

April 2012 Issue 4

Shaking Things Up

SAVAGE INSIDER

For All Things Savage

OLYMPIAN BREED

Preview this new campaign series

**Content to aid a GM in keeping
their adventures interesting**

A CAUSE TO DIE FOR

Adventure for the upcoming
Tunse'al



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MTE



SELECTED SAVAGE SETTINGS

DEADLANDS: RELOADED!

The year is 1876, but the history is not our own.

Pinnacle's flagship product is *Deadlands*, a horrific journey into the "Weird West." Mysterious beings called the Reckoners have given life to monsters and magic, causing history to divert from July 4th, 1863 forward. The South has won its independence, California has shattered into a labyrinth of flooded sea-canyons, and a mysterious super-fuel called "ghost rock" has spawned as much war and strife as it has "steampunk" devices.

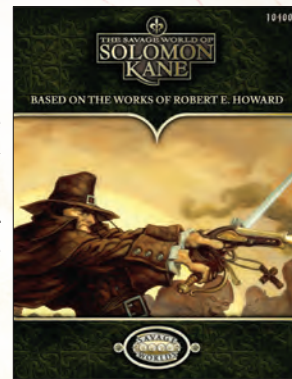
Players are steely-eyed gunfighters, card-slinging sorcerers called hucksters, mysterious shamans, savage braves, mad scientists, and more who battle against evil and attempt to prevent the "Reckoning."



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horror and violence, a bold land where even the lowliest cockroach can become a king by his own sword and the most wretched gob of filth can become a gawd.

Are you worm enough to follow your destiny? Do you have the nuggets to take your rightful place among Oith's most valiant heroes? If so, strap on your esophagator hide shield, pick up your poo flinger and your huge freakin' cleaver, mount your pygmy slog, whisper a prayer to Jelvis, kiss your larvae goodbye, and open the goosin' book. The muck-riddled road to epic adventure stands before you...

NECESSARY EVIL: EXPLORER'S EDITION

The fate of the world lies with the scum of the earth: when the super heroes of the world are blown to kingdom come by an unstoppable army of invading aliens, who will save the day? Evil! The only forces left to take on the alien menace are the crafty, self-serving super-villains! Necessary Evil is a supers game done Savage Worlds style. Inside the twisted Plot Point setting are complete rules on making four-color super-powered characters, over seventy super powers, a pile of adventures weaving in and out of a resistance story, new Edges and Hindrances, a bestiary of out-of-this-world critters, and more!

No simple reprint, this classic Savage Worlds setting is reformatted to the wildly popular *Savage Worlds: Explorers Edition*-size paperback, includes a new ending (110% of the story of the first edition), and has updated rules and two dozen new pieces of art.



WEIRD WAR II

The violence and horror of war brings humanity's worst nightmares to life, and no war was as terrible or as widespread as *Weird War II*. Climb in your Sherman, crawl into the ball turret of a B17, or just grab a rifle and battle the horrors of *Weird War II*.

One of our most popular lines ever relaunched as a single massive volume covering all the war's major theatres and updating the terror to the award-winning *Savage Worlds* system. You'll find complete rules for campaigns on land, sea, and air, rules for rune magic, and a massive bestiary with haunted tanks, Nazi Wehrwolves, ghost battleships, and more!

SPACE 1889: RED SANDS

Science fiction roleplaying in a more Savage time! Since Thomas Edison first explored the worlds with the help of his marvelous ether propeller, the British Empire has grown to include to the red plains and stately canals of Mars, the steaming, dinosaur-infested swamps of Venus, even a remote outpost in the twilight zone of Mercury.

In 1889, the sun truly never sets on the British Empire. But deep inside the Empire a core of revolt festers and grows. Martian cults cry out for the Earthlings' expulsion. Britain teeters at the edge of war with the Oenotrian Empire. In the midst of seething turmoil, the being known only as Kronos siezes the technology of a forgotten race to threaten the very future of mankind!

This book contains everything you need to play thrilling Victorian space adventures with the *Savage Worlds* game system: new Edges, Hindrances, combat and construction rules for ether vessels and aerial flyers, a complete system for Inventions, copious information about the various locales, races, and mysteries of the Solar System, an Adventure Generator, dozens of Savage Tales, a bevy of alien creatures and nefarious foes, and a Plot Point campaign to take your heroes to the stars and back again.



All of our settings (except *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* and *Pirates of the Spanish Main*) require the *Savage Worlds* core rules.

MTE SAVAGE INSIDER

Editor-in-Chief: Aaron T. Huss
Assisting Editor: Vickey A. Beaver
Lead Developer: Vickey A. Beaver
Marketing Direction: Vickey A. Beaver
Logo Design: Aaron Acevedo

Contributing Authors: Christopher Banks, Vickey A. Beaver, Jason Blair, Vikki Felde, Aaron T. Huss, Kevin Ranson, Randolph Suwara, Lee Szczepanik, Visionary Comics, Michael F. Zabkar

Cover Artist: Chaz Kemp

Interior Artists: Alessandro Alaia, Chaz Kemp, Svenja Liv, OtherWorld Creations, Joshua Pinkas, V Shane, Randolph Suwara

Website: savageinsideronline.com

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aaron@mysticalthrone-ent.com.

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CONTENTS

COLUMNS

LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS	2
FEATURED PUBLICATION	20
RECENT RELEASES	52
CONVENTION CONNECTION	51

FEATURED ARTICLES

SHAKEN, STIRRED, OR THOROUGHLY TWISTED	3
WORLDS SHAKEN WHILE YOU WAIT	35
PREMEDITATED ROLE-PLAYING	42
THE KID: OUTLAW (DEADLANDS COMIC)	44

PRODUCT PREVIEW

ONE SANDAL AND THE SON OF ODIN	23
--------------------------------	----

DESIGNER'S DIARY

STREETS OF BEDLAM	18
-------------------	----

GREAT ADVENTURES

A CAUSE TO DIE FOR	10
--------------------	----

CHARACTER GALLERY

DOCTOR RODERICK PATERNA	5
-------------------------	---

EQUIPMENT CORRAL

DOCTOR RODERICK PATERNA (GEAR)	7
WARP SWORD	36

FICTIONAL WRITINGS

MIND GAMES (CRYPT OF THE CRYSTAL LICH)	9
BOSTON BREWING (ECHOES OF ROME)	28
DATAFILE 5.07.3, SUBJECT: MIMEO	40

Greetings from the Editor-in-Chief:

I'd like to start off by thanking the over 1,400 people who have downloaded *Issue 3: What Lurks in the Shadows* and the continuing growth of people downloading Issues #1 and 2. To date, **SAVAGE INSIDER** has been downloaded over 6,200 times across the three issues, and we couldn't be happier for the response. To keep with our growing fan-base, we are ecstatic to present you with *Issue 4: Shaking Things Up*, with lead development by Vickey A. Beaver, our head assistant editor and marketing guru. In addition, to celebrate the success of **SAVAGE INSIDER** and our continuing efforts of developing it as a free eZine, *Issue 3: What Lurks in the Shadows* has been submitted to the ENnies Awards for 2012.

We'd also like to thank our fans who participate on our Facebook page and would like to remind you that we also have a Twitter feed (linked to our Facebook page) and a forum to discuss all things *Savage Worlds*, **SAVAGE INSIDER**, and Mystical Throne Entertainment. The forums can be found at:

<http://mysticalthrone-ent.com/forums>

SAVAGE INSIDER wouldn't be possible without our fans and the *Savage Worlds* licensees. We are constantly looking for submissions from both for incorporation into future issues. If you'd like to show off your love for *Savage Worlds*, drop me a line at:

aaron@mysticalthrone-ent.com

Finally, due to our method of trading lead developer duties, planning and development has already begun for *Issue 5: CONventional Gaming*. This issue will feature four one-shot adventures with pre-generated characters designed for conventions, one-session gameplay, or even to introduce players to a new setting or *Savage Worlds* itself. Developers have already been lined-up, and the four adventures include a fantasy adventure from White Haired Man located in the *Kith'takharos* setting, a cyberpunk adventure from Curtis and Sarah Lyon (freelancing for Gun Metal Games) located in the *Interface Zero* setting, a modern fantasy horror adventure from myself located in the *Judgment Day* setting, and a pulp adventure from our newly signed writer Jeremy Stromberg who you will soon find in **SAVAGE INSIDER PREMIUM**.

Thanks again for your continued support!

Aaron T. Huss,
Editor-in-Chief

If you want to write-in to *Savage Insider*, send an e-mail to aaron@mysticalthrone-ent.com and your letter will show up in the following issue's Letters from the Editor.

And Now from the Assistant Editor:

It's hard to believe that it's been over a year now since Aaron first put out a call to publishers to participate in **SAVAGE INSIDER**. At the time, he was just trying to see what kind of interest there might be, and the magazine didn't even have a name. I offered to help out if he was interested, and was flattered to be offered the assistant editor role. Despite *SI* being a volunteer project, he and I put the same kind of effort into it as we do with those things that make us money. It's the feedback we get from you that makes it worth it for us!

We got a couple of comments on Issue 3. One was from Craig Dixon who wrote, "These **SAVAGE INSIDER** issues have a very high production value and are a treasure trove for anyone seeking new *Savage Worlds* RPG material." Jodi Black of Beautiful Brains Books and Games and co-host with husband Clint Black to BBB & G's Thursday Night Chat commented, "I'm always impressed by this volunteer effort by so many in the publishing industry: it's literally a Who's Who of *Savage Worlds* licensees!" (If the names are niggling at you, flip through your *Savage Worlds* rulebooks.) Keep the comments coming, folks! Really, that is the payoff for us: knowing how well you like what's in *SI* and what you'd like to see next.

I was tempted to put my typical business seriousness aside for this issue and do some April Fool's stuff. Unfortunately, that temptation came much too late to incorporate any! I'll admit to not even considering this issue would be good to do some fooling in until about a week ago. Maybe next year!

Speaking of "nexts," this July is our anniversary issue, and it's back to Aaron's turn to lead development. From what he's shared already, it's going to be one adventure-packed issue. I can't wait to get editing on it! In the meantime, stop by our website, page on Facebook, or any of the sites where you get **SAVAGE INSIDER** to keep in touch.

I add my thanks to all of you who take the time to download and read **SAVAGE INSIDER** every quarter. We appreciate the effort you make in spreading the word by sharing our release announcements on Facebook, reviews at online stores, and generally getting the word out. Have a great day!

Vickey A. Beaver,
Assistant Editor

SHAKEN, STIRRED, OR THOROUGHLY TWISTED

By Vickey A. Beaver

It's human nature to fall into a routine or gravitate toward things that are familiar. Yet, there are times when we want to try a different approach. The same ol' same ol' stops feeling as interesting, challenging, or fun as it was before it became, well, the same ol' same ol'. If that's what's happening in your game – or you're concerned it might later – it could be time to shake things up, stir them about, and see if the outcome is thoroughly twisted, in a good way, of course.

One of our readers, Stephen Holland, posted a comment on the *Savage Insider* page on Facebook that got some of us thinking. He wrote, "As a very new pen and paper player and newer GM for a group of kids at my church, I need inspiration. We wrapped up a *Savage Star Wars* game recently, and after listening to the *Postcards from the Dungeon* podcast I have a few [ideas]." Still, he felt he needed more help on how to "steal" ideas well or come up with his own.

Luckily, *Savage Worlds* has attracted a lot of game masters (GMs) and players who are happy to help each other with whatever they need. One such soul is Geoffrey T. Nelson, a GM who connected particularly well with ideas from Luke Crane and David Petersen's *Mouse Guard* and Kendell Haven, a professional storyteller. He sent a message with loads of advice. The gist is "most ideas for adventures and campaigns come down to story." He suggests a good starting point for figuring out where to go from any given point is to ask the elementary question, "What does your character want and why?" That's largely driven by what your player wants for the character, and that's really the point – giving your players what they want out of a game.

Why does that help? As Nelson explains, "In *Savage Worlds*, some Hindrances are built-in goals or motives (Greedy, Bloodthirsty, Heroic, etc.) Don't be afraid of simplistic answers; they may evolve or

they may just be honest." Either way, knowing the "what" and "why" of the character's desire helps to create events for the game.

Once you've got the answer, following Nelson's outline, you'll skew the character's plans, providing unexpected game play. "Adventures happen when you interfere violently with their goals. Wanna get rich? Well, there are about 50 monsters between you and Step One. Wanna save the galaxy? Well, there's a Sith Lord and the Imperial Navy who have other ideas." Mess with their goals. "Offer them what they want, and then block the path to it with problems and conflicts, ramped up to 11 with risk and danger."

Getting down to specifics, Jennifer Brozek (JB), author of several short stories and ENnie-award winning *SHANGHAI VAMPOCALYPSE*, and contributor to a wide variety of RPG source books and *Get Savaged* blogger Brian Reeves (BR) weigh in. We (SI) asked them each three questions on the subject.

SI: What advice would you give a game master to shake things up in his or her campaign? Some reasons they might want to shake things up: they've been playing the same genre for the last three years; they play different systems or genres, but the players always pick the same kind of characters; they're playing a home-brewed setting, and they are getting sort of stagnant.

JB: Run a "flashback" game for the characters before they were heroes. If there was a traumatic event for one of them that made him or her into the hero they are today, run that game and have the other players in the game play NPCs--good and bad.

Another flashback game is to run the situation that destroyed the city one hundred years before. The quest is not to stop the destruction but to save certain people

or artifacts that can be found or referenced in the current game.

Run a game where the players are the villains that were just defeated. How would they react? What would they do next? Villains are the heroes of their own stories.

BR: There are a lot of ways to break out of a rut. One easy one is to introduce some disastrous event of epic proportions. But in order for it to not be just another problem, it needs to fundamentally alter the game world in some way. Magic suddenly and irrevocably vanishes from the world, and all the beings that exist because of it (elves, dragons, fey, etc.) begin dying off. Perhaps some force or powerful being kills off the gods, leaving the world bereft of divine magic. Alternatively, perhaps one of the gods betrays and kills the other gods, resulting in a "one true religion" world where the faithful are encouraged to wipe out all opposition. Maybe a rogue moon collides with the game world, permanently shattering it and wiping out most of the population. Unless the GM is bored with zombies, a zombie apocalypse would change things forever. A related, but more mundane, idea is a global pandemic.

If altering the game world isn't enough, it might be time to mix genres. This can be done on a small scale, with a single adventure arc that deals with aliens or horror, or it can be a large-scale incursion by other worlds that tear open "holes" in the game world's existence and create zones where things are very different -- much like the old game *TORG*. Imagine a fantasy world invaded by cyberpunk corporations from an alternate reality, hoping to capitalize on magic to perfect their cyberware. Or a pulp version of Nazis who see the world as ripe for colonization. This could lead into mix-and-match adventures, or it could bring long-established characters into new worlds and new challenges.

Perhaps the granddaddy of all shake-ups is time travel. Fling the characters back through time, either into their own past

where they have to rectify errors or work behind the scenes to prevent their own deaths, or beyond their own lives into the game world's distant past, where their adventures end up planting the seeds for their future lives and adventures. Or, going the other way, a villain could get the better of them and trap their souls in magical jars/ice crystals/time vortices, and they awaken in the game world's distant future, where everything is very different. New technology, new villains, new politics. It would be particularly interesting to play with the ramifications of their earlier adventures or show how some seemingly minor choice spiraled into chaos and now needs to be fixed.

As you can see, there are a lot of great ways to really change the game world without having to change the game. The key is that the change must be huge and it must be permanent. It can't be fixed through player actions, no matter how epic they are. Instead, they have to deal with the consequences, including social, political, religious, and technological upheavals.

SI: What's the most unexpected thing you've done as a GM in a campaign?

JB: I turned one of the minor villains defeated (but not killed) at the beginning of the campaign into the big bad by the end... created by the heroes themselves. All cam-

paigns have history. I tend to use it to influence the future.

BR: I began a fantasy campaign with the usual "you wake up naked and imprisoned in a dungeon" and combined it with the old "amnesia" cliché. After a while, the characters discovered they used to be heroes of the realm, very powerful and epic heroes who were well-known and beloved in the nation. They had been betrayed, and their power (and memories) [were] drained from them in a foul ritual by an enemy who has since assumed the throne, deposed the rightful rulers, besmirched the characters' good names, and used their stolen essences to create an orb that made her literally immortal. The campaign turned into the characters attempting to right all the wrongs and defeat this villain, slowly getting their memories back in the process. The best part was, they awoke with an NPC who stuck by them through the entire campaign, and who turned out to be the deposed king, his identity concealed behind a permanent metal mask a la The Man in the Iron Mask. When they discovered they had been adventuring with their former king that whole time, the look on their faces was classic.

SI: What's the most unexpected thing you've done as a player in a campaign?

JB: Sometimes the heroes are worse than the villains in a campaign. I remember hav-

ing my hero contact the villain after a particularly disastrous fight where the heroes killed a bunch of innocents trying to take out the villain. She defected (much to my surprise) and became a double-agent so that future fights happened away from populated areas. In the end, the "heroes" were deemed villains by the city itself. She turned herself in as soon as that happened. The rest went on the run.

BR: In a recent long-term fantasy campaign, I played a weak, elderly wizard who was born without eyes. Since he was born this way, no healing magic would fix the problem. To compensate, he spent his life learning magic and created his own minor spell that would allow him to see through "harvested" eyeballs stolen from the dead. As an extra perk, he could use any sight-based abilities those eyes gave their original owners -- night vision, petrifying gaze, that sort of thing. He was fun to play. One day I'd like to play a tiny mouse knight like Narnia's Reepacheep. The same-ol'-same-ol' just doesn't cut it with me.

Every person has a different angle for pulling a game out of circular habits. If one doesn't work, try another. Have a few tips of your own? Share them on *Savage Insider's* page on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/SavageInsider>



MERCENARY BREED is a space opera sandbox setting where inter-planetary corporations employ mercenaries to enforce laws and enact justice against those who perform oppositional activities.

No matter what kind of sci-fi action and adventure experience you're looking for, it's all possible with **MERCENARY BREED**. The core setting guide gives you the base tools and framework necessary to create an extraordinary setting of your own filled with creatures sourcing from the imagination of the players. **MERCENARY BREED** is meant to be interactive and social along with being fun, fast, and flexible.

Inside the **MERCENARY BREED** core setting guide you will find:

- Tools to create new races, home worlds, corporations, creatures, and missions
- Mechanics to support interactive creation between the players and the GM
- A sandbox setting ready to be populated
- Three pre-generated racial backgrounds
- Two pre-generated corporations
- Two pre-generated home worlds
- Twelve ready-to-use adversaries
- Three fleshed-out Savage Tales

DOCTOR RODERICK PATERNA

By Aaron T. Huss



Roderick Paterna was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1890 to an archeologist and his paleontologist wife.

Roderick's parents, Karl and Frida, were well-funded by private parties who relied heavily upon the intelligence of the Paternas. When Roderick was born in 1890, they took him around the world on their many quests for ancient artifacts, bones, and civilizations.

During his youth, Roderick was educated by a friend of the family while always yearning to get involved with what his parents were digging up. Catching his eye the most were ancient artifacts and icons discovered by his parents and others within their field group. The more they discovered, the more Roderick became intrigued by past civilizations and how they worked.

The Paternas' occupation gave them reason to relocate frequently across the world, resulting in Roderick making very few friends. He would pass the time looking through books kept by his father and those borrowed from his father's friends and on library shelves. Throughout the myriad stacks of books he read, Roderick's attention always returned to his favorite subject: Mesoamerican cultures.

Roderick was fascinated with the Mesoamerican cultures and often asked to travel to this historical region, covering parts of what is now known as Central America, to peruse the ancient civilizations being uncovered there. However, the Paternas' journeys did not take them to Central America, and Roderick was forced to learn about the cultures through teachers and books.

At age 16, Roderick's curiosity in the Mesoamerican cultures gravitated toward more sadistic areas. He began focusing heavily on the religious practices of the different civilizations, especially those involving sacrificing humans. He secretly studied occult-oriented books that took their influence from the religious practices of Mesoamerica.

At the age of 18, Roderick left his family to become an anthropologist, concentrating on Mesoamerica. He spent two years during his early 20s heavily involved in the uncovering of ruins throughout the area and studying more about the cultures, artifacts, icons, and religious practices.

Upon receiving his doctorate in anthropology, Roderick returned to Central America and bought a small house in Belize. From there, he spent the following 10 years involved in uncovering the ancient Mesoamerican cultures and the ruins

they left behind, studying their artifacts, icons, and religious practices.

During this time, and with his knowledge of archaeology thanks to his father, Doctor Roderick Paterna was able to collect a number of artifacts. While claiming them for study, Roderick was collecting these artifacts to learn how to tap into their arcane abilities, a result of his studies of the occult.

Roderick was paid extremely well for his continued studies and discoveries of the Mesoamerican cultures and the artifacts he amassed. He spent the next 10 years buying and selling artifacts to create enough wealth to establish a museum of his own back in the United States, resulting in a small, personal fortune. While patrons paid well to view the artifacts he discovered and learn everything he presented about the Mesoamerican cultures, Roderick was experimenting with his private collection of artifacts to unlock their true powers.

Now at the age of 46, Doctor Roderick Paterna has become the wealthiest historian concerning Mesoamerica with a museum in San Diego and a large collection of arcane artifacts, relics, talismans, and various icons. Those items with no abilities are displayed for all to see; those that hide secrets within are kept in a locked area where only Roderick has access.

Roderick is turning into a megalomaniac, determined to tap into the powers of the ancient cultures and start his own cultic following. Roderick uses the ancient items whose power he can unlock to control anyone he can, whether it is for monetary gain or the acquisition of additional artifacts.

Personality: Doctor Roderick Paterna is an arrogant man who feels his studies have made him better than all those who oppose him. Additionally, he acts as though those who do not understand anthropology and archaeology are truly beneath him and not worth his time.

Mannerisms: Dr. Paterna often looks at his pocket-watch as though his time could be better spent elsewhere, especially if he's speaking to someone he finds boring.

Distinguishing Features: Dr. Paterna's face looks like the bed of a dried lake. His studies of the arcane and experiments with arcane artifacts has had a detrimental effect on his looks, although it has not affected his charisma and boisterousness. Those looking at his face too long receive a scornful look as Paterna feels they are no longer paying attention to them.

Environment: Dr. Paterna has a large house in San Diego and another in Belize. He spends much of his time studying ancient artifacts in a backroom of his museum in San Diego when not hunting for those artifacts in Central America's Mayan, Olmec, Aztec, and Nahuatl ruins.

Adventure Seeds

Doctor Roderick Paterna has come under the suspicion of law enforcement after the disappearance of several homeless people in the San Diego area. Investigation finds that Paterna has formed a cult fashion after the Mayan civilization that requires human sacrifice to appease the gods. Thinking no one would miss them, Paterna has ordered his cultists to kidnap the homeless people to use in their sacrifices. During these cultic rituals, Paterna wears several ancient artifacts that give him unholy abilities.

Alternatively, Paterna could be encountered in the Yucatan Peninsula attempting to recreate a small Mayan civilization using his ties to the occult and his ability to manipulate ancient artifacts. He has begun the process of creating a new settlement fashioned in the style of the ruins he has uncovered in years past. No one truly understands how he's able to build the settlement without modern machinery, though he is believed to have a group of slaves performing the work. During certain phases of the moon, Paterna holds rituals to appease the ancient Mayan gods in hopes of gaining their power.

Another possibility is that Dr. Paterna has hired the PCs to help him search for an ancient artifact. Upon receiving this artifact, he may turn around and use it on them to keep them forever quiet.



DOCTOR RODERICK PATERNA

Doctor Roderick Paterna is an intelligent anthropologist determined to tap into the ancient powers of the Mesoamerican cultures.

Abilities: Agility d8, Smarts d12+2, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7; **Charisma:** -2

Skills: Fighting d6, Investigation d12, Knowledge (Archaeology) d10, Knowledge (Anthropology) d12, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d10

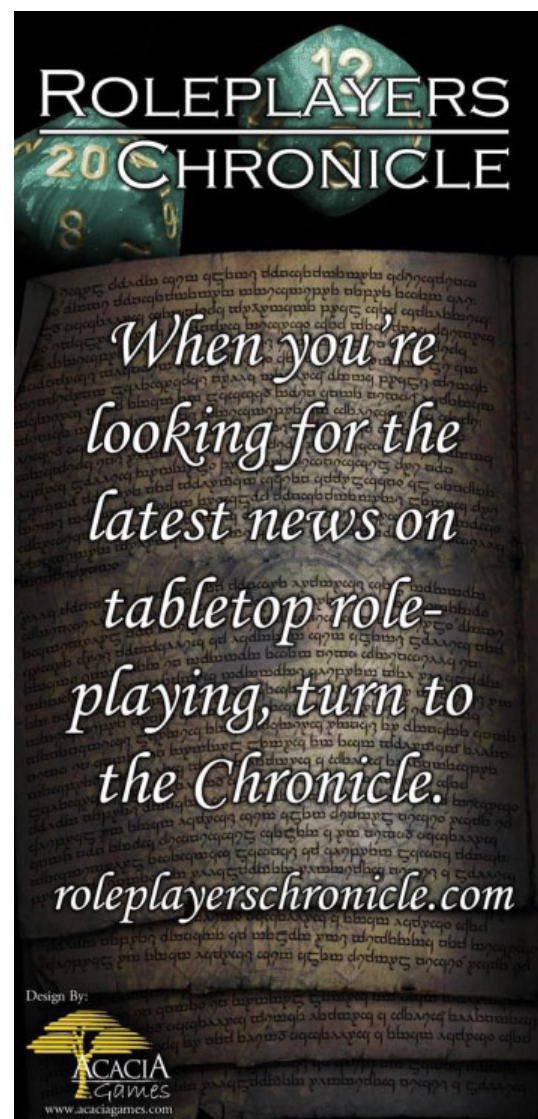
Armor: None

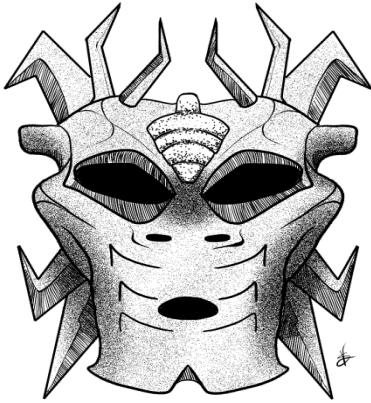
Weapons: Smith & Wesson (12/24/48, 2d6+1, RoF: 1, Shots 6, AP 1, Revolver)

Items: Mask of Penju, Ring of Secrets, Labyrinth Necklace

Hindrances: Arrogant (Major), Mean (Minor) Ugly (Minor)

Edges: Investigator, Linguist, Nerves of Steel, Rich, Scholar (Arcana and Occult)





MASK OF PENJU

The Mask of Penju is an ancient artifact said to originate from the Mayan civilization. It was originally discovered while unearthing the ruins of Naranjo between 1905 and 1910.

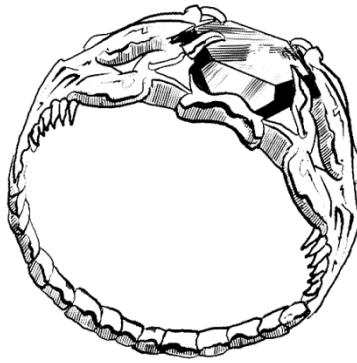
The mask was contained inside a box within what is believed to be an ancient temple. No one truly understood the purpose of the mask. It was kept as a possible relic of the Mayan people and ritual mask for their religious ceremonies.

A man named Carello Penju studied the mask for many years. Every attempt to understand the mask's purpose led to dead-ends and further speculation.

Notes about voices he heard upon placing the mask on his face stand out from Penju's studies. He wrote that when wearing the mask, he heard faint voices reciting words in an ancient language. After five years of study, Penju was declared insane and spent the rest of his life in an asylum.

Activation: The Mask of Penju is an ancient artifact that can only be manipulated by those with the right knowledge. Activating the mask is done through a Knowledge (Arcana) skill roll.

Effect: The Mask of Penju creates an aura of terror that is equivalent to the *fear* power.



RING OF SECRETS

The Ring of Secrets is commonly used by those who wish to subtly kill their foes rather than use outright violence. What looks like a regular ring with a gem centerpiece is actually a band with a clasp that holds a curiously shaped poison pill.

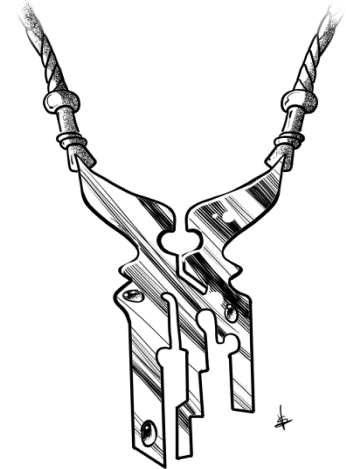
The wearer of the ring must either fashion a pill to look like a gem or use a fake, hollow gem that allows poison to be dispersed upon submersion. To remove the fake gem, the wearer presses a small release button on the side which opens the claw-looking clasps around the fake gem. The wearer may then take the fake gem or pill and drop it into someone's drink.

The ring's design protects the wearer from getting poisoned by holding the fake gem off the skin should the finger become moist through perspiration.

Avoiding wearing the Ring of Secrets in the rain is advised. It will prevent drops hitting the top of the fake gem and drawing the poison out and onto the wearer's finger. As an extra precaution, those who have worn the Ring of Secrets tended toward poisons that only kill when being ingested.

Activation: The wearer makes a Stealth roll to avoid being detected.

Effect: The effect of the fake gem or pill is dependent upon what poison is used with the most common being a lethal poison.



LABYRINTH NECKLACE

Many archaeologists have speculated as to how ancient underground caverns could possibly have been created. Theories range from underground rivers to slave labor to divine intervention.

Those who specialize in the more esoteric aspects of history know that some ancient cultures relied heavily upon channeling their gods to perform such great feats. Only by using the right talisman would one be able to create the desired effect through divine channeling.

The Labyrinth Necklace, as it has come to be called, is one such talisman. While many caves and caverns are natural, the bearer of the Labyrinth Necklace could create a web-like network of vast caverns and tubes by calling upon gods to grant them the power to shape the earth.

The resulting network of caves and caverns can be grand, underground palaces or simple temples.

Activation: The bearer makes a Knowledge (Arcana) roll to tap into the talisman's power.

Effect: The Labyrinth Necklace allows the shaping of the earth equivalent to the *elemental manipulation* power.

ANCIENT WORLD



Coming in 2012

Ancient World is a dark fantasy setting for *Savage Worlds* published by Mystical Throne Entertainment.

CRYPT OF THE CRYSTAL LICH - MIND GAMES

By Kevin A. Ranson

George loaded the tied-off black cloth bag with the crystal skull inside down into his pack before shouldering it. Abigail followed him out of the throne room and back into the passageway with the roots that had come to life before and had since become still.

As the two survivors reached the place where George had been ensnared and Longfeather tried to save him, Abigail could clearly see the body of her friend entangled heavily in the roots crushing his body against the wall. His neck and arms looked dislocated. She wanted to believe that it might have been quick, but the sounds she heard before his silence suggested otherwise.

"You were friends for a long time, weren't you?" George asked.

Abigail averted her eyes. "We need to go, Mr. Talbot."

"Did you love him, Abigail?"

Abigail blinked hard. Did she just hear the voice of the skull coming from the mouth of her hireling?

A living root suddenly grabbed one of Abigail's ankles and tripped her to the floor, dragging her slowly toward the wall. The torch had slipped from her grasp as she fell, freeing her hands to fight. Yet each time she tried to pull free, another root took hold and entangled her further.

"Mr. Talbot!" Abigail screamed. "George! Do something!"

George smiled. "I am, Abigail. Don't you find this fitting?"

The roots pulled Abigail up onto the wall and continued to constrict around her. In moments she found herself completely

immobile and at the mercy of the tendrils. The roots had strung her up next to Longfeather, just out of her reach but close enough that she could smell the blood from his wounds.

"Why?" she managed to gasp.

George looked blankly at her as she struggled feebly. "Why what, Abigail? Wasn't it your intent to steal the crystal skull and use it however you liked?"

"I never meant..."

"For anyone to get hurt? What about me, Abigail? What was I supposed to get?"

Abigail fought back her tears to keep her composure. "I said I would double your rate."

George smiled, then laughed heartily. "Your mistake, Ms. Morrison, was hiring a fool at a bargain price. The talisman kept me from your mind as Longfeather's willpower was enough to protect him. George, however, was as simple as putting on a new pair of boots."

Abigail closed her eyes tightly and struggled to free herself again. She didn't want to die.

"Oh, come now, Abigail. Where's your composure? That self-assured, young woman who led an expedition into a forbidden land with the promises of riches and fame?"

"Fine," Abigail said with finality. "Do your worst."

"I already have, Abigail. You know, periodically I enjoy getting out into the world – corrupting impressionable minds and seeing the sights. When I'm done I always return here, but not before ensuring that my legend continues so that

others, like yourself, periodically seek me out. You did your research well, discovered what you needed to know, and sought me. You made it, Abigail. Take solace in that. Very few make it this far."

Finding her voice and anger at last, Abigail started to speak her mind, but a tendril wrapped itself around her mouth before she could utter the first word.

George smiled again, picked up Abigail's lost torch and turned to leave. Behind him he could hear her muffled cries and sobs, but it could have been worse. He could have left her all alone in the dark, but he had instead allowed her to die with her friend.

Eventually.

Through the passageway and passed the wind tunnel, George sprinted up the stairs to the top of the temple. Just beyond the temple boundary, the black birds parted for their master, allowing him to pass unmolested. The dawn was approaching, speeding George along the path to the end of the cemetery until he turned to see the edge of the full moon about to slip below the horizon.

With a childlike jump, George stepped beyond the cemetery as it began to fade.

As the moon fell and the sun rose, the light touched an empty valley. It was a new day and a new time.

What evil to do first?

TUNSE'AL

Obatron
PRODUCTIONS

A CAUSE TO DIE FOR

By Vickey A. Beaver

Set in the brand new world of Tulse'al, a tribal RPG setting by Obatron Productions, A Cause to Die For is a one-shot designed for two to four Novice-rank characters with a duration of 2-4 hours. If you want it to be closer to two hours, reduce the number of times you apply the random encounter table. Adjust enemies according to the suggestions as you read for the appropriate challenge for party size.

The massive land of Tulse'al is shaped like a man who fell from the sky, landing face-first into the planet with his arms outstretched and his legs angled apart. The mythology says the father god, Baarek, in fact did fall after his children's prank went awry. There are six major areas of the land, called Tulse'al. They are The Spine and Extremities (mountains) in the shape of Baarek, Wetlands (swamp) to the left of The Spine, Drylands (desert) to the right, Footlands (jungle) below The Spine and between Baarek's feet, the Headlands above The Spine, and the Dreamlands, which are a mist-shrouded area of relative warmth at the very top of the Headlands and above Baarek's arms.

Each region has indigenous people who make up the master tribe. From that, there are splinter tribes. For the most part, everyone gets along the majority of the time. Well, except for the Skin Eaters. From the Headlands, they tend not to be welcome anywhere. After all, it's not unreasonable to avoid those who want nothing more than to eat your skin and then maybe the rest of your body. Or convert you to their cause, which just happens to be their dominance and everyone else's subservience.

The Wetlands are home to the amphibious, genderless Kresh. Some are given names that may seem feminine or masculine, as their parents simply liked the names' sounds. They tend to refer to each other by "ou" rather than "he" or "she." To make it easier on others, they'll pick a gender reference if they feel it necessary. They are natural swimmers who fiercely protect their land and water. The desert-dwelling Gales of the Drylands appear human. That is, until you get a good look at their eyes, which include nictitating membranes that protect them from grainy sand and intense light. Sun-baked skin gives them a harsh

look. The Gelid, blue-skinned, scholarly diplomats, live and study on The Spine. Great guides across any mountainous terrain, they record their personal and tribal histories on their skin. They find the Skin Eaters particularly repugnant. The warm and wet Footlands are home to the Kresh. The largest of the Tulse'als, they have orange-red skin, horns, and serious muscle. Known to be equally passionate in war and pleasure, the hedonistic tribe is both revered and reviled by individuals of other tribes.

Days are 30 hours long with two suns (usually only one shines every day, the second shines more quickly and disappears for two days) and three moons (two of the moons are on opposite sides of the sky, and the third isn't always visible).



Setting the Scene

The party has been traveling near the hills in any of the three flatter areas. Pick whichever one makes the most sense for the party's characters (Wetlands, Drylands, or Footlands). If using the accompanying pre-generated characters, choose the Wetlands. The areas along the hills are going to be the most remote and the most temperate for the regions, regardless of which one you choose.

They're an adventuring group, which isn't unusual in the tribal society. That's how most splinter tribes started anyway. People explore, finding new places to set-up life and call home. Some do that with the seasons. Others just want to get away from what they think is mundane life. They might consist of more than one race. That isn't unheard of, but it's noticeable since the regional indigenous people most often comprise any given splinter tribe as tribes are mostly geographically-based.

If you don't have an existing campaign you're working within, let it be that the party has been headed for The Spine to seek out the Gelid in hopes of being assigned to a research detail. The Gelid have been known to take adventuring parties up on offers to verify lore and new claims. They'll have started far enough away that it takes four weeks on foot. They don't have a targ – a sometimes domesticated animal that resembles a slightly larger than horse-size Tyrannosaurus.

Enroute

It's the season of trials, when youth prove their readiness to enter into adulthood. As is custom, the party stays at each village that offers accommodations on their travels. If they aren't invited, then they've likely done something to offend someone in the tribe, and that's not good. It's downright dangerous sometimes.

About two weeks ago, the party stayed with a tribe, Shallow Water, who was worried over one of their youth disappearing a few days before. They'd sent out a search party and were awaiting word when the adventuring party left. A week ago, they stayed with another tribe, Sacred Bog, who talked of an unseen danger in the area. They'd gotten word from the elders of a third tribe that one of the youth never made it back from an outing. They weren't clear on where that tribe was and moved on to speak in their own dialect, a very old one.

Upon reaching the current village a couple hours short of the dinner hour, the party is greeted warily, but is welcomed, by a middle-aged Kresh adorned in a bone vest, strings of beads, and leather-like leggings.

"You have entered the lands of Rosh*, under the Elders Kler, Norn, Selk, and Fris. From where do you travel?"

*Substitute the appropriate tribe name: Rosh (Wetlands), Grenna (Jungle), or Vren (Desert). All members of the party speak the Language of Many (LoM), as well as their tribe and splinter-tribe languages. **EXAMPLE:** Wetlands and Deep Swimmer being the tribal language and the splinter-tribe's language respectively. Only adventurers, some elders, scholars, traders, and the like usually know LoM unless the tribes are close to another land like the Wetlands tribes along The Spine.

When the party answers, ou will continue.

"I am Thare, greeter to newcomers and wisher of fair travels. Come, let us refresh you." Thare shows them to a tipi-like structure made of enormous leaves, different from what their own homes look like. The place has an odd scent like something musty being burned. After being left in the hut for several minutes, two young Kresh bring a tea of sorts to the party. It is as refreshing as it is unusual. Thare smacks two hollow sticks together, producing a chime-like sound. Another youth comes with a pile of fronds, leaving it with Thare.

"May the One Who Guides Our Travels bless you." Thare takes a frond from the bone tray, raising it to the sky, and then picks a piece off to eat, urging the party members to do the same.

"Tonight, you join the hunt."

If the characters ask about the hunt, Thare will tell them that it is the fourth day of "the trials." It is tradition that on the fourth day the people of Rosh hunt the Srot, an oversized frog-like creature whose skin possesses a quality that aids in vision questing. All in the village are required to participate.

After a satisfying dinner, they set off to hunt for a Srot. Regardless of location, they will happen to be in an area with underbrush and enough water for such a creature to thrive. If in the Drylands, they are in a large oasis housing its own rare micro-climate.

SROT

Srots are essentially frogs about the size of two adult humans. They have long tongues used to grab prey. They are tremendous leapers, able to hop over a grown person.

Abilities: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6 (leaping); **Parry** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Swim d8

Armor: Thick Skin (All 1)

Weapons: Tongue (Str+d4, pulls victim into mouth if they don't get free before the srot's next turn), Bite (Str+d4, once victim is in its mouth)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 5 (swimming)
- **Hallucinogenic Skin:** If a victim comes in contact with a srot's bare skin, it triggers a contest of Vigor; if tied,

repeat the contest (loss results in Smarts going down a die type, hallucinations, plus any additional in-game effects as determined by the GM, and a ringing on every spoken word for 30 hours after the other effects wear off)

If the fight goes too quickly for your session, introduce one alligator (or desert crocodile, if in Drylands) per three party members. Use the stats from *Savage Worlds: Explorer's Edition*. If anyone gets poisoned by the srot, role-play the experience with the victim needing to exercise off the effects of the drug at a rate of one hour per number below success from the Vigor contest, plus chewing a small, withered mushroom piece. There will be a wise person who knows that advice in the tribe. They'll give the party a few of the mushrooms if needed.

Follow the Path

In the morning, the party is made aware that Hesh, one of their youth, has been gone for a day longer than they expected during the rite of passage. All others returned. Having gained the tribe's trust, the elders ask the characters to join them in the search.

A day's effort eventually takes them to an area where they find three footprints about as big as they expect from a youth Hesh's size, a scrap of cloth that matches what Hesh was last wearing (green with yellow), and a single foot print with toes sticking over the edge of the shoe. They do not look like prints that match Hesh's people. They are all found in such a way that they look like the angle of the ground kept them from being easily disturbed. With Tracking, another set are found five minutes Spineward of where they are.

Eventually, with some Smarts rolls if necessary, the party figures out they need to head toward the hills. That was the direction both sets of tracks were headed.

They are four days away. Along the way, they find occasional tracks leading them to believe they are on the right path. Run random encounters three times a day:

Roll a d10

- 1 Timid Dinosaur, such as a baby Brachiosaurus (scares them, but runs away)
- 2-4 Snake (the more party members, the bigger the snake; on 2, it runs away after engaging, on 3, it is pretty vicious, on 4, it fights to the death) – see *Savage Worlds: Explorer's Edition*; use constrictors in Wetlands and Footlands and venomous snakes in Drylands
- 5-7 Wild Targ – see accompanying stats
- 8-9 Giant Spider – see *Savage Worlds: Explorer's Edition*
- 10 Nothing

WILD TARG

Targs are about 30% larger than most horses. The tyrannosaurus-like dinosaurs come in a variety of colors and are found throughout Tunse'al. Their hides are thick and can be used as armor. They can be domesticated and used as mounts or beasts of burden. They have a natural instinct to fight, and are protective of those they are allied with.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

Pace: 12; **Parry** 7; **Toughness:** 12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Notice d6, Swim d8

Armor: Thick Skin (All 2)

Weapons: Bite (Str+d4), Kick (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Size +3:** These things are large, powerful beasts.

In the Distance

Coming out of the main geographical features of the land they were in, the terrain turns almost prairie-like, unless in the drylands. In that case, it's rocky and plants other than cacti are actually growing. It's more hospitable. Either way, they see tipi or lean-to structures and smoke rising as if from campfires.

It takes the party an hour to get there. When they arrive, they're greeted by a red-robed figure who bids them welcome underneath her concealing hood. Her voice sounds similar to that of many of the Kresh.

"I am Alleal, keeper of the Path's Refuge. Come, let us quench your thirst." She leads them to a rectangular building where people are in quiet mediation at the far end, away from the entrance. It's a large structure compared to what most settlements offer. In a square pattern, there are representations of the Wetlands, Footlands, Drylands, and The Spine. In the center is a pile of what looks like white pillows surrounding a circle with a pattern they don't recognize.

Alleal asks them about where they are from and where they are going. If the party asks about missing people, she'll feign horror at the loss and asks how they can help. The tribe offers food, rest, shelter, and so on, as any other tribe would. It doesn't take long to see that more than one race is present, which isn't all that frequent in Tunse'al. Alleal bids the party to stay after they have a drink of incredibly pure water, but they are allowed to wander.

One of the structures, the wellness shelter, is a smaller building. There's only one entrance with narrow rectangular windows for light and air, but not large enough for entry or egress. There are two guards at the door playing bones. Through inquiry, the party finds a bad sickness hit and the guards are ensuring the sick don't come out in their delirium and hurt

themselves, or get others sick. It's actually a food storage, where they keep the sick well-fed and drugged-up.

As they're milling about, the party witnesses a ceremony they don't recognize. Investigation attempts may lead them to realize the ceremony seems wrong in some way; it's only done with the shamans.

The party is expected at dinner, which occurs in the rectangular building they got their thirst quenched earlier. Fifteen people form a circle around low-standing tables, which weren't there earlier. When it's time to give thanks for the meal, the Path's Refuge has an odd ritual. Rather than thanking the sun or moon or earth, Alleal leads a prayer in a language the party doesn't know, and passes a bone chalice to her right. As it is passed counter-clockwise from one person to the next, each slices the meaty part of their hand with a small knife made of a substance the party has not seen before (metal, which is taboo in Tunse'al). Each participant leaks some blood into the cup. If the party members ask, Alleal explains it's the only way to give proper thanks to the Dreamland gods for their bounty. That should strike them as odd. The Dreamland gods are a euphemism for the Skin Eaters and their abominations.

When the chalice reaches the party members, the non-player characters on either side skip them. When it gets back to Alleal, she adds her blood, stirs it, and touches each person on the forehead and chin with the tip of her finger that's been dipped into the blood. She dumps the rest into the center, where the symbols glow beneath the liquid as it sinks into the ground, leaving no trace.

Next, servants come out with food. There is nothing wrong with it or any beverages. If the party tries to leave at any point, Alleal will engage them, attempting to convince them that leaving is a great insult. She'll resort to intimidation, if necessary. If all else fails, the party finds the doors are barred.

The party may also notice through the windows, when the wind blows or if any of them peeks, that someone is being escorted to the wellness building with his hands tied behind his back. A servant follows with a tray of food, including some fruits.

Be One With Us

In the morning, if the party joins the group for breakfast, it is here that Alleal and the others try to recruit the party in earnest. She'll tell the party they should follow the ways of Path's Refuge,

honoring those who came long before them, and how they are the blessed people. If the party sneaks out, three red-robed figures per two party members (rounding up) will follow the party from Path's Refuge, trying to get them to join Path's Refuge when the party stops to break bread or camp, or if they notice they're being followed and engage.

Either way, once the party realizes the Path's Refuge isn't going to let them get away, one or the other side will initiate combat. When the hoods of any of the priests of Path's Refuge get knocked back, the party will realize they are fighting Skin Eaters and need to make Guts checks.

Unless they found a way to get a glimpse of the inside of the wellness shelter earlier, it will be at the end of the fight, or in the middle of it, that the party realizes the wellness shelter is a prison, and they have to help the people escape.

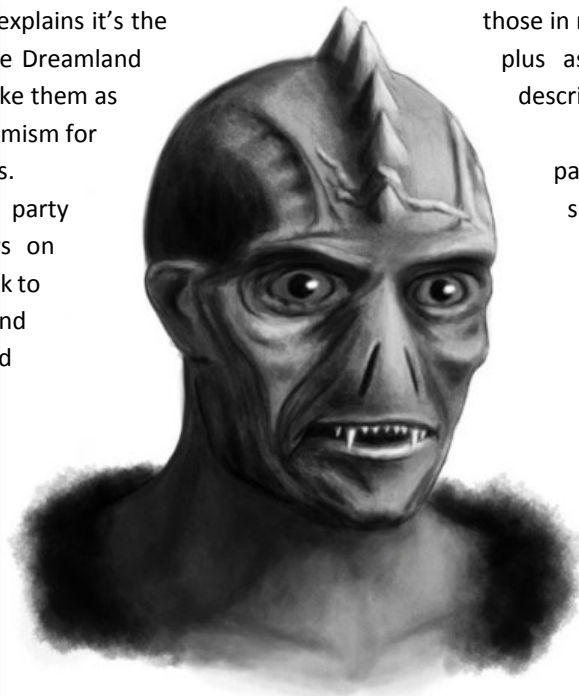
If the party engages combat in the eating and prayer hall, the people not wearing robes do not engage. Only those in red robes do, of which there will be Alleal plus as many others to equal the number described earlier.

When the fighting is done and the party checks on those in the wellness shelter, at least two are missing appendages. Others are missing fingers, ears, etc. Half are well, all are dosed with something similar to what they were cautioned about earlier with the srot. There are a total of ten. The story comes out that you either convert or become food. Some of the people not wearing red robes are openly mourning their loss. Most have run away or begged the party to help them get home. The party can deal with the prisoners as they wish. They find Hesh and one other missing

youth. They tell the characters that one more was with them, but was eaten after losing a fight when an escape attempt went badly.

The Haul

The settlement has a food store offering well-preserved humanoid meat (the party is not advised to take it), well-preserved snake (20 meals), chud (a cheese-like food that lasts a while – 12 meals), a couple bushels of berries, and healing salves in six jars, which will heal one wound each. When the party returns the youths to Rosh, they are given three prize spears (each do +1 damage over normal spears) and celebrated in a grand feast accented by drumming, reed whistles, and dance.



ALLEAL (WILD CARD)

Alleal is the Skin Eater priestess in this commune, a remote effort by the Skin Eaters to infiltrate the other races and cause disruption as opposed to overt war.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Intimidation d 10, Notice d6, Throwing d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Spear (Reach 1, Str+d6, Parry +1)

Special Abilities:

- **Improved Frenzy:** Alleal may make two attacks per round without penalty.
- **Level-Headed:** Acts on the best of two cards.

MINOR PRIESTS AND GUARDS

The other red-robed figures are Alleal's minor priests. They are also Skin Eaters. The guards are just converts of any race the GM chooses.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d10, Throwing d6

Armor: Hide vests beneath robes (Torso 1)

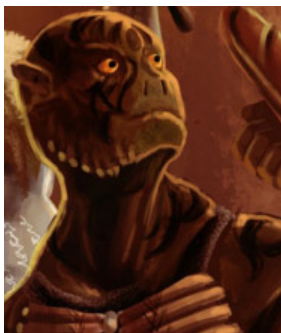
Weapons: Spear (Reach 1, Str+d6, Parry +1)

PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

Sassik was born to the Deep Swimmers tribe some 18 years ago. His youth was spent competing with others in feats of agility and strength. He won most games of strength especially swimming was involved. The elder said he was destined to be a warrior and he happily followed that path proving himself in hunts and skirmishes.

Sassik doesn't have many friends as his habit of drifting off into daydreams while others are talking has resulted in many arguments.

Some say Sassik has amazing luck and indeed, when he was first a teen, he was mauled in a hunt that everyone said should have killed anyone else.



Sassik's obsession with hunting and fighting has resulted in a fairly insular awareness of the world around him. He knows very little of things outside his immediate interest – others just say he's clueless. Unfortunately, during a hunt, he embarrassed a rival who

subsequently left the tribe. He doesn't speak of what happened, but the rival has sworn he will one day kill Sassik.

Sassik found himself wondering about the other tribes within the Wetlands. He queried the elders and was given the task to travel with some fellow tribesmen to a camp a few days north. The purpose was trade and to reaffirm friendship and cooperation between the two tribes.

SASSIK DEEP SWIMMER

Kresh Warrior

Abilities: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1); **Charisma:** -1

Language: Kresh, Dialect (Kresh Deep Swimmers)

Tribe: Member of Tribe Wetlands; **Sub-Tribe:** Deep Swimmers

Tribe Size: 50; **Tribal Language:** Kresh, Deep Swimmers (Dialect)

Tribal Tatoo: School of Fish; **Tribal Given Name:** Sassik Far Swimmer

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival (Wetlands) d6, Swimming d8, Throwing d6,

Armor: Targ Skin Armor (+1)

Weapons: Spear (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands)

Edges: Swamp People, Danger Sense, Cold Blooded, Fast Healer, Member of the Tribe Wetlands, Common Bond (Wetlands Tribe only), Connections (Wetlands Tribe), Luck
Hindrances: Dehydration, Duty (Tribe Wetlands and Deep Swimmers), Outsider to other core tribes, Enemy, Habit (daydreams when others talk to him), Clueless

On Brakken's eighth birthday, his father was caught stealing water from another family, dooming his own. He and his mother were banished from the tribe and his father executed. His mother took him over the mountains to the Wetlands, sacrificing her life to get him far from the desert.



Brakken was found wandering by an expedition of the Deep Swimmer tribe, who took him in. At the age of nine, he saved the tribal elder and became an official member of the tribe as a result.

Brakken's hot temper got him in a lot of fights, most notably with Sassik. Despite that, they became good friends. He wasn't quite as strong as his Kresh friend, but he certainly proved too hard-headed and resolute.

While Brakken became more known for his bad luck, he was also known as the tribal brother that always came to others' need.

BRAKKEN DEEP SWIMMER*Male, Gale, Warrior***Abilities:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (1); **Charisma:** 0**Language:** Kresh, Deep Swimmer Dialect**Tribe:** Member of Tribe Wetlands; **Sub-Tribe:** Deep Swimmers**Tribe Size:** 50; **Tribal Language:** Kresh, Deep Swimmers (Dialect)**Tribal Tattoo:** Angry Red Mask; **Tribal Given Name:** Brakken The Unlucky**Skills:** Fighting d6, Healing d4, Notice d6+2, Shooting d6, Survival (Desert) d6, Survival (Wetlands) d6, Swamp Botany d6, Swimming d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d6**Armor:** Targ Skin Armor (+1)**Weapons:** Spear (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands)**Edges:** Born in the Desert, Tough, Common Bond (Wetlands Tribe), Connections (Wetlands Tribe), Duty (Wetlands Tribe), Outsider to other tribes, Life in the Swamps, Alertness, Quick**Hindrances:** Hot Tempered, Law of the Sands, Outsider, Heroic, Bad Luck

When Mrish was young, he was trampled by a Targ gone wild and gained a permanent limp. Afterwards he was always afraid of the creatures, but that didn't diminish his courage when facing anything else.

Upon coming of age, Mrish joined a hunt for one of the giant Sarcosuchus. When the hunting party fled, one member fell and would have been eaten by the beast had Mrish not turned around and saved the fallen tribesman. He killed the Sarcosuchus and as a reward, he was given a shirt made from its skin, a symbol of his prowess.

Mrish became friends with Brakken and Sassik in their youth.

MRISH DEEP SWIMMER*Kresh Warrior***Abilities:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2); **Charisma:** +2**Language:** Kresh, Dialect (Kresh Deep Swimmers)**Tribe:** Member of Tribe Wetlands; **Sub-Tribe:** Deep Swimmers**Tribe Size:** 50; **Tribal Language:** Kresh, Deep Swimmers (Dialect)**Tribal Tattoo:** Eye in Teeth of a Sarcosuchus; **Tribal Given Name:** Mrish One Eye**Skills:** Swimming d6, Survival (Wetlands) d6, Swamp Botany d6, Fighting d6, Throwing d4, Shooting d4, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Tracking d6, Climbing d6, Healing d6, Repair d4**Armor:** Sarcosuchus Skin Armor (+2)**Weapons:** Spear (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands)**Edges:** Swamp People, Danger Sense, Cold Blooded, Fast Healer, Member of the Tribe Wetlands, Common Bond (Wetlands Tribe only), Connections (Wetlands Tribe), Charismatic, Hard to Kill**Hindrances:** Dehydration, Duty (Tribe Wetlands and Deep Swimmers), Outsider to other core tribes, Lame, Loyal, Phobia (Minor/Targs)

Trish grew up collecting plants for her mother, the tribe's shaman. She developed some knowledge in herbal remedies and a fascination with the powers plants could have.

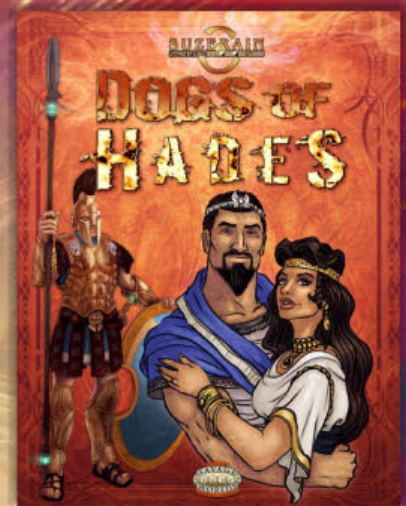
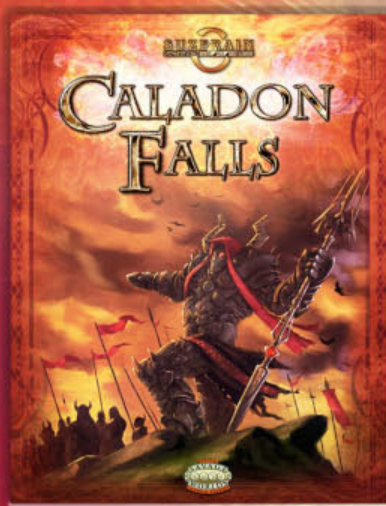


When Trish's mother died, she was not trained to take her place as shaman and as a result, had to take on the task of warrior.

Still, Trish collects plants and hopes to one day prove herself as a shaman. Her curiosity resulted in her testing a plant that left her anemic.

Trish became fast friends with Sassik, Mrish, and Brakken.

TRISH DEEP SWIMMER*Kresh Warrior***Abilities:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1); **Charisma:** 0**Language:** Kresh, Dialect (Kresh Deep Swimmers)**Tribe:** Member of Tribe Wetlands; **Sub-Tribe:** Deep Swimmers**Tribe Size:** 50; **Tribal Language:** Kresh, Deep Swimmers (Dialect)**Tribal Tattoo:** Leaves; **Tribal Given Name:** Trish Herb Gatherer**Skills:** Fighting d6, Healing d8, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Herbal Medicine) d8, Notice d8+2, Swimming d6, Survival (Wetlands) d6, Swamp Botany d8, Throwing d6**Armor:** Targ Skin Armor (+1)**Weapons:** Spear (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands)**Edges:** Swamp People, Danger Sense, Cold Blooded, Fast Healer, Member of the Tribe Wetlands, Common Bond (Wetlands Tribe only), Connections (Wetlands Tribe), Notice d8, Alertness**Hindrances:** Dehydration, Duty (Tribe Wetlands and Deep Swimmers), Outsider to other core tribes, Anemic, Curious, Quirk (Collects Plants)



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STREETS OF BEDLAM

By Jason L. Blair of FunSizedGames



Description

STREETS OF BEDLAM is an ultraviolent neo-noir crime setting full of broken laws, broken hearts, and broken dreams. It's a place where good people do bad things, but for the right reasons.

Purpose

To create a cool setting. I like interesting worlds, especially ones we haven't seen before, and I think **STREETS OF BEDLAM** fills a niche in the gaming community in general and in the *Savage Worlds* line in particular. I'd spent a good part of the past four years working on my kids-fighting-monsters game *Little Fears Nightmare Edition*, and a stylized, ultraviolent, dark, moody crime setting allowed me to flex entirely different creative muscles.

Influences

Frank Miller's *Sin City*, obviously, as well as films like *Reservoir Dogs* and *Boondock Saints*. Video games like *Kingpin* and *Max Payne* are in there. Everything from Walter Hill's *The Warriors* to Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown* have a place in Bedlam.

Research

The project came about due to my interest in the source material so I already had a good foundation starting out. Still, I revisited some favorite films, checked out some new ones, dug into the roots of noir and neo-noir. I love research and would allow myself to spend hours digging into the tropes of the genre, as well as the iconic works. Lots of time sifting through Wikipedia and reading movie scripts.

I spent a lot of time on [IMSDb.com](#) and reading published scripts. I wanted to develop a language for **BEDLAM**, so I looked to films with great dialogue and flow. I read Oliver Stone's script for *Scarface*, Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*, Robert Rodriguez' script for *El Mariachi*. *Chinatown's* a great script as well.

For the game side of things, I was already familiar with *Savage Worlds*, but I did look into what developers like Triple Ace Games and Reality Blurs were doing with the rules. Some folks are doing amazing work in the *Savage Worlds* line, which makes life easier in one way, since

it's all so inspiring, but harder in another, since a high bar has been set for the system's setting books.

I have to give a shout-out to the work Robin Laws has done with his Gumshoe system as well, which is hugely-inspiring when it comes to creating investigation rules that feel rewarding instead of frustrating.

Gaming Experience

The phrase I've been using is "the turning of the screw." The setting is designed so that characters are falling down rabbit holes – digging deep into crime and corruption to the point they can't find the ray of light. So they have to put their fists through a wall to let the sunshine in. Tension is constantly mounting, the plot ever-thickening. To me, an ideal session of **STREETS OF BEDLAM** is going to have mystery, suspense, surprises, and lots of bloody action. I aim to include some unnerving moments as well, for that staring into the abyss/lest a beast you become vibe.

Comparison

The first separation of **BEDLAM** from other crime settings is its style—both visual and tone. The second is that the setting is meant to emulate a particular subgenre of crime fiction, which is neo-noir. Add some unique character types and the ultraviolence rules, and you have what makes it different than the others. **BEDLAM** is a bit more over-the-top in its violence, a bit darker in its subject matter, but also that much more rewarding when you finally fight your way through the tunnel.

Development Process

Once I nail down the concept, I ask the big questions as put forth years ago by my

friend Jared Sorensen: “Who are the characters? What do they do? How do they do it?” Those are big questions, and I feel that if you can’t answer those then maybe you have some more work to do. I appreciate a good “kitchen sink” setting, but I find focused settings far more playable and inspiring.

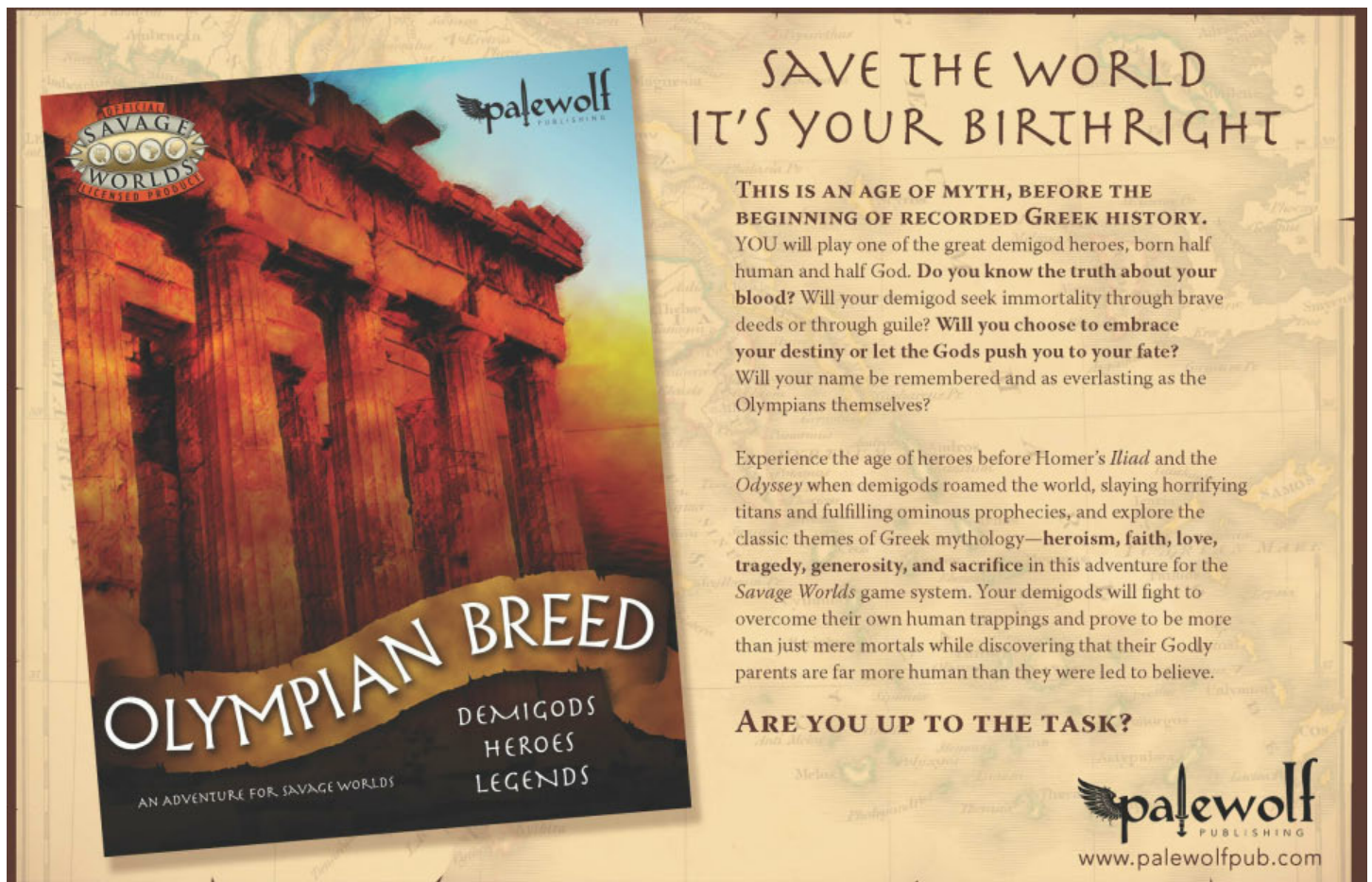
Next, I look at what work I need to do to answer those questions at the table. Working with *Savage Worlds*, I had the foundation, but I needed to decide what new mechanics to create to better emulate the source material. In this case, I wanted to add investigation and interrogation rules since those are big parts of *Bedlam*. I wanted to add “roles” to codify the film experience. Another huge part of answering those questions came in the form of the Archetypes, which is how I express the key characters of the game. I figured I could have provided guidelines

and plenty of examples, but having sort-of premade character types like the Monster, Valkyrie, Drifter, etc. is a good example of show, not tell. Players can create whichever character they want—they don’t have to use an Archetype—but the Archetypes provide a lot of flavor to the setting. They’re Polaroids of the setting.

Intermixed in this whole process is building the world. Bedford and Lamrose came about because of the name “Bedlam.” Aside from the pun, having two clearly-define districts allowed me to explore two different takes on the American City: the affluent and the left-behind. I come from the Rust Belt, so I know first-hand the effect that the loss of blue-collar labor has on a city built around that promise. Lamrose is Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Detroit. While Bedford is LA, New York, and Chicago – all under the thumb of Big Church.

As I work on one piece, all the pieces grow in a messy, organic fashion. When I feel I know the setting and mechanics well enough, I outline the book. This is a crucial part of the process. Having an outline gives early form to the product. It forces me to organize my thoughts as well as the presentation. This is how I’m going to show and sell my idea to the audience, so I need to make sure it makes sense to them. The outline is the skeleton and makes adding meat so much easier. In all honesty, without an outline, I cannot finish a book. At least, I never have.

Somewhere in all this, I’m commissioning art—in this case, from Shawn Gaston—and developing the final look of the book. At some point, everything becomes a blur of writing and editing and layout and artwork and, before I know it, I have a final product.



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BEASTS & BARBARIANS

By Aaron T. Huss



Stats

Publisher: GRAMEL

Writer: Umberto Pignatelli

Cover Art: Tomasz Tworek

Interior Art: Magdalena Partyka, Justin Russell, Claudio Pozas, Mario Zuccarello, Kuźnia Gier, Tomasz Tworek, William McAuslands

BEASTS & BARBARIANS is a gritty, sword and sorcery setting for *Savage Worlds* placed in a land filled with a stark variety of people and creatures, although not (elves or dwarves. As with many sword and sorcery settings, **BEASTS & BARBARIANS** is brimming with heroic opportunities and barbarian debauchery. It is a land heavily influenced by fantasy stories from the pulp fiction of many years ago. Most of all, it is a setting designed for cinematic action and big adventures. But it's not all hulking barbarians and scantily clad damsels, all types of characters can be found; just don't expect to be walking around in full-plate armor carrying magical weapons. So what can you expect? Short-story oriented adventures resulting in enough money to keep your character drunk for days.

THE BOOK OF LORE

Kicking off **BEASTS & BARBARIANS** is The Book of Lore, a detailed look at the Dread Sea Dominions (the core rulebook setting). You quickly find learn of the history of the land and how the people have come to be how they are, starting with the dawn of civilization and leading up to the setting's era. The background story is an interesting read. A time-line wraps up the background, leading into descriptions of the different nations, important locales, and the people calling those lands home. These people are quite different from one to another, although all are human in the Dread Sea Dominions. All of this information is easy to work into a character's background, helping a player choose which nation their ideal character will hail from.

CHARACTERS

The Characters section contains all the new and modified mechanics you need to create characters within **BEASTS & BARBARIANS**. As it is a sword and sorcery setting with pulp and heroic influences, character types don't stray too far from the adventuring type albeit with a different flavor. There is a great listing of character concepts along with changes to skills and new Edges. The Edges help to further that barbarian aspect of the setting while reaffirming some of the Dominion's danger.

SETTING RULES

There are a number of setting rules corresponding to **BEASTS & BARBARIANS** in the form of magic, gear, and special rules. Magic is a bit different in that the arcane arts you may think of as common in epic fantasy are quite uncommon and dangerous within sword and sorcery. A style of alchemy, known as lotusmastery, is

a little safer. This is detailed within the new Arcane Backgrounds and backed up by modified powers.

The gear section may seem standard for all settings, but sword and sorcery works slightly differently. There are no magical weapons and no plate armor. There are relic weapons, bonuses for adventuring with less protection, and more standard types of low-tech armor. A full selection of weapons, armor, ammo, mundane items, animals, and vehicles is included. Some of the weapons and armor are akin to Roman gladiators', giving the setting a unique flavor.

Topping off the setting rules are some interesting changes to **BEASTS & BARBARIANS**. Listed in the *Savage Worlds* deluxe edition, **BEASTS & BARBARIANS** uses Blood and Guts, Born a Hero, and Joker's Wild. What this means is that while the setting is gritty and dangerous, characters are over-the-top heroes with advantages over equivalent characters from other settings. Possibly the greatest change for the setting is the concept of what the characters do after the adventure. According to the mechanics, the characters must spend almost all their money on various debaucheries prior to their next adventure (which I think is hilarious). There's no saving up to buy your own castle. Hit the tavern and buy a few rounds for everyone every night until your money almost runs out. There are also role-playing styled mechanics that are determined after an adventure to define the other tasks a character performs before embarking on the next adventure. With loot in the thousands, heroes will have plenty of fun before they need more money.

GAME MASTER GUIDE

The Game Master Guide starts with a look at what it means to be a sword and sorcery setting and what types of games **BEASTS & BARBARIANS** aims to create. This includes plenty of information about scaling due to party size, creating a mood, understanding the setting, and a list for creating relics. This section is a must read for GMs.

ADVENTURE GENERATOR

This is possibly one of the greatest adventure generators I have ever seen. It is so simple, yet so detailed that it's almost unbelievable. By dealing four cards onto the table and using each card's suit and value, you can create a detailed framework for your next adventure including: setting, adversary, conflict, reward, how to begin, atmosphere, plot twist, and climax. This tool-kit is extremely detailed and flavored for **BEASTS & BARBARIANS**. While it is designed for use within the setting, you can easily apply much of it elsewhere (setting or system) with only a few minor tweaks as it's a fluff-driven tool-kit. There are so many options and so many combinations that you may never run out of ideas for adventures.

ADVERSARIES

BEASTS & BARBARIANS contains a HUGE list of adversaries including creatures using monstrous abilities and NPCs using Hindrances and Edges. There's really no need to go into extensive detail here. The section is 46 pages long with the majority of those pages being dedicated to NPCs. I find the creatures to be quite interesting and a good fit for the setting, but the NPCs are what truly shine as the section shows a world dominated by humans that come into conflict with each other on a regular basis.

ADVENTURE

BEASTS & BARBARIANS includes a fully fleshed-out adventure for Novice characters. It is an excellent representation of sword and sorcery and

the setting while offering a substantial reward for wise heroes. It is written in a very flexible style giving the heroes the chance to drive much of the adventure instead of forcing them to follow a predetermined path.

OVERALL

BEASTS & BARBARIANS is not only an excellent *Savage Worlds* setting, but a great depiction of sword and sorcery compared to any system. With *Savage Worlds*' inherent modularity, it's easy to add in heroic mechanics alongside gritty mechanics without breaking the system. Creating characters akin to pulp and heroic fantasy is so easy that very little changes from the core rulebook. This helps to decrease the amount of prep time needed to play. Players may find themselves a little taken aback by the lack of magic, and that's the dark side of the setting. This isn't epic fantasy and magic is dangerous.

RATINGS

Publication Quality: 8 out of 10

BEASTS & BARBARIANS is a beautiful book, albeit with a bit too much spacing. It's a well-laid out and formatted book with some excellent illustrations to support the sword and sorcery aspect. Even the dark background helps to enhance the gritty nature of the setting. I would have preferred additional illustrations in the bestiary section for some of the more obscure beasts and bookmarks for the PDF are a definite must. These are very minor issues and the publication is still of a high quality.

Mechanics: 10 out of 10

Considering it is a *Savage Worlds* setting, **BEASTS & BARBARIANS** has all the standard new mechanics such as Hindrances, Edges, Equipment, and Arcane Backgrounds. Out of these, what stands out the most are the Arcane Backgrounds and the Adventure Generator (which is designed in a mechanical way). The Arcane Backgrounds change the regular mechanics to a more

dangerous version where characters should be cautious with magic, especially sorcery. This is an excellent addition to the grittiness of the sword and sorcery setting. The Adventure Generator, on the other hand, is one of the most awesome tool-kits I have ever seen for designing an adventure. By dealing out four cards, using this tool-kit, you have everything you need to create the framework for a terrific sword and sorcery adventure. Additionally, much of this tool-kit can be applied for use within other settings and even systems. After seeing it, you may never create an adventure any other way... maybe.

Desire to Play: 10 out of 10

Those who enjoy pulp fantasy, heroic fantasy, and dark fantasy will definitely find this sword and sorcery setting falling into areas they enjoy. Fans of epic fantasy looking for a 180-degree change of pace will find sword and sorcery to fill that desire. Most of all, fans of *Savage Worlds* will find a great use of the system and many of its capabilities within the pages of **BEASTS & BARBARIANS**.

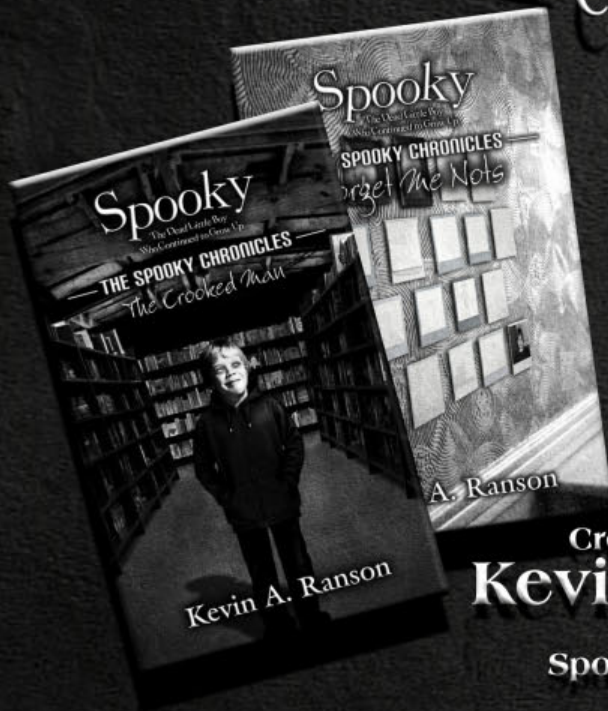
Overall: 9 out of 10

BEASTS & BARBARIANS is not only a great sword and sorcery setting; it is a well-designed *Savage Worlds* setting, utilizing the flexibility of the core rules to bring out the most colorful aspects of the setting. Game Masters will also find that adventures within the **BEASTS & BARBARIANS** settings are three-dimensional and take advantage of rules within *Savage Worlds* many settings tend to avoid such as chases, social interactions, and heroic setting rules. The setting may be dark and gritty, but the characters are over-the-top heroes who boast, quite loudly, about their adventures within the tavern after saving the damsel in distress.

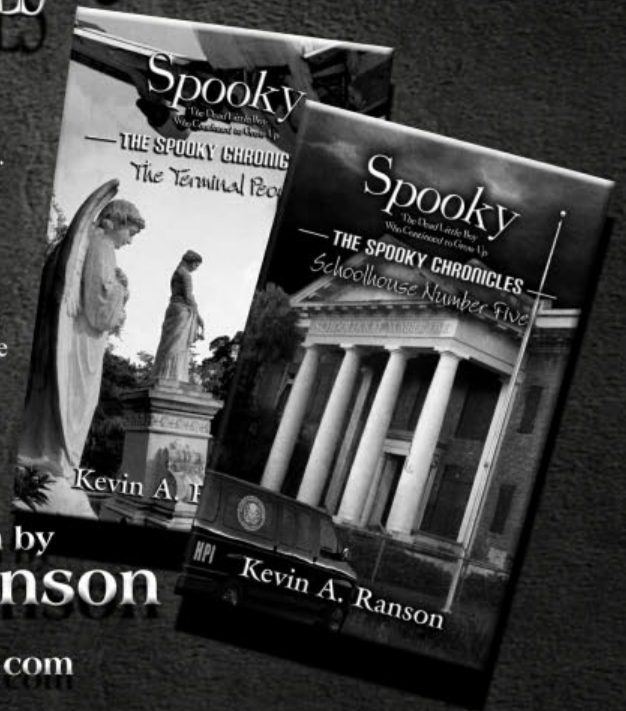
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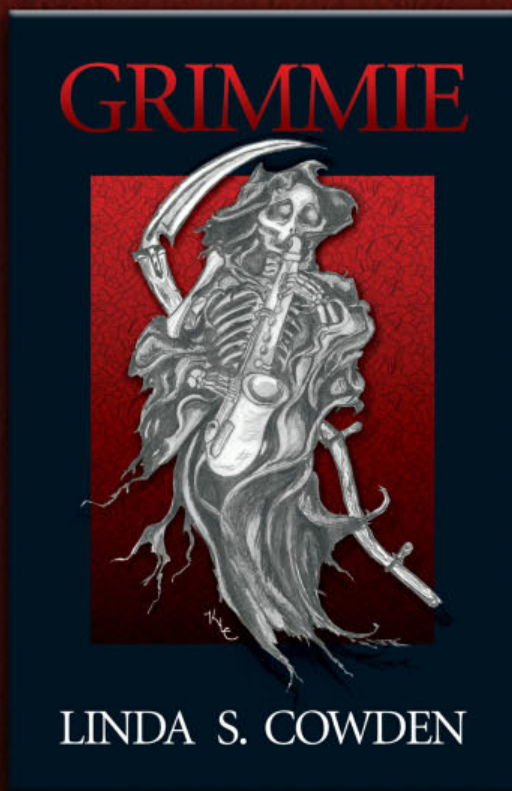


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He goes to school,
likes taking pictures
in cemeteries,
and doesn't breathe.
Accidentally starting
the zombie apocalypse
is his biggest fear,
but it's not his
biggest problem.



Created & Written by
Kevin A. Ranson

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The Reaper has a new face.

Bound by the laws of the hourglass and the scythe,
Death grows restless as the world beckons.

Then the deperation of one drew his awareness from the
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learns what it means to have a choice.


The Reaper has a new name: Corwin Grimm.

LINDA S. COWDEN

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ONE SANDAL AND THE SON OF ODIN

By Vikki Felde of 

"You ask after the one called Haldr. I know him. For a few coins, I will share the tale of how our paths merged for a time. I am Azarias, the best thief in all of Greece. Of course you have not heard of me, for I have never been apprehended." Azarias throws his arm over your shoulder and leans in close whispering, "Let me tell you about the time I almost got caught were it not for the brave Haldr. I owe that man my life. You see, I was hired by a noble, who shall remain nameless, to steal the Amulet of the Fates. Ah, I see by the look on your face, friend, that you have heard of it. Well, this amulet is said to have been forged by Hephaestus and blessed by Zeus. It was intended to be a gift from Zeus to his lovely wife, Hera, but she spurned his gift and threw it down to Earth. Probably had something to do with his infatuation with a mortal woman, but shhhh – best to not speak of such things lest we anger the gods. Anyway, the amulet was in the possession of a crone of a woman, Callidora. Some people say she could make rain fall from a clear blue sky! Can you believe that? No, I didn't believe it either." Azarias nods his head and smiles, showing you his crooked teeth. "Well, acquiring something from the House of Daemastis was not an easy undertaking. I mean, they are only second in line to the throne of Corinth, but who's counting.

"So, I laid my plans well friend, watching the estate for a whole week to learn their patterns. I counted the guards, watched their shift changes, learned what foods they ate, and discovered their secret haunts: the places nobles go to meet and discuss business and treachery. It's funny. These places are much like the places you and I would go, my friend, only they have better wine and more beautiful women." Azarias laughs along with you as some people shuffle into the bar and cast a glance your way. He moves, turning you both away from the newcomers' prying eyes. Lowering his voice a little more, he continues. "I chose my night carefully. They were having a celebration, a birthday party for the youngest noble child. Many, many people would be attending this

party, and things would be quite irregular for the guards who – I have observed – have a penchant for throwing dice around the side of the stables when they are supposed to be on post. Yes, it was a perfect night, almost too perfect. I waited, watching the rich merrily dancing and drinking. Their excesses are far beyond what you could even imagine, friend. I have seen things with my own eyes that I will never be able to forget." Azarias waggles his eye brows and winks. "Yes, I know you want to know about Haldr, I'm getting to that part. Be patient, let your anticipation grow.

"When the entire house was asleep, the guards well into their cups and dice, I crept into the dwelling silent like a cat. The hour was very late and soon dawn's light would embrace the sky. I had to be swift. Up the stairs and into Callidora's bed chamber, I slithered. I moved to the box on the table where she kept her prized jewels. My eyes filled with sparkles as the moonlight shimmered over the expensive trinkets and far too quickly my pockets were bursting with riches. Much to my dismay, the amulet I sought was not among these precious things. I searched frantically to find it.

"I looked everywhere as guards wandered the halls. It was nowhere to be found. A sound drew my attention to the bed, and I spotted the necklace still resting on the neck of the sleeping Lady Callidora! Had she been a more comely woman, perhaps I might have been distracted, but I took a deep breath, and set my mind to the task at hand. I moved onto the bed so slowly, so carefully as to not disturb her slumber. Deftly, my fingers caressed the clasp of the necklace till it opened. I gathered the amulet in my hands and cautiously extricated myself from the silken sheets. She never stirred, a testament to my skills, yes? Finally, I slipped through the house and out the back door into the gardens.

"Ah, but just when I thought it was time to pat myself on the back for a job well done, a cry pierced the silence and alerted the guards. Her shrill voice echoed as if she stood right next to me. My heart

began thudding in my chest. I glanced back at the house to see The Lady Callidora standing at the balcony in her night clothes.

"She screamed, 'Do not let that thief leave this place alive.' As she shouted, she pointed her bony finger directly at me, as if she could see me! And that's when I just ran. I put my head down and focused everything I had to make my feet move faster. Growling and snarling, two massive watch dogs pursued me. When I reached the wall, I jumped and grabbed the top stones, but the dogs were already on me. One of them, the biggest one with a piece of his ear missing, clamped down on my sandal and pulled. I strained to hold on, but then the other one leapt up and took a bite out of my backside. I shrieked, in a manly way of course, and the next thing I knew I was lying on my back looking at the stars on the other side of the wall. It was a very undignified feeling to be lying naked in the mud missing one sandal with a chunk of my butt left in a dog's mouth. The weight of the amulet around my neck further motivated me to get up and keep running. Well, that and the sounds of the dogs fighting over my thankfully now empty toga.

"I ran as fast as I could in one sandal, artfully ducking into every shadow large enough to hold me, but the guards pursued relentlessly. When I left the affluent section of the city, it seemed as if the guards magically multiplied. Slowly, they were surrounding me, and I was desperately trying to avoid them. The howls of hunting dogs made my blood turn cold. I slowly worked my way through the winding city streets. If I could get into shanty town, I knew I could lose them. As I darted down the long alley, a familiar growl froze me in my tracks. Ahead in the torchlight, I could see several guards and behind me that stupid dog with the piece of his ear missing, drooling at the thought of this tasty flesh." Azarias smacks his rump and laughs, turning back to you.

"But remember, I am telling you about the time I almost got caught. Just as I thought I was done for, this giant of a man appeared in the alley beside me. He must have come from the inn across the way, and in my fear-induced panic, I never saw him approach. He was tall though, and muscular with fair maiden's hair on his head and a golden beard. Strange were the weapons he brought to his hands, a huge ax and a very long blade of some kind, each made of a dark

gray metal so polished it gleamed in the moonlight. He looked like no one I had ever seen, wearing chains of armor, the pelts of some great beast, and an ornate winged helm. He glanced at me then locked his gaze on the guards who were closing in on our position. 'Doesn't seem like a fair fight', he said to the guards, his deep voice echoing in the narrow alleyway. "After that, it was all whirling blades, blood and the cries of men and beasts. It was over so quickly, I had hardly had time to catch my breath. He cleaned his blades on one of the dead guards' togas and looked at me as he sheathed his enormous sword. 'I am Haldr, son of Odin,' he said as he admired his handy work. His gaze traveled over to the six dead bodies of the city guard and the mangled remains of the two guard dogs. 'I am Azarias,' I told him, 'and I owe you a debt.' 'You owe me your life little man, but who is counting? I need a guide to Argos, you will take me there.' His commanding voice made me stand a little taller in my one sandal, if you know what I mean." As you share a laugh, a colossal man wearing a winged helm pushes his way into the bar. He glances around a second and hastily makes his way over to you. "Azarias, telling tales again?" He puts a hand on Azarias' shoulder, "Time for us to go." Azarias immediately heads out with the strange man with features from the north. The barkeep asks you to settle your debt, and as you reach into your robes to retrieve your coin, you realize it's missing. As the barkeep gives you a stern look, you swear you can hear the best thief in all of Greece laughing.

HAVING YOUR CAKE AND EATING IT TOO

Marble cake was invented for people who liked yellow and chocolate cakes but couldn't make up their minds as to which one they wanted. Some wise baker created "marble cake" to get the best of both in one unique cake. A similar mixture can and does happen in some role-playing games. Cross-genre games are quite common and can be exceedingly enjoyable. Elves with cyberware, vampires in deep space, and modern day wizards all have had a place at my gaming table. And much like cake, everyone loved it.

In *One Sandal and the Son of Odin*, I illustrate how to bring one of the Norse demigods into a game of Olympian Breed, which takes place in ancient Greece. While it sounds like it might be a difficult task, it's really all about crafting your story in a way that is open to explore new possibilities. By mixing things up from time to time, you can keep your game interesting, exciting, and fresh. Sometimes it's stimulating to introduce a character that's completely different from your players' so they won't know what to expect. Plus, the players can role-play to find out more about the new character and why they ended up squarely in the middle of the story. GMs can also use this new character to spin games in completely different directions or add direction to games without any. You can even offer this character type to new players and see where their visions take you. Who or what belongs in your game is limited only by your imagination.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT OLYMPIAN BREED

Olympian Breed by Palewolf Publishing is a set of adventures for a tabletop role-playing game set in the Greek heroic age. These adventures use the core rules set of *Savage Worlds Deluxe Edition*, *Super Powers Companion* (for the godlike powers), and *Fantasy Companion* (for the mythical monsters). You need access to all three of these essential resource books in order to create characters and to play in this setting. Please look at our FREE setting primer and character creation guide at DriveThruRPG.com. The PRE-GENS are also available for FREE. Fast! Furious! Fun!

With Olympian Breed, you bring your players' characters into an epic tale of high adventure in ancient Greece and beyond. Each "Act" is a complete game session with story elements, plot hooks,

detailed NPCs, and Game Master tips. The stories can be presented to players as "one shot episodes" or as part of a whole campaign with story threads to tie it all together.

These adventures take place in the age of heroes before Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. You are transported to a fantastic era when demigods roamed the world slaying horrifying titans and fulfilling ominous prophecies.

Within these tales, you explore all the classic themes that are so prevalent in Greek mythology such as, heroism, faith, love, tragedy, generosity, and sacrifice. This is an age of myth, before the beginning of recorded Greek history, where great heroes clashed against the darkest of terrors. Throughout the game, the characters fight to overcome their own human trappings and prove to be more than mere mortals. They also discover that their deific parents are far more human than they were lead to believe.

In this game, YOU play one of these great demigod heroes, born half human and half god. Do you know the truth about your blood? Was it your mother or father who imparted their divine heritage to you? Is that parent aware of you, or are you just one of their many abandoned progeny? Maybe the gods do know about you and perhaps, worse yet, they have a plan for you. Will you seek immortality through brave deeds or through guile? Will you choose to embrace your destiny or let the gods push you to your fate? And when your time is done, will you have left your mark on the world and risen above your mortal station? Will your name be remembered and be as everlasting as the Olympians themselves?

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Game Designers: Shawn & Victoria Felde

Creative Director: Tiara Lynn Agresta

Illustrator: Kerri Barber

Many Thanks: Adrian Agresta & Doug Barber

www.palewolfpub.com

Haldr traveled to Greece following a dark prophecy. The message was relayed to him by an old crone who told the tale of the death of Odin. She advised Haldr to seek the head of the demigod with ashen wings before he can slay the Olympians. For if he succeeds in killing those gods, one day he and his armies will storm Valhalla and slay Odin.

Secretly posing as the old crone, Hecate of the Crossroads whispered those words to Haldr, knowing that it would spark a fire inside him and lead him to Greece. It is her hope that Haldr will be able to stop the destruction of the Olympians, even though she knows he may die for his efforts. She intentionally neglected to mention that part of the prophecy to Haldr.

When he had made up his mind to go, the crone bade him to go sleep at the crossroads. Haldr granted the old woman's request and woke in Greece the very next morning on the crossroads just outside of Corinth. Driven by his curiosity, Haldr couldn't wait to see this new city. Much to his surprise, he could understand the locals even though they spoke with an unfamiliar tongue. A gift from his father, no doubt. He found their wine and food to be exquisite despite their demur manners. Now, if he could just find someone who knew of this demigod with the ashen wings.



HALDR (VETERAN 40XP)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d4, Fighting d12, Gambling d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Repair d4, Riding d4, Stealth d4, Streetwise d4, Survival d6, Swimming d6, Tracking d6

Armor: Aesir Chainmail (+2; 25lbs), Aesir Winged Helm (+3; 8lbs)

Weapons: Norse Battleaxe (d8+d8+d6; 10lb), Norse Longsword (d8+d8+d6; 8lb)

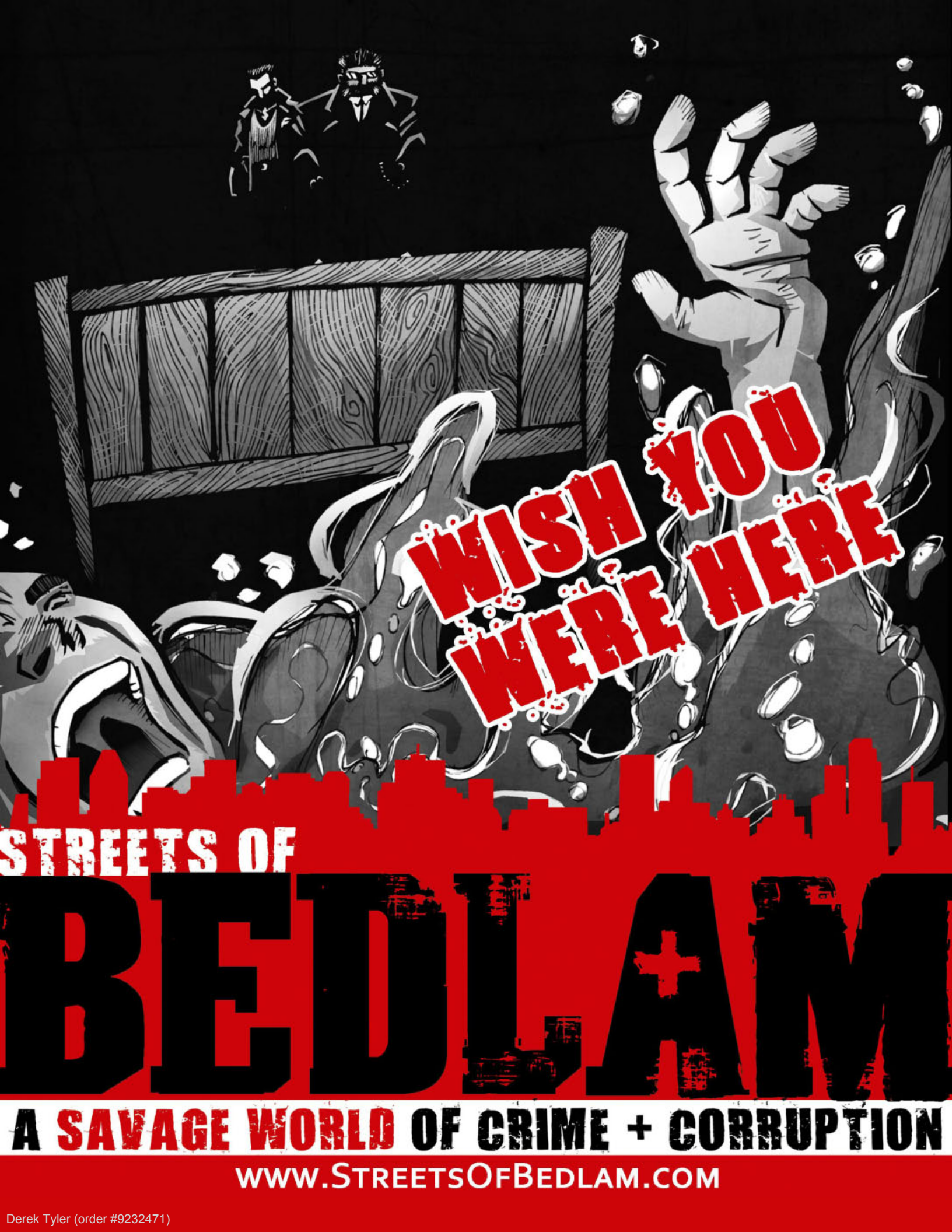
Hindrances: Curious, Destiny, Loyal, Quirk: Carouser

Edges: Ambidextrous, Blessing of the Gods, Brawny, Liquid Courage, Two Fisted

Powers:

- Attack, Melee (4): +1d6 Cold damage added to all melee attacks.
- Low Light Vision (1): Haldr can see in Dim and Dark conditions, but not in total darkness.
- Speak Language (2): Haldr can speak all human languages, but cannot read them.
- Super Attributes (4): Agility x1, Spirit x1, Strength x1, Vigor x1
- Super Skill (1): Fighting x2

Haldr is presented as a Veteran character, but you can adjust him to fit your group's current experience levels.



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ECHOES OF ROME - BOSTON BREWING

By Christopher Banks

You wouldn't know it from the Tommy gun in his hands, but Brian Donovan really was a nice kid. His family came over from the home country a few years before he was born and had made a nice life in Boston. Sure, the house was cramped and rested squarely in the shadows of a massive coat factory, but it was home. He had a mother and father who both worked hard and loved him immensely. But other than school, which no self-respecting Irish boy was keen on, what was a lad to do? His answer came when a friend introduced him to Steven Sheven, or Stevens.

Stevens had it in his mind to form a gang in Boston that rivaled the Gustin Gang. Wealth, fame, money, and girls could all be theirs; they just needed to take it. So Stevens got a few of his friends together, robbed a few folk here and there, and before you knew it, voila, a new, minor gang had emerged. Stevens named themselves the 1929 Gang, because they were formed in 1929. It wasn't a very good name, but he liked it. Stevens sent out some feelers, recruited a few local lads, and then began moving to phase two: the shakedown.

"Listen up, old timer. We can do this the easy way or the hard way." Stevens waved his hand toward Brian who held his gun as awkwardly as a live snake. Stevens noticed his nervousness and resolved to have a talk with the boy about it. He needed gangsters and thugs, not boys afraid of their own shadows.

The man across the counter from Stevens was maybe fifty years old. He didn't have much hair left and his face was weathered from age. "I'll tell you boys the same as I told the Italians; this is my garage, my sweat, my blood. You can take it when you pry it from my cold, dead hands."

Stevens stepped back and looked annoyed. It wasn't supposed to be this hard. People were supposed to be afraid of guns. Why didn't anything ever seem to go

right for him? He was searching for another intimidating phrase when a young woman walked in through the garage door. She was wiping dirt and grime from her hands as she fidgeted with a wrench. "Hon, do you know where..." she trailed off as she saw Brian with his submachine gun. "What's this then?" she asked.

Stevens grabbed her by the arm and led her over to the counter. "Who's the dame? A daughter, perhaps?" Stevens pulled her close against him and leaned in to smell her hair. "That's nice, doll. What do you think? Should you and I head on over to my pad and show each other a good time?"

Stevens expected the two to be terrified, instead, the old man looked disappointed and the girl began giving him grief. "Sorry, pal, bank's closed. Why don't you hard-boiled guys beat your feet and leave us alone."

Stevens pushed the girl against the counter and turned her around. There was no fear in her eyes. Was it his imagination or was that a hint of a smile on her face? Stunned, he stammered out another threat. "You got three days, pops. Three days to change your mind before we come back; and when we come back, it's not going to be pretty. You think you'll have any money left when 1929 is done with you?! Come on Brian." Stevens wheeled on his heels and exited the front door. Brian nodded to the two of them and ran out after his boss, pushing the submachine gun under his long trench coat.

"What was that, Don?" Mierien asked.

Don sighed and came around putting his arms on Mierien's shoulders. "Local boys thinking they can all be tough gangsters. I tell you, this world is going straight down the toilet."

Mierien smiled and turned to her husband, giving him a quick peck on the

cheek. "Trust me, it's been worse. I'll be back."

"Where are you going? Ah, damn it Mierien, let it go."

Mierien tossed on her coat from a nearby stand. "Not a chance." She flashed him a smile and left to follow her assailants.

"Damn it Brian; that was your fault!" Stevens told his companion as they walked through the busy side streets of South Boston. The wind was strong and blew in a cold spring air from the sea that mixed with the dozens of industrial buildings down the coast.

"My fault? I didn't do nothin'."

"That's the point! You didn't do nothin'. You're supposed to be tough as nails. No mercy given, none expected. You couldn't growl or furl your brows or something?"

Brian ran after the taller boy who was quickly outpacing him. "Sorry, Stevens. I'm not used to being mean. I'll do better, I promise."

Behind the pair, a few yards back, Mierien followed in the shadows. Appearing just over sixteen years in age, her long hair was braided together tightly behind her. Oil smudged her face and a thick, dirty, white coat covered her mechanic's uniform. She took great care to keep unseen and stealthily followed the two through the turns and alleys of Southie. After twenty minutes or so the two finally entered what appeared to be an old, abandoned ammunitions factory. Mierien crouched at the edge of a wide open stretch of land and looked around. Her keen senses spotted another half dozen young men skittering at the edges of windows or smoking in doorways. "Too many eyes." She muttered to herself.

"What?" a gruff voice shouted from behind her.

She spun around and saw two men, dressed oddly similar to the other two boys, grins plastered on their faces heading toward her. "What'd we have here, then?" the taller boy said, elbowing his friend.

"You lost, doll?" the other one asked, feigning interest.

Mierien rolled her eyes. "I don't have time for this. You two know what's in that building?" she asked gesturing toward the abandoned factory.

"What, you want us to show you inside? Maybe give you the grand tour?" the taller one continued then burst into a round of laughter.

Mierien closed her eyes in frustration for a few seconds. "Can you tell me or not?"

"Can't, bosses orders", the shorter one told her.

"Useless boys." She muttered turning to leave. The taller one lunged forward grabbing her shoulder. *Predictable*, she thought. Mierien grabbed his wrist from her shoulder and leaned forward and down. The man came stumbling in, falling over her back and landing in a puddle. She turned back toward the shorter boy and gave him a look that screamed, "Just try it." He got the message, and Mierien walked past him.

She got half way down the alley before the taller man was on his feet and yelling after her. His pride stung, he took out a handgun and came bounding after. She turned around and waited for him calmly. The man stopped his run when he got near and showed her the gun. "You like guns? I think you and I need to have a little one-on-one about manners, missy."

"No." she replied.

"No? 'No' what? That wasn't a question."

"No, I don't enjoy guns. Seems to me a man should be able to be a man with nothing but his fists and his wits." She replied.

The man turned to look incredulously at his friend, but the short man was minding his own business, suddenly finding incredible interest with a puddle on the ground. "Yea, all right. What, you used to your old man beating you and you need it some more?"

"Yes, because gods forbid a woman can think for herself." She shifted her weight and leaned on one leg, annoyed.

"Sure are good at beating your gums, aren't you?" he put his gun away and reached back to slap her across the face. Mierien simply leaned back when the blow came, causing his hand to wave awkwardly across air. "Bitch, come here!"

He balled up his hand and moved in toward her. Mierien jumped, pushing off his leg and driving her knee straight into the man's chin. The man's eyes rolled up and his feet buckled. He hit the ground a few seconds after Mierien turned the corner back towards home.

Mierien returned to the garage and replaced her jacket to the coat stand. Don was there behind the counter, giving her an exasperated look. "You didn't need to do that, you know."

"Of course I did." She walked over and poured herself a glass of water from the faucet, then took a long drink. She finished and set the glass down. "They said they'd be back in a few days. I know we're not paying them and we needed intelligence." She moved over behind the counter and put her arms around his waist. "I'll take care of it. You know I can."

Don pushed her arms away from his sides and held them in his hands. "That's not the issue."

"Well, what is it then?" she asked.

"It's this - all of this. Us moving to the city, you looking like you do, me having to pretend the love of my life is my own daughter. I can't take much more of it!" He turned from her, facing the wall, thinking.

Mierien sighed and leaned against his back. "You knew this would happen. You know this is how it has to be. I'm sorry."

Don slipped past her and headed toward the stairs. "I know, but that doesn't mean I have to like it," he told her sadly as he stomped up the steps leaving Mierien alone with her thoughts.

It's never easy and no one ever likes it, she thought to herself. It just is. Her mind immediately pushed away the pain, and she began formulating the best way to make sure the ammunition factory's new owners quickly went out of business.

Two days later Don and Mierien were sitting at a small card table in the garage discussing the business. "Bike repair has been good to us. We should keep on," Don told her.

"Don. I love you, but you are not seeing the big picture. The only constant I've seen in my years, and I've seen quite a few, is change. It won't be long before everyone is using cars, not bikes, and then what?"

"Ah, horsefeathers. People will be riding bikes until the day I die. That's enough for me."

Mierien threw up her hands. "You are as stubborn an old fool as I've ever..." She let her sentence fall off as the garage door opened to the ring of a loud bell. A massively tall, widely built black man wearing a black, pinstripe suit and hat entered the garage carrying a brief case.

"Help you?" Don asked.

The man looked up and a wide grin spread across his face. Mierien saw him and leapt out of her seat. "Alam!" She vaulted over the table and raced over to the newcomer. The man put down his briefcase and caught Mierien as she leapt up into his arms, wrapping her legs around him.

"Mierien, my girl!" he shouted back. He spun a few times, giving her a massive hug and quick kiss before setting her down. "How are you, girl?!" he asked.

She laughed and punched him in the arm. "You got my message?"

"I was in New York. I took the train here as soon as I heard."

"What's going on here?" Don asked trying to interrupt.

"New York, what in Hermes' name are you doing in New York?!"

"Ah, it's a long story. But, I'm here for you!"

"What's going on here?" Don yelled again. The two stopped and looked over at Don who was standing and quickly turning red.

"Oh, sorry dear." Mierien dragged Alam over to the table. "Don, this is Alam. He's-"

"Oh I know very well who he is. You've told me your stories about a thousand times." Don took his hand and shook it once. "Make yourself at home. I need a

beer." Don left the two friends talking and laughing as he grabbed his hat and headed out the door.

"New York? What were you doing in New York? Last I heard you and Pal were trouncing through the jungle down in Brazil." Mierien opened the door into the main store and beckoned Alam to follow.

"Yeah, that didn't last long. Pal found a secluded tribe where the women lead. When I left him, he was being pampered by the chief, a sub-chief, and the chief's daughter!"

Mierien poured each of them a glass of water while she listened. "Seems about right."

Alam laughed and took the glass from her hand. "Myself, I made it up to N'Orleans."

"Any different from the old Orleans?" Mierien joked.

Alam widened his eyes. "You kidding me? Picked up a little jazz while I was slummin'. I tell you Mierien, that music has livened my old soul again." He walked over to an aged phonograph and flipped through a couple of records. "Ah, what is this stuff? No Duke or Earl, not even any Luis! You gettin' old on me, Mier?"

"Stop." Mierien laughed. "Those are Don's old things."

"How we suppose to dance, without a beat?" Alam turned a graceful circle then mooched over to the counter housing his briefcase. He opened it revealing a handful of papers and odd items, finally pulling out a record of his own. "This one I think you'll like." He reversed his spin and slid over to the phonograph, sliding the needle to place. "This is one Fats gave me. I think it's gonna be big." A high tempo dance tune erupted out of the speakers and Alam shuffled to the right, kicking his feet up to the tempo. He reached the wall and reversed his step, sliding to a stop in front of Mierien with his hand held out. "Come on Mier, the world's comin' to an end. Let's dance."

She took his hand and he led her around the impromptu dance floor, twirling and giggling in delight. Outside a few passers-by stopped to watch the scandalous couple's new age waltz. The drum beat grew near the end of the tune and Alam picked Mierien up launching her

over his shoulder. She landed holding one hand as he twirled the momentum out of her. The music ended and the two laughed and hugged each other happily. Some of their audience clapped and whooped before resuming their walks. Mierien shuffled over to the sink, her arms out straight in flight while Alam removed the record from the player. She poured them a drink, the lively tune still on her mind.

"Okay, so you were having the time of your lives in New Orleans?"

Alam cut her off, "Eh, it's pronounced, N'Orleans." He smiled to her.

"Okay, so you were having the time of your lives in N'Orleans," she looked at him for approval. Alam gave a healthy nod. "What brought you to New York?"

Alam rocked to the side and his smile slowly faded. "I got that feeling again."

"Horsefeathers." Mierien said with trepidation. Alam gave her a quizzical look. "Don's been rubbing off on me. Same feeling?"

"Same damn one; same as in Antioch before the quake; same as in Genoa with the rats." The two sat in silence for several minutes, thinking.

The door opened and a red faced Don stumbled in. "Christ, you two look like your dogs have just died. Who kicked the bucket?" he asked as he pulled up a chair.

Mierien smiled and took Don's hand. "It's nothing."

"Horsefeathers!" He called out. I know I've only been with you twenty-something years, but I know you better than you think I do, my dear. What's wrong?"

Mierien looked up at Alam. Alam shrugged his shoulders. "Alam has a knack of... predicting tragedy."

"What do you mean predicting tragedy? Who's gonna die? Me?"

Alam gave Don a small smile. "Doesn't work that way. It works more on a large scale."

"How large?" Don asked.

"Well," Alam began, "300,000 from a cyclone in India, nearly as many in Antioch, about a million when The Yellow flooded in China, and my favorite, of course, somewhere over a hundred million from the bubonic in Europe."

"Christ." Don said. "I need another drink." He shook his head trying to clear

the alcoholic haze. "So now you've come here?"

"New York, actually." Alam said. "I've been cursed by Apollo. I can feel doom coming, but I've no idea how to stop it. I try, but have never been able to figure one out in time."

"Hell with *me*, you need a drink." Don told him. "Come on .Let's head over to Dolly's."

"Dolly's?" Alam asked.

"Local speakeasy," Mierien informed him.

"They got music?" Alam asked.

"Not bad. They play that inferno Jazz a lot." Don replied.

Alam smiled and picked up his hat. "Now you're talking my language."

An hour later the three sat at a large, round booth in Dolly's Show Place. It was officially a show theatre that offered the paying customer a hot meal and decent show. Unofficially, it had one of the largest stocks of illegal alcohol on the eastern seaboard. Poker games went around the clock, and show girls got paid for more than their ability to dance. Smoke hung thick in the air as the three threw back drink after drink. A pianist on stage played a light tune as the afternoon crowd rolled through.

"So what do we do? Just sit back and wait for the world to end?" Don asked.

Alam crunched on a piece of ice out of his gin and tonic and shrugged his shoulders. "Don't know. I was up in New York trying to find out what was happening, but I got Mierien's message and decided to skedaddle down here."

Mierien, unfazed by the copious amount of alcohol they had consumed, downed another shot of whiskey. "We'll look into it after we take care of those boys tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" Don asked. "You're not going over there tomorrow!"

Mierien gave him a sour glance. "Of course we are. We know where they hang out. We have the upper hand."

Don shook his head and took his wife's hand in his. Mierien pulled back and looked around, careful to keep up illusions. "This isn't a fight you need to concern

yourself with. They're thugs and bullies. They'll be gone in a month."

"The Catholic Zealots were thugs and bullies; they managed to kill a couple hundred thousand people before they went away." Mierien looked away, not wanting to have this conversation again. As she looked around, she noticed Stevens, Brian, and a few other young men, all dressed in pinstripe suits, walk in through the front door, smiling and laughing. "Looks like we weren't the only ones to need a stiff drink after a rough day."

Don looked over and saw them head over to an open table. "Crap. What should we-" Don looked back to Alam, who had vacated the table without his notice. "Now where did he go off to?"

"He does that," Mierien told her husband. "Don't worry; he usually has a plan... Usually."

Over at the gang table, a waitress in a short, tight fitting skirt came over holding a tray. "What will it be, boys?" she asked in a high pitched voice.

Stevens grabbed her by the thigh and positioned her in front of him. "Listen up doll, Stevens is the name. This here is my gang, The 1929 Gang. We're gonna need a round of whiskey for each of us, and bring the owner out with you. We have matters to discuss." He pushed her back and swatted her on the rump. "Be quick now, honey."

The girl looked at him confused, but wandered off to do as she was told.

"You sure we can do this, boss? The cops even drink here." Brian asked.

"Sure, I'm sure." Stevens said sitting back in his chair. "This juice joint is owned by an Asian fellow named Poove. He's a push over, I tell ya. We'll tell him the way it is. If he doesn't like it, he'll find himself bumped off quicker than you can say 'Chink.'" This brought a round of laughter from his fellow gang members. As the laughter died, one voice laughed a bit longer than the rest. The gang turned to see Alam sitting amongst them, laughing at Stevens' joke.

"Who the hell are you, spook?" Stevens asked.

"Hey, it's all copacetic, my man. Name's Alam, up here from N'Orleans to check out the local scene. Say you think

The Babe and the Yanks are gonna take it this year, or is Philly gonna shut 'em down."

"Philly, no question!" Brian jumped in. "Al Simmons, Earnshaw, and with Lefty shutting teams down, they got it hands down."

"I don't know - your man can clobber that ball. Should never have traded him to the pinstripes."

"Don't I know it. Those bums are gonna lose a hundred games this season now."

Stevens glared at Brian, causing him to sit back in his seat and go quiet. "Who told you to sit?" Stevens asked Alam angrily.

"Let's not fret on that Stevens. Let's talk dirt about this caper your about to pull off. You need a fall guy if you gonna -ex off the Chinaman."

"Who are you?" Stevens asked incredulously.

"I told you, Mack. I'm Alam."

Stevens smiled and leaned forward. "Well, Alam, let me tell you what's going to happen now. I'm going to have Brent and Willy here take you out back, beat the snot out of you, and if you're lucky, they won't shoot you in the head. How's that sound?"

Alam gave him a curious look. "Doesn't sound very copacetic at all. Not at all. Let me make you a counter offer." Alam stood up and pointed toward the piano player on stage.

The piano man, a short, squat black man in a white suit and top hat, slid his hands over the piano keys *discrete glissando* before breaking into a song. Alam crooned it out fast while the piano player did his best to keep pace. Alam slid around the gang's table as the audience watched on. A few jive steps back and his legs began rocking back and forth, up and down in rapid motion. He spun and pointed a finger over to Mierien. She was already out of her seat rushing to meet



Alam. They collided and spun into a Charleston as the piano roared on, now accompanied by a trumpeter as well as Alam's voice. After a few seconds of dance, the floor began to slowly fill with other couples eager to share in the day's revelry. Eventually the instruments took over and the floor was packed. The want-to-be gangsters sat at their table, glaring angrily at Alam through the crowd; except for Brian, who accepted a young red headed flapper's invitation to join her on the dance floor.

"You think you can clear this place out?" Alam leaned in and whispered loudly into Mierien's ears.

"I think I can handle that. Hold me up, though," she yelled back. Alam gripped Mierien's waist with both hands and held her upright as he broke into a spin. Mierien let her eyes shut and felt the energy around them. The music, the vibrations, the lust and desire,

everything filled her senses. She felt the ocean of energy roaring by her and dipped her hand in just enough to pull out a cupful of raw power. Her mind shaped the power, molded it to suit her needs. A split-second later a woman screamed in the kitchen and a tray slammed to the ground. Mierien let the energy course over her, her presence repelling people so profoundly they couldn't stand to be in the same room. One by one people began shuffling out of the speakeasy, unsure what was driving them away, but wanting desperately to be somewhere else. Mierien swooned and fell back, exhausted from the use of so much power. Alam held her as she fell and pressed her against his body.

"Easy now, easy," he told her gently as the throngs brushed past them. Alam noticed Don give a look back, even as he was compelled to leave as well. Mierien slowly regained her composure and took

to unsteady legs, nodding that she was fine.

"What's this then?" Stevens ask.

"A raid?" Brian asked.

"A raid? A raid by who?" Stevens responded. "All the cops are here!"

"Hey, isn't that the dame from the bike shop earlier?" Brian asked.

"What's going on here? They set this up?" The last man out of the room shut the door in confused disgust leaving Alam and Mierien facing off against the small group of gangsters. "What did you two do?" Stevens demanded.

"Us? Well we've been right here the whole time, little man." Alam told him. "Maybe they just got wind of that hair cream you been using? Woo-EE, that's some strong stuff."

Stevens gave a half chuckle and looked over his shoulder. "Brent, Willy, rearrange Mr. Alam's teeth, would ya."

Brent stepped forward, cracking his knuckles. "Gladly, boss." He grinned and made a beeline toward Alam, Willy close behind. Mierien slipped off to the side as the gangsters settled in to watch the fight.

Brent and Willy were big lads, over six feet tall and built like tree trunks. They were obviously brought in to do the heavy fighting for the gang. Alam surmised they grew up on the streets, brawling on the playground leading to back ally fights for cash. Unfortunately for them, Alam had a wee bit more experience.

The first haymaker came in awkwardly, as if Brent didn't expect much of a fight. Alam stepped into the swing, coming face to face with Willy and trapping the swinging arm against his side. A fierce head butt to the bridge of Willy's nose staggered the brute; a second knocked him unconscious. Alam checked his hat as the body fell to the ground. Brent stopped and began to take his foe a little more seriously. He put his fists up and began sending in probing jabs. Alam knocked them aside or stepped out of reach as need be, enjoying one of his favorite dances.

Mierien moved behind the remaining gang members to a tall man standing in back wearing a red scarf. She tapped on his shoulder to get him to turn around. Once he turned she jabbed the butt of her hand

against his larynx in lightning speed. The man gurgled for words, but found only air. Two quick chops upside each side of his head incapacitated him. Mierien caught him before he hit the ground, silencing his fall. She was glad Don wasn't here to see this side of her skill set. He was not a violent man and wouldn't approve. She moved to the next man and took him down by tripping him to the ground, rolling with his fall, and applying a vicious elbow to his temple. One by one they always fell.

Alam glanced behind the thugs and saw Mierien going to work. As such, he toyed with Brent, defensively blocking swings and countering punches. This went on for more then a minute before Alam decided the man had had enough. Brent sent in his usual jab, jab, and roundhouse combination. Alam anticipated the roundhouse and stepped in, delivering a vicious punch to the man's face. Brent stumbled off to the side, holding his eye. His legs wobbled as he fell onto the bar for support. Alam turned back toward Stevens whose face was quickly turning red.

"Enough of this, then. Get him boys!" Stevens turned around and noticed the rest of his gang unconscious behind him. Off on one side of the room Brian was sitting with Mierien, who had her leg on his chair between his legs, revealing her black stockings. "Brian! What are you doing? Get your Tommy gun and waste him!"

Mierien smiled to Tommy and put her arm on his. "No need for that. We know you're better than them." Mierien reached over and uncorked a half-empty bottle that was still on the table. She took a swig and then offered it to Brian.

Brian relaxed and took a drink. He locked eyes with Mierien and returned her smile. "Sorry, boss. I mean Stevens; I think you're on your own."

Stevens whirled back on Alam in a rage. "You think I need someone to fight for me? I put this gang together through sweat and blood. I'm not gonna let some colored bastard and his whore take it from me." Stevens took a rage-filled step forward, but was interrupted by a soft voice appearing on stage from behind the curtain.

"What seems to be happening here?" A short, bald, middle-aged Chinese man

wearing a crimson robe and carrying a top hat and cane stepped out and took note of the chaotic scene.

"Mind your own business, Chinaman! You and I will conclude after I finish stomping on the negro."

"In my club, all is my business. Cease your foolishness before you meet a fateful end, young man." He moved to the edge of the stage and down the small steps.

Alam turned and watched the newcomer. He was shorter and shaved bald. His eyes were calm and knowing. Alam wasn't sure why, but for the first time today, he believed he should be worried.

Still bright red in anger, Stevens turned to what he perceived to be an easier target. "Fine old man, I'll deal with you first." Stevens rushed at the Chinaman, intending to tackle him. In the blink of an eye the Chinaman's cane became a sword. It struck out in a quick swipe and, before anything happened, became a cane again. Stevens stopped and took a few staggering steps forward. He looked down, and his head fell to the floor, rolling under a nearby table.

Alam turned on the Chinaman and Mierien leapt up in surprise as Stevens' body dropped, spraying out blood. "That – that wasn't necessary," Alam told the newcomer.

"He was just a boy," Mierien yelled moving over to Alam.

"Boy or not, his mind was unclean. He wasn't fit for this world."

"You bastard!" Brian yelled from the table. "He was still my friend!" Brian stood and took out the machine gun from his long coat.

"Brian, no!" Mierien yelled a split second before her voice was drowned out by the roar of bullets. The Chinaman dove into a roll behind a table and came up the other side holding a steak knife. He flung it at Brian then leapt away from the incoming fire. The knife struck Brian in the shoulder and he reflexively dropped his gun, blood coming from the open wound. The Chinaman removed the sword from its cane sheath and advanced on the boy.

Mierien was faster. She bolted and rolled into the path of the sword yielder, coming up on her feet lightly and causing

him to stop. Alam moved to his flank, the Chinaman noticing everything. "This fish is too small," she told him, "Let's throw him back." Mierien spoke over her shoulder. "Brian, get out of here." Brian hesitated. "Now!" The boy had enough. He ran to the door and tossed it open, rushing away from the scene.

"You can't save him," the Chinaman said. "He'll burn in the fires of the new world, just like them all."

Alam and Mierien looked at one another. They had heard those words before, a long time ago, outside of Rome. The Chinaman replaced his sword into the cane and drifted back carefully to retrieve his hat. He picked it up and cleaned it off. "You think you are hidden? You think you are not known? My Lord knows all and sees all. He has foretold of you and your coming. You will not perish here, but you will be left here."

"Who are you?" Mierien asked.

"The first of many," the man responded cryptically. "We go where our Lord bids us. We fight and build as he decrees. Your time will come soon enough. He has prepared us for your arrival. He bid us to give you this gift." The man placed his top hat down on the table and backed away slowly.

"Thanks, I got a hat," Alam told the man.

The Chinaman let a slow grin play up over his face. It was the first real emotion he had shown since his arrival. "Bala' orpai ep a-deeam." He began.

Mierien's eyes went wide at the verse. "Alam, cover!" she yelled. Alam had known Mierien many years and knew the things that could frighten her were few and far between. He also knew to listen when she said jump. He ran and leapt over the bar, landing a few seconds behind Mierien.

"Sev'rila' Sev'Portuns' Sev'Nuaba!" The chanting crescendoed. Alam and Mierien hazarded a glance above the bar and saw the Chinaman leap out of a nearby window, glass shattering as he passed through. Out of the hat arose a foul looking, black substance. It clung to itself spilling onto the table in an amazingly rapid rate. Once it touched the floor the liquid took on a solid, rubbery form. The form took further shape and it flowed

together like jelly, small pseudo pods erupting out from the main stock at various, wild angles. A wide maw opened up on the body and dozens of eyes opened around the beast while small suction cup-like mouths completed the end of each pseudopod.

"Umm... Mierien?" Alam asked.

Mierien looked back at Alam wide-eyed. "Your guess is as good as mine."

The creature continued to grow until it towered fifteen feet into the air. Its eyed pseudopods looked around the room in all directions.

"We could make a run for it," Mierien said.

Alam removed a gladius from the inside of his coat. He felt its edge and smiled at the grip. "We could. Of course that thing will probably eat half the city before anyone figured out how to deal with it."

"Do we know how to deal with it?" Mierien asked.

"Well, no, but that's never stopped us before," Alam laughed.

"Ideas?"

Alam hefted his sword. "Let's start by chopping it up into tiny little pieces. We'll go from there. Ready?" Mierien gave him a nod. Alam came rushing around the bar, yelling at the beast while Mierien tumbled over the side and over toward the entrance. The beast roared and lunged forward toward Alam. He met it halfway and deftly spun around the first striking pseudopod, hacking into it with his gladius. A piece fell away, one of his hundred eyes falling to the floor and blinking up at him. "Sword works!" Alam yelled to Mierien as he continued jumping and rolling around the beast's striking pseudopods. A few more swipes of his sword and the beast fell back in a frenzy. Suddenly, it began emitting a strange noise, like a hundred different voices babbling incoherently.

Mierien shrieked at the sound and held her ears. When she looked, Alam was standing transfixed, sword at his side. The beast lunged forward, its babbling washing over Alam, paralyzing him. "Alam!" Mierien screamed. She rushed forward, dodging two pseudopods that slammed toward her. A third and fourth pod latched onto Alam and began pulling him toward

the beast. Alam began turning pale as his blood was drained by the latched pods. Mierien reached Alam and bowled into him, knocking him off his feet. The pods came unattached and the impact jarred him back to consciousness. "You OK?" she asked. Alam nodded and tried to sit up.

A pod crashed and wrapped around Mierien, tossing her viciously across the room. She gave a startled yell and managed to land in a roll, dislodging her shoulder from the impact, but otherwise unharmed.

From the doorway, two cops burst in with pistols drawn. They looked at the beast and stood, mouths agape. One of them fired his weapon into the beast. It struck out with a pseudopod and latched onto the man's forehead, dragging the cop inside. The other cop stood catatonic as hundreds of voices rolled over him.

Mierien rushed in to stop the assault. She flipped over an oncoming attack and landed in a run. The beast anticipated her movement, learning from her previous assault, with a second pseudopod ready, slamming into her and sending her careening into the wall.

The beast pulled the cop inside and deposited him easily into its massive maw, screams quickly silenced by a nasty crunching sound.

Alam regained his senses and rolled out of the way of the beast's attacks and did his best to ignore the babbling scream growing louder and louder in his head. He knew he didn't have long. Whatever this beast was doing, he was susceptible. Alam moved back and forth hacking pieces off the beast as he went along. At one point he danced dangerously close to the huge maw on the beast's body. It lunged and clamped shut, tearing off his shirt in the process. Back and forth he worked, cutting, dodging, slashing, and rolling. He was doing damage, but not enough. The beast was working him too hard and the pain in his head became so bad it began to throb loudly.

"Alam, down!" Mierien yelled. Alam flipped back and behind another table as Mierien flipped the safety off of Brian's discarded Tommy gun. She let loose into the beast, each round crashing into its body, causing it to stagger. The clip

emptied and Mierien finished by tossing the gun at the beast.

Alam took the opportunity to rush into the beast, slicing off more pods as they crashed down. He rolled in close and thrust his gladius up into the roof of the aberration's mouth, driving the blade deep into the creature.

Mierien tried the dazed cop's pistol and walked forward, unloading its contents into what she perceived to be the creature's head. On the other side Alam removed his sword and continued his assault, stabbing the beast's brain stem over and over again. The beast roared and flailed, black ooze pouring out of the wounds. Finally, it shuttered and collapsed into a pile of goo. Alam backed away slowly and met Mierien who clung to his arm.

The creature began to rapidly dissolve, the ichor turning to steam. After only a few moments, the only thing left of the beast was a shining police badge amongst a pile of human bones. Alam and Mierien used each other for support, breathing heavily. After a minute to recover, Alam replaced his coat and headed for the broken window. "We should get out of here before we have to explain this."

"What about him?" Mierien gestured to the remaining cop, still standing motionless.

"I don't know. Hopefully he'll be okay." The two slipped out the window and into the gathering crowd that was forming on the outside street. The two made their way down the road doing their best to conceal their wounds. They staggered around the final corner before the shop and Mierien pulled up short. The place was dark and quiet.

"What's wrong?" Alam asked her.

"It's dark."

"So?"

"Don would have the light on in an emergency." She said biting her lower lip.

"Maybe he never came back. Maybe he's back at the bar waiting for us." Alam offered.

"Maybe." Mierien didn't sound convinced.

They crossed the street and slunk into the dark shop. Alam saw it first. He had the better night vision, noticed details more

easily. "Mierien?" he asked her, always unsure what to say.

She pulled on the light sting and saw Don, sitting behind the counter, a familiar looking sword in his stomach. Blood pooled on the ground and ran in small lines toward the doorway. Mierien stood looking at the man she had spent the last twenty-five years with, time that seemed to flow like a rushing river. She was used to losing people – loved ones and friends. But the traumatic ones, the rivers that suddenly fall off into the sea, those are the ones that hit the hardest. She tiptoed around the blood and over to Don, closing his eyes and kissing him on the forehead.

"He was a good man. He didn't deserve this," she said quietly.

Alam reached over and removed a piece of parchment resting under Don's hand. He read it out loud, "If you manage to survive my Lord's gift, he bid me to take something precious from you. His soul now resides in hell along with all the other nonbelievers." Alam put down the parchment and looked at Mierien. She was sad, that was obvious, but there was a quiet rage building behind her eyes, a rage that wanted to watch the world burn.

"If that's what you want," she muttered. Outside, the wind grew while a low crash of thunder echoed in the distance like a rising growl.

"Mierien, what are you going to do?" Alam asked, concern on his face.

Mierien yanked the sword free of Don's body, unconcerned with the dying flesh now that the soul had departed, and stalked out of the building. Her voice answered the thunder's growl, "Burn them all."

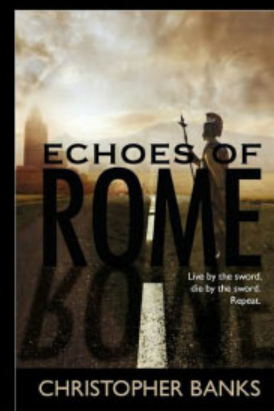
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WARP SWORD

By Chaz Kemp and Vickey A. Beaver

This sword looks like any other decorative, yet deadly sword. But it's not. When it works as planned, the Warp Sword is even better than most fine swords and feels strangely light for a blade so long. When it doesn't, it is dangerous to the wielder. Most consider the sword cursed and would rather not try it.

Special: Damage Str+d8+2, Weight 6

Activation: The Warp Sword can be used by anyone with Fighting. It acts as a normal long sword in damage and weight, if the person using it is unskilled.

Effect: When the hit roll fails by three or more, the sword warps behind the person using it, making the wielder the target instead, whether it was thrust or swung. Roll again and add whatever number the attack was missed by. The new roll is against the wielder's Parry.



SAVAGE WORLDS – WORLDS SHAKEN WHILE YOU WAIT

By Michael F. Zabkar

In the late summer of 1981, I was in the middle of growing from a boy to a young man. Most of my days were spent hanging around with other kids in my small neighborhood in a small, rural town in Northern California fishing, building forts, and riding our bikes hither and yon in search of adventure – well, adventure to us, anyway. I was preparing to go into 7th grade, and I was at an age where I was growing out of ‘toys,’ but still wasn’t really sure what I was growing into. Little did I know what I was in for one lazy August weekend.

One Saturday, while our neighborhood group was gathered at one of our homes, busying ourselves talking about *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Escape from New York* and *Dragonslayer* – essentially doing nothing, a friend brought over a game he had just purchased and asked if we all wanted to play. I admit: the box was intriguing. The cover portrayed a large green dragon menacing a blond-haired female preparing to cast a spell while her male companion readied to impale the beast on his spear. Scant inches away from all of them, was an open chest filled with treasure. To a boy such as myself, who was already a fan of science fiction and heroic fantasy, I was struck immediately by the title: *Dungeons & Dragons – Basic Set*. After some mild negotiations and convincing, we agreed to meet that evening and give the game a try. After all, we had nothing else better to do.

Five of us met in the dark recesses of my friend’s dining room, none of us knowing what to expect from a ‘role-playing game’, but we were determined to give it a go. My friend, the game master (GM), began to weave a tale of our band of adventurers arriving in a medieval town,

hearing rumors of great treasures to be found, baleful creatures, and sinister traps. Over the course of the next several hours we learned of marching orders, henchmen, and experience points (XP). Our characters enjoyed thrilling victories and endured bitter defeats. They characters crawled through a dungeon with only their wits to guide them and discovered hoards of loot beyond our teenaged imaginations. In short, we were hooked. Our worlds had been shaken.

Weekends thereafter were no longer filled with worrying about what we would do to pass the time. We were adventurers! We knew what to do. Our evenings entailed collective stories and rolling dice. We soon ‘graduated’ to the advanced version of the game and even more worlds opened to us. This love of the game continued until real life vied for our attentions and our efforts were drawn to another adventure – High School. Our group waned from the inevitable pulls of other pursuits that draw young people, and our gaming sessions became fewer and fewer.

In the following years, I too was drawn away from adventuring, but I always held a love for the game and often would spend hours reading and re-reading my books seeking to relive my younger adventures. I began to collect different games and started to amass a collection of books of various genres. These kept alive my love of role-playing games and introduced me to different periods of history, other authors, and fantastic worlds. I found there were hundreds of games to whet my appetite for adventure as I continued through my college years.

Occasionally I played, though not regularly. I delved into the realm of tabletop

wargaming and began to collect armies. I learned to paint and sculpt. During that time, I began to write down ideas for adventures, scenarios, and campaigns. Once again, I found new worlds to explore. Each expansion into new gaming territory built on the foundations previously set. I attended conventions and discovered there were legions of players such as myself. I relished the community I had been exposed to. I was comfortable with my hobby and pursued it with enthusiasm. I was content, or so I thought.

Through a chance meeting I met the owner of a scenario paintball company. We talked of games, and he suggested I attend one of his events. He described his events as “LARPing with paintball.” Being a died-in-the-wool gamer, I was familiar with *live action role playing*, and I was curious. LARPing and paintball? Little did I know what I was in for. The event was based on the Battle of Agincourt and there were hundreds of players. Much to my surprise, a large percentage of the players were in costume. By that, I mean the players set up medieval style pavilions and were decked out in full suits of chainmail with tabards, shields, and various pieces of armor, each one with a paintball marker (gun). I soon discovered that this was no mere shoot-em-up. There were missions to complete, puzzles to solve, and negotiations to be concluded. All players in costume were in character.

I found the problem solving skills I learned role-playing at my friend’s kitchen table translated almost directly to scenario events. Yet again, my world was shaken. I jumped into the role-playing aspect of the events with fervor. My weekends were spent not as a simple player, but rather as

a Russian arms dealer, a battle-armored star-trooper, or a diabolical scientist. I learned about costuming, prop-building, and honed my acting skills (such as they were). Through all of this, I continued to collect various games and often utilized them for character development. Eventually, this too began to wane, and I found myself feeling nostalgic for the days spent huddled around a kitchen table hanging on the words of the game master.

Through a chance encounter at a local gaming convention, I met Curtis and Sarah Lyon, two of the authors of *Caladon Falls*, and contributors to *Savage Suzerain*. They introduced me to the *Savage Worlds* system and ran me through my paces in a one-sheet adventure. As I sat down, I wondered what the game would be like. Would I enjoy it? Would it be complicated? How would the other players react? The game began, and our party was thrown into a war-torn world of bizarre magic and epic struggle. I found my initial trepidation replaced with an odd familiarity. Our party faced 'baleful creatures', 'sinister traps', and great treasures to be found. We experienced thrilling victories and bitter defeats. We banded together

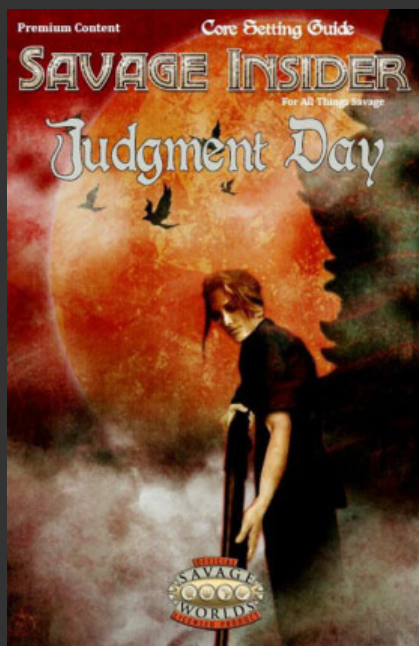
and overcame near-insurmountable odds. I was transported back in time to my friend's kitchen table and all the adventures my friends and I had. It was like hearing my favorite piece of music after being absent from it for years. I travelled full-circle and returned to the days of my youth. Once again, my world was shaken.

While learning the *Savage Worlds* system, I found it was adaptable to virtually every genre of gaming. I discovered even though the base mechanics stayed the same, myriad Edges, Hindrances, and details could be used to make each game unique. After discovering many of the worlds created by Pinnacle Entertainment Group, I posted a question on the *Savage Insider* Facebook page. It seemed like a simple question at the time. "How many Explorer Editions [digest-size products] are available for *Savage Worlds*?" I thought I would take a little jaunt down to my friendly local game store, and pick them all up. Little did I realize what a loaded question I asked.

To my great surprise, numerous users answered with a near limitless number of books and supplements written for *Savage Worlds*! In fact, I had no idea the number

of rich and fantastic *Savage Worlds* settings available. From *Savage Suzerain*, *Deadlands: Reloaded*, and *Weird Wars* to *Slipstream*, *Necessary Evil*, and *Interface Zero*. I had no idea! The discussion continued and led me to the *Savage Insider* website where I found a page listing nearly ALL of the *Savage Worlds* settings at http://mysticalthrone-ent.com/savageinsider/?page_id=84. As I scrolled down through listing after listing, I could not help but be in awe. World shaken? You better believe it!

Much in the same way my younger self was shown entire new worlds through the influence of a single game, I rediscovered the same excitement and sense of adventure with *Savage Worlds* and the seemingly endless settings. I now travel to my weekly game sessions with the anticipation I knew many years ago. For this, I owe much gratitude to Curtis and Sarah Lyon for introducing me to *Savage Worlds*, and to Pinnacle Entertainment Group for creating the RPG that shook my world. *Savage Worlds* – worlds shaken, while you wait.



The Inquisition has been protecting the world for centuries. While many feel solitude within their homes, inquisitors of all types are hunting the denizens that terrorize and kill. In *Judgment Day*, players take on the role of inquisitors hunting down and purging the likes of werebeasts, demons, aliens, ghosts, vampires, and more. Whether used as a stand-alone setting or secret society within existing settings, the Inquisition is ready to protect.

Judgment Day is a mini-setting, designed to be placed within existing settings to create specialized inquisitors while still being usable as a stand-alone setting focused on hunting horrific beings. To coincide with the stand-alone aspect, *Judgment Day* contains aspects of a modern fantasy, action horror setting.

Inside the *Judgment Day* core setting guide you will find:

- Background information describing the esoteric Inquisition.
- New Hindrances to flavor your Inquisitors.
- 30 new Inquisitional Edges to bring your inquisitors from Novice scholars to Legendary Grand Inquisitors.
- New adversaries to challenge your inquisitors.
- A fully-detailed Savage Tale to start your inquisitor's careers.

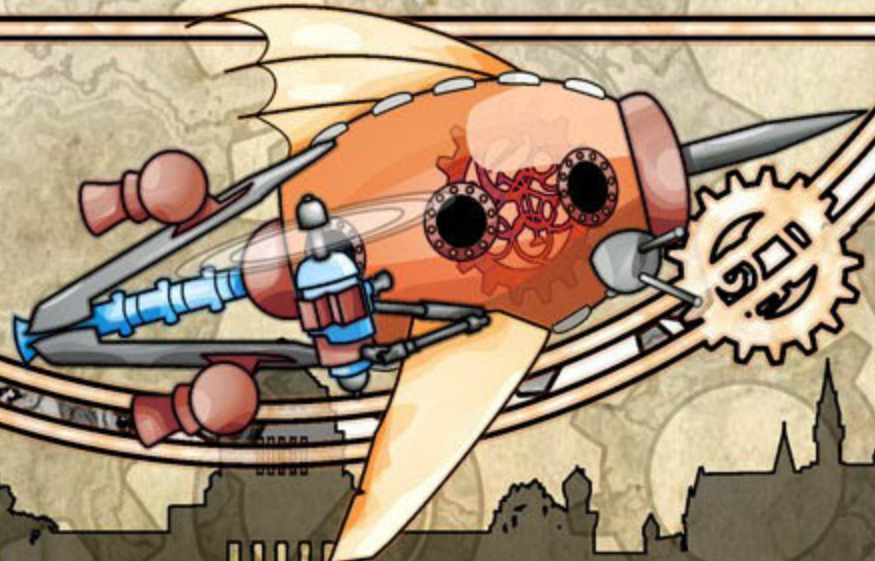
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DATAFILE 5.07.3, SUBJECT: MIMEO

By Lee F. Szczepanik, Jr. of Daring Entertainment

INTRODUCTION

When I decided to contribute a short story to this issue of *Savage Insider*, I realized that I wanted it to accomplish two things at once. First, I wanted it to give another (albeit brief) glimpse into the upcoming *Hellspawn* setting for *Savage Worlds*. Second, I wanted it to tie into the plot point campaign, and serve as what will eventually be a player handout to the group.

Although the events of the piece occur while the player characters are busy with another section of the plot point campaign, the discovery of this voice recording will put them onto the path to an inevitable confrontation with the Incarnate Hellspawn— those super-beings that became living dead, maintain full intelligence and control of their powers, and have been elevated to cosmic level.

Enjoy.

< . . . shuffling boots on gravel . . . labored breathing . . . >

How the hell do you turn this thing on? Oh, wait, I think it's already on. Okay, Foxtrot, the next time you invent something for the rest of us to use, how about you include a friggin' instruction manual with it.

< . . . shuffling boots stop moving . . . voice becomes a whisper . . . >

Shit, Necroleans are running patrols through this area. I see one of the giant cockroach-looking tanks down the street. Place is crawling with Hellspawn, too. Subjugators are probably somewhere in the area, then.

Foxtrot, if I die and ya'all have to come retrieve this thing you wanted me to record into, you tell our fearless leaders that it better have been worth it. This thing you sent me after better save the world. If not, I'm going to haunt the hell out of all of you for getting me killed for nothing.

< . . . low rumble . . . grows louder . . . drowns out all else . . . fades into the distance . . . is gone . . . >

That bug— tank— whatever, just passed by not more than twenty feet from me. This is getting too close. All right, time to get serious. Let's do this.

< . . . boots moving rapidly . . . breathing heavy . . . >

Just so everything is clear if I die, I've been slowly making my way north along what remains of Central Park West. I know some geniuses back there are going to question why I didn't cut through Central Park on my way up from Alphabet City. Well, if any of you are listening . . . you're nuts. No way I'm risking going into the park. You show-boaters in the spandex can do that crap. I'd rather risk the Necroleans and Hellspawn. I never signed on to be a superhero. I'm just the idiot that agreed to make this run.

< . . . a sigh . . . >

Yep, that's me. Speaking of me, if some other survivors find this recording, I want to be remembered as something other than a really hot corpse.

My name is Mimeo. Wait a minute. If I'm going down tonight, whoever hears this should at least know who I really am. Who cares about a secret codename anymore? My name is Danny Isaru. I grew up in New York, and before everything went to hell, I lived in a small apartment above a store in Brooklyn.

It was me, my two sisters, and my mother. We got by, that's about all I can say about it. I worked pizza delivery on my moped halfway across town. You'd think a guy with super-powers would be able to make some cash with it. Super Strength in construction, X-Ray Vision in search and rescue, or even a superior intellect to invent some new gadgets that people feel they just can't live without. Well, I'm sure those guys were living in posh apartments

somewhere. Me? I create a few seriously annoying assistants.

And before anyone wonders or tries to take on some stupid crusade in my memory, my mother and sisters didn't make it. They went in the first few hours of the invasion.

< . . . several moments of silence except for rapidly falling footfalls . . . >

Okay. I see it, the Museum of Natural History. Does anyone else find it odd that this building is still standing when everything around it is rubble? I suppose that does lend some credibility to what that thing inside is supposed to do, huh? After all this, I certainly hope so.

< . . . a heavy sigh . . . >

I don't see any Hellspawn around the building, and the Necroleans aren't around. I'm heading in. And Foxtrot, I just want to say again for the record, I hate you.

< . . . more rapid footfalls . . . click click click click click . . . >

Okay, so when the shit fell from the sky and people died and came back to eat everyone else, and biotechnological aliens attacked like it was a double-creature feature . . . someone actually bothered to lock the door when they left? Seriously?

Or— wait a minute— have they been inside all this time? Foxtrot, did you send me to a survivor stronghold that is going to get me a bullet up my—

< . . . high-pitched howl in the distance . . . another, closer . . . a third, even closer . . . >

Oh screw that!

< . . . shattering glass . . . >

That was louder than I thought it would be. You know what, though? I don't care. I'll take my chances with Hellspawn or insane survivors before I fight the things that come out of the park. At least I know

what will happen to me with the dead people or nutjobs.

< . . . *crunching glass under foot . . . boots echoing on a marble floor . . .* >

Okay, I'm in. Place is dark. Damned large, too. No, I'd never come here before everything happened. Me in a museum? Yeah, that was gonna happen.

< . . . *a grunt . . . wet popping sound . . . another . . . and again . . .* >

"Okay guys. Let's fan out. You know what we're looking for, so let's get this done and get the hell out of here."

< . . . *Mimeo's voice . . . several speaking at once . . . monotone and emotionless . . .* >

"We're on it."

< . . . *steady drumming of footfalls from multiple sources . . . fading . . . silence except for a single pair of boots on marble . . .* >

Well, I can't say that anyone has been staying here. The place is covered in dust. Which, of course, just makes it that much creepier at night, with no electricity, in the dark, with only a flashlight. How did I let you talk me into this?

< . . . *voice in the distance . . . without timbre . . .* >

"I've found it."

< . . . *cadence of boots . . .* >

Okay, Foxtrot, I have the crystal, and—

< . . . *a moan echoes . . . another joins in . . . more raise the volume . . . low . . . steady . . . primal . . . Mimeo speaking to others present . . .* >

"Mother #\$@&er! I guess survivors did take refuge here. They didn't make it. Grab whatever is handy and let's start busting some heads!"

< . . . *moans draw closer . . . volume intensifies . . .* >

And just to let y'all back home know, it's four of us against about a dozen of them. I. Am. Not. Happy.

< . . . *movement . . . running . . . a grunt . . . a cracking . . . a wet sucking . . .* >

Wait a minute. Something's not right. They're moving closer together. Oh . . . shit! They're controlled! I am so screwed!

< . . . *high-pitch scream . . . glass shatters . . . whistling fills recording . . . heavy grunt of pain as body slams into something solid . . . nearly a minute of silence . . .* >

I can barely move. Head is on fire

< . . . *grunt . . . painful . . .* >

Okay, even sitting up hurts like hell. My extremely good-looking partners are gone, not that it matters. Why are the Hellspawn just standing there?

< . . . *rock grating on rock . . . crashing against the marble . . .* >

Part of the ceiling just fell. What the—?

< . . . *a gasp of unmasked fear . . .* >

Oh, no. He's here. He's here, and I'm dead. Foxtrot— it's Phalanx. He's hovering right above me.

< . . . *baritone voice from a distance . . . drawing closer as it speaks . . .* >

"Looks like your mole was telling the truth, Adamantia. They actually sent someone all the way over here."

< . . . *another voice . . . feminine . . . barely controlled rage . . .* >

"Our agents know better than to fail us."

< . . . *painful grunt . . . baritone voice very near . . . perhaps inches from recording . . .* >

"I don't know why Foxtrot and the rest of your little band resist. It's just a matter of time, you know.

"But tell me, what's so important about a large crystal that you would throw away your life for it? Certainly not over me, I hope? These crystals no longer drain my powers. I am something . . . more . . . than I used to be.

"As you can see, I have the crystal in hand and am as powerful as I've always been.

"So tell me: What is this about?"

< . . . *a chuckle around painful breaths . . .* >

"Why don't you ask Foxtrot when he comes after you and rips the teeth from that ugly shark mouth of yours, and shoves them up your—"

< . . . *A woosh . . . a thud . . . a cry of pain . . . a clatter . . . baritone voice extremely close . . .* >

"Well, well, well. What's this? One of Foxtrot's little toys? Ah, a recorder. Good."

< . . . *voice speaking into the recorder . . .* >

"Listen up, my old teammate. I'm taking the crystal and your piece of meat to the Flesh Farm. If this thing is so important to you— come and get it.

"That is, if you're not afraid. After all, I would love to see what upgrades you've done with the armor since our last meeting."

< . . . *female voice . . .* >

"What about them? If they did the Scream, that means the Necroleans are watching us through them."

< . . . *baritone voice . . .* >

"And the Necroleans are wise to not act against us. Still, I don't like being watched. Why don't you have some fun. Regroup at the farm when you're done.

"Oh, and leave the recorder where I dropped it. I want Foxtrot to find it when he comes looking for his little soldier."

< . . . *battle cry from a female voice . . . solid object hitting soft target . . . sucking sound . . . Mimeo screaming . . . receding into the distance . . . receding . . . gone . . .* >

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PREMEDITATED ROLE-PLAYING

By Randolph Suwara

Editor's Note: While most of our articles focus on the Game Master's perspective, this one offers a view from an enterprising player.

Have you been feeling a little detached from the characters you have been playing lately? You might go through the motions of filling in their stats, rolling the dice, and exploring their surroundings. However, you might still not have the sense that you are sharing the same fears, the same breath of air, or the same existence.

This lack of visceral connection is disturbing because of its importance to many role-players. We want to be immersed in the experience of our characters. Maybe our role-playing could use some premeditation.

A role-player has to grow into a character's skin to feel what it feels. The more detail you amass beforehand, the more intense the role-playing experience can be. Some players are experts at creating a history for their characters. While that can give an excellent sense of the time and circumstances relating to your alter-ego, this article gives you examples of how the physical locations and objects a character interacts with can enhance immersion within the role-playing environment. If your game master (GM) is open to it, you can design items your character would have and places your character would know well or even live in.

Always confer with your GM so that you know your constructs are accepted and, therefore, are an integral and accepted part of your character's reality. That will avoid any over-reaching on your part, or situations where your character can't afford the objects or locations you imagine. Once you have been given

license to create, imagine a few belongings your character uses regularly.

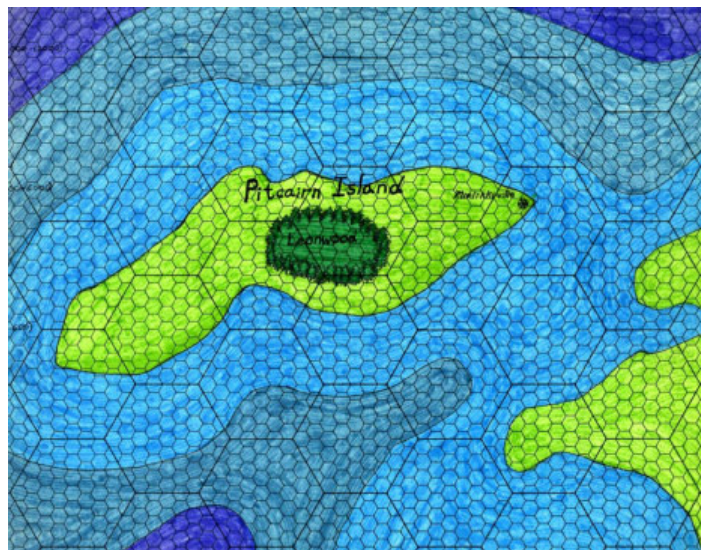
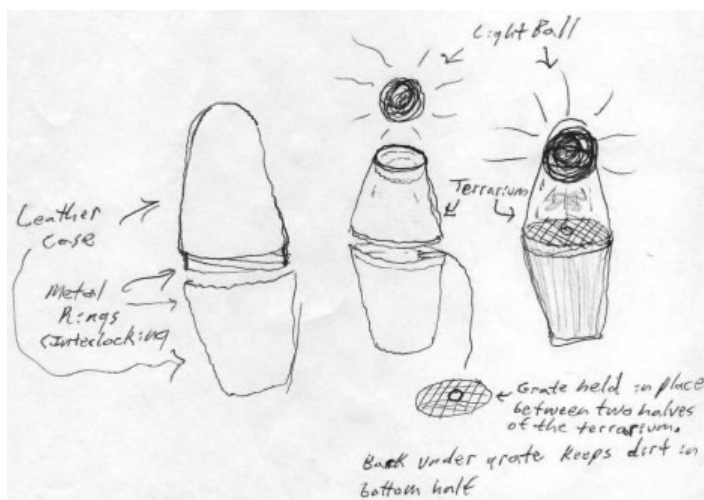
A character without magic might commission the creation of round marble stones that continually emit light. These are great because they don't burn out like torches and they don't produce heat. Thus, you can keep them anywhere on your character. They are great for entering dark, unexplored places without exposing your character to hidden dangers. Just keep these light marbles small to avoid adding too much weight to your pack.

When playing in a setting where spells require components, another use of that same light marble is to create a portable terrarium. Pay a glass blower to create a glass cone with a concave top to place a light ball in. The glass will fit snugly into a ceramic base carrying a small plant required as part of an entanglement spell (See Figure 1). Conveniently, your character has an important component no matter the location.

If your character carries a dagger, it might help to create a boot with a small sheath built into it. Your character can produce a blade after being searched or have a place to draw a backup weapon from.

Does your character have a small pet? Ferrets and other small creatures are extremely vulnerable. You may need to find a way to increase its chance of survival during pitched battles. Maybe a small netted compartment under your character's pack would provide it with protection until the battle has subsided.

Figure 1



In addition to creating personal possessions, finding a character's place in the world is important to feeling involved in your character's day-to-day existence. I usually try to find corners of the setting map that I am using to create a place that belongs to my character.

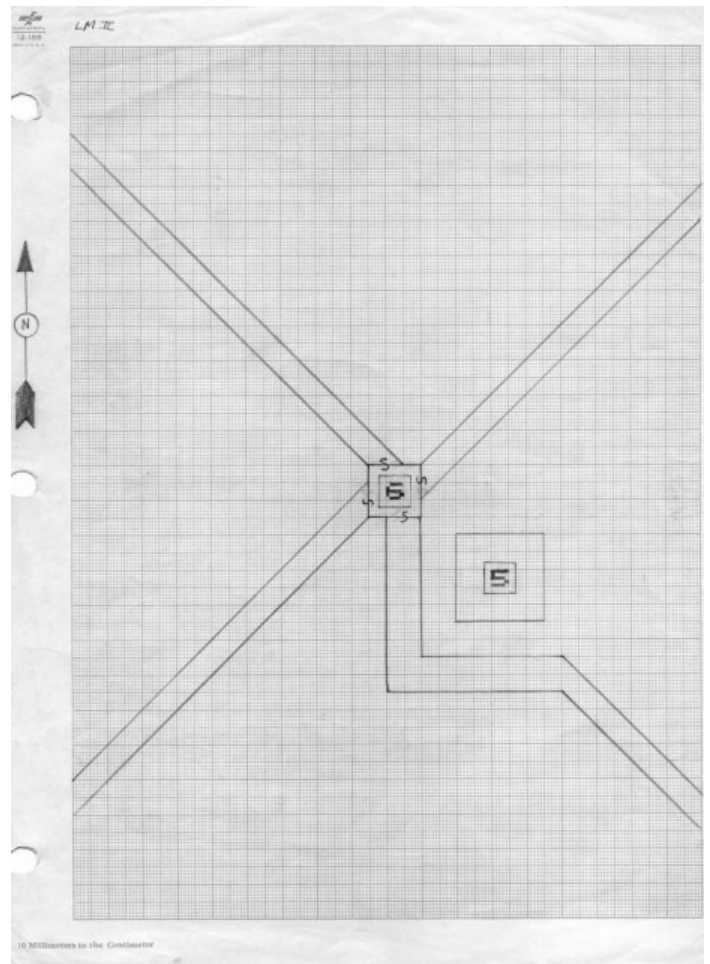
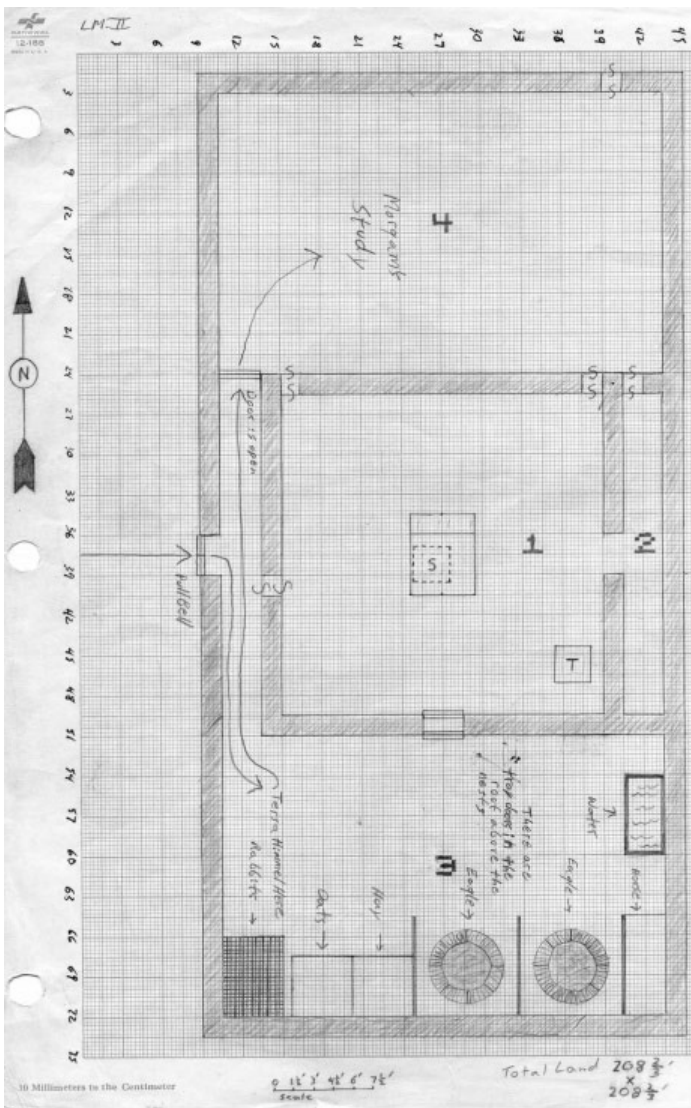
On one map, I found a place that appeared uninhabited. It was an island just off the end of a peninsula. I had a high-level character that needed an uncontested territory in which to build a castle. I named the island after Pitcairn Island and designed a castle perched upon some coastal cliffs, which became a launching point for numerous adventures. All my character's followers had a place they could inhabit. More importantly, it gave my character a safe home in a dangerous world. Any attacks on him would have to be a well-orchestrated act of war.

Not all our characters begin as rulers. Most adventurers lead a somewhat solitary existence. One of my characters, Morgam, when he was not adventuring, lived a cloistered and scholarly life. I did not attend games as often as the other role-players in

the campaign I was involved in, so I was running a relatively weak character in comparison to the rest of the group. During a game session, one player decided that his character wanted to kill Morgam. My character was outmatched, so he ran to the home I had designed for him.

Morgam's house was built out of large stones, so his pursuer could not burn it down. In his bedroom, the attacker saw a very obvious trap door. He opened it and was surprised by a fire trap spell. What he did not know is that Morgam had a secret door beneath his bed, which he had already unlatched and dropped through. Below, there was a small square room with secret doors on each wall. Each secret door had a divergent passage behind it leading underground away from Morgam's house. He survived to live another day because, while the more powerful character dealt with Morgam's premeditated tricks and traps, Morgam was well on his way to a city where he would not be singled out by a powerful adversary.

Prepare your character by anticipating needs and dangers ahead. Then you will enjoy a more immersive experience, some of which you helped design. It gives you a part of the campaign setting you know well, and offers your GM additional fodder for adventuring.



DEADLANDS

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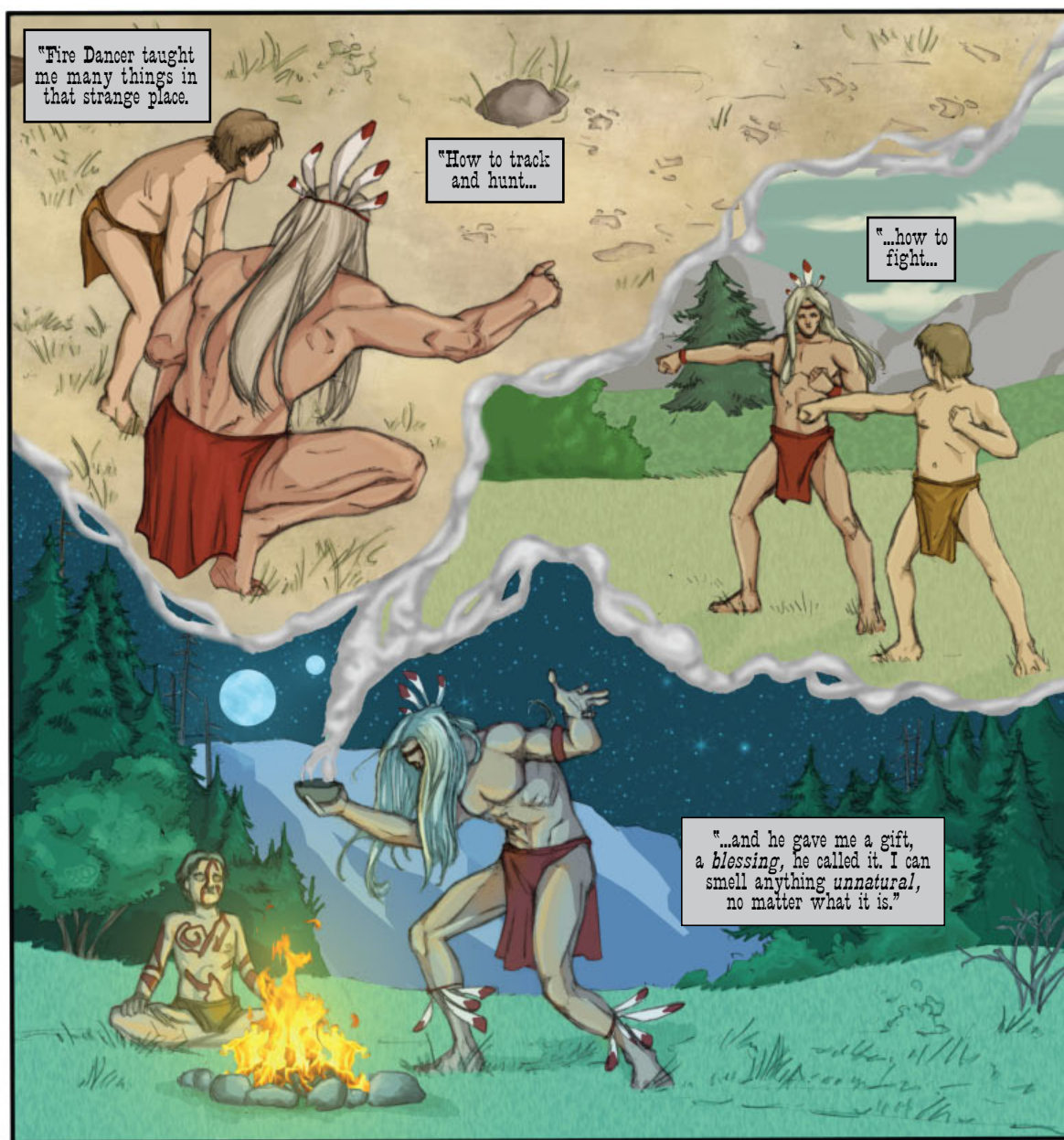
DIME STORE BACKUP: PART 4 OF 4

The Kid in "OUTLAW"

Story & Colors: C. Edward Sellner

Art: Alejandro Aragón

Letters: Jacob Basile Edits: Ron Marz

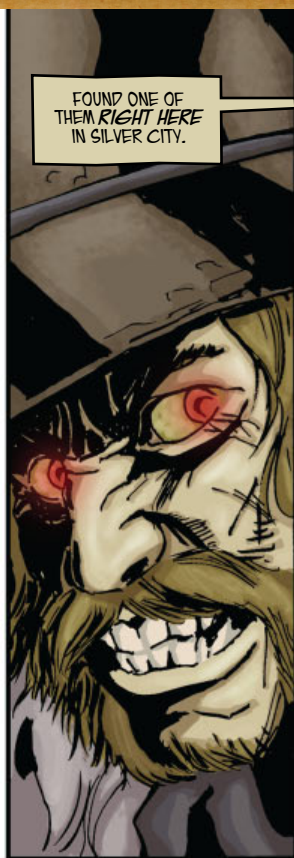






THOSE COMANCHE
TOLD ME EVERYTHING
THEY KNEW ABOUT THE
WOLVES. I GOT MY GUN,
MORE OF THEM BULLETS,
AND A HORSE.

THEN I
TRACKED THOSE
BASTARDS THAT
GOT AWAY.



FOUND ONE OF
THEM *RIGHT HERE*
IN SILVER CITY.



BEST
PART IS...

...I GOT LUCKY
ENOUGH THAT IT WAS
THE ONE WITH A *STUPID*
BROTHER, WHO I *KNEW* WOULD
COME TO TRY AND BREAK
HIM OUT OF JAIL.



SO I WAITED AND
KILLED THE BROTHER
AS HE CAME INTO TOWN,
KNOWING I'D GET LOCKED
UP NEXT TO THE OTHER
ONE FOR IT.

TWO FOR ONE,
AIN'T THAT LUCKY,
HARRINGER?



KILL
YOU!





IMAGE COMICS & VISIONARY COMICS PRESENT

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Death was Silent

AUGUST 2011

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Black Water

SEPTEMBER 21, 2011



EACH ISSUE ALSO CONTAINS A CHAPTER OF THE 4 PART ORIGIN OF **The Kid**



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CONVENTION CALENDAR APRIL - JULY

Welcome to Convention Connection! In order to ensure that readers have a chance to plan their convention trips, each quarter's issue will show conventions occurring in each of the three months of that quarter, plus the first month in the next quarter. It wouldn't do much good for you to get July's issue and only then find out that you have 10 days or so to get to a convention in July. That does mean there will be some overlap, but we felt the benefit was worth some small duplication.

Covering April, May, June, and July At-A-Glance

Convention	Website	Dates	Location (States + UK)
Norwescon	www.norwescon.org	4/5-8/12	WA
MTAC	www.mtac.net	4/6-8/12	TN
RavenCon	www.ravencon.com	4/13-15/12	VA
UBCON	http://ubcon.org	4/13-15/12	NY
Con-Quest Midlands	www.con-quest.co.uk	4/14/2012	UK
GnomeCon	http://gnomecon.org	4/20-22/12	GA
MAGE Con Spring	www.mage-page.com	4/20-22/12	NE
Odyssey Con	www.oddcon.com	4/20-22/12	WI
No Brand Con	www.nobrandcon.com	5/4-6/12	WI
KublaCon 2011	www.kublacon.com	5/25-28/12	CA
Gamex	www.strategicon.net	5/25-28/12	CA
Origins	www.originsgamefair.com	5/30-6/3/12	OH
UK Games Expo	www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk	5/25-27/12	UK
A-Kon	www.a-kon.com/bm/at-the-kon/gaming	6/1-3/12	TX
The North Texas RPG Con	http://ntrpgcon.com	6/7-10/12	TX
Another Game Convention	www.anothergamecon.com	6/21-24/12	OH
MichiCon	http://metrodetroitgamers.wordpress.com	6/22-23/12	MI
CONvergence	www.convergence-con.org	7/5-8/12	MN
ConectiCon	www.connecticon.org	7/8-10/12	CT
FandomFest	www.fandomfest.com	6/29-7/1/12	KY
KantCon	kantcon.com/v2/	7/6-8/12	KS
LibertyCon	www.libertycon.org/	7/13-15/12	TN
Continuum	www.continuum.uk.net	7/20-23/12	UK

All dates and websites were accurate as of this printing. If you know of conventions occurring between April and July that are not listed here, please let us know.

Savage Saturday Nights

Savage Saturday Nights (SSN) started at Con on the Cob and has become something popping up at other conventions from those as large as Gen Con to small, regional ones. If you are aware a convention featuring an SSN, let us know, and we'll mention it if we can.

If you are associated with a convention, we are happy to feature your logo and, if you are convention featuring an SSN, even elaborate a bit on that aspect of your con, providing we've got room to do so.

RECENT RELEASES

Here's a comprehensive look at Savage Worlds products that have been released during the previous three months.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Setting</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Format</u>
<i>Savage Insider Issue #3</i>	Mystical Throne Entertainment	Not Applicable	Magazine	PDF
<i>Savage Insider Premium Issue #1</i>	Mystical Throne Entertainment	Various	Magazine	PDF, Print
<i>50 Fathoms Player's Guide</i>	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	50 Fathoms	Core Rulebook	PDF
<i>Citadel of the Winged Gods</i>	GRAMEL	Beasts & Barbarians	Adventure	PDF
<i>Green World</i>	GRAMEL	Beasts & Barbarians	Adventure	PDF
<i>BA-27 Heavy Armored Car</i>	Alternate Realities Publications	Big Bang Ricochet	Supplement	PDF
<i>The Last Sons</i>	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Deadlands	Supplement	PDF, Print
<i>Quick Start Guide</i>	Mystical Throne Entertainment	Faith & Demons: The Rising	Adventure	PDF
<i>G-Men & Gangsters</i>	Triple Ace Games	G-Men & Gangsters (Showdown)	Core Rulebook	PDF
<i>Region Guide #48: Dwarven Cities</i>	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost	Supplement	PDF
<i>Region Guide #49: The Sunken Realm</i>	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost	Supplement	PDF
<i>Region Guide #50: Hrimthyr Isle</i>	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost	Supplement	PDF
<i>Region Guide #51: Taiga Elfhomes</i>	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost	Supplement	PDF
<i>Tales of Darkness</i>	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost	Adventure	PDF
<i>The Voice Stone</i>	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost	Adventure	PDF
<i>Game Masters Screen</i>	Gun Metal Games	Interface Zero	Core Accessory	PDF
<i>Hacking 2.0</i>	Gun Metal Games	Interface Zero	Supplement	PDF
<i>San Francisco – The Ruins by the Bay</i>	Gun Metal Games	Interface Zero	Supplement	PDF
<i>The Hideout</i>	White Haired Man	Kith'takharos	Adventure	ePub
<i>Blood Legacy of Mars</i>	Adamant Entertainment	MARS	Adventure	PDF
<i>Sell-Swords of Mars</i>	Adamant Entertainment	MARS	Adventure	PDF
<i>Sky-Tyrant of Mars</i>	Adamant Entertainment	MARS	Adventure	PDF
<i>A Gathering of Heroes</i>	Palewolf Publishing	Olympian Breed	Campaign	PDF
<i>PREGENS</i>	Palewolf Publishing	Olympian Breed	Campaign	PDF
<i>The Island of Love</i>	Palewolf Publishing	Olympian Breed	Campaign	PDF
<i>A Peculiar Pentad</i>	Super Genius Games	Realms of Cthulhu	Supplement	PDF
<i>Chapter Four, Week 1</i>	Daring Entertainment	War of the Dead	Campaign	PDF
<i>Chapter Four, Week 2</i>	Daring Entertainment	War of the Dead	Campaign	PDF
<i>Chapter Four, Week 3</i>	Daring Entertainment	War of the Dead	Campaign	PDF
<i>The Egg of Seven Parts (Revised)</i>	Triple Ace Games	Wonderland No More	Campaign	PDF

SAVAGE INSIDER

PREMIUM ISSUE 2

SPRING 2012

*Watch for Savage Insider Premium
Issue 2 available this spring.*

MTE



Savage Insider Issue 4: Shaking Things Up is an issue all about keeping your tabletop role-playing games interesting. Game Masters have the difficult job of keeping their games interesting for the players to prevent boredom, so *Savage Insider* presents content and tips to help you along the way.

Shaking Things Up is a cross-genre issue with content that covers an array of genres or can be used universally. Much of this content can be utilized in a variety of ways providing maximum value to the GM who has the difficult job of keeping their player's excited.

Shaking Things Up includes:

- A fully fleshed-out adventure
- A fully fleshed-out NPC with equipment
- 3 pieces of fictional writing
- 3 articles with tips for *Shaking Things Up*
- A preview of *Olympian Breed*
- *Streets of Bedlam* Designer's Diary
- And much more

Look for new issues of *Savage Insider* every 3 months in January, April, July, and October with Premium Content releases in-between.