For Veteran Player Characters

A Super-Adventure for *TORG: ROLEPLAYING THE POSSIBILITY WARS*

TORG

THE GAUNT MAN RETURNS

WEST END GAMES

This Evil Reborn

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By John Terra

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TORG™

Roleplaying the Possibility Wars™

The Gaunt Man Returns

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Introduction

Creation/ destruction/ creation/destruction/creation/ destruction ...

The cycle continued unfailingly, as it had for the past two years, the maelstrom howling its fury in the Gaunt Man's laboratory beneath Illmound Keep.

The Gaunt Man himself struggled to hold his substance together despite the force of the storm. But no sooner did he succeed in regaining his form than a roar from the maelstrom tore him apart again. Just when it looked as if he was doomed to destruction, his body would slowly reform until he was whole again. Then the entire cycle would begin anew.

Occasionally, the High Lord of Orrorsh glared at the small red and blue sliver of eternity shard that one of those damnable Storm Knights had used to initiate the maelstrom. If he could but outlast it, he would be free — free to resume his rightful place on the throne of bones, free to lead his realm to new levels of power.

High Lord and shard both hung suspended in the maelstrom, each attempting to subdue the other. The Gaunt Man furrowed his brow and hissed his fury at the shard. He felt a new determination not to let some overglorified piece of rock get the better of him.

In yet another bid for aid, his mind sought out Heketon in its special refuge. The Darkness Device's thoughts and emotions came to the Gaunt Man, but rather than offering help or advice, the Device merely "sat back" like some cruel father watching his son drowning, curious to see if the child would save himself or be overcome. Such was the only reaction Heketon had ever given the trapped High Lord.

His Device's indifference and malicious curiosity drained the last of the Gaunt Man's patience and fueled his fury anew. With an awesome display of willpower, he reached out for the shard, which hung but a few tantalizing centimeters from his grasp. To the High Lord's amazement, he found he could actually move his hand in the direction of the offending object, something he had been unable to manage for two years. Could it be that the shard was ... weakening?

Bolstered by this modest success, the Gaunt Man tried again. Slowly, slowly his fingers closed the short distance, though to the Gaunt Man it seemed the void between cosms. Closer ... closer ... closer ...

A loud shriek of painful triumph electrified the air as the Gaunt Man grasped the sliver of the Heart of Coyote. The shard immediately fought back, releasing all of its Apeiros-granted energy into its enemy.

The Gaunt Man felt the shard's power attempting to injure him from within. Ignoring the pain, the High Lord began to literally choke the life out of the sliver. Possibilities bled from the stone at an even faster rate and were hungrily devoured by the Gaunt Man, who grew stronger with each bit of energy consumed. As he grew stronger, he drained more and more possibilities, while the shard grew weaker and weaker still.

Finally, the shard was defeated. In a blinding flash of red and blue light, the maelstrom vanished, dropping the Gaunt Man to the stone floor. He took some satisfaction from the fact that he had landed on his feet, seeing it as a good omen for the future.

The sliver, now fully drained of possibilities, hit the floor with a dull thud. Now, it was only a useless chunk of red and blue veined rock. The Gaunt Man drew back his booted foot and kicked the offending stone. It skittered across the lab floor and came to rest in the ruins of the Gaunt Man's possibility-sorting device.

Regaining his composure, he brushed himself off, picked up his cane and surveyed his surroundings. The chamber was littered with the debris of his machine — much good *that* had done him! Turning away from the ruins, the Gaunt Man's eye alighted on his enchanted mirror, Wicked, hanging on the wall.

Inhaling and relishing a deep breath of the fear-tainted air of Orrorsh, the Gaunt Man walked around the chamber, taking in every detail. He struggled to sort out the images and memories he had experienced during his struggle in the maelstrom. There was Kurst's betrayal, Kane's failure, and those damned Storm Knights that had locked him in that humiliating state for ... how long?

While in the maelstrom, time had lost all meaning for the Gaunt Man. All he could remember was whatever his barely functioning five senses had been able to tell him. The image of Thratchen gloating over his predicament was the most prominent memory.

The Gaunt Man strode to Wicked, rasping "Show me the present," in a voice like dead leaves skittering across the floor of a crypt. Wicked shifted and blurred and revealed Jakarta, Indonesia to its master. Using the power derived from the shard, the Gaunt Man extended his senses and looked about the city. Focusing in on a newstand, he examined the date on a paper's masthead.

"Two years," he muttered. "A blink of an eye when compared to my lifespan, but a long time when one has plans for this cosm." He turned his back on Wicked and began to pace, letting the implications of his long absence from the war sink in. Then he spun on his heel and shouted at the mirror, "Show me Thratchen, that damned, pathetic, armor-plated gargoyle!"

Obediently, the mirror presented a picture of Thratchen. The techno-demon was consorting with others of his kind in a large city in North America.

"Tharkoldu? How can this be?" the Gaunt Man wondered aloud. Then his skeletal face grew dark with growing realization and fury. "Wicked! Show me the realms on Earth! NOW!"

For the next hour, a collage of im-

ages played across the surface of the occult artifact. Events and personalities flashed across the silver pane. The Gaunt Man hissed as he saw Uthorion routed by Storm Knights and the forces of the Light and forced to take refuge in the form of a dragon.

"My *trusted* lieutenant!" the Gaunt Man said, infusing the words with poisonous contempt. "My *incompetent* lieutenant is more appropriate!"

The scene shifted again to show a stunningly beautiful woman clad in ebon armor leading a charge against Ardinay's armies. The Gaunt Man watched closely, but said nothing.

Again, the mirror shimmered and the Gaunt Man found himself eavesdropping on a meeting of the Cyberpapal College of Cardinals. He could hear their fearful whispers, their worries that Malraux was losing support both here and in Magna Verita. They were silenced when the Cyberpope walked in, his flesh now mixed with steel implants. The Gaunt Man smiled thinly, wondering if perhaps Malraux had been influenced by Thratchen's "look."

"Has that pompous cleric begun to emulate the techno-demons?" he said aloud.

Assuming the question begged an answer, Wicked obediently showed Malraux descending the maelstrom bridge to Earth. The Gaunt Man saw his ally being attacked by Dr. Hachi Mara-Two and becoming something entirely new — a Cyberpope.

"And even with this incredible technology, he struggles to expand his boundaries!" the Gaunt Man said, shaking his head.

The High Lord's frustration grew as he beheld hundreds of edeinos actively battling Baruk Kaah, while natural disasters of all sorts rocked the Eastern Land. "Scaled idiot," he muttered in disgust. "He cannot even control his own pleasure-seeking reptile scum!"

Perhaps fearing to show the Gaunt Man any more failures, Wicked presented an image of 3327 plotting further expansions in America. Interspersed with this were images of Nippon agents battling Orrorshan horrors.

"Wealth-seeking, materialistic, uncultured barbarian," the Gaunt Man said, dismissively. "I should have known better than to recuit a glorified merchant." He added a silent promise that the Nippon High Lord would pay for daring to challenge the horror realm.

"Thratchen, Kanawa, Kaah. I am crafting quite a list of people who must needs be ... disciplined."

Seemingly oblivious to the Gaunt Man's comment, Wicked continued the spectacle, showing Dr. Mobius' tremendous progress. Finally, the Gaunt Man allowed himself to be impressed. He even let out a ghoulish cackle as he reflected on the fact that the most successful High Lord was also arguably the most insane. The irony was delicious.

Pressing Wicked for more information, he was treated to a display of the Nile High Lord's major victories and defeats. At one point, he cried, "Wu-Han has reformed? That is a sea change that shan't last long!"

Still, Wicked was not finished. He showed the Gaunt Man another realm, one populated by handsome people

and odd beasts, all bearing technology more advanced than even Malraux's. The Gaunt Man's smile was a cold one — he knew of these Akashans, but had not expected to see them on Earth.

"So Manwaring failed me," he said, making a mental note to punish the vampyre. "Very well, then. We shall see how long these beings can stand before the most powerful emotion in the cosmverse: fear. And if their machines live as well, then they too can know terror. To me, all fear tastes the same."

Wicked moved on to show techno-demons wandering through a large city. The Gaunt Man was perhaps most surprised by this sight — the Tharkokdu had failed in their attempt to invade Earth. Or had they?

"Show me Kranod!" he commanded. The High Lord of Orrorsh detested mysteries, unless he was the one who crafted them.

Wicked gave its master a brief glimpse of the rotting corpse of a techno-demon. Then it showed a human woman, one adorned with the same sort of equipment as Mara-Two, and she stood beside Malgest.

The Gaunt Man bellowed in evil mirth. "So that is what has happened! The fool failed in his invasion and lost his Darkness Device to that woman! Splendid! She will be far easier to control — new to the power she now wields. An alliance may be in order."

He eyed the image of Jezrael more closely. "Yes, and perhaps it is time I took a mate once more. One who is not so ... fragile."

In quick succession, Wicked showed the current whereabouts of the Hellion Court members and the Nightmares, followed by some of the more prominent Storm Knights who had arisen in the past two years. When it was done, the Gaunt Man sat down on his throne, rested his head on his steepled fingers and began to ponder.

After a few moments, he whispered, "Render Heketon unto me."

In the mirror's heart, there appeared a gaping maw lined with razor-sharp teeth. The Gaunt Man arose, reached into the mouth and emerged with the glowing black heart which was his Darkness Device.

"So you saw fit to withhold your aid from me?"

The heart pulsed as if in answer.

"Yes, I realize that you could have allowed Thratchen to find you, but I know you too well, 'old friend.' Despite his strength and his talent for treachery, he is still not the stuff of which a High Lord is made. In the future, you would do well to remember who is your rightful master!"

The heart pulsed again in his hands.

"Changing the subject, are we? A traitor? In my court?" The Gaunt Man appeared genuinely surprised. "Wicked! Show me my false-hearted servant!"

The mirror obeyed, revealing an image of General Avery Wellington poring over some occult texts. "Indeed. My 'honorable' courtier has decided to take advantage of my ... absence in order to seize power for himself? Wellington — gone from soldier to scholar? I would never have suspected! And here I thought that the combination of the rigid, unimaginative Victorian mind and the repressive restrictions of military life would keep him loyal to me. This situation must be corrected."

The Gaunt Man left the room, deep in thought. With his disappearance, much of what had dwelled in the Keep had wandered away. Many of the rooms were ruined, courtesy of Thratchen's fruitless search for Heketon.

"This will not do," the Gaunt Man said to Heketon, gesturing all about him. "Repair. Replenish. Redesign."

Immediately, furniture began to reassemble itself, walls "healed" of their cracks and scars and floors became level once more. For miles around Illmound, the dead rose from their graves and burial pits as numerous Waiting Village spirits entered their bodies, altered them, and began to shuffle toward the Keep.

Reflecting on his setback at the hands of Kurst and Mara, the Gaunt Man wondered if perhaps Illmound was too easy to breach. At his mental command, rooms shifted position and walls appeared where none had been before until he was well and truly satisfied.

The one chamber which did not change was that of Basjas, the arachnidan member of the Hellion Court. Entering, the Gaunt Man noticed dozens of human-shaped bundles of spider silk hanging from the ceiling. The High Lord was pleased to see that Basjas, at least, was doing her part to spread fear.

"All hail the power of the Torg!" said a statuesque, beautiful woman as she approached the High Lord. "He who has defeated the power of Apeiros and now walks again to reclaim his throne!"

"Eloquent as always, Basjas," the Gaunt Man said with pleasure. "During my ... inconvenience, I was aware of your secret visits. I saw how you wished to help and your frustration at your powerlessness. Your loyalty will be rewarded, my dear."

"The only reward I seek is the chance to spill Thratchen's blood," she hissed.

"Once my plans have been completed, I will allow you to begin yours against that traitorous techno-demon," he replied. "As well as have you pay visits to some of the more restless Nightmares, if only to remind them where true power in Orrorsh lies."

"Sconce and Maletretius have been plotting to seize a larger share of power in Orrorsh!" the woman said.

"Yes, yes, so Wicked has told me," the Gaunt Man answered smoothly. "Hence your visits. If they do not receive you well, you may help them on their way to the Waiting Village."

Basjas' eyes gleamed with wicked anticipation. "I am ready to serve you, master ... in any way you desire," she whispered, her fingers toying with the laces on her flimsy gown.

"So I see," the High Lord replied. "Prepare your plans of vengeance, Basjas. I shall inform you when to set the wheels in motion." And he was gone.

As he walked back to his laboratory, the Lord of Illmound Keep shook his head. Why did his female allies, beings such as Sabathina and Basjas, feel compelled to make romantic overtures toward him?

"When have I ever shown any interest in such things?" he muttered aloud as his footsteps echoed down the halls of the Keep. "Even my wife never felt my touch ... save for when I killed her," he added hastily.

After moving Wicked to his tea room, he used it to make contact with Parok, his ravagon lieutenant. His in-

structions were simple: come to Illmound with a dozen of the Dark Hunters, and tell no one.

While he awaited their arrival, another potential problem occurred to the Gaunt Man. Storm Knights had checked him once with an eternity shard—something must be done to prevent such a thing from happening again. He walked to his library and began paging through ponderous volumes of occult lore, seeking an answer.

"I wish a defense against eternity shards," he intoned, reading from a large book bound with human flesh. "I will create an occult talisman that will protect me from eternity shards. I will use a piece of a shard to create the talisman. I will research a ritual to enchant the shard which will create the talisman. The talisman will protect me from shards for as long as I am within Illmound Keep."

The Gaunt Man paused in his research as Parok, warlord of the ravagons, entered the library, bowing low. Behind him, a dozen ravagons knelt before the man they believed to be the Sixth Prophet of their religion.

"My lord!" Parok hissed. "We thought you were lost! This is indeed a joyous day! If you now desire that I destroy Thratchen —"

"Thratchen can wait," the High Lord answered. "Arise, faithful one, you and your kin. I knew your loyalty would never waver."

"We live to serve, lord."

"As it should be," the Gaunt Man said, nodding with satisfaction. "Now, Parok, heed me: I require stormers and Ords, dead or alive, it matters not. I require perhaps two dozen of each.

"Surely, many of my so-called allies have sent their agents to my realm to see if I had met with my demise. Seek out and fetch these stormers. Take your victims from all areas of Orrorsh. Tell no one who sent you, lest I consign you to eternal damnation, for I shall discover any treachery. Now go!"

As the creatures bowed and departed, the Gaunt Man returned to his work, taking no nourishment save for the possibilities that Heketon fed to him.

The moon had passed through all of its phases when the Gaunt Man finally emerged from the library. Clutching the scroll with its occult ritual written in Stormer blood, the triumphant High Lord strode into his laboratory and began creating the talisman, using a small piece of the Heart of Coyote as the main component. The Gaunt Man cackled with delight. The object which had made his life miserable for the past two years would now become his defense against such a thing ever happening again!

A week later, the ravagons returned from their grisly mission, bearing twenty dead Ords, twenty dead Storm Knights, and six live ones. The Gaunt Man never left his work, but instead ordered Parok to imprison the six live Storm Knights in the dungeons, and to stack the dead bodies in the laboratory.

The remaining ravagons were ordered to guard the Keep, for the Gaunt Man did not require them to seek out more Storm Knights. Many of the realms were sending groups of Storm Knights into the Orrorshan realm to ascertain the Gaunt Man's condition. Many of those Knights wound up at Illmound. No, the ravagons did not need to fly anymore. Stormers, good and evil, entered Illmound in search of answers. None ever left.

Finally, the talisman was complete. The neck chain was made of the finger bones of dead Storm Knights. The amulet which held the eternity shard was a portion of a human skull, carved into the shape of the Carredon's head, with the shard mounted in its mouth. With a nod of satisfaction, the Gaunt Man put on the necklace and placed his cloak over it, so that it would be hidden from the casual observer.

Leaving his lab, the Gaunt Man met Parok, who bowed and said, "Lord, how can we serve you now?"

The Gaunt Man raised his head and stared at the ceiling in thought. "For the nonce, nothing. I must name some new Nightmares to the Hellion Court, plus a staff for the Keep. However, I need one of your strongest people, a true warrior, who you feel can obey precise orders and is not afraid to die serving me. Someone whose strength lies in his sinews, not his mental faculties."

"I know the one to serve you, Lord!" Parok replied, grinning evilly as he thought of a particular ravagon who wished to supplant him but was being rather circumspect in his plans. "May I ask what he is to do?"

The Gaunt Man grinned wide, stretching thin the skin across his skeletal face, his eyes glowing red with malice. "I wish him to deliver an invitation to a group of Storm Knights in Jakarta. But he must do it in a particular manner."

"An invitation to Storm Knights?" Parok's expression betrayed his surprise.

"Why, yes, Parok!" the Gaunt Man answered sarcastically. "After all, those accursed stormers seem to have so much success these days, I feel that I should recruit some myself. Now hearken, for here is what I want your ravagon warrior to do ... "

As the Gaunt Man explained his plan, the halls of Illmound shook with the evil laughter of both beings.

A High Lord Resurrected

The Gaunt Man Returns is an adventure for *Torg: Roleplaying The Possibility Wars*. You must have the boxed game to play this adventure, as well as the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

Adventures for *Torg* occur in the Near Now, where seven different realities and their High Lords have invaded Earth. The mightiest of the High Lords, and the instigator of the Possibility Wars on Earth, is the Gaunt Man, ruler of a realm built on fear. Trapped in a maelstrom by Storm Knights (see the *Torg* novel trilogy), the Gaunt Man is about to return to the fray.

WARNING: This adventure thrusts the Storm Knights into an extremely perilous situation in perhaps the most dangerous of realms. It is recommended for experienced players.

Adventure Background

For most of the first two years of the Possibility Wars, the Gaunt Man has been trapped in a maelstrom with an eternity shard, the Heart of Coyote. During that period, his body has been continually torn apart and reassembled by the power of the reality storm. In his place, Thratchen, a

Tharkold techno-demon, ruled the horror realm, claiming that the Gaunt Man had business elsewhere and had named him regent.

With the Gaunt Man gone and his Darkness Device, Heketon, missing, there were no further stelae created, thus the borders of the Orrorsh realm have remained unchanged since the onset of the war.

Some members of the Hellion Court, the Gaunt Man's inner circle of advisors and lieutenants, chafed at this lack of progress. One Court member in particular was outraged at the perceived lack of an offensive plan: General Avery Wellington, supreme commander of all Victorian military forces and, unbeknownst to his people, a secret ally of the Gaunt Man.

Being a military man, Wellington felt that it was imperative that the realm expand. He began questioning Thratchen's right to rule and, unaware of the Gaunt Man's true fate, the High Lord's wisdom in appointing the Tharkokldu regent.

In order to keep himself busy, Wellington organized military expeditions to map out the Land Below, and also volunteered his men for various "extra-realm" duties such as guarding Victorian archaeological digs in the Nile Empire. During one such dig, a subordinate of Wellington's found an evil book, the Archives of the Damned, and sent it to his general. Wellington read the book and found an occult ritual within its pages. When invoked, the rite would kill thousands and use their life energy to transform the caster into a being of great power.

Believing that he would be far more adept at conquering this cosm than either the Gaunt Man or Thratchen, General Wellington began making the necessary preparations to use the ritual. The Nightmare Skutharka, along with his assistant, Mr.Ho, quietly backed Wellington's plans for domination. Thus far, Skutharka is Wellington's only ally.

In the meantime, the Gaunt Man finally defeated the eternity shard and emerged from the maelstrom, turning to his cursed mirror to view events that had transpired in his absence. When he learned of Wellington's ambitions, he summoned Parok, warlord of the ravagons and fanatic follower of the Gaunt Man. The High Lord of Orrorsh began formulating a plan that would stop Wellington without revealing to all that he had returned.

The plan is simplicity itself: the Gaunt Man "softened up" the city of Jakarta with supernatural manifestations and a series of ravagon-committed kidnappings and murders, then began reaching out to a likely group of Storm Knights through their dreams.

With the Knights on the trail of the ravagon, the Gaunt Man then engineered events so that they would believe he was still trapped in the maelstrom. Presented with the means to "keep" him there, the Knights are lured to Illmound Keep and a confrontation with ultimate evil ...

Adventure Synopsis

Act One begins with the Storm Knights resting in a hotel in Jakarta. They have all had a series of bad dreams. The morning paper details a string of brutal crimes that seem to have some connection with the dreams.

The Knights spend most of the rest of the act chasing down leads, many of which turn out to be red herrings. The act ends with the Knights in a position to stop the next murder, and finding an unlikely ally in a ravagon. This creature claims to be an enemy of the Gaunt Man who wishes to see him stay in the maelstrom. He presents the Knights with an eternity shard and warns them that they have only days to get to Illmound and prevent the High Lord from emerging.

Illmound Keep is covered in Act Two. The Knights wander through the grounds and all of the levels of Illmound, until they finally come face to face with the Gaunt Man. The High Lord explains that General Wellington has turned traitor, and if the Knights do not stop him, thousands will die. He himself couldn't care less — he merely wishes to see the Knights' mettle tested and Wellington destroyed. Should they refuse to help, the blood of all the Indonesians will be on their hands. The Gaunt Man gives the heroes a lead to Wellington's weakness, a Victorian professor who is currently involved in an archaeological dig in the Nile Empire.

In Act Three, the heroes go to the Victorian dig. They get embroiled in a murder mystery, then help in exploring an underground ruined temple, where a small eternity shard lies. The Act climaxes with an attack by pulp villains.

The final act, Act Four, has the Knights returning to Orrorsh, and going to New London to find more clues. After a trek through the jungle, the heroes pass the Fortress of the Dead on their way to Singapore to stop the ritual.

The climax occurs in the labyrinthian maze of the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, where Avery Wellington must be challenged to a duel at sunrise.

Gamemaster Preparation

It is important to preserve the atmosphere of Orrorsh in this adventure in order to keep it suspenseful. Each act has its own characteristics which should be emphasized. The first act is typical *Torg*, with lots of people from other cosms, combat potential, and scattered clues.

Act Two is a "dungeon crawl" with suspense building up as the party's Perseverance is torn down, culminating in the face to face meeting with the Gaunt Man himself.

Act Three starts off in the Orrorshan mystery style, and ends up in frenetic Nile pulp action. The final act drops back into gloomy Orrorsh, ending with the ultimate showdown with Wellington.

Gamemasters must remember that the Power of Fear permeates this entire adventure. One of the best ways to spread fear is to foster ignorance, and

the best way to foster ignorance is by never giving the players a completely straight answer. Be evasive. Use terms like "it seems," "it appears," "a number of things could have done this" or "it could be, or perhaps not."

Even an *Idea* card should not simply blow the lid off a mystery. Let the *Idea* card give the players a minimal amount of information, enough to keep them going.

As a rule, the players (and in turn their characters) will fear the things they do not know about, more than they would a known menace. Build up paranoia. Everyone they meet, unless they have absolute proof that the person is a "good guy," should be portrayed as a potential source of danger.

Before play, the gamemaster should ask the players to relate the following things about their characters: their greatest desire, their greatest fear, their most important goal, and what makes them angriest. The gamemaster should write these things down and file most of the stuff away for future reference; the only thing you really need to know about is what their greatest fears are. The other questions are just a smoke screen. The fears come into play later.

A strong attempt has been made to create a non-linear adventure. Don't herd the players into a scene, but rather tantalize them with what might be found. This holds true especially for Acts One and Two. If the players don't want to check out Soto Investments, for instance, don't force them.

Also, if the gamemaster feels that it's in the players' best interests, scenes such as the street-corner cyberpriest or Soto Investments can be run in a different sequence than the one presented. Give the players their free will.

Above all, don't RUSH things. The adventure is not meant to be run in one night's worth of gaming, with Storm Knights barrelling into encounters, weapons a-blazing. This is an Orrorshan adventure: patience, planning, and information-gathering are the orders of the day. Take time to roleplay and have fun. After all, even Storm Knights need to take time to sleep, eat, and train in new skills.

This adventure is also a good way for a gamemaster to get rid of any pesky eternity shards the party may have accumulated in the course of their adventures. Drop subtle hints about the stories of how the Gaunt Man came to be trapped for two years in a maelstrom caused by touching him with an eternity shard.

Adventure Timing

There is no way to predict what Storm Knights and the players who portray them will do. There are just too many choices for the players to make, too many options available to them. Thus, it is almost impossible to set a time limit on this adventure, specifically: when will Avery Wellington invoke the ritual?

Keep the idea of a time limit in check until Act Four. Once the party has arrived in New London, or even better, met the gypsies, drop hints that the ritual will be invoked "very soon."

A good rule of thumb is, when they reach the Fortress of the Dead (arrival should be slated as early evening), they have 36 hours to stop Avery.

A Word About Cybernetics

All cybernetically-enhanced characters encountered do not have their skill values modified by their cyberware. Skill values listed are base numbers.

Act One

Messages in Blood

The Major Beat

The Storm Knights are at the Hotel Indonesia in Jakarta for some rest and relaxation after a mission (note that Jakarta is a Core Earth hardpoint). Their bad dreams and the morning paper lead them into a new adventure. They visit the police department, run into some red herrings, try to stop a murder, and face down the murderer. All of this puts them on the path to Illmound Keep.

NOTE: Acts One and Two of this adventure have a Perseverance difficulty of 27. The Knights begin with a Perseverance of eight. Acts One and Two are influenced by the Gaunt Man, thus they are subject to his Perseverance DN.

See Act Three for the Perseverance DN of the rest of the adventure.

Keep an eye on the Storm Knight's attitudes while they are in Jakarta. The government has done a passable job keeping peace and order. The last thing the Indonesians will want is a group of Westerners swaggering into the city, shooting up everything, and announcing that they know best.

Remind the Knights that this is a civilized city, where the authorities do not appreciate big shoot-outs and property damage. Knights who openly flash their weapons, bully the locals, and pick fights will be jailed overnight and pay a $1,000 fine.

SCENE ONE: Up on the Wrong Side of the Bed

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights are meeting for breakfast in one of their rooms in the Hotel Indonesia. The night before, each person had the same nightmare. This was the fourth straight evening marred by this dream.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

It has been a long time since you embarked on a mission that could be accurately described as "routine." This last one, running supplies and top secret dispatches into the Indonesian city of Jakarta, was relatively free from incident, however.

The Indonesian government, brimming with gratitude but low on money, has put you up for several days in the luxurious Hotel Indonesia. This little break has given your group the chance to rest, relax, take a bath, and be waited on hand and foot for a while. In fact, your stay could be called "paradise" ... if not for the dreams.

For the last four nights, it has been the same dream, and all of you have experienced it. It begins with your group weaving through a labyrinth at night. A brilliant canopy of stars hangs above you and mist and fog swirl everywhere. Your group reaches the end of the maze, where stands a huge mountain of skulls. Atop the bones rests a huge, black manor house. Suddenly, you find that you can see into the basement of the house, where people much like yourselves are imprisoned.

You enter the manor house to find a skeletal figure trapped in a red and blue whirlwind. In the blink of an eye, you and your group are turned into the links of an iron chain, binding the skeletal figure, preventing it from breaking out of the storm. The skeletal figure strains at the herobonds, his efforts to get out causing the manor to crumble all around you, exposing your battle to the stars.

The stars shift their positions, forming faces in the night sky, which begin weeping blood. A huge hour-

glass manifests itself in the sky, but instead of sand, it is filled with souls, trickling, screaming, into the lower half of the glass. Eerie organ music, deep, ponderous and mournful, fills the night air. The final constellation pattern you notice is an open book.

At last, the emaciated skeletal figure shatters the chain, sending your group flying in all directions. The figure stands and raises its arms in triumph. The celestial hourglass explodes and a horde of winged creatures emerge and begin covering the Earth, feeding on its inhabitants. The screams of a race being devoured alive intermingle with the organ music.

Six skeletons appear and bow before the skeletal figure. One skeleton carries a small machine, perhaps a computer, made from some dark substance. Another wears a hood and cape. The third is not human, but edeinos. The fourth wields a sword and shield. The fifth is clad in leather, and has cybernetic enhancements and long hair like a woman's. The sixth is dressed as a clergyman, but sports cybernetic enhancements.

At last, Earth's dead rise and begin to advance on your group. The weeping constellations save you from them, sweeping you up in their stellar arms and lifting you into the heavens. As you rise, you notice once again the hourglass pattern in the sky.

Your rescue is short-lived, for the constellations attempt to consume you. But as they have no true form, you pass through them and begin to fall to Earth.

As the ground rushes up to meet you, a deep voice intones, "The next blood will be shed where the first blood fell. The hourglass will tell. Will you write an entry into the Archives of the Damned?" Before your impact, you awaken, screaming, in a cold sweat.

Exhaustion from your active past, as well as individual plans and agendas have prevented your group from all sitting down and discussing these dreams and what to do about them. This morning, you all agree to meet for breakfast and talk this over. When room service brings breakfast up, they also bring the first newspaper you have seen in a week.

After finishing the read-aloud, give the players handout 1, the *Jakarta Free Press*.

As the characters discuss the dream, have them generate a Perseverance total.

The Action

Once the Knights have read the paper and have had a chance to discuss the dream, they can go wherever they wish. The time is 10:00 a.m., local time.

Areas of the hotel include: bar, restaurant, health club, pool, front desk and lobby, and a mini-mall to purchase clothes, toiletries, luggage, small electronic appliances, liquor. The ho-

•JAKARTA FREE PRESS•

December 7, 1992 *Today's Weather: Sunny, muggy, 80's. PM fog*

FOURTH MURDER SHOCKS OFFICIALS

JAKARTA — The mutilated body of a longshoreman was discovered in an alleyway by police last night, bringing to four the number of murder victims in as many days.

The body of Persis Romesh, 38, was found near the docks. Although police have refused to release details on the murder, sources close to the investigation have hinted that all four murders are the work of the same killer.

Jakarta Police Chief Rashif Malaraya dismisses this speculation as unwarranted at this time, pointing out that there is no common thread linking the four victims. All were natives of the city, but there is no other apparent connection. "Obviously, these murders are the work of very disturbed individuals, and at present, we are not ruling out the possibility that one man is responsible for these deaths," Malaraya said this morning. "Anyone who has information on these murders is encouraged to come forward."

Malaraya denied that there was any link between these murders and the disappearance last month of six people from the rice fields northwest of the airport. Two of those missing were Jakartans, and the others foreigners. "There is a great deal of difference between mutilated corpses and missing Storm Knights," he said. "They may have been called away on a mission. We cannot compel them to keep us apprised of all their movements."

"Storm Knight," of course, is the term applied to those individuals who seem most adept at dealing with the strange events of the Possibility Wars. Malaraya refused to release any details on what the Knights were working on when they vanished.

Sources confirmed that the bodies of all four murder victims are currently being stored at the police morgue, pending further investigation of the circumstances relating to their deaths.

ONE MONTH ANNIVERSARY OF DISAPPEARANCES STILL YIELDS NO CLUES

JAKARTA — Despite public outcry and police efforts, there are still no clues in the disappearances of six Storm Knights one month ago. Public officials have dismissed the case as one more instance of "undisciplined vigilantes" acting without consulting local government, and do not suspect foul play.

However, eyewitnesses have come forward claiming that "winged creatures" armed with swords swept down from the skies and seized the victims. Police Chief Rashif Malaraya has rejected these accounts as "superstitious nonsense."

Police files in cities throughout Java and Sumatra confirm that a number of other kidnappings of a similar nature occurred within two days of the ones in Jakarta. No clues have yet been found to explain these events.

Society News

Lady Ellenby's Charity Ball — see page 5

Victorian Battleship Visits Jakarta

JAKARTA — Her Majesty's Ship *Thunder Child*, the first Victorian dreadnaught to be built on Earth, docked at Jakarta Harbor yesterday morning, on the first leg of a goodwill tour.

Captain Anton Salisbury, master of the HMS *Thunder Child*, kept his vaunted Victorian manners as he stated, "We are here to show the good people of Indonesia that we have their best interests at heart. We simply wish to share the benefits of our Victorian culture, work ethic, and morality."

"There is little 'goodwill' between the Victorians and the oppressed people of Indonesia," stated Muhammed Al-Asif, spokesman for the Indonesian Liberation Movement, a political/military group that is actively hostile to the Victorians. "And look at what that so-called superior race considers to be state of the art! Why, a single Indonesian guided missile destroyer could sink an entire squadron of their dreadnaughts before those old ships could lumber into gunnery range!"

The vessel will be docked at Jakarta for five days, and is open to limited tours.

SOTO INVESTMENTS OPENS FOR BUSINESS

JAKARTA — The latest skyscraper on the beautiful Jakartan skyline belongs to Soto Investments, a Japanese-based corporation.

"We are here to bring prosperity and recovery to the beleaguered, embattled, but proud people of Jakarta," Isumo Mastumori, president of Soto's Indonesia Division, announced at a press conference yesterday. "The free and honorable people of Japan stand beside their Indonesian bretheren in their struggles against an outmoded form of other-world Western imperialism."

Soto Investments has pledged to help rebuild shattered companies that lost holdings to the Victorians, as well as searching out likely prospects for new investment ventures. "We wish to show the world that Indonesia is making every attempt to rebuild, and that Japan stands behind her and every other nation that seeks economic recovery," Matsumori explained. "Also, we wish to bring back a sense of normalcy to the lives of the people, hence our efforts to keep a flow of currency and trade coming into the city."

tel has 16 floors, with the first two floors taken up by the abovementioned areas. Floors 3-15 contain normal rooms (for a total of 195 rooms), the 16th floor contains a luxurious suite.

The hotel front desk has a guest register. Finding names and room numbers of guests who checked in before the Storm Knights requires a *find* total of 8. Looking up names without the desk clerk noticing requires a *stealth* total of 10.

The following are the more interesting people staying at the hotel, plus their room numbers:

Usagi Hayakawa (16th floor suite): Usagi is an executive of Soto Investments, staying at the hotel until better quarters can be secured. For bodyguards, Usagi has four corporate ninja, which stay in room 1515 until needed.

Usagi Hayakawa

DEXTERITY 9
Dodge 12, fire combat 11, melee weapons 12, running 11, unarmed combat 10
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 9
Evidence analysis 11, land vehicles 11, language 11, trick 10
MIND 10
Business 14
CHARISMA 10
Persuasion 11
SPIRIT 9
Reality (Nippon Tech) 10
Possibilities: 4

Equipment: 13mm Chunyokai, damage value 18, ammo 9, range 3-10/40/50; Misaki XE laptop computer; Sony Talkman Scrambler; bank card with 10,000,000 yen balance.

Usagi is familiar with the layout of the Soto Investments building.

Corporate Ninja (8)

DEXTERITY 16
Acrobatics 14, fire combat 14, maneuver 14, martial arts (ninjutsu) 18, melee weapons 14, missile weapons 15, stealth 18, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 9
Find 13, tracking 11, trick 11
MIND 9
Test 12
CHARISMA 9
Taunt 12
SPIRIT 10
Intimidation 14, reality (Nippon Tech) 12
Possibilities: 10

Note: Ninja know all maneuvers in their discipline

Equipment: 13mm Chunyokai, damage value 18, ammo 9, range 3-10/40/50; Niyoki camouflage suit; Sorubu climbing gloves; shimsi sword, damage value STR+5/14

Izumi Tarahachi (1212): Actually, just a normal Japanese *sarariman*, who is unaware of the existence of Kanawa or Rauru. He has cheated on his taxes, so he acts rather guilty.

Michelle Martin (1215): Michelle is an executive of God's Word Industries, and a loyal member of the Cyberchurch. The room adjacent to hers, 1213, contains two Hospitaller bodyguards.

Michelle Martin (Cyberpapacy)

DEXTERITY 10
Dodge 12, energy weapons 11, fire combat 12, maneuver 13, running 13, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 9
Find 11, language 12, scholar (Cyberpapal realm lore) 13, trick 12
MIND 10
Business 13, cybertech 13, psychology 13
CHARISMA 12
Charm 15, persuasion 14, taunt 14
SPIRIT 10
Faith (Cyberpapal) 13, reality (Cyberpapacy) 12
Possibilities: 6

Equipment: Cyberware: NeuraCal, EpiphaNeur, BelleMicroView, MB MindBoost, slicers, damage value STR+2/12; Cyber value: 12; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30, range 3-12/30/50; bug hunter, *find*+3 for detecting electronic bugs; snappy looking blazer with HallowMesh woven inside it, armor value TOU+5/15; notebook computer; bank card with 95,000 franc account;

Description: Michelle looks like a perfectly normal, well-dressed, attractive businesswoman. She does not even have a French accent.

Hospitallers (2)

DEXTERITY 10
Beast riding 12, dodge 12, fire combat 13, energy weapons 13, maneuver 12, melee weapons 13, unarmed combat 13
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 9
Find 10, first aid 11, tracking 12
MIND 9
Test 11, willpower 12
CHARISMA 9
Persuasion 10, taunt 12
SPIRIT 12
Faith (Cyberpapacy) 17, focus 13 (14 with crucifix), intimidation 15, reality (Cyberpapacy) 15
Possibilities: 2 per Storm Knight

Equipment: Cyberware: NeuraCal, EpiphaNeur, CSI EyeKill MkIV, CSI HotShot (*find*+2 bonus in poorly lit conditions), CyberHam Receiver, TSE LeMotion (*find*+3 when detecting movement), Throat Mike, Homer, MB Charger 2 (DEX+1 for 3 minutes), MB Blocker (ignore K results, reduce each shock damage hit by three), Compte's Stabliza (+2 to defensive skills), Cyber value: 19; GWI Armor of God, armor value TOU+8/17; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30, range 3-12/30/50; MAS StormGun w/CSI Smart Gun, damage value 22, ammo 12, range 3-16/50/70, +6 to hit; power broadsword, damage value STR+8/18

Allen Morgan (704): A Spartan posing as a business executive, he is here to study the current condition of Jakarta, plus rumors of the Gaunt Man's impending return.

Allen Morgan

DEXTERITY 10
Acrobatics 11, dodge 12, fire combat 14, maneuver 12, melee weapons 13, running 13, stealth 14, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 10
Evidence analysis 14, find 14, land vehicles 13, languages 14, scholar (US history) 15, tracking 14, trick 15
MIND 9
Test 13, willpower 14
CHARISMA 9
Charm 10, persuasion 13
SPIRIT 9
Intimidation 14, reality (Core Earth)

12
Possibilities: 6
Equipment: MAC 10, damage value 18, ammo 10, range 3-15/25/50; .45 Colt Auto, damage value 16, ammo 7, range 3-10/15/40; Kevlar woven into leather jacket, armor value TOU+5/14; tourist paraphenalia.

Sandra Goldstein (707): Sandra is a member of Israel's Mossad. She is here to shadow Morgan.

Sandra Goldstein
DEXTERITY 11
Dodge 14, fire combat 14, maneuver 13, running 12, stealth 15, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 10
Evidence analysis 14, find 15, first aid 12, land vehicles 13, language 13, scholar (intelligence/ counter-intelligence methods) 15, tracking 12, trick 13
MIND 10
Test 14, willpower 14
CHARISMA 11
Charm 14, persuasion 14, taunt 14
SPIRIT 11
Faith (Judaism) 14, intimidation 15, reality (Core Earth) 13
Possibilities: 2
Equipment: Uzi, damage value 17, ammo 11, range 3-15/40/100; 9mm Beretta, damage value 15, ammo 9, range 3-10/25/40; knife, damage value STR+3/12; bugs (6); bug receiver.
Description: Sandra is a beautiful woman who also happens to be an excellent spy. She is just as capable of being a good friend and loyal ally as she is of snapping someone's neck. Those who befriend her and help are given the former treatment. Those who stand in her way get the latter.

Anwar El Hassan (802): Anwar is an official of Mobius' government, here on a fact-finding tour. In the room next to his, 800, four veteran shocktrooper bodyguards stay.

Anwar El Hassan
DEXTERITY 8
Dodge 11, fire combat, lock picking 12, maneuver 9, melee weapons 9, prestidigitation 12, running 12
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 9
Egyptian religion 11, find 10, hieroglyphics 11, language 12, mathematics 11, scholar (bureaucracy) 11, trick 12
MIND 8
Hypnotism 12
CHARISMA 7
Persuasion 10, taunt 11
SPIRIT 8
Faith (Egyptian) 12, reality (Nile Empire) 9
Possibilities: 4
Inclination: Evil
Equipment: 9mm Luger, damage value 15, ammo 8, range 3-10/25/40; camera, lockpick tools
Description: Anwar wears a white suit and a fez. He perspires heavily.

Veteran Shocktroopers (4)
DEXTERITY 9
Beast riding 11, fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 9
Climbing 10
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 7
Find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9
MIND 7
Survival 9, test 9, willpower 12
CHARISMA 7
Taunt 10
SPIRIT 9
Faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12, reality (Nile Empire) 10
Possibilities: 1
Inclination: Evil
Equipment: KK81, damage value 19, ammo 24, range 3-40/400/1k; two grenades, damage value 19, explosive burst radius 0-3/8/15; bayonet, damage value STR+4/13; field kit

Jakarta

Map 1 features Jakarta and all pertinent locations. In addition, there are a number of locations not listed on the map which may be of some use to the Knights. The city can be portrayed as an excellent "rest stop" for Storm Knights who are adventuring in the Pacific area, especially Orrorsh.

Jakarta has several hospitals, where a Storm Knight can easily find a doctor to aid him. Consider a random doctor to have a *medicine* skill value of 14.

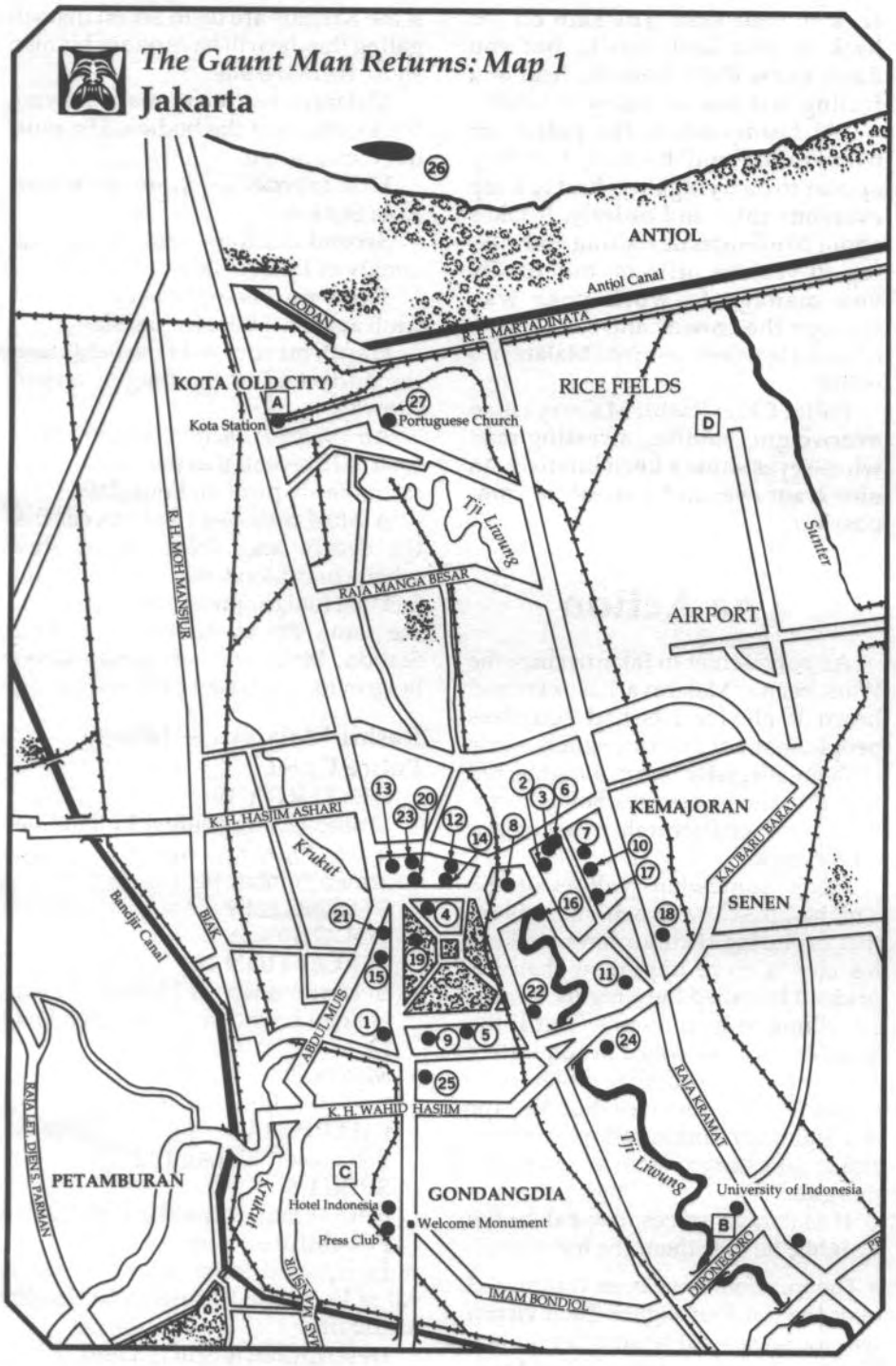
There is a Hachiman Arms franchise store. Always guarded by four heavily armed MarSec agents, this store has every weapon found in the *Torg Rulebook*, *Nippon Tech* sourcebook, and *Kanawa Personal Weapons Guide*. The store also carries ammunition and grenades.

Mingling with the populace and generating a *streetwise* total of at least 12 will get the Knights connected to the black market. Through the black market, characters can purchase standard items along with exotic things like spell components, armor, explosives, and other items found in the various sourcebooks (NOTE: No items above Tech 24 may be purchased). Prices are subject to a 20 percent markup.

There is a French cyberlegger named Doctor DeVeaux who can repair and install cybernetic systems. He also sells data chips, cyberdecks, and other electronic equipment. He sells no weapons or armor. As a good rule of thumb, DeVeaux has only six chips at any one time, and one cyberdeck. All of his items are sold at a 30 percent markup. His fee for installing cybernetics is an additional 10 percent of the systems' costs.

DeVeaux's operation is located in an abandoned warehouse adjacent to a Jakarta railyard. His base attitude towards the Knights is *neutral*.

Dr.DeVeaux
DEXTERITY 12
Dodge 15, energy weapons 14, fire combat 14, stealth 15
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 12
Cyberdeck operation 15, first aid 14, forgery 15, land vehicles 14
MIND 13
Cybertech 16, medicine 16, psychology 16, science (computers) 15, streetwise 17
CHARISMA 8
Persuasion 12
SPIRIT 11
Intimidation 13, reality (Cyberpapacy) 15
Possibilities: 4
Equipment: Cyberware: J-Jack, NeuraCal, Belle MicroView, Belle View 20-20, DATAS Snooper, PLP Hypertouch, MB Blocker, FN Jammer, damage value 23, ammo 7, range 3-40/100/150; ChipHolder 3. Cyber



Key

1. Bank of Indonesia
2. Cathedral
3. Central Post Office
4. Central Telephone Office
5. City Hall
6. City Theater
7. High Court
8. Istigial Mosque
9. Ministry of Agriculture
10. Ministry of Finance
11. Ministry of Health
12. Ministry of Internal Affairs
13. Ministry of Justice
14. Ministry of Religious Affairs
15. Museum of Indonesian Culture
16. Office of the First Minister
17. Parliament
18. Pasar Senen (Monday Market)
19. Police Headquarters
20. Presidential Palace
21. Radio Republik Indonesia
22. State Electricity Company
23. State Palace
24. Cyberpapal Embassy
25. Soto Investments
26. *Thunder Child*
27. Cemetery

A. First murder
B. Second murder
C. Third murder
D. Fourth murder

value: 21; first aid kit; MediCo Slap Patches; NeuraInc Bioscanner; Medico Laser Scalpel; bug hunter; IriMesh jacket, armor value TOU+3/13; power dagger, damage value STR+5/13; dark glasses

Description: DeVeaux is a bald-headed man is his early 40s. He fled France as a criminal, wanted for his illegal storefront cyberfitting operation.

Flags

If a *True Identity* card is played, Anwar El Hassan recognizes a Storm Knight as the perpetrator of some past heroic accomplishment. He will send the shocktroopers after the Knight in order to capture or kill him at some point during this act.

A *Mistaken Identity* card will make Sandra Goldstein believe that the hero is here to contact the Spartans. She will shadow the Knight in order to learn more about him.

A *Suspicion* card played will make Michelle Martin suspect that one of the Knights is a wanted heretic, and she will send the Hospitallers after him, as well as notifying the Cyber-papal embassy in the city.

If the characters are trying to figure out the dream, an *Idea* card will reveal the following facts: the hourglass is a recurring theme, and symbolizes time running out.

Variables

If the Storm Knights appear unwilling to look into the murders, Police Chief Malaraya will call them and ask for their help. He will ask that they come to the station at once.

If the Storm Knights visit the *Thunder Child*, they will get a tour, and a long-winded speech about the importance of Victorian values from Captain Salisbury. Despite his surname, he is not related to Lord Bryon Salisbury, nor is he allied with the Gaunt Man.

Perseverance Awards

Award the Knights one Perseverance point for discussing the dreams.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights go to the police station, cut to Scene Two, "Verified by Autopsy." If they wish to wander the streets of Jakarta for a time, cut to Scenes Three and/or Four. If the Storm Knights wish to investigate the Storm Knight disappearances, cut to "Variables" on page 17. If they wish to investigate Soto Industries, cut to Scene Four, "Unsound Investments."

SCENE TWO: Verified by Autopsy

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights go to police headquarters to investigate the deaths, and find some gruesome evidence.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The walk to police headquarters is brief but hot. The streets are crowded with people, trying to keep life going as normally as possible. Many faces betray a feeling of unspoken dread. The humidity makes your clothes stick to your skin. The skin on the back of your neck crawls, but you don't know if it's from the heat or a feeling that you are being watched.

At headquarters, the police are overworked and harried, but they appear to be trying their best to keep everyone calm and orderly. It takes about 20 minutes of waiting and talking to various officers, but finally you manage to work your way through the crowds and to the desk officer. He ushers you into Malaraya's office.

Police Chief Rashif Malaraya is an overweight, balding, sweating man whose eyes show a keen intellect, an observant eye, and a streak of compassion.

The Action

As police chief in Jakarta since the Wars began, Malaraya has seen and heard it all. He has had countless people, many of them foreigners, some of them allegedly Storm Knights, tell him all manner of stories. Some stories have been accurate, others have been wild rumor.

He is somewhat jealous of the Knights' freedom to act, but realizes that capturing the murderer stalking his city is more important than his pride. If he called the Knights, he will be willing to help them — but if the Knights came to police headquarters of their own accord, they will have to *persuade* him to get to see the bodies or any significant information. A *yes* result is necessary to gain access to the morgue.

If Malaraya agrees to speak to the Knights, he tells them the following:

• The murders have been committed over the last four nights. Each victim was found several hours after the act. None of the four victims had anything in common. Each murder was committed between the hours of one and three in the morning. There were no witnesses. If the Knights wish to see the bodies, they may.

• Malaraya does not believe there is any connection between these killings and the disappearance of six Storm Knights from a rice field northwest of the airport one month ago. However, if the Knights are dead set on investigating this, he will have one of his men show them the site.

Malaraya has a city map showing the locations of the bodies. The murder locations are:

First murder — in an alley near Kota Station.

Second murder — next to the University of Indonesia.

Third murder — between the Press Club and the Hotel Indonesia.

Fourth murder — in the fields near the north end of the longest airport runway.

An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 10 reveals that the murder sites form the shape of an hourglass.

A *Mind* total of 11 will reveal that the dream line, "Next blood shed where first blood fell," refers to the fact that tonight's murder will occur at the same site as the first one, Kota Station. Malaraya will refuse to believe evidence based on a dream.

Rashif Malaraya — Jakarta Police Chief

DEXTERITY 10
Dodge 12, fire combat 14, land vehicles 13, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 10
Evidence analysis 12, find 11, language 12, scholar (Indonesian law) 14
MIND 12
Test 15, willpower 16
CHARISMA 9
Persuasion 12, taunt 12
SPIRIT 8
Faith (Islam) 9, intimidation 12,
Possibilities: none
Equipment: 9mm Beretta, damage value 15, ammo 9, range 3-10/25/40; handcuffs

Description: Rashif is a normally a jovial fellow. These days, he's a bit grim, for he can't stand to see his fellow countrymen suffer. He's a dedicated, loyal, honest cop.

The Morgue

The police station morgue is chilly and reeks of death. The bodies lie on concrete slabs. They range in age from

early 20s to early 40s. Three are men, one a woman.

When the Knights view the bodies, subtract a Perseverance point and have them make a Perseverance check.

A *find* or *Perception* total of 9 on any one of the bodies will reveal what look to be scratches. An *evidence analysis* total of 10 will reveal that all of the wounds were made by talons. A *Superior* success on this check reveals that the wounds were most likely caused by a ravagon.

The coroner's reports for all four victims are identical. All suffered the same wounds, and in the same order:

Gall bladder removed
Abdomen slashed
Ulna fractured
Nose broken
Trachea lacerated
Mandible fractured
Aorta punctured
Neck broken

A *Perception* total of 11 reveals that the list of wounds spells out "Gaunt Man." If the Knights figure this out, subtract a Perseverance point and have them make another Perseverance check.

Personal Effects

Only one victim had anything worth mentioning. One of the men, Antonio Perez, a man in his early 40's, had a crucifix inscribed with circuitry, now twisted into scrap metal. Anyone from the Cyberpapacy will recognize it as such. An *evidence analysis* total of 10 will show that the crucifix was bent by a single clawed hand.

If the Knights ask Malaraya about this, he will mention that there has been a great deal of street preaching by a Cyberpapist of late. Although he dislikes cyberpriests, the man has broken no laws and so cannot be arrested. It's possible that Perez was one of their converts.

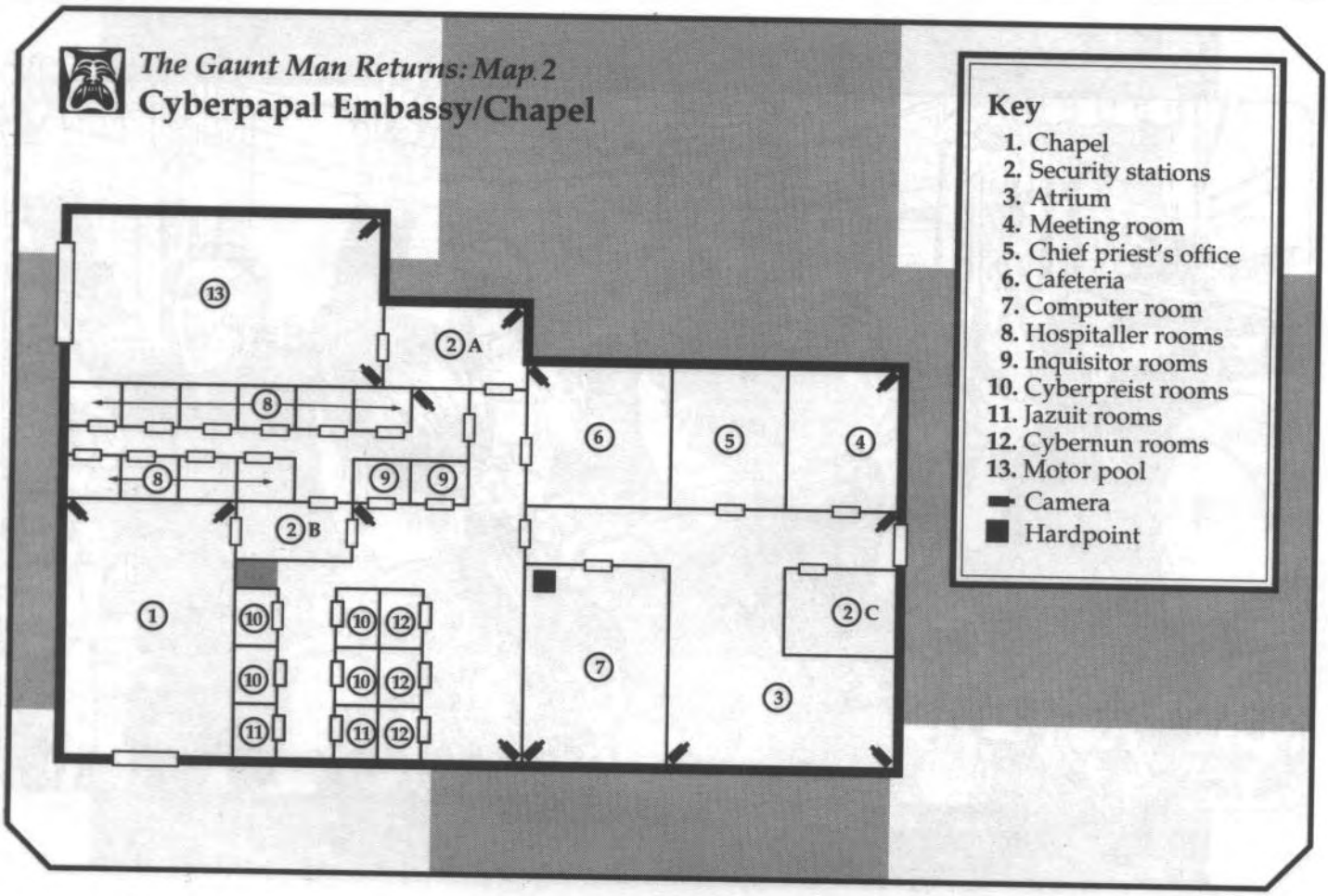
Flags

A *Connection* card means Malaraya knows one of the Knights and will be as cooperative as the Knights require, stopping short at breaking the law or giving the Knights policemen as extra muscle.

A *Personal Stake* card played means the hero knew one of the victims, and is now intent on finding the killer.

A *Suspicion* card played indicates that Malaraya considers a Knight to be somehow involved with the murders. This person will be treated coolly, asked probing questions, and eventually will be tailed by three policemen.

An *Idea* card will reveal that the dream line, "Next blood shed where first blood fell" refers to the fact that tonight's murder will occur in the same place as the first one, Kota Station.



Variables

If the Knights wish to investigate the rice fields, site of the Storm Knight disappearances, a policeman will guide them there. A *find* or *Perception* total of 12 will reveal a piece of card half-buried in the ground. It reads, "1:00 a.m., Dec. 8, Kota, Zyl w/ shard."

Perseverance Awards

Award the Knights two Perseverance points for seeing the bodies, two for figuring out the Gaunt Man acrostic, and one for determining that a ravagon committed the murders.

Cut To ...

If the Knights wish to investigate the connection between the victims and the cyberpriest, cut to Scene Three. If they wish to investigate Soto Investments, cut to Scene Four. If they wish to wait until evening and travel to Kota Railway Station to wait for the murderer, cut to Scene Five.

SCENE THREE: The Sermon on the Street

The Situation

Standard. The Knights come upon a crowd listening to a cyberpriest preaching about how faith in the Cyberpope is the only way to defend oneself against the surrounding horrors. A pair of Hospitallers is the way the priest defends himself from unruly city folk and trigger-happy Storm Knights.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

As you walk back out into the hot muggy city, you are once again lost in the throng of humanity. Eventually, you come upon a group of people listening with interest to a street preacher. The heavily-accented voice is speaks first in French, then in various local tongues, then again in English. You cannot see the speaker from your current vantage point, though his voice seems louder than that of a normal man. He is standing in front of the Cyberpapal Embassy.

Wait for the Knights to close in, if they wish to. If they do, continue reading:

Pushing your way through the crowd as politely as possible, you see the center of everyone's attention. A man dressed in clerical vestments but with an obvious cybernetic eye and a cybernetic arm, is preaching to the

crowd.

Flanking him, arms folded across their chests, clad in full armor, are a pair of guards, both women. They have huge swords strapped to their backs. A huge red cross emblazons each chest plate. The guards survey the crowd with care, ever vigilant for signs of trouble. The man talks on.

"Brothers and sisters, this is the time for increased vigilance! The powers of darkness surround you, aye, the very forces of Hell are at our gates! And what can protect you? The Sacellum? A white man's religion built on the broken backs of the exploited non-white races? Never! The old, crumbling, dusty religions of the past? Never!

"All of those religions are built around human beings, and since humans are imperfect, so are their religion! We who follow the true Shepherd, Jean Malraux I, the Cyberpope, follow one who has purged his body of weak, imperfect, sinful flesh, and has submitted to the pure metallic communion of God!

"A cyber-enhanced faith is a faith purged clean of human weakness, for with the cybernetic gift of God, our sinful natures are controlled, and we become pure! And the forces of Hell cannot prevail against purity!

"Join with the CyberChurch! Feel our warmth, our love, our protection, our unconditional acceptance! We are a large family, and we wish for you to join us!"

It does appear that some in the crowd are being swayed by the preacher's words.

The Action

The Knights need not to do anything here. But there is some information to be gained from the cyberpriest and the GodNet terminal inside, and it is quite likely that the Knights will want to intervene here just on general principles. Let them linger in this scene to their heart's content — they will eventually get back to the main adventure.

The rally will continue for another half hour, as the preacher gets warmed up and begins to go into a detailed account of the tenets of the cyberfaith.

A *persuasion* value should be made for the cyberpriest's speech. A negative or *Minimal* result means no one converts. Beyond that, one fourth of the crowd converts for every level of success achieved. Thus, a *Spectacular* success converts everyone. There are 100 people in the crowd, not counting the Storm Knights. The difficulty of the *persuasion* attempt is 12. The crowd's base attitude is *neutral*.

The Storm Knights may attempt to muscle their way to the front and give a counter-speech, using *persuasion*. If the storyteller insults either the cyberpriest or religions in general, the difficulty of their *persuasion* attempt on the crowd increases to 15.

A *Good* level of success will negate the cyberpriest's speech — the crowd will walk away from the cyberpriest and he and his guards will slink off angrily.

A *Superior* success makes the crowd hiss at the cyberpreacher, then quickly disperse. The Cyberpapists are now enraged at the Storm Knights, and before this act is over, they will attack them in force.

A *Spectacular* success will cause the crowd to laugh the cyberpriest and his cohorts out of this part of town, and give the cyberpriest such a crisis of faith that he will be unable to preach for a week.

The Knights only get one chance to make a speech.

If the Knights simply wish to talk to the cyberpriest about the crushed crucifix, they can wait until the sermon is over and approach the Hospitallers with it. They will convey the message to the priest, who will invite them into the chapel to discuss it. He will confirm that Perez was a new member of the church, and vow that the Cyberchurch will pay all the costs of his burial. He cannot provide any information regarding the murders.

The Church

Map 2 details the Cyberpapal embassy/chapel in Jakarta. All external doors have electronic locks — a *science (electronics)* total of 15 is needed to pick these locks. Failing to unlock a door on the first try sets off a silent alarm at the security station.

All computer terminals have retina scanners to prevent unauthorized usage.

Total complement of the building is four cyberpriests, two cybernuns, ten Hospitallers, two Jazuits, and two Inquisitors.

1. Chapel: Seats 100 people. The chapel contains an altar and a cybernetic crucifix. There are six cyber slave terminals for VX worship and confession. One cyberpriest is always on duty here. The Chapel is open between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

2. Security stations: Each is manned by two Hospitallers. 2A watches the motorpool, 2B watches the chapel and bedrooms, and 2C watches the rest of the complex. There is a computer terminal in each station, video screens for the cameras, plus alarm switches

3. Atrium: This is a nicely appointed, airy place with beautiful trees and flowers growing in planters. HoloVids of Biblical locations and stories show on the southern wall.

4. Meeting Room: Contains a long table, a dozen chairs, and a computer terminal.

5. Fra Daniel's Office: A huge steel and chrome desk dominates Fra Daniel's room. He has a Wrath I cyberdeck, computer terminal, an alarm button, and a GodLight stored in the desk (locked, *lock picking* difficulty 13).

6. Cafeteria

7. Computer Room: A huge cybernetic crucifix dominates the upper left corner of the room. This is a Cyberpapal hardpoint (TOU 10). It has a weight value of 5 and a *Spirit* value of 6, thus it projects a Cyberpapal pure zone of six meters, and a dominant zone an additional 34 meters.

The rest of the room contains three Wrath I cyberdecks, the computer mainframe, and four terminals.

Fetching information from the computer mainframe is a four step Dramatic Skill Resolution using the *science (computers)* skill. Step A is breaking the initial passcodes. Step B is getting to the right menu. Step C is breaking into the correct files. Step D is the retrieval of the information. Difficulty for each step is 16

Failure at any point activates a building-wide alarm and increases further computer difficulties to 20. If the alarm is left on for 30 seconds, the computer automatically purges all data.

Data includes the exact complement of the installation, a list of known heretics in the area, an order from Malraux himself for the staff to report any rumors of the Gaunt Man's return directly to him, plus a roster of converts. Antonio Perez is on this list. There is also some mention of plans for an expansion of the realm into New England.

Fra Daniel Vernuille
DEXTERITY 9
Dodge 11, fire combat 11, melee weapons 12
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 11
Cyberdeck ops 14, find 13, scholar (Avignon Doctrine) 11, trick 12
MIND 10
Science (computers) 12, test 12
CHARISMA 11
Charm 15, persuasion 14, taunt 14
SPIRIT 12
Faith (Cyberpapacy) 17, focus 14 (16 with crucifix), intimidation 14, reality (Cyberpapacy) 15
Possibilities: 15
Equipment: Cyberware: NeuraCal, EpiphaNeur, BelleView 20-20 (+2 to *Perception* skills based on sight), CSI LEDs, Cyber-Ham Receiver, TSE LeMotion (*find*+3 for detecting movement), Throat Mike, Homer, DATAS Boomer, MB Charger 2 (DEX+1 for 3 mins), ChipHolder 3 Cyber value: 16. HalloMesh, armor TOU+5/14; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30, range 3-12/30/50; power dagger, damage value STR+5/14; crucifix.

Hospitallers (10)
DEXTERITY 10
Beast riding 12, dodge 12, fire combat 13, energy weapons 13, maneuver 12, melee weapons 13, unarmed combat 13
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 9
Find 10, first aid 11, track 12
MIND 9
Test 11, willpower 12
CHARISMA 9
Persuasion 10, taunt 12
SPIRIT 12
Faith (Cyberpapacy) 17, focus 13 (14 with crucifix), intimidation 15,
Possibility Potential: some (18)
Equipment: Cyberware: NeuraCal, EpiphaNeur, CSI EyeKill MkIV, CSI HotShot (*find*+2 in poorly lit conditions), CyberHam Receiver, TSE LeMotion (*find*+3 for detecting movement), Throat Mike, Homer, MB Charger 2 (DEX+1 for 3 mins), MB Blocker (ignore K results, reduce each shock damage hit by three), Compte's Stabliza (+2 to defensive skills), Cyber value: 19; GWI Armor of God, armor value TOU+8/17; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30, range 3-12/30/50; MAS StormGun w/CSI Smart Gun, damage value 22, ammo 12, range 3-16/50/70, +6 to hit), power broadsword, damage value STR+8/18

Jacking In

The embassy construct has a *Good* security level. Its VX image is a glowing monastery.

The computer also has a satellite uplink to the GodNet. Anyone jacking in gets the VX sensation of rising up into the clouds, seeing a glowing city of gold in the sky. This is the VX image of Firmament, the Cyberpapal satellite.

Cell 1: Welcomes the decker to the Jakarta Embassy of the Cyberpapacy.

Cell 2: Resembles a great cathedral. This is where the faithful deckers can conduct VX worship.

Cell 3: This room appears to be the interior of a stone watch tower. Each wall has a cross, three of which are seals concealing doors.

The guardian (G1) is:

Knight of God
DEXTERITY 13
STRENGTH 14
TOUGHNESS 15
PERCEPTION 16
MIND 14
CHARISMA 13
SPIRIT 16
Net Values: net attack (melee) 13, net defense 13, net find 16, net stealth 16, net manipulation 16, net track 1
Response/Processor/Storage: 0/12/15
Programs: Onslaught 5(4), Armor 4(3), Scramble 3(2), Trace 2(2), Grab 2(2), Deck Wipe 1(2)

Cell 4: This room appears to be done up like the Roman catacombs. A wall of crossed bones is a seal for the door to the Core Cell.

The guardian (G2) is:

Demon
DEXTERITY 13
Dodge 14, melee 14, stealth 14
STRENGTH 15
TOUGHNESS 16
PERCEPTION 12
Tracking 13, trick 13
MIND 13
Test 14, willpower 14
CHARISMA 11
Persuasion 12, taunt 15
SPIRIT 13
Faith 15, focus 14, intimidation 14
Net Values: net attack (melee) 16, net defense 16, net find 14, net stealth 16, net manipulation 14, net track 15
Response/Processor/Storage: 2/5/7
Programs: Attack 2(2), Defense 2(2), Scan 1(1), Shroud 1(1), Evade 1(1)

Cell 5: The core.

Cell 6: This contains all the data for the embassy. It contains the same information as can be found by just trying to crack the computer codes in the computer room.

Once at Firmament, the decker is re-routed Earthward to Avignon.

Inquisitors (2)

DEXTERITY 8
Dodge 10, energy weapons 10, melee weapons 10, stealth 12, unarmed combat 10
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 11
Cyberdeck operation 12, evidence analysis 15, find 12, scholar (Avignon Doctrine) 14, trick 12
MIND 10
Test 12, willpower 14
CHARISMA 8
Charm 11, persuasion 11, taunt 11
SPIRIT 12
Faith (Cyberpapacy) 15, focus 14 (16 with crucifix), intimidation 16
Possibility Potential: some (21)
Equipment: Cyberware: NeuraCal, EpiphaNeur, BelleView 20-20 (+2 to *Perception* skills based on sight), CSI LEDs, CSI LtFilta (flash protection), FFO ColEnhanz (*find*+2 in well-lit conditions), DATAS Snooper (+2 bonus for normal frequency hearing), CyberHam Receiver, TSE LeMotion (*find*+3 for detecting movement), Throat Mike, Homer. Cyber value: 15; GWI HalloMesh, armor value TOU+5/14; GWI GodLight housed in staff, damage value 24, ammo 50, range 3-10/25/40; electroprod in staff, damage value 16

Any Knights captured by the Cyberpapists will be interrogated by the Inquisitors.

Jazuits

DEXTERITY 10
Dodge 12, fire combat 12, unarmed combat 13
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 10
Evidence analysis 12, find 12, language 12, scholar (religion) 12, trick 12
MIND 10
Test 12, willpower 13
CHARISMA 9
Charm 10, persuasion 16, taunt 11
SPIRIT 13
Faith (Cyberpapacy) 17, focus 14, reality (Cyberpapacy) 14
Possibilities: 5
Equipment: Cyberware: NeuraCal, EpiphaNeur, slashers, damage value STR+6/15, Kreelar tendons, Cyber value: 10; HalloMesh, armor value TOU+5/13; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30, range 3-12/30/50

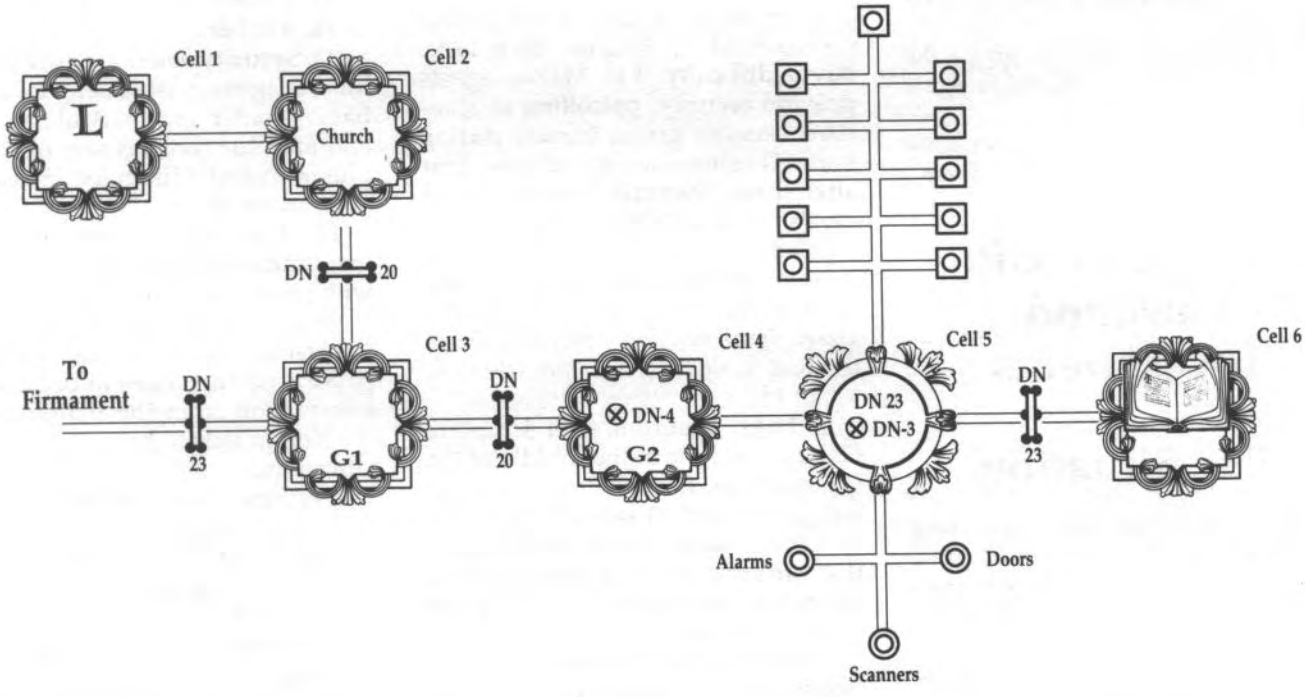
Flags

An *Alertness* card played while in the crowd will enable the Knight to overhear several people talking about the wisdom of getting extra holy protection, considering the odd shadows seen in the Portuguese Cemetery several nights ago.

If the Knights ask the people for details, they are told that there have been odd winged shadows flitting about the graveyard at night, sometimes accompanied by tiny pinpoints of red or white light.

If the cyberpriest survives this scene and is upstaged by a Storm Knight

The Gaunt Man Returns: Map 3
Cyberpapal Embassy Construct



speech, a *Nemesis* card will make the priest an enemy of the card player, even if the card player did not give the speech.

A *True Identity* card played by a Cyberpapal Knight means that the cyberpriest recognizes her as someone wanted for questioning. Before the act is over, the priest will make an attempt to arrest the character is question, using a number of Hospitallers equal to the party's strength.

Variables

The Storm Knights may attack the cyberpriest and his guards as he preaches. Not only will the trio defend themselves, but some of the faithful will summon the police. The Cyberpapists have a permit to speak. Captured Knights will be thrown in jail overnight, or pay a $1,000 fine per offender.

Cut To ...

When the Knights have finished dealing with (or ignoring) the Cyberpapists, they may wish to investigate the cemetery. See the description in Scene Six, but nothing will go on there until after Scene Five has taken place.

If the Knights wish to go to the railway station and wait, cut to Scene Five.

If the Knights wish to investigate Soto Investments, cut to Scene Four.

SCENE FOUR: Unsound Investments

The Situation

Standard. A new office building owned by Soto Investments is open for business. The Storm Knights pass it either on their way to or from police headquarters.

Storm Knights investigating the building discover that it is a red herring, though there is a Rauru Block member here that can become an ally in the future. See Map #4 for the layout of the building.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Walking down the hot streets of Jakarta, making your way through the crowds, you see a beautiful new 20-story office building made of glass and steel. Workmen are putting the finishing touches on the logo sign, "Soto Investments." An attractive fountain done in a distinctive Japanese motif, with chrysanthemums and lotus blossoms, sets up a spray of cool, refreshing water.

A *business* total of 6, or a *scholar (Nippon realm lore)* of 8 informs the Knights that Soto Investments is a Kanawa subsidiary.

The Action

The Knights are free to ignore this place — again, it is a red herring — or they may attempt entry. Concealed external security cameras (*find* total of 15 to spot them) will show building security if anyone is staking out the building.

The Building

External locks have a *lock picking* difficulty of 16. Internal door locks have a difficulty of 15. MarSec agents provide security, patrolling in standard security guard blazers during normal business hours, and in full gear after hours. Normal business hours are 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

All doors have alarms, which sound if the *lock picking* attempt fails, or if the door is forced open. Detecting the alarm requires a *find* total of 15. Deactivating it requires a *science (electronics)* of 15.

A huge, beautiful steel sculpture (TOU 25) stands in the middle of the ground floor. It is a hardpoint with a weight value of 14 and a Spirit Value of 5, which bathes the first and second floors in a Nippon Tech pure zone and the rest of the building in a Nippon dominant zone.

There is a parking garage located under the building, open from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. There are always four MarSec agents patrolling the garage or manning the ticket booth at the entrance/exit.

First Floor

1. Atrium: A beautiful, airy place, with lots of sunlight pouring in. There are curving stairways heading up.

Near the front doors is a security desk, always manned by two MarSec agents.

2. Restrooms

3. Maintenance

4. Elevator Maintenance: Has circuit breakers and controls for elevators and telephones. Characters with *science (electronics)* can override or shut down any elevator or phone system by generating a total of 16. It takes 10 minutes per attempt.

5. Supplies

6. Gallery: Walk-through areas with Japanese art.

7. Phones, etc.: Contains banks of pay phones, FAX machines, and courtesy phones.

8. Elevators and Stairs: Note that these elevators and stairs only go to the 19th floor. They also give access to the underground garage.

Second Floor

9. Walkway.

10. Cafeteria.

11. Kitchen.

12. Security: There are always eight MarSec agents posted here. This room has computer terminals, alarm, door, and elevator controls and overrides, plus a locked (difficulty 15) cabinet with ammunition.

13. Computer Room: Contains mainframe, modems (for connection with Japan), terminals, printers.

Characters who generate a *science (computers)* total of 22 can crack the passwords and codes in order to get information from the mainframe. If the Knight fails to break in, an alarm will sound.

Available data includes:

— 3327's directive that information on the Gaunt Man's return is a high priority. A huge cash bonus ($500,000 US dollars) is being offered;

— the full personnel roster of the building;

— a directive from 3327 that orders Soto investments to handle stock for Karkthusa, Inc., Singapore;

— if any of the player's Storm Knights are wanted by Kanawa, their dossiers are in here, too.

Third-Eighteenth Floors

These floors are filled with offices and conference rooms that are utterly meaningless to the Knights.

Nineteenth Floor

14. Secretary's Office.

15. Vice-President's Office: There are four vice-presidents.

16. Samurai Station: This room contains the eight corporate samurai hired by 5043. A secret two-way mirror allows the samurai to watch the corridor leading from the elevators.

17. Training Room: There is a private elevator that leads to the20th floor. The rest of the room contains training mats and sleeping cots.

18. Suki Kitakame's Office: This is the office of 5043's secretary. There is a desk, computer terminal, typewriter, and various bits of Japanese art. Inside her locked (*lock picking* difficulty 12) desk is a 13mm Chunyokai (damage value 18, ammo 9, range 3-10/40/50).

19. 5043's Office: This is a beautiful office equipped with all the latest technology. The office has a large desk, a wet bar, CD player, Zamftech Monolith personal computer (hooked into the Soto mainframe in room 13), cordless phone, and alarm button. A private elevator leads to 5043's bedroom on the 20th floor.

Twentieth Floor

20. Outer Security: This room contains a team of four corporate ninjas, who act as 5043's bodyguards. A secret panel (*find* total of 20 to notice it) leads to 5043's penthouse. The room contains an alarm panel which can alert the entire building to a threat.

21. Inner Security: This room features four more ninja and several futons.

22. Bath lockers.

23. Baths: Vice presidents and other important people are invited up here by 5043 for relaxation. The water is hot.

24. Geisha: There are eight women (seven standard geishas, plus Tamara) living here, company geishas on call. There are rice paper privacy screens set up for their sleeping mats. The room is decorated with tea sets, Haiku banners, origami, bonsai trees, chrysanthemums, and painted rice paper panels.

Geishas (7)

DEXTERITY 10
Dodge 14, melee weapons14
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 10
Language 14, scholar (Geisha) 15, scholar (Nippon realm lore) 14, scholar (origami) 13
MIND 11
Artist (singing) 13, artist (flute playing) 13, artist (dancing) 13, willpower 13
CHARISMA 12
Charm 15, persuasion 14, taunt 13
SPIRIT 11
Possibilities: None
Equipment: dagger, damage value STR+3/11; kimono; flute
Description: Geishas are hostesses, singers, dancers, artists, here to bring tranquility and relaxation. Their primary role is NOT that of a concubine.

These women pose no threat to the Knights. Tamara Ondo, however, may attempt to contact the Storm Knights and fool them into thinking that she is an ally.

25. 5043's Penthouse Dwelling: This is another luxurious room. It features a big desk, a high-res wide-screen TV with built in VCR and satellite dish, a massive collection of movies on video, a CD player, exercise equipment, a huge bed, and the private elevator.

The desk (locked, difficulty 22), contains documents which indicate that Karkthusa is run by an Orrorshan rival of the Gaunt Man who seeks to do business with Nippon. Other reports indicate that Karkthusa, Inc is considering a rather sudden move to Hong Kong.

5043 has a secret stairway (*find* total of 15 to spot it) that leads through a one-way door out to the main stairway near the elevators. The stairway also goes up to the roof.

The door leading to the roof is locked from the inside (difficulty 20 to pick, and alarmed *(science (electronics)* difficulty of 16 to disable). Out on the roof is an Oda Butterfly helicopter, 5043's personal transportation.

Oda Butterfly: Tech 23; speed 150/90/13; pass 8; TOU 17

Personnel

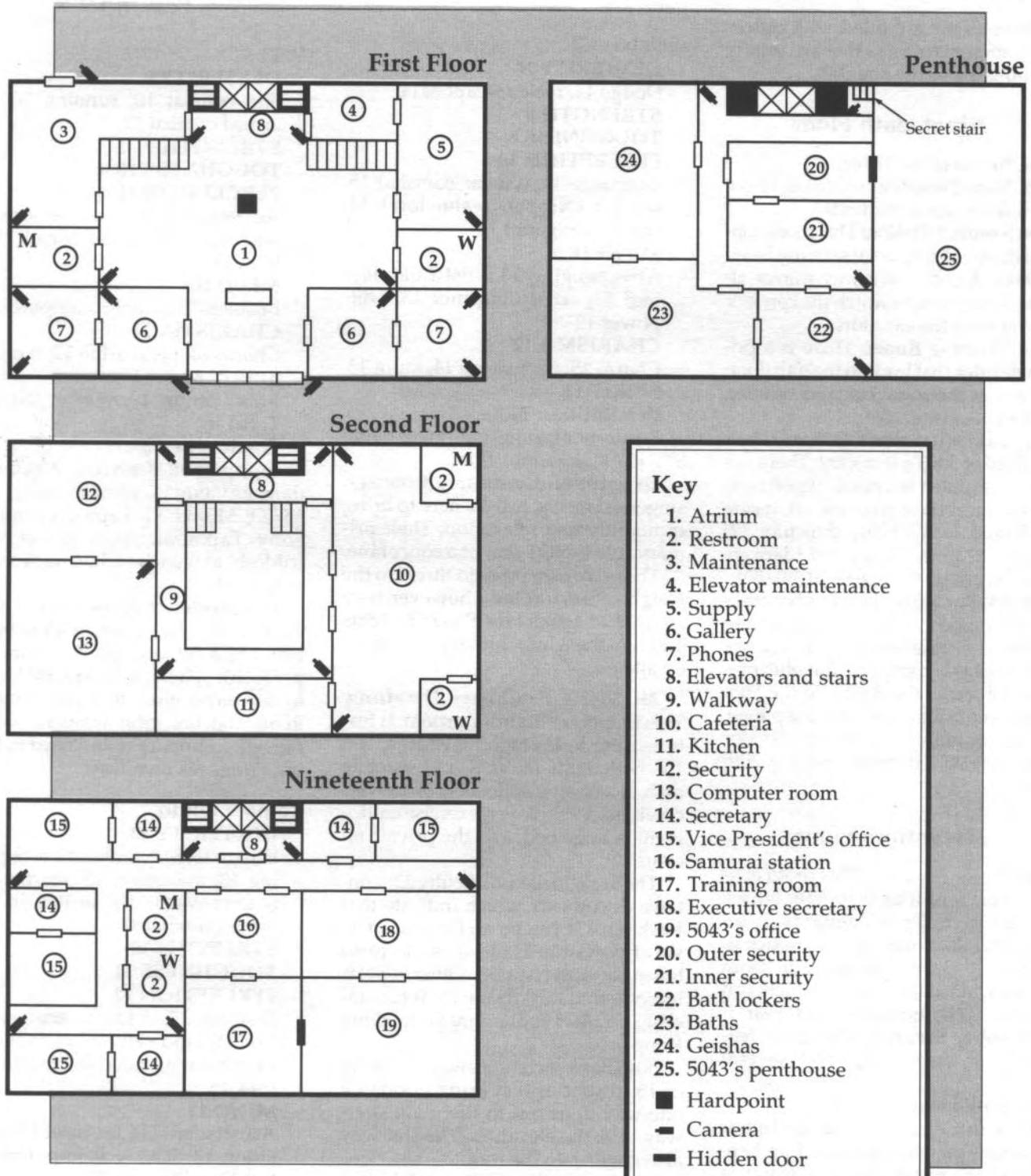
5043

DEXTERITY 8
Fire combat 10, running 10, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 11
Air vehicles 13, land vehicles 12, language 14, scholar (finance) 14, trick 13
MIND 10
Business 16, science (computers) 12
CHARISMA 11
Charm 14, persuasion 14, taunt 15
SPIRIT 8
Intimidation 10, reality (Nippon Tech) 16
Possibilities: 5
Equipment: Komatsu Wakizashi, damage value 14, ammo 6, range 3-5/15/25; Misaki XE Laptop computer; Sony Talkman; sport jacket with IriMesh woven into it, armor value TOU+3/13
Description: Aggressive and motivated solely by greed, 5043 is in his late 20s, a bit young for a company president. The handsome 5043 loves to surround himself with expensive items and beautiful women. 5043 is fiercely competitive, and used to having things his own way.

Tamara Ondo

DEXTERITY 12
Dodge 15, fire combat 15, lock picking 13, maneuver 15, martial arts (Atemi-Waza) 15, stealth 16, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11
PERCEPTION 12
Disguise 15, evidence analysis 14, find 15, land vehicles 14, language 14, scholar (Geisha) 16, tracking 12, trick 15
MIND 11
Artist (singer) 14, business 12, meditation 12, science (computers) 13, test 13, willpower 12
CHARISMA 12
Charm 15, persuasion 15, taunt 14
SPIRIT 10

The Gaunt Man Returns: Map 4
Soto Investments



Intimidation 13, reality (Nippon Tech) 13

Possibilities: 2 per Storm Knight

Skill Note: Tamara knows all maneuvers in the Atemi-Waza discipline.

Equipment: Chiang 67 pistol, damage value 16, ammo 8, range 3-10/25/50; electronic lockpick; Allied camcorder; 6 smoke screen pellets; smoke screen lenses

Description: The beautiful Tamara works as a corporate spy/troubleshooter for the executives of Korruki Investments, who feel that they should be the ones in Jakarta, not Soto Investments.

Tamara is posing as a corporate geisha in order to find evidence of 5043's incompetence. She is fiercely loyal to Kanawa. She will approach Storm Knights with hints that "my loyalty is not with Soto," hoping that any Knights would falsely assume she is with the Rauru Block.

In her role as a geisha, she acts very humble and subservient. She is an excellent singer.

Suki Kitakame

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 11, fire combat 12, lock picking 12, maneuver 11, melee weapons 12, stealth 11, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 10

Evidence analysis 13, find 14, first aid 12, land vehicles 12, language 14, scholar (Nippon Tech realm lore) 14, trick 13

MIND 9

Artist (actress) 13, science (computers) 12, willpower 11

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 9, reality (Nippon Tech) 9

Possibilities: 5

Equipment: ZIIP77z, damage value 16, ammo 12, range 3-20/30/50; IriMesh woven into jacket, armor value TOU+3/11; electronic lockpick; Omi signal scrambler; 35mm microcamera; Allied camcorder; Allied micro-transmitter; Misaki XE Laptop computer

Description: Dressed in short skirt, heels, and wearing lots of flashy jewelry and makeup, Suki poses as a secretary. In fact, due to her stunning looks, 5043 has made her his corporate secretary.

This is exactly what Suki hoped for, since she is a Rauru Block agent sent to infiltrate the high levels of the company and determine what its goals are.

5043 has not yet made any overtures to Suki. He is biding his time, waiting for the business to settle into a good routine first.

In "real life," Suki is a warm, wonderful person who longs to see the true Japanese spirit restored.

Suki knows that a new electronics firm called Karkthusa has opened up in Singapore. She will mention this to any Storm Knight who wins her confidence.

MarSec Security (36)

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, fire combat 11, maneuver 10, melee weapons 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 8

Find 9, tracking 10, trick 9

MIND 8

Test 9

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 9

SPIRIT 7

Intimidation 9

Possibility Potential: some (55)

Equipment: (during business hours) Kanawa KM 11, damage value 18, ammo 12, range 3-10/25/40; IriMesh woven into jacket, armor value TOU+3/11; nunchaka, damage value STR+5/13; walkie-talkie; (during night hours or emergency) Kyoto Police RKD armor value TOU+7/15; Impala chain gun, damage value 23, ammo 600, range 3-40/150/400; , nunchaka, damage value STR+5/13; walkie-talkie

Description: Pairs of MarSec agents patrol the building, and a pair man the lobby area.

Corporate Samurai (8)

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 10, maneuver 10, martial arts (Seda Chen) 11, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 8

Evidence analysis 9, find 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 7

Test 8

CHARISMA 7

Persuasion 8

SPIRIT 7

Intimidation 9, reality (Nippon Tech) 9

Possibilities: 2

Note: Corporate samurai know the maneuvers *stone fist, weakness probe, lightning fist, serpent's coils, sacrifice kick*

Equipment: Kyoto RKD armor, value TOU+7/16; 13mm Chunyokai, damage value 18, ammo 9, range 3-10/40/50; katana, damage value STR+7/16; walkie-talkie

Description: These samurai are a backup for MarSec, and are personally responsible for guarding 5043.

Corporate Ninja (8)

DEXTERITY 13

Acrobatics 14, fire combat 14, maneuver 14, martial arts (ninjutsu) 18, melee weapons 14, missile weapons 15, stealth 18, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 9

Find 13, tracking 11, trick 11

MIND 9

Test of will 12

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 12

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 14, reality (Nippon Tech) 12

Possibilities: 10

Note: Ninja know all maneuvers in the ninjutsu discipline

Equipment: 13mm Chunyokai, damage value 18, ammo 9, range 3-10/40/50; Niyoki camouflage suit; Sorubu climbing gloves; shimsi sword damage value STR+5/14; 3 H-S stars, damage value STR+3/12

Description: These ninja are fanatics, and will sacrifice themselves to keep 5043 safe.

Flags

A *Connection* card played by a Core Earth or Nippon Tech Knight means that Suki is an ally, and will aid the Knights so long as it doesn't endanger her or her cover.

If a *Romance* card is played, a Knight may fall in love with Suki or Tamara.

5043 or Tamara can easily become a *Nemesis* if that card is played.

If a *Mistaken Identity* card is played, Suki believes the hero is a spy for Kanawa, and will actually act against that person.

Variables

If the Storm Knights choose to ignore this encounter, no problem. It is, after all, a red herring meant to instill a feeling of paranoia and uncertainty in the Knights.

The heroes may attempt a break-in at night. 5043 lives in his penthouse on the top floor. Suki works long hours and leaves around 9:00 pm. Tamara lives in the building.

Cut To ...

If the Knights have still not figured out that the next murder will take place at the Kota Train Station, they can receive an annonymous tip leading them there. If they have figured it out, or are simply going there to meet Zyl, cut to Scene Five.

SCENE FIVE: Coda at Kota

The Situation

Standard/Dramatic. At 1:00 a.m., the huge ravagon sent by the Gaunt Man and Parok is about to commit the fifth murder. The victim is an Akashan bioengineer, just arrived in Jakarta.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The late hour brings few visitors to the Kota railroad station. You hear the mournful whistle of a train as it pulls out of the station.

The last train from Jakarta has just pulled away. A man who looks like a South American Indian stands alone on the platform, wearing a business suit, in which he seems uncomfortable.

The Action

The stranger is Camoran Zyl, an Akashan Storm Knight who was supposed to rendezvous with a party here and deliver an eternity shard into their hands. Unfortunately, the Knights he was supposed to meet are the ones who were kidnapped from the rice field by ravagons some weeks ago. He is unaware of this — if the Knights approach, he will mistake them for the people he was supposed to meet.

Once he is sure that the party members are Knights — even if they are not the ones he was informed would be meeting him — he will tell them that he carries on his person a key to a train locker. Inside the locker is an eternity shard, a small statue made of gold. His instructions are to turn the shard over to a Knight party, and then make his way to Australia to meet with a representative of Pella Ardinay's government.

Zyl will lead the Knights down the train platform. Just before they pass an alleyway between two warehouses, have the Knights generate *find* or *Perception* totals. On a 14, they spot a winged shadow out of the corners of their eyes. Immediately thereafter, the ravagon launches himself out of the alley and attacks Zyl. He claws the Akashan's shoulder, narrowly missing his throat.

At this point, the scene becomes *Dramatic*. Have the Knights make a Perseverance check.

Chosen Ravagon
DEXTERITY 10
Flight 17, maneuver 20, stealth 18, unarmed combat 21
STRENGTH 16
TOUGHNESS 15 (21)
PERCEPTION 10
Find 16, first aid 13, language 12, tracking 16, trick 15
MIND 8
Test 15 (18), willpower 18
CHARISMA 8
Persuasion 12, taunt 15 (18)
SPIRIT 10
Faith (Irishantism) 16, intimidation 17, reality (Orrorsh) 20
Possibilities: 18
Natural Tools: Occult-treated armored skin, value TOU+6/armor value 21; talons, damage value STR+2/value 18; wings, speed value 13

Camoran Zyl
DEXTERITY 8
Biotech weapons 9, dodge 10, running 9, unarmed combat 9
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 12
Find 14, first aid 13 (+3), language 15, psionic manipulation 14
MIND 12
Medicine 14 (+3), mindsense 14 (+3), psionic resistance 13, science (biotech) 16, willpower 13
CHARISMA 10
Charm 14, persuasion 11 (+3)
SPIRIT 8
Reality (Akashan) 9
Possibilities: 4
Alignment: Zinatt
Psionic Powers: telepathy group: *beacon, empathy, send thoughts, thought scan, clairvoyance, sense past*
Equipment: Stun gun, damage value 20, ammo 25, range 3-10/25/50 (stun damage only); amninatral (+2 to *first aid*); biotech repair kit, transtech (biotech), vitamin/mineral packs (5).
Description: Zyl is a thoughtful young man and a competent bioengineer, though he tends to be rather absentminded at times.

When Ravagons Clash

Allow the battle to proceed as normal for a while. At some point, before the ravagon is defeated, a second ravagon — named Sakrel — will appear and attack his fellow hunter. The two ravagons will lock in a bitter struggle. (Note that Sakrel has the same stats as the ravagon listed above).

The Knights may choose to aid Sakrel and kill off the offending ravagon, or they may use the diversion to spirit Zyl away and try to retrieve the shard.

With or without the Knights' help, Sakrel will defeat the murderous ravagon. He will then approach the Knights, taking care to make no hostile moves.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The ravagon looks at you for a long time before speaking.

"You fought well ... for humans," he intones. "You will need every bit of that courage in the days ahead.

"I have shed the blood of a dark hunter on your behalf. I have marked myself as an enemy of the powers of Orrorsh. I ask only that you listen to me in return."

If the Knights agree, the ravagon explains that he is a Denyer, one of a small group of his species opposed to the Gaunt Man and his teachings. He has information about the Gaunt Man's imminent return, as well as the missing Storm Knights and the deaths in Jakarta. All of this he wishes to share with the

Knights — but not here. He is being stalked by something, and needs time to lose his pursuers. He offers to meet them at a cemetery a short distance east of the train station in half an hour.

The Knights may use any means they wish to test the ravagon's veracity. He genuinely is a Denyer, and genuinely believes all that he has told, and will tell, the Knights. If the Knights are wary of meeting with him, he will say simply that they have the opportunity to stop a great horror from returning to this world, but time is growing short. If they have not the courage to meet this challenge, then perhaps this cosm is rightly doomed.

The ravagon will then fly off due east. No matter how long the Knights wait and watch, they will not see anyone or anything following the ravagon.

The Eternity Shard

If he survived, Zyl will give the Knights the eternity shard. If he was killed, the Knights may get it for themselves. If they seem uninterested in it, or simply do not know it's there, Sakrel will give it to them.

The shard is a golden statue, with red and blue streaks, depicting the legendary "first Incan." It is a small sculpture, no more than 35 centimeters in height. The statue possesses the group power *life thread*.

Ayar-Manco Statue
Cosm: Core Earth
Possibilities: 200
Tapping Difficulty: 15
Purpose: To preserve the spark of life within mankind
Powers: Those possessing the Ayar-Manco statue receive a +3 to *first aid* or *medicine* totals
Group Power: *Life thread*
Restrictions: The possibilities within the statue may not be used for actions intended to bring physical harm to others

Flags

An *Alertness* card will reveal the murderous ravagon's presence, as it stalks and hovers, looking for a victim.

A *Connection* card means one of the Knights has encountered Sakrel before, and knows him to be a Denyer and an opponent of the Gaunt Man.

Variables

If the Knights waited too long to go to the train station, Zyl will be dead when they arrive and Sakrel and the other ravagon will be battling. Sakrel will still win and will take the Knights to the eternity shard.

If the Knights refuse to believe Sakrel, the ravagon will state that if he had wished them dead, he would have let his fellow hunter slay them. A true ravagon does not believe in deception and complicated stratagems — he faces his foe and defeats him fairly. The day he turned away from the false prophet, the Gaunt Man, he became a true ravagon once again.

Perseverance Awards

Award the Knights two Perseverance point if the death-dealing ravagon has been defeated.

Cut To ...

Once the Knights head for the cemetery, cut to Scene Six.

SCENE SIX: A Matter of Grave Importance

The Situation

Dramatic. Sakrel the ravagon has been using this cemetery as a refuge while hunting the murderous member of his species. Unfortunately, a pair of Tharkoldu techno-demons are hunting for him, and have trailed him back here.

The techno-demons were sent by Jezrael, High Lord of Orrorsh. She suspects that something peculiar is going on within Orrorsh, particularly since Thratchen has taken up residence in Los Angeles and has been making an effort to ingratiate himself with her. She had sent two dozen technodemons to scour Orrorsh for information on the possible return of the Gaunt Man.

However, of the 24 demons sent out, 22 wound up at Illmound Keep and were subsequently slaughtered. The two in Jakarta are the only ones left, unbeknownst to them.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The cemetery is deserted at this time of night. The fog settles over you like a living thing — and in Orrorsh, who can say it's not alive? All is quiet except for the dim background noise of Jakartan night life, the excesses of people who are oblivious to the horrors around them. These sounds do little to comfort you. The area enclosed by the wrought iron fence of the graveyard might as well be on another world.

Give the characters a couple of rounds to look around, then spring some of the following incidents on them:

1. **A shriek of an iron door opening echoes around you. The exact source is uncertain.** (Tharkoldu techno-demon looked into a crypt to find the ravagon.)

2. **The loud boom of an iron door slamming shut fills the air. Exact location unknown.** (As above, but door has been closed in disgust.)

3. **A dull thud, like something heavy has been overturned.** (A tombstone has been overturned. Do this one several times, mixed in with the other incidents.)

4. Have the characters generate *find* or *Perception* totals. On a 10, read the following:

The mist parts enough so that you can dimly make out two winged figures ahead of you, and one to your right. They seem tensed in expectation, the one on the right has its arms raised above its head.

(An *evidence analysis* total of 15 will reveal these to be three angel statues. However, be mean by flipping a card on the Drama Deck and asking for intentions. See if they blow away statuary.)

5. **A flash of red light pierces the fog for a second, then winks out.** (Tharkoldu laser sighting. Can be done several times.)

6. **Whiiirrrrr....clik! Whirrrrr clik!** (Tharkoldu servo-motors, weapons systems being engaged. A Tharkoldu or Race Storm Knight will recognize this for what it is — all others must make a *Mind* total of 16 to place the sound.)

7. When all is quiet and the players are tense, scream "Roowwarrr!" and read the following:

A small, four-legged thing lunges out of the fog and lands on the shoulder of one of your number. (A frightened cat panicked and is now attacking a Storm Knight.)

The Nature of the Cemetery Fog

The fog is a product of Orrorshan occult. It limits visibility of the naked eye to two meters. From two to six meters, objects can be made out, but no details can be discerned.

The fog diffuses light, so that *light* spells and other light sources merely illuminate the fog around one into a cloud of glare.

Binoculars or other means of sight enhancement will reveal nothing but fog, nor will the Living Land miracle *see through mist* have any effect here. For Knights with infrared, pulp powers, or other means of enhanced sight, all uses suffer a +10 to their difficulty.

Efforts to use the Ayslish *dispel magic* rite to eliminate the fog suffer a +10 to their difficulty.

Have the Knights make a Perseverance check when they first encounter the fog.

The Action

Sakrel is waiting, as promised, for the Storm Knights within the cemetery. Give them some time to try and find him, and then he will find them.

If the Storm Knights have had the presence of mind to try *tracking*, things will be much easier. A *tracking* total of 12 reveals clawed foot prints leading deep into the cemetery. If a *Superior* or better success was earned, the tracker can tell that there are three distinct sets of footprints, with two sets appearing similar.

Finally, when it seems that the players have had enough, read the following:

The fog swirls around a huge winged figure, which remains completely still.

The fog parts to reveal a huge ravagon, eyes locked on you, red blood dripping from its claws. After a moment, it bows, lifts a clawed hand and addresses you in a deep, guttural voice that seems to massacre the very words it speaks:

"Stormers! I am grateful you have come, for I have news of great import to you and your kind. I bring word of the Gaunt Man. Come forth, and accept my word as a true follower of Ravok that I will not harm you."

A *scholar (Orrorsh realm lore)*, *scholar (Tz'Ravok lore)* or *Perception* total of 10 reminds the Knight that ravagons follow a strict code of honor.

If the Knights hesitate, the ravagon says:

"Come forth, I say! I do not need deceit to overcome the likes of you. But I am not here to shed your blood — no, I am here to save your miserable lives."

Pause for a moment, allowing the party to react. Then continue:

"The tale I have to tell is grave indeed. I am, as I have said, a Denyer, one who believes the Gaunt Man has deceived the ravagons into following his lead. Now we have learned that he will soon emerge from the maelstrom and further corrupt our people. The murders in this city committed by my late brethen were part of a ritual glorifying his return.

"My elders have sent me to ask you, who seem so successful in handling such matters, to go to Illmound Keep, on the island you call Borneo, and stop the Gaunt Man's return!

"It may also interest you to know that the disappearances of stormers from this place a month ago was the act of ravagons loyal to the Gaunt Man. They have imprisoned the stormers in the dark under-dungeons of Illmound as a gift for the Gaunt Man when he comes out of the storm!"

Allow the Knights to react. If they seem uncertain of their ability to stop the Gaunt Man, have Sakrel point out that he knows the story of how the High Lord was trapped in the maelstrom. As the Knights have an eternity shard (the statue), they have merely to use it on him as he emerges to thrust him back into the storm, at least for a short time.

If the Knights want Sakrel to come with them, he will agree. (See the box below, "Gamemaster Characters and the Gaunt Man.") If the Knights simply want the ravagons to handle the situation, Sakrel will explain that ravagons are skilled in combat, but not stealth and deceit. And both of those things will be needed to pierce the stronghold of the Gaunt Man.

Once something of a consensus has been reached, have the Knights generate *Perception* or *find* totals. On a 10, they hear two figures approaching.

Read the following:

"You are going nowhere, lizard!," a harsh metallic voice crackles. "Our lady Jezrael would have words with you about the Gaunt Man and his return!"

Through the mists, you see two huge, winged hulks advancing on your group. Small chains and other adornments dangle and glisten on their dark skin, as small points of yellow, red, and white light, no doubt from cybernetic enhancements, shine coldly.

One of the two turns to your group. "Stay where you are, meat! Once we neutralized our friend here, we have questions for you!"

With a mechanical hiss, the two techno-demons advance on the ravagon, who girds himself for battle.

The Knights have a few options here. They can fight alongside the ravagon against the Tharkokdu; they can stand around and wait their turn; or they can run, in which case one of the techno-demons will pursue them.

Left to themselves, the techno-demons will beat the ravagon unconscious in three rounds. The Tharkoldu will then attempt to interrogate the Storm Knights to find out what they know, then kill half their number. The other half will be rendered unconscious and taken, along with the ravagon, back to Los Angeles.

If the Knights defeat the techno-demons and successfully interrogate one, it will reveal that Jezrael sent a dozen pairs of techno-demons to Orrorsh to find out about the Gaunt Man's return. It does not know the fate of any of the other teams.

Techno-Demons (2)

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 14, energy weapons 14, fire combat 12, flight 15, melee weapons 12, missile weapons 12, pain weapons 13, stealth 11, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 16

Lifting 18

TOUGHNESS 16 (21)

PERCEPTION 10

Alteration magic 13, divination magic 13, find 14, first aid 11, land vehicles 12, tracking 14, trick 12

MIND 11

Apportation magic 14, conjuration magic 14, test 15, willpower 15

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 11, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 16, intimidation 16, reality (Tharkold) 16

Possibilities: 15

Arcane Knowledges: *folk 3, entity 3, inanimate forces 2, living forces 2*

Spells: *pop, monkey form, prismatic alteration, telekinesis, silence, weakness*

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/18; non-cyber talons, damage value STR+3/19; wing strike, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/23; wings, speed value 10.

Equipment: Nanocord; hand mount with agonizer; Killseeker, +1 to ranged attacks, +2 to ranged weapons; interdermal plate, armor value TOU+5/21; cyberwings, +3 to push with *flight* and *lifting* value when flying; life cyber. cyber value: 17; Res-14 laser, damage value 25, ammo 50, range 3-50/100/200

Gamemaster Characters and the Gaunt Man

When your Knights find out what it is they are supposed to do in this adventure, they may well want to go hide under the bed until it's over. Or, at least, they might want to find some help.

This is perfectly all right. Feel free to bring old gamemaster characters you've generated, new ones, or some of the entries from the *Torg Character Collection* book. Maybe your characters will want to call on Mystery Men they've met, or contact the Guildmaster for aid. Keep it within reason (don't let them borrow a reality bomb from Dr. Mobius, for example), but let them get help if they want some.

Why are we being so magnanimous? Well, many horrible things happen in this adventure, particularly at Illmound Keep. If there are gamemaster characters along, some of these things can happen to them, effectively scaring the pants off the player characters. This saves some wear and tear on your Knights, lets you spring some of the nastier traps just for fun, and sees to it that the players sweat (as they should in this adventure).

Variables

If the Storm Knights flee the battle scene, one Tharkoldu will go after them. If the Knights elude him, the Tharkoldu will reappear later in the adventure (at the most inopportune time) and attack the Knights.

Flags

A *Nemesis* card means one of the Tharkoldu will become a blood enemy of one of the Knights and vow to slay him at some point in the future.

Perseverance Awards

Award the Knights three Perseverance points for surviving this scene.

Awards

Storm Knights that survived the Act gain four Possibilities. If they saved Camoran Zyl, they earn an extra two Possibilities. If both techno-demons were slain, add an extra three Possibilities to the award.

Cut To ...

When the Knights are ready to head for Illmound Keep, cut to "Interlude" and then begin Act Two.

INTERLUDE: Getting There Isn't Half the Fun

In order to participate in Act Two, the Knights must travel from Jakarta on the island of Java to Illmound Keep in Borneo. This requires the heroes to travel across the Java Sea.

The Knights may choose to either fly or take a boat. Note that the Keep is in an Orrorshan pure zone, so that planes will cease to operate above it.

Gamemasters should feel free to throw an Orrorshan monster at the party while they are in transit. This beast is sent by the Gaunt Man in order to "soften up" the heroes.

Note that if the players go by boat, they will have to travel overland to reach Illmound. The trek through the jungle should be filled with tension and the hints of lurking danger.

As far as knowing where Illmound Keep is, once the characters have resolved to go there, they will know the way instinctively.

Act Two

Invitation to Illmound

The Major Beat

This entire act takes place in Illmound Keep and its environs. Each *Standard* scene deals with a different area of Illmound, culminating with a dramatic tea party hosted by none other than the Gaunt Man himself.

Please keep in mind when running this act that the Knights are in an Orrorshan pure zone. They cannot cause contradictions unless they first raise a reality bubble around themselves.

The Knights will be called upon to make many Perseverance checks during this act. Any *Martyr* cards will be taken the first time the Knights fail a check.

Note that Illmound Keep is situated on a high rocky promontory, with only one path giving access.

The Keep's walls have a *Toughness* of 25, ignoring all results except for *wounds*, and will regenerate at the rate of one wound level per round. When wounded, the walls scream and ooze reddish-black ichor, which *intimidates* the viewers with a value of 15. The first time the Knights see this, drop their Perseverance by one point and have them make a check.

The entire Keep radiates occult magic. Attempts at detection will get readings of equal intensity everywhere.

Occasionally, with especially trigger-happy visitors, other phenomena will manifest themselves to visitors. Gamemasters should select from the following list:

1. A fanged mouth appears on a wall, and takes a bite out of a Storm Knight. The mouth has an *unarmed combat* value of 12, a *Toughness* of 20, and its teeth do damage value 15. The mouth is not possibility-rated.

2. A door slams shut further down the hallway.

3. The floor under one Knight begins to melt, requiring her to generate a *maneuver* or *Dexterity* total of 10 to avoid it. Failure means the Knight falls into the ooze. A *Strength* total of 12 is required to pull oneself out again. A *Strength* total of 10 is needed to pull someone else out. The ooze does damage value 15 per round.

4. A doomed, wailing soul flies screaming past the Knights. The spectre has an *intimidation* value of 15.

Doors can vanish and appear, corridors and walls can be rearranged, all at the Gaunt Man's will. He always knows the locations of any living beings in his Keep. Locked doors currently have a difficulty of 11 to pick (after all, the Gaunt Man wants to make it easy for the Knights to get around).

The Gaunt Man has a group of Storm Knight zuvembies working at Illmound as a staff. They will not initiate combat, but will fight to the death if attacked.

Zuvembie
DEXTERITY 8
Dodge 9, melee weapons 9, stealth 10, unarmed combat 10
STRENGTH 20
Climbing 22, lifting 23
TOUGHNESS 20
PERCEPTION 1
Trick (25)
MIND 1
Test (25)
CHARISMA 3
SPIRIT 10
Faith (Orrorshan evil) 13, intimidation 11 (15)
Possibility Potential: none
Powers: *up condition (inside*

Illmound), attack form resistance (firearms).

Corruption Value: 15
Fear Rating: 1
Perseverance DN: 12
Weakness: fire (stymie)
True Death: beheading

If there are truly obnoxious Storm Knights who enjoy going from room to room, destroying the contents, do the following:

When a room is destroyed and the Knights are about to leave it, those who aided in its destruction feel odd and sick. They are being attacked by an occult ward in the room, with an effect value of 18 directed at their *Toughness*. They may actively resist using their *Toughness* attribute. If the spell is successful, they take two points of shock damage. This physical energy is then used to reconstruct the room. Repair takes place in fast motion before the amazed viewers' eyes, until it is in the exact same condition it was when the party first entered it.

SCENE ONE: Grounds for Insanity

The Situation

Standard. This scene covers the entry to Illmound Keep, featuring a glimpse of the maelstrom bridge, a topiary, and an evil garden.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The path you are travelling on is made of cobblestone. An occasional iron pole juts out of the earth on the side of the road, some of the poles having skulls or other body parts mounted atop them. The path is an upward incline, and you see that you are travelling in a rather rough, mountainous area.

The air is thick and heavy, almost suffocatingly so. There is no sunshine, no moonlight. The sky above you appears to be a perpetual storm, with red and blue lightning arcing in impossible paths across the sky. The very clouds seem to roil and shape themselves into grimacing faces.

At long last, the path ends, and you find yourselves at a four meter high stone wall with a rusted iron gate. Beyond the wall, rising like an ancient monolith of unfathomable wickedness, is an old crumbling edifice.

Behind the structure, a huge bridge arcs towards the stormy, restless heavens. The bridge appears to be made of screaming, writhing bodies of men, women, and children, mortared together with a sickly red paste.

To your left, great craggy mountains rise up. By the looks of them, they are impossible to climb, especially in this weather. To your right, the ground eventually stops at a cliffside, with a drop of hundreds of feet.

The wind whips and howls as a black rain soaks you. The demon wind carries the screams to your ears, making it seem that the sources are much closer to you.

In the windows of the Keep, figures occasionally flit by, silhouetted by either blood red or sickly green illumination.

A loud shriek fills the air as the rusted front gate swings away from you, bidding you "enter freely, and of your own will."

There is an occult ward set up to make Storm Knights from different cosms have different perceptions of what Illmound looks like. The occult value is 20, and is used as an "attack" on each Knight's *Perception*.

Use the following list and give each player whose Knight was successfully "attacked" a note with how they view the Keep.

Orrorshan/Core Earth: A huge stone Victorian manor house (this is also the way it really looks).

Ayslish: An ancient castle made of black stone.

Nile Empire: An Egyptian-style temple with great columns and statuary, all made of obsidian.

Nippon: A huge Japanese-style pagoda, all in white (Japanese color of mourning).

Cyberpapacy: A huge black cathedral with gargoyles flitting around the battlements.

Akashan: An Aztec temple covered with vines and tentacles.

Living Land/Land Below: A huge castle made of bleached bones and vines.

Tharkoldu: A two-story black house of modern design, with flashing lights in the windows, and winged shapes flitting around the roof.

As these perceptions are illusions, they can be disbelieved with a *Mind* total of 21.

Scaling the wall requires a *climbing* total of 8. Scaling the cliffs requires a *climbing* total of 12, with a failure causing the Knight to fall 30 meters on to jagged rocks. (Use the falling rules on page 52 of the *Torg Rulebook* to determine damage.) A *Dexterity* total of 9 allows the Knight to catch himself before he falls.

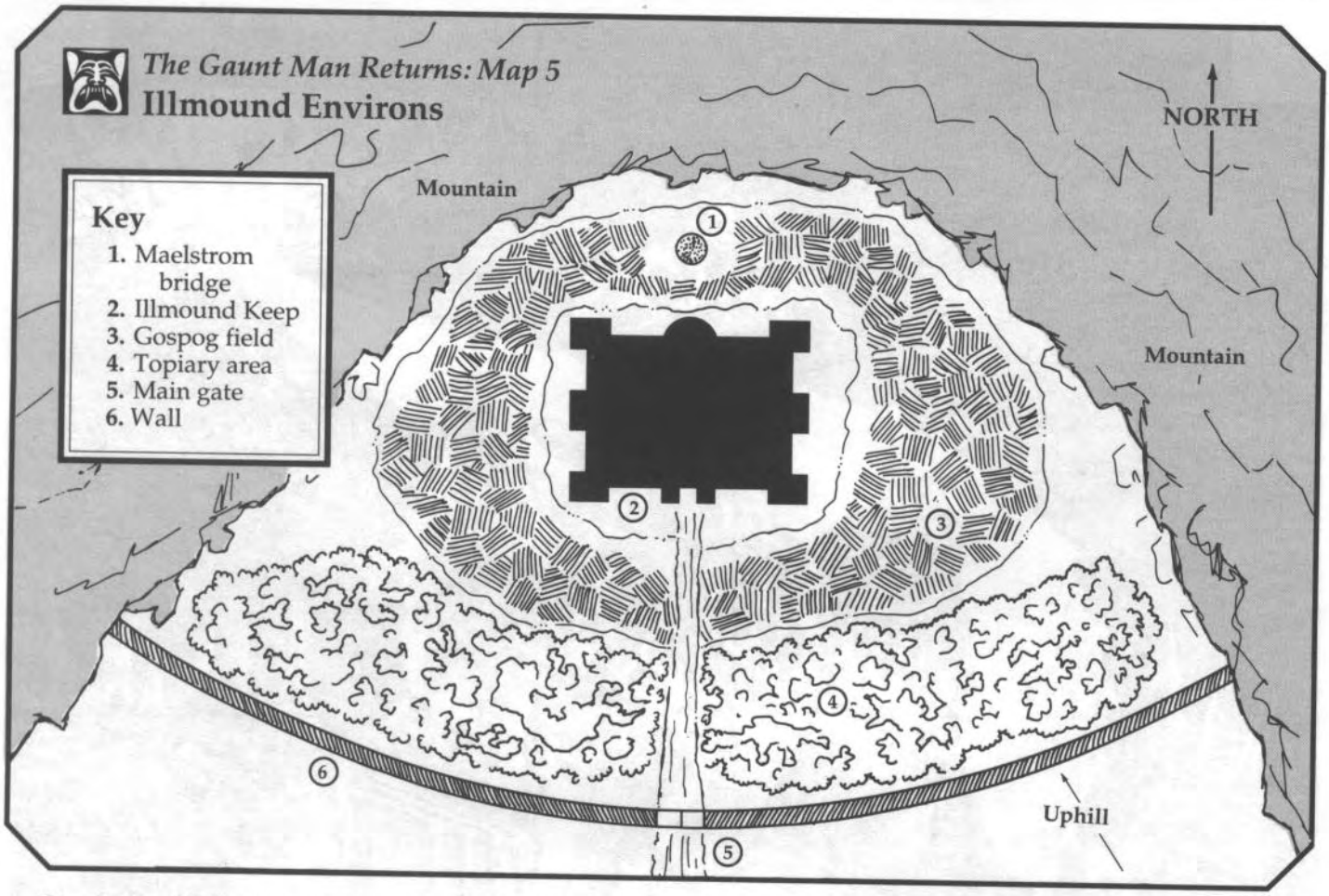
If the Knight fails to catch himself and does fall, an *acrobatics* total of 15 will halve the damage suffered.

The Topiary

Once the party has gone through the gate (see Map 5), the first area of interest is the topiary. This consists of a huge lawn with various large bushes sculpted to resemble ghouls, misshapen animals, gargoyles, and the Carredon.

The bushes will animate and shamble towards the party, attacking them once they are in range. Have the party make a Perseverance check.

Topiary Terrors (two per Knight)
DEXTERITY 8
Stealth 11, unarmed combat 10
STRENGTH 12
TOUGHNESS 12
PERCEPTION 8
Find 12, track 12, trick (15)
MIND 6
Test of will (20)
CHARISMA 5
Taunt (20)
SPIRIT 10
Intimidation 14
Possibility Potential: None
Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+4/16; blood-draining thorns, damage value 18
Powers: *regeneration, attack form resistance (fire and ice).*
Corruption Value: 18
Fear Rating: 1
Perseverance DN: 12
Weakness: Pure water (severe)
True Death: Bright light, sunlight



Description: Topiary terrors can grab an opponent in a bear hug, then use their thorns to drain the victim's blood. The terror must make a successful *unarmed combat* attack to grab its opponent, causing at least a *wound*. The thorns then come into play, doing damage value 18 per round. A *Strength* total of 12 is required to free oneself from a topiary terror.

Once the victim is emptied of blood, he is rooted to the spot, transformed into a bush version of his former self, dead.

Splashing one of these horrors with pure water causes damage equal to the *Spirit* or the *faith* of the attacker. In order to truly kill a topiary terror, it must be exposed to sunlight or bright light on the same round its wound level indicates death.

Gospog Garden

This huge garden of gospog encircles the Keep. Gospog are grown here, not as guards, but as terrors to be released on Indonesia. It is possible for the Knights to skulk by without being seen, if they can generate three successful *stealth* totals against the gospog's *find* values.

When describing the horde of gospog, gamemasters should imply that there seem to be hundreds of gospog. This is a trick of the shadows around Illmound, as well as just a general feeling, surrounded as the Knights are by the gospog fields.

Gospog of the First Planting (24)

See page 90 of the *Torg Rulebook*.

Gospog of the Second Planting (10)

See page 102 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

The Gardener

An edeinos zuvembie, missing one arm, staggers around the garden, going through the motions of a gardener (see zuvembie stats). It wields a sickle, damage value STR+4/24.

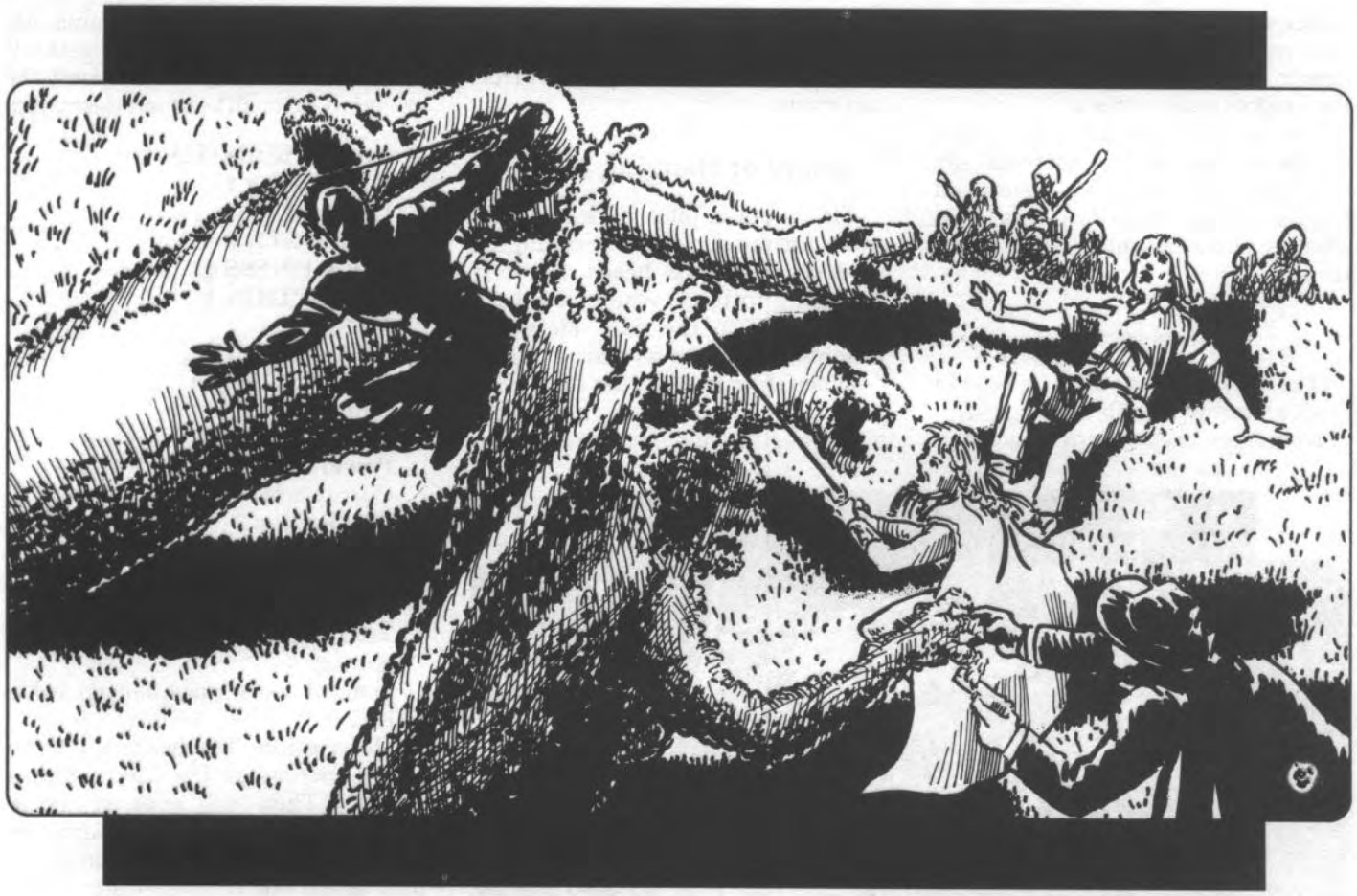
Scavenger Hunt

Anyone generating a *find* or *Perception* total of 12 will discover a severed techno-demon head. There are 14 such heads scattered in the underbrush of the courtyard, as well as a few limbs.

A Knight who generates a *cybertech* total of 18 can salvage a Tharkoldu cybernetic system from the head. There should be no more than ten salvageable cybernetic systems, no two alike. The most common will be cybernetic eyes and ears, chipholders, and SpellChips.

Perseverance Awards

Award the Knights three Perseverance points for making it through this scene.



Cut To ...

Once the Knights have cleared the garden and made it to Illmound's front door, cut to Scene Two, "Playing for Keeps."

SCENE TWO: Playing for Keeps

The Situation

Standard. The Knights enter Illmound Keep and get the chance to explore the ground floor.

Keep in mind that, at any time, the characters may decide to move from one floor to another without exploring thoroughly. Be prepared to shift to the appropriate scene should this happen.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Finally, you stand at the front door of Illmound Keep. It is made of mahogany with verdigris-covered fittings. The door swings open silently, as if welcoming you.

When the party enters, the door does not slam shut. It simply disappears, only to be replaced by a stone wall. If any of the Knights should turn around, they will see no evidence that a door ever existed.

Subtract one Perseverance point and have the Knights make a check.

Should the Knights attempt to blast their way out, see the notes on the Keep's walls under "The Major Beat," above.

The Action

The Storm Knights now find themselves alone on the ground floor of Illmound Keep. Consult Map 6 while they explore this area.

Tower Rooms

Each of these eight rooms is exactly alike. It consists of a square chamber with two windows and a door that can be deadbolted.

The rooms each contain four chairs, flowers, and an empty casket. The rooms are decorated in black bunting. (If a Storm Knight dies in Illmound, he will appear in one of these coffins, ready for burial.)

Dining Room

This room contains an oak table and 24 chairs. Expensive china and silver settings stand in large cabinets. Two huge silver candelabra, each with six candles, stand upon the table. A rhythmic thud comes from the northern door (in the kitchen).

Kitchen

The kitchen has the strong smell of dead bodies. There are various cooking utensils, a huge cast iron stove (coal-fired), and a sink with a water pump.

A ninja zuvembie, with half of his face destroyed, is hitting a dwarven

corpse with a cleaver. Some of the ninja's own entrails are also getting chopped. Lower Perseverance by one and have the Knights make a check.

The far end of the kitchen contains a walk-in meat locker, kept magically cold. Hanging from hooks are dressed torsos of humans, dwarves, and edeinos, plus a few unidentifiable creatures.

Chessroom

The floor of this room is laid out in black and white marble blocks, resembling a huge chess board. Lined up, ready to play, are chess pieces. The pieces range from 1.25 to two meters in height, and are moved by verbal command.

Room of Hanging Heads

This room is pitch dark and very chilly. Suspended from the ceiling are a series of severed heads, formerly belonging to those who crossed the Gaunt Man in the past. Have the Knights make a Perseverance check.

When the party reaches the turn in the room, the doors disappear and the heads begin a hideous keening (*intimidation* attack, damage value 20). Anyone approaching a head gets bitten by it. The heads will keen until the party is dead or all heads are destroyed.

Keening Heads (12)
DEXTERITY 1
Unarmed combat 8
STRENGTH 6
TOUGHNESS 4
PERCEPTION 4
MIND 2
CHARISMA 1
SPIRIT 7
Intimidation 14
Possibility Potential: None
Power Rating: 0
Corruption Value: 10
Fear Rating: 2
Perseverance DN: 12
Weakness: Religious hymns sung loudly
True Death: Any miracle that causes damage.
Natural Tools: fangs, damage value STR+3/9
Description: The heads are from recent victims of the Gaunt Man's sweeps. They will even speak to people, using rudimentary memories of the deceased. Nasty gamemasters may make one or two heads "late" friends of a Storm Knight.

Art Gallery

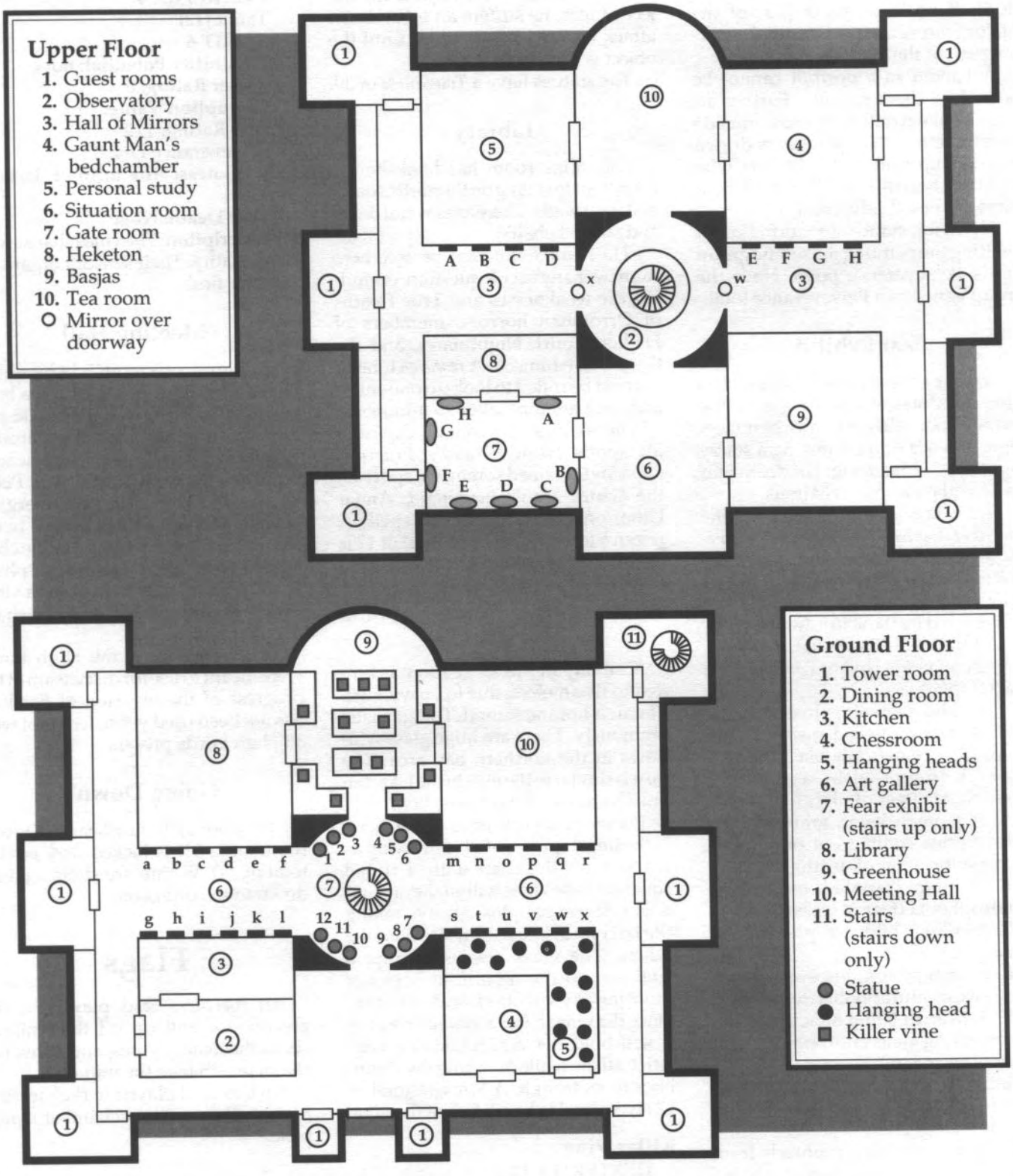
A total of 23 portraits hang on the walls of these corridors. Each portrait depicts a different horror of Orrorsh, attacking and dismembering helpless victims. The horrors depicted come from the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

a= amphid, b= bone golem, c=chthon, d=disembodied hand (4), e=faceless one, f=gospog first planting, g=gospog second planting, h=gospog third planting, i=gospog fourth planting, j=gospog fifth planting, k=ghoul, l=other, m=ravagon, n=ravagon veteran, o=chosen ravagon, p=shaden, q=shadow, r=skarth, s=succubus, t=incubus, u=vampire, v=werewolf, w=zombie, x= zuvembie

The paintings are immune to all forms of attack. Each painting has an occult ward cleverly worked into the detail of the frames. The first attack on any given painting elicits no reaction. A second attack results in an *intimidation* attack (value 20) against the would-

The Gaunt Man Returns: Map 6

Illmound Keep



be vandal(s). A *setback* result or better puts the vandal(s) in the painting, where he is attacked by the creature.

If the Knight wins, he is free, unless he strikes the picture (or another one) again, whereupon the process repeats itself. If he loses, he is part of the picture forever, experiencing the eternal pain of the death blow.

A Knight in a portrait cannot be helped by those outside. Further attacks on the painting by those outside have no effect. No one else is drawn into the portrait; only the one who initiated the damage. All portrait creatures are possibility-rated.

The first instance of a Storm Knight entering the painting makes the group lose a Perseverance point. Have the group generate a Perseverance total.

Fear Exhibit

This marble circular chamber has a big spiral stairway leading up to the second floor. The ceiling is 20 meters high, and is a dome showing a starry night sky, with an angel of death and an hourglass as constellations.

There are twelve statues in the chamber. Each one represents a different fear. Anyone who touches a statue is attacked by a *madness* spell (effect value 15) and suffers from the fear represented by the statue for the duration of the spell (one hour).

1. A woman covered in spiders: arachnophobia
2. A child drowning: hydrophobia
3. A man crouched inside a very small cage: claustrophobia
4. A man with a lantern: nyctophobia (fear of night)
5. A woman being grabbed by a pair of arms coming out of a grave: necrophobia (fear of death)
6. A man impaled on a tree: dendrophobia (fear of trees)
7. A falling child: acrophobia (fear of heights)
8. A man getting his eyes clawed out by a cat: ailurophobia (fear of cats)
9. A woman being attacked by an axe-wielding male: androphobia (fear of male strangers)
10. A man being attacked by a knife-wielding female: gynephobia (fear of female strangers)
11. A man bleeding profusely from multiple slash wounds: hematophobia (fear of blood)
12. A woman being devoured by a man-eating plant: botanophobia (fear of plants)

Once the victim has been given the fear, whenever he encounters the object of fear, he suffers an *intimidation* attack (value 15) per round until the object is removed.

The statues have a *Toughness* of 30.

Library

This huge room has bookshelves from floor to ceiling on the north, south, and west walls. There are several desks and stuffed chairs.

The *research* skill may be used here to answer any occult question, excluding the weaknesses and True Deaths of Orrorshan horrors, members of Hellion Court, Nightmares, and the Gaunt Man himself. A *research* total of 12 must be rolled to look up one entry, and each attempt takes 20 minutes.

The shelves also contain copies of all spells from *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire* (obtained some time ago from the Gaunt Man's lieutenant, Angar Uthorion), plus all Orrorshan spells. A *research* total of 6 or a *find* total of 12 is needed to find any one spell. Each attempt takes 10 minutes.

Greenhouse

Visibility in this large room is limited to five meters, due to heavy mist. The air is hot and humid. Things rustle ominously. There are huge glass windows in the northern bay area. The mist is similar to the mist in the Jakartan graveyard (Act One, Scene Six).

Plants of all varieties grow here, including a species of vine growing as marked on the map with a tinted square. These vines will snake out and attack Storm Knights, always taking the last one in line so as not to alert the others. The vines always attempt a *vital blow* to the mouth, in hopes of muffling any screams from the victim. Once the vine scores a *wound* or better, it will hold the victim fast and constrict, all the while dragging the victim back to its trough. A *Strength* total of 12 is required to break free of the vine.

Killer Vine

DEXTERITY 12
Stealth 20, unarmed combat 16
STRENGTH 12
TOUGHNESS 12
PERCEPTION 10
Find 14
MIND 5
CHARISMA 4
Taunt (12)
SPIRIT 6
Possibility Potential: none
Power Rating: 0
Corruption Value: 10
Fear Rating: 1/2
Perseverance DN: 8
Weakness: Any form of darkness (stymie)
True Death: None
Description: The vines share a form of telepathy. Their sensory organs are on their flesh.

Meeting Hall

This gorgeous room is lit by a huge chandelier. It is dominated by a large oak table, carved and polished to perfection. There are seven seats around it: a huge bone throne at the head; a replica of the papal throne of St.Peter; an ultramodern steel and fiberglass chair; a wooden throne carved in the shape of a dragon head; a marble chair carved with Egyptian hieroglyphs; a chair of bones intertwined with vines and thistles; a metal throne in the shape of a demonic head.

This is the room the High Lords were meant to use for discussion of the progress of the invasion of Earth. It has not been used yet, at least not with all High Lords present.

Going Down?

The door to the northeastern tower room (area 11) is locked (*lock picking* total of 11). Within are stairs leading down to the dungeon.

Flags

An *Alertness* card played in the greenhouse will tip off the Knights about the deadly vines, and allow the characters to take the initiative.

An *Idea* card played in the meeting room will reveal that chamber's purpose.

Variables

The Knights may attempt to climb the walls of the Keep in order to enter through a window. All the windows are barred, requring a *Strength* total of 20 to open.

The roof of Illmound is a gabled, shingled affair with no means of entry.

Perseverance Awards

The Knights are awarded one Perseverance point for making it into the Keep. Dealing with the kitchen, room of the hanging heads, art gallery, and the greenhouse results in two additional Perseverance points for each.

Cut To ...

If the party decides to go to the second floor, cut to Scene Four, "Mounting Fear." If they make their way down to the dungeons, cut to Scene Three, "Descent Into Madness."

SCENE THREE: Descent into Madness

The Situation

Standard. This is the catacombs level of Illmound Keep (see Map 7). There is nothing crucial to the plot, though there are prisoners to rescue.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

A set of marble stairs leads downward into the gloom. Moans and screams of anguish drift from below.

Guard Room

The floor is covered in what seems to be a knee-high layer of bones and body parts of all types. The walls are covered with goo, the remains of humans ripped apart and hurled at the walls with great force. Every once in a while, the layer of bones shifts, as if things were moving underneath it.

There are several disembodied hands crawling under the bones (bones provide *high concealment* for the hands). The pit is actually four meters deep. There is a stone walkway, covered with a meter-deep layer of bones and viscera. The walkway cannot be seen; it must be probed for.

Finding the walkway requires a *find* or *Perception* total of 16 every two meters. If the Knights are using an object such as a sword, staff, or rifle to prod and poke, the *find* total required is 12. Do not prompt the players! Let them declare that they are searching.

Disembodied Hands (15)
DEXTERITY 12
Dodge 15, stealth 16, unarmed combat 16
STRENGTH 14

Climbing 15
TOUGHNESS 13
PERCEPTION 9
Tracking 13
MIND 8
CHARISMA 6
SPIRIT 8
Faith (Orrorshan evil) 12
Additional Skills: one at +2 adds
Possibility Potential: some (40)
Power: *blur form*
Corruption Value: 12
Fear Rating: 1
Perseverance DN: 10
Weakness: None
True Death: Reattached to body where the hand came from.

Note that if the party finds the path, the hands will still try to attack, specifically grabbing the Knights by the heels and dragging them off the path. Drop the Knights' Perseverance by one and have them make a check.

Knights in the pit suffer a +2 to the difficulty of all physical attacks due to the shifting bones.

Climbing totals of 12 are required to climb out of the pit.

Corridor of Darkness

This corridor is shrouded in occult-generated darkness and the air bears an unnatural chill. Only Orrorshan horrors are capable of seeing through this blackness.

A *Perception* or *find* total of 9 indicates that the screams are coming from somewhere down the corridor.

Non-magical mundane forms of illumination (torches, flashlights) do not work. Spells or miracles that produce light have their difficulty increased by +12. Only cybernetics and other such devices that use infrared will be able to cut through the darkness (bear in mind that since this is an Orrorshan pure zone, a reality bubble will be needed for such devices to work).

Cells

Each cell has an iron door with a *lock picking* difficulty 15 lock. The cells have no furniture, only a heap of straw.

The following cells are occupied:

A: Unjay Arit, a female Akashan Monitor. All of her equipment has "died." She does not have the Comaghaz virus. She came to Orrorsh to attempt to verify rumors of the Gaunt Man's return.

Unjay Arit

DEXTERITY 10
Biotech weapons 14, dodge 11, energy weapons 14, maneuver 14, melee weapons 14, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 9
Find 13, language 10, psionic manipulation 10, track 13, trick 10
MIND 8
Psionic resistance 9, survival 9, test 12
CHARISMA 7
Persuasion 8, taunt 11
SPIRIT 9
Faith (Akashan) 10, intimidation 11, reality (Star Sphere) 11
Possibilities: 1
Psionics: Mind probe, psi scrambler.
Alignment: Coar
Equipment: none
Description: Unjay is very headstrong, and irritated that the High Council has not acted swiftly in dealing with the Gaunt Man.

B: Private Oscar Sampson, of Her Majesty's 7th Regiment.

Pvt. Oscar Sampson

DEXTERITY 9
Dodge 11, fire combat 11, maneuver 10, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat
10
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 9
MIND 8
Willpower 10
CHARISMA 7
SPIRIT 8
Faith (Sacellum) 9, reality (Orrorsh) 10
Possibilities: 2
Equipment: none
Description: Sampson is a loyal Victorian, trying to keep a stiff upper lip through all of this terror.

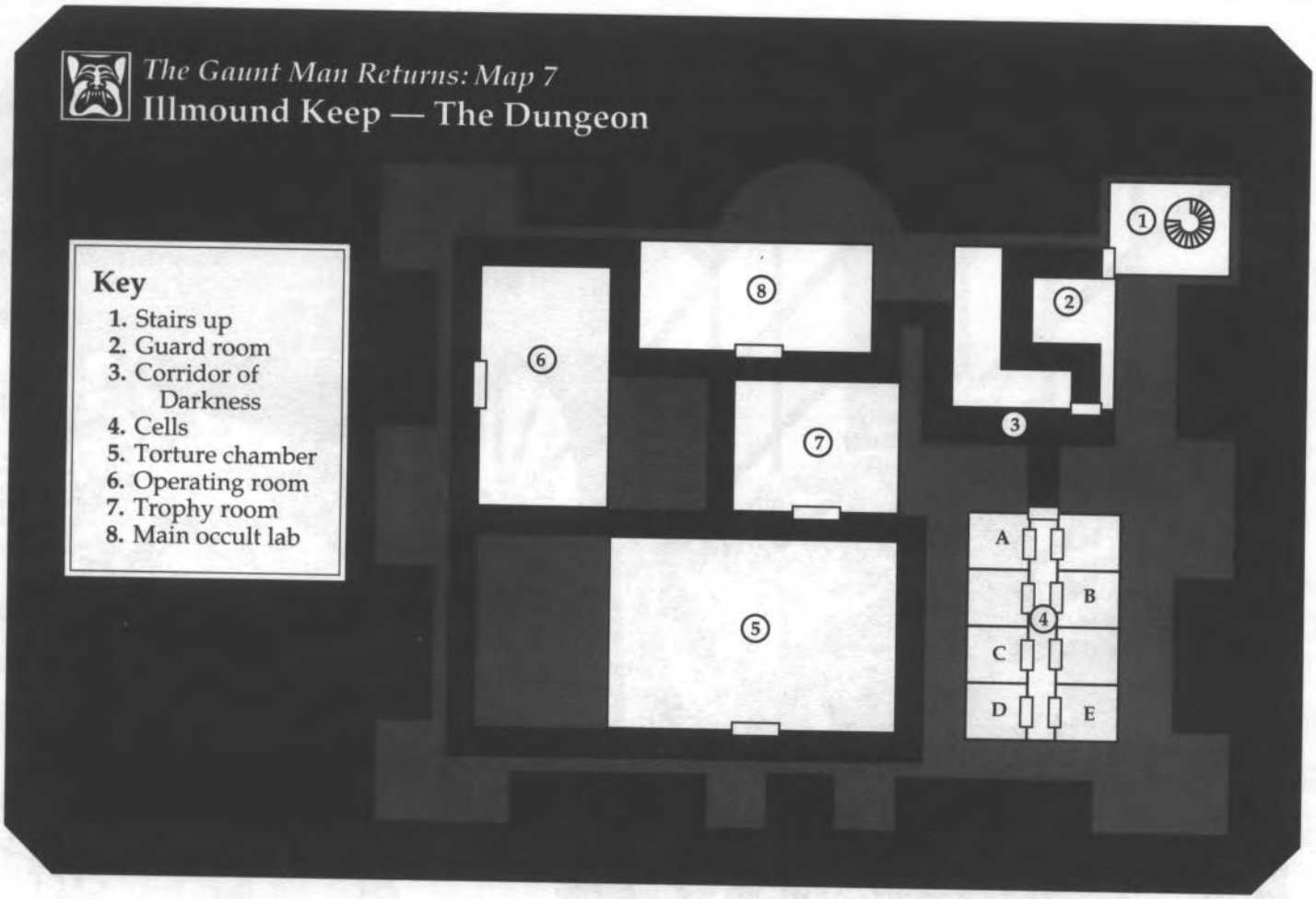
C: Tara, a pretty human female. Actually, a techno-demon using the *monkey form* spell. This demon was one of the ones sent by Jezrael to scout out Orrorsh. Occult runes on the door keep the demon in the cell.

Once the door is opened, the ritual is broken. Tara will maintain her monkey form until it becomes absolutely necessary to transform. Once free of Illmound's environs, she will reward her rescuers by ripping them open. Her cover story (as Tara) is that she is from Los Angeles, and was here to spy on Orrorsh for the Race, as well as to monitor a large flight of techno-demons that entered Orrorsh just before her.

Tarek Bor of the Hezerah-Thev Pride

DEXTERITY 10
Dodge 14, energy weapons 14, fire combat 12, flight 15, melee weapons 12, missile weapons 12, pain weapons 13, stealth 11, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 16
Lifting 18
TOUGHNESS 16 (21)
PERCEPTION 10
Alteration magic 13, divination magic 13, find 14, first aid 11, land vehicles 12, tracking 14, trick 12
MIND 11
Apportation magic 14, conjuration magic 14, test 15, willpower 15
CHARISMA 9
Persuasion 11, taunt 13
SPIRIT 11
Faith (Cult of the Dominant) 16, intimidation 16, reality (Tharkold) 16
Possibilities: 3
Arcane Knowledges: *folk 3, entity 3, inanimate forces 2, living forces*
Spells: *Monkey form, pop, prismatic alteration, telekinesis, silence, weakness*
Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/18; non-cyber talons, damage value STR+3/19; wing strike, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/23; wings, speed value 1
Equipment: Nanocord; hand mount with agonizer; Killseeker, +1 to ranged attacks, +2 to smart weapons; interdermal plate, armor value TOU+5/21; cyberwings, +3 to push with *flight* and *lifting* value when flying, life cyber, Cyber value: 17

D. Izumi Nakaharu, a Nippon executive. His mind has snapped since his arrival at Illmound and he is completely paranoid. He will make a break for it the minute the Knights release



him, and probably meet some hideous fate somewhere in the Keep.

Izumi Nakaharu
DEXTERITY 9
Dodge 11, fire combat 10, maneuver 10, unarmed combat 10
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 11
Disguise 12, evidence analysis 14, find 13, language (English) 15, trick 14
MIND 12
Business 16, test 13
CHARISMA 10
Persuasion 11, taunt 11
SPIRIT 10
Intimidation 12, reality (Nippon Tech) 14
Possibilities: 2
Equipment: none

E: Mike Brick, a Spartan from Texas. Mike was sent by the Delphi Council to get information on the Gaunt Man's impending return.

Mike Brick
DEXTERITY 10
Fire combat 13, melee weapons 12, missile weapons 11, stealth 11, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11
PERCEPTION 9
Air vehicles 11, find 12, land vehicles 12, language 12, scholar (American sports legends) 15, scholar (American action-adventure movies) 14, trick 12, water vehicles 11
MIND 9
Survival 12, test of will 12, willpower 12
CHARISMA 9
Persuasion 11, taunt 12
SPIRIT 8
Intimidation 14, reality (Core Earth) 9
Possibilities: 1
Equipment: Dark glasses

With the exception of "Tara," the prisoners are all broken in spirit. *Persuasion* attempts will have to be made on each to rouse them from their stupor.

The following can be found out from the prisoners (except Tara):

- They do not know how long they have been here.
- They do remember when they were taken, and the dates correspond to between a month and five weeks ago.
- Ravagons captured them.
- They have been subjected to brutal experiments by a tall, thin fellow in a black mask and a white lab coat.

As a reward for rescuing them, some of the prisoners may teach the Storm Knights their skills. Note that they will have to be somewhere safe to do this (i.e., away from Illmound Keep).

Torture Chamber

In here is every torture device known to man; whipping posts, iron maidens, racks, cages, iron masks, the

iron boot, a brazier filled with red hot branding irons, and a pendulum scythe.

The equipment looks recently used, with reddish brown and greenish yellow stains.

Operating Room

There are two operating tables, complete with straps, plus numerous old-fashioned surgical tools, bone saws, skull drills. Anatomical charts for humans, edeinos, ravagons, elves, and Others decorate the walls.

One table sports a dead, dissected techno-demon. On one wall are glass jars with heads, organs, bodily fluids, and blood specimens of humans, elves, dwarves, edeinos, and mummies.

Have the Knights make a Perseverance check.

Trophy Room

Two of Kurst's former compatriots from his cosm stand near the door, in wolf-man shape. They are stuffed.

Other trophies include:

The mummified body of the real Lord Bryon Salisbury, done up in full Victorian military regalia;

A crossed pair of unloaded Victorian dueling pistols;

A well-preserved first edition of the *Book of Power*;

An antique globe of Gaea;

A three-dimensional illusion diorama showing Kurst surrendering to the Gaunt Man;

A non-powered Orrorshan stelae;

A silver sacrificial dagger;

A lock of black hair;

A replica of Heketon, sculpted from obsidian.

Event

While the Knights are in the trophy room, a Core Earth human male zuvembie in a waiter's uniform wheels in several large covered platters on a cart, as if serving dinner.

Under the covers are cooked human heads, garnished with entrails. Drop Perseverance by one and have the Knights make a check.

Main Occult Lab

This huge room reeks of chemicals. Atop two long stone tables are beakers, flasks, alembics, tubes, all with strange, exotic liquids. The work tables contain other implements common to alchemical labs: mortar and pestle, scales, an hourglass, specimen jars, bunsen burners.

There is a full range of acids stored and labelled in here. Assume that there are 20 different containers filled with acid. There are six containers of various poisons, including arsenic and cyanide.

A small bookcase lies against the south wall, between the doors. The books contain various occult rituals (see the Appendix on page 91). One volume also contains the weaknesses of the horrors within Illmound Keep — a *research* total of 15 is necessary to find the proper information, and it takes five minutes to read each entry. Feel free to toss a horror at the Knights if they are spending too much time perusing the texts.

Against the western wall lies a large bank of smashed machinery. A *scholar (Orrorshan realm lore)* or *Perception* total of 15 shows that this machine was the Gaunt Man's infamous possibility-sorting device, now ruined.

An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 14 directed at the bookcase will reveal that one has been used, although how recently is unclear. It is a notebook, apparently kept by the Gaunt Man, that makes reference to attempting to find protection against eternity shards. There are no dates to indicate when the entry was written. The rest of the pages are blank.

Flags

A *Romance* card means that a male Storm Knight falls in love with Unjay or Tara. If the Knight falls in love with Tara, the techno-demon will keep up her disguise for a while longer, out of sheer cruelty.

A *Personal Stake* played by a Knight means that one of the prisoners is a friend, and their safe escape will be a major goal.

An *Idea* card played will remind the Knights that, based on what they'd heard, the maelstrom holding the Gaunt Man should have been in this room.

An *Alertness* card (or a *find* or *Perception* total of 20) will reveal a secret door in the north wall that leads to a hidden stairway. The stairway leads to the Gaunt Man's chambers on the second floor of Illmound.

Perseverance Awards

The Knights receive one Perseverance point for surviving the torture chamber, the operating room and the trophy room, respectively. They receive an additional two points for making it through the pile of bones at the beginning of the scene.

Cut To ...

If the party decides to explore the ground floor, cut to Scene Two, "Playing for Keeps." If the party decides to explore the second floor, cut to Scene Four, "Mounting Fear."

If the party decides to run out of the Keep screaming, remind them that the front door is gone.

SCENE FOUR: Mounting Fear

The Situation

Standard. This is the top floor of Illmound Keep (see Map 6). It contains rooms of more personal value to the Gaunt Man, plus the chance to meet the High Lord of Orrorsh himself.

Guest Rooms

Each of these rooms are the same: a four-post bed, a dresser, kerosene lantern, a washbasin, and a chamber pot. These rooms are for when guests drop by.

If the Knights visit a guest room, a female elf zuvembie, clad in a maid's uniform, staggers into the room and begins to turn down the bed. Then, in

a disgusting parody of the stereotypical amorous chambermaid, the zuvembie begins to attempt to seduce a male Storm Knight.

Observatory

This chamber contains a huge brass telescope and a domed ceiling. The ceiling cannot be opened — rather, the telescope has the occult ability to see through solid objects. The dome's interior is painted black, with small points of light and lines, representing constellations of an hourglass, an angel of death, a heart, a book, a werewolf, and a ravagon.

The mirror marked "W," if looked at, triggers an occult ward (value 25) that transports the viewer to mirror "A" in the Hall of Mirrors. The "X" mirror does nothing unusual.

Flitting around the top of the telescope are a trio of gargoyles, loudly screeching, "Lift your voices and sing praises to the Nameless One, for the Lord of the Keep has risen again!"

The gargoyles then power-dive at the Knights and attack.

Gargoyles (3)

DEXTERITY 12
Acrobatics 14, dodge 17, flight 15, maneuver 15, unarmed combat 16
STRENGTH 14
Lifting 16
TOUGHNESS 20
PERCEPTION 11
Find 15, tracking 15, trick 16
MIND 10
Test 12
CHARISMA 8
Taunt 17
SPIRIT 12
Faith (Orrorshan evil) 14, intimidation 16
Possibility Potential: none
Natural Tools: fangs, damage value STR+4/18; claws, damage value STR+6/20
Power: *attack form resistance* (melee/missile weapons)
Corruption Value: 15
Fear Rating: 1
Weakness: Magic spells that cause physical damage (stymie)
True Death: Slain with stones or stone weapons

Hall of Mirrors

The ceilings and walls are mirrored here, and a special set of mirrors exist on one set of walls. Even though the hall is cut in half by the observatory, an occult spell allows one to walk all the way from one end to the other without passing through that room. One must be actively thinking of reaching the observatory to find it again.

Mirrors A-H shows each viewer at a different life stage, as follows:

A. Infancy

B. Young adult

C. Whatever that Storm Knight fears the most appears to take shape and lunge out of the mirror. It's an illusion, which attacks the Knight using an *intimidation* of 20. A *willpower* or *Mind* total of 14 allows the Knight to disbelieve the illusion and be unaffected by the *intimidation* attack. Knights may also choose to actively resist the *intimidation* attack.

No one else sees anything attacking the Knight, though if they too look in the mirror, they are similarly attacked by their own unique fear.

"Player's call" is that the victim goes mad. This need not mean he is incapacitated — he can still remain a heroic Storm Knight, just one who talks to imaginary people on occasion, or believes that all of the High Lords are actually Dr. Mobius in disguise. Gamemasters are encouraged to have some fun with this.

If any Knight is affected by the mirror's attack, subtract one from the party's Perseverance and have them generate a check.

D. The dream each Storm Knight had at the beginning of the adventure.

E. The Storm Knight having a cup of tea, surrounded by corpses.

F. The Storm Knight in an Egyptian tomb, fighting mummies.

G. The Storm Knight having a duel at sunrise with a Victorian officer while in the background, a city falls to the ground.

H. The viewer is teleported via occult ward (value 25) to mirror "X" in the observatory.

The mirrors have a *Toughness* of 40.

The Gaunt Man's Chambers

This room is decorated in the Old World style, with tapestries, black bunting, and thick carpets.

The room is the Gaunt Man's bedchambers, and contains a large four-post bed, a wardrobe and mirror, a grandfather's clock, an hourglass, and several marble statues of people in various poses of fear.

A secret door in the north wall leads to the dungeon occult lab. A *find* or *Perception* total of 20 is needed to find the secret door.

While the Knights are in the room, the drapes and bed curtains begin to move, and a mournful wail fills the air. The source is a banshee, who was once the Gaunt Man's mate, and who now haunts the room. She is not in a talkative mood.

Have the Knights make a Perseverance check.

If the Knights do not attack the banshee, she will not attack them. While she has no interest in helping them, she does recognize them as the Gaunt Man's enemies and has no interest in harming them, either.

If they should attack, she will concentrate more on making them flee than slaying them.

Banshee

DEXTERITY 11
Dodge 14, maneuver 14, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 12
TOUGHNESS 12
PERCEPTION 10
Find 12, track 14, trick 13
MIND 8
Willpower 10
CHARISMA 9
Taunt 14
SPIRIT 12
Faith (Orrorshan evil) 15, intimidation 20, reality (Orrorsh) 14
Possibilities: 30
Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+4/16; shriek, acts as an *intimidation* attack against anyone within range of her voice. Characters suffers the effects of the wail for a number of rounds equal to the number of result points achieved by the attack. On a *setback* result, the target suffers a -3 penalty to all actions. On a *break* result, the character feels compelled to flee in panic from the source of the sound. On a *player's call*, the target character is paralyzed with fear and cannot take an action for the duration of the effect. Characters can shake off the wail's

effects by generating a *Mind* or *willpower* total of 23 or by slaying the banshee.

Powers: *cold aura, paralyzing touch*
Corruption Value: 22
Fear Rating: 3
Weakness: A singer singing a happy song.
True Death: Slain with a weapon made of bone

Personal Study/Occult Lab

The only entrance to this room is through the tea room where the Gaunt Man waits, so the Storm Knights may have trouble getting in here.

This is a study, filled with more books and a fully stocked occult lab. The texts give the True Deaths of every horror in the vicinity of New London. The books are protected by occult wards, so if they are opened, the ether will be disturbed and the Gaunt Man will be aware that someone is looking at his books.

An *occult* total of 20 is necessary to be able to make out the writing in the books. It takes ten minutes to read each entry.

Core Earth Situation Room

There are only two things in this room. The first is a six-foot diameter globe, a topographical replica of Earth. It shows the extent of each realm, each in a different color, including the location of each maelstrom bridge and each stelae. It is a beautiful rendition of the planet. Clouds pass over areas, the globe revolves, showing night and day, and even where the moon is. Unfortunately, the scale of the globe is such that one cannot pinpoint precise stelae locations.

The second item is a stone statue with a huge black diamond in place of a face. The statue's hands are outstretched, as if to receive someone's hands.

If someone puts their hands on the statue's hands, a voice asks him if he wishes to lose a possibility. If the Knight agrees, he loses a point and a swirling black light forms in the diamond. The Knight is then able to communicate directly, two-way, with any High Lord except the Gaunt Man.

If the Knight refuses to lose the possibility, he is instructed to remove his hands immediately. If the Knight's hands are not removed in one round, a powerful jolt (damage value 20) courses through the Knight. Ignore armor for purposes of calculating damage. Any Knight with cybernetics must make an immediate cyberpsychosis check.

Gate Room

This room features a series of eight stone arches, each obscured by a different-colored mist. They are gates to different cosms.

A. The Waiting Village
B. Aysle
C. Magna Verita
D. Marketplace
E. Gaea
F. Takta Ker
G. Terra
H. Tharkold

It costs two Possibilities to use a gate (the Knights will be apprised of

same if they try to pass through one). After 24 hours, an occult spell with a value of 34 draws the Knights back to the basement of Illmound.

Heketon's Chamber

This chamber has a thick iron door (*Toughness* 25) and a padlock (*lock picking* difficulty of 18). If opened, read or paraphrase the following:

The door opens, and a blast of cold air sharp with the tangy iron taste of blood slams into your faces, causing you to take a step backwards.

Inside, a large black heart of obsidian rests on the hands of a statue depicting a tortured soul. The heart beats with a rhythm of wickedness that pounds in your heads. A sinister black-green light crackles in an aura surrounding the evil thing.

This is not, of course, Heketon. The real Darkness Device is back in its pocket dimension at the moment. This is another obsidian sculpture like the one downstairs, treated with occult spells to resemble the Darkness Device. A successful *detect magic* rite will pick up strong traces of occult magic around the object. An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 20 will indicate that this is not the real Heketon.

Let the Knights do whatever they feel like. Try to talk to it (it won't respond); try to smash it (it's got a *Toughness* of 15); try to invoke a reality storm on it (it's a piece of rock — it doesn't have any *reality* skill).

You can be sure the Gaunt Man will be getting a good laugh out of the whole affair ...

Basjas' Chamber

This bedchamber is covered in spider webs. From the ceiling hang human figures, long dead, covered in web cocoons. Subtract one Perseverance point and have the Knights make a check.

Basjas need not be home. If the Knight have not been going on a destructive rampage, cutting down and ruining everything they see, let the room be deserted.

If, on the other hand, things have been far too easy for the Knights thus far, let Basjas be home ... and not in a good mood. In order to be truly sneaky, Basjas can assume her beautiful human female shape and be wandering the corridors near her lair, posing as a Victorian prisoner. She may attempt to lead the Knights to her chambers to snag them in her web. The Gaunt Man will act to prevent her from killing the Knights, however, as he has some use for them (he will let her have the fun of humbling them, though).

Basjas

See pages 26-27 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

The Tea Room

When the Knights reach the Tea Room, cut to Scene Five.

Perseverance Awards

Award the Knights three Perseverance points for this scene.

Cut To ...

Once the Knights reach the tea room and encounter the Gaunt Man, cut to Scene Five, "A Blot of Tea."

SCENE FIVE: A Blot of Tea

The Situation

Dramatic. The party encounters the Gaunt Man, sitting at a table in the tea room and surrounded by dead Storm Knights. He is pouring tea.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

A huge, airy room stands before you. On the far wall, ornate stained glass bay windows offer little light. The stained glass images depict Storm Knights meeting their deaths at the hands of various horrors of Illmound Keep.

An organ plays a dirge of its own accord. A gilded mirror over the organ displays a series of swirling shades of darkness.

A long table dominates the room. There are numerous settings as if for afternoon tea. Seated at the table are an edeinos, a cyberpriest, a Hospitaller, a ninja, a dwarf, an elf, a technodemon, a priest of Sebek, a Sister of the Serpent, a Draygaak, a human male, and a human female. They are all dead, as is evidenced by the various gaping wounds, open chests, and missing limbs. A few place settings are stained by bodily fluids and entrails which have spilled onto the table.

Hanging from the ceiling are even more bodies, many holding lit candles as if they were grotesque chandeliers.

Sitting at the head of the table is a skeletal man in dark clothing and a wide brimmed hat with a buckle. He is pale, with dry crackly skin reminiscent of parchment. His dark eyes burn with sheer evil.

With his bony fingers, he pours tea and gestures to some open chairs. "Banish from your minds any thought of attack," the figure addresses you in a raspy voice that sends shivers down your spines. "Sit, and join me for some Dharjeeling tea. So glad you could accept my invitation. Help yourselves to some... lady fingers."

The Action

Have the Knights generate a Perseverance check. Then allow them to react (give them a chance to scream, shoot, whatever). If they attack, the Gaunt Man will demonstrate the futility of their actions (removing bullets from his chest, holding his hand out and letting a laser ricochet against it), only retaliating against those who were foolish enough to initiate hostilities.

If the Knights attempt to attack him with an eternity shard, the Gaunt Man will wrest it from their grasp and thank them for the gift. The amulet (which is completely concealed by his cloak) protects him from the shard, but he will under no circumstances reveal to the Knights why the shard is not working on him.

The tea and snacks are completely safe. (Yes, the "lady fingers" are really pastries.)

The Knights can, of course, attempt escape. The Gaunt Man will let them run through the Keep for a while, then use his occult skill to draw them back to the tea room.

The Knights may also want to try jumping through the stained glass windows. Let them — they're just normal windows. But Knights who go through them, including those with the power of flight, will find themselves falling and falling, only to land in a seat in the tea room. The window they went through is whole again.

Whether or not the Knights sit down, the Gaunt Man will resume his speech:

"I have summoned you here on a matter of singular importance. During my ... sabbatical, a member of my Hellion Court grew ambitious. Believing himself to be worthy of the throne of Orrorsh, he is planning an occult ritual that will give him vast new powers.

"The being in question is none other than General Avery Wellington, the Supreme Commander of the Victorian military. I know not what the source of his newfound courage is, but he has decided to try and become a threat to my carefully-crafted ecology of fear ... and to one of your cities.

"You see, for his ritual to work, many thousands must die. I have no use for such bloodletting — I prefer people to remain alive, but in terror. But for reasons of my own, I prefer not to intervene in Wellington's affairs at present. I know that Storm Knights such as yourselves are insufferably heroic, and I know of some of your past deeds."

At this point, the Gaunt Man refers to three of the Knights by name and mentions some of their past accomplishments.

If the Knights press the Gaunt Man for the reasons he will not confront Wellington himself, he says:

"The completion of his ritual is far less of a threat to me than it is to your precious cosm. The deaths of millions are an ... inconvenience, I will grant, but not worthy of my attention. I can eventually restore the balance, and meanwhile use the dead for my gospog fields.

"Also, I wish to retain my anonymity for a while longer. I have kept my victory over the Heart of Coyote secret for six months now, while I gauged the strength of my fellow High Lords. Now I wish to gauge the strength of my enemies — you Storm Knights. How you fare against Wellington will show me how strong you have become in my absence."

As a show of good faith, the Gaunt Man will tell them that Wellington's True Death is to be slain in a duel at sunrise with an enchanted sword. He will not reveal his weakness, saying "its nature escapes me." He will say that a Victorian professor, Alister Scope, is currently on an archaeoloigcal expedition in the Nile Empire, in the area where Egypt, Sudan, and the Red Sea meet. The site is about five miles inland. Scope has researched Wellington and knows the details of the ritual as well as Wellington's weakness. It is possible that Scope may also know where the Knights might obtain the weapon they need.

Knowledge of the weakness is essential — Wellington will never agree to a duel unless he is cowed into it.

Beyond this, the Gaunt Man will

offer no help. He wishes to see how well the Knights will manage on their own (it should prove an amusing entertainment).

The Gaunt Man

DEXTERITY 17
Dodge 22, maneuver 18, melee weapons 20, prestidigitation 20, unarmed combat 18
STRENGTH 21
TOUGHNESS 28
PERCEPTION 29
Evidence Analysis 31, find 30, language 32, scholar (eternity shards) 32, scholar (Orrorsh realm lore) 35, scholar (the Nameless One) 33, trick 31
MIND 28
Test 32, occult 34, willpower 34
CHARISMA 22
Charm 26, persuasion 27, taunt 23
SPIRIT 28
Faith (Orrorshan evil) 37, intimidation 38, reality 35
Possibilities: 300
Equipment: Occult amulet protecting him from eternity shards; cane with small living head, causes fear in a 30-meter radius around the Gaunt Man (spell functions in a similar manner to the *fear* spell detailed on page 86 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook).
Powers: *attack form resistance (physical, mental, and spiritual damage from magical attacks), regeneration, resistance to normal weapons, silence*
Corruption Value: 61
Fear Rating: 5
Perseverance DN: 27
Weakness: Eternity shards, though this is nullified while the Gaunt Man remains inside Illmound and wears his amulet.
True Death: None known.

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions ...

Well, our Storm Knights are certainly in an interesting situation, aren't they? They no doubt have other questions to ask the Gaunt Man — his answers are provided in the sidebar below.

The Knights now have to decide whether they want to take the hint, stop Wellington, and save the city or not. The gamemaster should advise them that knowing a city is about to be destroyed and not doing anything to stop it is a *Wicked* act and will result in massive amounts of Corruption points. If they absolutely, positively refuse to take action to stop the ritual from taking place, levy 13 Corruption points on each Knight and have them make a Corruption check. Let's hope they look good with horns and running sores ...

If they decide among themselves to take on Wellington, secretly generate an *occult* total of the Gaunt Man against the Knights' *Spirit*. DO NOT LET THE PLAYERS KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO. Essentially, the Gaunt Man is casting a spell that will simulate the effects of eight Corruption points being awarded to each Knight. The characters need not generate Corruption checks in this instance, but do receive the automatic *up* condition.

This "artificial corruption" will be perceived by those with *true sight* as real. The Gaunt Man is hoping to thus start the Knights on the road to wickedness.

Once the heroes have accepted the task, cut to "Aftermath."

Aftermath

If the heroes accept the task, the Gaunt Man will cure any physical damage or insanity the Storm Knights acquired while exploring Illmound. Any dead Knights, however, remain dead, and their corpses become the Gaunt Man's property.

Answers to Storm Knight Questions

Q: Why us? Why not some of your own lackeys?

A: As I have said, I wish to test the strength of Storm Knights. You have already proven your mettle by surviving my Keep — now I would see just how powerful you are.

Q: If you're so strong, why not just fry Avery from a distance?

A: If you fail, I may well do that ... eventually. Not before I see the outcome of his rite, however. I prefer subtlety at this time.

Q: What's to stop us from telling people about your return?

A: I fully expect you will. And this news will spread glorious fear among the masses!

Q: What's to stop us from telling other High Lords or lieutenants about your return?

A: Beware. My associates often slay the bearers of bad news.

Q: How do we know this isn't an elaborate trap?

A: To what end? If I wanted you dead, I would have killed you the moment you blundered into Illmound. I am not Dr. Mobius — I need not engage in elaborate scheming to slay my enemies.

Q: Why don't you know Avery's weakness? Don't you know everything?

A: I allowed Avery the luxury of choosing his own weakness when he became my ally, and to tell me what that weakness was in due time. He never told me, and I believed I had little to fear from that stodgy, unimaginative, two-dimensional thinker. It seems that I underestimated the extent of his ambitions. Ah, well. One error in a millenium is to be expected.

Q: What's to stop YOU from getting a hold of the ritual and using it yourself?

A: I am already the most powerful of High Lords, soon to be the Torg. What care I for some paltry ritual?

He then summons a zuvembie butler to escort the Knights out of Illmound. A huge black hansom cab awaits, pulled by skeleton horses and driven by an unidentifiable being clad in a long robe and cowl.

The creature is gospog of the fourth planting, though it will not make any attacks or other overt moves unless it is attacked or its cowl is lifted up. In that case, it attacks the offender, kills him, then resumes his duties as driver.

The cab flies through the air and deposits the party at the Jakarta city limits. The time is sunset. Once the Knights leave the cab, it disappears.

If the gospog is killed, the coach lands softly and disappears, effectively leaving the Knights stranded. If this happens over the ocean, they are in deep trouble.

Variables

If any Storm Knight tries to use *spirit medium* to talk to the dead and attempt to ascertain Avery's weakness or even the full extent of his plot, the attempt fails. Whatever's going on has cowed even the spirits.

An organized attack on the Gaunt Man will bring a half dozen ravagon veterans immediately into the battle, interposing themselves between the Gaunt Man and the Knights.

Perseverance Awards

Give each surviving Knight three Perseverance points for meeting the Gaunt Man and living to tell about it.

Act Awards

Give each Knight seven Possibilities for surviving the Act. If they managed to rescue the prisoners, give them another two. If they somehow managed to slay Basjas, add three more.

Cut To ...

Once the party is ready to head off to Egypt, cut to "Interlude," then move on to Act Three.

Interlude

The Storm Knights need to get from Jakarta to the dig. There is a Victorian steamship, the SS *Celestia*, departing Jakarta harbor at noon the day after the party returns from visiting Illmound. The ship one-day stops at Colombo, Ceylon; Bombay, India; Aden, Yemen; Port Sudan, Sudan; and ends up in Cairo, Egypt.

To sail from Jakarta to Port Sudan takes two weeks. Fare is 100 sterlings per person one way.

There are 40 other passengers, a mixture of Victorian, Nile, and Nippon. Gamemasters may place characters of their own creation on board. Optionally, the characters from the Hotel Indonesia, if not used in Act One, may be placed on board ship.

The Knights' best bet is to take the ship to Port Sudan and hire trucks as to get to the site. It is a four hour drive.

The Knights can use the time on the ship to relax and/or learn skills.

If one or both of the techno-demons from Act One survived, it could tail the Knights to the ship and kill several random passengers, in hopes of unnerving the heroes. Each night, the demon kills one innocent passenger and places the severed head outside a Storm Knight's door. Once each hero has a head, the demon begins killing the Storm Knights, one per night.

There simply are NO aircraft to be hired in Jakarta. All aircraft have been commandeered by the government and pressed into service. If a Storm Knight has his own aircraft, the journey takes 18 hours on the average, counting stops to refuel.

Act Three

Die Like an Egyptian

The Major Beat

The Storm Knights arrive at the dig in the Nile Empire and meet a bunch of interesting Victorians, including secret allies of General Wellington and Dr. Mobius.

After becoming embroiled in a murder investigation, the Knights help explore a newly discovered temple, find an eternity shard, and fend off a sneak attack by Mobius' forces.

NOTE: The Perseverance difficulty number for the remainder of this adventure is 23. This reflects the fact that the Knights are no longer under the direct influence of the Gaunt Man, but are now wandering into Wellington's sphere of power.

SCENE ONE: Them Bones, Them Bones, Them Buried Bones

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights arrive at the Victorian dig site. Due to the presence of a hardpoint in the area, most of the camp is an Orrorshan dominant zone.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

At last, your long journey is at an end. The hour is half past four in the afternoon. Stretched before you is a large campsite and dig, with great sand dunes rising in the background. In the precise center of the camp, a statue of a queen sitting on a throne holds up a flagpole, from which the Victorian's flag snaps smartly in the desert breeze.

Surrounding the flagpole are many large tents, with khaki and pith helmet-clad figures entering and leaving. On one side of the camp, Victorian soldiers drill. A few artillery pieces stand at the ready.

The far end of the camp has several large trenches, with dozens of native workmen laboring under the hot sun. Many small tents, no doubt for the workers, stand pitched near the digs.

A Victorian sentry catches sight of you, and advances, demanding identification.

The Action

The purpose of this scene is for the Knights to get acquainted with the personnel working at the dig. It can be as long or as short a scene as the gamemaster wishes — let the Knights wander around and interact with the different characters here to their heart's content, if they're having fun.

The following are the statistics for the dig staff, including the military presence.

Professor Ambrose Garreck — Dig Leader

Reality: Orrorsh
DEXTERITY 7
Beast riding 9, fire combat 8, unarmed combat 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 11
Egyptian religion 13, evidence analysis 13, find 15, hieroglyphics 17, language 15, research 16, scholar (Victorian history) 17

MIND 12
Science (archaeology) 18, survival 15, willpower 15
CHARISMA 9
Persuasion 12
SPIRIT 10
Faith (Sacellum) 14
Possibilities: none
Equipment: Cross heavy revolver, damage value 16, ammo 6, range 3-5/15/25; archaeology kit (brushes, tweezers, magnifying glass, vials, files, small hammer, chisel, large notebook, pens and ink); letter of authorization from Overgovernor Neteru allowing the dig to take place.

Description: An average-looking man in his late thirties, Garreck is a bookish scholarly type, rather awkward among people, women in particular. He tends to be absent-minded, and gets totally absorbed in his work.

Professor Alister Scope

DEXTERITY 9
Beast riding 12, fire combat 12, melee weapons 12
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 12
Evidence analysis 14, find 15, language 16, research 16, scholar (Orrorsh realm lore) 16, scholar (Victorian history) 15, trick 14
MIND 12
Occult 18, science (archaeology) 15, survival 14, test of will 15
CHARISMA 10
Charm 13, taunt 14
SPIRIT 12
Faith (Sacellum) 15, reality (Orrorsh) 14
Possibilities: 6
Equipment: Cross heavy revolver, damage value 16, ammo 6, range 3-5/15/25; archaeology kit; lantern; occult kit; occult books (adds +2 to any attempts at researching occult or attempting occult rituals); wooden stakes; mallet; 6 vials of holy water; silver dagger, damage value STR+2/12; necklace of garlic; Sacellum cross on neck chain; private journal; enchanted rapier, damage value STR+7/22.

Description: Alister Scope is a member of the Sign of Six, a Victorian secret society. A powerful, handsome, intense man in his early 40s, he has dedicated his life to fighting the horrors of Orrorsh wherever they appear.

Unfortunately, Professor Scope is a bit unhinged from his dabblings in the occult. His discovery of the extent of corruption among the Victorians, as well as Wellington's duplicity, has shaken him badly.

What Scope Knows: Avery Wellington has stumbled upon the *Archives of the Damned*, and found a ritual to gain him great power. Wellington must go to the highest spot in a city, and invoke the ritual at dawn, when the stars are right. Scope believes the city to be sacrificed is Singapore.

Wellington is resistant to normal weaponry. In preparation for this obstacle, Scope has fashioned an occult-forged foil. If the Knights convince Scope that they are going to confront Avery, he will give it to them.

Wellington's weakness is a Gaean rose, the Peace Rose, whose petals are an electric blue and blood crimson. These roses grow in two locations: a small garden at the house where the Sign of Six usually meets, in New London (Padang), and inside the Fortress of the Dead.

Professor Scope starts out as *neutral* toward the Knights. In order to win over his trust, his attitude must be made *loyal*. (Note that the group has to mention that they are out to stop Avery Wellington!) If this is done, a successful *persuasion* will make Alister admit he's a member of the Sign of Six, and he will tell the group the Sign's address in New London, as well as what he learned about Avery. He also gives the Knights his journal to read (handout 2).

Scope also mentions that the Bell and Whistle is a great pub in New London, and a source of great news, rumor, and gossip.

Reverend Charlton White — Dig Chaplain

DEXTERITY 8
Melee weapons 12
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 11
Evidence analysis 12, find 13, first aid 14, languages 13, research 13, scholar (Core Earth Christian religions and sects) 15
MIND 10
Test 14, willpower 14
CHARISMA 10
Charm 13, persuasion 16
SPIRIT 13
Faith (Sacellum) 17, focus 17, reality (Orrorsh) 14
Possibilities: 7
Equipment: Cross heavy revolver with blessed silver bullets, damage value value 16, ammo 6, range 3-5/15/25; Sacellum *Book of Power*; Sacellum Cross; four vials of holy water

Description: Rotund, balding, with a cherubic face, Reverend White reminds one of Friar Tuck more than a Sacellum priest. In the eyes of his superiors, the Reverend is extremely liberal, hence his assignment out here "among the rest of the heathens."

Brigadier Ashton Auchenford — Victorian Army Garrison Commander

DEXTERITY 9
Beast riding 12, dodge 12, fire combat 13, melee combat 14, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 12
PERCEPTION 9
Find 10, tracking 12, trick 12
MIND 8
Survival 12, test 14, willpower 13
CHARISMA 8
Persuasion 12, taunt 12
SPIRIT 9
Faith (Sacellum) 10, intimidation 12, reality (Orrorsh) 11
Possibilities: 5
Equipment: Cross heavy revolver, damage value 16, ammo 6, range 3-5/15/25; sabre, damage value STR+4/14

Description: Brigadier Auchenford is a handlebar-moustached man in his late 40s, who carries himself with typical military discipline. He is a spit and polish type, always quoting regulations and slogans to his men.

Typical Victorian Officer of the Valiant 13th Regiment

See page 43 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

Description: There are two leftenants in the Valiant 13th. One is Nicholas Rowefield, the second is Winston Welles.

Rowefield is a dashing, gallant officer. Charming, polite, well-liked by all, Leftenant Rowefield knows nothing at all out of the ordinary.

Welles is a scoundrel, a drinker, gambler, and all around mean com-

mander. Still, he is not Corrupt.

Winston suspects that "there's more to Victoria Sigurd than meets the eye." Being a devotee of the wild life, he sees in her that same look. He suspects that her demure Victorian demeanor is a sham. He has no idea how right he is.

Incidentally, Welles will not share his opinion of the Victorian women unless he is alone with male Storm Knights.

Both officers share the same tent. It is very easy to tell whose cot is whose, one being very neat and well made up, the other looking like a pig sty.

Typical Victorian Soldier of the Valiant 13th Regiment

See page 43 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

Description: There are 40 soldiers in the camp. This includes four sergeant-majors and eight lance corporals.

The four sergeant-majors share a tent, the eight lance corporals share two tents, and the remaining 28 men share seven tents.

The men have no idea anything untoward is going on, except for the mysterious murders of several workers.

Victorian Ladies (3)

DEXTERITY 9
Beast riding 10, dodge 11, running 12
STRENGTH 7
TOUGHNESS 7
PERCEPTION 9
Egyptian religion 10, hieroglyphics 10, scholar (domestic work) 14, scholar (secretarial work) 14
MIND 8
CHARISMA 11
Charm 13
SPIRIT 10
Faith (Sacellum) 11
Possibilities: none
Equipment: Archaeology kits, parasols, typewriters.

Description: These single women in their mid-20s are along as secretaries, assistants, clerks, and domestics. Their names are: Allison Mastill, Sarah Wellington, and Lenore Garreck.

Allison and Sarah are normal Victorian women, modest, prim and proper. Despite the name, Sarah is NOT related to General Wellington. Allison is a blonde, Sarah a brunette.

Allison and Sarah both like Leftenant Rowefield. They also both dislike Lenore Garreck, considering her a troublemaker and unfeminine. The women will not share these opinions with male Storm Knights; only with a female Storm Knight, over tea.

Lenore is the younger sister of Ambrose. She is a firebrand, championing the cause of women's rights and anxious to get her hands dirty. She has red hair. Lenore is friends with Victoria.

The three women share a tent with a fourth, outlined below.

Victoria Sigurd

DEXTERITY 11
Dodge 14, maneuver 12, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 14
TOUGHNESS 11
PERCEPTION 12
Trick 13

MIND 11
Willpower 12
CHARISMA 14
Charm 16, persuasion 16, taunt 16
SPIRIT 5
Faith (Orrorshan evil) 15, intimidation 13, reality (Orrorsh) 12
Possibilities: 10
Powers: fire attack, regeneration
Corruption Value: 22
Fear Rating: 1
Weakness: Sacellum *Book of Power* (severe)
True Death: Disfigurement of face
Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+1/15

Description: Victoria is a succubus allied with Wellington, and was sent by him to eliminate Scope. On the outside, Victoria is a shy, pretty brunette who works as a typist and "knows her place."

At night, she occasionally hunts down men in order to spread some fear. Thus far, three workers have died, though everyone thinks that either wild animals did it or that the workers ran off.

If somehow interrogated successfully (she is *loyal* to Avery), she knows that Avery will perform the ritual in Singapore, and that the Nightmare Skutharka is quietly backing him up.

Snee the Mole

DEXTERITY 12
Dodge 14, fire combat 14, lock picking 16, melee weapons 15, prestidigitation 17, stealth 18
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 9
Disguise 10, find 10, forgery 11, land vehicles 12, scholar (electronics) 11, trick 12
MIND 8
Streetwise 12, survival 12, test 10, weird science 10
CHARISMA 7
Taunt 12
SPIRIT 8
Faith (Egyptian) 9, reality (Nile Empire) 10
Possibilities: 6
Inclination: Evil

Equipment: 9mm Luger, damage value 15, ammo 8, range 3-10/25/40; stiletto, damage value STR+3/13; Nile Empire talisman; weird science radio (stashed in tent); weird science listening devices (4)

Description: Snee is a slimy, bug-eyed hood from Cairo, who has taken to hanging around pulp villains. He is currently disguised as a laborer, and is supposed to report to Dr. Totten and the Scarlet Asp by secret radio once the expedition finds something of worth. Snee talks in a wheezy, whiny voice, and loves to openly leer at beautiful women.

He has four listening devices, which he will attempt to plant in some of the Storm Knights tents. A Storm Knight attempting to locate one will have to make a *find* or *Perception* total of 20.

Common Laborer (89)

DEXTERITY 8
Melee combat 9, unarmed combat 10
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 7
Find 9
MIND 7
CHARISMA 7
Taunt 10
SPIRIT 8
Intimidation 9
Additional Skills: one at +1 adds
Possibility Potential: some (75)
Equipment: picks and shovels, damage value STR+4/14

Description: These laborers sleep six to a tent. They are sullen and surly, working for a mere pittance under the hot sun. The effect of working in an Orrorshan hardpoint is making some of them begin to accept the Victorian rubbish about superior races and economic classes.

The laborers are superstitious, possibly another result of being in the Victorian reality for too long. They feel that some supernatural beast has cursed the site and is killing off their fellows.

The Camp

The central feature of the Victorian camp is a bronze statue of Queen Victoria holding a eight-meter high flagpole, which was made into a Victorian hardpoint by the original founders of the camp by means of the *create hardpoint* group power from a Victorian eternity shard. See Map 8, "Victorian Encampment."

The hardpoint weighs 100 kilograms and has a *Spirit* value of 5. It projects dominant Orrorshan reality in a 100 meter radius, with an Orrorshan pure zone created in a 10-meter radius. The hardpoint has a *Toughness* of 25.

Artillery Batteries

These are two Lee-Hollings 15 pounder cannons, with a damage value of 25. *Heavy weapons* skill is needed to load and fire them. Close to the cannons is the ammunition storage, consisting of 100 shells. The ammunition storage also contains locked strongboxes full of silver bullets, blessed bullets, and standard bullets. There is always one sentry guarding the batteries/ammo dump.

Army Tents (Soldiers and NCOs)

Each tent sleeps four, and has four cots, a lantern, and a Sacellum cross.

Leftenants' Tent

Nicholas Rowefield's half of the tent is clean, neat, militarily precise. Winston Welles' half is messy and unkempt. There are two cots, a lantern, a folding table, and two chairs in this tent. In Welles' army chest, there is a deck of cards, dice, some erotic (by Victorian standards: ladies in bloomers, etc.) illustrations, and a large bottle of brandy.

Brigadier's Tent

The Brigadier's tent has a cot, desk, four chairs, lantern, victrola with recordings of hymns, *Book of Power*, and a Sacellum cross. On the Brigadier's desk is a letter from an associate, who happens to mention in passing that General Avery Wellington is undertaking some sort of mission in Singapore.

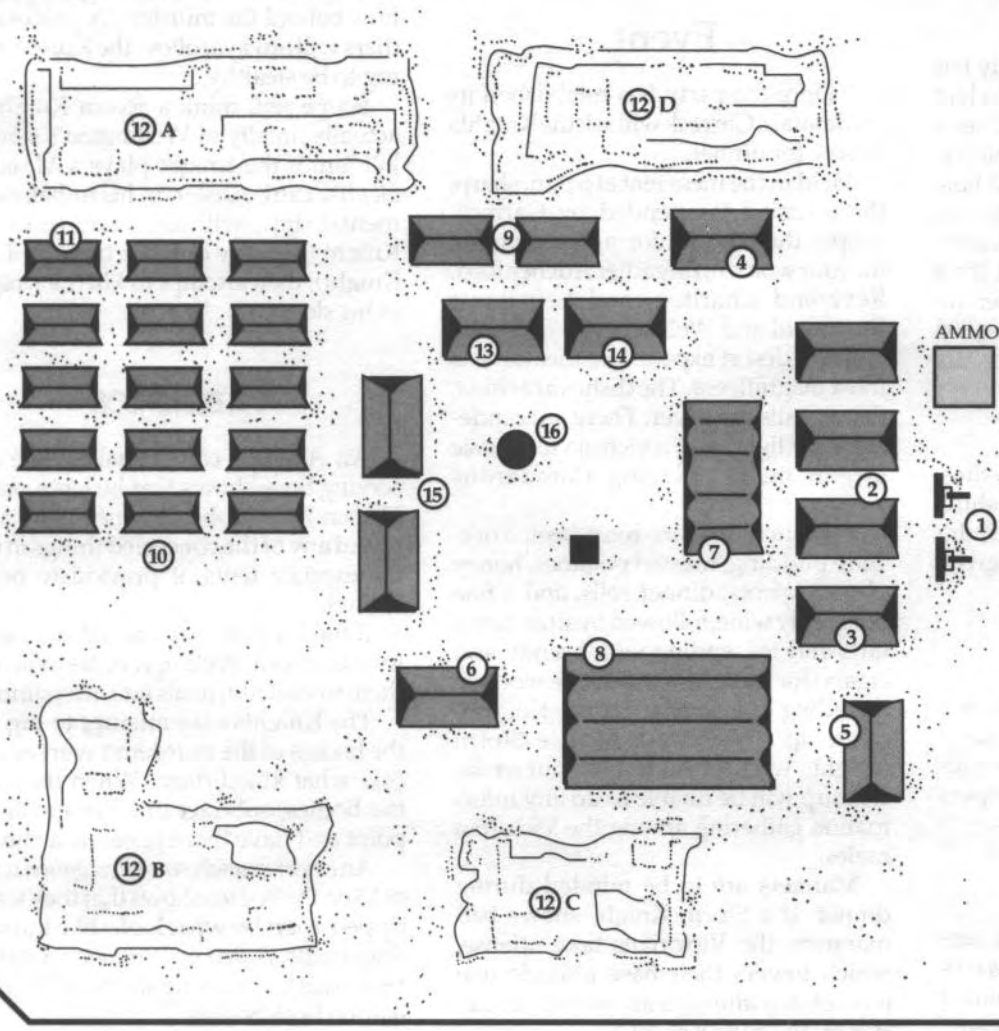
There are also reports on the performances of both leftenants. Despite comments about Welles' slovenly appearance, both officers are judged well.

Reverend's Tent

The good Reverend has a cot, desk, two chairs, lantern, several Sacellum crosses and Books of Power, 20 extra silver bullets, and six extra vials of holy water.

The Reverend can always be found in his tent. He uses it to do his work, counsel the troubled, and any other duties.

The Gaunt Man Returns: Map 8
Victorian Encampment



Key

1. Artillery batteries
2. Soldier/NCO tents
3. Leftenants' tent
4. Brigadier's tent
5. Reverend's tent
6. Ladies' tent
7. Work tent
8. Mess tent
9. Guest tents
10. Laborer's tents
11. Snee's tent
12. Digs
13. Garreck's tent
14. Scope's tent
15. Other archeologists' tents
16. Well

■ Hardpoint (Statue of Queen Victoria)

The Ladies' Tent

Kept tidy as a good ladies' dormitory should be, it has four cots, two sewing kits, a lantern, a Sacellum cross, and a *Book of Power*.

It is considered a scandal for a man to enter the ladies' tent without a proper chaperone (namely, another woman).

Work Tent

This large tent is where the majority of the paper work and lab work is done. There are four typewriters, a filing cabinet, two lanterns, a long worktable, a map of the camp site (including the digs), and office and archaeological supplies.

The filing cabinet is locked (*lock picking* difficulty 8). A *find* or *Perception* total of 8 or more is needed to find each of these items:

- A full roster of camp personnel. Victoria Sigurd was a last minute addition, in the wake of the sudden and mysterious death of the woman who was supposed to go.
- A copy of the letter of authorization from Overgovernor Neteru for the dig.
- Reports on the three workmen's deaths. Two bodies were found, one was not. The dead were buried in a nearby ditch. It appeared that a wild animal had ripped them apart. The deaths happened every other night (which means one is due tonight).
- A record of what has been found thus far, which is precious little. The site has been in place here for the last five weeks.

Mess Tent

Another large tent, with a partition cutting off a fifth of it. The smaller section has the camp stove and food preparation tools. The women are in charge of food preparation.

Guest Tents

Used for any visiting scholars, etc, each tent has four cots, a lantern, a *Book of Power*, and a Sacellum cross.

Laborer Tents

Filthy and substandard, each has six cots and lots of sand lice.

Snee's Tent

An ordinary laborer tent, it only has four occupants (two of the victims had used this tent), including Snee. Snee's tent mates are unaware of his duplicity.

Under Snee's cot is a concealed hole (*find* or *Perception* total of 12). Inside is an odd machine with a microphone. A *weird science* total of 10 will reveal that it's a powerful radio and eavesdropper receiver. There is also a bag containing 500 Nile Royals and four extra clips of ammo.

Digs

These are the four main dig sites. Workers labor in two seven-hour shifts (4 a.m.-11 a.m., noon-7 p.m.). Each dig site has fifteen workers at any given time on one shift.

Garreck's Tent

Contains a cot, desk, two chairs, lantern, private stock of liquor, and many books on archaeology and other subjects. His desk has copies of all papers found in the Work Tent.

Scope's Tent

Contains a cot, desk, two chairs, lantern, Sacellum cross, and several books on the occult. A *find* or *Perception* total of 15 on his desk reveals a secret compartment with his diary. If the Knights find it, give them handout 2, "Journal of Professor Alister Scope."

Scope's enchanted sword is hidden under his bed. *Find* or *Perception* total of 10 to spot.

Other Archaeologists

These two tents each contain two junior Victorian archaeologists. Their names are: Reginald Dwight, Phillip Howard Craft, Artemis Conrad, and B. G. Shore.

Each tent has two cots and a lantern. These men have no bearing on the adventure. They know of nothing unusual, and, being men of science, they scoff at the occult, magic, and miracles.

Well

This is the Victorians' water supply. There is always a sentry on duty here.

Event

Once the party has established its credentials, Garreck will ask the Knights to stay for dinner.

Held in the mess tent at 6 p.m. sharp, the occasion is attended by Garreck, Scope, the four junior archaeologists, the four women, Brigadier Auchenford, Reverend Charlton, and Leftenants Rowefield and Welles.

For a desert expedition, mealtime is most magnificent. The dishes are china, the utensils are silver. There are candelabra for light, and a victrola for music (organ music, playing thunderous hymns).

Fare includes rare roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, roasted potatoes, honey glazed carrots, dinner rolls, and a fine burgundy wine, followed by strawberry tarts and tea, ending with brandy and cigars (for the males, while the women, including the female Storm Knights, clean up the dishes). Female Storm Knights who refuse to help out in the cleanup will be unable to do any information gathering among the Victorian males.

Manners are to be minded during dinner. If a Storm Knight shows bad manners, the Victorians take offense, which lowers their base attitude one level on any attempts at *charm* or *persuasion* by the rude Knight.

Dinner lasts until 10 p.m.

Event

The Knights may decide to turn in for the evening, or they may arrange a nocturnal meeting with Scope. Regardless, a desert storm howls into camp, bringing thunder, lightning, rain, and wind.

When the clock strikes midnight, cut to "Midnight Murder."

Flags

A *Romance* card causes one of the three ladies to fall in love with a male Storm Knight. If the Storm Knight is female, either leftenant or one of the four minor archaeologists fall in love with her.

A *Suspicion* card causes the Brigadier to suspect that a Storm Knight is somehow behind the murders. A pair of soldiers will always follow the Knight, trying to be stealthy.

Scope will think a Storm Knight is actually an ally of Wellington's sent to kill him if the Knight plays a *Mistaken Identity* card. Alister, in his unbalanced mental state, will shy away from the Knight (and any obvious friends of the Knight), then attempt to kill the Knight in his sleep.

Variables

An *Alertness* card played while observing Snee shows that he has a pistol hidden in his robe. *Alertness* may also reveal any of the concealed things in the appropriate tents, if previously overlooked.

If the Knights try to get Alister alone to talk about Wellington, he will tell them to visit him in his tent after dinner.

The Knights may attempt to dig up the bodies of the murdered workers, to find what killed them. When they see the bodies, subtract one Perseverance point and have them generate a check.

An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 13 on the bodies shows that they were ripped apart by what looks like human fingernails. A *find* or *Perception* total of 16 reveals several long strands of brown hair on both bodies.

The bodies are buried 20 meters due west of dig site 13A. The Knights can ask Professor Garreck for permission to exhume the bodies, requiring any level of *persuasion* success. Otherwise, the Victorians will be horrified if they discover the Knights in the act of gravedigging.

Midnight Murder

As the storm reaches its peak, the succubus calling herself "Victoria Sigurd" strikes again, killing one of the sentries.

A *Perception* total of 8 allows the Knights to hear a loud wail of pain that rises above the howling of the wind.

A *find* or *Perception* total of 9 allows the Knights to determine the direction from which the scream came. Once

Handout 2

Journal of Professor Alister Scope

November 8 — As I stand here on the deck of the steamer and ponder my situation, my mind keeps turning back to that devil, Wellington. How could that man have betrayed God, Queen, and country?

I am convinced that Wellington, aside from his involvement with the powers of Darkness, is now a corrupt monster of great power. Using the books I have brought along and the books I managed to steal from Wellington himself, I hope to ascertain his weakness.

Dig, Day 1 — Even across this Earth's Indian Ocean, I feel the gaze of Wellington, and it weighs heavy on my soul. Due to the academic nature of many in our group, the books were the first things unpacked. I shall start my research on the morrow.

Dig, Day 5 — My duties as an archaeologist consume my time and energy, but I still manage to save some for my studies of Wellington. Since he is a man of war, I suspect that his weakness involves peace. But in what form? What manifestation?

Dig, Day 10 — Thanks be to the Saviour, success at last! The monster Wellington can be slain at sunrise in a duel with a single opponent. The sole way of getting him to agree to such a duel is to confront him with a Gaean Peace Rose, a rare species of rose which grows in few places on this strange world.

One of these places is the Rhodesland Street manor of Dr. Stormfield, which serves as the New London headquarters of the Sign of the Six, my fellow occult students! The irony is delicious!

I shall have to notify Dr. Stormfield that the means of stopping Wellington lies in his own garden!

A second location is the Fortress of the Dead, a foul place on Majestic's northeast coast.

Dig, Day 15 — My mind is almost unable to comprehend the enormity of the corruption of General Wellington.

Thanks to my reading of his books, I have discovered his plans. The man has found a ritual that will grant him great power, though at the cost of many lives. This ritual lies in a book called the *Archives of the Damned*, a foul volume with countless blasphemies between its worm-eaten covers. Unfortunately, I was unable to purloin that specific volume.

This ritual, which must be performed at the highest point in a large city in the Southern hemisphere, will drain the life force of many of the city's inhabitants and give this energy to the General.

I am not certain of the time or location; perhaps my fellow society members can aid me there. I must leave the camp as soon as I am able, but securing permission will be difficult, since I dare not confide in any, lest they be an agent of Wellington's!

Dig, Day 16— Work came to a halt today when laborers discovered one of their fellows, dead. He had been missing for two nights. His insides had been torn out by claws, presumably belonging to some wild animal. The whole incident makes my spine shrivel.

Dig, Day 17 — Another laborer has been found dead, his throat torn out. It seems certain that we have a wild animal hunting in the area, or so Garreck says. I fear that it is something far more sinister, and that it walks among us in the guise of a human.

Dig, Day 18 — I have burned Wellington's books and invoked my rituals to gain as much knowledge as I can. All of my forays into the corrupt world of the occult are beginning to fray my nerves.

During the last days of my research, I discovered that Wellington is resistant to mundane weaponry. This presents yet another obstacle, though my special foil will most likely neutralize this advantage.

My dreams of late have shown a great city under a night sky, a city now filled with walking dead. I dream of an hourglass in the sky, and a withered corpse emerging from a storm.

I feel as if I am prisoner in this camp. I dare not trust any of the soldiers.

Later —

Another laborer is lost, presumed dead. His body has not been found. What manner of madness has seized us?

Dig, Day 20 — I lay awake tonight, and I hear the sounds of the insects in the desert. They tell me that a group of people come to our camp tomorrow afternoon. These people, though they may mean well, are already tainted by Corruption. The insects know. They sing their knowledge to each other and mock me.

But their mocking is in vain, for I have understood their speech, and I believe I know the name of the city which Avery intends to destroy: it is called Singapore.

the direction has been ascertained, finding the body is easy. The murder site is a mere five meters from Scope's tent.

Once the Knights arrive at the location, read the following:

The lightning flashes, briefly illuminating the area. In the quick burst of light, the severed yet still helmeted head of a Victorian Regimental soldier stares at you, eyes wide, mouth hanging open in a silent scream.

The head is propped atop the deceased's rifle, the latter driven through the headless corpse with great force. Dangling from the mouth is the soldier's Sacellum cross, hanging upside down.

Drop the party's Perseverance by one and have the make a check.

An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 12 on the body shows that there are what look like the marks of fingernails on the remains of the throat, as if the head was torn off by human hands. A *find* or *Perception* total of 18 reveals several long strands of brown hair on the body. If the Knights have viewed the other bodies, a *Mind* total of 8 reveals that the marks on the throat are identical to those on the corpses.

The truth behind this gruesome incident is that Victoria wanted to kill Scope, but the sentry showed up unexpectedly. She killed the man, and with her flair for drama, set up the corpse as it is found, but then had no time to continue to Scope's tent and finish the job. She is now back at the women's tent, having slipped out and back. The other women noticed nothing.

There are no tracks. The howling wind, driving rain, and shifting sand sees to that.

Three rounds after the cry, ten soldiers, Leftenant Welles, Brigadier Auchenford, Garreck, Alister Scope, and the Reverend arrive at the scene.

Flags

A *Suspicion* card played will make the Brigadier suspect a Storm Knight of the murder.

Variables

If the Knights were in Scope's tent and managed to react immediately, they will see a blurry figure fleeing the murder site and heading in the direction of the women's tent. Remember that barging into that tent would be a breach of etiquette, and the Victorians will no doubt react with indignation to any accusation of one of the ladies.

If the Knights had decided to do night time guard duty outside, allow one *find* or *Perception* roll, trying to beat a difficulty of 16. Success indicates that the Knight sees, through the storm, two figures struggling. The Storm Knights will be able to arrive in time to save the soldier's life and confront Victoria.

If Victoria escapes, she will try the next night to kill one of the male Knights. She will continue to make such attempts until she is destroyed. When she appears, have the Knights make a Perseverance check.

Perseverance Awards

The Knights receive one Perseverance point for each of the following: obtaining information from Scope or his sword; observing the nail marks of strands of hair on the workers' bodies; observing same on the sentry's body. They receive two Perseverance points for viewing the corpses and two for viewing the sentry.

If the Knights should defeat Victoria, give them two additional Perseverance points.

Cut To ...

Once the evening's excitement is over with, cut to Scene Two, "Under the Sand." The Knights will have plenty to occupy them in the day before having to deal with Victoria again in the evening.

SCENE TWO: Under the Sand

The Situation

Standard. The following day, at ten in the morning, workers discover a tomb entrance in dig site C.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Come morning, the storm has ended. The tents held up surprisingly well. Your group is sitting alone in the mess tent, having a light breakfast of tea and scones.

Let the party have a chance to talk, perhaps discussing events of the night before. They have complete privacy. After a few minutes, continue reading aloud:

A cry goes up from some workers in one of the dig sites. Archaeologists and other workers dash over, and a cheer goes up.

The workers have found an ancient tomb. It will take them a while to clear a decent passageway. Exploration of the tomb is set for one o'clock, right after lunch.

Keep in mind that the tomb is in the Orrorsh dominant zone, due to the presence of the hardpoint.

Snee will dash off to his tent to report the find. If none of the characters are paying attention to the laborers' reactions, then no one notices Snee leave. If the characters are watching the workers, a *find* or *Perception* total of 11 will reveal that Snee has wandered off. If the Knights follow, he will have finished broadcasting his message to his superiors by the time they arrive at his tent.

The Action

Garreck, Scope, Victoria (if she's still alive), Lenore Garreck, the Brigadier, and three workers (one of them Snee), will descend into the tomb. As a matter of courtesy, the Knights will be invited along.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Your group clambers down the 40 feet into the large pit, where the rest of the explorers are already clearing away sand and other debris from the doors.

The four workmen begin work at removing the seals from the stone double doors. There is a feeling of electric anticipation in the air.

At last, the doors are pulled open, and a blast of millennia-old stale air assails the group as fresh air rushes in.

The Tomb

Consult Map 9. "The Underground Temple," while the Knights move through the Egyptian tomb. This area contains an eternity shard. If the shard is removed from its resting place, a number of traps will be triggered. These are explained under individual location entries.

Main Chamber

This room contains a beautiful sarcophagus flanked by four hieroglyph-inscribed pillars. In the far corners stand large clay jars.

Reading the hieroglyphs requires a *hieroglyphics* total of 12. If none of the Knights can read it, one of the archaeologists will. They say "Prince Ahun-Tet, exiled from the court of Pharaoh. A curse on any who defile his tomb, for they shall suffer the same fate as he, exile from those he loves." (The curse is a bluff.)

One jar contains the Prince's organs, carefully preserved. The other contains a selection of two dozen jewelry pieces, each worth 1,000 sterling.

The Prince's mummy is a typical corpse, well preserved and stuffed with flowers, spices, onions, and garlics.

Inside his chest cavity is a scroll (*hieroglyphics* total of 12 to read it). It reads, "The earthen vessels that hold the Prince's treasure also mark the way to greater things. Seek what lies between them."

The scroll also contains a mathematical spell:

Confusion

Skill: *conjuration*
Difficulty: 15
Number of Planets: 1
Influence: Isis, Nepthys, Ptah

Mathematicians casting this spell utter a confusing babble of equations and such, rendering opponents confused and stupefied.

The spellcaster compares his spell total with the target's *Mind*. For every level of success achieved, the victim suffers one round of being unable to cast a spell, invoke a miracle, or use psionics due to an inability to concentrate. All other *Perception* or *Mind*-based actions suffer a +2 to their difficulty.

A section of the north wall is plaster, concealing a set of double doors. A *find* or *Perception* total of 14 is required to discover the doors. An *Alertness* card will also reveal the doors' presence.

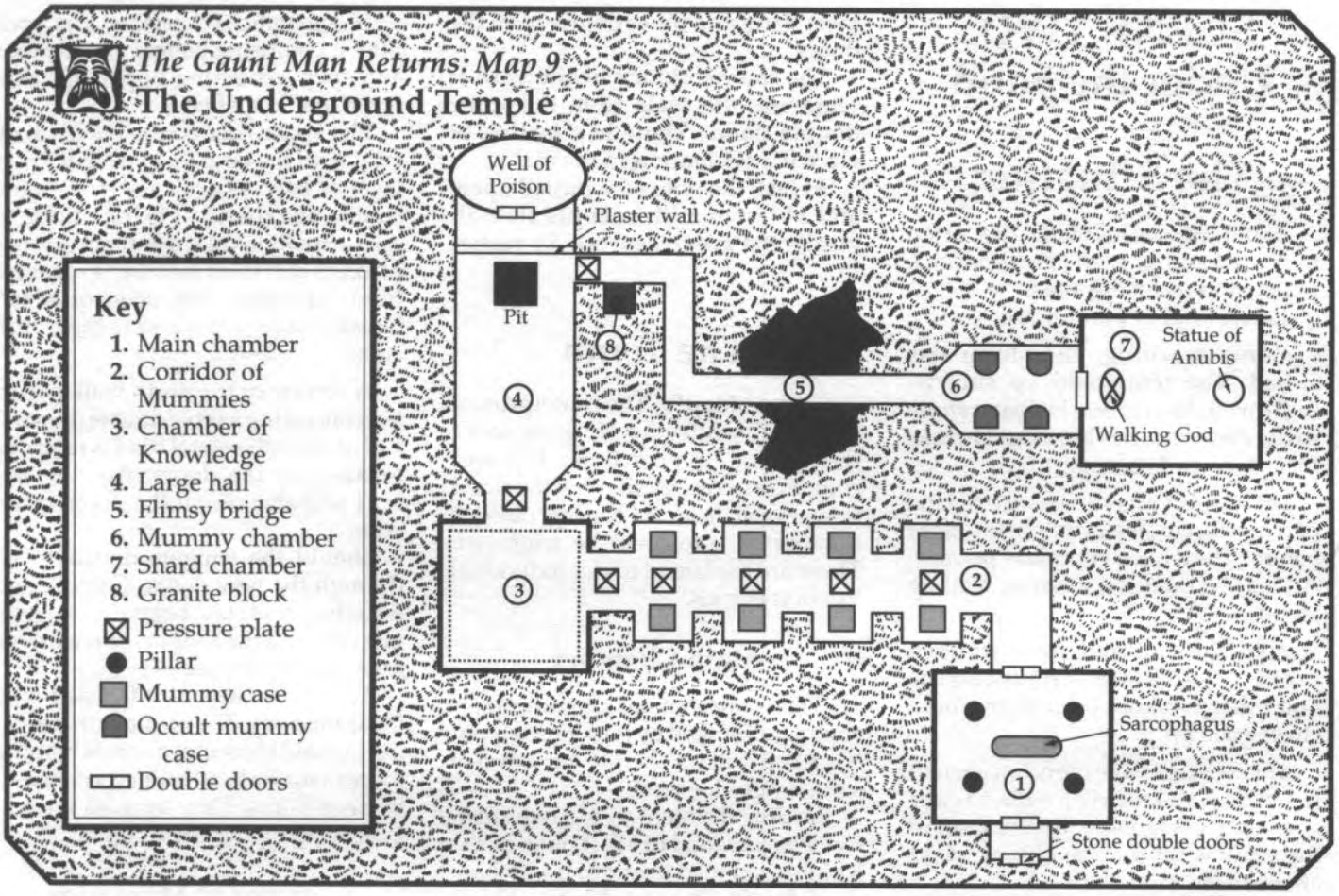
Should the Knights decide to go through the new doors, Garreck and the others will stay, but the archaeologist will lend the Knights two workers (one of them is Snee).

The Victorians are interested only in the mummy. They believe that what lies beyond the secret doors is nothing more than workers' tunnels and maintenance shafts. They have no interest in accompanying the Knights.

Corridor of Mummies

This two-meter-wide corridor has recesses every four meters. In each recess is a sarcophagus containing a mummy. Each sarcophagus lid is coated with a dangerous contact poison (damage value 15, suffered every round until poison is washed off with water—rubbing one's hands on clothing or against a wall has no effect). An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 13 will reveal a strange sheen on the lids, as if some substance has been brushed on the outside. A *scholar (realm lore)* total of 11 will reveal that ancient Egyptians often covered mummy cases with poisons to protect their contents from thieves.

When the Ankh of Ra eternity shard is taken, the trap in this hallway is activated. Each mummy fires a poison dart at each Knight that steps on a pressure plate (Storm Knights must make a *maneuver* or *Dexterity* total of 15 to avoid each pressure plate). The mummies "attack" with a *missile weapons* of 14, and the darts do damage value 12. If the darts score a *wound* or



better result, the poison with which they are coated works its way into the bloodstream, doing damage value 13 per round. A *first aid* total of 10 is required to drain the tainted blood and prevent the poison from killing the victim.

Chamber of Knowledge

In this hieroglyph-decorated chamber are five clay tablets with glyphs inscribed upon them. Each has a different inscription: one features the Egyptian miracle *mummify*, another *portent*, another the engineering spell *find the path*, a fourth the mathematical spell *death shout*. The fifth has been affected by the Orrorshan hardpoint and now lists the *resurrection* ritual (see Appendix: This Evil Reborn).

When the eternity shard is taken, the trap in this room is activated. When explorers step on the northern hallway pressure plate, the floor opens up to reveal a huge pit (three meters deep), filled with asps, scorpions, poisonous spiders, and centipedes. The creatures come from underground, and have used small cracks in the pit walls to gain entry.

If the party was running down the darkened hallway, the first rank of Knights must generate *acrobatics* or *Dexterity* totals of 12 to avoid falling in. Each subsequent rank of Knights need only generate totals of 10, as they know the pit is there.

If the Knights were walking down the hallway, they can easily see the pit opening before them. *Long jumping* or *Dexterity* can be used to try to leap over the pit to the Corridor of Mummies. The Storm Knight must make an *acrobatics*, *maneuver* or *Dexterity* total of 16 to avoid tumbling onto the pressure plate. The mouth of the hole has a length value of 3.

Anyone falling into the pit suffers a damage value equal to their weight value plus 5.

Once in the pit, a Knight suffers damage value 16 per round from assorted snake bites. A *Strength* total of 10 is needed for someone to pull the Knight out. Getting out of the pit unaided requires a *climbing* or *Strength* total of 12.

Help from the Victorians will probably not be forthcoming. They are far too absorbed in their mummy, and won't be coming this way for hours at least.

Large Hall

This hall is decorated with more hieroglyphs. The northern section, where the hall turns east, is made of flimsy plaster.

When the trap is sprung, the double doors beyond it burst open. This causes a huge amount of caustic slime to come smashing through the weak plaster wall and flooding the corridor. The slime has a damage value of 18 per round of exposure. It not only affects living tissue, it eats through armor. All armor must be "attacked" by the slime. The armor's *Toughness* equals the adds it confers to the user's *Toughness*. Thus,

Akashan kinetic armor resists the caustic slime with a *Toughness* of 10.

A *hieroglyphics* total of 13 is necessary to read the walls, but they have nothing of import to say.

Flimsy Bridge

This cavernous chamber has a narrow stone bridge spanning a chasm. Within the chasm are hundreds of hungry rats, chattering and squealing. The chasm is 25 meters deep.

The bridge can only support two humans at a time. For purposes of weight determination, one human equals two dwarves, one giant equals two humans.

Any greater amount of weight causes the bridge to collapse into the rat chasm. Anyone falling into the chasm suffers damage value 12 per round from all of the rat bites. The rats crawl into armor and such, so vests and armor provide no protection. Basically, the victim is covered in rats. (On the other hand, landing on nice, soft rats eliminates the problem of falling damage.)

Negotiating the bridge requires an *acrobatics* or *Dexterity* total of 10. Failure indicates a fall into the rats. If the Knight fails, he gets to attempt to catch himself—a *Dexterity* total of 12 means he has fallen, but is holding on to the stonework with one hand. A *Strength* total of 10 is needed to get back on to the bridge. A *Strength* total of 8 is required to pull someone else back on to the bridge.

The rats have gained access to the chasm by means of the concealed tunnel (see following Event).

Event

A concealed tunnel at the bottom of the chasm is home to a group of Orrorshan wights that have come up from the Land Below. When the last Storm Knight is halfway across the bridge, the wights attack him and try to drag him into the chasm.

The chasm tunnel is one meter wide and slopes downward into the earth at a very steep angle. The tunnel leads to the Abominari Temple in the Land Below.

Have the Knights generate a Perseverance total when they first see the wights.

Wights (6)

Reality: Orrorsh
DEXTERITY 11
Dodge 14, maneuver 13, stealth 13, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 15
Climbing 16
TOUGHNESS 16
PERCEPTION 13
Tracking 14, trick 15
MIND 8
CHARISMA 3
SPIRIT 16
Intimidation 18
Possibility Potential: none
Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+3/18 plus life drain; teeth, damage value STR+2/17 plus life drain
Powers: *animal control, life drain*
Corruption Value: 14
Fear Rating: 1/2

Weakness: sunlight (severe)
True Death: a flaming weapon which completely destroys the wight's body (at least six wounds).
Description: Wights appear as ghastly white, bloated corpses still dressed in the remains of their burial clothing. Their teeth are pointed and their fingers are unnaturally long and wickedly curved.

Mummy Chamber

This chamber has four sarcophagi standing upright. Each contains a mummy, transformed by the Orrorshan axioms. They will attack the Knights if the Knights attempt to enter the Shard Chamber, or if the Knights open the sarcophagi and begin attacking them.

Mummies (4)
Reality: Orrorsh
DEXTERITY 6
Unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 15
TOUGHNESS 20
PERCEPTION 3
Trick (13)
MIND 5
Test (14)
CHARISMA 3
Taunt (13)
SPIRIT 15
Intimidation 20
Possibility Potential: none
Powers: *resistance to normal weapons*
Corruption Value: 16
Fear Rating: 1
Weakness: fire (severe)
True Death: Destruction of their sarcophagi (TOU 20).

Shard Chamber

The most unusual thing about this chamber is that it is lit bright as day. An orb that represents Ra the sun god hovers near the middle of the ceiling, giving light to the chamber.

This room is seven meters in width.

The room is bare save for a four-meter-high statue of Anubis, with an ankh on a chain around his neck. The golden ankh has veins of red and blue running through it, for it is an eternity shard.

The Ankh of Ra
Cosm: Core Earth
Possibilities: 40
Tapping Difficulty: 15
Purpose: To illuminate others and to reveal that which is hidden.
Powers: Adds +3 to *find* and *evidence analysis* totals. Three times a day, the Ankh can be commanded to shed a powerful light in a 20 meter radius, which nullifies all darkness, regardless of whether it's caused by magic, miracles, pulp power, or otherwise. The light lasts for one hour
Group Power: Stelae Sense
Restrictions: Possibilities tapped from the Ankh can only be used when seeking knowledge (*research, find, evidence analysis, scholar, science*) or revealing it to others (*language, persuasion*).

Event

Once the Ankh is found, the two laborers, if present, give a cry of dread and run out of the chamber. Snee's cry is an act — he's heading for his tent to alert his Nile masters.

When the Ankh is taken, it springs the temple's elaborate trap. An Anubis Walking God smashes through the floor's stone blocks (marked "X" on the map) and attacks the Knights. If they run, it will pursue.

Mechanics of the Trap

Removal of the Ankh from Anubis' neck puts all traps in motion. Until the Ankh is removed, the pressure plates, etc. are inert. Things happen in the following order. Note that some things are time-dependent, while others are action-dependent.

- Round after Ankh is taken: Walking god erupts from floor, attacks Knights.
- The round Anubis is defeated: Walls and ceiling begin to shake, stonework begins crumbling, iron ball emerges.
- Second round: Granite block begins to slide out of recess, to seal off corridor.
- Fourth round: Block in place. Poison gas begins filling sealed off area (damage value 15).
- Fifth round: Shard Chamber caves in.
- Sixth round: Mummy Chamber caves in.
- Seventh round: Flimsy bridge caves in.
- Eighth round: Large hall caves in.
- Ninth round: Chamber of Knowledge caves in.
- Tenth round: Corridor of Mummies caves in.

— Pressure plate to the left of stone block is pressed: the caustic ooze rushes out. The ooze moves at a speed value of 8.

— Pressure plate in northern corridor next to Chamber of Knowledge is pressed: floor swings open, revealing the vermin.

— Pressure plate in eastern corridor next to Chamber of Knowledge is is pressed: mummies in area Corridor of Mummies fire their eye darts as victims walk by.

Anyone in a room when it caves in automatically suffers cave-in damage. Damage value for room cave-ins is 25, ignoring victims' armor. The victims are also trapped under rubble, requiring a *lifting* or *Strength* total of 18 to extricate oneself. A *Strength* total of 15 is necessary for someone else to pull one out of the rubble

If the room before a Knight has caved in, a *climbing* total of 14 is required to make their way over the rubble. Failure means they have slid back into the original chamber. If a *setback* occurs, a Knight might twist her ankle among the rocks.

Anubis Walking God

DEXTERITY 8
Dodge 12, maneuver 12, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 11
STRENGTH 16
Lifting 18
TOUGHNESS 19
PERCEPTION 14
Find 15, trick (15)
MIND 12
Test (16)
CHARISMA 9
Taunt (16)
SPIRIT 13
Intimidation 18, reality (Nile Empire) 14
Possibilities: 20
Inclination: Evil

Natural Tools: eye beams, *find* to hit, damage value akin to *slow* spell with value 24

Equipment: two-handed sword, damage value STR+9/25

Granite Block

Once the trap is activated, this huge granite block begins to slide out of its recess, sealing off the corridor. It takes three rounds to do so completely. Block's *Toughness* is 30.

Event

Once the Anubis Walking God is defeated, a low rumble sounds, and the walls begin to develop cracks. The floor shakes.

From out of the wall behind the other statue of Anubis (the one that had been wearing the ankh) comes a spiked ball of iron, three meters in diameter, rolling at a speed value of 10, courtesy of engineering magic. It rolls through the Shard Chamber and the Mummy Chamber and on to the flimsy stone bridge. The bridge collapses once the ball gets halfway across it.

Iron Ball

Toughness: 30, damage value: 25, speed value: 10

If a victim suffers a *heavy wound* or better from a hit, he is stuck to a spike and is now rolling with the ball, suffering an additional damage value of 15 for each stuck round. The ball has no multi-action penalty for running over more than one Knight.

Dividing the Spoils

The Victorians wish to keep the Ankh, great archaeological find that is. Hefty *persuasion* will be required to get them to give it up, and on this subject, they are *hostile*.

If Scope has not yet shared his information on Wellington with the Knights, he will do so now, as they have shown their resourcefulness by obtaining this artifact. When they return to the camp, he will tell them what he knows, give them his journal (handout 2), and the sword.

If the Knights have not obtained the shard, they will have to rely on *persuasion* to get Scope to talk.

A Dark and Stormy Night ...

A violent sandstorm will spring up that night, effectively postponing any plans the Knights had to leave until the next day. This gives them the chance to steal the shard if they have not been able to obtain it any other way (there will be a number of sentries equal to the number of Knights posted as guards).

If she is still alive, Victoria will make an attempt to seduce and then kill one of the male Knights during the evening, giving the Knights a chance to defeat her.

Variables

If the Knights turn down the archaeologist's offer to explore the tomb, or do not explore the secret areas, one of the laborers will find the Ankh and set off the traps. He will stumble into the Main Chamber, on the verge of death, shard in his hands. The Nile attack will still take place at dawn of the next day.

If the Knights neutralized Snee before the expedition went down into the tomb, Scene Four will still occur, since Snee is supposed to check in three times a day: sunrise, noon, sundown. The attack will come at dawn.

Perseverance Awards

Award the Knights one Perseverance point for this scene. If they succeeded in obtaining Scope's journal and sword, award them two more points.

Cut To ...

As the sun rises over the desert the next morning, cut to Scene Four "The Pulp Raid."

SCENE FOUR: The Pulp Raid

The Situation

Dramatic. The secret Nile contingent, alerted by Snee, swoops down on the camp, intent on getting the eternity shard.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

You are awakened from a sound sleep by the sound of a tremendous explosion that rocks the camp. This is followed by harrowing screams, rifle fire and the distinctive noise of motorized vehicles coming nearer and nearer.

If the Knights look out their tent flap to see what the trouble is, read:

The first thing you see is the statue that had stood in the middle of the camp, now blown to rubble. In the distance, laborers explode into flames, apparently caught in an axiom wash.

But what is most stunning is the sight of a horde of machinegun-wielding shocktroopers, many on foot, some in jeeps, roaring down on the Victorian camp. A pair of Nile tanks are also closing in, while a third tank explodes, a victim of Victorian artillery batteries. A pair of reconnaissance vehicles roar past the tanks, machine guns blazing.

The Regimenters are lined up in skirmish formation, firing at the Nile shocktroopers and being cut down in hails of lead for their troubles.

Even in the confusion of battle, you cannot miss the sight of two costumed figures hovering ten meters in the air above the battle, shouting orders and laughing insanely.

The Action

The encampment is under attack by Nile shocktroopers led by two villains, Dr. Totten and the Scarlet Asp. Using a Victorian field piece purchased on the black market, the Asp had the Orrorshan hardpoint blown up. Dominant Nile is now flooding back into this area, causing Ord laborers to perish as they transform a second time.

Veteran Shocktroopers (50)
DEXTERITY 9
Beast riding 11, fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 9
Climbing 10
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 7
Find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9
MIND 7
Survival 9, test 9, willpower 12
CHARISMA 7
Taunt 10
SPIRIT 9
Faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12
Possibility Potential: some (55)
Equipment: KK81, damage value 19, ammo 24, range 3-40/400/1k; grenades (2), damage value 19, explosive burst radius, 0-3/8/15; bayonet, damage value STR+4/13; field kit

Mk 13-Khepera Tanks (2)
TOU 27; speed value 60/40/11; crew 4; armament: 75mm gun, damage value 27, ammo 1, range 100-600/1k/2.5k; two 30mm Khaifus, damage value 25, ammo 11, range 3-250/1k/2k

MC2 Serseru (2)
TOU 26; speed value 100/60/12; crew 3; armament: Kocha machinegun, damage value 22, ammo 5, range 3-100/600/1k

Senehem Jeeps (6)
TOU 15; speed value 150/100/13; crew 4

Scarlet Asp
DEXTERITY 12
Acrobatics 13, dodge 16, melee weapons 14, running 13, stealth 15, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 10
Climbing 12
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 13
Find 14, first aid 15, hieroglyphics 14, land vehicles 15, scholar (Terran Mystery Men and villains) 14, scholar (master criminal) 16, trick 16
MIND 12
Test 14, weird science 16, willpower 15
CHARISMA 14
Charm 19, persuasion 18, taunt 18

SPIRIT 12
Intimidation 14, reality (Nile Empire) 16
Possibilities: 28
Inclination: Evil
Equipment: Asp headband: TOU 12, powers: *dispersal* 20, *electro-ray* 20; asp staff: TOU 15, powers: force field 20, flight 15, mind control 17; skimpy costume, lots of gold jewelry, scarlet high heels
Description: The Scarlet Asp is the typical pulp villainess: she mixes her evil in with a healthy dose of sex appeal. She will use her charms on males whenever she stands to gain by doing so. She has a malicious sense of humor, and loves to injure women whom she perceives as being more attractive than herself.

Doctor Totten

DEXTERITY 10
Dodge 14, fire combat 14, flight 12, heavy weapons 13, maneuver 13, melee combat 14, unarmed combat 11
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 11
Air vehicles 16, Egyptian religion 12, evidence analysis 13, find 12, land vehicles 12, language 12, scholar (burial customs) 17, scholar (Nile realm lore) 15, scholar (master criminal) 13, trick 16
MIND 12
Artist (organist) 15, hypnotism 14, medicine 15, test 14, weird science 15, willpower 14
CHARISMA 11
Charm 15, persuasion 15, taunt 17
SPIRIT 10
Faith (Egyptian) 13, intimidation 16, reality (Nile Empire) 13
Possibilities: 13
Inclination: Evil
Pulp Powers: *Brainbuster*, value 17; *withering touch*, value 20
Equipment: Skull suit, armor value TOU+5/15; 9mm Luger, damage value 15, ammo 8, range 3-10/25/4
Description: Young Otto Von Totten was an accomplished German ace during Terra's Great War. After the war, he went into medicine, with an emphasis on developing weird science powers in humans.

One day, Totten experimented on himself, and received the touch of death. Still chafing from the outcome of the Great War, he now is obsessed with death in all its forms.

Totten is subject to mood swings; at one moment he is aristocratic, cultured, and droll; another moment, he is filled with thoughts of death and destruction.

Running the Battle

The shocktroopers have orders to target Storm Knights first, since they constitute the greatest threat. If Snee got any messages out, the attackers know exactly who the Knights are.

The Knights, before they get a chance to split up into pairs or solo, are attacked by two Senehems (each with four troopers) and two dozen shocktroopers on foot. Three rounds later, a Serseru joins in the fray. Three rounds after that, a Khepera tank enters the battle.

After the Knights have had a total of ten rounds of combat, gamemasters should gauge the overall battle by how successful the heroes have been. If the Knights have dealt with all of the Nile

forces thrown at them, they face a showdown with the pulp villains. Scattered pockets of Nile resistance will keep the Victorians out of this showdown.

If the Knights were overwhelmed by the Nile forces to the point of retreating or sustaining over 50 percent casualties (dead, KO'd or unconscious), the Nile forces rout the Victorians, who flee south. The pulp villains' focus now becomes the Storm Knights, whom they believe must have the shard (whether they actually do or not is another story).

Note that the villains will try to incapacitate the Storm Knights rather than kill them outright. The Knights are to be taken alive. However, if some Knights seem to be rather successful at inflicting wounds on the villains, those offenders will be slain, probably by a very enthusiastic Dr. Totten.

The goals of the villains are to get the eternity shard, get any death-related rituals, and capture some Storm Knights.

Event

If (somehow) Victoria Sigurd is still alive at this point, she will use the confusion to try to kill Scope. The professor, meanwhile, will have his fragile mind snap at the sight of the carnage of battle.

Unless a Storm Knight was specifically assigned to watch Scope, the Knights require a *find* or *Perception* roll of 15 to notice his state. One roll is made per group of Storm Knights per round.

Ending the Battle

If the Nile forces are losing the battle, the Scarlet Asp and Dr. Totten will beat a hasty retreat using their *flight* powers. They will disappear over the northern dunes.

Defeated shocktroopers will lay down their arms and surrender. Interrogation of the shocktroopers or *tracking* (difficulty 3) them back to the source of the attack will reveal that on the other side of the north dunes, a camouflaged base exists.

The Nile Encampment

Refer to Map 10, "The Nile Base," while running this section.

This secret base was built 18 months ago. The entrances are concealed by a camouflage net (*find* or *Perception* total of 18 to uncover the door). The base has a total complement of 100 shocktroopers.

Barracks and Mess Hall

There are two barracks, each holding 50 shocktroopers.

Temple

The air is filled with the smell of incense. Dominating the room is a solid gold statue of Sebek, the crocodile god. *Faith* and *focus* attempts when invoking Egyptian miracles receive a +2 bonus in this shrine, while attempts to invoke other miracles suffer a +2 to the difficulty numbers.

Priests' Quarters

Each room contains a priest of Sebek, a simple cot, a holy symbol of Sebek, a lamp, and a miniature altar for personal worship.

Priest of Sebek

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 12, maneuever 11, melee weapons 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (11 with mask)

PERCEPTION 11

Egyptian religion 14, find 12, first aid 13, hierogyphics 14, language 13, mathematics 12, scholar (astronomy) 13, trick 13

MIND 9

Test 12, willpower 11

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Egyptian religion) 14, focus 13, intimidation 12, reality (Nile Empire) 14

Possibilities: 2

Inclination: Evil

Equipment: Khopesh sword, damage value STR+5/14; Sebek holy symbol, golden crocodile mask: increases *Toughness* by two, electro-rays shoot from the mask's eyes (value 16) usable every other round.

Scarlet Asp's Room

Plush scarlet furniture, rug, pillows, and bunting decorates this room. The air smells of musk incense.

The musk incense is a weird science creation which works on male Storm Knights. For every round spent inside the room, each male Storm Knight is "attacked" by the scent (value 18). The scent's total is compared to the Storm Knight's *Mind* or *willpower*. The result is read on the General Results Table:

Minimal/Average: No effect.

Good: Victim's *Mind* temporarily drops by -1. If the victim is removed from the incense, he will return to normal in one hour.

Superior: The victim will be unable to muster the will to fight the Scarlet Asp.

Spectacular: The victim will not only be unable to fight the Asp, he will feel compelled to protect her from those who would cause her harm.

A secret panel (*find* or *Perception* of 18 to spot) leads to a corridor that takes the user to the submarine pens.

Doctor Totten's Room

Painted black, this room is filled with statues and symbols of death. A secret panel (*find* or *Perception* of 18 to spot) leads to a corridor that takes the user to the submarine pens.

Major Teth-Ra's Room

This man is the leader of the Nile garrison. The room has a bed, desk, and a few chairs. A secret panel (*find* or *Perception* of 18 to spot) leads to a corridor that takes the user to the submarine pens.

Inside the Major's desk (which is unlocked) are his orders:

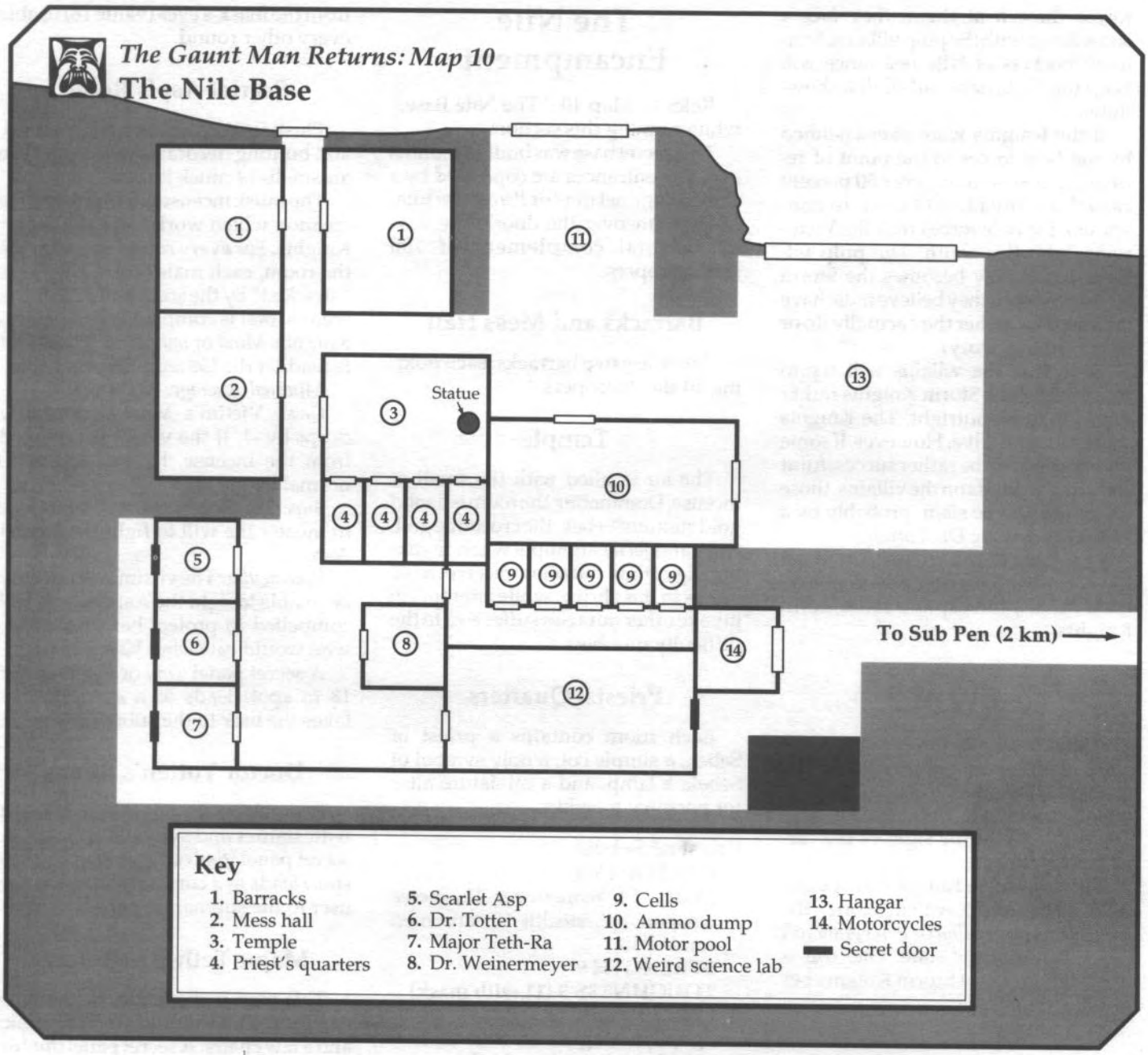
Wait for word from Snee the Mole regarding significant finds at the Victorian dig. If one is found, strike the dig, take the artifact, and kill all the Victorians.

Also, use the submarine to wreak havoc on Red Sea shipping. Victorian vessels are fair game.

The orders are signed by Overgovernor Neteru.

The Gaunt Man Returns: Map 10

The Nile Base



Major Teth-Ra

DEXTERITY 10
Dodge 12, fire combat 16, maneuver 14, melee combat 12, running 14, stealth 14, unarmed combat 13
STRENGTH 11
TOUGHNESS 11
PERCEPTION 9
Find 11, hieroglyphics 12, land vehicles 13, scholar (military strategy) 15
MIND 10
Willpower 12
CHARISMA 10
Persuasion 14, taunt 12
SPIRIT 8
Faith (Egyptian religion) 9, intimidation 14, reality (Nile Empire) 10
Possibilities: 6
Inclination: Evil
Equipment: 9mm Luger, damage value 15, ammo 8, range 3-10/25/40; khopesh sword, damage value STR+5/16)

Description: Teth-Ra is an ambitious man who wishes to rise in favor with Overgovernor Neteru. A military genius, he employs strategy and values patience.

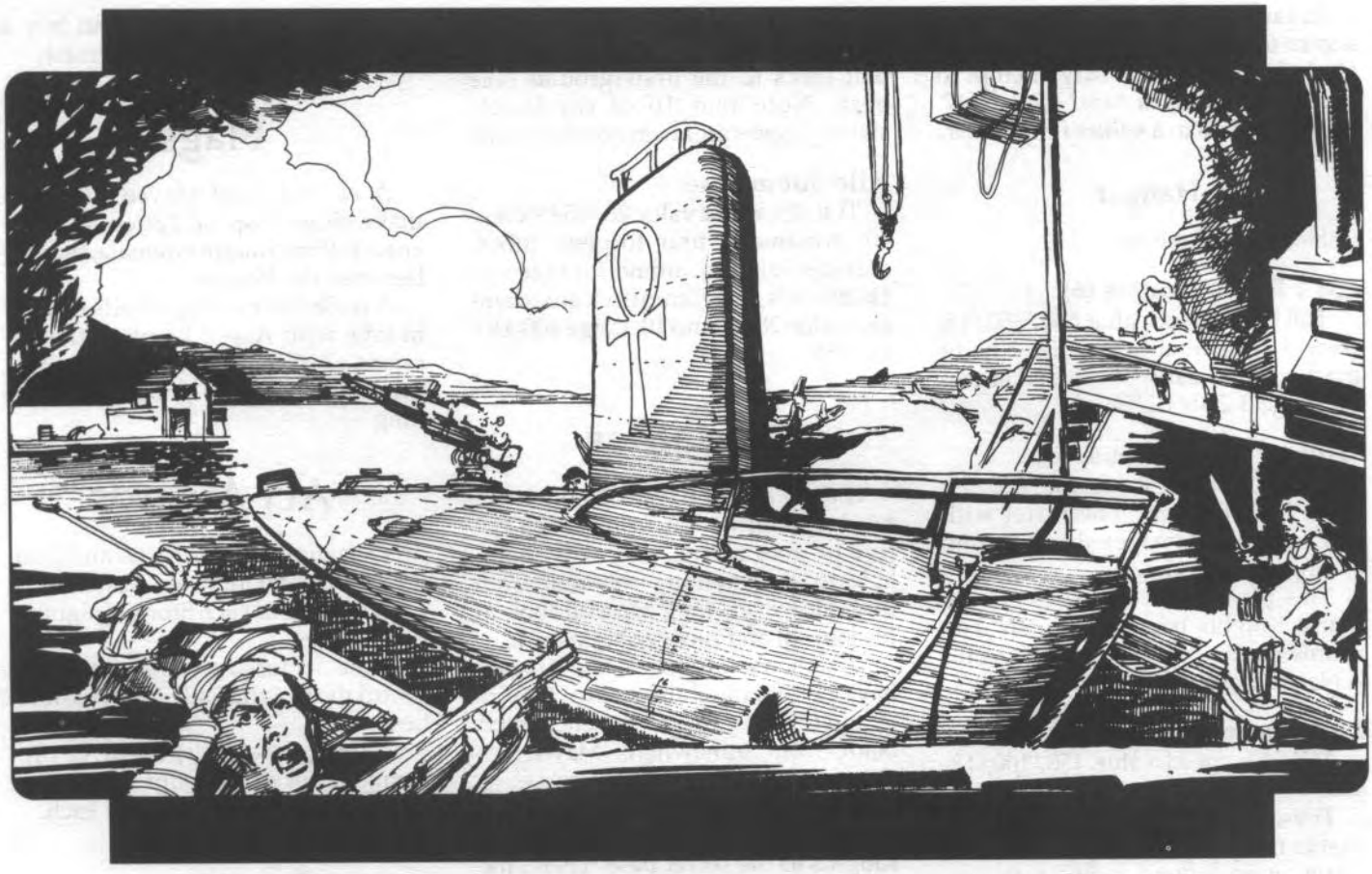
Dr. Weinermeyer's Room

Filled with clutter, dirty clothes, and stacks of books, this is the room of a weird scientist.

Among the debris is: four housings, eight boosters, seven compensators, four possibility capacitors, three power plants, 17 adaptors, and 25 caps. There are also numerous tools for use in the construction of weird science gadgets.

Doctor Hans Weinermeyer

DEXTERITY 7
Fire combat 9, running 9



STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 13
Evidence analysis 16, find 15, language 14, mathematics 14, scholar (electronics) 15, scholar (Nile realm lore) 16
MIND 13
Hypnotism 16, weird science 19
CHARISMA 7
SPIRIT 10
Possibilities: none
Inclination: Evil
Equipment: 9mm Luger, damage value 15, ammo 8, range 3-10/25/40; weird science toolkit, lots of pens, pocket protector, monocle
Description: Doctor Weinermeyer is from Terra's Germany. He is 60 years old and has a huge mop of white hair on his head. A bit absent-minded, he is still a brilliant weird scientist.

Cells

Great for imprisoning captured Storm Knights. Locks on the steel doors require *lock picking* totals of 20 to open.

Ammo Dump

Boxes and crates filled with ammunition for tanks, planes, and small arms/rifles of the Nile Empire. If the dump blows up, it will take the complex (and half the hillside) with it.

Motor Pool

This area contains repair/refuelling facilities for the motor vehicles. The vehicle inventory includes:

Mk 13-Khepera Tanks (3)
TOU 27; speed value 60/40/11; crew 4; armament: 75mm gun, damage value 27, ammo 1, range 100-600/1k/2.5k; two 30mm Khaifus, damage value 25, ammo 11, range 3-250/1k/2k

MC2 Serseru (3)
TOU 26; speed value 100/60/12; crew 3; armament: 30mm Kocha, damage value 22, ammo 5, range 3-100/600/1k

Senehem Jeeps (10)
TOU 15; speed value 150/100/13; crew 4

Troop Trucks (6)
TOU 20; speed value 100/60/12; pass 16

Weird Science Lab

This huge room glows with the light of dozens of electronic tubes and wires. Lightning crackles between electrodes, and the smell of ozone fills the air.

This is the lab where Doctor Weinermeyer practices his scientific experiments. The evil doctor can be found in the lab from 8 a.m. to midnight.

His pride and joy is the Enneadotron. The Ennead is the term for the most powerful gods of the Egyptian religion. The gizmo is a weapon which has four settings, each one producing a power similar to that of an Egyptian god. The settings are:

Set: *death ray* (value 25)
Ra: *flash* (value 20, stun damage only, victims have +6 added to the difficulty numbers of all skill attempts requiring sight for three rounds following attack).
Isis: *mind control* (value 25)
Anubis: *fear* (value 20)

In order to use the device, a *weird science* total of 12 must be generated. Unskilled individuals may attempt to use it, generating a *Mind* total of 17. Failure results in a *setback* for the user.

Hangar

Housed in here are:

PM 1 Paket Fighters (6)

TOU 27; speed value 600/380/16; crew 1, armament: two .30 Khaifu machineguns, damage value 25, ammo 11, range 3-250/1k/2k

"Horus" Cargo Transport

TOU 22; speed value 400/250/15; pass. 24; armament: one turret with .55 Onslaught, damage value 26, ammo 8, range 3- 250/1k/2k

This plane can be used to get the Storm Knights back to Orrorsh. The nearest landing place within that realm is New London (Padang).

Motorcycles (12)

TOU 12; speed value 150/100/13; pass 3

These motorbikes are stored here to enable troops to move quickly to the secret underground submarine pen two kilometers to the east.

The bikes each have a sidecar, and there is enough room for someone to ride behind the driver.

The Sub Pen

This pen houses one of Mobius' submarines, which patrols the Red Sea and western Indian Ocean. Access to the sub pen comes from the tunnel that leads to the underground Nile base. Note that 10 of the base's shocktroopers are always on duty here.

Nile Submarine

TOU 25; speed value 25/15/9; crew 40; armament: four torpedo tubes, damage value 34, ammo 1, range —/1k-20k/40k; one 75mm deck gun, damage value 28, ammo 10, range 400-1k/6k/15k

Variables

If the Knights have not gotten the needed information from Scope before he goes insane, they will be unable to get anything coherent from him. However, they can still look at his journal and recover his sword.

If, by some mischance, the Knights have not obtained the sword, they're going to have to get an enchanted blade from somewhere. Maybe it's time for a side trip to Aysle ...

If the Nile forces win the big battle, Asp and Totten will fly the surviving Knights to the secret base. There, the male hero with the highest *Charisma* becomes the plaything of the Asp while his comrades are tortured by Totten.

Once both villains have had their fun, the heroes are flown to Thebes and turned over to Mobius for interrogation and more fun.

Should the Knights not find the hidden Nile cargo plane, they can easily head back to Port Sudan and hire a plane to get them back to Orrorsh.

Flags

A *Nemesis* card played here will make either Asp or Totten an arch-enemy. If the Knight is female, the Asp becomes the *Nemesis*.

A male Storm Knight finds himself in love with Asp if he plays the *Romance* card, or, the Asp decides that the Knight may be good for a brief fling.

Act Awards

Defeating the Nile forces and gaining the information on Wellington's weakness earns each Storm Knight six Possibilities.

If the Victorians were wiped out, award the Knights only four Possibilities.

Gaining the eternity shard, or capturing either of the pulp villains are actions worth one Possibility each.

Cut To ...

Once the Knights leave the Nile and head back to Orrorsh, cut to Act Four.

Act Four

Recurring Fears

The Major Beat

The Storm Knights land in New London (Padang), and have a chance to explore the city and hopefully make contact with the Sign of Six.

After trekking through the jungle, encountering obstacles and meeting gypsies, the Knights arrive at the Fortress of the Dead and deal with the Ayslish menaces therein.

Crossing the channel into Singapore, the heroes have the option of encountering Skutharka before facing off against General Avery Wellington and his bodyguards.

SCENE ONE: Merry Olde New London

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights have a chance to explore New London a bit, and perhaps rest up before they proceed any further. While in the city, they can find the Sign of Six headquarters and try to obtain the Peace Rose they need to stop Wellington.

When the Storm Knights arrive in New London (see Map 13), read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The former Core Earth city of Padang, now called New London, sprawls before you. Gone are the power lines, street lights, television antennae, and other signs of the modern age. In their place, old chimneys and smokestacks dot the cityscape. It is as if you have stepped into a Sherlock Holmes story.

In New London harbor, steamships and warships of a bygone era dock or set sail, with burly longshoremen loading and unloading cargo.

On the streets, people either walk, ride horses, or use horse-drawn wagons or black hansom cabs. Instead of electric street lights, gaslight lamps dot the major thoroughfares.

Even modern clothing has been changed. Women wear long dresses, shawls, and floppy hats or bonnets, while men wear suits and top hats or derbies. The native Indonesians you see are dressed in either rags or servants' clothing.

One more manifestation of Victorian reality is immediately obvious: the air is chilly and damp; rain and fog abound.

The Action

The Knights can wander around the city for a while, if they wish. The following are descriptions of some of the points of interest in New London. The city may be a good place to stock up on arms, equipment and/or provisions. Note that the only equipment available is of Victorian vintage.

The Bell and Whistle Pub

One of the most popular pubs in New London, it is a prime source of rumors and gossip. Many off-duty sailors and Victorian soldiers frequent it.

Among the latest bits of gossip:

- Lord Bryon Salisbury will be returning to Victorian society very soon.
- General Avery Wellington has gone off to Singapore. He set sail on the HMS *Vixen* several days ago, and ought to arrive in Singapore by tomorrow.
- The Japanese have been doing extensive trade with the Victorians.
- For quite some time now, General Wellington has been ordering expedi-

tions to the underground caverns under Orrorsh. He seems especially keen on finding any books on magic, for the purpose of his personally destroying them, no doubt.

The gamemaster should feel free to insert his own campaign rumors, or those from *Infiniverse*. The Bell and Whistle is also a good place to insert interesting gamemaster characters from other realms.

New London Public Library

The best source of information in the city, and prime location to use the *research* skill. Most Core Earth books dealing with geography, history, mysticism, and religion are intact. The library is open from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Police Headquarters

The primary place of incarceration for criminals and unruly Storm Knights. It is always manned by at least 30 constables and a platoon of Victorian military. They are openly suspicious of non-Victorian Storm Knights snooping around on private property.

Chief Inspector Oliver Lessarde is the officer who deals with most non-Victorian Storm Knights.

Regimental Headquarters, Queen's Own 17th Lancers

Colonel Percival Livingston, commanding. Colonel Livingston is a hard-nosed, narrow-minded disciplinarian who gives long lectures about Victorian values, and dislikes anyone not Victorian.

7th Regiment, Victorian Royal Order

Colonel Harry Baker, commanding. Colonel Baker is a reasonable man, and a bit more open minded than the average Victorian military officer.

St. Christopher's Cathedral

A Sacellum cathedral which has grown from a small church, run by Father Brian Shaw and the corrupt Deacon Ishmael Crawford. Both men live in a parsonage building attached to the church.

Father Brian Shaw

See page 51 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

Deacon Crawford

See page 51 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

Sign of Six Secret Meeting Place

The manor house at 221 Rhodesland Street is the headquarters of the Sign of Six. The manor is owned by Dr. Angus Stormfield. Angus lives here with his butler, cook, maid, and two workmen, the latter acting as bodyguards.

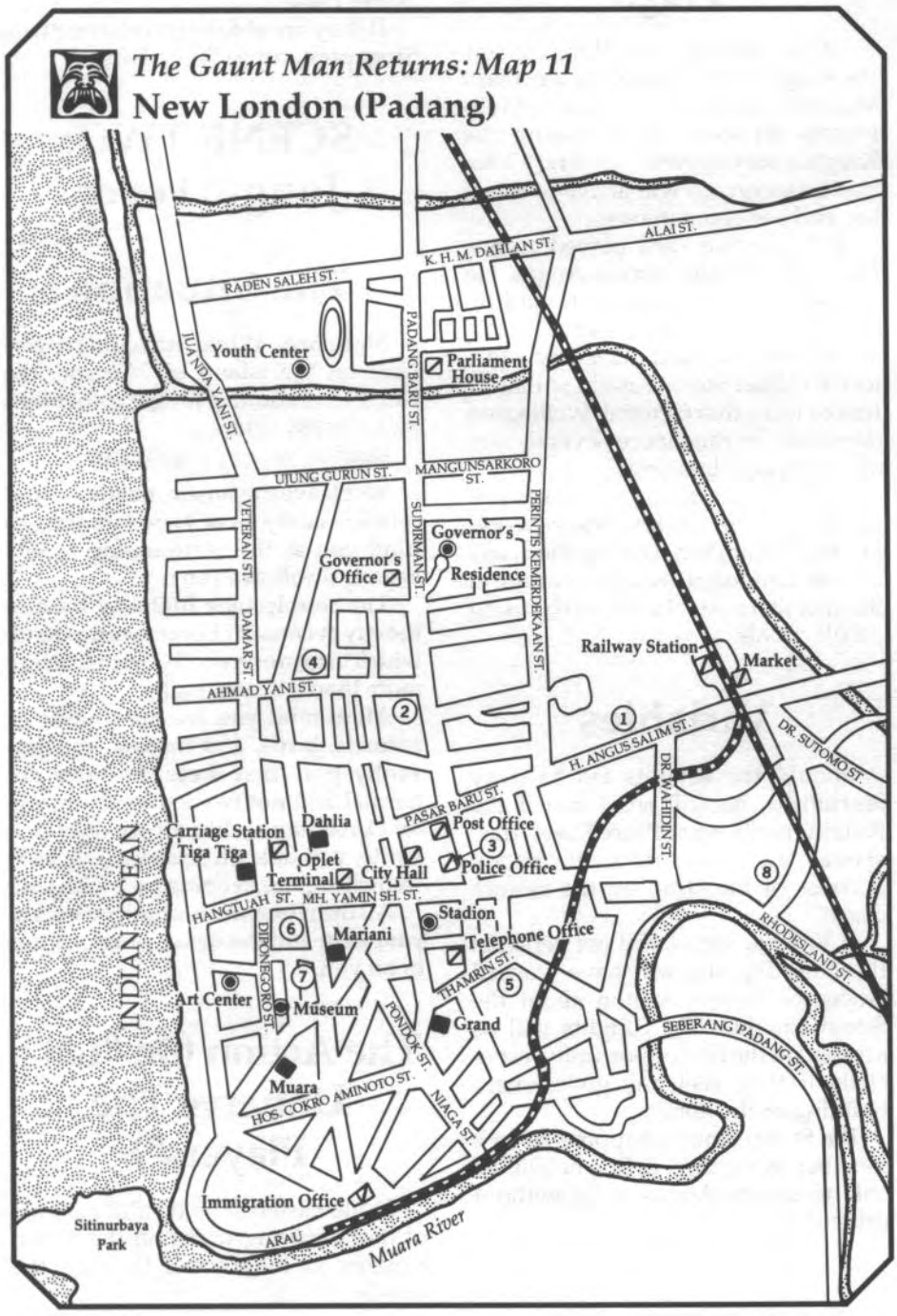
Angus Stormfield

See page 45 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

Angus has grown the Peace Roses on the grounds himself, and will not part with them unless persuaded. Angus starts out as *neutral* toward the Storm Knights, though if they have a signed letter by Professor Scope, his attitude is *friendly*. Any positive result will net the Knights one rose each.

If the Knights manage to convince Stormfield of their intentions, he will mention that a lighthouse exists near the Fortress of the Dead, located across the Strait of Malacca from Singapore. Artemis Bunn, the lighthouse-keeper, is a fellow member of the Sign of Six. Bunn can lend them boats to cross the sea to Singapore, but first they will have to travel overland to reach the lighthouse.

Angus will also tell them he has heard that Karkthusa, Inc. in Singapore is allied with Wellington, and its offices might have valuable information.



New London Graveyard

There is nothing here of significance, but the characters don't know that. It is merely a scary little place that proper Victorians avoid.

Cruel gamemasters can always plant a few ghouls or second-planting gospog in the various crypts.

Event

Nighttime in New London is a grim affair. The cobblestone streets are only dimly lit by gaslight, and a chilling fog brings a feel of mystery and danger. If the Knights are still being followed by techno-demons, one attacks at night.

The Taint of Corruption

While the Storm Knights are travelling in New London, unsettling things happen around due to the artificial corruption given them by the Gaunt Man.

Gamemasters should feel free to include as many manifestations as are deemed appropriate. A good rule of thumb is, the longer they stay in New London, the more phenomena occur. Any temporary phenomena last for a few minutes, usually ending when more than one Knight notices it.

Key

1. Bell and Whistle Pub
2. New London Public Library
3. New Scotland Yard/ police office
4. Regimental headquarters, 17th Lancers
5. Regimental headquarters, 7th Regulars
6. Saint Christopher's Cathedral
7. Sign of Six meeting house
8. New London graveyard

◉ Government buildings
■ Hotels
▨ Public buildings
Railroad

• When the Knights walk by a small Sacellum church, the steeple and bell tower collapse with a loud crash and bong (this happens only once).

• The Knights cast no shadow (temporary).

• A Sacellum priest walks by. As soon as the Knights look at him, the priest's cross cracks in two and falls off its chain.

• Animals (dogs, cats, horses, mostly) howl, hiss, and panic in the presence of the Storm Knights (temporary).

• The Knights' footprints are shaped like those of a clawed beast (temporary).

• A rain of blood falls on the Knights, following them around, and stops after one minute (temporary).

• Talking to a citizen of New London, one Knight sees the person's face change into a demon's visage (temporary).

• As the Knights' shadows fall upon a blind beggar, the man opens his eyes and joyfully announces that he can see. He takes one look at the Knights, screams "Devils!", gouges his own eyes out, and collapses of a heart attack, his mouth locked wide open in a silent scream of fear (this happens only once).

Getting Out of New London

There are no scheduled ship departures for Singapore until next week. There are no flights, as all planes have transformed.

If the Knights brought an aircraft and left it unattended, it has either: a) transformed into a hot air balloon and, unattended, drifted off, now flying somewhere over New Guinea, or b) Victorian troops stumbled upon it, didn't understand what it was, and so used it as a target for artillery practice. It is now in smoldering ruins.

The New London docks do not have yachts for hire. Chartering a boat will take at least a week.

The Knights can take a train to Sibolga, further up the coast. However, Sibolga is even smaller than New London, and has even fewer transportation facilities. Trains leave every four hours, fare is two sterlings per passenger one way.

There are roads from New London and Sibolga which connect each other, as well as leading to the Fortress of the Dead. It takes three days to reach the Fortress from New London. It takes one day to walk from Sibolga to the Fortress.

Flags

A *True Identity* card played means the Knight is recognized by a corrupt Victorian soldier as a threat to Wellington. At some point during the Knight's stay in New London, Victorian infantrymen will arrive to arrest her and her companions.

A *Connection* card played means one of the Knights knows Angus. He will be willing to cooperate and no *persuasion* rolls are necessary.

A *Connection* card played by a Victorian soldier Storm Knight willallow him to learn that General Wellington departed for Singapore several days ago on urgent business.

A *Mistaken Identity* card makes Angus believe that the Knights are working for Wellington. During their stay in New London, a group of ten Sign of Six members attacks the party using occult rituals.

Variables

Should the Knights fail to sway Stormfield, he will snarl that if the Knights really want Peace Roses, they should "seek them out in the bloody Fortress of the Dead on the eastern coast!"

If Victoria Sigurd did not perish in the Nile dig, she will have warned Governor Robert Ashton about the Storm Knights. The Knights will be arrested at the first opportunity, especially if they visit any government building or the library.

If a Storm Knight happens to be a member of the Sign of Six, he will be able to secure Angus' help without difficulty.

Perseverance Awards

The Knights gain one Perseverance point if they obtain at least one Gaean Peace Rose.

Cut To ...

If the Knights decide to travel overland to the Fortress of the Dead, cut to Scene Two.

If they are able to travel directly to Singapore, cut to Scene Four.

SCENE TWO: Jungle Fever

The Situation

Standard. While travelling overland on the island of Majestic, the Knights encounter jungle difficulties and a gypsy camp.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

You leave the hustle, bustle — and relative safety — of New London behind you as the surrounding jungle eagerly swallows you up.

The cobblestone highway leaving the city eventually becomes a dirt road, which in turn eventually becomes little more than a beaten path.

All around you are the sounds of animals, birds, and insects. You fervently pray that these creatures are normal and not twisted in some way by Orrorshan reality. Every once in a while, you hear an odd rustling, as if something was keeping pace with you.

All the while, the humidity clings to your skin and the dense jungle closes in on you.

The Action (or, "Let's Unnerve The Players")

Gamemasters should inflict a couple of the following tricks on the Storm Knights as they travel through the jungle.

• The Knights see a shadow out of the corner of their eyes. When they turn to face it, it is gone.

• Something grabs at their clothing ... it's a branch.

• Something seems to grab a Knight's ankle. The Knight has stepped into a tangle of gnarled vines.

• All jungle noises stop for one minute.

• A loud crash booms through the jungle, like someone just felled a huge tree.

• (At night) Things land on the heads of several Storm Knights, and begin pulling at their hair and screeching. Bats have gotten tangled up in several Knights' hair.

Monkey See, Monkey Slay

Halfway between where they came from and where they're going, the Knights encounter monkeys.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Your jungle trek is taking its toll on you. Exhaustion and fear are the overriding emotions in your heart. The heat, the claustrophobia of the jungle, and the persistent presence of insects is making this a miserable trip.

The despair subsides as you hear some loud chattering, and you see a group of a half dozen monkeys playing in the high grass and the trees. They make delightful acrobatic maneuvers and toss something back and forth, possibly a gourd or coconut.

Wait for the Knights to react, then continue reading:

The monkeys see you and begin to chatter louder, jumping up and down as if for joy at having an audience.

Several monkeys shyly approach you and hand you bananas and other delicious fruits.

Wait for the Knights to react. If they ask, the monkeys are eating the fruit, too. If the Knights accept the fruit, continue reading:

Delighted that their gifts were accepted, the monkeys scamper back to their original positions, then stare at you and chatter noisily. They begin to go deeper into the jungle, but stop and look at you again, their speech growing louder.

An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 8 will reveal that the monkeys want the Knights to follow them. If they do, read the following aloud:

After a few minutes, the monkeys stop their scampering. You find yourselves in a great clearing, with dozens of monkeys leaping about and playing.

In the middle of the clearing is a heap of stones, with a headless human corpse lashed upright on a pole. The monkeys who were playing with the

gourd place it on the corpse, and you see that it is in fact a decomposed human head

At once, all the monkeys surround the figure and begin worshipping it. They no longer chatter, but rather they make a moaning sound that resembles speech of some sort.

Have the Knights make a Perseverance check.

A *Perception* total of 15 reveals that the noises are a chant of "Gaunt Man, Gaunt Man, Gaunt Man." Should the Knights either disrupt the ceremony or try to run away, the monkeys, enraged, attack.

Monkey-Things (36)
DEXTERITY 12
Acrobatics 18, dodge 19, melee weapons 14, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 11
Climbing 15
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 9
Find 11, track 12, trick 16
MIND 7
CHARISMA 8
Taunt 12
SPIRIT 8
Intimidation 12
Possibility Potential: none
Natural Tools: fangs, damage value STR+3/14
Equipment: Human femur clubs , damage value STR+4/15
Power Rating: 0
Corruption Value: 12
Fear Rating: 1/2
Weakness: None
True Death: Any

The monkey-things will take any dead Storm Knights, cut them open, stuff them with fruit, bamboo, and leaves, and prop them in a circle around the altar.

The body on the pole was an Ayslish mage. In his pouch lies a carved piece of wood (an arcane knowledge object, *plant* 2), spell components, a seal (a *scholar (Aysle realm lore)* total of 8 reveals that it signifies that the bearer acts on orders of Lady Pella Ardinay), and a parchment fragment that reads "... word has it that W.D.'s force is laired at the F. of D, mayhap changed to the laws of this land ..."

The mage has a backpack with a purse inside, containing 100 Ayslish trades, and a spell book with the following spells: *Lenfrieu's spell staff, plant shackles, sun flower, tree ward, change to falcon, detect truth, disguise self, silence, telepathy.*

Wagons East

On the night before they arrive at the Fortress of the Dead, the Knights stumble upon a gypsy camp.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

From beyond the jungle growth, the strains of music — accordion, tambourine, and flute — are heard, mingling with the sounds of laughing and clapping.

If the Knights decide to investigate, continue reading:

You part the underbrush to see a camp with eight brightly colored wagons in a circle. In the center, a huge bonfire roars. Beautiful women in long skirts and colorful scarves dance provocatively, while the seated menfolk play their instruments and clap their hands.

The gypsies have a *neutral* attitude towards the Storm Knights. The heroes may attempt to persuade the gypsies of their good intentions. If the gypsies are made *friendly*, they will offer the Knights a place to sleep and a hot meal and good drink.

For two sterlings, Anna, a beautiful gypsy woman, will read any one Knight's fortune with a Tarot deck. Gamemasters should improvise an appropriate fortune, hinting of things to come without giving away the ending of the adventure.

For five sterlings, Anna will contact the spirits to answer questions.

If Anna uses *true sight* on any party members, she will recoil, scream, and insist that the group leave the camp immediately. She has seen the taint of corruption on the Knights.

The gypsies will sell or trade the following things: bottle of holy water, 2 sterlings (fake); healing balm, 4 sterlings, (fake); silver knife, 10 sterlings, (real); wolfsbane, 1 sterling (real); poison antidote, 5 sterlings (fake).

Anna Vostovich
DEXTERITY 12
Acrobatics 14, beast riding 14, dodge 14, lock picking 14, maneuver 13, melee weapons 13, prestidigitation

15, stealth 16, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 12
Find 14, first aid 13, languages 14
MIND 10
Artist (dancing) 14, occult 12, willpower 12
CHARISMA 11
Charm 14, persuasion 14, taunt 13
SPIRIT 11
Reality (Orrorsh) 12, spirit medium 15, true sight 14
Possibilities: 8

Equipment: Colt Peacemaker, damage value 15, ammo 6, range 3-5/15/40; boot knife, damage value STR+3/11; Tarot deck, crystal ball, colored powders, silver jewelry, wolfsbane

Description: Anna is very much a free spirit. An expert dancer and spirit medium, she is headstrong and independent. She loves flirting with non-gypsy men, and especially enjoys flirting with several at a time in order to see them fight over her.

Flags

A *Romance* card makes Anna fall for a male Storm Knight, or vice versa.

A *Suspicion* or *Mistaken Identity* subplot makes Anna do a *true sight* reading on the party.

Variables

If the characters are stuck, the gamemaster may arrange to have the Knights encounter the gypsies within New London itself. Anna can give them the clues they need, specifically that Avery Wellington is now in Singapore.

Perseverance Awards

The Knights receive one Perseverance point for defeating the monkey-things.

Cut To ...

Once the Knights reach the Fortress of the Dead, cut to Scene Three.

SCENE THREE: Lighthouse of Darkness

The Situation

Standard. The Fortress of the Dead lies on the coast of Majestic, garrisoned by dead men and an Aylish Draconis Teutonica which has transformed to Orrorsh. Beyond the fortress lies a Victorian lighthouse and a small dock with several boats (see Map 12). The time is 5:00 p.m.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The fog parts enough for you to make out the imposing shape of the Fortress of the Dead. The place is quiet, with no sign of habitation

The sun has already begun to set, and twilight is creeping in. You hear the roar of the waves as they crash against the rocks. Every half minute, a brilliant beam of light swings by, shining from a tall structure beyond the Fortress.

Once the party closes in to within 20 meters, continue reading:

The ground all around you erupts as dozens of armed skeletons emerge from the earth.

When the Portuguese built this fortress centuries ago, they used the Muslim gravestones as raw material. These skeletons are the corpses of the restless dead whose graves were violated.

Skeletons (36)
Reality: Orrorsh
DEXTERITY 10
Melee weapons 13, unarmed combat 13
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 14
PERCEPTION 9
Find 11, track 12
MIND 8
Willpower 10
CHARISMA 5
Taunt (14)
SPIRIT 9
Intimidation 15
Possibility Potential: none
Powers: *attack form resistance (firearms)*
Corruption Value: 10
Fear Rating: 1/2
Weakness: Muslim holy symbols (severe)
True Death: Disassembling the Fortress and placing the stones back where they belong.

The Elder Wyrm

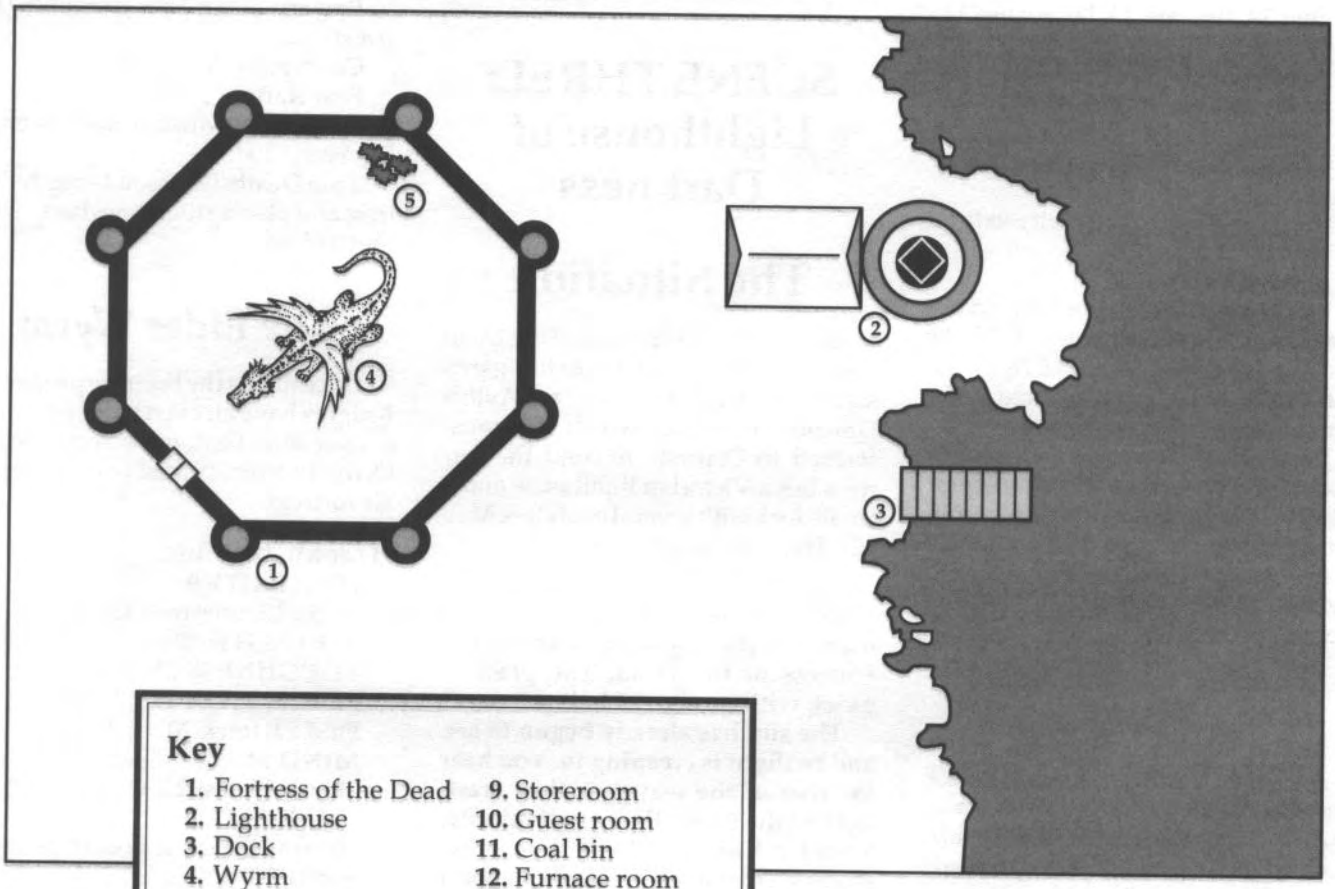
Once inside the Fortress proper, the Knights have an even bigger surprise: a Draconis Teutonica, converted to Orrorshan reality, resides in the open-air fortress.

Trankh, the Elder Wyrm
DEXTERITY 9
Flight 12, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 27
TOUGHNESS 23/35
PERCEPTION 19
Find 23, track 20, trick 23
MIND 14
Occult 15, test 21, willpower 20
CHARISMA 7
Charm 10, persuasion 11, taunt 12
SPIRIT 8
Intimidation 15, reality (Orrorsh) 10
Possibilities: 20
Natural Tools: scales, armor value TOU+12/35; wings, speed value 11; claws, damage value STR+3/30
Powers: *fire attack (value 42); elemental alteration (mist, value 24); blur form*
Corruption Value: 20
Fear Rating: 2
Weakness: magic attack (stymie)
True Death: Pierced in the heart by a blessed sword wielded by one who is pure of heart.

Description: Trankh enjoys this new reality, since she can now induce fear into her victims, something she has always wanted to do. If the Knights talk to her, she will explain that she had come to Orrorsh with a party of Ayslish folk in search of evidence of the Gaunt Man's return.

When the Ayslish ran afoul of lighthouse-keeper Bunn, the man invoked a reality storm against the dragon.

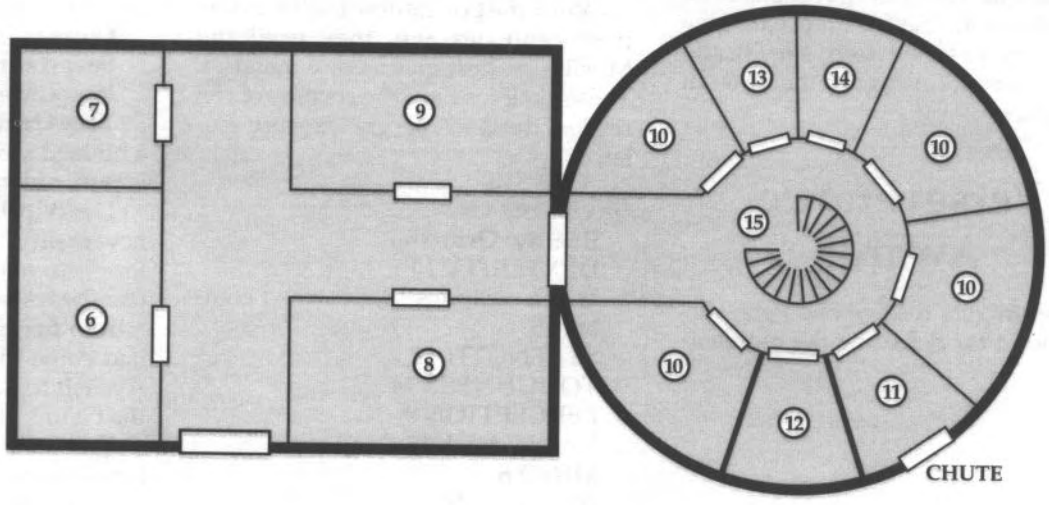
The Gaunt Man Returns: Map 12
Fortress Environs/Lighthouse



Key

1. Fortress of the Dead
2. Lighthouse
3. Dock
4. Wyrm
5. Peace roses
6. Kitchen
7. Bathroom
8. Bedroom
9. Storeroom
10. Guest room
11. Coal bin
12. Furnace room
13. Generator room
14. Suppy room
15. Stairs

The Lighthouse



Now transformed into a horror, Trankh has jet-black scales, fiery red eyes, and a more demonic aspect, like something out of the Victorian *Book of Power*.

Within the Fortress grounds are dozens of Peace Roses growing in a patch. If they need them, the Knights might be able to bargain with the dragon. Trankh specifically seeks anything that might be proof against magic.

The Lighthouse

The cast-iron lighthouse was run by Artemis Bunn, a secret member of the Sign of Six. The ground around the lighthouse is inscribed with occult runes that keep away any horrors (as anyone generating an *occult* total of 10 will know).

Unfortunately, Bunn was attacked by the Ayslish who wished the place as a base of operations while they sought out news of the Gaunt Man. In a pitched battle, which resulted in the destruction of several Ayslish, Bunn went mad. He is locked up in a room inside the lighthouse by Anakronis Magus (see below).

Artemis Bunn
DEXTERITY 8
Fire combat 9, melee weapons 9, stealth 14, unarmed combat 10
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 10
Find 12, first aid 11, tracking 12, trick 11
MIND 10
Occult 16, test 13, willpower 12
CHARISMA 8
Charm 10, taunt 10
SPIRIT 10
Faith (Orrorshan evil) 11, intimidation 11, reality (Orrorsh) 12
Possibilities: 2
Corruption Value: 10
Equipment: none.
Description: At one time a stalwart fighter of Corruption, Artemis has now joined its ranks. He is worn out from his captivity, though he seems sound enough. If he is rescued and allowed to play host for the Storm Knights in his lighthouse, see "Variables," below.

The lighthouse is run on electricity, with an oil-lamp backup. The exterior door is locked, with a *lock picking* difficulty of 18. Interior doors have a *lock picking* difficulty of 12.

Bunn's Bedroom

Now taken over by Anakronis Magus, it is filled with Anakronis' possessions, plus four occult volumes. The room also contains Bunn's notes, detailing a suspected connection between Karkthusa, Inc. in Singapore with General Wellington's plans.

A statue of Corba'al is an Ayslish talisman, making the lighthouse living areas (rooms 6-9) an Ayslish dominant zone.

Storeroom

Contains various bits of equipment such as rope, kerosene lanterns, lots of kerosene, extra ammunition, and warm blankets.

Guest Rooms

Makeshift guest rooms, each with a bunk, oil lamp, and chair. Currently each is occupied by one dwarf (there are always two dwarves up and around, on guard and maintenance duty).

Coal Storage Bin

Half-full, it features a coal chute leading to the outside.

Furnace Room

Lined with extra thick walls, this coal-fired furnace provides heat and hot water.

Generator Room

This room contains the electrical relays, back-up kerosene generator, and other electric things related to the lighthouse beacon and interior illumination. Due to its primitive simplicity, attempts at sabotage, using *science (electricity)*, have a difficulty of 9.

Supply Room

Filled with electric parts and the like, it is also where the mad Bunn is being kept.

Winding Stairs

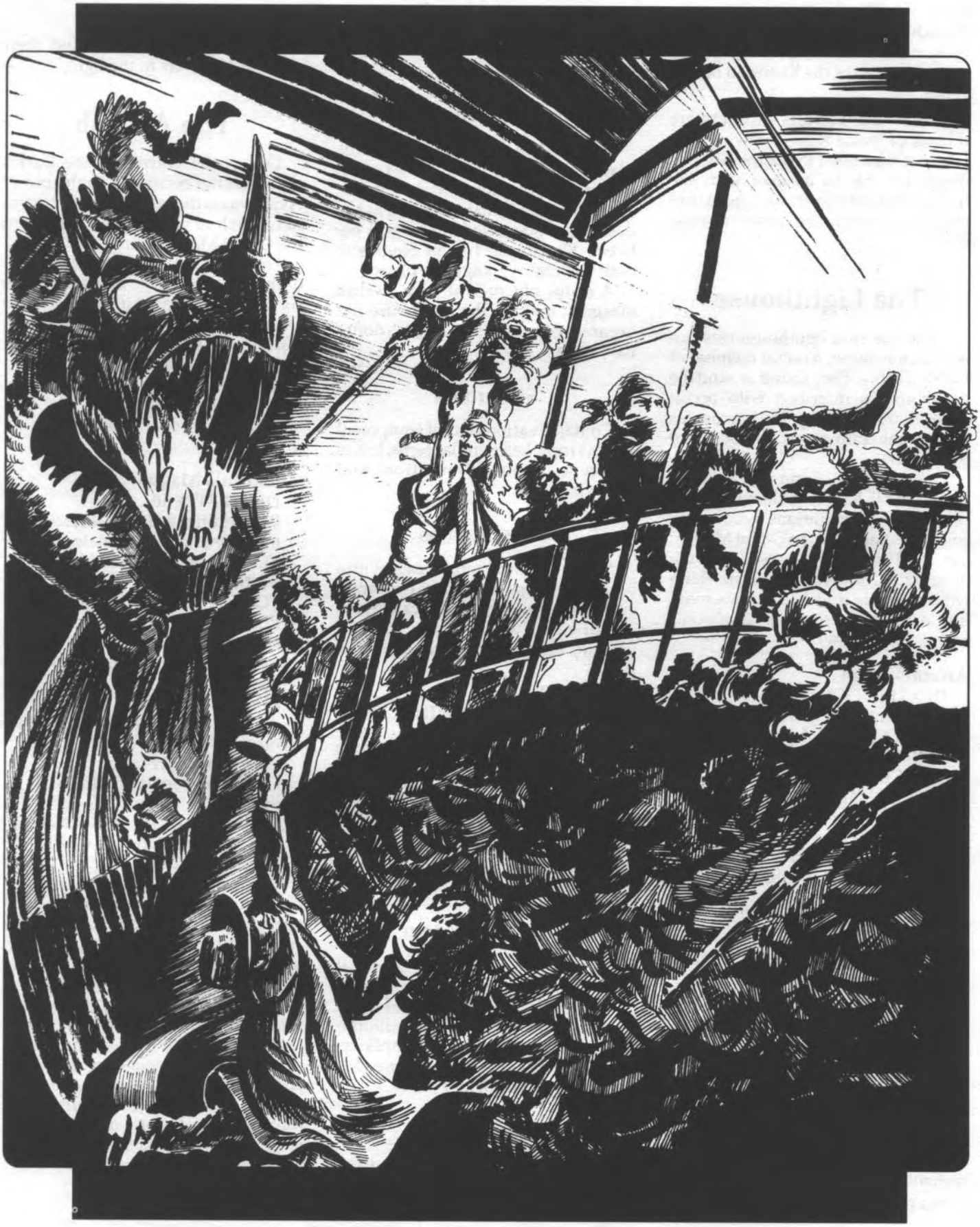
These cast-iron stairs wind their way up 26 meters to the light.

The Ayslish

One of the Warrior of the Dark's first acts after becoming High Lord of Aysle was to dispatch an Ayslish team to Orrorsh to check up on rumors of the Gaunt Man's return.

Now, a month later, the remnants of the Aysle team are holed up in the lighthouse, making forays into Orrorsh, trying to figure out what's going on. Due to the effects of Orrorshan laws and atmosphere, however, the Aysle team has lost much of its desire to accomplish its goal, and spends a great deal of time brooding in the lighthouse.

Anakronis Magus
DEXTERITY 10
Beast riding 13, dodge 18, lock picking 12, maneuver 12, melee combat 11, running 15, stealth 14
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 9 (18 with amulet)
PERCEPTION 14
Alteration magic 18, divination magic 16, evidence analysis 16, language 15, trick 18
MIND 13
Apportation magic 18, conjuration magic 17, test 15, willpower 15
CHARISMA 11
Charm 14, persuasion 15, taunt 16
SPIRIT 11
Corruption 17, faith (Corba'al) 14, intimidation 18, reality (Aysle) 15
Possibilities: 16
Corruption Abilities (Aysle): Cause one opponent to become fatigued once per act; ability to defer corruption into surrounding land; *gain harm* miracle. Note that skill bonuses have already been factored in.
Arcane Knowledges: *air* +3, *water* +3, *darkness* +3, *entity* +4, *magic* +2
Spells: *conceal evil, create fear, low spirits, mage dark, withering touch, cast lasher, detect magic, dispel magic, imprisonment, mystic shield, animate skeletal warrior, banish demon, sense undead, arm of air, fighting whirlwind, floater, frigid air, Corgain's gills, fog, ice bolt, water spray*



Equipment: Spell books; staff, damage value STR+2/11; components; amulet of increased toughness, value TOU+9/18; max TOU 20; four bottles of healing draught (removes damage as if one Possibility was spent)

Description: Anakronis is a smooth-talking, quietly competent wizard. His evil is not the maniacal, loud type; he is a calculating sneak.

Anakronis is slowly being seduced by the Power of Corruption. He began reading Bunn's books, and is now fascinated with occult rituals.

Dwarves (6)

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 9, fire combat 10, maneuver 9, melee weapons 10, missile weapons 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

Alteration magic 13, find 10, trick 12

MIND 8

Test 10

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 12

SPIRIT 8

Corruption 10, intimidation 11, reality (Aysle) 10

Possibilities: 2

Arcane Knowledges: *earth +3*

Spells: *earth shield, pathfinder, stone tunnel, Thorvald's tracker*

Equipment: Spell book, wheellock dag, damage value 13, ammo 1, range 3-5/10/25; dwarven bombs (2), damage value 19), battleaxe, damage value STR+5/15; dwarfmail, armor value TOU+4/13; Tancred torch

Description: The dwarves are evil and greedy, and serve the Dark High Lord as well as they can. They have some fascination for the light mechanism in the lighthouse, which still works.

The Dock

This small dock has two Victorian vintage coal-fired motor launches tied to it.

Launches: Tech 19; TOU 17; pass. 8; speed value 100/30/8/10

Variables

To add an element of tension, the gamemaster can decide that Wellington's ritual will take place at dawn. In this case, Bunn's notes should include an entry which mentions that Wellington is going to attempt some unknown action. The action will occur on the date of the next dawn.

If the Storm Knights bypass the Fortress, the dragon will spot them, but ignore them unless there are obvious Ayslish Storm Knights in the group. In that case, the dragon will attack.

An *Alertness* card will tell the Knights that there is something definitely wrong with Bunn, probably a mental condition.

An *Idea* card tells the Knights that sleeping in the lighthouse is NOT a good thing to do.

If Bunn is freed, he will offer to put the Knights up in his lighthouse. In the middle of the night, Bunn, using the objects the Knights touched as occult props, will invoke an occult ritual on the occupants of one room (no more than four people). This ritual causes maggots, worms, and spiders to come bursting out of the victims. Victims suffer a damage value of 18 (ignore armor) each round. The ritual lasts as long as the caster is uninterrupted or 30 minutes go by, whichever comes first.

The ritual takes ten minutes to initiate. During the first five minutes, nothing happens. In the latter five minutes, the victims feel horrendous pains in their bodies and are completely helpless, unable to do anything but scream.

It will be up to the victims' companions in the other rooms to help them. Have the Knights make a Perseverance check when they see the horrible condition of their friend.

Perseverance Awards

The Knights receive one Perseverance point for finding the notes, another for defeating the wyrm, and a third for defeating Bunn, if necessary.

Travelling Across the Straits

Once the group has secured transportation across the straits to Singapore, the boat ride should be uneventful. If the players have been having an easy time of it, Trankh, if still alive, may fly up and attempt to destroy the boats when they are halfway across the strait.

The journey across the straits takes six hours by boat.

Cut To ...

Once the Knights land in Singapore, cut to Scene Four.

SCENE FOUR: Who Put the "Sin" in "Singapore?"

The Situation

Standard/Dramatic. The Knights arrive in Singapore. They can take some time to rest and resupply, or they can head right to Karkthusa, Inc.

This scene changes to Dramatic when the Knights encounter Skutharka.

The Action

High atop the Royal Crown Colony skyscraper, occupying the top two floors, is Karkthusa, Inc., firm of the Nightmare Skutharka.

Access to the Royal Crown Colony Skyscraper is available from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

A *business* total of 15 will reveal that Karkthusa is listed as being owned by a Mr. Ho. A *scholar (Orrorshan realm lore)* total of 11 reveals that Ho is the aide to the Nightmare Skutharka.

Elevator/Stairs

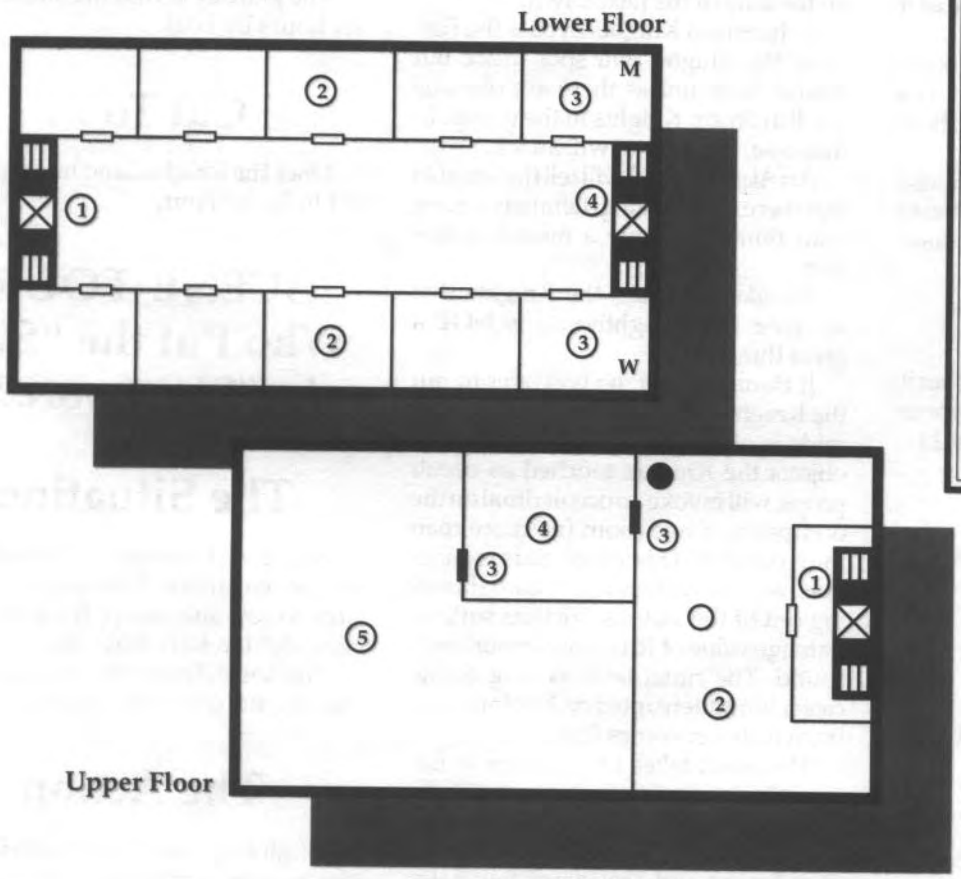
The elevator and stairways (marked #1 on the map) end at the first floor occupied by Karkthusa. In order to get to the upper floor, one must cross to the other side of the building and use the stairs or elevator marked #4.

Office Cubicles

Each hosts a corrupted employee of Skutharka, plus a desk, phone, computer terminal, and coffee cup. The computer screens are filled with gib-

The Gaunt Man Returns: Map 13

Karkthusa, Inc.



Key

Lower floor
1. Elevator/stairs
2. Office cubicles
3. Restrooms
4. Elevator/stairs to upper floor only

Upper floor
1. Elevator/stairs
2. Mr. Ho's room
3. Hidden door
4. Workroom
5. Skutharka's room

○ Perceived Mr. Ho
● Real Mr. Ho

berish, and the coffee cups are filled with blood (have the Knights make a Perseverance check if they spot this).

Six of the corrupted employees are women. All of the employees are dressed like white-collar yuppies and appear perfectly normal. A successful *true sight* total against a difficulty of 10 reveals their bodies as being a hideous shade of green, black and crimson, with strips of flesh hanging off them. Drop one Perseverance point and have the Knights make a check.

Corrupt Employees (12)

DEXTERITY 9
Dodge 11, melee combat 12, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11
PERCEPTION 11
Find 12, trick 14
MIND 10
Business 13, test of will 12, willpower 12
CHARISMA 8
Taunt 12
SPIRIT 10
Faith (Orrorshan evil) 12, intimidation 14
Possibility Potential: none
Powers: *attack form resistance (magical damage)*
Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+2/12
Corruption Value: 14
Fear Rating: 1
Weakness: Any holy symbol (severe)
True Death: Destruction of their computer terminals.
Equipment: briefcase, damage value STR+1/11; computer terminals (TOU 12)
Description: These people were Core Earth yuppies who saw the chance to sell their souls in exchange for power and eternal life.

They are dressed in normal Core Earth clothing and carry briefcases. The corrupted souls will attack only if the Knights make some obvious reference to their true appearance (screaming, vomiting, etc.)

Meanwhile, they spend the hours chattering into phones, watching stock quotations flash across their computer screens, and typing gibberish in response.

Rest Rooms

The men's room contains the dead body of a janitor, ripped to shreds by the corrupted employees. He has been dead for three weeks. Subtract one Perseverance point and have the Knights make a check.

Upper Floor

Mr. Ho's Room

If the Knights enter this room, read the following aloud:

This huge room is painted stark white, from the ceiling to the floor. The color makes the room seem huge, with a far-off horizon. Recessed light panels give the room a soft, silvery glow.

Seated in the middle of the room, cross-legged in a Lotus position, is an Oriental man in a white business suit. Upon your entry, he looks up at you and says, "Yes? What can I do for you?"

This man is Mr. Ho, Skutharka's assistant. He is currently meditating upon new ways to inflict horror upon the people of Singapore.

The entire room is protected by the power of the occult. The stark whiteness of the room disorients all but Skutharka and Ho; time, distance, perspective, all become meaningless.

In practical terms, whenever anyone in the room attempts any action, even walking, he must generate a *willpower* of *Mind* total of 12. (This effectively makes any action taken in this room a multi-action.) Failure means the Knight is *stymied* for that round.

The distortion effect is already working: Ho is NOT in the center of the room, he is in the corner marked on the map.

Mr. Ho will engage disoriented Knights, making hit and run attacks. If he is wounded, he will retreat through this secret panel (*find* or *Perception* difficulty 18 to spot).

Mister Ho's Workroom

This antiseptic smelling room is Mr. Ho's workroom, with various modern medical tools such as forceps, pins, needles, and scalpels, plus a stainless steel table. The table has restraints, and a small channel to collect blood. Four steel cages complete the room's decor.

Another secret panel (*find* total of 18 to spot) leads from this workroom to Skutharka's office.

Mr. Ho

See page 32 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

Skutharka

If the Knights enter Skutharka's office, the scene shifts to Dramatic.

Read the following aloud:

This huge office is dominated by a large modern desk, with huge windows behind it, offering a splendid view of Singapore. The walls are covered with maps of the city, anatomical charts of the various humanoid races, and electronics schematics.

A huge wolf-like creature sits at the desk, wearing a business suit that clearly does not fit, as the beast's muscles pop many of the seams.

The creature grabs at the half-dozen telephones on the desk, seemingly at random, since the devices are not ringing, barking phrases such as

"Buy!" "Sell!" "Let's do lunch!" "Hostile takeover!"

At last, it puts the phones down and looks at you with yellow canine eyes. The beast appears to be salivating. The smell of blood washes over you as the beast leans forward and says:

"You don't look like the kind of executive material I need! Consider yourselves terminated! Lunch break!"

The Knights have a couple of options here. They can fight; they can run (Skutharka will, of course, pursue, but if they should escape, see "Variables," below); or they can try to talk their way out of this.

Yes, *talk*. Skutharka is a bestial Nightmare, but he's not an idiot. If the Knights can convince him the Gaunt Man is back and knows who's been naughty and who's been nice, Skutharka might decide to give them the information on Wellington's plans which they need. He will explain that he was spying on Wellington all the time, and ask that the Knights put in a word for him with the High Lord.

Of course, should the latter take place, Skutharka will develop a deep and undying hatred for the Knights for forcing him to shame himself. He can be expected to become a frequent foe of the party.

Skutharka

See page 32 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook.

The Evidence

In Skutharka's desk are papers from Avery Wellington, announcing his intention to invoke the ritual at the highest point in Singapore, the Bukit Timah Nature Preserve, at dawn. The overall tone of the documents indicates that Skutharka is showing support for Avery's power play.

A badly scrawled memo from Skutharka himself mentions that his "company" will move to Hong Kong right before the ritual is invoked.

The schematics on the wall are for various electronic devices (TVs, stereos, CD players, Walkmans) and ways for them to be infused with the power of the occult.

Flags

An *Idea* card tells the Knight that Karkthusa is an anagram for Skutharka.

An *Alertness* card will find one of Mr. Ho's concealed panels.

Variables

If the Knights capture and successfully interrogate Mr. Ho, he can provide them with the same information they will find in Skutharka's desk.

If the Knights should escape Skutharka, they will need to get the information on Wellington from some other source. Perhaps the Sign of Six has a base here, or the Rauru Block has heard rumors of strange doings at the nature preserve. Feel free to improvise to keep the adventure moving.

Perseverance Awards

Finding the information in Skutharka's office gives the party two Perseverance points. Defeating Ho and Skutharka gives the party one Perseverance point for each. Finding the janitor's body gives the Knights two Perseverance points.

Cut To ...

When the group decides to head to the Bukit Timah Nature Preserve, cut to Scene Five.

SCENE FIVE: A Beef With Wellington

The Situation

Dramatic. The Knights must make their way through the maze of the Bukit Timah Nature Preserve. Unfortunately, Avery's personal bodyguards, the Wellington Reds, are stationed here in pairs, ready to deal with any intruders.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The beautiful gardens of the Bukit Timah Nature Preserve hold no attraction for you at this moment. You have a duty to the people of Singapore to stop Avery Wellington's mad schemes before they reach fruition.

The occasional rumble of thunder and flash of light erupt over the city, but the night sky is clear, the stars so brilliant that even the city lights cannot fully obscure them.

Various flower scents waft through the night air, and you see an amazing variety of trees and flowers: roses, chrysanthemums, tulips, daisies, and cherry and apple trees covered with blossoms.

And yet, all this beauty is marred by the knowledge that somewhere in this maze stands General Avery Wellington, setting in motion his plan to destroy Singapore.

The Action

The maze walls are three meters high and are made of bushes and flowers growing over solid rock, thus the Knights cannot pass through the barriers effortlessly.

Avery Wellington's location is flat in relation to the rest of the maze, thus climbing atop the hedge wall (*climbing* difficulty 12) will not give the viewer a good idea of where he is.

Random Noises

While the Knights are walking through the maze in the dead of night, have them generate *Perception* totals periodically and give them some of these noises to unnerve them:

- Rustling in the bushes.
- Hoofbeats going at a trot.
- The sound of a rifle being cocked.
- The sound of a sabre being drawn from its scabbard.
- A hideous gurgling sound (the infernal steeds' way of neighing).

The Sentries

The Wellington Reds, General Avery Wellington's personal body-

guards, have been transformed into corrupt horrors, even though they still appear to be normal Victorian soldiers.

The Reds are set up in pairs at five different locations in the labyrinth. They are mounted on infernal steeds. The Reds' orders are clear: do not let anyone pass.

When the Reds first see the Knights, they will demand that the Knights turn around and go back, telling the intruders that the gardens are off-limits. If the Knights refuse to go back, the Reds become more insistent, until finally they start attacking the Knights.

Wellington Red (10)

DEXTERITY 12
Beast riding 14, dodge 14, fire combat 15, melee combat 14, maneuver 14, running 13, stealth 13, swimming 13, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 14
TOUGHNESS 15
PERCEPTION 11
Find 15, scholar (military tactics) 13, tracking 12, trick 13
MIND 9
Test 11, willpower (11)
CHARISMA 9
Taunt 12
SPIRIT 9
Intimidation 14, faith (Orrorsh evil) 13, reality (Orrorsh) 12
Possibilities: 6
Powers: *blur form, dark vision*
Equipment: Weston bolt-action carbine, damage value 17, ammo 8, range 3-50/90/200; occult-charged cavalry sabres, damage value STR+6/20. The sabres ignore armor adds. Anyone can use one, but it is considered a Wicked act. Each sabre is jet black, with a handle made of human bones, and inscribed with sinister runes. Whenever the sabre hits a victim, the blade glows sickly red, and shrieks. The swords have a *Toughness* of 30
Corruption Value: 12
Fear Rating: 1/2
Perseverance DN: 8
Weakness: Holy Symbols
True Death: Once killed, the Knight must place a Peace Rose in the Red's hands.

Infernal Steed (Orrorshan)

DEXTERITY 13
Dodge 15, flight 14, running 16
STRENGTH 15
TOUGHNESS 15
PERCEPTION 10
Find 12, tracking 12, trick 14
MIND 8
Test 12, willpower 12
CHARM 7
SPIRIT 9
Intimidation 14
Possibility Potential: none
Natural Tools: hooves, damage value STR+3/18
Powers: *attack form resistance (firearms), darkness*
Corruption Value: 15
Fear Rating: 1
Perseverance DN: 18
Weakness: magical damage
True Death: Placing sugar in the dead steed's mouth

Variables

If the Knights somehow bypass the majority of the labyrinth and go right to Wellington, each patrol must generate a *find* or *Perception* total of 22 to notice that something is amiss. If they beat the difficulty number, the Reds will enter the final battle only if a *setback* occurs against the Storm Knights, unless otherwise stated.

Knights who are flying over the maze will be the target of fire from the Wellington Reds.

The Knights may attempt to bluff their way past the Reds, claiming that they too serve Wellington. Avery has already told the Reds that no one is expected, and that no one but Reds have any business in the garden. Thus, any Storm Knight attempting to persuade the Reds that they belong here has a difficulty of 25.

Wellington's location is accessible only by the maze or by air. Behind Wellington's area are rocky cliffs that are completely impassable.

If the Knights decide to blast their way through the walls of the maze, they will be attacked by all ten Reds after the second wall is demolished.

And Death Does Come ...

When the Knights reach the end of the maze, they will find Avery Wellington in the middle of doing his occult ritual. Three vampyre ninja are lurking in the bushes, keeping a watchful eye on their new master.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

As the sky in the east begins to lighten and turn red, you see a distinguished Victorian officer on his knees, facing the dawn, reading from a large book in his hand. There are human skulls on the ground, arranged around the General in a circular pattern. A horse grazes nearby, obviously Avery's mount.

He turns and looks at you, his eyes blazing with insanity and new-found power. He smiles, stands ramrod straight and in a clear, strong voice, addresses you.

"So, you have come to me at last. We have not yet been formally introduced. I am General Avery Wellington, Supreme Commander of Her Holy Majesty Queen Victoria's Expeditionary Armies." Avery bows to you.

"As you are no doubt aware, I served a higher, greater power. Now, however, the time has come for me to seize control of my destiny and take my place as the rightful ruler of this strange land. Quite frankly, there is little you can do about it, so if you would please be so kind as to take your leave?

"Oh, yes. You had best leave the city with all alacrity. Once the ritual is invoked, the lifeforce of many, if not all, of the city's populace will be drained and placed into my own body. You have been warned. Thank you for your kind attention."

Have the Knights make a Perseverance check.

The only way to permanently kill Avery is to have one Storm Knight challenge him to a duel. Unfortunately, the only way to make him accept the challenge is to confront him with the Peace Rose and use it in an *intimidation*, *taunt*, or *test* attack. This attempt can be made by any member of the party, and each member can try once. Any level of success will make Avery acquiesce. The Knight who successfully forced him into the duel does not have to be the one to fight him.

When the duel is officially accepted, the sky turns dark and great storm clouds begin flashing lightning and rumbling thunder. A strong wind kicks up and rain begins to fall.

The Duel

Though Avery has occult powers at his command, he will fight the duel fairly; his Victorian honor as well as his own sense of superiority will keep him honest.

The Storm Knight must fight him using a melee weapon, specifically, a sword of some type. Since Wellington has resistance to normal weapons, that weapon better be magic.

The duel is to the death, and no one else can intervene for either combatant. The duelling Knight cannot recieve help of any kind from his companions, though he can benefit if a companion plays one of the following cards: *Supporter*, *Rally*, *Leadership*, *Seize Initiative*. If the Storm Knight does recieve additional aid, Wellington won't meet his True Death, and upon reincarnation, will hunt down the Knights.

When fighting, Wellington banters with his opponent, remarking calmly about the ritual and the plans he has when he becomes a High Lord. He attempts *vital blows* to disarm his opponent and fancy maneuvers meant to distract the hero.

The heroes only get one chance to duel with Avery, for by the time one duel is done, the sun is up and Avery cannot be killed with his True Death.

Lest the rest of the party feel left out, consult "Killing Time," below.

Timing in the Maze

Gamemasters should feel free to play with their players' heads in this scene. Go in with the knowledge that, by the time the Knights reach Wellington, he will have just about completed the ritual. But don't tell the players that — instead, flip cards, talk about that glow they see overhead, and generally make them feel like they need to be there yesterday.

If they get defeated by the Reds, obviously Wellington will get to finish his ritual. But if at all possible, let them reach him before he's finished, so the duel can proceed.

General Avery Wellington

DEXTERITY 12

Beast riding 14, dodge 16, fire combat 17, maneuver 17, melee combat 21, running 14, stealth 15, swimming 14, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 14

PERCEPTION 14

Find 17, language 14, scholar (military tactics) 20, tracking 15, trick 16

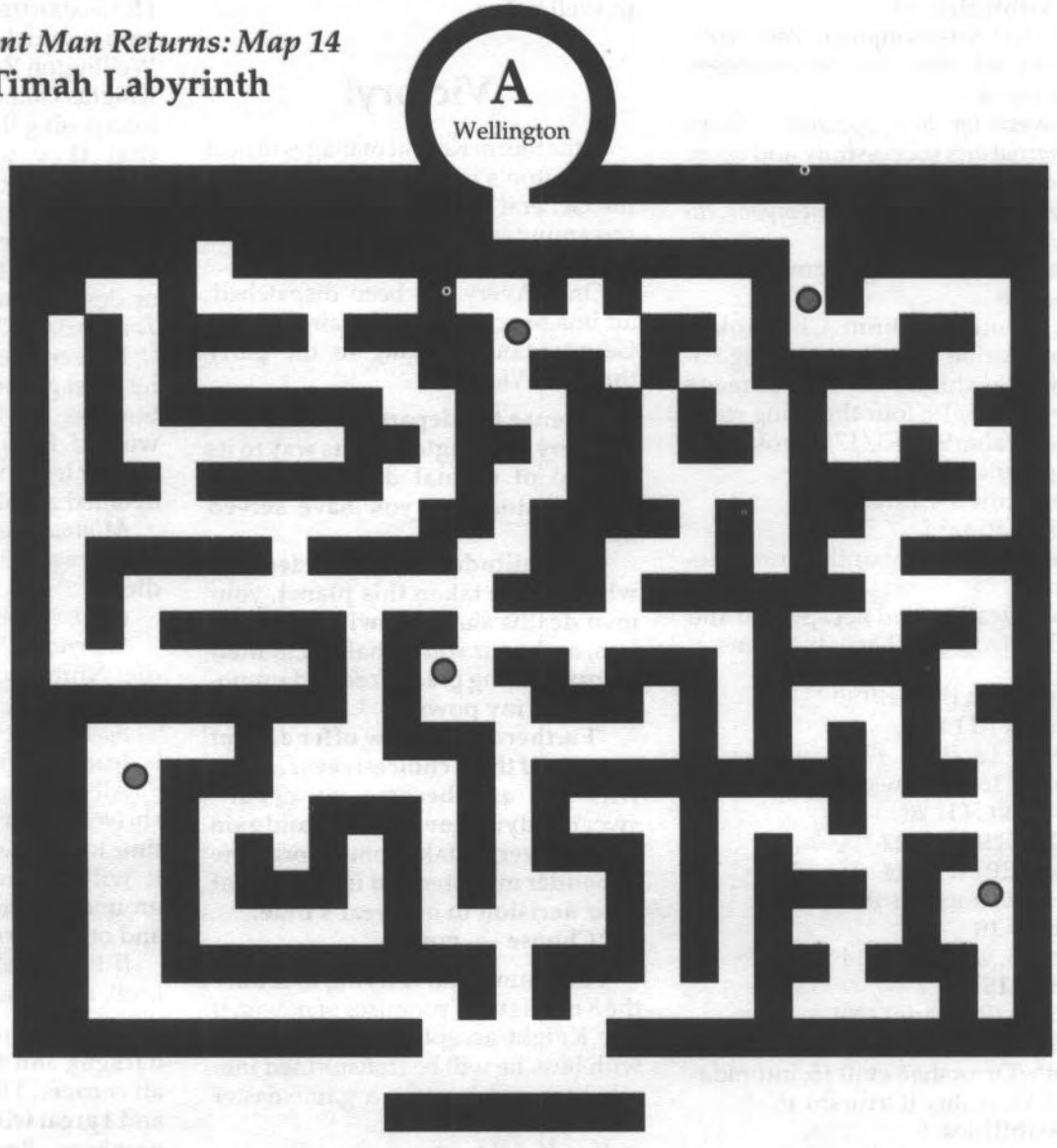
MIND 12

Occult 18, test 17, willpower 15

CHARISMA 13

Taunt 15

The Gaunt Man Returns: Map 14
Bukit Timah Labyrinth



Wellington Red Guards

SPIRIT 12
Faith (Sacellum) 18, intimidation 16, reality (Orrorsh) 20
Possibilities: 5 per Storm Knight
Powers: *resistance to normal weapons, regeneration armor defeating attack (any melee weapon)*
Corruption Value: 22
Fear Rating: 2
Perseverance DN: 23
Weakness: Gaean Peace Rose (severe)
True Death: Slain at sunrise in a duel against a single opponent.
Equipment: Tawning .38, damage value value 13, ammo 6, range 3-5/15/25; sabre, damage value STR+5/18

Killing Time

The three vampyric ninja lunge from their hiding places and attempt to make a surprise attack on the non-duelling Knights, along with Wellington's mount.

Vampyre Ninja
DEXTERITY 13
Acrobatics 14, fire combat 14, lock picking 14, maneuver 14, martial arts (ninjutsu) 16, melee weapons 14, missile weapons 14, prestidigitation 14, stealth 15, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 16
Climbing 19
TOUGHNESS 18
PERCEPTION 11
Find 13, language 13, scholar (poisons) 14, tracking 14, trick 16
MIND 14
Meditation 15, test 23, willpower 23
CHARISMA 14
Charm 26, persuasion 21, taunt 18
SPIRIT 9
Faith (Orrorsh evil) 18, intimidation

17, reality (Orrorsh) 12
Possibilities: 10
Martial Arts: Ninjutsu: *block/strike, lightning fist, stun attack, missile dodge, felling the oa*
Powers: *life drain (Dexterity)* (must use *martial arts* successfully and cause a *wound* or better), *elemental alteration (mist), resistance to normal weapons, infection*
Natural Tools: fangs, damage value STR+2/18
Equipment: 13mm Chunyokai, damage value 18, ammo 9, range 3-10/40/50; shimsi sword, damage value STR+5/19; four throwing stars, damage value STR+3/17; Niyoki camouflage suit (+1 to *stealth*)
Corruption Value: 18
Fear Rating: 1
Weakness: chrysanthemums (severe)
True Death: Head decapitated and mouth filled with cherry blossoms.

Bloodmane the Horse
DEXTERITY 15
Dodge 18, flight 17, maneuver 16, stealth 16, unarmed combat 19
STRENGTH 20
TOUGHNESS 22
PERCEPTION 14
Find 16, tracking 18, trick 17
MIND 10
Test 15, willpower 14
CHARISMA 7
Charm (20), taunt (20)
SPIRIT 14
Faith (Orrorshan evil) 15, intimidation 18, reality (Orrorsh) 16
Possibilities: 5
Natural Tools: razor-sharp hooves damage value STR+5/25; fangs, damage value STR+2/2
Powers: *magical resistance, blur form, darkness, silence*
Corruption Value: 17
Fear Rating: 2
Weakness: weapons made of solid wood
True Death: iron spike driven through its forehead
Description: Wellington's steed looks like a huge white stallion, unless seen with *true sight*. Its true form is a huge black horse-like thing with six massive legs, batwings, and eyes and mane that glow a phosphoresecent green.

The beast is intelligent, and understands spoken languages. It is devoted to Wellington.

Victory!

If the Storm Knight manages to beat Wellington's in the duel to the death, the General's body shrivels, dying a screaming, slow death, and turns to dust.

Once Avery has been dispatched, an image appears in the air. It is the Gaunt Man, speaking to the party through Wicked:

"I sense the departure of the soul of Avery Wellington, on its way to its reward of eternal damnation. My thanks, stormers, you have served me well.

"In gratitude, I have decided that when I have taken this planet, your own deaths shall be swift and painless, and your souls shall go to their eternal resting place, free and unmolested by my powers.

"Furthermore, I now offer each of you one of three choices: sever all ties with me, and become my enemy; swear undying loyalty to me and gain great power; or take some more time to ponder my offer and inform me of your decision in one year's time.

"Choose — now!"

The Gaunt Man is trying to seduce the Knights with promises of power. If any Knight accepts the offer to ally with him, he will be transformed into a horror and become a gamemaster character.

If a Knight refuses the offer, the Gaunt Man removes the artificial Corruption he had inflicted upon the Knight and his soul is his own again.

The most insidious choice is the third one. If the Knight chooses to take a year to decide, the artificial Corruption becomes real. Every Wicked act committed thereafter has a chance to increasing the Knight's Corruption value, until at last the Knight is a horror, under the control of the Gaunt Man.

Defeat!

If the Knight loses the duel, Wellington continues reading the occult ritual to invest himself with power. He needs to read it for six more rounds after the duel. The surviving ninja and Wellington Reds will see to it that the Knights cannot get to the General, by interposing themselves in such a way that they form a wall between Wellington and the Knights.

If the Knights reach Wellington before he finishes reading the ritual, they may attempt to kill him (temporarily) or destroy the book. The book has a *Toughness* of 35.

If Avery manages to finish the ritual, he must generate an *occult* total of 20. Success indicates that the ritual worked. Each level of success brings a greater level of devastation to the city, detailed as follows:

Minimal: Several dozen citizens die.
Average: 25 percent of the citizens die.
Good: 50 percent of the citizens die.
Superior: 75 percent of the citizens die. Numerous fires spring up from car and plane crashes.
Spectacular: Everyone in Singapore is dead. The fires rage for days.

All who die in Singapore turn into shrivelled corpses which take a long time to rot. If everyone in the city dies, it will become a popular feeding ground for demons, gargoyles, ghouls, and other horrific flesh eaters.

If the ritual works at any success level, read the following aloud:

Despite the dawn hour, the sky darkens and thunder rumbles from all corners. The very ground shakes, and a great wind kicks up from out of nowhere. Red and blue lightning flashes from the cloudless sky, striking different areas of Singapore.

General Avery Wellington raises his arms heavenward and gives a shriek of triumph. Red and blue sparks of power play over his body.

Slowly, his body begins to change. However, it does not seem to be the result Wellington desired.

"What's happening to me?" he shrieks as his limbs shrivel up and his skin becomes bloated and blackened. His eyeballs dry up and collapse into their sockets, and his tongue withers away.

When the transformation is complete, it is no longer a dashing Victorian general who stands before you.

Instead, it is a huge, glistening black blob 20 meters wide, with what remains of Wellington's head perched atop it. Yes, Wellington has gotten his wish. He is no longer a simple mortal; he is now a creature of great power.

The head screams with rage. You get the idea that this is not what Wellington had in mind. Slowly, the head turns to you, and a look of murderous rage fills his eyes.

Avery Wellington has indeed been changed by the occult ritual. He is now a horror of great power. But the gruesome change has driven all thoughts of becoming a High Lord from his mind — now he wishes only to destroy.

The Wellington Creature

DEXTERITY 14
Maneuver 17, stealth 15, swimming 17, unarmed combat 20
STRENGTH 22
TOUGHNESS 25
PERCEPTION 8
Find 11, language 12, trick 13
MIND 10
Occult 15, test 18, willpower 16
CHARISMA 8
Taunt 10
SPIRIT 15
Intimidation 22, reality (Orrorsh) 22
Possibilities: 40
Powers: *resistance to normal weapons, regeneration*
Corruption Value: 24
Fear Rating: 3
Perseverance DN: 25
Weakness: salt (severe)
True Death: The ritual which created him must be read backwards.

If Avery turns into a blob, he will attempt to crush the Storm Knights, then run rampant through Singapore, destroying whatever's left of the city.

If the Knights manage to destroy the book, it will have no effect on the Wellington Creature, save to make it much harder to kill him with his True Death. The Knights will have to find another copy of the ritual ... somewhere.

Variables

It is possible that the Knights somehow get to the ritual spot some time before Avery does, and attempt to set up an ambush. As a precaution, Avery flies over the spot on his horse and scouts the area, making sure it is safe. If he does find Knights in a position to ambush, he will attack them, leading his Wellington Reds and the ninja vampyres in a horrific charge from the skies.

If, during the duel, the Knights seem to be beating the ninja, Avery will mentally summon any remaining Wellington Reds to come and help. They arrive in two rounds.

If the pair of techno-demons from Act One are still alive, they enter the fray against everyone, starting with the Storm Knights first, then Avery and company next.

Killing Wellington without using the True Death will result in his return one month later in a different body, in a different role.

A resurrected Wellington will no longer be a Hellion Court member, and will be completely out of favor with the Gaunt Man. In fact, the Gaunt Man will seek him out and have him killed once and for all with his True Death.

Adventure Awards

If the Knights destroyed Avery Wellington forever and foiled his plan, award them 15 Possibilities

If the Knights were unable to kill him with his True Death but managed to slay him and thus postpone his plot, award them 10 Possibilities.

If Singapore lost even a single person to the occult ritual, the Knights get no Possibility reward.

Killing Skutharka and Mister Ho increases each Knight's award by two Possibilities per death.

Epilogue

Read aloud only if the Knights succeeded in their tasks and have rejected the Gaunt Man's offer of an alliance:

No sooner do you finish your discussion with the High Lord and manage to catch your breath high atop Tin Hill, when a great drowsiness washes over you. Everyone slumps to the ground, exhausted from the battle.

You awaken in your rooms at the Hotel Indonesia. You have come full circle. Your physical injuries have all been healed, and you are washed and dressed in your normal bedtime manner. The hour is midnight. Something jingles at your side.

Lifting your arm, you see a copper charm bracelet around your wrist. The charms include an hourglass, a book, a Victorian Army helmet, and lastly, a chess pawn with your face on the head.

Most of the discomfort over this mysterious piece of jewelry (yes, it can be removed) is replaced by the satisfaction of your having won the battle. Still, you are unsettled by the fact that you don't know what the future has in store for you, especially with the Gaunt Man now free. But you have a feeling the worst of the Possibility Wars is still yet to come.

The Gaunt Man Returns
Response Form

1. Was the Ayar-Manco statue recovered? _____
2. Was Basjas slain? _____
3. Was the Ankh of Ra recovered? _____
4. Was Dr. Totten slain? _____
5. Was the Scarlet Asp slain? _____
6. Was Skutharka slain? _____
7. Were citizens of Singapore killed by the ritual? How many? _____
8. What happened to Wellington (check one)?

   _____ 1. He was slain by his True Death.

   _____ 2. He was slain, but not by his True Death.

   _____ 3. He transformed into a horror, and is now wandering free.

   _____ 4. Other (explain) _____

   _____

   _____

9. Did the Storm Knights say "Yes," "No" or "Maybe" to the Gaunt Man's offer of an alliance at the end of the adventure? _____

Mail your response to: West End Games, RR 3 Box 2345, Honesdale, PA, 18431
Dept.: Gaunt Man Returns

Appendix: This Evil Reborn

The following is a summary of how the other High Lords are reacting to the Gaunt Man's return and/or their attitudes toward him in general:

3327 (Ryuchi Kanawa)

The High Lord of Nippon Tech no longer acknowledges any sort of alliance with the Gaunt Man. As far as 3327 is concerned, their partnership is dissolved. But 3327 realizes that he risks much in setting himself up in opposition to the most powerful of High Lords, and so will maintain his efforts to subvert members of the Hellion Court and defend his gains in Asia. Expect Kanawa to foster closer ties with the Victorians.

The Gaunt Man is enraged by the extent of 3327's betrayal and his myriad assaults on Orrorsh. The High Lord is already hatching plans to seize control of southeast Asia and provide aid to the Tharkoldu in their war against Nippon.

Jean Malraux I

The Cyberpope is aware that he has not been able to expand the realm to the extent that the Gaunt Man probably would have liked. He is therefore casting about for someone other than himself to blame. Malraux's report to the Gaunt Man will cite problems with Mobius, the Tharkoldu, and the Akashans as reasons for his recent setbacks.

Malraux is hoping that Uthorion will argue his case for him with the Gaunt Man, at the same time calling for the destruction of the Warrior of the Dark, who has made no secret of her distaste for the Cyberpope.

The Gaunt Man is unwilling, at this time, to cut off either Uthorion or Malraux. However, he has criticized the Cyberpope for taking action against the Nile Empire and intends to let Malraux stand or fall on his own.

Baruk Kaah

Struggling to hold his realm together in the face of Storm Knight victories, natural disasters in the Eastern Land, and the Akashan airlift, Kaah will put aside his distrust for the Gaunt Man and propose an alliance with him against 3327.

Were the conquest of Earth going more smoothly, the Gaunt Man would no doubt dispose of Baruk Kaah as punishment for his repeated failures. But the Western Land still serves as something of a check to 3327's ambitions, and so the Gaunt Man will let Kaah live ... for now.

Dr.Mobius

Dr. Mobius can point to huge territorial gains in the past two years, thus his alliance with the Gaunt Man remains firm, at least on the surface. In truth, Mobius has long suspected that the Gaunt Man's "disappearing act" was part of a plan to trick him into making a mistake. For his part, the Gaunt Man considers Mobius a posturing fool — but a *successful* posturing fool. The Gaunt Man believes he will be able to manipulate Mobius when the time comes and eliminate him as any potential threat.

Warrior of the Dark

The Warrior's predecessor, Uthorion, was a long-time lieutenant of the Gaunt Man. Unfortunately for him, he failed miserably in his attempt to conquer Scandinavia and Great Britain, and was forced to take refuge in the body of a dragon to escape death at the hands of Storm Knights.

The Warrior is less concerned about how the Gaunt Man will react to her replacing Uthorion than she is about pleasing Drakacanus. She has correctly guessed that the Gaunt Man will be impressed by results, and will not act against her as long as she does not openly rebel against him. She is also working at firming up her alliance with Jezrael, in the event that Orrorsh does turn against Dark Aysle.

In fact, the Gaunt Man is amused by the Warrior's efforts in Aysle, and regards so untested a High Lord as no threat to his rule. The new Aysle she is creating is more in keeping with his own dark desires, so he will leave her to her work for the nonce.

Jezrael

Though Malgest, the Tharkoldu Darkness Device, has informed Jezrael that Kranod was a former lieutenant of the Gaunt Man, she does not fear the Gaunt Man as much as would be expected. She remains, at this point, unaware of just how powerful he is, and feels certain she could stay his hand if the need arose. She is not, however, seeking to provoke a confrontation with him.

The Gaunt Man finds the anger and violence within Jezrael a fascinating study and appreciates that she saved him the trouble of eliminating Kranod. He will, when the opportunity presents itself, offer her an alliance.

Sarila

Though not a High Lord *per se*, Sarila is by far the most powerful Akashan threat to Core Earth. She knows little about the Gaunt Man (as Orrorsh has not affected South America in any great manner), but she is confident that her Comaghaz virus and her mastery of techology will prove more than a match for a being who thrives of fear and superstition.

Though he was not surprised by the Akashans' arrival, the Gaunt Man

was not expecting something on the order of the Comaghaz virus. He is adopting a "wait and see" attitude while crafting long-range plans for the destruction of the "Space Gods."

Through a Glass Darkly ...

With the aid of his mirror, Wicked, the Gaunt Man has learned much of what has passed during the years he spent in the maelstrom. Now he is looking ahead, planning an expansion of his realm.

His most likely target is Australia, whose people are in some ways similar to segments of Victorian society. He is also eyeing China and India, both areas rich in fearsome lore that could be used to crush their societies.

The Gaunt Man is also overseeing the transport of Orrorshan talismans to such diverse sites as Rumania and New Orleans, Louisiana, traditional seats of occult power.

New Items

A number of new objects have come to the fore since the Gaunt Man emerged from the maelstrom and began to plan his conquest anew. What follows are some of the more significant:

Wicked

The Gaunt Man's mirror, Wicked is a sentient occult artifact. Though incapable of speech, it can understand many languages. It communicates by projecting images on its surface and a limited form of telepathy.

The mirror to can be used for scrying on anyone who has come into contact with it in the past, or any of the High Lords. This scrying enables the user to see and hear what is taking place. The user cannot communicate with the person being scryed, unless the person is serving the Gaunt Man in some capacity.

Wicked can also focus in on random scenes within the cosm in which it resides upon command. If the user generates an *occult* total of 25, he may see the past in Wicked up to three times that day.

Besides scrying, Wicked can also project illusions on to its surface. Illusion is the way Wicked *charms, intimidates*, and *taunts*. The Gaunt Man can also use Wicked to see if someone is telling the truth. The person being interrogated must be looking into the mirror. If he is lying, his image will hideously distorted in the glass.

Wicked is devoted to the Gaunt Man. Anyone who attempts to take it off the wall will be attacked by a huge fanged mouth which materializes on the mirror face. This fanged mouth also serves as an extradimensional gate into a pocket cosm which the Gaunt Man uses as a hiding place for certain valuable items. It is here that Heketon was hidden while the Gaunt Man was locked in the Maelstrom.

Wicked
DEXTERITY 0
STRENGTH 20
TOUGHNESS 20
PERCEPTION 20
Language 25, scholar (realm lore) 28, trick 24
MIND 20
Occult 27, test 25, willpower 25
CHARISMA 15
Charm 26, taunt 25
SPIRIT 22
Faith (Orrorsh evil) 25, intimidation 30, reality (Orrorsh) 25, true sight 24
Possibilities: 90
Natural Tools: fangs, damage value STR+5/25
Powers: *Cold aura, magical resistance, regeneration, resistance to normal weapons*
Corruption Value: 22
Fear Rating: 1
Perseverance DN: None
Weakness: Severe weakness to sunlight on its surface.
True Death: Shattered with a golden spike.

The Archives of the Damned

The *Archives of the Damned* is a huge, leatherbound book sealed with iron clasps. Millennia old, the book is more like a journal, with entries written by corrupted scholars, madmen, and demons. The book is a collection of poems, essays, and prose concerning the nature of evil, corruption, and the occult. The *Archives* also contains numerous spells and occult rituals.

The book is so inherently foul that anyone claiming it as their own adds four points to their Corruption value. Another Corruption point will be added for every six months in which the book is in one's possession.

The volume grants bonuses to the *occult* total for certain occult events: *death haunt* (+2), *madness* (+3), and *mark of the hunted* (+3).

The spells *boiling blood, death haunt, eye spy, madness*, and *slow death* can be found within the pages of the Archives.

The book has a *Toughness* of 26.

Holy Water

Price (Value): $10 (5)
Spiritual Rating: 9

This blessed water causes *spiritual damage* equal to the user's *faith* when hurled at an opponent (treat the attack as a *missile weapon* skill use). Armor is ignored. Note that holy water only damages certain creatures, usually those that are known enemies of the faith.

Holy water can only be used by those with at least one add in the *faith* with which the blessed liquid is connected.

Use of holy water is a contradiction in realms whose *Spiritual* axiom is less than 9. Holy water can be created using the miracle below.

Bless Holy Water

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 9
Difficulty: 11
Range: touch
Duration: permanent
Effect: Turns regular water into holy water

This miracle turns fresh, clean water into holy water. The miracle must be invoked in a church or other hallowed ground.

The water must be pure (either boiled or from the tap). One cannot make holy water out of puddles, ponds, or a glass of water from which someone has drunk a portion.

The miracle creates enough holy water for four vials, and cannot be

invoked more than once per week. This miracle is available to Core Earth Christian, Cyberpapal, and Sacellum priests.

Occult Rituals

Identify Murderer

Effect Value: 18
Bonus Number to: effect
Range: Touch
Duration: Special
Cast Time: 9 (one minute)

This ritual enables the caster to identify a murderer. The caster must have a skin sample from the victim and a handful of dirt from a murderer's grave.

When cast, the effect value is compared to the murderer's *Spirit*. The level of success determines how much information is gleaned:

Minimal: Whether the murderer was a living being or undead

Average: A general idea of the murderer's nature (human, horror, animal, etc.)

Good: The murderer's gender, if applicable

Superior: A detailed physical description of the murderer

Spectacular: The name of the murderer.

For this ritual to be successful, the corpse cannot be more than three days old.

Barrier of Force

Effect Value: 20
Bonus Number to: effect
Range: Four meter diameter circle around caster
Duration: Special
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)

Similar to *ward enemy, barrier of force* enables an occultist to cast a second ritual in safety. While the barrier is in place, the caster is protected from magical, spiritual, physical and psionic attacks, though he may still be *tricked, taunted, intimidated* and *tested*.

The ritual requires that the caster set the skulls of four adult murder victims at the four cardinal points of the compass before beginning. The barrier (which is invisible) will remain in effect for as long as it takes to cast a second ritual; for the barrier to be up, a second ritual must be cast immediately (a caster may not raise the barrier and wait around for several hours before casting a second ritual). Once a second rite has been performed, the barrier collapses and must be reformed.

The barrier will also fall if the caster should be interrupted in his casting of a second rite, or if the caster himself decides to tear it down.

Beings who wish to smash through the protection must generate a *Spirit* total exceeding the effect total of the barrier. Failure to break the protection results in spiritual backlash against the attacker.

To determine spiritual damage, subtract the attacker's *Spirit* total from the spell's effect value and consult the Combat Results Table on page 40 of the *Torg Rulebook*. Spiritual damage effects are detailed on page 125 of the *Rulebook*.

Dark Research

Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect
Range: Subject must be in same cosm/realm as caster
Duration: Special
Cast Time: 20 (two hours)

This ritual enables the occultist to learn a great deal about a specific individual. The occult components needed are: an item owned by the subject or a piece of his flesh; a book filled with blank white pages; a quill pen made from the wood of a tree growing in a swamp; a vial of ink made from the ichor of an Orrorshan gospog of the Third Planting.

The ritual must be cast in a library or study during the new moon. The effect value is compared to the target's *Mind* or *willpower* with the results dependent on the level of success:

Minimal: The target's name

Average: The target's occupation/role in life

Good: The target's current residence

Superior: The target's skills, talents, powers, weaknesses.

Spectacular: The target's significant actions over the past year.

If the ritual fails, the target is aware that he is being researched, and will know who is doing it and where they are located. At a *Minimal* level of success, the target aware only that he is being researched.

Resurrection

Difficulty: 25
Cast Time: 27 (two days)

This occult ritual brings life back to a corpse. Unfortunately, the lifeforce is provided by a spirit from the Waiting Village.

The required occult components are: the dead body to be revived (it can even be just a fragment of the remains, no smaller than a thigh bone); some blood from the creature that slew the victim; an unused coffin; and some of the caster's blood.

The caster places the deceased in the coffin, spills the murderer's and his own blood onto the corpse's chest, then invokes the ritual.

Performing this ritual corrupts both the caster and the resurrected being. If they did not previously have any corruption points, they immediately receive eight. If they were already corrupt, they receive four additional points.

The deceased revives, with all damage healed, including the regeneration of any missing body parts. All personality traits, memories and skills are restored.

Unfortunately, the recipient now has a *Wicked* spirit residing in him. Every week, the recipient gains another point of corruption, until the spirit finally takes full control. Of course, only the gamemaster knows that the *resurrection* ritual is a sham.

Death From Within

Difficulty: 18
Effect Value: 18
Range: 6 (15 meters)
Duration: Special
Cast Time: 14 (10 minutes)

This ritual causes maggots, worms, and spiders to come bursting out of the victims. Victims suffer damage value of 18 (ignore armor) per round.

In order to cast the ritual, the caster must speak the names of the victims, and have the following occult components: an item touched by the victim(s)

in the past 24 hours; a dead insect; a pint of salt water taken from an Orrorshan zone; a note, written in the caster's blood, which gives a physical description of the victim(s).

Note that the victim(s) must be named at the beginning of the ritual. New victims cannot be added on once the user has begun speaking the ritual. Multiple targets brings about the appropriate One on Many penalties.

The ritual takes ten minutes to initiate. During the first five minutes, nothing happens. In the latter five minutes, the victims feel horrendous pains in their bodies and are completely helpless, unable to do nothing but scream.

Thereafter, the vermin erupt from the victim in a never-ending stream, until the ritual is no longer spoken or 30 minutes has elapsed, whichever comes first.

This occult ritual is a *Wicked* act.

The Hellion Court Reborn

Following the disaster with Avery Wellington and the questionable behavior of some other Hellion Court members, the Gaunt Man saw the need to replenish the ranks of his top lieutenants. The following are the new members, to be introduced either all at once or gradually into your campaign.

Hatha

Hatha was the high priestess of the worship of nature spirits in the cosm of Kantovia, Kurst's former domain. After his victory over Kurst and his Darkness Device, the Gaunt Man recruited some of the more promising entities from Kantovia for his planned conquest of the cosmverse. Hatha, who relished the idea of greater power, willingly joined him.

Hatha personifies the fear that mortals feel in the face of natural phenomena, such as earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, etc. It is rumored that she can summon such forces of nature, as well as cause crops to fail or flourish, through the use of her spiritual powers.

Like Nature itself, Hatha can be cruel, harsh, indifferent, or helpful, depending on her mood. In fact, due to her corruption, she is prone to sudden, violent mood swings. The Gaunt Man realizes that Hatha is an extremely powerful being, but remains confident that he can control her.

In appearance, Hatha is a horrifyingly beautiful woman with long brown hair and sparkling green eyes. Her skin resembles leaves and bark knitted together and her fingernails are rose thorns. She looks every bit the dark embodiment of Nature's power.

Hatha

DEXTERITY 12
Beast riding 14, dodge 14, melee weapons 15, running 15, stealth 16, swimming 15, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 15
Climbing 18
TOUGHNESS 17
PERCEPTION 15
Find 18, language 19, scholar (Kantovian lore) 23, tracking 22, trick 19
MIND 18
Occult 22, test 23
CHARISMA 19

Charm 25, persuasion 23, taunt 22
SPIRIT 17
Faith (Kantovian nature spirits) 20, focus 22, intimidation 23, reality (Orrorsh) 24
Possibilities: at least 10 per Storm Knight
Natural Tools: fingernails (STR+4/19)
Powers: *Hypnosis, life drain (Toughness), magical resistance, animal control, plant control, shape change, blur form, silence.*
Miracles: All Core Earth miracles. *Animal speech, fertility, inferno, plague, plant protection,* and *storm* from Aysle.
Corruption Value: 25
Fear Rating: 2
Perseverance DN: 25
Weakness: Severe weakness to acid
True Death: Steel spike blessed by a Kantovian shaman and driven through her head
Goals: To serve the Gaunt Man to the best of her abilities.
Power Notes: Hatha does *life drain* by attacking a victim with her fingernails. She can control any animal with *animal control. Plant control* is similar to *animal control.* Hatha can *shape change* into any known animal or bird.

Thanys

Thanys claims to be the living embodiment of all cosms' ideas of death. He claims total control over death in all its forms.

The Gaunt Man is convinced that Thanys is an insane, delusional individual who somehow acquired great power. Making so unknown a quantity a Hellion Court member is a bit of a risk, but the Gaunt Man enjoys the fear that Thanys creates even among the other Court members. The Gaunt Man's only concern is that he must rein in Thanys' desire to spread death too quickly.

Thanys wears a black robe and cowl and a pair of oily black raven's wings that sprout from his back. The wings have a total span of 10 feet. No one has seen what Thanys looks like under his cowl. His voice is a dry crackly hiss, and his presence is heralded by the cold of the grave.

Hathas and Thanys have a natural antipathy toward each other.

Thanys
DEXTERITY 13
Dodge 15, flight 16, melee weapons 16, stealth 15, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 13
TOUGHNESS 14
PERCEPTION 15
Find 18, scholar (Death lore) 20, track 22, trick 19
MIND 17
Test 21
CHARISMA 19
Taunt 27
SPIRIT 17
Intimidation 25, reality (Orrorsh) 20
Possibilities: at least four per Storm Knight
Powers: *Cold aura, paralyzing touch, resistance to normal weapons, shape change (raven), darkness, dark vision*
Corruption Value: 24
Fear Rating: 4
Perseverance DN: 25
Weakness: The leaves of the telegraph vine
True Death: Must be bound with plant tendrils and impaled with a living tree
Equipment: Obsidian sickle, damage value STR+10/23
Goals: To spread death throughout the cosmverse.

THE GAUNT MAN RETURNS

by John Terra

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