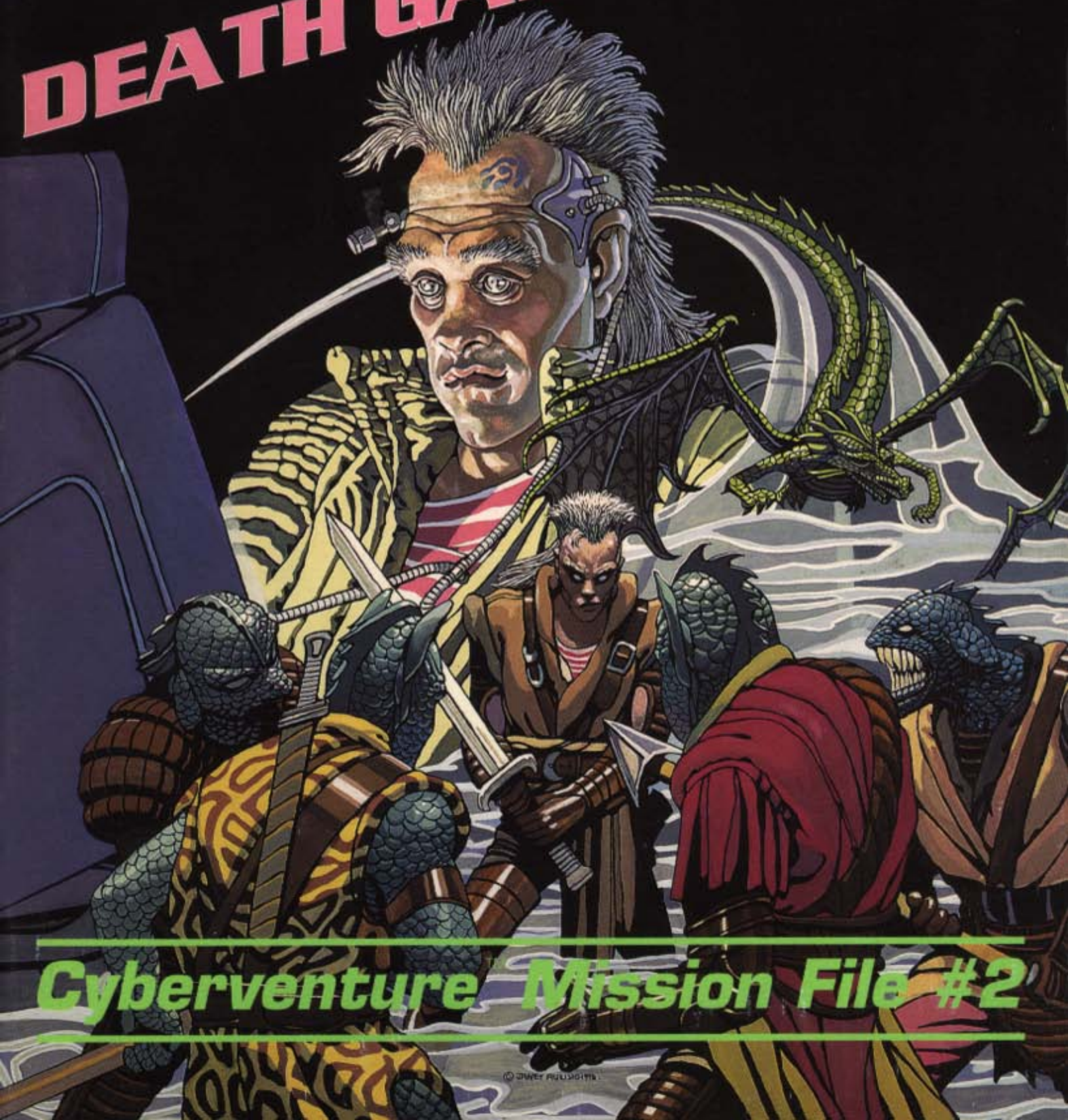


# CYBER SPACE™



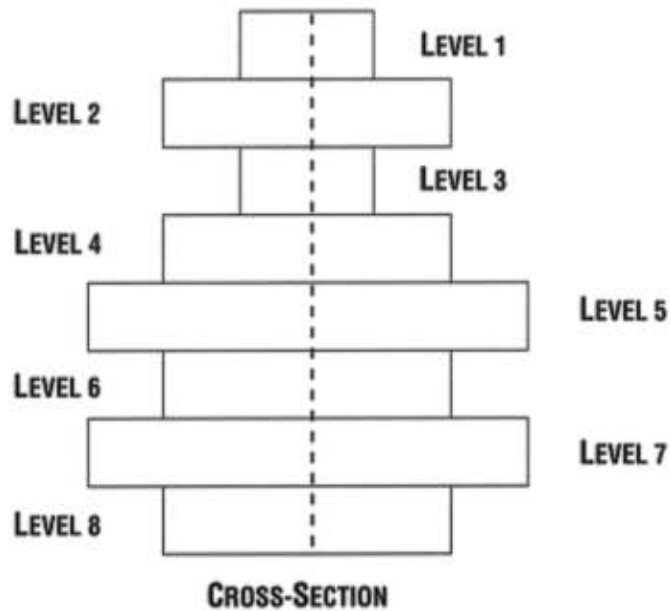
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## DEATH GAME 2090™

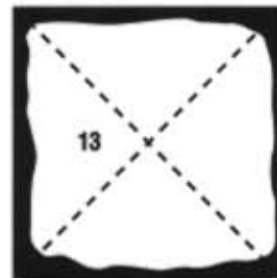


Cyberventure Mission File #2

# THE BARON'S TOWER



LEVEL 1



LEVEL 3



LEVEL 2



LEVEL 4

# DEATH GAME 2090™

## CYBERVENTURE MISSION FILE #2

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Death Game 2090, the latest Cyberventure for ICE's Cyberspace™ role playing game. Herein you will find all that is necessary — besides a copy of Cyberspace itself — in order to quickly set up and play a ready-to-run adventure in earth's dark near-future. If your players have not yet designed their characters, you may have them select pre-designed adventurers from the list on page 6.

## THE CYBERSPACE GENRE

The setting for *Cyberspace* is a century from now, when our tortured earth has become even more cruel and cynical. It is 2090. This is a time of rampant drug abuse, governments in collapse, usurping corporations and amazing technology. The streets are home to hopeless and those down on their luck: vagrants, criminals, and the unemployed. Lives are bought and sold for the price of 100 mL of whole-grain alcohol. It is man's twilight age — the last few desperate years before an abyssal plunge into total oblivion and anarchy.

As GM, it is your job to set the stage for dark and disturbing role playing at its most challenging. Reading the source material in the *Cyberspace* rules will provide some insightful background, and give you an idea of the sort of things that go on in the day-to-day world of the future. However, this is only a start. In order to enshroud the game

with the dark mystique of the genre, we suggest that a little investment of your time studying certain films and books will reap great rewards when running the game. Check out the films *Aliens*, *Blade Runner*, *Mad Max*, *Robocop* and *Warriors*; and the books *Hardwired*, *Neuromancer*, *Mirrorshades* (anthology), and *Street Lethal*.

The adventure provided in this product thrusts the adventurers into the throbbing heart of a new field of technology: ActiStim. This is a dangerous scenario, requiring the players to act properly or risk psychological damage to their characters. It should be hard for the adventurers to gauge fact from simulation after a while, and this uncertainty should produce a healthy sense of paranoia and fear in the characters.

Keep the action fluid and shocking, with your players constantly making life or death decisions. This is the essence of existence in the lethal world of *Cyberspace*.

# 1.0 THE WORLD OF CYBERSPACE

As detailed in the *Cyberspace* game, earth at the end of the 21st century is a study in contrasts and extremes. More violent and decadent than our world today, the society is mercenary, with the trade measured in terms of money and lives.

Profit is king, media is queen, and the pawns include everything (and everyone) else.

Below is a summary of major events from the turn of the century to the year 2090.

As can be gleaned from the timeline below, man has been living with Cyber System implants for over 60 years, which has allowed him ample time to develop a wide range of artificial "enhancements", and the medical technology to implant them quickly and inexpensively. On the other hand, the realm of Cyberspace, wherein the consciousness of man may travel and interact with others, is in its infancy; less than 10 years old at this time. Remote regions of the Net remain largely unexplored, and Cyberspace is recognized as the last earthly frontier to be fully mastered by man.

## TIMELINE

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>2000</b> — Capitalism runs rampant. China remains as last bastion of communism.</p> <p><b>2002</b> — Interactive video in widespread use.</p> <p><b>2004</b> — USA, Russia &amp; Japan sign the "Three Powers" treaty.</p> <p><b>2007</b> — Psychoactives and surgery used to control criminal behavior.</p> <p><b>2010</b> — Trade in human organs reaches global proportions.</p> <p><b>2012</b> — First true Artificial Intelligence developed.</p> <p><b>2014</b> — Artificial wombs created.</p> <p><b>2015</b> — European Economic Community becomes the fourth superpower.</p> <p><b>2017</b> — Widespread robot development.</p> <p><b>2020</b> — Global satellite/ground communications network (a.k.a. the Net) fully integrated.</p> <p><b>2024</b> — All superpowers are engaged in space industry.</p> <p><b>2027</b> — First versions of Direct Neural Interface developed, allowing mental control of mechanical systems. Bionic prosthetics, known as cyber implants, or "wetware", developed.</p> <p><b>2028</b> — First documented case of CIRS.</p> | <p><b>2031</b> — Organ/tissue cloning developed. Global currency, the "World Dollar", instituted.</p> <p><b>2032</b> — Megacorporations begin loaning money to hard-pressed governments.</p> <p><b>2035</b> — First cloning of a human performed.</p> <p><b>2039</b> — First cryogenic deep space colony vessel launched.</p> <p><b>2040</b> — Megacorporations begin buying countries.</p> <p><b>2047</b> — Tensions rise between Japan and the USA.</p> <p><b>2048</b> — Apparent Sensory Perception (ASP) record/playback techniques developed.</p> <p><b>2049</b> — RAM chip implantation techniques in humans developed. Two person neural interface perfected.</p> <p><b>2051</b> — Laser/Hydrogen Triggering rockets developed.</p> <p><b>2054</b> — Practical vehicular laser weaponry developed.</p> <p><b>2061</b> — Japanese troops begin operations on American soil. USA secedes from superpower alliance.</p> <p><b>2065</b> — The Crystal Palace space habitat is operational.</p> | <p><b>2069</b> — Japanese mercenary gangs terrorize American residential districts.</p> <p><b>2071</b> — Effects of global climate shift cause catastrophic ecological destruction.</p> <p><b>2075</b> — Synaptic reformatting intelligence drugs marketed.</p> <p><b>2076</b> — The Great California Earthquake; San Francisco and areas northward escape destruction.</p> <p><b>2078</b> — Inception of the Death Valley Free Prison.</p> <p><b>2081</b> — CyberDecks produced. The realm of Cyberspace is born.</p> <p><b>2082</b> — Japanese/American low-intensity war ends.</p> <p><b>2085</b> — Indian Ocean Comet Disaster; world climate degraded further.</p> <p><b>2086</b> — Recombinant DNA techniques performed on humans. Alterant Replicants produced.</p> <p><b>2088</b> — Intercorporate wars become prevalent.</p> <p><b>2089</b> — The Martian Conflict begins; belligerents include megacorps New Edison and Okira.</p> <p><b>2090</b> — The Present.</p> |
|--|---|--|

## 2.0 SYSTEM ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are listed alphabetically within subcategories.

### CHARACTER STATS

Ag .....	Agility
Co .....	Constitution
Em .....	Empathy
In .....	Intuition
Me .....	Memory
Pr .....	Presence
Qu .....	Quickness
Re .....	Reasoning
SD .....	Self Discipline
St .....	Strength
Ap .....	Appearance

### SKILL LIST

Acrobatics .....	Acr
Administration .....	Adm
Advanced Math .....	AdM
Ambush .....	Amb
Appraisal .....	App
Armored Body Suit .....	ABS
Armored Exoskeleton .....	AEx
Astrogation .....	Astg
Astronomy .....	Astr
Biological Technics .....	BioT
Biology .....	Biol
Body Development .....	BD
Chemistry .....	Chem
Combat .....	Com
Contortions .....	Cont
Culture .....	Cul
Cyber Attunement .....	CybA
CyberDeck Operation .....	CDOp
Cybernetics .....	Cyb
Cybernetics Technics .....	CybT
Drive .....	Drv
Drug Tolerance .....	DrT
Electronic Bypass .....	EBy
Electronics Technics .....	ElecT
Enviros .....	Env
Equipment .....	Eq
Exploit .....	Exp
Falsification .....	Fis
Fire .....	Fir
Foraging, Rural .....	FoR
Foraging, Urban .....	FoU
Frenzy .....	Frz
Gambling .....	Gam
History .....	His
Intrusion .....	Int
Light Body Armor .....	LBA
Linguistics .....	Lng
Mechanical Bypass .....	MBy

Mechanical Technics .....	MecT
Media .....	Mda
Medical Practice .....	MeP
Melee .....	Mel
Missile .....	Mis
Mounted .....	Mtd
Music .....	Mus
No Armor .....	NoA
Perception .....	Per
Physics .....	Phy
Pilot .....	Plt
Planetology .....	PI
Quick-Draw .....	QuD
Software Technics .....	SofT
Sport .....	Sp
Stalk & Hide .....	S&H
Streetwise .....	StW
Subduing .....	Sub
Trickery .....	Trk
Utility .....	Util

### GAME TERMS

AT .....	Armor Type (four possible ATs are used in this game)
AT(DB) .....	Armor Type with Defensive Bonus given
Bon .....	Bonus

CF .....	Critical Failure (usually an unmodified roll of 05 or lower)
CIRS .....	Cybernetic Implant Rejection Syndrome (measured by CIRS Stat)
CN .....	Construction Project
CS .....	Critical Success (usually an unmodified roll of 96 or higher)
D .....	Die/Dice (ie; "1D10" = a ten-sided die roll)
DB .....	Defensive Bonus
DL .....	Difficulty Level
EP .....	Experience Points
GM .....	Gamemaster (Game Referee)
Lvl .....	Level (Experience Level)
MM .....	Moving Maneuver
Mod .....	Modifier or Modification
NPC .....	Non-Player Character
OB .....	Offensive Bonus
PC .....	Player Character
Rd, Rnd .....	Round (a ten-second period)
RP .....	Repair Project
RR .....	Resistance Roll
RS .....	Research Project
SM .....	Static Maneuver
SRB .....	Standard Rank Bonus (progression of Mods gained by Rank/Rtg# progression; Ranks 1-10 add +5 each, Ranks 11-20 add +2 each, Ranks 21-30 add +1 each, and Ranks 30+ add +1/2 each)
Stat .....	Statistic or Characteristic

## 3.0 TASK ABBREVIATIONS

A "Task" is any game situation which requires some sort of die roll to determine the degree of success or maneuver result (either Static or Moving). There are five "Task Types", and each is associated with a specific maneuver table or process, as noted below:

CN =	Construction Project ( <i>Construction/Research Chart, Cyberspace p.47</i> )
MM=	Moving Maneuver ( <i>Personal Maneuver Chart, Cyberspace p.44</i> )
RP =	Repair Project ( <i>Malfunction/Repair Chart, Cyberspace p.48</i> )
RS =	Research Project ( <i>Construction/Research Chart, Cyberspace p.41</i> )
SM =	Static Maneuver ( <i>Static Maneuver Chart, Cyberspace p.43</i> )

Tasks presented in this text are recorded in the following abbreviated fashion, consisting of three parts:

- 1) The first two letters represent the Task Type, as shown above. This is followed by a slash (/).
- 2) The second abbreviation indicates the skill or stat(s) used to modify the dice roll. This is followed by a colon (:).
- 3) The last letter indicates the Difficulty Level of the Task, as explained above. It is always the initial letter of the DL "name" except that "X" is used for "Extremely Hard" ("E" means "Easy").

Some examples:

MM/Acrb:V = A *Very Hard* Moving Maneuver modified by Acrobatics skill.

CN/CybT:H = A *Hard* Construction Project modified by Cybernetics Technics skill

MM/St:S = A *Sheer Folly* Moving Maneuver modified by Strength.

### DIFFICULTY LEVELS TABLE

Routine .....	+30
Easy .....	+20
Light .....	+10
Medium .....	+0
Hard .....	-10
Very Hard .....	-20
Extremely Hard .....	-30
Sheer Folly .....	-50
Absurd .....	-70
Insane .....	-100

## 4.0 ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

This adventure has a standard structure, designed to aid you in setting up the run and handling your players. They should not be allowed to read any part of this book. However, you may wish to show them selected graphics, such as illustrations of characters or important schematics.

The "Overview" section provides a summary of the adventure. After this come the individual chapters, each of which is broken up into the following parts:

### WORLDCOMP HEADLINES

#### OLD FAITHFUL

TESTS TOXIC:  
RANGERS ISSUE COVERALLS TO  
TOURISTS

AMERICAN  
CORPORATION SEIZES  
IRANIAN HOSTAGES:  
DEMANDS FREE TRADE POLICY,  
PROHIBITION OF  
COMPUTER PIRACY

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**General Briefing:** Designed as much for the players as for you, this material can be role-played or read directly to the players. This information includes only what the characters are expected to know, and may even include deceptive material.

**Running the Mission:** This is the detailed breakdown of what will (or should) actually happen in the adventure, including the various factors which can help or hinder the PCs.

**Requirements:** What you will need in order to run this portion of the adventure — characters and locales involved, actions previously accomplished by the PCs, and so forth.

**Aids:** Things and persons which might help the adventurers during this portion of the adventure. These possibilities are not necessarily obvious, and may indeed be overlooked by the PCs.

**Obstacles:** Conversely, persons and situations which might interfere with the PCs' completion of this portion of the adventure.

**Compensation:** Any rewards (both tangible and in terms of the plot) which the PCs are likely to acquire for successfully completing this section of the adventure.

**The Run:** The information you require in order to run the adventure.

**Denouement:** A summary of the conclusion of this portion of the adventure, leading to the next chapter.



**Character/Organization Dossier:** This is a file of background data regarding NPCs and organizations which are likely to be involved in this part of the adventure. It is a reference source for the GM, aiding him in the job of fleshing out NPC personalities, and providing data on important *Cyberspace* system data.

**Schematics:** Another resource file, this one includes maps and layouts of locations relevant to each portion of the adventure.

The following chart provides the GM with six characters — one representative of each professional category — for his players to choose from if they do not wish to develop their own. Their stats, mods and skills have all been calculated and developed. Now all they need is a little personalization. Each is given a social class from which players may generate Character Backgrounds as detailed in the *Cyberspace* rules, Section S 9.0 (page 26).

PRE-DESIGNED CHARACTER CHART						
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
<b>Name</b>	<b>Sly the Fly</b>	<b>Izvestia</b>	<b>Sister Schmooze</b>	<b>"El Bruto" Casteneda</b>	<b>Circuit Flash</b>	<b>Ratchet</b>
<b>Profession</b>	Sneak	Jockey	Sleaze	Killer	Net Junkie	Tech Rat
<b>Social Class</b>	Corp Middle Class	Space Colony	Corp Middle Class	Lower Class Sprawl	Corp Upper Class	Lower Class Sprawl
<b>Level</b>	1st	5th	2nd	3rd	4th	6th
<b>Maneuvering</b>	AEX 15	LBA 25	NoA 20	NoA 50, LBA 45	NoA -25	No Armor 25
<b>WMR</b>	11 m/rnd	15 m/rnd	24 m/rnd	30 m/rnd, 23 m/rnd	15 m/rnd	25 m/rnd
<b>Constitution</b>	50	38	66	66	11	51
<b>Agility</b>	82	86	82	100	69	63
<b>Self Discipline</b>	82	3	50	51	95	47
<b>Memory</b>	60	34	11	10	90	85
<b>Reasoning</b>	56	34	10	30	90	85
<b>Strength</b>	64	54	44	92	22	68
<b>Quickness</b>	75	71	32	70	58	48
<b>Presence</b>	41**	23	99	54	32	21
<b>Intuition</b>	14	67	80	12	82	61
<b>Empathy</b>	21	11	97	2	1	26
<b>Appearance</b>	10	26	30	50	6	48
<b>CIRS</b>	5	0	2	1	1	0
<b>Fire</b>	Beretta PM-15 MP 11	Steyr NY-5 NP +45	Colt/Corning Mk1 LP +20	Steyr AUG C 5mm AR +64	Mirage 5X 5mm Pistol +20	Mirage 5X 5mm Pistol +35
<b>Melee</b>	Brawl -24	Switchblade +35	Brawl -25	Razornails +44	Brawl -25	Tire iron +20
<b>Missile</b>	Grenades -19	—	—	Grenades -5	—	—
<b>Hits</b>	62	58	45	117	49	63
<b>AT(DB)</b>	AEX (+5)	LBA (+0)	NoA (0)	NoA, LBA (0)	NoA (0)	NoA (0)
<b>Primary Skills</b>	Pilot +15 Equipment +15 Stalk & Hide +18 Administration +16 Elec Tech +15 Linguistics +40	Pilot +81 Drive +70 Equipment +35 Elec Tech +40 Perception +40 Linguistics +50	Equipment +17 Culture +46 Streetwise +41 Administration +51 Exploit +56 Linguistics +40	Drive +33 Equipment +13 Stalk & Hide +10 Exploit +10 Mech Technics +20 Linguistics +15	Equipment +30 Elec Tech +39 SoftTech +39 Cyber Tech +54 Cyber Attunement +47 Linguistics +50	Drive +46 Streetwise +50 Mech Technics +88 Electronics Technics +83 Software Technics +53 Perception +52
<b>Secondary Skills</b>	Acrobatics +40 Appraisal +10 Contortion +10 Gambling +10 Media +15	Acrobatics +50 Advanced Math +10 Astrogation +50 History +5 Media +10	Appraisal +10 Gambling +15 History +5 Media +35 Music +20	Acrobatics +30 Drug Tolerance +20 Sport +35 Subduing +20 Trickery +25	Advanced Math +20 Chemistry +50 History +25 Media +30 Physics +35	Appraisal +15 Drug Tolerance +20 Foraging, Urban +50 Subduing +25 Trickery +30
<b>Languages</b>	English D5 Gutterspeak D5 Italian D4 Japanese D3 —	Russian D5 English D4 Gutterspeak D4 Spanish D3 Japanese D3	English D4 Gutterspeak D5 Japanese D4 Spanish D3 —	Spanish D5 Gutterspeak D2 English D1 — —	English D5 Japanese D4 Magnebubble Biobasic D4 — —	Gutterspeak D5 English D3 — — —
<b>Equipment Packages</b> <b>#1) Cyber Systems:</b> Megavision Mk 10. Balance Rig Rtg 10. Body Plating (Polycarbon). Fangs and Claws (retractable, for climbing). <b>Items:</b> Sprint (Honda jetpack). Beretta PM-15 Md. Machine Pistol. 4 magazines (60 rounds) AP/TC, 1 mag GP/TR. Disposable Missile Launcher (2). 6 CO Mk 1 grenades, 6 Mk 10 SMK, 2 Mk 1 FAE. <b>Cash:</b> \$200. <b>#2) Cyber Systems:</b> DNI to brain. <b>Items:</b> Ford Hunter (civilian version). Steyr NY-5 Needle Pistol. 10 magazines (20 bursts). Switchblade. LBA Flak Vest. <b>Cash:</b> \$20. <b>#3) Cyber Systems:</b> Lowlight Rtg9. Directional Mike. Directional Scent. Biosonar Mk3. <b>Items:</b> Colt/Corning Mark One Laser Pistol +20. 2 energy cartridges. <b>Cash:</b> \$200 (plus future income of \$200/mo). <b>Note:</b> Knows Cult leader.				<b>#4) Cyber Systems:</b> Razornails (retractable). <b>Items:</b> LBA Reinforced Flak Armor. Steyr AUG C 5mm Lt Assault Rifle. 2 magazines (20 rounds) GP/DUC. 6 FAE Mk 1 grenades. <b>Cash:</b> \$10. <b>#5) Cyber Systems:</b> DNI to brain. <b>Items:</b> Mk 15 CyberDeck with Mangebubble Core. Mirage 5X 5mm Pistol. 2 clips (10 rounds) GP. Mk 50 Card Drive. 3 DNI cables. Programs: Matrix, Self-Definition, Random Number Generator Rtg 10, Bludgeon Rtg3. <b>Cyberspace Skills:</b> CyberDeck Operation +57, Combat +42, Intrusion +47, Utility +42. <b>Cash:</b> \$75 (\$600/mo income). <b>#6) Cyber Systems:</b> Toolhand (multi-head power ratchet). <b>Items:</b> Wheeled bus (decrepit). Electrical toolkit. Mechanical toolkit. Mirage 5X 5mm Pistol. 2 clips (10 rounds) GP. <b>Cash:</b> \$15. <b>Other:</b> Knows corp assassin. <b>Notes</b> All Empathy stats reflect CIRS reductions <b>** Includes bonus for visible implants</b>		

# UNIQUORN QLAB



The Qlab's not just another hangout — it's an institution. If the Sprawl had a heart, its blood would spurt through these doors. Everyone who is anyone is here sometime, hustling drugs or doing a deal or making a connection. There's an electric tension here, a wild mixture of adrenaline and sweat, of sex and death, of great vibes and sour whisky.

It's a place where adventures begin or end, as the case may be.

When a new stimgame shows up at the Unicorn Qlab, there's no hint that the game is other than what it seems — the latest in interactive entertainment.

However, those who win the top scores are contacted by agents of Stimular, a stimgame design house. Fabulous fortunes are offered to those willing to sign up for six months as *stimtesters* — professional game players.

## 1.0 GENERAL BRIEFING

**Note:** You may read the following section to your players, or the action may be role played.

Rich kids, from the vantage point of the 53rd story of some mega-skyscraper, find the Sprawl fascinating. It teems with life, they say. Raw savagery and unbanked emotions. Sex and violence, and violent sex. Real life, chipper.

That's the view of the outsider, the voyeur, the "touriste". You know better. What's the Sprawl? It's raw sewage seeping out from around the manhole cover. It's feral children, urine-stained sidewalks and dead derelicts on the streets at dawn; neon-laser lights that stutter, and shot-out street lamps; it's food-aid tickets, chalk lines around a corpse, and every street corner staked-out by prostitutes; it's gangs, phones that don't work right, and spent bullet casings in the gutter.

The Sprawl is not a romantic place, and it's not pretty. It is tough and vicious, and it breeds survivors like you.

After nightfall, when you hit the streets, word reaches you almost instantly:

"Fritzine is ready," hisses a green-haired boy with bruised hands, as you weave down an alley. "I gotta bundle on ya, so don't suck out."

And the girl on the street, with the wax skirt and the animated tattoo: "Hot sticks, stimmers! Jam 'em down. Be gutly tonight." She smiles, revealing jagged teeth and a long, forked tongue.

"It's the Flow," says some muscle type, who takes it on himself to escort you across an abandoned lot. His eyes warily track the empty windows that overlook the lot from above. "I been thinking about that Jasmine angle, and I think you've been overlooking the symbolism of the chains..."

What is it that dead artist said? Something about everyone getting ten minutes of fame? You're today's celebrity, entirely by accident. When that new stimgame showed up at the Unicorn Qlub, who knew that you and your pals would be so good at it, or that interest in the game would build like it has? And who knew that your chief competitors would be Fritzine "Das Reich" Guderian and her New Hitler Youth pals?

Tonight at the Unicorn Qlub, it'll be the final showdown — you and your team against the NHY stimmers. No one else has survived the long series of encounters, the adventures which have led to this evening's climax. Of course, the New Hitler Youth want to turn this competition into some kind of tournament about racial purity and ideology. Thanks to their propaganda, *everyone* in the Sprawl knows about the Qlub action tonight.

### THE UNICORN QLUB

The Unicorn Qlub is more than just a hangout. Squatters originally took over this abandoned warehouse, expanding the living space by knocking down walls into adjacent buildings. Neo-Rockers came to jam, and a second-hand pool table found players, and then fences found this a convenient place to do deals. Somehow, it all came together as the Unicorn Qlub, one of the few spots of neutral ground in the San Francisco Sprawl.

As you enter through the steel double-doors, the expected wave of neo-rock vibes doesn't smash your eardrums. The great two-tier stage in the center of the old warehouse is empty of musicians. In their place on the top platform is an octopoid structure of booths and video screens — the stimgame.

Fritzine and her friends are already here, surrounded at one of the bars by their fair-complexioned, blond supporters. The joint is more crowded than usual tonight, even without dancers packing the floor-space. You're surprised to see additional video screens hanging on the walls, with wires stringing across the ceiling and down to the stage.

"Good eve, sprawlkids." The video screens blink into life, revealing the bearded visage of Quint, the manager of the Unicorn Qlub (no one knows who really owns the place). He's outdone himself tonight: his tuxedo is of the deepest ebony, yet casts brilliant reflections in all colors of the rainbow; his facial hair has been chromed, and a caged bird sings within his top hat.

"You've noticed a slight change in our interior architecture, no doubt? Well, this is the showdown tonight between the stimgame finalists, and you and I both know how much attention this game has been getting — so we moved the machine out here for one night."

Some complaints break out, mostly from the neo-rockers, but these are drowned out by chants from stimgame fans: "Stim it!" "Heil Fritzine!" "Hot sticks!"

Quint calls for representatives of both teams to step forward, to the lower tier of the stage. "Each team will have its turn against the machine, to prevail or fail. I am thinking of a number between one and one hundred. The team which comes closest to this number will have the privilege of selecting whether to play first or last."

Before you can respond, the German screams out her answer: "Zwolf!" When Quint raises his eyebrow, Fritzine translates the response into English — "Twelve."

**Note:** Now let the players make their own guess

"The correct answer," says Quint, waving toward the video screens, is..."

**Note:** Roll dice, to make the players think that you are randomly selecting Quint's number. Ignore the result and select a number which makes the PCs' guess wrong.

"We'll go first," says Fritzine, leaping for the ladder to the upper tier. She waves her finger at your face. "Eat ram-bits, mon-grel!"

The neo-Nazis settle into the booths radiating out from the stimgame's central processing unit. Some jack in directly; others pull down stimhelms and strap themselves in. Someone must have scored big in order to get this machine for the Qlub — you know that stimhelms cost megabucks.

As the neo-Germans enter stimspace, the video screens relay the view from a variety of camera angles. Like your team, Fritzine and her boys have completed four quests, capturing all of the Crowns of Enchantment and many miscellaneous magical artifacts, some with unknown powers. Their game characters — barbarian warriors, wizards and clerics — have advanced to god-like status, much like your own characters. Now they march north across the Plains of Destiny toward the Mountains of Yesterday, knowing only that the final battle is about to be engaged. But against what enemy?

When the ground begins to quake, they figure what they're up against. "Rinaldo the Titan," grimaces Fritzine/Brunhilda the Amazon, as a black-armored giant strides over the hill.

Minutes later, the stimgame booths eject their occupants, and the lights come up. The neo-Nazis have been defeated.

"Your turn, sprawlers," says Quint, motioning you up the ladder. You trode in or strap down the helms, and experience the familiar plunge into stimspace.

## 2.0 RUNNING THE MISSION

The basic idea is to introduce the players to the concept of stimspace as their characters fight the finale of a tournament.

Afterward, they'll be recruited by Stimular, the stimgame design company, and run into revenge from the Hitlerites.

### 2.1 REQUIREMENTS

This adventure is designed for a medium-sized group of 3-6 members, but you may customize it for any number. A blend of character types is suggested — Sneaks, Sleazes and Killers all come in useful, and a Net Junkie or Jockey character is probably essential.

Since the stimgame is equipped with stimhelms, the characters do not need to be jack-equipped in order to play.

As the PCs enter stimspace, you will need to help them select *their* player characters from among those available (see section 3.0). If you need additional characters, simply make minor modifications and then clone those already provided.

Read the appendices. All the information in that section is essential in understanding the new technology introduced in the following adventures, and it helps to describe some of the fantasy elements in the stimspace environment.

### 2.2 AIDS

The following items or devices have been collected by the stimgame characters in previous games, and should be allocated among the stim-characters as the game begins. Any character may use any of these items.

**Amber Crown.** At the command of the wearer, this crown projects doubts into all enemies within 10 meters. RR attack level 5, modified by SD. Characters who fail to resist must flee. May be used twice daily.

**Bracer of Pure Water.** This copper armband purifies all water poured through it. Reusable.

**Ebony Crown.** Upon the command of the character wearing this crown, any creature within 5 meters (other than the wearer) may be healed. The crown restores a maximum of 50 hits per day.

**Edict Versus Undead.** When this parchment is read out loud, a powerful blessing is loosed — no Undead can come within 15 meters of the reader. Lasts for 5 minutes. One use only.

**Eel Rope.** This 3-meter rope turns into a live eel whenever immersed in running water, and obeys simple commands given by its owner. Returns to rope form on command. Reusable (3 times per day) unless killed in eel form. 10 hits, +25 OB, Small melee attack, NoA, +50 DB.

**Elven-Fashioned Chain Mail.** +10 defensive bonus.

**Golden Crown.** This crown has a 75% chance of absorbing any spell cast at its wearer, but may only absorb one spell at a time. On any following round, the wearer may cast the absorbed spell at any target within 3 meters — 50% chance the spell succeeds, otherwise the crown merely disgorges the energy harmlessly.

**Magnetic Ankh.** At the will of the wielder, this wand attracts ferrous metal with a pull equal to 400 lbs.

**Rod of Levitation.** Allows the holder (only) to levitate up to 10 meters vertically, so long as he is holding the rod.

**Sands of Invisibility.** The contents of this leather bag, if poured on a single object, bestow total invisibility on it for 10 minutes. One use only.

**Silver Crown.** At the command of the wearer, this crown gives him extra strength — doubling all damage he causes with melee attacks. Effects last for 5 rounds; may be used 5 times daily.

**Spear of Blue Iron.** +15 offensive bonus.

**Sword of Delay.** After any turn of combat, the user may abandon the sword, and it will continue to fight with the same ability as its owner. Fights for 2 minutes. Returns to owner upon utterance of a command word.

**Sword of Ebony.** When withdrawn from its sheath, this weapon absorbs light. -25 offensive bonus to all attacks within 10 meters.

**Sword of Emeraltine.** +20 offensive bonus, +15 further against worms and dragons.

### 2.3 OBSTACLES

The major obstacle which the PCs are about to come up against is Trysk, the Worm of Destruction. He has been the architect of the catastrophes which have beset the stimmers from the beginning, and now must destroy them before they use the united crowns to overthrow those who rule the Land in his name.

Minor obstacles are Brunhilda the Amazon — Fritzine's former character, risen from the dead — and a prophesying vulture.

## 2.4 COMPENSATION

There is no cash reward for surviving this portion of the adventure. However, the PCs gain temporary recognition throughout the Sprawl, and Quint gives them free bar privileges for a month.

On the down side, the adventurers earn the continuing enmity of Fritzine and her friends. This may become a factor in a continuing campaign.

## 2.5 THE RUN

The action should proceed along lines similar to those set out below.

### THE STIMGAME

Help the players get a feel for stimspace as the tournament begins. First, they find themselves "disembodied", floating in a featureless mist, and then feel themselves being pulled toward figures marching out of the fog — their stimgame characters.

Let the PCs select their stim-characters (which are the characters they have been playing in the tournament). Genders of the stimgame characters may be switched for the convenience of the players.

Describe to them how it feels as they are drawn into the bodies they've selected. They now see and experience everything from the perspective of their character, and use his/her stats for everything *except* mental activities (that is, anything involving Em, In, Me, Pr or Re).

Next, a place materializes around them. This is SSS/Interstim technology, so explain how they can tell that this isn't "real" — that is, though the colors are vivid, fine details are blurred or glossed over. This especially occurs in the background, where the machine doesn't expect attention — the same wind that ripples the grass at their feet might not stir the leaves in a tree off to their left, for instance.

The game's opening scenes begin. The PCs appear in a marble-walled throne room, kneeling in the presence of a radiant being.

"You have done well, Champions," booms Solidon, God of Light. "You have done all that I have asked of you, and the Crowns of Enchantment are within your possession. All that remains is to vanquish the Great Enemy, for he cannot tolerate your success. He will come to seek you, and you must defeat him or suffer the consequences. My blessings shall be upon you."

**Note:** *If the PCs attempt to do anything at this time, Solidon ignores them — this is a pre-scripted prologue within the game.*

Immediately after Solidon's speech, the throne room fades into fog. The PCs rematerialize on a grassy plain (the Plains of Destiny), looking north toward the snow-clad Mountains of Yesterday.

**Note:** *The items listed under "Aids" should now be equally divided among the characters, as they desire.*

There are three encounters during the stimgame:

### THE WELCOME

Sharp-eyed PCs (SM/Per:H, or at reduced difficulty levels until someone succeeds) are the first to spot a figure drawing toward them from the north.

The person can soon be seen to be a warrior in chain mail, with shoulder-length blond hair cascading out from beneath a steel cap — probably a woman. She calls out in a husky voice: "Velkommen! I greet you!" She does not respond to anything said to her.

At close range, further details become visible. The armor is blood soaked, and the pale skin gapes with hideous wounds — the figure is an obvious Undead. Observant characters may identify (SM/Me:E) this corpse as Brunhilda the Amazon, Fritzine's late character.

### UNDEAD BRUNHILDA

**Profession:** Killer  
**Level:** 20th  
**Hits:** 117  
**AT(DB):** ABS(-10)  
**Melee:** Broadsword 148  
**Skills:** Ambush 18, Environs 101, Perception 38, Quick-Draw 94, Stalk & Hide 44, Subduing 45  
**Equipment:** Broadsword

Brunhilda fights until destroyed, always choosing to attack the opponent who is her fiercest foe. She cannot be stunned or knocked unconscious, and is affected only by physical attacks (including spells such as Fireball) and magic specifically for use against Undead.

Upon realizing the identity of their foe, a terrible horror creeps over all of the PCs. This is computer-generated fear — a simulated emotion, but terrifying none the less — and until it is successfully resisted (RR attack level 3, modified by SD), the characters stand paralyzed.

Since the characters have not encountered Undead within the stimgame before, they do not know for sure how to kill one.

If the PCs try to avoid the Undead by outrunning her, the stimgame reality bends — as in a nightmare — so that she is always just in front of them.

Using the magical Edict Against Undead at this time is a waste of this powerful magic item. It merely forces Brunhilda to wait until the enchantment wears off (in five minutes).

If a stim-character is injured by Brunhilda, use this opportunity to explain how damage works in Interstim games. Instead of pain, the character feels an electric shock, and in his mind's eye sees a bar indicator rise — registering how many "hit points" he's taken.

If a stim-character is killed, the player character is ejected from the stimgame. He may watch what follows along with the rest of the audience in the Unicorn Club.

### THE VULTURE'S PRIZE

Shortly after the battle with the Undead, the PCs come across the site of a battle. Great ditches have been gouged in the dirt, and there are craters where the ground was struck with great force. Several bodies lie strewn about, their belongings broken and shattered. This was the site of Fritzine's combat with the Titan.

In the center of the battered field perches a large vulture, astride a corpse. As the PCs approach, it looks at them with a rheumy eye and speaks in a hoarse croak. "Answer my riddle, and I'll give you my prize."

If the stimmers play along, the vulture presents its challenge:

"Without it, there is no life.

"Yet there's too much of it, oft, at death.

"Name it, and my treasure shall be yours."



**The Vulture's stats:** 30 hits, +35 OB, Small melee attack (beak), NoA, +30 DB (when airborne only). If the PCs move within 10 meters, it warns them away; if they persist, it tries to flee with its treasure.

The answer to the riddle is: Blood.

If the characters seem unlikely to get the right answer, the bird gives them additional clues — it *wants* to give them the "treasure".

The vulture's prize is a brilliant opal, 10 centimeters in diameter, set at the end of a silver chain. It has the unusual property of absorbing magic — the owner is unable to successfully cast spells, and his magic items refuse to function. Magic-users can detect this magic drain (SM/In:V), thereby deducing the function of this device.

As the vulture departs — or as its final speech, if it is killed — the creature makes a dire prophecy. "Ere this sun shall set, your blood shall bathe the foothills of the Mountains of Yesterday. The signs betoken this."

### WORM OF DESTRUCTION

An hour after the meeting with the vulture, a cold north wind begins to pick up on the Plains of Destiny. With the ill breeze come dark shadows, storm clouds; and something else.

What approaches is the Worm of Destruction, a creature of pallid and puffy flesh, carried on the wind by four boneless, black wings. The head has neither eyes nor face, but only a gaping maw lined with sharp and glistening fangs. Its hooting calls attention to itself, unless the characters spot it first from afar (SM/Per:VH).

There is nothing subtle about the Worm's assault: it drops to earth in the path of the characters, and then wriggles its way toward them in order to devour them.

**The Worm's stats:** 450 hits, +70 OB, Huge melee attack (bite), ABS, +50 DB.

### REWARDS AND THREATS

If the stimmers triumph over the Worm, they win their victory. In the game, they are returned to the presence of Solidon, where they are healed of their wounds — and those stim-characters who have died are recalled to life. As a heavenly choir extols the achievements of the fantasy heroes, the stimgame ejects its players.

If the stimmers lose, they are ejected from the machine as a hush falls over the Uniqorn Qclub. "So which team won?" grunts Quint, staring at the screen. "Give us a point score, you damnable clunking piece of machine!" At last, the totals for both teams are shown — and the PCs have beaten the race gang by a mere 200 points.

The Uniqorn Qclub is the scene of celebration: the stimmers are hoisted on the shoulders of the crowd, and Quint breaks open a case of champagne. The neo-Nazis and their supporters are nowhere to be seen.

The party lasts until the wee hours of morning. Much later in the day, when the PCs awake, their memories of the celebration are vague and confusing. However, each finds the same handwritten note, on corporate stationery, somewhere on their person:

*Stimular Enterprises is at the forefront of tomorrow's interactive entertainment technology. We appreciate your demonstrated skill at our Solidon Quests™ game, and invite you to consider pursuing a career in testing and developing future games. PLAY FOR PAY — please give us a visit.*

*Sincerely,*

*Rikki Janus*

*Director of Stimtesting*

*P.S. I will contact you at the Uniqorn Qclub tonight at 11 pm.*

There is a second, disturbing occurrence: swastikas have been painted on the door(s) of the PCs' quarters — a promise of vengeance from the New Hitler Youth gang.

### RENDEZVOUS

If the PCs decline to meet Rikki at the Qclub, he seeks them out. In either case, the encounter is essentially the same. Be sure to note Rikki's unusual characteristics and role-play them during this encounter (see below).

Rikki Janus claims to be recruiting the city's best stimmers in order to test new designs for Stimular, further quests like the one which the PCs have just completed. He paints a rosy picture of days spent playing, offices of their own, plentiful benefits and the finest of equipment. Rikki asks the characters to guess how much money stimgames earn each year, then offers them enormous salaries in their new careers: \$25,000 World Dollars a year (more, if the PCs hold out for it).

If asked specifically about future projects, Rikki is vague, explaining the need for secrecy in a competitive field. He says only that Stimular's chief designer is trying to top himself, to do something really fresh and novel.

Rikki is determined to recruit the characters. If they do not accept his offer, he insists that they at least consent to visit the company and try out the new technology. "Much sexier than these Interstim machines," he promises.

### WALTZING WITH HITLERETTE

Fritzine wants revenge for her defeat at the hands of the player characters, and has decided that only one method will suffice — to beat the stimmers in archaic hand-to-hand combat. "For real, not the *virtual* experience," she sneers. The gang also wants their vengeance to be as public as their defeat; in other words, at the Uniorn Qlub.

If the PCs meet with Rikki at the Qlub, their discussion is interrupted by Fritzine and eight members of her gang, who have staked out the Uniorn. Two of the neo-Nazi soldiers carry drawn Uzis, but the others have only neural whips and Luger handguns (all holstered).

Slash, the bouncer, challenges those with drawn guns. Fritzine orders her gun-toting friends to remain near the entrance, and then walks onto the emptying dance floor, placing herself equally distant from Slash and the PCs. Here she makes her challenge:

"Mongrel filth! You beat us in stimspace, but do you have the guts to fight for real, with blades and blood? No cyber stuff, no bullets — just muscle and steel. Your champion, and me." She draws off a white glove and slaps the face of one of the PCs with it. "Fight or run, vermin."

If the characters accept Fritzine's challenge, then a duel will be fought between Fritzine and a single PC. The combat continues until someone surrenders, loses consciousness, or dies — and Fritzine will never surrender. At a command from the neo-Nazi leader, a gang member brings the weapons: two gleaming broadswords.

Remember that this battle is in real space, not stimspace — the PC involved must use his actual skills to win this fight. (The same is true for Fritzine.) The neo-Nazis declare a foul if they suspect the PC of using cyber gear.

If the players won't go along with Fritzine's challenge, she accuses their characters of cowardice, and advertises this belief throughout the Sprawl.

If Fritzine encounters the PCs somewhere other than the Qlub, have the challenge remain the same, but the fight is to occur later at the Uniorn Qlub.

## 2.6 DENOUEMENT

When the characters complete this portion of the adventure, they have either been hired by the Stimular corporation to be professional stimtesters, or should at least have consented to visit their offices. Proceed to the next chapter of the adventure, Stimtesters.

## 3.0 CHARACTER/ORGANIZATION DOSSIER

Here is a summary of information on Rikki Janus, Fritzine Guderian, Brunhilda the Amazon, and the six stim-characters available for player-character use.

### 3.1 RIKKI JANUS

Rikki is a prime example of the rags-to-riches story, 2090's style. Biologically abnormal, his early life was spent sleeping in storm drains and city parks, trying to get enough food to eat and to keep out of danger. By his late teens, Rikki had forged a career for himself as an "arranger," acting as a middleman for corporations looking for freelance muscle.

Success at an important job led to a permanent position with Stimular Enterprises, working for a boss who wanted what he wanted — regardless of whether or not it was legal. Rikki's duties have increased over time, and he now manages all of the day-to-day affairs of Stimular's chief executive, Neldon Kendrick.

With a large salary, Rikki has been free to indulge his pursuit of an identity. Owing up to his lack of gender, Rikki realized that he didn't have to masquerade as male or female — he could parade his special state by playing both genders at once!

Rikki's NAC/vocal emulator allows him to switch between a masculine and a feminine voice, and other NAC programs assist in playing two personas: a sweet, ultra feminine side; and a tough, wise-cracking macho role. Throughout the adventure, Rikki constantly switches modes, often several times within a single conversation. She enjoys discomfiting others.

The most obvious eccentricity about Rikki is the manner in which he dresses: half and half. During the events in this chapter, she wears a specially tailored outfit which resembles a ball gown on the right side, and a tuxedo on the left. Likewise, his hair is cut short on the left, and worn long with curls on the right; he favors a mustache on the left, and female make-up on the right; and so forth.

Success has not brought happiness to Rikki. Despite his play-acting, he is a sad character, often bitter or depressed.

## IS DOSSIER: RIKKI JANUS

Information Services: Datafile Beta 01164-9

Access Code Restricted. Database Omicron

## GENERAL DATA

**Profession:** Sleaze  
**Social Class:** Urban Homeless  
**Level:** 5th  
**Maneuvering:** NoA 10  
**WMR:** 22 m/rnd  
**Fire:** Mirage Punch TP 20  
**Melee:** Dagger 10  
**Missile:** Shuriken 10  
**Hits:** 39 (63)  
**AT(DB):** NoA (-5)  
**Primary Skills:**  
 Exploit: 87  
 Streetwise: 70  
 Administration: 65  
 Culture: 60  
 Perception: 35  
 Drive: 30  
 Equipment: 30  
 Stalk & Hide: 25  
**Secondary Skills:**  
 Media: 30  
 Falsification: 25  
 Foraging, Urban: 20  
 Subduing: 20  
**Languages:**  
 English D5



## BIOGRAPHY

Abandoned by his parents because he was abnormal (asexual, biologically neither male nor female), Rikki Janus learned the ruthless art of survival on the streets of the Sprawl. He works as Neldon Kendrick's executive secretary, handling tasks both legal and not, and luxuriates in a lifestyle he never expected to be able to afford. Totally ambidextrous.

## PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

**Age:** 26  
**Eyes:** Blue  
**Height:** 163 cm  
**Skin:** Fair  
**Sex:** Asexual  
**Hair:** Blond  
**Weight:** 54 kg  
**Race:** Caucasian (Anglo)

## STATS

Co 24 (-5); Ag 44 (+0); SD 18 (-5); Me 37 (+0); Re 85 (+5); St 11 (-5); Qu 57 (+0); Pr 98 (+20); In 61 (+0); Em 75 (+5); Ap 61. CIRS Stat: 3.

## CYBER SYSTEMS

- Austin VEM (Vocal Emulator), Mk 2. Rikki can alternate between a husky male and a sultry female voice, both stored in NAC.
- DNI (to NAC).
- NAC Processor, Mk 15 (in-line with brain, DNI jack).

## EQUIPMENT

- Mirage Punch Taser Pistol
- Dagger, concealed in boot
- Shuriken (6), concealed in bracer
- Dose of Hemoflux, in vial on belt

## IS DOSSIER: FRITZINE GUDERIAN

Information Services: Datafile Gamma 74718

Access Code Restricted. Database Omicron

## GENERAL DATA

**Profession:** Killer  
**Social Class:** Wastelands  
**Level:** 3rd  
**Maneuvering:** NoA 20  
**WMR:** 24 m/rnd  
**Fire:** Uzi III SMG 74\*  
**Melee:** Broadsword 34/44\*  
**Missile:** Thrown Knife 24  
**Hits:** 76/106\*  
**AT(DB):** NoA (+5/+35\*)  
**Primary Skills:**  
 Perception: 40\*  
 Drive: 23  
 Environs: 23  
 Ambush: 15  
 Stalk & Hide: 15  
 Cybernetic Technics: 15  
 Cyber Attunement: 10  
**Secondary Skills:**  
 Frenzy: 40  
 Foraging, Urban: 25  
 Foraging, Rural: 20  
 History: 20  
 Acrobatics: 10  
**Languages:**  
 English D5  
 German D3



## BIOGRAPHY

Fritzine "Das Reich" Guderian was raised in the mountains of Idaho, and is proud of her German-American heritage. When non-Caucasian marauders killed her parents, she moved in with her uncle, "Monocle" Schlitz, who ran a body shop in the San Francisco Sprawl. Fiercely competitive toward other races, Fritzine is nevertheless not as brutal as others among the New Hitler Youth.

## PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

**Age:** 27  
**Eyes:** Blue  
**Height:** 170 cm  
**Skin:** Fair  
**Sex:** Female  
**Hair:** Blonde  
**Weight:** 55 kg  
**Race:** Caucasian (Anglo)

## STATS

Co 78/103\* (+5/+35); Ag 79 (+5); SD 55 (+0); Me 69 (+0); Re 49 (+0); St 65/90\* (+0/+10); Qu 81/106\* (+5/+35); Pr 77 (+5); In 56 (+0); Em 18 (-5); Ap 55. CIRS Stat: 0.

\* Modified by Cyber Systems

## CYBER SYSTEMS

- Adrenal Booster, Rtg 5. (+25 to Qu, Co and St for 1-10 seconds after stressful situation arises.)
- Visual Clarity, Rtg 6 (+30 to Pr).
- DNI to brain.
- Light Generator, Mk 1 (concealed in end of left index finger), 1-20 degree field.
- Sperm/Ovum Filter. Screens out undesirable racial traits.

## EQUIPMENT

- Uzi III 10mm Smart Submachine Gun Rank 4 (+20).
- Broadsword

### 3.3 STIMGAME CHARACTERS

The following table gives the stats for the six Stimgame characters which may be used by the players.

#### STIMGAME CHARACTER TABLE

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
<b>Solidon's Quests</b>						
<b>Datafile</b>	40-119	93-975	68-926	17-135	24-528	21-738
<b>Name</b>	<b>Borrock the Warrior</b>	<b>Vreka the Thief</b>	<b>Wilkim the Mage</b>	<b>Grom the Dwarf Fighter</b>	<b>Ilkar the Elf Ranger</b>	<b>Domini the Healer</b>
<b>Profession</b>	Warrior	Thief	Mage	Warrior	Ranger	Cleric
<b>Social Class</b>	Nomad	Slum	Minor Noble	Exile	Elven Noble	Townsmen
<b>Level</b>	20th	20th	20th	20th	20th	20th
<b>Maneuvering</b>	AEX 10	LBA -5	NoA 10	AEX -10	AEX -20	ABS -10
<b>WMR</b>	22 m/rnd	19 m/rnd	22 m/rnd	18 m/rnd	16 m/rnd	18 m/rnd
<b>Melee</b>	Broadsword 178	Short Sword 92	Staff 40	Hand Axe 158	Broadsword 85	Club 71
<b>Missile</b>	Short Bow 157	Composite Bow 122	Light Crossbow 20	Heavy Crossbow 147	Composite Bow 96	—
<b>Hits</b>	137	72	67	174	101	70
<b>AT(DB)</b>	AEX (+15)	LBA (+5)	NoA (+5)	AEX (-5)	AEX (0)	ABS (-10)
<b>Primary Skills</b>	Riding: 75 Environs: 76 Armory: 25 Mech Lockpick: 30 Ambush: 45 Stalk & Hide: 56 Perception: 50	Environs: 50 Lockpick, Magical: 120 Mech Lockpick: 151 Ambush: 114 Stalk & Hide: 122 Exploit: 97 Perception: 72	Environs: 70 Lockpick, Magical: 66 Mech Lockpick: 20 Stalk & Hide: 54 Culture: 58 Magical Technics: 151 Perception: 102	Riding: 45 Environs: 74 Mech Lockpick: 50 Ambush: 58 Streetwise: 20 Blacksmithy: 50 Perception: 10	Riding: 136 Environs: 131 Armory: 114 Culture: 74 Administration: 45 Mech Technics: 40 Magical Technics: 72	Riding: 67 Environs: 72 Culture: 132 Streetwise: 131 Administration: 122 Exploit: 100 Perception: 65
<b>Secondary Skills</b>	Acrobatics: 55 Contortions: 40 Frenzy: 75 Gambling: 30 Medical Practice: 35 Subduing: 67 Trickery: 65	Acrobatics: 30 Appraisal: 52 Contortions: 25 Drug Tolerance: 55 Falsification: 45 Quick-Draw: 45 Trickery: 45	Advanced Math: 40 Appraisal: 56 Astronomy: 45 Alchemy: 54 History: 50 Subduing: 61 Trickery: 30	Appraisal: 66 Drug Tolerance: 45 Foraging, Rural: 20 Foraging, Urban: 50 Frenzy: 52 Gambling: 5 Quick-Draw: 30	Acrobatics: 25 Biology: 52 Foraging, Rural: 40 History: 45 Music: 56 Quick-Draw: 72 Subduing: 55	Appraisal: 15 Astronomy: 25 Contortions: 15 History: 20 Literature: 25 Medical Practice: 80 Subduing: 61
<b>Languages</b>	Nomad Tongue D5 Common Tongue D4 —	Common Tongue D5 Latinesque D4 Trollish D4	Common Tongue D5 Latinesque D4 Arabesque D4	Dwarven Tongue D5 Common Tongue D5 —	Elven Tongue D5 Common Tongue D5 —	Common Tongue D5 — —
<b>Physical Stats</b>	Co 99 (+20) Ag 82 (+5) St 100 (+25) Qu 97 (+15) Pr 61 (+0) Ap 29	Co 47 (+0) Ag 92 (+10) St 30 (+0) Qu 79 (+5) Pr 73 (+0) Ap 4	Co 81 (+5) Ag 46 (+0) St 27 (+0) Qu 75 (+5) Pr 86 (+5) Ap 20	Co 100 (+40) Ag 43 (-5) St 61 (+5) Qu 26 (-5) Pr 7 (-20) Ap 5	Co 58 (+0) Ag 66 (+5) St 19 (-5) Qu 86 (+20) Pr 99 (+35) Ap 79	Co 43 (+0) Ag 11 (-5) St 40 (+0) Qu 7 (-10) Pr 92 (+10) Ap 35

#### Equipment and Spells

**#1) Equipment:** Broadsword. Short Bow, with quiver of 20 arrows.

**#2) Equipment:** Composite Bow, quiver of 20 arrows. Short Sword. **Spells:** Clairaudience (2), Disintegrate (1), Fireball (1), Invisibility (2), Safefall (1), Teleport (1).

**#3) Equipment:** Chest of Magical Paraphernalia. Staff. Light Crossbow, quiver with 20 quarrels. **Spells:** Clairaudience (3), Control Stone (3), Control Water (2), Death Blast (5), Disintegrate (5), Eye of the Magi (3), Fireball (10), Flaming Cloud (5), Forgetfulness (4), Invisibility (3), Levitate (3), Perplex (5), Safefall (1), Sleep (3), Stasis (5), Teleport (5), Wall of Rock (5), Water Breathing (1), Word of Death (2).

**#4) Equipment:** Suit of Plate Armor. Hand Axe. Heavy Crossbow, quiver with 40 quarrels.

**#5) Equipment:** Composite Bow, with quiver of 40 arrows. Broadsword. Suit of Elven Plate Armor. **Spells:** Clairaudience (2), Flaming Cloud (2), Forgetfulness (1), Invisibility (1), Safefall (1), Sleep (2), Water Breathing (1).

**#6) Equipment:** Club. **Spells:** Clairaudience (2), Control Stone (2), Control Water (2), Flaming Cloud (5), Forgetfulness (3), Levitate (3), Perplex (5), Safefall (5), Sleep (5), Wall of Fire (5), Water Breathing (3), Word of Death (2).

## 4.0 SCHEMATICS

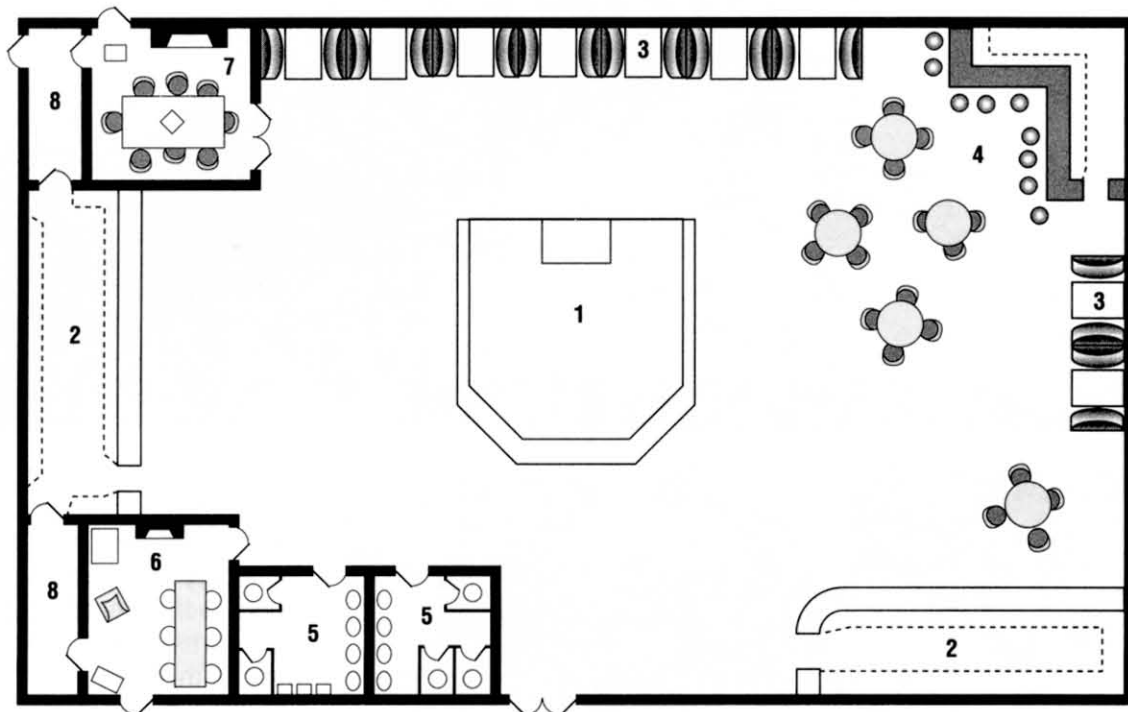
Following are the floorplans important in this portion of the adventure.

### 4.1 UNIQORN QLAB

- 1. Stage.** This two-tiered structure is reinforced and contains a lift for transporting heavy equipment to the top platform.
- 2. Bar.**
- 3. Booths.**

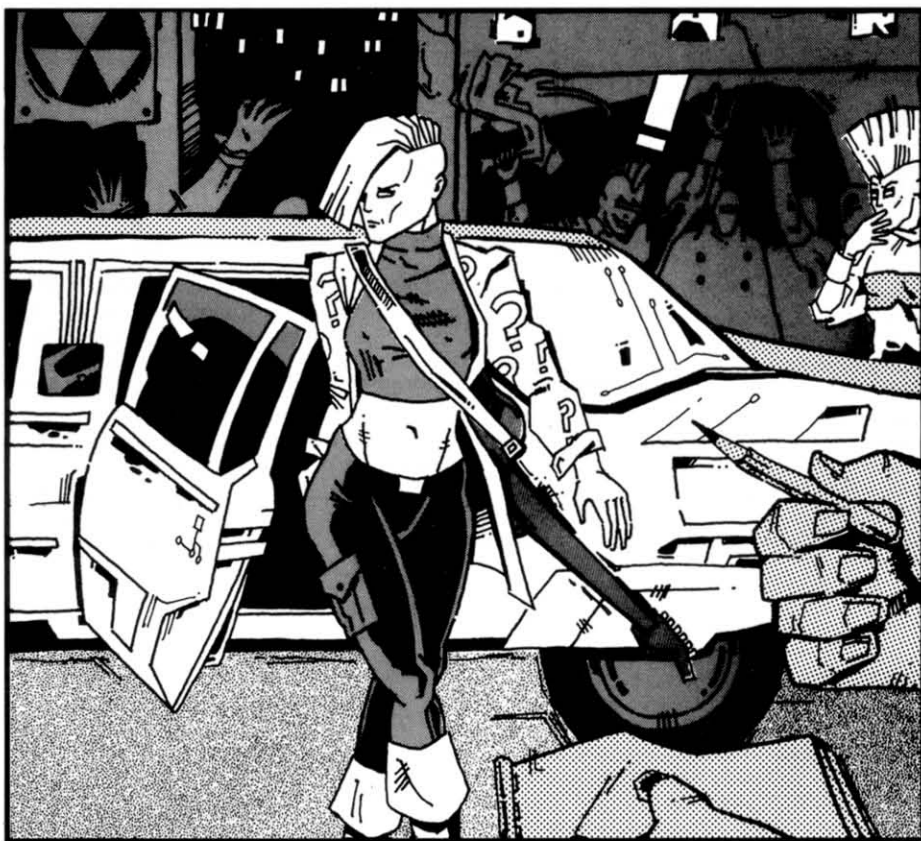
- 4. Unicorn Qafe.** Sandwiches, sushi, and other instant foods are served here.
- 5. Restrooms.**
- 6. Quint's Office.**
- 7. Conference Room.** It's dangerous to poke around in here, as the powerful Sprawl elements which congress here don't like to be snooped upon.
- 8. Store Room.**

### THE UNIQORN QLAB



0 1 2 5 meters

# STIMTESTERS



Entertainment figures, along with their cousins, the newscasters and government's press secretaries, are the royalty of the late 21st Century. Others in the arts cling to receding fame. Artists, in all media, can be found in token attendance at every high-class event. Sometimes even authors gain a measure of fame, though their books are read by ever fewer literate people.

Among his peers, the entertainment programmer is unique. Whether he designs the opening screens of a new electronic game, animates a battle sequence for Saturday morning holo-toons, or splices stimtapes, the electronic artist remains anonymous.

## 1.0 GENERAL BRIEFING

**Note:** You may read the following section to your players, or the action may be role played.

Stimular Enterprises' offices take up both the 21st and 22nd floors of Time-Warner Tower West (#53 on the San Francisco map, on page 99 of *Cyberspace*).

The wall around the Financial District is only built of prejudice, but it might as well be stone and steel. Vidcams monitor every in-leading road and walk, and in an unseen processing center, those who work for the corporate masters decide who looks desirable and who should be escorted beyond the perimeter. Corp Cops stand in knots at the intersections, stroll from megalith to skyscraper picking up "contributions," and patrol in Ford Hunter VTOLs overhead.

The passes from Rikki satisfy those who question you, and the guards at the Time-Warner Towers let you in — after confiscating your visible weapons, of course. The escalator whisks you past the gleaming artifacts in the entrance hall of this palace of capitalism, and then the elevator encapsulates you and thrusts you skyward.

When the portal irises open, you emerge into the lobby of Stimular Enterprises. Before you can introduce yourself to the phalanx of identical, apple-cheeked receptionists, Rikki cascades into view — in another of his bi-outfits, half business suit and business dress.

"I was so afraid you wouldn't take me up on my little offer," she says, smiling prettily. "Here at Stimular, we're proud of everything we've accomplished, but we can't sit on our laurels. We've got to get to tomorrow, and we hope to do that with the help of stimmers like yourselves."

She claps her hands. "Now for the tour. The floor below is nothing but clerical and filing, so we'll skip that. Everything important happens up here."

The offices have an odd look to them, a blend of traditional corporate culture and rad-fad stimgames: vidscreens enshrine repeating episodes from best-selling games, traditional furniture sits next to statuettes of dragons and decapitated heads, and the message "Do Not Disturb: GAMING!" flashes above several closed doors.

**Note:** At this point, you may show the players the map of this floor, then describe the rooms using the key provided at the end of this chapter.

At last, Rikki takes you to a room marked "Stimtest Chamber". It looks like nothing you imagined — if you ever knew what to expect, that is. At one end of the room is a series of cubicles, each with a desk and terminal, all of which open into a central bull pen where vending machines

dispense soyacaf and yoganuts. At the far end, six game machines are ranked along the wall, each equipped with trodes or a stihelm.

"Knowing that our success depends on the creativity of our game developers," says Rikki, stroking his half-mustache, "we pamper our creative staff. Free snacks. Unlimited terminal access. Weight room down the hall. These machines are loaded not just with every game we make, but every design which we can trade for or purchase from each of our competitors."

He spreads his arms, indicating the entire room. "And what do we ask in return? Only that you *play* — spending at least four hours a day on our games in development, individually or as a team — and give us feedback: What would you like us to change? How can we make the game more exciting and rewarding? Are the challenges too tough, or not tough enough? Answers to questions like these can make or break our company."

After a question-and-answer period, Rikki invites the adventurers to enter the game machines. He, too, trodes in. "Now let me play host in our world of stimspace."

## 2.0 RUNNING THE MISSION

In the material that follows, this chapter of the adventure is broken into various encounters.

Rikki now offers the adventurers a nightmare tour of stimspace. The action is both a tutorial and a diversion, while the Stimular computer checks out the PCs' cybergear and neutralizes any in-line NACs.

### 2.1 REQUIREMENTS

The players should have become accustomed to the idea of stimspace in the previous chapter. Now they learn just how stimspace can be used (and abused). The fantasy stim-characters used before are not used here — use the player characters' actual stats instead.

### 2.2 AIDS

The player characters are entirely on their own, but there is nothing exceptionally lethal in this episode. Specifically, Rikki will not help them in any way.

### 2.3 OBSTACLES

Rikki, and the stimgame under his command, oppose and torment the adventurers in this episode. (This is a set-up for the get-even scene involving Neldon Kendrick at the climax of the adventure.)

## 2.4 COMPENSATION

Players should gain further competence in the uses and abuses of stimspace, as well as a real understanding of the dangers they are about to face.

## 2.5 THE RUN

The action should proceed along lines similar to those set out below.

The GM must gauge this scene according to the interests of his players. There are some who will enjoy role-playing the various illusions and deceptions, while others may become bored because there is nothing they can fight. Therefore, extend or condense this material as your group requires.

### CROSSING OVER

As they plug in, the player characters do not experience the familiar gradual transition to a fantasyscape. Instead, they find themselves right where they were a moment ago — the stimtest office. (Characters with NACs might think to switch their inputs, comparing the real world to the stim version.)

Check to see if the characters realize they are in Interstim stimspace (SM/In or Re:M). Those who fail the roll believe they are still in the real world — “So what happened? The machines don’t work?” Those who succeed each receive (privately) one of the following clues:

- 1) **Graininess.** The character is especially sensitive to the “grainy” look of the computer-generated environment — he sees the blurs and glosses.
- 2) **Body Feels Wrong.** The character’s instinct immediately tells him that his body feels “wrong” — different, less complete. (He’s now in a computer-generated virtual body.) Characters with concealed cyberware will eventually notice — when they try to use it — that this gear is missing from their virtual bodies.
- 3) **Perfume Missing.** The character notices that he no longer smells the odd mixture of cologne and perfume which Rikki wears.



- 4) **Ache Gone.** The pain — probably from an old injury — which normally troubles this character has just gone away. It isn't programmed into his virtual body.
- 5) **Aroma Missing.** The character no longer scents the odor of the soyacaf dispenser.
- 6) **Pest Missing.** The character had previously been swatting at a fly. It is now gone.

**Note:** *Keep track of which stimtester receives which clue, as these will be important in a later chapter.*

### THE SCAN

If any of the player characters possess NACs, they can switch their inputs and trode in and out of stimspace at will. This doesn't suit the purposes of Rikki and his unseen boss. Therefore, the stimtesters are scanned for NAC gear when they first connect to the game machines.

The process involves the use of a System Searcher program, shielded by a Mimetic program which disguises the intruder software as a harmless element in the stimspace environment.

Except in the unlikely event of the player characters' having placed cyberspace combat programs within their NAC memory, there is no possible defense. At best, the character suddenly notices an extra chair in stimspace ("Funny, I didn't spot that before" — SM/In:M). Moments later, he might see it disappear (SM/In:L).

Although the programs scan all of the characters simultaneously, the chair which each might be seen in is in a different location. The chairs are real and tangible to the characters who perceive them.

If any characters have NACs, read the "Virused!" material at the end of this section.

### SEE THE GRAINS?

"Do you see the difference?" asks Rikki, pointing all around him. He is now in a macho mode, emphasizing his left (male) side.

If any stimtester insists that this is reality, Rikki becomes abusive. "Come over here! Look at this cup of soyacaf. Look away. Now look back. Did you see the temporary graininess of the image?"

Seeing the change is hardly difficult (SM/Re or In:E). Even if the character agrees with him, however, Rikki continues to be aggressive — he is trying to provoke a physical confrontation. He pulls the

stimtester from place to place, throws the cup of soyacaf in his face, and finally — if the adventurer hasn't done so already — throws the first punch.

Rikki hasn't really lost his temper or his mind, but is play-acting in order to demonstrate the properties of stimspace (and because he has a sadistic streak.)

### THE FIGHT

Under Rikki's guidance, the stim-computer is programmed to give his virtual body immense strength (St 100) and to keep him immune from injury (no hit-point losses). S/he can be struck, but not injured — Rikki never bleeds.

If player characters try to make use of their cybergear, make a secret roll (SM/SD:V). If they fail, they discover they do not have the item in question. If they succeed, however, their will is so strong that the Interstim environment responds to their wishes — they may use the equipment.

If Rikki sees cybergear in use, he becomes upset and a little frightened. "How did you get that in here? I want it out, now."

Resolve the contest of wills with simultaneous rolls (SM/SD:V for the player character, M for Rikki). If the stimtester wins the highest result, he may keep his gear for another round; if Rikki wins, the item disappears and does not return. In the event of a tie result, the device becomes "ghostly" and cannot be used that round.

Rikki's plans to triumph over his/her original foe, then goad the others into attacking him/her. S/he lectures them on the properties of stimspace as they struggle: "Stimspace isn't reality. Pain doesn't hurt. Everything is subjective. Never believe your eyes. Come on — get me, scummers!"

As a final demonstration, the computer reduces the stimtesters' virtual bodies to one-fifth of normal size. This can be resisted by a successful roll (SM/SD:V), but the resistance must be rolled *every round*. Once the roll is failed, the character shrinks and cannot grow again.

Rikki then chases the stimtesters around the office, trying to jump on them or kick them across the room. From the characters' perspective, both Rikki and the room have grown huge. In game terms, temporarily divide the characters' St scores by 5.

The office doors are shut, and cannot be opened. Rikki continues the fight until one of the stimtesters loses all of his hit points.

### DEATH-TRAUMA

In an instant, the healthy stim-characters are restored to full-size and normal hit points, and grouped around the "dying" stimmer, who writhes on the floor. If any try to continue the fight, Rikki has the stim-computer invisibly restrain them (SM:SD/V to resist).

"Nothing is real in stimspace. You felt no pain from your injuries, but only an electric tingling. Now watch the process of death." As Rikki speaks, the stimtester disappears in a flash of light.

"Because all of his hit points were gone, the computer has returned your comrade to the real world. Normally, there would not be a problem. However, when the mind is not separated in time from the virtual body, sometimes there is the problem of psychological injury — the so-called Death Trauma."

A wall-mounted video screen comes to life, showing the missing stimtester (apparently in real-space) connected with the game machine. His face has turned blue, and he is convulsing. "This is an image from the real world. Your friend is suffering psychological damage — believing that he has died, his will now forces his body to give up its hold on life."

If asked to do something, Rikki insists that while in stimspace, s/he is powerless to intervene. Then s/he laughs.

### NAC-JACKING

If any player character has a NAC in-line between his brain and his data jack, he can switch his inputs and check on his fellow adventurer himself.

(Rikki's image "from the real world" is a sham — back in reality, the real character remains in his game machine, still troded into stimspace.)

When the NAC-equipped stimtester switches his inputs, his virtual body freezes and becomes tenuous, like a specter. If this happens, Rikki explains about NACs and switching inputs. "That's exactly what to do — switch out and see for yourself. Remember: only lies are real in stimspace."

If at least one of the player characters has a NAC and *can* switch out but hasn't thought to do so, Rikki brings up the subject after lecturing about lies versus reality.

If none of the stimtesters are so equipped, Rikki lectures about reality versus illusion, then turns off the video screen.

### MIND GAMES

Rikki now warns the adventurers about the dangers of "believing" stimspace. As s/he does so, the missing stimtester reappears in full health.

"In stimspace, I can be anything I want to be," says the corporate fixer. "Through control of the computer, anything can be mine."

A snap of the fingers. "I could be completely female." Rikki becomes a very attractive woman, wearing a ribbonform gown and turquoise nylons.

"And remember that I can, through the machine, manipulate your emotions." Another snap of the fingers. "I can give you hunger."

The stimtesters are struck with intense pangs of physical hunger. Those who fail to resist (RR attack level 5, modified by SD) either are gut-wrenched with cramps (RR attack level 3, modified by Co) or must forage for food among the convenience machines.

"Or grief." Stimtesters who fail their roll (RR attack level 5, modified by SD) are struck with a wave of depression so intense that they begin to weep or rock mindlessly from side to side. The hunger ceases.

"Or lust." Again Rikki snaps his fingers. Resistance requires another RR roll (attack level 3, modified by SD) — characters who fail burn with passion. The grief ends.

"I am a goddess — Athena, perhaps? Or a star? Madonna? Liz Taylor?"

Characters who failed the previous roll must try a second RR (attack level 3, modified by SD), or find themselves rushing forward to embrace Rikki.

Before any of them reach him, the stim-master snaps his fingers. The compulsion ends. Rikki returns to his normal form. "Don't you see?" he asks, sadly. "It's all illusion. That's all that stimspace is."

### VIRUSED!

**Note:** *This material applies only if there are stimtesters with NACs in-line between their jacks and their brains. If not, disregard the following.*

Rikki's boss has been quite creative in adapting cyberspace programs to the stimsense environment. Having previously scanned and discovered NACs, the Stimular chief now introduces virus programs to disable the NACs. This will make it possible to keep the NAC-equipped characters prisoner within stimspace.

The virus program is called **Slave**, and its purpose is to transfer control of the implanted neuroprocessor to an external source. It is disguised by an Invisibility program, making it difficult to see (SM/SD:V) amid the stimsense inputs.

If the program is detected, the victim "sees" it — or rather, sees the random distortion of stimsense signals caused by the presence of the intruder. These look like multi-colored dancing specks, something like what you see when you shut your eyes too tight; but they appear everywhere, even though the character's eyes are open.

The virus attack may occur at any time during this scene of the adventure. Unless

the character has defense programs stored directly in his NAC (unlikely), there is no defense.

Once in place, the Slave program takes control of the NAC. For the rest of this chapter, it passes on the commands of the player character, switching inputs accordingly. Starting with the next chapter, it stops cooperating and refuses to let the PC switch inputs.

## 2.6 DENOUEMENT

"The final danger of stimspace is overstimulation," explains Rikki, returning to his male mode. "As the privileged input, I can order the machine to stimulate you with artificial emotions of any strength. Do you realize what happens when your ability to perceive becomes overloaded?"

Rikki asks for a volunteer. If no one speaks, have Rikki select the best role-player in your group.

The fixer now runs rapidly down the following list of sensations, pointing or gesturing or snapping his/her fingers after each. The victim must make RRs for each. The sensations build on top of each other.

Sensation	RR level*	Complication	RR to Avoid*
"Earache, left ear."	5:SD	Moan	3:SD
"Hunger."	5:SD	Cramps	3:Co
"Nausea."	3:SD	Regurgitation	3:Co
"Your lover has died. Grief."	3:SD	Weeping	5:SD
"You are ticklish. Laugh!"	3:SD	Laughter	None allowed
"Tooth ache, canine tooth, upper right."	5:SD	Moan	5:SD
"Anger. You hate him!"		Attack	
[Points to another adventurer]	4:SD	companion	3:SD

\* The number is the attack level. The abbreviation names the stat bonus which applies to the roll.

When a character fails a RR, he must make a second RR to avoid the complication associated with that stimulation.

As the character falls victim to more and more sensations, his mind overloads. Beginning with the second failure of the stimtester to resist, have him roll to maintain his sanity (SM/SD:M). Increase the difficulty level by one degree for each stim-sensation he has failed to resist.

If the character overloads, he loses consciousness and his body curls into a fetal position. At this point, Rikki ends the demonstration. The players find themselves (apparently) back in the stimtest room, obviously out of the InterStim environment.

The victimized stimtester is within his game machine, still oblivious to his surroundings.

## 3.0 CHARACTER/ORGANIZATION DOSSIER

What follows is a no-nonsense run-down of Stimular Enterprises, the corporate focus in this adventure.

**WARNING**
**Access Restricted**
**WARNING**

### IS DOSSIER: STIMULAR ENTERPRISES

IS Classified Datafile: Gamma 835Z2  
Unauthorized Viewing Prohibited

**Primary Operations:** Entertainment, Stimgames

**Worth (Assets):** 21 billion

**Total Employees:** 50,000

**Main HQ:** San Francisco

**Principal Branches:** Berlin, Manila, San Juan, Tokyo, Washington

**Chief Executive:** Neldon Kendrick

**Major Stockholder(s):** Neldon Kendrick (55%), IBN (34%). Rikki Janus owns 0.5%.



#### CYBERSPACE NET ICON

A upside-down black top-hat, like that from which a magician might produce a white rabbit.

##### Defenses:

- *Mainframe Electronic Intrusion:* Rtg10 Data Screen/Rtg20 Bouncer
- *Highest Security Database Access:* Rtg25 User Recognition/Rtg65 Data Screen

**Additional Information:** A cyberspace intrusion allows the adventurers to learn a great deal of background information about the corporation, but the vital stimspace computer system is kept secure by keeping it off the Net.

#### CORPORATE OVERVIEW

Stimular is an important competitor in the stimsense industry, although its name is certainly not a household word. It specializes in selling stimgame machines, dedicated computers which run only Stimular-designed games.

The corporation is not an electronics manufacturer — Stimular acquires parts from other companies, then performs the final assembly. A masterful marketing program has placed Stimular-built stimgames in thousands of recreation centers.

The real secret to Stimular's success has been the genius of Neldon Kendrick, who is both the company's CEO and chief designer. Without the stimgames which he designed, Stimular would have been only one more player in an overcrowded and competitive industry.

Kendrick is a recluse who is rumored to live for weeks at a time within his corporate headquarters.

**WARNING**
**Access Restricted**
**WARNING**

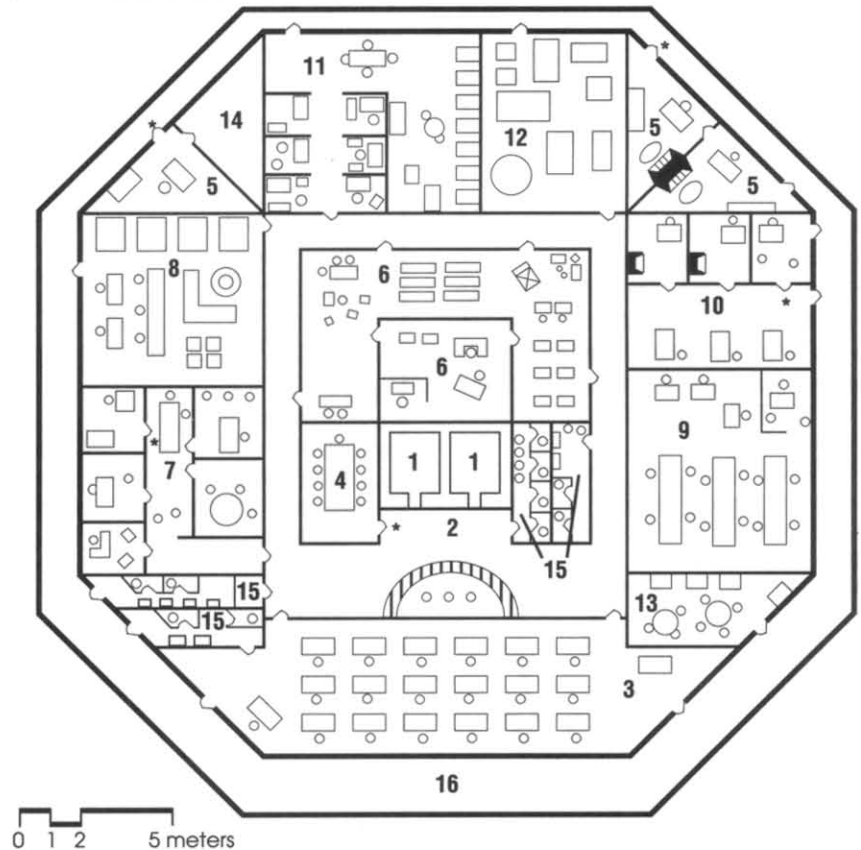

## 4.0 SCHEMATICS

Following are the floorplans important in this portion of the adventure.

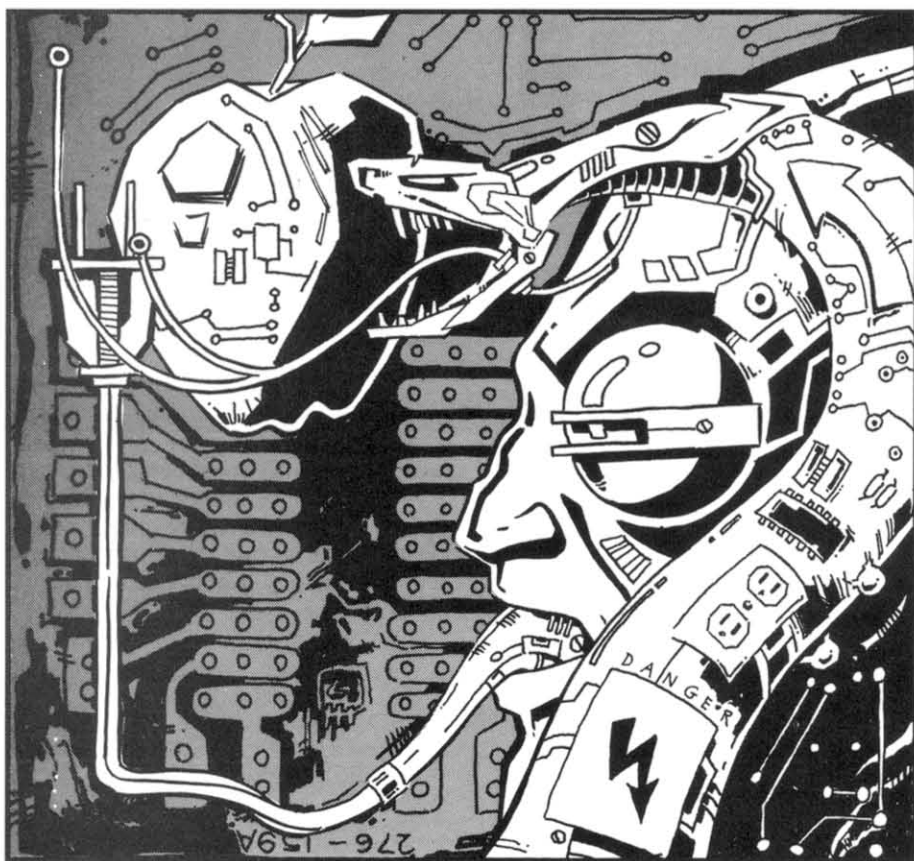
### 4.1 STIMULAR ENTERPRISES

1. **Elevator.**
  2. **Reception Area.**
  3. **Secretarial Pool.** The wall between this area and reception is transparent.
  4. **Conference Room.**
  5. **Executive Offices.**
  6. **Art Department.** The outside walls are transparent, as are those around the administrator's office.
  7. **Programming Department.**
  8. **Computer Department.** A variety of "big iron" processors are scattered about this sub-arctic air-conditioned chamber.
  9. **Hardware Analysis Department.** Engineers sit at terminals.
  10. **Circuit Engineering Department.** Draftsmen design circuit layouts with computer assistance on large video-terminals.
  11. **Stimtest Room.**
  12. **Weight Room.** The machines are automated Verne exercise devices.
  13. **Break Room.** Vending machines line the wall.
  14. **Store Room.**
  15. **Restroom.**
  16. **The Promenade.** The interior walls are hung with art, and the exterior wall is transparent to show off the view. Stimular employees commonly jog along the outer hallway during their exercise breaks.
- \* **Game rooms.** Rooms marked on the map with "\*" have locked doors and the sign "Do Not Disturb - GAMING!"

### STIMULAR ENTERPRISES



# BACK TO REALITY...



"I think, therefore I am."

As the classic philosophy expression puts it, the action of thinking establishes one's existence. But what happens when we move out of the theoretical arena and into the world of cyberspace and stimspace?

Do AIs think, and if so, are they people?

What about "artificial" people — mindtapes of real people, played and replayed in cyberspace? Are they human? Do they truly exist, even if it's only in the electric shadows of the Matrix?

And what of the player characters? As they swarm through the simulated reality of stimspace, do they retain their reality? Or do they only simulate life? What makes real life, real?

## 1.0 GENERAL BRIEFING

**Note:** You may read the following to your players, or the action may be role played.

You suffer a moment of dislocation as you shift from a virtual existence back to reality. Coming out of Interstim is like emerging from clouded waters — the sudden intensity of real life stuns you.

The stimhelms retract hydraulically toward the ceiling, and the trodes eject mechanically from the jacks. Rikki steps clear of his/her machine, unsmiling, casual, as if nothing unusual has happened.

"I hope that you appreciated the tour," s/he says, sweetly. "Here at Stimular, we believe in acknowledging both the good and the not-so-good potential of the artificial environment.

"As for your friend," Rikki says, "he'll snap out of it shortly. That was only a *little* overload — believe me, we could literally have blown his mind if we'd wanted to."

Before you can reply, a wall-mounted vidscreen blinks. Several times as large as life, dressed in the chrome shouldered suit of the corporate power-monger, a silver-haired stranger looks down at you.

When he speaks, his voice is deep and produces words at a measured pace.

"Rikki, glad I caught you while the new boys were still in the test center. Let me introduce myself. I am Neldon Kendrick, the president of Stimular Enterprises.

"We've invited you here today to impress you with the technology of stimspace and our commitment to progress — at any cost. You could be an essential cog in our corporate machine.

"Tell me — how do you feel about Stimular, now that you've had some time to get to know us?"

**Note:** Let the players make their various comments. Kendrick is unflappable, no matter what the stimtesters reply.

"Our biggest problem," says Kendrick, "is to find committed, motivated workers. We've had our eyes on you for some time. Your skills were demonstrated in the *Solidon's Quests* tournament. And there's your background — surely, coming from the Sprawl, you won't be missed. No lawman would lift a finger to find you.

"What we've decided to do," he says, breaking the slightest of smiles, "is to let you work for us. In fact, you *must* work for us. Our guards will not let you exit this floor, and you will test our games until we decide that we've gotten full usage from you."

"You're stim-slaves," explains Rikki. "If you try to escape, you'll never leave here alive."

"No, of course you're not slaves," protests Kendrick smoothly. "You've been on salary from the moment you left the elevator. More like indentured servants, don't you think, Rikki?"



## 2.0 RUNNING THE MISSION

Not all at Stimular is as it seems. *The players have never left stimspace*, but are merely experiencing the life-like inputs of Stimular's new ActiStim technology.

Kendrick now teases the stimtesters, waiting to see how long it takes for them to realize that they are not in the real world.

### 2.1 REQUIREMENTS

Continue to use stimspace stats for the characters, as explained in the previous chapter.

### 2.2 AIDS

The stimspace environment has been designed by Kendrick, and there are no obvious aids for the adventurers.

The minor NPCs are projected by modified mindtapes, and although they have the semblance of being human — mannerisms, expressions, and so forth — their actions are strictly according to programmed instinct.

### 2.3 OBSTACLES

Other than Kendrick, who appears only on the video display, and Rikki, who isn't much of a threat in this reality, the other obstacles are the guards, bureaucrats, and secretaries of the 22nd floor.

Each of the NPC types have been programmed by Kendrick with certain peculiarities:

The **guards** "die" rather easily, usually in a messy or gruesome fashion. Their trick is that after several moments of seeming death, they can get back up and shamle after the stimtesters — in horror-movie fashion.

The **bureaucrats** are terrified of the adventurers, and flee shrieking from them at every opportunity. Under conditions of extreme stress — for instance, if cornered by the PCs — they die of fright.

The **secretaries** ignore everything until the scent of blood is in the air. In this case, they fight with maniacal strength for the right to gorge on fresh blood — they are programmed to be ghouls.

### 2.4 COMPENSATION

Survival of these events allows the stimtesters to advance to the next chapter, where they finally receive an opportunity to beat Kendrick and his neural programming.

### 2.5 THE RUN

The action should proceed along lines similar to those set out below.

#### GETTING STARTED

Kendrick's first goal is to incite the adventurers into immediate rebellion, so that he can play his little game (this chapter's events) on them. However, the players may be smarter than he is — they might resist peacefully (perhaps refusing to trode in) or even *cooperate* with the stimgame designer.

If the stimmers are slow to start fighting, Rikki attempts to stir things up. He suddenly screams, and points toward the player character with the greatest St score. "Sir, that man has a concealed weapon!"

In full view (on the vidscreen) of the stimtesters, Kendrick calls Security from his vidphone. "We have a potential hostage situation on the 22nd floor. I want a full team, with combat gear, on the double." In short order Stimular guards attack, and Kendrick forces the confrontation he desires.

If the adventurers do fight, Rikki's task is to get himself "killed." Therefore, he blocks the adventurers' exit, drawing a taser pistol from within his/her blouse. If he is given a chance to fire his weapon, Rikki shoots wildly, deliberately avoiding injury to the stimtesters (Kendrick doesn't want them harmed, yet). He also has 6 shuriken concealed within a bracelet, and a dagger in his boot.

Since this is ActiStim, and since the stim-computer is programmed to help Kendrick's agents, Rikki feels no pain when beaten or shot, but he shrieks like a scalded cat. Make a secret roll for the stimtester with the highest In, pitting Rikki's success or failure (SM/Exp:M) versus the character's (SM/In:H), to see if the play-acting is noticed.

The computer accentuates every injury, making it appear that any injury to Rikki is fatal. Secretly make a SD/Per:H roll for the attacker (or anyone inspecting the body) to see if they realize that the wounds seem to be worse than they should be.

If Kendrick's plans work out, Rikki is "killed" before the stimtesters leave the room.

#### MADHOUSE ON THE 22nd FLOOR

During the carnage which ensues, the stimtesters probably begin to fight their way toward the only exit from the floor — the central elevators.

As they leave the stimtest chamber, they are attacked by security guards. These foes never gather in a mass but always attack in one's and two's. Start with three guards approaching the adventurers from different directions, then add 1D10 new guards whenever two guards are put out of action.

The security men use poor tactics, favoring blind charges rather than sticking to cover from which they could ambush or snipe. Slacken the attack if the stimtesters are having a rough time, and be sure to give them time to secure weapons (and replacement ammunition!) from fallen enemies.

As the characters advance, the workers in the offices ahead of them run into the hallways looking to escape to "safety" — which brings them directly into the line of fire of the player characters. These bureaucrats are hysterical, and die easily and messily.

Neldon Kendrick presses his guards to attack, peering down from every vidscreen in view. He asks them to shoot for specific stimtesters while making unflattering remarks about their abilities and tactics. For example: "Sergeant, mark the red-head. She's the ring leader. Bring up a sharp-shooter and nail her butt."

The corporate guards die easily from very light wounds. This becomes apparent to any character who examines one of the bodies and succeeds at a SM/MeP:M roll.

**Note:** No guard "returns from the dead" at this point in the adventure.

Kendrick's goal is to create a surreal combat in which guards die by the dozen, but new ones always appear. The corp soldiers are uniformly brave, given to shouting triumphant phrases just before they die ("You'll never get out of here alive!" "Let's get 'em, boys!" "You'll regret the day you ever tangled with Stimular!").

Try to proceed to the next entry before the stimtesters are out of sight of the door to the stimtest chamber.

### RIKKI RETURNS

Piercing the concatenation of gunfire comes a high-pitched inarticulate shriek from behind the adventurers.

The "dead" Rikki Janus — with gaping wounds, blood-soaked clothing, and entrails or other interior organs hanging out — lurches into the hallway, coming after the stimtesters.

"You've ruined me!" screams the corporate fixer. "You're gonna die for this, scummers!"

Upon first seeing Rikki, each adventurer must make a resistance roll (RR attack level 3, modified by SD). Those who fail become frightened, suffering a -20 penalty to Ag and Ag-based skills due to involuntary trembling. If any players comment on this unusual fear, secretly make a SM/In:H roll for their characters — if successful, the stimmers realize that *something* is tampering with their minds. (The fear is generated by the ActiStim computer.)

Rikki uses whatever weapon the adventurers left him with, or grabs the nearest available weapon from a fallen guard. S/he takes double his/her normal hit points before again collapsing "into death."

### THE SECRETARIAL POOL

The large glass-fronted room near the elevators contains twenty secretaries operating terminals. Next to the elevators themselves is a counter staffed with three smiling receptionists.



All of these non-player characters are *ghouls*. They remain at their work stations until the scent of blood reaches them — which occurs when a guard is shot within 3 meters of one of them, or when a wounded bureaucrat reaches the reception lounge.

Once blood is seen to flow, 1D5 ghouls leave their work each turn and attack the bleeding victim(s). If there are no bleeders, the ghouls attack anything that moves (whether it be a stimtester, a bureaucrat, or a security guard, but not another ghoul). Kendrick orders his guards to fight the secretaries, then his vidscreens blink and fade to darkness.

Kendrick expects the ghoulish scene to force the adventurers to doubt either the environment or their sanity.

At least one player character will probably die during this encounter, but that death and the chance to devour a fresh corpse should divert the ghouls long enough for the other adventurers to reach the elevators. As the stimtesters disappear into the elevator, they should leave a scene choked with blood and bodies.

## DETECTING ACTiStim

The stimtesters are in stimspace during this portion of the adventure, but in a heightened sensory environment made possible by technological breakthroughs at Stimular. Their surroundings appear as real as ASP can make it, and detecting the falseness of the apparent reality takes either luck or detective work.

Those players who received the following clues may have a special opportunity to unravel Kendrick's puzzle.

**1) Graininess.** ActiStim is amazingly lifelike, and there is no graininess under normal conditions.

When the environment becomes crowded, however — too many people, too much action, too many explosions and other special effects — the processors begin to overload. At these times, a character sensitive to graininess feels his eyesight "become blurry."

If the player then becomes curious, he may attempt a SM/Per:M roll. If successful, he realizes that he's sensing graininess — sometimes, at odd moments.

**2) Body Feels Wrong.** Characters with concealed cyberware find that it is present in their ActiStim virtual bodies. The "feel" of the virtual body is modeled from readings taken during the InterStim tour earlier.

However, when the adventurer is performing physical actions, secretly make a SM/BD:V roll for him — if successful, the character notices that his balance is off, or some other subtle clue that his body is different.

**3) Perfume Missing.** Rikki's perfume has not been recreated in ActiStim.

**4) Ache Gone.** The ache — probably from an old injury — which troubles this character also exists in ActiStim space, so this clue provides no assistance in detecting the false environment.

**5) Aroma Missing.** The soyacaf machine has the correct odor in this stimspace, unfortunately. This is another clue which is not useful now.

**6) Pest Missing.** The fly is still missing.

Once the ghouls have attacked, the adventurers probably disbelieve their environment. You should then be charitable in letting them pick up on these clues.

## 2.6 DENOUEMENT

At last, the adventurers escape to the elevators and ride toward the lobby. If the players are sharp, they've realized by now that someone is monkeying with their subjective reality. If so, then what happens next should not come as a horrible surprise...

After the descent, the elevator doors open on the same floor which the stimtesters just left from.

As the doors open, Rikki — shambling like a horror-movie fiend — enters the reception area. "Get them!" he shrieks, gurgling blood. "Eviscerate them!" As he says this, the "dead" guards twitch to their feet and pursue the adventurers once more.

To avoid overwhelming (computer-generated) terror, the PCs must succeed at a Resistance Roll (attack level 5, modified by SD) — if they fail, they shake uncontrollably (-35 to Ag and Ag-based skills, not cumulative with previous penalties).

Continue this climax so long as the players seem to be enjoying it — even killing the last one of them, if they are taking this in the right spirit. If they aren't enjoying the encounter, end it after the fear-resistance roll.

To bring this chapter to a conclusion, the reception area vidscreens flicker back to life. Kendrick peers down at the wreckage and carnage. "This bores me," he says.

As he says this, the guards and other NPCs fade from view, and the stimtesters (including any who "died" in this chapter) reappear with full hit points.

## 3.0 CHARACTER/ORGANIZATION DOSSIER

The salient NPCs for this section of the adventure are the ActiStim guards, secretaries and bureaucrats.

### 3.1 STIMULAR GUARDS

#### CHARACTER FILE: STIMULAR GUARDS

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Personal Datafile 32-573

**Profession:** Killer

**Level:** N/A

**Hits:** 5

**AT(DB):** LBA(0)

**Fire:** Roll for each —

1-5: +10 20mm autoshotgun

6-7: +5 Mirage XR12 (Laser Pistol)

8: +0 Mirage R10 Lance (Medium Assault Rifle)

9: +0 5mm Lt Machine Pistol

10: -10 Rocket Pistol

**Melee:** +5 Brawl

**Skills:** +5 Subduing, +10 Equipment

**Equipment:**

• Main Weapon (as rolled above)

• Light Body Armor

• Special item, rolled for each —

1-5: nothing

6-7: Extra clip of ammo

8: Grenade (anti-laser aerosol)

9: Grenade (smoke)

10: Grenade (shrapnel)



The guards are based on a mindtape of a real, over-loyal, courageous Corp Cop on the Stimular security force. All qualities of strategy and common sense have been edited out, creating just what Kendrick wants — cannon fodder.

When reanimated, the guards regain their full hit points but their appearance remains mutilated.

### 3.2 GHOULISH SECRETARIES

The secretaries are a union of virtual bodies (based on Stimular's real receptionists and secretaries) and edited mindtapes (of carrion-eating hyenas, overlaid with a superficial shell of human personality).

When triggered by the smell of blood, the secretaries become blood-crazed and revert to bestial behavior — some run on all fours, and all howl for blood.

### 3.3 TIMID BUREAUCRATS

Like the secretaries, the bureaucrats have virtual bodies based on actual technicians and engineers at Stimular, but their personalities are fused from mindtapes of office workers (a superficial overlay) and timid white mice.

The result is that the bureaucrats are terrified of strangers, and squeak when frightened. Stress makes their hearts over-accelerate, bringing on heart attacks and death (SM/Co:V on a Co of 35).

## CHARACTER FILE: GHOULISH SECRETARIES

Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Personal Datafile 32-129

**Profession:** Killer

**Level:** N/A

**Hits:** 50

**AT(DB):** NoA(5)

**Fire:** —

**Melee:** +50 Brawl

**Skills:** +35 Acrobatics, +45 Contortions, +20 Frenzy, +45 Subduing

**Equipment:** None



## CHARACTER FILE: TIMID BUREAUCRATS

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Personal Datafile 32-720

**Profession:** Sleaze

**Level:** N/A

**Hits:** 5

**AT(DB):** NoA(0)

**Fire:** —

**Melee:** —

**Skills:** None that are relevant to this encounter

**Equipment:** None



# ENDGAME



Michaelangelo had his Sistine Chapel. Rodin's masterpiece was *The Kiss*. L. Ron Hubbard capped his career with *Battlefield Earth*.

But what does a stingame designer do for an encore? The stimtesters are about to find out...

## 1.0 GENERAL BRIEFING

**Note:** You may read the following to your players, or the action may be role played.

"This was only a test, a demonstration of what my new ActiStim technology can do," says Kendrick's larger-than-life image on the vidscreen. "Realistic, no? Aren't you impressed?"

He ignores any replies you make. "You should appreciate the training and experience I'm giving you. In a few moments, you'll be grateful for all of it, I assure you.

"As my assistant explained to you, here at Stimular we're involved in work on the fringes of new technology. In the stimgame industry, nobody cares what you did yesterday — they're always demanding what's new for today!

"And do you know what sells? Violence, pain and shock. Real, chair-gripping, urinate-in-your-pants fear. Plus that sense of wonder which we here at Stimular pride ourselves on, that extra dramatic touch.

"This is the deal, scummers. We're going to plunge you into the heart of the wildest, most excessive fantasy game you've ever played. All of the safeties have been taken out. If you die in the game, you'll probably go into death-trauma, and if you sensory-overload, we won't be able to help you.

"Beat the game, and you earn your ticket out of here. Foul it up, and we may never unplug your trodes — got that? Plus the danger of real death and insanity... if that's not motivation, what is?" He chuckles.

The room fades away, leaving you floating inside a gleaming cloud.

In nanoseconds, you feel yourselves pulled toward figures marching out of the fog — your stimgame characters. You are drawn into their virtual bodies, but this time the experience is disturbingly real. These don't seem like stim-bodies, but like tabernacles of living flesh and blood!

Next, a familiar marble throne room materializes around you, the one you've seen at the start of every episode of *Solidon's Quests*. Out of habit, you kneel in the presence of the radiant being on the throne.

"You have done well, Champions," booms Solidon, God of Light. "You have done all that I have asked of you, and the Great Enemy has been vanquished.

"Unfortunately, there are shells within shells, and our Enemy has a Master even more sinister than himself. To you I entrust the responsibility to enter the lair of the Baron Don-nel, to redeem the Land from his evil, to cast him to the reaches of furthest darkness, and to return the fair Princess Fiona to our embrace once again."

While the god is talking, you notice a strange but persistent buzzing sound. At first you ignore it, but its insistence lures you into giving it your attention.

At last, what is happening becomes clear: the faint sound is a whisper, and it comes from Solidon. The god is both whispering and speaking at the same time.

"Welcome to Kendrick's personal hell, stimmers. No, don't look at me like that, the boss'll catch on! Just don't say nothing, OK?"

"Don't believe anything that scum-sucker tells you, got that? There's no way he'll let you out of here if you don't beat his game, and nobody's ever beat it.

"I was once like you, y'know. Cocky, thought I knew my way around stimspace. Been here forever, seems like, stuck playing this Solidon bit.

"I can't help you, but there may be others who can. Kendrick's going loco, and his control over the stim-environment becomes weaker by the moment. I just don't know if it'll be in time to make any difference to you freakers.

"Those are great virtuals, by the way. Where'd you get them muscles, Hercules? Oh, got to shut up, my canned speech is almost over."

Meanwhile, Solidon has been droning on:

"Our last Enemy is Baron Don-nel, liege of the Abyss and Master of Universes. He rebels against all that is just and pure, and were it not against the strictures by which the gods are bound, I would have dispelled him from the Land long ago. But I am not permitted to perform this task — instead, it lies in your hands to banish this blemish.

"Let me speak in detail of each of the tasks you must perform.

"First, you must redeem the Land from the evil of Don-nel. His power of domination is said to come from his mastery of the Ebony Image, a figure of blackness which shuns the light and loves the night. Destroy the Image, and Don-nel's power to harm the Land is decreased.

"Second, there is a way for you to banish the Baron from this plane. I say this by way of prophecy, for I can feel the truth of what I say in my very bones, but I cannot explain the how or the why of it to you.



"Lastly, you must return with the Princess Fiona. She was stolen by the Baron fortnights ago, on the eve of her wedding, and pines for her release. Fiona is the fairest flower of the Land, and the embodiment of all that is good and pleasing among us.

"As always, my blessings shall be upon you." Solidon raises his hand, and a cymbal clashes. "Fare thee well, my Champions."

The throne room dissolves into grey mist that engulfs you . . .

## 2.0 RUNNING THE MISSION

In the material that follows, this chapter is been broken into easily digestible encounters.

This chapter contains information concerning the stimgame adventure which Kendrick has devised. The following chapter ("Kendrick's Will") contains further information about how to foil Kendrick's plans — *be sure to read both chapters before beginning to run the climax of the adventure.*

### 2.1 REQUIREMENTS

Use the fantasy stim-characters provided in the first chapter ("Unicorn Qlub") for this portion of the adventure. They retain all magical artifacts and other items which were not used up, lost, or broken during earlier encounters.

### 2.2 AIDS

If the adventurers rescue the prisoners in the Dungeon, these NPCs become available as reinforcements later in the adventure.

In addition, many events and persons which might aid the adventurers are described in the next chapter.

### 2.3 OBSTACLES

The Tower is inhabited and defended by members of three races loyal to Baron Don-nel:

The **Blue Veins** are officers and magi. They pilot Don-nel's Tower through the universe, and wield a strange variety of communal magic.

The **Four Legs** are technicians and overseers. They are the fiercest warriors of the Tower, due to their great strength, gigantic size, and fierce temper.

The **Sucker Cats** are the most abundant of the Tower's denizens. Little more than slaves, they stoke the furnaces and perform the other unpleasant works that the Four Legs command them to.

If the stimtesters are to triumph over the stimgame, they must also solve the problems posed to them by Solidon. The Ebony Image and the Princess both await in separate chambers of the tower. The secret to banishing Don-nel from this plane of the universe is to realize the nature of the Baron's Tower — it is not a structure, but an inter-dimensional vessel. It is within the adventurers' power to send this vessel to another plane, then to wreck the controls so that the Baron cannot easily return.

In the ultimate sense, however, the one obstacle the players must overcome is Neldon Kendrick, the designer and master of this false reality. This problem is dealt with in the chapter following this one.

## 2.4 COMPENSATION

Beating Kendrick's game is the only way to entice him into his own virtual universe — once he involves himself, the stimtesters can use the laws of stimspace against him. This is explained in detail in the chapter which follows this one.

## 2.5 THE RUN

This chapter deals with the threats and challenges of the Baron's Tower, a fantasy environment devised by Neldon Kendrick.

Many of the encounters are described in Section 4.0 ("Schematics") below, since these actions are linked to specific locations in the Tower. These scenes do not occur in the order in which they are presented, but come into play as the characters travel to different parts of Don-nel's edifice.

The events described in the following chapter should be interwoven with those described here.

### ARRIVAL

The stimtesters materialize in an immense chamber built of monolithic stone blocks. Rock benches ring an amphitheater, at the center of which stands a platform surmounted with a swiftly rotating golden spindle.

Four large archways lead elsewhere on this level. A stairway fabricated of a strange blue metal leads upward along one side of the chamber, and a cavernous hole gives onto a ramp leading downward. The great hall is deserted.

"You have arrived in Baron Don-nel's Tower," booms Solidon. "I can do nothing more for you." His words end with a punctuating thunderclap. (Fortunately, these sounds can be heard only by the player characters.)

If the adventurers linger, they are surprised by the entrance of a lone Blue-Vein. The stranger walks several meters before noticing the characters, then cautiously moves closer to discover what they are. When he is certain they do not belong in the Tower, he flees to call for help.

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## STAGE ONE: SKULKING

During the first phase of this chapter, the stimesters are undiscovered within the Tower. No guards are searching for them, and they are free to explore.

Except for those non-player characters whom they meet by entering specific portions of the Tower (see section 4.0, below), the only strangers whom the adventurers meet are "random" wanderers in the halls and rooms of the Tower.

**Meeting Strangers:** Roll D10 one per every five minutes of game-time, and once for each new area the characters enter. If a "1" is rolled, the party runs into someone else.

Have the player whose character has the best chance try a roll (SM/Per:M in a hallway or small chamber, H in a larger hall, V in a giant chamber). If he succeeds, the stimesters spot the strangers before they themselves are seen.

If the roll fails, roll 1D10. On a result of 1-8, both parties stumble into each other at short range (2D10 meters), taking one another by surprise. On a roll of 9 or 10, the non-player characters surprise the PCs.

**Random Encounters:** To determine who (and how many) the strangers are, roll 1D10. Reroll results which duplicate previous encounters.

- 1 — 1D10 Sucker Cats
- 2 — lone Blue Vein
- 3 — lone Four Legs
- 4 — pair of Blue Veins
- 5 — 2D10 Sucker Cats
- 6 — 1 Four Legs and 1D10 Sucker Cats
- 7 — 1 Four Legs and 2D10 Sucker Cats
- 8 — 1D10 Four Legs
- 9 — 2D10 Blue Veins
- 10 — Special Encounter. Roll 1D10 once more —
  - 1-3 — Laborer party on the way to the Steam Chambers — 1 Four Legs, 1D10 armed Sucker Cats, 4D10 unarmed Sucker Cat laborers
  - 4-6 — Prisoners being escorted to a Dungeon — 1 Four Legs, D10 Sucker Cats, 3D10 human prisoners in chains
  - 7-8 — Prisoners being escorted to the Torture Chamber — Dark Urik, 1 Four Legs, 2D10 human prisoners in chains
  - 9 — Princess under escort — Princess Fiona, 3 Blue Veins, 1 Four Legs, 1D10 Sucker Cats
  - 10 — Ebony Image (see below)

**Spreading the Alert:** When discovered, the player characters' first concern should be to prevent word of their presence from spreading throughout the Tower. The best way to do this is to silence the newly-met strangers.

The actions of the non-player characters depend on the circumstances:

**Blue Veins:** Due to their communal nature, they immediately think to send one of their members for help. The remainder stand between the adventurers and the messenger, protecting his escape. If combat looks likely, they fuse.

**Four Legs:** Upon sighting an enemy, their instinct is to attack — and to order their slaves to attack, if any are present. Only if a battle goes awry will a Four Legs think to send for help, and then he'll go himself rather than send a messenger.

**Sucker Cats:** If a Four Legs is present, the slaves do exactly what he orders. If not, or once their overseer is dead or gone, the Cats flee. If they escape, roll D10 — on a roll of 5 or higher, the slaves do not report encountering intruders; otherwise, they do.

If the adventurers do not pursue an escaped NPC, then assume that the Tower is alerted to intruders in D10 rounds. If they do chase the runner, play out the results — the NPC heads for the nearest Barracks.

**Attracting Attention:** During a fight, the adventurers might accidentally attract the attention of others nearby.

The Blue Veins are telepathic at short range, but this might be sufficient to reach the nearest chamber (if not horizontally, then vertically — consult the map).

The Four Legs also make enough noise in combat (mostly yelling) to attract others within 15 meters.

## STAGE TWO: ON ALERT

Once the inhabitants of the Tower become aware of the intruders, use these rules to handle the situation.

During a first-level alert, the Four Legs send Sucker Cats throughout the Tower in order to locate, pin down, and learn more about the intruders.

Dispatch four parties of D10 Sucker Cats, each led by a Four Legs, from both Barracks. Every five minutes, move the patrols to a new chamber, fanning out throughout the Tower. Post sentries in major unoccupied chambers as they pass through them.

You may want to make pencil notations on the Tower map in order to track where the Baron's forces are, or you could mount a copy of the map on cardboard and use flag pins to keep track.

In addition, continue to roll on the Random Encounter table for wandering strangers.

The adventurers should not be greatly threatened by the patrols, because they can out-fight them rather handily. The problem is that it is becoming harder to hide, and this level of alert must eventually escalate to Stage Three.

**Going to Stage Three:** The Tower remains on a low level of alert until something occurs to convince the Four Legs that further troops must be mobilized.

A Four Legs will not flee until half of his patrol is slaughtered. If a Four Legs escapes to reach a Barracks, the Tower automatically goes to Stage Three alert.

Fleeing Sucker Cats who reach a Barracks may also trigger Stage Three, but only if the Four Legs believe the slaves' story (only a 5-in-10 chance). Otherwise, the only result is the sending of a new patrol.

The Tower's alarm may also be strengthened if a patrol stumbles upon evidence of great slaughter — 10 or more bodies, not necessarily all in one place. In this case, the Four Legs orders his Cats to hold their position, then returns to the Barracks and triggers Stage Three.

## STAGE THREE: TO ARMS!

The Four Legs, realizing the danger to the Tower and the Baron's plans, now mobilize all of the guards.

Release a new patrol (2D10 Sucker Cats and a Four Legs overseer) every round from each Barracks, until all of the soldiers have been deployed. Each patrol may move to an adjoining room once every five minutes.

The Four Legs order the patrols to block exits and contain the intruders, acting upon the latest information available to them. (If the adventurers move swiftly enough, they should be able to escape from the traps which the Four Legs set up.)

Also release a patrol of D10 Blue Veins every D10 rounds from their living area. These patrols roam the Tower in no apparent pattern, and automatically merge with any Four Legs-led patrols they encounter.

Use the Random Encounters table only in areas of the Tower where the patrols are not standing guard.

**Tactics:** The Four Legs use larger patrol forces now, but still insist on spreading out their strength in an effort to surround and confine the PCs.

When a patrol encounters intruders, the commanding Four Legs immediately shouts for reinforcements or will go to get some if the distance is too far for his voice to carry. Alerted neighboring patrols then rush forward, each trying to enter the chamber from a different exit in order to block any escape.

The Four Legs are now conservative in combat, refusing to launch an attack until all exits have been covered and at least two patrols are present for the assault.

**Going to Stage Four:** Whether the adventure ever proceeds to Stage Four depends upon the actions of the adventurers. They can successfully bring this chapter to a conclusion without killing large numbers of non-player characters, but such luck may not be with them.

If any Four Legs escapes after the failure of a multi-patrol assaults, he can trigger Stage Four by reaching a Barracks or any other patrol. Similarly, if a patrol discovers the remains of such a battle, its overseer will do the same.

### STAGE FOUR: WAR IN THE TOWER

By bringing the Tower to this level of defense, the Four Legs complement the combat abilities of the player characters by completely shifting their strategy.

Realizing that their only hope of defeating the intruders is through superior numbers, the overseers group their patrols together into small armies (50 or more Sucker Cats, where possible). This takes D10 rounds per army, and the merging patrols must first gather in one spot.

Each army is led by a vanguard of 2D10 Four Legs, which acts as a shock force to lead the charge against the enemy.

Meanwhile, the slaves in the labor chambers of the Tower (the Steam Chambers and the Spindle Rooms) are released from their duties to form further assault forces. These Sucker Cats are armed with only their bare hands, and are brutally driven into battle by their overseers.

Each army of laborers consists of 5D10 slaves and D10 Four Legs. A new army departs from one of the labor chambers every D10 rounds, until all of the slaves have been committed to battle.

### EBONY IMAGE

This encounter may take place at any time of your choosing.

The Ebony Image is a creature of shadow stuff, and it specializes in tricking its enemies into devouring themselves. It has been an invaluable aid to Baron Don-nel in his desecration of the Land.

The Image stalks the PCs in its shadow form, and it nearly impossible to spot as it flits from darkness to darkness (SM/Per:V). It is easier to spot in places where shadows are out of place, like the Aerium or the Steam Chambers.

It makes its move when the adventurers are alone in any chamber, or when the characters notice its presence. As dark-

ness turns the illumination to twilight dimness, the stimtesters' own shadows rise from the ground and do battle against them.

If the attacking shadows are defeated, the Image is driven back to its natural dimension.

## 2.6 DENOUEMENT

By triumphing over the Tower, the stimtesters bring on a final confrontation between Baron Don-nel (Neldon Kendrick) and themselves. This is fully discussed in the next chapter.

## 3.0 CHARACTER/ORGANIZATION DOSSIER

### 3.1 BLUE VEINS

The aliens known as Blue Veins in this adventure are so-called due to the prominent blood vessels which crawl like tree roots over every exposed skin surface. Their eyes are golden, their mouths open

horizontally rather than vertically, and they are mute (they communicate by short-ranged telepathy). They wear shimmering turquoise robes and bronze circlets around their bald pates.

Their most unusual ability allows them to link telepathically into *Circles of Magic*. Any number of Blue Veins may do this, which takes 2 rounds. New members likewise take 2 rounds to fuse with the group.

### CHARACTER ARCHETYPE FILE: BLUE VEINS

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Executive Datafile 76-253

**Profession:** Mage  
**Level:** N/A  
**Hits:** 51  
**AT(DB):** NoA (50)  
**Melee:** +35 Chain  
**Missile:** +30 Bola  
**Skills:** Administration 50, Astrogation (trans-dimensional) 75, Enchant Technics 15, Environs 45, Equipment 55, Magical Technics 35, Perception 30  
**Spells:** Death Blast (1), Lightning Bolt (3), Wall of Fire (1), Web (1)  
**Equipment:**  
 • Triple-strand silver chain  
 • Bola, hanging from waist  
 • Forked wand of green glass, used to cast spells  
**Special Ability:** Natural telepathy, range of 10 meters



Fused Blue Veins cast one spell per round *per Circle*, using the total of the skill ratings of all the members. The Circle may cast a spell if any of its members is able to cast that spell.

If any member of a Circle takes damage, that damage is spread out as equally as possible among all of its members.

Tactically, the Blue Veins prefer to form Circles within Circles, thus protecting those at the core.

### 3.2 FOUR LEGS

The technicians of the Tower, Four Legs are brawny giants, three meters tall atop four well-muscled legs. They wear little other than loincloths, and carry small bronze batons.

Four Legs have powerful tempers and enjoy wading into a good brawl. On the other hand, it is their job to command and oversee the Sucker Cat slaves. When any lone Four Legs encounters the adventurers, roll D10:

1-5: the Four Legs attacks

6-10: the Four Legs flees to find D10 Sucker Cats

### 3.3 SUCKER CATS

Slaves of Baron Don-nel, the Sucker Cats fight bravely enough under the command of the Four Legs, but they never show initiative — and flee if left without an overseer.

They are furry bipeds, two meters in height, with a prehensile furred tail. Retractable suckers in their hands and feet allow them to climb sheer surfaces. All Sucker Cats hate water.

Sucker Cat laborers (as opposed to guards) never wear armor, and their only weapons are their bare hands.

## CHARACTER ARCHETYPE FILE: FOUR LEGS

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Executive Datafile 76-148

**Profession:** Tech Rat

**Level:** 8th

**Size:** Large

**Hits:** 140

**AT(DB):** NoA(10)

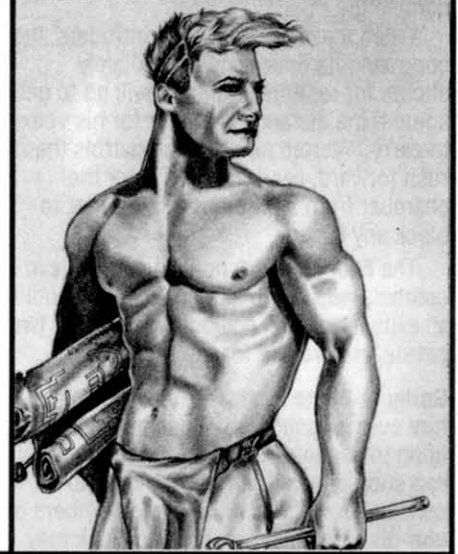
**Melee:** Roll D10 for each: 1-7: +120

Melee 8-10: +60 Broadsword

**Skills:** Administration 25, Advanced Math 75, Alchemy 40, Technomancy 85, Equipment 45, Frenzy 20, Gambling 35, Perception 25, Physics 30

**Equipment:**

- Some carry ornate blue-metal curved swords



## CHARACTER FILE: SUCKER CATS

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Executive Datafile 76-729

**Profession:** Sleaze

**Level:** N/A

**Hits:** 32

**AT(DB):** Roll D10 for each group, or party of reinforcements —

1-6: NoA(25)

7-9: LBA(10)

10: ABS(0)

**Missile:** Roll D10 for each party —

1-7: none

8-10: +15 Lt Crossbow

**Melee:** Roll D10 for each group, or party of reinforcements —

1-4: +25 Spear

5-7: +25 Short Sword

8-9: +20 Hand Axe

10: +35 Brawl

**Skills:** None of any relevance

**Equipment:** Only as indicated by skills known



### 3.4 DARK URIK

Baron Don-nel's chief torturer, Dark Urik is an intensely masculine humanoid with ruddy-bronze skin and silver hair.

His chief weapon is a Whip which strikes fear into its targets. Victims struck by the whip are subjected to a bath of blue fire and an intense, unnatural fear (generated by the stim-computer). Until they succeed at a roll of SM/SD:V or until Dark Urik is removed from their presence, victims must curl into a fetal position, howling and trembling with fear. Characters who previously resisted a fear RR receive a +20 bonus to this roll.

There is no additional penalty for being whipped again before recovering from the first whipping.

### CHARACTER FILE: DARK URIK

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Personal Datafile 76-590

**Profession:** Tech Rat

**Level:** 20th

**Hits:** 130 (225)

**AT(DB):** LBA(+5)

**Melee:** +172 Whip, +147 Short Sword

**Skills:** Biology 34, Body Development 135, Exploit 73, Medical Practice 25, Perception 50, Trickery 43



### CHARACTER FILE: DON-NEL'S BULLOCKS

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Personal Datafile 76-478

**Hits:** 190

**AT(DB):** NoA(10)

**Melee:** Bulls first attack with a head butt (+40, Large attack), after which the victim must succeed at a MM/Ag:H roll to remain on his feet.



### 3.5 DON-NEL'S BULLOCKS

Against fallen foes, bulls attack with either a trample (+30, Huge attack) or by goring (+30, Large attack) — 50% chance of each. Immediately following a goring, the bull tosses its victim D10 meters in a random direction.

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**CHARACTER FILE: SHADOWS**

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Personal Datafile 76-350

**Profession:** varies**Hits:** 50**AT(DB):** ABS(0)**Weapon Skill:** +60 with whatever they have**Skills:** None besides basic combat skills**Equipment:** Shadow of whatever the PC uses**3.6 EBONY SHADOWS**

There is a shadow to match each stimtester, equipped with that character's weapon of choice (or a broadsword, if the character does not normally use a weapon).

Be sure to have the players state their intentions at the start of each combat round, then resolve their actions individually. Any character who strikes his own shadow does damage, to his foe, and to himself! Once a character has so injured himself, other PCs about to attack their shadows must succeed at a SM/Re:M roll to stop themselves in time from any declared attacks.

Between combat rounds, the shadows trade places in order to be attacked by the PCs they match. Randomly select two shadows who are not adjacent to their characters, and trade their places. The adventurers notice only a blur unless they succeed at a SM/Per:M roll.

**CHARACTER FILE: PRINCESS FIONA**

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Personal Datafile 76-590

**GENERAL DATA****Profession:** Sleaze**Social Class:** Princess**Level:** 5th**Maneuvering:** NoA 10**WMR:** 22 m/rnd**Fire:** (Crossbow 20)**Melee:** Dagger 10**Missile:** Shuriken 10**Hits:** 39 (63)**AT(DB):** NoA (-5)**Primary Skills:**

Riding: 30

Ambush: 10

Stalk &amp; Hide: 25

Culture: 60

Diplomacy: 70

Administration: 65

Exploit: 87

Perception: 35

**Secondary Skills:**

Appraisal: 10

Media: 30

Music: 10

Subduing: 20

**Languages:**

Common Tongue D5

**BIOGRAPHY**

An edited mindtape taken from Rikki Janus, Princess Fiona is a well-balanced, kind person. She is honest, brave, selfless, gracious and loving — which is a surprise, considering her origin.

Any male stimmer who meets the Princess must resist the stim-computer's efforts to make him fall in love with her (RR attack level 2, modified by SD). Those who fail the roll are bound by geas to protect Fiona.

**PHYSICAL APPEARANCE****Age:** 26**Eyes:** Blue**Height:** 163 cm**Skin:** Fair**Sex:** Female**Hair:** Blond**Weight:** 54 kg**Race:** Caucasian (Anglo)**STATS**

Co 24 (-5); Ag 44 (+0); SD 18 (-5); Me 37 (+0); Re 85 (+5); St 11 (-5); Qu 57 (+0); Pr 98 (+20); In 61 (+0); Em 75 (+5); Ap 61.

**EQUIPMENT**

- Dagger, concealed within boot
- Shuriken (6), concealed within bracer
- Vial of healing potion (equivalent to a Tissue Knitter, 6 uses), in secret compartment of belt

## 4.0 SCHEMATICS

The following details the layout of the main focus for the action in this portion of the adventure.

### 4.1 THE BARON'S TOWER

The following descriptions match the numbered areas on the Baron's Tower map, located inside the front and back covers of this book.

**1. Chamber of the Spinning God.** This immense chamber is built of monolithic stone blocks. Rock benches ring the amphitheater, at the center of which stands a platform surmounted with a swiftly rotating golden spindle.

Four large archways lead elsewhere on this level. A stairway fabricated of a strange blue metal leads upward along one side of the chamber, and a cavernous hole gives entrance to a ramp leading downward. The great hall is deserted.

The rotating spindle is girded by three golden bands — a horizontal band, and two vertical bands perpendicular to one another. Trying to touch the spindle itself is dangerous. Those attempting to do so must first overpower an invisible spirit which pushes physical objects away from the spinning object (SM/St:L). Victims who insist on touching the rotating spindle suffer a "3B" wound, are thrown 2D10 meters, and are stunned for D10 rounds.

Thrusting anything into the moving spindle — for instance, trying to stop it by wedging it with a sword — causes the foreign item to be tossed 4D10 meters in a random direction. Nothing the characters can do will stop the spinning spindle.

Touching the golden bands has an entirely different result. They move — grudgingly, not as if rusted in place but more as if a great weight resists the motion. Moving the horizontal band has no discernible effect. Moving either of the vertical bands makes the entire room (and tower) cant in the direction of motion.

The spinning object is a gyroscope-like device, and controls the orientation of the Baron's Tower in the aether. By adjusting this control, the adventurers can turn the entire tower upside-down! The gyroscope has no effect on the force of gravity, however.

Excessive fiddling with the spindle summons a party of D10 Blue Veins from their living area to investigate.

**2. Treasury.** As shown on the map, a number of these vault rooms open off from the Chamber of the Spinning God. Each is stacked with a fortune in goods, ransacked from the Land — holy artifacts from the temples, royal jewels, sacks of coins from many lands, and so forth.

If the adventurers wish to load themselves down with this loot, they may. None of it is enchanted or especially useful during the adventure. There are no guards.

**3. Dungeon.** These iron-gated cells are guarded by 1D10 Four Legs (with the keys) and 2D10 Sucker Cats.

Four cells each contain 1D10 human prisoners from the stimgame characters' world. A fifth cell contains 1D10 renegade Sucker Cats, eager to fight against the Baron.

If released by the adventurers, the released heroes insist on striking out on their own to find and rescue Princess Fiona (if she hasn't been found yet) or to assassinate Baron Don-nel.

Under no circumstances should the PCs be allowed to add these NPCs to their own party. Such a large, unwieldy group would greatly slow down the adventure. Instead, let the head-strong NPCs fight and die "off camera." The stimgamers should witness their feats by meeting a sole survivor with a previous bit of information, or see the mingled bodies of friend and foe as they continue to search the Tower.

Use the ex-prisoners as aids and reinforcements for the PCs. When the stimgamers get into a dire predicament — surrounded by large numbers of Sucker Cats, perhaps — the human NPCs can make a surprise attack and open an avenue for escape.

Likewise, the former captives can bring the PCs clues which they haven't been able to obtain for themselves, such as the location of the Princess. This reward is given at your discretion.

**4. Torture Chamber.** This dark chamber, reached through a twisting entranceway, reeks of blood and old nightmares. Human prisoners (2D10) squat in cramped cages, many of them gnawing on bones or howling feebly to themselves. Near each exit are D10 Sucker Cat guards.

On the raised dias are Dark Urik, Baron Don-nel's Torture Master, and his Four Legs overseer. They are administering pain to a human victim spread-eagled on a rotating platform, whose screams echo into the surrounding chambers.

If interrupted by the stimgamers, Dark Urik seems to enjoy the intrusion. "Look what the rats have dragged in," he comments to his overseer. "Mortals, do you dare tread within my sanctuary?" He is macho-arrogant and cannot conceive of his own death.

Urik's special weapon is a whip that breaks men's wills (see the character descriptions, above). When Urik is killed, his face blends into that of a convulsing Rikki Janus (see "Face Blending" in the next chapter for a full explanation).

If freed, the prisoners prove to be broken men and women, and wander off on their own. Many are insane. Later, they may bring unexpected aid to the PCs in the same manner as released dungeon inmates.

**5. Hall of the Bullocks.** Characters entering this cavern might at first think they've left the Tower. A bright sun shines down on a rolling meadow where cows and bulls graze. A cobblestone road leads to the top of a central hill, then disappears descending the far slope.

On second glance, the illusion is apparent. Walls of stone blocks — sky blue in shade — rise on all sides, confining the meadow within a great hall. The sun is only a glowing disk that rides on rails across the ceiling.

The cattle are raised for food during the Tower's longer journeys. The beasts pay no attention to the intruders. All are of a massive build, and the bulls have wicked-looking horns that sweep forward to end in lance-sharp points.

The adventurers are safe in this cavern so long as they remain on the cobblestone paths. An enchantment cast on the road protects those who stride it from the bull cattle. Should the stimtesters leave the road, however — perhaps to hide from strangers who wander in — the bulls scent them and attack.

To determine how many bulls attack, roll D10 and divide by 2. To locate the animals, roll for each: 3D10 to determine how far away it is, and D10 to determine a random direction.

Once the characters have betrayed themselves, the bulls can sense them even if they return to the road. The animals attack until the stimtesters leave the chamber.

**6. Steam Chamber.** These great halls are wreathed in steam, and moisture condenses on every surface. Sounds echo within the clouds without apparent source: strident hisses, water flowing, the cracking of whips, and low moans that seem to come from hundreds of throats. Lightning and thunder rumble irregularly.

The energies which power Don-nel's Tower are unleashed here. Six-man teams of slaves lift heavy blocks of crystalized Fire and carry them out on scaffolds over ponds of elemental Water. The crystals, tossed from far above by the Sucker Cats, are destroyed upon impact with the water. Lightning then flickers above the pond (sometimes striking the Sucker Cats), and the pool brightens its silvery radiance.

There are 500 unarmed Sucker Cat laborers in each chamber, driven to their tasks by 25 whip-wielding Four Legs.

The Elemental Fire in its crystalline form is stable, and not of much use to the player characters. Each block weighs 500 lbs.

A full explanation of the property of the glowing ponds is given in the Chambers of Radiance description.

**7. Chamber of Radiance.** Each of these rooms contains a pool of Elemental Water, glowing with silvery radiance. These store the power generated in the Steam Chambers.

Each network of pools is patrolled by D10 Blue Veins, who inspect the pools to ensure they are retaining their charge. If they come upon intruders, the Blue Veins will send one of their number for help, then fuse mentally and magically attack the strangers.

The power of the pools is dangerous:

- Spells cast over the waters become diverted, and speed off in a random horizontal direction.
- Living beings which touch the pools trigger a powerful spark (treat as a Mark I laser attack).
- Non-living items placed in and then withdrawn from the pool pick up a magical charge, cancelling out whatever magical properties they may have had previously. The charge detonates when the item contacts any living being. The person who thrust the item into the pool is immune to attack, so long as his contact with the charged item is continuous — if he puts down the object, then tries picks it up again, the item's charge detonates.

**8. Chute.** A foul stench of decay surrounds these chambers, which are the collecting place for all the garbage and waste of the Tower. Within each, 3D10 slaves and 2 Four Legs overseers wrestle refuse-laden barrels to the edge of a walled pit and toss the offal out. A cool and steady breeze flows from the pits, blowing into the Tower.

Should the stimtesters think to look down the walled pits, they can learn a secret of the Tower. The structure — which is actually a trans-dimensional ship — floats over a mountain range in the distant-most southern realms of the Land. The adventurers can see mighty chains rising from below, holding the Tower in place.

There is no rescue for characters who fall into the pit. The Four Legs especially enjoy throwing enemies to their deaths in this way.

**9. Reservoir.** Narrow passageways run on ledges beside these deep lakes of clear water. Many types of edible fish swim in the depths. The Tower's denizens draw drinking water and meat from these chambers.

Due to the narrowness of the passageways, this can be a good place for the stimtesters to battle an outnumbering foe. However, remember that Sucker Cats can walk on the walls and ceilings as well as on the walkway (if their Four Legs overseers think to order them to do so).

**10. Spindle Room.** These rooms are dominated by 50-meter shafts of gold, which protrude through round portals in the floors.

From elevated platforms on the chamber's edge, Blue Veins direct the operation of the trans-dimensional engines. Their silent signals are relayed by the Four Legs to Sucker Cat slaves. Fifty slaves are stationed inside a large barrel mounted on its side, and fifty more are chained to poles at the barrel's ends.

Operation of the golden spindles is a three step process:

First, the Blue Veins call for a reorientation of the slave barrel. The Cats chained to the poles pull, swiveling the barrel into a new position.

Next, the barrel slaves begin to run, spinning the barrel around on its axle. Chains around the barrel transmit its motion to gears in the ceiling, which in turn slowly move the golden spindle.

Finally, the Blue Veins call a halt to the movement. Their chief raises a tuning fork made of green glass as the others fuse their magic together. Then a burst of light from the enchanted fork strikes the ceiling, briefly opening a hole through which Elemental Water spills onto the base of the spindle. The spindle-engine then trembles, and shoots a bolt of fire into the sky.

Should the PCs incapacitate one or more of the Tower's Engines, the entire structure will slowly begin to settle toward the ground.

Alternately, the adventurers might try to operate the Engine themselves. With a successful Enchant Technics roll (SM:M), any mage can use the fork to release charged Water. Correctly directing the spindle (through use of the barrel mechanism) is impossible without training, however, and the PCs' actions will have random consequences (roll D10):

- 1-3: The Tower begins to settle downward.
- 4-6: The Tower begins to gently ascend.\*
- 7: The Tower begins to wander east.\*
- 8: The Tower begins to wander west.\*
- 9: The Tower begins to wander north.\*
- 10: The Tower begins to wander south.\*

\* If the anchor cables are still in place, the Tower can only strain against its moorings.

**11. Anchor Room.** This chamber contains a great horizontal wheel, with shackles where slaves can be chained to drive the device. Above the wheel is a spool, from which a heavy chain descends through a hole in the floor. The room is empty of occupants.

The chain is an anchor cable, and leads to a weighted block resting on the mountain crest several hundred meters below.

There are two ways to unanchor the Tower. The simplest is to cut the chain. Unfortunately, it takes 1,000 hits points' worth of damage to part the metal links.

The second method is to use the winch to raise the anchor. For every five minutes' worth of effort, a character may try a SM/St:X roll. Up to 25 characters may work the winch at the same time. Once one success has been scored, the anchor is clear of the ground; nine more successes retract the anchor into this compartment.

When all of the anchors have been retracted or their cables have been cut, the Tower is free to move.

**12. Kitchen.** This hall is filled with benches, and one end is clustered with open fires and cooks laboring over kettles. At any moment, there are 10D10 Sucker Cats, 3D10 Four Legs, and D10 Blue Veins here.

Small shafts connect each kitchen to the living quarters directly above in the Tower. Platforms in the shafts, which move up and down as connecting ropes are pulled, are used to bring warm food to those above.

**13. The Aerium.** The largest chamber of the Tower, this multi-story room is shaped like an upright cylinder. A spiral path leads from top to bottom, circling the room three times before it reaches the bottom.

At the center of the chamber, suspended on chains broad enough for a man to walk on, is a brilliant supernatural flame. Its light nourishes the trees which grow from every conceivable surface, even sprouting sideways from the walls of the Aerium. Birds of a thousand species nest in the trees and flit through the air, singing a medley of exotic bird-songs.

The central flame is immaterial, and cannot be used to harm or ignite anything. However, smart adventurers might think to hide within it — it can cause them no injury, and conceals them perfectly from all watchers.

**14. Chamber of the Fountains.** Small ponds of enchanted Water (see the Chamber of Radiance for a description of the waters' powers) stud the floor of this wide, high-ceilinged chamber. In the center stands a low platform crowned by a silver podium, manned by 2D10 Blue Veins.

At round, one of the ponds leaps into life, sending (1D10 divided by 2) multi-colored streams arching into other ponds. Roll 2D10 to determine the row and column of the pond which is fountaining, then roll 2D10 to determine where it sends each stream. Characters walking in the path of a water stream must succeed at a MM/Ag:M roll to avoid being hit. The Blue Veins are never hit, as they know in advance where the streams are flowing — a smart character will duck when he sees one of them duck down.

This chamber is the control center of the Tower. Communications between the power, furnace and engine chambers is handled by pipes carrying the enchanted Water, and that flow is controlled and monitored here. The play of the fountains can be interpreted by a Blue Veins just as one might read a book.

Should the PCs gain control of the silver podium, they may make use of the levers there. Without proper knowledge, the controls cannot be used intelligently — roll 1D10 and consult the following results:

1-5: Increase Engine power by one level.

6-8: Change Course\*

9,10: Decrease Engine power by one level.

\* Roll again, and consult the table given in the Spindle Room description

The Engines begin at level 2. Different power levels have different results:

*Level 0:* Tower immediately descends for a landing.

*Level 1:* Tower hovers, and can fly horizontally at half speed if unanchored.

*Level 2:* Tower hovers, and can fly horizontally if unanchored.

*Level 3:* Tower can ascend if unanchored.

*Level 4:* Tower can ascend if unanchored, and can fly horizontally regardless of anchors.

*Level 5:* Tower ascends regardless of anchors.

*Level 6:* Tower can accelerate to trans-dimensional speeds.

**15. Blue Veins Quarters.** These rooms are the communal living chambers of the Blue Veins. Each contains 3D10 mages.

**16 Cabins.** These rooms are the chambers used by visiting dignitaries and esteemed prisoners. All are empty now except for those inhabited by Princess Fiona and her guardians.

Unless chanced upon previously (due to the vagaries of the Random Encounters table), the Princess will be located here. Her guards consist of 3 Blue Veins mages, a Four Legs overseer, and 1D10 Sucker Cats.

**17. The Baron's Chambers.** Baron Donnel's personal chambers are ornate, with a slightly decadent touch: an immense oaken desk with 35 drawers, all locked; a wardrobe of costumes from throughout the dimensions, including amber worksuits and a chromatic hard-shell hat; and a ring-shaped bed with a caged monkey in the center.

However, the Baron is not here, nor is there anything here of use to the player characters.

**18. Observatory.** This glass-domed room is used by the Blue Veins to plot the Tower's position as it journeys between the dimensions. There are 4D10 Blue Veins here.

**19. Barracks.** Two hundred Sucker Cat guards and fifty Four Legs masters occupy these cramped quarters.

# KEDRICK'S WILL



Psychologists say that the end of childhood comes when a youngster can distinguish between fiction and reality — or between Santa Clara (the city in California) and Santa Claus (the mythical red-suited figure), so to speak.

If this is true, then Kendrick is on the verge of a second childhood. In the virtual reality of ActiStim, he has created a world where he — as Baron Don-nel — is an evil and capricious deity. Neldon Kendrick spends more and more time in this private world, compelling Rikki Janus to recruit ever more victims to people the stim-domain.

What Kendrick has forgotten is that his creation is not without its limits. In other words, the tide is coming in, and — with the adventurers' help — Kendrick's sand castle can be washed away.

## 1.0 RUNNING THE MISSION

The material that follows has been broken into easily digestible encounters.

This chapter contains information about the collapse of Kendrick's stimgame environment. The previous chapter contains other information about Kendrick's stimgame — be sure to read both chapters before running the conclusion of this adventure.

### 1.1 AIDS

The gradual disintegration of Kendrick's control now allows earlier victims of the stimgame to communicate with the player characters. They provide the clues which aid in toppling the universe.

### 1.2 OBSTACLES

Baron Don-nel (Neldon Kendrick) is the final enemy, and he can be dealt with in the course of this chapter.

### 1.3 COMPENSATION

Emerging from this adventure, the stimtesters possess valuable knowledge concerning stimtech in general, and Stimular Enterprises in particular.

Within several days of the concluding scene, the executives of a reorganized Stimular offer \$30,000 if the stimmers agree to keep silent concerning the demise of Neldon Kendrick and accompanying events.

The adventurers can sell their tales of stimspace to a competing corporation for \$5,000. A description of the ActiStim experience is required to get top dollar.

The story of their adventures can also be sold to a news network for a cool \$2,000. Verification (by truth tests) will be required. The price goes up to \$20,000 if the PCs are willing to have their memories taped for later processing into videos.

### 1.4 THE RUN

These encounters generally occur in the order in which they are presented, and are to be mingled with and between those presented in the previous chapter.

It is up to you to determine how fast to introduce these events. As a general rule, whenever the players begin to tire of the adventure, introduce a new scene.

#### THE FIRST ETCHING

The "lost souls," previous victims of the stimgame, remain within Kendrick's virtual universe — some programmed and given assigned roles, and others (due to the deterioration of the system) roaming at large.

One of the at-large souls is the Engraver. Existing only as a disembodied intelligence, he communicates with the PCs by making messages appear in the stone of the Tower.

From the stimtesters' point of view, the writing looks as though it was scratched into the rock with the same ease as a knife melts through butter. The letters are two meters in height, and disappear D10 rounds after the characters view them.

(The Engraver alters the environment by influencing the stimgame computer. This is his *only* way to contact the PCs.)

The first message appears shortly after the characters leave the Chamber of the Spinning God:

"Kendrick is Don-nel — beat him! The lost souls will help you."

#### PROGRAMMER, LOST

As the stimtesters explore the Tower, they come upon a lone figure stalking the halls, oblivious to them.

What should catch their attention is the fact that he's dressed in modern clothes: a tattered T-shirt proclaiming "Am I SCSI?", well-worn jeans, second-hand penny loafers (shoes) and a backpack.

Kurt Glossenbach is unique because he refuses to believe in virtual realities. By strength of will over time, he has forced ActiStim to bend to his wishes: if it won't dejack him, at least it can let him appear normal.

Therefore, Kurt now *looks* like Kurt.

The downside of Kurt's strong will is that he refuses to believe that the adventurers are real, just as he continues to deny the existence of the Tower. If pressed by the PCs for answers, he just closes his eyes and says, "Go away."

Fortunately, the Engraver has some influence over Kurt. During his meeting with the stimtesters, the programmer suddenly stares into space, nods, and then says, "OK. If you say so, that is." After that, he travels with or slightly behind the adventurers, but still doesn't believe in them.

#### A FRIENDLY SUCKER

As the stimtesters move through an otherwise unoccupied chamber, they hear a stage whisper: "Like, don't shoot me. OK, sprawlkid?"

Above them, suctioned to the ceiling, is a Sucker Cat. It's actually another of the lost souls, a musician named Amber Forensics. Once part of a stimtest team, she was later programmed to play the part of a Sucker Cat — but Kendrick's failing control has allowed her to regain her self-awareness. She, too, can sometimes hear advice from the Engraver.

Amber offers the following pieces of information to the party, if they ask the right questions:

**About Kurt:** "The programmer? It's the whole mental thing. Stimgames are designed to be interactive — not like c-space, right? So if you're strong enough, eventually you get your way."

**About ActiStim:** "The system can't take the load of all of us in here, but Neldon's too psycho to stop it, check? But, like, what happens to us when the system crashes? Do we crash too? Awesome."

**About Kendrick:** "Ya gotta play the game, 'cause it's the only way to get Neldon in here with us. When he's the Baron, he's subject to the same rules of stimspace that we are, chippers. But if we're losing at his game, he's got no reason to show up, and we're fried."

She also insists that she used to date one of the male player characters (select one of the better role-players in the party). "My memory's a little fuzzy, but I think we made a nice duo." Her affections, considering her virtual form, might be offensive to the stimtester.

She will follow the players unless actively discouraged.

### FURTHER ETCHINGS

Clues continue to appear from the Engraver, at irregular intervals even when the PCs are fleeing, and haven't time to read them). These may also be communicated through Amber or even Kurt.

Roll 1D10 to select a random etching, or choose one which fits the way your adventure is developing:

- 1: "Princess — go {direction}!" Fill in the blank with up, down, right, left, forward or backward.
- 2: "You will be your own enemy." "Shadows gather." Warnings about the Ebony Image.
- 3: "Sever the cables that bind." "Free the ship to sail." Advice to cut the Tower's anchors.
- 4: "The Baron is disturbed by your progress."
- 5: "Warning — go {direction}!" This advice, if taken, allows the party to avoid a patrol or similar encounter.
- 6: "Use your imagination."
- 7: "Overload the system." "Provoke trouble." "Gain points."
- 8: "Rescue the prisoners." "Go for points." "Win the game."
- 9: "Warning..." — The writing dwindles to an indecipherable scrawl.
- 10: Garbled warning — roll again, then give the selected warning but with the letters and spaces scrambled.

### PROGRESSING TO THE FINALE

In order to qualify for the events at the end of this chapter, the stimtesters must either begin to win the Baron's Game or further overload the ActiStim processors.

**Winning the Game.** If the stimtesters start to make serious progress toward defeating the Tower, Neldon Kendrick (the Baron) enters stimspace in order to personally defeat them — this leads directly to the "Denouement," below.

The adventurers bring this on by accomplishing any two of the following:

- Rescuing the Princess.
- Defeating the Ebony Image.
- Moving the Tower from its original location.
- Defeating large numbers of Sucker Cats, Four Legs and Blue Veins.

You may delay the entrance of the Baron if the players are enjoying themselves, and aren't ready to have the adventure end yet.

**Overloading ActiStim.** By putting strain on the stimgame processors, the adventurers weaken the environment and make it responsive to their desires.



These occurrences stress the stim-computer:

- Any battle involving more than 20 combatants.
- Any encounter involving special effects — especially fights in which lots of spells are cast.
- Raising the alarm level of the Tower (see the previous chapter for a description), since this increases the number of characters active in the environment.

Whenever an overload occurs, follow it with one of these special events:

**Face Blending:** As the system weakens, "real" faces begin to replace virtual ones.

Let every player try a SM/SD:S roll — for each success, a PC regains his natural face. As the system is further overloaded, let those who failed roll again, each time reducing the difficulty level by one degree.

During combat, the faces of the Sucker Cats may temporarily lapse into those of people who have been trapped in the stimgame by Kendrick. Some of these may be known to the PCs. The NPCs remain under the control of Kendrick, however.

Princess Fiona and Dark Urik are special cases. Once overloading begins, their faces start to change — but it takes a successful SM/Per:X roll (decrease the difficulty as further overloading occurs) to recognize the "new" face which gradually supplants the programmed one.

Both Fiona and Urik are Rikki Janus, but in different ways. Dark Urik is actively being played by Rikki — the fixer goes into death-trauma when/if Urik is slain. Fiona is an edited mindtape taken from Rikki, and is a well-balanced, kind person.

**Reconfiguring the Environment:** When overload conditions are occurring or have just occurred, listen carefully to what the stimtesters say. In fact, remember anything they've said recently. Their wishes can come true at these moments. Any of the following might occur:

**Doors and Walls.** An opening might appear where none existed before, simply because a character wished "for a way out of here." Likewise, a door could wall shut.

**Weapons.** A desperate PC could suddenly find himself gripping a laser pistol, or a brace of grenades, or a new broadsword, if that was all he wanted.

**Kurt's Equipment.** After overload periods, Kurt gains new pieces of equipment — headphones, a wristcomp, and finally (shortly before you are ready to wind up the adventure) a cyberdeck. If he can make ActiStim give him a jack, he could interface with the computer and try to defeat it.

It is also possible to change the environment deliberately through an act of will. This requires a roll versus SD, with a difficulty level that starts at "Insane" and reduces by one degree after each overload situation.

Eventually, the environment becomes very malleable. The PCs will be able to create passages where none were before, summon high-tech weapons, or force NPCs to wink out of existence. Add further penalties to any change which harms the Tower — for instance, destroying the Engines — since the stim-computer will not willingly erase the primary structure of the stimgame.

Once the adventure has reached this stage, progress to the "Denouement." If you don't, things will get totally out of hand.

## RESCUES

Given the size of the opposition set against the player characters — thousands of Sucker Cats, plus hundreds of Blue Vein mages and Four Legs giants — situations may arise in which the stimtesters seem to face certain extinction.

Fortunately, the following aids exist to help them out:

**Solidon Intervenes:** Once during the adventure, the "god" can help the stimtesters by casting a few well-thrown lightning bolts at their enemies (equivalent to 2D10 shots from a Mark 5 laser weapon).

"Champions of Solidon, know that thy god watches over thee..." booms the bass voice.

Then the other voice — the one that whispered to the characters earlier — mutters "Oh, damn!" followed by a yell. (Neldon is disciplining Solidon for interfering.)

**Sacrifice of an NPC:** Princess Fiona and Amber the Sucker Cat are available to take damage which might otherwise be suffered by one of the player characters.

Fiona is programmed with perfect fidelity to her cause, and she is more than willing to sacrifice her life — by stepping in the way of a spell or blow — to save one of Solidon's champions. "For Solidon and the Land," she gasps as she breathes her last.

The Sucker Cat is less willing to die, but she figures that if they're in a situation in which they might all die anyway, then she should make sure that those who have the best chance — the champions of Solidon — survive. Virtual death doesn't always mean real death, after all (she's already been "killed" once in the Tower). "Till we meet . . . beyond this reality," she moans as her exit line.

**Uprising of the Sucker Cats:** If the system is overloading, and especially during mass battle scenes, individual Sucker Cats which are motivated by real minds come to their senses and reject their programming.

These NPCs turn and fight the PCs' enemies, sacrificing themselves for the cause of defeating Kendrick. Once one Cat has rebelled, D10 others might also overcome their programming. However, the number of renegade Cats should never exceed 10% of the total Cats present.

**System Lock-Up:** Lastly, the continuing overload of the ActiStim system might lead to a massive processing crunch. Symptoms of this occur in advance:

- Minor NPCs occasionally disappear, vanishing in mid-air, and never return.
- Individual NPCs sometimes freeze in mid-action for D10 rounds.
- Attacks which strike the PCs (or even the NPCs) sometimes fail to have any effect.
- Spells sometimes fail to function.
- When the stimtesters turn a corner or enter a new room, they sometimes see only fog — the correct view fades into place around them D10 rounds later.

During a massive lock-up, which usually occurs during a high-strain situation, all enemy NPCs freeze in mid-action. The only audible sounds are those made by the PCs' voices.

The stimtesters can move, but their actions no longer affect the environment — their blows do no damage, they cannot pick up a dropped weapon, and their spells do not function.

The freeze lasts for 2D10 rounds, after which the system resets itself. To ease the strain on its system, the stim-computer randomly deletes 2D10 nearby enemy NPCs.

## 1.5 DENOUEMENT

The adventurers bring on the end of the adventure by either threatening to win the Baron's stimgame, or by causing increasingly severe stresses to the ActiStim processors. These events cause Neldon Kendrick to enter the environment as Baron Don-nel, where he seeks to defeat the PCs in personal combat.

The Baron's entry is dramatic: lightning bolts fragment reality, cutting open a gaping hole beyond which mills the black clouds of the Void. Striding in through this nothingness comes a giant of a man in night-black enameled armor, with red fire dancing around the metal joints and the corners of his eyes: Baron Don-nel.

"You thought you could win at this game," growls Don-nel in the voice of Neldon Kendrick. "Think again, sprawlkid."

The Baron waits for the stimtesters to attack, confident in his powers. Once they make their move, he accompanies his martial defense with a different emotional attack every round, affecting all of the stimmers (except Kurt) simultaneously. This should be reminiscent of the earlier scene with Rikki Janus.

Victims who fail their Resistance Rolls suffer the effects listed above but may attempt new Resistance Rolls once per round.

The Baron becomes progressively enraged if the characters resist his attacks, and in the end goes berserk and charge into their midst, forgetting his stim-powers — he tries to kill them by might alone.

If the characters have done well in the adventure, allow them to kill Don-nel regardless of how many hit points he has.

**Aftermath:** With the death of the Baron, the stim-reality abruptly vanishes. The adventurers find themselves again in the stimtest chamber at Stimular, still within the game machines. Rikki Janus is curled in another of the machines — if Dark Urik was slain during the adventure, Rikki is dead from death-trauma.

Emotion	RR*	Result if Failed
"You are on fire!"	3:SD	Drop weapon and collapse
"Despair!"	3:SD	Apathetic; cannot take action
"Hallucinate!"	1:SD	Char moves randomly, babbling incoherently
"Rot and die!"	1:SD	Character sees himself as a corpse, cannot take action
"Be drunk!"	1:SD	-50 to all Ag-based skills
"Your leg is broken!"	3:SD	Cannot move
"Hate!"	2:SD	Victim goes berserk, attacks nearest person
* number is the attack level; abbreviation lists the skill bonus which modifies the roll		

Simultaneously, a concealed door slides open in the wall, revealing a gallery of other game machines. Some of the occupants are dead, but others awaken stiffly to life — these are the “lost souls,” previous stimtesters who were imprisoned by Kendrick. Among these are Kurt Glossenbach (easily recognized), Amber Forensics (who may or may not be a former girlfriend of a PC, at your discretion), and the Engraver.

The gallery ends in a further door, which opens into an elegant executive office. Behind the desk, troded into a custom stimdeck, sits Neldon Kendrick — emaciated and pale after living in stimspace for weeks.

The executive makes no response, staring blankly regardless of what the adventurers do. He has suffered Sensory Overload, and is catatonic. He dies several weeks later, never regaining his sanity.

## THE END OF THE ADVENTURE

Leaving Stimular should not be a problem, since the security guards do not expect trouble, and do not know about what has transpired. Note that the corporate guards will kick-out anyone found wandering around the facilities unescorted.

## 2.0 CHARACTER/ORGANIZATION DOSSIER

### 2.1 KURT GLOSSENBACK

Because Kurt does not believe in the reality around him, he cannot be harmed by anything in it.

Likewise, he sometimes can absent-mindedly bend its rules — for instance, walking through a wall which he doesn't notice, or strolling into mid-air.

### 2.2 AMBER FORENSICS

Amber is regaining her human personality and memories, but she is having trouble sorting them out. Right now, she's over-affectionate: hugging strangers, rubbing against them, and talking a mile a minute.

Fortunately, she's also a gold mine of information, if the PCs think to ask her the right questions. Use her to explain Kendrick's stimgame if the players are slow to figure things out.

### IS DOSSIER: KURT GLOSSENBACK

Information Services: Datafile Ceti 54702-7 Access Code Restricted. Database Omicron

**Profession:** Tech Rat

**Level:** 9th

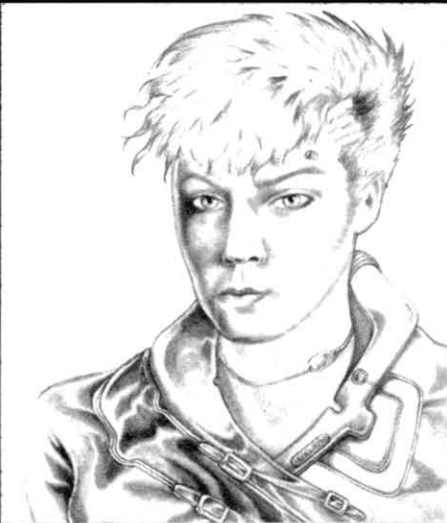
**Hits:** 38 (but see notes below)

**AT(DB):** NoA(0)

**Fire:** —

**Melee:** Brawl 15

**Skills:** Advanced Math 55, Astr/Biol/Chem 17, Cyber Tech 91, Elec Tech 118, Equipment 32, Mech Tech 68, Soft Tech 95



### CHARACTER FILE: AMBER FORENSICS

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Personal Datafile 05-529

**Profession:** Sleaze

**Level:** 6th

**Hits:** 32

**AT(DB):** LBA(10)

**Missile:** +15 Lt Crossbow

**Melee:** +20 Hand Axe

**Skills:** Acrobatics 74, Culture 108, Equipment 39, Exploit 73, Gambling 12, Music 99, Perception 29, Sports 47, Streetwise 119

**Equipment:** light crossbow with 20 bolts, hand axe



## 2.3 BARON DON-NEL

The alter-ego of Neldon Kendrick of Stimular Enterprises, the Baron is a larger-than-life figure who is tremendously arrogant and over-confident. Then again, he's never been defeated, either.

Kendrick's shield is more than a fashion accessory — it's a potent magical artifact. It has a 75% chance to reflect any spell cast at it or its bearer, channeling the energy toward the nearest possible victim.

However, the shield can be defeated by casting area-effect spells (such as Fireball and Death Blast) so that they strike and burst adjacent to the Baron, rather than casting them directly at him.

## CHARACTER FILE: BARON DON-NEL

Stimular Entertainment Incorporated: Kendrick's Personal Datafile 76-651

**Profession:** Killer  
**Level:** 25th  
**Hits:** 155 (254)  
**AT(DB):** AEX(+20)  
**Melee:** Broadsword 192  
**Missile:** —  
**Skills:** Quick-Draw 65, Subduing 57  
**Equipment:** Black broadsword, black shield (see below)



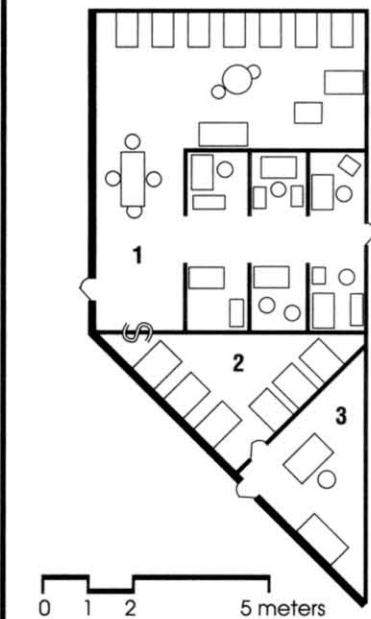
## 3.0 SCHEMATICS

Following are the floorplans important in this portion of the adventure.

### 3.1 STIMULAR OFFICES (DETAIL)

1. **Stimtest Chamber.** Note the concealed sliding door is now marked on the west wall.
2. **Store Room.** This room is packed with stimgame machines, stacked vertically in groups of three.
3. **Kendrick's Office.**

### STIMULAR OFFICES DETAIL



# APPENDICES

## 1.0 JACKING IN

There are two ways to jack into the Net: the common (but risky) *direct jack*, and the safer *NACjack*.

### DIRECT JACKING

In this method, the user jacks into a CDeck using a Direct Neural Interface (DNI). This means that the user's neural inputs come directly from the CDeck — he has no awareness of his physical surroundings when troded in, since his upper brain is disconnected from almost all of his nervous system. Only the lower brain remains linked to the body, automatically controlling the heart beat, respiration and waste elimination.

The only way such a user can jack out is through software, instructing his CDeck to initiate a "soft dejack" (SM/CDOp:R). He cannot manually unplug his jack, as he is no longer connected to the majority of his nervous system, and therefore cannot voluntarily move his arms or any other part of his body. If the CDeck cannot dejack (perhaps due to damage from Black ICE), *there's no way for the operator to unjack* — he is locked in C-Space until someone unplugs him.

If the CDeck is knocked out, a decker's worst nightmare might come true. If he's now tied to a null jack — a dead signal — a DNI will automatically detect this and switch back to the body's neural channels. If the user instead receives random inputs — static — the DNI cannot detect this. In this case, the user remains trapped in a mind-warping holocaust of random inputs until someone else pulls his plug.

## 2.0 STIMTECH

Here's a quick run-down on five varieties of stimulation technology:

### APPARENT SENSORY PERCEPTION (ASP)

This technology, which has been around for over half a century, allows a person to experience the replay of someone else's neural experiences. ASP is the ultimate passive entertainment — the user experiences the replay just as if he was riding inside the brain of the person who made the original recording, seeing and feeling everything that person saw and felt.

While this works well for certain types of entertainment (pornography, horror flicks, action/war adventures), the problem is that ASP induces in some users a "mental claustrophobia" — they feel trapped because they have no control over the experience. ASP is strictly limited to a replay of the original neural recordings.

### NACJACKING

The safer way to cruise the Net is to put a dedicated neuroprocessor in-line between the DNI and the brain. The Neurological Activity Controller (NAC) allows the decker to switch his inputs (SM/CDOp:L), tracking "real" or "apparent" sensory input — he can even switch out from C-Space, and then physically unplug himself from a CDeck.

Experienced operators can *multiplex*, sampling different inputs simultaneously — using one eye to view real space, and a virtual eye to look around C-Space, for instance (SM/CDOp:H).

Jacking into an ASP is similar to jacking into cyberspace. Unless the user has a NACjack, there is no way to dejack until the ASP player releases him. However, all commercial machines have a safety sensor (the so-called panic switch) which automatically dejacks a user if his heart rate races at dangerous levels.

### MANIPULATED SENSORY STIMULATION (MSS)

One of the limitations of ASP is that the tapes must be continuous — that is, there's no way with ASP to directly splice neural experiences together. Then came MSS (pronounced "missss").

These neural tapes have been modified by computer. ASP scenes are linked together or edited, with smooth transitions ("fade-out/fade-in") inserted. Sensory fragments can also be isolated using MSS, then spliced into other tapes — for instance, the sensory impression of a scent or taste.

The establishment of MSS meant that feature-length stimpapes could be produced and distributed. It also led to some extremely interesting experimental media forms, which allowed viewers to live the same scene from different perspectives — the Orgieste tape series is today the best remembered.

The first interactive stimgames, produced by a corporation called Stim-U-Vent, used MSS technology. In the Select Your Own Destiny series of games, users have a passive role during their simulated experiences until they reach “decision nodes,” when they are dejected by the ASP player so that they may select from a menu of options. Thus, the games allow their players to have some input, but lack the full implementation of SimSelf interaction.

### SYNTHETIC SENSORY STIMULATION (SSS)

This breakthrough technology (2072) allowed the creation of artificial ASP — “taped” experiences which never happened. Sophisticated computers generate the artificial background (sights and sounds, primarily), then translate this into neural equivalents.

SSS (pronounced “sassss”) requires extensive computer resources and lots of time. In other words, it’s expensive. Producers save money by simplifying the tapes — reducing the number of elements involved, or making the images less well defined (the *fuzzy factor*), all of which makes the simulated experience less convincing.

There also remains the problem of convincingly coding emotions. ASP users feel *everything* the original subject did — fear, love, arousal, and so forth. SSS-generated emotions remain coarse and obviously artificial.

### INTERSTIM

From the beginning, games based on the ideas used in Interactive Television but using ASP technology had been inviting projects.

The problem? An interactive game requires two-way neural contact, and ASP is unidirectional — the ASP player does not care what the viewer is thinking. This was overcome with the perfection of SimSelf technology, which is the basis of InterStim. In Interstim-space, the user’s virtual body reacts to his neural commands, affecting the stimspace environment around him.

However, the data processing problems of SSS are more than doubled with the two-channel technology of InterStim. Therefore, stimspace is usually stylized or limited to a small set of recurring icons. The experience is fun, but it can’t be confused with real life — it isn’t of the same resolution standard as ASP.

SimSelf adventures are a popular but high-priced form of entertainment in the world of *Cyberspace*. Playing such a game is similar to jacking into the Matrix, since both allow the user to have a SimSelf experience in a generated SSS environment, but the game has a plot and a limited (small) number of simultaneous users. The adventures usually offer a strictly limited number of options, due to problems of data processing speed and memory limitations.

CDecks use SSS and InterStim technology to create cyberspace experiences. The

limited abilities of CDecks force C-Space to either be visually abstract (at “low resolution” compared against ASP, as with the *Matricks* and *CivNet* matrix presentation programs) or to rely on only a few detailed but repeated images (as with the *Mediaeval* program). This is especially true since *Cyberspace* uses heightened time (10 sec = 1 sec), while ASP commonly replays in real time (1 sec = 1 sec).

### ACTISTIM

The breakthrough made by Kendrick, the major NPC in this adventure, involves the development of specialized processors, programs and high-speed memory cores all dedicated to providing the SimSelf experience in an ASP-quality environment — ActiStim, as Kendrick calls it.

The system allows for real-time generation of simulated sensations which can be mistaken for real life, and handles many players at once.

## 3.0 ADVENTURING IN STIMSPACE

The following rules should help you to run the “medieval fantasy” elements of Kendrick’s stimgame using the existing *Cyberspace*[M] rules. The results may not always be “realistic”, but they do reflect the *stimgame*’s [M] reality.

(Alternately, you might want to patch in magic or medieval melee rules from *Rolemaster*[M] or another fantasy role-playing game.)

**Medieval Armor:**[M] Use the existing combat tables, but treat leather armor as LBA, chain mail as ABS, and suits of plate armor as AEX.

**Skills In Stimspace:**[M] In stimspace, use the skill levels of the stim-characters rather than the skills of the real player characters.

What actually happens is that the machine enforces the rules of its own universe — when an untrained PC swings a sword, for instance, the machine “corrects” his swing according to the skill rating of the PC’s character.

The reverse is also true — PCs who try to use their actual skills in stimspace have their actions retarded to match the ability of their stim-character.

Of course, this applies to actions which are performed physically, not to actions which are primarily cerebral. The machine makes a character succeed at Exploit, for

instance, not by planting thoughts or words in the player character’s mind, but by manipulating the emotions of the non-player characters in his favor.

**Resistance Rolls:**[M] Use the character level of the original player character, not the stim-character, when making all RRs.

**Magic:** In the world of Kendrick’s games, “spells” are pre-packaged units of magic listed on magic-casters’ character sheets (which the player views in a manner similar to a heads-up display). A spell may only be used as many times during a game as the value given for it on the character’s sheet.

The mage must first declare to the GM that he is readying the spell. This is not an action (it takes no time, and does not prevent the mage from carrying out any other actions that round — except readying another spell), but readying a spell and casting that same spell cannot be performed in the same round.

On the turn after the spell has been readied, it can be cast. Once readied, a spell is used up regardless of whether or not it is actually cast. A spell decays 10 rounds after being readied, and is of no further use.

When a spell is of random duration, the player rolls for duration after casting the spell.

## USING SPELLS

To use a "touch" category spell: The casting occurs immediately and automatically after the mage touches a person (or, if appropriate to the spell, an object) — or when anyone or thing touches the mage. To touch a resisting victim, the mage must succeed at an Ag roll.

To use a "thrown" category spell: The *Cyberspace* rules for throwing grenades also apply to throwing spells in the ActiStim environment, but substitute the Magical Technics skill bonus for the requested weapon skill bonus.

## SPELL LIST

The following spells are available to various PCs and NPCs, as listed on their character sheets:

**Clairaudience:** The caster can hear all sounds clearly in a radius of 20 meters, despite intervening walls or obstacles. Duration: 1 round.

**Control Stone (thrown):** At the caster's command, 10 cubic meters of rock permanently mold into any shape requested. Cannot be used to harm a foe, except by engulfing him in rock.

**Control Water (thrown):** As per Control Stone (above), but the water retains the commanded form for 2D10 rounds. Works on all forms of water.

**Death Blast (thrown):** Identical in effect to a Mark I Shrapnel (SH) Grenade. Casting this spell at a higher Mark level costs that number of spell points, to a maximum of Mark V — that is, a mage could cast five Mark I Death Blasts or a single Mark V Death Blast.

**Disintegrate (thrown):** Causes any non-living item not greater than 2 cubic meters in size to shatter into dust.

**Eye Of The Magi:** Forms an ethereal eye which can travel anywhere the mage can (at the speed he can run), and through which the caster can look at distant places. The Magi's Eye endures for D10 rounds.

**Fireball (thrown):** Identical in effect to a Mark I Concussion (CO) Grenade. Casting this spell at a higher Mark level costs that number of spell points, to a maximum of Mark V — as per Death Blast, above.

**Flaming Cloud (thrown):** Creates a cloud that ignites, with effects identical to a Mark I Fuel/Air (FAE) Grenade. Casting this spell at a higher Mark level costs that number of spell points, to a maximum of Mark V — as per Death Blast, above.



**Forgetfulness (touch):** Causes the victim to sleep for 2D10 rounds. Awakening, he forgets everything that occurred for 3D10 minutes before the spell was cast.

**Invisibility:** The caster can no longer be seen. Lasts for D10 rounds.

**Levitate:** The caster can rise vertically to a height of 10 meters. Lasts for D10 rounds.

**Lightning Bolt (thrown):** Identical in effect to a Hvy Laser.

**Perplex (touch):** The victim temporarily forgets what he was doing, and wanders away. The spell's duration is 3D10 rounds, after which the victim's memory returns.

**Safefall:** Allows the caster to fall from any height at a rate no faster than a drifting feather. The spell lasts until landing.

**Sleep (thrown):** Affects the targeted victim and D10 of his closest associates. Characters who fail their Resistance Roll (SD provides a skill bonus) fall asleep for 2D10 rounds.

**Stasis (touch):** Victim freezes in place for D10 rounds, and can neither take action nor be acted upon.

**Teleport:** Instantly moves the caster from his present location to any point within eyesight, without moving through the intervening space. Duration: instant.

**Wall Of Fire (thrown):** Creates a flaming barrier one meter in width, and no longer than 5 meters. Passing through the fire causes damage equivalent to a hit from a Mark I laser weapon. Duration is D10 rounds.

**Wall Of Rock (thrown):** Creates a wall of stone which is one meter wide, two meters high, and up to five meters long. Duration is D10 rounds.

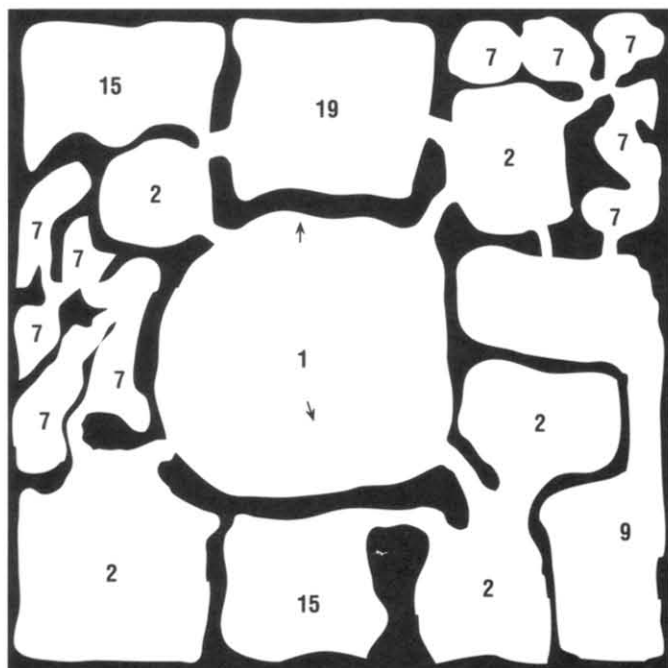
**Water Breathing:** Allows the caster to breathe while underwater. Works only in ordinary water. Duration: 2D10 rounds.

**Web (touch):** From the point touched by the caster, causes a Web to extend 2 meters in all directions. Anyone coming in contact with this Web (except the caster) must succeed at a Resistance Roll (Ag is the skill bonus) or become entangled. Disentangling requires a successful MM/St:M roll. Duration of the Web is 2D10 rounds.

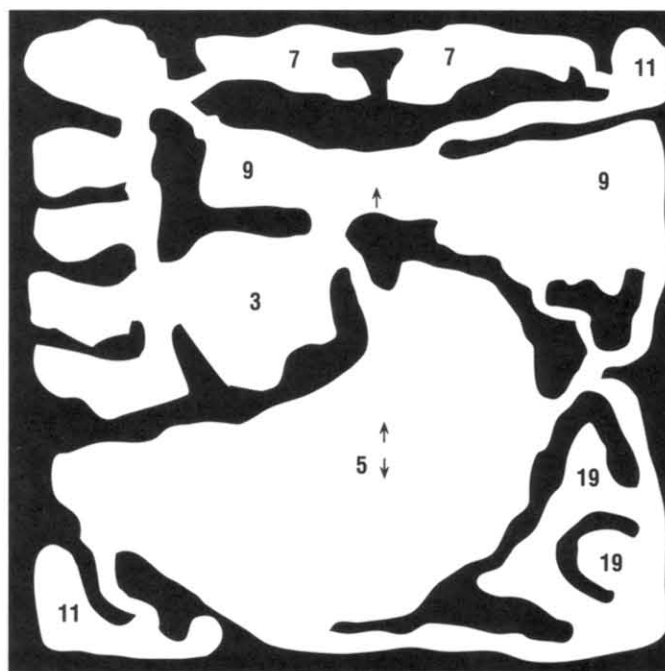
**Word Of Death (touch):** Causes the victim to die. A Resistance Roll is allowed, with a skill bonus based on SD.

# THE BARON'S TOWER

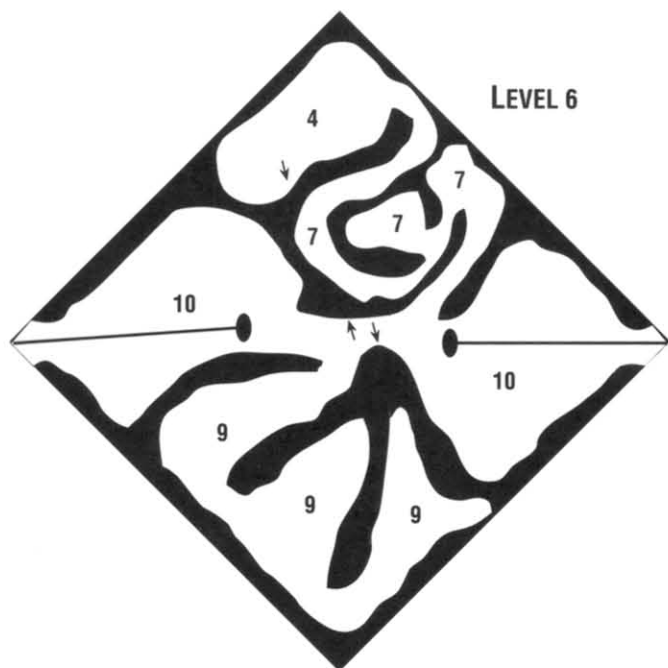
LEVEL 5



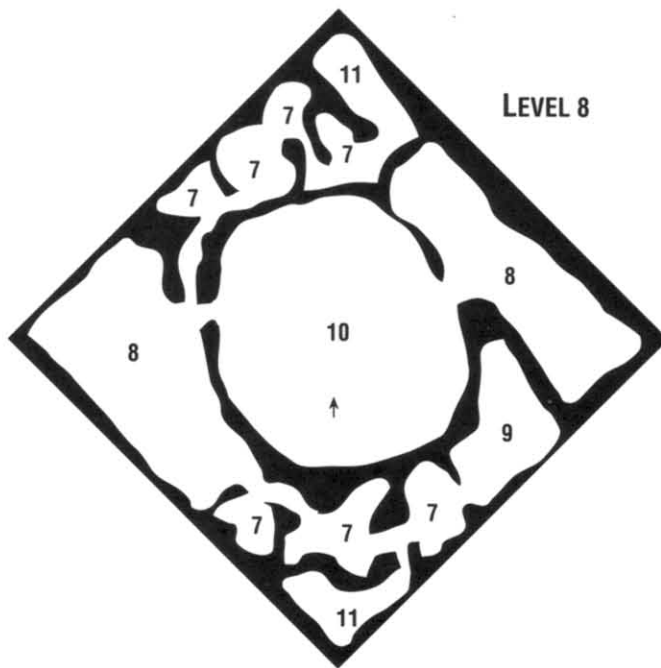
LEVEL 7



LEVEL 6



LEVEL 8



**If the Sprawl had a heart, its blood would flow through the doors of the Unicorn Qlub.**

Everyone who is anyone eventually makes their way here; to score a deal or make a connection. It's built on a foundation of electric tension and deep within is a mixture of adrenalin and sweat, lust and death, great vibrations and sour whiskey. The Unicorn Qlub is a place where great adventures begin, and this one starts with the latest in ActiStim technology: it is the Death Game 2090. Stimmers Beware!

# CYBER SPACE™

## **Cyberventure™ Mission File #2**

### **DEATH GAME 2090™**

This Cyberventure Mission File provides all you need to run a set of linked adventures using the **Cyberspace™** game system. You'll find sample player characters along with an array of stimspace characters for use in the Death Game. Each adventure section also provides the Gamemaster with background, NPC dossiers, and all the schematics you'll need for each of the following linked scenarios:

- Unicorn Qlub: Here players are thrust into their roles as heroic characters in the realm of Stimspace.
- Stimtesters: Will the players be recruited by Stimular Enterprises, the leader in ActiStim technology?
- Back to Reality: What will the players think of their exposure to the next generation of ActiStim games?
- Endgame: The players have been taken advantage of. Now it's payback time in the Death Game.



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