

INFINIVERSE™

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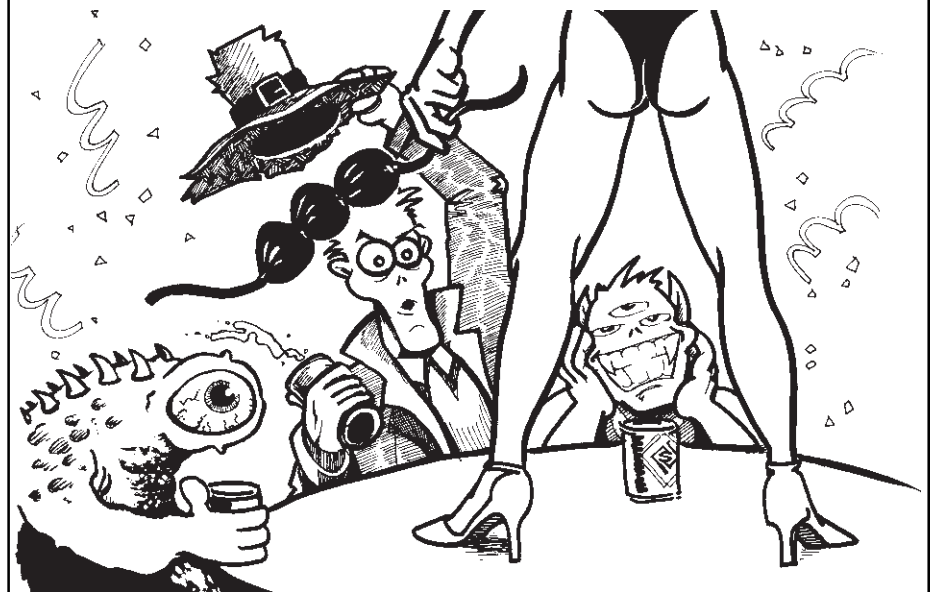
Coming August '94.

The World of Bloodshadows.
A MasterBook game.

REALITY CHECK

by Brian Schomburg

Who could forget the Bachelor party before the *Bride of Darkness* adventure?



Rumor Report and News



First Indication reports on the newest batch of rumors to which you have responded. Continuing Report updates the rumors as more responses come in. The Wrap Up gives you the tally after the rumor has reverberated throughout the Infiniverse for about three months. The wrap-up will be the last report for that rumor in *Infiniverse*.

Rumor Report

The results are given a true or false, followed by a parenthetical number. That number represents the strength of the truth or falsehood throughout the Infiniverse. For example, a statement which is False (15) is false unless the game-master decides to test the statement; on a roll of 15 or better, the statement is actually true. Roll again on 10 and 20 when testing the truth or falsity of a reported rumor.

First Indication: Issue #37

1. New villain, Dr. Cyclops, appears in Berlin with the power to shrink his enemies. Believed to be collecting Storm Knights. Grows to True (20).

2. New and charismatic leader, Doomtak, appears in the Land Below, forging an army of conquest. Dead even — False (11).

3. Aliens from Star Sphere send robot craft to Earth as part of a trap for unwary Humans. Rockets to True (15).

Continuing Report: Issue #36

1. Mobius plans to use reality tree to convert Iceland to Nile axioms and

turn it into a floating battlebase. Holds at True (19).

2. Ghostdancer movement springs up among Gaea's Native American population in response to the domination of the Gaunt Man. Big leap to True (35).

3. Negotiations going on between high-ranking cyberpriests and techno-demons. Still down there at False (18).

4. Colonel Cairo and Captain Carnage (the former Dr. Zap) clash in the streets of Thebes. Both vanish under a pile of rubble. Slight jump to True (15).

The Wrap-Up: Issue #35

1. Woman believed to be infected with Comaghaz the subject of a battle in Tokyo. Law of Intrigue may be affecting Comaghaz cells in Nippon Tech. Holds to finish at True (15).

2. Baseball seen as a symbol of national hope renewed in the wake of the Possibility Wars. Another precinct heard from, and it finishes at True (19).

3. Orrorshan werewolves travel to the Land Above to try and gather Ustanah for use in a new Horror. A drop, and it finishes at False (11).

4. Backlash against Storm Knights beginning to be seen in some areas of Core Earth. "Ords Are Heroes, Too" chapter springs up. Ends at True (17).

5. Mobius believed to be targeting Spain for invasion. Finishes at True (19).

Convention News

West End Games is looking for gamers planning to attend Origins '94 in San Jose, CA in July 7-10. We need people both to run games for us and to help us work our booth. As usual,

anyone who helps out will receive credit toward WEG merchandise.

We are also looking for game-masters to run *Torg*, *Shatterzone*, and *Star Wars* at GenCon '94 in August.


If you are interested in helping us out, contact West End Games, RR3 Box 2345, Honesdale, PA 18431.

For those of you who were disappointed at not being able to get into your favorite WEG event last year, take heart — WEG is getting extra booth space this year so that we can run pick-up games during the show.

Upcoming For Torg

March: *The Clerics' Sourcebook* collects all the miracles of the *Torg* universe, along with an assortment of new ones, and details the miracle creation system. Can we hear an amen, brothers and sisters?

May: *Infiniverse Update, Volume III: And the first one not written by me!* John Terra leads you through the Possibility Wars 1994, featuring shocking surprises, sinister plots and the return of an old and adamant villain (no, it's not Ensign Egypt!)

September: *City of Pain* is the new title for John (*Interview With Evil*) Terra's second novel. This book follows Major Havoc and his band of Mystery Men into the heart of Berlin, where Nile heroes clash with Tharkoldu techno-demons in the deadliest mixed zone of them all. 



Advanced Stelae Removal 401

By Michael W. Annis

"All that we are accomplishing here is putting out the fires on the border of a great conflagration. If we would truly save this forest that is Core Earth, we must take the battle to the realms and, ultimately, the High Lords."

— Reverend Prentiss Trimble,
Victorian Expeditionary Force

Mobius has expanded into Greece and Crete. The Warrior of the Dark has acquired Drakacanus, gained dominant zones in Russia and flipped all but a few of the Aysle zones to the Dark. Malraux is in the Mediterranean and nibbling on the North American coast. 3327 has only managed one new zone lately, but it includes the city of San Francisco. The Gaunt Man's nappy-time is over and he's hungry. Hopefully, it'll take him a few weeks to digest the 18 new dominant zones he's planted since getting loose.

If you can do basic arithmetic, you know that even after almost four years of fighting, struggles and death, we of Core Earth are losing the Possibility Wars. The majority of Storm Knight groups spend most of their time foiling the plots of the High Lords, thus simply trying to contain things, actions my players refer to as "putting out brush fires" or "fire-stomping." If we seriously intend to win this war, then we had better begin to take the offensive right now!

Okay, easier said than done, you tell me. Well, my players and I have developed strategies and tactics for the express purpose of hastening the end of the High Lords on our globe, and here and now I will share them with you. This article may seem to read like a treatise on how to become a *Torg* rules-lawyer, but that is not the aim. Use these tricks, but don't lose sight of the fact that this is a roleplaying game. Neither should you fail to take advantage of them. Don't be overly scrupulous. Remember, this is

WAR!

How Do We Win?

We win by getting rid of all of the stelae-bounded on the planet. That's not about to happen overnight, but let's see what we can do to speed up the process. Safely pulling up stelae consists of the following actions:

- 1) Going to the target area;
- 2) Performing some Glory deeds;
- 3) Planting the seeds;
- 4) Waiting;
- 5) Returning and finding the stelae;
- 6) Ripping the sucker up.

Boy, I sure make it sound easy, don't I? Well, maybe it's not as tough as it looks, if you've got the right tricks up your sleeve.

Getting There

This one entails some discussion between players and gamemaster. The players try to decide upon a good target and what to attack. Picking on fringe zones is a good idea. You want to find a stela that only bounds one zone, or else you'll have to worry about preparing more than one zone at the same time, a much more complex and dangerous undertaking. Get a couple

here, but being too cautious is almost as bad. Remember, *Torg* is an adventure game. The gamemaster then has to determine whether or not he can handle the request. Sometimes my players want to try things and frankly, I don't feel up to designing and running, and I've been an active roleplaying gamemaster since 1978. That "don't bite off too much" rule works for the gamemaster as well as for the Storm Knights. Players and gamemaster have to find a mission that all can agree on.

Covering Yourself in Glory

Okay, so now we're on-site and trying to give some High Lord a bloody nose. We need a couple of good Glory rolls for some story seeds. But what happens if no one in your group draws a *Glory* card? Well, then you darn well better get one quick! Refilling your hand is what *Rally* and *Leadership* cards are for. You get to refill your hand at the end of every scene, too, so if you need to, your whole team better go through cards as fast as you can until you find the needle in the haystack.

So now you're ready. You've traded cards with your teammates to get the most usable hand you can for the great moment. You look for an appropriate action in a good, juicy Dramatic scene

You don't have an eternity shard? Uh-oh, is your insurance paid up?

of singles under your belt before you go for the big scores. (Operation Central Fire was a good example of this sort of action, overly optimistic and too risky to the natives.)

Now, pick a target within the zone you want to hit. Not biting off more than you can chew is very important

(waiting for an *up* condition is a good idea, too!), slam your whole hand down by "playing for the critical moment," whip out your eternity shard, milk it for three of four Possibilities, spend one of your own, add a *Hero* card or two to boot, and roll the dice. You can hardly avoid rolling a 60+!

Instant Glory event! (What's that you say? You don't have an eternity shard? Uh-oh, is your insurance paid up? No, really, if you don't have one, then we need to back up and tell you how to get one, 'cause it's really, really tough to pull this stunt off without one.)

If you take a good look at the sections of the basic rules that deal with the High Lords, the Everlaws, eternity shards, group powers, etc., it quickly becomes clear that it was the intent of the designers that a group be able to get ahold of a shard that could be of reasonably direct usefulness to a party. In my campaign, four separate groups of Storm Knights have only managed to turn up five shards in the two years I've been running. And two of those have the "cannot use its Possibilities to harm the other beings" restrictions. You don't need a bazooka, just a way to violate that "I can only spend one Possibility on a given action" rule, with more reliability and force than a couple of *Hero* cards can give you.

Now I'm sure that there are gamemasters who are reading this and screaming that I'm awful free with giving out goodies to their players. Not so. I'm not suggesting you just give anything away. I am saying it's an integral part of *Torg* to need a shard, so write them a good adventure and get a shard! Make 'em sweat for anything they get. I ran one group through three whole adventures solely to get their hands on one shard: one to find out that it existed and roughly where it was, one crash landing/diversion on the way to get it, and the last to actually find and recover the thing. I gave them blood, toil, sweat and tears, and by the time they finally got the Sword of the Shogun, they richly deserved it!

Planting the Seeds

This one is reasonably straightforward, so it doesn't require a lot of blather from me. The only recommendation I will make is don't forget to take advantage of the Core Earth Law of Glory. If the one who plants the seed (spends the Possibility and makes the *persuasion* roll) is a Core Earther, he gets a +2 modifier to the *persuasion*

attempt. (If the person gripes that he's the one who always has to spend all the Possibilities, remind him whose damn planet it is, anyway! Then give him a few extra points here and there, because doing the right thing is good roleplaying.) Of course, if your only Core Earther has a *persuasion* of 8 and your gypsy soothsayer has a 17, feel free to ignore my advice entirely.

Waiting

Waiting the right length of the time for your seeds to mature is very important. Too little a wait and you can't get the roll you need for the stories to take. Too long and maybe you never get to go back there because you're dead. Also, maybe the High Lord has expanded his realm. The area you seeded, which used to be a border zone that could be safely dealt with individually, is now an interior area that cannot be removed without breaking four to six other zones (which are not prepared, and thus you'll kill more people than you help).

The best thing the boys at WEG ever gave us for this problem is sitting on the very last page of *The Cassandra Files*. It's a new Group Power called comfort and no serious stelae-busters should be without it. Using this power can turn a month's wait into a year's effect! Find it! Get it! Even if you can't find the only eternity shard that has it, find another group of Storm Knights (other players or gamemaster characters) that has the power and spend the Possibilities to spark some new power-bearers in your group.

(This strategy actually should be used at every opportunity, for every power you can afford. You don't have to have a shard to have its Group Power. You can get "sparked" off others who have been "sparked" and pretty soon, every Storm Knight could be running around with five or six Group Powers, subject only to his ability to buy into them.)

Accelerating the effectiveness of story-telling is the only use that *comfort* has, so your gamemaster should be willing to let you have it, sooner or later (better sooner), on the basis that it doesn't mess up game balance.

Finding the Stelae


Finding a stela's exact location without the Group Power *stelae sense* is near impossible, harder than the needle in the proverbial haystack. I strongly recommend *stelae sense*. The problem with this is that only one eternity shard of all those published has the *stelae sense* power, and it's described in the *Storm Knights' Guide* (not in an adventure where your hungry Knights can get their grubby little paws on it).

To solve this small dilemma, you gamemasters will have to find your own way of introducing this shard into your campaign. (I did, you can too!) Either that or you can alter an existing one to have a different group power than as published (I gave *stelae sense* to Excalibur in my campaign) or you could just make up a new shard entirely.

Rip It Up, Tear It Up, Waaaay Up

Finally. It's Act IV, last scene (Dramatic, of course). You've found the damn thing, it's right there, so DO something about it. The easy way is with yet again, another new group power, straight from *No Quarter Given* called *block*. (You know, if I didn't know better, I'd think that the WEG guys were trying to *help* us win ... Naaaaah!)

With *block* activated, a reality-impenetrable force-field globe is created around the stela. It's then cut off from the Darkness Device and the other stelae it might be hooked to. One use of *block* and you don't need to fool with all those link-breaking *reality* rolls.

Now just apply a generous measure of good old-fashioned brute force and destroy the thing. For a Cyberpapal altar, use a good-sized satchel charge and run like hell. Nippon Tech ATM machine, back off a ways and use a LAW or Stinger. Ayslish trades will melt from fireballs, Living Land body sacks will also burn. Dynamite works in the Nile or Orrorsh, and if that's in short supply, Nile obelisks and Orrorshan statuary are still susceptible to being worked over with a twenty-pound sledghammer. Where there's a will, there's a way! 



Pocket Dimension: Lereholm

By Greg Detwiler

As Orrorsh fans know, the vampyress Sabathina is one of the Gaunt Man's most trusted servants. As a reward for services rendered, the High Lord has allowed her to reshape a pocket dimension into a virtual duplicate of Lereholm, as a "home away from home" between campaigns. Although this Lereholm is but a pale shadow of its predecessor's glory, it is still a fair representation of what that world was like.

Axioms and World Laws

The *Magic* Axiom: 11

Lereholm's *Magic* axiom is high enough to permit the existence of undead and other beings that require magic to survive. Enchanted weapons and other tools are possible, but the spells cast on them will wear off over time. Still, the existence of the above-named creatures ensures that tribal spellcasters spend most of their time creating magical weaponry and protective charms. Of the four types of magic, only conjuration is rarely attempted. Alteration magic is extremely popular, particularly spells that involve transforming enemies into creatures.

The *Social* Axiom: 6

Lereholm's social structure is tribal in nature. Due to the harsh living conditions on this world, discipline is harsher than is usual at this low a *Social* axiom. Each tribe is ruled by a matriarch. Every member of every tribe knows his or her place; they also know that they *have* a place, even if it is only

as a transformed guard beast. Due to the tribes' all-meat diet, tightly-organized hunting bands are the closest thing they have to military discipline.

The *Spiritual* Axiom: 12

Lereholm's *Spiritual* axiom is slightly higher than its *Magic* axiom, so holy weapons are slightly more common than their magical counterparts. The latter, incidentally, are invariably in the form of a bone version of the tribal holy symbol, the Vassen (a circle with a triangle inside it). Fairly potent miracles are common, due to the fact that each matriarch is also priestess for her tribe. (Sabathina relinquished this power in exchange for the Gaunt Man's "gifts.") Lereholm's religion is of a shamanistic nature.

The *Technological* Axiom: 4

Lereholm's *Tech* axiom is the lowest recorded thus far, even lower than that of the Living Land. The tribes are still in the Stone Age, as well as the Ice Age, on this frozen world. Stone-tipped spears, stone knives and daggers, and stone-headed maces and axes share prominence with clubs as the cosm's predominant weaponry. Armor consists of hides and furs, and is worn as much for protection from the weather as from enemies.

Several factors conspire to keep the axiom low. First, agriculture is all but impossible on Lereholm: there are no plants extant which are edible for humans. Some of the smaller game animals have been herded into caverns and sealed in until needed, but true domestication is unknown. Any guard

beast encountered will be a transformed human, not a true animal. Finally, the fierce winds that constantly blow discourage research into missile weapons such as bows and slings; spears in Lereholm are only for thrusting.

Although trees are present on Lereholm, harvesting them is so time-consuming and difficult that woodworking is almost unknown, with bone and stone taking its place.

The Law of Community

Due to the fact that tribes must work together to accomplish anything, the Law of Community has evolved so that every action has a better chance of succeeding if other members of one's tribe are present. When a character is part of a group of 10 or more, any action he takes will receive an automatic +1 to succeed. This effect is unconscious; the other members of the group improve the odds by their very presence. Due to the small size of most Storm Knight bands, this is an excellent reason for adventurers to make an effort to recruit locals (and for the players to engage in roleplaying).

The Law of Matriarchy

As Lereholm's power is concentrated in female hands, the Law of Matriarchy provides an automatic +1 to any action by a female of an intelligent species. If the woman is part of a group of 10 or more, she may boost the modifier to +2 by taking advantage of the Law of Community. (She gains no additional bonus by being in a group of 10 or more women.)

Example: *Rhailina is a female warrior who has been separated from her band by a stampeding herd of branch-tusked mammoths, and she is now being stalked by a hungry hill bear. The bear catches up to her, forcing her to lash out with her spear in self-defense. She needs a 15 to hit the bear, but generates a 13. Her +1 modifier brings it up to a 14 — she fails! Fortunately, the bear misses its first attack as well.*

Suddenly, she hears the shouts of her tribesmen as the reformed hunting band finds her. Soon she is surrounded by a knot of over a dozen hunters. She lashes out again, generating a 13 — her +1 modifier makes it a 14, and the Law of Community adds another +1. She hits! The bear is wounded and the other hunters move in for the kill.

The Cosm

Lereholm is a land of icy wastes, vast tundras, snow-covered mountains and dark forests of twisted trees. This world is very much in the grip of an Ice Age, one that has existed for tens of millions of years.

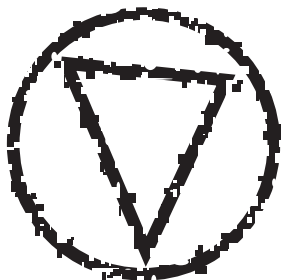
The wind always blows here in powerful gusts, so much so that missile weapons are unreliable. Unless one is firing with the wind directly at one's back, all missile weapons checks will have +4 added to their difficulty. Rounds from chemically-propelled suffer a +7 to their difficulty of hitting. These restrictions do not apply when firing at point-blank range.

Save for inside the caverns, ranged weapon attacks can only be reliably made with enervgy weapons, magic and miracles.

Many of the mountains are made of limestone and tend to be full of caverns. The folk of Lereholm have expanded and connected all of these caverns and laboriously dug out new ones as shelter from both weather and beasts. Unfortunately, they must often leave their fortresslike homes in order to go hunting, so the monsters of Lereholm have a good chance of getting them almost every day.

Due to the gradual pace at which the Ice Age approached, most of the

cosm's animal life was able to evolve and adapt with it. All reptiles have had their scales modified into a form of feathers, providing both insulation and armor. Thus, Storm Knights crossing a river are vulnerable to crocodile attack everywhere; the thing just has a layer of feathers like those of a penguin, with a roll of blubber underneath.



There have been no complete extinctions of animal life in the history of this pocket dimension, though many species have had their former range reduced to a single continent. Mammal-like reptiles, dinosaurs, giant flightless birds (flight is difficult, if not impossible, in Lereholm's winds — +5 to *flight* difficulties), and huge mammals all share the cosm. Dinosaurs and mammal-like reptiles now sport feathers or fur (note that this evolution does not affect the creature's *Toughness* and armor adds. This stat is the same as before. Thus, gamemasters can hit players with beasts the look different, but are really as dangerous as in the past.) Interestingly, all of Lereholm's creatures are extremely large — this is an evolutionary adaptation due to the fact that large animals lose body heat much more slowly than smaller ones.

Most of Lereholm's humans live on the continent of Volklandia, the only one of the six continents to have been named by the people.

Many carnivores on Lereholm have subspecies with sabreteeth. Other unusual inhabitants include hill bears (the name refers to the animal's size, not its habitat) and the branch-tusked mammoth. The latter's tusks have short, curved branches protruding at intervals from either side, making them cruel but effective slashing weapons. There is also the ditracha, a flightless bird the height of a four-story building, with an ostrichlike build, power-

ful clawed legs that can deliver a deadly kick, and a yard-long hooked beak.

In addition, there are tiger-sized weasels, wolves the size of Kodiak bears, ox-sized wolverines, and host of other reasons why human hunting parties on Lereholm never go out with fewer than 10 members, and often a good deal more. Fortunately for hunters, prey animals are even more numerous, and often one kill can feed the entire tribe.

The cosm's high *Magic* axiom allows for the existence of various Horrors, who were an invaluable aid to the Gaunt Man when he invaded the original. Lereholm's undead are almost always of human form, though occasionally an animal also joins the ranks of the reanimated. Air elementals are the most common type of true elementals encountered here. In addition, hybrid elementals of snow and ice have also been encountered here.

Pocket Dimension Contest

So far, *Infiniverse* has featured two pocket dimensions from the prolific pen of Greg Detwiler. Now it's your turn — do you have an idea for a pocket dimension that's new and different? Or maybe one that's been mentioned in the *Torg* canon, but never explored or explained?

Then this is your chance to see it in print! Simply write up a 2000 word description of the pocket dimension (see details below), and we'll publish the four best in *Infiniverse*! The top two prize winners will receive free copies of the *Berlin Citybook*. Third and fourth place winners will receive free copies of John Terra's upcoming *Torg* novel, *City of Pain*.

Your write-up should include a brief introduction to the pocket dimension, the axioms and world laws (with explanations and any special rules), and a description of the dimension and its inhabitants. If need be, you should also provide information on how the Storm Knights might get there (is there more than one gate? Where are they?)

Deadline for submissions is June 1, 1994.



Dispatches and Rumors

Dispatches

1

A recent sub-zero cold snap in the Land Above has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Leopard Men, Keefee Haroo and other former denizens of the Land Below. Meteorologists have been at a loss to explain the brutal weather, said to be the coldest to hit that geographic area in a century, and some have wondered if it might have some connection to the Possibility Wars.

In fact, it does. The Warrior of the Dark, High Lord of Aysle, obtained the legendary Cask of Ancient Winters through her Norse troops, intending to use it as a weapon in her siege of Oxford. But before she could employ it, it was stolen by a Viking chieftain with ties to the Light. This brave soul ran the blockade around England and made it to North America and the Land Above.

It was there that he was struck down by a Darooni Wasp Rider and the Cask split open. It remains where it fell, in the northern reaches of the Land Above. Frost Giants in the employ of the Warrior and Nile ice-squads are combing the area, searching for the cask.

Critical Event: The Storm Knights must recover the Cask of Ancient Winters before the Ayslish or Nile agents do. Doing so is a *Good* result (6 or better); failing to do so is a *Bad* result (3 or less).

Standard Frost Giant

DEXTERITY 11
Dodge 12, melee weapons 13, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 15 (10)
TOUGHNESS 16 (10)
PERCEPTION 7

Find 8, tracking 8, trick 8
MIND 9
Apportation magic 18, survival (arctic) 12, test 10
CHARISMA 7
Taunt 8
SPIRIT 7
Intimidation 9
Additional Skills: two at +1 adds
Possibility Potential: some (20)
Arcane Knowledges: water 15
Spells:
Equipment: Ice club, damage value STR+3/18

Description: Frost Giants look as if they are constructed of ice and snow, and perhaps they are. Roughly four meters in height, the Frost Giants are capable of surviving in bitterly cold

SPIRIT 7
Additional Skills: two at +1 adds
Possibility Potential: Some (30)
Powers: Fire blast/fire wall, value STR+10, range 3-10/25/40; Adventure cost: 5
Equipment: Thermo-suit (+2 to survival (arctic) checks); KK81, damage value 19, ammo 24, range 3-40/400/1k; Kocha machinegun, damage value 22, ammo 5, range 3-100/600/1k

2

Orrorshan sorcery has recreated the legendary Broth of Oblivion, and already it has begun to appear in Tokyo and other havens of the Gaunt Man's

The character loses all knowledge of his identity and role in life.

temperatures. They are believed to be mute.

The campaign in the Land Above has seen the debut of Mobius' newest battle unit, the Ice-Squads. These are shocktrooper companies trained in fighting in winter weather for the High Lords' planned eventual conquest of northern Europe.

Nile Ice-Squads

Reality: Nile Empire
DEXTERITY 9
Dodge 10, fire combat 11, heavy weapons 10, unarmed combat 10
STRENGTH 9
Climbing 10
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 9
Find 10, tracking 10, trick 10
MIND 8
Survival (arctic) 11
CHARISMA 7

enemies.

According to the ancient tales, when a damned soul returns to Earth in a new form, he must first drink of the Broth of Oblivion. This causes him to forget his previous existence and all knowledge of language.

The broth created by the Orrorshans has these effects. After consuming it, a character will lose all knowledge of his identity and role in life, although he will still retain knowledge of his skills. He will also lose knowledge of language for speaking purposes, although he will be able to understand things spoken to him. In addition, he will be extremely open to suggestion (attempts at *persuasion* directed at this character are at +10).

The effects of the broth last for one week. In its natural state, it is a sulphurous brew, so sorcerers use other ingredients to mask the smell and taste.

Critical Event: The characters must travel to Nippon or Orrorsh to obtain a sample of the broth, either for their own use or to synthesize an antidote. Getting some is a *Good* result (6 or better); failing to get any is a *Bad* result (3 or less).

3

Dr. Mobius has triumphed again!

The evil genius has succeeded in synthesizing *sa*, the magical fluid which serves as the blood of the Egyptian gods. With this at his command, he is able to create super-agents beyond anything known before.

At his weird science lab in Thebes, Mobius injects selected shocktroopers with the concoction, and then bestows pulp powers upon them. (The result is agents who have pulp powers at twice their normal value, but the same adventure cost.)

Of course, there is a downside to this formula, one Mobius scrupulously avoids mentioning. After a week, the character so "blessed" must generate a *Toughness* total against a value of 15. Failure means the character goes up in flames, for human shells were never meant to house the blood of gods.

If the character succeeds, he gets another day. But he must generate a total of every day, and the difficulty number goes up by +2 daily.

Critical Event: The Storm Knights get a chance to encounter one or more of Mobius' super-agents and learn something of the nature of *sa*. If they defeat the agents, it's a *Good* result (6 or better); if they learn about *sa* by getting their heads handed to them, it's a *Bad* result (3 or less).

4

In the wake of the Los Angeles earthquake (and just what were those Orrorshan agents doing in the area just before that happened), the residents are facing a new terror. A dozen of the creatures known only as preservers have escaped from Tharkoldu Alpha Ver'Churuda's laboratory and are now loose in the back alleys of the shattered city.

Preservers resemble distorted, ten-drilled, two-meter long, open-ended cylinders, with six spindly legs. The creature attacks by firing a spore cloud into the face of its target, rendering him unconscious, then swallowing him whole. The unfortunate then passes through the creature's body and emerges in a fluid-filled transparent sac (TOU 10), which the preserver drags back to its lair.

Removal from a sac is almost invariably deadly. The fluid left in the victim's lungs turns poisonous on contact with air (damage value 23 per round). Only the Tharkoldu know how to neutralize this poison.

Critical Event: The Knights must track down and stop the preservers. Doing so is a *Good* result (6 or better); failing to do so is a *Bad* result (3 or less).

Preserver

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 13, longjumping 14, maneuver 11, running 14, stealth 16

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 14

PERCEPTION 13

Find 15, psionic manipulation 16

MIND 8

Mindsense 10, psionic resistance 13

CHARISMA 5

Charm (13), persuasion (13), taunt (8)

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Cult of the Dominant) 11, intimidation (12), reality (Tharkold) 13

Possibility Potential: All

Natural Tools: paralyzing spore, stun damage value 18, range 1-3/6/-; paralyzing sac fluid, *willpower* roll of 20 to break free; sac, *Strength* total of 11 to escape; running, speed value 11

Psionic Powers: Psychic Senses (*awareness, lifesense*); Telepathy (*perception distraction, send thoughts, thought scan*).

Rumors

1

Storm Knights traveling through the region of the Greek peninsula have

learned of some strange occurrences there. Villagers are telling strange stories of what appear to be Roman gladiators and strange creatures engaging in combat. A noted historian, Dr. Constantine Demopulos, has expressed the belief that the creatures that have been mentioned bear some resemblance to the hydra, the gorgon and other creatures of Greek mythology. Officials are certain that these sightings are connected to Mobius' invasion of Greece.

But others believe there is more here than meets the eye. After Roman gladiators aren't part of Greek history. The battles sound more like those fought in the Roman Coliseum! Demopulos organized an expedition to investigate the sightings. They were last known to be headed for the island of Aeaea, home of the sorceress Circe in Greek myth. The party has not been heard from since.

— John Kahane,
Ottawa, Ontario

2

Whispers on the GodNet:
Blood, Hellfire and Damnation.

Something has changed, something very terrible. The Inquisition has recently begun a campaign of fear that makes the bloody days of the French Revolution look like a tea party. Whole towns in southern France are but smoldering ruins now, burnt to the ground to cleanse the heretics from Cyber-France. Jean Malraux, after his success in Marseilles, is reminding France once again who is in control.

Yet there is another reason for this new aggressive stance. While on an expedition into Berlin a few weeks ago, a high-ranking Inquisitor was stormed to Tharkold reality. However, his faith was of such strength that he maintained it through the storms. Returning to France with a higher *Spiritual* axiom of his own and a much crueler mindset, the Inquisitor, Louis-Nichols de Saigne, set about improving the Inquisition as he saw fit. He has also brought at least one Tharkold miracle with him into France, that of *cyberharmony*. De Saigne is gaining power fast, and any day now may be appointed Grand Inquisi-

tor. He has been told by Malraux that as long as he produces results, the Cyberpope will not interfere.

—Ian J. Stewart,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

3

Dr. Mobius is furious. It seems that his latest creation designed for use against the Cyberpapacy has been lost. Mystery Men launched an attack against the weird science lab where it was being assembled, and during the confusion it apparently got up and walked out.

The scientists in question refuse to talk, although one was tricked by Storm Knights into revealing that the project was not a robot. Word on the street has it that what walked out of the lab was Mobius' first attempt at weird science cyberware!

Weird Sciborg

Reality: Nile Empire

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 13, fire combat 14, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 11 (14)

Lifting 12

TOUGHNESS 13 (16)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 11, first aid 10, tracking 11

MIND 8

Medicine 10, science 11, test 12, weird science 15

CHARISMA 7

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 11, reality 12

Possibilities: 25

Powers: *Super-attribute* (x2), STR+3/14 — TOU+3/16; *super-skill* (*weird science*); Adventure cost: 9

Equipment: Servo-arm, STR 18; hypereye (*absolute vision* value 18); spinal booster (*adrenaline* power device wired directly to spine, value 18); knuckle-knives (*claws*, damage value 17); leg-lifters (*jump*, value 14); motion-motors (*running* 11); eternity heart, possibilities: many hundreds (may only be accessed to run gizmos); Kocha machinegun, damage value 22, ammo 5, range 3-100/600/1k; bullet-proof vest, armor value TOU+6/22; first aid kit; various weird science components

Description: The Weird Sciborg was apparently a minor Mystery Men captured by Mobius' troops. He was then put through agonizing experiments and brainwashed by the High Lord himself, along with his crack staff of sadis — er, weird scientists. After hooking a number of nasty gizmos to his body, the subject was then wired with a piece of eternity to power him.

Inclination: Evil

—Bill Brackeen,
Jonesboro, AR

4

Flocks of ravagons have been sighted in Los Angeles, apparently led by Parok himself. Strangely enough, the Tharkoldu appear to be letting them pass freely through the area (providing they do nothing to provoke the techno-demons' notoriously short tempers).

Sarrol, the priestess of the ravagons, has returned to Tz'Ravok and taken the newcomer's side.

In fact, this is the going price for peace between Tharkold and Orrorsh. The Gaunt Man wants Thratchen returned, and with Jezrael refusing to openly betray one of her servants (albeit an untrustworthy one), arrangements were made for Parok and his flock to hunt him down.

Or is there more to it than that? Is it possible that Thratchen has been working in secret for the Gaunt Man these past few months, and taking him back by force is a way to fool Jezrael into thinking the High Lord and the techno-demon are naught but blood enemies?

—Greg Detwiler,
Williamsburg, PA

5

Word has passed to Orrorsh from the far cosm of Tz'Ravok that rebellion has flared anew among the ravagons. No doubt spurred by the collapse of the Gaunt Man's bridges, the Denyers are recruiting many of the tribes to their standards. Worst of all, leading them is


a massive ravagon who claims to be the true Sixth Prophet, Sallsboratza. The previous ravagon claimants of this title, Gondaratza the Mad One, has dropped out of sight, and it is said the Sixth Irishantza slew her for her impudence. Even more disturbing are reports that Sarrol, the priestess of the ravagons, has returned to Tz'Ravok and taken the newcomer's side.

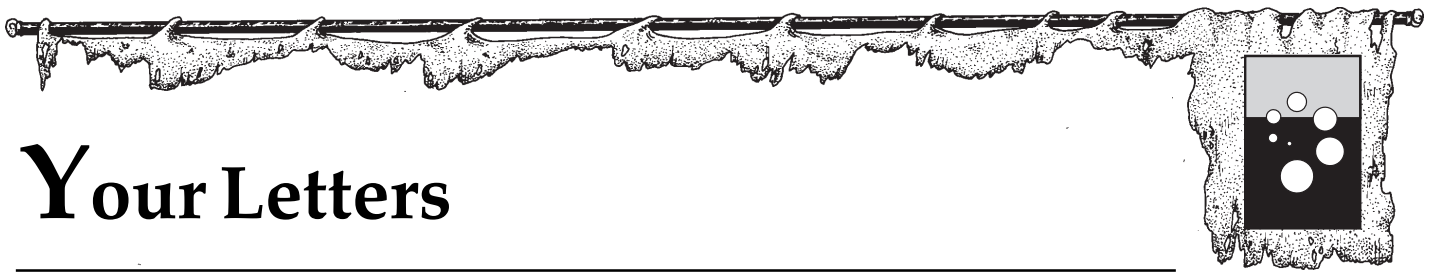
Is this newcomer the Sixth Prophet, or is he an agent from some other High Lord, sent to disrupt the Gaunt Man's power base? Some say he is a renegade ravagon backed by one of the other High Lords, perhaps 3327. Non-ravagon theories state that he is one of the following: 1) an intelligent pterosaur from the Living Land; 2) a fantasy creature from Aysle; 3) a demon from the Cyberpapacy; 4) the result of some Nile weird science experiment; or 5) a genetically engineered creature from Akasha or Tharkold.

Whatever the "Sallaboratza" truly is, he has the potential to turn the Gaunt Man's strongest and most loyal servants against him.

6

Further detailed examination of the 3327 clone has revealed that, though his DNA does match "Ryuchi Kanawa," his body is not human! Instead, he is an artificial being constructed of pseudo-organic materials. At first glance, it appeared that his cells were human, but under electron microscope, it became obvious the artificial elements — such as plastics — were present.

The implications of this are potentially staggering. Was this 3327 an exception, or are all the clones actually artificial men? If so, why and when were they substituted for the clones? For that matter, is it possible that this has somehow been done without 3327's knowledge? And does the real 3327 still exist — or has he, too, been replaced? 



Your Letters

I am writing to you to see if you could answer some questions we have about *Torg*. We have been roleplaying *Torg* for over two years and enjoy the system very much. But there are some rules we are not 100 percent sure on and need answers to stop confusion, specifically the rules regarding atheism.

1. What is meant by "presence" on page 125 of the *Torg Rulebook*, when it refers to a miracle being invoked in the presence of an atheist? How far does presence extend in distance and diameter?

2. Is the atheist not considered to be present if he is fighting, talking or just not paying any attention to the invoking cleric? Suppose he is blinded somehow?

3. Does an atheist automatically know when a miracle is being performed in his presence?

4. Does an atheist's attempt to stop a miracle count as a simple action?

5. If the answer to 4 is no, would it be a multi-action to stop multiple miracles being cast in a round?

6. Does acting to stop a miracle count as an active defense?

7. And some general questions: can you invoke a reality storm on someone who has the reality skill but no Possibilities?

8. Can you invoke a reality storm on an Ord?

9. Do giants automatically disconnect if they enter a magic-poor area?
— Kelvin Powell,
Napier, New Zealand

1. "Presence" means the atheist must be able to see and hear what goes on. If there is no verbal component to the miracle (the cleric does not need to speak the prayer aloud), then he need only see the cleric invoking the miracle. That puts the distance at sight and (if applicable) range of the cleric's voice.

2. It is fair to make the atheist generate a *Perception* total to see whether he notices a miracle being invoked. If he is blinded, and there is no verbal component to the miracle being cast, he would probably be unaware of it.

3. No.

4. No. You have to generate a *faith* total.

5. Yes, it would.

6. Technically, an argument could be made for this, since it works much the same way (the atheist's roll essentially has to be simultaneous with the cleric's invocation). However, an atheist can attempt to cancel *any* miracle, not just those directed at himself or those that would be harmful to his party. So I would say it cannot be considered an active defense.

7. Yes.

8. No.

9. Giants would have problems in pure zones, since their enhancements are contradictions. Otherwise, they would never automatically disconnect just by walking in somewhere.

Which maelstrom bridges could Storm Knights somehow find their way up? In other words, could you publish a quick breakdown of the chances of average Storm Knights traveling to other cosms using the current bridges?

— Ian Stewart,
Winnipeg, MB

A general rule of thumb is that the more bridges a realm has, the more likely you'll be able to slip up unnoticed. The two most likely realms are the Nile Empire, particularly the Houston bridge, and Aysle, and for essentially the same reasons: both are in the middle of "hot" wars and there's a lot of chaos and confusion. A few well-disguised faces won't be noticed in a crowd.

The most difficult bridges to climb are Tharkold (very heavy security, due

to Race infiltration of the realm), Orrorsh (when they're rebuilt), and Nippon Tech. The Cyberpapacy falls somewhere in the middle. Keep in mind that the Living Land and Akasha have no bridges.

1. Do the Akashans still have the ability to produce invisibility powder and other trinkets, as found in *The Forever City*? And speaking of the Forever City, have the Space Gods or their client races (or anyone else) reclaimed it?

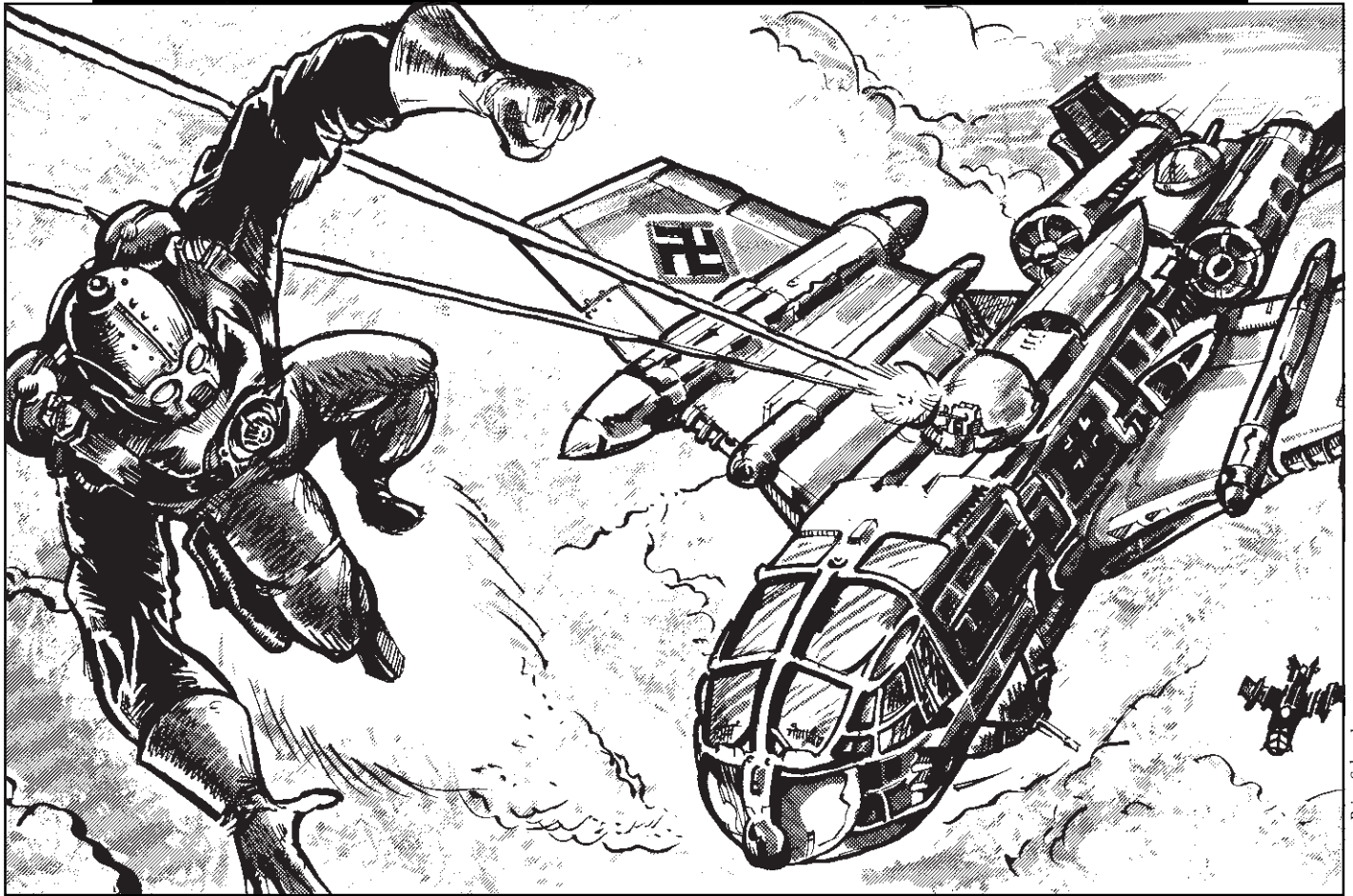
2. Now that rumor #5 of issue #33 is true and the Posse has found the Sacellum, I've got some questions. Since LA is now in a Tharkold pure zone and faiths other than the Cult of the Dominant and the Way of the Race must cause a contradiction to invoke miracles, won't Ord Posse be shortchanged?

— Ralph Dula,
New Cumberland, PA

1. Yes, it can be assumed that the Akashans can still produce the kind of artifacts found around the Forever City. Whether they are or not is another story — basically, if you would like to introduce that sort of stuff into your campaign, feel free. As far as we know, no one has claimed the Forever City as yet.

2. Ord Posse members are hosed, Ralph. That's certainly the way it looks to us. As far as the minority members of the Posse go, that's a very interesting question.

By the way, our thanks for your letter regarding *High Lords' Guide* and we're glad you liked it so much. To answer your questions regarding the artwork, it came from the Japanese-language version of *Torg* they're publishing over there. They translate our works but do all their own art. You can see more of their version of the Possibility Wars in the upcoming *Infiniverse Update, Vol. III*, on sale in May.



Brian Schomburg

Herald Messages

"May each drop of my blood be as a black arrow, straight to the heart of Jean Malraux! Father in Heaven, to thee I commend my soul — Father Gregory Hildebrand, cyberpriest, before giving his life to destroy a stelae, thus freeing millions from the dominion of Cyberpopo."

— Bill Brackeen,
Jonesboro, AR

Core Earth psychics have once again proven their value. Not only did they uncover the True Death of Sabathina (which they put to use), but foretold that Ardinay's capture was inevitable. Knowing this, they led several devastating strikes against the Warrior of the Dark's forces, ensuring she will be unable to capture Oxford in Ardinay's residence.

— Ralph Dula,
New Cumberland, PA

The reign of the Torg has begun! Someone has become the Torg and Ayroa is determined to find out who. But if the rumors of Baruk Kaah's return are true, what is their relation to the Torg?

— Mike Lenzo,
Hudson, OH

Cyberpapal plans for New England have been dealt a severe blow. Storm Knights destroyed a coven of gospog in Salem and prevented a stelae from being planted in southeastern New York. The Storm Knights survived multiple Nippon assassination attempts — Kanawa front companies, with aid from the Boston nuncio, have purchased high-tech companies around Boston to prepare for manufacture of Tech 26 equipment, especially robotics.

Through the valiant efforts of occultist Lord Arthur Baine and with the assistance of

Akashan technology, the Orrorshan reality tree in New Orleans has been destroyed.

— Jim Ogle,
Socorro, NM

A ledger uncovered in Alexandria claims that a reality shard was stolen from its owner in Uruguay by Nile mobsters and is for some reason being delivered to Tokyo. The shard is supposedly a pair of red baby shoes belonging to the famous Andes survivors. Anybody out there close enough to Japan to check it out?

— Ben Ehrets,
Allentown, PA

"Surf's up!"

— Richard Lafferty, reluctant vampire, after seeing the Leviathan blown into a thousand bloody, frothing bits in the Channel