

PAPYRUS™ 5 Happy Holidays Issue

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Scribbles From The Scribe

What Ever Happened to Fantasy Games Unlimited?

Since my brothers and I discovered V&V I have been intrigued and confused by its publisher FGU. The variety of their RPGs was incomprehensible at the time. Not until the flowering of GURPS and HERO/ICE had there been such a variety under one label. Unfortunately, each product not only had its own system but there were multiple products in most genre.

Just last year I found 3 V&V adventures on sale for \$1 each at a local hobby store (in VA at the time). I asked the owner if this meant FGU was out of business, he said "Something like that.". I bought the 3 adventures and wrote FGU for info on their demise and availability of products. While I waited for an answer I found a copy of the V&V boxed set and purchased it as it was possibly the last copy in VA (its empty spot on the shelf was filled within days by another copy). The response I got from FGU consisted of their 1 page catalog/price list. Still confused I asked Lee Gold about it in my letter inquiring about A&E, she said "effectively" to answer my question regarding FGU being dead and the fate of Lands of

Adventure. My curiosity is not yet satisfied.

I find myself wondering why FGU has let this happen to itself. Using some personal experience, my FGU product list, Rick Swan's "The Complete Guide to Role-Playing Games" and a limited wish spell I present the following scenario for the rebirth of FGU and some of its games.

Phase 1, slim down the product line. Combine the supplements from products within the same genre under 1 system. The system chosen under phase 1 must support phase 2, provide generic/conversion info to encourage purchases from players of competing and more established games. The following is my view of the slimming down combos:

Fantasy - Sorry C&S fans, the lead here goes to LoA which is infinitely more flexible, less complex and easier to combine/use with AD&D, Fantasy Hero and others. Under the LoA banner we should find Dwarven Halls (Swordbearer), Swords and Sorcerers (C&S: Viking, Celtic & Mongol cultures), along with other converted/rewritten sourcebooks (culture packs) and adventures from C&S, Land of the Rising Sun and Bushido.

Historical - Flashing Blades, Privateers & Gentlemen

and Skull & Crossbones would be better off combined into one culture pack for LoA.

SciFi - This was a tough one as I know little about the products, but my vote goes with Other Suns. Although Space Opera material is more prolific, the system is more complex, ie "more science and less fiction". Conversion material for the Traveller games, Star Hero, GURPS Space, Star Trek and Star Wars would be lengthy but well worth the crossover bucks.

Super Hero - Of course V&V, there is no other choice. Conversion data to Champions and Superworld does exist in the back of some modules though it would need to be updated and proliferated throughout the line. Marvel Superheroes conversions are a little tougher but possible and DC Heroes would be close to impossible.

Contemporary & Near Future/Past - Again for simplicity, Daredevils wins. It would have to encompass Aftermath, Freedom Fighters, Gangster, Year of the Phoenix and Psi World. This may be a tall order but we're thinking big here. The conversion possibilities are wide ranging in this category and the below universal conversion system may be most appropriate though TS/SI, HERO, Call of Cthuhlu and GURPS are obvious necessities.

Universally Speaking - A simpler answer to direct conversion info is the use of a generic statistic system. The most basic would be to list all characteristics as a % of the human max, since all games can use that as a ref. This % could then be applied to similar characteristics of any game system, of similar genre, to recreate any encounter. Explicit definitions of each characteristic would be necessary as different systems emphasize and/or use different

ones, these differences may be by name only or include alternate definitions.

Generic FGU - The biggest and most difficult option in this plan would be to bring all of these games under 1 sys. My nominees are LoA and V&V. Although I am biased by ignorance I do believe a combo of these 2 is possible and that it could easily cover the entire gambit of genre.

What do you think?

Rock-Con Report

I went to Rock-con (Nov 2&3), the first convention I've been too since college (about 9 yrs ago, a Simcon at UofR). It was enjoyable but smaller than I had imagined. I don't want to appear negative, it was well worth the registration fee and run professionally, as far as playing goes, besides being convenient as hell since I live here now. I was however, disappointed in the dealer area. There were some bargains, and I took those I found home, but for the most part prices were equal to or more than those in a store, even for older items. I felt as though I paid an entrance fee at my local hobby store. Anyone else go and did you feel the same? Maybe I'm out of touch or maybe that Simcon so long ago was special but I expected great deals on stuff, new and old. That is why the dealers come, to hook customers on their products, isn't it?

Spellin' It Out

Exploding Prootwaddle originally developed for The Fantasy Trip by, and converted to GURPS by, Michael Hopcroft of Portland, Oregon.

The Exploding Prootwaddle basically creates what is to any observer a live, functioning Prootwaddle (chief scribe's note: see Papyrus #3 for GURPS description of the Prootwaddle race.). The

Prootwaddle will do whatever it is told to do by anyone. This would usually mean performing menial tasks. Unknown to observers, the Prootwaddle has an Explosive Fireball spell contained within it. Any sudden forceful contact (like a sword blow) will set off the fireball, with the Prootwaddle and the unfortunate attacker in the middle. The unfortunate newly-created Prootwaddle is always incinerated by the blast, it mainly serves to preserve and conceal the spell.

The explosion caused by hitting the Prootwaddle does 1 die of damage for every three energy points expended. Prerequisites: Explosive Fireball, Create Servant. Energy Cost: 3 per die of damage, 1 per die to maintain. Duration: 1 minute. Exploding Prootwaddle is a Mental/Very Hard spell. I don't want to discuss the consequences of blowing your roll.

Variants of the spell can be used to create exploding representatives of any menial with an IQ of 7 or less. This is a "bad-guy" spell, after all, it does kill a one-minute-old Prootwaddle.

Thorn Flight, an AD&D spell by Nick Parenti for Druids

Level: 1

Components: V,S,M

Range: 6"+1"/level

Casting Time: 2 segments

Works exactly like magic missile spell. Damage is 1-3/thorn, one thorn/level.

Material component is a rose stem.

Endorsements

Alarums & Excursions, the largest and predominant RPG Amateur Press Association (APA). Published by Lee Gold (ICE Vikings, GURPS Japan, Lands of Adventure, Land of the Rising Sun). Don't just read, participate! For more

information send a SASE to, Lee Gold, 3965 Alla Road, Los Angeles, CA 90066

Silver Griffin, a semi-pro, independent magazine on RPGs. For more information send a SASE to, Devlin Janax editor, Silver Griffin, P.O. Box 1751, St. Paul, MN 55101.

OGER, a brand new RPG 'zine! Get in on the ground floor of something new. For more information send a SASE to, OGER, c/o John Sullivan, 1385 Lomas Verdes, Rochester Hills, MI 48306.

More Dungeon For Your \$ by Nick Parenti

If You Can Find It, And The Price Is Right, Buy It!: A collection of supplements that are more generic than they appear.

1. Dwarven Halls, campaign pack for Swordbearer, by A. Hendrick, for FGU.

This purple covered book provides 45 pages of Dwarven culture, history, a campaign setting, adventures and information on dwarven strongholds and settlements. The information within is compatible with any fantasy setting containing dwarves, elves, gnomes, bugbears, goblins, hobgoblins, etc. Role-playing folklore says the Swordbearer rules are over complicated but this does not appear to affect the usefulness of the Dwarven Halls supplement. Character data is easily convertible to other systems and character skills are listed in percentages for success.

2. Lands of Mystery, campaign supplement for Justice Inc., by A. Allston, for HERO Games.

This book has a cover price of \$9 and can be worth every penny to gamers of any genre. It is designed to aid in the creation of lost worlds for pulp type adventures. The book will work equally well

for creating alternate fantasy settings or scifi world/alternate earth creation. Aside from being a fantastic GM aid it contains a campaign setting that could fit into any of the above mentioned genre. This is probably one of gaming's best kept secrets.

3. Lands of Adventure, Culture Pack, Mythic Greece & Medieval England, by Lee Gold, for FGU.

Although it may be difficult to find, outside of buying the LoA box set (an altogether excellent purchase), this supplement is full of info critical to campaigns in mythic greek or medieval settings.

Information includes calendars, holidays, religion, magic, monsters, character races, equipment and other background material. I have found LoA, and therefore the culture pack, to be compatible with most systems as well as a damn good system on its own.

4. Holy Warriors, module of faith, intrigue and death during the crusades for Time & Time Again, by B. Hamblin, Timeline Ltd.

Excellent background material for middle eastern settings. The history of the crusades and the culture of the middle east are described in detail. The intrigue and strength of the period would make an excellent fantasy setting and a little imagination is all it would take. Character statistics and skills are in a familiar format. Although they concern time travel the adventures contained within can be used, with few alterations, in any fantasy campaign.

5. Conan Triumphant, adventure for Conan, by W. Carlson, TSR.

More than any other Conan RPG adventure, this adventure contains tools that can be used in any FRPG. The adventure itself is excellent

involving varied elements of role playing, it also contains a fair sized city. There are good campaign and encounter area maps and brief but valuable backgrounds for all PCs/NPCs. It contains mass combat rules for the Conan game. It also contains a set of geomorphs for detailing the streets and buildings of any fantasy city, this is its greatest value. The geomorphs alone are worth what you'll pay for this module and for what I've seen this sell for (as low as \$1) how can you miss.

6. Pentacle Plot, V&V Adventure, by S. Jones, for FGU.

This adventure crosses the line between fantasy and super hero gaming. In it a group of heroes are transported to an alternate earth of medieval technology. In its short 23 pages, it provides history, cultures and background for this world, NPCs, politics, mass combat and campaign/encounter areas of note. For \$5 or less, any FRPGamer will be satisfied with what he finds in these pages.

7. RuneQuest Cities, by Abrams, Everson & Press, Chaosim/Avalon Hill.

This book contains charts and tables to help any GM populate, detail and determine encounters within cities, towns and villages. The system is simple and independent of game rules. This is a must for GMs who regularly find their games in urban settings. This and the above Conan adventure are all one would need to instantly create believable and exciting urban encounters.

Another section of the book concerns character catch-up. It is a system for determining what a character has been doing, outside of play, and what affects it has had on him, his wealth and his skills. Again, this is stand

alone and not dependent on the RuneQuest rules although monetary values will need conversion.

8. Wizards & Warfare, rules for war games, by P. Irving, for Heritage Models, Inc.

This old (1978), little book has displaced my copy of BATTLESYSTEM. It provides war gaming rules for FRPG that are short, concise, simple and playable. Creatures and races not specifically addressed by the rules can be interpolated via comparison with those that are listed within the rules. This is a mass combat system for role-players whose knowledge and/or patience with war gaming is small.

9. Barsoomian Battle Manual, rules for adventure gaming on John Carter's Mars, by S. Bizar, for Heritage Models, Inc.

Sky Galleons of Mars was not the first classical period aerial combat game. These rules, based on Edgar Rice Burrough's Warlord of Mars series, provide information on ground and air combat on John Carter's Barsoom (Mars). Their strict adherence to Burrough's writings make the mass combat rules more complicated than Wizards & Warriors but they remain simple compared to others. The aerial combat rules are divided into increasingly complex sets so that beginners can play the simplest rules immediately. This book is also an excellent source book for anyone wishing to game on Barsoom or in a similar setting.

Peculiar Personalities

le Tiercel (the Falcon), a hero for Champions (4th ed) RPG, by Samuel C. Marlowe

Le Tiercel is a 250 point superhero from Paris, France. In this game world (the same one as presented in all of the Champions sourcebooks), he is considered to be the symbol of the French and their hero

(except for Jerry Louis, of course). He is flamboyant, a good fighter, and quite the ladies man.

His real name is Pierre Conarde, he served in the French air force for years as a talented normal before his aircraft crashed into a mountain. Something strange happens to all people who become superheroes, he has yet to divulge the origins of his natural powers.

His wings are an experimental set of flying/attack devices. With them he can reach a top speed of 80 inches (game terms) per move. The charges on his belt attachments are small rockets that increase his flying speed for a short time. He can slash with the sharp metallic edges of the wings for a considerable amount of physical damage, but only if he is not flying. He has yet to develop a flying move-by-attack using the wing edges, but this is a consideration of his for future practice. He can fold the wings under his normal clothing if needed, somehow, they are able to respond to the mental commands of whoever is wearing them. They give flight "instinct" to the user, they don't automatically teach a user how to attack with them however (a rationalization of the Independent disadvantage applied to the wing cost). Flight with the wings is hands-free as well as feet-free, allowing the user to attack normally (savate works especially well with them).

Le Tiercel does not work for Interpol specifically, he will cooperate easily enough with any well respected law enforcement agency that needs his help. I hope you enjoy le Tiercel (translated, the falcon, I hope. My apologies for any misuse of any words in French), he has certainly added a lot to my campaign.

| | | | | |
|-----|------|------|----|---------------------------|
| Val | Char | Cost | | (metallic wings, -1/2), |
| 10 | STR | 0 | | Full phase 1+ (-1/2). |
| 21 | DEX | 33 | 3 | Flash Defense vs. sight: |
| 15 | CON | 10 | | 6 pts., OAF (goggles, - |
| 10 | BODY | 0 | | 1). |
| 11 | INT | 1 | 12 | Telescopic Vision +8 |
| 10 | EGO | 0 | | w/sight rolls. |
| 21 | PRE | 11 | 3 | +1 to all PER rolls. |
| 22 | COM | 6 | 8 | Armor: +4rPD, +4rED, OIF |
| 2 | PD | 0 | | (Kevlar suit, -1/2) |
| 3 | ED | 0 | 16 | Armor: +15rPD, +15rED, |
| 5 | SPD | 19 | | OIF (wings, -1/2), act. |
| 7 | REC | 4 | | 11- or full phase action |
| 40 | END | 5 | | to move wings into the |
| 30 | STUN | 4 | | way (abort to wing block) |
| | | | | (-1) |

Pts. Disadvantages

| | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 100 | Base points | | Skills, Perks, Talents |
| 10 | DNPC sister (normal, 8-) | 22 | Savate Martial Arts |
| 15 | Enraged: attacks villain | | Package |
| | who causes a woman to | 5 | +1 w/all DEX rolls |
| | scream (14- berserk, 11- | 3 | Idiomatic English |
| | recovers) | | w/French accent (French |
| 15 | Hunted: Rainbow Archer | | native) |
| | (as pow, 11-) | 3 | Acrobatics (15-) |
| 15 | Hunted: VIPER (as pow, | 3 | Breakfall (15-) |
| | NCI, 11-) | 3 | Combat Pilot (includes |
| 20 | Watched: Interpol (no | | Transportation FAM |
| | pow, NCI, 14-) | | w/planes) (15-) |
| 15 | Reputation: French | 5 | International Police |
| | national superhero (14-) | | Powers |
| 15 | Secret Identity (Pierre | 5 | Well Off |
| | Canarde) | 3 | Bump of Direction |
| | Psych. Lim.: | 3 | Speed Reading |
| 10 | Loves to fly (common, | 10 | Eidetic Memory |
| | moderate) | | OCV: 7 DCV: 7 |
| 15 | Overconfident (v. com., | | Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 |
| | moderate) | | |
| 20 | Honorable (common, total) | | Costs: |
| 250 | Total Disadvantages | | Char Powers Total Disadv Base |

93 + 157 = 250 = 150 + 100

Cost Powers

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 13 | Flight: 15" x4 NCV, 0 END |
| | (+1/2), OIF (metallic |
| | wings, -1/2), Independent |
| | (-2). END: 0 |
| 9 | Flight: +20", 4 Charges |
| | (-1), turn duration (-2 |
| | levels), IAF (belt |
| | charges, -1/2), |
| | Independent (-2), must be |
| | used at full power (- |
| | 1/2), applies to NCV. |
| | END: 0 |
| 6 | Life Support vs. |
| | Heat/Cold, High |
| | Pressure/Vacuum. |
| 5 | Instant Change to same |
| | clothes. |
| 17 | HKA: 2d6 (3d6-1 w/STR), |
| | 1/2 END (-1/4), OIF |

Letters

... Right now I'm looking for GM aids for the PC series. So if anyone has a copy of any RPG character database system, I'd like to see it. I am especially looking for Hero System, GURPS, MARVEL SUPERHEROES, DC HEROES, and other games. I am especially interested in a character generator for AD&D or ROLEMASTER. (I'm not holding my breath for an RM aid, though; there is simply too much data to handle, even at 640K.) Tell people to send any inquiries to my address: Michael Hopcroft, 420 SE Grand

Ave. #215, Portland, OR 97214

...

Gem Stones

Emerald: According to legend, the emerald's soothing color was used to cure poor vision.

Ruby: The Hindu's believe that the ruby burns with a fire capable of boiling water.

Errata

The last two lines of the poem on page 5 of Papyrus IV should have read: "BUT IRON, COLD IRON, SHALL BE MASTER OF THEM ALL", printer error. It was identified as Rudyard Kipling's, "Cold Iron" by Michael Hopcroft, thanks Michael.

Charts to Handle Semi-Mass-Combat for GURPS

by Steffan O'Sullivan

Updated 5-02-89

from Steve Jackson Games', Illuminati 218 (512)447-4449

There are times when you have to make a lot of die rolls. Sometimes this is no problem, sometimes it's a pain. For those times when it's a pain, the following three charts are offered.

First of all, credit: this is modified for GURPS from a September, 1986, Dragon (tm) magazine article called "One roll, to go," by Larry Church. He wrote the charts for d20 use; I merely took the idea and did the math to create them for 3d6. He used percentile dice for these charts, which would make a lot more sense, but I've stuck to 3d6, as I believe GURPS works better with less clutter. He does give a lot more "How to use" than I do, and I recommend you read the article if my description is too brief.

Okay, now what are these charts? They are the odds of rolling a number of successes, given 5 or 10 or 20 rolls at the same odds. Thus, one die roll will give you how many out of 10 bullets hit, for example. I have only made three charts, one for computing 5 rolls, one for computing 10 rolls, and one for computing 20 rolls. Thus, 35 shots at the same skill could be done in 3 rolls: one on the 20-roll chart, one on the 10-roll chart, and one on the 5-roll chart. 33 shots would actually take more rolls: one on the 20-roll chart, one on the 10-roll chart, and 3 individual shots. You could make one for 100-rolls if you were a masochist - I'll pass, thanks.

To use them, it is assumed that all the Effective Skill or Attribute levels are the same. Look across the top of the chart to the correct Effective Skill level. If you're shooting 10 bullets, and your effective skill is 12, for example, go across to the 12 column in the "10 rolls" chart. Then roll 3d6. Look down the column until you see the number you rolled, or the next highest if it's not on there. Read across to the left, and the result is the number of bullets that hit the target. If the die roll is larger than the largest number in the column, all rolls missed. In the above example, if a 12 is rolled, reading across we see that 7 bullets hit the target; if you rolled a 16, only 5 bullets hit the target. Voila! 10 die rolls resolved in one roll!

There are two special cases: when you roll a 3 or an 18. These are NOT treated as criticals, by the way. You have to roll again in each case. For example, if you have 10 archers firing at the party, all at effective skill 8, and you roll a 3, you'll notice that there are four 3's in the 8 column. Which one do you use? What that means is that 7 of the archers definitely hit - you have to roll again for the other three. They MAY have hit. If you have more archers yet to fire, add three to their number - otherwise roll three times against a skill of 8. The general rule for rolling a 3: read across the chart from the 3 closest to

the bottom of the chart - that many rolls succeeded for certain. Count the number of 3's in the chart and subtract 1 (or you could say count the number of 3's left - same thing) - that many more rolls MAY hit: roll again.

For 18s, it is similar, but with a slight difference. If the 10 archers' skill were 12, and you rolled an 18, look down and read the 18 closest to the top of the chart - in this case, reading across we get a 4. That means that AT THE MOST 4 archers hit the target, you have to reroll for ALL of them, as they may have all missed. Count the number of 18's in the column, and reroll for that many (not that number minus one, as for 3).

I have NOT figured any critical hits or misses into the charts. When doing large numbers of rolls, you could simply ignore the possibility, or assign them straight by the numbers: 1.9% chance of either, unless skill is 15+ or abysmally low. That means roughly one out 50 rolls for each - I'd ignore them below that.

If you have any questions, post them on the general GURPS board, ask me, or look up the Dragon (tm) article. The math is pretty straightforward probability theory, and I used a spreadsheet to calculate it, double-checking my formulae and checking against his results, so it should be accurate. I did round off sometimes, but usually required the more difficult number. For example, there were a number of times when the percentage was 62.3% - obviously I rounded that up to an 11. But a 57% I went ahead and required a 10 to get. This is where it becomes clear that percentile dice are better for this sort of thing.

| 5 Rolls: | | Effective Skill or Attribute Level: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Hits: | \ | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 14 |
| 4 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 18 |
| 3 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 18 | 18 |
| 2 | \ | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 1 | \ | 4 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |

| 10 Rolls: | | Effective Skill or Attribute Level: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Hits: | \ | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 13 |
| 9 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 17 |
| 8 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 12 | 15 | 17 | 18 |
| 7 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 17 | 18 | 18 |
| 6 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 5 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 11 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 4 | \ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 3 | \ | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 12 | 15 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 2 | \ | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 1 | \ | 5 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |

| 20 Rolls: | Effective Skill or Attribute Level: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Hits: | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 20 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 11 |
| 19 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| 18 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 17 |
| 17 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 14 | 17 | 18 |
| 16 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 18 |
| 15 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 10 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 18 |
| 14 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 13 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 10 | 13 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 12 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 11 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 10 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 9 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 8 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 10 | 13 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 7 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 11 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 2 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 1 | 5 | 8 | 11 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |

Note: ``Hits'' should actually be ``Successes'', but Hits fits better.

Ysgarth Fiction, from Ragnarok Enterprises' Necropolis of Dreams BBS (512)472-6905

Father Udag was always up before noon when we were on the road. In the three weeks I'd travelled with him as page and acoland maintaining an imposing girth to illustrate the substantial nature of his mission was first among them. Noon was his hour, when the folk were gathered in the square of whatever town was on our route that day. The Father would waddle across the square, hoist his considerable mass onto the sturdiest platform available and begin his sermon for the day.

By noon I'd already be well into the day. At dawn I would head into town and check out the churches and holy shrines, note their size, endowment and popularity. Over breakfast I'd usually ask a few locals about the village bigwigs, subtly discovering their faiths and interests. Then I'd buy up a good hot meal, rouse Father Udag, and brief him over lunch.

In most villages an

energetic afternoon of preaching in the square would yield rich donations and often an invitation to the home of some pious local mogul. The Father was quite a speaker, hard to resist and hard to forget. His unique appearance was a surprising asset. When a seven foot anthropoid frog waddles through your morning, shopping, it tends to grab your attention. When this dread apparition stands up before you in a white cassock the size of a tent, erects the blue crest on his head, puffs out his purplish throat membrane, and speaks in melifluous tones about morality, faith and damnation, you are going to listen. When he spoke of piety, charity and punishment, it made an image to restore faith in the most hardened. He knew the litanies of scores and faiths, and just what to say to get a crowd laughing, weeping, and dropping money in our purse.

Our tours on the road had their high times and hard times, and we'd been on the road quite a while when we hit

the little town of Moctref on the Marskian Coast. It was mid-summer, and we should have been settled in already working the bazaars of Ptolemeias, but an indiscretion with a demon, three slatterns and a Guildmaster's son had lost us our welcome in the city. Moctref was just like a hundred little towns crouched between the coastal cliffs and the mine-riddled mountains of the Kerngan. I was at the gates at dawn, did my scouting, and we were set-up in the village green at noon.

Like most of its neighbors, Moctref followed the somewhat tedious faith of Ankew, a local afterworld deity already quite familiar to us. The afternoon went well, and our purse was soon heavy with the bulky copper coins from the old kingdom, still favored locally.

After the lecture and collection, a small man in servant's livery approached the Father as he chatted with a few devout fishwives. I slipped forward to intercept him, fending him off and collecting a message from the owner of the local salting and packing house. The letter contained a crudely worded invitation to dinner, and after stashing our take in a hollow stump near our camp we made our way down to the house of this local worthy, never loath to enjoy a free meal.

I recognized the fat fellow who greeted us at the door as one of our audience, and an appraising glance around his small factory and house promised a rewarding evening. Father Udag, resplendant in robes of black and silver, clearly awed the stout fellow, who stammeringly introduced himself:

"Welcome, holy sir. I am Drus Catrenar. Thank you for honoring our humble house."

We paraded in, had a brief tour, and were ushered on to

the dining room where the other guests were already assembled. Standing around a large table, clearly awaiting our arrival were a florid, large-pored woman, clearly Mrs. Catrenar, a blurry-eyed antique fellow who was already seated, presumably some older relative, a wispy but attractive girl of about my own age (fourteen years by the Father's estimate, though I am an orphan), and a slightly humped-backed fellow with a cast in one eye and a clerical look about him. Already quiet alarm bells were ringing in the back of my head, but Father Udag was striding forcefully into the room, bent over to miss the low beams, taking a seat between our host's wife and daughter.

Unfortunately long association with humans and separation from his own kind have made the Father unusually aware of human nature, with an associated gathering of human vices and interests. I try to prompt moderation where I can, but a 500 pound playboy is hard to restrain.

Catrenar introduced his wife Temir, his uncle Uras, his daughter Istur, and Brother Amtokin, the local priest. I made an effort to sit next to the Father, but a bit of jostling left me down at the foot of the table between the remarkably relaxed uncle and the promisingly demure Istur.

A sumptuous selection of fish and local vegetation was set before us in quaint clay bowls which seemed to have been baked in the sun. I'd tasted better in Ptolemeias, but never at a better price. Conversation went with dinner, so I stayed off the resinous local wine to keep my wits about me. Not so Father Udag, who downed several capacious bowls while discoursing on his travels in the furtherance of Ankew, elaborating and bowdlerizing his adventures

and honors. The consumptive little priest tore heartily at his fish, keeping a wary eye on Father Udag. The Father shovelled it in at triple the rate, but his eyes were all on Istur.

At this point, with the Father's eyes and mind wandering, discretion prompted me to break into the conversation. "So, Brother Amtokin, perhaps you would tell us how you find service in your pleasant little parish. I'm sure Father Udag would love to hear."

"Well," the priest brushed his greasy bangs back, "I realize that a wide travelled being like the Father here has many opportunities to help people of all areas to attain faith, but here in Moctref we have a strong community of followers, and it seems redundant for outsiders to come in bringing foreign ideas and dubious philosophies to upset our lives. We may be simple people, but we live close to Ankew, and we can see and learn all we need of his mysteries in the life and nature around us. Ankew is a god of the Kernwyk and those who are not of Marsk and the Kerngan cannot really know him. They can only follow the corrupt rituals and perverted philosophies of that great city of sin, Ptolemeias."

Our host came near to choking on his food, but the Father just leaned back in his chair, lowered his mottled lids and stared at the priest for a dramatic moment. "My dear fellow, noble brother in faith, even here in this remote but devout village you must have heard the words of Vinassir the Sage, one of your own people, I believe. Was it not Vinassir who wrote 'It is that the gods are worshiped, not the fashion of the worship which is the eternal element of true religion. Faith not form is the essence.'"

"The words of Vinassir may be of value, but it is widely known that at his death he turned from Ankew to the faith of the Three Mothers, which surely damns him as well as yourself."

"A popular claim in these parts, but seemingly unfounded, and certainly not supported by his biographer Isbedrean of Kalmurik."

"Corrupt east country propaganda. Isbedrean was Osca in anycase, and we all know they worship idols and spirits. Besides, the Ankewites of Oscala helped the Saesnan in Karystau and Iuria, and are no friends of our faith or people."

"So, politics not faith are the basis of your beliefs. If you have examined the Prophecies of Omdregar, surely you must be aware..."

Theology, thank the gods for it. The little priest was just the self-righteous type Father Udag liked to browbeat into faith-shock, and they would be at it for hours. Long enough to tire the old bombast out, and for me to get to know Istur a bit better. In anycase, our hosts deserved some entertainment in exchange for their meal.

The evening ended after much wine and talk, and I was able to lead Father Udag out of our little camp leaving our hosts awed and the little priest cowed into numb silence. Confrontations had been averted, and we could move on about our business in the morning.

We built a fire, gathered together our bedrolls, and I was just drifting off to sleep when Father Udag wheezed, and rolled over to fix me with a bulging, blood-shot stare.

"Inval, there are things about this town which I find intriguing. Let's put Trisrach off for a couple of days and see what we can scare up here."

I've learned not to argue

with a tired Batrag, so I could only shudder, try not to think of tomorrow and fall asleep.

Entity Encounters

This being the Holiday issue, we have enclosed a special pull-out section of creatures. All are for the Ysgarth FRPG system and the text is taken from Ragnarok Enterprises' BBS. The graphics were lifted from various sources and added where appropriate. We hope your Holidays were enjoyable and Happy New Year!

- Reminder -

Send self-addressed stamped envelopes to receive future issues, or send a submission. We'll even take donations, but we cannot guarantee specific numbers of issues nor deliver dates.