. Other than that, nakedness is a very big taboo in 17th century England!

Luckily for the Adventurers, due to Giles' mental condition, he only has 4 Righteousness Points in the Adamite faith and while he seems very passionate about it, can be converted to another faith quite easily (using the Righteousness rules in *Clockwork & Chivalry* p.57) – at which point he will become very contrite and rush off to put some clothes on.

His little cottage is filled with books, stacked in teetering heaps, with only narrow walkways to get between them. Once the problem has been explained to him, he will be fascinated and begin pulling books from various piles; some of them are the Vicar's and some his own but they are all bestiaries of one sort or another. Giles is easily distracted and will appear to be studying the topic in question only to suddenly say, *'I say, did you know that pelicans feed their young by pecking their own breasts to give them blood?'* or *'To think that barnacle geese grow from barnacles, who'd have thought it?'* It will be up to the Adventurers to find the information they need.

Alchemy, Lore (Aristotelian Science), Lore (Zoology), Lore (Africa), INTx2, or any other

skill the player can persuade the Games Master to accept, can be used to find information about Basilisks. Adventurers can make a roll every 15 minutes and each successful roll gives one piece of information from the following list:

- The Basilisk can inject poisonous venom with its beak.*
- The Basilisk can kill you just by staring at you.*
- The Basilisk can be killed by hearing the cry of a cockerel.
- The Basilisk can be killed by the smell of weasel urine.
- The Basilisk can only be harmed by a magically-treated weapon.
- The Basilisk has corrosive blood.*
- The Basilisk can be killed by making it stare at itself in a mirror.
- The Basilisk can only kill you with its gaze if you make eye contact with it – if you only look at it in a mirror, you are safe.

Those marked with a * are definitely true (see *Clockwork & Chivalry* p.100) – the others may be true or false at the Games Master's discretion. If the Games Master wants to run a game in which the Adventurers spend their time hunting weasels for their urine, go ahead – there is probably someone in the village with a ferret but will that do the job? Feel free to come up with any other real or imaginary facts about the Basilisk – it could be that the players have read the entry on Basilisks in the *Worldbook* and think they know what they are getting in to, in which case some new true facts may be entertaining (Basilisks are irresistibly attracted to freshly-laid hens' eggs, Basilisks can only be killed by a male Natterjack Toad and so forth).

Whatever resources the Adventurers think they need can probably be procured in the village, whether it is mirrors (or highly polished pans, more likely), toads or volunteers (see *Recruiting Others*), though collecting them may take a while.

If you can get your characters sneaking around the hedgerows, peering into mirrors, carrying bottles of weasel urine and crowing like cockerels, this will make for an interesting confrontation when the

Iconoclast returns at the end of the next scene!

It is possible, of course, that one or more of the Adventurers are Alchemists themselves, in which case, if they are caught casting spells in Parliamentary territory, they could be in serious trouble.

Hunting the Devil's Chicken

Once the Adventurers have gathered their resources (and possibly a group of villagers willing to help), it will be time to hunt the Basilisk. How this goes depends entirely on what sort of plan the players came up with. Bear in mind that the Basilisk is very dangerous and could kill most of the party if you are not careful. If the Adventurers have some villagers helping them, it might kill one of them first, giving the players some warning as to quite how deadly it is. When the hunt begins, the Basilisk is just waking up in a barn on the edge of the village nearest the church. It will head toward the village looking for food. Despite its lethal nature, it prefers the same sort of foodstuffs as chickens eat – seed corn, vegetables, scraps and so on. The Basilisk is actually quite nervous of this strange environment; it was brought up in captivity in far off Cyrenaica, has spent most of its life in a box and is not used to the English countryside. Its response to anything it sees as a threat is to spread its tattered wings menacingly and gaze at it – which is usually fatal. If the threat seems too overwhelming, however, it will attempt to escape. It cannot fly but can flap in an ungainly fashion over low hedges and the like and its small size means that it can squeeze through narrow gaps in hedges, into henhouses, through carelessly left-open windows, through barns filled with animals and so forth.

The Basilisk should lead the Adventurers a merry chase (though a potentially lethal one) around the village. This is likely to be a deadly serious hunt from the point of view of the Adventurers but a ludicrous romp on the part of their players. Play it out for as long as your players are enjoying themselves, with hairs-breadth escapes on the part of the Adventurers *and* the Basilisk and just when it seems that the Adventurers are about to triumph,

interrupt them with the following:

Suddenly, you hear a terrific metallic roaring, The hideous clanking noise comes from the road leading out of the village.

Some of the Adventurers may recognise the noise as the sound of the Iron Horses of the New Model Army Clockwork Regiment.

Whose Side Are You On?

The Iconoclast, Zeal-for-the-Lord Harrison, has gone off to the next town, donned his other money-making 'hat' and returned as a Witch Hunter, with a squad of New Model Army Soldiers, determined to root out all signs of Witchcraft in the village. There are three of the large clockwork two-wheeled Iron Horses (see *Clockwork & Chivalry* p.144); each of them normally carries two Soldiers, though one of those has been replaced by Harrison for this mission.

The Adventurers may be expecting help from the New Model Army but this is not to be forthcoming. At the sound of the Iron Horses, the Basilisk panics and flees if possible (killing if necessary). If the Adventurers are in the middle of combat, the sound of the Iron Horses will require them to make a Persistence roll to avoid being distracted, allowing the Basilisk to get away. Even if the Adventurers manage to kill the Basilisk, Harrison will have a story ready.

The Iconoclast-turned-Witch Hunter is determined to uncover evidence of Witchcraft, as he is paid for every Witch he turns in. The Adventurers are bound to be doing something that could be construed as Witchcraft, whether it is wandering around with mirrors, toads and magic potions, or apparently sacrificing a deformed chicken to Satan. Harrison will point at the Adventurers and cry out, 'Seize the Witches – I want them alive for hanging!'

The Soldiers will shut down their Iron Horses, draw their swords and leap into the fray. Harrison is not much of a fighter and will stay at the back, out of the way. If the Basilisk is still alive, it will no doubt cause complications and it is even possible that Crazy Giles will have another conversion to Adamite beliefs and run naked through the conflict, calling for peace and love.

The NMA Soldiers will be attempting to subdue rather than kill the Adventurers; the Adventurers may not be so cautious.

There are any number of ways this fight

could go, depending on your players. For instance:

- If the Adventurers can capture Harrison, the Soldiers will hold off and listen to their explanation of events.
- If the Adventurers are captured, the villagers will probably stick up for them and the Soldiers will release them, though they will have made an enemy of Zeal-for-the-Lord Harrison, who may return in a future episode.
- If the Basilisk is still free and kills someone else, the Soldiers can be persuaded to change sides and help hunt it down.
- If the Adventurers kill all the soldiers, they will likely be hunted across the county as murderers (and Witches too, if Harrison has anything to do with it).

The best possible result is that the village is saved, the Soldiers end up on their side and Harrison's accusations are proved to be untrue. In that case, some of the villagers (after laying out their dead Vicar in the church for later burial) will have a celebration party for the Adventurers. This may be rather more than the Puritan members of the community can put up with (particularly Repentance Halliwell) and they will wax loud and long about the sinfulness of drinking, dancing, singing and anything else constitutes fun. Crazy Giles will probably make a fool of himself in some way. Harrison will storm off in disgust, plotting to take his revenge on the Adventurers at a later date.

Survivors should be given three Improvement Rolls and a Hero Point.

NPCs

The following NPCs have General Hit Points (see the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* p.96); if the Adventurers are already weakened from fighting the Basilisk by the time the NMA Soldiers arrive, treat them as Underlings.

Zeal-for-the-Lord

Harrison

Puritan Iconoclast

STR 12 CON 11 SIZ 10 INT 13

POW 15 DEX 11 CHA 14

SR 12 CA 2 Hit Points 11

Skills: Evade 69%, Influence 67%,

Oratory 59%, Persistence 45%, Pistol (Duelling) 32% (2D4+1), Resilience 32%, Sword (Rapier) 42% (1D8), Unarmed 25% (1D3)

Faction: Puritan R P : 68

New Model Army Soldiers (5)

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 9 POW 10 DEX 12 CHA 9

SR 11 CA 2 Hit Points 12

Skills: Evade 53%, Persistence 36%, Pistol (Flintlock Carbine) 67% (2D6+1), Resilience 43%, Sword (Mortuary Sword) 65% (1D8), Unarmed 56%

Peasants (3D6)

STR 12 CON 11 SIZ 10 INT 9 POW 10 DEX 10 CHA 9

SR 10 CA 2 Hit Points 11

Skills: Club 32% (1D6), Evade 42%, Persistence 36%, Resilience 46%, Unarmed 56%

New Profession:

Iconoclast

Social Class: Any

Skills: Common Skill Bonuses: Evaluate +10%, Influence +10%, Insight +10%, Lore (Regional) +15%, Ride +5% **Advanced Skills** - Lore (Iconography), choose one – Engineering or Oratory.

'We brake down about 100 superstitious pictures; and seven fryers hugging a nun; and the picture of God, and Christ; and divers others very superstitious. And 200 had been broke down afore I came. We took away 2 popish inscriptions with Ora pro nobis and we beat down a great stoning cross on the top of the church.' - William Dowsing, Iconoclast, 1644.

You smash things. Strictly speaking, you smash particular things – religious icons that you believe to be blasphemous or to serve the purpose of separating God from his people. Such items include altar rails, which you believe divide the Preacher from his flock, stained glass windows, chalices, surplices, books, tapestries, paintings and other 'Catholic' trinkets, which probably

The Naked and the Dead



seem to you little more than pagan or magical relics. Sometimes you are aided by a willing populace, resentful of priestly extravagances. At other times you are resisted by a resentful population, who curse you for abusing their place of worship and religious leaders.

Before the war, the affectations of the Laudian church, with its ceremonial trappings, caused many Godly people to suspect that there is a secret plot by the Anglican church establishment (with tacit Royal approval) to return England to Catholicism. Laudians and Catholics uniformly despise and fear you.

Strictly speaking, Iconoclasts tend to be members of the Puritan Faction and few people are actually full-time Iconoclasts, as they have to do other jobs to get by. There are however exceptions. In the same manner that superstition, religious zeal and civil disruption has led to individuals becoming Witch Finders, a few people have decided to devote themselves to becoming full-time Iconoclasts. You may have taken this job on yourself, motivated out of religious sensibility and hopeful that a grateful populace will reward you for your efforts. Or, like William Dowsing, who is quoted, you may have been appointed (and salaried) by a Parliamentary Committee, paid to carry out Iconoclasm. Or you may have a private benefactor who sees paying you as akin to sponsoring a missionary.

Of course, you may belong to a Faction other than Puritan. Perhaps you are a Ranter, enjoying the opportunity to attack the Anglican orthodoxy. You could be a Leveller, quick to join a crusade against wealth and privilege. Or maybe you are motivated out of Self Interest (Greed), some of the items, particularly the valuable silverware, becoming 'relocated' rather than smashed. You may work alone, or possibly you have an escort of willing helpers. You may have a note authorising you to recruit local volunteers or you may attempt to persuade religious leaders to peacefully and willingly allow the civil authorities to remove any iconography. Or, you may just love the sound of breaking glass and the thrill of destruction. Whatever

your motive and mode of working, the Civil War offers you plenty of opportunity to ply your singular trade.

New Faction: Adamites

- **It is possible to live in a state of innocence** – And that should be the aim of everyone.
- **Nudity is a holy and innocent state** – Through stripping off one's outer garb one can emulate the divine state of Eden. Worship is best done with no clothes on, before God as he intended.
- **Marriage is an unnatural concept** – Were Adam and Eve man and wife? Marriage is an impediment to perfect union.
- **Recreating Eden requires the dissolving of law** – Law is unnecessary when life is lived in a state of innocence.
- **There is no right and wrong** – We are God's perfect beings, incapable of sin.

Allies: Clubmen, Diggers, Ranters

Enemies: Laudians, Presbyterians, Puritans

Zeal: 30

Bonus Skills: Beliefs (Adamite) +25%

Adamites loosely base their beliefs on the teachings of an early Christian sect. The breakdown of deference following the outbreak of the Civil War has kindled an interest in liberating philosophies and Adamites take the notion of 'liberating philosophy' to an extreme. By living as if in Eden before the 'fall' you have attained a state of grace. You consort with fellow believers, unburdened by worldly trappings, in particular your clothes.

You might take advantage of your 'natural state' to partake in carnal activities in the knowledge that you should not be confined by false worldly morality; although if that is the sole substance of your belief you are not an Adamite but rather belong to the Self Interest (Lust) Faction. Certainly you will not feel bound by the sinful laws of earthly authority, secure in the knowledge that your innocence raises you above such tawdry restrictions.

Many who argue against religious tolerance, particularly Laudian, or Presbyterian Faction Scholars and Preachers, use the

Adamites as the most notorious example of the dire consequences of religious schism. Indeed, when condemning non-conformists they often accuse them of being Adamite, whether that is the actual case or not. Such is the fear that many other Faction members have, of guilt by association, many otherwise sympathetic to religious independence, nevertheless, draw the line at Adamite congregations. Many Puritans suspect (or perhaps, perversely, hope) that most Adamites are women, using the Sect as an excuse to free themselves from the male authority that marriage provides and engage in Ungodly behaviours. Your Faction is accused of lewdness and worse but you know it is wider society that is guilty of false modesty and hypocrisy, whereas you live in a state of perfection.

Even the most notorious Ranters stress that their nudity is symbolic and illustrative, a method of challenging the orthodox establishment, although in practice the boundaries between the behaviour of individual Ranters and Adamites might be rather hazy. All but members of neutral Factions are likely to find Adamites unacceptable and even fellow neutral Faction members are likely to find your beliefs unsettling (although those belonging to the Self Interest (Lust) Faction may find Adamites somewhat intriguing).

It is unclear just how many Adamites there actually are. If one believes the writers of the many penny pamphlets declaiming them, you are everywhere. Others believe that Adamites are an invention created to justify an attack on all non-conformity. But you know different. The truth lies somewhere between these two notions; certainly Adamites exist but how many practise the Adamite faith is unclear. Where the Ranters practise their faith publicly, purposely challenging church authorities, Adamites often meet secretly to avoid censure. It is suspected that Adamites are particularly numerous in London, meeting in fashionable private houses to conduct their bizarre meetings.



Volume I: The Justice Department

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Augmetics and Prosthetics

By Alan Oliver

The Augments in the Traveller Core Rulebook are simple and generic, a necessary function of trying to cover the entire subject in under a page. This article is aimed at those players who want to make augmetics a major part of their game. It looks at augmetics in greater detail and also puts some balance features in place to prevent augmetics from taking over a game completely.

Introduction

Cybernetics can be divided into two broad types, medical prosthetics and augmentation.

Medical prosthetics are designed to mimic the natural functions of the body and are used to replace lost body parts. These will range from the simplest, lowest Tech Level items such as the wooden peg leg, to the highest, vat grown cloned organs. The key point of medical prosthetics is that, at best, they match the appearance and capabilities of the natural body, rather than exceed it. They are generally legal in all but the most restrictive of legal systems, although many religious communities consider them to be breaches of the strictures of their faith.

Augmetics involves alteration to the body that increases the user's existing capabilities or gives them completely new abilities. This could be in the form of replacement limbs or organs that work significantly better than the natural organ or implanted devices or organs within the body. Augmetics are illegal outside of the military in all but the most liberal of societies and are typically restricted to military and intelligence operatives, with the inevitable trickle down to the black market and criminal fraternity.

Medical prosthetics

As stated, these are used as part of medical procedures after a character is particularly seriously injured. Any character that is

seriously wounded will have a chance of losing a limb or organ. This will either be at the Referee's discretion or on a random dice roll. Roll 1d6 and the injury will require medical prosthetics on a 1. The Referee can assign modifiers to this dice roll based on circumstances, such as being hit by an explosive weapon or a big chopper.

Medical prosthetics do not provide any bonuses to the character with them, they are designed to mimic the normal human body so they provide no advantage. The only effect that medical prosthetics do have is that they still have ART ratings. The ART ratings for medical prosthetics are lower than they are for augmetics.

Typical examples of medical prosthetics and their ART ratings are:

- Hand or foot, each 2.5%
- Arm to shoulder, each 5%
- Leg to hip, each 7.5%
- Eyes, each 2.5%

The Costs

These are the various ways in which augmetics can be kept in check in a game to prevent them from dominating play.

Price

In most places augmetics are going to be expensive. In addition to the cost of the augmetic itself, normally from a black market dealer, there are additional costs involved. Firstly you will have to pay fixers to track down the augmetics, unless you have access to them directly. This is normally 5-30% of the cost of the augmetic (roll 1d6 x 5%). Then there is the cost of the facilities and trained staff to implant them, this will be another 5-30% of the augmetic cost on worlds where it is not illegal to perform this service, rising to 10-60% on worlds where performing augmentation on another is a criminal offence.

Given the amounts of money involved and the fact that this all takes place in

the criminal world, there is a great deal of potential for double crossing and betrayal as well.

Time

Having augmetics installed is not quick. For most augmetics to be implanted, and for the character to recover from the surgery and learn how to use the augmetic you are looking at weeks, possibly months before the character is ready for action again.

At Tech Level 10 assume a minimum of three months recovery for any serious augmetic implantation, including the time for retraining in the new abilities. For each Tech Level above 10 reduce this time by two weeks. So at Tech Level 14 recovery will only take a month and at Tech Level 16 recovery is just a few days.

Legal – the ART

On almost every planet there is a point where someone stops being a person with rights and becomes a machine or device with no rights of their own. This is normally termed the Augmetic Replacement Threshold. It is based on the percentage of the body that has been replaced with augmetics and medical prosthetics. It can range from as low as 5% in a repressive society to as high as 95% in a very liberated or lawless society.

The character's ART is a cumulative total of all the medical prosthetics and augmetics that they have, each of which will have an ART rating. This is then compared with the local ART and if above it then their legal rights will be at least curtailed. In some places they will no longer be considered sentient at all and will be the legal property of another. They could also comprise a slave underclass or be considered dangerous animals that need to be controlled.

In some societies there may be 2 levels of ART. When the first ART is reached then the person must be registered, licensed, tagged or otherwise controlled or monitored.

Then at the second ART they actually lose their rights and are no longer considered people. This dual ART system is common on many worlds.

Members of military in these societies are generally not under ART restrictions; however this will again depend on the local laws. A military veteran who leaves the service will normally have their military augmetics removed and have them replaced with medical prosthetics. Those that keep their augmetics will face the normal legal problems.

Medical prosthetics have a lower ART rating than the augmetic equivalent. This is because they are designed to simply mimic the human body rather than surpass it.

Travel (optional rule)

This is not part of the official *Traveller* cannon but can be used to handicap characters with heavy duty augmetics. This should be used as an optional rule if required.

Characters who have a high ART level suffer dangerous feedback during FTL jumps, and have to spend the time in jump in cryo suspension. Depending on the ART level of the character they will suffer the following effects;

Under 25% ART level, the character suffers no adverse effects other than a headache and some nausea.

Between 25% and 50%, the character suffers a -2 to Strength and Dexterity, treated as an injury. This is accompanied by a pounding headache, nausea and sometimes diarrhoea.

Between 50% and 75%, the character is rendered unconscious when the jump is initiated and will suffer a permanent -1 penalty to Strength, Dexterity or Endurance, unless they are in cryo.

Over 75%, the character is killed by the feedback, which fries the nervous system and reduces wetware to slag.

The effect of this is that high ART level characters have to be kept in storage,

which does create some nice imagery. Ranks of full replacement hard-body war machines being put into cryo storage for transport to the enemy system, then waking up to go straight into battle.

Psionics

Augmetics are very detrimental to Psionics. For each 10% ART the character suffers a -1 penalty to Psi. Any wetware or implants mounted directly in the brain count as double their ART rating. Cloned replacement limbs and organs do not degrade psionic strength.

For this reason those characters who do develop psionics will generally avoid any form of augmetic. Whereas normally augmetics can unbalance a game, they might be a useful way to restore the balance if there are several powerful psionic characters in play. The non psionic characters can be given augmetics to get them back into balance with the rest of the group.

Cascade

Most augmetics are of limited capacity unless combined with other augmetics. For example augmetic eye replacements with cameras installed will only have the memory for a handful of still shots or a few seconds of footage, and require the user to touch the eye to activate the camera. This can be improved by adding B-WIS, so the camera can be used with a thought command, and supporting digital memory. Then you have the problem that the memory requires a power source and, if high capacity, some sort of heat sink. Then you can add in a transmitter, either as an implant or as part of an audio package and broadcast what you can see. However that might require increased processing power, especially if you want to encrypt it.

The full range of possibilities involved are near limitless, players and Referees will have to work out what additional features can be gained by adding additional cascade augmetics.

Compatibility

As anyone who has tried to install software or hardware on a PC knows, these things are not always compatible. There is no reason to think that across something the size of the Imperium, it will be any different. In general if all the augmetics in a system are produced by the same manufacturer, then you should have no problems. A 'system' is defined as a group of augmetics connected together to perform a specific function. For example eye replacements, BWIS, memory wetware and a comm. would be one system. However an armoured dermis and a prosthetic hand would not.

If two or more manufacturers produced different parts of the system, then there is a chance of problems. Assume a -1 DM for each manufacturer's product, after the first, involved in the task being attempted. Software patches and hardware improvements will be available, ranging from Cr 2-1,200 each but these are at best temporary solutions, typically lasting 1-6 weeks.

Augmetics

Augmetics are again divided into different groups; prosthetics, organ replacements, biomods, wetware, support hardware, implants, exoskeletons and full body replacement.

Prosthetics

This is limb replacement technology. Augmetics can be stronger than the original limb, have internal or external hardware fitted, or at higher Tech Levels, both. Where increased strength is required the rest of the body will need to be reinforced for this to function.

Organ Replacements

These either perform the same function as the original organ, but with a greater capacity, or add additional abilities not found in the normal organ.

Augmetics and Prosthetics

Eye replacement in particular offers a wide range of possibilities and can be divided into three types; designer eyes appear to be natural eyes but with the makers marks or logos worked into the eye. Covert eyes appear to be entirely natural eyes but still have augmented functions, while Overt are obviously artificial, normally only used within the military, and tend to feature a wider range of features.

Biomods

These are implants that change the way the body itself operates, such as capillary pumps to improve blood flow or chemical digestive enhancers. As Tech Level increases these become organic or genetic changes to the body, rather than mechanical. They are more subtle than most other forms of augmetic but rarely provide as great a benefit.

Wetware

These are inbuilt computer systems and are required to operate many different augmetics. These are most likely processing power and memory requirements. There are external interface connections that enable the user to interact directly with computer systems or other 'smart' hardware, allowing a greater degree of control. There are also sensory recording capabilities.

The key part of wetware is the Brain-Wave Interpretation System, which allows the user to control any electronic hardware by thought if linked into it. Without a B-WIS augmetics must be manually or vocally controlled.

The other common part of wetware is the smart link, which enables the user to connect directly to a 'smart' piece of hardware and control it directly from their B-WIS. Any hardware that has been upgraded to smart will receive a +1 DM. Upgrading hardware to smart costs 50% of the cost of the hardware when new.

Support hardware

These are required to keep other items functioning. These include power cells, heat sinks, wireless comms and so forth. Other augmetics that require support hardware will list it in the description. As Tech Level increases support hardware becomes more powerful, able to support more items.

Those items that require power will list a power requirement in units/hour or units/use. Power cells are storage batteries that hold a number of units before they are discharged and need replacing. They are normally mounted in the skin or outer casing of an augmetic. The standard small power cell is a 10 millimetre disc, 2.5 millimetres thick; the large power cell is a 20 millimetre cylinder of 15 millimetre diameter.

Heat sinks will be rated for the number of systems that they can support. The basic heat sink can only support one system but some designs will support multiple systems, especially as Tech Levels increase.

Implants

Implants are devices or hardware mounted directly into the users flesh. They are either mounted on the surface or deep within the body. Surface implants break the skin and are easily accessible but can be easily spotted. Deep implants are surgically implanted deep in the body and cannot be accessed without surgery. Implants include storage spaces, weapons, electronics, data display systems and even explosives.

Exoskeleton

An exoskeleton is a form of battledress armour that is fused directly with the body to some degree. They are normally a messy and inefficient step towards full body replacement, however they have the advantage that they retain more of the users natural body, which is significant for legal purposes or when retiring from the military.

Exoskeletons do not appear human in anything other than the worst visual conditions and cannot pass for normal people.

Full Body Replacement – Full B-Rep

Full body replacement involves transplanting the brain and some elements of the nervous system into an otherwise artificial body. The trauma involved in such procedures normally means that this option is only used when the subject is already dead.

The artificial body is normally humanoid for ease of use but this can range from a near human appearing body to massive war machines. Because life support systems are limited to the head or torso of the replacement body, more of the body is devoted to offensive and defensive systems, which makes them much tougher than exoskeletons.

At Tech Level 13 it becomes possible to make artificial bodies that appear human to most normal examinations, while at Tech Level 15 artificially created organic body replacement becomes possible.

B-Reps that are designed to appear human are generally called soft-body, while the full on war machine style B-Reps are called hard-body.

Imperium Military Augmetics: IMA

This is an Imperium wide military supply company that produces augmetics directly for the Imperium military, both ground pounders and deep space navy and marines. They are the largest manufacturer of military augmetics within human controlled space and as such their augmetics are the most common in the military and black markets alike.

All IMA augmetics are obviously artificial and made from cutting edge materials

dependant on the Tech Level involved. For them most part they are high performance alloys and composites but not nano-engineered materials.

Officer items are more expensive, available at a slightly higher Tech Levels and are more stylish in appearance, they come in male and female options, unlike the standard IMA prosthetics, which are unisex in design and not generally aesthetically pleasing unless you want to look like a piece of military hardware mated with an industrial digger.

IMA Prosthetics

IMA Leg replacement; reinforced [TL 11, ART 15%, 20 / hour]: Leg replacement from the hip down. Leg is heavily armoured but operates at a higher strength to compensate for the increased weight. Effect is to add 2 to Endurance for sustaining damage purposes only. The officer upgrade includes a retractable sidearm holster inside the thigh. Holster is shielded against detection by scanners lower than TL 12.

Leg replacement; reinforced
Cr 20,000

Officer leg replacement; reinforced
TL 12 Cr 50,000

IMA Leg Replacement; Strength Enhancer [TL 11, ART 15%, 30 / hour]: Leg replacement from the hip down. Requires torso sub dermal reinforcement to operate. If combined in a pair then increases running speed by 50% and provides a +2 to strength in situations where leg strength only is required. If a pair of strength enhancer arms are added to this, then the +2 becomes a direct characteristic improvement. The officer upgrade improves leap distance, allowing leaps of up to 10 metres when fitted as a pair.

Leg replacement; strength enhancer
TL 11 Cr 25,000

Officer leg replacement
TL 12 Cr 70,000

IMA 'Charger' leg and spine replacement [TL 11, ART 35%, 75 / hour]: This replaces both legs from the pelvis and heavily reinforces the spine. The limbs are lightly armoured but massively powerful, allowing the character to run at speeds of 30-40mph. The officer upgrade also increases leap distance to 20 metres.

Charger leg replacement

TL 11 Cr 100,000

Officer charger leg replacement

TL 12 Cr 250,000

IMA arm replacement; reinforced [TL 11, ART 10%, 20 / hour]: Arm replacement from the shoulder. Heavily armoured but operating at a higher strength level to compensate for the weight. Effect is to add 2 to Endurance for sustaining damage purposes only. Officer upgrade includes a weapon hardpoint on the forearm as standard.

Arm replacement; reinforced

TL 11 Cr 25,000

Officer arm replacement; reinforced

TL 12 Cr 60,000

IMA arm replacement; strength enhancer [TL 11, ART 10%, 30 / hour]: Arm replacement from the shoulder. Requires torso sub dermal reinforcement to operate. Increases the user's strength by two, with regard to recoil for pistol weapons. If the user has a pair of these arms, this applies to all man portable weapons. If combined with strength enhancer legs, Strength characteristic is improved by 2. Officer upgrade improves this to +4 to strength for recoil purposes.

Arm replacement; strength enhancer

TL 11 Cr 30,000

Officer arm replacement

TL 12 Cr 90,000

IMA Support Augmetics

IMA sub dermal reinforcement [TL 11, ART 5%]: Ceramics, carbon fibre and monomolecular reinforcements are applied to the torso muscles and any organic limbs remaining. Required for any augmetic prosthetics to operate at their full

strength without ripping the torso apart or rupturing internal organs. The officer upgrade is simply better designed and the user retains a more human appearance.

Sub dermal reinforcement

Cr 50,000

Officer sub dermal reinforcement

TL 12 Cr 100,000

IMA Weapon hardpoint [TL 11, ART 0%]:

These are arm mounts that normal one handed guns can be fitted to and used. The gun must have a 'smart' interface and is used on the relevant pistol gun Combat Skill. Weapon can be used freely while the hand is free to hold a different weapon or do other things.

Weapon hardpoint

Cr 10,000

IMA Power Cell [TL 10, ART 1%]: Large power cell. If mounted directly into a replacement limb, then the ART is reduced to 0%. The Officer power cell comes with a universal power adaptor, that allows the cell mount to be plugged in to around 60% of Imperium military hardware to draw power from it and recharge the cells. These can then be swapped out to the troops, enabling the officer to keep their troops operating in the field.

Power Cell,

TL 10 100 units Cr 35,000

Officer power cell,

TL 12 200 units Cr 50,000

IMA power plant [TL 12, ART 10%]: This is a football sized micro reactor that is used to power the more powerful augmetics in use by the military. It produces 150 units of power per hour, so a single power plant is likely to be sufficient to power all but the most power hungry of augmetics. Some hard-body B-Reps actually mount two of these, especially the older and less efficient designs. The Officer plant produces 300 units per hour and gives out less radiological emissions.

Power Plant TL 12

150 units per hour Cr 100,000

Officer plant TL 13

300 units per hour Cr 250,000

Augmetics and Prosthetics

IMA Heat Sink [TL 10, ART 2%, 1 / hour]:

This is a military heat sink, much larger and more powerful than civilian designs. The standard heat sink is a 20 by 60 millimetre heat exchanger and is capable of handling the heat from five augmetics. The Officer upgrade is the same size as the standard heat sink but somewhat less box like and can handle the heat from eight augmetics. Heat sink, TL 10

5 augmetics Cr 40,000
Officer heat sink, TL 12
8 augmetics Cr 65,000

IMA Biomods

IMA Circulatory enhancement [TL 11, ART 7%, 1 / hour]:

This is a mechanical enhancement to the entire circulatory system, including replacing the heart with a mechanical prosthetic. The rest of the major arteries are also reinforced to handle the increased blood pressure that the artificial heart provides. The overall effect of this is to increase the Endurance characteristic by one. The officer version is more efficient than the standard, only requiring 1- 3 hours. This is a borderline item as it could be classified as an organ replacement.

IMA Circulatory enhancement
TL 11 Cr 400,000
Officer Circulation
TL 12 Cr 500,000

IMA Organ replacement

IMA Overt Optics [TL 11, ART 10%, 1 / 10 minutes]: Replaces the eyes with complex military scanners that fill the entire eye socket from brow to cheekbone. The standard features are anti flash protection and light intensifier night vision. They can have two additional functions from the following list:

Tactical map display (requires TMSS)
Cr 10,000
IR & UV vision filters, alternative night vision options Cr 15,000
Range finder laser, +1 DM to hit with 'smart-linked' weapons Cr 20,000
Laser designator (for targeting laser

guided ordinance) Cr 25,000
Suicide grenade (turns head into plasma grenade) Cr 30,000

The Officer optics are designer rather than overt and include Tactical map display in the left eye and data display in the right eye in addition to the normal overt optic features. They can still be upgraded with two additional functions from the list.

Overt Optics, pair
TL 11 Cr 100,000
Officer designer optics, pair
TL 12 Cr 250,000

IMA Armoured skin replacement [TL 10, ART 10%]:

The standard version of this reinforces the character's body and replaces their skin with a heavy ballistic fibre to provide Armour 2 across the entire body. This gives the character a skin like dense rubber and destroys their sense of touch. Normally genitalia are left unarmoured.

The officer version only provides Armour 1 to the entire body, however the character appears almost entirely human and does not lose their sense of touch.

Armoured skin replacement
Armour 2 Cr 60,000
Officer armoured skin replacement
Armour 1 Cr 75,000

IMA Wetware

IMA B-WIS [TL 11, ART 3%, 1 / hour]:

This is the standard military B-WIS and is capable of being linked to up to four different augmetics or smart systems. It is mounted in the back of the skull and requires a power source and a military heat sink. The officer version, available at TL 12, sits flush with the back of the head and can therefore be hidden by long hair or a hat. It can also be linked up to eight different augmetic or smart systems.

IMA B-WIS
TL 11 Cr 50,000
Officer B-WIS
TL 12 Cr 70,000

IMA Smart linkage [TL 11, ART 1%]: The standard military smart linkage connects directly to the smart device by fibre optic

cable, radio or other non-hardwired comms being too vulnerable to enemy jamming. Cannot be used without a B-WIS. Many users then plug short range comms into their sockets and smart hardware to remove the need for a cable and these can be purchased for as little as Cr 50. The socket is typically mounted in the skull or neck for pilots and other vehicle crew or in the arms for infantry/marine troopers. The officer smart linkage is little different from the normal one, except that it is hidden under artificial skin when not in use.

IMA smart linkage
TL 11 Cr 2,500
Officer smart linkage
TL 12 Cr 4,000

IMA Tactical map storage system [TL 11, ART 6%, 1 / 5 minutes]:

This piece of wetware is a single role combination of processor, memory storage device and comm system that is designed to update from the military sat network and display a real time tactical view of the battlefield. The officer upgrade can also display the locations of friendly units operating in its network. If they have biomonitors fitted, then these details will also be displayed on the officer TMSS. Requires a heat sink.

Tactical map storage system
TL 11 Cr 30,000
Officer tactical map system
TL 12 Cr 50,000

IMA Implants

IMA Military muscle replacement [TL 12, ART 30%, 1 / minute]:

This is one of the more extensive augmetics produced by IMA. The major bones of the body are reinforced and most of the major muscles in the body are replaced with artificial muscles running off power cells. This produces a respectable +2 to body characteristic. However the artificial muscles used are bulky, giving the character a swollen, inhuman appearance. The Officer muscle replacement uses more advanced muscle fibres to give the same improvement to body without the massive increase in bulk.

Military muscle replacement	
TL 12	Cr 1,000,000
Officer muscle replacement	
TL 13	Cr 1,250,000

IMA Military nerve signal enhancement

[TL 11, ART 5%]: This extensive series of implants runs all through the body, implanting small devices on the major nerve bundles that accelerate the speed that nerves operate. The procedure is expensive as it involves over 40 individual pieces of micro surgery. Each individual nerve enhancer has its own built in power supply, which IMA claim is good for five years operational time. However the Imperium navy replaces them after four years and the marines after two and a half years years. Apart from the scars, this is one of the few IMA augmetics that is not obvious. The officer version uses better power systems and is good for 10 years. The system provides a permanent +1 to Dexterity.

Military nerve signal enhancement	
+1 Dex	Cr 400,000
Officer hardwiring	
+1 Dex	Cr 550,000

IMA Pilot Nerve rewire [TL 12, ART 10%]

The nervous system is enhanced to improve reaction speed and coordination, although 3-6 months of retraining is required afterwards for the user to adapt to their inhuman reaction speeds. Because of the length of time to implant and retrain the user, the military only use this augmetic for fighter pilots. In addition to providing a +2 to the Dexterity characteristic, it also provides a +2 DM to the Initiative roll in combat, in addition to any Dexterity DM the character has. There is no improved officer version of this augmetic.

Pilot Nerve-wire	+2 Dexterity
+2 initiative DM	Cr 1,250,000

IMA Military Comms [TL 10, ART 2%, 1 / hour]

This is an audio only comms that has military scrambling. External controls unless linked to a B-WIS. The officer Comms has multiple channels and can handle audio and visual comms, although it will need optical pick up and displays to make

use of the function.	
Military Comms	
TL 10	Cr 5,000
Officer Comms	
TL 11	Cr 10,000

IMA Arm blade [TL 11, ART 4%, 1 / deployment/retraction]

This mounts a carbon fibre blade between the bones of the forearm, which is deployed through the heel of the hand. The blade is useful for both slicing and stabbing. Only a single blade is mounted and it is very strongly attached to the bones of the forearm. Unless linked to a B-WIS, the blade is deployed by slapping a switch on the side of the arm. Mainly used for covert ops and military intelligence types, some grunts have adopted them as emergency backup weapons when ammo is low. Because of the alterations required to the hand there is a -1 DM penalty to Dexterity actions using it. The officer version has no Dexterity penalty and is far less obvious.

Military arm blade	2d6 damage
TL 11	Cr 10,000
Officer blade	2d6 damage
TL 12	Cr 20,000

IMA Exoskeletons

IMA Deep Space Exoskeleton [TL 14, ART 40%, 10 / minute]

This is a very heavy duty exoskeleton that was designed for use by the Imperium marines exclusively. The heavily armoured exoskeleton is vacuum proof and is actually designed for operations in open space. It provides armour 4 across the entire body but is slow and cumbersome in gravity, with a penalty of -2 to Dexterity. The officer DSX retains a more human appearance but with a slight reduction in armour. However it is not slow and cumbersome in gravity, suffering no penalty to Dexterity.

IMA DS Ex	
Armour / 4 -2 Dexterity	Cr 2,000,000
Officer DSX	
Armour / 3	Cr 3,500,000

IMA Grunt exoskeleton [TL 12, ART 35%, 5 / minute]

This is a lightly powered exoskeleton designed for use by ground

troops. While not as bulky as the DS Ex, it is still a massive set of exoskeletal plates that confers a penalty to Dexterity while providing heavy armour. The Officer exoskeleton provides the same armour as the grunt but with no penalty to Dexterity and retains a more human appearance.

IMA Grunt Ex	
Armour / 3 -1 Dexterity	Cr 750,000
Officer Ex	
Armour / 3	Cr 1,000,000

IMA Body replacement

IMA produce a large range of military body replacements, most of which are very specific to their military role but these are very tightly controlled. The only one presented here is a somewhat outdated design that is no longer used by the frontline military but has started to appear in mercenary and criminal organisations.

IMA 'Boxer' hard-body replacement

[TL 13, ART 90%, 5 / minute]: This is a 2.2 metre tall lumbering war machine hard-body, heavily armoured in ceramic plating and mounting weapon hardpoints capable of holding rifles on both forearms. It also has over the shoulder auto-targeting weapon mounts, normally fitted with grenade launchers. It is very powerful and tough but not the most quiet or agile of designs. There is no officer version of this design.

Characteristics are fixed at Strength 14, Endurance 14 and Dexterity 8. Armour / 4 Cr 800,000

Travellers Aid Society

Franchulates

These produce legal medical prosthetics and minor augmetics for use across the human sphere. They operate franchulates in most major and minor starports that offer cheap medical prosthetic implantation in a secure and professional environment. They also offer limited amounts of augmetics, mainly wetware and support items to give full functionality to their medical prosthetics.

Augmetics and Prosthetics

On planets that are Tech Level 14 or higher, these will be organic medical prosthetics, while on lower tech worlds they will be mechanical, ranging down from artificial muscle fibres to simple mechanical limbs.

On worlds where the local laws prohibit even the use of medical prosthetics then the franchulate is most likely to be located within the starport itself, where Imperium law takes precedence over local laws. If that is not possible then the franchulate will be hidden somewhere out in the associated city, keeping out of sight of the authorities.

TAS Organ Replacement

TAS Designer Optics [TL 13, ART 10%, 1/hour]: Designer eye replacement, with the Travellers Aid Society logo etched into the iris of the eye. They provide a data display system as standard, although without associated data storage or comms this is limited to a time/date function. Can have one of three different additional functions added.

Binoculars	Cr 20,000
IR vision	Cr 30,000
Anti-glare protection	Cr 25,000

TAS Digestive tract Replacement [TL 12, ART 5%]: Replacement for stomach and intestines, little more than a medical prosthetic replacement apart from a very effective toxin and chemical filtration system. This gives a +4 DM to resist any ingested poison or toxin. Requires a heat sink.

TAS digestive tract replacement	Cr 20,000
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TAS Breast replacement [TL 10, ART 2%]: The ultimate in breast enhancement, the augmetic function is that the user can adjust the size of their assets. At TL 12 further enhancements make these undetectable even on close examination and the shape and elasticity can also be controlled. Where available this augmentation replaces normal cosmetic surgical procedures for the general public. These will provide a +1-3 DM to social rolls under the appropriate circumstances.

For full mental control, thus avoiding accidental setting changes when handled, a B-WIS link is recommended.

TAS breast replacement	Cr 30,000
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TAS genital replacements [TL 12, ART 5%]: Functional genitalia replacements, the augmetic factor is the enhanced level of pleasure nerve response that comes with the package. This makes sexual contact a far more intense experience for the user. This provides no specific in game benefits. Warning: regular use can become addictive.

TAS genital replacement	Cr 50,000
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TAS Wetware

TAS B-WIS [TL 10, ART 2%, 1/6 hours]: This allows direct through control of a single augmetic. As the Tech Level rises, the number of smart links or augmetics controlled by the B-WIS increases. The B-WIS is mounted entirely inside the skull and leaves no obvious evidence of it's existence. Unlike the IMA B-WIS it doesn't run hot enough to require a heat sink. More than one B-WIS can be fitted if the Tech Level for multiple augmetics isn't available.

TL 10	1 augmetic	Cr 10,000
TL 11	2 augmetics	Cr 20,000
TL 12	3 augmetics	Cr 50,000
TL 13	4 augmetics	Cr 100,000
TL 14	8 augmetics	Cr 500,000
TL 16	16 augmetics	Cr 1,000,000

TAS smart linkage [TL 10, ART 1%]: This connects the B-WIS to an external smart device. Unlike other TAS augmetics there is little improvement in the items as Tech Level increases. These are more discrete than the military linkages produced by IMA.

TAS smart linkage	Cr 5,000
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TAS Wetware Processor [TL 11, ART 2%, 1/hour]: This is a computer processing

core used to enhance other augmetics. Will require a heat sink for safe operation.

TL 11	Computer / 0	Cr 10,000
TL 13	Computer / 2	Cr 50,000
TL 15	Computer / 4	Cr 125,000

TAS Memory Storage System [TL 11, ART 2%, 1/hour]: Memory storage is effectively unlimited but the standard storage system is only connected to one other augmetic. As Tech Level rises, they can be connected to multiple inputs and outputs. For example the basic TAS MSS can be connected to TAS designer optics and therefore record anything seen by the optics and play back any stored recordings directly to the optic. A higher level TAS MSS could be connected both to the optics and to a comms system and could therefore record optical data and then transmit it through the comms, or the reverse. Lower Tech Level memory systems require heat sinks.

TL 11	1 augmetic connection	heat sink required	Cr 10,000
TL 12	2augmetic connections	heat sink required	Cr 25,000
TL 13	3 augmetic connections	heat sink required	Cr 40,000
TL 14	4 augmetic connections	heat sink required	Cr 60,000
TL 15	5 augmetic connections		Cr 75,000
TL 16	unlimited augmetic connections		Cr 150,000

TAS Wafer Jack [TL 12, ART 2%, 1 / 3 hours]: The standard wafer jack implanted into the base of the skull. It can hold up to four wafers at one time, and is Computer / 2 as standard. As technology level rises, these capabilities increase. The user can use expert programs for tasks relying on intelligence or education only.

TL 12	4 wafers	computer / 2	Cr 12,500
TL 13	6 wafers	computer / 4	Cr 17,500
TL 14	10 wafers	computer / 5	Cr 45,000

TAS Implants

TAS Comms [TL 10+, ART 2%, 1 / hour]:

This starts with a basic audio only comms system mounted in the skull behind the ear. As technology increases the range of comms available increases, although to access or record visual or other data other augmetics will have to be added to the system.

TAS Comms	TL 10
Audio only	Cr 1,500
TAS Comms	TL 12
Audio & visual	Cr 6,000
TAS Advanced comms	TL 14
Multiple data streams	Cr 65,000

TAS subderm armour [TL 11, ART 5%]:

The character has a mesh of advanced polymers under the skin, providing a degree of protection without being obvious to visual inspection or TL 10 or lower scanners. Intended for travellers who have to pass through war zones but don't want to look like a soldier.

TAS subderm armour	
Armour / 1	Cr 75,000

TAS Support Augmetics

TAS Small Power cell [TL 10, ART 1%]:

This provides power for other augmetics. As Tech Level increases the amount of power provided by a single cell increases.

TL 10	10 units	Cr 1,000
TL 11	20 units	Cr 2,500
TL 12	50 units	Cr 10,000
TL 13	100 units	Cr 25,000
TL 14	250 units	Cr 40,000
TL 15	500 units	Cr 50,000
TL 16	2,500 units	Cr 100,000

TAS Wetware heatsinks [TL 10, ART 1%, 1 / hour]: These are a standard design micro heat exchanger used to keep skull

mounted wetware from overheating. Each one is 25 millimetre square set into the skull and needs to be open to the air. The basic design can only handle the heat from one augmetic.

TL 10	cools 1 augmetic	Cr 5,000
TL 11	cools 2 augmetics	Cr 15,000
TL 12	cools 3 augmetics	Cr 35,000
TL 13	cools 4 augmetics	Cr 50,000
TL 14	cools 5 augmetics	Cr 75,000
TL 15	cools 8 augmetics	Cr 100,000

Frontier Prosthetics

They operate on the fringes of the imperium, where the laws regarding medical prosthetics are often laxer than those elsewhere. Their products are nominally medical prosthetics but offer some augmentive capabilities. This is normally in the form of greater strength and durability than normal medi-pros but they are not of military quality.

Their main line of augmetics is in prosthetics. These are humanoid in shape but have ridged external plating. Overall they have a slightly primitive look, although this is a design feature rather than an indication that their product is actually primitive. They are definitely aiming at the macho male explorer/outback prospector/farmer market.

Frontier Prosthetics

Frontier Hand prosthetic [TL 10, ART 5%, 6 / hour]:

This replaces the hand from the wrist, with some supporting structures running up into the forearm. The hand has built in tools, either electronic, mechanical or weapons tech. These tools provide a +1 DM to skill rolls where appropriate.

Frontier hand prosthetic	Cr 15,000
Electronic tools	Cr 5,000

Mechanical tools	Cr 10,000
Weapon tech tools	Cr 15,000

Frontier partial arm prosthetic [TL 10, ART 7.5% 12 / hour]:

This replaces the arm at the elbow, with additional reinforcement running up the upper arm. The hand can mount tools as per the hand prosthetic. In addition the forearm can have one of the following options mounted onto it; weapons hardpoint, extending blades, larger tool (such as arc welder or buzz saw) or a concealed storage space.

Frontier partial arm prosthetic	Cr 25,000
Weapons hardpoint	Cr 5,000
Extending blades, 3d6 damage	Cr 10,000
Large tool, 5d6 damage, -2 DM to hit	Cr 7,500
Concealed storage space	Cr 5,000

Frontier Standard arm prosthetic [TL 10, ART 10%, 15 / hour]:

This replaces the arm from the shoulder but also includes reinforcement to the torso. It mounts no inbuilt hardware but is made from tougher materials for greater endurance. The limb increases Endurance characteristic by one for the purpose of taking damage only. If mounted in a pair, with Frontier standard leg prosthetics and Frontier torso reinforcement then this converts to a +1 to strength characteristic.

Frontier standard arm prosthetic	Cr 30,000
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Frontier Utility arm prosthetic [TL 10, ART 10%, 15 / hour]:

This replaces the arm from the shoulder but also includes reinforcement across the shoulder and ribcage. This features a tool hand, forearm tool and a concealed storage space in the bicep.

Frontier Utility arm prosthetic	Cr 42,000
Costs of the tool hand fitted is extra	

Frontier Guardsman arm prosthetic [TL 10, ART 10%, 30 / hour]:

Limb replaced

Augmetics and Prosthetics

from the shoulder, with additional reinforcement to the torso. The hand comes with weapons tech tools built in. The forearm mounts a set of extending blades and it has a shoulder mounted gun platform. The gun platform can mount any pistol sized weapon that has 'smart' links and unless mated to wetware control systems simply targets whatever the hand points at. This enables the user to fire the weapon on the appropriate gun combat skill, with a penalty DM of -1.

Frontier Guardsman arm prosthetic
Cr 70,000

Frontier foot prosthetic [TL 10, ART 5%, 6 / hour]: This is a prosthetic foot from the ankle with additional reinforcement to the calf. There are four basic designs. The Spreadfoot can triple in length and breadth so as to decrease ground pressure, making it an effective snow shoe. The Grip foot has fractal surfacing and elongated toes to aid in climbing. The handifoot has an opposable thumb and can grip weapons, tools or handholds, although with a -1 DM. The claw foot has three heavy duty toes ending in 15cm claws. Normal footwear is not practical with any of these prosthetics.

Spreadfoot
Cr 10,000
Gripfoot
Cr 12,500
Handifoot
Cr 17,500
Clawfoot 2d6 damage
Cr 20,000

Frontier partial leg prosthetic [TL 10, ART 10% 12 / hour]: The leg is replaced from the knee down, with reinforcement running up the thigh. It can mount any of the Frontier foot options. Cost does not include the foot, prices as above.

Frontier partial leg prosthetic
Cr 5,000

Frontier standard leg prosthetic [TL 10, ART 15%, 15 / hour]: This replaces the leg from the hip, but also includes reinforcement to the pelvis and spine. It mounts no inbuilt hardware but is

made from tougher materials for greater endurance. The limb increases Endurance characteristic by one for the purpose of taking damage only. If mounted in a pair, with Frontier standard arm prosthetics and Frontier torso reinforcement then this converts to a +1 to strength characteristic.

Frontier standard leg prosthetic
Cr 30,000

Frontier ranger leg prosthetic set [TL 10, ART 35%, 1 / minute]: This is a matched pair of leg prosthetics plus heavy duty pelvis and spine reinforcement. The legs come with either spreadfeet or gripfeet as standard. The whole set up is designed for greater running speed and leap distance. Character can run at 15-20mph and leap distances of 10 metres.

Frontier ranger leg prosthetic set
Cr 80,000

Frontier Implants

Frontier 'Wolvi' arm blades [TL 10, ART 5%, 1 / extend/retract]: Three blades made from orbital alloys are mounted in the forearm alongside the bones. They extend out through the back of the hand and when deployed are attached to the hand only. The three blades make it much more dangerous than the military version, however the mountings are much more fragile and any abuse of the blades leads either to them snapping off of the hand or breaking the wrist.

Wolvi blades 4d6 damage
Cr 20,000

Frontier Organ Replacement

Frontier Armoured skin replacement [TL 11, ART 10%]: The characters skin is replaced with a heavy duty polymer based armoured material, which provides an inbuilt Armour 1 against all attacks. Armour is very obvious but is available in the following colours; white, olive green, ninja black, desert camouflage, jungle camouflage and mud brown.

Frontier armoured skin replacement
Armour / 1 Cr 50,000

Frontiersman 'Organ' replacement [TL 10, ART 5%, 1 / 5 minutes]: This is a male only genital replacement 'augmetic' that is designed to appeal to the typical Frontier client. The replacement organ is larger than normal and made from toughened materials for enhanced durability for heavy usage.

Frontiersman 'Organ' replacement
TL 10 Cr 15,000

Frontier Wetware

Frontier B-WIS weapons Tracking System [TL 12, ART 2%, 1 / hour]: This is a dedicated B-WIS designed for use with Frontier prosthetics. It will control a shoulder mounted weapon, targeting whatever the user thinks about shooting. It can control up to a maximum of two shoulder mounted weapons, and two forearm hardpoints. However using the Frontier B-WIS WTS to control any other form of augmetic is not advisable.

Frontier B-WIS WTS
TL 12 Cr 30,000

Frontier Support Augmetics

Frontier Torso booster [TL 11, ART 10%, 1 / 5 minutes]: This augmetic only functions in combination with all four limbs being replaced with prosthetics. It connects all four limbs into a single system for power and control purposes, and provides the reinforcement to the spine, pelvis, rib cage and shoulders for prosthetic limbs to operate at improved strength. Much of this reinforcement is outside the body, with the torso being criss crossed with structural supports, shock absorbers and armoured power cables. As the only purpose of this augmetic is to make prosthetics into augmetics, it is considered illegal on most planets. If combined with full limb prosthesis of suitable quality it provides a +1 to strength characteristic.

Frontier torso booster +1 Strength
Cr 300,000

Frontier torso toughener [TL 11, ART 7.5%]: Where the torso booster is designed to improve strength when combined with

full limb prosthesis, the toughener layers high durability materials around the torso to make the user significantly tougher than they were before. It still requires full limb prosthesis, but provides a permanent +1 increase to endurance stat, while retaining the limb bonuses to Endurance for the purpose of taking damage.

Frontier toughener	+	1
Endurance		Cr 400,000

Frontier Small powercell [TL 10, ART 1%]: This is a standard power cell used to power smaller augmetics.

Frontier small power cell		1 5
units		Cr 2,000

Frontier large power cell [TL 10, ART 2%]: This is a standard large power cell, used by most of the Frontier augmetic range.

Frontier large power cell		8 0
units		Cr 12,000

Frontier Exoskeleton

Frontier armoured exoskeleton [TL 12, ART 12.5%, 30 / hour]: This is a heavy exoskeleton replacing the characters skin. In addition there are powered systems within the exoskeleton to give the character an increase to Strength of +1. The exoskeleton removes all sense of touch in the character, other than the tongue which remains organic. Genitalia are removed during surgery. The exoskeleton provides Armour 2 in addition to the bonus to Strength.

Frontier armoured exoskeleton		
		Cr 650,000

Phoenix Augmetics

Source unknown, this shadowy company produces the top end augmetics available in the Imperium. Difficult to get hold of and insanely expensive, acquiring any of this technology is likely to be a quest in itself, unless you are working for the imperium black ops, dirty tricks, military intelligence type organisations that have more money to burn than anyone else.

Phoenix Wetware

Phoenix hardwiring [TL 16, ART 25%]: Using advanced nanotechnology this is the ultimate in augmetic stat improvement. The nanites literally rewire the entire nervous system, including the brain. What they replace the nerves with is a mater of speculation, some say that it is platinum for superb electrical conductivity. Others say that it is using some form of fibre optics. A third theory is that the material doesn't naturally exist in our dimension and has to be mined in dimensions not our own. Only the people at Phoenix know for sure. The effect of this is to improve the Dexterity and Intelligence characteristics by +3 each, permanently.

Phoenix hardwiring		+ 3
Dexterity and Intelligence		Cr 25,000,000

Phoenix Bioware

Phoenix tissue lacing [TL 16, ART 20%]: As with the hardwiring, this uses nanotechnology extensively to lace all the muscles, bone and tissue of the body with a network of nanofibres that vastly improve their strength and resilience. Again the

substances involved are unknown, the presence of phoenix tissue lacing is not even detectable to scanners below TL 16. The effect is to improve strength and endurance characteristics by +3 each, permanently.

Phoenix tissue lacing		+ 3
Strength and Endurance		Cr 25,000,000

In Conclusion

The four ranges of augmetics presented here are just the tip of the iceberg. There are thousands of different manufacturers across the imperium and that doesn't include the alien races who use their own forms of augmetics, some of which can be used by humans. What this has hopefully done is provide a starting point and framework for the Referee to expand upon to suit their own campaign.

Other areas for potential examination are street level augmetics, a more detailed look at body replacement and exoskeletons, alien augmetics and designer augmetics.

Just remember, once the players have got their hands on this stuff, they are going to be that bit harder to kill, so you'll find you'll need some NPCs with augmetics to throw against them.

Preview of the Planets

By Christopher Dorn, Robert Glass, Matthew Grau, and Fraser McKay

From the Upcoming Original *Traveller*
Setting from WildFire

Chthonian Stars is set in our solar system, just a few hundred years in the future. This article gives you a sneak peak at where you can go and what might be waiting for you.

Mercury: Conquering the Dead Planet

Mercury is a small dead world – a rock in space marred and cracked by ages of meteor impacts. It slowly rotates like a pig on a spit under the punishing heat of the Sun. The temperature variance on any given day, between the dark and roasting sides, ranges between -315°F and +800°F. Building a sustainable colony here would be next to impossible under these extreme conditions. So, why would anyone want to invest so much time and expense to come here in the first place? The answer is mining. Though dead on the outside, Mercury harbours a wealth of natural metals and minerals below her surface. Investment in a colonial mission to Mercury would naturally be dangerous and risky but that was a risk the Chinese government was willing to take. Luckily for them, the unconquerable dead world had one Achilles heel, one place where humans could land in relative safety.

The Chao Meng-Fu crater, located on Mercury's southern pole, is the only location on the planet that remains mostly in the shade throughout the entire day – thus the temperature stays relatively constant. It was here that the Port Tian colony was established as the only human presence on Mercury. Life here is sparse and simple, with very little in the way of creature comforts. Nobody goes to Mercury unless they have business there – at least nobody who wants to live a comfortable life-style. Yet there is wealth to be had for those brave enough to join the drilling operations that sink further and further towards the planet's core. A miner might be able to return home to Earth with a small, dream-building fortune after a few years of hard work. That is, of course, if he

doesn't disappear among the dangerous labyrinth-like tunnels of Mercury's mines.

Venus: The Earth That Wasn't

Venus has one of the harshest climates in the solar system. Despite being only a bit smaller than the Earth and well within the range of the sun that is generally held to be friendly to life, Venus has a decidedly hellish surface with high winds and temperature in the hundreds of degrees – no matter if you are on the day or night side. Despite these conditions, however, it is a world that has extensively felt the touch of humanity.

Five corporations control Venus, under the nominal authority of the Venusian Administrative Body. Each corporation has utter autonomy and authority within their colony, with each colony having its own set of rules and regulations, customs, holidays and so on. However, outside of the colony, including any mining operations those colonies may claim, the VAB has the final authority. While the Venusian Administrative Body is supposed to be apolitical, its rulings are generally tilted in favour of whichever corporation currently has the most influence.

Nearly all aspects of life on Venus occur underground. With the high temperatures, scouring winds and somewhat corrosive environment of the surface, subsurface colonies have been by far the cheapest method of colonising the planet in the long term. Most of these colonies can trace their roots back to the initial mining operations of the corporations but, for the most part, those mining operations have moved to other areas of the planet. Despite this, these colonies offer comfortable environments with wide caverns modelled much like the parks found on Earth, giving them an open-air feel. There is no mistaking, however, which colony you are in, for nearly every corridor you walk down, napkin you wiped your face with and glass you drink out of has the associated corporate logo emblazoned across it.

Earth: Birthplace of Humanity

The nations of Earth are still pretty much as they have been, though some borders and centres of power always shift. The threat of terrorist nuclear strikes and the nuclear devastation of Port Klang in Malaysia woke the world up. Modern nations have become more civilised and choose to resolve their disputes through the forum of the Unified World Council – a powerful cooperative body that has replaced the impotent United Nations.

Fortunately, the Earth suffers no more from the threat of ecological disaster. The damage done during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries was halted and, in some cases, reversed. However, the Earth has been damaged and a person from the 21st century would find the world to be quite different. Air quality has recovered but climates have changed permanently in many parts of the world. There are places where it is not safe to travel outside without special suits, where the thinning or non-existent ozone no longer protects life from dangerous solar radiation. Many species are permanently extinct, though cloning efforts labour on to bring some of them back – to little avail.

On the other hand, pushing people out to live on other worlds has helped to ease the threat of overpopulation. People still have not learned, however, and there are no population controls in place. It will only be a matter of time before overpopulation becomes a problem again – or at least it would were things not awakening in the galaxy that are helping to thin the herd.

Compared to the rest of the solar system, though, the Earth is paradise. Large cities and population density make it very safe and the natural ecology of the planet is where humanity was meant to exist. That, however, does not mean that the strange happenings in the rest of the solar system have not found their way to Earth.

Mars: The Red Money Pit

112 years ago, the first permanent settlement was created on the surface of Mars. In the beginning, the mining operations on Mars produced better than anyone ever hoped. Jobs were plentiful and calls to Earth for more and more settlers brought shuttle after shuttle of people hoping to cash in on the prosperity. The original colony expanded and smaller settlements began to spring up in areas that could be easily protected from meteor and radiation damage.

However, this did not last. The dig sites all began to encounter a material in the ground that was incredibly hard to drill, blast or bore through. The material was useless to the miners, as no one could find any way to profit from it. Worse yet, all indications showed that this material was present all over the planet.

Tourism, the second largest money-maker for the planet, was beginning to lag behind the more exotic locations found on Ganymede and Io. However, Mars had one final message to the people of Earth that thought that life could be restored to the Red Planet. Two years ago, the moon Diemos radically shifted orbit and swung into the path of Phobos.

The impact shattered the moons and blanketed the orbit of Mars with millions of particles of space debris. Much of the debris rained down in a hail of meteorites that peppered the planet for days on end. The location of the colonies in low-lying areas saved them from the worst of the damage. The dust storm created by the impact of so many meteorites continues to blanket the planet to this day. Solar collectors struggle to collect the little sunlight that sneaks through the clouds above.

Jupiter: The Cyclopean Giant

It is the largest planet in our solar system, so large that it is two and a half times the mass of all the other planets combined. The gas giant known as Jupiter has captured the imaginations of science fiction writers and explorers alike, with its massive

satellites and giant red eye. It is too bad for them that the reality turned out to be far less fascinating than they had hoped.

The planet itself is home only to two large floating gas mines. Most workers live on Callisto and come in month-long shifts. The real excitement of Jupiter is found on the four Galilean moons – Callisto, Europa, Ganymede and Io.

Callisto's most distinct features are the numerous and massive impact craters that cover the surface. This is where many of those working on other Galilean Moons and Jupiter live and it is best described as a bedroom community.

Europa is home to a giant underground saltwater ocean, kept warm by the magnetic influence of Jupiter. It has conditions that resemble the deep oceans of Earth, complete with its own life and ecosphere – the first extra-terrestrial life discovered in the history of man. The lifeforms survive by chemosynthesis, similar to the black smoker environments of Earth.

Ganymede is the largest moon in the solar system. The moon's primary trade is tourism and entertainment. It is, for lack of a better analogy, the Las Vegas of the outer planets. Visitors can enjoy casinos, shows and restaurants, as well as low-gravity skiing, snowboarding and the like.

Io is rife with geological activity, with many mountains and volcanoes. Bunkers that shield visitors from the intense radiation provide staging grounds for those who wish to come to climb the majestic mountains in a low gravity environment. It is the destination of the rich, thrill-seekers and those who already dwell in Jupiter's orbit.

However, there have been some unusual reports in and around Jupiter space. Gas miners in the upper atmosphere of Jupiter report seeing shadows of things in the clouds. Scientists on Europa claim that

the 'fish' that they are studying have been acting differently. Perhaps most unusual is the way that a part of Callisto has begun to change – like it is developing an atmosphere.

Saturn: The Greater Malefic

Out there, way beyond the treacherous rim of the Asteroid Belt and the great orbit of Jupiter lays the heart of mankind's new frontier – Saturn. Her many jewelled rings highlight the moons that are home to a rising civilisation. Over three million residents of the Republic of Saturn live and work here, striving daily to build their lives around the promise of a free and independent world. Opportunities abound here for the adventurous of heart and the ingenious of mind. Rapid growth has created a strong economy built on industry, manufacturing, mining, tourism and perhaps the most important of Saturn's commodities – agriculture. It might seem ironic that the one world in the solar system named after the Roman god of the harvest would actually deliver on the promise of her ancient namesake. However, the fact remains that Saturn has evolved into what many call the breadbasket of the outer planets.

Ice harvesting has become an important industry among Saturn's moons, especially the brilliantly white Enceladus with its giant plumes of sprayed ice shot majestically into space from massive geysers on its southern pole. Other moons like Rhea play host to huge manufacturing plants and ship yards that allow Saturn to produce bio-domes, shuttles, transports and other necessary components that sustain the colony. Saturnian colony structures and merchant vessels are not uncommon among the Outer Worlds.

Perhaps the most amazing example of the Republic of Saturn's achievements is Titan. It is here, under the orange sky and dense atmosphere of Saturn's largest moon, that great cities and mammoth farming bio-domes have arisen. Cassini University, located within the capital city of Cassini,

Preview of the Planets

is famous for its schools of Planetology and Organic Chemistry. The city of Chronos has become one of the most important trade centres in the Solar System, built on the need to transport Titan's wealth of agricultural goods off world. The existence of sustainable colonies on Neptune and Uranus can be directly attributed by some degree to the success of the Saturn colony.

Uranus: The Frozen Wasteland

For years, the Uranus sector had been nothing more than a junction point for transports off to the lucrative diamond mines of Neptune or the vast expanse of the Kuiper Belt beyond. Even then, that was only when the orbital alignments worked out. That all changed when the Wesley family founded the hydrogen mining facility from Veronica Station. The Wesley family obtained the rights to the moons surrounding Uranus and has offered them to independent prospectors or corporations to do with as they will.

The surface of the planet is not actually a surface at all but a mix of water, ammonia and methane in a thick liquid form. Despite its large size, the gravitational forces of Uranus are actually less than that of Earth, so it would be possible to land on its surface if it was solid. Given that Uranus has no solid surface, the only colony for Uranus proper is Veronica Station – the mining facility run by John Paul Wesley to extract molecular hydrogen from the atmosphere. The space station is a patchwork of various components and sections from a number of failed attempts to set up a mining rig in the orbit of Uranus.

The moons of Uranus have all been set up as mining and prospecting regions, where independent contractors and corporations obtain deeds for mining rights from Wesley. Law is officially maintained by the internal security supplied by the Wesley family. The reality, however, is that the local prospectors and corporations will deal with suspected criminals internally. In fact, the region has the lowest reported theft rate of anywhere in the solar system but that only

means that little crime is reported. Being much like the gold rush towns of the old west on Earth, law is very often handled as a personal matter between prospectors.

Neptune: The Point of No Return

Neptune, the last planet of our solar system, so far into space that it is 30 times the distance of the Earth from the burning Sun. Wind is a near constant on Neptune – the average daily winds range from 45 mph to nearly the speed of sound. Unsurprisingly, the only colony on Neptune's surface is underground. Beyond it lies only the Kuiper Belt, a place filled with dwarf planets and miscellaneous chunks of rock. It is no wonder that it is considered to be such a frigid, inhospitable world, where only the greedy or desperate would dare set foot.

Salacia is the primary and only colony on Neptune. It is powered entirely by geothermal taps, utilising the extremely hot core of the planet. At first glance, it would seem amazing that anyone would want to spend the large amounts of money and incredible effort required to maintain a colony on Neptune. Posterity or curiosity hardly seem reasonable motivations. The answer is simple – Neptune produces diamonds, the most precious gem in the solar system. Salacia is a joint operation of the European Union and the Rhodes Company – a firm with long roots in the diamond business and the fabulous wealth that goes with it.

Over the last few years, strange things have become commonplace on Neptune. Many people have started to have intense nightmares, some of which have induced homicidal fits in otherwise normal folks. Insomnia (or sleep aids) is an epidemic. People have also started to go missing from time-to-time, without any trace – some believe that there is a conspiracy afoot. On top of all that, there are those who claim to have heard eerie distant sounds through the surface flurries, like the songs of whales. None of these facts are advertised by Rhodes – it would be bad for business.

Pluto: The Enigma

Across the solar system nearly every planet and moon has felt the presence of humanity. Not so with Pluto. The planet has made it clear that it wishes to be left free of man's company. There have been attempts, many of them, over the years. However, with each attempt comes screams and then silence. Most expeditions have never made it to the surface and those that do never last. Even satellites and probes only last for a few hours at best before their signals are lost. Pluto wishes to be left alone and thus far humanity has found itself a distant observer. In recent years, that observation has increased ten-fold.

The small dwarf planet has always been a bit of an enigma in the solar system. Its orbit sneaks in and out of the Kuiper belt and is tilted, running north and south of the ecliptic plain. There has never been a satisfactory explanation of this oddity. More recently, however, the small world has begun exhibiting even more bizarre and inexplicable behaviour – the orbit of Pluto has been changing. The change was small at first but it seems to be increasing. Its velocity has also shifted, sometimes speeding up and sometimes slowing down. There is no known cause that science can find for its behaviour, though many a great mind has set to the task of finding it.

Even with this new development, travel to the world is strictly forbidden. Even its moons are off-limits. Inevitably someone will again make the attempt to land on the world, to force from it the secrets that it hides and inevitably those same someones will transmit screams of terror into the dark void before they too go silent. Pluto will surrender its secrets when it is ready, not when we demand it, for Pluto has no time for our needs.

Kuiper Belt: The New Frontier

Past the distant planet of Neptune lies a thick band of rock, dust and ice known as the Kuiper Belt. Many dismiss this region as nothing more than another asteroid field but those people do not truly understand

the scope of the belt. Despite being far less dense in most areas than the better known belt of rocks that sits between Mars and Jupiter, the Kuiper Belt dwarfs its inner system cousin in its sheer population of rocks and ice. For this reason, the Belt has become the new frontier of the solar system.

For those who are brave or, depending on whom you ask, foolish enough to venture that far out, there lies a great potential to truly make your mark on the solar system.

Many explorers have found massive deposits that have netted them finder's fees that allowed them to retire in style. Many more, however, have simply vanished never to be heard from again. While there is great promise in the Belt, there is also great danger.

So far out is the Kuiper Belt that even a small emergency can turn deadly. Unlike the inner system, there is usually no help to be found. Those who make their living in the belt are truly self-reliant – they

have to be to survive. They are also freer to pursue their dreams than anywhere else in the solar system. The Unified World Council has no say out here and even those corporations that have staked a claim out here, such as the massive 4G Enterprises, understand that they will never have any influence beyond the walls of their own stations.

Faith and Blood

By Greg Lynch

A Conan Scenario for 5th to 7th Level Characters

Faith and Blood is a *Conan Roleplaying Game* scenario of a different breed. Rather than hunting through a plague-ridden jungle in search of a city so old that it has been forgotten by history or tracking a corrupt sorcerer to his demon-haunted lair, bringing him to bay and slaying him to prove the might of metal over magic, *Faith and Blood* is a story of intrigue, backstabbing, politicking and murder in that most princely of cities, Tarantia, capital of Aquilonia, the Flower of the West.

Background

For centuries, the cult of Mitra was the only religion allowed in Aquilonia – all others forbidden by edict of the crown. It is hardly surprising; Mitra is the ‘universal god’ of the Hyborians, the deity worshipped throughout the lands conquered by that ancient tribe of barbarians from whom the Aquilonians, Argosseans and others are derived.

The ascension of King Conan to the throne of Aquilonia changed all of that. Not only was Conan himself a worshipper of another god (Crom) but his barbarian temperament could not abide the prospect of the persecution of others based on religion. After witnessing one act of religious intolerance after another, Conan, in frustration, declared that every man in his realm should be able to worship whatever god he chose.

It should come as no surprise that this edict by King Conan was unpopular with the cult of Mitra and was the subject of strident opposition throughout Aquilonia. Aquilonians feared that allowing other religions than Mitra to openly exist within the borders of the country would ultimately destroy it, taking away the one most powerful unifying force – religion. Despite the

protests, outcries and even mumbled threats, Conan would not budge from his position.

Several years have passed since King Conan’s edict and thus far Aquilonia has not unravelled. Nor has the dominance of Mitra ebbed. Of all the ‘foreign’ religions in Aquilonia, the most prevalent (other than Bori, the ancient god of Hyborians, still worshipped in some rural corners of Gunderland) is Asura and even that cult is a tiny minority, meeting in secret and afraid to worship openly.

Despite the fears of the priests of Mitra their cult has remained predominant, utterly eclipsing all other faiths throughout Aquilonia. The people fear and distrust other religions, knowing only what they have heard from the Mitran priests – tales of human sacrifice and even more unwholesome practices, blasphemies of the kind usually attributed to the cult of Set.

Though the fears that the cult of Mitra will lose its worshippers (and through them, its power) to foreign religions has never materialised, the possibility of this has preyed on the minds of some in the priesthood like a cancer. Almost unintentionally, those priests most troubled by the edict have sought one another out, finding like minds with which to share their fears and suspicions of the ultimate result of opening Aquilonia’s doors to other religions – what they see as an ineluctable descent into evil and depravity. Whispering to one another in small groups, their fears have only grown, turning from suspicion to certainty, an absolute surety that all they fear will come to pass and soon.

From this certainty was born a burning, faith-filled need to stop the potential spread of other religions, to save Aquilonia, and the cult of Mitra itself, from the mad edicts of the barbarian king. They turned

to the sacred Mitran texts, seeking answers and justifications. In the name of piety, they stripped the words of context and intent, finding within passages meant to promote peace, civilisation and forgiveness rationalisations to embrace sin and darkness in the name of what they saw as the greater good, the preservation of their nation and their faith.

Armed now with what they viewed as a divine mandate from Mitra himself to take whatever actions seemed necessary, these priests formed their own secret society within the clergy. Calling themselves the Brotherhood of the Bull, they began to chart a course to force the throne to renounce tolerance for other religions and drive the blasphemous outlander faiths from the soil and soul of Aquilonia.

Led by a priest named Constanus, the Brotherhood of the Bull is finally ready to put their plans into motion. They have chosen to wait and bide their time until now, when King Conan is once again away from Aquilonia and the country is being ruled in his stead by Count Trocero of Poitain and Publius, the king’s chancellor. More information on both of these men is available in *Aquilonia – Flower of the West*. Though both are unflinchingly loyal to Conan, Constanus is counting on the fact that both are worshippers of Mitra and the potential influence of Dexitheus, archpriest of Mitra and one of Conan’s counsellors, to make his job a little easier. Moreover, Count Trocero himself is away from Tarantia in his own lands of Poitain, leaving the true governing of the city wholly in the hands of Publius.

The Brotherhood of the Bull has targeted the cult of Asura as the first religion they must drive from Aquilonia, as it is the most prominent of the foreign faiths. They have attempted to find solid proof the Asurans are engaging in the practices the general populace suspects them of, such grisly rites as human

sacrifice and cannibalism but have failed utterly. Some have even opened their minds to the dark arts of sorcery, justifying this violation of Mitran dogma with the belief they must turn to such power to oust the evil magicians of the Asuran cult but again they have failed to find the proof they sought. Rather than give up their quest to cast the other faiths from Aquilonia, the Brotherhood has chosen to invent the evidence they have sought. What matter a few lies and a few lives when the destiny of the nation and the Mitran faith lie in the balance? Constanus has even gone so far as to recruit a number of mercenaries and assassins to his cause, carefully keeping them at arm's length and ignorant of his true identity, while at the same time holding them close enough that he can marshal their services to protect his person or carry out his orders with little or no notice.

Sorcerous knowledge has served Constanus exceptionally well before, and it will serve him well throughout the course of this scenario. The Asurans are adept at several styles of sorcery, as Constanus has learned, most notably at the use of divination. Constanus will be using greater sorcerous news throughout *Faith and Blood* to prevent the Asurans (or any others he fears may become interested) from learning the truth of who is behind the crimes being blamed upon the Asurans.

Constanus has been joined in his quest by more than just vitriolic priests of Mitra, however. Knowing he would need financial backing for his divine mission, finances he could not count on receiving from the Mitraeum, he began looking for other allies. He found one in Lord Nadanidus, a wealthy baron with an estate in Tamar (the old city section of Tarantia). However, Constanus is unaware of Nadanidus' true loyalties. Though he has always put forth the appearance of a forthright and devout worshipper of Mitra, Nadanidus sold

himself long ago to the cult of Set. The cult of Set and, indeed, Stygia itself, would very much like to see Aquilonia wracked by internal discord, and in Constanus' plans to oust all religions save Mitra from the borders of Aquilonia, Nadanidus saw his opportunity to serve Set in a greater way than he had ever imagined would be available to him. As far as Constanus knows, Nadanidus is an ardent supporter of his goals, a faithful man who has given him finances, influence and even a place in which the Brotherhood of the Bull may gather, in the cellars beneath his estate in Tamar.

Constanus' plan to disgrace the Asuran cult is audacious and vile, the kind of act that could only be justified by the most zealous and fanatical sort. Posing as an Asuran priest, he has hired a group of the basest mercenaries he could find to carry out a crime he has specified, leaving behind just enough evidence to place the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Asurans. Even if it is not enough to have the Asurans officially driven from the kingdom, Constanus believes it will be enough to force the throne into requiring the Asurans practice their worship openly. Once the locations of their temples are revealed, Constanus is counting on the antipathy with which the followers of Mitra regard Asura to ensure the temples of the foreign faith do not stand for long. For his part, Lord Nadanidus is counting on the religious strife to weaken Aquilonia and King Conan's grip on the throne. Whether or not these plans have any chance of success is up to the Player Characters and what actions they take throughout the course of *Faith and Blood*.

Part One – Venomed Night

The Player Characters will become caught up in the machinations of Constanus and the Brotherhood of the Bull when they are out in the streets of Tarantia one night. The section of the city they are in matters little,

though this should not take place within Tamar (the old city) or the Black Fortress ward.

The Games Master may read or summarise the following to the players as the adventure begins:

As you make your way through the benighted streets in a late hour approaching midnight, you spy a man ahead of you, stumbling, holding the wall beside him for support. At first glance, he seems to be just another drunkard, staggering his way home after a long night in the taverns, destined to lose whatever money not spent on wine to the quick fingers of a thief. As he fumblingly approaches, however, you note this is no average drunkard. The figure is clad in the black robes of a Mitran priest and something about his clumsy gait suggests more than mere alcohol is behind it. He takes two more steps and falls to his knees, bending forward as though he is in prayer. The feathered shaft of an arrow juts from his back and he holds out one hand to you in a sign of desperation.

His lips move as you approach, a trail of bloody spittle draining from the corner of his mouth. 'Treason,' he gasps in a reedy, choking voice. 'Heresy ... all lies ... stop Brotherhood ... midnight ... in Delvyn...' Those few words seem to tax the last of his strength, and his final breath rattles from his lungs.

The priest of Mitra is exactly that, a man named Urestes who was, until perhaps half an hour before encountering the Player Characters, a member of the Brotherhood of the Bull. Upon hearing the depth of Constanus' plan, however, Urestes had a sudden crisis of conscience. As much as he may have wished the Asurans and all other foreign faiths lashed out of his beloved Aquilonia, he could not countenance the depravity of what Constanus proposed. He spoke long and eloquently against it but his fellows of the Brotherhood would not be dissuaded. Despairing of their path, but promising to remain true to his word and not reveal anything of the Brotherhood,

Faith and Blood

Urestes departed their secret meeting place beneath the estate of Nadanidus, intending to make his way back to the Mitraeum (the grand temple of Mitra in Tarantia).

Constanus was unconvinced of the sincerity of Urestes' oath not to reveal the Brotherhood, however, and had him followed by Essenic, one of a number bodyguard/assassins the corrupted priest of Mitra has retained. Once Urestes had travelled far enough from the meeting place of the Brotherhood, outside the borders of Tamar, Essenic planted an envenomed arrow in his back.

The Body

At this point, the Player Characters have several options open to them.

They may simply ignore the murdered priest's last words, walking on to find the nearest tavern with loose gold and a waiting brawl but this, obviously, will remove them from the plotline of *Faith and Blood*, unless the Games Master chooses to have one of the townspeople see the priest stagger up to the Player Characters, muttering something with his last breath before the Player Characters wander off. In this case, the Player Characters may find their drinking and carousing disturbed by Tarantian guards looking for answers and drawing the Player Characters back into the plot of the scenario.

The Player Characters may also choose to take the body to the Mitraeum or to the palace. In either case, they will be noticed and stopped by a patrol of the Tarantian guard before they reach their destination. They are certain to be suspicious, at least initially, of what role if any the Player Characters had in the death of a priest of Mitra. However, given the fact that the Player Characters are transporting a (presumably) unlooted body, it should not be too difficult for them to convince the guard they had no role in the actual death (Diplomacy skill check roll DC 15). Assuming the Player Characters also relay Urestes' last message, the guards will react accordingly, half of the patrol escorting the

Player Characters (and the body) back to the Chancellor's Ward while the other half rushes towards Delvyn, gathering other guards as they go. They will, however, arrive too late.

Obviously, should they choose to wait for the guard at the spot where they encountered the priest, a patrol will eventually happen by, resulting in much the same series of events as if they were found transporting the body. In the case of any of the above, the Games Master may move directly to Part Two.

The third is the most likely choice of the Player Characters. Anxious to avoid being seen with a corpse of a priest of Mitra but intrigued by his last words, they may venture to the Delvyn ward of Tarantia to see if they can discover what Urestes meant by his choked warning. They have little time to make it to Delvyn, however. Should they try to find a way to surrender the body to the Mitran priests, to the guard or to whomever else, they will be too late to find what Urestes sought to warn them of.

Urestes has 27 sp and a gold icon of Mitra worth 125 sp when the Player Characters meet him.

Blasphemy in Delvyn

Delvyn is a slum area of Tarantia, a place of wattle and daub tenement buildings housing the city's poor – immigrants, labourers, beggars, drunkards, wastrels and orphans. People of a dozen different nationalities are pressed together in this place, united only in their poverty.

Delvyn, named after an ancient craftsman who would surely be forgotten by now had his name not become attached to this hopeless place, is also the site of the largest public cemetery in Tarantia. It is a burial ground for the poor, a mostly untended and unkempt field littered with tiny markers, the majority of which have long since been weathered into anonymity. Corpses here are buried standing up, to make the most use of the available room. Most of those buried here, however, are

not even accorded the honour of a private grave but are cast into deep mass graves, their bodies dusted with lye.

The cemetery is also, due to its size and nature, constantly receiving new occupants, which is why Constanus chose it for the first major stage of his plan. The mercenaries he hired (and primed for the job with Constanus' skill in the Hypnotism sorcery style) are tasked with a grisly duty, one for which they have been well compensated. They are to capture one of the denizens of Delvyn, preferably one of the teeming hordes of orphaned children that roam its streets and take their victim to the cemetery at night. There, clad in dark robes like those worn by the Asurans, they will disinter the newest available corpse (easily done, as in the public cemetery the bodies are not buried deep). With corpse and captive in hand, at the moment of midnight, they will cut out the heart of the captive and anoint the dead body with the heart's blood, forming symbols and shapes which Constanus has learned are sacred elements of Asuran worship. Once this is done, they will flee the cemetery, leaving both corpses behind to be found by the first person brave enough to venture into the cemetery to look for the source of the screams.

If the Player Characters go straight from where they encountered Urestes to Delvyn, they will have a chance to catch Constanus' mercenaries in the act. Whether they do or not, of course, depends upon where they go when they reach Delvyn. The information given about Delvyn at the beginning of this section of *Faith and Blood* is common knowledge in Tarantia, should the players inquire of the Games Master what their Player Characters know of the region, he should feel free to give the information out so long as any of the Player Characters have spent more than a month or two in Tarantia.

Delvyn itself is quite small, only about five acres in size, though it is home to more than 1,000 inhabitants in about 400 ramshackle buildings. Navigating through it is a difficult task for anyone not born to

its narrow, winding streets and dead-end alleys, making the ward seem much bigger than it is, particularly to those who are lost and in a hurry on a dark night. If the players ask about significant or important locales within Delvyn, the Games Master may tell them that aside from the cemetery, the ward is composed entirely of mouldy tenements, tiny shops and stinking taverns.

Armed with this information, the Player Characters will likely make straight for the cemetery. If they do not, generous Games Masters may allow them to overhear some of the locals talking in excitement and fear of the robed figures that stole a young orphan off the street and headed for the cemetery. Whether the Player Characters make it to the cemetery in time to stop the horrible crime before it is committed is, of course, up to the purview of the Games Master.

The mercenaries are, per Constanus' orders, doing nothing to mask their presence in the cemetery and will be easily found by anyone who thinks to look there. They are killers and slayers to a man, lawless, godless and honourless sellswords who care not who they slay, nor why. If they are interrupted or accosted in the midst of carrying out their assignment, they will gladly draw steel and fight back, to the death if need be.

Mercenaries (5): Soldier 4, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 4d10+8 (33 hp); Init +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex); Spd 30 feet; Dodge DV +3 (+2 Level, +1 Dex); Parry DV+5 (+3 Level, +2 Str); DR 5 (+5 mail shirt); Attack: broadsword +7 melee (1d10+2); SQ Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Formation Combat (Skirmisher), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword); SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12; Equipment: mail shirt, broadsword, Asuran robes

In addition to their equipment, the five mercenaries have a combined total of 541 sp. Five hundred of that is half the payment promised them by Constanus, who intends to have them killed when they come to collect the second half. Constanus, knowing

full well the capabilities of *psychometry*, made certain that the coins given the mercenaries did not pass through his hands or those of his closest followers before giving them to the mercenaries. Aside from the money and the equipment listed above, there is one further clue – one of the mercenaries has a scrap of paper on which are sketched examples of the symbols they are to draw in blood.

If the Player Characters arrive at the cemetery in time to rescue the mercenaries' 'sacrifice,' a young boy, they will find he has no additional information to give them. He was nabbed from the street by the five men, bound and gagged, and brought directly here. His only interest is in fleeing back to the relative safety of the dark and mapless alleys of Delvyn.

If the Player Characters arrive too late to prevent the sacrifice and choose to examine the markings left behind by the mercenaries, they may recognise the symbols as Asuran with a Knowledge (religion) skill check roll (DC 20). A second skill check roll (DC 25) is enough for the Player Character to know with certainty that such inhuman practices as what was just carried out in the cemetery are not part of Asuran worship. If one of the Player Characters worships Asura, the DC for both these skill check rolls is reduced to 10.

The guard does not patrol the cemetery regularly but will be attracted by the sounds of combat coming from the cemetery and will arrive on the scene 1d3 minutes after the battle with the mercenaries ends.

Part Two – Threats and Rumours

Though the guard of Tarantia, once they become involved in the events of the scenario, will initially be suspicious of the Player Characters, that suspicion is unlikely to last long unless the Player Characters react in a particularly antagonistic or foolish manner to the guards' questions. Between the murdered priest of Mitra and the incident in the cemetery, the guards

will be quick to recognise the gravity of the situation, and the Player Characters will find themselves quickly passed up the ranks, until they are told to report to the Chancellery, the palace of Publius, at first light.

After passing along this order, the Player Characters are free to go, most likely returning to their accommodations for a few hours of much-needed rest before their early morning appointment at the Chancellery. If the Player Characters are already staying (or planning to stay) at an inn while in Tarantia, and have not already made some manner of specific arrangements, the Games Master may consider simply telling them they are staying at the Stag and Whistle, a simple and functional inn in the South Gate Ward of the city.

The Chancellery

The Games Master may read or summarise the following for the players as the Player Characters approach the Chancellery.

Though strictly speaking, the Chancellery is a mansion, it seems to be a mansion designed to withstand a siege. Parapets and crenulations line the rooftop, and four Black Dragons stand guard in front of the iron-bound door. Clad in shining armour and silken tabards, they rap the butts of their spears on the flagstones three times in unison as you approach, signalling you to halt and state your business.

The Black Dragons are expecting the arrival of the Player Characters and have orders to send them ahead into the Chancellery. Once the Player Characters identify themselves, one of the Black Dragons will summon a page to guide them. They will also relieve the Player Characters of any weapons, as none may enter the Chancellery armed.

The page bows to you and beckons you to follow him. He leads you down a long, columned hall lit by narrow windows high above and through a heavy wooden door at the end. You pass through two large rooms before the page stops in front of a

Faith and Blood

well-worn door. He opens it and gestures for you to enter.

The room is small, perhaps 15 feet square. The floor is covered with a collection of rugs, showing glimpses of flagstone in the gaps between them. One wall hosts a large bookshelf, while the opposite wall contains a wide hearth, on which a low fire smoulders. The room is lit by three tall windows in the wall opposite the door you came through, as well as a chandelier of candles hanging from the ceiling. Between the bookshelf and the hearth is a long wooden table, eight chairs set about it.

The page bows again and leaves, closing the door behind him. A moment later, another door, almost hidden by the bookcase, opens and an elderly man in fine clothing walks into the room. A gauntleted hand reaches in from behind him and pulls the door closed again.

'Please take a seat,' the man says, gesturing to the table. 'I am Publius, Chancellor of Aquilonia, and I would like to speak to you about last night.'

Publius will ask the Player Characters to recite their version of what happened, often interrupting them to ask for more details on a specific incident. He will dwell primarily on the words Urestes said to them before dying and the particulars of what happened at the cemetery. Publius is a patient and careful listener but is also extremely insightful and very nearly impossible to fool (+25 on all Sense Motive skill checks). He has a gift for judging people and understanding situations that very nearly borders on the psychic. More information on Publius can be found in *Aquilonia – Flower of the West*.

'Very well,' Publius says once all his questions have been answered. 'I thank you for your assistance thus far, and would like to impose upon you further, if I may. This is a troublesome business indeed, one which I sense is more complex than it may seem. Where religion is concerned, passions run high – already rumours of what passed last night are beginning to circulate in the city,

and I fear the rumours will soon become accusations, breeding violence. I must know exactly what is happening, but I sense I would be best served by keeping the guard out of this matter. Therefore, I turn to you. I wish you to investigate this, discover if there is indeed a deeper truth, and, if possible, resolve this situation before it festers too long. You will, of course, be compensated.'

Though Publius is asking nicely, he is not truly asking at all but rather phrasing an order in the form of a request, which the Player Characters will quickly realise if they try to refuse. They may, of course, accept it with no intention of fulfilling it but Publius is likely to know if they are.

Publius is also not telling the whole truth of why he wants the Player Characters involved, namely that he does not trust the guard to remain objective in this. They are Mitra worshippers to a man, and have the same distaste and loathing for the Asurans that most other Aquilonians have. The Player Characters may ask to be provided with some kind of writ, establishing in writing their authority to investigate this matter, but Publius will not provide it. After all, a large part of his reason for using outsiders to resolve this problem is to keep the government out of it.

Once the Player Characters agree to help, Publius will give them the information they need to get started, that the name of the slain priest of Mitra was Urestes and he was killed by an arrow fired by a man named Essenic, an infamous sellsword of Tarantia who can often be found on the Avenue of Roses.

The Avenue of Roses

Where the Player Characters go next is, of course, up to them but they will likely find all roads lead to this next section of *Faith and Blood*. Should they choose to go to the Mitraeum to inquire about Urestes, they will find little information of value. He was well known and well liked by his fellow priests, who cannot suggest any reason for his murder beyond a blasphemous robbery.

As the Player Characters make their way through the streets, they will soon learn that Publius was right. Rumours of what happened the night before – the unholy murder of a Mitran priest and the terrible rites conducted in the public cemetery – are the talk of the town. Most citizens of Tarantia are only now hearing of it, but still, the Games Master should describe the alternating tones of shock and anger the Player Characters hear as they journey through the city.

The Avenue of Roses is the prostitute ward of Tarantia, a three-acre section of the city containing most of Tarantia's brothels. Most of the buildings here are connected to one another and at least three storeys high. The streets are narrow, winding paths that snake their way between buildings.

Finding someone who knows of Essenic here is not terribly difficult, as he is a common sight in this ward. Player Characters who make a successful Gather Information skill check roll (DC 15) and are willing to spread around a handful of silver will discover that he went into the House of Nine Jewels late the night before and, as far as the informant knows, has not left again.

Unfortunately for the Player Characters, the informant is wrong – Essenic left the House of Nine Jewels only an hour after arriving. If they wish, the Player Characters may speak to Yarina, the prostitute Essenic hired, but there is little she can tell them, as he did not wish to spend his time with her talking.

Hunting the Hunter

With Essenic not where they hoped he would be, the Player Characters have some legwork ahead of them. Finding a one particular man in a city with a population of about 80,000 is not an easy job but it can be done.

Fortunately for the Player Characters, Essenic is not an unknown person in Tarantia. So long as they are willing to spend the time (and coin) required for several Gather Information skill checks,

they have a good chance of hunting him down. The following list provides the pieces of information the Player Characters have the opportunity to discover, along with the associated DC of the Gather Information skill check. Games Masters may pick and choose as they like from this list.

- Essenic is originally from Shamar but came to Tarantia a decade ago. (DC 20)
- Essenic is willing to sell his services to anyone with the coin to pay him and does not care what he is ordered to do. (DC 15)
- Essenic once killed a man by picking him up by his ankles and flinging him headfirst into a stone wall. (DC 15)
- Essenic has a wife he never sees named Lyness, who works as a laundress. (DC 20)
- Essenic has a house in the Khorotas Ward of Tarantia. (DC 20)

The Player Characters may, of course, spend as much time as they like on this but should be reminded that each use of the Gather Information skill check can take hours (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* core rulebook). Once the Player Characters have discovered either the fourth or fifth item from the list, they should have enough information to head to the Khorotas Ward of Tarantia.

While the Player Characters are searching for Essenic, the rest of the city is hardly sitting idle. Constantus and his fellows in the Brotherhood of the Bull are gladly taking advantage of the rumours in the streets of Tarantia, carefully teasing men's fears of the Asurans into anger and whipping up the fervour of the faithful against the Asurans. By mid afternoon, the Player Characters will notice that the discussion of Urestes' murder and the desecration in the cemetery have become the sole topic of conversation they overhear as they move through the city and most of the shocked tones are gone, replaced by dark threats of violence against the foreign religions.

Once the Player Characters reach the Khorotas ward of Tarantia, they will

find it a relatively easy matter to track down Essenic's wife Lyness, who lives on the second floor of a small clapboard tenement. However, she has not seen Essenic in nearly a month, so has little to offer the Player Characters. It is clear from the moment they speak to her that she bears little love for Essenic.

Though Lyness has not seen Essenic in some time, others in this ward have. A Gather Information skill check (DC 15) will be enough for the Player Characters to find out Essenic has spent most of the day in the House of Lions, a riverfront tavern frequented by bargemen and dock workers.

Luck is finally with the Player Characters, for if they go to the House of Lions, they will find that Essenic is still there. At the Games Master's option, Essenic may have heard of a gang of armed men looking for him throughout the city. In this case, Essenic will still be at the tavern, but will be accompanied by a group of fellow mercenaries.

Essenic is an arrogant, obnoxious braggart, a man who has seen his fair share of battle and is long past any compunction about killing. If the Player Characters approach him peacefully, trying to engage him in conversation, he will speak with them briefly, but will flatly deny any knowledge of Urestes' murder, pleading ignorance about any evidence he is presented with. He will not keep this up for long, however, and after a few minutes of a conversation he is not interested in having, will order the Player Characters to leave. If they do not, he will gladly start the battle himself. At the Games Master's option, he may have some mercenary drinking companions with him.

Essenic: Soldier 8/Thief 3, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 8d10+2d8+34 (84 hp); Init +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Reflex); Spd 30 feet; Dodge DV +7 (+5 Level, +2 Dex); Parry DV+11 (+7 Level, +4 Str); DR 5 (+5 mail shirt); Attack: war sword +15 melee (1d12+4) or Shemite bow +13 ranged (1d10+4); SQ Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency – Shemite Bow, Eyes of the

Cat, Far Shot, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry), Formation Combat (Skirmisher), Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Sneak Attack Style (war sword) +2d8, Sneak Attack +2d6, Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +1, Weapon Focus (war sword); SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 10; Equipment: mail shirt, war sword, Shemite bow, 74 sp

Mercenaries (3): Soldier 4, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 4d10+8 (33 hp); Init +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex); Spd 30 feet; Dodge DV +3 (+2 Level, +1 Dex); Parry DV+5 (+3 Level, +2 Str); DR 5 (+5 mail shirt); Attack: broadsword +7 melee (1d10+2); SQ Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Formation Combat (Skirmisher), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword); SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12; Equipment: mail shirt, broadsword

Once battle is joined, Essenic will show no mercy. If the battle begins to go against him, he will flee if possible but will do all in his power to prevent himself from being captured.

If the Player Characters are exceptionally fortunate, they may indeed capture Essenic alive. However, it will be extremely difficult to get any information out of him, as he knows the gibbet waits for him if he is convicted of murdering Urestes.

Despite Essenic's obstinacy, he knows a great deal of what is really happening, simply from what he has observed in the service of Constantus and Lord Nadanidus. He does not know Constantus' actual name (though he thinks it is Parnas), nor does he know the names of any other members of the Brotherhood of the Bull but he does know where they meet and he knows they are the ones behind the attempt to frame the Asurans for the crime in the cemetery the night before.

If the Player Characters are somehow able to capture Essenic and force him to talk, they have a good chance of jumping almost to the end of the scenario. However,

Faith and Blood

Faith and Blood assumes he goes down fighting (or escapes), meaning the Player Characters still have their work cut out for them.

Meeting in Twilight

So long as the Player Characters have not managed to capture and interrogate Essenic, they will have an unexpected visit from Constanus as night begins to fall upon the city. By now, he has learned through the faithful worshippers of Mitra most of the circumstances behind the Player Characters' involvement in these events and is as yet unsure whether they represent a liability or an opportunity.

Constanus knows that Urestes survived long enough after being shot with the envenomed arrow that he was able to find and speak, albeit briefly, to a group of people on the street and he is aware that the Player Characters are those people. He also knows they were at the Chancellery this morning, and that they have spent the day roving around the city, asking questions Constanus would prefer people not ask. Lastly, he knows they defeated Essenic in battle and thus recognises them as a potentially dangerous enemy. Or a potentially useful ally.

He suspects the Player Characters were called to the Chancellery for the exact reason they were, as he knows Publius well enough (at least by reputation) to know he would rather keep the city government out of this situation, given the conflict between King Conan's edict of religious tolerance and the antipathy with which the guard views all religions save that of Mitra. However, he wishes to make certain this suspicion, along with all others, is true.

The Games Master may read or summarise the following information for the players:

The sun is just touching the western horizon, colouring the buildings of Tarantia crimson and orange and casting long, thin shadows across the narrow cobbled streets you have spent the day walking. Your limbs aching and

the wounds left by your battle with the mercenary Essenic stinging, you find yourselves looking forward wistfully to hearth and rest, and perhaps a solid meal and a few skins of ale when a carriage rattles to a stop beside you and the door swings open. It seems hearth and rest might have to wait.

A man in his late middle years, clad in the dark robes of a Mitran priest, leans out of the carriage to beckon you closer. He is a thickly-built, broad-shouldered man who looks as though he would have made an exceptional warrior, and judging by the crook of his nose, it seems as if he has been in a fight or two during his life. His head is shaven, but he boasts a neatly tripped beard of dark hair flecked with grey.

'May I offer you a ride?' he asks. 'I would like to speak to you for a few moments, and you have the look of men who could do with a bit of rest.'

As you all clamber aboard, he asks your destination, calls it out to the driver, and waits until the carriage is under way again.

'I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak to you,' he continues. 'My name is Constanus, and, as you may have guessed, I am a priest of the one god Mitra. We were all most distraught to learn of the pious Urestes' murder at the hands of the blasphemous Asura worshippers. I understand you were the last to speak to him before he went on to the halls of Mitra?'

During the ride back to the inn (or other accommodation) where the Player Characters are staying, Constanus will pump them for as much information as he can get regarding what they heard from Urestes, what they have discovered during their investigation and what they intend to do next. This conversation should be roleplayed out between the Games Master and the players, as it is, in many ways, one of the cusp events

of this scenario. At the Games Masters' option, if the Player Characters seem to be foundering in their search for clues, Constanus may unwittingly drop one or two hints during the course of the conversation. For example, if the Player Characters do not specifically mention to him that Urestes mentioned the word 'Brotherhood' on his dying breath, Constanus may use that word himself, referring to the 'brotherhood' of the Mitran priests.

Constanus is primarily interested in what the Player Characters have discovered and in which direction their basic loyalties lie. If possible, he will do his best to befriend them (but will not use any sorcery, as he deems that far too great a risk). If he believes he has been successful, he will urge them to go ahead and report back to Publius that it was indeed the Asurans behind the murder and the blasphemy in Delvyn, even going so far as to 'tease' the Player Characters with hints that the priests of Mitra have discovered evidence that is indeed the case, evidence he is not yet able to reveal.

If the Player Characters seem combative or uncooperative to Constanus, he will not respond in kind, preferring to continue his charm campaign in hopes of turning them around. However, if it becomes clear to him that is impossible, his temper will begin to get the better of him, and he may even go so far as to issue a thickly-veiled warning, something like: 'I do, of course, applaud your sense of duty in this matter, friends. My greatest concern is for you, that the faithful of Tarantia will see your activities as some manner of an attempt at protecting the Asurans, who are, as I mentioned, clearly guilty. I am troubled at the thought some of them may seek to remove what they perceive as an obstacle to justice.'

On the other hand, if the Player Characters seem friendly towards Constanus, he will pursue an entirely different tack in the conversation.

After all, these are the people who just dispatched Essenic, a deadly warrior indeed, and a man Constanus needs to see about replacing. If the Player Characters seem eager to place the blame for the two crimes squarely on Asura, he may even go so far as to begin grooming them for a place within his organisation, stepping into the shoes left behind by Essenic.

It is possible, if one of the Player Characters is a scholar, that he might look into Constanus' eyes and see that the priest of Mitra is corrupted. See the Conan the Roleplaying Game core rulebook for complete rules on the Sorcerer's Soul.

Knives in the Dark

Unless the Player Characters were eager to befriend Constanus and gladly agreed to follow his advice and report to Publius that the Asurans were indeed behind the crimes of the previous night, they will be receiving some unwelcome visitors that evening.

After receiving a less enthusiastic response than he had hoped for from the Player Characters, Constanus decided almost immediately that he needed to hedge his bets. That night, working through his other mercenary/bodyguard Taspilus, he will dispatch a small group of hired assassins to the Player Characters' inn (or wherever else that happen to be sleeping). Like the mercenaries from the cemetery the night before, these assassins will be prepared to plant false evidence linking the Asurans to the assassinations, though Constanus has made certain to provide evidence that will be discovered whether the assassins succeed or fail.

Should they succeed, they are to use the Player Characters' blood to paint the same symbols and glyphs painted with blood in the cemetery the night before. On the other hand, if they fail and are killed, each one has, on a leather thong about his neck, a leather disk on which

is painted one of the Asuran symbols, items which were initially prepared by Essenic for use in the cemetery sacrifice the night before, but which Constanus decided against at the last moment. He has made certain neither he, nor any other living member of the Brotherhood, has touched the false talismans, ever mindful of the dangers the psychometry sorcery spell poses to his plans. Taspilus presented them to the assassins in a wooden box, claiming them to be good luck charms. Constanus assumes, logically enough, that if the assassins are killed by the Player Characters, the discovery of the fake talismans will serve to bolster the case that it was the Asurans behind the two crimes of the previous night.

Constanus' belief that he is guided by the ultimate will of Mitra, that the god's desire for all foreign religions to be purged from Aquilonia (and, eventually, the world), is more than sufficient for him to justify to himself the act of sending assassins after the very people who might possibly unravel his plans. His belief makes him optimistic enough to assume the Player Characters will, indeed, not unravel his plans but he is still realistic enough to know that he must be the one who acts to prevent them from doing so.

Whether the assassins succeed or fail in their mission is something Constanus cannot predict, but he believes that no matter the outcome, it will be good for him. If the assassins succeed, the very people assigned by Publius to determine if the Asurans were behind last night's crimes will be found dead, with evidence implicating the Asurans once again. If the assassins fail, the bloodied Player Characters will still find evidence of Asuran involvement, in the form of the false talismans worn by the assassins. In this event, Constanus is hopeful the Player Characters will be far more willing to entertain the idea that the Asurans are behind the crimes, and thus far more willing to help Constanus in his ultimate goal.

The exact tactics used by the assassins are wholly dependent upon the sleeping arrangements and location of the Player Characters. Faith and Blood assumes the Player Characters are staying in the Stag and Whistle, one of Tarantia's many inns, occupying one or more rooms on the second storey of the building.

The assassins will come for the Player Characters while they sleep. If the Player Characters are in more than one room at the Stag and Whistle, the assassins will divide themselves up accordingly, attempting to strike each group of Player Characters simultaneously. They are adept at slipping into locked rooms, and at the Games Master's discretion, may either try coming through the doors or sneaking through the windows.

Assassins (4): Soldier 3/Thief 3, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 3d10+3d8+12 (41 hp); Init +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflex); Spd 30 feet; Dodge DV +5 (+2 Level, +3 Dex); Parry DV+5 (+3 Level, +2 Str); DR 4 (+4 leather jerkin); Attack: short sword +8 finesse melee (1d8+2); SQ Combat Reflexes, Deft Hands, Eyes of the Cat, Formation Combat (Skirmisher), Point Blank Shot, Poison Use, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Sneak Attack Style (short sword) +2d8, Sneak Attack +2d6, Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +1; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 8; Equipment: leather jerkin, short sword, false talisman of Asura

Games Masters should bear in mind that with this attack happening at night while the Player Characters are (potentially) sleeping, they will likely not be wearing their armour.

If the assassins are not successful in simply killing the Player Characters as they sleep (a sad end for a Player Character but perhaps a good lesson to the players about the importance of setting watches) and end up in a battle with the Player Characters, the assassins will not stay around to fight for long, making their escape at the first possible

Faith and Blood

opportunity. However, these are not brave men, nor are they committed to a cause, and if it becomes clear escape is impossible, they will surrender. The assassins know little of why they have been sent after the Player Characters, only that they were paid good coin to do so. If the Games Master is feeling generous and would like to drop another clue into the Player Characters' laps, he might wish to reward their luck or skill in capturing one of the assassins by having the assassin know the name of the man who hired them, *Taspius*. They know nothing of *Constanus* or the *Brotherhood of the Bull*.

The assassins were offered 500 sp each for eliminating the Player Characters.

The commotion of battle is certain to draw attention from other guests at the Stag and Whistle, who will nonetheless wait until the sounds die down before coming to investigate. Once the other guests in the inn, as well as some of the staff, come to the Player Characters' room(s), the Games Master should roll a series of Spot skill checks for them to determine if any of them notice the false talismans of Asura around the necks of the assassins. If they do (or if the Player Characters do nothing to prevent the existence of the talismans from coming out when the guard arrives at the Stag and Whistle to collect the bodies and ask questions), by morning the rumours of this latest dastardly crime by the Asurans will be circulating through the streets of the city.

Part Three – Unexpected Meetings

As the day dawns on the second day of their investigation, the Player Characters are likely to be fervently wishing Urestes, the murdered priest of Mitra, had stumbled down any other street in the city than the one they were walking down. However much they may wish that, of course, it was them that Urestes encountered, and it was them that

Publius charged with discovering the truth behind the murder of the Mitran priest.

This day dawns with the rumours circulating about the Asurans yesterday showing no sign of abating. In fact, the rumours have grown dramatically overnight, and tension and anger against the Asurans is running high in the light of the rising sun.

Unless the Player Characters took special care to collect and conceal the false talismans of Asura around the necks of each of the assassins, they will surely have been seen by now, whether by the other guests at the inn or by the soldiers of the guard who came to the Stag and Whistle to collect the dead assassins. If they have been seen, new rumours will be added to the mix of xenophobia and suspicion beginning to take on a life of its own on Tarantia's streets, rumours of new attacks by the worshippers of Asura.

*This section of Faith and Blood involves a number of meetings between the Player Characters and other individuals who are interested, for one reason or another, in the drama playing out in the streets of Tarantia. It also demands more of the Games Master, an ability to think on his feet and keep several balls in the air at once, as the religious strife in the city, until two days ago only a slowly simmering problem, is now threatening to boil over, setting Tarantia aflame. The meetings detailed in this chapter can take place in almost any order the Games Master desires (though it would probably be best if the meeting with *Hardrathus* came first). Games Masters may also feel free to alter the meetings in any way they wish – for example, if one or more of the Player Characters has a dark secret in his past, something he would not wish to see revealed, it is entirely appropriate for the Games Master to add a meeting to those detailed below (perhaps with *Lord Nadanidus*) with someone who happens to have some degree of knowledge of*

such secrets, knowledge that can be used as leverage against the Player Characters to skew the investigation one way or the other. Many people in the city of Tarantia feel they have some measure of a stake in what is happening, or feel they have some way to turn the impending violence to their own benefit, and will not hesitate to use any measure available to them to ensure the situation turns out as well as possible.

Out from Hiding

As the Player Characters are readying themselves for another day of investigation, they will receive a visit from someone few in Tarantia have met openly, or at least, few have met who realised who he was.

The Games Master may read or summarise the following for the players:

The sun has risen high enough to clear the eastern buildings of the city, spreading enough light that you can see the general outline of the buildings outside through the murky glass of the window in your room. As you prepare to leave the inn for another day of attempting to unravel the clues set before you, there is a soft, almost hesitant knock on your door.

*The Player Characters, understandably skittish after the attack by *Constanus'* assassins mere hours before, may wish to take certain precautions before opening the door. The man on the other side is planning no foul play against them, rendering any such precautions effectively moot. He will demand to be let in before discussing his business, however, refusing to give even so much as his name, insisting in a loud whisper that it is unsafe for him to speak to the Player Characters through the door, but he has information for them which is vital to their work. Of course, the Player Characters may refuse to speak to him, keeping the door firmly locked, but *Faith and Blood* assumes they will be curious*

enough about what this stranger has to say that they will open the door for him.

The man steps into the room as the door is opening, moving with the kind of swiftness seen in a thief eluding his pursuers, closing the door behind him just as swiftly. He is tall and thin, dressed in a long, dark coloured cloak bearing more than a few stains of travel. The cloak's cowl is drawn far forward, concealing his face.

Once the door is closed again, he turns to you, pulling back the cowl of the cloak to reveal a pale oval of a face, with calm, delicately chiseled features. His hair is dark, with several streaks of grey running through it, and he is clean-shaven.

'My thanks for receiving me under such odd conditions,' he says, his voice carrying the accent of one native to Tarantia. 'After your ... excitement ... of last evening, I can certain understand if you feel cautious or uneasy, but allow me to assure you I mean you no harm whatsoever. Indeed, I fear we face a common foe.

'I could not be certain of your role in what is happening now throughout the city until last night, so you must forgive me for not approaching you earlier. Indeed, it was not until you yourselves came under assault by that band of assassins that I knew you were not actively working as part of some larger plot. Ah, but you must forgive me again. In my haste to explain to you my reasons for not coming before, I have forgotten to tell you why I am here now. I am Hardrathus, priest of Asura, and neither I nor any of my followers have had a hand in the crimes being ascribed to us.'

Unless the Player Characters see this admission as a reason to draw steel and attack, Hardrathus' demeanour will be one of patience and mollification. Should the Player Characters choose to attack, of course, he will attempt to flee. He is here, after all, to make the Player Characters (who, unless one of

them is a worshipper of Asura, will likely have little or no knowledge of Asuran worship) understand that his cult is not, indeed, could not be, responsible for the crimes being committed in the city and ascribed to Asurans.

'Sadly, oaths I have sworn prevent me from discussing much of our customs and rituals with those who do not our path. Indeed, were the circumstances any less dire, I would never have come to you, revealing myself as I have. It may be that these oaths of ours are unwise, that our very secrecy, and the ignorance it breeds, has allowed these terrible rumours now infesting the streets of Tarantia to gain currency. Wise or unwise, however, what is done is done, and it is too late now to reconsider.

'These terrible crimes – the murder of the Mitran priest, the abhorrent acts in the cemetery, the vile attempt on your own lives – have come as an utter surprise to us. I have attempted, through some eldritch means, to find out more of what is happening, but someone or something has successfully managed to block all such attempts. Logic indicates it must be the same person who is behind these crimes, or at least someone closely allied with him.

'I regret I cannot tell you who it is that has orchestrated these terrible deeds. I can only tell you again that it was not I, nor was it any worshipper of Asura who follows our creeds of justice and scholarship. If you have any questions for me, I shall answer them as fully as my oaths allow, and if you have any need of me, I shall serve you as well as I can so long as your endeavour is truly to uncover the architect of these terrible things.

'I have one boon to ask of you as well. Tell no one of me, or of our conversation this morning. I freely admit that, given the mood of the city, I fear for my safety and that of all my followers, should my identity become known. I place my trust in your honour.'

True to his word, Hardrathus will answer any of the Player Characters' questions as well as he can, though he is forbidden by his oaths to tell them (so long as they do not worship Asura – and he will not accept an instantaneous conversion clearly undertaken for the sole purpose of gaining information) any of the specifics required of Asuran worship. Likewise, he cannot take them to the temple of Asura, hidden beneath a nondescript building on the Avenue of the Smiths in the Market Ward of Tarantia, less than a mile from the Mitraeum itself. If he is presented with any of the supposedly Asuran symbols found on the corpse in the cemetery or on the false talismans worn by the assassins, he will confirm they are indeed Asuran in origin, but wholly divorced from their proper meaning. For example, the symbol on the assassins' talismans means 'balance.' Also, if the Player Characters ask him about the name Taspilus (if they were able to get that information from one of the previous night's assassins, Hardrathus will tell them it sounds familiar, and promise to get back to them when he knows more.

Hardrathus is also true to his word in that he will do whatever he can to help the Player Characters, so long as it is indeed their intention to find out who truly is behind this series of crimes. As long as the intentions of the Player Characters are honourable, he will lend what aid he can. However, he does not think it a wise idea for him to accompany the Player Characters as they move throughout the city, as his presence is certain to raise questions he thinks are best left unasked. Though Hardrathus prefers to avoid combat, at the Games Master's option he may join the Player Characters in the final battle of the scenario beneath the villa of Lord Nadanidus.

Once the Player Characters have asked all their questions, Hardrathus will tell them that, if they wish to get in touch with him again for any reason, they should place a pair of lighted candles on the window of their room at the Stag

Faith and Blood

and Whistle, and he will be there as soon as he can. Likewise, should he discover anything, he will come to the inn to report it.

King for a Day

Games Masters should bear in mind that a good amount of action in Faith and Blood is taking place 'off stage,' away from the Player Characters, though it still has an effect, whether direct or indirect, upon the plotline. Today, Publius, chancellor of Aquilonia, is at the centre of much of this action. Beginning late yesterday, and resuming almost immediately this morning, Publius finds himself very nearly under siege by various nobles of Tarantia, all of whom want the same thing – the exposure or exile of the Asurans.

By early afternoon, Publius is beginning to become very nervous about the situation, and will be calling for the Player Characters, hoping for some manner of good news.

Concerned Citizens

Throughout the day, the anger of the citizens of Tarantia against the crimes supposedly committed by the Asurans continues to grow, a fact the Games Master should make clear to the Player Characters through his descriptions of what is happening in the city all about them.

The tales of the 'Asuran' crimes continue to grow more and more fanciful, and more and more loathsome, almost by the hour. Though only two murders have truly occurred as a result of Constanus and Nadanidus' plans, one would not know it to hear the stories being told on the streets. More than one corner or marketplace in Tarantia is, by noontime, the chosen site of someone holding forth on the evils of the Asurans, and the need for all good and loyal Tarantians to drive them from their lands. Several people, mostly foreigners, are accused of worshipping Asura, an accusation that

leads swiftly to a brutal beating at the hands of a mob.

As the Player Characters go about their business this day, they are likely to find themselves meeting suddenly and, in some cases, unexpectedly, with some of Tarantia's nobles who either could not get in to see Publius, have already seen him and wish to repeat themselves to the Player Characters who are investigating this matter or have decided to go straight to the investigators themselves. The exact number of these meetings, and who instigates them, are left up to the Games Master. If the Player Characters are relative newcomers to Tarantia, there are likely to be very few such meetings. However, if the Player Characters have made a name for themselves in the city, particularly if they already have a non-hostile relationship with one or more nobles, they may find themselves besieged throughout the day by nobles who only wish them to report the guilt of Asura so that the business of the city can move forward.

Second Chance

Shortly after Hardrathus takes his leave of the Player Characters, indeed, only a few moments after they leave the Stag and Whistle, a familiar carriage pulls to a stop beside them. It is Constanus, who has decided to make another attempt at converting the Player Characters to his cause. Just as he did last night, he will open the door and beckon the Player Characters over to speak with him. He will also offer them a ride to wherever they may be headed, but whether or not they take him up on the offer has little to do with the rest of the encounter, save that Constanus will know where they went.

'I am quite relieved to see you all still hale and hearty,' Constanus says, dropping his voice low enough to prevent it from being overheard. 'Word came to me of the attack you suffered last night, but I did not know for certain before now that you had all survived the attempt

on your lives. I further understand that these assassins bore more sigils of the murderous cult of Asura? I trust you are now convinced of the culpability of these heathen foreigners in the spate of crimes gripping our city?'

Constanus will make an ardent and earnest effort to bring the Player Characters around to his way of thinking, pointing out to them again and again the obvious guilt of the Asurans. He is unwilling to hear any arguments to the contrary, though he will keep his temper under control. If the Player Characters mention anything about Hardrathus, of even of receiving a visit from a priest of Asura, however, Constanus' temper will flare as he denounces all such worshippers as fiends and demons of the most vile order.

Whispers in the Temple

This encounter may take place anywhere the Games Master deems appropriate. If the Player Characters have become suspicious of Constanus (which would not be surprising) and have come to the Mitraeum to see what they can discover about him, it should take place there. Otherwise, it can take place virtually anywhere in the city, with the exceptions of Tamar and the Player Characters' room at the Stag and Whistle. Cadius is terribly afraid he has stumbled onto the edges of something very dangerous (a true and reasonable fear) and is unwilling to expose himself by meeting with the Player Characters anywhere that he might be recognised.

If the Player Characters have not yet been successful on following up on any other clues, this meeting may be the break in the investigation they have been hoping for.

If the encounter takes place at the Mitraeum, the Player Characters will notice a lone priest standing in a barely-open doorway, gesturing to them to come to him. If it takes place outside the great temple, Cadius will approach

them nervously, glancing over his shoulders and taking sidelong looks up and down the street, seemingly unaware of how suspicious such activities seem to an onlooker.

Caudius has taken the death of Urestes quite hard, as he had a great deal of respect for the senior priest. Driven by curiosity as much as anything else, he has striven to find out all he can about Urestes' death and has managed to piece together a more or less complete picture of what happened when the Player Characters found him the poisoned priest.

'Please, good lords and ladies, I understand you do not know me, but I feel I must speak to you. First, though, I must know – did the pious Urestes say anything about a group called the Brotherhood before going to Mitra's halls?'

Of course, the Player Characters may outright lie, they may refuse to answer and they may tell the truth. Caudius is, despite his nervousness, quite anxious to share his information, and can be fairly easily persuaded to do so even if the Player Characters confirm nothing about Urestes' last words. As soon as Caudius knows Urestes mentioned the Brotherhood, or as soon as he is convinced to speak, he will say the following.

'Very well,' the priest says, nodding. 'Then there is something I fear I must tell you. I overheard two priests speaking this morning, though I could only see one of them. They appeared to be arguing, though in hushed tones, but at one point the priest I could not see let his anger best him, and his voice rose high enough that I could pick out his words. He told Barthias, the priest I could see, that, though it was regrettable, Urestes could not be allowed to betray the Brotherhood. Barthias paused for a moment, then nodded his assent, and they quickly went their separate ways.

I saw Barthias again perhaps an hour later, and his face still had a haunted look about it. I have never heard of this Brotherhood before, and I know nothing more of it, but if they are behind Urestes' murder, they must be brought to justice.'

Caudius is telling the Player Characters the absolute truth. Though he has no more love for the Asurans than any other priest of Mitra, his loyalty to Urestes has made him value justice for the murderers over any other concerns, save perhaps his own safety. The Player Characters may question Caudius all they like, but he knows nothing more.

The Player Characters will likely wish to meet this Barthias, which will be a difficult prospect without the help of Caudius or another priest. Caudius does not wish to become any further involved in this than he already is, but with a successful Diplomacy skill check (DC 15) by one of the Player Characters, he will agree to help. He will insist it take place outside the Mitraeum, but other than that will let the Player Characters plan the details of the meeting.

The Assassin Master

If the Player Characters discovered the name Tapsius from one of the assassins last night, mentioned it to Hardrathus and return to the Stag and Whistle any time after noon, they will find a note slipped under their door. The note is unsigned, reading simply this:

'Tapsius is a mercenary retainer in the service of Lord Nadanidus. He has served Nadanidus for three years, and is a veteran of several mercenary companies.'

Any Player Character with even a single rank in Knowledge (Tarantia) will know who Lord Nadanidus is, as will any Player Character who can succeed in a Knowledge (nobility) skill check DC 15. Of course, they may well have already met him this day (see above).

Regardless of how well the Player Characters do on their skill check rolls, they know nothing of Nadanidus' connection with the cult of Set. As far as anyone in Tarantia is aware, Nadanidus is simply another very rich, moderately unscrupulous noble. However, a Gather Information skill check roll (DC 20) is sufficient to reveal that Nadanidus and Constanus have been seen together regularly. A successful check against a DC 25 is enough to reveal that there is an old series of catacombs beneath Lord Nadanidus' manor in Tamar.

Confession

If the Player Characters were wise enough to have Caudius arrange for them to meet with Barthias, he will be able to set it up on relatively short notice. The exact circumstances of the meeting, as well as its location, are dependent upon what plans the Player Characters made for it.

Barthias will not be pleased when he learns Caudius has effectively lured him into a trap. Still, he is not a foolish man and will not immediately attempt to fight his way free.

Barthias: Scholar 5, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 5d6 (19 hp); Init +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex); Spd 30 feet; Dodge DV +2 (+1 Level, +1 Dex); Parry DV +0 (+1 Level, -1 Str); Attack: dagger +5 finesse melee (1d4-1); SQ Investigator, Iron Will, Knowledge is Power, Priest, Spells; PP 7; Spells astrological prediction, entrance, hypnotic suggestion, mind-reading, psychometry, rune of Jhebbal Sag, warding; Magic Attack +4 (+2 Level, +2 Cha); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 15; Equipment: priest's robes

Barthias feels he is on the horns of a dilemma, a predicament that is likely to serve the Player Characters well, so long as they are careful in how they handle this situation. He is extremely loyal to both Constanus and the Brotherhood of the Bull, holding the banishment of

Faith and Blood

all foreign religions from Aquilonia to be his highest calling. However, that loyalty does not extend to Lord Nadanidus. A suspicion has been growing in his mind for some time that Nadanidus does not have the interests of the Brotherhood at heart. Finally, Barthias mustered up his courage to attempt to read Nadanidus' soul and managed to see the corruption so carefully hidden within. He now believes that Nadanidus is attempting to use the Brotherhood in some way he does not yet understand, but is unsure how to broach the subject with Constanus. He also believes something very unnatural is going on in the catacombs beneath the manor, a suspicion given some credence by his discovery 10 days ago of a scale, about twice the size of his thumbnail, that he thinks came from some kind of enormous snake.

Of course, he is not interested in sharing this information with the Player Characters, who will have to use either the Diplomacy or Intimidate skill to get Barthias to talk. The process is very much like pulling teeth; the Player Characters will have to drag the answers they want out of him one by one. The DCs for the skill check rolls will vary depending upon the question being asked, and Games Masters should assign a difficulty to each check. In general, Barthias is more likely to answer questions about Nadanidus (DC 15 or more) than he is to answer questions about the Brotherhood (DC 25 or more). If the Player Characters manage to recruit Cadius to their side, he will urge Barthias to help the Player Characters, and the Games Master should consider lowering the DC of these checks by as much as five.

If the Player Characters manage to succeed on three skill checks in a row, Barthias' resolve will break and he will begin to volunteer information. The exact extent of his knowledge is up to the Games Master to determine, with due consideration given to how much help, if any, the Player Characters currently

need to unravel the events of Faith and Blood. There are, however, certain things Barthias absolutely does know, such as the Brotherhood's culpability in the crimes in the cemetery, the Brotherhood's goal of exiling all religions save Mitra and the fact that the Brotherhood is to meet in the catacombs beneath Nadanidus' manor this very night. There are also some things he absolutely does not know, such as the fact that Constanus ordered the attempted assassination of the Player Characters.

It is important for the Games Master and players to roleplay this conversation. If the Player Characters are particularly lucky and persuasive, they might (at the Games Master's option) be able to recruit Barthias to their cause. In this case, Barthias will agree to work to help them, whether by providing details on what he knows of the catacombs (he has never been farther inside than Room 7), or by trying to arrange for them to meet Constanus. If the Player Characters express a desire to launch their own assault on Lord Nadanidus' catacombs (or, if they have already spoken to Publius and taken up his request that they finish the job) Barthias will ask them not to make the attempt during the gathering of the Brotherhood, which is set to begin two hours past sundown. He can tell them how to get into the sewers at the closest access point to Nadanidus' catacombs, and will reveal the location of the hidden door from the sewers into the catacombs themselves, as well as provide them with a key to the lock.

Constanus

The Player Characters may have become suspicious of Constanus after their first meeting with him the night before, and decide to spend the day investigating him, an exercise in the use of the Gather Information skill that is not likely to yield any great results.

However, if the Player Characters choose to follow Constanus as he conducts his business in the city today, they may

learn some things of great value. He spends most of his day travelling from one lord's manor in Tamar to another, always going inside for some 15 to 20 minutes before emerging again and travelling on to the next noble. Though the Player Characters have no way to know this at the time, most of these nobles being visited by Constanus are the same nobles who, shortly afterward, make their way to the Chancellery to pressure Publius.

Once Constanus leaves Tamar, his first activity will be quite interesting to the Player Characters. His carriage takes him around the outside of the ancient wall surrounding the old city, coming to a stop outside a short and narrow alleyway that terminates at an old tower. Constanus approaches the tower, making his way to where the tower joins with the wall itself, and opens a hidden door. He descends a winding stair into the sewers beneath the old city. If the Player Characters wish to, of course, they may follow him now, heading straight into the climax of the adventure.

After several hours in the catacombs, Constanus returns to the alleyway, making his way on foot to where his carriage waits. His activities after this are up to the Games Master, depending upon whether he wishes the Player Characters to have a chance to meet Constanus again or not (see below). Games Masters should remember, if the Player Characters are attempting to follow Constanus, that he is moving about in a carriage, which makes following him on foot an exhausting and potentially futile exercise for the Player Characters.

If the Player Characters have not been keeping track of Constanus' movements throughout the day, they will have to rely on Barthias to find him for them, should they wish to speak to him. Whether Barthias is able to find him or not depends upon the wishes of the Games Master.

Ultimately, speaking to Constanus may be a fruitless endeavour, unless the Player Characters are true masters of diplomacy. Utterly convinced of the rightness of his cause, Constanus will admit nothing of the crimes he has been a part of, putting on a masterful show of righteous indignation at the implication he might have played some part in them. Only if the Player Characters are somehow able to prove to his satisfaction that Lord Nadanidus is a worshipper of Set will he begin to listen to them. He views Set as even worse than Asura, a belief which, coupled with his rage at being deceived by Nadanidus, might net the Player Characters an extremely powerful ally.

Of course, the Player Characters will need more than Barthias' suspicions and a big snake scale to convince Constanus, and finding any more evidence of Nadanidus' allegiances without raiding his catacombs would be very nearly impossible.

Publius

By early afternoon, the mood on the streets and the pressure brought by the nobles has put Publius into a foul and desperate mood, and he will begin trying to find the Player Characters, sending scouts out to order them to report to him at the Chancellery. Whether or not those scouts are successful in locating the Player Characters is, of course, up to the Games Master, who should also consider exactly what the Player Characters are doing when making his decision.

Faith and Blood assumes that, if the Player Characters do go to see Publius, it will be after they have spoken to Barthias. As at their first visit to the Chancellery, the Player Characters are relieved of weapons and escorted to Publius' study by a page.

Publius looks far more tired than he did when you saw him last, as though he has not slept in days. The table in his study, so neat before, is now littered with sheets

of parchment, gathered into loose piles. The fire in the hearth is long dead, and a smell of cold ashes gives a sombre tone to the air in this room. Publius looks up at you as you enter, his face a grey and impassive mask.

'I hope you've something to report to me,' he says gravely. 'I fear this situation is becoming more dire by the hour.'

Assuming the Player Characters have spoken to Cadius and Barthias by this point, they do indeed have something to report aside from their confrontation with Essenic and the assassin attack of the night before, two things Publius is already aware of. He will listen intently as the Player Characters speak, asking probing and insightful questions to draw out the details, but is not at all pleased by the news they have brought him.

Though Publius will not say as much, he is dismayed at the thought of Mitran priests being responsible for the spate of crimes blamed on the Asurans, and not simply because he himself is a worshipper of Mitra. Given the current climate, and the sheer power of the cult of Mitra, he sees no way he could expose the Brotherhood of the Bull for what it is. The possibility of involvement by the cult of Set he sees as both a blessing and a curse. On one hand, if Lord Nadanidus is truly an acolyte of the Stygian god, the entirety of the crimes can be blamed on him. On the other hand, if it is true, it means the Stygians are taking a more active interest than before in the affairs of Aquilonia.

'This is disturbing news,' Publius says as you finish your tale. 'Very well. I've a favour to ask of you, one for which you will be compensated, of course. You have brought me speculation about Lord Nadanidus, but not proof, and without that proof, I cannot move against him. He is quite wealthy and exceedingly influential, and if I were to send the guard after him and be proven wrong,

the results could be unfortunate. I would, therefore, like you to find the proof I need, presumably within the catacombs beneath his manor. If you agree, you will be operating without my official sanction. Should you find no evidence of an alliance to Set, I can likely get you out of Tarantia, but you can never return. If you do find it, however – well, that is how heroes are made.'

Part Four – The Serpent's Lair

Gaining access to the catacombs beneath Lord Nadanidus' manor is no easy task. The catacombs themselves are incredibly old, parts of them dating back to before the existence of Aquilonia itself.

The Games Master need not feel constrained by the descriptions given for the rooms below. The catacombs beneath the manor are hardly some dusty and abandoned labyrinth, but rather serve as home for a number of Nadanidus' retainers and have a permanent presence of most of his guards. From the moment it becomes known that the Player Characters are forcing their way into the catacombs, the entire place will become very active. The guards, priests and others in the catacombs will not simply wait for the Player Characters to arrive at their respective rooms, but will instead actively move to engage and destroy the invaders.

The descriptions for the rooms given below list the potential enemies that are in each room of the catacombs before the alarm is sounded. Obviously, the Games Master must be the final arbiter of which Non-Player Characters do what, and when, but the following timeline represents what may be the most likely order of events, beginning with the Player Characters' entry to Room 4. Games Masters may feel free to use all, some or none of it.

Faith and Blood

Round 1: As the Player Characters enter Room 4, the three guards within are alerted, and one heads for the door.

Round 2: One of the guards runs through the door, calling out an alarm.

Round 8: Five guards from Room 8 are the first to respond to the alarm.

Round 9: The members of the Brotherhood (if they are in session) flee Room 7.

Round 15: Six guards and one officer from Room 9 arrive.

Round 18: Five guards and one officer from Room 9 arrive.

Round 20-25: Lord Nadanidus and Taspilus arrive. If things are going poorly for the guards, Lord Nadanidus will attempt to release the Son of Set from Room 14.

Lord Nadanidus and Taspilus have no official position in the catacombs, but may arrive at any point the Games Master deems appropriate. Lord Nadanidus' statistics are given in the Non-Player Characters section of Faith and Blood; Taspilus is listed here.

Taspilus: Soldier 9/Thief 2, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 9d10+1d8+34 (87 hp); Init +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflex); Spd 30 feet; Dodge DV +8 (+5 Level, +3 Dex); Parry DV+15 (+7 Level, +4 Str, +4 large shield); DR 5 (+5 mail shirt); Attack: arming sword +15 melee (1d10+4); SQ Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Eyes of the Cat, Far Shot, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry), Formation Combat (Skirmisher), Great Cleave, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Sneak Attack Style (war sword) +1d8, Sneak Attack +1d6, Trap Disarming, Weapon Focus (arming sword); SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10; Equipment: mail shirt, arming sword

The Entry. This is the entry point to the sewers which the Brotherhood of the Bull members have been using when they come to the catacombs. The Player Characters may have learned of it from Barthias, or from watching Constanus as he accessed it.

Junction Room. This junction room is in most ways just like all other junction rooms in Tarantia's sewer system, but with one important difference. In the southeast corner of the junction room is a cleverly concealed door leading into the catacombs beneath Lord Nadanidus' manor. Finding the door without a careful search is nearly impossible, and even if one knows where to look, it is difficult (Search skill check DC 20 to locate).

The Games Master may read the following text for the Player Characters when they arrive here:

If the information you were given by Barthias is correct, this dismal junction room holds the entryway into Lord Nadanidus' catacombs. Glancing around, there is no door in evidence, only walls of incredibly old stone. The room itself is more or less square, about 20 feet on a side. The ceiling is no more than six feet tall, supported by four square pillars of brick. Including the entry you used, there are three tunnels leading out of this room, heading, you assume, deeper into the sewers. A narrow, slick walkway only half a foot wide runs around the perimeter of the room, bridging the three exits with rusted metal catwalks. Aside from this walkway, none of the room's floor is visible, concealed beneath a slowly-moving morass of sludge of unknown depth and undeniable stench. Stains on the walls mark the level to which the sludge has risen in the past, and you can only be grateful there has been little rain in Tarantia of late.

Manoeuvring on the narrow ledge around the junction room is difficult but it can be accomplished with a successful

Balance skill check roll (DC 19). The concealed door itself is locked. If the Player Characters have the key, of course, they may open it with ease, otherwise, they must pick it using an Open Locks skill check (DC 20).

To Sewers. All locations marked with this number indicate a passageway leading deeper into the aged sewer system of Tamar.

Guard Room. This room was once, many years ago, used as a storage facility for the smuggling operations that made Lord Nadanidus' forebears so wealthy. However, now it stands empty, save for the three guards Nadanidus keeps stationed here to ensure no one enters the catacombs beneath his manor without his knowledge. If the Player Characters have come up with some way to disguise themselves as members of the Brotherhood of the Bull, and have come at the time of the meeting, the guards will let them pass. Otherwise, one of the guards will run through the southeastern door to tell his lord that invaders have breached the catacombs while the other two take up positions to block the door and prepare to do battle with the Player Characters.

Guards (3): Soldier 2, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 2d10+4 (16 hp); Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 25 feet; Dodge DV +2 (+1 Level, +1 Dex); Parry DV+7 (+1 Level, +2 Str, +4 large shield); DR 8 (+7 mail shirt and scale corselet, +1 steel cap); Attack: broadsword +5 melee (1d10+2); SQ Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword); SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12; Equipment: mail shirt and scale corselet, steel cap, broadsword, large shield

The Player Characters should easily best the two guards who stand against them, but unless they are able to stop the third guard before he reaches either Room 7 or Room 8, the entire armed forces of the manor will soon be roused against them.

Storage Room. This room has been empty and unused for so long the door no longer works, and must be forced open (Strength ability check, DC 15). Inside is nothing but dust and remains of several ancient crates, very nearly degraded into dust themselves.

Wine Cellar. The cool room is furnished with wooden racks along each wall, holding a total of nearly 200 bottles of wine, including 10 bottle of black lotus wine (see Conan the Roleplaying Game core rulebook). The wines are from a variety of countries, though few of the bottles are labelled in any way that makes sense to the casual observer. Still, if they could be transported out of here, they would be worth a total of 6,500 sp to an interested buyer. That total does not include the price for the black lotus wine.

If one of the guards in Room 4 managed to get away and sound the alarm, there will be another group of guards responding by the time the Player Characters reach this area of the catacombs. They are not interested in taking prisoners; Lord Nadanidus, in his concern that someone might discover his worship of Set, has commanded that any intruders into the catacombs be killed.

Guards (5): Soldier 3, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 3d10+6 (23 hp); Init +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex); Spd 25 feet; Dodge DV +3 (+1 Level, +2 Dex); Parry DV+9 (+2 Level, +3 Str, +4 large shield); DR 8 (+7 mail shirt and scale corselet, +1 steel cap); Attack: broadsword +7 melee (1d10+3); SQ Cleave, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12; Equipment: mail shirt and scale corselet, steel cap, broadsword, large shield

Larder. This room is, officially, the larder for the manor above, containing sacks of grain, wheels of cheese, salted meats and various other foodstuffs to supply

Lord Nadanidus, his family and his retainers. However, that is not the sole purpose of this room, nor, as far as Faith and Blood is concerned, is it the most important.

The larder is also the room in the catacombs set aside for the meetings of the Brotherhood of the Bull. There are, including Constanus, 11 members of the Brotherhood, Mitran priests for whom the goal of driving all other religions out of Aquilonia outweighs any other concerns or precepts of their faith.

If the Player Characters have come during the time of one of the meetings, the members of the Brotherhood will be there. If the alarm has been sounded, they will be trying to make their way out of the room to join with some of the guards from rooms 8 and 9. Ultimately, it is up to the judgement of the Games Master as to whether or not the members of the Brotherhood have had enough warning to make it out of their meeting room and unite with the soldiers. If the Player Characters have come straight to this point as quickly as they could manage, the members of the Brotherhood are likely still here. On the other hand, if the Player Characters have spent an inordinate amount of time checking every nook and cranny they have passed, the members of the Brotherhood will almost certainly have made their way to rooms 8 and 9, and the Player Characters will soon be facing a combined group of priests and mercenaries.

The room itself is inordinately large for an underground chamber, some 35 feet by 40 feet, its seven-foot, smoke-blackened ceiling held up with five immense columns. The majority of the provisions are stacked against the eastern and southern walls, leaving much of the northern and western areas of the room clear.

Priests (8): Scholar 5, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 5d6 (19 hp); Init +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex); Spd 30 feet;

Dodge DV +2 (+1 Level, +1 Dex); Parry DV+0 (+1 Level, -1 Str); Attack: dagger +5 finesse melee (1d4-1); SQ Iron Will, Knowledgeable, Knowledge is Power, Priest, Spells; PP 7; Spells astrological prediction, entrance, hypnotic suggestion, mind-reading, psychometry, rune of Jhebbal Sag, warding; Magic Attack +4 (+2 Level, +2 Cha); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 15; Equipment: priest's robes

Priests (3): Scholar 7, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 7d6 (26 hp); Init +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflex); Spd 30 feet; Dodge DV +3 (+2 Level, +1 Dex); Parry DV+1 (+2 Level, -1 Str); Attack: dagger +6 finesse melee (1d4-1); SQ Iron Will, Knowledgeable, Knowledge is Power, Leadership, Priest, Spells; PP 8; Spells astrological prediction, domination, entrance, greater warding, hypnotic suggestion, mind-reading, psychometry, rune of Jhebbal Sag, visions, warding; Magic Attack +6 (+3 Level, +3 Cha); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 16; Equipment: priest's robes

If Constanus is here as well, the Games Master should consult the Non-Player Characters chapter of Faith and Blood for his complete statistics.

Barracks. This room is 15 feet by 20 feet, supported in the centre by a single column. It is one of two barracks for the guards and mercenaries retained by Lord Nadanidus. If the Player Characters manage to get here without rousing the alarm, they will find five soldiers awake, playing a game of cards by the light of a flickering lamp, while four more sleep in their bunks.

Guards (5): Soldier 3, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 3d10+6 (23 hp); Init +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex); Spd 25 feet; Dodge DV +3 (+1 Level, +2 Dex); Parry DV+9 (+2 Level, +3 Str, +4 large shield); DR 8 (+7 mail shirt and scale corselet, +1 steel cap); Attack: broadsword +7 melee (1d10+3); SQ Cleave, Formation Combat

Faith and Blood

(Heavy Infantry), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12; Equipment: mail shirt and scale corselet, steel cap, broadsword, large shield

Guards (4): Soldier 3, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 3d10+6 (23 hp); Init +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex); Spd 30 feet; Dodge DV +3 (+1 Level, +2 Dex); Parry DV+5 (+2 Level, +3 Str); DR 0; Attack: broadsword +7 melee (1d10+3); SQ Cleave, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12; Equipment: broadsword

The second set of statistics is for the four guards sleeping in their bunks.

If the Player Characters have set off an alarm, five of the soldiers will be missing and presumably dealt with outside Room 6, while the other four are busily struggling into their armour.

Barracks. This is the second, larger barracks for Lord Nadanidus' men-at-arms. The room measures 25 feet by 30 feet, and differs from the rooms encountered thus far in that it is not entirely man-made. Instead, it is a natural cave that has been enlarged and finished, and the broken stumps of stalactites still dangle from the ceiling, which is supported by four square pillars.

This barracks is home to 16 men, including the three standing watch in Room 4 when the Player Characters arrive in the catacombs.

Guards (6): Soldier 2, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 2d10+4 (16 hp); Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 25 feet; Dodge DV +2 (+1 Level, +1 Dex); Parry DV+7 (+1 Level, +2 Str, +4 large shield); DR 8 (+7 mail shirt and scale corselet, +1 steel cap); Attack: broadsword +5 melee (1d10+2); SQ Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus

(broadsword); SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12; Equipment: mail shirt and scale corselet, steel cap, broadsword, large shield

Guards (5): Soldier 3, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 3d10+6 (23 hp); Init +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex); Spd 25 feet; Dodge DV +3 (+1 Level, +2 Dex); Parry DV+9 (+2 Level, +3 Str, +4 large shield); DR 8 (+7 mail shirt and scale corselet, +1 steel cap); Attack: broadsword +7 melee (1d10+3); SQ Cleave, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12; Equipment: mail shirt and scale corselet, steel cap, broadsword, large shield

Officers (2): Soldier 5, Medium Human Male Aquilonian; HD 5d10+10 (36 hp); Init +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex); Spd 25 feet; Dodge DV +4 (+2 Level, +2 Dex); Parry DV+10 (+3 Level, +3 Str, +4 large shield); DR 8 (+7 mail shirt and scale corselet, +1 steel cap); Attack: broadsword +9 melee (1d10+5); SQ Cleave, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword), Weapon Specialisation (broadsword); SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12; Equipment: mail shirt and scale corselet, steel cap, broadsword, large shield

Storage. This room is very nearly packed full with crates and boxes, containing the dozens of minor things a manor such as that of Lord Nadanidus needs to operate effectively, such as lamp oil, bolts of cloth, extra pots and so forth.

Stairs. These stairs lead up into the main manor of Lord Nadanidus.

Treasury. Behind a cleverly concealed door in the wall at the corner of the corridor lies the treasury of Lord Nadanidus. Finding this door requires a 10-minute search of the proper area, as well as a successful Search skill check roll (DC 25). The door

itself is locked (Lord Nadanidus has the key), with a good lock (DC 30 for Open Lock skill check rolls).

Within his treasury, Lord Nadanidus keeps coins, precious gems, objects of art and other items of great value, totaling more than 15,000 sp. The actual wealth of Lord Nadanidus far exceeds this amount, of course, but the majority of his wealth is tied up in a wide variety of investments such as caravan trains. Of course, the Games Master is free to adjust the wealth in the treasury up or down dependent upon his wishes for the campaign.

Player Characters might also be wise to remember, before raiding Lord Nadanidus' treasury, that the man has heirs who know nothing of his involvement with the cult of Set, but will certainly be anxious to get their hands on his wealth. If they are robbed of that chance, they are not likely to look kindly upon the Player Characters.

In the northwest corner of the treasury is another locked secret door, identical to the first, leading into a rough-hewn corridor.

Shrine of Set. The rough walls of this natural cave are covered with heavy black hangings, framing the dark altar in the centre of the room. Atop the altar are several golden vessels set with rubies and onyx. Though there is no writing of any kind in the room, it is not difficult (Knowledge – religion skill check roll DC 15) to identify this place for what it is – a shrine to the Stygian god Set.

A single iron-bound door in the northern wall leads out of this room, as does a spiral staircase concealed behind one of the black wall hangings, which ascends to the manor above, though the way is blocked by an iron trap door bolted and locked from the other side.

The sacramental vessels on the altar of Set are worth 2,500 sp.

The Lair. Behind the door leading through the northern wall of the shrine of Set lurks a creature the Player Characters certainly do not wish to meet. It is a Lesser Son of Set, and if Lord Nadanidus becomes desperate, he will attempt to make his way here in order to loose it against the Player Characters. The complete statistics for the beast are available in the Conan the Roleplaying Game core rulebook.

Lesser Son of Set: Huge Animal; HP 70; Init +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflex); Spd 20; Dodge DV +9 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural); DR 5; Attack +13 Bite (1d10+10) or Grapple; SV Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

The Crypt. This enormous natural cavern has dozens of graves dug into the walls, in which the ancestors of Lord Nadanidus lie in slumber. Though they were all buried with their finery, Nadanidus stripped them of any valuable possessions long ago, reasoning that such wealth could be better used by the living.

Non-Player Characters

CONSTANUS, PRIEST OF MITRA
Medium Human Male Aquilonian
Scholar 12

Hit Dice: 10d6+20+2 (63 hp)
Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +5 Ref)
Speed: 30
DV (Dodge): +15 (+1 Dex, +4 Level)
DV (Parry): +14 (+4 Level)
DR: -
Attack: Dagger +10 finesse melee (1d4)
Full Attack: Dagger +10/+5 finesse melee (1d4)
Special Attacks: Defensive Blast, Spells
Special Qualities: Knowledge is Power
Base Power Points: 11 (base 4, +4 Wis, +3 Level)
Maximum Power Points: 33
Magic Attack Bonus: +9 (+3 Cha, +6 Level)
Corruption: 3
Space/Reach: 5ft. (1)/5ft. (1)
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +14
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 16

Skills: Appraise +11, Bluff +17, Concentration +15, Craft (alchemy) +11, Craft (herbalism) +11, Decipher Script +11, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +17, Heal +11, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (religion) +18, Listen +17, Perform (ritual) +11, Profession (priest) +18, Sense Motive +18

Feats: Adept (Divination), Adept (Hypnotism), Diligent, Iron Will, Leadership, Priest, Skill Focus (Knowledge – local), Skill Focus (Profession – priest)

Counterspells: *warding, greater warding, rune of Jhebbal Sag*

Divination: *astrological prediction, psychometry, visions, mind-reading, sorcerous news, greater sorcerous news, dream of wisdom*

Hypnotism: *entrance, hypnotic suggestion, domination, ranged hypnotism, mass hypnotic suggestion*

Oriental Magic: *calm of the adept*

Prestidigitation: *conjuring, burst barrier*

Constanus is the worst kind of religious zealot, a man so convinced of the ultimate rightness of his cause that he is able to justify easily anything he might feel necessary to further that cause. For Constanus, that cause is ridding Aquilonia of all faiths save that of Mitra, and he is willing to commit murder, and acts even darker still, in order to see it through. He is certain that any acts he commits in this endeavour, no matter how much they may seem to violate basic Mitran dogma, are done with the full blessing of Mitra in the interest of the greater good.

HARDRATHUS, PRIEST OF ASURA

Medium Human Male Aquilonian
Scholar 8
Hit Dice: 8d6+8 (38 hp)
Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Ref)
Speed: 30
DV (Dodge): +14 (+1 Dex, +3 Level)

DV (Parry): +13 (+3 Level)

DR: -

Attack: Dagger +7 finesse melee (1d4)
Full Attack: Dagger +7/+2 finesse melee
Special Attacks: Defensive Blast, Spells
Special Qualities: Knowledge is Power
Base Power Points: 9 (base 4, +3 Wis, +2 Level)

Maximum Power Points: 27

Magic Attack Bonus: +7 (+3 Cha, +4 Level)

Corruption: 0

Space/Reach: 5ft. (1)/5ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +11

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 17

Skills 132: Appraise +12, Bluff +12, Concentration +13, Craft (herbalism) +12, Decipher Script +12, Gather Information +12, Heal +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +12, Perform (ritual) +12, Profession (priest) +12, Search +12, Sense Motive +12

Feats: Adept (divination), Iron Will, Investigator, Priest

Spells:

Counterspells: *warding, greater warding, rune of Jhebbal Sag*

Divination: *astrological prediction, psychometry, visions, mind-reading, sorcerous news*

Hypnotism: *entrance, hypnotic suggestion, domination, ranged hypnotism*

Prestidigitation: *conjuring*

Though the roots of the cult of Asura are in distant Vendhya, Hardrathus is a man of Aquilonia. Quiet and studious, he is a man of impressive charisma when he chooses to use it. He is intensely loyal to Aquilonia and to Asura. He is also very loyal to King Conan, the man who granted his religion asylum and, he had hoped, freedom from persecution.

He is horrified at the crimes that have been carried out and blamed on Asura, and is anxious to do all he can to clear his cult of any suspicion.

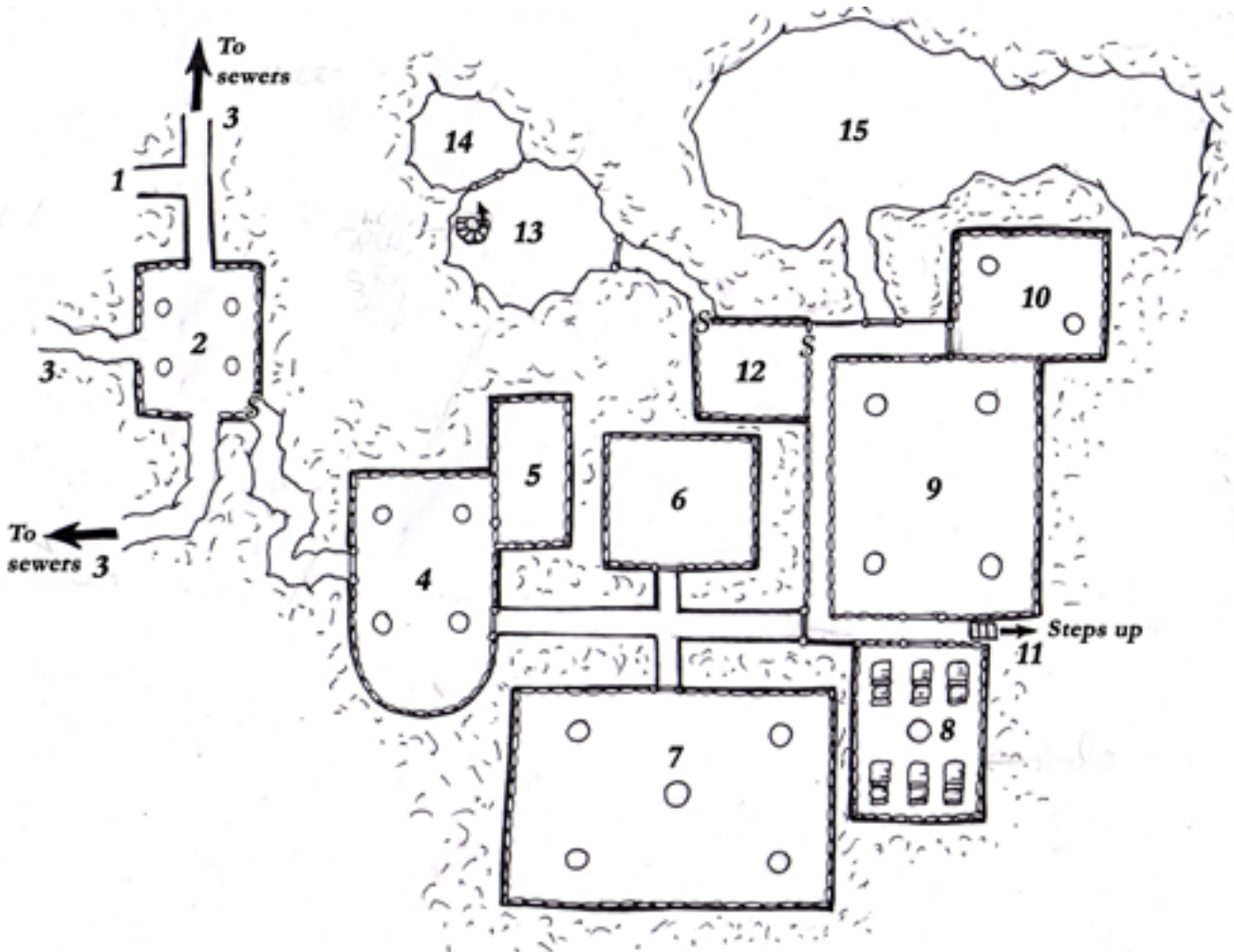
Lord Nadanidus

Medium Human Male Aquilonian
 Noble 5/Scholar 5
 Hit Dice: 5d8+5d6+20 (71 hp)
 Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflex save)
 Speed: 30ft.
 DV (Dodge): +13 (+1 Dex, +2 Level)
 DV (Parry): +20 (+3 Str, +3 Level, +4 large shield)
 DR: 6 (breastplate)
 Attack: Akbitanan broadsword +11 melee (1d10+3)
 Full Attack: Akbitanan broadsword +11/+5 melee
 Special Attacks: Defensive Blast, Spells
 Special Qualities: Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth, Special Regional Feature +1, Smear Another, Lead By Example +2, Knowledge is Power
 Base Power Points: 7 (base 4, +2 Wis, +1 Level)
 Maximum Power Points: 14

Magic Attack Bonus: +4 (+2 Cha, +2 Level)
 Corruption: 4
 Space/Reach: 5ft. (1)/5ft. (1)
 Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +12
 Abilities: Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14
 Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Knowledge (religion) +10, Ride +11, Sense Motive +13
 Feats: Iron Will, Leadership, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Skill Focus (sense motive), Steely Gaze
 Possessions: Akbitanan broadsword, breastplate, large shield
Curses: lesser ill-fortune, ill-fortune, greater ill-fortune
Divination: astrological prediction, psychometry, mind-reading
Summonings: demonic pact

Lord Nadanidus is the descendant of an old, old family that has lived in Tamar for dozens of generations, one that has never felt itself overburdened with a need to adhere to the law. Driven by greed and material gluttony, Lord Nadanidus went further than any of his forebears, striking a deal with the cult of Set in his search for greater power.

At the command of the cult, he took on an active role at the Mitraeum, where he met Constanus. The two became allies in what Constanus saw as their common loathing of all foreign religions in Aquilonia. Nadanidus stoked the fires of resentment burning in Constanus into a blaze, which soon led to the formation of the Brotherhood of the Bull.



TRAVELLER

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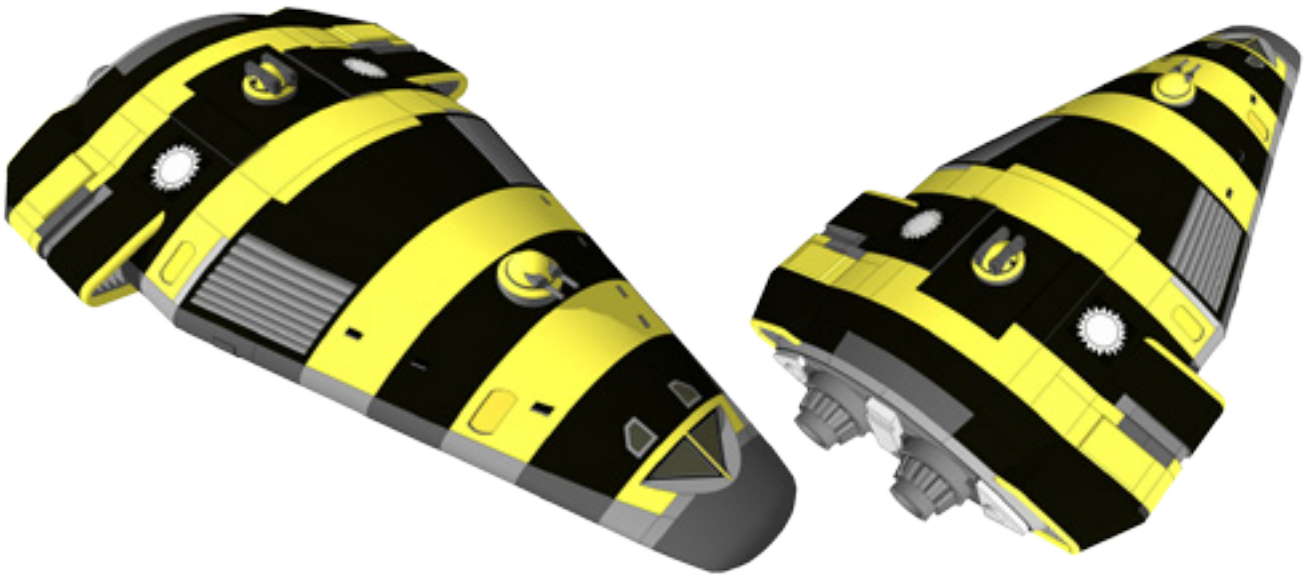
Armed Free Trader

By Ian Stead

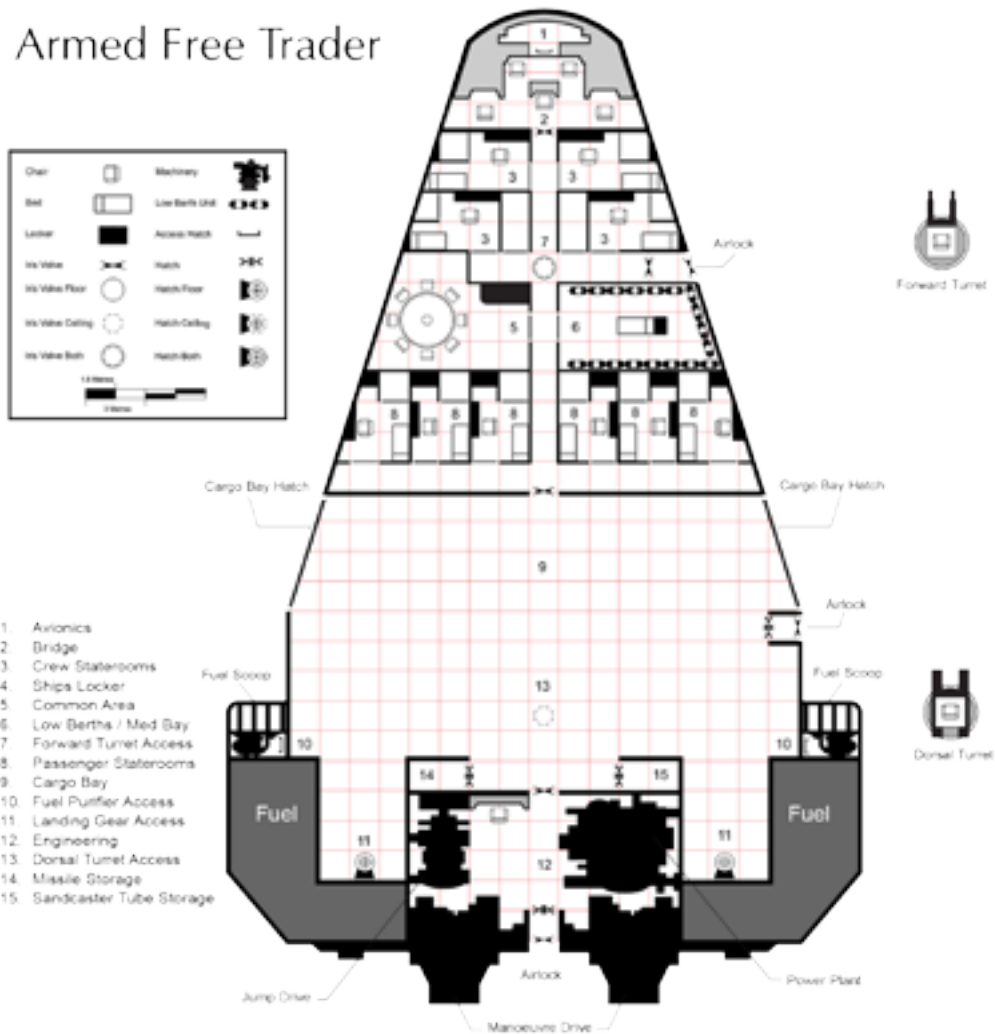
Armed Free Trader

This armed version of the standard Free Trader is a useful ship in the more lawless parts of space. Trading some low berth space over the original design, this packs armaments and improved electronics to deal with those tight spots. Normal crew consists of a pilot, navigator, engineer and 2 stewards/gunners. The Armed Free Trader is a TL 12 Design.

			Tons	Price (Mcr.)
Hull	200 Tons	Hull 4		8
		Structure 4		
		Streamlined		0.8
Armour	Crystaliron	4 Points	10	1.6
Jump Drive A		Jump 1	10	10
Manoeuvre Drive A		Thrust 1	2	4
Power Plant A			4	8
Bridge			10	1
Computer	Model /3	Rating 15		2
Electronics	Civilian Sensors	-2 DM	1	0.05
Weapons	Hardpoint #1	Double Turret (Beam Laser/Beam Laser)	1	2.5
	Hardpoint #2	Double Turret (Missile Rack/Sandcaster)	1	1.5
Ammunition	12 Basic Missiles		1	0.015
	20 Sandcaster Barrels		1	0.01
Fuel	22 Tons	One Jump-1 and Two weeks of operation	22	
Cargo	88 Tons		88	
10 Staterooms			40	5
18 Low Berths			8	0.8
Extras	Fuel Scoop			
	Fuel Processor		1	0.05
	Ship's Locker			
Software	Jump Control/1			0.1
	Manoeuvre/0			
	Evade/1			1
	Library/0			
Maintenance Cost (monthly)				0.0386
Life Support Cost (monthly)				0.0218
Total Tonnage & Cost			200	46.425



Armed Free Trader



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