

# MEAN STREETS

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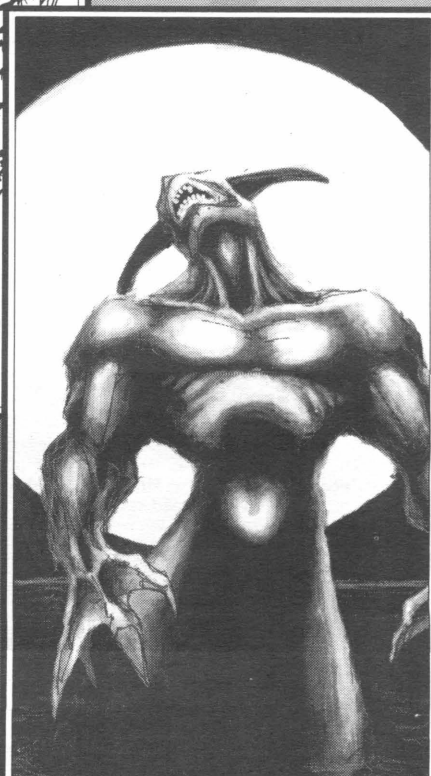
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## INTRODUCTION

*“Down these mean streets a man must walk who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid ...”*

— Raymond Chandler,  
“The Simple Art of Murder”

So, pally, da boys got ya on the ropes. Dey got dis here game — *Bloodshadows*’s its handle — and you don’t know quite what to do wit’ it. But they’re clamorin’ for a session, everybody itchin’ ta roll dem bones, and you haven’t got a clue how to make the play — it’s gonna be a wash-out.

Well, here’s the deal, and I’ll shoot square wit’ ya. You need to know more about this here *Bloodshadows* thing, and I got the scoop. What I’m givin’ ya now is the straight dope ...

*Bloodshadows* is a roleplaying game that’s probably quite unlike any other you’ve played. It’s a fantasy, but it’s not swords and sorcery; and the middle ages are long since past. Magic abounds, but it’s an accepted form of technology. Everybody uses it, but few are its master.

The name of the world is Marl. Marl is a world of isolated city-states that was once broken as a result of an ages-long rivalry between the gods. Having finally rebuilt itself, it finds itself once more on the brink of oblivion. But this time a third party has entered the picture.

The characters who play out their lives against this backdrop of the eons are a diverse lot — familiar, but somehow different. There are hard-boiled detectives, rough-and-tumble police officers, gangsters and gorgeous dames whose middle names are trouble. But each of these characters could as soon be a monster or a demon as a human being.

*Mean Streets* is your guide to this exciting new world. While many of the concepts will be familiar to experienced players and gamemasters, the uniqueness of this new setting needs some clarification. Setting up a *Bloodshadows* game or campaign is different from setting up a typical fantasy game. Even the characters have a different slant, which should be kept in mind when establishing them.



This campaign pack is an aid to preparing a *Bloodshadows* game. Included herein are explanations of the different approaches required, as well as ideas and hints for the various aspects of a roleplaying game: creating characters, setting up encounters, adventures and campaigns, and using props.

This book is also valuable for beginning gamemasters. As you read through this book, you will be introduced to many of the basic concepts of roleplaying games, and how to deal with them.

In addition to conceptual advice, this product provides a small city for use in your game. The cities are the heart of *Bloodshadows*; they are where civilization is centered, and where most of the action happens.

Also included in this book is a *Bloodshadows* adventure, "This Tarnished Heart." Besides giving you a game you can play right away, it also serves to demonstrate a typical *Bloodshadows* game.

## THE GAMEMASTER SCREEN

This campaign pack also contains the gamemaster screen for the *Bloodshadows* game. Experienced players should already be familiar with the idea of a gamemaster screen, but a word of explanation may be in order for beginning players.

The gamemaster screen stands on the table between the gamemaster and the players. It serves to hide the gamemaster's notes and die rolls from the players. It also contains many of the charts and tables most frequently required during the course of a game, saving the gamemaster from having to flip through the rule book at an inopportune time. The reverse side of the screen contains those charts and tables which the players may need to consult. Simply detach the screen from the rest of the book and you're ready to play!





## CHAPTER ONE

# SETTING THE TONE

Elacar Stang strode purposefully across the grimy asphalt of the street. Moisture glistened on the bare brick faces of the closed and shuttered shops, even though there hadn't been any rain in the last few hours. There was a chill in the air, and Stang pulled the collar of his loose-fitting trench coat up around his neck. The expression on the face that peered out from under the brim of the worn grey fedora was even colder than the air that worked its way into Stang's bones.

A breeze kicked up, carrying with it a lilting voice that sounded small and lonely. He was barely aware of it. In the distance, the streetsinger continued to chant of last-minute guild contract talks and a recent jailbreak. Stang continued down the block, passing under the blinking neon sign that proclaimed an alchemist's shop.

He paused momentarily at the entrance to an alleyway, and looked around furtively. There was no one about at this time of night, at least in this quarter of the city. He took one more drag on the the unfiltered Lothos he held clenched between his lips, then flung it to the ground and stepped into the alley.

The street light behind him cast long shadows down the length of the alley. Apparently the city was getting around to recharging the glowstones. Stang stalked down the length of the alley, the long shadows sliding across him like quick-moving stripes. He stepped through puddles that looked like pools of black blood.

The light from the glowstone didn't reach the other end of the narrow passage, which suited his purposes just fine. He took up a position in the deepest shadows and settled in to watch the alley across the street.

Welcome to the world of *Bloodshadows* — the world of *fantasy noir*. *Bloodshadows* is fantasy roleplaying game with a twist. You won't find knights in shining armor, magicians with pointy caps and long robes, sharp-eared elves wearing green and slinging arrows, or fur-clad barbarians brandishing broadswords.

No, the magic exists, but the time period is much later. Magic has been around a long time on the world of Marl, and has come to be an accepted technology. Everybody knows what it is, and most everyone knows some sort of spell or another. Doors are



## A NOTE TO THE POLITICALLY CORRECT

*Bloodshadows* takes its flavor from another era — a fictional era — when men were “tough guys,” “muscle” or “wimps,” and women were “broad,” “skirts” and “dames.” Women didn’t usually have much overt power, as everything was run by men who saw them only as ornaments and status symbols. The men ran big business, crime, the police department and the political machine.

However, many women were able to turn that to their advantage. A woman who knew what she wanted could generally find the right man, one who could be wrapped around her little finger. Strong women *could* get things accomplished, they just needed to be circumspect about it.

In the world of *Bloodshadows*, women may be called “dames” or “broad,” but they have a little more identity than they did in classic *film noir*. A woman can be a hard-boiled detective, or a tough cop, or a gangster — but they usually do approach the role a little differently than their male counterparts. This is a major difference between fantasy and *film noir*.

As an example of how a strong and independent woman fits into the *Bloodshadows* setting, see the entry describing Alina Terenzia, which is found in the Selastos chapter of *The World of Bloodshadows*. Also note that the private detective template in the *Bloodshadows* WorldBook is female.

warded with magical doorseals, light is provided by glowstones, the waitress in the local coffee shop can warm your cup of java in the palm of her hand and the police have forensic mages who help solve crimes.

However, in *Bloodshadows* the magic has moved from the middle ages into the near present. The mechanics of fantasy have been wedded to the sensibilities of *film noir*. This mixing of genres may take some getting used to, but the result is a fascinating new world in which to adventure.

## FILM NOIR

*Film noir* is a French term that refers to films from the '40s and '50s which explored the dark underside of American culture. *Film noir* (pronounced “film nwahr”) was not so much a move-

ment as a collection of themes and stylistic conventions that many of these movies shared.

The themes are the violence inherent in American culture and disillusioned men (and occasionally women) facing moral dilemmas. The conventions are a dark and brooding visual style, heavily overlaid with shadows. Settings are dark, dingy and worn. Life is violent, and frequently short.

These themes are also found in the books on which many of the films were based. The stories are populated by tough, hard-drinking, chain-smoking characters who scrape out a living on the underbelly of society. The men are frequently hard-boiled detectives or “tough guy” thugs, and the women are “tough dames” who know what they want and will stoop to anything to get it. The people they deal with are usually gangsters and the corrupt rich, who are essentially brutal and uncaring.

It is the trapping and style of *film noir* that give *Bloodshadows* its unique flavor.

Throughout this book we will be providing advice and examples of how these trappings work in the game. This will provide you with a basic understanding of how to work these themes and characters into your adventures, and allow you to enjoy your games. However, for an even fuller appreciation of the proper tone of *Bloodshadows*, we recommend going to the source.

Find some of the *noir* novels and read them. Experience firsthand the tone and feel of these stories. Go out and rent some of the movies. A picture truly is worth a thousand words. Watching a couple of these flicks will give you many more ideas for staging and describing your adventures than a bunch of words can.

Two of the premiere writers of these books are Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. Some novels by Hammett to look for are:

*Red Harvest*  
*The Maltese Falcon*  
*The Continental Op*  
*The Dain Curse*  
*The Glass Key*  
*The Big Knockover*

Some good references by Chandler are:

*The Big Sleep*  
*The Long Goodbye*  
*Murder, My Sweet*  
*The Lady in the Lake*  
*Farewell, My Lovely*

In addition to reading the above-listed books, it's a good idea to watch some of these films:

*The Maltese Falcon*  
*Murder, My Sweet*  
*Out of the Past*  
*The Big Sleep*

*Foreign Intrigue*  
*Red Light*  
*Race Street*  
*The Long Wait*  
*I Walk Alone*

Two more recent films in the same genre — the original and its sequel — are:

*Chinatown*  
*The Two Jakes*

And perhaps the best reference movie for *Bloodshadows* (because it already mixes fantasy with *film noir*) is:

*Cast A Deadly Spell*

In addition to giving you a feel for the tone of the game, these books and movies will expose you to the complex plots and schemes, and the betrayals and double-crosses, that are a major part of the genre. They should give you quite a few ideas for how to set up an adventure.

## OTHER REFERENCES

Another of the major aspect of *film noir*, and in *Bloodshadows*, is a conflict between “the law” and the criminal element. It is as if this conflict serves as a microcosm for the greater struggle of Order and Chaos which looms over Marl once again. To get the feel for portraying this conflict, look at any of the many gangster movies that are available.

A good reference for the law-versus-crime aspect of the world is *The Untouchables*. Either the television series or the movie will give you a lot of information to work with. You don’t even need to worry about historical accuracy — what you’re looking for is the tone and flavor of the period. Mob wars, rub-outs and criminal brutality all have their place in the cities of Marl.

The law is not at a disadvantage, either. The sentinels can be as brutal as the criminals they are seeking to eliminate. Again, look at the gangster movies. Look at *Earth’s history*, also — search warrants and Miranda warnings are relatively recent developments. Coppers didn’t bother with such niceties when they were looking to bring down the mobs.

Most often, player characters are those

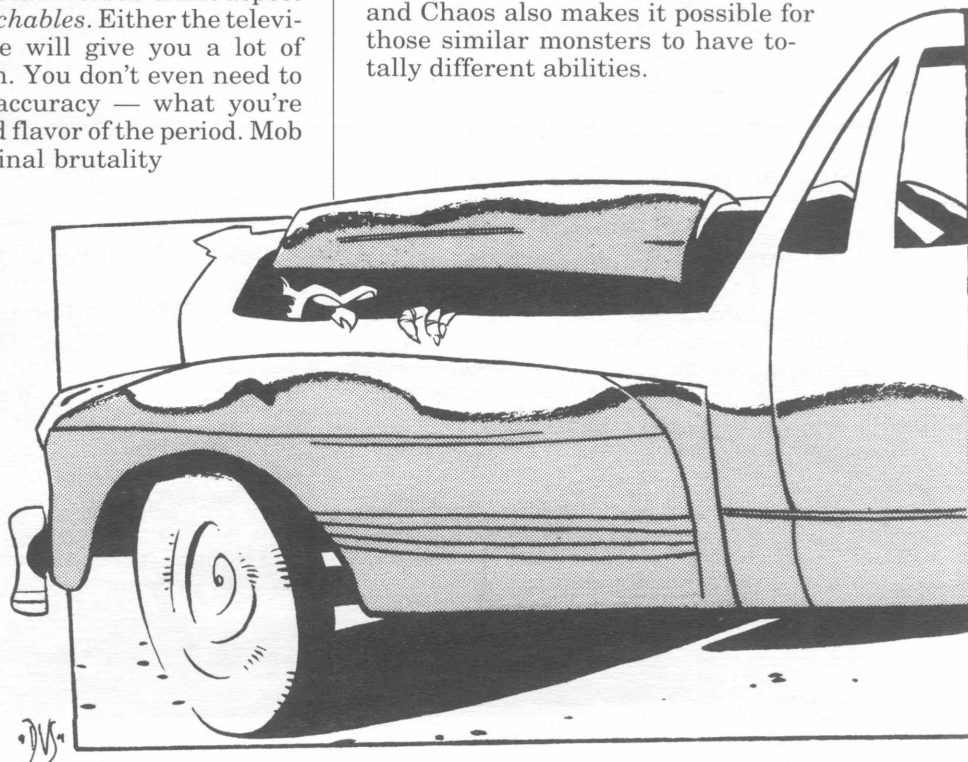
who dance between the law and the criminals. They have their own “code” they live by — some things they will not do — but they don’t like the strictness and regimentation (and corruption) favored by those in positions of authority.

## THE UNNATURAL

In addition to the styles and characters of *film noir*, *Bloodshadows* gives you the opportunity to play the flip side of the coin — “monsters,” the non-Human residents of Marl. While it can be argued that many of the Humans on Marl are also monsters, the Unnatural creatures that haunt the night are the things that make many people’s skin crawl. Mixing monsters in with *film noir* can give you some truly threatening opposition.

Many people will relish the opportunity to play the Unnatural. Running a character that is equal parts Humphrey Bogart and Bela Lugosi is an interesting challenge. But don’t restrict yourself to the conventional monster types. In addition to the many Unnatural creatures presented in *The World of Bloodshadows*, the character generation rules are structured to allow you to develop any type of Unnatural being you like.

When creating Unnaturals, take a few minutes to come up with distinctive abilities. The idea is to develop something out of the ordinary. It is possible to have characters be similar types of monsters, but the interplay of Order and Chaos also makes it possible for those similar monsters to have totally different abilities.





## SLANG

Another aspect of the period in which *Bloodshadows* is set is the often colorful slang terms which were in use. Using some of these terms is another way to establish the tone of the game and enhance the feel of the adventure. Provided below are examples of slang terms common during the *film noir* period, followed by some slang particular to Marl.

### FILM NOIR SLANG

Slang Term	Definition
dope	information
gunsel	gunman (also has other meanings)
gin joint	bar
flivver	car
flop room/ flophouse	a place to stay
gat	pistol
heap	car
joe	coffee (as in "a cup of joe")
pig-sticker	knife
sap	blackjack, bludgeon
screw	prison guard (again, there are other meanings)
shiv	knife
speakeasy	bar where unlicensed liquor is sold
steamer	car
taxi dance hall	club where solo men and women can pay for dance partners (and sometimes other things ...)
wheels	car

### SLANG OF MARL

Slang Term	Definition
Annie gun	submachine gun (after the Skandra "Annihilator")
deadboy	any Undead (usually Zuvembie or Taxim)
dirt boy	earth mage (insulting)
finger music	spellcasting
flamer	fire mage (insulting)
flip side	the destination of a magical gate
flipper	dimensional mage (insulting)
floater	air mage (insulting)
gibberer	any mage who uses incantations (insulting)
meat	an Undead term for any living being; a gangster term for any non-gangster
nat	Unnatural name for "Human"
player piano	a self-activating ward
squeaker, squealer	alarm spell or informant
tax-head	a person with the "brains of a Taxim"; a drug addict
wetman	water mage (insulting)

There are some popular references which can give you a feel for the variety of Unnatural types you can create. Watch the movie *Nightbreed*, for instance. This presents a city of monsters in which each monster is a distinctive entity. The Marvel Comics series, *Nightstalkers*, also presents distinctive and original monsters in addition to the more traditional vampires and such. *Nightstalkers* is also a good source for ideas on running a team that routinely deals with Unnatural creatures.

## MAGIC

Besides the fantasy element of monsters, *Bloodshadows* gives you the opportunity to use a wide variety of magic. The many schools of magic

are open to most characters, who can learn as much or as little of it as they wish. You can play the supermage if you like, or just learn a few spells that will help you get your job done.

The use of magic also allows you to give a different slant to the standard elements of *film noir*. Mob wars can now be fought with tommy guns packing magical ammunition or spellcasters hurling arcane energies. The gunsel you just iced may get back up and try to finish the job he started. The sky's the limit when magic and Unnaturals are added into the picture.

So if the idea of playing a wisecracking, trench-coat-wearing werewolf who talks like Bogart and can light his cigarette with his fingertip appeals to you, grab your fedora and enter the world of *Bloodshadows*.

## CHAPTER TWO

# DEFINING CHARACTERS

As the Gurthos elemental touring car slid to a halt on the grimy side street, two shadows detached themselves from the adjoining alley and approached it. The lead shadow was tall and thin, and had a crumpled fedora pulled down low over its eyes. The second shadow stood shoulder-high to the first, and had a broad build. The shadows resolved into the shapes of two men as the door of the Gurthos swung open, spilling light across the two figures.

The men waited, their coats drawn tight against the damp chill of the night air. In a moment, a new shape joined them, seeming to unfold from within the confines of the car. It was tall, dwarfing even the taller of the two once-shadows, and gangling. Something about it wanted to scream out “odd.” It remained a shadow, thwarting the attempts of the light from the car’s glowstone to illuminate even the slightest detail.

Words were exchanged in furtive whispers. After a few minutes the tall man nodded and the shadow-thing folded itself back into the Gurthos. The car pulled out noiselessly and was gone. The tall man said something brief to the wide man, then strode off down the street in the direction opposite the car.

The wide man pulled up his collar to ward off the deepening chill, then faded back into the shadows of the alley. A moment later a small orange glow pierced the darkness, as he lit a cigarette with the small flame which danced on the end of his fingertip.

Elacar Stang gave him a few more moments to slip into inattentiveness, then set forth from the covering shadows of the alley across the street, from which he had witnessed the entire tableau. As he stalked purposefully through the rampant detritus which the wind scattered across the grime-slicked street, he undid the belt of his long coat, letting the coat fall open. He brushed it back and reached inside, his right hand coming to rest on the weapon slung low from his shoulder.

Stang reached the alley quickly, before the wide man was even aware of his approach. Grabbing him by the shirtfront with his left hand, Stang shoved him backward into the damp bricks of the wall. The gasp he let out as the breath was knocked out of him failed to dislodge the cigarette dangling from his lip. He regained his breath quickly, though, and blustered a threat.





"Pally, you're gonna find out just how big a mistake you just made."

"The mistake is yours, Max, for not leaving this burg when you had the chance," replied Stang through gritted teeth.

"Stang! Now wait a minute. You made some kinda mistake. I'm clean. I ain't done nuttin'." The cigarette bobbled wildly, but refused to give up its perch on Max's lip.

"I doubt you've been clean since you got out, but the fact that you are out is what I'm interested in. The price on your head is for bustin' out of the joint. Now get a move on. I got a fee to collect."

Stang spun the wide man named Max around, grabbing him by the collar of his coat and forcing him further down the alley. Max stumbled, and Stang's grip on him loosened. Max took the opportunity to twist free, throwing an elbow back at Stang's face.

As Max ran off, Stang regained his balance, and in one smooth motion threw back his coat and raised the weapon at his side. He lifted his arm, sighted briefly down the barrel and squeezed the trigger. The over-and-under sawed-off disgorged a glowing burst of light which rocketed unerringly toward the fleeing figure. It struck him full in the back and knocked him face-first into the muck of the alley's floor. As he fell to the ground, the ball of light flared up, and sizzling green tendrils of arcane energy snaked out and around him, pinning his arms at his side.

Stang walked up to the magically trussed figure, which still struggled against its bonds. He reached out a foot and flipped Max over. Stang stared down at him.

"Now, now, Maxie, don't run off. We got us a little date with the sentinels."

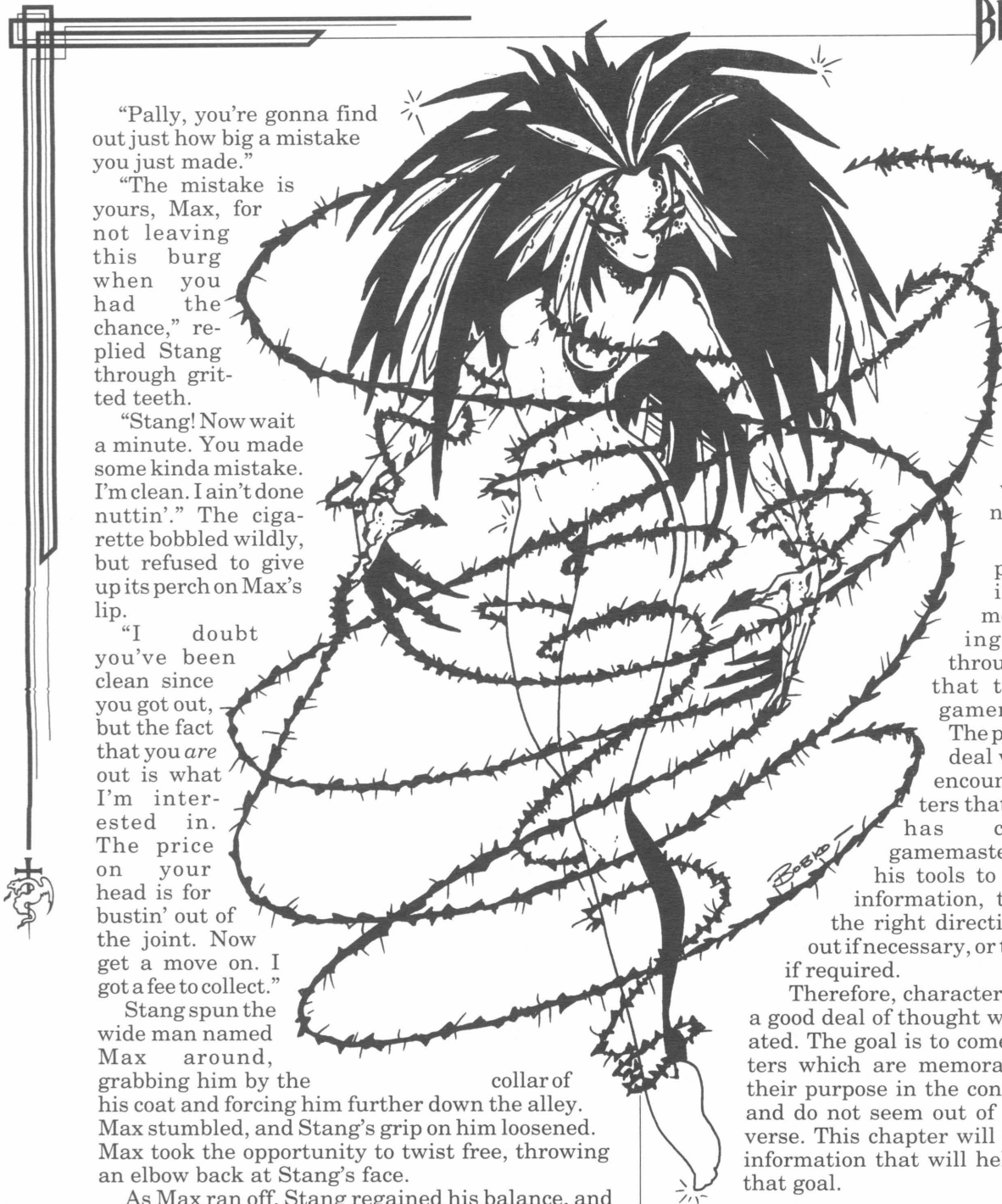
Characters are perhaps the most important element of a roleplaying game. It is through the characters that the players and gamemaster interact. The players' characters deal with the settings, encounters and characters that the gamemaster has created. The gamemaster's characters are his tools to give the players information, to point them in the right direction, to help them out if necessary, or to slap them down if required.

Therefore, characters should be given a good deal of thought when they are created. The goal is to come up with characters which are memorable, which serve their purpose in the context of the game, and do not seem out of place in the universe. This chapter will provide you with information that will help you to achieve that goal.

## PLAYER CHARACTERS

Player characters generally have a lot of thought put into them right from the beginning, as players will be using their characters for long periods of time, and may already have strong ideas about the types of characters they intend to play.

Even if a character is not fully fleshed-out when created, it will develop more depth and individuality as the player continues to play the role. This is



easy enough for the player to achieve as the player generally only has one character to concern himself with over the course of many games.

In addition, the character generation rules in *Bloodshadows* go a long way toward establishing the character's uniqueness. Once the statistics for attributes and skills are determined, the character is made an individual through the use of Background Advantages and Compensations.

The primary focus then is on setting up a character that shares the worldview of the *Bloodshadows* universe. What are his motivations?

The following section details the way characters perceive and interact with their world. This information should be provided to the players by the gamemaster when characters are created. The players should build their characters with the gamemaster's assistance, and discuss their backgrounds and motivations with him. The gamemaster can then help the players to shape their characters so that they fit the tone of *Bloodshadows* and the gamemaster's campaign.

In addition to the information in the following section, various details of using physical description, personality "hooks" and mannerisms (described under "Gamemaster Characters," below) can be provided to the players as an aid in conceptualizing and presenting their characters.

## CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS

The denizens of Marl are not heroes. They are ordinary folks who are looking to get through life without being bothered, and hoping to one day improve their lots. There may well be the rare do-gooder who is out to right the perceived wrongs of his society (the occasional sentinel, gumshoe or newscribe comes to mind), but for the most part people look out for themselves. They go about their business, looking to make a buck, and try to lose their problems in the bottom of a bottle of their favorite type of drink.

Typical characters are cynical and hard-bitten. They've been around the block a few times, and they know that the deck is stacked against the average Joe. The money, power and prestige go to those who already have them — the rich, the authorities, the heads of industry, the guild bosses — and are doled out only in small chunks and to those who sell their souls (sometimes literally) to these leaders. The poor slob on the street does his job and hopes he has enough to keep the landlord off his back, buy some food and keep his preferred bottle of forgetfulness in stock.

In spite of their cynicism, though, many characters would take the opportunity to stick it to those who reside in the upper strata of society, if they were given the chance. That opportunity could be a

chance to knock one of the well-to-do off their high horse, or the chance to help an average citizen get out from under the thumb of the bosses. This is not so much for the cause of good, but more along the lines of evening out the balance.

Even when a character does something heroic, it is probably not for heroism's sake. Usually a character has her own private agenda, and the current case is somehow related to that agenda. And in most cases, the end justifies the means. Something actually heroic may be achieved, but it might be built on the blood and broken bones of the character's adversaries. The people of this world tend to be callous and violence is a way of life. Even a character with a moral streak would not hesitate to stoop to violence if it got the job done. It's what his opponent expects; it's how things are done. There is very little nobility in the citizens of Marl.

Another motivating factor is personal aggrandizement. For some characters, the stimulus may be to claim some of the power and riches for themselves. Not every character is a private dick struggling to pay the rent on his office. One might be a gangster seeking to carve out his own piece of the action, or a mage seeking the ultimate magical powers.

## THE GODWAR

A further defining factor for many characters is that of the eons-long struggle which has shaped the world of Marl. The motivations detailed above are the results of the current social situation in the cities. It is the outlook of those who live in the present and are not exposed to the long history of the Godwar and the continual plotting which goes on behind the scenes.



## NOW, LISSSEN UP

"The name is Stang, Elacar Stang. I'm a bounty hunter. I useta do some detecting, private-like, but it wasn't for me. I don't like gettin' wrapped up in other people's dirty laundry. Besides, peeking through keyholes gives me a backache. This is a lot more direct, no dancin' around. You know who you're looking for, you go get 'im, you bring 'im in, you get paid. Clean, straightforward. I like it that way.

"What the stiff is tryin' to tell ya is on the up-and-up. There ain't no heroes. I useta think there were, once ... but I wised up. Everybody's got their price; it's just that some of us have a higher price."

## NOW, LISSSEN UP

"So we're a little bit sullen. Where's the harm in that? Hey, how would you feel if your entire world was ripped away from you? I had a promisin' career ahead of me. I was a sentinel. I useta walk the beat, and after a while I made detective. Things were good. Yeah, sure you see your share of the dirty side of things, but you're gettin' a chance to make things right. And my gal, Velma, and me — we had our plans. Like I said, things were goin' good.

"Then one day, I wake up, and I'm *different*. Nothin' I could put my finger on at first, but I got these weird feelings, and things about me started to change. A mage explained it to me a while back. It seemed I was what he called a 'sleeper.' There are some of us who have been around a long time, since the original Godwar, and apparently we're waiting around for the time that we're needed again. That actually explains some of the mystery of my past. I mean, I can't really remember ever bein' a kid and growin' up. So I guess I may've been around a long time goin' from life to life.

"Well, some part of the Godwar was flarin' up again, and I got the call. I suppose it coulda been worse. I pretty much have a Human shape — only some of the details are different. The people that knew me knew that somethin' was goin' on, and it didn't take long ta figger out when my face started to change. But it didn't change much, and I can still pass as Human — most folks just think I got a really ugly mug.

"Once the change was apparent, most everybody treated me different. I was kicked off the force, so I became a private dick, but like I said before, that wasn't for me. But I guess, in the long run, it ain't so bad. I mean, I got these extra powers, and they come in handy in a scrape, so I guess I'm not so bad off.

"Yeah. Too bad Velma didn't think so ..."

Those characters who are involved in the struggle taking place on Marl generally have a different impetus for action. Elements of the above-mentioned reasons may still apply, but the overarching consideration is the character's place in the Godwar.

Those characters who are aware of the war fall into four categories: Order-aligned, Chaos-aligned, Oathbreaker-aligned, or free agent. People aligned to Order or Chaos serve their respective alignments and share their outlooks.

Order-aligned characters tend to be more rigid and organized in their outlook and in their actions.

Not surprisingly, they see Chaos-aligned characters as the enemies in a great war.

Chaos-aligned characters are less predictable and more free-form in their plans. To them, Order-characters are the enemy.

Characters aligned to either power see the Oathbreakers as traitors and threats, although they may not be above trying to manipulate Oathbreakers into a confrontation with the opposing power. Those characters aligned to one of the two powers are more interested in furthering the plans of their chosen power, and are less concerned with the plight of the average individual. They always have the basic agenda of serving their cause, and most actions are taken with that in mind.

However, even those aligned to one of the powers may have private agendas. Perhaps the character wishes to see Chaos become dominant, but his real reason may be because he sees it as away to gain some personal power. Or an Order supporter may feel that when Order prevails, he will be the one at the top of a very orderly pyramid of power.

Many aligned characters aren't even looking that far ahead. Most see their alignments as being rewarding *now* — a Chaos character gets to fight, cause trouble, and increase his personal power; an Order character has someone to tell him what to do, and he can pass on the orders when he gets powerful, and he has a structure he can adhere to.

The Oathbreakers' "up front" motivation is to free Marl from the depredations of the two powers. However, a character who is aligned with the Oathbreakers may not openly display that intent. The great strength of the Oathbreakers is their ability to go undetected by the forces of Chaos or Order. This makes them very interesting to roleplay, as they attempt to further their own goals while pretending to be working for one of the opposing powers. Oathbreakers often end up working at cross purposes — Oathbreaker-Order characters often find themselves in opposition to Order-Chaos characters and vice versa.

And, finally, there are the free agents. These are the investigators, adventurers and spellslingers who may be aware of the great conflict underway, but who have not allied themselves with any of the sides. They are frequently sought out by the various factions involved in the war as independent operatives, so as to make the faction's plans difficult to fathom. Free agents generally share the worldview of the average citizen of Marl; they just happen to be also privy to some information concerning the Godwar.

It is even possible that the free agent may not be aware of the war at all; the hiring faction may want a complete *naif* so that no information is leaked.



## MONSTERS

In addition to the many citizens who share the standard worldview of Marl, there are those who take an even dimmer view of the world and society in general. They are monsters — literally. In the world of *Bloodshadows*, your character can as easily be a Vampire or Demon as a Human. Many of the monsters of Marl were once Human. Becoming Unnaturals has not improved their outlook any. And the monsters who were not once Human often see Humans as fair game.

As such, the viewpoint of Unnatural characters is generally much grimmer than that of Human characters. Not only do they deal with the dark underbelly of society every day, very frequently they *are* that dark underbelly.

Unnaturals who were once Human might still share some of the Human worldview, depending on how much they have changed. Many once-Humans no longer think along those lines, however. They have new concerns to occupy their existence. For instance, a Vampire is more concerned with where the next pint is coming from, rather than whether the guild bosses are playing fair with the guild members. And a Relkazar is generally focused on its mission and doesn't need to concern itself with paying the rent.

In addition, Unnaturals must frequently endure discrimination and ostracization. Even when they are accepted in a city, they are not accorded the rights or privileges that Humans may have. This does not make for a positive outlook on life.

Unnaturals are almost always involved to some extent with the combatants of the Godwar. It was the Godwar that first brought them to prominence, and they are among the frontline troops of both sides. Most Unnaturals will therefore be aligned with Order, Chaos, or even the Oathbreakers.

In spite of all that they have going against them, it is still possible for some of these monsters to work with Humans. They may not like it, they may wish that the Humans were their next meal, but there are times when they need to work together with them. The exigencies of a particular investigation, or of a mission of importance to the furtherance of the war, might require it of them. They will be forced to put aside their normal fears, urges or desires, at least for the time being.

All of these factors should be considered when playing an Unnatural, giving you a many-layered character that will be a fascinating roleplaying challenge.

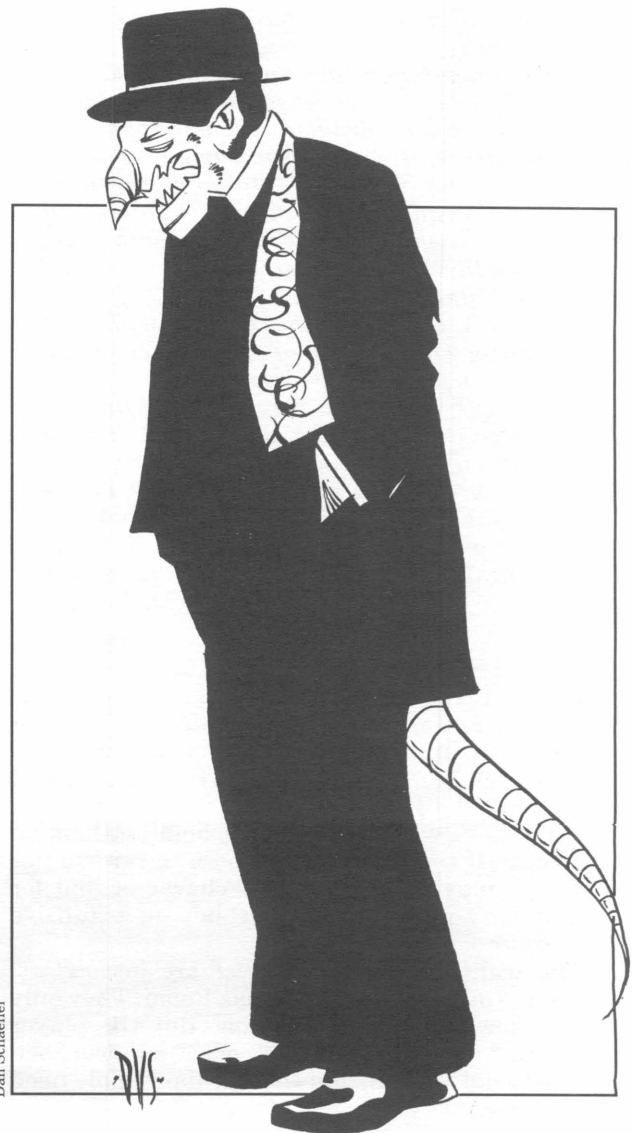
## GAMEMASTER CHARACTERS

Player characters are designed to last (at least, that's the hope). As such, much more care is given to their creation. As continuing characters, they

can be fleshed out and given more depth over the course of many adventures. And, generally, the player has only the one character to develop.

The gamemaster's job is much more complex. He must come up with every other character that the players' characters interact with. The gamemaster has to develop an entire cast of characters, from supporting parts to the merest extras, and at the same time breathe life into them and make them distinctive. A daunting task, even for an experienced gamemaster.

But it doesn't have to be an impossible job. Presented below are a number of guidelines which should you have you coming up with interesting and unique characters, even at a moment's notice if necessary.



## CHARACTER CONCEPTION

The first thing to be determined is what role the character will play in the adventure. Is he going to play a major part, or just serve to move the plot along? Or is he merely someone who fills in the background or adds flavor? The type of part the character will fill determines how much depth the character needs in his background. Here's a sample scene:

*As you enter the Topaz Room, you tear your eyes from the opulence of the trappings in order to take in the staff located around the soon-to-be-filled main hall. A handful of formally-dressed waiters scurry about the room, preparing the tables for the club's opening. As you spy Carter Holgist, the owner of the Topaz Room, coming toward you, you also catch a glimpse of his featured torch singer relaxing at a nearby table after rehearsals.*

*She's a knockout, elegantly coiffed red hair cascading over one of her sparkling green eyes. She takes a long drag at the cigarette holder poised gracefully in her shapely gloved hand before puckering her lips in your direction. Before you can react, she vacates the table and heads through a door leading to backstage, passing the very large, stolid, and unmoving bouncer stationed there.*

*While you're hesitating, uncertain of what to make of what you just saw, Holgist comes up to you. You force your gaze back to him — after all, he is the one you're here to grill — and see a slender, well-dressed man with slicked-back hair and a pencil-thin moustache. He exudes an air of confidence and something in his demeanor hints at a touch of malevolence. Here is a man to be handled cautiously. He extends his hand and speaks in a cultured and refined voice. "Gentlemen, what can I do for you?"*

In this scene, three types of gamemaster characters are introduced. Carter Holgist is a *major* character, and will be troubling the characters at other points in the adventure. He will need to be detailed. The torch singer is a *minor* character at this point. She introduces further mystery to the characters — what is she up to, leading them on like that? If the characters choose to pursue her lead, she may become a major character, but for now it isn't necessary to give her an extensive background.

The waiters and the bouncer are just *extras*, filling in the details of the Topaz Room. They only need a few lines of description. But the player characters may be seeing more of the bouncer soon if they're not careful, and then he'll probably need some stats.

## EXTRAS

The extra is a character who is merely there to fill in the background or add flavor to the scene. Extras play no significant part in the storyline. Often extras serve as "cannon fodder"; their sole purpose is as muscle working to implement the main character's plans, or to slow down the player characters.

If the character is an extra, then the character creation process will be very brief. It may only require coming up with the character's appearance and what part of the scene he occupies. If the extra or extras interact with the player characters at all, it may be necessary to determine some of the characters' statistics. For instance, a gangster's goons involved in a shoot-out with the player characters will need *fire combat* and *dodge* stats, and you'll need to know their Endurance and Toughness attributes, but not much else.

**Note:** "Extras" are called "Grunts" in the *MasterBook* chapter on gamemastering.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

A minor character is designed to help move the plot along. This may be a continuing contact who shows up from time to time, or it could be a character who plays a major part in one scene, but not the entire adventure.

Minor characters need to be more fully described, although it may not be necessary to define motivations for them. Minor characters usually do not need an extensive background, if they need any at all. In general, a full set of stats should be determined, as the course of the encounter may go a bit astray from what you have planned.

**Note:** In *MasterBook*, "Minor" characters are called "Standard."

## MAJOR CHARACTERS

If the character is going to play an extensive part in the story, then he is considered a major character.

## NOW, LISTEN UP

"Think about it like this: you go into a shop and a clerk comes up to ya and asks if he can help you. You're already sizing him up. Just from the guy's appearance and the few words he said to you (and how he said 'em), you've already got an impression of him.

"Well, that's what you're aimin' for with these characters. Summarize 'em in such a way that you get a gut feelin' for what they're about just from the way you describe 'em."

ter. There are usually only one or two major characters in an adventure. These tend to be the characters who stand opposed to the player characters, but an ally or patron could also take the part of a major character. Whatever part major characters play, they drive the plot along, working behind the scenes and directing their lackeys into encounters with the player characters, or taking an active part in most of the scenes of the adventure. A major character will also play a significant part in any climactic scenes.

Such characters need to be fully thought out. They require a detailed description of their appearance and personality, as well as any apparent mannerisms. They also need a full set of stats. The character's background and objectives must also be determined in depth, as well as his motivation. In general, they should be built like player characters — with histories and fully-described abilities. You, as the gamemaster, may not use all this information, but you need to know it.

**Note:** "Major" characters are referred to as "Archetypes" in the *MasterBook* rule book.

## CAPSULE DESCRIPTION

Once the character's role has been determined, it is time to consider what the character is like. This will be partly determined by the role the character plays, and partly by the gamemaster's reason for using this character. One way to come up with a character idea is to base it on a player character template. This is also a good method if you need to come up with a gamemaster character in a hurry.

**Gamemaster:** *There's nothing further to be seen after the corpse has been removed. A few sentinels are dispersing the crowd and preparing to shut down the scene.*

**Players:** *We approach the nearest sentinel to see if we can glean any more information.*

**Gamemaster:** *Ummm ...*

In this case the gamemaster had not intended for the characters to talk to the sentinels. If he intends to follow through on the players' impromptu decision he needs to come up with a sentinel pretty quickly. He grabs the Sentinel template from *Bloodshadows WorldBook*, makes some quick changes (if necessary), and has a sentinel ready to interact with the player characters.

You can avoid even this delay with a capsule description. The capsule description should be a short paragraph describing the character in such a way that the gamemaster will be able to understand and get into the part quickly. Any of the character's aspects — personality, motivation, background, etc. — can be included. The key factor is to cover the pertinent information so that the game-

master can tell who the character is at a glance. The gamemaster can also jot down any important details or skills after the paragraph. In the above example, the sentinel's interaction skills (*willpower*, etc.) are the most important, since the player characters will be talking to him.

The best way to do form a capsule description is to try and describe the character in a series of adjectives — three or four should be sufficient. This is the basis of the character. For instance, the bouncer might be described in this manner:

**Bouncer:** Large, burly, mean-looking, dumb.

The list of adjectives can be expanded into two or three sentences, providing the capsule description of that character.

**Sentinel:** Basically honest, but not above accepting a "gratuity" in exchange for information he sees as harmless. Gruff and businesslike unless approached carefully.

Another good thing to include in the capsule description is a personality "hook"; something on which the gamemaster can hang his interpretation of the character. This can be a particular quirk in the character's appearance, or an apparent mannerism or figure of speech. Something distinctive will give the gamemaster a handle on the character and will give the players something to recognize the character by.

**Example:** *The bouncer at the club is large, burly and mean-looking, which is sufficient to intimidate most troublemakers. However, he is not too bright and must be given simple and clear directions. When he speaks, his lips curl up in a sneer and he has a pronounced lisp.*

**Example:** *The sentinel on the street is pretty honest but willing to divulge certain information. When he feels he is being pushed or threatened, however, he pulls out his baton and starts rapping it on the palm on his hand. This is a signal that the player characters had better back off.*

After the players have encountered the bouncer or the sentinel once or twice, they'll probably get a sinking feeling when you describe the lisping voice coming up behind them in the dark alley or the meaty smack of the baton into the palm of the sentinel's hand.

## FILLING IN THE DETAILS

Major characters need quite a bit of detail to make them seem real to the players. Minor characters don't need as much detail; usually they only need fleshing out in one or two areas. Once you've got the capsule description, it's time to add that detail.





## BACKGROUND

Where the character comes from goes a long way to determining what she's like today. Did she come from a life of crime, or did she work her way up in life honestly? A club singer, a gangster's moll and a rich dame all look at life differently, and will react differently to the same situation. Likewise, an ex-sentinel can be very different depending on whether he was a bad cop drummed off the force, one who successfully got away with it until he retired, or a disillusioned cop who quit because of the corruption in his city.

If the character knows magic, what kind of mage is he? A bloodmage, firemage and a deathmage all have different outlooks on magic and on what they do with it, as do characters with different magic skills. Is the character a dedicated mage, or merely a dabbler who has other more important interests and uses magic only for particular uses?

Another factor in the character's background is whether he has a history with the player characters. Maybe the ex-cop was a partner of one of the player characters, or the now-wealthy woman was an old flame. Where the character's been and how he got where he is give the gamemaster a good idea of how to run the character.

**Note:** Constructing characters that work themselves into player character backgrounds is a terrific idea, if it's done well. It takes a little preparation. Generally, you should write up a few paragraphs (no more than would fit on an index card) of information about the character and how he or she ties in with one (or all) of the player characters. When the character is encountered for the first time, give that information to the player character who "knows" the gamemaster character. That way, that character actually has some "memories" of the gamemaster character.

## PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

One of the easiest ways to help the players visualize the gamemaster character they are dealing with is with a good description. And the best way to give them a good description is to give them something distinctive to remember about the character.

Some particular physical characteristic, whether natural or affected, really makes an encounter memorable. The players will then be able to recognize the character much more quickly in later encounters. For instance, Carter Holgist always wears his hair slicked back and has a pencil-thin moustache. Coming up with appropriate details and using them in your descriptions gives the players a richer feel for the setting they're involved in; much more than a nondescript narration would. Compare the following two descriptions:

*A figure comes up the alley in your direction. As it gets closer you see it's a Zuvembie. Suddenly it turns toward you and attacks.*

*The lone figure approaches your position in the alley. As it shambles through a pool of light you notice its bluish pallor and the dry, peeling skin of its face. The scattered patches of unkempt hair and the glazed look in its eyes confirm what you were afraid of; it's a Zuvembie. Suddenly it lurches around and comes toward you, its reaching arms flailing about to strike you.*

The second description is richer in detail, giving the players a much better feel for the encounter and bringing it to life. Of course, you might not always want to use a longer description:

*You come around a corner and grimy, rotting hands grab you! A foul odor assaults your sense of smell!*



Thomas O'Neill

*My god, it's a Zuvembie!*

Another aspect of physical appearance is the clothing the character wears. Is the character fastidious in appearance, or generally unkempt? What type of clothing does the character usually wear? Carter Holgist is always seen in formal wear. If the player characters see a slender figure in formal wear dealing with some hoods in a dark alley, they may have a good guess as to just who it is back there.

Items like jewelry and other accessories are also good elements of physical appearance. The local firemage always wears a large brooch crafted in the shape of a salamander dancing in flames, or the wealthy widow wears a *meth* stole loosely around her shoulders. The character's taste in accessories or what they represent are often important insights into the character.

Accessories also include any equipment a character carries regularly. Jake Marsh, a private investigator, wears a wrinkled trenchcoat and a crumpled fedora always pulled down tight over his eyes; his weapon of choice is a non-magical .38 long-barrel service revolver which he used when he was a sentinel. Elacar Stang, the bounty hunter, carries an over-and-under sawed-off shotgun, with one barrel for standard bullets and the other for arcane ammo. These are the types of things that really give a character character.

## PERSONALITY

The next thing that a character needs is a personality. You know where the character comes from and what he looks like, but what does the *act* character like? How does he present himself to the world? Perhaps he is strong-willed character, always in control of his situation. Or maybe he's a whining, petulant little worm. The club singer may be a flirt, or she may be all business.

Once again, it is a good idea to pick one aspect of the personality and emphasize it, so as to have a prominent trait with which to identify the character. In addition to the character's general reaction to the world, you should consider how he reacts in certain situations. For instance, if the character's plans are foiled, does he panic or does he remain cool, calm and collected? Or does he instead fly into a rage and throw caution to the wind? Does he hold up well under pressure, or fall to pieces?

## RESOURCES

No characters operate in a vacuum. Most will have one or more friends or associates with whom they work. If the character is powerful enough, he may have an entire organization from which he can draw resources. When determining a new character, keep in mind what sort of assets are available

to him. If the character is a crime boss, he's got his entire organization and plenty of muscle to back him up, not to mention access to lots of weapons, cars and magic. Maybe the character is an information broker whose resources aren't as organized, but can eventually provide him with the information he needs. As he'll tell you, "I got guys that know guys."

Remember that a major character who's a villain will use whatever resources he has. And since he didn't get to be the head of an organization by squandering his resources, he'll use them intelligently. A major villain will not face off against the player characters in the first scene. He will send his boys to do the dirty work. It will be up to the player characters to determine where the opposition is centered; they'll have to track down the head of the operation, if they even suspect there is an organization involved.

The villain will generally only step in to handle the job once the player characters have been softened up by his agents, or if the fight is brought to him and he is forced to act.

Magicians are also characters for whom you *must* establish resources. For example, if a major character in your adventure is a powerful mage, that character's stats should not completely define the character. Don't just list a few spells and some equipment for him (if he's a major character) — create a few *surprises*. Maybe he's come up with a couple spells that aren't "in the books," or he constantly keeps up a bunch of protective wards. Maybe he has a few summoned creatures lurking in the shadows — he's a *mage*; treat him like one.

## CHARACTER STATS

Once the character is "real," it's time to describe him or her in terms of the game mechanics — that is, determine the character's statistics and attributes. Armed with the character's background and *raison d'être*, you can begin to fill in the numbers for her attributes and decide on her skills. If the character is a major or minor character, she will have more experience than an average beginning character. How much more depends on the character's position in the game world and the player characters he or she will be up against.

The character's position in the game world lets you know just how experienced he or she should be in an absolute manner. For instance, a character who is the head of a successful spellrunning operation will be a very experienced character, and will have been in business long enough to build up the operation, and will have survived any assaults along the way. Knowing the character's background will give you an idea of how many extra skill points to assign to the character above and beyond the basic points of a beginning character.



The other factor which will influence the amount of extra skill points is the player character team involved in the story. You don't want to have a major villain who can be taken out in the first round by the player characters, yet the villain shouldn't be unbeatable. The player characters should have some chance to prevail, either through the proper use of teamwork, card play, or other reasonable means. The final confrontation should be a close-fought one, so that the success of those involved will feel really worthwhile.

It is a tricky process trying to balance the character's stats against those of the player team, but as you get a feel for the game it becomes easier. Once you have determined the character's attributes and skill points, you will need to assign those points to appropriate skills. Again, knowing the character's background comes in handy here. The skills the character possesses will be relevant to the purpose the character serves in the adventure as well as to his background. As an example, the spellrunner mentioned above would likely have three or four magic skills as well as a number of arcane knowledges, so as to be able to check out and test the goods the character was receiving. However, if the spellrunner ran only necromantic spells and objects, that might be the only skill and arcane knowledge he or she would need.

As described above, player character templates make an excellent starting point for creating a character. The choice of skills becomes much easier, as the character already has a set of skills based on their background. It only remains to make whatever changes might be needed in the background and adjust the skills accordingly. This method of creating characters is highly recommended for beginning gamemasters.

## BRINGING A CHARACTER TO LIFE

Your characters are set up and ready to run. Now comes the fun part. As the gamemaster, it's your job to breathe life into the backgrounds and stats you have created. If you've followed the hints given in the preceding sections, you've established characters with prominent features. These features make your characters distinctive, so that the players can relate to them. Additional idiosyncratic features can also be added which can be the starting point for your portrayals.

As roleplaying games are primarily verbal, the strongest cues are also verbal. Your characters interact with the players' characters by speaking to them, so make your characters' speech individual. One of the quickest ways is to use some sort of accent.

*Bloodshadows'* major motif is the hard-bitten detective, so think of the characters in those mov-

ies. Your best Bogie impression will come in handy, but think of other types of characters, also (you don't want everyone sounding the same). Gangster films offer a wealth of "bad Brooklyn accents" and "gangster slang." Not everyone is a product of the street, so more genteel accents are also appropriate. Carter Holgist is a very urbane, cultured individual, and would speak accordingly. And of course, any *outré* sort of accent would serve for a monstrous type. "Foreign" accents are also welcome — to show that certain characters might have come from other cities.

Many of your characters will share backgrounds, such as coming from the same neighborhoods or cities, so a multitude of accents would begin to sound odd. Another verbal trick is to give a character a figure of speech or a speech mannerism he uses a lot. This gives attentive player characters an immediate clue as to whom they are speaking to, something which comes in very handy when a number of gamemaster characters are involved at one time.

One type of mannerism that is easy to use is to have the character frequently use a specific interjection or sound. Some examples are:

*"I want some information, see? And I'm gonna get it from you one way or another, see?"*

*"My friend there is a touch sensitive, isn't he, hmmm? I'd hate for him to lose control. Now, I believe we can come to some kind of understanding, hmmm?"*

*"There's so much violence in the world today, no? It's frightening. It's especially frightening when it strikes so close to home, no?"*

Other mannerisms might be referring to oneself in the third person, or referring to oneself by name. For example, here's a character named "Morris" expounding on his philosophy of life:

*"Morris knows what he likes, he does. If Morris wants something, Morris goes out and gets it."*

Another mannerism suitable to scatterbrained characters — or those who are just plain dumb — is to ramble. This can also be used to drive the player characters crazy, especially if the character who rambles really has information useful to them.

*"... and then he says the wrong thing to me so's I plugs him and — what was we talkin' about?"*

Besides the verbal mannerisms, characters can have other types of mannerisms. These would be revealed as the gamemaster describes the situation before and between exchanges of dialogue. Some distinctive mannerisms could be wringing the hands, licking the lips, dangling a cigarette on



the lip, or tapping on a cigarette case. Other distinctive characteristics can be used. Perhaps a character has a limp, or a large mole on the face. Remembering to describe these features when laying out the scene for the players adds life and depth to the story you've created and produces a satisfying experience for both players and gamemaster.

**Note:** If you establish a mannerism for a character, the best way to continue using it is to write down a description of the mannerism after the capsule summary and the character's stats.

## CONTINUING CHARACTERS

After putting so much work into creating characters, it sometimes seems a shame to have them last for only one adventure. No one says characters have to disappear after the adventure, though. Keeping characters around not only lends a sense of continuity to your campaign, but also adds greater depth to your game world.

There are a number of ways to work in continuing characters, and you should begin working them in as soon as possible. The more continuing characters there are, the more chances there are to foreshadow the events of future adventures without the characters getting suspicious. Continuing characters are usually minor characters, although the occasional major character can be used as a continuing character.

Many of the player characters' contacts can be continuing characters. This is one way to build growth into your campaign. In one adventure the player characters meet a sentinel who provides them with some information, or assisted them in the climactic scenes. Perhaps in a later adventure he approaches them with information on a case that has him stumped, and he would like their input on it, leading them into another adventure.

Maybe a later adventure sees the player characters going to their sentinel contact to try to get some information which might help them solve their

current case. This gamemaster character will become a continuing character and will grow over time just like the player characters. Maybe a year or two of game time later their sentinel buddy will make detective; perhaps they even helped him in the case that got him his promotion.

The development of the characters' relationship with this gamemaster character does not even have to be a smooth one. Maybe it's a love-hate relationship. The sentinel doesn't like the player characters because they work outside the proper channels, and maybe he even hassles them from time to time, trying to pin something on them. But eventually he develops a grudging respect for them as they continue to "work" together.

Other types of characters that might become continuing characters in this vein could be a newscribe whose beat covers the player characters'



stomping grounds, or a bail bondsman who has hired them in the past, or even the local streetsinger who frequents the corner outside the characters' office. There are also guild leaders, rich newspaper owners, police chiefs and desk sergeants whose paths may often cross with that of the player characters.

In addition to the helpful type of continuing characters, there are the continuing antagonists. These characters provide the tension of a dramatic campaign. They can range from the minor villain who crops up once in a while to the background nemesis who continually crosses the characters' paths.

The minor villain could be someone the player characters put away in a previous adventure. Now he's done his time, or he's out for good behavior, or his boys sprung him, and he's back to his old ways. Maybe he remembers the role the characters played in his incarceration and is out to even the score. He could come right after them, or be subtle about it and try to ruin the characters' careers before finally revealing himself to them preparatory to killing them off.

Not all continuing antagonists need to be gangsters, of course. The character types listed above could also be hostile to the characters, or gangsters could be friendly. Maybe the newspaper tycoon finds the investigators a thorn in his side, as they are always uncovering his plots to gather power to himself, or perhaps a gangster feels "indebted" to the player characters because they performed some service for him in the past — intentionally or unintentionally.

Sometimes a minor villain can become an ally. Maybe a gangster's moll helped the gangster set up the team. But after they turn the tables on the gangster and put him away, the moll comes to admire them. Maybe she even becomes a player character's girlfriend. At some point she may become a valuable contact with the underworld.

The most ambitious continuing character is the *nemesis*. This kind of character can fuel a campaign of many adventures. The best way to use the nemesis is not to overdo it. Every second or third adventure could be devoted to a storyline bringing the nemesis back into the picture. It may even be possible that the player characters don't even real-



Tim Bobko

ize at first that there is a single person orchestrating the actions against them. Part of the thrill of this type of campaign is the gradual realization that there is someone or something out there that has such vast connections and resources. Then the team must come up with a plan to get to the source and put an end to the evil once and for all.

One type of nemesis is the crime boss. Here's how it might work. The team becomes involved with a gunrunning operation, and over the course of the adventure they determine the major villain behind the scheme. They take out the lackeys and confront the villain in his headquarters. After a close battle they overcome him, but before the villain is captured he effects his escape. Maybe it even looks like he was killed.

What the players don't know is that the gunrunning operation is just one of the villain's many livelihoods. He's also got his fingers into prostitution, gambling, and racketeering. Or maybe the gunrunner is a high-level hood, and it's his boss who controls the other rackets. In either case, their paths will cross again. Although they may not realize it, the crime boss will.

After a number of adventures dealing with the crime boss, the player characters will sooner or later figure out what's going on. The continuing storyline will eventually culminate in a final climactic battle where the team finally faces off with their nemesis and resolves the situation for good.

In *Bloodshadows*, there is also the Unnatural aspect. Maybe the nemesis is a powerful sorcerer, so they'll have to watch out for magical assaults. A villain that the player characters were forced to kill can't even be guaranteed to stay dead. Perhaps he and his minions are back to haunt the team.

## CHARACTER GROWTH

In each of these cases, the continuing characters will develop as they interact with the player characters. It will be necessary for you to keep track of that growth from adventure to adventure. The easiest way is get yourself a notebook and begin keeping a record of each character you intend to continue. Write up a full character sheet for each one, and add new sheets as the characters develop. Each time you use a character in an adventure, write in a brief description of the part he played and what the results were.

Like player characters, continuing gamemaster characters will improve their skills and learn new ones. So every couple of adventures, check over the characters you've been using and see how active they've been. Then give the character a life-point award as if it were a player character. Use the new life points to improve the character's skills and attributes.

You can also come up with adventures or experiences the character had when not involved with the player characters. This gives your character an independent life of sorts, and gives you interesting items which the character can describe as part of his or her background when dealing with the players' characters.

It may also be useful to keep a record of extras that you come up with. It's possible that an extra may crop up in a later adventure, but they are also handy when you need a minor character or extra in a hurry. Just flip through your stack of extras and find one that fits the bill. Think back to the example mentioned previously, when the player characters decided to question a sentinel that the gamemaster hadn't planned for. If the gamemaster had a file of extras, she could have pulled one out, changed the name and had a new character ready to go.

We have provided a Gamemaster Character Log (see page 44) to help you build a file of extras. It serves as a record of each character you create, with space to record the background, physical appearance, personality, resources and stats. There is also a space to note distinguishing characteristics to use when portraying the character, as well as a space to include a picture of your character. You can draw this in if you are artistically inclined, or cut a photo or drawing out of a magazine to represent the character's physical appearance.

As you use the character again, add notes to the Log explaining how the character was used, and any changes the character has experienced. Update the logs as you use them and you'll build up a ready supply of characters for your games.

Alternatively, you might find it handy to set up an file of index cards with all the pertinent information about your characters on them. Or you can keep your records in the same notebook you're using for continuing characters.





CHAPTER  
THREE

## LOCATIONS

The noise of the joint assailed the ears even before a customer opened the door to enter. And then it got worse inside. Normally all this clamor annoyed Stang, but at the moment he barely noticed; he was too involved in scanning the room intently to let the bedlam register on his consciousness.

As his eyes swept past the bar he glimpsed the bartender noticing him with a sullen glare. The bartender — Harry was his name — was big and beefy. He couldn't afford a bouncer, so he doubled in that capacity. And in Stang's opinion, he enjoyed that aspect of the job far too much. Harry was bending to retrieve something from beneath the bar as Stang's gaze continued to skim across the room full of occupied tables.

His gaze fell on his target at the same moment Hermes "Johnny" Delmonico noticed him. Johnny leaped to his feet and overturned the round wooden table into Stang's path as he bolted for the back door. Johnny Delmonico was a two-bit hood, but he had enough warrants outstanding to make him worth Stang's while. He would at least cover operating expenses for a time. Stang worked his way through the maze of tables, moving as quickly as he could without upsetting any of them. The last thing he needed was irate customers slowing him down.

As he dashed around the overturned table he noticed Harry jumping over the bar with a large cudgel in his hand. Stang continued after Johnny but altered the direction of his pursuit so as to move away from Harry. Johnny changed direction, too, heading away from Stang and down a clear path to the door. He put on a last burst of speed to make it to the door and freedom when Harry's club caught him in the side, just below the ribs.

The pain spell impressed in the club took effect immediately and Johnny hit the floor like a sack of *drammarins*, writhing and groaning with the sensations that coursed through his body. As the pain subsided and Johnny's body went limp, Stang trussed him up with a set of handcuffs — no sense wasting a *runeslug on a punk* in his condition — and hauled him to his feet. As he half-dragged, half-carried the wobbly hood out the back door, he threw a nod of thanks back at Harry. Harry just hefted his club with a grin and headed back to the bar.

After Stang collected the rewards on Johnny Delmonico, Harry would get his cut. It certainly paid to know people.

One of the things that defines an adventure is the location where the action takes place. Each type of game has its own particular sites and establishments. Traditional Medieval Fantasy is right at home in castles, taverns and dungeons. Science Fiction has as its backdrop spaceships and alien worlds. And it wouldn't be Horror without a haunted house.

*Bloodshadows* is a Fantasy game that encompasses some of the elements of Horror, and while some of the settings of those genres are applicable at certain times (such as a haunted house or a ruined fortress), most adventures are set in the cities and have their own singular requirements. *Fantasy Noir*.

Presented below are a number of establishments that can be found in most of the cities of Marl. They are representative of the types of locales that make up the *Bloodshadows* milieu. Although some of these are presented as specific establishments, they can be treated as generic locations. Simply pick a setting as needed and change its name. Or use these locations as a springboard for your own ideas, and modify them as much or as little as you like.

## GIN JOINT

The gin joint is just your basic local barroom. It can range from a large, busy, popular establishment which is crowded every night to a seedy little dive with a handful of patrons who have no thought for anything but the glass of forgetfulness clenched in their hands.

*The Dripping Dagger* is a gin joint which falls toward the lesser end of that spectrum. It is a neighborhood bar with a small but regular clientele. Even during the day one or two guys can be found there, drinking whisky straight up. It is owned by Hank Aquaria, who runs the business and tends the bar during the day. At night he has a fellow named Danny Kraken come in to tend the bar while Hank handles the accounts in his office.

The barroom itself is a single room, long and narrow. Double doors on the right open into the main seating area. To the right of the doors is a large plate glass window fitted with a curtain about halfway up the window, and a large neon sign proclaiming the name of the joint. The sign also displays a stylized dripping dagger.

As you enter the joint, you can see the bar running along the right wall. Along the left wall is a series of booths. Between the bar and the booths are a number of small tables with chairs scattered around them. Bar stools line the bar. Behind the bar are shelves full of a variety of liquors, but gin and whisky are heavily represented. On the ceil-

## NOW, LISSEN UP

"Gin joints in general are good sources of information. Usually the bartender doesn't mind chatting with a fellow as long as he's buying some drinks. With some of these guys, though, you gotta slip 'em a little extra to loosen up their tongue. But it's worth it, 'cause they know what's goin' on in their neck o' the woods.

"If there's a joint near you, it'd be a good idea for you to start hangin' out there. That way you can get the inside scoop on what's happenin' in your own stompin' grounds. And if you're a regular, the bartender starts to look out for you. He'll cover for you, and you might even find yourself wit' a place where you can hole up for a while if things get a little too hot."

ing, two fans rotate slowly, stirring up dust motes that swirl lazily down to the sawdust-covered floor.

Along the back wall are three doors. Two lead to restrooms. On the left wall in the back is a public crystal set (local calls are a nickel — or the local equivalent). The rightmost door opens onto a small corridor containing two more doors. The door to the right leads to Hank's office; the door straight ahead leads to the storeroom.

The office is stocked with a desk and chair, another chair, and three file cabinets. Hank keeps a .38 revolver with non-magical slugs in a drawer in the desk.

The storeroom is filled with stacked cartons of liquor, snacks, paper goods and whatever else is required in the running of a bar. There is a sturdy door in the rear wall to the left, which leads to an alley behind the building. It is locked from the inside. In the alley behind the building is a stairwell down to a basement storage area which is used by the landlord.

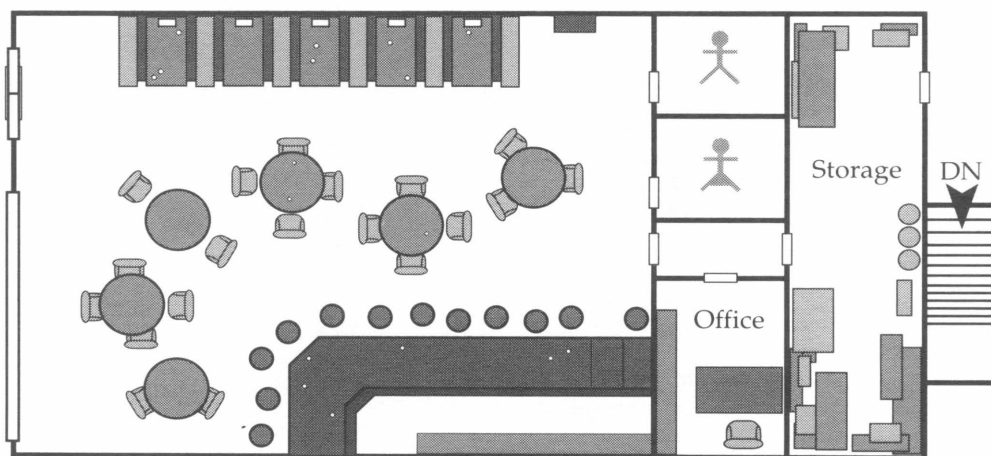
## USING THE GIN JOINT

The gin joint can serve a number of purposes in an adventure. For the most part, it will be encountered in the course of an investigation, as the characters go looking for someone who frequents the place, or was seen there. Or they may just be trolling for information. Bartenders are usually good sources of local information, although it may take some gold to loosen the tongues of some of the more reticent ones.

An adventure may start in a gin joint, as the characters encounter some strange goings-on and are moved to investigate further, or they may be approached by someone who recognizes them. And



## THE DRIPPING DAGGER — A GIN JOINT



Thomas O'Neill

the joint may even be the “office” of a less well-to-do private investigator.

### HANK AQUARIA (TYPICAL GIN JOINT OWNER)

#### AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, maneuver 9, unarmed parry 10

#### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11, vehicle piloting: car 10

#### ENDURANCE 8

#### STRENGTH 8

#### TOUGHNESS 9

#### INTELLECT 10

Perception 11 (trouble 13), trick 11

#### MIND 10

Business 12 (gin joint 14), scholar: local celebrities 11

#### CONFIDENCE 8

Con 9, intimidation 9, streetwise 10, willpower 10

#### CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 10, taunt 9

#### Life Points: 2

**Equipment:** .38 revolver, damage value 14, ammo 6; tuxedo; portable crystal set; silver cigarette case

**Description:** He seeks to turn a profit, while trying to avoid involvement with the mobs. He tries to remain in good standing with the local law. If trouble comes up in his place, he will try to get his staff to handle it themselves, but he will call in the cops if things get too rough.

### DANNY KRAKEN (TYPICAL BARTENDER)

#### AGILITY 8

Dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 10, unarmed parry 10

#### DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 11, prestidigitation 11

#### ENDURANCE 9

#### STRENGTH 8

#### TOUGHNESS 9

#### INTELLECT 8

Perception 9, trick 9

#### MIND 8

Science: drink mixing 10

#### CONFIDENCE 9

Con 10, intimidation 11, streetwise 11, willpower 10

#### CHARISMA 8

Charm 9, persuasion 9, taunt 9

#### Life Points: 3

**Equipment:** Club (behind the bar), damage value STR+3/18, *pain* spell focused in, effect value 24 (see Chapter Seven, “Magic,” in the *Bloodshadows WorldBook*)

**Description:** Danny will do things to make a few bucks on the side, but won't do anything that will cost him his job. He tries to keep the joint from being busted up and will back up the waitresses in any dispute.



## MINOR CHARACTERS: THE GIN JOINT

There are numerous minor characters that might be in any Gin Joint (not just *The Dagger*) at any time. Here are some examples:

**The Bar Fly:** Not necessarily a drunk, but a regular at the Gin Joint. He/she can provide information on all other “regulars,” the Gin Joint itself, and some local characters and situations.

**The Entertainer:** Could be a singer, a comedian, a magician (yep, stage magic still draws a crowd in Marl’s cities — if it’s good), or a stripper. He/she often needs to be coaxed or flattered (rather than bribed), but people tell the Entertainer things and he/she overhears quite a bit that happens in the Gin Joint.

**The Bouncer:** Big and tough, the Bouncer doesn’t have to be dumb — though everyone thinks he/she is, most of the time. As a result, the Bouncer hears a lot of what is said in the Gin Joint, but is very tight-lipped if the information will cause the place trouble. The Bouncer’s a good friend to have if trouble does start in the place.

**The Streetsinger:** Boys and girls make money selling papers or news crystals in the Gin Joint and, while they might not be good informants, they can tell you what’s happening in the city and might be convinced to keep their eyes on your back (for a proper reward).

## GAMBLING DEN

In many cities of Marl, gambling is either illegal or tightly controlled. And in those cities where it is not, there are always those looking for a high-stakes thrill, and those willing to provide it (and separate the seekers from their selasts, dollars, or gold in the process). In any event, it is practically a given that you can encounter a gambling den in any city around.

The gambling den is a location where covert — and generally illegal — games of chance can be played (if the games are legal, it wouldn’t be a “den”). In some instances the den may actually be a floating location, moving from place to place each day to avoid a raid by the local law. But, usually, the gambling den is in a long-established location, which remains undiscovered through careful pro-

cedures or the judicious purchase of the loyalties of the appropriate individuals within the law enforcement community.

The “gaming parlor” of Mickey “the Quesk” Roritan is representative of this type of location. It is located in the basement of a neighborhood gin joint (this location would fit perfectly under a joint like *The Dripping Dagger*; patrons with the proper password would be shown through the storeroom to the stairway in the alley and down to the entrance to the “parlor”).

Those seeking *Mick’s Place* make their way down a back alley to a decrepit-looking stairwell behind the bar. At the bottom is a heavy door with a sliding viewport, through which a large bouncer may view prospective clients and inquire as to the password. If he is satisfied that everything is on the up-and-up, he opens the door and allows them in. The following description can be read aloud to the players:

**Upon entering, you see a large room filled with all manner of gaming tables and well-dressed patrons. Smoke fills the air. At the far end of the room, along the right wall, is a bar to serve the gamblers a wide range of rare and expensive liquors.**

**Near the middle of the back wall is single door, labelled “Private,” and flanked by one or two large burly men who give the appearance of being strangers to the tuxedos they are wearing. The room beyond the door is the storeroom and records room. Besides the usual stacks of crates along one wall, there are a few tables with three or four men tallying up receipts and markers.**

Each of the tables has a special *incineration* spell focused into it (see the *Bloodshadows* WorldBook, Chapter Seven, “Magic”). When someone slams the palms of both hands onto the table and shouts a secret command word (which is changed weekly), all papers on the tabletop go up in a flash of flame and smoke. Those sitting around the table are unharmed.

To the left is a door which leads to a private room. This is generally reserved for private card games, which clients arrange with Mickey directly. Mickey charges a fee, of course, guaranteeing the security of the game. These high-stakes games are by invitation only. Sometimes, this room can be hired out for other purposes, but only by special arrangement with Mickey.

On the right wall is another door, this one leading to Mickey’s office. Mickey’s office is furnished with a desk and chair, a sofa, two plush chairs and a liquor cabinet. This where he entertains favored guests, or “discusses matters” with those who have lost big and whose marker is no



good. He is generally accompanied by two of his goons when with the latter type of client.

The other door in Mickey's office leads to an outside corridor. The corridor runs down the width of the building to a door at the far end. That door is a false door, and opens on a brick wall. Behind Mickey's desk, in the far right corner of the room as you enter, is a secret trapdoor which leads down to a tunnel that crosses under the street and lets out into the sewers. From there Mickey can make his way to a number of other outlets which open into safe houses. When the trapdoor is opened, a spell focused into it causes the door to the corridor to swing on its hinges and generates the auditory illusion of footsteps running down the corridor. Mickey intends to make sure that he is not taken if his place is ever raided.

## USING THE GAMBLING DEN

The gambling den is primarily a place for information-gathering and having fun (i.e., roleplaying). The characters may be able to wangle an invitation to the place, or somehow pry the daily password out of someone they are questioning. On the other hand, they may find themselves on the receiving end of an invitation from the gambling boss himself. His car may pull up to the characters on the street and his goons will request their attendance ... *now*. This would generally occur after the characters began snooping too closely into the boss's business, or roused some of his people.

Or maybe *he* wants to hire them.

## MICKEY "THE QUESK" RORITAN (TYPICAL GAMBLING BOSS)

### AGILITY 8

Dodge 14, maneuver 9, unarmed combat 9, unarmed parry 12

### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 10

Deduction 12, perception 11, trick 11

### MIND 10

Apportation: elemental 13

### CONFIDENCE 8

Con 9, intimidation 10, streetwise 13 (legal situation 15), willpower 10

### CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 11, taunt 10

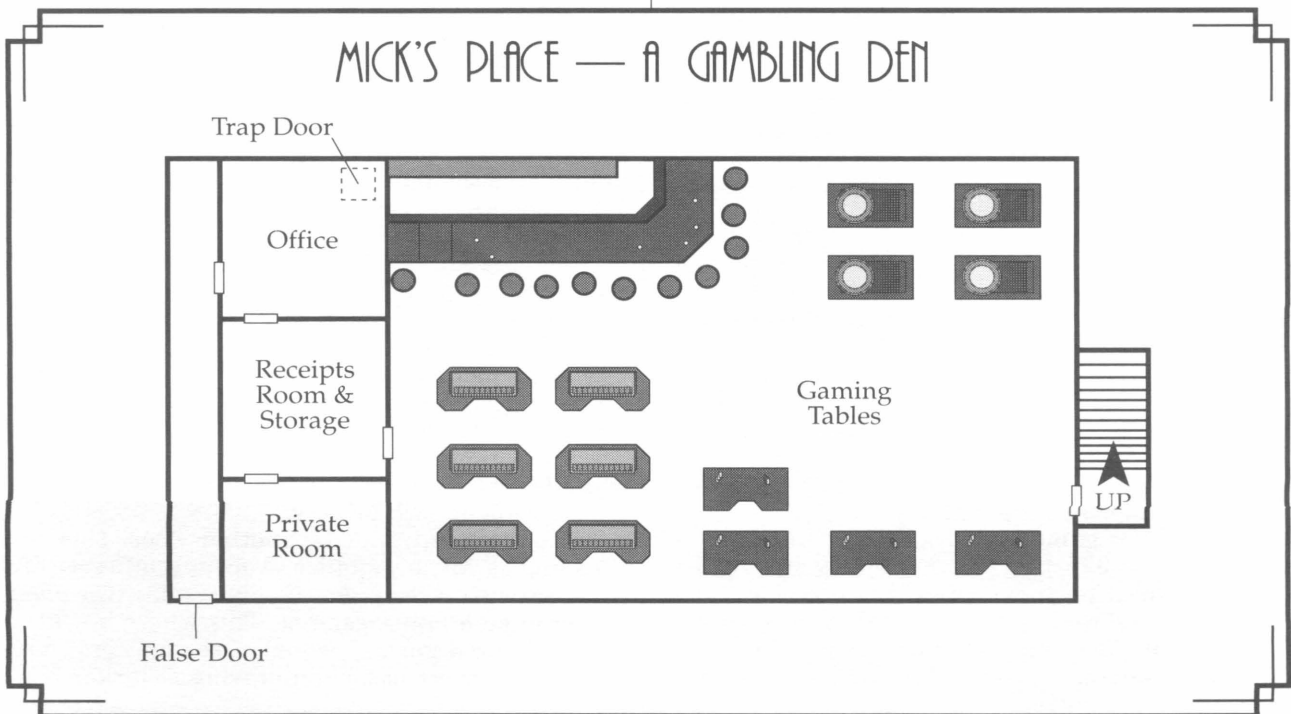
### Life Points: 7

**Equipment:** .44 automatic, damage value 20, ammo 6

**Arcane Knowledges:** Earth 3, fire 3

**Description:** Mickey wants to make a profit, live comfortably and build an organization. He wants people to respect him, even if it's only through fear. He needs to show how tough he is. He can be smooth and suave at first, but he loses his temper easily and then flies off the handle.

## MICK'S PLACE — A GAMBLING DEN



Thomas O'Neill

## MINOR CHARACTERS: THE GAMBLING DEN

*Mick's Place* has its own stable of minor characters, and probably has a few similar to those listed for the Gin Joint, above. The Gambling Den's denizens tend to be a little more dangerous and desperate, however, as they are used to looking over their shoulders.

**The Smuggler:** He/she uses the Gambling Den as a meeting place for clients and as a pay-off joint for his/her gangster and law enforcement contacts. The Smuggler can get if for you, for the right price, whatever "it" is — but watch out, the Smuggler may sell information as well.

**The Dealer:** Like any hired help, the Dealer knows a lot more about what's going on in the Gambling Den than the average customer — but he/she knows when to keep quiet. The Dealer is often a contact to "the Boss" (Mickey, in the case of *Mick's Place*), and usually knows a lot about the regular customers.

**The Rich Kid:** Often in trouble, more than often drunk, the Rich Kid spends daddy's/ mommy's money like it was water — not that he/she would ever touch water. The Rich Kid is tolerated, even when he/she is late paying, because the Rich Kid's parents are influential or will pay off big sometime. More likely to cause trouble than anything else, the Rich Kid will try somebody's patience once too often ... sometime.

**The Loan Shark:** What's a Gambling Den without someone who loans money? The Den gets a cut of the interest, but that leaves a sizeable chunk for the Shark. He/she hangs around, usually with a couple of goons, waiting for someone desperate enough to accept a little "help." Often, the Loan Shark "knows people" who can then help the unfortunate character pay off his/her debt in a hurry — a pimp, a fence, or a gang boss all come to mind.

## MARCUS "KNUCKLES" MALONE (TYPICAL GOON/BOUNCER)

### AGILITY 9

Dodge 11, melee combat 14, unarmed combat 16, unarmed parry 17

### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11

### ENDURANCE 9

Resist shock 12

### STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 11 (13 w/ armor)

### INTELLECT 8

Perception 9 (possible trouble 12)

### MIND 8

### CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 11, streetwise 10

### CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 4

**Equipment:** sap, damage value STR+3/18; knife, damage value STR+4/19; .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6; padded outfit, armor value TOU+2/17

**Description:** Marcus enjoys busting heads and roughing people up, but he doesn't let that get in the way of business. The boss has explained to him in great detail that blood on the floor and broken bones are almost as bad for business as the occasional free-for-all.

## DETECTIVE'S OFFICE

Most private detectives have some sort of office, where they can relax between cases and wait for the next dame with legs that wouldn't stop to come in and complicate their lives. Some detectives work with partners, others are loners. Some may have had a partner who was killed, but that's a case for another time. There are also large agencies which employ a number of detectives, and will assign one based on the requirements of the case brought to them. However, the majority of private detectives will have a small office in an office building, located on a second- or third-story floor walk-up.

"Dirk" Sable (his real name is Clarence, but no one dares call him that) works out of an office on the second floor of the McMasters Building. After climbing the stairs from the first floor, you walk down a wide corridor. The third door (of four) on the left leads to Sable's office. The door has a pebbled-glass window in it, and a transom above, just like all the other office doors in the building. The words painted on the window say, simply, "Dirk Sable, Private Investigations."

Entering through the door, you find yourself in an anteroom. There is a secretary seated at a desk to the left. Next to her, against the far wall, is a table. Along the far wall to the left are arrayed three file cabinets. To the right of the door are three wooden chairs. The far wall is almost all windows, starting from about waist-height up. The glass is the same pebbled glass as that in the door. If the light were right, you could make out shapes in the next room, but otherwise nothing can be seen.

There is an intercom on the secretary's desk, through which she can contact Mr. Sable. After being shown through the inner door, you enter the





actual office. It is a small room, with a desk and two chairs directly ahead. A bank of three windows on the far wall illuminate the room, the blinds on the windows casting striped shadows across the floor and furniture. A ceiling fan revolves indolently overhead. Along the left wall are a coat rack surmounted by a crumpled fedora and three file cabinets (in the top drawer of the middle cabinet can be found a bottle of whisky and two glasses). Against the right wall are a sofa and a small table with a lamp on it.

## USING THE DETECTIVE'S OFFICE

The private detective's office could figure prominently in an adventure. Most likely, one of the characters will be a gumshoe and work out of an office like this. If not, the characters may have cause to hire a private dick, or at least to question one, and will eventually end up at the office.

### DIRK SABLE (TYPICAL PRIVATE DETECTIVE)

#### AGILITY 9

Dodge 14, maneuver 12, unarmed combat 13, unarmed parry 14

#### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 15, lock picking 16

#### ENDURANCE 9

Resist shock 11

#### STRENGTH 8

#### TOUGHNESS 10 (18 w/ armor)

#### INTELLECT 10

Cartography 12, deduction 17, divination: vitomancy 12, perception 13, science: criminology 13

#### MIND 8

Research 12, scholar: important people 12

#### CONFIDENCE 10

Con 11, interrogation 12, intimidation 11, streetwise 12, willpower 12

#### CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt 10

#### Life Points: 8

**Arcane Knowledges:** Light 2, fire 1

**Equipment:** .38 service revolver, damage value 15, ammo 6; knife, damage value STR+4/19; lockpicks; bribe & gag money (\$100 or the equivalent); heavy trenchcoat with toughening spell, armor value STR+8/18; glowstone

**Description:** Dirk is dogged in his pursuit of the truth, and his sense of honor drives him on even when the client doesn't. There are times when he is tempted to just take the money and stiff the client, but then that pesky conscience kicks in and he's off on another case. Dirk keeps an eye on the important people in town, and he knows which way the wind is blowing.

### SARAH QUINN (TYPICAL SECRETARY)

#### AGILITY 8

Dodge 12, maneuver 9, unarmed combat 9, un-

## MINOR CHARACTERS: THE DETECTIVE'S OFFICE

While Dirk's office isn't a hang-out for stiff and drunks, there are people who could be "passing through" at any given time. They can be used to add flavor to any encounter in a Detective's Office:

**Landlord/lady:** Usually the opposite sex of the detective (it just seems to work out this way), the building owner/manager is invariably nagging about the rent or pushing the detective to "settle down" and get married — or at least have a wild fling. The Landlord/lady might have a few "choice words" to say about the detective from time to time, and is not above spying on the detective or revealing secrets ... "just as long as my back rent is paid!"

**Gangster Lieutenant:** This middle-man/woman is usually flanked by a pair of tough-guy bookends who would like nothing better than to rearrange the detective's, his friends, or (sometimes) his enemy's faces. Usually, the Gangster Lieutenant is delivering a "message" to the detective. Most of the time, it's bad news. Sometimes, it's a reward. Occasionally, it's an invitation for a one way ride to the river.

**Beat Cop:** The Beat Cop might be an old buddy of the detective, but, quite often, he /she and his/her boss, a detective employed by the city, are in the detective's office for the same reasons as the Gangster Lieutenant (above). Of course, they seldom want to take the detective on a one-way ride ... usually it's a trip "down town" for an appointment with a rubber hose.

**The Client:** These come in all shapes and sizes. The shapelier, the better ... and the more trouble. The detective longs for the day when a Client will walk in and pay ten grand for the return of his/her pet cat ... and it's the same damn critter the detective's secretary's been feeding all week. Most likely, the Client is someone who wants to use the detective, or the player characters, if they are handy, and then screw them when the job is done.

armed parry 13

**DEXTERITY 8**

Vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

**ENDURANCE 8**

**STRENGTH 8**

**TOUGHNESS 8**

**INTELLECT 9**

First aid 14, perception 11

**MIND 9**

Scholar: business practices 12

**CONFIDENCE 8**

Con 9, streetwise 11, willpower 10

**CHARISMA 10**

Charm 13, persuasion 12, taunt 13

**Life Points: 2**

**Equipment:** steno pad; pencil; .22 revolver, damage value 15, ammo 6 (hidden in garter-holster)

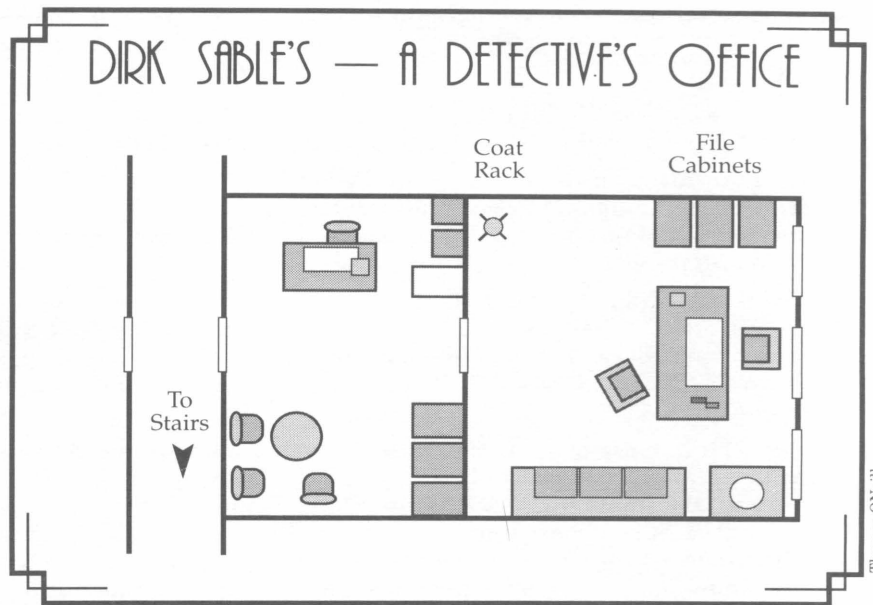
**Description:** Sarah does her job to the best of her abilities. She just wants to keep the office organized and make sure everything runs smoothly. She is loyal to and protective of her employer, because he treats her all right. She has no desire to become involved in the cases that he is working on, but she can be counted on to come to his assistance if necessary. She may have a crush on him.

## CULT CHAMBER

Many of the cults of Marl maintain established temples or meeting places. This is where their public devotions are carried out. But some of these cults have rites that they prefer no one else see. Others are totally secretive, performing all of their actions out of the public eye and preserving the secret of their existence.

Those cults with secrets to hide have clandestine meeting places. These are generally also used as sacrificial chambers. One such cult chamber is *Neref's Pit*. The *Pit* is a natural cavern located below an inactive warehouse in the industrial section of town, and is dedicated to the bloody worship of the deity of Chaos whose name it bears. Cultists slip through the loose boards that once sealed up the rear door and climb down through a hole found below the rotted floorboards. The climb is steep and occasionally slippery, but the rock is rough enough to provide easy purchase for those climbing in or out.

After a descent of a few meters, the hole opens up into a decent-sized chamber in the stone. Perched in holders attached to the wall flanking the entrance are a number of unlit torches. On the floor



are two or three glowstone lanterns, currently dim. These are used by cultists venturing further into the caverns, and are left here when they exit again.

The only other opening into the chamber is from a natural passageway in the rock, which winds around to an intersection. Four other passages radiate out from the meeting point, three narrower ones heading off to the front and to the right. These passages may lead deeper into the bowels of Marl, or may be passages which run under the city, so that some cultists might arrive from these tunnels. To the left a wider corridor leads to *Neref's Pit*.

Just before you enter the pit, there is another opening in the rockface to the right. This leads to a room where the cultists prepare themselves before a ceremony. It serves primarily as changing room, where the cultists don their robes and accoutrements before the rites, and store that equipment before returning to the world above.

Passing through the opening directly ahead, you step out onto a wooden balcony which runs along the wall of the chamber to the right. There is a heavy wooden railing along the outer edge of the balcony. At the far end of the structure is a rickety staircase, which winds its way down to the floor of the *Pit* fifteen feet below, all the while hugging the natural stone wall of the cavern.

The floor of the *Pit* is packed down hard and smooth from the passage of so many feet over the course of time. *Neref's Pit* is a large open area, and the cultists stand here during their rituals. Often the room is often filled from wall to wall with worshipful followers. The far end of the chamber is a natural ledge, where the floor abruptly rises a half a meter.

## MINOR CHARACTERS: THE CULT TEMPLE

Like the Detective's Office, the Cult Temple isn't usually a hang-out for your average Joe or Jane. On the contrary, everyone there will have a *reason* for being there — or *better* have one.

**Investigator:** The Investigator might be from another cult or from a news bureau, or even a private dick on a case. Usually, the Investigator will try to stay safely on the outskirts of the mass of cultists, using their single-minded attention to whatever is happening around the altar to move around and discover what he/she is there to find out.

**Fanatical Cultist:** This character is not usually typical of the other cultists found in the chamber. He/she so strongly believes in his/her god, faith, or whatever that the Fanatical Cultist will kill, die, or do anything else to promote his/her religion (as per the religion in question). The Fanatical Cultist may have a life outside the Cult Chamber, but that is a secondary life — he/she is completely devoted to the faith.

**Part-Time Cultist:** This character is a more mainstream representation of the cult's members. The Part-Time Cultist probably believes in the faith, and may even feel strongly about it, but doesn't let the cult dominate him/her when the Part-Timer is not in the Cult Chamber. Indeed, if the Part-Time Cultist is confronted about his/her beliefs outside the Chamber, he/she may be hesitant or embarrassed to talk about them. The Part-Time Cultist can be browbeaten into revealing what secrets he/she knows and may even betray the cult with enough motivation.

**Acolyte:** The Acolyte is like a middle-management priest. He/she has considerable influence within the Cult Chamber, and may have some actual power (magical skills, etc.). The Acolyte hopes one day to be a priest and will do what he/she can to promote him/herself within the cult. The Acolyte will be suspicious of non-believers, even if the Acolyte him/herself does not really believe. The Acolyte enjoys using his/her power over the majority of the lower-ranked cultists.

The ledge is large enough to hold a large stone altar and a number of cultists — those leading the ritual and performing any sacrifices. The altar is a large stone block, seemingly carved out of the rock of the chamber. There are a number of blood grooves carved in the top and down the far side of the altar. There are more channels in the surface of the ledge, leading back to the far wall of the chamber. Where the back wall meets the altar ledge is a meter-wide chasm. Blood from the sacrifice flows through the grooves in the rock and down into the fissure. After the ceremony, any remains from the sacrifice are cast down into the chasm as well.

To the left of the ledge is another opening in the wall. Through that opening is a small chamber, where the clerics or high priests prepare themselves for the ritual to come. If there is to be a sacrifice, this is usually where he, she or it will be kept prior to the ceremony.

## USING THE CULT CHAMBER

This location can be uncovered during the course of an investigation or serve as the focus of a climactic confrontation. In the first case, characters tailing a suspect may be led to the chamber, discovering that the person they are following is a cult member. They can then stake out the chamber hoping to discover who else may be involved, or

trying to discover the identities of the leaders of the cult.

Or the characters may need to discover the whereabouts of the chamber in order to rescue a client, or member of the team, from an untimely end. They will have to decide whether they wish to charge right in and have to fight their way through wave after wave of cultists, or try to sneak in and out undetected.

It is even possible that the characters wish to talk to the leader of the cult, or even join the cult itself (hey, not everyone plays good guys). They would probably be led to the cult chamber in this case.

The narrow, dark passageways are also a great way to add tension a the scene. Describe how dark it is, and how the dancing shadows cast on the walls by the torches or lanterns look like things coming after the characters. Describe the sounds of dripping moisture, shifting rock and echoing footsteps. Maybe an odd smell is encountered; it will be left to the players' imaginations to figure out what it might represent. The characters will have to wend their way through unknown tunnels, never knowing what might lie just around the bend.

The cult chamber is not always a natural cavern. It could as well be a man-made structure. Perhaps it is located in the basement of a deserted warehouse, or in the warehouse itself. Wherever it is



found, it is a good idea to keep the balcony (or a catwalk) and the rickety staircase; they provide a variety of options for chase and combat scenes. There might be a fight on the balcony with the railing coming loose, or running battles up and down the *rickety* (note the emphasis) stairway. A balcony often provides a good point for observation which then becomes a dead end when the observer is discovered.

## HURLY BENDETHWYPE (TYPICAL CULTIST)

### AGILITY 7

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, melee parry 9

### DEXTERITY 8

Thrown weapons 10

### ENDURANCE 9

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9 (10 w/ armor)

### INTELLECT 8

Cantrips 10, perception 9

### MIND 8

Scholar: cult history 11

### CONFIDENCE 8

Faith: the Cult 12, willpower 13

### CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 10 (Cult doctrine 12), taunt 13

**Life Points: 1**

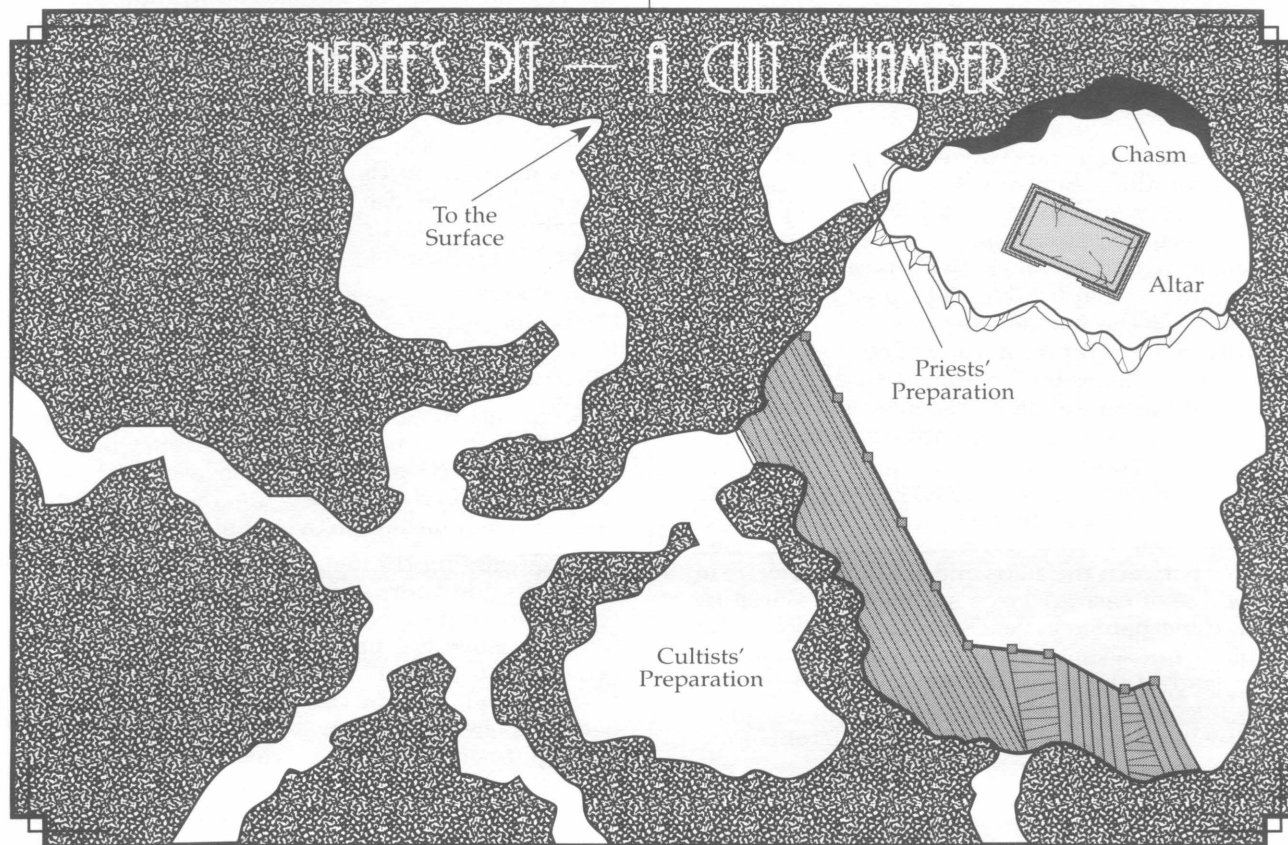
**Equipment:** Heavy robe, armor value TOU+1/15; acolyte's dagger, damage value STR+4/19

**Description:** Hurly joined the Cult some time ago and feels she is better informed and more true to her faith than those who have joined since. She looks up to senior members of the Cult and would do anything they asked — as long as it doesn't get her in too much trouble or make her late for her job. While Hurly has never participated in a blood sacrifice, she feels she is ready ... as long as everyone else wants to do it.

## PRECINCT HOUSE

Most cities are large enough that the sentinels/bailiffs/police cannot work adequately from a centralized location. Thus they have a number of local headquarters *cum* staging areas located across the city. There is generally at least one per district of the city, but there may be more if the size of the district warrants it. Sometimes, particularly rough areas do not have precinct houses because they would not be safe to work in.

The precinct house is where sentinels (or whatever they are called in a particular city) come when reporting to work, where they can change into their



Thomas O'Neill

## NOW, LISSSEN UP

"Just remember, the desk sergeant is like a demigod in the precinct house. Just about nuttin' gets done without his knowin' about it. What you gotta figger out is, is he an Order demigod or a Chaos demigod, 'cause you gotta deal with him the right way or you might as well be talkin' to a brick wall. Treat 'im right and things'll go real smooth. But make 'im mad and you'll be lucky if you don't end up in a cell somewhere."

uniforms, receive assignments and briefings, and do paperwork. Apprehended criminals are brought here for processing and then kept in holding cells until they can be moved to more permanent incarceration. After their shift the sentinels report back, clean up, change into their civilian clothing and head home again.

The precinct house is also where the plainclothes sentinels are headquartered. This is where they work between investigations, following up leads and filing reports. The Sentinel Department's mages also work here, in a number of forensics labs and divination chambers located in the basement. Plainclothes detectives consult with the mages as necessary, and occasionally mages will go out into the field with the detectives for on-site examination.

The sentinels of the Thirteenth Precinct of the ASD (Albredura Sentinel Department) are stationed in a typical precinct house. The coppers of the "One-Three," as it is known, are responsible for the eastern end of Marketwall (see the map of Albredura in Chapter five). The precinct house is located near the northeastern corner of the business district, not far from where it borders on Neln. The precinct house is of average size; smaller ones can be found in smaller precincts or cities, and larger ones exist where a greater concentration of sentinels is required.

The One-Three is a two-story stone structure built in a style popular seventy-five years ago, made of large blocks of dressed stone with deep grooves between the slabs and shallow carvings in the center of each. A large staircase bordered by thick stone banisters leads up to a heavy set of double doors set into a stone-framed arch. These doors lead to the main floor of the building (the following descriptions are keyed to the numbers on the Precinct House map for ease of reference).

## MAIN FLOOR

**1. Vestibule.** Passing through the doors, you enter a large vestibule/waiting area the width of the building. Directly ahead you see a large desk set up on a platform, so that the sentinel sitting there towers above you. A waist-high wooden railing separates the area behind and to the sides of the desk from the vestibule. To either side, along the walls, are wooden benches where civilians can wait for information or assistance. Just beyond the railing on the left is a wide staircase which leads to the second floor.

**2. Desk Sergeant.** The desk sergeant sits here. His job is to handle the citizens who come in, providing them with information or directing them to where they need to go. To the left of the central desk is a gate in the railing and a door in the back wall, which leads to the squad room.

To the right of the desk is another gate in the railing and a door in the wall, which is overseen by a sentinel sitting at a normal desk. Prisoners pass by this way to be brought downstairs to the processing room and the holding cells. Behind the desk is another door in the wall. This provides access to room 4.

**3. Corridor.** This leads to the staircase down to the basement. There is a barred window set into the right-hand wall, allowing conversation and transactions with the occupant of room 4.

**4. Processing Room.** A sentinel sits here at the window in the wall. He handles bail and bond arrangements. There are a number of shelves with forms on them on the far and right walls as you enter. There are also a few cabinets in this room, containing the paperwork on suspects brought in and bailed out.

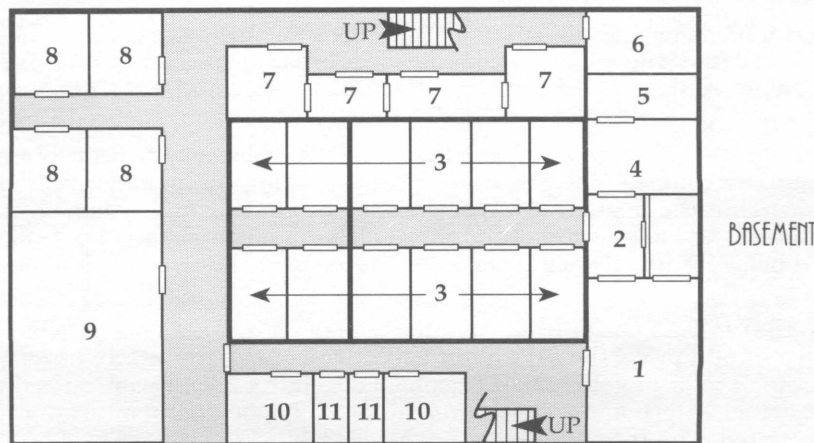
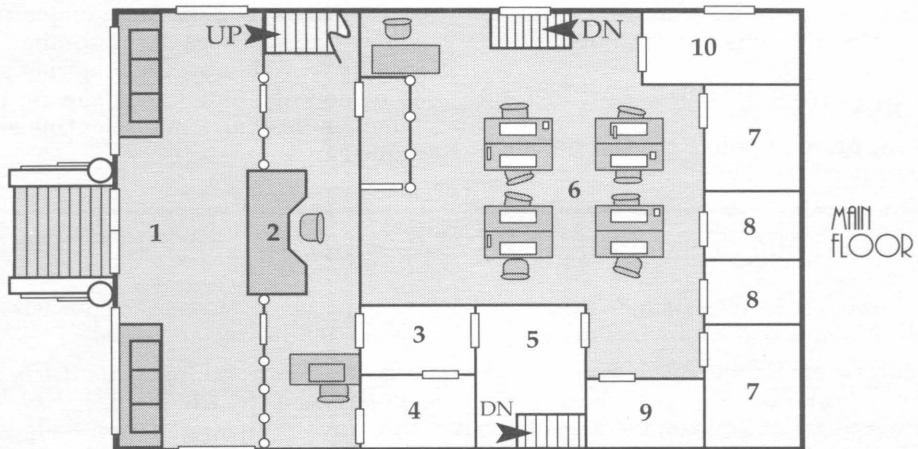
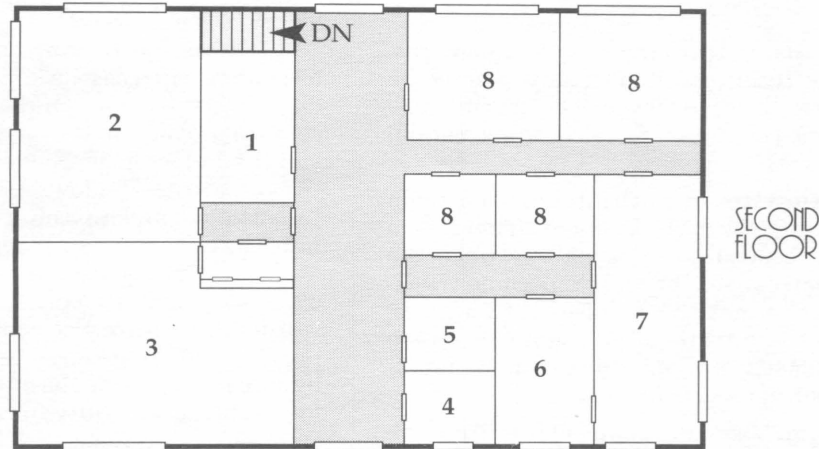
**5. Stairwell.** This area leads to the staircase to the basement. There are two doors, one leading to the corridor to the vestibule, the other opening into the squad room.

**6. Squad Room.** The squad room is where the plainclothes sentinels spend their time when they are not out actively working on a case. Here is where they file their reports, deal with the public, and pursue information over their crystal sets.

After passing through the door from the vestibule, you find yourself behind another railing. To the left is a uniformed sentinel sitting at a desk. His job is to learn the nature of your complaint and direct you to a detective. There is a narrow bench to the right where you can wait. Just beyond the bench is swinging gate, which you must pass through to enter the squad room.



## THE ONE-THREE — A SENTINEL PRECINCT HOUSE



Thomas O'Neill



In the center of the room are eight desks, where the detectives work. Along the back wall are a number of doors to interrogation and observation rooms. Along the left wall is a staircase down to the basement.

**7. Interrogation Room.** These small rooms, also known as “interview rooms,” are where the detectives question prisoners, or can discuss private matters with civilians. Each contains a small table and two or three chairs.

**8. Observation Room.** Each interrogation room has an adjoining observation room. There is a *viewwall* spell focused into the wall between the rooms. This spell causes the wall to become transparent to the occupants of the observation room, while those in the interrogation room can see no difference. Other sentinels use these rooms to monitor the interrogations of prisoners.

**9. Storeroom.** Various supplies for office work and paperwork are kept here.

**10. Lieutenant’s Office.** The shift lieutenant uses this private office, which contains a desk, some chairs, a table and some file cabinets.

## SECOND FLOOR

**1. Storeroom.** More supplies for the precinct house are located here.

**2. Records Room.** All the records of past cases are kept in this room, which is filled with row after row of file cabinets. There are also two tables with four chairs each located here for those who need to do research.

**3. Evidence Room.** Anything that may serve as evidence in a case is kept here. There is just one door into the room. Once inside, you face a high counter surmounted by a chain mesh fence with a small window in it. Evidence is submitted or retrieved at the window. All transactions are carefully logged, and anything removed from the room must be signed for.

To the right there is a door which leads into the evidence room proper. The door is locked and warded. There are also wards on the entire room to prevent any long-range tampering with evidence by sorcerers outside the building. There are always four sentinels on duty in the evidence room.

**4. Men’s Lavatory.**

**5. Women’s Lavatory.**

**6. Showers.** Sentinels going on or off duty may shower here. There are a number of rows of open stalls arrayed down the length of the room. There is a modesty panel that can be easily installed when male and female sentinels shower at the same time.

## MINOR CHARACTERS: THE PRECINCT HOUSE

The One-Three has its own list of characters, as do any precinct houses the characters might find themselves in. Some suggestions include the following personalities:

**The Short-Timer:** He/she has been on the force for gods know how long. Only thirty more days to forced retirement, and the Short-Timer has mixed feelings about the whole thing. He/she knows the “short-timer curse” (that they tend to get cut down within days of turning in their badges), but he/she would love to make “one more bust” to go out in style. The Short-Timer knows the ins and outs of every legal agency in the city — and quite a few illegal ones — and may be willing to “bend the rules” if it means he/she can “go out with a bang.”

**The Rookie:** An eager-beaver, everyone is waiting for this joker to settle down. There’s no tarnish on that badge, and that’s new shoe-leather he/she is breaking in. Nobody wants to get too close, in case the Rookie gets in trouble or gets himself killed. But he/she is eager to make a good impression, and the Rookie doesn’t know when to keep his/her mouth shut about “police business.”

**The Regular:** “Lefty” or “Stoolie” or “Mage-bait”; this character’s probably got a rap sheet as long as his/her list of nicknames. The Regular is always getting run in and questioned — not that he/she ever gets *busted*, but the Regular always hears something of what’s going on out there on the street. The Regular seems deathly afraid of the sentinels or of jail-time, and will roll over with just a little prodding, but he/she is usually smart enough not to spout the wrong bits of news that might get his/her throat cut.

**The Informant:** This shifty-eyed customer makes a business out of what the Regular does for survival. For the right price, the Informant will talk about virtually *anything*. The Informant sneaks in, or makes quick calls, or gets brought in on a fake charge. Some cash slips into his/her hand, some info comes out of the Informant’s mouth, and the squealer gets “bumped around” a little to make it look like he/she resisted. The Informant can find out anything ... for a price.

**7. Locker Room.** This where sentinels change into or out of their uniforms and keep their personal belongings. There are rows of lockers and narrow benches throughout this room. Again, modesty panels can be used to separate the male/female areas.

**8. Meeting/Briefing Room.** There are four of these rooms in differing sizes. These rooms are used for announcements to and orientation of sentinels just going on shift. These rooms can also be used for meetings about cases, planning for raids or other types of conferences. The schedule for these rooms is kept by the desk sergeant, and requests for time must be made to him.

## BASEMENT

**1. Processing Room.** This is where all prisoners are processed. New prisoners are fingerprinted, photographed and checked for any magical surprises. Prisoners being removed for interrogation or for transfer are also processed in this room. All prisoner movement must be coordinated with the sentinels on duty here.

**2. Watch Room.** A sentinel sits behind a barred and warded window and checks everyone who passes through the outer portion of the room. Anyone entering or leaving the cell area must pass through this room.

**3. Holding Cells.** These are the cells where prisoners are kept while in custody in the precinct house. The entire cell block has reinforced walls and is warded against magical attack or departure. At the far end of the block are specially reinforced cells for Unnaturals and other dangerous prisoners.

**4. Holding Room.** Prisoners and other participants in a lineup are brought to this room in preparation for the lineup.

**5. Line-Up Room.** The actual lineup takes place in this room.

**6. Observation Room.** Citizens attempting to identify perpetrators in a lineup are brought to this room. The wall between this room and the lineup room has a one-way *viewwall* spell focused into it, so that the prisoners cannot see the citizens involved.

**7. Magical Laboratories.** The precinct's forensic mages work in these rooms, analyzing evidence for clues and other information that will help to identify victims and/or perpetrators, or to establish other facts relevant to a case.

**8. Divination Rooms.** The station's divinatory sorcerers use these rooms to try to develop other information about cases, particularly when there

## NOW, LISSSEN UP

"Hey, they may look like standard interrogation rooms, but there's a reason they're down in the basement and tucked in the back away from everythin' else. If you're bein' brought downstairs for questioning, you don't stand much of a chance. You ain't got no friends down there. And if you're goin' downstairs it don't matter no more if you start singin' like a canary, 'cause it's probably not gonna stop them coppers from havin' a little fun with your face first."

is no physical evidence that can be analyzed. These mages also attempt to identify potential crimes before they occur and in particular try to head off crime waves.

These rooms can also be used as magical labs if necessary.

**9. Boiler Room.** This room houses all the apparatus required to heat and cool the building, as well as circulate fresh air. Some of the precinct's mages can maintain the spells if necessary, but most of the maintenance is done by an outside service.

**10. Interrogation Room.** These are standard interrogation rooms as described for the main floor, above.

**11. Observation Room.** These are standard observation rooms as described for the main floor, above.

## USING THE PRECINCT HOUSE

The sentinel station could be a focal point for many adventures. That's because the sentinels are going to be involved in just about anything the characters are involved in ... at least if it causes trouble in the city. If they're lucky, the sentinels will be looking for the same thing (although even that can lead to trouble if they don't like the characters' noses in sentinel business). If not, they may find themselves down at the precinct house for questioning.

Besides going down to the precinct to inquire as to information or to talk to a detective, characters may have to go there in order to bail out a colleague or substantiate his story. Or maybe they have to retrieve something from the evidence room. That should pose quite a dilemma for the characters.

Characters who are private detectives should have some contacts in the local precinct house. In

many cases they were sentinels before they went private. Maybe an ex-partner is still there, or the detective's former lieutenant likes him. The relationship may be more rocky than that, though, with the sentinel bearing a grudge against the gumshoe. Many sentinels have a love-hate relationship with private detectives, a situation that was true in *film noir* and is still true even in modern detective shows.

## KEITH JULETTE (TYPICAL SENTINEL)

### AGILITY 9

Dodge 12, maneuver 10, melee combat 14, melee parry 14, stealth 10, unarmed combat 11

### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

### ENDURANCE 9

### STRENGTH 9

### TOUGHNESS 9 (15 w/ armor)

### INTELLECT 8

Perception 9, tracking 9, trick 9

### MIND 8

Scholar: criminology 9

### CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 9, streetwise 10, willpower 10

### CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9

### Life Points: 3

**Equipment:** .38 revolver, damage value 14, ammo 6; runelugs (various); handheld crystal set; baton, damage value STR+3/18, *pain* spell focused in (see the *Bloodshadows* WorldBook, Chapter Seven, "Magic"); bulletproof vest, armor value TOU+6/22

**Description:** Keith's been on the force long enough to know the score. He's an honest flatfoot, but he might turn the other way if a "gratuity" is passed to him by a respectable citizen. He doesn't like a dishonest cop — one who gets bought by the wrong crowd — but he knows everybody does what they have to to get by. Keith thinks of the sentinels as a job and a brotherhood — and sisterhood; his partner's a female, and a damn good cop. Some brothers and sisters you may not like, and they may not like you, but it's "us against them," out on the streets.

## KIRSTEN DEGLO (TYPICAL SENTINEL DETECTIVE)

### AGILITY 8

Dodge 13, melee combat 10, melee parry 14, unarmed combat 14, unarmed parry 16

### DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 14, lockpicking 12

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 8 (14 w/ armor)

### INTELLECT 10

Deduction 13, divination: vitomancy 13, perception 11, science: criminology 13, tracking 11, trick 11

### MIND 8

Research 10, scholar: the city 12

### CONFIDENCE 9

Con 10, interrogation 10, intimidation 10, streetwise 10, willpower 13

### CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 10, taunt 10

### Life Points: 5

**Equipment:** .38 revolver, damage value 14, ammo 6; runelugs, various; handheld crystal set; trenchcoat with toughening spell, armor value TOU+6/17; lockpicks

**Description:** Her captain called her "a quick study." Some of the other detectives call her "a smartass." Nevertheless, Kirsten has managed to win the respect of most of the older detectives in the department through hard work, intelligence, and a little tact. When she was teamed with another newbie detective instead of a veteran (as was the usual practice), she realized she'd have to work harder to gain the respect she needed. She became the "senior partner" through force of will and talent, and, now, she's one of the best sentinels in the precinct house. She's a little too "clean" for some of the detectives' tastes, but she doesn't rub it in some of the "less honest" detective's faces, so they don't mind.

## CURIO SHOP

The curio shop is more a convention of fantasy or horror stories, but as such is still an appropriate location for a *Bloodshadows* adventure. Curio shops are where long-lost magical items are usually found, buried under the dust of many years. And of course, those powerful books of magic have to end up somewhere.

Ninety-nine percent of the curio shop's merchandise is junk, however.

In addition to the magical and mystical items that can be found in such a location, a curio shop may also be the source of a more mundane — but potentially valuable — item. Maps of the Wilderness — *true* maps — are rare, no matter what that guy you met in the bar tells you. An antiquities shop may be where the characters can find just such a real map. Maybe it's a rolled-up piece of parchment stuffed into an umbrella stand, or it's stored flat in a folder in with a lot of old art prints, or it may just be a series of maps hand drawn in the



## NOW, LISSEN UP

"Yeah, I've seen my share of curio shops, antique shops, bric-a-brac stores, whatever you wanna call 'em. Since my ... change, I frequented them a little more often. The shopkeepers are less likely to scream and call the sentinels when they realize who's pokin' through their bookshelves, and they'll talk forever about ancient history nobody else cares about.

"Ninety-nine percent of what ninety-nine percent of these shops carry is crap. Neat-looking old crap, but crap nonetheless. Few curio shops try to bilk their customers — putting glamors and false wards on junk stuff — though, so anything authentic is usually pretty harmless.

"O'course, if you need to find some ancient relic or forbidden tome hidden in the city, you hit a few curios first. Sure, they probably don't have it hidden behind an umbrella stand or locked up in an old roll-top desk, but the shopkeeper might have some info you need ... and it's a helluva lot less dangerous than starting out with a demon summoning."

pages of an old book — perhaps the journal of a successful expedition that has long since been forgotten. Just remember, if the expedition occurred too long ago, things may have changed since the maps were drawn.

*Oddities and Antiquities* is a small curio shop located on the border between the respectable business district and the middle-to-lower class residential district. During the day it does a slow but steady business, selling old books to young students or trading bric-a-brac with the same old ladies who brought the stuff in originally, but at night the character of the neighborhood changes and not many people are about on the streets. In spite of this situation, the store has been in its present location for close to ten years.

The store sits near the end of a block of attached storefronts. You go down a short flight of steps to a double door with large panes of glass in it. Stepping through, you come to a foyer with three tables in it. The tables are filled with curios and oddities. The window displays are accessible from the foyer, as they are open to the store, with no dividers to separate them.

From the foyer you go up a short flight of stairs to the main floor of the shop. The floor of the shop is filled with tables brimming with knickknacks, bric-a-brac and assorted other goods, as well as

some larger freestanding pieces scattered throughout. The wall to the right is covered with inset shelves, also filled with a collection of things. To the left is a counter surmounted by an old cash register. Behind the counter are more shelves of stuff.

Behind the counter is a flight of stairs which leads upstairs. The upstairs is only a partial floor, constituting an apartment for the owner of the shop. The stairs lead to a balcony that overlooks the front of the store. There are three doors in the wall. The door on the left leads to the bathroom. The middle door opens into the living room, and the door on the right is to the bedroom. At the back of the living room, on the left, is an archway opening into a small kitchen, which is tucked behind the bathroom.

On the main floor, a waist-high wooden railing stretches from the staircase to the opposite wall. There is one swinging gate in the middle of the railing. Going through the gate and down a short flight of steps leads you into the back of the shop (under the apartment), which is used mostly for storage. Customers are discouraged from entering the back area. It is filled with more tables brimming with items, as well as stacked wooden cartons.

Across the entire back of the store hangs a frayed black velvet curtain. If you were to pass behind the curtain, you would find that there is more to the shop. Another table and a staircase down are located behind the curtain. the staircase leads down to the basement.

The basement is not much different than the store above, with the exception that there are more stacked cartons than there are tables down there. The front wall of the basement is covered with a curtain similar to that in the back of the store above. Looking behind the curtain in the basement you find a locked set of heavy doors. These doors lead to the vault, where the shop owner keeps his most valuable items, as well as those that are highly magical or arcane in nature.

The vault's walls are lined with shelves, and there are a number of freestanding shelves lined up in the center of the chamber. The shelves are filled with a variety of odd and curious items, some of which glow with a powerful aura. The vault itself is thick-walled and heavily warded. A study of the wards would reveal that their purpose is not only to keep people out, but to keep things *inside* as well.

## USING THE CURIO SHOP

The curio shop is generally visited as the introduction to or culmination of an adventure. This is where that item you were looking for might be found, or where your quarry has chosen to hide out.

The amount of junk in the store could make for a very interesting fight, with characters trying to chase one another around and over all the obstacles, or hiding and taking cover behind them. And trying to find that one item amidst all the things in the store should prove quite frustrating to the characters.

The curtain in the back should be downplayed by the gamemaster — don't call attention to it. If the characters don't look behind it, they'll just have to try again on a later visit. Of course, as the adventure draws to its conclusion, you may have to prompt them subtly, but it will still be an effective surprise. If the characters break into the vault — or even get the key and get in easily — it's possible that while they are acquiring what they came for they may release something that was bound within. That could even lead them into their next adventure, as they try to set things right.

You can really have fun with the players, also. That *Tome of Forbidden Things* may not be found in the vault (it turns out that the book on the reading stand was a mundane — even if valuable — volume after all). Maybe it's sitting out on one of the shelves on the main floor, hidden in plain sight. The characters may have to tear the place apart

trying to find it. Which may be cause for them to be visiting the precinct house all over again — this time unwillingly.

## THADDEUS ELDEN (TYPICAL CURIO SHOPKEEPER)

### AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, stealth 10

### DEXTERITY 8

Lockpicking 10, prestidigitation 10

### ENDURANCE 7

### STRENGTH 7

### TOUGHNESS 8

### INTELLECT 11

Divination: sorcery 14, perception 11, perception (find 12), perception (evidence analysis 12), scholar: "forgotten lore" 12, trick 11

### MIND 9

Business 11 (small business 14)

### CONFIDENCE 9

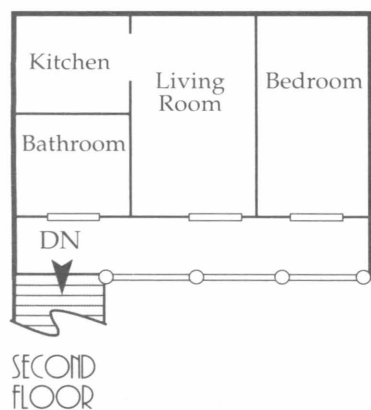
Con 10, willpower 10

### CHARISMA 8

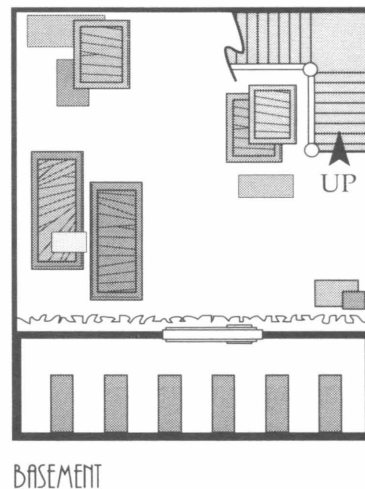
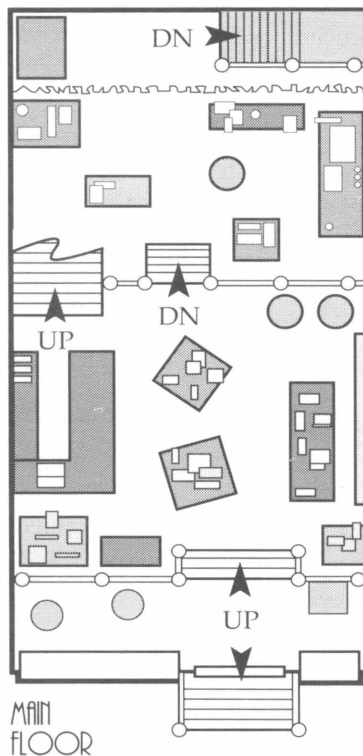
Persuasion 10

### Life Points: 3

Arcane Knowledges: Enchanted 4, entity 2



## ANTIQUITIES AND ODDITIES — A CURIO SHOP



## MINOR CHARACTERS: THE CURIO SHOP

The customers, clients, and visitors to the shop might provide some interesting characters that could be encountered during any call on the Curio Shop:

**The Owner's Niece/Nephew:** She/he doesn't think much of the shop, and his/her parents were *crazy* for sending him/her to live with that loon for the whole *summer*! "All my friends get the summer off!" The Niece/Nephew complains, "And I have to sit in that musty old *hole* waiting for more nuts to walk through the front door!" The Niece/Nephew will attach her/himself to anyone who looks more interesting than their surroundings — especially if that person intimidates or picks on the Curio Shop's owner (though not too much). The Niece/Nephew might part with or blurt out information about secret treasures or "weird" customers that the owner would never talk about.

**The Strange Customer:** This person scares even the Curio Shop owner. Every week or so, the Strange Customer comes in, says nothing, and purchases an item or two off the shelves. The Curio Shop owner wonders why these old shelf-dust collectors have suddenly become precious to the Strange Customer, but dares not ask. The Strange Customer might just be strange, or he/she (it?!) might have some unusual secret or terrible powers.

**The Neighbor:** Most Neighbors to Curio Shops stop in periodically to "visit" — usually, they are "normal" storekeepers who really wish the Curio Shop would close down or move. "It brings such *weird* people into this part of town!" Sometimes, the Neighbor will take an active part in closing the shop — some nasty rumors, a little intimidation, and, possibly, a tiny bit of arson mixed in. The Neighbor "knows a lot" about the "goings-on" in the Curio Shop, and will elaborate to no end.

**Equipment:** glasses; ledger book; pen; pocket watch

**Description:** Thaddeus is a man fascinated by the obscure and the arcane, and is constantly searching for new and interesting trinkets that reflect that fascination. He seeks to eventually acquire a previously undiscovered artifact or two among the curios that pass through his hands, as well as information about the past and/or the Wilderness. To this end he is constantly poring over old tomes and maps, and purchasing estates and individual oddities from customers. He may also have cult connections, due to his trafficking in arcane and forbidden items.

Once he has gained the goods or knowledge he desires, he intends to retire on the proceeds and live a life of luxury, while immersing himself in the past all over again. He is not above passing off worthless items on his customers in pursuit of this goal, though he will not do this frequently enough to damage the reputation of his shop.

## NIGHT CLUB

The night club is where the well-to-do come to be seen and to party the night away. But it is not just a place for entertainment. More respectable than a gin joint and more legal than a gambling den, the good night club is recognized as the evening home of the idle — or not-so-idle — rich. Many business deals are closed within its walls, and a good many

of them are not always legitimate business; gangsters frequent the night clubs also. Many of them even run night clubs of their own.

A typical night club provides entertainment in the forms of music, song and drink. The bar is generally well-stocked, and may even have one or two very rare libations, imported from a distant city. Depending on the laws of the city, and who's running the club, the bar may even provide contraband liquors to those who know the proper questions to ask.

The usual entertainment consists of a big band and/or piano player, who provide much of the music for patrons who like to cut a rug on the club's dance floor. In addition to the music supplied by the band, there will often be a singer or singers belting out a tune or crooning a love song for the pleasure of the patrons. And, of course, there is always the torch singer, generally a gorgeous dame who croons popular but sadly sentimental tunes about unrequited love.

Patrons sit at tables or in plush booths, with a view of the stage and band. Waiters shuttle the drinks between bar and tables. The usual dress is formal, especially in some of the ritzier joints. But, unless the place is really hoity-toity, a suit and tie will be tolerated.

*The Topaz Room* is one such establishment. It is a fairly upscale joint, and while well-appointed and attracting an impressive clientele, it does not exhibit overt pretensions of grandeur. It is situated in





the better part of town and stands alone on its own block. There is a large parking lot outside to accommodate the many cars — mostly elementally powered, in keeping with the affluence of the patrons — and other conveyances that arrive nightly.

Approaching the front of the building, you are greeted by a doorman and come upon a set of ornately decorated double doors, with worked-glass panels inset into them. Passing through them, you come upon a large lobby (the following descriptions are keyed to the numbers on the Night Club map for ease of reference).

**1. Lobby.** The lobby is large and well-appointed, with a crystal chandelier hanging over the center of the room. Directly ahead of you is the main aisle leading into the main room of the place. To the left of the aisle is a coat-check room. To either side of the lobby is a large archway.

**2. Coat Check Room.** This is a small room filled with a number of clothes racks, upon which patrons' coats are kept while they are enjoying themselves. In the evenings there are generally two women working in the room.

**3. Main Corridor.** Passing through either archway flanking the lobby, you walk down a long corridor with plush couches and large potted plants along both walls. At the end of each corridor is a bathroom, as well as another aisle leading into the main room.

**4. Bathrooms.** There is a room for men at the end of the left-hand corridor and one for women at the end of the right-hand corridor. The rooms are very well-appointed, with marble-topped counters and gilt-edged mirrors. An attendant staffs each of the rooms, to assist patrons in the selection of toiletries and colognes, which are available at a modest cost.

**5. Main Room.** This large, open room is filled with booths and tables of various sizes. They are

arrayed in a series of semicircles around the dance floor and the stage, which take up the far corner of the room. The semicircles are terraced, affording each level of tables a view of the entertainment.

Situated around the room, between and around the various seating areas, are a number of large potted plants. In addition to the main aisle, which leads from the lobby directly down to the dance floor, there are another two aisles at either side of the room. These aisles run from the dance floor out to the main corridors on the left and right.

Waiters are constantly flitting from table to table, keeping the guests supplied with a wide variety of drinks from the well-stocked bar. In addition to the waiters, a "photographer" works her way around the tables, offering to take a souvenir photo of the patrons. If the guests are willing, she snaps the shot, collects the fee of one-half gold coin per photo, and returns with the requisite number of copies (each in its own cardboard photo holder bearing the name of the Topaz Room) in about half an hour.

**6. Bar.** This a large and ornate bar, crafted from imported woods and highly polished. Behind the bar is a series of cut-glass shelves, lit from behind to enhance the design, which hold bottles of many different shapes, colors and textures. The bar is stocked with the standard liquors, as well as a great number of exotic and imported beverages. Various plants are suspended around the shelves for decoration.

Three bartenders work the bar during the busy shifts; at other times — assuming the joint is open — there is only one bartender. They are usually kept busy, servicing the customers who park themselves at the bar, as well as the constant stream of waiters bringing orders from the tables. But there are still lulls in their activity, during which they can be engaged in brief conversation. The bartenders are generally good sources of information, although sometimes a little pricey, and usually know if some big shot is in the joint or when he might be expected.

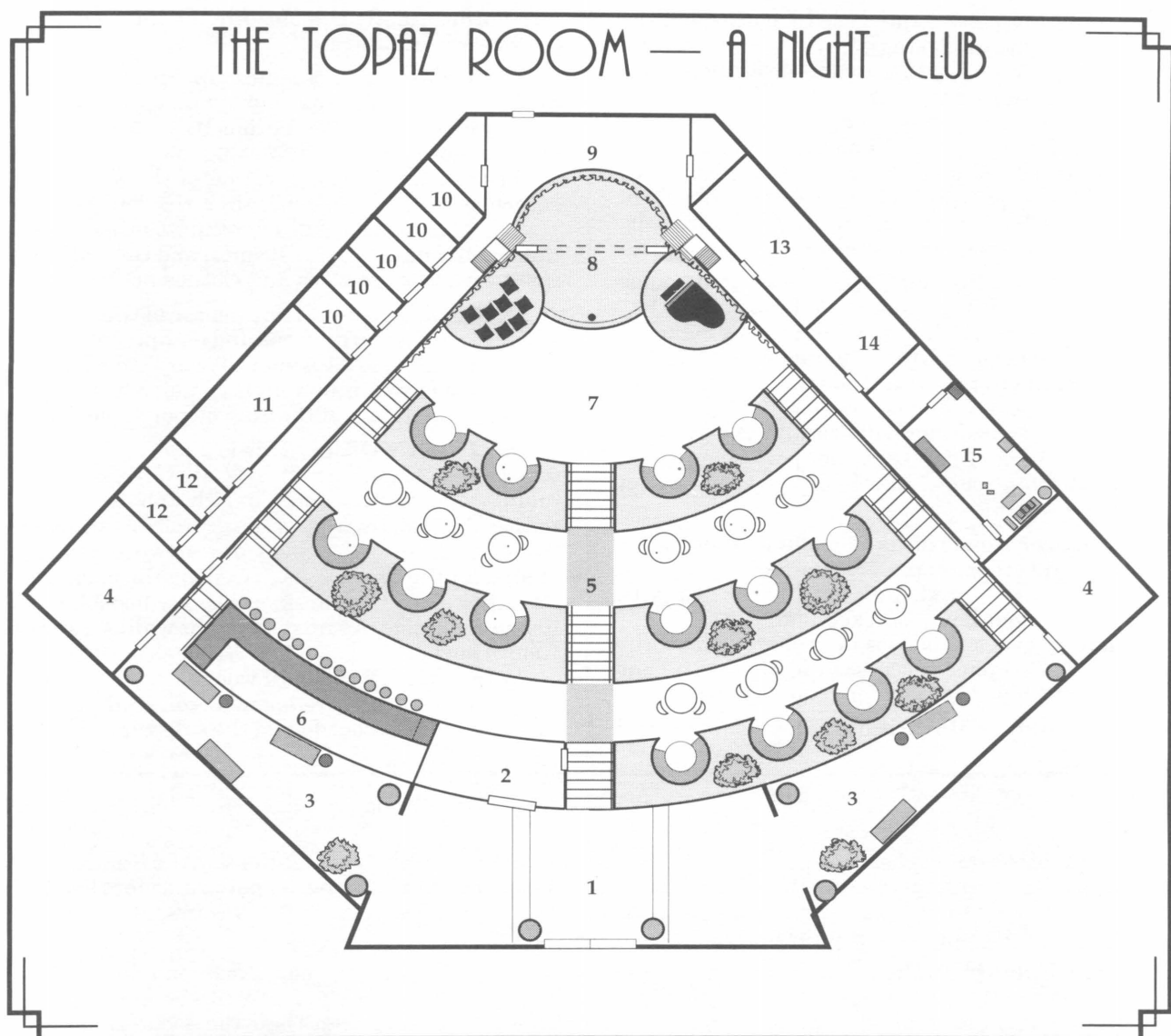
**7. Dance Floor.** A large semicircular tiled area wrapping around the main stage, this is where couples come down to cut a rug. Generally, this area's hopping with well-dressed customers gyrating to the latest popular tunes, but there are also some who come down to take a turn with their sweetie during a slow love song.

**8. Stage.** The main stage is a large circular platform — above the level of the dance floor — which is divided across the center by a proscenium arch. To the right of the main stage (from the customers' point of view) is a smaller semicircular stage, upon which sits a white piano. To the left is another smaller semicircular stage, where the band

## NOW, LISSEN UP

"You might as well save your money in a joint like this. Most of these bartenders think they're hot stuff, and gettin' information out of 'em is like pullin' teeth. The thing is, they brush you off *after* they've taken your money, tellin' you 'I ain't seen the guy,' or 'Sorry, I never heard of the gent.'"

"Sure, you might get lucky and find the rare bird who will actually sing if the money's good enough, but they're few and far between. Ah, I don't know why I'm wastin' my breath, you're just gonna go out and try anyway. Just don't say I didn't warn ya."



Thomas O'Neill

performs. Arrayed across that stage are a number of podiums; a member of the band stands behind each and keeps his music sheets there for easy visibility. Each podium displays the name or symbol of the band on its front, facing the audience.

The main stage is used for the featured performer. When the band is the main entertainment, the bandleader uses this stage to direct the band. Singers are also located on this stage, at the front center, where a microphone is set up for their use. Occasionally, a dance act may be booked for the club. They would also perform on the main stage, accompanied by the band and/or pianist on the flanking stages.

Along the back edge of the main stage hangs a heavy curtain, separating the stage from the back-

stage area. This can be opened to allow access to backstage by stagehands and performers when an act is being set up. While the curtain is in place, there are a number of hidden gaps through which performers and hands can pass. The side stages are also backed by curtains. Behind the curtains are a set of steps leading down to the backstage area. There is also a set of steps at either side of the main stage, behind the arch.

**9. Backstage.** Located behind the stages is a large open area where the scenery and equipment required for a show are kept. This is also where the mechanisms for manipulating the curtains, sound system and lighting can be found. There are a number of ladders and ropes leading up into the darkened higher level, where catwalks and more

ropes crisscross above the backstage area and the back half of the main stage.

Two small rooms are located to either side of the backstage area, along the back wall. These oddly-shaped rooms are tucked away in the corners and are used for storing equipment, as well as the occasional individual unfortunate enough to cross the club's owner (if he is a gangster or other bad guy). In the back wall is a door leading out of the building to a reserved parking area.

**10. Dressing Rooms.** This series of small rooms is where the performers prepare for a show. They are all pretty much the same, containing make-up tables with large mirrors mounted along them, racks for hanging clothes, and are usually strewn with current props and costumes.

A featured performer will usually get a dressing room all to him- or herself. Other performers must share dressing rooms, in which case they can get pretty crowded.

**11. Storeroom.** This large room is where cases of liquor and other supplies for the bar and the club in general are stored. It is fairly crowded with crates and other boxes stacked high.

There is also a table set up in here, where the club's photographer processes the photos she has taken and prepares them for customers.

**12. Employee Bathrooms.** These smaller and

more utilitarian bathrooms are for the use of the performers and the staff.

**13. Wardrobe.** Costumes and props for the different shows that the club mounts are stored in this room. Costumes and props that are currently in use are brought to the dressing rooms and stored in those rooms for the duration of the show, and returned to the wardrobe after the run is completed. The room is full of rolling clothes racks, hung with lots of fancy costumes, and the walls are lined with filled shelves and clothes hooks.

**14. Storage Room.** The purpose of this room is storing scenery, large props and equipment that is used backstage, so it is generally very crowded and difficult to move around in. It can also be used for storing individuals, if the club owner so desires.

**15. Owner's Office.** This is a large, well-decorated office. The furniture is all well-crafted of quality woods and covered in rich upholstery. Opposite the door is a large desk and plush chair. Flanking the desk to either side are two more plush chairs, for the owner's guests. Along the back wall, on either side of the desk, are heavy bookshelves/display cabinets. Against the right wall is a sumptuous couch.

Against the left wall is a wooden cabinet. When the cabinet's doors are opened, you find yourself facing the thick steel door of the safe which is built

## MINOR CHARACTERS: THE CLUB

Most of the minor characters in the Club will be drawn along the same lines as those in the Gambling Den and the Gin Joint (above), though a little more upscale. They tend to be better paid, and more loyal, and less likely to act against the owner's, or his/her customer's, best interests. Of course, there are always more minor characters you can insert:

**The Social Climber:** This man/woman comes to the Club every night that is fashionable, to rub elbows with the socially successful. While affluent, the Social Climber only appears to be wealthy — he/she might buy a round of drinks for a table, but only early in the evening. Then, the Social Climber hopes to gain contacts, friends, and free meals/drinks. The Social Climber will do virtually *anything* to rise in status, and may be more desperate for attention than a drunk is for a bottle.

**The Headliner:** Usually spoiled, almost always vain, the Headliner is the "foreign talent" the Club uses to pull in some extra customers. While the Club may have a regular band, or several regular acts, the Headliner is here "at the bequest" of the owner. Chances are good the Headliner is either a star on the rise ... or on the way down. He/she sees the Club scene as "good exposure," but it may be "beneath" him or her. Often, the Headliner's mouth and attitude gets him/her in trouble, and the player characters might get paid to get him/her out of it. The Headliner has little loyalty for the Club.

**The Hat-Check Girl/Boy:** Checking hats is a good way for young boys and girls to make money in the Club. They hold coats and umbrellas, too. "Hat-checking is as good as head-counting" is the smart Club owner's saying, however, and if anyone has a chance to spot "new talent" coming into a club — and go unnoticed while doing it — those at the check station are it. Often, the Hat-Check Girl/Boy is very loyal to the Club owner, but won't "see the harm" in answering a few questions ... for a suitable tip.



into the cabinet. Only the owner knows the combination to the safe's lock and the counterspells to the wards.

Along the wall to the left of the door is long narrow cabinet. This serves as a bar, and the top of the cabinet is lined with a few bottles, some glasses and an ice bucket and tongs on a tray.

This is the room where the club's owner conducts business, entertains guests and deals with visitors. During business hours, he can be found here when he's not out mingling or overseeing the operation of the club. During the day he can be found here taking care of the books or handling orders, unless he is about the club inspecting it or watching rehearsals.

While the owner of the club is in his office, he is usually accompanied by a henchman, or a bodyguard, or an associate, depending on what type of club it is.

## USING THE NIGHT CLUB

The night club can be encountered in a number of ways. The most usual is that the characters will end up there in the course of an investigation. Most likely they will go there to ask around, trying to obtain information, or trying to find someone they're seeking — some informant or clue has pointed them in the direction of the club.

The story might begin in the night club, as the characters are asked to meet someone there, and she hires them for a job, or otherwise sets them up for the adventure. Maybe the concerned individual is a member of the staff or a performer.

Another way that they may end up at the night club as a result of their investigations might be for the club's owner to summon them there. After being "invited" into a big black limo by some burly no-nonsense muscle because "da boss wants to talk to ya," the characters may find themselves in the owner's office and told to stop nosing around in things that are none of their business or too dangerous for them. That should pique their interests and keep them looking deeper into the situation.

## CARTER HOLGIST (TYPICAL NIGHT CLUB OWNER)

### AGILITY 8

Dodge 14, maneuver 9, unarmed parry 12

### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11, prestidigitation 13

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 10

Perception 11, trick 11

### MIND 10

Business 14 (clubs 17)

### CONFIDENCE 8

Con 9, conjuration: wizardry 11, intimidation 10, streetwise 12, willpower 14

### CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 11, taunt 10

### Life Points: 5

### Arcane Knowledges: Folk 3

**Equipment:** Silver cigarette case; cigarette holder; small-caliber pistol, damage value 16, ammo 6; *invisibility* spell (charged into ring; one use — see the *Bloodshadows* WorldBook for effects)

**Description:** Carter presents the appearance of being suave and debonair, but in actuality is cruel and conniving. He is involved with the mobs, while not being a mobster. Some possibilities of this involvement could be money-laundering, trafficking in contraband or letting the place out for gambling after hours or for mob conferences. These mob connections give him a sense of power that he does not actually have.

## USING ALL THE LOCATIONS

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, these locations can be used in many different ways in several different adventures. They may even be renamed and slightly reworked and used as "different" locations from time to time.

For example, there is no reason that *The Topaz Room* can't become *The Silver Sable Club* with a few slight changes to the map and some renaming of the characters.

These locations are provided to save you, the gamemaster, work. Certainly, you don't just want to change a few names and use the same exact locations over and over again, but you can use these tips to let your players think that you are creating everything from scratch the first time.

## REDOING THE MAP

Each of these locations has a map. Some of them have map keys (like the 13th Precinct and *The Topaz Room*). All you have to do is create a new map, with a new basic shape, around the old key or description. "Room 12" might be on the west side of your old map, where it was on the second story, to the north, of your old map.

## ADDING/SUBTRACTING ROOMS

Perhaps the Curio Shop would work just as well without an upstairs apartment. Maybe the Gin Joint should have some housing upstairs — for "guests" or drunks. It might be nice if the Club had

two or three “main rooms,” with different things going on in each.

## COMBINE THE LOCATIONS

Wouldn't it be interesting if the Curio Shop was a front for the Gambling Den? “I'd like to buy a brass unicorn,” the customer says. “What color?” the clerk asks. “Blue,” the customer responds, giving the coded phrase, and a hidden door opens up leading down into the Gambling Den.

You can take two, or even three, locations and attach them to each other. You might even choose to attach them to innocuous, or interesting, locations of your own creation. Maybe the sentinels in this section of “Rensdale” have their precinct in the other half of a meat-packing plant and the ventilation spells die out in the middle of the summer.

## SHUFFLE THE CHARACTERS

There's no reason the “Strange Customer” from the Curio Shop can't pop up in the Gin Joint later on in an adventure or campaign — and Carter Holgist might drop by *The Dripping Dagger* to meet with the proprietor, make a deal, or just to try some “low-scale” action. The fact that your player characters see these “location-linked” characters in other locations only makes them more real and more interesting.

Basically, anything you want to do to make these locations reusable is in your best interests. You might even wish to make major changes to each location now, and save the “stock” descriptions for later, when you might be pressed for a location you haven't prepared.

## GAMEMASTER CHARACTER LOG

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIES	ALIGNMENT	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX
ATTRIBUTES		Physical Appearance			
AGILITY	___	INTELLECT	___		
DEXTERITY	___	MIND	___		
ENDURANCE	___	CONFIDENCE	___	Personality	
STRENGTH	___	CHARISMA	___		
SKILL/VALUE		ATTR.			
				Resources	
				Equipment	
Arcane Knowledges					
Spells		Distinguishing Characteristics			
Background		Notes			

## CHAPTER FOUR

# RUNNING ADVENTURES

The stacks of crates in the darkened warehouse stretched toward the ceiling, like the blocky fingers of a dead thing groping for freedom from its earthy entombment. Elacar Stang ignored the crates towering above his head as he advanced through their grasp, his senses straining forward to pick up any indication where his quarry might be found deeper in the building.

This had been a tough job. His target was easily spooked, and after he had eluded Stang's first attempt at apprehending him he had lost himself further within the dark recesses of the underworld. After a few leads had panned out, Stang picked up word that Griswold Kush had skipped town.

Impressed with the extent of the resources Griswold had at his disposal — after all, traveling to another city was not something to be taken lightly — Stang had opted to follow him. The bounty being offered for Griswold's retrieval made following him to another city worth the risk. Somebody wanted old Kushie real bad.

Kush's connections apparently extended to the magical, too. The trip to this new burg had been made much easier by passage through a gate. Information about gates — accurate information — was decidedly difficult to come by, yet old Kushie had made a beeline to one as soon as he had left the walls of Tarrik.

Stang had been through gates before. You don't make a living tracking people and things down by remaining in one city. So he was not unprepared for the sensation he felt passing through. But there had been something *different* about this passage, almost as if there were someone else in there with him. In addition to the usual physical sensations one felt after passage, Stang was unusually disoriented. The feeling soon passed, though, and he quickly picked up Griswold's trail.

And that had led him here. It didn't take long to track Griswold down in a different city. He was an outsider, without all the connections he enjoyed back in Tarrik. Stang spread around a little gold, asked the right questions and had ended up here, in a dark warehouse in the industrial part of town. He sensed that the chase was almost up.

Sure enough, as he took another turn through the maze of stacked containers, he noticed the cool glow of a lantern illuminating the space behind a wall of crates. Creeping closer, he saw that a little room had been formed by stacking some of the cargo around a small open area. Griswold had a cot, a glow-lantern, a table and a





couple of chairs for company. *Not quite the accommodations he's accustomed to*, mused Stang sardonically.

Seeing that Griswold was alone, Stang allowed himself a touch of histrionics. He strode through the opening in the wall of crates and struck an authoritative pose, saying in his best sentinel-voice, "Well, Mr. Kush, it looks like your "vacation" is coming to a premature end."

For a long moment there was silence. Griswold just sat there on the cot, shoulders hunched and his head resting in his hands. There was something odd about this. This wasn't the way Kushie should react. Then Griswold Kush began to move. He turned slowly, a wide grin plastered across his face, a grin that looked almost too large for his face. He stood slowly, and spoke even more slowly. "Greetings, Mr. Stang, we've been expecting you. Or, rather, I should say *I've* been expecting you. Mr. Kush was rather apprehensive about any such encounter, and I'm afraid he's no longer able to be here for this meeting."

Stang cursed silently to himself as he stretched out his senses and suddenly felt the presence of something Unnatural. The thing that stood before him looked like Griswold Kush, but his quarry no longer occupied the body he had lived his life in. Stang's unspoken curse served two purposes; his sense for other creatures of the supernatural was usually pretty dependable, but somehow this thing had masked its presence from him. Not only that, but now he had lost his quarry for good, and with him, the bounty.

Another bounty hunter might have tried to pass off the body and collect the reward anyway, but Stang had a code of honor within which he worked. His target had eluded him, and the case was closed. He had no quarrel with the current occupant of the body which now stood before him, and stated as much to him. He began to withdraw from the stacked-crate room.

"Now, now, Mr. Stang, don't be in a such a hurry to leave. I'm sure we'll find that we have a lot in common. And we'll have lots of time together to get to know one another's interests." As it spoke, Kush's body continued to move closer to him. The grin widened even further, until it wrapped around Kush's face from ear to ear. Then it continued to widen, the flesh tearing and the bone cracking until the entire top of Kush's head fell away from the body.

While the head was putting on its own show, sharp yellowish claws grew out of Kush's chest in a line along his breastbone. They extended themselves out a few inches, then curled left and right from the center, grabbing hold of the bone, skin and clothing bordering the freshly gaping wound. With a sickening cracking and splintering sound, Kush's chest was split wide, glistening organs cascading out upon the floor with a wet plop.

The legs of the now-abandoned body gave out and it sagged to the floor, cast off like useless rags. The thing which had torn its way out of Kush's body stood before Stang, and he had an impression of something not quite reptilian. Before he could catch any details, the thing threw itself at him, claws raking wildly at his face. Stang threw himself back and to the side, still managing to draw his sawed-off from under his coat in one smooth motion.

The creature from Kush's body sailed past him and into the edge of the opening, bringing a wall of crates crashing down on itself. As it scrambled free of the boxy avalanche Stang fired the runslug already loaded in the upper barrel. The capture-slug caught the creature in the right shoulder, and the flaring tentacles of energy emanating from it only managed to pin that arm to its body. The thing shrugged its shoulder, and the tentacles dissipated. It clambered free of the pile and advanced on Stang again.

Immediately after firing the first slug, Stang began muttering a reloading cantrip, concentrating on the special runshell he kept secured to his belt. As the creature prepared itself for another leap, the spell was completed and Stang pulled the trigger. The fireball-shell met the creature in mid-jump, imbedding itself in the thing's chest. A split-second later it detonated with a flash and a muffled thud, sending parts of the creature flying to different parts of the warehouse.

A keening wail seemed to echo through the building, although Stang felt more than heard it. The cry was cut short and punctuated by a dull thump as the head of the creature hit the floor in front of Stang. It rolled forward and came to rest at Stang's feet, staring up at him with blank, lifeless eyes.

Elacar Stang stared back at the head for a second, then got slowly to his feet. He reloaded his weapon once again, slung it under his coat and took a deep breath. Then he kicked the head into the pile of crates and headed out of the warehouse to prepare for the long trip home.

## BLOODSHADOWS AS A MOVIE

As mentioned earlier in *this book*, the underlying motif of *Bloodshadows* is that of *fantasy noir*. In keeping with that background, the best way to consider a *Bloodshadows* adventure is in terms of film. The adventure itself is a movie, but an open-ended movie. As the adventure is played out, the actions of the characters help determine the ending. This may be the ending planned by the game-master, or it may be something far different.

The various aspects of the film analogy are fulfilled by the gamemaster and the players, with the majority of the responsibility on the gamemaster's shoulders.

## THE DIRECTOR

This is where you, the gamemaster, come in. It is up to you to provide direction to the adventure. You present the world to the players. They see what you want them to see. It is up to you to present the players with the proper mood and feel of the adventure and of the universe in which it occurs. You get to choose how information is presented. You control the pace of the story: how fast it develops, when the action should slow down to evoke a mood, when the action should heat up so as to keep the players excited and involved, and so on.

The presentation of the adventure may also be enhanced by sound effects or lighting, or by the use of props. You will determine what audio or visual aids will be used to further the storyline.

## THE SCRIPT

In the role of scriptwriter, the gamemaster determines the overall course of the adventure — in fact, the gamemaster is more of a “story editor” than an actual scriptwriter. What are the goals and the intermediate steps necessary to achieve them? What will happen in these scenes to keep the players interested and moving forward to the conclusion? What type of characters are necessary to to move the adventure along?

Gamemaster characters should be interesting and engaging in order to encourage players to roleplay their own characters. You should keep in mind the characters that your players are using, and tailor the story to those characters. You want to provide a challenge to the players and the characters, but not make things impossibly difficult. You may also wish to set up situations that allow the characters to grow and develop. But above all, you and the players should have fun.

You must plan the course of the adventure, and provide the information required to let the players find their way through it. Of course, you are under no obligation to make it obvious; the players must work for their clues. On the other hand, the information shouldn't be too obscure, either.

You must also plan for side trips and tangents. Players are an inventive lot, and sooner or later the players' characters will do something or go somewhere that you did not intend. You must have contingencies ready. They do not have to be fully fleshed out, but you should have some ideas that you can fall back on and develop if it becomes necessary.

The details that work into the script will also go a long way to evoking the feel of a real world. You are seeking to describe a world that lives and breathes. The players should not feel that their characters are just acting on a stage; they should feel that they interacting with a world. You want to make your players care about what their characters are doing, and feel that what the characters do makes a difference in the world.

If time does not permit the creation of your own story, another alternative is to use someone else's script; that is, a published adventure. When using a published adventure, most of the work of plotting the story and creating the details is done for you. You must become familiar with the story before running it, though. Read it through and make notes. You may have to make modifications to the story or the details if you are trying to fit it into an existing campaign. Note what elements you have changed, and add in whatever elements your version requires.

## THE ACTORS

This is where the players come in. They are the stars of the film, playing the protagonists around whom the story revolves. Much of the enjoyment of a roleplaying game lies in bringing a character to life. As the director, you should encourage your players to roleplay their characters; you want them to perform. The rules and die rolls are there as guidelines to the characters' actions, providing a framework within which actions can be compared and resolved. But the heart of the game is playing a role.

The rest of the cast is filled by the gamemaster. You get to play every other character in the story — a daunting task, but not impossible. You are the villains, the antagonists, and all the extras. Strive to bring your characters to life. Give different characters distinctive personalities and particular mannerisms. This will help to distinguish your characters from one another and clue the players in as to whom they are dealing with in a particular scene.

Just as the players will try to stay in character, you should also. Keep in mind the character you are currently portraying and what his or her purpose is in the storyline. How would this character interact with the players' characters. Remember, you are not dealing with your pals Harry and Theresa, but with a tough detective and a sultry torch singer. And you are not you, but the sniveling snitch whom they are giving the third degree. For more information on creating and running distinctive characters, see Chapter Two, “Defining Characters.”



## THE CREW

Everything else necessary to the running of the game is handled by the gamemaster. From time to time, you will be required to act as propmaster, sound effects generator or lighting director, based upon which of those effects you have determined to use in your capacity as director.

As propmaster, you will prepare and distribute whatever props are required to advance the story. Usually these will be newspaper clippings, notes scrawled on scraps of paper, invoices, maps or whatever else might provide a clue. Actually preparing a sheet of paper with the information on it and handing it to the players at the appropriate time goes a long way toward making the world feel real. It also saves on misunderstandings that come from inaccurate description.

As sound effects generator, you will want to set the mood with the appropriate sounds or music. Having a suitable musical selection playing in the background on a portable tape player can really evoke a feeling of being someplace. For instance, you might have some big band music playing while the characters are at a dance hall questioning the owner of the joint. There are several tapes available presenting the sounds of a haunted house, with sounds ranging from thunderstorms to wolves howling to clanking chains and eerie moans. Pick one up around Halloween and save it for year-round spooky moods.

You can also make the sounds yourself. The growl of a dog or a monster about to pounce is something just about everyone can do. Build up a repertoire of sounds and music you throw in to establish a scene.

Lighting is an often overlooked adjunct to roleplaying. No one expects you to have a series of spotlights and colored gels handy, but you don't need much to set a mood. Just dimming the lights, or turning off all but one light can make things more eerie. remember that in *film noir*, a dominant element of the visual style is heavy shadows cast across the scene. A single bare bulb placed low can cast some effective shadows.

You might also pick up some colored light bulbs, in particular red, green and blue. Placing these bulbs in a fixture and turning it on for the appropriate scene can quickly establish a setting. You might also develop a lighting shorthand, so that your players can tell what the situation is just by the lighting. For instance, you could use a red bulb to signify night. Whenever the action takes place at night turn on the red bulb. Maybe the blue bulb represents a full moon when the characters are outdoors at night. Colored acetates from an art supply store can also be used in conjunction with a flashlight to establish scenes and characters. Projecting a green or blue light on your face works well to give your skin a ghastly pallor, for

those times when you are portraying a Taxim or some other undead creature.

## THE BLOODSHADOWS STYLE

In order to convey the unique atmosphere of a *Bloodshadows* game, you need to keep a number of elements in mind when designing or preparing your story. These items serve to establish the proper mood for the game, or to reinforce the feel of the story. You, the gamemaster, should remain aware of these elements both when setting up the adventure and when actually running it. Use of these items will help keep the players in the proper frame of mind and serve to heighten the roleplaying experience.

### MOOD

*Bloodshadows* is dark, brooding and filled with shadows. Things are very often unknown and sinister. It is a hard world, in which only the tough survive. Those who really experience life often come face to face with death. Criminals are brutal, and many times so is the law. But even though the world is dark, it is not unrelentingly so. It should be leavened with lighter scenes so that it does not become overpoweringly oppressive.

More details on the mood of *Bloodshadows* are given in Chapter One, "Setting the Tone."

### HORROR

Besides the darkness of the human soul, there are creatures and beings who literally have been born of the darkness. Not only do Human characters in this world have to put up with the dark desires and longings of their own kind, but they are also subject to the depredations of supernatural creatures, some of whom see Humans only as prey.

In addition to the trappings of *film noir*, then, you should also keep the conventions of horror films firmly in mind. The two genres share many characteristics, but the real twists come from combining the two, so that your players don't expect what comes at them. For instance, one of the venerable old institutions of horror films is the haunted house. But instead of making it an obvious location, like an old Victorian house, what if, during the course of an investigation, the characters become trapped in a brownstone or a flophouse That is haunted by some Unnatural creature.

Other things, such as the gradual build-up of horrific elements leading to the grand appearance of the main evil, or the gradual whittling down of the team ("I'll go check the basement. Wait here"), can be combined with the conventions of the hard-boiled detective story for excellent effect.



## VALUE CHART

Val. Measure		Measure		Measure	
0	1	35	10 million	70	100 trillion
1	1.5	36	15 million	71	150 trillion
2	2.5	37	25 million	72	250 trillion
3	4	38	40 million	73	400 trillion
4	6	39	60 million	74	600 trillion
5	10	40	100 million	75	1 quadrillion
6	15	41	150 million	76	1.5 quadrillion
7	25	42	250 million	77	2.5 quadrillion
8	40	43	400 million	78	4 quadrillion
9	60	44	600 million	79	6 quadrillion
10	100	45	1 billion	80	10 quadrillion
11	150	46	1.5 billion	81	15 quadrillion
12	250	47	2.5 billion	82	25 quadrillion
13	400	48	4 billion	83	40 quadrillion
14	600	49	6 billion	84	60 quadrillion
15	1,000	50	10 billion	85	100 quadrillion
16	1,500	51	15 billion	86	150 quadrillion
17	2,500	52	25 billion	87	250 quadrillion
18	4,000	53	40 billion	88	400 quadrillion
19	6,000	54	60 billion	89	600 quadrillion
20	10,000	55	100 billion	90	1 quintillion
21	15,000	56	150 billion	91	1.5 quintillion
22	25,000	57	250 billion	92	2.5 quintillion
23	40,000	58	400 billion	93	4 quintillion
24	60,000	59	600 billion	94	6 quintillion
25	100,000	60	1 trillion	95	10 quintillion
26	150,000	61	1.5 trillion	96	15 quintillion
27	250,000	62	2.5 trillion	97	25 quintillion
28	400,000	63	4 trillion	98	40 quintillion
29	600,000	64	6 trillion	99	60 quintillion
30	1 million	65	10 trillion	100	100 quintillion
31	1.5 million	66	15 trillion		
32	2.5 million	67	25 trillion		
33	4 million	68	40 trillion		

Number of  
Cards for Each

1	5
2-5	3
6+	2

## Value Modifier

Seconds	0
Minutes	+9
Hours	+18
Days	+25
Weeks	+29
Months	+32
Years	+38
Meters per round	0

MPH	+3
KMH	+2
Kilos	0
Pounds	-2
Tons	+15
Meters	0
Feet	-3
Kilometers	+15
Miles	+16

## BACKGROUND ADVANTAGE LIST

### COLUMN I

- Additional Skill Adds (CI)** One add in general skill, two adds in specialization
- Contacts (CI)** Character has a friend or friends who provide minor assistance
- Cultures (CI)** Character gains knowledge of a foreign culture
- Equipment (CI)** Character gains unusual equipment
- Fame (CI)** Character has minor notoriety
- Skill Bonus (CI)** +1 to a group of three related skills (modifier to bonus number only)
- Wealth (CI)** Character is upper middle class

### COLUMN II

- Additional Skill Adds (CII)** Increase one general skill by two adds, or one specialization by three adds
- Contacts (CII)** As Contacts I, but the "friend" is more influential
- Cultures (CII)** The knowledge is more extensive than Cultures I or more in-depth
- Equipment (CII)** The item is more valuable than Equipment I
- Fame (CII)** The character is better known than "I"
- Luck (CII)** The character can use certain card deck enhancements once per adventure
- Skill Bonus (CII)** Gain +1 to the bonus number of five related skills
- Trademark Specialization (CII)** The character gains +3 to the bonus number of any specialization, plus he his moderately "famous" for it (as "Fame I")
- Wealth (CII)** The character is from the upper class

### COLUMN III

- Additional Skill Adds (CIII)** Increase one general skill by three adds, or one specialization by four adds
- Additional Attribute Point (CIII)** Increase one Attribute by one point
- Contacts (CIII)** The "friends" are extremely unusual and effective

- Cultures (CIII)** The character has "native knowledge" and interactive abilities in the culture
- Equipment (CIII)** The equipment is artifactual in nature
- Fame (CIII)** The character is almost always recognized as famous
- Learning Curve (Positive)(CIII)** The character can improve skills at a cost of one skill point *less* after adventuring
- Luck (CIII)** The character can choose from other card deck options to use during an adventure
- Skill Bonus (CIII)** Gain +2 to the bonus number of three related skills or gain macroskill bonus (see text)
- Special Abilities (CIII)\*** Special Abilities chart and text)
- Special Effects (CIII)†** Gain the ability to use the special effects skill (or one such skill) as per the game setting
- SupraNormal Knowledge (CIII)** The character can do something no one else can do (see text; +3 bonus is common)
- Wealth (CIII)** The character is incredibly rich

### COLUMN IV

- Contacts (CIV)** The contacts are godlike
- Cultures (CIV)** The character understands a completely alien culture
- Equipment (CIV)** The character gains an artifact
- Luck (CIV)** The character gains more use of his card deck enhancements (see text)
- Skill Minimum (CIV)** Character always gains a +0 bonus number or better on three related skills
- Special Abilities (CIV)\*** More powerful than "III" (see Special Abilities chart and text)

See text in *MasterBook* rule book.

\*The Special Abilities (CIII) & (CIV) Advantages are handled differently in *Bloodshadows* than in *MasterBook*. See the text descriptions.

†All *Bloodshadows* characters may learn the magic skills as defined in Chapters Six and Eight without purchasing this Advantage.

### SKILL POINTS

Intellect Is ...	Skill Points Are ...
13	10
11 to 12	9
8 to 10	8
6 to 7	7
5	6
Mind is ...	Skill Points Are ...
13	16
11 to 12	14
9 to 10	12
7 to 8	10
6	8
5	6

### TOUGHNESS CHART

Strength	Toughness Points
10 to 13	4
7 to 9	3
5 to 6	2
Endurance	Toughness Points
12 to 13	8
9 to 11	7
7 to 8	6
5 to 6	5

### COMPARISON CHART

# of Skill Adds	Level of Knowledge
1	Novice
2	Beginner
3	Intermediate
4-6	Professional
7-10	Advanced Professional
11-15	Adept, or "Master"
16+	Probably the most learned in the world

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+1

COVER AND CONCEALMENT

Concealment is:	Defensive Modifier
One-Quarter	+3
One-Half	+5
Three-Quarter	+8
Complete	+12
Complete Plus	+12+?
Cover is:	Toughness Modifier
Negligible	0
Weak	+2
Moderate	+4
Strong	+6
Very Strong	+8
"Impenetrable"	+12

SURPRISE MODIFIERS

Surprise Levels	Attacking Modifier	Damage Modifier
Blindside*	+2	0
Partial Surprise	+2	0
Complete Surprise	+5	-2

\*The modifiers for a *blindsight* attack are cumulative with either *partial surprise* or *complete surprise* modifiers, but neither *partial surprise* nor *complete surprise* are cumulative with each other.

MULTI-ACTION TABLE

Action Priority	Modifier to Skill Total
Primary	-2
Secondary	-3
Tertiary	-4
Etc. ...	An additional -1 for each

MANY-ON-ONE TABLE

# of Characters	DN Modifier	Effect Modifier
1	DN	-
2	DN+1	+3
3	DN+2	+4
4	DN+2	+5
5	DN+3	+6
6	DN+3	+7
7	DN+4	+8
8	DN+4	+9
9	DN+5	+10
10*	DN+5	+11

\* For every two characters above nine, add +1 to the DN Modifier and +1 to the Effect Modifier.

BLOOD SHADOWS SKILL LIST

<b>AGILITY</b> Acrobatics Beast Riding* Climbing Dodge <b>Flight*</b> Long Jumping Maneuver <b>Martial Arts*</b> Melee Combat Melee Parry Running Stealth Swimming Unarmed Combat Unarmed Parry	First Aid Linguistics Navigation* Perception <b>Safe Cracking</b> <b>Science*</b> Smuggling <b>Teaching*</b> Tracking Trick <b>Vehicle Mechanic</b>
<b>DEXTERITY</b> Fire Combat <b>Gunnery*</b> <b>Heavy Weapons*</b> <b>Lock Picking</b> Missile Weapons* Prestidigitation Thrown Weapons <b>Vehicle Piloting*</b>	<b>MIND</b> <b>Artist*</b> Business <b>Cartography</b> <b>Conjuration*</b> <b>Hypnotism</b> <b>Language*</b> <b>Medicine</b> <b>Research</b> Scholar*
<b>ENDURANCE</b> <b>Resist Shock</b>	<b>CONFIDENCE</b> <b>Alteration*</b> Bribery Con Faith* Gambling Interrogation Intimidation Streetwise Survival* <b>Willpower</b>
<b>STRENGTH</b> Lifting	<b>CHARISMA</b> Charm Disguise Persuasion Shapeshifting <b>Summoning*</b> Taunt
<b>INTELLECT</b> <b>Apportation*</b> Camouflage <b>Cantrips</b> Deduction <b>Demolitions</b> <b>Divination*</b> <b>Forgery</b>	

\* Macroskill: must select a skill focus.  
**Boldface:** Skill cannot be used *untrained*.

ROUNDS PROCEDURE

0. Declare Rounds
  1. Determine Initiative
  2. Announce Approved Actions \*
  3. Act in Initiative Order
  4. Summarize Results (Gamemaster)
  6. Award Cards/Flip Over Cards \*
  7. End Rounds or Begin a New Round
- \* Only when using the card deck for initiative.



## FIREARMS

Weapon Type	Damage*	Ammo	Range				Price (Ammo)**
			Short	Med.	Long	Ext.	
.22 Delken	15	6	3-10	15	40	140	10 (2)
.38 Gelvash	17	6	3-10	25	40	140	15 (1)
.44 Karr Automatic	20	6	3-10	25	50	150	40 (2)
Degan "Guardian" Rifle	22	6	5-20	75	200	300	40 (1)
Gelvash "Thunder" Shotgun	21	2	5-10	20	40	80	20 (1)
Skandra "Annihilator" Submachine Gun	17	30	5-10	20	50	100	90 (3)

\* Damage given for standard lead slugs. Runeslugs do this damage, plus whatever damage the charged spell causes.

\*\* Ammo prices are for standard lead slugs.

## ATTRIBUTE VALUE COMPARISON CHART

Attribute Value	Relative Quality
13+	Superhuman
13	Exceptional — A genius; an Olympic or professional athlete of the highest caliber would have attributes this high (but would also have many skill adds as well); a movie idol
11-12	Outstanding — A very adept or extremely bright character; in top physical shape; a very popular person
9-10	High average — smart; in good shape; personable
7-8	Low average — not overly intelligent; moderate conditioning; bland
6	Below average — unintelligent; in poor physical shape; dull or abrasive
5	Well below average — "stupid"; almost no physical ability; unpleasant and unpopular
5-	The character has either a severe handicap or another reason for being so below "normal."

## ARMOR

Armor Type	TOU+/Max Value	Price (In selasts)
Hides and Furs	+2/17	5
Bone and Hide	+3/18	8
Padded	+3/18	10
Leather	+2/17	5
Bronze	+6/21	100
Bulletproof Vest	+7/22	125

## ENCHANTED WEAPONS\*

Weapon Type	Damage Value	Effect Value	Price
Ashes to Ashes	STR+4/19	30	150
Burning Blades	STR+2/17	18	120
Chain Reaction	STR+4/19	17	300
Hand of Glory	—	19	110
Lightning Cane	STR+4/19	21	140
Pain Baton	STR+4/19	13	90
Razor Wire	STR+5/20	18	250
Smoke Rings	—	20	50
Winter's Wand	STR+1/16	19	100

\* See notes in text for all of these weapons

## BLOODSHADOWS SKILL LIST

### AGILITY

Acrobatics  
Beast Riding\*  
Climbing  
Dodge  
**Flight\***  
Long Jumping  
Maneuver  
**Martial Arts\***  
Melee Combat  
Melee Parry  
Running  
Stealth  
Swimming  
Unarmed Combat  
Unarmed Parry

### DEXTERITY

Fire Combat  
**Gunnery\***  
**Heavy Weapons\***  
**Lock Picking**  
Missile Weapons\*  
Prestidigitation  
Thrown Weapons  
**Vehicle Piloting\***

### ENDURANCE

**Resist Shock**

### STRENGTH

Lifting

### INTELLECT

**Apportation\***  
Camouflage  
**Cantrips**  
Deduction  
**Demolitions**  
**Divination\***  
**Forgery**  
First Aid  
Linguistics  
Navigation\*  
Perception  
**Safe Cracking**  
**Science\***  
Smuggling  
**Teaching\***  
Tracking  
Trick

### Vehicle Mechanic

### MIND

**Artist\***  
Business  
**Cartography**  
**Conjuration\***  
**Hypnotism**  
**Language\***  
**Medicine**  
**Research**  
Scholar\*

### CONFIDENCE

**Alteration\***  
Bribery

### Con

Faith\*  
Gambling  
Interrogation  
Intimidation  
Streetwise  
Survival\*  
**Willpower**

### CHARISMA

Charm  
Disguise  
Persuasion  
Shapeshifting  
**Summoning\***  
Taunt

\* Macroskill: must select a skill focus.

**Boldface:** Skill cannot be used *untrained*.

## SKILL ADD COSTS

- General skill: 1 skill point per add
- Focus: 1 skill point per add
- Specialization: 1/2 skill point per specialization add

## MISSILE WEAPONS &amp; ALCHEMICAL POTIONS

Weapon Type	Damage Value	Range				Price
		Short	Med.	Long	Ext.	
Throwing Weapon	STR+2/17	3-5	10	15	25	5
Bow and Arrow	STR+5/20	3-10	40	100	150	7
Crossbow	STR+9/24	3-10	100	200	300	15

Potion	Effect Value	Range				Price *
		Short	Med.	Long	Ext.	
Blind	30	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	25
Eagle Eyes	21	-	-	-	-	25
Potion of Power	20	-	-	-	-	35
Razor's Edge	19	-	-	-	-	35
Revitalize	11	-	-	-	-	50
Smokescreen	20	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	50
Stench	15	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	30
Tar Pit	18	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	35
Thunder	19	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	60
Toughen	25	-	-	-	-	80

\* Per dose

## MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon Type	Damage Value	Price
Club/Baton	STR+5/20	2
Knife/Dagger	STR+4/19	3
Stake	STR+4/19	4
Switchblade	STR+4/19	4
Cleaver	STR+5/20	5
Brass Knuckles	STR+4/19	10
Blackjack	STR+3/18	5

## ADVANTAGE FLAWS

CIII	PAGE *	CIV	PAGE *
<b>LIST A</b>		<b>LIST A</b>	
Ability Loss I	76	Ability Loss III	78
Allergy I	76	Allergy II	79
Cultural "Allergy" I	76	Cultural "Allergy" II	79
Metabolic Difference	77	Reduced Attribute III	79
Minor Stigma	77	Rot II	79
Reduced Attribute I	77	Symbiosis I	79
Rot I	77		
Stench	77	<b>LIST B</b>	
<b>LIST B</b>		Ability Loss IV	79
Ability Loss II	77	Infection II	80
Atmospheric Incompatibility	77	Reduced Attribute IV	80
Environmental Incompatibility	77	Symbiosis II	81
Infection I	77		
Nutritional Requirements	78		
Reduced Attribute II	78		

\* Page number in  
*The World of Bloodshadows.*

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

CIII	PAGE *	CIV	PAGE *	CIV (CONTINUED)	PAGE *
<b>LIST A</b>		<b>LIST A</b>			
Armor-Defeating Attack	66	Accelerated Healing	70	Natural Sorcery I	71
Atmospheric Tolerance	66	Animal Control II	70	Natural Weaponry	
Enhanced Senses	66	Attack Form		(Hand-to-Hand)	72
Environmental Tolerance	66	Resistance (Environmental)	70	Natural Weaponry	
Long Life Span	67	Attack Form		(Ranged)	72
Multiple Abilities I	67	Resistance (Interaction)	70	Possession I	72
Omnivorousness	67	Attack Form		Shapeshifting I	72
Silence	67	Resistance (Magical Attack)	70	Uncanny Aptitude II	73
Speed	67	Attack Form Resistance			
Up Condition	67	(Non-Enchanted Weapons)	70	<b>LIST B</b>	
Water Breathing	67	Attribute Increase II	70	Attribute Adjustment	73
<b>LIST B</b>		Confusion	70	Elasticity	74
Animal Control I	67	Darkness	71	Immortality	74
Attribute Increase I	67	Fast Reactions	71	Intangibility	74
Blur	67	Fear	71	Invisibility	74
Combat Sense	67	Flight	71	Life Drain	74
Glider Wings	67	Hardiness II	71	Natural Sorcery II	75
Hardiness I	67	Hypnotism	71	Paralyzing Touch	75
Infravision/Ultravision	67	Multiple Abilities II	71	Possession II	75
Toughened Skin	70	Natural Armor	71	Regeneration	75
Uncanny Aptitude I	70			Shapeshifting II	75
				Teleportation	75
				Transmutation	75

\* Page number in *The World of Bloodshadows.*

## MAGICAL FOCI

Alchemy  
Necromancy  
Vitomancy  
Technomancy  
Photomancy  
Wizardry  
Elemental  
Sorcery  
Chronomancy

## ARCAINE KNOWLEDGES & ALIGNMENTS

### ORDER

Light  
Living Forces  
Enchanted  
Aquatic  
Avian  
Animal  
Air  
Time

### CHAOS

Darkness  
Inanimate Forces  
Entity  
Fire

Water  
Dimension

### OATHBREAKER/ ORDER

Light  
Living Forces  
Enchanted  
Aquatic  
Avian  
Animal  
Air  
Earth

### OATHBREAKER/ CHAOS

Darkness  
Inanimate Forces  
Entity  
Fire  
Water  
Metal

### NON-ALIGNED

Death  
Life  
Plant  
Folk  
Magic

## RANGED WEAPONS

Fire Options	Attacking Modifier	Defensive Modifier	Damage Modifier
Burst Fire as Single	-1	0	-2
Full Auto (if possible)	+3	-1	+1
Single Fire as Multi (if possible)	+2	0	+1
Aim (for one round)	+2 (next round)	-2 (same round)	+1
"Trick" Shot	-4	varies	+2
Sweep (Ranged) (if possible)	+2	0	-5
Hit Location	*	*	*

\* See *MasterBook* rulebook.

## RANGED WEAPONS (MUSCLE-POWERED)

Missile Options	Attacking Modifier	Defensive Modifier	Damage Modifier
Aim (for one phase)	+2 (next round)	-2 (same round)	+1
"Trick" Shot	-4	varies	+2
Hit Location	*	*	*

\* See *MasterBook* rulebook.

## HAND-TO-HAND ATTACKS

Attack Options	Attacking Modifier	Defensive Modifier	Damage Modifier
Short Range	-3	-2	-1
Sweep (Hand-to-Hand)	+3	-1	-5
Grab	-1	-4	-3
"Knockdown"	-3	0	first wnd becomes knockdown
All-out	+4	-6	+1

## HIT LOCATIONS

Hit Location	Attacking Modifier	Effects
Head	-8	+12 to damage
Chest	-2	+3 to damage
Abdomen	-4	+6 to damage
Left or Right Arm	-3	-2 to damage
Left or Right Leg	-2	-1 to damage

## WOUND LEVEL CHART

Wound Level	Modifier(s)	Healing Rate	Healing Difficulty
<i>Light</i>	no modifier	One day	10
<i>Moderate</i>	-2 to physical skills	One day	12
<i>Heavy</i>	-4 to physical & -2 to all other skills	Three days	14
<i>Incapacitated</i>	-8 to all skills	Three days	16
<i>Mortal</i> *	automatic KO*	One day	18
<i>Dead</i> *	dead	dead	we mean it; you're dead

\* See *MasterBook* rulebook.

## FIRST AID CHART

Condition	DN
Shock, KO	8
Lightly wounded	9
Moderately wounded	11
Heavily wounded	12
Incapacitated	14
Mortally wounded	18
Dead	22

## MEDICINE CHART

Wound Level	DN
Lightly wounded	10
Moderately wounded	12
Heavily wounded	13
Incapacitated	15
Mortally wounded	17



## BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+1

## BACKGROUND COMPENSATION LIST

## COLUMN I

<b>Advantage Flaw (CI)</b>	There is a limitation or drawback to one of the character's Advantages (see text)
<b>Age (CI)</b>	The character is older or younger than his prime
<b>Bad Luck (CI)</b>	The character is unlucky; usually when the character rolls a die total of "2," he is affected (see text)
<b>Bigotry (CI)</b>	The character is a minor bigot in some way
<b>Cultural Unfamiliarity (CI)</b>	Character is "out of his element"
<b>Debt (CI)</b>	Character owes a small debt to someone
<b>Employed (CI)</b>	Character has a job that takes away some of his freedom of choice
<b>Enemy (CI)</b>	The character has a minor enemy
<b>Handicap (CI)</b>	The character has a minor physical or mental handicap that adds +2 to the DN of five or more related skills
<b>Infamy (CI)</b>	The character is a minor "villain"
<b>Prejudice (CI)</b>	The character suffers as an object of minor prejudice
<b>Poverty (CI)</b>	The character begins the game as poor, with sub-standard and limited equipment
<b>Price (CI)</b>	There is a "price" to a character's Advantage
<b>Quirk (CI)</b>	The character suffers from a personality or physical quirk that makes his life a little more difficult

## COLUMN II

<b>Advantage Flaw (CII)</b>	There is a significant limitation to one of the character's Advantages (see text)
<b>Age (CII)</b>	The character is very old or very young (see text)
<b>Bad Luck (CII)</b>	The character is even more unlucky than "I" (see text)
<b>Bigotry (CII)</b>	The character is a serious bigot
<b>Cultural Unfamiliarity (CII)</b>	The character is from an alien culture and is significantly limited in cultural knowledge
<b>Debt (CII)</b>	The character owes a large debt to someone under dangerous circumstances
<b>Employed (CII)</b>	The character's "freedom" is virtually nonexistent because of his job
<b>Enemy (CII)</b>	The enemy is very powerful or always around
<b>Handicap (CII)</b>	The character has one physical or two mental Attributes and add +3 to the DN of all skill checks, except in very special circumstances (see text)

## COLUMN II (CONTINUED)

<b>Infamy (CII)</b>	The character is, most likely, a criminal or thought of as an enemy of society
<b>Language (CII)</b>	The character does not understand the language of the area he is in
<b>Learning Curve (Negative) (CII)</b>	The costs for learning skills are doubled
<b>Prejudice (CII)*</b>	The character is the subject of fairly serious prejudice
<b>Price (CII)</b>	There is a much higher price to be paid (physical damage as an example) for using an Advantage
<b>Quirk (CII)</b>	The character has a much more often occurring or serious "personality flaw"

## COLUMN III

<b>Achilles' Heel (CIII)</b>	The character has a vulnerability (see text)
<b>Advantage Flaw (CIII)†</b>	The flaw interferes with the use of the Advantage <i>and</i> provides an additional disadvantage
<b>Burn-out (CIII)</b>	Under certain circumstances, a particular Advantage goes away permanently
<b>Bad Luck (CIII)</b>	The character will suffer from <i>at least</i> a setback periodically (see text)
<b>Cultural Unfamiliarity (CIII)</b>	The character is a complete alien
<b>Debt (CIII)</b>	The character can gain no material goods — all must be turned over to a "lender" at the end of an adventure
<b>Employed (CIII)</b>	Character is, essentially, a slave
<b>Enemy (CIII)</b>	The enemy wants to kill the character and is very powerful
<b>Handicap (CIII)</b>	The character cannot perform many normal activities
<b>Infamy (CIII)</b>	The character will almost always be attacked or pursued
<b>Quirk (CIII)</b>	The character has a severe personality disorder

## COLUMN IV

<b>Advantage Flaw (CIV)†</b>	The flaw interferes with or completely interrupts the use of an Advantage, in addition to having several negative effects.
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\*All non-Human characters gain this Compensation *in addition to* the Compensations they normally must take to balance their Advantages.

†These Compensations have been expanded or modified from the *MasterBook* versions.

## SUCCESS CHART

Result Points	General Success	Damage	Intimidation	Taunt/ Trick	Maneuver	Push (Shock Taken)
0	Minimal	1	stymied	stymied	fatigued	1 (3)
1	Solid	O1	stymied	stymied	fatigued	1 (2)
2	Solid	K1	stymied	stymied	fatigued	1 (1)
3	Solid	O2	stymied	stymied	fatigued	2 (4)
4	Solid	3	stymied	stymied	fatigued	2 (3)
5	Good	Knockdown O3	untrained	untrained	fatigued	2 (2)
6	Good	Knockdown K3	untrained	untrained	fatigued	3 (5)
7	Good	Knockdown KO	untrained	untrained	stymied	3 (4)
8	Good	Wnd K/O 3	untrained	untrained	stymied	3 (3)
9	Superior	Wnd K/O 5	untrained	untrained	stymied	4 (6)
10	Superior	2Wnd Knockdown K3	setback	setback	stymied	4 (5)
11	Superior	2Wnd K/O 5	setback	setback	stymied	4 (4)
12	Superior	2Wnd KO 5	setback	setback	stymied/fatigued	5 (7)
13	Spectacular	3Wnd Knockdown K3	setback	setback	stymied/fatigued	5 (6)
14	Spectacular	3Wnd K/O 5	setback	setback	stymied/fatigued	5 (5)
15	Spectacular	3Wnd KO 7	break	up/setback	stymied/fatigued	6 (8)
16	Spectacular	4Wnd Knockdown K5	break	up/setback	setback/fatigued	6 (7)
17	Spectacular+	4Wnd KO 7	break	up/setback	setback/fatigued	6 (6)
18	Spectacular+	5Wnd Knockdown K5	break	up/setback	setback/fatigued	7 (9)
19	Spectacular+	5Wnd KO7	break	up/setback	setback/fatigued	7 (8)
20	Spectacular+	6Wnd Knockdown K5	player's call	player's call	player's call	7 (7)
+1	Spectacular+	+1Wnd	player's call	player's call	player's call	8 (10)

## ARBITRARY DN SCALE

Difficulty Level	% Chance of Success**	DN Value
Simple	100%	*
Routine	97%	0
Nearly Routine	90%	2
Very Easy	85%	3
Easy	79%	5
Average	55%	8
Complicated	36%	10
Difficult	15%	12
Hard	10%	13
Very Hard	3%	15
Extremely Hard	†	18
Incredible	†	22
Nearly Impossible	†	25+

\* Simple actions do not normally need to be rolled for — opening a door, walking across a room, etc.

\*\* The “% Chance of Success” is based on an average character with an attribute value of 8.

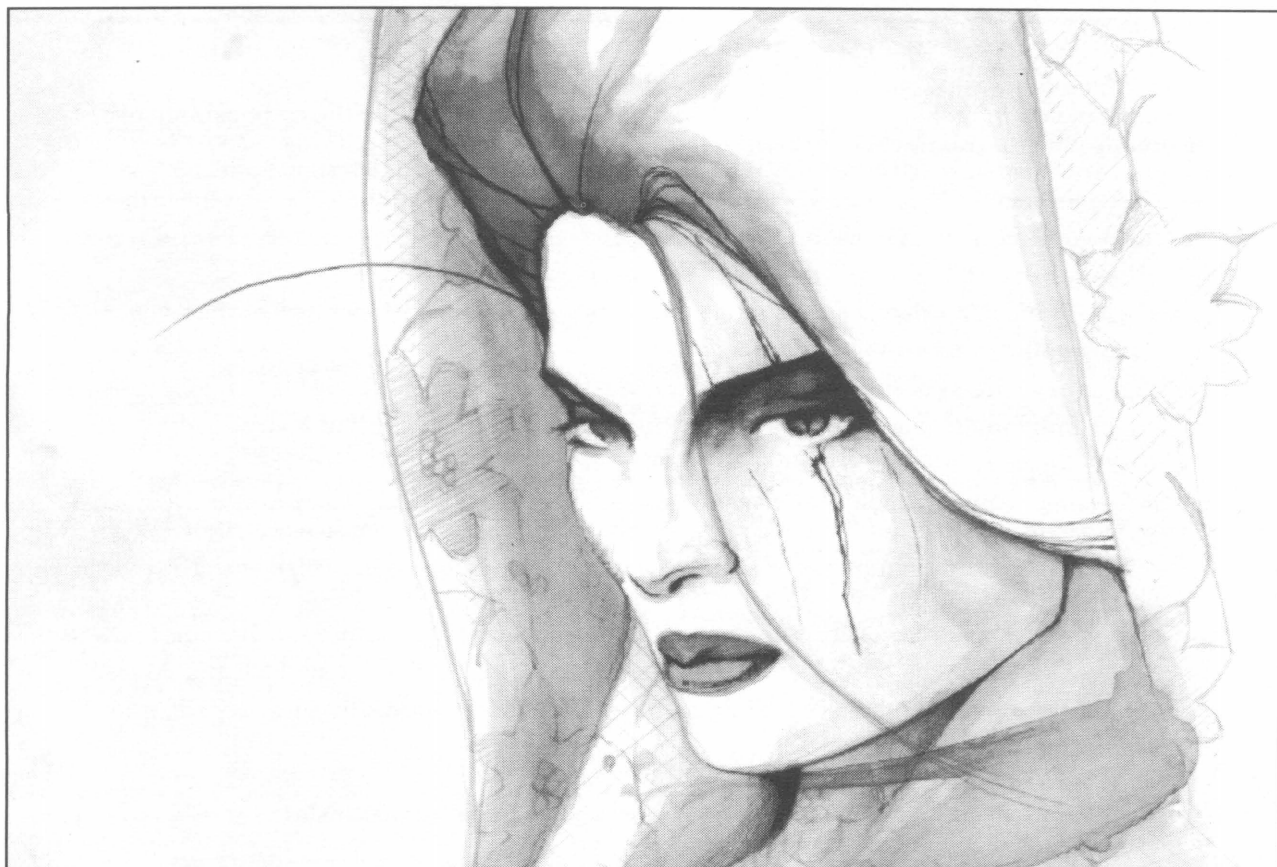
† Cannot be achieved without a roll-again.

## EXTENDED PUSH TABLE

Result Points	Push (Shock Taken)
22	8 (9)
23	8 (8)
24	9 (11)
25	9 (10)
26	9 (9)
27	10 (12)
28	10 (11)
29	10 (10)

## MODIFIER CHART

Modifier to DN or Skill	Situation
+/- 1	The modifier barely affects the skill attempt
+/- 3	The modifier makes a significant difference
+/- 5	The modifier will probably change the overall outcome
+/- 7	The modifier will almost totally change the overall outcome
+/- 10 (or more)	The modifier totally redefines the skill attempt



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*Bloodshadows* also provides you with a varied cast of monsters to use in your horror stories. They range from conventional horror creatures like Vampires and werewolves, to the more *outré* demons and Wilderness creatures with their unique powers. But whatever type of monster they are, they have been brought into the near-modern world. Vampires can be found on blood lines, like those unfortunates forced to frequent the soup kitchens. Undead Taxim work the mines of Selastos and are represented by their union.

In addition to the monsters the character may encounter, the characters themselves may be monsters. The character generation system fully supports player-character monsters, and that character type should be presented as an option. Players should be encouraged to roleplay their monstrous existence if they choose such a character.

Horror is a major part of the world, so try to keep it in mind when setting up storylines, and when describing scenes and encounters.

## MAGIC

Horror is not the only element of fantasy that flavors the world of *Bloodshadows*. Magic is wide-

spread and is an accepted form of technology. Until recently, it was the primary form of technology. It is so common that almost everyone knows at least some small spell or cantrip that will aid them in their job or day-to-day existence. Lighting, both indoors and out, is provided by glowstones. Doors are locked with doorseals and other wards. Keys are unnecessary, and citizens just have to remember the spell that releases the seal.

It is important to remember the omnipresent nature of magic. Sprinkle passing references to it liberally in your descriptions. Mention the mechanic who is gesturing over the elemental engine of an automobile as he tunes it up, or the sentinel who carries evidence from the crime scene in a globe of spell-shielding. These references do not have to be major ones, either. Small, background uses of magic say a lot more about the pervasive nature of magic in this society than do fireball spells and heavy-duty rituals.

## DETAILS

Details are what make a world seem to have a life of its own. The world becomes real when details are mentioned in passing; mentions of specific



## SOME DETAILS FROM FILM NOIR

When using details to give the world of *Bloodshadows* extra depth, a lot the emphasis should be on those details derived from the genre of *film noir*. Consulting these movies is a good way to get a feel for the genre (a list of some of these films is given in Chapter One). As a quick shorthand, here are some standard conventions of the genre which you can add into your descriptions to evoke the proper feel.

- † The world appears to be in black and white; describe it in terms of greys and blacks and shadows.
- † Long shadows stretch across the scene and any people or objects in it.
- † A lone ceiling fan spins slowly overhead, usually casting moving shadows across the room.
- † Faces are usually obscured by shadows.
- † Streetlights cast circles of light on an otherwise dark street.
- † The streets and buildings are damp and glisten with moisture, as if it had just rained.
- † A neon sign buzzes in the background, blinking on and off.
- † Dramatic camera angles make the world seem to skew crazily (“As you run into the darkened alleyway, the long shadows slanting down its length make the walls seem to lean wildly in on you.”)
- † Characters can be hard-drinking, and usually have a flask or a bottle of Scotch with them or in an easily accessible location, such as a desk drawer or file cabinet.
- † Almost everyone smokes cigarettes or cigars, and has one dangling from his or her lips.
- † The men wear trenchcoats and fedoras, tuxedos, cheap suits, or other easily-identifiable garb.
- † The women wear evening dresses and dress hats, knee-length skirts, tight sweaters, and other accoutrements.
- † A dead body lies facedown in a slowly spreading pool of blood.
- † Newsboys hawk headlines proclaiming a crime wave or gang war (translated to *Bloodshadows* terms, streetsingers call out the same news).

things give the impression of a full-fledged world with a variety of accepted references. The passing reference implies the much larger, accepted background.

When describing an object, don't describe it generically; give it a name or a model number. Using a brand name in a description, such as, “the Varenburg motor car screeches to a halt in front of the Weary Wayfarer Inn,” suggests a much more interesting world than the bland, “the car screeches to a halt in front of the inn.” You might even want to establish some significance to different brand names. For example, maybe the characters know that having a Varenburg motor car on Marl would be like owning a Mercedes on Earth — it helps establish the characters who own or use such items.

When the characters enter the curio shop to question the proprietor, it feels like a richer world if he is puttering about humming the tune to “Little Marisa,” especially if your characters know that this is a new song or an old one, reflecting the character of the proprietor.

It is sometimes difficult to come up with song titles and brand names at the drop of a hat, so a good idea would be to start a collection of index cards, or a series of pages in a notebook, on which

you can jot down names and ideas as they occur to you. Then you just have to scan the appropriate page when you are describing a scene and pick something that seems to fit the situation.

In order to drive home the feeling that the characters exist in a fully-formed world, it is sometimes helpful to run them through scenes that are not directly tied to the adventure being run. If they travel to a different city, roleplay their arrival and the search for an inn at which to stay. Describe the city's sights, sounds and smells to the players. Let them see that there is more to the world than the events in which they have become embroiled.

Also, occasionally tell the players of events that occur independently of their characters' actions. Maybe their city is involved in an election. As the characters pursue an investigation, drop information about the progress of the election. As they prowl through one sector of a city they may hear streetsingers talking about the charges of fraud leveled by one candidate at another. Perhaps the sentinel they are questioning chats a little about who he intends to vote for, or a newscribe tries to discuss politics with the characters. Give the impression of a much vaster world that is growing and developing around the characters and their local concerns.

Who knows, at some point they may even become involved in the background developments, as the campaign manager for one of the candidates hires them to dig up some dirt on the opponent. Having the world develop independently, and keeping the characters aware of it is also a great way to foreshadow and/or introduce upcoming adventures. Maybe the players will even be the ones who make the decision to get involved in one of the background stories, leaving it up to you to work out the details for an upcoming adventure.

## TOUGH GUYS

As stated before, *Bloodshadows* is a hard world. The characters who walk its back alleys have to be tough to survive. And tough they are; the detectives are hard-boiled, the dames are hard-bitten, and everyone covers themselves with some sort of hard emotional shell. Not doing so allows the chance of getting hurt bad, emotionally or physically.

It's not just the heroes who are tough. The criminals are tough, and the sentinels have to be tough in order to deal with them. When planning adventures keep this aspect in mind. Nice guys get eaten alive (sometimes even literally), so no one does anything without putting up a tough front. When creating characters and setting up situations, think of ways to work this toughness in.

Another part of the tough character is his cynicism. Most of the characters involved in a *Bloodshadows* story have been around the block. They've had their share of pain, and they've encountered firsthand the duplicity of their fellow beings. Characters with that kind of background don't take anything at face value. They will constantly be looking for the angle; either that of the person they dealing with, or one of their own.

This provides a good opportunity for dramatic tension in your story. The investigating team knows that the client is lying to them, but about what aspect of the case (or even the entire case)? Play up this facet of the situation and keep the players on their toes as they try to unravel the mystery behind the mystery. And this leads directly to the next element.

## UNCERTAINTY

The unknown pervades the world of Marl. Things are very frequently not what they seem. This is an element that makes the lives of its inhabitants an unsure thing at best. And it is this state of affairs that causes them to develop the practiced art of cynicism.

This doubt also helps you to keep the players off balance. They never know exactly what it is they are looking for, or what may be lurking around the

next corner. This serves to keep the level of tension up, making for a more exciting game. It also serves to intrigue the players and keep their interest up. They want to know what is going on. They will keep moving forward as they seek to unravel the tangled threads of the mystery presented to them.

In light of this, you should strive to present adventures that are not straightforward, but that take full advantage of the principle of uncertainty. However, the adventure should *appear* straightforward. Do not throw the mystery at the players from the very beginning. Let them discover it through their own actions. Present enough of the "hook" to keep the players following your lead, and let them discover the plot twists as they go along.

This incertitude can also be used to trick the players into tripping themselves up. After a few games the players — in the roles of their characters — will begin to realize that the clients who hire them are lying or otherwise misleading them. After they achieve this mindset of uncertainty and cynicism, send them a client who is being straightforward. Then watch as the players attempt to uncover the (nonexistent) hidden motives of the client. The honest client throws them for a loop, since they are expecting to be lied to.

The uncertainty factor also applies to the various aspects of an adventure. Its most basic use is the adventure that turns out not to be what it seemed originally. But uncertainty can be used with the different elements that make up the adventure. For example, the character creation system provides for monsters with a wide variety of powers and weaknesses. This allows you to modify these antagonists to fit the story and to keep the players on their toes. They can never be certain what abilities the creature they are facing might possess. Just because the characters have faced a Vampire or Relkazar before doesn't mean that they are prepared for the one currently standing before them.

## RUNNING BLOODSHADOWS ADVENTURES

As gamemaster, you have perhaps the most difficult task in playing the game; you must make the game fun for both your players and yourself. In approaching your adventure as if it were a movie, you are better able to understand how the different parts of running a game mesh together to form an all-encompassing whole. Applying the proper style to that whole gives your game the distinctive feel that makes it come alive. Preserving that feel is your next job.

As the director, you want your players to get into their roles and and experience the world you have



created for them. So you must encourage roleplaying. When the players become involved in playing their roles the game becomes more fun for everyone. It also provides greater opportunities for character development.

In addition to solving the mystery of the adventure, players should be encouraged to consider their characters' actions and how they affect the character. Does the character seem to be changing alignment by his or her actions? Has the characters' perception of the world or of his own life changed because of events that have occurred? Many times these will be conscious decisions. At other times, players may be surprised to discover just how much their characters have changed. Just as some novelists claim that their characters decide the course of the story, your players may find that their characters have minds of their own.

It is this exploration of the characters, and the opportunity for players to become a character totally unlike themselves, that make roleplaying a fun pursuit and a challenging one. You can further the fun and challenge by promoting that roleplaying.

## STAYING IN CHARACTER

The easiest way to promote roleplaying is to keep the players in character. There is always a tendency for players to slip out of character, telling jokes or discussing the day's events among one another. While this has its place — gaming is, after all, a social function — it tends to be distracting to the adventure, and should be reserved for before or after the game, or during agreed-upon breaks. Keeping the players in character keeps them focused on the adventure.

One of the ways to do this is to use your own characters. Gamemaster characters can be a good tool for keeping the players' attention without being too heavy-handed. Talk to the players in character, and wait for them to respond in character. If they don't, have the gamemaster character repeat his request, until the player gets the message. Have your characters challenge the players. A snitch dealing with a player's character who seems indecisive might tell him, "I thought I was dealin' with a tough guy who could get things done." Try to get the players to respond by saying, "I do this" or "I do that," not "My character does this."

Another method for keeping players in character is to set up situations that are best resolved by roleplaying, not dice rolling. It is better to have players try to talk their way through something than to have them fight it out. A couple of characters faced with a Relkazar might do better to try and con it or persuade it or intimidate it rather than get involved in a gunfight or a brawl.

When resolving a con, persuasion, intimidation or other such attempt, make the players roleplay it. Skills and attributes are there to serve as guidelines, or to be used for quick and dirty resolutions. It is more fulfilling to have the players think about their actions and play them through.

Yet another way to keep the players in character is to make the world feel real. Get the characters involved in situations that are not purely action, or directly related to the case they are working on. Let them experience the world around them. Pepper your descriptions with slices of life. Keep the background alive. Describe the streetsingers calling out their news as the characters walk through the streets, or present a colorful description of the hoods who are lounging outside the boarded-up storefront that the characters are walking past. Etch a sharp portrait of the denizens of the pool hall next to the inn at which the characters are rooming.

The key to presenting memorable depictions is the use of detail. Details bring a description to life, raising it above a run-of-the-mill generic listing of elements. See the section on "Details," above.

## FAILURE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

There are times when even the best-laid schemes go astray. It is those times that build character — assuming they don't kill you. There is a fine line to walk when adjudicating failure. In order to give a story meaning, players must feel that their characters are in jeopardy when involved in an adventure. There is no fun and no challenge if the players know that their characters cannot die. On the other hand, there is no more adventure if all the protagonists are eliminated by a stroke of bad luck early on in the story. As gamemaster, you must walk that fine line.

When planning encounters for your story, you must keep in mind the strengths and weaknesses of your players' characters. You want to pose encounters that will challenge the characters, yet not be impossible to overcome. There should always be a chance of failure, although the odds of it occurring can be modified if required by the storyline. Changing the difficulty numbers as the situation changes is one way to modify the players' chances. Another is to fudge the die rolls. As the gamemaster, the final call is yours. Judge the results by how the players perform.

If a player roleplays a situation well, but the result of the dice goes against him, feel free to modify the result. One way is to explain away the result. "Uh-oh. The Hellghest's vicious swipe catches you square in the side. Its sharp claws would've ripped your ribcage open if they hadn't been deflected by your shoulder holster." Another is to simply change the result to something more suit-



able. It is strongly suggested that you make your die rolls in secret.

Keep the gamemaster screen in front of you and roll the dice behind the screen. You don't want to let on that you are cutting the players any slack. Also, get in the habit of just rolling the dice every once in a while for no particular reason. This will keep the players on their toes, and will disguise those rolls that really mean something. It is sometimes worthwhile (and fun — at least for you) to look at the dice you've just rolled, cluck your tongue ominously, and then continue with the game. The players will be on edge expecting something to happen.

There are times, however, when failure is entirely justified. If the players are acting foolishly, such as charging into a dangerous situation without a plan or without taking any precautions, let the dice fall where they may. The surviving characters will quickly learn not to be so hasty or foolish in the future. You are under no obligation to make it easy for rash characters.

In addition, failure may be justified by the storyline. If the time is dramatically suitable for one or more characters to fail, you may even want to modify the die rolls against the players' favor. Keep in mind that failure does not necessarily mean death. It could just cause a major setback to the players' plans, or place them in a situation that endangers them further.

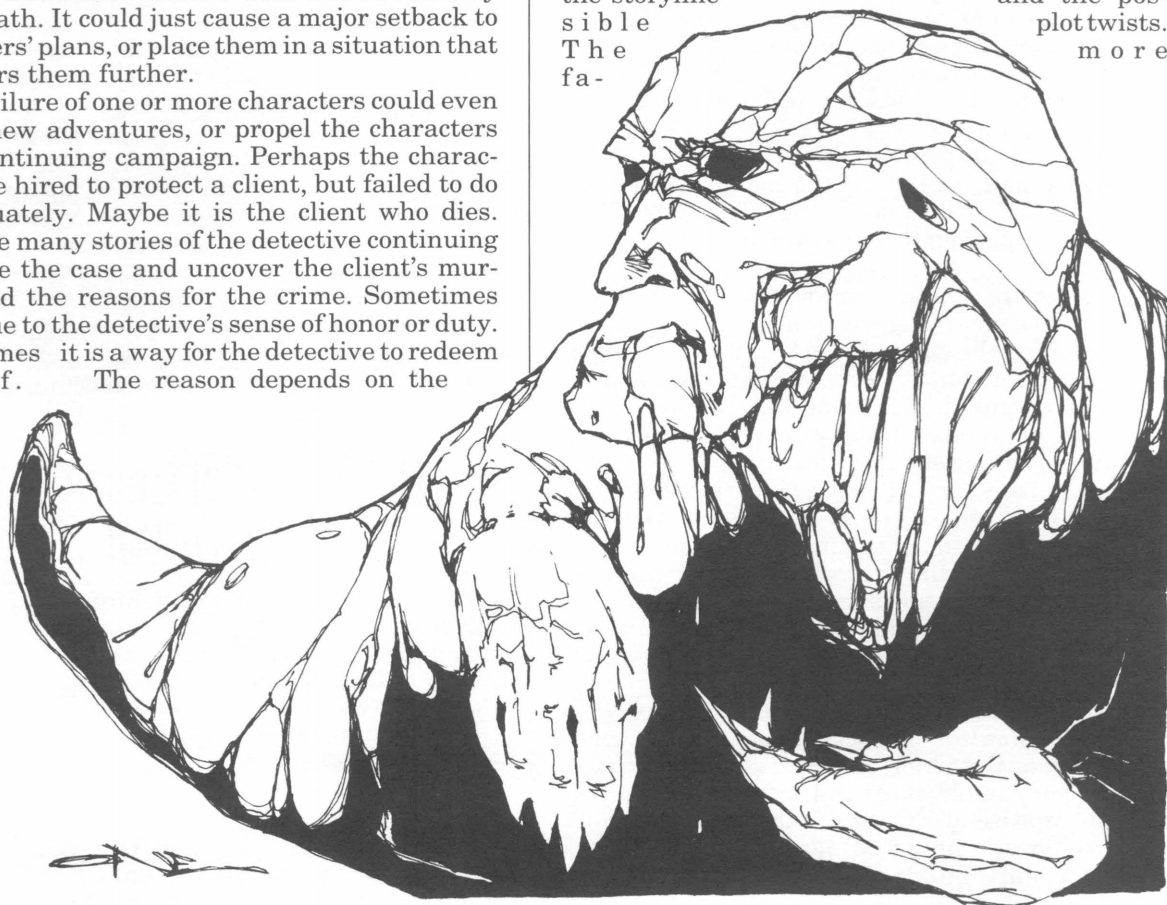
The failure of one or more characters could even lead to new adventures, or propel the characters into a continuing campaign. Perhaps the characters were hired to protect a client, but failed to do so adequately. Maybe it is the client who dies. There are many stories of the detective continuing to pursue the case and uncover the client's murderer and the reasons for the crime. Sometimes this is due to the detective's sense of honor or duty. Other times it is a way for the detective to redeem herself. The reason depends on the

character and the player portraying her, but the result is a continuing story.

Other results of failure could be the capture of one or more members of the team. This could lead to adventures centering on the escape attempts of the characters, or the rescue mission mounted by the remaining characters. The tension can be increased by instituting a time limit. Perhaps the characters have been captured by a cult they were investigating, and are now to be sacrificed by the cult in a ritual at the next assemblage two days hence. The remaining characters have a limited time to discover the whereabouts of the cult's headquarters and free their friends.

## MAINTAINING THE PACE

In order to maintain a level of excitement and keep the players' interest, an adventure must move along briskly. Adventures which bog down begin to fall apart. The best way to keep a story moving along is to be prepared. Once your adventure is written and finalized, read it through again. If you are using a published adventure, read it through once or twice in order to become familiar with the storyline and the possible plot twists. The more



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familiar you are with the material, the more quickly you can locate information and respond to expected and unexpected turns of events.

If you are using props, have them ready. Make as many copies as you will need of handouts, and keep them in one spot so you can reach them easily. Stack the props and handouts in order so that they are easier to distribute as the adventure unfolds. Once again, be familiar with the contents of each of the handouts.

In addition to reading through the adventure to familiarize yourself with it, you should also gather together any information you will need during the course of the game. If you know that certain weapons or spells will be used, have the information regarding them in a handy place. If you know there will be a lot of climbing, you may want to have the climbing rules handy for quick access. Gather all the pertinent rules you can think of, so they'll be easy to find. Nothing slows down an adventure as quickly as having the gamemaster paging through the rule book trying to find the relevant rule.

In addition to the rules you'll need, have all your characters ready to go. Be familiar with the major and minor characters that you'll be using. Reread their backgrounds and characteristics if necessary. This where a notebook for keeping track of gamemaster characters comes in handy (see Chapter Two, "Defining Characters"). Also gather together any maps and locations you will need to consult during the game.

Familiarizing yourself with the course of the adventure and having all the pertinent facts at your fingertips will allow you to keep the adventure moving along, even if the players go off on a tangent.

Even before you begin preparing for the game session, you must keep certain things in mind to avoid stalling the game. Avoid boring scenes. Each scene should advance the story somehow and preferably give the players something to do. Scenes which are not related directly to the storyline, such as those described earlier as a means of making the world seem real, are still a good idea, but should be kept brief enough to give the players the color and feel you are seeking without boring them. Involving the players in the descriptive scene is a way to keep their interest, also.

Sometimes transitional scenes last too long and break up the flow of the story. Trim these scenes down or take them out altogether. Use a *scene shift* to bridge the extra time. A scene shift is used in books and films to gloss over unimportant information and keep the action moving directly to the next scene. For example, if the characters are traveling from the south end of Galitia to the north end, don't roll dice for encounters all along the way (unless you are trying to build tension in that manner), and

don't roleplay the entire journey. If the journey is to be uneventful, use a scene shift to get from one point to the other. Scene shifts are also useful for glossing over dull and repetitive tasks.

**Example:** "Getting the address from Tarnik's little black book, you determine that the person you seek can be found in a northern quarter of Galitia. You and your partners set off to question him. Hailing a cab, you begin the journey through town ...

"...As the cab rounds the corner of Stenpole Street, you spot your destination. Paying the driver, you dismount to approach the front doors of the building."

**Example:** "The copper sits you down at a beaten-up-looking table and plops a massive tome down in front of you. He opens it and you see a multitude of faces staring back up at you. You hope that it won't take you all week finding the perpetrator's likeness ...

"Ten minutes later, you strike paydirt; there's that ugly mug, staring back at you."

Another problem that serves to slow down an adventure is that of overly cautious players. Again, this is something that can frequently be avoided by careful advance planning. If your encounters are too tough for the characters, the players will tend to become cautious, not wanting to risk them. They will hang back, trying to size up the situation, and looking for the safest way to approach the confrontation. Striking that careful balance between tough encounters and cakewalks is a very important skill to develop, and will come with experience.

If your players still insist on being too cautious, you will have to draw them out. As discussed earlier, roleplay the gamemaster characters in such a way as to engage the players' characters or challenge them. It shouldn't take much to get their interest piqued and have them charging into things once again.

## THE BLOODSHADOWS ADVENTURE

By now you've got an idea of how to run an adventure and make it an interesting and challenging experience. Treating the adventure as a movie — in keeping with *Bloodshadows'* roots in *film noir* — allows you to structure the story in easy-to-handle units. You can then add in the appropriate elements to evoke the proper mood and present a world that feels real and engrosses both the players and their characters.

But what about the underlying structure of the story, or the focus of the adventure? What kind of adventure do you run in the world of *Bloodshadows*?

## HOW AN ADVENTURE UNFOLDS

An adventure can develop in one of three general ways. First, a simple adventure may become more complicated as it progresses. Second, the adventure may be straightforward, with no added twists or complications. Third, a complicated adventure may turn out to have a simple solution.

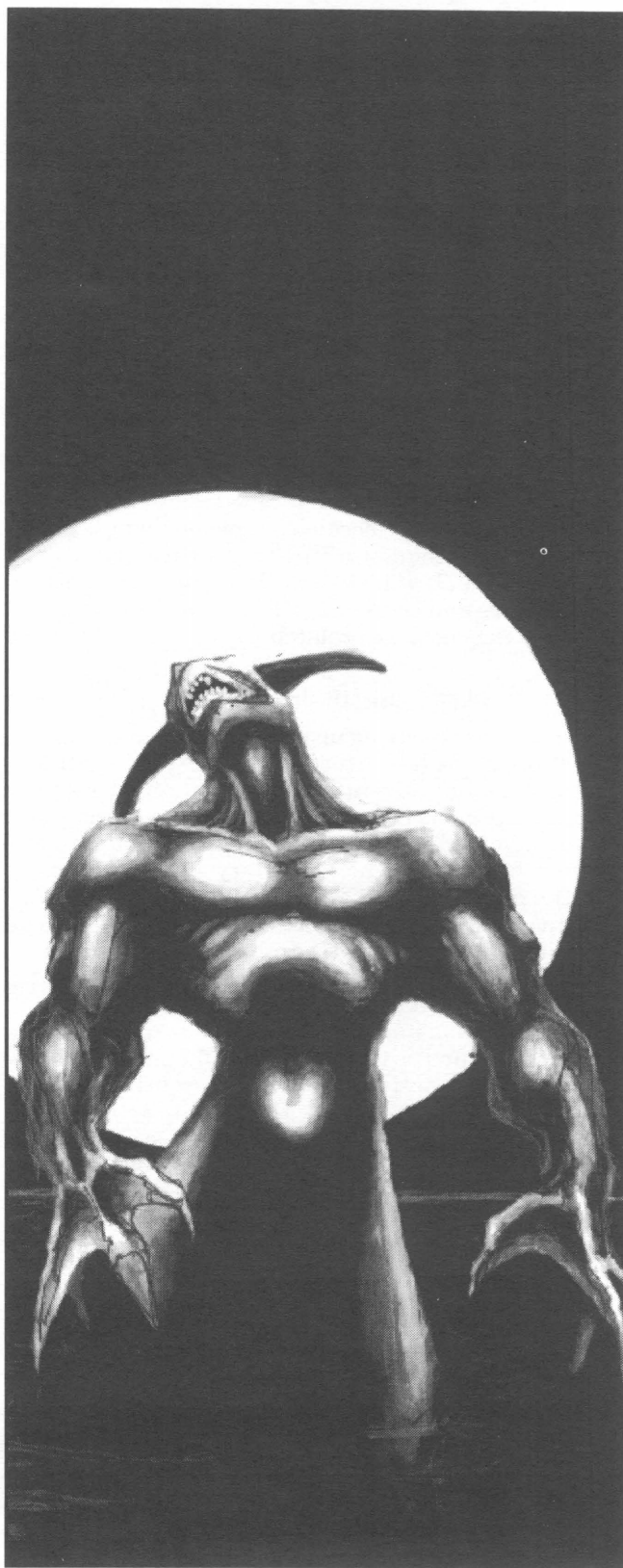
The most common type of adventure is the one that starts out simply, but becomes more elaborate and complicated as it progresses. This may be due to the fact that the client was hiding some aspect of the case when first hiring the team. As the team delves deeper into the mystery, they discover some of the hidden information, which reveals the larger picture. Or the client may have been unaware of the wider-ranging implications of the case, and the investigators become embroiled in the situation while in pursuit of the original objective.

For example, a client may approach a private detective to find a family heirloom that has been stolen. As the detective and his partners and/or contacts investigate the disappearance, they discover that the heirloom appears to be a priceless *objet d'art*. In pursuing the case further, they determine that the art thieves with whom they are familiar are not involved and the usual fences have not been contacted. Additional investigation finally turns up the information that the missing heirloom is actually an ancient artifact of power. It was stolen by a cult, whose members intend to use its power in an arcane ritual in order to achieve some foul goal. The scope of the adventure has expanded from a simple theft to a long-term plot that threatens the entire city, or perhaps even the world.

Next is the adventure that is what it appears to be. The characters become involved in a situation, do what they need to in order to resolve the situation, and succeed or fail depending on the efficacy of the efforts. For instance, some characters may become embroiled in a turf war between two cults or two criminal organizations. As it becomes necessary for them to settle the conflict, they try to mediate between the two sides, or aid one side against the other, until they end the war (or not).

The least common type of adventure, because it is more difficult to construct, is for a complicated case to become simple. In general, you may want to start this kind of adventure by introducing the characters to two or three new cases. Present the cases gradually; don't pile them on right at the start. As the cases develop, the characters come to realize that there are connections between the various investigations. Eventually they determine that they all boil down to the same cause.

As an example, the characters are involved in tracking down someone the client wants to find. A day or two later another client hires them to recover a missing item. That case eventually comes to in-



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involve theft, murder and blackmail. As they seek to unravel the chain of events, the characters finally discover that all of the additional events were arranged by the person they were originally hired to find, as that person does not want to be found. All of the other aspects of the adventure were red herrings, or red herrings that went out of control (this is the basic plot of *Murder, My Sweet*, which is a good filmic reference for a *Bloodshadows* adventure).

When creating this kind of adventure, it is best to determine what end result you want, then back-track from there in order to set up the various diversions that will be required to make an interesting adventure. In addition, if you plan to run this type of adventure you should lay the groundwork early. Work in additional (usually simpler) cases around the main case of earlier adventures, so as to get your players used to the idea that they can pursue multiple cases at one time. This way, the players will not become suspicious when you suddenly have them working two or three cases at the same time. It will be something they've experienced before and therefore will help to disguise the fact that the cases are related.

## CONCURRENT ADVENTURES

In addition to setting up the players for a complicated-to-simple adventure somewhere down the line, concurrent adventures can be interesting to run in their own right. In this case, the characters can be involved in more than one investigation at a time; but unlike the secondary investigations mentioned above, these would all be full-fledged adventures. Each adventure can be its own storyline, independent of the others, but it becomes more fun for the players if you have elements that are common to all of the stories. There may be one or more gamemaster characters who keep crossing their paths, such as the newscribe who seems to be all over town, or the plainclothes sentinel who always seems to be dogging their trail.

Each of the different stories can be structured differently, so it would be possible to have one of each of the adventure types described above running concurrently. You might even have one or more of the stories end up related to each other.

## BASIC PLOTS

Once you've determined how you want your story to unfold, you need to decide just what it is all about. Some basic ideas for adventures are presented below. These ideas are those geared toward the flavor and feel you want to evoke for a *Bloodshadows* adventure.

### FIND SOMEONE

The team must find a missing character. Perhaps they have been hired by a client to find someone who has recently disappeared. Maybe the client wants to find someone he knew many years ago in order to get re-acquainted or to deliver something (like an inheritance) to the person.

It may also be that a friend or acquaintance of one of the players' characters has gone missing, and the characters decide that they need to find the person. It could also be that the missing person was kidnapped and must be rescued.

### PROTECT SOMEONE

In this storyline, the character or characters are hired as a bodyguard for the client. Perhaps she is a merchant doing business in an unsavory neighborhood. Or maybe he has received death threats, or suspects he has been targeted by a cult for death or abduction. The characters might be hired to guard a caravan ma

### FIND SOMETHING

In this type of story, a client needs a rare and/or valuable object recovered. It may have been stolen or lost. For extra dangers, it could have been lost in the Wilderness when the caravan transporting it was attacked. Maybe it currently resides inside the safe of one of the town's biggest gangsters. The something does not even have to be an object; perhaps it is information.

You can also add a twist to this sort of adventure. In keeping with the principle of uncertainty described earlier, the client is not being forthright about the circumstances of the case. The object she wants recovered does not even belong to her. In recovering the object for the client, the characters are unknowingly stealing for her. This can lead to all sorts of complications, as the characters may become wanted by the sentinels and then need to get the item back from the client to clear their names.

### BLACKMAIL

The client is being blackmailed and needs the characters to uncover the blackmailer (or just to deliver the ransom). Or one of the characters is being blackmailed. The incriminating information may be true or it may be fabricated. Maybe the characters are not to go after the blackmailer, but are hired to determine if the information is actually true.

Instead of being the focus of the adventure, blackmail may be the catalyst for the adventure. The character or characters must go do something for the blackmailer in return for the information the blackmailer holds.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# ALBREDURA

The ruggedly-built Varenberg motor car rolled out of the plains and into the rocky ravine that led down to Albredura. The hum of elemental energies, faint as it was, seemed like a rush of sound in the silence that surrounded the city. As the car drew closer to the wall Stang could see that it was well-kept and imposing. It was also well-guarded; he could make out the shapes of many sentinels patrolling the wall and its gate.

Twilight dropped onto his head as he entered the ravine. The towering spurs of the mountain range that cradled the city blocked much of the early evening sun, which seemed to be diving behind the horizon for cover. Already the glowstones that adorned the barrier were springing to life as the mages made their circuit of the wall.

The trip through the Wilderness had been uncommonly uneventful — for Stang, at least. He had counted the wreckages and remains and one motorized and two beast-drawn caravans, and of an individual motor car. *Now that's what I call a heap*, he had mused dryly to himself.

When he arrived at the city's gate, he chatted briefly with the sentinel in charge, spun him a yarn about pursuing business opportunities in his fine city, and sealed his entry with a donation to the sentinels' ball. The gates swung soundlessly outward and Stang eased the Varenberg forward. As the car picked up speed the view that greeted his eyes almost stopped him in his tracks. For as far as he could see the city was nothing but ruins.

Confusion was spreading through his mind like cigar smoke in a back room, but he nonetheless thought to look back over his shoulder. All that he saw, however, was a group of unconcerned sentinels going about their business, so it didn't seem like a trap. Trying to look like nothing was out of the ordinary, he proceeded along the road. Block after block of ruined buildings and wreckage that might conceivably once have been buildings slid by. The only other thing he saw was the ever-present mountains behind everything. After about five minutes, during which time he had yet to see a complete structure, he approached another wall.

Stopping at the sentinels' post, he waited until the gate warden of this second wall stepped up to the car. This sentinel was a surly one, much gruffer than the warden of the first gate. Stang reacted in kind. "Nice burg you have here," he commented.



"It ain't much, but it's all we got," the sentinel replied, "Now, what's yer business in our 'burg'?"

Stang sang him the same tune he used at the first gate and bought another ticket to the sentinels' ball, just to smooth things over, and was quickly ushered through the second gate.

Once again a vista of broken buildings greeted his gaze. Determined to get to the root of this mystery, he continued on down the road. A few minutes' drive brought him to a third wall and gate. At this checkpoint the procedure varied. The sentinel in charge directed him to pull his car over to large field alongside the road. A double handful of carts, wagons and motor cars were arrayed in a rough line leading into the field. Stang was prepared to argue, but the sentinel headed him off.

"I'm sorry sir, but it's city policy. We don't want anything from Outside coming in. You can come back and claim your vehicle in day or two. After the wildmages have had a chance to check it over, you'll be allowed to bring it inside the walls.

"If you won't cooperate, you'll have to turn back and leave. And that's not such a good idea, sir, seein' as how it'll be dark soon."

The sentinel was young, but looked firm in his position. Stang didn't have much choice but to go along with the procedure. He parked the car, got his bag out of the trunk, and after filling out some paperwork, was ushered to a smaller gate alongside the main gate.

As the gate swung open, he saw that the road continued on into the heart of the city — a real city. There were no ruins here, but row after row of bustling city streets. Glowstones winked on in the deepening gloom as he stepped through the gate. He would have to find a place to flop for his stay, then he'd head out and get down to business. His

quarry was in there somewhere, and Stang was going to smoke him out. And it seemed it would be an interesting town to do it in.

## THE SHRINKING CITY

Unlike most cities, which grow outward, Albredura is a city that's growing inward. It is a city in decline, although its citizens have yet to realize it.

Albredura, not quite two centuries old, is as much a victim of the Godwar as much older cities which actually existed at the time it occurred. The city suffered under the depredations of the Wilderness creatures which the war unleashed onto Marl — and which once swarmed regularly through the area — and decreased in size as it became more difficult to adequately defend.

But what remains of the city is still a bustling center of activity. Albredura was built on the back of the copper trade. The many applications of copper in the magical arts led to the growth of a major magical marketplace, and the eventual expansion of that marketplace into various other fields of magic.

The city is wedged into a gap in the base of the Flendar mountains, which surround it on the north, west and south. To the east, a rocky ravine makes a slight and gradual ascent to the plains beyond. What passes for a road in the plains winds its way north and south, passing near the ruins of Drelmar to the north and then fading away into the northern forest, and heading south to an area of plains and rolling hills.

A limited amount of trade works its way to Albredura from the south, although it is uncertain if there is a city to the south or if the trade route passes through a gate. Trade is still very dangerous, as all manner of Wilderness creatures frequent the area. Queskworms remain a recurring threat to large trade caravans.

In addition to the occasional overland trade, there is much magical trade. With the abundance of sorcerers in Albredura, there is a great deal of teleportation of goods, in spite of the risks involved — mages tend to be a stubborn and single-minded lot, and they rise to the challenge of perfecting their craft.

Industry continues to prosper. The copper mines still produce much ore, and the factories stay busy refining it and crafting it. There is money to be made in Albredura, if one has the right connections.

However, the Wilderness continues to make incursions into the city (the ruined districts are still considered to be part of the city, even though no one lives there anymore), and attempts to pen-

## NOW, LISSEN UP

"Yeah, I been to Albredura. And it's one weird place. You first get there and you swear you're goin' into a ghost town. There's nothin' but wrecked buildings, but it's crawlin' with sentinels and guarded by walls. Like, why are they guardin' this place?

"But once you get through the third wall you find there really is a city there. And it's a city just like any other, with the same rich guys feudin' with the same corrupt guys and steppin' all over the average joe. But you can feel that deep down, there's something *different* about this place. I can't quite put my finger on it. It's as if there's something squirming around just below the surface of this town, like worms crawlin' under the skin of a corpse."



erate the third wall. And a potentially greater threat has begun to stir, a threat that the city has brought upon itself.

## THE HISTORY OF ALBREDURA

Like many of the cities of Marl, Albredura started off as a fortified outpost. In this case, it was the beginning of a mining venture for the city of Drelmar. Drelmar was once a great city, linked to others on the continent of Eln, and had a thriving trade in timber from the northern forest and magical items.

The spellcasters of the city were a varied lot, practicing many different types of magic based on a variety of arcane knowledges. However, there was a strong affinity for technomancy, with copper being the metal of choice. The demand for copper and copper items was generally satisfied by the commerce with the cities to the south.

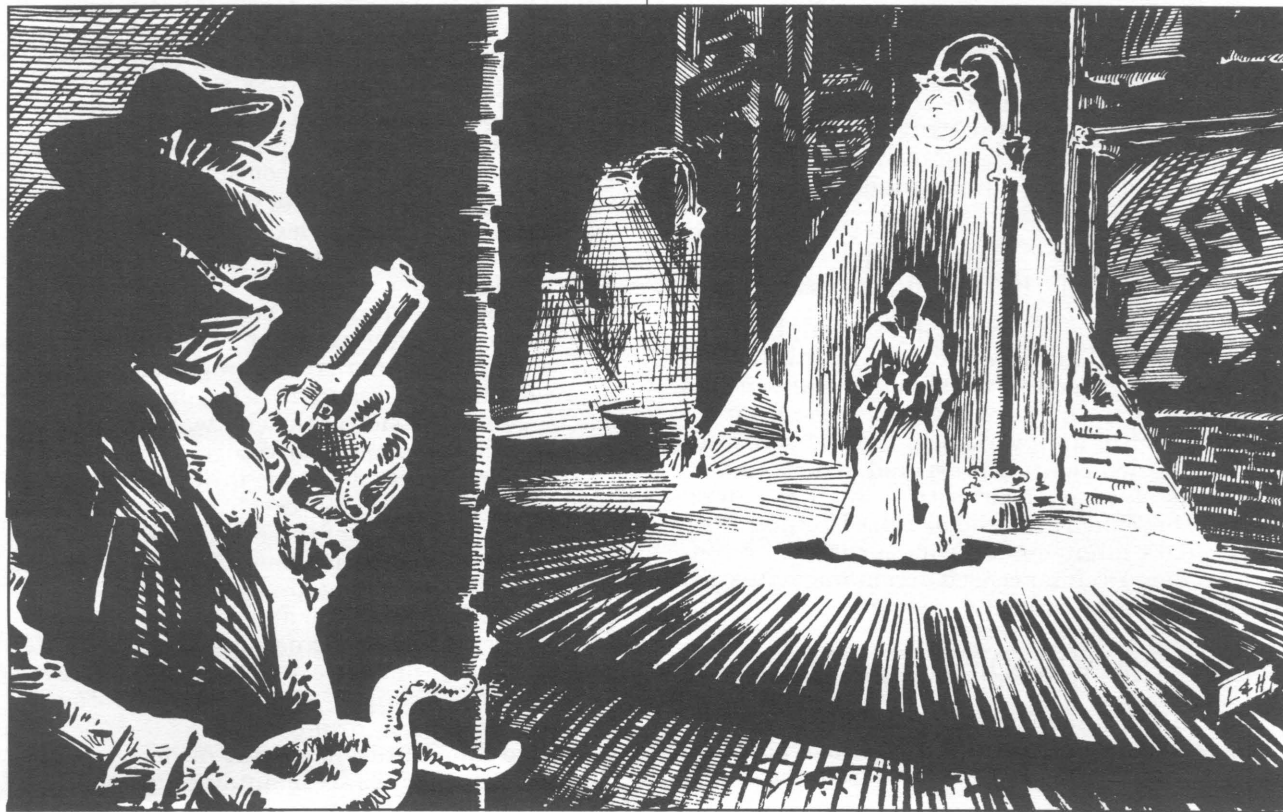
When a scouting party discovered that copper could be found in the mountains, it prompted great excitement in Drelmar. Expeditions were sent out to determine where the ore could most easily be taken from the mountains. A large yet sheltered ravine south and west of the city offered the best combination of accessibility and protection, and the mine was established.

After a time it was discovered that transporting the ore to the city was a hazardous proposition. In addition to the regular threats of the Wilderness, different types of Wilderness beasts and other Unnatural *things* appeared to sweep through the area with random frequency. At times even the mine itself was attacked.

The mine site was fortified further. Eventually it was decided to prepare the ore before transporting it to Drelmar. More workers were sent to the scene. After the processing of the ore became established, coppersmiths began to visit the site, then set up shop there. Some brought their families. Merchants followed. New housing was built, new walls constructed, and what had begun as a remote mine became a town in its own right. And as the town grew, the fertile plateau to the south was discovered and farmed.

## THE SUNDERING

Things went along smoothly for a number of years. But at some point after one particularly bitter and hard-fought election, the new rulers of Drelmar felt threatened by the possibility of the town becoming independent and attempted to exert more control. Of course, the workers — no, the *townsfolk* — resisted this exerting of influence.



Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill



Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

Then the influence became more physical. A force of sentinels was sent to restore control. The townsfolk armed themselves. Nearly all the sentinels who were assigned to the mine as a defense force chose to defend the town against the Drelmarian force.

The conflict that ensued wasn't really a war, not by anybody's definition. But there was armed confrontation, and some blood was shed. Arcane energies were committed to the struggle, but in the end Drelmar was forced to relinquish its control over the town. The town declared its independence and Albredura was born.

## THE AFTERMATH

The Albredurans never forgot what Drelmar had attempted. Relations between the cities cooled off, and trade faded to a trickle — officially, it was frowned upon. Albredura began to trade for itself with the south, and worked to become self-sufficient in its own right. It prospered and expanded. The walls were given priority — both to defend against the Wilderness and against Drelmar. And a few years later, no one was surprised or concerned when Drelmar ceased to communicate with Albredura in any capacity.

## THE SPORADIC WARS

What the Albredurans didn't realize was that there was no longer a Drelmar. An Unnatural horde had swept across the plains from the desert

to the east and laid waste to the city. Their defense was valiant, but ultimately doomed. With the help of Chaotic cultists in the city, wall after wall was breached, and the residents slaughtered, sacrificed, eaten or worse. For their trouble, the cultists were permitted to watch the carnage before becoming victims — or Unnaturals — themselves.

Led on by the road, the horde next descended on Albredura. The battle there was also hard-fought, but with the advantage of mountains on three sides and less wall to defend, the city managed to hold out. The outer wall was breached, and the outermost district reduced to rubble, but the horde was repulsed and the city was safe. For a time. Attempts were made to repair the wall when possible, and some even succeeded, but the outer district was given up as lost. The people who had fled found new homes deeper in the city. What with the losses inflicted on the defenders, living space was becoming more available anyway. No one ever discovered where the creatures came from, or why they banded together like they did. Theories were thrown about as wildly as fists in a barroom brawl. Some even believed that Drelmar had had a hand in the attacks.

This pattern repeated itself over the years. The city rebuilt itself, leaving unrepaired those buildings no longer needed. After all, no one was really eager to move back into the outer districts. Then after a few years the creatures came back and made life miserable again. The city rebuilt. The hordes returned. And so on over a period of seventy years.

And then the attacks ceased. It took a few years before people realized that no more attacks were coming, and even then they remained wary. The end result of the years of continual strife was a smaller city — the outer two walls were breached and ruined in countless places along their length, and the districts within rendered unlivable — and a paranoid populace.

The people of Albredura became a mistrustful lot. They constantly expected renewed assaults, and went to great lengths to be prepared, or at least to present the appearance of being prepared. Anyone travelling outside of the city was subjected to intense scrutiny upon their return.

Magicians who had become intimately familiar with the Wilderness creatures' abilities and powers during the course of the wars passed on their knowledge and a special class of sorcerer — the *wildmages* — was created. The wildmages were charged with searching for and detecting any influence of the Wilderness creatures who constantly sought to gain entrance to the city. They even occasionally brought the battle out to the Unnaturals on their own turf.

And so Albredura came to the modern era. The city's outermost gates are maintained, and much of

the walls. The ruined districts lie abandoned. The city sustains itself in its reduced state, and continues to wait for the next assault from the Unnaturals or from Drelmar.

## ALBREDURA TODAY

One hundred eighty-seven years after it declared its independence, the city of Albredura endures. A select few citizens enjoy a propitious life; the vast majority of residents know a day-to-day existence, in which they daily drag themselves to work and hold forth hope for the weekend to come.

The rich built their estates from the copper trade and are concerned with only their own pursuits, namely, staying rich and getting richer. However, the average person now has some champions in the newest arrivals to positions of influence.

The city itself remains host to thriving copper and magic trades. There have been no concerted attacks on Albredura by Unnatural hordes in over fifty years, but the city nevertheless maintains a complicated set of defenses. Many creatures still roam the Wilderness, and the existence of the city acts as a magnet to them.

But while things are beginning to seem promising for the ordinary citizen, and the city maintains its vigilance over what may come from Outside, a new breed of trouble is awakening from within.

## THE WALLS

Like all cities on Marl, Albredura maintains a series of walls to protect itself from the Wilderness. The mountain range to the west, and its spurs to

the north and south protect the city on those sides, and so walls have been built to close off the mouth of the ravine that the city occupies. During the Sporadic Wars, however, the two outermost walls were breached in countless places due to the sheer number of Unnaturals comprising the hordes.

The city did what it could to repair the walls during the wars, but the constancy of the attacks made it impossible to do an effective job. During the lulls between assaults, some work was accomplished, but much of it was torn down again when the attacks resumed. Eventually the outer districts were given up as lost and no further serious effort was given to maintaining the outer walls.

However, once the onslaughts ceased becoming a regular event, the city government realized it was probably not a good idea to leave the walls in a state of disrepair — that would be an open invitation for the Wilderness, or the Drelmarians, to come waltzing in and try to take over again. On the other hand, there were some who argued that spending money and time on walls to protect unoccupied districts was wasting hard-earned resources.

The compromise they came up with has lasted to this day. The walls were repaired, but only in those areas where they could be seen when approaching the city. The walls around the gates that gave entry to the city were repaired. Damaged walls closer to the surrounding mountains or hidden by broken-down buildings were left in that condition. The gates were operated normally. Anyone coming down the natural approach would see what appeared to be a complete and fully manned wall.

The planners also realized that small groups could still slip unobserved into the outer districts, especially at night, so the gates were locked and the

## COLD HARD CASH

The currency of Albredura is the Albreduran mark — known locally as “marks” or “dollars.” A one-mark piece is a large, round coin composed of a gold-copper blend. Older coins have more gold in them — the original mark was a pure-gold coin imported from Drelmar.

As a result, older coins are scarce and valuable — a *drelmark* (the name given to a Drelmar mark) — is worth about ten Albreduran marks, depending on the stamp-date.

For the purposes of intercity trade, the modern Albreduran mark is worth about the same as a selast (as detailed in the *Bloodshadows* WorldBook), though the exchange rate varies — bring an Albreduran mark into Selastos, and you’ll get maybe sixty percent of its value. The same will happen if you import selasts into Albredura.

Most of the city’s rich use drelmarks and “copper notes” — bonds drawn on the copper mines (they’d be like money orders or checks in a city with an extensive banking system, and they are written out on parchment and marked with mining seals). They are virtually worthless outside of Albredura (unless you know someone who trades with the copper-mining city), but they are worth real money in the city — and they are much lighter and more portable than the coins. These copper notes can be worth any amount, though standard currencies are 10m (ten Albreduran marks), 20m, 50m, and 100m.

Paper marks and drelmarks, however, are usually very traceable, so characters and people who deal in “shady business” will probably not mind schlepping around the heavy standard mark-pieces.



sentinels staffing them were pulled back to the Third Wall. No one would be allowed in or out at night. The next morning the gates were manned again and opened.

Persons wishing to enter the city had to submit to questioning and an examination of their goods and selves. Anyone or anything deemed suspicious could be detained until a more thorough investigation could be made. Goods, vehicles and occasionally people could be sequestered outside the Third Wall until they could be certified free of Unnatural taint.

The government also established special sentinel patrols to sweep through the Haunts — as the ruined outer districts became known — and make sure that no Wilderness beasts had made their way in the previous night. These patrols were trained to deal with creatures both natural and Unnatural and were augmented by wildmages.

And so it continues to this day. At first light each day the gate guards make their way up Straight Street and assume their posts, while the Wilderness patrols fan out and begin their sweeps through the Haunts.

## GOVERNMENT

Albredura is governed by a mayor and a City Council made up of one representative from each of the city's districts (except the Mines and the Haunts). The current mayor is Harvey Turin, a forceful man from a working-class background. To hear the streetsingers chant it, he is a breath of fresh air for a city with its head in the mines.

Turin's ancestors were mine workers and he himself worked his way up through the ranks of the Mine Workers' Guild. His natural inclinations are toward the average citizen, but he has also developed the knack of handling thorny political disputes — something he picked up from his days in the Guild. His overall agenda involves wresting some of the power from the copper barons and using it to improve the lot of the workers. In light of this, it is no wonder that he has found himself allied with Tavist Roon.

### MAYOR HARVEY TURIN

#### AGILITY 9

Dodge 11, unarmed combat 11

#### DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 10

#### ENDURANCE 8

#### STRENGTH 8

#### TOUGHNESS 9 (14 w/armor)

#### INTELLECT 10

Divination: technomancy 13, perception 14, science: politics 15, trick 13

#### MIND 9

Business 14, scholar: politics 19

#### CONFIDENCE 10

Con 12, intimidation 15, streetwise 14

#### CHARISMA 11

Alteration: elemental 15, persuasion 15, taunt 12

#### Life Points: 8

**Arcane Knowledges:** Earth 3, metal 2

**Equipment:** Mostly, Harvey leaves the defense of his person to his bodyguards (sentinels). He does wear a suit that has been magically toughened (armor value TOU+5/22), but he seldom carries a weapon.

**Description:** Harvey is a businessman/small-town politician. He wants to make his city a better place to live for the most people he can. Certainly, he is concerned with his political future, but he is more interested in the declining city's future.

## THE CITY COUNCIL

The City Council is comprised of six individuals who advise the mayor and administer the running of the government. They can also serve as the mayor's representatives in trade and guild negotiations, although the final decision is reserved to the mayor. They also vote on the passage and repeal of laws, in conjunction with the mayor. Each representative has one vote, and the mayor has three.

Council members are elected by and represent the people of each of the six active districts (the Mines have no actual residents, being the work area outside the entrance to the mines; and the Haunts are empty of population). In actual fact, the money of the copper barons wields a lot of influence, and each district's elections often become a bidding war between the two industrialists.

The mayor is elected by all the people of the city. Once again the money flows freely from Overlook to the other districts. When the rich boys work together, there is usually no question as to who will be elected. But in the last election, a disagreement over ongoing negotiations with the Miners' Guild set Carter Hodgkins and Bruno Melassia against each other, and their money worked at cross-purposes. That and the influence of Tavist Roon, the publisher of the *Shining Star*, resulted in an upset, bringing the miner's kid, Harvey Turin, to the top seat in the city. The copper barons are not pleased.

At this point, Hodgkins owns the vote of Overlook and Neln, and Bruno holds Darnish and Karas. The Magic Circle and Marketwall representatives are independent, although the councilman for Marketwall is inclined to take Tavist Roon's position on issues. Mayor Turin remains an unknown quantity.

## THE COPPERS

Albredura's internal peacekeeping force started out as the muscle for the early mine owners. Their job was to keep the miners in line, protect mine property and break strikes (through the judicious breaking of heads). As the mine site grew into a city, so too did the responsibilities and allegiances of the sentinels. At the time of the Sundering, the sentinel force acted in favor of the city itself against the Drelmarian overlords. Nowadays they are a respected part of the city, although there are those who are in the pocket of one of the crime bosses or copper barons.

The duties of the sentinels include keeping the peace in the city and protecting its citizens, but their primary function is the defense of the city from what lurks outside. At least half the sentinel force is dedicated to manning and defending the walls, and scouring the Haunts for any signs of Unnatural infiltration.

The sentinels of Albredura are often called "coppers." Some say that this is a reference to the fact that their scryers use copper bowls and mirrors; others claim that it dates from the time when the sentinels were owned outright by the copper barons. Suggesting the latter when addressing a copper is a sure way to find yourself in a back room of the basement of Sentinel Headquarters for a vigorous round of "questioning."

Uniformed sentinels walk a regular beat through the streets of the city. Other sentinels ride patrol cars (generally steam-powered). Standard equipment for beat sentinels is a snub-nosed .38 revolver armed with both lead and runelugs, a billy club with impressed *pain* spells and a hand-held crystal set. Patrol car sentinels carry the standard equipment and, in addition, their cars are equipped with a shotgun, tools for breaking into dwellings, and healing kits.

In addition to the uniformed sentinels, there are also plainclothes sentinels, whose job is to investigate serious crimes and to infiltrate the mobs. Numbered among the plainclothes are the special investigative sentinels, including bloodmages and other arcane sleuths.

**Note:** Stats for a typical Albredura sentinel and sentinel detective can be found in Chapter Three, "Locations" (the Thirteenth Precinct of the ASD — the "One-Three" — is described there as well).

## THE WILDERNESS SQUAD

Albredura's Sentinel Department also has a special unit, known simply as the Wilderness Squad. These are sentinels who are tougher than usual and can keep their wits about them when faced

with the Unnatural. They are given extra training in all the standard skills a sentinel needs to know, and are given training in additional skills. All Wilderness sentinels are schooled in magic; no sentinel can join the Wilderness Squad without some affinity for the arcane arts.

Besides the magic that the Wilderness sentinels know, the squad contains experienced sorcerers, who also receive special Wilderness training. Each of these sorcerers — known as wildmages — accompanies a team of Wilderness sentinels when they are called on to perform their duties. In addition, the "Wild Squad" is the only one that welcomes the occasional Unnatural into its ranks — providing that Unnatural person can prove he, she, or it is on the side of Albredura and not the Wilderness.

The Wilderness Squad serves a threefold purpose in Albredura. Their primary responsibility is to search the Haunts each morning for any signs of Wilderness incursions. Teams of sentinels and wildmages scour the ruins, seeking to detect any sign of the Unnatural and to bring it in for questioning if found.

Secondly, Wilderness Squad teams are always on call to quell any Unnatural or magical disturbances within the city. Since magic is so widespread in town, they do not respond to just any crime involving magic. There must be a significant use of magic to warrant calling out the Squad. The decision to call on the Squad is made by the captain of the local precinct. In cases where there are conflicting crimes, those involving the Unnatural take precedence over those involving humans using magic.

Lastly, the Wilderness Squad is used to mount attacks on the creatures of the Wilderness. In addition to sweeping the Haunts, patrols are occasionally sent outside the First Wall to scout the ravine and the mountains that border the city for any sign of Unnatural activity in the area. If such activity is detected, one or more strike teams are formed to root out the presumed threat.

## STANDARD WILDERNESS SENTINEL

### AGILITY 9

Dodge 13, maneuver 12, melee combat 16, melee parry 17, stealth 15, unarmed combat 12, unarmed parry 13

### DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding: *choose focus* 10, fire combat 17, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

### ENDURANCE 9

Resist shock 13

### STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (15 w/armor)

### INTELLECT 10



Deduction 12, perception 13, tracking 11, trick 11

## MIND 8

## CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 9, streetwise 10, willpower 15

## CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 13

**Life Points:** 5-7 each

**Skill Notes:** All Wild Squad sentinels have at least three adds in one of the magic skills, and some have a secondary magic skill as well.

**Arcane Knowledges:** At least five adds in various arcane knowledges. *Entity* and *folk* are preferred.

**Equipment:** .44 automatic pistol, damage value 20, ammo 6 (usually several runslug loads as well, from *fireball* to *lightning bolt*); shotgun, damage value 21, ammo 2; hand-held crystal set; baton, damage value STR+3/18, *pain* spell charged in; bulletproof vest, armor value TOU+6/22 (sometimes with additional magical boost)

## THE WILDMAGES

If the Wild Squad sentinels are similar to the typical sentinels of Albredura, then the wildmages can be compared to the sentinel detectives. They are usually Wild Squad sentinels with more experience, much more magical skill, and an direct understanding of the Wilderness.

There are no "typical wildmages," though. Each is an individual who creates his or her own spells (or collects them from others according to some plan or other). They develop radically different personalities and capabilities.

A wildmage will have all the skills of a Wild Squad sentinel, but up to ten adds in any particular magic skill, with several secondary magical skills as well. Most are heavily armed and protected from magic and mundane attacks, though they seldom look it.

## STANDARD WILDMAGE

### AGILITY 8

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

### DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding: *choose focus* 10, fire combat 14, thrown weapons 11

### ENDURANCE 9

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 10 (17 w/armor)

### INTELLECT 10

Apportation: *choose focus* 16, deduction 12, divination: *choose focus* 18, perception 12

### MIND 9

Conjuration: *choose focus* 12, scholar: Wilderness 11

### CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration: *choose focus* 17, streetwise 10 (the Haunts 13)

## CHARISMA 8

Summoning: *choose focus* 16

**Life Points:** 5-7 each

**Additional Skills:** two at +1 adds

**Equipment:** .44 Karr automatic, damage value 20, ammo 6; lightning baton, damage value STR+5/20, *lightning bolt* spell can be triggered from end, effect value 21 (3 charges); 2 vials *Tar Pit* potion; 1 vial *Toughen* potion; bulletproof vest, armor value TOU+7/22; hand-held crystal set; heatstone; sleeping mat, pouch containing spell components

**Spells:** *Acid bath*, *blind*, *bullet*, *dark cloud*, *destroy magic*, *detect magic*, *fireball*, *first aid*, *invisibility*, *light*, *plant cuffs*, *rain of razors*, *sense undead*, *sorcerous shield*, *windstorm* (skill focuses permitting)

**Arcane Knowledges:** As determined by magic skill focuses; usually about ten adds total spread out over three or four arcane knowledges.

**Alignment:** While most Wildmages are Order or Oathbreaker-Order aligned, a few are actually Oathbreaker-Chaos aligned — fighting against their "old allies" for the Oathbreaker cause.

## THE MUGS

From its inception, Albredura has been tightly controlled by the copper miners — as the people who *owned* the mines like to think of themselves. As what started as a private venture eventually grew into a town, the owners maintained a firm grip on things. And, inevitably, in the expansion there were those who sought to get a piece of the action.

Some succeeded. Even with a tight grip on matters, and lots of muscle to protect interests, some things fall through the cracks. And there's always someone waiting there to pick it up for themselves. However, the big boys have managed to keep a hold of most of the pie, leaving only a few crumbs for the rats crawling around in the dark.

Because of the control the copper barons have maintained, organized crime never became a big business in Albredura. Sure, it's there, but not to the extent that it is in Selastos or Galitia. There are no really powerful mobsters in the town. Four or five small gangs (the number varies over the course of time as mob hits and sentinel raids take their toll) control different rackets in the city. And they are constantly vying with one another to expand their control to each other's territories.

As it stands currently, "Big" Mickey Tartonne (literally; Mickey is a Hugor) controls the contraband liquor trade and the gambling racket. Willis "Sweet Willy" Smythe has most of the flesh-ped-



dling in town in his grasp, from the street walkers in the Pit to the call girls and escort services in Marketwall and Neln. Anyone caught working the streets without his sanction won't end up looking so good. Croft Weatherby runs an extensive loanwyrming operation and can call on favors from some prominent individuals in Marketwall and the Magic Circle.

A sizable ring of thieves and burglars has developed in the city, backed by Thom "Tommy Boy" Kincaid. He is working toward virtual control of all theft and fencing operations. He has a considerable network of "eyes" and snitches who report to him. If a robbery is performed by someone not under his influence, he makes sure that he gets a cut and strongly suggests that the perp join his organization. Very few refuse after a talking-to by Tommy Boy's goons. He is motivated by a desire to form what he likes to term his "Thieves' Guild," and even though some of his competition consider him to be living in a fantasy, Kincaid has been very effective in fashioning his organization.

There is also a lively trade in smuggling, forgery and counterfeiting, which has been staked out by Paracelsus Calhoun. 'Celsus has quite a few magicians on his payroll, for two good reasons. Since much of the trade in and out of the city is by magical means, it behooves him to have an "in" with the Magic Circle. And mages seem to have the right touch for the delicate "duplication" of official documents and legal tender. Calhoun also has a controlling interest in a few of the mundane caravan companies based in the city.

The fortunes of "the Boys," as they are known by the coppers, are constantly changing, as each tries to take some of the others' business for himself. There is an uneasy peace among the Boys, and most of the sniping is on a small scale, because in the past the internecine cycle of hits and retributions had almost wiped out many of the organizations. However, there is still an occasional breakout of mob violence as one of the Boys begins to feel he can get away with something. The sentinels are generally content to let such altercations run their course as long as there is not too much loss of taxpayers' property or lives, as they feel the Boys are doing them a favor by rubbing each other out.

## BARONS AND MAGNATES

The true power in Albredura over the years has been concentrated in the hands of just two individuals. But recent events have begun to change that situation, as former allies turn against one another and a third player enters the fray.

The big money in town comes from the copper mines, and the mines and related industries are controlled by two organizations: Hodgkins Copper,

owned lock, stock and barrel by Carter Hodgkins, and Melassia Mines, likewise owned by Bruno Melassia. The owners are both descendants of a long line of copper families, dating back to the original working of the mines. Title to the mines has remained in the families through to the current day.

In the past, the two copper barons have worked together to keep their holdings profitable. They would meet every six months to set the price of their goods (everything from raw ore to finished products) and then relax and collect their income. Occasionally they'd dabble in politics, greasing the right palms to get the proper representatives and mayors elected. This situation has existed for many years, and everyone had been happy with it — everyone who mattered, that is.

Recently, though, two things have changed Carter Hodgkins' feelings about the situation. Information unearthed by a reporter for Tavist Roon's tabloid rag, *The Newsmage*, has revealed that Melassia's family is not the original owner of the mines they hold. After the mines had been established and the town began to grow, the Hodgkins and Melassia families relocated to the site. During the Sundering and the consequent unpleasantness with Drelmar, they were determined to remain independent.

However, during the punitive raids by Drelmar, the original owner of what became Melassia Mines was killed, along with his wife and two children. The company foreman, Talor Melassia, seeing his chance to strike it rich, took over ownership of the mine. He forged the documents necessary to convince anyone who checked into the situation, but in the confusion of the Sundering, no questions were ever asked. Afterwards, the Melassias were believed to be the legitimate owners of the mine, and through the years that had become accepted fact.

Though the information was printed by *The Newsmage*, a tabloid of dubious authority, Roon's other paper, the respectable *Shining Star*, has confirmed the story, as has Hodgkins' own private investigations into the matter. Hodgkins now feels betrayed. As a member of the privileged elite, he feels strongly about the social *status quo*. He sees Bruno as a usurper, a pretender to the throne, even though the situation occurred over 150 years ago.

On top of that, Hodgkins has recently become aware of the *Grimlings*, a race of creatures living beneath the mines (see "The Godwar in Albredura," below). He has become involved with them and the cult dealing with them, and has succumbed to the promises of total control over all of the mining in the city.

The recent negotiations with the Miners' Guild have brought the situation to a head. Bruno's inclination to make some concessions to the guild

— which he feels will improve the workers' working conditions and morale, and eventually the owners' fortunes — appears to Carter to be a plot to turn over all the mines to the workers, and which threatens his deal with the Grimlings. The two owners are now at odds, and the edifice of power which was built on their cooperation is beginning to crumble.

Bruno is nonplused by the antagonistic behavior of his former friend, but he is now becoming annoyed. The Melassias have never taken opposition lying down. Things are heating up between the two, and no one knows what will come of the situation.

## CARTER HODGKINS

### AGILITY 8

Beast riding: horse 10, dodge 10, maneuver 9

### DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, thrown weapons 10, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

### ENDURANCE 7

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 10

Divination: technomancy 11, perception 12, trick 12

### MIND 9

Conjuration: technomancy 11, business 12 (mining 14), scholar: Albreduran history 11

### CONFIDENCE 10

Bribery 12, con 11, intimidation 12, willpower 12

### CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 11, taunt 9

### Life Points: 8

**Spells:** *Dagger*

**Arcane Knowledges:** Fire 2, folk 1, metal 3

**Equipment:** smoke ring, cigarette case, elemental lighter, 500 marks cash

**Description:** Hodgkins is the closest thing to an aristocrat that Albredura has. He is rich and sophisticated, and believes that that is the natural order of things. He should be entitled to that because of his upbringing and because it is his family's business that has kept Albredura going all these years. Yet he is not foppish about it. He has a head for business and prefers to stay in charge of things in a hands-on manner.

**Alignment:** Hodgkins professes no alignment, yet his general outlook on life is Order-based. However, all that may soon change, as he becomes more deeply embroiled with the Grimlings and their plots (See Chapter Six).

## BRUNO MELASSIA

### AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, maneuver 10, unarmed combat 11

### DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 11, vehicle piloting: elemental car 11, vehicle piloting: wheeled 9

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 9

Apportation: technomancy 12, cantrips 10, forgery 10, perception 11

### MIND 10

Business 12 (mining 14), conjuration: wizardry 12

### CONFIDENCE 9

Bribery 11, con 10, intimidation 12, streetwise 11, willpower 12

### CHARISMA 7

Persuasion 9 (negotiations 11)

### Life Points: 8

**Spells:** *Alarm, mystic barrier, rain of razors*

**Cantrips:** *Candle, chill, find*

**Arcane Knowledges:** Folk 1, magic 2, metal 3

**Equipment:** switchblade, damage value STR+4/19; pen, with *bullet* spell charged in, effect value 17 (1 charge); 600 marks

**Description:** Whereas Carter Hodgkins has the bearing of an aristocrat, Bruno Melassia is much more a man of the people — at least in appearance and bearing. Bruno's family has long been one of the wealthiest families in town, and he is very comfortable in his role of rich industrialist. However, he is not above getting his hands dirty, if necessary, and is much more willing to deal with those less well-off. He comes off as more easy-going, and not as stiff and standoffish as the other affluent individuals in the city.

In his youth, Bruno became interested in magic, and that is an interest he has carried with him to the present day. It is really no more than a hobby with him, as he does not have the time to devote to the study of wizardry. But he likes to tinker with magic spells, and surrounds himself with various enchanted items, some of them small and meaningless and others out of the ordinary (such as the chandelier which rotates and gives off a multi-colored prismatic glow when the command word is spoken, or the walking stick which will rise up and scratch your back when activated).

## A NEW PLAYER

Tavist Roon is the *third major industrialist* in the city. His rise to leadership was quite sudden. He arrived in Albredura a scant five years ago. No one knows where he came from, and Roon has remained tight-lipped about it. Speculation is that he relocated from Galitia, but no one has been able to determine the truth of that assertion.

## TAVIST ROON

### AGILITY 8

Dodge 11, maneuver 10, stealth 11

### DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 10, prestidigitation 10, vehicle piloting: wheeled 9

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 10

Perception 12

### MIND 9

Business 11 (publishing 13), conjuration: photomancy 12

### CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration: wizardry 12, faith: Saer 12, interrogation 11, intimidation 11, survival: urban 10, willpower 12

### CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 7

Alignment: Chaos 3

Spells: *Dark cloud, light, lightning bolt*

Arcane Knowledges: Darkness 2, inanimate forces 2, light 1

Equipment: Recording crystal; notepad; pencil; .44 Karr Automatic, damage value 20, ammo 6

**Description:** As befits his chaotic nature, Tavist Roon changes frequently from mood to mood. He can be civil and restrained one moment, fly into a rage the next and then maintain a restrained, but coldly calculating, demeanor. When in public, he is generally able to keep these mood swings in check, but that makes them all the more extreme when he is finally able to let his guard down.

Tavist is, in actuality, an agent of Chaos, who travels from city to city to sow the seeds of dissent and pave the way for the downfall of Order. He has known many names and appearances in his time, and relishes his work with a perverse sort of delight. He looks down his nose at those cults, creatures and gods who openly war against the forces of Order.

Roon prefers to infiltrate a city and work from the inside to cause all vestiges of Order to crumble. Open warfare is a messy business, and it alerts the other side that something is going on. Usually by the time *Roon is done, it's too late* to do anything about it.

In the few short years that he has been in Albredura, he has built himself a communications empire. He began by founding *The Newsmage*, which was and still is a sensationalistic tabloid that plays fast and loose with the facts. In spite of that, it became very popular, due in large part to its star newscribe, Karl Holshaque (see below).

The rag focuses on stories dealing with magical

happenings and stories about Unnatural doings around town. The Wilderness Squad often gets a story on the paper's first page, much to their chagrin. Holshaque himself is a continual nuisance at the Squad's headquarters. One of the paper's most popular features is "Oops!," a column detailing the various magical backlashes that have occurred to sorcerers who have flubbed a spell. Among the complaints leveled against *The Newsmage* is that the paper often manufactures its own news. Roon has never deigned to grace the complaints with a response (but the fact is, it's true).

Circulation increased in leaps and bounds. While the paper was growing, Roon was working behind the scenes to gain more control over the delivery of the news. He flooded the streets with his own streetsingers, and as the pressure mounted, got many of the established 'singers to come over to his organization.

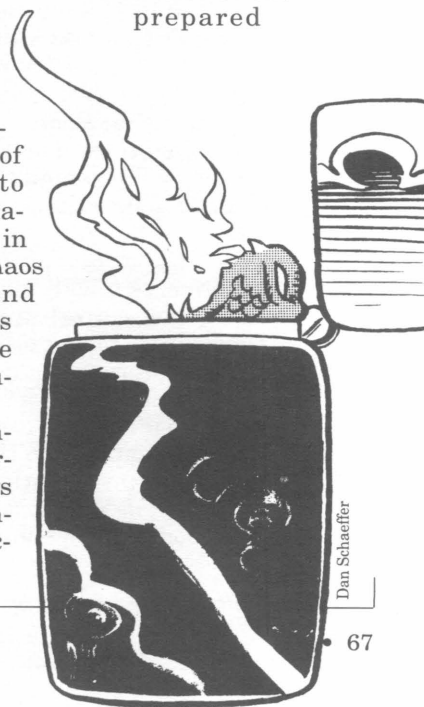
His influence and his income grew quickly. Eventually he managed to acquire a controlling interest in the major newspaper of the city, the *Shining Star*. He has since consolidated his position, and at this time, there is only one other independent newspaper standing firm in the face of Roon's empire. *Verities* is printed three times a week, and distribution is severely limited. Arlen Strook, the publisher and a former newscribe for the *Star*, feels that it is his duty to oppose Roon's monopoly of the news and to present alternative viewpoints. He is also stubborn, and the more Roon strongarms him, the more he resists.

In addition to wrapping up the newspapers in town, Roon has managed to make major inroads into the crystal broadcasting industry, wresting control of one of the only two broadcasting enterprises in town from its owners.

Now that Tavist Roon has control of the flow of information, he is to implement his own agenda for gaining power. Roon is a major-league Chaotic, who swears allegiance to the third aspect of Saer. He has come to Albredura, which is primarily an Order-aligned city, in order to sow the seeds of Chaos there. As Hodgkins and Melassia are the bastions of Order in Albredura, he seeks to divide and eventually topple them.

His plan is already underway. It is in the interests of Order that things continue in the same manner as always. The struc-

has control of the prepared



Dan Schaeffer



tured routine of the mines and the rules for workers keep things running smoothly, even if it oppresses the average guy and gal.

Through the media he controls, Roon champions the cause of the common man. The *Shining Star* regularly runs editorials supporting the Mine Workers' Guild in its negotiations with the copper barons. It was Roon who backed Harvey Turin in his bid for mayor. And it was Roon's organization which conveniently uncovered the information concerning the Melassia family which led to the rift between the industrialists.

By posing as a supporter of the common man, Roon hopes to undermine the foundations of Order in Albredura, and cast it into the abyss of Chaos. When that occurs, Tavist Roon will be there to run things.

Roon's position is also rabidly anti-Unnatural. This is a position that plays naturally on the general feelings of all Albredurans, given their history, and ingratiates him even further into the hearts of the average citizen. It also serves to curry favor with the city government and the Sentinel Department in particular.

But once again, it is all a pose. While he professes to support a pure city, and directs *The Newsmage* to reveal the presence of the Unnatural wherever it can be unearthed, he actively works with Chaotic Unnaturals. Roon supports a network that brings them into the city to spread fear and terror, and then spirits them away before the Wild Squad can pick up their trail. Tavist Roon has become a powerful man who bears watching.

With power comes risk. His rapid rise in their city has been watched with extreme interest and distaste by the copper barons. They see Roon as an upstart and an interloper. In particular, Roon's support of Turin for mayor has confirmed in their minds that he is someone they do not want around. In spite of their own differences, Hodgkins and Melassia are both keeping an eye on him. The action on the street is running heavily in favor of the opinion that Roon is not long for this world. Of course, the street does not know the connections Roon has, which should provide for an interesting encounter when the situation finally comes to a head.

The star reporter of *The Newsmage*, Karl Holshaque, is a walking conundrum. At times he can be quite scatterbrained and inattentive to his surroundings, but at other times — usually when working a story — he becomes tenacious and extremely focused. Unfortunately, these tendencies combine to make him an extremely annoying individual, particularly to those whom he pursues in the course of an investigation.

However, if you can get past the brash exterior, he is a good and dependable friend, and those who

can stand to be around him long enough to get to know him find that he is in actuality a person who is very ardent in his pursuit of the truth. While his bread and butter is exposing the Unnatural, his passion is in uncovering stories which reveal the excesses and machinations of those who hold power. By bringing the dirty laundry to light, he seeks to make things better in his city.

Unfortunately for Holshaque, he seems to be a magnet for the Unnatural, and is constantly having to deal with one monster after another. This "weirdness magnet" keeps him from the investigative reporting he truly loves and adds to his reputation as an annoying two-bit reporter from a second-rate rag. He maintains an open mind in spite of it all, and he knows that not all Unnaturals are trouble. He has even been known to kill a story if he believed that some Unnatural creature, humanoid or not, was trying to mind its own business and was not a threat to the community at large. His popularity and success have given him enough influence at *The Newsmage* to be able to get away with his seemingly capricious decisions and flamboyant style, although it does give his editor ulcers.

## KARL HOLSHAQUE

### AGILITY 8

Dodge 16, maneuver 12

### DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 10, lock picking 11

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 9

Cantrips 11, deduction 11, perception 12 (find 14) (evidence analysis 14)

### MIND 10

Deduction 16, research 15, scholar: Albredura 16

### CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration: vitomancy 12, con 13, intimidation 11, streetwise 15

### CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 11, taunt 10

### Life Points: 9

**Spells:** *Facade, intuition*

**Cantrips:** *Breeze, candle, chill, find*

**Arcane Knowledges:** Living forces 3

**Equipment:** Scribepad, camera, battered hat, rumpled suit

**Description:** Holshaque is a dedicated, and therefore usually annoying, individual. He is tenacious in pursuit of a story, and many a public official or sentinel has regretted becoming involved with him.

While working — which is generally most of the time — Holshaque maintains the persona of a

bumbling newscribe. In reality, his is a sharp mind, and he is able to pick up on details that others might miss.

Holshaque keeps in touch with an extensive network of "sources," ranging from streetsingers to people in the offices of the Chief of Sentinels. This serves him in good stead when he is tracking down a story, especially the sensational, Unnatural-related events that the *Newsmage* prefers to publish.

In addition, he has a sort of "weirdness magnet," in that Unnatural creatures and events always seem to cross his path. While this keeps him popular with his editor and publisher, it does frustrate him, as he would rather be out working on stories of significance.

## THE GODWAR IN ALBREDURA

While the city did not experience the Godwar proper, it has suffered as a result of its long-lasting effects. The great massed hordes of Unnatural creatures that were unleashed on Marl have claimed the outer districts of the city and the mindset formed by these depredations has kept many bottled up in their little corner of the world. This has served to bolster the cause of Order in Albredura.

The founding families of the city did not ally themselves to either power, but as they were business people involved in the running and maintenance of an industry, their personalities tended toward Order. There was not much of a Chaotic presence in the city in its formative years, and before the worship of Chaos could spread from Drelmar, it was sacked and the Chaotics dispatched by their own "allies."

Since the Sundering, then, the dominant force in Albredura has been Order. A number of cults have been established over the years, most of them benign social organizations. There is one cult of Order, however, the Most Worshipful Conclave of Sta, which is in reality a bastion of the struggle first engendered in the Godwar. The cultists consider themselves the guardians of Order in Albredura, and maintain a watchful eye for any incursions of Chaos. Their name and surface rituals are designed to

present the appearance of foppish dilettantism, so as to disguise their true fervor.

There are two cults of Chaos, but they are small and secretive. They have no effective power, and serve only to perpetuate their particular form of worship. The first is a cult whose members number in the dozens and which practices the worship of Saer in his second aspect. The other is an even smaller group, followers of the word of Neref, which has been on the verge of extinction. That has changed, though, as some of its members have recently made a discovery which could turn the tide of the Godwar in Albredura quite suddenly and with great finality.

## THE THREAT FROM BELOW

Throughout the years of its existence Albredura has remained blissfully unaware of some unseen neighbors. Underneath the mountains that virtually ring the city lives a community of Grimlings, a community that has dwelt there for more years than the city has existed. For the most part reluctant to approach the surface, the Grimlings have lived in ignorance of the city above. That has changed for a number of reasons.

With the return of the Godwar to Marl, the Unnatural nature of the creatures has been aroused, stirring them out of their complacency. They have begun slinking and slithering through the tunnels closer to the surface, seeking to spread discord and ruin.

At the same time, the mines are being dug to levels deeper than ever before, which has also acted to stir the Grimlings into action. They see these mineshafts as incursions into their own territory, and are prepared to do whatever they feel is necessary to repel the intruders.

Lastly, the years of heavy industry have taken their toll on the Copperwash River. Industrial wastes and other detritus (and not a few bodies) have been dumped into the river for disposal over the course of many years. All the rivers of Albredura flow into and disappear beneath the mountains bordering the southeast of the city. What no one in the city realizes is that the rivers work their way underground and eventually emerge as three spectacular waterfalls pouring into a vast un-

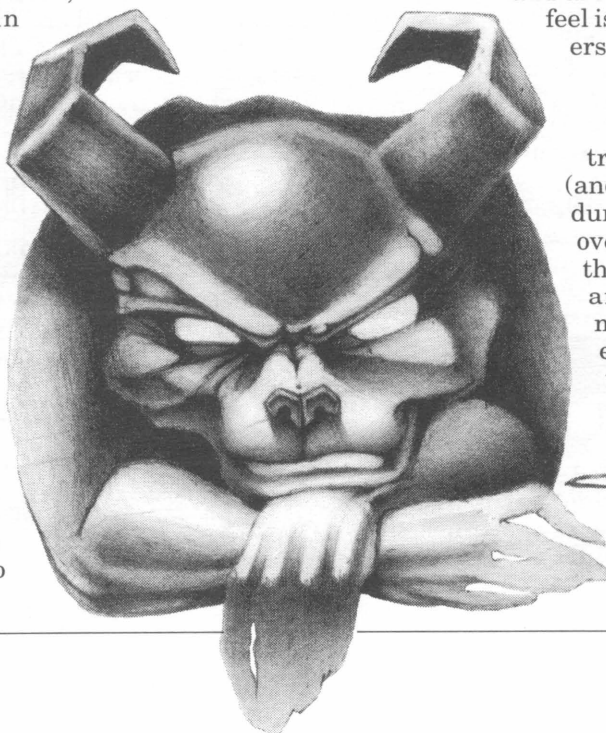


Illustration by Thomas O'Neill

derground grotto. The grotto contains the major source of water for the Grimlings, and they do not take kindly to what has been happening to their lake.

Grimling activity was first discovered by miners working the newer, deeper shafts of a Hodgkins mine. After a violent and bloody first contact, the Chaos-aligned workers realized that this must be a sign from Neref. Keeping their discovery a secret from the mine's management, they contacted their cult's leader. Further meetings with the Grimlings led to an alliance of sorts being formed, with the cultists working above ground to pave the way for the reemergence of Chaos into the city, and the Grimlings using the tunnels which honeycombed the ground below the city to carry out acts of general terror and raids against supporters of Order.

Seeking a highly visible action to proclaim the power of Chaos, the cultists plotted with the Grimlings to do away with one of the copper barons. One moonless night two months ago, Carter Hodgkins was snatched from his palatial Overlook property and dragged screaming into the passageways beneath his house. The Grimlings and cultists gathered in a deep chamber to offer Hodgkins up as a sacrifice to Neref.

Frantic for his life, he offered them anything if they would let him go. Realizing that Hodgkins could serve them better alive than dead, the cultists persuaded the Grimlings to forgo their gruesome entertainment. The Grimlings were eventually dissuaded from dispatching him, offhandedly sacrificing a few of the cultists, a horse, and a stray dog instead.

While waiting to hear from the cult, Carter realized that he might be able to turn the situation to his advantage. He is currently in contact with the Grimlings, attempting to get them to work with him instead of the cultists. He feels that he can convince the creatures to side with him, at the expense of the cultists. As an end result, he believes that he can enlist the aid of the Grimlings to mine the mountains even more effectively, eventually making him the sole power in Albredura.

And so the power of Chaos begins to ensnare yet another unsuspecting soul and plant its seed within the bosom of humankind.

See Chapter Six for the stats and abilities of Grimlings.

## THE DISTRICTS

Officially, Albredura is divided into six districts. There are three other areas within the city that are considered districts by its citizens (The Mines, the Inner Haunt and the Outer Haunt), although these "districts" are not represented in the City Council.

See the map of Albredura on page 73 for the location of the various districts within the city.

## THE MINES

The Mines is Albredura's smallest "district," and one of the unofficial districts. It is situated at the inner end of the ravine that holds the city, and is the area where the entrances to all of the mines are located.

This is where the city started. The first miners set up their camp here, and when the mines were found to be worth working, a wall was erected to seal off the campsite from the Wilderness. This original wall is still standing and delineates the border of the Mines. As the city grew, people moved outside the wall and took up residence around this area. Eventually the city continued to grow outward to almost fill the ravine.

Today the Mines serve as the staging area for all mining operations. Mine headquarters for both Hodgkins Copper and Melassia Mines are located here, containing the offices of the mine's foremen and administrators, as well as the locker rooms and showers for the workers. Storage sheds and buildings dot the area, as do a number of garages. Trucks trundle back and forth between the Mines and Karas constantly.

After slicing through the heart of the city, Straight Street passes through the only gate in the wall and ends in a large loop, around which most of the buildings and loading areas are located.

No one lives in The Mines; it is solely a business district and the sole business is the mines. There is plenty of security, though. Company-owned security personnel patrol the area during the day, and night watchmen keep an eye on things through the night. They are there to prevent problems from disgruntled workers, guild agitators, and the other mining concern. There are also daytime drive-throughs by the city sentinels, who are also keeping an eye on the rent-a-sentinels.

## KARAS

Karas is the industrial center of the city. When Albredura became a city, it was only natural that the factories involved in refining and working the metal would be built near the Mines. The factories were put up right outside the wall that protected the Mines, which also put them close to the river so that its waters could be used in various industrial processes.

Today the Copperwash River is still used for that purpose, although the years of abuse and misuse have taken their toll on the river's cleanliness. Watermages can make a tidy profit purifying water for the city.



Most of the city's heavy industry is located in this section of town. There are also some ramshackle residences available for those who are really down on their luck and not too concerned about their health. Like the Mines, Karas is pretty much deserted at night, with the exception of night watchmen and occasional sentinel patrols.

## MARKETWALL

Originally a long, narrow region paralleling the wall along the edge of the farmland plateau, this old farmers' market has developed into the center of business and commerce in the city. While the original farmers' market stretched down the length of the plateau, this district has expanded outward from the plateau and into the center of the city, enveloping Overlook in the course of its expansion.

Most of the city's banking and business firms are situated here, as well as the marketplaces which were the origin of the district. Some of the tallest buildings in Albredura are also located here. There are a number of high-to middling-quality inns to be found in this district as well.

In addition to the commercial structures, a number of residential dwellings have been constructed in Marketwall. Many of the companies' middle managers make their homes here where they make their living. There are also apartments held in long-term lease, which are used by executives who must work late and don't want to risk traveling back to Neln during the midnight hours.

Tavist Roon lives in this district, in a penthouse suite at the top of the tallest building in the city.

## OVERLOOK

This is the posh district of Albredura. The rich and the near-rich reside here, on the slopes of a hill that found itself in the middle of a city. The original mine owners built their houses here, on the west side of the hill, so that they could look out over their holdings (hence the district's name). As the town grew, the estates expanded, and more of the well-to-do found it chic to live up on the hill.

Nowadays the Hodgkins and Melassia estates are still located near the top of the hill, and the lower slopes hold the homes of the upper management of the mining concerns, as well as some of the business leaders who make their livings in Marketwall.

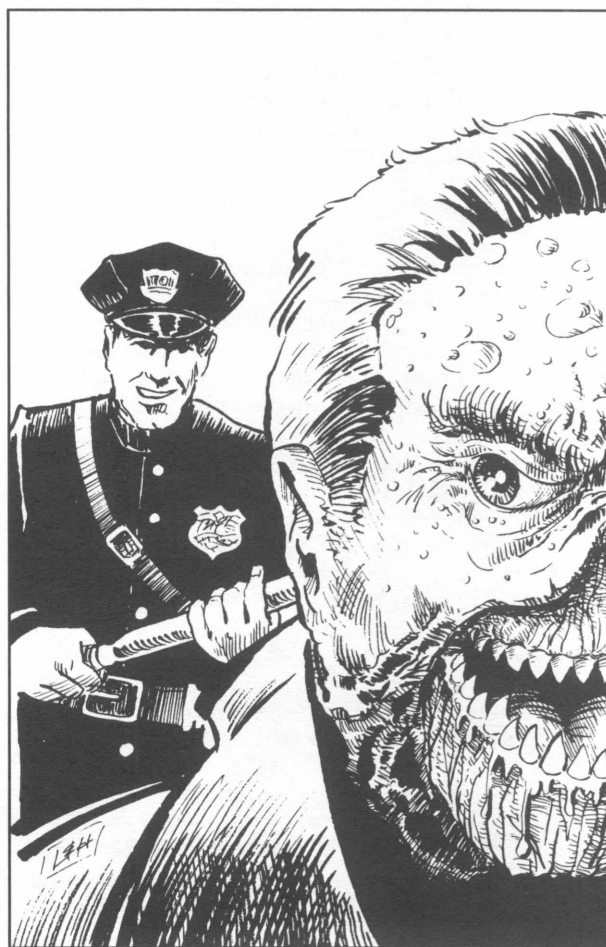
The sentinels pay particular attention to Overlook, and it is not uncommon to see two or three cars on patrol within a short time of each other. The various residents of the district also depend to a greater or lesser extent on private sentinels and security mages.

## MAGIC CIRCLE

As its name implies, this is the center of magical activity in Albredura. However, its name is derived from its humble beginnings. The original center of magecraft in the city consisted of the mages' Guild headquarters, two magical supply companies, and a handful of magicians' and alchemists' offices situated around a traffic circle on the northern edge of Marketwall. From those beginnings it has grown into a business district that rivals Marketwall in size and influence.

Most major traffickers in the arcane have set up shop in this district. There are quite a number of businesses that deal in magic and alchemy including, among others, arcane transportation companies, mystical communications firms and elemental auto parts shops. In addition, most of the major branches of sorcery have their guild halls in Magic Circle.

That is not to say that practitioners of magic cannot be found elsewhere in the city. That is far from the case. There are magicians' offices located throughout all the districts of Albredura, offices



Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

whose quality and level of practice vary as much as the neighborhoods they can be found in. It is just that the big-time practitioners and the large companies have chosen this district as their base of operations.

Needless to say, the crime rate in this district is the lowest in the city. The sentinels do patrol here, but do so mostly to make sure that the streetmages stay in line. Sentinels pulling Magic Circle duty are chosen for their aptitude with the magical arts.

## NELN

Neln houses the majority of Albredura's white-collar workers. It is a district of middle-class homes, parks and small shops. Many of the residents travel to work in the Marketwall district day in and day out, but there are those entrepreneurs who have set up their own shops and stores within their own neighborhoods. There are also quite a few marketplaces, some of them rivalling those in Marketwall.

## NOW, LISSSEN UP

"All a' these descriptions are 'official,' remember. Fer the most part, they're accurate, but that bit about the Haunts ain't.

"Anybody who thinks nobody lives in the Haunts'd better stay outta there. It just ain't so.

"I bet there's an Unnatural every couple a' blocks inside the Outer Haunt, and maybe a few walkin' around the Inner Haunt, especially at night. Why else would the Wild Squad patrol the place so frequently?

"But those Unnaturals keep their heads down. Usually, they're two-bit Undead — Zuvembies and the like — who aren't welcome in the city proper. Or they're minor little annoyances, like Sketh. But a lot of Others haunt the Haunts, too. I know. I been there.

"If you were a criminal, or wanted by one a' the copper barons, or you were a mage who just got a really bad feedback jolt, where would you go until the heat — or the curse — wore off? The Wilderness? Not likely — too dangerous. Another city? How do you know you wouldn't be walkin' into something worse?

"You go to the Haunts. A smart guy with a little magic skill and a whole lotta tough can live in the Haunts, undetected, for a few weeks — if he's lucky. Dodging the patrols ain't too hard, unless you radiate magic. And it makes it tough on a bounty hunter to track you down.

"I should know."

Less savory businesses can also be found here. Gaming halls and after-hours clubs featuring contraband liquors are popular establishments in the evenings. Prostitution is also a big racket, but in the form of call girls and escort services. Streetwalking is frowned upon in the district.

Property values and rents increase as one gets nearer to the edges of the district bordering on Marketwall and Magic Circle. The areas around Straight Street are also upscale and pricey. Values decline with proximity to the Third Wall (and the Haunts beyond) and the district of Darnish.

Some better paid blue-collar workers also reside in Neln, in the neighborhood bordering Darnish. The housing there is not as good as that in the majority of Neln but it is a definite step up from that to be found in Darnish.

## DARNISH

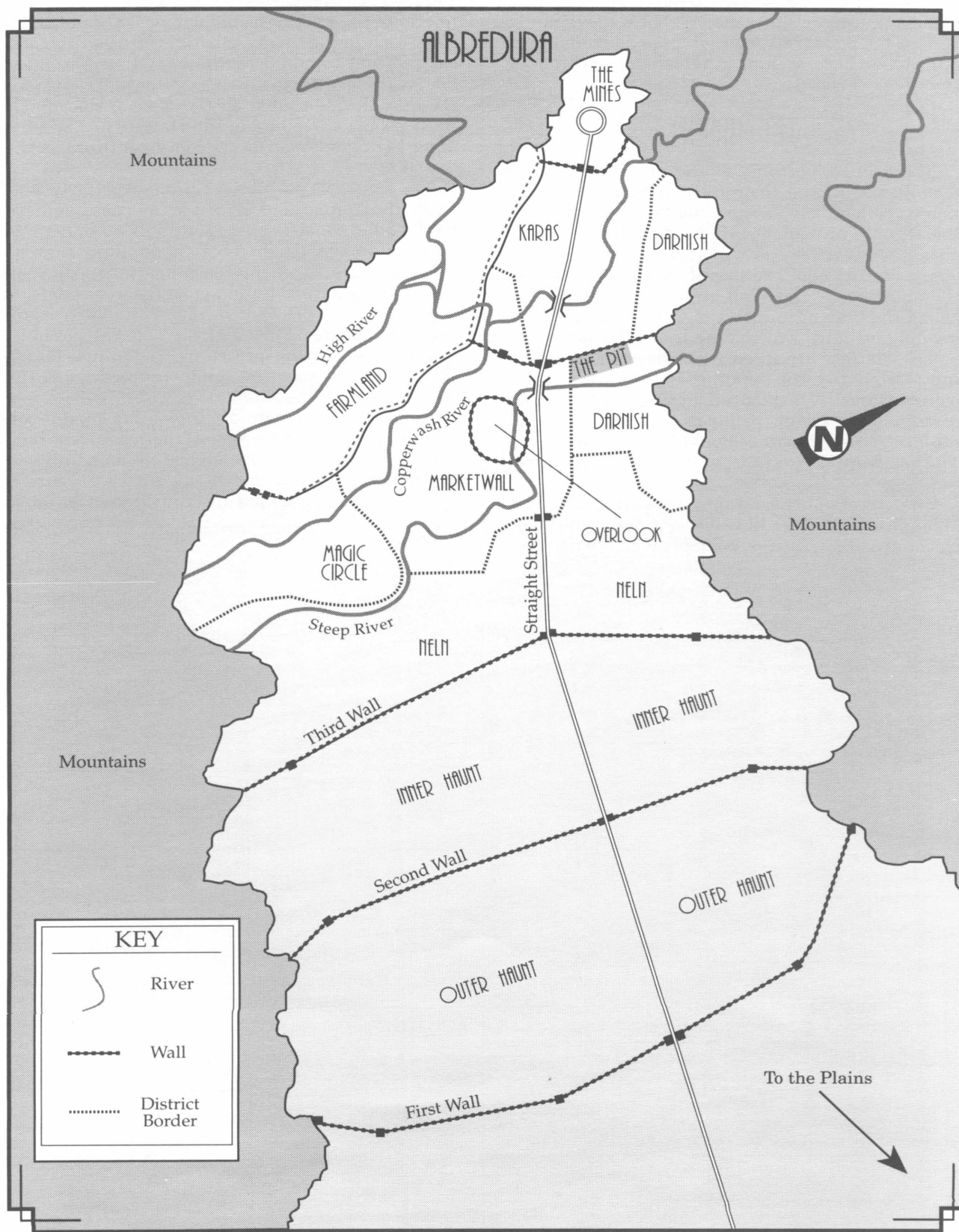
Darnish began its existence as the shanty town where the workers of the original mines and factories lived while putting in their time. As more people moved to the mines from Drelmar, additional housing was added, and the shanties were converted to more permanent residences. The residential quarter eventually expanded beyond the then outer wall (which is still standing) and extended itself along the edge of the northern mountain.

The district is still an area of lower-class housing, and the least well-off find that this is the best they can afford. The streets are filled with disillusioned or uncaring individuals who eke out an existence in the mines or the factories or just rolling those who wander into a section of the city where they don't belong. A number of street people also wander the byways of Darnish.

This is the place to come to if you need something illegal. Weapons, drugs, or other contraband can be found if you have the right connections. Just about everyone has their price, and information can be gotten if the right palms are greased. How good that information actually is is open to debate.

Sex of any type is also widely available. Streetwalkers stake out many of the doorways and street corners of the district, but the widest variety of illicit pleasures can be found in The Pit. This is the red-stone section of the city, and is located along the wall that separates Darnish from the industrial district of Karas. Even succubi and 'shifter whores can be found in The Pit, which says a lot about the district, given the prevailing attitude in Albredura concerning Unnaturals.

The sentinels are kept busy in this district, but they do not go too far out of their way, preferring to let the streets handle themselves. That makes the sentinels' jobs easier; they only move in concertedly





when a murder or other major trouble flares up.

Those Unnaturals who can pass as Human are often found here, seeking to hide themselves among the dregs of society.

## THE HAUNTS

The ruined portions of the city, which were demolished in the Sporadic Wars, have become known collectively as the Haunts. No one lives in the Haunts any longer; they were abandoned for good shortly after the Unnaturals invaded them over a century ago. The area of the Haunts between the outermost First Wall and the Second Wall is called the Outer Haunts, the district between the second and third walls is the Inner Haunts.

The Haunts are filled with the ruins of buildings. Originally, the buildings in the outer district were primarily residential homes. In the inner district were mixed residential and commercial buildings, with an occasional factory to the north. The residential buildings were mostly apartment buildings.

The streets of the Haunts are still fairly passable, although some have become totally blocked by collapsed structures. All are covered with scat-

tered debris, making vehicular passage slow and time-consuming. Only Straight Street is kept cleared and repaired by the city. It is the main boulevard leading to the city's gates and continues straight through town all the way to the mines. Most people travelling in the Haunts are passing along Straight Street either coming into or leaving the city.

The sentinels patrol the Haunts regularly with specially trained and armed Wilderness squads. Each squad consists of six sentinels accompanied by a wildmage. Their job is make sure that no creature from the Wilderness has taken up residence in the ruined buildings of these districts. If any creature is discovered, the sentinels are supposed to capture it for questioning, if at all possible. Standard operating procedure is for five of the sentinels to keep the thing occupied while the wildmage works his magic on it. The other sentinel is to call for immediate backup on his crystal set, just in case things go wrong. If the creature is non-intelligent, it may be dispatched immediately.

Anyone found wandering about the Haunts is assumed to be an Unnatural until they can prove otherwise.



## CHAPTER SIX

# MINI-ADVENTURE: THIS TARNISHED HEART

“This Tarnished Heart” is an mini-adventure for *Bloodshadows* set in the city of Albredura (detailed in Chapter Five). In this adventure, the investigating team becomes involved in what looks like a politically motivated crime, only to discover that there is a darker force at work in the city.

## ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

“This Tarnished Heart” is a one-act adventure consisting of ten scenes. All of the scenes may not occur, however, as the adventure is structured to allow a bit of flexibility. This has been done to prevent the adventure from being too linear, a situation in which the players are led by the nose from one scene to the next with no variance allowed. Instead, the initial scenes are set up so that the players can choose their own course of action.

Eventually, the characters will be funnelled in the proper direction, but there are still two paths they can follow to the final scenes. In this way, the players’ choices drive the course of the adventure, allowing them and their characters a limited freedom of choice.

The adventure begins with Scene One, which sets up the situation. From there, the players’ decisions as to what they will do determine which scene is played out next. It is possible that some scenes may not occur at all, as the players’ choices cause their characters to bypass certain avenues of investigation. At the end of each scene is a section (“Cut To ...”) which will direct you to the next scene to be run, depending on what the players decide to do.

## PRESENTATION OF THE SCENES

Each scene is presented with a number of sections that clarify and detail the course of action for the scene, as well as any alternatives available in that scene.

The scene opens with a description of the action that should take place in the scene.



This will describe any locations where the scene occurs, as well as the gamemaster characters the players' characters encounter. It will also point out the suggested flow of the action.

Following the description of the scene are a number of sections, not all of which will necessarily be presented for a particular scene. The first is "The Inside Scoop." This section gives you an explanation of what is really going on in the scene, or why things are happening. It is the behind-the-scenes details that the players need not or should not know about, at least not just yet.

Next is the "Variables" section. In this section are described some of the alternate courses that the scene could take. Players do not always do what you expect them to do, and this section outlines probable variations in the flow of the adventure and how to adjust the course of the story to accommodate them.

The "Card Play" section details some of the possible effects that may occur if one or another subplot cards are revealed during the scene. Not every particular card will have an effect, and the cards listed in this section are the ones most likely to fit into the storyline. However, just because a card is not listed here doesn't mean it can't be worked into the story. If the card gives you an idea for something interesting, by all means work it into the adventure. That's one of the good things about the cards — the serendipitous ideas that they can generate.

The "Cut To ..." section is pretty self-explanatory. This directs you to the next scene to run. There are usually a number of choices in this section. Which one you should follow depends on what happened in the current scene and/or what the characters have decided to do next.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The investigators (player characters) are hired to look into the disappearance of Mayor Turin's daughter. It appears to be a kidnapping, but no ransom note was found. When the team arrives at the mayor's house, they find Tavist Roon, the newspaper magnate, there. He suggests that the crime is politically motivated and points the investigators in the direction of the copper barons, the two major industrialists in town.

When the characters check with Bruno Melassia and Carter Hodgkins, they are given information which leads them to suspect that local gangsters are involved with the case. Investigating the gang lead, the characters find themselves in the middle of a shootout between two of the gangs. They also discover the existence of an Unnatural creature, the likes of which no one has ever seen.

In talking with the gangsters, the investigators determine that other women, and some men, have been disappearing around the city, including some of the whores working for "Sweet Willy" Smythe. At the scene of one of the disappearances, the team is attacked by a number of creatures like the one they discovered earlier. After beating them off, they pursue them and discover a network of tunnels running beneath the city.

Tracking the creatures into the tunnels, they are led to a cultists' chamber beneath an abandoned warehouse. There they witness the showdown between rival factions seeking to control the creatures who previously attacked the characters. They also discover the mayor's daughter, who is still alive but slated to be a sacrificial offering.

The showdown devolves into a melee, and in the confusion the characters are presented with the opportunity to rescue the mayor's daughter, leaving the cult factions to deal with one another.

## SCENE ONE: A CALL FOR HELP

**Standard.** At the start of a new day, the characters are approached by two men in suits. This first contact can occur a number of ways. If the characters are established in Albredura, they are approached at their place of business, or wherever it is they can usually be found (such as at a local gin joint). If the characters are new to town, they are approached at their inn.

The men are agents for Harvey Turin, the mayor of Albredura. They wish to hire the services of the characters on behalf of their employer. They tell the characters that they have heard of the characters' reputation for quick work and *quiet* work; this investigation should be discreet. Or, if the characters are new to town, they are told that the mayor is looking for someone who is not involved in the local situation for some discreet work.

Fees will probably be discussed at this point. The mayor's agents will try to keep the cost down, but will eventually agree to the characters' terms, if they are not excessive (5000 Albreduran marks is about the top limit, though he will go a little higher if the characters will take a copper note). Once the assignment is accepted, the characters are asked to report to the mayor's house for the details of the case. The men leave and the characters may make their preparations for the investigation.

Upon arriving at the mayor's house, which is located in a well-to-do section of Neln near the Marketwall district line, the investigators are ushered into a finely decorated living room to meet with the obviously distraught mayor. Also present



is Tavist Roon, the newspaper magnate, whom Mayor Turin introduces to the characters. Roon is a good friend of Mayor Turin, and was instrumental in getting the mayor elected, thanks to his favorable coverage of the campaign in his newspapers. He is here now to lend moral support, and to make sure that the news does not yet get out about the kidnapping.

Also present are a number of uniformed sentinels, and Detective Raymar Stansfield, the plainclothes sentinel in charge of the investigation. Detective Stansfield throws a surly glance at the investigators every once in a while; he does not feel that private investigators should be involved in this case — it is a sentinel matter.

Mayor Turin tells the characters that he spent the evening with his aides preparing for a particularly thorny Council session which is coming up in a couple of days. His daughter, Caroline, had gone upstairs after dinner to read and then turn in. After his aides departed, he went upstairs to go to bed also, as he needed his rest for the next day's work and preparation. He did not check on his daughter when he went up. He heard no commotion during the night.

When Caroline did not come down for breakfast, the house servant went up to check on her and found the room empty. There was no trace of her, but all of her belongings were still where they were usually found. There were also signs of a struggle. If asked, the mayor will allow the investigators upstairs to examine the room. Detective Stansfield will protest, but the mayor holds firm on his decision.

Examination of the bedroom reveals a medium-sized room, conservatively decorated. A four-poster canopied bed dominates the room. In addition to the bed, there is a dresser, a chest of drawers, and a small night table. The window is a bay window with a bench seat set within. It is clear that a struggle occurred here, as the bedclothes are rumpled and twisted, and lie half on the floor. The sheets on the bed are also twisted. The carpet is bunched up near its middle, as if something heavy were dragged along it. The night table has been knocked down onto its front and lies alongside the head of the bed. The mayor informs the team that this is how the room was found; the sentinels have moved nothing yet. The investigators are free to look around, but are asked not to move anything either.

The investigators can poke around to their hearts' content, but they will find nothing helpful. Have the members of the team make *perception* rolls against a difficulty of 9. Those who succeed at their rolls will note that the window is wide open. They can make of that what they will (the area is warm at this time of the year and a lot of people sleep with

the window open). If any of the characters generate a *perception* total of 11 or more, they notice something twisted between the bedclothes and the sheet. Removing the item reveals it to be a small piece of parchment. It is a note, but apparently not a ransom note; scrawled across the parchment are the words, "Now we'll see who has the power!"

Once the characters have had a chance to get a good look, a forensics mage will rush up and encase the parchment in a globe of arcane energy. He will then rush off with it to show it to Detective Stansfield. After the discovery of the note, there are no other clues to be found.

After examining the room they may wish to ask further questions of Mayor Turin. He does not have much more information to offer. His daughter is 18 years old. His wife died three years ago and he has raised his daughter himself since then. There is one house servant, Anna, who cooks and cleans. If the investigators question her, she will know nothing. Her room is in the back on the first floor. She heard nothing during the night, and has seen no one lurking around the house lately.

At some point, the topic of conversation should become the upcoming Council session, during which the Council will deliberate on a proposed law which would make it illegal for the mine workers to go out on strike. Mayor Turin is against the law, as Tavist Roon is quick to point out. Needless to say, Roon will continue, the copper barons, Carter Hodgkins and Bruno Melassia, are in favor of it. This incident is sure to interfere with the mayor's concentration on the deliberations to come. Roon will continue to emphasize how much the copper barons have to gain from this incident, but without going so far as to accuse them of the crime.

Mayor Turin concludes by thanking the team for their assistance, and asks that they keep him apprised of the situation with daily reports. He can be found at home for the next few days.

At this point, the investigators should have discovered all they can at the mayor's house, and should decide on a course of action after they take leave of the Turin household.

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

This scene serves to introduce the characters to their new case and gives them some background as to the situation they are entering.

Tavist Roon is on hand to make sure that suspicion is thrown on the copper barons. He is not involved in the kidnapping, but it serves his purposes to implicate one or both of the industrialists. It was Roon who suggested that Turin hire private investigators, as he feared that the sentinels would shy away from investigating Hodgkins and Melassia.



## CARD PLAY

If an *alertness* card is played, one of the characters will notice that the signs of a struggle are confined to the room. There are no indications of any sort of struggle in the hallway outside the door, or anywhere else in the house.

A *connection* card means that the investigator knows one of the uniformed sentinels stationed at the Turin house. He will be able to learn that the sentinels do not believe that this is an ordinary kidnapping, but they are uncertain of what is really going on. If the characters did not find the note in the bed, they will find out about it from the sentinel.

## CUT TO ...

If the investigators decide to question Bruno Melassia, cut to Scene Two, "A Dead End, Kid." If they prefer to interview Carter Hodgkins, cut to Scene Three, "I Accuse." If they instead intend to start their investigation by checking with their contacts for underworld ties to the crime, cut to Scene Four, "Pssst ... What's the Word?"

## SCENE TWO: A DEAD END, KID

**Standard.** After making their way nearly to the top of Overlook, the characters arrive at the gates of Bruno Melassia's estate. Read the following aloud to the players:

**Traveling through Overlook you can see that it truly is an exclusive neighborhood. All the way up the hill the only things you could see were walls separated by wide streets and well-manicured park lands.**

**As you approach the entrance to the Melassia estate you can see that it is no different from the rest of the local architecture. The gate looms above you. Three-meter-high walls flank the massive steel slabs which seal off the grounds from the outside world. Atop each of the gateposts upon which the doors are hung crouches an ornately carved gargoyle. As you draw nearer the gate, the heads of the gargoyles turn slowly and quietly, following your movements — it looks like Melassia has himself a top-of-the-line surveillance system.**

**In the center of the gate above the latch is a larger, more grotesque gargoyle's head, suspended there as if it were some gruesome hunting trophy. When you are standing in front of the gate, its eyes snap open and stare**

**directly at you. Its jaw opens with a creak, and a cultured voice inquires as to your business.**

The voice belongs to Bruno Melassia's butler. He will inform the characters that Mr. Melassia's busy schedule does not permit him to see just anyone who shows up. He will remain firm in his position. However, if any of the characters mentions that they are here concerning the disappearance of Caroline Turin, there will be a pause, after which the butler will inform them that they may enter. The gates will swing open enough to allow the characters in.

Once inside the gates, it is a short trip along a straight road to the house. The butler will admit the characters and usher them into a sitting room, where he will offer them a seat. There are two sofas and a number of plush chairs in the room. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

**The butler leaves the room. As you look around the room, you can't help but notice the extravagance of your surroundings. The richly paneled walls enclose finely crafted furniture and a thick imported carpet. While your gaze is travelling around the room, you hear a sound at the door, and turn to see a tall, imposing figure entering. The figure is slightly stocky but firmly built. His black hair is slicked back over his head and he sports a black moustache. He steps forward toward the closest investigator and extends his hand. "Gentlemen, greetings. I am Bruno Melassia. I trust Jenkins has made you comfortable?"**

Melassia is amiable enough during the discussion, but he seems a bit distracted, as if he had somewhere else to be. He is sympathetic to the mayor's plight, but doesn't understand how he can be of assistance. He denies any knowledge of the disappearance, and certainly wouldn't be involved in anything as heinous as kidnapping.

He admits that he and the mayor have been at odds before — that situation holds true for the City Council, also — but that that was business, and is always left in the Council Chamber. Melassia tells the characters that he had a business meeting last night, then retired early and did not leave the house. He was nowhere near the mayor's house. His driver and butler can confirm that. He allows the investigators to speak with the both of them and they, of course, confirm his account of the evening. His business meeting was a private concern, and he will not reveal with whom he met. The driver and butler will also decline to name names.

Melassia then requests that the characters leave, now that he has answered their questions. He has work to attend to. He is polite but firm, and walks the characters to the door himself. Jenkins accom-

panies them, and then waits outside the door, “to make sure that you find your way to the gate with no problems.”

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

This is essentially a chance to meet Bruno Melassia and get the investigation off to a slow start. It also a chance to roleplay a scene without the extra concerns of combat. The players should come away from the encounter with the feeling that Bruno doesn’t know anything and is concerned for the mayor and his daughter. What Bruno does actually know is revealed in Scene Five.

## VARIABLES

If the characters visited Carter Hodgkins first, then they already know Bruno’s secret. This scene should be run as described above, in that this is the first the characters are seeing of Melassia and his house, but should follow the course of events described in Scene Five.

## CUT TO ...

If the characters are off to speak with Carter Hodgkins, cut to Scene Three, “I Accuse.” If they have already visited Hodgkins, cut to Scene Five to continue the events of this scene. If they want to check into mob involvement with the disappearance, cut to Scene Four, “Pssst ... What’s the Word?”

## SCENE THREE: I ACCUSE

**Standard.** The characters make their way to the estate of Carter Hodgkins, which is located near the top of the hill that is the Overlook district. Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

**As you travel through Overlook you see that it just as exclusive a neighborhood as it has been the few other times you’ve made it up this way. It’s still the same high walls separated by wide streets and well-manicured park lands.**

**As you approach the gate to the Hodgkins estate, you are impressed by its size and bulk. It appears as a huge copper slab, ornamented with a geometric design spanning its face, and with a hemispherical boss set in its center. The walls on either side of the gate are three meters high, and made of stone which has been polished to a smooth finish.**

When a character approaches the gate, the cop-

per surface of the hemisphere slides back, revealing a large eye staring at the characters. A booming voice seemingly projected from the surface of the door declares, “State your business or be on your way.”

Once the characters explain why they are there, the gate opens silently and swiftly. After following a paved roadway up a gently rising hill, the characters find themselves in a large driveway in front of the main building. They are greeted at the door by Hodgkins’ butler, Martel, a white-haired older man with a similarly-colored walrus moustache. He leads them to the parlor. Read aloud or paraphrase:

**As you pass through the house you are struck by the opulence of your surroundings. Everything about the place speaks of the finest goods and materials. As you enter the sitting room, this sense is heightened as you notice the highly polished furniture and the well-kept carpets and accessories. Any one item in this room would pay the rent on your office for a year. Standing in the center of the room, drink in hand, is a slim yet wiry individual, his dirty blonde hair cropped close and his clothes bespeaking the same sumptuousness as his surroundings. The figure addresses you. “I am Carter Hodgkins. Welcome to my home. I understand that I might be of some assistance to you?”**

For the most part, Hodgkins will answer the characters’ questions simply and directly, without any flourishes or elaborations. He will seem stiff and uncomfortable during the interview. This is because he feels that this sort of thing is beneath him, and he looks down on the investigators as being beneath his interest. He is submitting to this questioning because he knows it is the only way to make the situation go away.

When asked where he was during the evening of the abduction, he explains that he was engaged in a business negotiation. He will give the name of a prominent businesswoman in Albredura (if the characters check with him, she will confirm Hodgkins’ story).

At some point in the conversation, Hodgkins will bring up the mob angle, inquiring as to whether the characters have looked into the involvement of the local gangsters, instead of bothering upstanding citizens like himself. He will mention that he has heard rumors of similar situations in the district of Darnish. From what he has heard, it seems that a Mr. Smythe is the one involved with these disappearances.

At some other point in the conversation, Bruno Melassia should become the topic of discussion. If the characters do not mention him, then Hodgkins





should subtly bring up his name. It should come up that Melassia has did not leave the house that night. When it does, Hodgkins will become agitated, calling Melassia a liar. He will explain to the characters that he knows that Melassia went out that night, since he is having him followed, for his own — personal — reasons (he will say no more about that). His investigator followed Melassia to the mayor's house that night.

After the characters have finished with their questions, Hodgkins will show them to the door himself. His parting comment will be a cryptic statement that Melassia cannot be trusted, but he will not elaborate on that assertion.

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

This encounter is also intended to be a roleplaying-oriented scene. The characters are being given information which is intended to lead them deeper into the story. But the information should also show them that not everything they hear is true, and should serve as an introduction to the machinations going on around them.

Hodgkins has actually heard about the disappearances connected to the Smythe gang, but he does not fully understand the connection. He is also glad to set the investigators on Melassia's trail, because of the recent revelations about Melassia in the popular media (see Chapter Five for details). What he told them about Bruno is true; his PI did follow him to the mayor's house. However, neither of them knows what Melassia was doing there or what he saw (see Scene Five for what Melassia saw).

## VARIABLES

This scene plays best if the characters went to see Melassia first. However, if they came after Hodgkins first, they will already know that Melassia was out that night. In that case, read Scenes Two and Five and work them together to run the encounter with Melassia.

## CUT TO ...

If the characters have previously interviewed Bruno Melassia and have discovered he was lying, cut to Scene Five, "But, But ..." If they have not yet interviewed him and wish to do so now, cut to Scene Five, "But, But ..." and also read Scene Two as described in "Variables," above.

Should the characters choose instead to pursue the gangster angle, focusing on the Smythe gang, cut to Scene Eight, "Gang War: The Flip Side." If they are just going to investigate the gangster

angle in general, cut to Scene Four, "Pssst ... What's the Word?"

## SCENE FOUR: PSSST ... WHAT'S THE WORD?

**Standard.** This scene is much more free-form than the preceding scenes. That is because the action in this scene will vary depending on your players' characters and your campaign setting. Characters who have Contacts as a Background Advantage may wish to get in touch with their contact. The contact should, of course, be appropriate to the information desired. In this case, the contact should have ways of knowing about the mobs and their activities.

The investigators may have many contacts, or only one. They may choose to pursue all of their options or only a few. In each case, though, remember that the information should be garnered by roleplaying. Don't just give the information away; make the players earn it by really getting into the part of their characters.

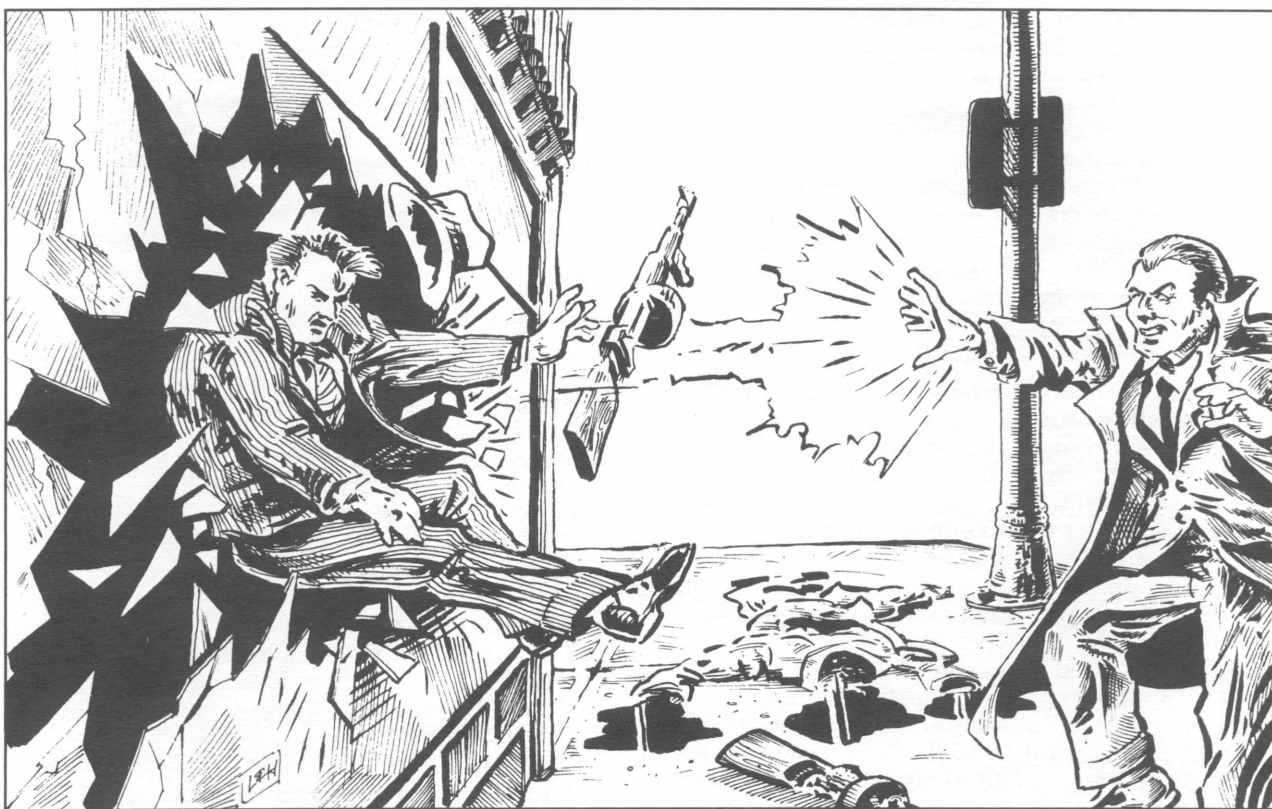
If they don't have any contacts, they will have to pound the pavement looking for leads. This situation should also be roleplayed. Information could come from a number of unlikely sources — perhaps a streetsinger saw or overheard some mobsters discussing something related to the current situation. Or a bartender may have spoken to people who heard from other people. The characters might even be able to get some information from a sentinel they know or know of. Newscribes are also good sources of information.

Use of the *streetwise* skill is also appropriate in this scene, but it should be used in conjunction with the roleplayed encounters outlined above. Have the players generate *streetwise* totals to determine what type of information they received after completing the encounter. The base difficulty number is 10 for information relating to the mobs. This difficulty number can be modified as you see fit. Apply different modifiers based on the situation the characters find themselves in (for some example modifiers, see the Streetwise Chart in Chapter Four of *MasterBook*). Characters without the *streetwise* skill may still make skill rolls, using their Confidence Attribute.

A *minimal* success indicates that the character has confirmed what the team already knows, that some of the mobs have been involved with mysterious disappearances.

A *solid* success means that the character learns that the mob connected with the disappearances is that of "Sweet Willy" Smythe.

On a result of *good*, the character discovers that



Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

Smythe's gang is actually on the receiving end of the disappearances. Some of their people have disappeared, and Smythe is trying to determine who is behind it all.

If the character achieves a *superior* success, he learns the above information. In addition, he is able to ascertain that some of Mickey Tartonne's men paid a visit to the mayor's house on the night that the mayor's daughter vanished.

Each character is entitled to one *streetwise* or *Confidence* roll. Characters may be permitted to make additional rolls if they are able to get information from one of their contacts, one roll per contact. Modify the roll according to how accurate a source of information each contact is.

You should run this scene as long as it remains interesting and fun. If your players are really getting into the roleplaying aspects and having a good time, by all means prolong it. If it looks like they're getting bored, move on to the next scene (see "Cut To ...," below).

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

Once the characters make it to this scene, they will move from the preliminary investigation and the double dealing down into the underworld and some heavy action. This is a transitional scene that

gets the players some information so that can move on, while also providing a good dose of roleplaying.

This does not have to be a strictly roleplayed scene, however. Any scale of confrontation could occur during the characters' quest for information, allowing you to set up fist fights, gun battles, or even car chases.

## CUT TO ...

If the characters determined that the Smythe gang was involved and wish to pursue that line of investigation, cut to Scene Eight, "Gang War: The Flip Side." If they learned of Tartonne's visit to the mayor and decide to question his Honor again, cut to Scene Six, "The Plot Thickens." If they want to go directly to Mickey Tartonne, cut to Scene Six, but pick up the action starting at "A Gracious Invitation."

## SCENE FIVE: BUT, BUT ...

**Standard.** After learning that Bruno Melassia has been less than forthright with them, the investigators return to his estate to get some real answers. The trip through Overlook is the same

uneventful trip that the characters have taken before, although there seems to be a greater concentration of sentinel patrol cars in the area than there were previously.

Once the investigators have identified themselves, they are ushered into Melassia's home by the butler. This time he is waiting for them in the sitting room. He greets the characters and inquires as to their progress. He also states that he does not know how he can be of further assistance, since he has told them everything he knows.

Once the characters have confronted him with their new information, read the following aloud:

**Bruno Melassia becomes thoughtful. He remains silent for a long while — he appears to be considering his position carefully. Finally, he walks over to the large double doors and closes them. Then he turns to the investigators and begins to speak. “Yes, it’s true. I did go to the mayor’s house. But I never even got to the door. I wanted to speak to him off the record — you know, man-to-man — about the pending legislation.**

**“My car pulled up across the street from his house, but before I could get out, I noticed a commotion at the side door. There were three or four thugs, and it looked like they were struggling among themselves. They started down the street, and when they passed under a glowstone, I could see that they were struggling with a figure in their midst. I couldn’t make out who it was, because there was a large sack wrapped around them. But I did recognize two of the thugs — they’re legbreakers who work for Mickey Tartonne. They hustled their captive into a large black car and drove off.**

**“After they left, I decided to forgo my conversation with the mayor, and I returned home, where I stayed the remainder of the night.**

**“I’d like you to keep this quiet, if you could. That’s why I didn’t mention it before. I didn’t want it to get out that I was trying to speak with the mayor on the side. There’s a lot riding on this legislation, and it can’t be jeopardized.”**

Once he has finished his speech, Bruno looks a little more at ease. If the characters question him further, he will not be able to provide any more information. He has already related all that he saw.

At this point the characters should leave. If they become too persistent, Melassia will reach into his pocket (he has a summoning device in there). Moments later two no-necked bruisers enter the room to escort the characters out (“Mr. Melassia would

like for youse to leave now”).

The characters should take the cue. There is no sense in getting into a fracas in the house of one of the richest men in the city. If they do get involved in trashing his place, they will spend a good part of the adventure in a sentinel holding cell. Should they decide to cause trouble, they will find a few more muscle-bound goons waiting for them in the hall. There is one goon for each member of the team.

## MELASSIA'S GOONS (ONE PER INVESTIGATOR)

**Species:** Human

**AGILITY 9**

Dodge 14, melee combat 14, melee parry 11, unarmed combat 17, unarmed parry 11

**DEXTERITY 9**

Fire combat 13

**ENDURANCE 10**

Resist shock 12

**STRENGTH 10**

**TOUGHNESS 11 (14 w/armor)**

**INTELLECT 7**

**MIND 8**

**CONFIDENCE 8**

**CHARISMA 7**

**Additional Skills:** two combat-related skills at +1 adds

**Life Points:** 1–2 each

**Equipment:** sap, damage value STR+3/18; revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6; padded suits, armor value TOU+3/18

**Description:** These are men who have been “promoted” from the mines to work as “security” for Bruno Melassia. They are thankful for the opportunity to get out of the dark and dangerous tunnels, and for the chance to break the occasional head. Therefore, they are very loyal to Melassia, and will serve him unflinchingly.

Bruno would prefer it if his goons don’t use their revolvers — or even their saps, if at all possible. He would rather not beat up or kill the investigators ... he just wants them to leave.

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

This scene shifts the investigators from the red-herring lead that Tavist Roon suggested to a lead that will plunge the investigators into the world of the mobs, and to their later encounter with ... *the unknown*.

The characters should be encouraged to leave Melassia’s home peacefully. If they choose to fight and the goons defeat them, they will work the characters over, inflicting an additional wound on each, and then dump them out on the street. If the



characters should win, they will escape the house just before two sentinel cars pull up. Though they escape now, the sentinels will be looking for them for the rest of the story opening the way to a complicating factor you can work in later if needed.

## CUT TO ...

If the characters want to question the mayor further, cut to Scene Six, "The Plot Thickens." If they want to track down Mickey Tartonne to question him, also cut to Scene Six, but pick up the action starting from "A Gracious Invitation."

## SCENE SIX: THE PLOT THICKENS

**Standard.** Having learned from Bruno Melassia about the late-night activity at the mayor's house, the investigators pay the mayor another visit. Getting into the house should present no problem, unless the characters chose to fight Melassia's goons, in which case the sentinels will be looking for them.

Otherwise, the characters will be admitted to the mayor's home and be free to question him about the events of the other night. When the investigators bring up the subject, the mayor will get a panicked expression on his face, then look around furtively. He will then usher the characters into another room, where they can speak without being overheard by any of the sentinels.

The mayor remains hesitant to discuss the matter, but eventually he will give up the goods. He was visited by Mickey Tartonne's men, but they had nothing to do with his daughter's disappearance. They were sent by Big Mickey to convince the mayor that he needed the gangster's help. They brought with them some sort of Unnatural creature, which he was told was rounded up by some of Mickey's boys. Mickey's game was to get some considerations from the mayor when the mayor began his upcoming crackdown on organized crime, in exchange for the creature and whatever information Big Mickey had on it, including where it was found.

The mayor was, of course, not interested. He had no intention of making any deals with a criminal, figuring that the Wild Squad could root out the creature and determine if it was an isolated threat. He ordered the thugs out of his house immediately; he did not want anyone seeing that they were there, for fear that they would get the wrong idea.

Mayor Turin cannot provide much information on the creature. All that he remembers is that it was short, gangling and had large round eyes. The mobsters kept it wrapped up in large sack for the most part, and left with it still wrapped up and struggling to get free.

Once the mayor has given the characters his account, they will want to head out and check on Mickey Tartonne. Once again, if the sentinels are not looking for them, their movements are unhindered. If they are being sought, they will have to sneak out. In that case, you can provide additional tension by having the characters spotted as they are leaving, which will lead to a chase scene as they attempt to shake their pursuers.

## A GRACIOUS INVITATION

Once the investigators have left the house and are clear of it, they will encounter some of the other players in this mystery. Read the following aloud or paraphrase:

**As you head down the block, two large black cars pull up to the curb alongside you and two burly-looking men in hats and coats jump out of one and position themselves in front of you. As you face them you are also aware of activity behind you. From within the cars you hear the all-too-familiar sound of machine gun bolts being drawn. A glance inside the nearest car reveals a faint glow within the two muzzles that are pointing in your direction — they are obviously loaded with some sort of runeslugs.**

**The taller of the two men facing you finally speaks. "Da Boss would like to see ya — and he'd like to see ya ... now! Get in the car." The characters may resist a bit, in which case the head thug attempts to increase the pressure. "Let's move it, you mugs — Mr. Tartonne don't like to be kept waiting." The characters should eventually accede to the thug's "invitation"; after all, Tartonne is the one they wanted to see.**

Once inside the car, the machine guns are kept pointed at the characters. The lead thug mutters something under his breath and the windows of the car become opaque as it speeds away.

## VARIABLES

This scene can unfold in a number of ways, depending on how the characters arrived at it. In each case, though, it should end the same way. If the characters got involved in a fight in Scene Five and are wanted by the sentinels, they will have to approach Mayor Turin in a roundabout fashion. They can sneak into his place in order to talk to him. In that case, they will be accosted by Big Mickey's men after they leave.

If the characters are spotted by the sentinels and must elude them in a chase scene, they will be approached by Tartonne's thugs after they elude the sentinels.



Another option for the investigators, if they are avoiding the sentinels, is to call Mayor Turin, in order to arrange a meeting elsewhere. If that's the case, they will hear his story wherever they meet him. Then, after he leaves, the characters will find themselves embroiled with the crooks.

Should the characters decide to skip the mayor altogether, and just go out looking for Big Mickey, then they will encounter the big black cars on the street while they are searching.

In each case, the car will bring them to the next scene.

## CUT TO ...

The action continues in Scene Seven, "Gang War."

## SCENE SEVEN: GANG WAR

**Standard.** After a long and winding ride, the car stops. The investigators are ordered out of the car, where they find themselves facing a boarded-up storefront on a desolate street. They are herded inside, through the front door that still swings on its hinges in spite of the boards nailed across it. There are a number of wooden crates inside, some along the far wall, others near the front window. Toward the back of the space is a large crate covered with a tarpaulin. There are also a number of men with Annie guns ("Annihilator" submachine guns) standing around the room. And judging from the sounds emanating from the back room, there are at least a few more men back there. But what really catches the characters' eyes is the extremely large figure sitting on a crate opposite the covered one.

As if it weren't imposing enough, the large figure stands, its head practically brushing the ceiling. It turns its green-hued face to the characters and says, "I heard you mugs was lookin' fer me," as its malodorous breath assails the characters' noses. "Well, here I am."

### "BIG" MICKEY TARTONNE

**Species:** Hugor

**AGILITY 8**

Dodge 18, unarmed combat 15, unarmed parry 16

**DEXTERITY 7**

Fire combat 14, thrown weapons 10

**ENDURANCE 12**

**STRENGTH 12**

**TOUGHNESS 12 (19 w/armor)**

**INTELLECT 9**

Perception 12, smuggling 12 (liquor 15)

**MIND 8**

Business 9 (bootlegging 11)

**CONFIDENCE 8**

Bribery 12, con 11, intimidation 11, streetwise 10, willpower 10

**CHARISMA 6**

**Life Points: 5**

**Equipment:** .44 automatic, damage value 20, ammo 6; one vial of *tar pit* potion; smoke ring (four charges); suit has a spell to increase its armor value to TOU+7/19

**Description:** Big Mickey is a Hugor, and atypical of the species. Not only is he a huge, hairy, halitosis-ridden tower of muscle, but he's got some brains, too. No one really knows where he came from, or how he came to control one of the mobs in Albredura. What is also surprising is that he manages to stay in charge and avoid being hassled by the authorities, since he is quite clearly an Unnatural. He does keep a low profile, however, preferring to direct operations from a hidden headquarters. When he does show himself, it is usually in one of many "safe houses" he has set up, where he can hold meetings without exposing himself to the world at large or revealing his true headquarters.

Big Mickey has never been seen paired with another Hugor, the so-called "life-mate" of popular theory, leading those who know him to believe that the popular theory is not always true or that Mickey is exceptional in more ways than just his intelligence. In actuality, he does have a life-mate, who remains safely hidden in the secret headquarters. At times, though, they switch places — Big Mickey is, in fact, two different individuals.

If the characters explain that they are investigating the disappearance of Mayor Turin's daughter, Mickey will relax a bit. He will claim that he had nothing to do with it, and that his boys only went to Turin's house to discuss business. When the investigators mention the creature, Mickey lets out a harsh, guttural laugh. Then he says, "You mean this?" as he throws the tarpaulin back from the crate, which is now revealed to be a low cage.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

**Inside the cage is a creature unlike any you have ever seen before. It is short and gangling, with a dark green hide that is covered with rough, unwholesome patches. Two large yellow eyes stare at you from its tapering head. The creature grabs the bars of the cage and begins rattling them, all the while chittering through its numerous sharp teeth. As the thing continues to work itself into a frenzy, Big Mickey flings the tarp back over the front of its prison.**

**"This is just a little present the boys got me for my birthday."**

When pressed, however, Big Mickey loses his



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flippant attitude. Actually, he's more than a little concerned. It seems that recently some of his boys have gone missing under mysterious circumstances. He makes deliveries all over the city, but he's been having some trouble near the Pit, the red-stone section located in the district of Darnish. A couple of his trucks have been found standing unattended on the streets, their engines still running, with no sign of his men to be found.

Thinking one of the other mobs is looking to horn in on his territory, Mickey has taken to having a car follow each of the trucks that go into the Pit. Just the other day another crew of his disappeared, and when the guards in the car looked around, they found this creature in the adjoining alley. It was trying to climb into a basement window. They managed to capture it and bring it to the boss. Big Mickey's not sure if this thing is related to the vanishing men, but he hopes it's not. It's one thing to use *magic in mob disputes* — after all, that's the way of things — but to use something *Unnatural*; that can't be tolerated.

After some thought, he decided to bring the creature to the mayor's attention and get the Wilderness Squad on it, but had hoped to get something out of the deal. "I can't just *give* somethin' away. It ain't good fer business."

Now he's just hanging on to the creature until he decides what to do next. Before he can tell the characters anything further, the conversation is

interrupted by a commotion from outside. Read the following aloud or paraphrase:

**Suddenly, one of Big Mickey's thugs comes running in excitedly from outside the store and yells, "We got company! Two cars! Looks like Sweet Willy's boys!" Almost immediately a hail of bullets comes ripping through the front window and door, sending shattered glass flying into the room. Three of Big Mickey's men take up positions behind some crates near the front of the shop and begin to return fire."**

Have each of the characters generate a *dodge* total to escape injury from the first volley of bullets and splintered glass. They are being attacked with a skill value of 12 and a damage value of 17 (plus any result points). After determining the results of the initial attack, the characters may choose their actions. The storefront is being attacked by ten of "Sweet Willy" Smythe's gunsels, five in one car and five in the other. One man in each car is armed with an Annie gun — a Skandra "Annihilator" Submachine Gun — and one of the men in the front car is a spellcaster, as witnessed by the fireballs that occasionally blast the facade of the store.

## SWEET WILLY'S HITMEN (9)

**Species:** Human

**AGILITY** 9



Dodge 13, maneuver 11, unarmed combat 11

## DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12, vehicle piloting: wheeled 11

## ENDURANCE 9

## STRENGTH 10

## TOUGHNESS 11

## INTELLECT 8

Perception 9

## MIND 8

## CONFIDENCE 8

## CHARISMA 7

**Life Points:** 1–3 each

**Equipment:** .44 automatic, damage value 20, ammo 6; two of the gunmen are also armed with Skandra submachine guns, damage value 17, ammo 30 (also, see notes in *MasterBook* about *burst* and *full-auto* capabilities of submachine guns)

**Description:** These gunmen have been ordered to put the hit on Big Mickey, and that's what they intend to do. However, they're not fools and they're not heroes. If they take more than 50% casualties, one of the cars will drive off and return a few minutes later with two more cars of men.

## SWEET WILLY'S "HITMADE"

**Species:** Human

## AGILITY 9

Dodge 14, maneuver 11, thrown weapons 12, unarmed combat 11

## DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12

## ENDURANCE 8

## STRENGTH 9

## TOUGHNESS 9 (16 w/armor)

## INTELLECT 8

Perception 11

## MIND 12

Conjuration: elemental 18

## CONFIDENCE 10

Alteration: wizardry 17

## CHARISMA 7

**Life Points:** 2

**Spells:** *Fireball*, *lightning bolt*

**Arcane Knowledge:** Fire 2, inanimate forces 3

**Equipment:** .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6; 12 runeslugs, *lightning bolt* spell focused in; bulletproof vest, armor value TOU+7/22

**Description:** Sweet Willy's "pick of the litter" is evidence of how serious he is about killing Big Mickey. This intelligent "thug" has been trained to throw two spells fairly well — he can also cast a few others (not listed; gamemaster's discretion) for those times when bullets might not be enough. He does, however, have a more well-developed self-preservation instinct than the rest of the gang and will flee if he starts getting singled out for attacks.

At the start of hostilities, Big Mickey hightails it into the back room, from where he intends to make his escape in a car waiting outside the back door. If the characters attempt to follow him, four of Mickey's troops will stand in their way, seeking to delay the characters while Mickey makes good his escape. If the characters don't try to get out that way (or in Mickey's way), Mickey's men will leave them alone. If the characters join Mickey's men in shooting at Sweet Willy's boys, two of the men from the back room come forward to join the shoot-out, while the other two leave with Mickey.

## BIG MICKEY'S SOLDIERS (5)

**Species:** Human

**Use the stats for Sweet Willy's Hitmen**

**Equipment:** .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6; brass knuckles, damage value STR+4/19. The two men from the back room will have Annie submachine guns, damage value 17, and bullet-proof vests, TOU+6/22

**Description:** Mickey's men are supposed to cover his retreat, so they return fire seeking to keep the hitmen busy while Mickey escapes out the back. In addition, they are getting a chance to fight back at the gang they think has been picking off their own guys, so they have a personal score to settle.

**Note:** If the player characters help Big Mickey's men fight off the attackers, even for a few rounds, word will get around. Those loyal to Big Mickey (as well as the big man himself) will feel indebted to the characters, and well-disposed toward them in the future. Likewise, Sweet Willy's friends and allies will be less than friendly. If the player characters take off, Big Mickey's men will *not* hold it against them — it isn't their fight, after all.

During the battle, have the characters make *perception* rolls against a difficulty number of 10. Anyone who succeeds notices that the cage containing the creature has been overturned and the door has been jarred loose. The creature is nowhere to be seen. However, there is a trail of drops of thick, blackish fluid — which looks like it may be blood — leading from the cage door into the back room. Any character who follows the trail finds it leads to a storage niche under the staircase which leads to the upper floor, where the trail stops dead.

Another *perception* roll (DN 10) will let the character notice that the rear wall of the niche is false and he will be able to force it open. A character who fails to notice the false wall, but assumes there is something there, will be able to break in the false wall panel by attempting a Strength roll with a difficulty of 10.

What is revealed behind the false wall is a rough-hewn passageway in the stone, which de-

scends down into the darkness below. The passageway is just wide enough to let a normal-sized Human climb down. If the characters decide they want to go down into the stony passage, they will be required to make a *climbing* or Agility roll to descend safely. The rock of the shaft is rough and irregular, so the difficulty of the climb is 8. Unfortunately, it is very dark climbing down the shaft — if none of the characters has a light source of some kind, modify the difficulty number by +5 due to the darkness.

If the characters elect not to climb down the passage, run the gun battle to its conclusion, with the characters determining their results as normal. However, during the course of the battle all five of Big Mickey's men should end up wounded, fled or dead, allowing Sweet Willy's men to come into the place to check things out. If the characters continue to shoot, more of Sweet Willy's men will arrive at the back door, effectively surrounding the characters. At this point they should be encouraged to surrender. Willy's men will then take them away to meet with their boss.

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

This scene introduces the characters to the Unnatural creature which they will be seeing much more of. If they choose to follow it down into the tunnels they will be that much closer to the end of the adventure.

If the characters do not follow the creature into the tunnels, it is important that they be captured by Sweet Willy's men, as that will eventually lead them down the right track.

## CARD PLAY

An *alertness* card will tip off the characters to the trail of blood leading from the cage to the hidden tunnel. If a *nemesis* card is played, the character has said or done something to offend Big Mickey, who from this point on will be hostile toward the character (even if he is friendly to the rest of the party). If a player turns up an *idea* card, she should be told that surrendering to Sweet Willy's men is the thing to do.

## CUT TO ...

If the characters are taken by Sweet Willy's goons, cut to Scene Nine, "Into the Depths." If they chose to climb down the rock shaft, go to Scene Ten, "Under the River and Through the Rock."

If the characters do neither, or if they defeat Sweet Willy's goons, they should receive an invitation to meet with the gang leader and then go to Scene Ten.

## SCENE EIGHT: GANG WAR: THE FLIP SIDE

**Standard.** Read aloud or paraphrase:

**Your investigations have paid off and you find yourself in front of a rundown-looking brownstone building in Darnish — the headquarters of "Sweet Willy" Smythe. Two large men in ill-fitting suits are sitting on the stoop in front of the building, looking studiously nonchalant.**

**As you approach the building the two men take closer notice of you and get to their feet. The man on the left says, "Can I help you gents?" The other fellow backs up the stairs two steps to the top and says, "Ah, why doncha just get lost?"**

**Fortunately, one of your contacts was able to get you the pass-phrase, and you respond with, "We are lost — we want to get found." Then there's a tense moment as the two of them look you over without a word. Was that the right phrase? Then the guy on the left finally speaks, "Why don't you gents just step right up?" and gestures you to the door.**

The characters are being admitted to see Sweet Willy. Once they're in the vestibule and out of sight of the street, the two guards will want to frisk them and confiscate their firearms. "You can pick up your piece on the way out. Nobody packs when they see the boss." If they make a fuss, they will be shown the door — at gunpoint. The best course of action is to acquiesce. Otherwise the characters will have to find some other avenue of investigation.

## "SWEET WILLY" SMYTHE

**Species:** Human

**AGILITY 8**

Dodge 15, melee combat 16, melee parry 14

**DEXTERITY 9**

Fire combat 14

**ENDURANCE 8**

**STRENGTH 8**

**TOUGHNESS 9 (15 w/armor)**

**INTELLECT 10**

Cantrips 11, perception 12

**MIND 10**

Business 14 (prostitution 16)

**CONFIDENCE 8**

Alteration: vitomancy 15, con 12, intimidation 11, streetwise 10, willpower 11

**CHARISMA 9**

Charm 11, persuasion 11, taunt 10

**Life Points:** 7

**Spells:** *First aid, personality*

**Cantrips:** *Chill, clean, find, note*

**Arcane Knowledges:** Folk 2, living forces 1

**Equipment:** 22 Delken, damage value 15, ammo 6; switchblade, damage value STR+4/19, charged with *ashes to ashes*, effect value 30; toughened clothing, armor value TOU+6/15

**Description:** Beneath his facade of mannered urbanity, Willy is cold and ruthless. He fancies himself a ladies' man, but he's usually too caught up in himself and his appearance to pull it off. He likes to consider "his girls" as family, so if anyone hassles them, he'll set the hassler straight. Of course, he'll brook no disloyalty from his family, either.

Once the characters meet Willy, he's curious to know who they are and why they want to see him. If they tell him what they are investigating, he'll want to know what that has to do with him. Smythe will play things close to the vest. He's not one to give away information without careful consideration. He is also rather brusque. He's in a hurry because he has some business to attend to, and he doesn't want to waste that time on meaningless questions.

If the characters mention that they know his gang has been the victim of disappearances, he'll become more interested, and inquire as to whether they think the disappearances are connected. He is also more inclined to stick around and find out what the characters know.

Eventually the characters will learn that some of Willy's "girls" have disappeared. At first he thought it might have been a "client" who was getting carried away, but even girls who were under guard and alone have disappeared. The latest occurrence was just last night. Now he believes that a rival gang is trying to cut into his operations — he has had reports of lots of Big Mickey's men cruising the streets of the Pit. He was just preparing to pay Mickey a surprise visit when the characters showed up (i.e., the events of the previous scene have not happened yet).

If the encounter has gone well so far, and Willy seems to trust the characters, he'll invite them to come along for the "visit." If that doesn't seem like a likely thing, he'll tell them to come back later that evening to discuss the situation further.

The interview is over at that point, and the characters will accompany Sweet Willy down to the street or they won't. At the door their weapons will be returned to them. In the street are three black cars with their engines running. Two of them are carrying five men each. Willy heads for the last one. If the characters are going with him, they will ride in the same car he does.

## SOMETHING TO REMEMBER ME BY

The cars travel for about fifteen minutes. As they turn down a seemingly deserted street, the two lead cars move down the road, while Willy's car pulls over to the curb at the end of the block. Moments later there is the sound of gunfire and the pyrotechnic flare of magical combat, as the occupants of the other two cars open fire on a boarded-up storefront.

The shootout seems too far away to involve the characters, when suddenly two more cars come careening around the corner, and screech to a halt across the street from Willy's car. Willy jumps out of the car onto the sidewalk. The characters barely have time to do the same as they notice the barrels of many guns suddenly appear at the windows of the newly arrived vehicles.

Just as the characters make it out of the car, it is riddled with bullets (**Gamemaster:** Have them generate Agility rolls to get out of the car, but don't actually injure the characters). The characters will have no choice but to defend themselves. Willy already has his revolver out and is returning fire, as is his driver. There are four of Big Mickey's men in each of the cars (see Scene Seven for their stats). One of the men is armed with a submachine gun, all the others have .38-caliber revolvers. They will fight until there are three of them left. Then they will pile into one or both cars and beat a hasty retreat.

The street is desolate, but there are a few junked cars parked along both sidewalks, which can provide cover. Unoccupied storefronts line both sides of the street.

After Big Mickey's men are dispatched or driven off, everyone piles back into Sweet Willy's car to drive down to the scene of the other gunfight. The characters can accompany Willy into the storefront, where they will find a deserted space lined with wooden crates, many of which are spilling their contents of bootleg booze through myriad bullet holes. The bodies of five of Big Mickey's men are also sprawled about.

Have the characters make *perception* rolls. The difficulty number is 13 to notice an overturned cage half-hidden under a tarpaulin, and a trail of blackish blood leading into a back room. If the characters follow the trail, it leads to a storage niche under the staircase to the upper floor, where the trail ends.

Another *perception* roll (DN 10) will let the characters notice that the rear wall of the niche is false and can be forced open. A character who fails to notice the false wall, but assumes there is something there, will be able to break in the false wall panel by attempting a Strength roll with a difficulty of 10.

Behind the panel is a rough passageway carved



into rock, which leads down into darkness. If the character wish to explore the shaft, see Scene Seven for the details of climbing down. If they do decide to climb down, the scene ends. If they don't, they will leave with Sweet Willy and return to his headquarters, thus ending the scene.

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

Sweet Willy believes that Big Mickey is responsible for the disappearances of Willy's girls because of the extra men Mickey has been sending into the Pit. He doesn't realize that Mickey is also the victim of disappearances, hence the extra men. What neither of them know is that the creature Mickey's men captured is the key to what's going on.

This scene gives the characters a chance to get on the creature's trail, but that will be difficult to accomplish since they probably have not yet seen the creature if they've followed this path of the adventure. All that will change in the next scene.

## VARIABLES

In order to get the characters involved in the shootout and give them a chance to pick up the creature's trail, they need to come along with Sweet Willy. Every effort should be made to keep the meeting with Willy running smoothly so that will be invited along.

Of course, if one of the characters is a sentinel, getting that invitation will be difficult, as Willy will not want the law around to witness a hit. If the sentinel is undercover, Willy need not know who he is. If not, you could have the sentinel called away for a while, so that the other characters can go along and get involved in the shootout. Then the sentinel can show up after the fight to join the characters, in case they end up going down the shaft.

Other methods might include having the characters say "good-bye" to Willy and then tail him (to see what's going on), or having them go see Big Mickey (see Scene Seven) and get there before Willy's men.

Remember, in most cases, if Scene Seven was already run, *this scene will not take place* (and vice versa).

## CARD PLAY

One again, an *alertness* card will tip off the characters to the trail of blood leading from the cage to the hidden tunnel. If a *nemesis* card is played, the character has said or done something to offend Sweet Willy, who from this point on will be hostile toward the character.

## CUT TO ...

If the characters go with Sweet Willy, cut to Scene Nine, "Into the Depths." If the characters were to meet Willy after his visit to Big Mickey, also go to Scene Nine, as they arrive at the warehouse after the attack. If they climb down the rock shaft, go to Scene Ten, "Under the River and Through the Rock."

## SCENE NINE: INTO THE DEPTHS

**Standard.** Arriving at Sweet Willy's headquarters, the investigators get down to business, asking Sweet Willy what he knows about people vanishing. Sweet Willy tells them of the disappearances of his girls, usually with no trace, and often from behind locked doors. The last such occurrence was just last night, from an apartment in the Pit. The investigators should be interested in examining the place. If no one mentions the idea, Willy will suggest it to the characters. He gives them the address and the key to the apartment and asks them to let him know what they find out.

Read the following aloud or paraphrase:

**As you enter the area known as the Pit, you begin to understand how it got tagged with that moniker. The refuse littering the streets lies side by side with the Human refuse that society has cast off. The dregs of Humanity are scattered here and there, begging for a few coins to buy another couple of hours of forgetfulness, or just staring hopelessly out from hooded eyes. Here and there, a furtive shape slips through the shadows or back alleys; a shape that may or may not be Human. Welcome to the Pit, the "waiting room for Hell."**

**As you move along, the streets become a bit clearer, as the Human trash is replaced by "working girls" of all shapes, sizes and colors. The entire tableau is rendered eerie due to the ruddy illumination cast on it by the myriad red glowstones affixed to the exteriors of the rundown buildings. Suddenly, your ruminations on the condition of Mankind are cut short as you arrive at the address Sweet Willy gave you.**

The building the characters have arrived at is a narrow, seedy-looking apartment building set between two other buildings just like it. The missing girl's apartment is located on the ground floor at the back of the building. When the characters enter the room, they find that the place is a shambles. Tables have been overturned, the mattress has been ripped and spilled its contents all over the

## GRIMLINGS

*"Bigthingss manthingss come to world below, belowworld, by digdig big holess in ground, bigholess. Uss ssmall oness no want you come, nowant ssmalloness. Bigthingss come, ruin belowworld, bigruin. Bring godss with manthingss, bigthingssgodss, play ssacrifice. Ssmalloness sshow bigthingss ssacrifice, what godssacrifice really iss."*

Grimlings are a species of noisome subterranean scavengers, whose like has not been seen on Marl in many hundreds of years. They are humanoid in shape, and reach a height of one meter. Grimlings are covered in a thick, scabrous hide, which ranges in color from a blackish green to a yellowish brown. Their heads are elongated, tapering from the bulbous back to a narrow snout filled with small, sharp teeth. Large, round yellowish to yellowish-green eyes are situated on either side of the head — eyes which appear to be faintly luminescent.

A Grimling's limbs are long and gangly, ending in large, strong, four-digitated hands and feet, which enable them to slither with ease up and down the rocky walls of their underground homes.

Grimlings will eat just about anything, whether meat or vegetable, and without regard to whether it is fresh or putrid. They will take what they find lying around, but they will also kill for food.

Grimlings are intelligent creatures, if inherently primitive. They can form plans of action and band together to achieve goals. They are capable of speech, speaking in hushed whispers that sound like the wind rushing along the damp stone walls of an underground cavern. Their own language consists mainly of whispered exhalations, but they can also speak the language of Humans (to a certain extent).

Once a Grimling population is stirred from its existence deep



floor, and drawers have been pulled out of the dresser.

The room is a simple L-shaped studio, with the larger side doubling as living area and bedroom. A small utility kitchen is tucked into the other branch of the "L," and a bathroom is located just beyond it at the end of the branch. This is apparently where the girl lived, not where she worked.

While the investigators are looking through the room, emphasize the disarray, and how it looks like someone must really have been looking for something. Describe the squalid condition of the room, and how even before it was ransacked it was probably not much of a place to live. Also mention that the characters can hear the scurrying of rats in the walls, but don't draw too much attention to the fact. Describe it matter-of-factly, as if it were just one more background detail.

Call for a *perception* check. A total of 10 or better reveals that the room was ransacked just for the fun of it, not to find anything. There is nothing further to be found here. The place has been vandalized too much to provide any useful information.

While the characters are still looking around, have them generate another *perception* total. This time the difficulty to beat is 15. Anyone who fails the roll will be surprised by what occurs next. Those who succeeded will be *only partially* surprised. Read aloud or paraphrase:

**You've seen about all there is to see. As you take one last look around the place, you [pointing to the players who succeeded in their *perception* rolls] notice that the rats in the walls seem to have moved under the floor and are even more active. The scurrying is faster and more**

below ground and makes its way to the surface, the terror begins. Grimlings prowl the dank and dark passageways through the earth and continue up into the hidden recesses of the buildings aboveground. They move like large rats, slinking through the back alleys, lurking in the shadows and darting out to attack unwary passersby. At times a number of Grimlings will form a hunting party and actively seek something living that they can drag back down into their lairs. One of the first signs of a Grimling infestation is the unexplained disappearance of children or small animals from the streets of a city.

Grimlings can be used as player characters.

## STANDARD GRIMLING

**AGILITY 12**

**DEXTERITY 9**

**ENDURANCE 10**

**STRENGTH 8**

**TOUGHNESS 10 (16 w/hide)**

**INTELLECT 7**

**MIND 7**

**CONFIDENCE 9**

**CHARISMA 6**

**Skill Notes:** Grimlings are proficient in low-technology matters — for instance, they can use swords and knives, but generally can't fathom guns. They are capable of learning magic, and are particularly adept at alchemical concerns.

**Natural Tools:** hide, armor value TOU+6/17, no effect against fire; fangs, damage value STR+3/15.

**Alignment:** Grimlings are generally Chaotic, and often actively worship Chaos gods; at times different factions will claim different gods as their patron. It is not uncommon for those factions to war on each other in the name of their patron.

## BACKGROUND NOTES

### Advantages/Compensations

1CI, 2CIII, 1CIV

### Mandatory A/C

**Advantages:** Special Abilities (CIII): Enhanced Hearing, Omnivorousness, Ultravision; Special Abilities (CIV): Natural Armor (hide), Natural Weaponry (HTH) (fangs)

**Compensations:** Advantage Flaw (CIII): Ability Loss II (lose ultravision after exposure to sunlight; must remain in darkness for at least one hour to regain); Cultural Unfamiliarity (CIII); Advantage Flaw (CIV): Ability Loss III (cannot use Enhanced Hearing or *tracking* skills in open area), Allergy II (direct sunlight)

**Note:** Like all Unnaturals, Grimlings must also take the additional Compensation of *Prejudice* (CII).

### Recommended A/C

Skill Bonus to *stealth*-, *tracking*- or *climbing*-related skills.

### Restricted A/C

None



pronounced. Then it's almost as if they were beginning to pound on the floor from below.

Suddenly there's a crashing and a splintering as the floorboards are hurled ceilingward. Two small dark shapes come scrabbling out of the the newly-formed holes. At the same time more of the shapes seem to appear from within different items of furniture against the walls. The wave of bodies descends on you, sharp death glinting in their hands.

The characters are being attacked by a pack of creatures like the one that Big Mickey had in captivity. The creatures are *Grimlings*, although the characters will not know that. Two have crashed through the floor, while the others have come through tunnels they have dug up into the building. There are as many Grimlings as there are player characters. The Grimlings are armed with

knives of a sort — sharpened shards of pitted and rusted metal, with the grip formed by leather strips wrapped around the butt end. The Grimlings attacking the characters have the following statistics.

## GRIMLINGS (TWO PER INVESTIGATOR)

**AGILITY 12**

Climbing 14, dodge 15, stealth 15, melee combat 14, melee parry 14

**DEXTERITY 9**

**ENDURANCE 10**

**STRENGTH 8**

**TOUGHNESS 10**

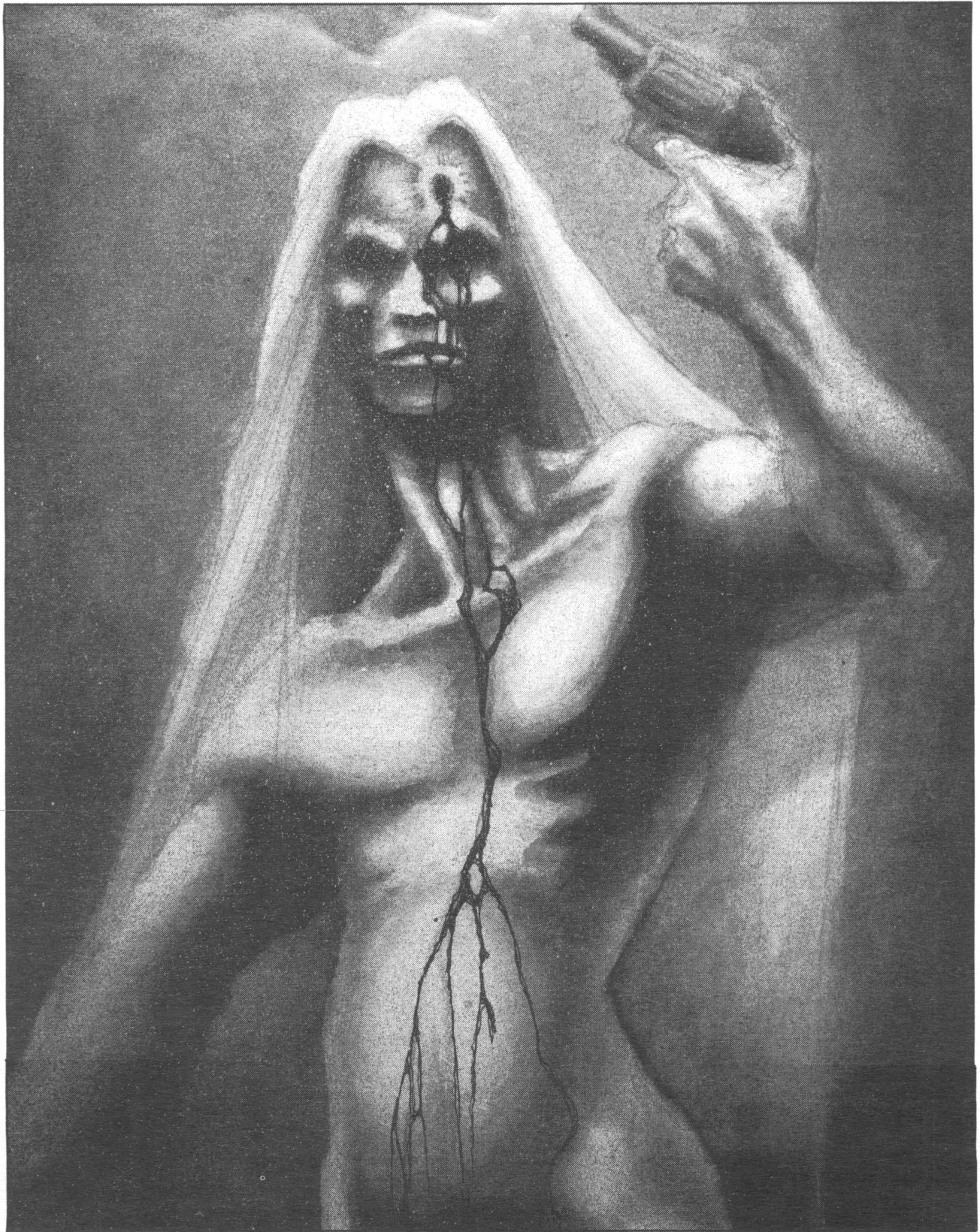
**INTELLECT 7**

**MIND 7**

**CONFIDENCE 9**

Intimidation 11, survival: underground 11





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## CHARISMA 6

**Life Points:** 1–2 each

**Natural Tools:** Fangs, damage value STR+3/

11

**Equipment:** knife, damage value STR+4/19

**Description:** The Grimlings have become aware that someone is tracking them, and so they have begun lying in wait in order to trap whomever it is. Their goal is to eliminate the threat to their existence.

The Grimlings will fight until there are only two remaining, at which time they will break off the fight and flee back to the tunnels.

If the characters begin to lose the fight, you can have a couple of sentinels show up; they were summoned by someone who is tired of all the racket going on in the building. The Grimlings will flee before the sentinels can catch a glimpse of them, in order to preserve the secret of their existence.

The characters will be able to identify where the Grimlings disappeared, and upon closer examination, will find a hole in a wall opening on a tunnel that leads down under the ground.

Read the following aloud or paraphrase it:

**Having driven off the foul Unnatural creatures, you breathe a sigh of relief. But that relief is quickly tempered by the thought that some of those creatures are still on the loose and it seems that they are responsible for the recent abductions. Can it be that Caroline Turin was dragged deep beneath the surface of Marl? The only way to tell for sure is to follow those things into their lair.**

The characters should decide to descend the tunnel and attempt to find the lair of the creatures. They can do so immediately, or they may wish to prepare a bit first. Once they are ready, they begin the climb down into the depths.

## CARD PLAY

An *alertness* card means that the character is not surprised when the Grimlings attack. If a *personal stake* card is played, the character has determined from some paperwork found in the apartment that the girl who lived there is actually the daughter of an old family friend. This character will now also be seeking to save the girl as well as Caroline Turin.

## CUT TO...

Go to scene Ten: "Under the River and Through the Rock."

## SCENE TEN: UNDER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE ROCK

**Dramatic.** The characters descend into the labyrinthine tunnel system that exists below the city of Albredura. They may be prepared for their expedition, or they may not, depending on when and how they entered the cave system.

Each of the characters must make a *climbing* or *Agility* roll to descend safely. The rock of the shaft is rough and irregular, so the difficulty of the climb is 8. Unfortunately, it is very dark climbing down the shaft — if none of the characters has a light source of some kind, modify the difficulty number by +5 due to the darkness. Anyone who fails their roll falls three meters to the passageway below.

After reaching the bottom of the downward shaft, the characters can look around. If they had time to prepare they probably have one or more light sources. If they did not have time to prepare, one of the characters at the bottom will trip over something near the wall of the cavern. It sounds metallic. After groping around for a while, they will discover three old lanterns, which apparently were still half full when they were discarded.

## CAVERN ENCOUNTERS

This is another scene (or, at least, part of a scene) that can be run in a free-form manner. Once they have entered the tunnels, the characters will be trying to pick up the trail of the creature (or creatures), in hopes of finding out more about the disappearances, particularly that of Caroline Turin.

Presented below is a list of possible encounters. Feel free to throw these into the mix at any time. You may want to vary the severity of the encounter depending on how prepared the team is. You can come up with encounters of your own, or modify the ones presented here. Keep the characters wandering through the tunnels as long as it's fun.

### ENCOUNTER ONE

The team comes across a Grimling scouting party, consisting of from six to ten Grimlings armed with long knives (of the type described previously in Scene Nine). There is also a leader, who carries a short staff. The staff is actually a pain baton, as described on page 132 of *The World of Bloodshadows*. It has three charges remaining. Use the stats provided in Scene Nine for the Grimlings.

### ENCOUNTER TWO

Approaching a larger intersection, the team is



surprised to see two different groups of Grimlings meet, then attack each other. As the team watches, the melee starts to drift toward them. The characters can avoid becoming embroiled in the big battle by generating a *stealth* or Agility roll of 12. If any character fails to do so, three or four Grimlings detach themselves from the main group and attack.

You may also want to have the players make *tracking* or Intellect rolls to determine how well their characters are doing in following the Grimlings they encountered in the earlier scenes. After a certain number of successful rolls, interspersed with encounters, the characters find themselves in a corridor, down which they can hear Human voices.

## ENCOUNTER THREE

The characters pass a small alcove. If anyone has an *alertness* card or generates a *perception* total of 10 or higher, that character sees a skeleton in the alcove, dressed in rages. Poking around the skeleton will reveal a small amulet and a ring. The ring is made of gold and has an emerald set into it — it is worth about 400 Albreduran marks. The amulet is also made of gold, but only worth about 200 marks. However, if a character wearing the amulet says the word “protect,” a spell is discharged. The spell has an effect value of 25. The effect value is measured against the character’s Toughness with armor on the “Push” column of the Success Chart. The character’s Toughness with armor is then increased by the push value for one hour. The amulet has four charges.

The skeleton has been in the alcove a long time and there is no evidence to who it was.

## THE END IS NEAR

As the characters head down the corridor, the voices become fainter. Soon, they find themselves at an intersection of a few corridors. Following the voices before they disappear completely, brings them down a corridor that ends in a door. When the investigators open the door, they are on a balcony overlooking the floor of a large open area hewn out the the rock (you can use the map of Neref’s Pit, which can be found in Chapter Three, “Locations,” for this scene).

If the investigators have discovered the changing room before entering the large chamber, they will be able to don robes and make it down to the lower level undetected.

On the floor of the large chamber stand ten blue-robed figures, facing the altar. Arranged around the robed figures are fifteen Grimlings, which are lighter in color than the ones the characters have previously seen, being a yellowish-brown. On the

altar lies a bound figure, a girl — it is Caroline Turin.

Just as three of the figures detach themselves from the group and begin to approach the altar, a hooded, red-robed figure steps out of an opening to the left and calls for them to halt. Even from on the balcony, the characters can feel the tension in the room increase.

They can overhear the red-robed figure telling the blue-robes that they had better yield; they cannot possibly succeed. One of the blue-robed figures who had begun to advance calls the red-robe a base impostor and an infidel, and claims that with the support of these our subterranean servants — and he gestures back toward the Grimlings — we can take back the power that is rightfully ours. “Haven’t we already proven that by claiming the life of the city’s leader as a sacrifice?” he asks.

The red-robe calls him a pitiful fool, and states that he does not know the meaning of power, and that his puny demonstration is little more than a game. At that, red-robe calls out a rasping phrase, and a horde of Grimlings — these being a darker, blackish green — comes boiling up over the lip of the chasm situated behind the altar. Two of them dash for the altar and grab the girl, then carry her to the opening on the left that the red-robed figure came from. The other Grimlings descend on the blue-robes and the lighter Grimlings, and a free-for-all develops on the floor of the chamber.

These developments give the investigators the opportunity to rescue Caroline. It is a dangerous chance, but it’s their only one. They will have to make their way down to the chamber, work their way across the floor to the priests’ chamber, retrieve the girl, and get her back up. If the characters bring an extra robe down from the dressing room with them, they will be able to disguise Caroline, making it a little easier to get her out.

Once they get her up the stairs and out of the chamber, it will be an easy matter to follow the footprints in the passageways and find their way to the passage up to the warehouse, the city and safety.

The characters should make a series of *stealth*, *acrobatics*, and, occasionally, combat-related rolls to get to Caroline and get her out. They should have to fight off a particularly tough Grimling to finally save her.

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

As the characters can gather from the conversation between the robed figures, there is some sort of power play going on in the cult. What they do not know is that the person in the red robe was none other than Carter Hodgkins, the copper baron.

Following his kidnapping by the Grimlings (detailed in Chapter Five), he was able to forge an





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alliance with them at the expense of the Chaos cult which had requested his abduction. However, many of the Grimlings felt that they should more properly ally themselves with other followers of Chaos. Unfortunately for them — and the cult — the larger faction in the Grimling community opted to side with the industrialist, figuring that he could better serve their ends.

In order to flex their muscles and show that they were now a power to be reckoned with, the Cult of Neref planned to sacrifice the daughter of the mayor. They then hoped to plant the seeds of panic and despair when they returned her broken body back to her room right under the noses of the mayor and the sentinels.

When he discovered their plan, Hodgkins decided to disrupt it in order to demonstrate his own power and influence and to put the cult in its place. He succeeded in disrupting the plan, but lost possession of the girl. However, he has only strengthened the resolve of the Neref-worshippers to put him down. No good is brewing beneath the streets of Albredura.

## VARIABLES

If the *personal stake* card had been played in Scene Nine, you could set up this scene so that there were other abductees being held in the priests' chamber preparatory to being sacrificed. Among them they would be the woman who is the character's *personal stake*, giving the character the opportunity to play out the subplot.

## CARD PLAY

If the *idea* card was played, you could suggest that the investigators bring an extra robe to disguise Caroline. If the *romance* card is played, Miss Turin becomes infatuated with one of her rescuers.

If the *nemesis* card were turned up, the characters may have been recognized by some of the cultists. The cult of Neref might then be out for their blood. Or, alternatively, Carter Hodgkins might become the nemesis if he recognized them and their involvement in this situation.

## THE WRAP-UP

If the investigators get Caroline Turin out of the underground area and back to her father, they earn Mayor Turin's gratitude and respect. That and a half-mark'll get them a cup of coffee.

But Turin will reward them with whatever he promised. If you want to keep the characters in Albredura, they might be hired to go after Carter Hodgkins (if they found out about him) or to wage war on the Grimlings. Possibly, they could also be bodyguards or strike-breakers (remember the new legislation coming about?)

## AWARDS

Since this was a particularly long adventure, the awards will vary. For every *two* scenes (round up) the characters participated in (they may have skipped some or gone quickly through a few), give each of them *one* Life Point. Then, if they managed to save Caroline, give them another Life Point.

In addition, any characters who were particularly inventive in their roleplaying or negotiation techniques might receive 1–5 Skill Points each. Examples of good techniques would be: making friends with the gang bosses (instead of pissing them off), negotiating tough (but fair) with Mayor Turin, trying to find out as much about the Grimlings as possible, and/or trying to map out the Grimlings' cavern (for future adventures).





# MEAN STREETS

by Stephen Crane

## BLOODSHADOWS CAMPAIGN PACK

Take a long trip through the Wilderness or a short trip through a gate and you might end up in Albredura. You could do worse, you could do better. Albredura's a city of survivors and cynics, hard magic and cold steel. Trying to turn a profit is tough in a town where breaking even might not even mean survival.

*Mean Streets* is a campaign supplement for *Bloodshadows*, the World of *Fantasy Noir*. It contains details on the isolated city of Albredura as well as gamemastering tips for the *Bloodshadows* roleplayer.

Also included in *Mean Streets* is the *Bloodshadows* Gamemaster Screen, containing many of the necessary charts and tables included in the *Bloodshadows* WorldBook and MasterBook.

*Mean Streets* is a Campaign Supplement intended for use with the *Bloodshadows* game.

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