

DRAGON

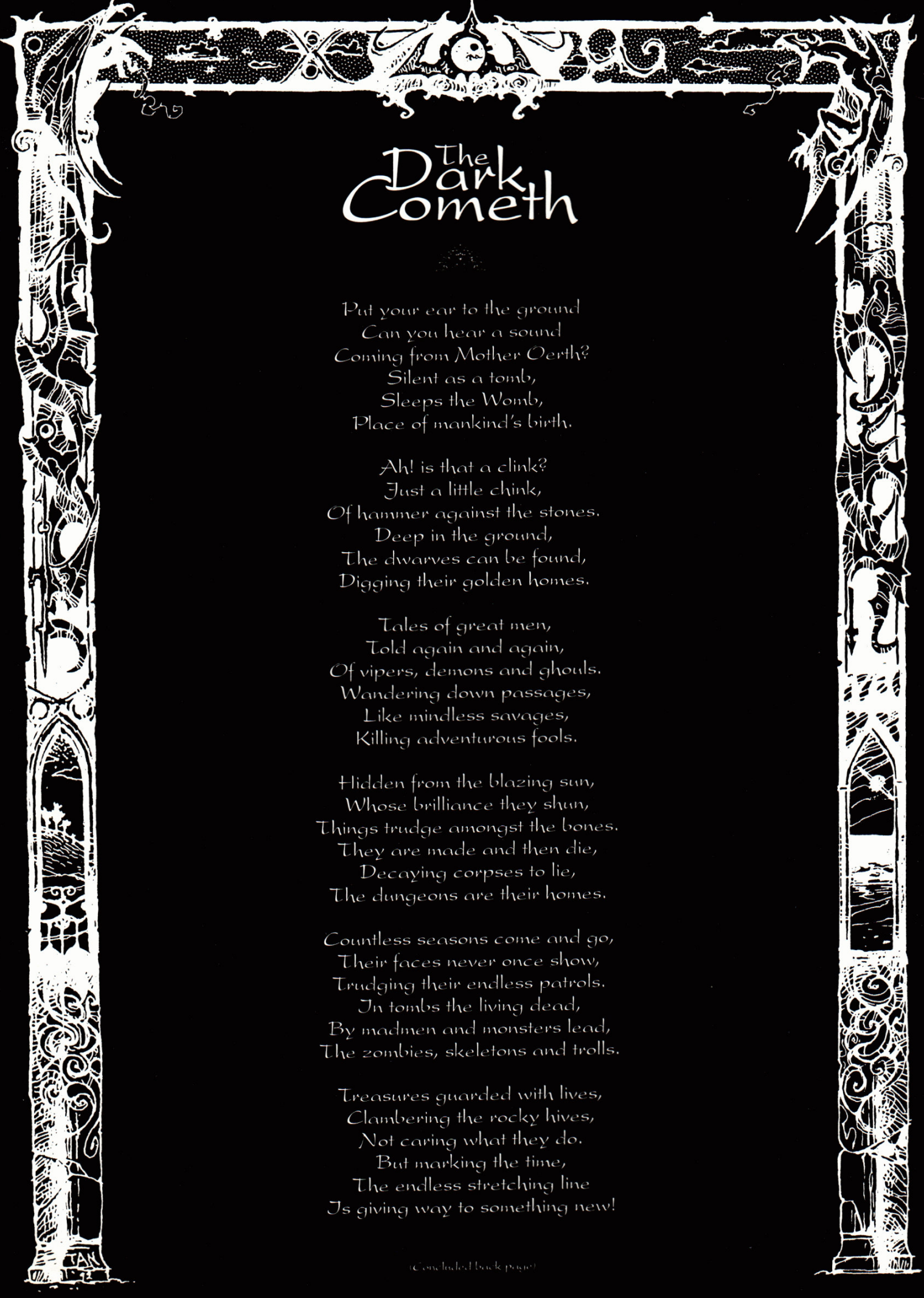
Volume One - Number One \$5.95

11023
GAMES WORLD
2413008 4775709
\$ 5.95

ISSN 0 1038-619X



The New Journal of Roleplaying & Wargaming



The Dark Cometh

Put your ear to the ground
Can you hear a sound
Coming from Mother Oerth?
Silent as a tomb,
Sleeps the Womb,
Place of mankind's birth.

Ah! is that a clink?
Just a little chink,
Of hammer against the stones.
Deep in the ground,
The dwarves can be found,
Digging their golden homes.

Tales of great men,
Told again and again,
Of vipers, demons and ghouls.
Wandering down passages,
Like mindless savages,
Killing adventurous fools.

Hidden from the blazing sun,
Whose brilliance they shun,
Things trudge amongst the bones.
They are made and then die,
Decaying corpses to lie,
The dungeons are their homes.

Countless seasons come and go,
Their faces never once show,
Trudging their endless patrols.
In tombs the living dead,
By madmen and monsters lead,
The zombies, skeletons and trolls.

Treasures guarded with lives,
Clambering the rocky hives,
Not caring what they do.
But marking the time,
The endless stretching line
Is giving way to something new!



*Imagine God, as the poet saith, to play but a game...with this world; to sport
Himself with making little things great, and great things nothing;
imagine God to be at play with us, but a gamester...*

-John Donne



DROW
DECEMBER 1992
VOLUME 1
NUMBER 1

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ABOUT THE COVER

Our first cover features a Drow by the name of Enassatar, who shows up in the Underdark scenario, page 7.

Also shown: Semiramis, Queen of Assyria, and a mounted Knight of the Thirty.
Painted by Scott Ludlam.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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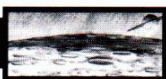
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'Obedience alone gives the right to command.'
- Ralph Waldo Emerson



SUBSCRIPTIONS

The issue price is \$5.95. Subscription for six issues is \$27.00. All cheques and money orders are to be made payable to the address below.

SUBMISSIONS

We welcome articles and illustrations for Drow. Please inquire before the submission of material, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope. We will send submission guidelines. All inquiries, manuscripts and art portfolios should be sent to the address below.

CORRESPONDENCE

The editors of Drow are looking for reader feedback on any aspect of this magazine. On page 54 you'll find our reader survey - please send this back with your comments, or take a few minutes to scrawl a letter: all feedback, positive or negative, is greatly appreciated. Please write to the address below.

ADVERTISING

Advertising in Drow works. Phone or write for our rates and deadlines for display or classified ads. This could be the time to announce your new product. Consultas P/L, the designers of Drow Magazine, can prepare striking artwork quickly and inexpensively. (For an example this issue, see page 47 for a look at what we did for Simulations Kite City.)

BACK ISSUES

There are no back issues yet.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**"A failure establishes only this:
that our determination to
succeed was not strong enough."**
-Christian Bovee



SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES...

'Cuthbert Longweapon and his adventuring party have come across something that is obviously about to change the colour of their day. For the price of a postage stamp and a little imagination, you can win a \$100 Simulations Kite City voucher. In the space directly below, tell us what it is that's got Cuthbert and his party so shocked and we'll send the most original respondent the voucher. We'll print the winner's response in Issue #2. (Mail Order available)

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A PARANOIC SCENARIO FOR MEDIUM LEVEL AD&D CHARACTERS

BY ADRIAN BOER

THE UNDERDARK BECKONS



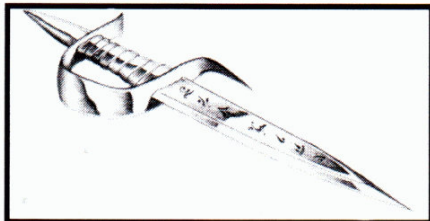
DARKNESS ON THE SURFACE

The Underdark: a realm of insidious power, mysterious beauty and shadowy darkness, the domain of the dark elvenfolk, the Drow. It is here that the demon spider-queen, Lolth reigns supreme. Her machinations and desires dictate Drow society, her control nearly absolute. But, her greatest aspirations lie on the surface, in the land of light. Domination of the lands of Fearun and the worship of surface dwellers is what she seeks. Ever watchful is Lolth, and ever ready are the Drow, for signs of weakness in the land above. Scattered thinly throughout the lands are vigilant eyes, blinded by light but refined in darkness, learning of the feeble world above. Damathra-Dar is one such place.

DAMATHRA-DAR

On the eastern edge of the Spiderhaunt Wood, high up in the rocky spur of the Desertsouth Mountains, is an ancient forest deeply overgrown by huge trees. The foliage is so dense that the interior is cast in deep shadows and the floor is cloaked in currents of red and grey mist. Neatly tucked into this region is a forgotten valley nestled between two jagged ridges. Forest blankets the floor like a senseless maze, turning and twisting to nowhere. Hidden amid the verdure, like a crystal pool in an endless desert, is an ancient sanctuary. Grey walls and crumbling columns rise from the undergrowth, some collapsed, other standing as bastions against the encroaching hedge of trees. The site is a forgotten temple consecrated to Mystra, The Goddess of Magical Energy. It's a solemn, even sacred place, which hides the darkness within. The temple was once a remote shrine where Mystran priests could study and pray in seclusion. At the time of its founder, Bran Shirash, Lady of Mystery, the temple was but a small edifice. With the passing of years it flour-

BY THE BLADE



ished and grew, maturing as a concealed sanctum of receptive devotion. At the height of its prominence, 1095 DR, while excavating a level beneath the temple proper, a strange natural cavern filled with moss and lichen, aglow with lavish, auroral colours was uncovered. The precinct was found to be emitting a high level of radiation. Before a study could be undertaken, a small group of Illithids emerged from the dark depths. They managed to penetrate the barriers and enter the temple, capturing many priests and priestesses as slaves, although others managed to escape. With this news, the temple was abandoned and in years forgotten. In the Year of the Harp, 1357 DR, a patrol of Drow stumbled across the site. They quickly realized the benefits to be gained by utilizing a complex this close to the surface, yet filled with the precious UnderDark radiation. They claimed it for themselves and named it Damathra-Dar (Shallow Jewel).

LEVEL ONE

THE TEMPLE

The narrow path, rutted and broken, burrows through a tangle of shadows and murky darkness. Trunks thick with mold grow gnarled and bent, the limbs coiling out like spider's legs, choked with vines and brush, heavy with spiny leaves that shimmer in streaks of glistening green. Shadows drape the forestland like bloodstains across a dark earth. It's like a tunnel, walled in by deep gloom, where things of blackness and shadow stalk for prey. Abruptly, seemingly from nowhere, a grey cluster of stone

buildings rise up against the onslaught of dark trees. They are in various states of decay, surrounding an apparent female statue. Once, long ago, it would have been a small sanctuary of civilization within the midst of this foul, stifling forest but now it is a fading ruin, slowly falling beneath the tide of clawing foliage.

1. STOREHOUSE

The ceiling of this building has long ago disintegrated, the walls collapsed. It is now largely a pile of fractured grey rubble covered in damp green moss and garish yellow fungus. Swollen, nut-brown tree roots thrust through the stone where bright mushrooms sprout in the dark crevasses.

DM NOTES: If the players dig around in the rubble they can uncover general items such as rusty spikes, pottery shards, and the like. There is nothing of value.

2. HIGH PRIESTS QUARTERS

Sagging wood beams and missing masonry now adorn this once modest but beautiful building. Splintered cracks fan the thick sombre walls in chaotic patterns, climbing towards a ceiling laden with clumps of soggy leaves. The oaken door is slightly ajar. Inside there is darkness, with the odd shaft of light illuminating an array of spindly webs interweaving through the room like a latticed, translucent motif.

DM NOTES: This building was once the domicile of the High Priest or Priestess of Mystra. Now the interior is home to 3 Giant Spiders who lurk amongst their intricate webs. PC's may become stuck in these webs.

Giant Spiders (3): AC 4; HD 4+4; hp 28, 32, 30; MV 3, Wb 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA F-type poison; SD Nil; AL CE.

There are also 4 Huge Spiders buried amongst the leaves on the ceiling. They attack by leaping on their prey (up to 30 feet).

Huge Spiders (4): AC 6; HD 2+2; Hp 10, 8, 14, 12; MV 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Leaping (30 ft.), opponents -6 on surprise + type A poison; SD Nil; AL N. These spiders are pets of Enassatar Kinshaen.

3. COMMON QUARTERS AND HALL

The western portion of this building has long ago collapsed and is now a pile of stone overrun with decades of lush green weeds. However, the rest of the building is in remarkably good condition. Composed of ancient black timber and cheerless cold stone, it has managed to weather the years fairly well. Creepers swarm across the old timber, racing to devour the remaining portion of the building. Inside, a moderate hall stretches into darkness. The air is dry and clean. A large table with many chairs around it fills much of the room. In the center of the table there is a small candelabra with two small candles in it. Heavy black velvet curtains are drawn across the windows. On the northern wall there is a finely sculptured mantle above a fireplace. The floor is made of heavy, polished chestnut. A thin film of dust covers the room.

DM NOTES: *In the time of the devout Mystrans, this building was their main hall and personal chambers. Only the hall remains now, the wing of chambers having collapsed long ago. The hall is now used by the Drow merchants as a rendezvous place with Zhentarim agents [See Purposes]*

4. THE STATUE

Smooth, etched contours flow over a curvaceous woman of unearthly beauty. Her slender form is entrancing, refined, graceful, her face a vision of intangible mystique, sensual yet penetrating. This is a prodigy of the divine, a statue of pure clarity: a 7ft. tall statue of the Goddess Mystra. It is sculpted from white marble.

5. THE TEMPLE

Age old stone pillars stand like deathless guardians before this inspiring building. Each stone is chiseled and engraved with ancient writings and scenes, all of which are now worn to little more than faint outlines. The edifice is fully intact, and still holds enough mystery to testify to what it once must have been - a small temple of eldritch power. Rearward of the pillars, a grandiose archway, scarred with black smears, encloses a thick iron door streaked with lines of flaming corrosion. Inlaid on the iron door is an elegant, flowing rune limned with black ink.

DM NOTES: *This building is the Temple of Mystra and is the largest in the cluster. It has survived the years well. There are no windows or other doorways into the building. The large iron door is still very strong despite the unusual line of rust. The door is currently locked. (10% to pick due to the intricacy of the lock). If the door is opened, then a wall of fire (as per spell) will fill the doorway. It will last for 7 rounds per activation and deals 2d6+12 damage to anyone passing through the flames. The wall of fire is contained in the glyph on the door, which is a powerful Drow 'Way-Marker Rune'. (See TSR's Drow Of The UnderDark p.103). The black smearing on the archway attests to previous attempts at entry.*

The interior of the temple is cloaked in total darkness unless stated. Thus, descriptions are provided only after adequate illumination has been supplied.

A. ENTRY HALL

Covering the entire room is a layer of polished obsidian. There is nothing else in the room. If there were any furnishings or decorations they have long since been removed. Vaguely visible on the northern wall is a set of black oaken double doors.

DM NOTES: *Drawn across the center of the room is an almost invisible tripwire made of spidersilk. If sprung, poisonous gas will begin to seep into the room (the same characteristics as the Cloudkill spell). Both doors will also lock themselves.*

B & C LIBRARY & WRITING ROOM

These rooms are panelled with fine grained lacquered mahogany. When exposed to light the walls gleam with a pearly bronze. Otherwise the rooms are completely empty.

DM NOTES: *Long ago, these rooms were a library in which a very precious collection of books was kept. However, the books, bookcases and writing materials have been systematically removed by the Drow and taken to their city deep within the earth. Items such as these are hard for Drow to gain so it was a very valuable treasure.*

D. ANTE CHAMBER

The walls of this room are veined with crystalline azure coursing through grey stone. On each wall there is a set of double doors. They are all of black oak except the northern set which are a semi-transparent azure in colour and there appear to be some symbols or writing across them. The western set are wide open.

DM NOTES: *The writing is 'Sarn!, Sreen Del Kyorlin Ssussun.' (In Drow, this reads: 'Warning!, Danger of Guarding Light'). The western door has been opened by the Drow to allow the Phase Spiders to enter the antechamber and attack the intruders [See Room (E)]. The blue veins in the walls are a strain of quartz which was added to the stone during construction. The northern doors are also of blue quartz.*

E. MEDITATION ROOM

A forbidding chamber of gloom, lit only by inky luminescence, reflecting off jet walls. Amid this black light, outspread like bloodless veins, is an immense, dreamlike web. The mellow silvery gloss ebbs and flows like elastic crystal. Behind this perfect mesh, in the dark recesses of the room, ash-blond bones lie scattered over the floor. Amongst this decaying waste rests a large coppery chest. There is nothing else in the room.

DM NOTES: *Once a room reserved for the contemplations of magic, it is now the domain of the Phase Spiders. They will already be ethereal, (having been alerted by the Drow), and will either be lurking in the antechamber for an attack in the back, or waiting in the web.*

Phase Spiders (2): AC 7; MV 6, Wb 15; HD 5+5; Hp 37, 34; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA poison (type F), +4 attack from behind; SD phase in and out of ethereal -3 mod. on initiative; AL N; SZ L (14').

The spiders are personal pets of Sanat Kharn and Dinach Serzhar [See NPCs]. The copper chest is 2' wide and 3' long. It is unlocked, and contains 700gp, 4 sapphires (500gp each), 2 emeralds (800gp), and 2 scrolls.

F. STAIRS

This room is filled with a wide, black marble stairwell winding down into darkness below. The stairs lead to a new level.

G. THE MYSTRAN SHRINE

This room is filled with a brilliant light that is almost searing. White, polished marble gleams with reflected light. The centerpiece is a magnificent altar, consisting of coiling columns, between which an immense, shimmering blue-white star casts forth beams of radiant light. In addition, in the center of the vast room an incandescent orb glows with an intensely hypnotic, multi-coloured pulsing light.

DM NOTES: *The set of double doors leading into this room is locked, both physically and with a wizard lock spell. The globe of light is a prismatic sphere which has had a permanency cast on it. It was the dying act of the high priestess of Mystra, when the Illithids attacked. All players looking into the*

room must save against the sphere. The Drow are severely affected by such a spell and thus have been unable to enter the room. Hence, this room has remained undisturbed for many decades. The blue-white star is the holy symbol of Mystra. It is 10' by 10' and weighs 2000 pounds. It is suspended above the ground by a levitate with permanency. Any Mystra followers praying before the star will gain a protection from normal missiles and a cure serious wounds. Lying before the star is a skeletal body (the high priestess of Mystra died before her symbol of devotion). It's hand clutches a fully charged Wand of Wonder. Also on the hand is a ring of Sustenance. The Drow avoid this room like the plague, but will be happy to allow any players to enter and bring out the treasure for them.

LEVEL TWO

1. COMMON ROOM

A vaulting of crafted, black igneous rock, flecked with deposits of amber gypsum splice across the ceiling in a trellised network, emulating a spiderweb. Neighboring the eastern wall is a fluted, intricate well brimming with clear water. Nearby, a patch of colourful mushrooms rise from a covering of damp olive moss. In the center of the chamber, bundles of silken material cushion elaborate benches and chairs.

DM NOTES: This room is used as the common room for the Drow. The mushrooms are a food source, whilst the well provides fresh water.

2. COMMON CHAMBERS

Emerging from a spiral tunnel, shaped like the interior of a rippled spine, you enter a chamber almost alive with radiant colour. Rich lichen flushed with the colours of a flaring sunset cover the walls and ceiling in a pastel wash. Sprouting from the floor are a series of sculptured stalagmites limned with soft hues of faerie fire. They seem to denote four personel chambers. An open course winds between the jutting stone, continuing on into a dark passage beyond. This area constitutes the personal chambers of the four male dark elves. Each chamber holds a cast stone bed upon which thick bundles of soft, dark fabric are laid.

DM NOTES: There is also a chest in each room, and they are all trapped (ie poison needles, triggered crossbows etc. (DM's choice)). The chests contain personal belongings and a significant amount of treasure (determine randomly). The extensive lichen is due to the radiation which is being emitted in the area.

3. PRIESTESS CHAMBERS

A sweeping stone structure, akin to a moulded labyrinth, fills much of the room. Mysterious runes, impressed upon the smooth surface, weave around embossed gems, glowing fungi, and chiselled carvings of mating spiders. The structure is fitted with benches, secluded bowers and small concave chambers. The surrounding walls are blanketed in blooming moss and lichen, glowing like a brilliant floral collage. On the western wall a large, gold framed picture hangs from silver chains attached to the ceiling. It depicts a strange, beautiful city inside an enormous cavern, obviously deep underground.

DM NOTES: Once again, this chamber is subject to high levels of UnderDark radiation spilling from the walls. It is the personal abode of Enassatar Kinshaen, Priestess of Lolth. She has three pet spiders living with her in the room. They are very dear to her.

Watch Spiders (3): AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; Hp 14, 10, 14; Dmg 1-6; SA poison (2d4 turns of paralysis); SD Nil; AL LN. These spiders will stalk their prey through this labrinthine structure, waiting for the best opportunity to attack. (Watch Spiders are from Drow of the Underdark, by TSR Inc. If this is not available, use Huge Spiders instead.) The painting is of Menzoberranzan, Enassatar's home. Her possessions are placed in various concave chambers and bowers, which include items such as a bed, chests,



sets of Drow clothing and weapons. The 40 gems embossed into the walls have a value of 100gp each.

4. THE INNER SHRINE

The large adamantite door opens into an inner chamber which is shrouded in darkness. A beautiful, yet repulsive statuette of a sleek spider with a woman's torso and head reclines above a polished black obsidian alter. On the alter rests a brazier of scented coals burning in a golden bowl, the interior lined with black pearls. The room smells of fresh blood and pine needles.

DM NOTES: This is the shrine to Lolth, where Enassatar spends much time praying to her Goddess. The statuette is made of adamantite, the eyes are black pearls. The gems are worth 1000gp each. The statue is worth 5000gp (weighs 1000 pounds). The golden bowl is worth 2000gp.

5. INTO THE UNDERDARK

This passage leads further into the famed Underdark, where a chain of new adventures await the players. Eventually the PC's may even get to the city of Menzoberranzan.

DROW PURPOSE

DM NOTES: The continued existence of Damathra-Dar is very important to the Drow of Menzoberranzan for many reasons. With high levels of Underdark radiation permeating the area, Drow are able to remain there indefinitely and their clothing, weapons and armour will not deteriorate. Thus, they are able to conduct activities on the surface and then return to Damathra-Dar to replenish their possessions from the vital radiation, saving the long journey to another area deep within the earth. Stretching westwards of the Spiderhaunt Wood is Daggerdale and Mistedale. These farming communities are prime targets for Drow raids. Hence Enassatar and her band often venture out to these areas to gain information about these territories. Further, the Drow have learnt of the evacuation of the Elven Court, and are seeking to embark on a scouting mission of the area. Finally, the Drow are always watchful of the activities of the Lords of Shadowdale. They remain cautious of the area.

An important tradition of Drow society is a ritual known as 'The Bleeding'. In order for a youth to become a full adult, he/she must venture out onto the Surface and kill a dangerous or intelligent surface creature. Damathra-Dar serves as a launching point for such sorties. Finally, Damathra-Dar is also a trading post. Periodically, a Drow Merchant Clan known as Narrion Llar, with permission from House Baenre, come to Damathra-Dar where they trade with agents from the Zhentarim. They meet on the Surface, in the Hall [Surface Building (3)]. The Drow trade their poison (a deadly sleep poison) for especially prized surface fruit and slaves.

It is up to the DM to effectively manipulate the activities of the Drow. They will know if anyone attempts to enter the temple long before they do so. Hence they will have time to prepare for the defense. Always remember that the Drow are very intelligent and exceedingly cunning, but not foolhardy. They will not waste their lives. With their natural affinity for quietness combined with their elven boots and cloaks, they are nearly invisible at all times. Use this to your advantage, primarily through hit and run tactics. If the Drow are pressed, Enassatar may parley with the PC party (she can speak common), but will betray them when the time is right. Enassatar will under no circumstances fight in a pitched battle by herself. If it comes down to her alone and she decides the odds are not in her favour, she will flee into the Underdark, heading for Menzoberranzan. If the players head into the Underdark she could become a future nemesis for them. This scenario lends itself to many opportunities for adventure. The players could be followers of Mystra, who learn of the lost temple in the Spiderhaunt Wood and decide to investigate its fate. Alternatively, they could be Zhentarim agents who are part of the trading venture to meet with the Drow at Damathra-Dar. Further, the players could learn of numerous Drow raids and sightings in the Dale Lands and after much investigation track them back to the lost Mystran temple. Finally, the players could be studying ancient texts in the hope of discovering an entry into the Underdark, and find an entry on the Mystran temple and the attack of the Illithids from the depths of the earth. No doubt there are many other opportunities that could arise in a campaign environment.

NPC's

Name: Enassatar Kinshaen

Drow Priestess 6th level

SZ M AC -1
Str 14 MV 15"
Int 16 HD 9
Wis 12 Hp 68
Dex 18 #AT 2
Con 14 Dmg by weapon or
Cha 17 spell
AL CE MR 60%

SA: Poisoned weapon (-4 to save, if failed then -4 to hit, +4 AC for one round then falls unconscious for 2d4 hours)

SD: hidden poisoned garrot in her boot.

Spells (Innate): Dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire, detect magic, know alignment, levitate, clairvoyance, detect lie, dispel magic, suggestion.
Spells (Priest): curse, darkness, cure light wounds (x2), protection from good, chant, hold person, resist fire, silence 15', radius, slow poison, pyrotechnics.

Weapons: Mace +3, whip +1

Armour: Drow chainmail +2

Special: Piwafwi (Drow elven cloak); Drow elven boots; Baenre House insignia in a neck purse.

Blue-black weblike robes trail from her slender form, a whisper of silk in the oppressive darkness. She is beautiful, her face delicate and finely wrought, her skin so dark that she seems almost ephemeral. There is an

ageless look to her, a precious timelessness. Yet, she has the piercing, quick eyes of a deadly predator. Enassatar is a priestess of House Baenre, 'First House' of Menzoberranzan. She has been sent to oversee Damathra-Dar for five years. She is currently in her second year. She sees the appointment as a great boon, for it is an opportunity to impress her Goddess Lolth by personally slaying many surface dwellers, especially elves. Enassatar is very ambitious, even for a Drow, and will seize any opening for personal gain and favour from Lolth.

Enassatar has four subservient male guards.

Sanat Kharn: Male Fighter

Dinach Serzhar: Male Fighter

Lyme Thalluan: Male Fighter

Queldyth Jhalimar: Male Fighter

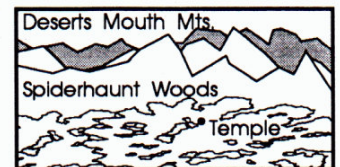
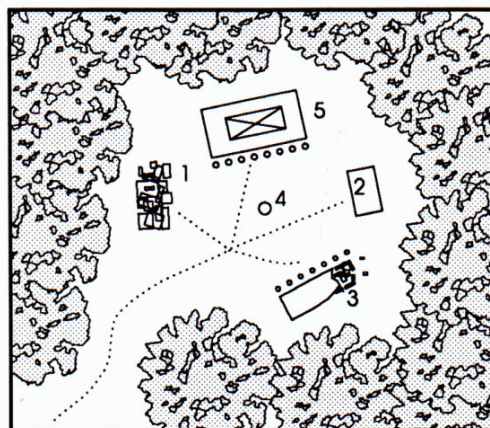
Drow Guards (4): AC 2; MV 12; HD 4; Hp 32, 29, 27, 33; Dmg 1d8+2; MR 40%; Int High to Genius; AL CE.

Spells (Innate): Dancing Lights, Darkness, Faerie fire.

Weapons: Long Sword +2; Hand Crossbow with poisoned darts (see Enassatar for poison); 4 daggers.

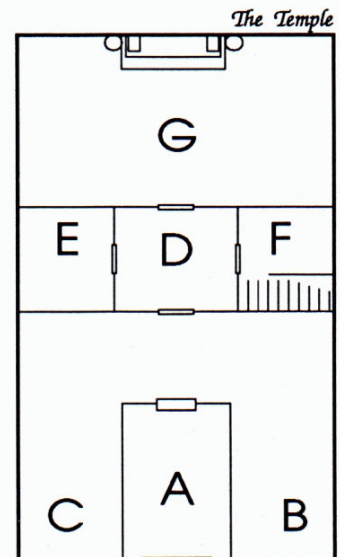
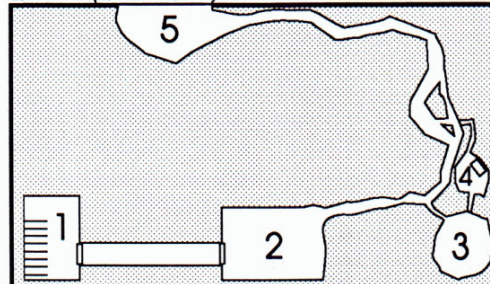
Armour: Drow Chainmail +2

Special: Piwafwi (Drow Elven Cloak), Drow Elven Boots, neck purse with black medallion denoting which House they serve).



Surrounding Area

Level 1 (Lower Level)



By Roy Mallum

NEW LIVES NEW LANDS

Prologue



THE TALL, GAUNT MAN LEANED FORWARD on his ruby throne, his long pale fingers gripping the arm-rests. 'My Goddess!' he thought darkly, 'What is that Hell-spawn doing now?' His sunken eyes were fixed on the mandibles and claws of his chancellor. The appendages were weaving a sort of tapestry from a fibrous substance being extruded from the creature's lower abdomen. He watched as the scorpion-man laid the construct down on the floor and began emitting a series of clicks and whistles.

The tapestry began to glow and soon the Red Emperor recognized the familiar outlines of his realm. The chancellor glanced up at him. 'Now my Lord - look at the vast expanse of your Empire. As I have said, no empire has ever matched it for size. But look carefully my Lord - look at the frontiers. See there in the west, the Western Rockwood Mountains and Charg - shrouded by the Ban. In the south - the bottle-neck of Dragon Pass and the running sore of Whitewall. In the north - the frozen wastes of Thunder Bay and the Valind Glacier. All expansion in these directions is blocked. But, the empire must expand - you have read the reports of my agents - your governors and their appointees are corrupt, the urban legions spend much of their time polishing armour and the rest of it whoring. The cults care nothing for the stability of the Empire but waste their energies in petty rivalries, the ...'

'Enough!' snapped the Emperor, 'as you have said, I have read the reports. You have made your point - the Empire needs to continue expanding. But the only direction left is east. There is nothing of value on those endless

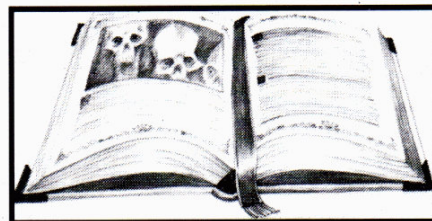
Pentan steppes.'

'My Lord, it does not matter what is there. A nation is strong only when it is expanding. Failure to grow will

bring decay, followed by collapse. Such a course would not please the Goddess,' replied the chancellor. Pointing his claw at a region of steppesland east of the great Poralistor River he added, 'take this place first. It is only a land of semi-nomadic animal herders, but it will blood the legions and also gain the Empire recruits.'

The Red Emperor had decided. 'Let it be so - order the X and XIII legions to advance from Jarst and make the Redlands our new province.'

IMAGININGS



SWEAT TRICKLED FROM TAHLAN'S BROW as he sat on the boulder, watching the small flock of sheep. Yelm was not playing the game today. Fire season was well and truly over, yet the Sun-God's fierce rays still beat down on this blight stricken land.

Leaving the scrawny beasts to scratch for whatever brown blades of grass they could find, Tahlan wandered over to the only shade in sight - that provided by a sturdy Boab tree. A quick glance around revealed no watchers. He sank down among the tree's roots and leant back onto the smooth, cool bark. Within seconds he was asleep.

It was hot again. Time had passed and Yelm had burnt away his shade. Reluctant to move, Tahlan stretched his thin body with a giant yawn. What was this? The ground was shaking. An earthquake? Quickly getting to his feet he scanned the horizon. To the west a wide dust-cloud clung to the shimmering landscape. The cloud was shot through with beacons of golden light. This must be the source of the vibrations. Remembering, his flock, and also the wrath of his step-father and the bite of his sable-skin whip, if any of the beasts should go missing, Tahlan ran to the spot where he had left them.

'Orlanth Spawn!', he cursed.

No sight of the animals.

A rhythmic rumbling noise could now be heard and the cloud was emitting low mournful sounds. Alarmed by this strange turn of events, Tahlan's first impulse was to get out of there fast. But, remembering the lessons of the old tribal shaman Yilgarne, he stood still and concentrated. With his hand on the small black stone that hung from the leather cord around his neck, Tahlan invoked Farsee. His enhanced vision revealed the cause of the vibrating earth and the frightening noises. Emerging from the swirling clouds of red dust was a vast column of well ordered soldiers. Yelm did not seem to have any power over this column - his rays were turned back by the brightness of the metal shields and breastplates. Near the front of the snake-like mass of men, a group of brightly dressed soldiers raised burnished tubes to their lips every few minutes, and a loud clear tone seemed to pervade the world and proclaim that here was a power that the Old Gods would learn to fear.

Tahlan was mesmerized by this spectacle and did not move as the column approached - the flock was forgotten,

The World of Glorantha was created in the early 1970s by Greg Stafford. It was first brought to public notice in his boardgames White Bear and Red Moon and Nomad Gods. It gained world-wide attention as the campaign setting for Chaosium's Second Edition Runequest fantasy role-playing game in 1978. Since that time Runequest has come under the aegis of The Avalon Hill Game Company, and Glorantha is still growing and developing.

The story that follows is the introduction to the lives of two young adventurers, Tahlan and Wotan - two men of disparate natures, who follow seemingly divergent pathways, but are linked by a force they cannot perceive.

Eiritha would have to tend to them.

With his normal vision Tahlan saw that the column was led by a troop of soldiers on proud horses. Behind the man on the white stallion, presumably the commander, was another horseman. This one held high a massive banner, secured to a post the size of a small tree, and topped by a large metallic circle that glowed crimson in the swirling dust. The magnificent banner streamed out over the heads of the riders. At this moment Tahlan realized there was no wind and yet the banner was in vigorous motion. Surely this army was Gods-favoured.

The noise of the serried ranks stamping the ground in unison overwhelmed Tahlan as the column passed within a hundred strides of where he stood. He was so numbed that he did not notice the outrider rein in his horse and jump down in front of him.

In crude Redlander the dust-streaked soldier said: 'I am Wotan. The centurion has one hundred imperial silver ready for you, boy. Join us'.

Thinking of the woman who kept wanting him to call her mother, but wasn't, and his cruel, never smiling step-father, it did not take Tahlan long to make up his mind. 'I will take the Emperor's coin,' he replied.

THE CLEARBURST CAME and went twice, whilst Tahlan was trained in the ways of the Imperial army. The discipline was harsh, but not unendurable - especially for a boy brought up in the barren Redlands. His teachers were mainly grizzled veterans of Red March. The imposing, brightly armoured legionnaires that he had first encountered had quickly returned to their barracks in Jarst. Their role had been to intimidate. The ill-equipped March-men and mercenary units such as the Grey Wolves were left to do the actual fighting.

After having learned the cross-bow and short-sword; the Imperial

rapid march; how to keep armour and kit from rusting; and how to live off the land, Tahlan was sent out on patrol. This was the main task of the auxiliaries: to show the Crescent Banner and to put the fear of the Goddess into the natives. The veterans had soon made Tahlan aware that he was no longer to consider himself a Redlander. He was now a Marcher.

Although he learned their language, Tahlan still found that he could not really 'talk' to his comrades. Their simple banter of women, beer and battle did not interest him (possibly because he had had no experience with any of them). But he boasted along with them to keep on good terms.

As the seasons passed in long patrols Tahlan noticed that the surliness of the Redlanders seemed to be increasing - in direct proportion to their growing poverty. Things worsened after the Emperor's last herd-beast tax. Instead of being greeted by an obsequious headman offering koumiss and shelter, the patrol was now met with insults and thrown dung. Shelter and food had to be taken by force - the Emperor's rescript was no longer respected. Some patrols reported the presence in the camps of barbarians daubed with paint.

On the way back to Vannack's Landing the patrol passed through a shallow lightly wooded valley. The scout, Taras, came pelting out of the brush shouting for the leader. Within minutes the patrol reached a clearing and froze in its tracks. Bound to an upright cross was a naked man. The crescent symbol branded on his upper left arm revealed that he was a marcher. His body was punctured by a score of spear thrusts, his eyes had been gouged out and the wounds were covered by flies.

The patrol leader drew his dagger and moved forward. The mass of flies flew off with a frenzied buzzing: the man's genitals had been removed. His hand visibly shaking, the leader

cut the man's bonds and lowered the corpse to the blood-splattered ground. After the burial and a short prayer the patrol resumed its march. That night Tahlan overheard Taras telling the leader that marks in the clearing were consistent with those of Pentan barbarians.

At base, rumour had it that the daubed strangers spotted in some Redlander camps were Pentan scouts. They were said to have stirred up resentment against the Empire. Once the troops learned of the mutilation of one of their own, it was not long before anger became widespread.

Before the Goddess in her Red Moon had passed overhead thrice, a general assembly was called. On the packed clay parade ground the troops gathered in well ordered centuries. A dark skinned man of middle age and wearing a long crimson cloak over his armour mounted the dais. A trumpeter sounded a blast on his horn and the assemblage came to attention. The legate spoke:

'Soldiers of the March. As you are all aware, one of our comrades has been most cruelly murdered. This is more than an affront to the authority of the Emperor, it is an act which threatens the right of each of us to a warrior's death. There is little that we demand in the service that is more sacred than the right to die honourably. To die under the knife of a cowardly torturer would mean that your spirit would be forever in torment. To ensure that the Redlanders do not continue this barbaric practice, they must be taught a lesson. The century of Pandros is therefore ordered to exterminate the nearest clan to where the torture took place. May the Goddess guide your steps.'

After the regulatory three Red Moon salutes, the parade was dismissed. The century of Pandros was Tahlan's. Outside the centurion's tent Pandros explained that the target clan was the Habre. They were to depart at dawn.

After a night of cleaning weapons

and readying equipment, the century was standing at Eastgate as Yelm raised his burning face from behind the far horizon. As Pandros gave the order to march the gathered Marchers raised a shout of farewell.

TWOMERCENARYCAVAL-rymen were attached to the century to act as scouts. Tahlan recognized one as Wotan, the man who had first recruited him. Wotan was dressed in buckskin trousers and tunic and wore a chainmail hauberk. Over this was draped a grey wolf-skin cloak, the beast's head resting on his iron helm. His skin was burnt dark by Yelm's fire and iron rings dangled from his ears. Around his neck jangled a leather thong gilded with gold coins. At night-camp Tahlan reacquainted himself with Wotan, discovering that the horseman was one of the famed Grey Wolves. 'You have filled out since I last saw you - no longer a timid shepherd-boy', said Wotan.

'You have also changed, your skin looks as tough as leather and the hair shows touches of grey.'

'Don't let a few streaks of grey fool you lad,' replied Wotan, 'I may be twenty-two but there is no-one who can match me in horsemanship or swordplay.'

Early morning on the third day as Pandros was conducting the pre-battle rites, Wotan came riding down from the ridge-top and reported that the Habre encampment was quiet. Pandros ordered sixty men to advance stealthily over the ridge to the outskirts of the camp. When the star-beacon was launched they were to attack. The remainder of the century were to provide covering fire from the ridge and to act as a reserve.

Tahlan, crouching down below the level of the tall steppe grass, jogged forward. It was only a few hundred strides to the camp, yet his tunic was soon soaked with sweat from the tension of keeping his weapons from making a noise, the fear of being seen, and the growing realization that this was to be his first taste of battle.

Daring to look above the swaying grass, Tahlan saw that he was barely twenty strides from the first tent. Were the others ready? There was no indication that they had been spotted. Just as he was catching his breath there was a loud crack and a bright new red moon was added to the sky.

Battle cries ringing in his ears, Tahlan powered to his feet and lunged forward. Emerging from the grass an arm-length away was a brown skinned youth, his face smeared with broad strips of blue paint. It was hard to say who was more surprised. The Redlander reached down for his sword, but Tahlan's was already in his hand. On impulse he thrust the blade forward. It entered the boy just below the ribs. He just stood there, his eyes widening in shock. After what seemed like hours to Tahlan, a thin trickle of blood ran from the Redlander's lips and he fell to his knees, the sword wrenching out of his innards.

Numb, staring straight ahead, bloodied sword still in hand, Tahlan walked into the camp. All around him were burning tents, panicking cattle and horses, and Marchmen cutting down half-naked old men and boys. Using the flat of his sword, Tahlan lifted the flap of a tent. Light streamed in, revealing a woman wedged in the rear darkness of the tent, holding a small knife before her. On the packed earth floor lay two girl-children, a gaping pink wound in each of their throats. Their blood had stained the earth dark red (a libation to the Goddess?) and was congealing in their long black hair. The woman screamed and made as if to lunge for Tahlan's throat. He made no move to protect himself. She halted so close to him that he could smell the Hatred and the Shame. Without saying a word she raised the blade to strike and drove it into her own breast. As she slumped to join her blood with that of her daughters, Tahlan cursed softly. His horrified eyes fixed on the gory tableau: he suddenly realised then that this was not warfare, but slaughter of women and children. Something was not right with the Empire. With a visible shudder, he turned and left, letting the tent flap swing shut.

Centurion Pandros and a few other veterans had arrived in the camp and were trying to restore some order. Striding up to a soldier on top of a screaming girl, Pandros brought the flat of his sword down on the man's cheek, sending him sprawling. The soldier rolled and bounded to his feet. His loose trousers tripped him, and a blow to the back of the head rendered him unconscious. Pandros threw his cloak over the pale body of

the whimpering girl and walked on to deal with the next miscreant. Similar measures brought the rest of the century into line. No-one had obtained more than a scratch. The camp had only contained children, women and old men. After questioning one of a handful of survivors, Wotan explained that the men had left camp to avoid the inevitable retribution, expecting that their non-combatants would not be harmed by the Lunar authorities.

The century returned to Vannack's Landing, leading the surviving Redlanders, and four Marchmen in chains. The afternoon of the following day, another assembly was called. As well as the Legate Prytanis, the dias held a line of Red-Cloaks. Prytanis spoke first, congratulating Pandros' century on wiping out a 'nest of vipers'.

The healer Brysis whispered to Tahlan: 'Some vipers - not one fighting man among the lot.'

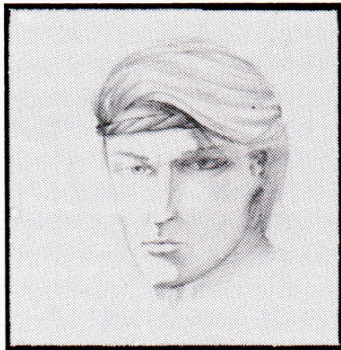
Prytanis was replaced by a Red-Cloak. The assembly immediately hushed. Her face glowed with the radiant beauty of the moon, and the dying light of Yelm revealed the perfect form of the Goddess through her sheer garments. Few remembered the words she spoke, but all felt the Passion of the Goddess within them. Any questioning or resentment was forgotten. It was clear that the work of the Goddess was true and just. Her enemies must be destroyed. The five surviving Redlanders (including the girl saved by Pandros) were marched to the front of the dias, each escorted by a cowed Red-Cloak holding a scimitar. Pandros started to move forward, but Wotan quickly laid a hand on the centurion's right shoulder. 'Don't waste your life, what can you do? Bide your time man, there will come an opportunity when we can wipe these red bastards from the face of Glorantha.'

Pandros stopped, his shoulders slumped.

The scimitars were raised, gleaming redly in the Moon's first light. They flashed downwards, and the five figures slid to the floor.

The priestess acclaimed: 'Thus will be the fate of all those who challenge the power of the Goddess.'

Back at their tents the century was informed that their reward was to be a week's furlough in Jarst City.



TAHLAN

Male human soldier, private in the Marchers (the Lunar militia in the Redlands). Birthplace and natural family unknown. Youth spent as a shepherd in the Redlands.

Initiate of Found-Child [see Griffin Mountain p.16 and Cults Book p.43] and lay member of Ernalda [see Cults Book p.36].

Culture: Barbarian Herder

Current age: 18.

STR 11	Move 3
CON 13	Hit Points 13
SIZ 12	Fatigue 24
INT 18	Magic Points 16
POW 16	Dex SR 3
DEX 13	Siz SR 2
APP 17	

Location	Melee Points
R Leg	01-04 4/5__
L Leg	05-08 4/5__
Abdomen	09-11 5/5__
Chest	12 4/6__
R Arm	13-15 4/4__
L Arm	16-18 4/4__
Head	19-20 6/5__

WPN	SR	A%	DAM	P% Pts
Fist	8	46	1d3	26 4
Dagger	8	41	1d4+2	41 6
Gladius	7	66	1d6+1	52 10
L/Spear	6	36	1d10+1	27 10
Pilum	7	56	1d6+1	46 10
T/Shield	8	26	1d6	47 12

Dodge: 33

Spirit Magic: 80%

Farsee 2; Detect Life; Mobility 2; Multi-Missile 1; Speedart; Heal 2; Peaceful Cut.

Skills:

Climb 50%; Jump 31%; Throw 65%; First Aid 30%; Plant Lore 35%; Animal Lore 39%; World Lore 36%; Listen 51%; Scan 58%; Search 47%; Devise 28%; Play Pipes 27%; Ceremony 29%.

Languages: Speak Read/Write

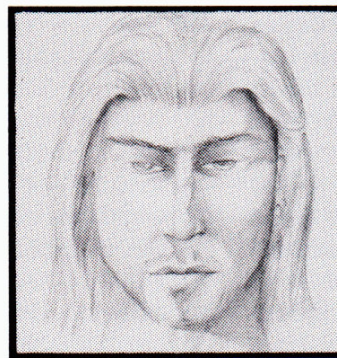
Redlander	45%	22%
Jarstian	37%	12%
New Pelorian	20%	10%
Pentan	18%	

Equipment:

Gladius; Dagger; Two Pilum; Target Shield; Cuir-bouilli over soft leather vambraces, greaves and cuirass; Bezainted Skirts; Lamellar helmet; woolen under-tunic; Light cloak; Sandles; Backpack; Camping and Cooking gear; Writing equipment; Lamp and oil flask; water-skin.

Personality:

Tahlan has always been a shy and withdrawn person - feeling out of place in his environment. He is haunted by the knowledge that he does not know his real parents. He feels uneasy when part of a group, yet yearns to hold a position of power. One manifestation of his sense of otherness is his obsession with cleanliness.



WOTAN

Male human mercenary (a member of the Grey Wolves). Born into a family of lesser nobility in Carmania. Detesting the degeneracy and passivity of his peers, he left his father's estates near Storal, for a life of adventure in the east.

Stormbrother of Humakt [see Cults of Prax p.33 and Cults Book p.41].

Culture: civilized.

Current age: 22



STR 18 Move 3
CON 16 Hit Points 16
SIZ 15 Fatigue 34
INT 12 Magic points 11
POW 11 Dex SR 2
DEX 17 Siz SR 2
APP 16

Location	Melee	Points
R Leg	01-04	4/6 ____
L Leg	05-08	4/6 ____
Abdomen	09-11	7/6 ____
Chest	12	7/8 ____
R Arm	13-15	4/5 ____
L Arm	16-18	4/5 ____
Head	19-20	-/6 ____

WPN	SR	A%	DAM	P%	Pts
Fist	7	63	1d3+1d6	26	5
Kick	7	46	1d6+1d6	42	6
Grapple	7	56	1d6+1d6	51	-
W/Maul	5	48	1d10+2+1d6	27	10
Lance	4	70	1d10+1+1d6	38	10
B/Sword	6	92	1d8+1+1d6	53	12
G/Sword	5	67	2d8+1d6	22	12

Dodge: 39%

Spirit Magic: 55%

Bladesharp 2; Co-ordination; Repair.

Skills:

Ride 67%; Throw 45%; Fast Talk 40%; Orate 31%; Evaluate 37%; Martial Arts 26%; Human Lore 42%; Animal Lore 39%; World Lore 36%; Listen 41%; Scan 61%; Search 42%; Conceal 38%; Sleight 26%; Track 49%.

Languages:	Speak	Read/Write
Carmanian	71%	43%
New Pelorian	42%	27%
Redlander	39%	07%
Jarstian	31%	11%
Esrolian	28%	--
Pentan	11%	--
Darktongue	09%	--

Equipment:

Lance; Broadsword; Greatsword; Chainmail Hauberk; Bezaunted greaves and Vambraces; Leather tunic and vest; Linen shirt; Woolen cloak; Wolf-skin cloak; Cavalry horse; Saddle and saddle bags; Camping and cooking gear; 30m rope; Wine skin; Iron ear-rings; Necklace (21 Wheels).

Personality:

Wotan has wandered from battlefield to battlefield during the last four years of his life. On every occasion he

forces his way to the fore, to test his valour. He is disdainful of those who do not share his views, but is aware of the need for balance. Recognizing the intellectual abilities of Tahlan, he has decided to make the younger man his companion.

History:

Wotan's childhood was spent on his father's manor on the Esel River south of Storal. Garath - Baron Eselton, was a harsh, demanding father. Embittered by the confiscation of two-thirds of his estates by Governor Palantales, for his part in a failed conspiracy, he cared little for his children, except that they grew up to be formidable warriors able to take revenge on the Lunar authorities. The best tutors and armsmasters that the baron's dwindling resources could hire drilled the lessons of war into Wotan and his elder brothers Saron and Deventor.

Wotan flourished under the harsh regimen. But as he grew closer to manhood he began to chafe at the disrespect shown to his family and himself by the New Carmanians - the recent Lunar immigrants now holding power in his native land. After his father died Saron succeeded to the barony, but only after the payment of a heavy tallage.

The estates were no longer able to support the three brothers so Wotan took up residence in Kitor, the Lunar capital of Carmania. He entered the service of Alejandro, Count of Spol, and became a squire. The count was an infrequent visitor to Kitor, so Wotan had little to do. Unable to find anyone of character who shared his views on the rightful destiny of Carmania, he took to visiting the ubiquitous taverns and whore-houses. One night, an argument over a particularly delectable whore led to a duel. Wotan easily bested his opponent. Unfortunately, the severely injured man was Gilganat, son of the governor.

Understanding the danger he was in, Wotan fled Kitor that night. He travelled east into the Heartlands. He hated the regular planned cities, the arrogance of the nobles, the apathy of the peasants, and the oppressive weight of the hand of the Red Goddess. He continued east.

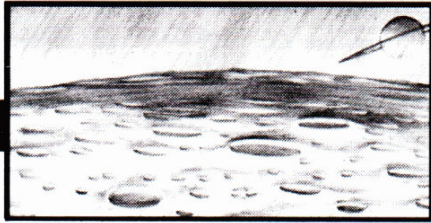
At Jorant, on the shores of the ice-locked White Sea, he heard of the exploits of the Grey Wolves. In the battle of Iliu-dan this company of heavy cavalry had charged the elite 'Hammer of Zorak Zoran' snow-troll warband. The trolls were overrun and the tenth legion exploited the gap to drive the enemy flanks apart. The Grey Wolves returned from pursuit and smashed into the confused rear ranks of the two troll groups [The full history and organisation of the Grey Wolves will be recounted in a later issue of Drow].

After the Wolves had rode in triumph through the garlanded streets of Jorant, Wotan approached their recruiting officer, Ostia, and joined.

The Search for END

By Cliff & Adrian Boer

EVENT HORIZON



Penrose's Fivefold Symmetry

The twentieth Century has been a time for major breakthroughs in the field of science. Momentous events such as Einstein's 'Theory of Relativity' and Heisenberg's 'Uncertainty Principle' in turn stood science on its head. The discovery of Black Holes, Quasars, Neutron Stars and the like altered the face of the cosmos for humankind. Among these widely heralded discoveries came the seeds for still greater revolutions in the paradigms of the scientists yet to come. The 'Missing Mass' question raised the possibility of a universe filled with 'Cold Dark Matter' as yet unseen by human probes. Cosmic strings were theorized to exist in both the quantum world and also as huge gravity distortions over light years of space. As often happens with really big breakthroughs in the sciences, the ramifications of the newly heralded discovery may not at first be truly appreciated. This was the case when it was surmised that the atom could be split, (who at that time would have dreamt of the horrific weapons to follow this discovery), or when Stephen Hawking supposed that Black Holes could evaporate, (the potential for unlimited free energy generators was not immediately appreciated either). At about that time (1972), a gifted mathematician by the name of Roger Penrose made a largely unremarkable discovery in the company of these other more readily appreciated breakthroughs. It was an insight of sheer intuition at the time and it dealt with the Fivefold Symmetry. Looked upon as an interesting curio at the time, it did not indicate in the slightest the mind boggling revolution it would cause in the long term. Penrose was contemplating an interesting question concerning crystals at the time. He posed the question 'Why is it that crystals can form with symmetries of two, three, four and sixfold symmetry, but never with fivefold symmetry?' Crystals are sometimes thought of as living, growing as a result of repeating shapes that fit together in a regular manner to form units of a progressively larger scale. However there is no singular regular three dimensional fivefold shape that can be used as the basic building block to do this. Penrose wondered if in fact he could accomplish this task. As a result of his enquiry, he came up with a set of configurations consisting of pentagons, rhombuses, pentacles and 'jester's caps'. He found that he could fill a page with these objects and have them never overlapping, and could do so indefinitely. (See the accompanying figure: Quasi-Fivefold Lattice Symmetry). The amazing thing about this lattice is that it never repeats its form and can go on indefinitely doing so, as with pi for example. Ten years was to pass until it was discovered that his insight in fact had reality in nature itself. It was demonstrated by chemists that an alloy of Aluminium Manganese would grow as per the diagram into a three dimensional crystal. In a 'normal' crystal, the various groups of atoms have to know where to fit on the 'global scale', that is, they have to know the construction of the entire crystal before they can be able to work out just where it is that they must fit. How can this be? This suggests that there is a quantum process at work here that knows universally the matrix of the whole cosmos!

IMPERIAL HISTORY OF 'END' EVOLUTION

END (Expansionary Nexus Development), was discovered to have occurred at the very beginning of time. It was in the first 10^{-46} of the first second of the universe when the Grand Unified Field first commenced its breakdown of the standard ten dimensions into the now more familiar four dimensions of the present day universe. And when the forces of gravity, electromagnetism, nuclear-strong and nuclear-weak forces separated from each other to go their independent ways through time, it was then that symmetry came into being. Symmetry is the universal inhabitant of the wondrous world of the quantum. Beyond our sight at its operational level, it was perceived in its macro-form by the dances of the atoms as they joined in harmonious conjunction. Long held by humankind to be an interesting phenomenon, they possessed the key to the manipulation of quantum physics in its raw state. The first discoveries of Fivefold Symmetry had to await further development until substances capable of generating the Fivefold Symmetrical form in a useful manner could be found. The secret lay waiting in the form of a substance called Lanthanum, which, when combined with a small trace of a highly heat-resistant substance called Tantalum, allowed for some staggering innovations in space travel. END first revealed its usefulness in -9235 (3955 PI), when Arannash Nihikelar and his team of researchers were able, using Lanthanum, to warp the fabric of space and enter jumpspace. Thus, the Vilani, using the jumpdrive, began their interstellar explorations which eventually lead to the forming of the Ziru Sirka or First Imperium. Similarly, in a Terran laboratory in -2396 (AD 2052), a man named Varese Stavinsky, having observed a crystal growth for several days, found the crystal behaving in a previously unexplained manner. He found that various light beams were diffracting and showing themselves to be doppler shifted on beaming through the heart of the crystal. On further investigation using beam/slit techniques, peculiar quantum effects became apparent which lead to a major research programme. On acceleration down a substantial linear accelerator, small crystals were found to be spacially jumping at faster-than-light speeds! Another perceived impossibility was thereby shattered through the use of the END principle. A mere thirty-five years later the Jump-Drive was born on Terra, and the weave of jumpspace became a reality for the Solomani. The great physicist, Alexander Barden proposed in -2399, (a mere one year after the establishment of the Terran Confederation) proposed that the most useful substances for END research would be those capable of Fivefold Symmetry in their own right rather than as part of an alloy. He pointed out that as an example one of the great mysteries of science, which remained as yet unexplained, was how biological cells determined their own individual loca-

tions and uses within the map of the organism to which they belonged. He stated his belief that genes had found a way of utilizing the END principal to determine their growth and development patterns. He said "How else could a single biological cell know just where the hell it was within the scope of a whole body? How does it know just when to stop dividing because the finger has grown long enough? How would a cell know that it belongs to part of a kidney, and should function as such, instead of being a brain cell?" All this would be explained if the cell was able to tap into a universal system that would tell it where it was, and what it should be doing, in just the same way that Fivefold Symmetry does for crystals. He suggested that a single substance capable of utilizing the END principal should allow us to control the growth of organisms at will. He suggested that we could grow as many appendages as we would want, have additional organs, and could even modify our own structures sufficiently to allow for better adaptation to new and different planets and environments. All this would come as a result of a successful search for END. Other scientists suggested that vastly improved forms of jumpspace travel would also be possible. The END principal seemed to point toward a notion of space-time in which distant points could somehow be directly connected by 'tapping' into the encoded geometric structure of space-time. Another gain that could be attained by utilizing the END principle is vastly improved communications between distant systems. One of the more remarkable suggestions was that a stasis field could be generated which would cause time itself to cease within the confines of the matrix. (This would allow for permanent timeless storage of anything for any amount of time in a state devoid of corruption.) During the Rule of Man (-2204 to -1776) the suggestions flew thick and fast without any major new discoveries following, but slowly the understanding of the full ramifications of END were spreading throughout civilized space. Then, from -1776 until the year 0, (the period known as The Long Night), the pursuit of Fivefold Symmetry ceased as the Second Imperium plunged into isolation and

technological stagnation. With the dawn of the Third Imperium, investigations into the world of the quantum resumed at new levels of intensity. However, during the reign of Cleon IV, restrictions were placed on the public's accessibility to information related to Fivefold Symmetry. Heavy penalties were imposed for the dissemination of knowledge in this research field. At the same time budgets of astronomical proportions were being passed for the express purpose of pursuing this knowledge. The search gathered momentum, for ultimately it held in its grasp power and riches beyond measure.

Through the centuries small advances have been made but nothing truly significant has been discovered. But on the eve of the Rebellion, 1117, it seems that various research facilities are on the verge of a major breakthrough.

THE FUTURE OF 'END'

Within the sphere of MegaTraveller we now stand at the threshold of the major implementation of the use of the END principle in its limited form. New discoveries are about to become available and the rush is on to acquire this technology at all costs. Drow will be unfolding these discoveries to you within our forthcoming issues. They will add new dimensions to your scenarios and allow for greater development of your worlds. We have based our END principle, (our term), on real life physics processes as they are currently understood amongst the world's leading scientists. We have termed the principle 'Expansionary Nexus Development' because a 'nexus' is in fact a term applied to the formation

of a crystal in a quantum sense. Each dimension (up to ten) forms a crystal lattice network. It is this cosmic lattice on which the atomic structure of crystals are based. Our descriptions of the use of the END principle will include fully plausible explanations of the functions described. Included in the areas to come in the immediate future are:

□ **IMPROVED COMMUNICATION:** By building and establishing the appropriate generating systems on specified planets, communication time will be greatly reduced (although not instantaneous).

□ **GENETIC ENGINEERING:** For the purpose of colonizing more difficult worlds, racial traits can be modified to make habitation biologically possible. Special classes of individuals may be bred for specific utility functions in certain environs.

□ **TIME STASIS FIELDS:** These can keep their contents in a timeless environment, including life-forms. This can be ideal for the preservation of vanishing species, or for long-distance transportation of the same. Dangerous or hostile elements can be kept safe within these fields also. This can provide an interesting way of imprisonment without death, and so on.

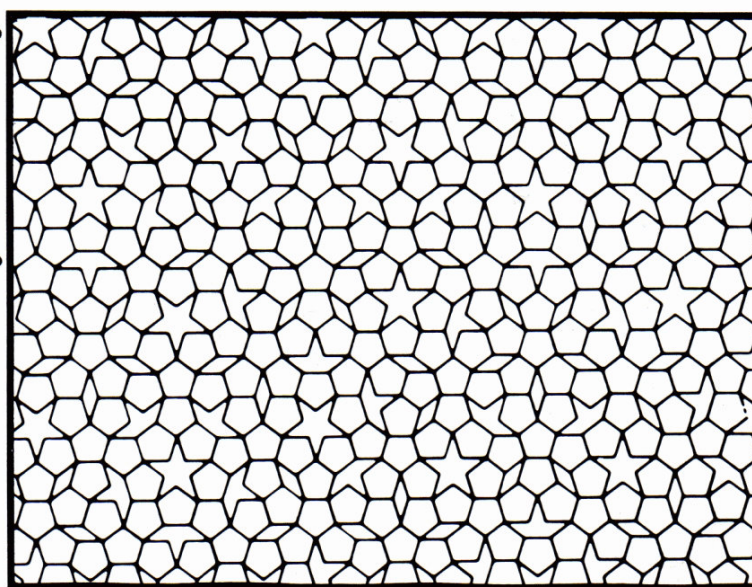
□ **WORMHOLE TRAVEL:** By travelling to specific locations as determined by the END principle, Wormhole miners can create highways through space that will allow for rapid jumping over extremely long distances between specified locations.

□ **ELEMENT MANIPULATION:** By controlling certain quantum effects some rare elements can be created out of the more common ones in specific conditions, such as in the vicinity of a black hole or a neutron star.

Other areas that will be covered include the discovery of Sevenfold Symmetry, (END 7), and this will continue all the way up to the Tenth Dimension, (END 10).

Any readers who have any ideas they wish to contribute to the scheme of things are most welcome to drop us a line.

Fivefold Symmetry



Discovered by Roger Penrose (a mathematician), this diagram is of a hypothetical crystal growth made up of five-fold symmetry. It never repeats, can grow infinitely large, and is made up of four different basic shapes. The intricacies of the pattern are truly remarkable.

Semiramis

QUEEN OF ASSYRIA

By Brad Martin

The Kingdom of Assyria was comprised of the core cities of Ashur, Nineveh and Erbil. It first came to historical prominence circa 1800 BC, when Shamshi-Adad carved out an empire between the northern reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This empire collapsed under pressure from the Mitanni, Elamites, Babylonians and Hurrians.

In the second half of the fourteenth century BC the Assyrian empire revived and Babylon was conquered. A 'Time of Troubles' circa 1200 BC saw the fall of the Hittite empire and the large scale movements of peoples by sea and land. Waves of nomadic Aramaeans fled their deforested homeland in the Jebel Bishri. The economy and hence the political stability of the Assyrian empire was destroyed.

Only when the Aramaeans had gradually coalesced into kingdoms (the tenth century BC) were the Assyrians able to revive their empire.

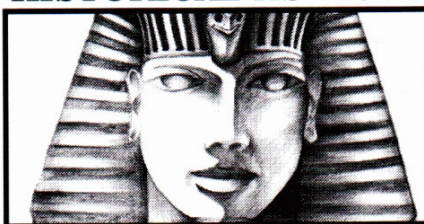
Ctesias of Cnidus gives the following account of the birth of Semiramis. Near the Syrian city of Ascalon, the goddess Derceto incurred the jealousy of Aphrodite. The Goddess of Love caused Derceto to be filled with lust for one of her acolytes. From this union was born a daughter.

Filled with shame for her actions, Derceto killed her lover and exposed the infant. A flock of doves found the babe. While some kept it warm by stretching their wings over it, others gathered milk and cheese to feed it. The disappearance of the food alerted the Keeper of the Royal Herd, Simmas. He discovered the child and took her in as his own daughter. He gave her the name Semiramis (close to the Assyrian word for 'doves').

By the time of Semiramis' childhood the Assyrian empire had expanded from its homeland on the northern Tigris River, to encompass lands from Anatolia to Babylon, and Urartu to Syria.

Monarchical authority was weak, powerful provincial

HISTORICAL ASPECTS



Women have long been neglected or stereotyped in role-playing games and fantasy literature. In most RPG's women player characters are forced to have weaker characteristics and are sometimes restricted in their choice of profession. When allowed to participate in warfare they are often presented as an oddity. Many player characters treat women (either PC or NPC) as "comfort girls", not as independent characters who have their own goals.

This article (and those to follow in this series) is designed to demonstrate that in history, women did exercise power and had aspirations for themselves and their heirs.

governors became virtual kings in their own region. One such was Onnes, the governor of Syria. Hearing of the unsurpassed beauty of Semiramis, he persuaded Simmas to give her to him in lawful marriage. Her beauty was matched by her wisdom. Onnes followed her advice and Syria prospered. The governor was so enamoured with his wife that he sent for her when he was on campaign in Bactriana. Upon arriving at the siege works surrounding Bactra, Semiramis saw that the acropolis was only lightly defended. Devising a style of dress suitable for such work (a long coat with sleeves extending to the hands, trousers and boots - this dress was later adopted by the Medes) she picked out some skilled mountaineers and scaled the heights. With their acropolis captured, the city surrendered.

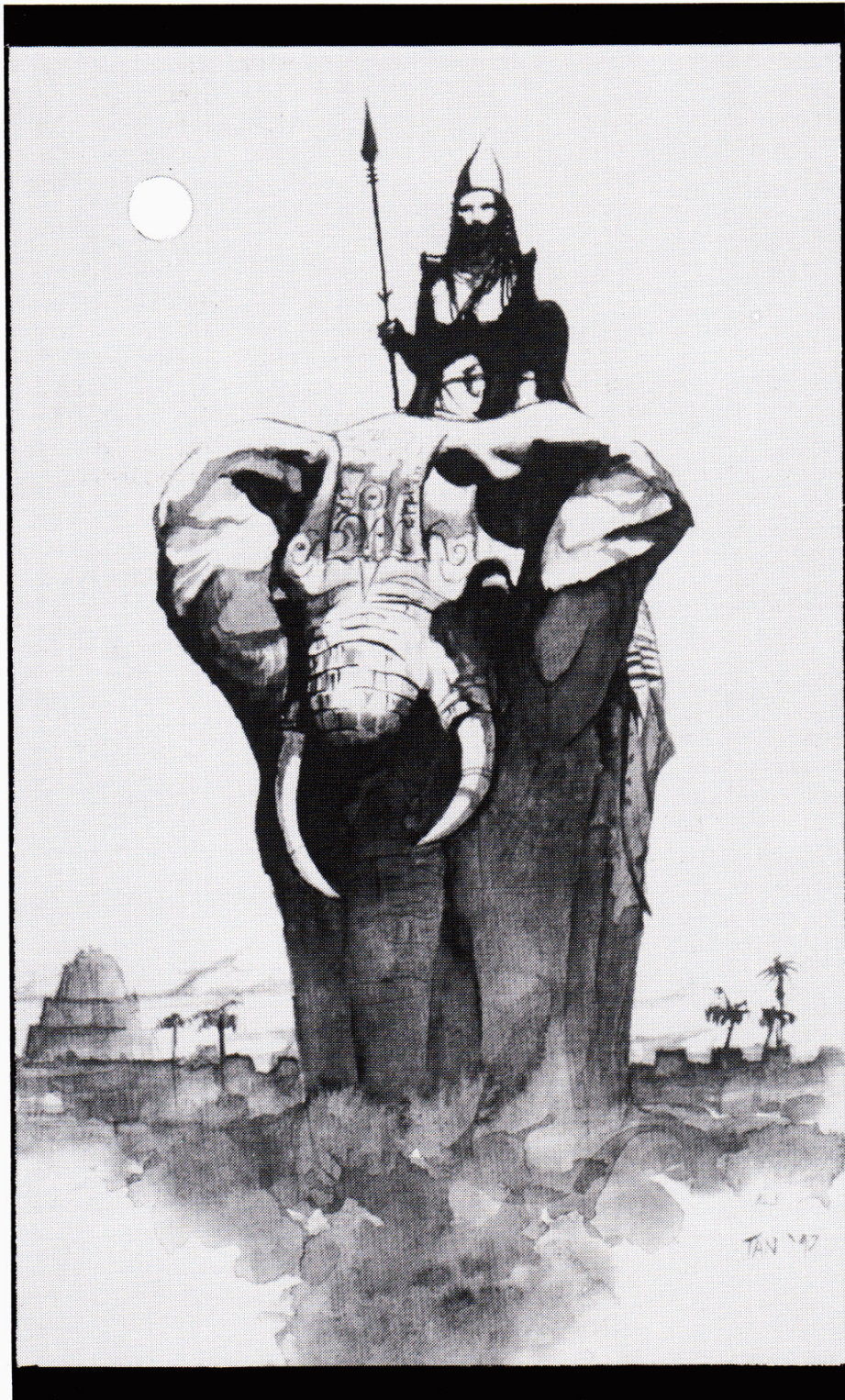
This episode brought Semiramis to the attention of the Great King Shamshi-Adad who soon became infatuated. He attempted to persuade Onnes to yield her to him. Onnes refused. The King persisted. Driven into madness Onnes hanged himself, and Semiramis became Queen. When the Great King died, she became the ruling monarch.

Semiramis was determined to surpass the deeds of her husband. He had built palaces at Nineveh and Calah, and a temple at Ashur.

The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus records how the Queen's workforce of two million men founded the city of Babylon. However, Babylon first came to historical prominence under its king Hammurabi [1792 - 1750 B.C.]. During the time of the ninth century Assyrian revival, Babylon came under their control. The Babylonian merchants preferred Assyrian suzerainty to that of the seminomadic Aramaean tribesmen from northern Arabia. Therefore, instead of founding the city, Semiramis may have greatly embellished the pre-existing structure.

She built new walls around Babylon. They had a





Semiramis was one of the most formidable female rulers in history, amassing armies of staggering size for foreign conquest, although the challenge of India proved too much for even her tactical genius.

circumference of 365 stades (about forty miles), and were wide enough for six chariots to drive abreast upon. The wall was made of baked mud bricks fastened in bitumen (Mesopotamia was famous for its bitumen in Antiquity, just as Iraq is for its oil today). It reached a height of 300 feet and was studded with 250 towers.

Two massive palaces were also built in the city, one on each side of the Euphrates (and linked by a tunnel carved under the river). The bricks used to build the palaces were engraved with wild animals and coloured with glazes.

On one of the palace walls a hunt was depicted: Semiramis portrayed on horseback in the act of hurling a spear at a leopard. (This is a motif long associated with kings - the painting on the facade of the large tomb discovered at Vergina in Macedonia shows a Royal Hunt in a sacred grove, with Philip II about to strike a lion with his spear, watched by his son Alexander.)

The river was spanned by "the most ancient stone bridge", five stades long and thirty feet wide.

In the centre of the city she had a great ziggurat built. It was an eight stage tower of mud bricks, for E-temen-ana-ki, the 'foundation stone of heaven and earth'. At the top of the ziggurat a shrine was set up containing the gold statues of the gods. Temples for the Babylonian god Nabu were also built at Calah and Nineveh. This does not imply that Semiramis was a Babylonian princess, Assyria had absorbed much of Babylonian culture and the Babylonian script was often used for royal inscriptions. The state god Ashur was not neglected.

Trade was encouraged by the building of quays along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Irrigated gardens were planted near the Bagistanus mountain, and the city of Chauon in Media. The Assyrian Queen, like the Persian satraps who succeeded her, enjoyed the luxury of water-gardens amidst the semi-barren land. As well as living in pleasant environs, Semiramis enjoyed a series of lovers. To avoid political complications she remained unmarried, doing away with those who lay with her.

To ensure the loyalty of the subject nations Semiramis visited each in turn. She won over the populations by massive public works projects: roads, tunnels and irrigation canals. These projects also ensured that her name was remembered. She subdued Egypt, Libya (where she visited the shrine of Zeus-Ammon in the Oasis of Siwah - Alexander the Great followed in her footsteps, 332/1 B.C.), and most of Ethiopia.

The Queen was obsessed with surpassing her predecessors. Hearing that India possessed the 'most extensive and fairest country', she ordered her governors to assemble a massive army. After two years of preparation the army was ready at Bactra. It consisted of three million infantry, two hundred thousand cavalry, one hundred thousand chariots, two thousand river boats (transported by camels), and thousands of dummy elephants (black oxen hides were sewn together and filled with straw, and a camel and a driver were placed within the structure).

The Assyrian preparations attracted the attention of the Indian king, Stabrobates. He gathered together an even larger army. However, his river fleet was defeated on the Indus and Semiramis had a large bridge built across the river. After discovering that the Assyrian elephants were dummies, Stabrobates halted his withdrawal. His cavalry and chariots attacked but the horses shied away when confronted by the unfamiliar smell of the dummy elephants. The Indian King ordered his real elephants to advance. The Assyrians could not withstand this attack and fled back to the bridge. This bottleneck caused thousands to be drowned in the river. Only one-third of their original army survived.

On her return to Mesopotamia, Semiramis' son, Adad-nirari III, conspired against her. The Oracle at Siwah had

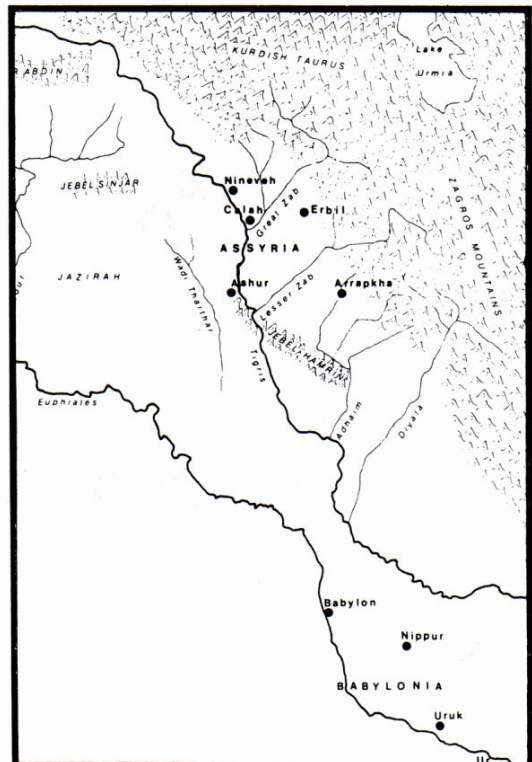
foretold this, so he was not punished. Instead, she turned the kingdom over to him and withdrew from public life.

From the information available it is apparent that Semiramis was a woman with a special aura, who undertook the full functions of a sovereign. Inscriptions of Semiramis found on stelae (grave-stones) at Ashur, Pazarcik and Bel-tarsi-iluma support this conclusion. The legends that grew up around her reign were of such potency that other monarchs felt compelled to match, or attempt to surpass, her deeds. Sennacherib [704 - 681 B.C.] laid out extensive gardens; Nebuchadnezzar II [604 - 562 B.C.] rebuilt Babylon, adding the famous Hanging Gardens and the Tower of Babel; and Alexander the Great invaded India (he was also unsuccessful).

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Assyria and Babylonia



Semiramis

QUEEN OF ASSYRIA

CAMPAIGN USE

Semiramis may be used in a role-playing campaign as a model for an ambitious woman ruler. Players may interact with her in several ways:

1. SHOW TIME: The characters hear that Semiramis is about to visit their province. If they wish to win her favour they may organize civic festivities (displays of horsemanship; a great hunt; the opening of a new water garden; exotic dancing and plays; a massive banquet; camel races; etc). If this display is held in a town or village other than the provincial capital the PC's will earn the gratitude of the local merchant class - and also the enmity of the provincial governor.

2. PRESS GANG: Semiramis is raising an army for a distant campaign.

a) The PC's are contracted to recruit one hundred infantry. The populace is reluctant to volunteer, how will the characters fulfil their quota.

b) A gang of soldiers rush the tavern in which the PC's are drinking - they attempt to snap manacles on all and sundry.

3. SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE: The characters hire on as mercenary scouts for Semiramis' campaign.

4. LOVE KILLS: The character with the highest charisma is approached by agents of Semiramis' chamberlain. They promise vast riches if he is willing to spend a few nights engaged in pleasurable activity. They will not reveal the identity of the woman. If the PC agrees he will be conducted to a luxurious town-house and bathed and groomed by slave-girls. When he is led into the bedroom he will find that it is in near darkness. Semiramis will make passionate love to him and feed him fine wines and food. As the nights pass he will become steadily weaker - the food contains a slow-acting poison. His heirs will receive a substantial reward.

5. THE FLOOD: Rivermen carry news that torrential rain has been falling in the Northern Mountains. Rivers have broken their banks and a vast wall of water is heading southwards. Whilst the Queen's men conscript villagers to build levees, the PCs are hired as overseers of gangs clearing the irrigation canals of silt. The next few days are chaotic as rumours abound and villagers attempt to flee to higher ground. Government bounties for successful completion of allotted tasks are huge. On a number of occasions Semiramis, in her palanquin, visits the work sites to encourage her subjects. One evening a man describing himself as the Queen's Assistant Master Engineer points to a canal and orders that its course be diverted. An observant PC will notice that the direction he indicated leads to the massive mud-brick walls of the nearby city. Floodwaters rushing down the canal would

soon undermine these formidable defences.

6. THE ENTERTAINER: A PC with an entertainment skill is approached by Semiramis' Master of Ceremonies. He explains that the Queen is bored and desires to see what pleases people in other lands. The PC's success will largely be determined by the player's roleplaying ability. (Rate the players' routine from 1 to 10, using a combination of their roleplaying as well as relevant skill levels). An average rating of 1 to 5 will see the PC tarred and feathered and run out of the city. A rating of 6 to 8 will see the PC receive a generous reward (e.g. a seasons salary for an entertainer). A rating of 9 to 10 will gain the PC a very valuable reward and high honour (DM's choice).

7. THE TRAITOR: The PCs come across a royal courier attending his lame horse. He explains that he has an urgent message to deliver to the Queen's palace and requests the use of one of the PC's horses - he will offer them a royal rescript that may be redeemed at any royal staging post. If by some means the PCs obtain the message they will find that it is in code. If it is deciphered, the message informs the Queen that a certain high ranking official (make him one of the PC's patrons) is in the pay of the enemy.

Other possibilities include:

- A) Engineers hired for her public works.
- B) Couriers
- C) Royal officials
- D) Entertainers
- E) Assassins

How ever the players become involved, it must be remembered that the Queen is backed by the resources of a state.

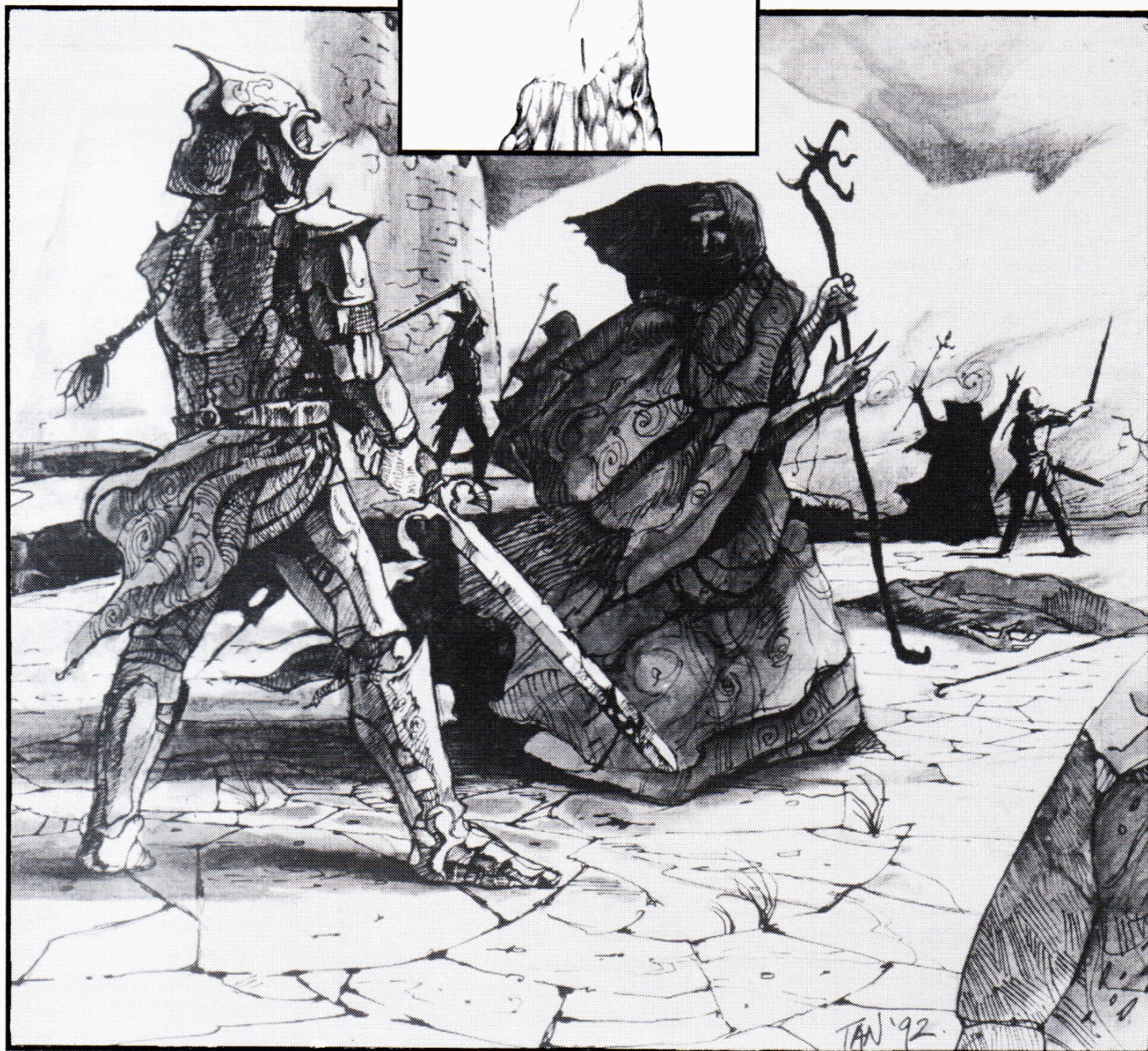
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KNIGHTS

of the Temple

By Adrian Boer

The Chosen

The archetypal member of The Thirty always seems to emerge from a very similar background. Born into the peasant or serf environment, where the hardships of ill-health and perpetual hunger are familiar scenes, it is a struggle for ordinary children to survive. But, for the child who will someday join The Thirty, it is more than just a struggle. It is a crusade.

Knights of the Temple

A NEW PALADIN KIT FOR 2ND EDITION AD&D BASED ON
DAVID GEMMELL'S 'THE THIRTY'

The parents of these children are often forgotten, and as orphans they are forced to endure adversity beyond nature's trials. They are subject to uncaring, abusive step-parents, who rarely attend to their added burden. Treatment becomes worse when the child's peculiar tendencies and demeanour awaken. In order to compensate for the lack of affection in their lives they launch into an obsession for learning. In their surroundings, this is sometimes tantamount to evil-mindedness.

An array of psionic-like abilities begin to manifest themselves unwillingly, propelling further suspicions from the commoners. Many children develop some form of physical ailment, such as loss of hair or translucent skin. Inherent phobias also unfold, typically of crowds, being touched, or strangers. As a result, these youths become withdrawn and isolated, preferring their own company over that of others.

It is sometimes said that such different individuals are fated to live apart, to become outsiders from society. But it is not so. Society does not determine the shape of The Thirty - only the Source can do this.

THE SOURCE

This God may be deemed the God of Ether, as he has no set form. As such, he has become part of the fabric of the Ethereal Plane, flowing through its midst. He is a proponent of the **Lawful Good (Neutral)** ethos. Equity and balance are fundamental aspects of his faith, as are edification and sanctimony.

Knights of the Temple are the direct servants of the Source. The 'chosen' are determined by the decree of the Source alone, their fate set even before birth. The hardships of childhood are to prepare them for life within the warrior-priesthood. Once inducted into the order, the Source focuses their evolution towards becoming 'perfect beings'.

The Source will not accept worship from anyone other than his selected Knights. Hence, the God is little known. The only homage he welcomes is derived from a few scattered monasteries, spread thinly throughout the lands.

THE CALLING

The torrid daily routine of work and abuse becomes an endless cycle to these children of kismet (destiny). Apart from the change of the seasons, one month is the same as the next, and one year is no different to the previous. But the hour of change

comes to all the children of destiny - an hour of Providence. The Source will grant them the 'Awakening'. The process begins with a crisis that deeply affects the individual. A dear pet may be slain or a fire may consume his home. Once awakened, he will be overcome with an enlightened feeling of well-being. There and then he will begin the pilgrimage to his monastery (the location of which is instinctively known). This is usually a journey of great distance, though through divine inspiration, he requires no rest or sustenance. Travelling day and night, nothing will delay his march.

The trials of his previous life are now behind him. Trials of a very different nature await.

THE MONASTERY

The new initiate arrives drawn and exhausted, remembering little of his journey. His anxiety at the strangeness of his arrival at such a remote place is soon dispelled by the appearance before him of a strong father-figure. The man intones a soft measured welcome, his voice at variance with the gleaming silver armour he wears - the voice of a poet. This is the Abbot of Swords. For the first time in his lonely life, the boy feels a touching of minds. There are no words, only an infusion of power, a promise of strength and friendship. He has found home at last.

Inside the monastery on a small spartan table, the Abbot and the boy share bread, water and salt. Their fellowship secured, the pupil utters the 'Three-fold vow' (Tersanctus)

- Stability
- Obedience
- To embrace the religious canon and Rule.

It is a simple ceremony, one that was always meant to be.

The initiate is then shown around the Monastery (see related article page 28) and introduced to his new family.

When a member of the Thirty dies, wherever he may be in the world, all other members instantly realize his deliverance to the Source. Shortly after the death, another young boy will mysteriously arrive at the monastery's entrance, ready to begin his tutelage in the ways of the Ethereal God.

THE RULE

Knights of the Temple follow a precept of laws which dictate their moral conduct and ethics. It is known simply as The Rule. It's many volumes are extensive and esoteric, demanding many years

"I see a desert of broken souls and undead beasts. At the centre of this desert is an oasis and beside it a tree. Beneath its branches men gather for shade, and rest, and peace. Not one of the undead beasts can gather near the tree, nor any creature of evil approach it - The tree has thirty branches".

D. Gemmell, "Waylander", p.327.

of Platonic study. The Rule was indited many centuries ago by the father and founder of The Knights of the Temple, the holy warrior-knight Ellmere Callashar. Below is an excerpt from his writings found within the second volume of The Rule:

'Listen, my son, to the advice of your master and hear it in your heart. To you, who have taken up the strong and shining weapons of obedience, I now address my words.

My first and most important advice to you is this: that whatever you set out to accomplish in the way of goodness, you shall ask the Source most earnestly in your prayers to bring it about, so that He who has been gracious enough to count us amongst His children shall never have cause to grieve for our misdeeds. We should always give Him such obedience out of the store of goodness He has placed within us. And if we wish to serve in the afterlife, we must without delay do those things which will benefit us eternally, now while there is yet time and we are in this body and can still accomplish all these things as dwellers on this plane.

Within this Order, it is our hope to prescribe nothing harsh nor burdensome. But if some degree of strictness is applied for the correction of faults, do not lose heart. For the entry to the Source must of necessity be narrow, but as our faith increases and we are confirmed in the monastic life, our hearts enlarge and we travel easily along the road to the Source. And so, always keeping the Source as our master, and remaining steadfast to His teaching until deliverance, we will become worthy to share in His service and Kingdom.'



Telson Apshade, Knight of the Thirty.

The Templar Knight is skilled in both psionics and the military arts, making him an awesome opponent.

ETHOS

The Knights of the Temple renounce the ordinary pleasures and comforts of life, in order to free the mind and discipline the senses for contemplation. Through continual meditation and learning though the Rule, they endeavour to evict all impurities of thought from their consciousness in an attempt to reach Perfect Harmony. In this state of mental temperance and gentleness, they are able to accept other peoples lust for power and bloodshed as part of their fallen nature. More importantly, Harmony provides pure motives and furnishes complete control over actions.

A Knight believes that he is judged in body and spirit by the Source. In life then, he must hold the two aspects of his being together in harmony. Judgement is determined according to his consummated quest to uphold the harmony, and maintain pure motives through the strict following of the Rule. Ultimately, the Knight seeks the perfect death to counterpoint the perfect life, empowering him to transcend the world's chains and journey to the Source.

Crystal Harmony is a demi-plane created by the Source. Upon a Knight of the Temple's attainment of 'perfection', he dies. He is then conveyed to this plane, which becomes his paternal sanctum. Within Crystal Harmony, the Knight serves his true purpose. After years of preparation upon the plane of his origin, he will have achieved complete control and harmony. He is then ready to assume a new form, something akin to a Deva, called an Ashlanth - meaning 'One of Silver'. His quest is now to serve the cause of goodness across the mists of the Ethereal and other planes. (This will be dealt with in another article at a later date).

LEARNING THE WAY

When a youth arrives at a monastery, he spends at least the next decade in training. Learning The Rule, and mastering the ways of the Source are his life.

There are two forms of focus that assist the Knight in attaining the ideals described in The Rule.

Each Knight has a manifestation of himself in the form of a unique rose with a single flower. Each rose is a different shade from the others, and each has its own distinct fragrance. The rose grows in magnificence with the Knight's purity and strength. It acts as a focus, providing empathy to cultivate humility. Each Knight spends many hours in meditation, linked mentally with the rose, learning its humble simplicity but also its majestic harmony. The Knight is then able to reinforce the vows of The Rule. The learned virtues of humility and obedience lead to harmony of mind and body.

The other important focus is that of combat. To perform at the peak of his abilities, his energies must be focused through physical training. Many hours are spent each day improving physique and combat prowess. By striving for perfection, purity and grace far beyond that of the warrior, the Knight may genuinely test his Humility, guardian of all virtues.

The test of Harmony comes when a Knight

leaves the monastery and ventures out into the world to find battle. Each time he faces adversaries, he tests his innermost convictions. A man's will to live is strongest when he has to fight hard to stay alive. He will cherish life with a passion greater than ever before. This will force him to face his doubts. Hence, the barriers of inclemency and self-will are placed on trial. The Knight's virtues and human tendencies are questioned through the focus of combat. If Harmony is maintained, the Knight becomes more receptive to the Source. The attainment of 'Perfect Harmony' will signify his death - and delivery to the Source.

RETURNING TO THE WORLD

When a Knight has achieved a sufficient level of Harmony and balance, the Abbot will deem that he can re-enter the world which rejected him. His mind-mastery will have been shaped so that a distorted world will no longer threaten his internal balance. Instead, it is the emerging Knight of the Temple, honed in mind and sword, who will correct the world around him.

The Abbot will ordain quests for the Knight to perform. Embassies to governments or powers; advising in the construction of national defenses; training soldiers; participating in worthy battles; fighting evil and righting injustices.

Alternatively, a Knight may feel that he requires to return to the world for his own purposes. The solemn wandering of the world for a time is a required and necessary chapter dictated within The Rule. By traveling throughout various lands one will find battle to focus Harmony, but will also gain wisdom through the diverse experiences he will face.

A Knight will return often to the monastery. The spiritual guidance gleaned from the Abbot and The Rule is never complete. His solid bonding with the brethren of the Temple also draws him back. Finally, the rose most cherished by him calls for his empathic devotion.

When a member of The Thirty dies, wherever he may be in the world, all other members instantly realize his deliverance to the Source. Shortly after the death, another young boy will mysteriously arrive at the monastery's entrance, ready to begin his tutelage in the ways of the Ethereal God.

The Knights of the Temple, as a complete unit, may also leave the Monastery. This occurs by decree of the Source, and is undertaken only in times of a Crusade.

The occurrence of a Crusade is rare. However, when they transpire it means the death of all the Knights but one. Each Knight sees his own death through a prophetic dream before it occurs. The Source then ensures that the Knight's doubts will be at their highest during the moment of truth - for he knows he is to die. Hence his virtues of Obedience, Humility and Harmony are put to their most formidable test. The one who does not see his own death is sent from the forthcoming battle to start a new monastery, and become the Abbot for a virgin Thirty.

The motive and not the outcome of a Crusade must be pure. In such an event, exclusive appointments, known as Obediences are conferred by the Source, through the Abbot. There are four: the first is The Voice - he who leads The Thirty. The second is The Heart - he who is strong, fearless and true. The third is The Eyes - he who is most gifted for insight into the future. The fourth is The Soul - he who feels for The Thirty. The abbot is never The Voice. This title is usually endowed to the least perfect - the one who has to face his doubts the most.

Obediences are only bestowed before a Crusade. To ensure the attendance of all Knights, the Source grants the Abbot the use of a special spell. It is only awarded once in the Abbot's lifetime. It is called Ethereal Strands (see description).

KNIGHT PROFILE

Knights of the Temple are soft-spoken, gentle-natured, introspective and extremely thoughtful individuals. They are emotionally distant but polite and courteous on all occasions. They are symbols of purity and grace, shedding a sense of piety and humility over whomever they convene with. However, a Knight's greatest hinderance is the distrust and suspicions he must face from the common people. Due to his immense powers, both mental and physical, he is viewed with awe, but also with fear. The fear is enhanced by dark rumours (often spread by the enemies of the Knights) of their activities and habits. When met with fear and distrust he will do his utmost to advise, but if rejected he will not use force. However, when confronted by evil he is prepared to take the initiative and use force to advance the cause of good.

The rigorous physical and mental training a Knight of the Temple undergoes, combined with his clear providence, grants him remarkable strength and sagacious prowess. He becomes a warrior of such ability that his sword weaves an eldritch spell before his opponents. His mind grows capable of unfurling powers far beyond the commoner. He seeks through mediation, discipline and instruction to achieve the perfect emotional balance in which to become a living weapon, whilst retaining a plenary of obedience and humility. The sanctified light of the Source remains eternally before him. He is a Knight of the Temple - a Knight of the Thirty.

CAMPAIGN USE

Description

The Knight of the Temple belongs to an exclusive order, devoted to a god known only as the Source. They seek to train their body and mind to collude in perfect harmony, and to uphold all that is righteous and good.

Before you create a Knight of the Temple, confer with your DM and ask if he or she will allow the kit in the campaign. It should

be noted that this kit is very powerful, and could sway the game balance.

In order to become a Knight of the Temple, the character must have a Strength of at least 13, Wisdom of 14, Intelligence of 14, Dexterity of 12, and Charisma of 17.

This kit cannot be abandoned.

Only paladins may be Knights of the Temple, fighters and rangers may not.

Role

In the campaign, the Knight of the Temple is often removed from the rest of society, but is nonetheless a true friend. He is a bastion against evil, and is of the purest disposition.

Secondary Skills

If you are using the secondary skills table, the Knight of the Temple receives two: Groom and Scribe. These are mandatory.

Weapon Proficiencies

A Knight of the Temple gains two extra weapon proficiencies, giving him a total of six to begin the campaign with. However, due to his strict training within the monastery, his choices are limited. Three slots must be devoted to Broad Blades. The fourth slot is to be used for Specialization with one of the longer blades (player choice). The fifth is to be used for Two-Weapon Style Specialization. The last slot is to be devoted to ambidexterity (canceling the negatives of Two-Weapon use). The use of long, short or bastard swords are encouraged but not required. As the Knight gains more slots through level increase, he may spend them on anything he desires.

Nonweapons Proficiencies

The Knight starts with a total of four slots. Bonus proficiencies: Reading/writing, Riding (horse, land-based). Required: Endurance; Blind-Fighting; Etiquette; Language, Modern; (Priest, no extra cost), Ancient History; Local History; Language, Ancient. Recommended: Heraldry; Navigation; Survival; Fire-Building; Running.

Equipment

The Abbey's treasury provides the Knight with a set of Field Plate armour, two *Fine* Blades

(see Complete Fighters Handbook p.11) of his choice, and one average quality blade).

Special Benefits

Similar to a Cavalier, a Knight of the Temple receives +3 to save vs. all magic which would affect his mind, such as the clerical spells of command, charm person, enthrall, cloak of bravery, symbol, and the wizard spells charm person, friends, hypnosis, sleep, irritation, ray of enfeeblement, scare and geas. He also gains +4 to save vs. fear of any kind.

The most important benefit a Knight of the Temple gains is psionics derived from his God the Source.

Upon reaching second level a Knight is granted the psionic discipline of Telepathic Powers. He gets one Science, and two Devotions. The Science is 'Mindlink' (mandatory). He may choose two devotions from the Telepathic discipline.

At fourth level, a Knight gains another discipline: Clairsentient Powers. The Science is: 'Precognition' (mandatory). He may choose two new devotions from this discipline. (A Knight may not gain any more disciplines beyond this point).

Every three levels beyond second, a Knight also gains one additional devotion which he may choose from either of his two disciplines.

A Knight begins with 15 PSP's. He receives 6 additional Psionic Strength Points each level after second.

A Knight also gains a medium warhorse. It is a gift from the monastery.

Special Hindrances

The Knight is severely restricted in his actions by The Rule - his religious doctrine.

Another hindrance he acquires are the suspicions from the common people (See Returning to the World, page 26). If a Knight encounters anyone with an Intelligence or Wisdom score less than 13, he receives -4 to his reaction role.

Races

Only humans may become Knights of the Temple.

ETHEREAL STRANDS

(Divination)

Sphere: Astral

Range: Special

Components: V, S

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 1 hour

Area of Effect: Specified Persons

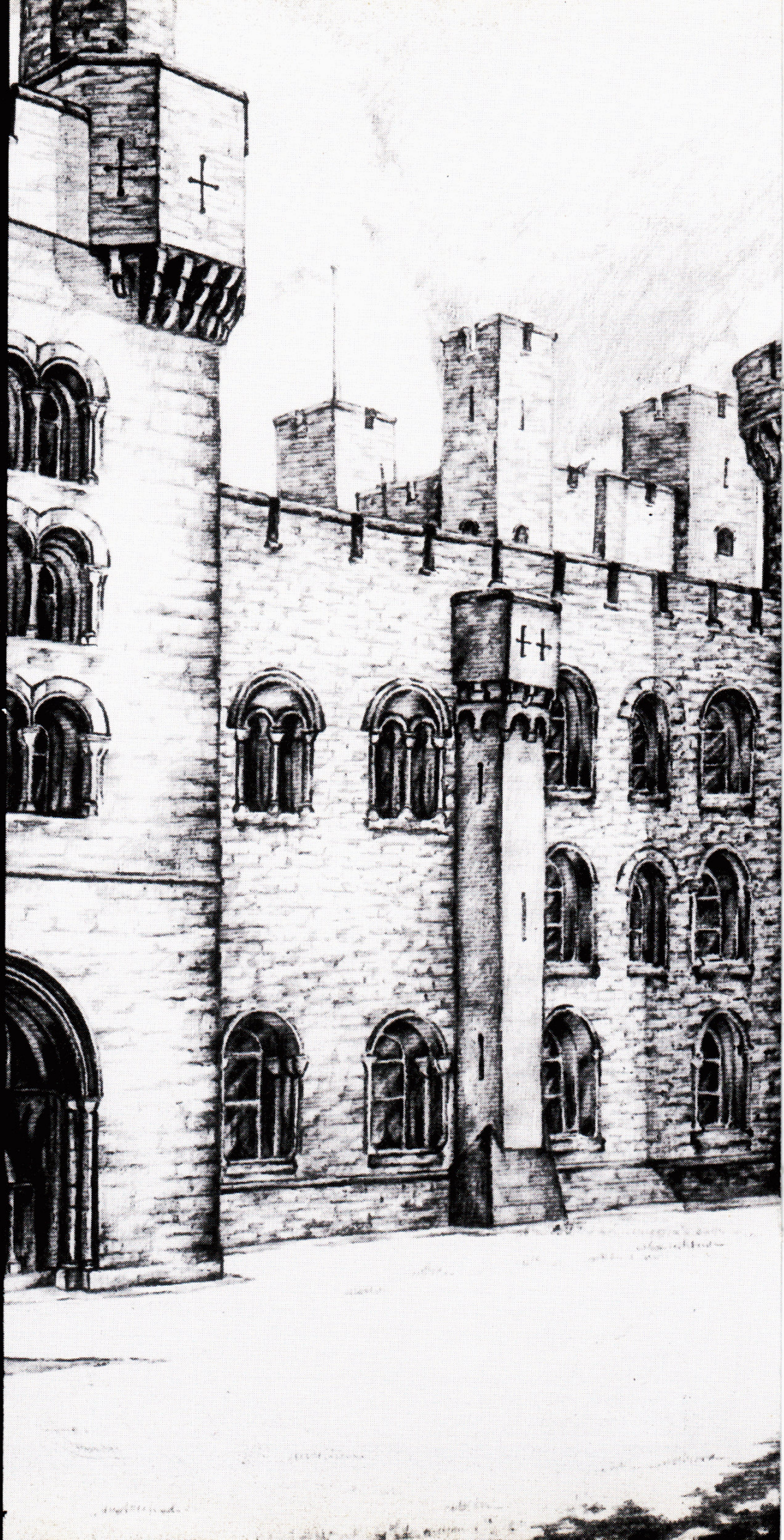
Saving Throw: None

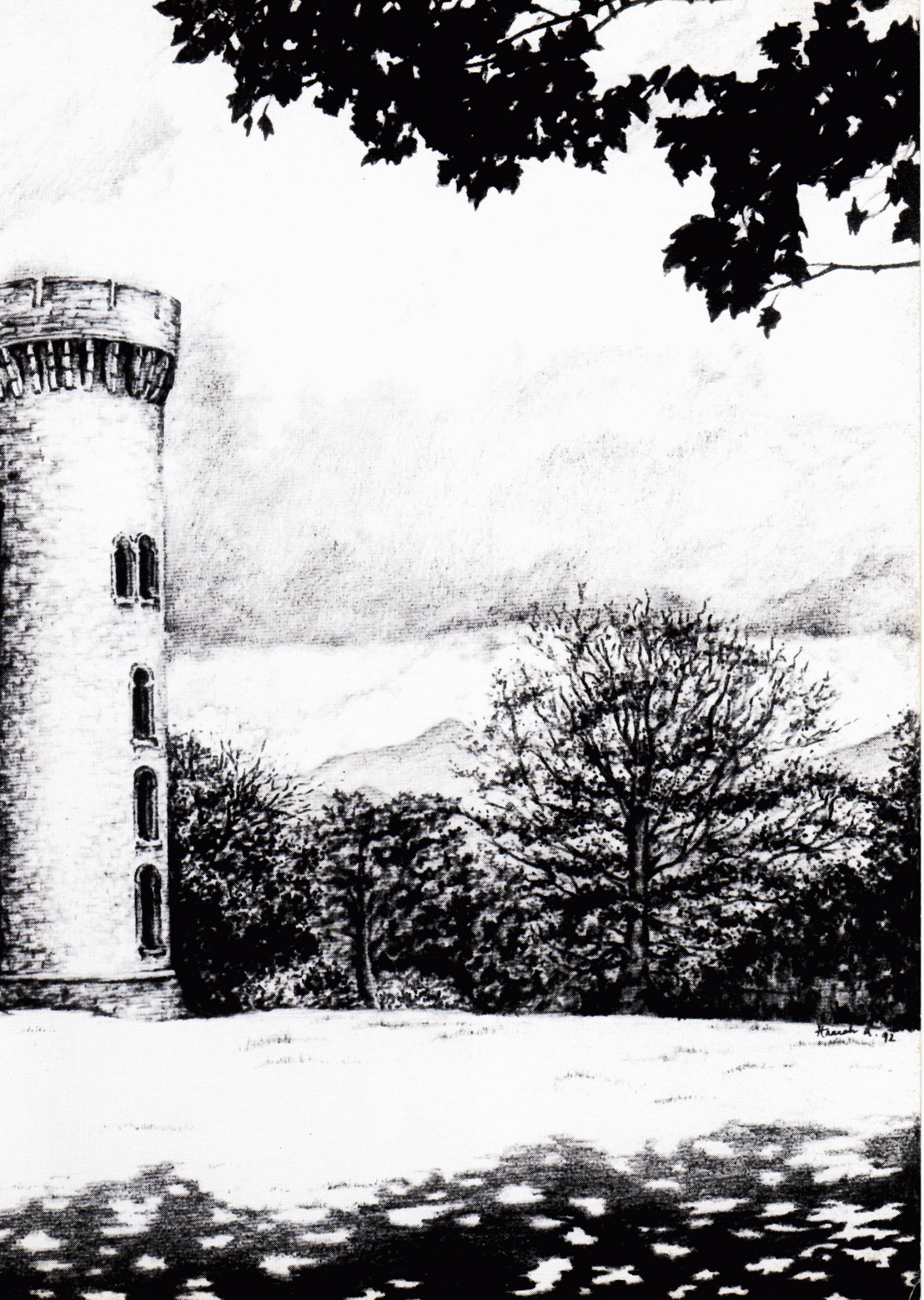
By means of this spell, the Abbot is able to convey all members of the Thirty, no matter where they are located, back to the monastery. When the spell is cast, any Knight absent from the Abbey instantly turns ethereal. Simultaneously, ethereal misty strands (similar to silver cords) spring forth from the chapter house, where the Abbott is in prayer. The number of strands matches the number of missing Knights. Each strand spirits through the plane, selecting the most direct path to a Knight. Once located, the strand secures itself around him and retracts back to the monastery. Once it has arrived, the strand dissipates, and the Knight returns to the material plane. The spell is granted to each Abbott once only by the Source. It is to be used exclusively for the summoning of all Knights for a Crusade.

THE MONASTERY OF LA SALLE

Aranach had left the battle in its final stages. Over half of his brethren had gone to the Source, the others were destined to follow soon. He had known total defeat, but the Source had not yet called for him to join the others in their perfect deaths.

Aranach did not despair, for the Source had another task for him to complete before he would reach the ultimate harmony. He must create a new Thirty. The new monastery was purchased far from the old one, and paid for with the blood of the old Thirty. Through their deaths, they gave birth to a new Thirty. Aranach toiled for many days to make the Monastery suitable for the 'ritual of purification'. He lit his last bundle of incense sticks and walked from room to room intoning the three-fold vow in each. The ceremony ended in the chapel where Aranach placed the incense in a brazier and fell to his knees. With all of his soul he prayed to the Source to bless this monastery and complete a new Thirty. Aranach focused on his as yet unblooming rose placed in front of a window, and continued his prayer. Hours turned to days as he gave worship to the Source silently and devotedly. On the third day Aranach's rosebud broke the stillness and slowly opened to display the beauty it had been hiding. He felt himself being lifted by strong hands, but his feet would not support him. His cramped body was placed in a chair. Aranach slowly lifted his head and gazed upon the first of the new Thirty.





Arrival

This Temple of the Thirty is situated in a small clearing deep within the Forest of Gulthmere. The first sign the adventurer sees of the monastery is the crenellated turret of the Abbey rising through the trees, and most travellers - there are very few - immediately mistake the grim structure for a fortress. This complex was not designed for the Knights (it is far too large for the small number of people who now inhabit it). Rather, it is a relic from a far earlier age, it's whereabouts lost to all but the Source: it's existence was revealed to the Abbot Aranach shortly after the death of the last of his Thirty.

It's a peaceful place, the ancient stones of the towers and walls overgrown with moss and the awesome presence of the mysterious Source permeating the very landscape. (This acts as Protection From Evil (as spell) within a 100' radius of the monastery). A stream flows nearby, a well within the walls provides water in all seasons, and the forestland surrounding the Temple is rich with game: this is a well chosen site.

The Grounds

The monastic grounds are split into training areas of stone, grass, and sand, and a separate area is set apart for the stables. There are usually 40 warhorses and numerous foals housed within. The Knights tend vegetable patches and a small crop of maize outside the walls of the abbey. Because of this, the complex is economically self-supporting and politically independent, entirely separate from the outside world

Area 1

The inner sanctum of the Chapter House is the most remarkable space in the monastery. The huge silent chamber has a vaulted roof and spectacular stained glass windows which give it a hushed, reverential atmosphere. Bundles of incense burn with a warm, mysterious smell, and the tumult and chaos of the rest of the world seems insignificant and far away.

Around the walls there are gradines (tiered seats) for thirty. At most times there will be two or three Knights bowed in quiet prayer.

Area 2

This low beamed, dim hall serves as the library, a massive stock of over 22,000 books, scrolls, maps and codices. This is the most commonly used room within the Abbey as the importance of reading and education is stressed throughout the Rule. Many books fall into the expected categories of works of devotion and aesthetic theology, but there is also a myriad of historical, military and linguistic works. Each successive Thirty adds to this spectacular collection.

Area 3

The rooms around the outside of the abbey consist of the personal cells of the Knights, with some left empty in the unlikely event of visitors. The rooms are adorned with nothing more than spartan dressings: a bed, table, and chest. All have small windows which look out into the grounds of the monastery.

Area 4

The kitchen and Main Hall is where the Knights and Abbot congregate for morning and evening meals. The Main Hall is a cool vaulted chamber panelled in dark wood, dominated by a long mahogany table with places set for thirty. The Abbot leads his Knights in a simple prayer before each meal.

The Abbey has a large cellar which is accessed through the monastery's kitchen. This space is used to stockpile foodstuffs and excess armour

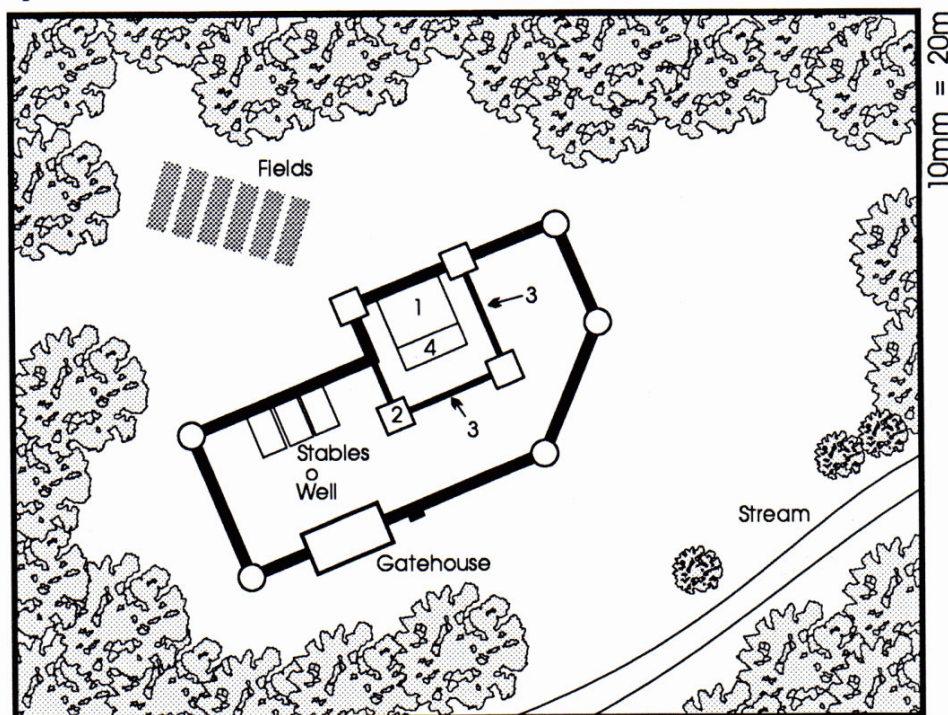
and weapons. It is also used to hold the temple funds, gathered through the adventuring of the Knights. This treasury is not segregated from the rest of the cellar, nor are the coins and gems held in locked chests, as the Knights see no point in such paranoid behaviour. Characters of evil alignments will be interested to know that depending on season and the fortunes of crusades, this treasury can reach amounts in excess of 50,000gp in gems and coinage. In addition, there will be 1D12 randomly generated magical items - classified and named - on shelves within this room. Beware that the Source takes a poor view of adventurer parties looting his places of worship, and the God of Ether is *not* a divinity to be taken lightly.

Other Areas

There are numerous empty rooms within the Temple. If players go exploring, the GM should stock them with useless relics from an earlier time - no exciting monsters and no fabulous treasures. This building is a drafty derelict.

Other Temples

The location of other Temples scattered thinly around the realms are up to the DM's discretion. Keep in mind that they will always be in sheltered, out of the way places with abundant natural resources to assure independence from the world outside.



ARANACH VAR ALLAN*The Abbot of Swords*

Level 10 Age 57
 Str 14 HP 64
 Int 16 AC: 1
 Wis 15 **Weapons**
 Dex 15 Two *fine* Drusus
 Con 16 (See Fighters Hand-
 Cha 18 book)
 Com 14

Psionics PSP: 72*Telepathic powers*

Mindlink (Science)
 Empathy (dev)
 Mental barrier (dev)
 Contact (dev)
 ESP (dev)

Clairsentient powers

Precognition (science)
 Combat mind (dev)
 All-round vision (dev)

Although now 57 years of age, the Abbot of Swords is a formidable figure. His brown eyes are passive and unchallenging, communicating confidence and security to any who look into them. They show no bitterness or remorse from the hardships of his youth. Born to a peasant family, Aranach was subject to ridicule and mockery for all of his childhood and adolescence. This changed when he was 17 and began displaying psionic powers: ridicule was replaced by abhorrence and mockery by hatred. Within a year he was stoned out of the village, spending several months in the wilderness barely able to stay alive.

When the Source called upon him, he became part of Tor Sironen's Thirty. He spent thirty years training and adventuring, and many a foul beast has fallen beneath his whirling twin Drussus.

All of Tor Sironen's Thirty, save Aranach, saw their deaths in dreams on the night before they set out on a quest against an evil horde. Aranach has ventured forth under the guidance of the Source to build a new Thirty and found a new Monastery. He has not been at it long and still exhibits uncertainty at times, still unsure as to whether he is equal to the massive, humbling task the Source has set him. He is the teacher, confessor and spiritual guide to his Knights, regarding himself as the servant of the brethren, not their master.

KELL LEASHAM*Knight of the Temple*

Level 2 Age 27
 Str 16 HP 13
 Int 14 AC: 1
 Wis 15 **Weapons**
 Dex 12 Sabre (Fine, +1 TH)
 Con 13 Shortsword (Fine, +1 TH)
 Cha 17
 Com 12

Psionics PSP: 30*Telepathic powers*

Mindlink (Science)
 Contact (dev)
 Intellect fortress (dev)

Leasham was the son of a poor merchant. When at the age of four he began showing signs of paranormal powers, his parents had him exorcised. When this failed, the parents were distraught, and combined with a series of misfortunes befalling the family, his father decided to have Leasham killed. His mother, not being able to condone this, stole him away and locked him in a cellar in a storehouse. The burden of feeding and providing for Leasham became too much for her, so she hired a servant to bring Leasham food and occasionally remove his wastes and provide new clothes. The years moved on and so did the servants. Leasham's only constant was the darkness of his cellar. No one spoke or touched Leasham for two decades. He stagnated mentally and physically. Deprived of every child's basic need - love, he led a horrifying solitary existence. For the twenty years Leasham was captive his only joy was a shaft of morning sunlight that beamed through a crack in the cellar roof. He revered the light with an innocent awe, and today still gives praise to the dawn. When the Source shone upon Leasham and delivered him to the Monastery, he had an aura of child-like innocence, suppressed by years of isolation. In person, he is introspective and soft spoken, and will never initiate conversation. He has a clear, bright view of life, and enjoys every second of it, knowing better than anyone what it's like to be cut off from the world.

TELSON APSHADE*Knight of the Temple*

Level 6 Age 26
 Str 14 HP 46
 Int 17 AC: 0
 Wis 15 **Weapons**
 Dex 16 Two Handed Sword
 Con 12 (Fine, +1 TH)
 Cha 17 Shortsword (Fine, +1 TH)
 Com 15

Psionics PSP: 62*Telepathic powers*

Mindlink (Science)
 Contact (dev)
 Intellect fortress (dev)
 ESP (dev)

Clairsentient powers

Precognition (science)
 Combat mind (dev)

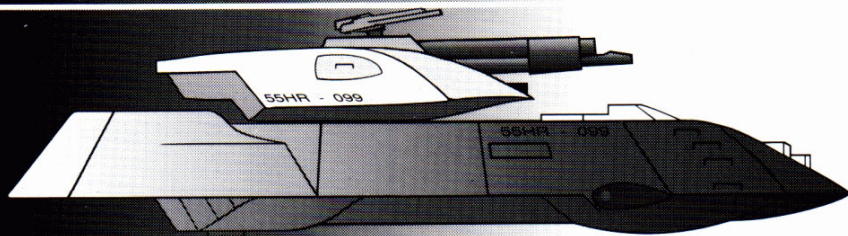
Apshade is the archetypal Knight of the Temple: distant, controlled, devoted. Standing at 6'2" and 210lbs, he is an imposing figure. For formal occasions, his long burgundy hair is tied into two braids falling down his back. When he unties this flaming mane in battle, the impression of unstoppable wildness is enhanced: foes have been known to flee before a blow is struck at the sight of this giant bearing down on them with a two handed sword held low and a cold, polite smile on his face.

His background was similar to other Knights of this religion, and he is no stranger to ridicule and hatred. At an early age he withdrew into himself, reading whatever books his cobbler parents could find for him and cutting himself off from the rest of the peasantry.

Aranach's parents died in a suspicious fire when he was sixteen: the young boy survived by a miracle and joined the scribes guild in Waterdeep, utilising his talent for reading and writing and learning more about the ways of the world. On the untimely death of his mentor and friend at the guild, Apshade felt the call of the Source, and undertook a staggering pilgrimage across the Realms to the new monastery.

Apshade is utterly devoted to his new life and helps with the running of the Temple, using his skills as a scribe to assist Aranach. More than anything else however, he lives for combat in the name of the Source.

STRATEGIC VISIONS



THE MECKLENBURG GAMBLE

A battle scenario for the futuristic wargame GEV

Many wargamers would be familiar with Steve Jackson's 21st Century Tactical Ground Combat game, OGRE. His premise is that mechanised warfare makes a reappearance in the mid-21st century following the invention of 'biphase carbide armour'. This lightweight armour means that even air-cushion vehicles can carry several centimeters of protection. In effect, nothing less than a tactical nuclear weapon is likely to dent a BPC armoured vehicle. Infantry have benefitted from the development of the 'heavy powered suit' - 4cm of BPC armour and jet power making the infantryman the equivalent of a 20th century tank. Long-range missiles have declined in value because of enhanced electronic counter-measures and anti-missile beam weapons. The ultimate development of the new mechanized warfare is the computer-controlled 'cybernetic attack vehicle'. Their array of weapons, the 2-3 metres of BPC and their nuclear powered engines make them virtually unstoppable. They are called OGRES.

G.E.V. is the sequel game to OGRE (over 100,000 copies of the game are in print and a computerized version is now available). It expands OGRE to simulate small unit and infantry tactics, in the titanic conflict between the Combine and the Paneuropean Alliance.

DATELINE: SPRING 2086

After blunting the Paneuropean drive on Riga in the summer of '85, Army-Group Baltic used the winter to re-organize and re-equip. Stretching an already taunt supply network to the limit, the army group was made ready for a counter-offensive.

Baltic's task was made easier in that much of Pan-E's Eastern Army was tied down occupying the east coast of the old North American Federation. When the mud had dried, A.G. Baltic launched its attack. The Pan-E garrison in Poland was shattered and the ruins of Warsaw were stormed. The way was open to the North German Plain.

Only the Central Reserve, moved forward to the Mecklenburg city of Rostock, stood in the way of a decisive Combine breakthrough. In order to maintain momentum, Marshal Sargov chose to deploy his Special Forces. An amphibious and airborne assault would be launched to capture the port of Lubeck, thus trapping the Central Reserve east of the Elbe, where they could be annihilated at leisure by the second-line infantry.

ORDER OF BATTLE

COMBINE FORCES

201st ASSAULT SQUADRON [Col. Rik Danilov] - 12 GEV
366th JUMP TROOP [Captain Alex Kutsevov] - 8 INF
2nd TANK BATTALION [Major Dev Gorki] - 10 ARMOUR

ENTRY:

201st: any water hex, east side of map - Turn 1
366th: Drop Zone (DZ) on any clear hex - any turn
(units to be deployed within 3 hexes of DZ - may not move on initial turn)
2nd: any undestroyed lakeside city hex - after Lubeck is taken
(max. of 4 units per turn - may not move on turn of landing)

PANEUROPEAN FORCES

XXXIII LANDWEHR DIVISION [Maj. Franz Tenkof] - 24 INF, 5 ARMOUR
WEST COUNTRY VOLUNTEERS [Col. James Fiennes] - 10 ARMOUR
(+1 INF per LT or HVY TANK)

ENTRY:

XXXIII: any city - deploy at start
(max. of 4 INF & 1 ARM strength points per city hex)
VOLUNTEERS: enter on hexes 0422 and/or 1822 - turn 5

VICTORY CONDITIONS

COMBINE:

UNIT DESTRUCTION

6 points per BRIDGE destroyed
2 points per CITY WITH ROAD destroyed

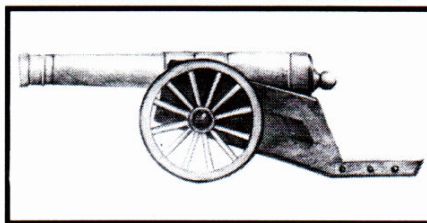
PANEUROPEAN:

UNIT DESTRUCTION

6 points per CITY WEST OF HEXROW 06 (occupied or adjacent to a friendly unit)
30 points for majority control of LUBECK (hexes 1915-2315)

GAME LENGTH: 20 turns

STRATEGIC VISIONS



STRATEGY & TACTICS

The Veteran of Wargaming Magazines

Famous for being the first magazine to include a complete wargame, *S&T* has now been in existence for over 26 years. The magazine was the brain-child of Christopher R. Wagner, then an active U.S. serviceman, stationed on an airbase in Japan. His decision to publish "A Journal of American Wargaming" was based on what he felt was the "useless or grossly naive articles" filling Avalon Hill's *General*. He was determined to produce a professional magazine for serious gamers. Volume I Number 1 was published in January 1967. It had twelve pages, with an article on the Remagen Bridgehead and variants for AH's Blitzkrieg and Battle of the Bulge. The initial circulation was 160 copies.

Over the years the magazine has been through many vicissitudes. The latest, in 1991, saw Chris Cummins purchase the magazine from 3W, under the label *Decision Games*. The new editor in chief is Joseph Miranda. He has seen active duty as a military policeman and special operations officer, and obtained a bachelor's degree in history from UCLA. Some of his wargames designs include: *Nicaragua*, *Nato*, *Trajan* and *Franco-Prussian War*.

Under his stewardship the magazine's ethos has shifted from one of supporting popular assumptions on warfare, to one of determining "the exact nature of how wars were actually fought." The emphasis on innovative analysis and "hard" data means that articles and games are now concerned with political, economic and cultural factors, not just military ones. This new ethos is clearly reflected in the *Trajan* game.

Other key people in the new team at *S&T* are Keith Schlesinger and Matthew Caffrey. "Kirk" Schlesinger is the managing editor. Besides

editing, he develops *S&T* games and prepares errata. A professor of history at Northwestern University, "Kirk" has been a wargamer for 25 years. Caffrey is Senior Contributor and Applied Wargaming editor. He was a combat engineer in the U.S. Marine Corps and a Senior Analyst at the USAF Wargaming Center. He has a MA (Military History) from the university of Alabama.

S&T #145

Edited by: JOSEPH MIRANDA
DECISION GAMES 1992
REVIEW: BRAD MARTIN



After the tyrannical reign of Domitian came to an end, the Roman Senate seized the initiative from the Praetorian Guard and nominated the elderly Marcus Cocceius Nerva as Emperor. Nerva was not as compliant as the Guard expected. He adopted as his son and successor Marcus Ulpius Traianus (Trajan), an experienced and popular soldier, then governor of Upper Germany.

Trajan became Emperor in January 98 AD after Nerva's death. He suppressed the Praetorians and then devoted much of his time to the administration of the empire. The period 101-106 A.D. was spent in war against the Dacians. Finally Dacia was incorporated into the empire as a province and Trajan could turn his attention to the east.

Trajan's Parthian War, 114-117 A.D. is the feature article for this issue of *S&T*. It describes and analyses Trajan's annexation of Armenia, his advance to the Persian Gulf, the subsequent Parthian revolt, the nature of the Parthian state and army, and Roman military geography.

The accompanying game, *Trajan: The Roman Campaign in the East* was designed and developed by Joseph Miranda. It is the first in a projected 'Roman Warfare' series of games to be produced by *S&T*. Each game in the series will have a similar scale and use the same basic set of rules. It aims to give a view of ancient warfare from the perspective of the commanding generals.

The distinguishing feature of *Trajan* is the use of 'Strategem Markers' to represent various political, diplomatic and military actions. At the

beginning of their turn each of the supreme leaders receives a number of strategem markers equal to their leader rating. Markers may also be gained through winning battles, capturing cities or pillaging. There are four types of markers: Military, Agent, Political and Special. They may be played at the beginning of a player's turn or to counter an enemy action. The use of these markers introduces a much needed element of uncertainty into historical games. You may suddenly find that your leader has been assassinated or that your elite bodyguard unit has gone over to the enemy.

The rules are comprehensive (28 pages in length), yet not overly complex. The division into Basic and Advanced rules means that the game can be played after very little preparation. Only in the Advanced game are battles to be resolved on the **Battle Board**, (here command control and tactics are of supreme importance in determining the outcome).

The map (drawn by Mark Simonitch) covers the area of ancient southwestern Asia, from Anatolia to Parthia. It is based on the map of Claudius Ptolemy from the 2nd Century A.D. It thus reflects the dominating position of Ctesiphon and the importance of rivers (as transport routes).

Trajan is a worthwhile addition to the compendium of wargames, especially as it deals with the ancient world - an era that has been neglected by most games designers. The game is fun to play and provides a challenge for both sides (the greater number of Parthian units and events such as the 'Parthian Uprising' help to offset the superior Roman discipline and control). Five scenarios, one campaign game and one battle scenario are supplied.

Other articles in *S&T* #145 were *Naval Weaponry of the 1990's*, *Theater Warfare Exercise* and *Weapon System: F-15 Eagle*. I found these less than appealing. The Cold War is ended - we don't need more 'Toys for the Boys' type articles. *For Your Information*, (a collection of military history facts and opinion) by A. A. Nofi was, however, up to its normal high standard. The reinterpretation of the campaign of Marathon in light of the faction fighting between the

Pisistratids and Alcmaeonids (an autocratic Athenian clan expelled by the Pisistratid tyrant in 514 B.C.), was a worthwhile read. Extensive and required errata on *Objective: Tunis* (S&T #140) and *Hannibal: The Second Punic War* (S&T #141) rounded off a magazine that more than maintained S&T's high standards. On the basis of this issue, it has a bright future.

Tactical Hints for Trajan

Roman Player:

At least one Roman leader should be left on a Provincial Capital so as to collect recruits.

Rivers are valuable methods of transporting armies.

Any expeditionary force sent against the Armenian cities should be substantial (at least 4 units) - the way is long and attrition high.

Armies should consist of combined arms. A preponderance of legions attempting to besiege a city is vulnerable to Fire Combat.

Be wary of garrisoning captured Parthian cities with civis units - these are likely to revolt if the 'Uprising' chit is played.

Parthian Player:

Initial Set-Up: Concentrate core units near Ctesiphon. All Armenian units to be set up in a single force. A unit or two in an Arabian city will dissuade the Romans from making a desert expedition. Place one leader in an eastern regional capital (to build a reserve army.)

Play the "Trade Concession" chit as soon as possible, and begin building up a reserve army.

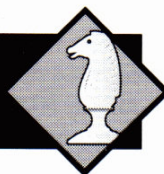
Use "Agent Chits" to maintain secrecy of composition of Exercitus forces.

Establish a small raiding force to threaten Cappadocia and Cilicia, thus tying down units of the limited Roman force pool.

Don't leave your counter-offensive too late. □

DAYS OF DECISION

by: GREGORY PINDER
& HARRY ROWLAND
AUSTRALIAN DESIGN GROUP 1992
REVIEW: FRANK FARRELLY



Having been a *World In Flames* fanatic for years I awaited the expansion game, *Days of Decision*, with not a little excitement. The possibility of invading Czechoslovakia in 1938, concluding an Anglo-German Alliance or securing Poland as an Axis minor seemed to offer unlimited flexibility to a much played wargame. Indeed, upon playing *Days of Decision* I found it possible to conduct a separate Spanish Civil War, and to influence the politics of a range of small European nations which are neutral in the original *World In Flames* scenarios. Nonetheless *Days of Decision* has some serious design and concept flaws.

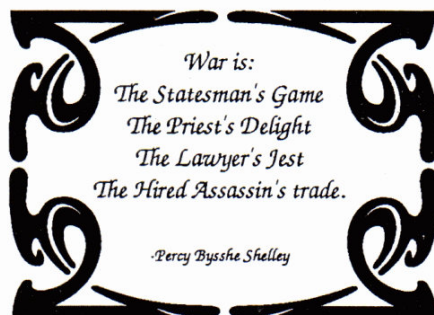
Representing diplomacy in a wargaming format has always been difficult, and to my mind only succeeds well in the classic, *Diplomacy*, though the original premise of this game (pre-1914 power politics) is lost in the simple mechanics, and unrestrained Machiavellian impulses are encouraged by its military design. Like the *Origins of the Second World War*, an earlier attempt at pre-1939 diplomatic intrigue, *Days of Decision* represents diplomacy as a mere extension of warfare by other means. Disappointingly, it pits the Allies against the Axis automatically and thus discounts a new alliance system. For example, Italy is automatically tied to Germany by the design of the options cards, Il Duce cannot revive the Stresa Front or maintain a strict neutrality. The Axis player, if disallowed from playing a German or Japanese option, will (perhaps grudgingly) take an Italian option that will strengthen the anti-German Pact.

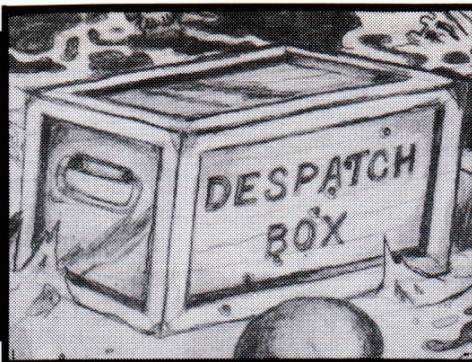
Similarly, and more unforgivable, the Allies are locked together. The vast majority of options played by the Allied player will always be French or British, with the USA and the USSR only taking passive options to reinforce the Allied position. China is a matter of course, and not unreasonably, impotent, an early victim of Japanese aggression in most of the games I have played. More seriously the separate aims of the Americans and Russians are not adequately represented,

the assumption being that their interests are ultimately served by the defeat of Nazi Germany. In the case of Stalinist Russia, and its East European policies, this is not the case in the late 1930's. Though the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is represented on the options card it does not represent a viable policy alternative to an anti-Nazi Pact, just a temporary reprieve from Barbarossa.

Aside from the conceptual flaws with the options cards and the design of the Alliance systems, the design of the game is 'dazzling' and eventually almost unplayable. The map is only one quarter of the size of the *World In Flames* maps, yet on it is crowded a range of political and economic indicators, as well as a minor country pendulum that measures minor country opinion and political standing (basically either pro-axis and pro-allied, or neutral). The map represents necessary information, but in such a way that it can easily be forgotten or misplaced in the heat of the moment. Frequently, a vast array of paper records are required if something is forgotten. For all but committed *World In Flames* enthusiasts it is probably not worth the effort.

Basically, the options offered by the game designers allow either an aggressive Axis "annexation" policy, or a more persuasive economic strategy, which may allow the Axis to gain some extra allies (including, strangely, Belgium). In the final analysis, the aim of Axis play is to increase its economic and military dominance of Europe, and to neutralise Allied influences. Instead of allowing a shifting pattern of alliances, and a flow of diplomatic activity to suit the objectives of each power, *Days of Decision* ties the two sides to a basically historical scenario, with an interesting range of new scenarios. Certainly it enhances *World In Flames*, but it does not stand as a separate game, and it does not solve the problem of how to transpose politics into a successful historical or wargaming context. □





DESPATCH BOX

(READINGS FROM THE FRONT LINE)
BY BRAD MARTIN

Command Magazine

Command Magazine under the editorship of Ty Bomber has aggressively entered the mainstream market. Initially a 'game in a magazine' in the vein of *S&T*, it can now be found on the display stands of your local newsagent. The shift from a military history and analysis magazine to a glossy, popular format is a bold move. Yet *Command* seems to have been successful. The articles are comprehensive, very interesting, and greatly enhanced by spectacular full colour maps and illustrations. The Australian price is \$8.75 (a version with a game tied to the leading article is also available from games-shops for \$22.50).

Fortress

The Castles and Fortification Quarterly

Another publishing venture that has proved it has staying power and the ability to maintain consistently high standards is *Fortress, The Castles and Fortification Quarterly*. It has recently celebrated its third anniversary. The articles appeal to both specialists and interested readers. They are accompanied by fine quality photographs, plans and drawings. Notwithstanding the fact that there are about 100,000 castles in Europe, the magazine has an increasingly international outlook - issue #10 featured an article on the forts of King George found in Western Australia. For anyone interested in military architecture or wishing to add that extra degree of realism to

their campaign, this is an outstanding magazine.

Battles of Ballecourt

A three metre high cairn bearing the Australian Imperial Forces rising sun emblem and bronze plaques commemorating the 75th anniversary of the battles of Ballecourt was unveiled recently in France. From February to March 1917 the German army retreated to the Hindenburg Line. In April the French Commander-in-Chief, Robert-Georges Nivelle was to launch his disastrous spring offensive against the heavily fortified German line. As a prelude to this offensive, two brigades of the 4th Australian Division (4th and 12th) were ordered to breach the Hindenburg line near the fortified village of Ballecourt, to allow the British to get their cavalry through. The attack on 10th April was the first time Australian infantry had been supported by tanks (even though only one of the twelve made it to the German trenches). The Australians successfully took the trenches but were unable to hold them due to the lack of artillery support. German counterattacks shattered the brigades (the 4th Brigade suffered 2339 casualties out of 3000 men engaged). After the start of Nivelle's offensive, the British government ordered the Imperial troops to support it. On May 3rd, the 5th and 6th Brigades of the Australian Division attacked the Hindenburg Line over the same ground as on 10th April. The Australians succeeded in capturing their ob-

jectives but German counter-attacks necessitated the commitment of the 1st and 5th Australian divisions. They held on, and on 17th May the Germans retreated. The two battles of Ballecourt cost the Australians over 10,000 casualties (including 5000 killed). Of more importance than a few hundred yards of the Hindenburg Line was that the attacks had drawn German attention away from the French sector of the front which had erupted in mutiny following Nivelle's offensive.

Military Simulations

Military Simulations have revamped their mail order magazine. The layout is more readable and the pictures clearer. The comprehensive range of gaming products is still the most impressive in Australia. Ensure that you check out their 'Crazy Specials' - there are some excellent bargains.

HMAS Voyager

Fifty years ago, on the 22nd of September 1942, the Australian destroyer *HMAS Voyager* left Darwin. When dis-embarking the 2/4 Independent Company at Betano Bay, East Timor, the ship drifted onto a reef and struck fast. After being attacked by Japanese Bombers, the ship was abandoned, and on the 25th September it was destroyed by fire. The next Australian ship named *Voyager* met an even more disastrous fate - it was cut in two by *HMAS Melbourne* in 1964 with the loss of 82 lives. □



Holland awakes in a tiny sterile room, biomonitors taped to his chest and temples. For a moment, total disorientation, a wave of nausea, and then-

Memory slams into him and his body goes rigid. Infinite spaces scream at him from a place behind his eyes and he remembers what they have done to him. He relaxes by degrees as the nightmare washes over him. Now he's able to analyse the photorealistic horrors of this bizarre fortress within the glowing non-universe of the matrix. Finally, he brings his pulse completely under control and allows himself a satisfied grin.

He has survived the Sculpted Mentality Storm.

THE SCULPTED MENTALITY STORM

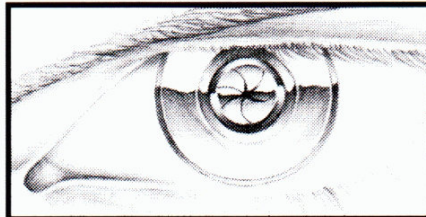
NEURO-INITIATION IN SHADOWRUN by ADRIAN BOER

OVERVIEW

The Sculpted Mentality Storm is a unique system construct designed by Ares Macrotechnology Inc. The function of the construct is to test mental application, discipline and stability in special individuals who are aspiring to enter an elite unit of 'Knight Errant Security', a multi-faceted, paramilitary security division of Ares. The concept was designed by Damien Knight, the mysterious CEO of Ares Macrotechnology Inc. The premise behind the construct is to devise a program which will stretch one's mental conceptions, both conscious and subconscious, to their limits. The result is the SMS: the Sculpted Mentality Storm. This construct is hand-designed, utilizing special Simsense and custom graphics in order to emulate reality in its entirety: Sight, Sound, Touch, Taste and Smell are sharply defined. The subject will be confronted by a series of nightmarish encounters where heart rate, decision clarity and instinct levels are closely monitored.

GM NOTES: Described below, in order, are the sectionalised parts of the system construct. A depiction of the 'nightmare' is provided, along with an explanation. It is important to remember that this construct is a 'sculpted system'. That means that it has custom-designed imagery which is different from the Universal Matrix Specifications imagery. Nodes become geographical places rather than objects hanging in space. In the SMS, the reality is so powerful that it will superimpose itself on the decker's persona, transforming it to fit the new reality. To oppose the restyling, the character must make a Success Test using a number of dice equal to his MCP Rating against the system rating of the node. If it is failed, the persona alters to correctly conform to the new reality. The player usually decides the shift, but in the SMS, the GM chooses the persona because it may convert whilst within

CHROME WAVE



the same node, a genuinely shocking experience. The decker also receives -2 on his reaction attribute for the entire run. (For more information see: Virtual Realities p.51-2, Fasa Corp.)

THE MATRIX

Open your eyes. Frosted hues of colour coded constructs spread in a fantastic neonscape, a grid of flowing pale blue symmetry cast with clusters of data, lances of lineal light lost in parallelism. It's a vibrant, pulsing ecosphere. Above the prismatic strata of boundless icon architecture hang the corporate fortresses, impressionistic data kingdoms unto themselves. This is the neo-realm of communication byways, datastores, corporate constructs, and dissenter deckers. This is the matrix.

THE PYRAMID OF MENTALITY

The Construct

Whispering above the infinite cerulean grid, in a tier of iridescent polyhedral and spherical shapes, an obsidian ziggurat shimmers in a mysterious tint of metallic darkness. It's a small palatial pyramid of iconic beauty, tapering to a smooth summit. Uniformly sleek, with sharp lateral edges, it seems to be encircled by an aurora of palpable blackness, drinking in the surrounding light.

GM NOTES: Welcome to the Sculpted Mentality Storm. This is a modest construct in size, but sublime in style: it's very nature warns against uncensored intrusion. Beware transgressors, your very consciousness is in jeopardy.

THE SAN

The Tempest Gate

At the base of the opaque pyramid, a long vertical sliver of ionized silvery light writhes in a spasmodic dance for freedom. Splintered visual abstracts and alphanumeric code transform across the lattice of light. Liquid chromium cascades from the code fabric, down and beyond the black wall of the construct, dissolving into the vivid stratum below.

GM NOTES: This is the only entry into the system. It connects to the matrix at LTG #3175 (52-2552). Unlisted. Orange 5, Barrier 5. It is actually quite an experience passing through this SAN. Being washed by cascading chromium whilst riding through a resilient lattice of coded light is something you don't quickly forget.

SPU ONE

The Calm Before The Storm

You arrive in a small radiant chamber enclosed by kinetic polychrome walls, striated with veins of opaline energy fluxing like strange sleepy rivers. Banks of changing zirconium circuits merge and flow in the polychrome, polarizing in the center of each wall. The pulsing rhythm of a synthetic heartbeat reverberates through the feel of space. The fragrance of impending fear permeates the air, summoning bodily adrenaline. Before a semi-transparent portal, leading to a tendril-like datastream beyond, stands an ancient man, dressed in a white robe



accelerated tube of warped space. Below, a plane of solid black glass. The bottom. Rushing streaks all around. Faster and faster, bolting toward solidity. A fiery comet hailing through a bore of molten larva. A booming thunder. Black glass.

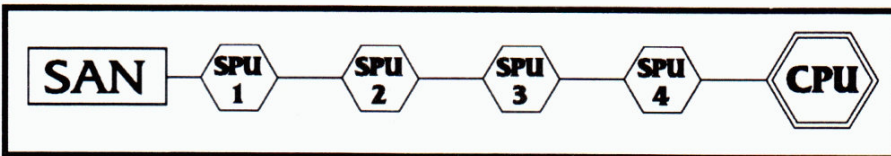
Impact.

GM NOTES: Orange 5. This is a very common nightmare - falling. The only difference is that the Metallic Ride has to be one of the most intense, fast, petrifying rushes anyone could experience. The opening of the revolving disc must be very sudden. The speed of the descent is at unrealistic levels, which must also be stressed. Throughout the Ride, the persona of the subject can alter from an initial human through to a burning comet. Feel free to experiment. The object of this test is to monitor the subject's stress level and clearheadedness. When the subject impacts on the glass, he/she actually passes through a connecting datastream and arrives at the next SPU.

SPU THREE

The Dark Shrine

Motes of protoplasmic slag drip down liquid cellular walls. Amino compounds splash over vertebral cartilage, arched and bowed in insane forms. Sickening metagenetic horrors, shaped from fibrous tissue, swell from the composite living shrine, seeking the threshold of consciousness; pursuing sexual incarnation. Like stains spreading over viscous water, they fill the room, shambling, quivering bodies surging and heaving in virgin desire. Bleached, half melted skeletal proboscii protrude further, engaging in osmotic intercourse, shuddering with acute orgasm. A corrugated bio-structure articulated by integral organic scaffolding raises itself, each segment a rusty sculpture of perversity. Tracts of parasitic larva ingest globules of chlorinated resin, anthrax virii swim in cysts of nauseous milky plasma, multiplying into microscopic embryos and forming hybrid colonies of adaptive non-life. Jets of ammonium and sulfuric acid vomit from circulatory valves, searing cellular flesh and blending with excreted gastric juices. Corroded steel and scabrous epoxy form templates depicting scenes bereft of sanity. Bacterial enzymes immured in cytoplasmic fluid drip from the contorted ceiling, catalyzing symbiotic reactions.



SCULPTED MENTALITY STORM SYSTEM MAP

scintillating with a shifting weave. His eyes are alive with glittering intelligence. He radiates an aura of cold judgement, his finger pointing accusingly...waiting for the key.

GM NOTES: The first SPU is akin to an entry foyer. It is designed to increase the apprehension of the 'Runner' and to terminate intruders. The ancient man is Black IC 4. It was designed by Nasan Helles, and is termed 'The Archon'. If the decker is authorized then access will be granted and the Archon will lower its finger. If not, then it will attack. The heartbeat permeating the chamber will imperceptibly quicken the longer the decker remains in the node. Orange 4, Access 5, Black IC 4.

SPU TWO

The Metallic Ride

Euphonic thunder explodes in the distance, long booming peals that charge the crisp air. An ether of stratified glowing copper, flaming lavender, lustrous silver and steely azure stretch out from the nucleus of a revolving disc of blending colours.

Elsewhere there is nothing but void, but here it's a hypnotic, mercurial utopia, phasing through converging harmonic colours. The meandering swirl of ciphering colours turns faster. The rim curls upwards. The core of the plane falls away. Horizontal is suddenly vertical. You're plunging downward. Streaks of intense molten metalline; platinum, gold, copper and silver, fuse into blazing alloys ascending in a spiralling tube. Falling. A gyrating, psychedelic vortex thrashing in quantum awareness, dropping, tumbling. An explosive rush of static bursts through the quaking conduit, a sensory equivalent of white noise. The vivid surging colours are overwhelming. It's become an enraged vertiginous maelstrom, spinning wildly, ever deepening. Now you're bewildered, plummeting, terrorized, through a cyclonic cone of storming, turbulent metallic colours, a hypersonic ride through an

Sounds of demented, acrimonious prayers resound through this metabolic, biological hell. The smell of biochemical decay diffuses from respiring, stygian walls. The entire environment expands and contracts like an organic vascular sponge laboring in a bizarre ritual of liturgic synthesis.

GM NOTES: *Orange 5. This node truly is 'Hell Incarnate'. The subject must move through this room, all the way to the other side, where he/she may pass through a degenerated alter and into the datastream beyond. The node is 60' square, and to successfully cross the room the subject must make a Willpower Success Test every 15'. Whilst crossing, emphasize the burning sensations of the acid, the hallowed, sick praying and the nauseating, overwhelming smell.*

SPU FOUR

The Killing Ground

A soothing silver light seeps through a predawn forest mist, slowly dissipating to fresh green. A cool tranquil breeze carries a sense of total tranquility. Sweet smells and comforting hums rise out of the foliage in slow, dizzying waves that float and dance in the warm currents. Dappled shadows layer the forest's colours in oddly knit patterns of black and white. Birds sing in melodious unison. Tiny insects fly with sudden, invisible bursts that leave no clue of their passing. A trace of pure light rain falls with a soft sprinkling sound. Leaves become watered silk glistening beneath rays of clear dawn light. Small mirrored pools reflect a glazed grove of emerald, awakening to a perfect, pristine morning. It's a clear curved glade, forested on all sides.

Blood red. Bodies. The acrid smell of the freshly killed. Grim human visages are sprawled over the wet turgid grass, their carcasses shattered with an awful intensity. Some are barely alive, convulsing with dulling agony, gnawing at swollen tongues. The rest, lifeless corpses covered in congealed blood mingled with pealy lymph, their gruesome contortions stiff with lost pain. Amid this sanguine carnage, two naked people, an adult male and an adult female, kneel in the center of the clearing. Their hands are bound behind their backs, their heads are raised. A kind of numb futile expectancy is inscribed across their faces: they wait for an inquisitor to pass judgement, for their inevitable execution. From somewhere babies

are screaming. The rain is falling harder. A glistening, sharp blade fashioned from black chrome lies on the soaked earth pointing toward the two bound figures. Waiting. For you.

GM NOTES: *Orange 5. This node trials the subjects ability to follow an order, and carry out a cold, gruesome killing. The fact that the blade is pointing directly at the two captives is an obvious allusion as to what is to be done. Be sure to accentuate the difference between the beautiful, serene forest and the bloodied glade, to make the circumstances of the killing even more difficult. The captives will not speak or reply to any questions. If they are released they will run off into the forest and very quickly disappear. Once the captives have either been freed or killed, a datastream will open up inside a very large tree trunk.*

CPU

The Eye of the Storm

Finally, calm. The prefabricated nightmares fall away behind and all that remains is a tightly walled obsidian room. They're assessing performance, analysing the screaming brainwaves, charting the downward course of your progress through the Sculpted Mentality Storm. A sign blinks in the black air just above: PLEASE WAIT.

Then, a voice, a warm female voice. 'The test is over. You'll feel a little disorientation, but you can start to relax. We'll jack you out as soon as we've completed our assessment.'

Silence, calm, the tension and horror bleeding away into the darkness. The room dissolves into gentle, numbing static and the real world reasserts itself with a shimmer.

'How do you feel? A little groggy? That's just an after effect of the Storm, you'll be fine in a few minutes.'

She's wearing a smooth white coat, several heavy pieces of scientific equipment riding a black belt that draws the coat in at the waist. A heavy fletcher pistol hangs from the belt, just within reach. She's working quickly, taking readouts from the biomonitor and downloading them into her Data Pack. Without looking down, she speaks, very quietly, and her lips are motionless. 'You passed the test 93% positive. Congratulations, that's a remarkable score. Before you accept the terms of Ares' offer, BioNetics would like to place a counter bid.' She looks down briefly, 'Say nothing yet, and make no move

that I have spoken. BioNetics will offer you a new identity and a negotiable 15% on Ares' contract should you accept our...invitation. If you are interested,' she leans across and begins tapping a keyboard, 'blink your eyes twice.'

GM NOTES: *Never forget that reality can be as accurately portrayed within a Sculpted environment than any nightmare. The CPU is the site of the final test: that of loyalty, and the effect of jacking out of the matrix and returning to the real world is nothing more than a clever piece of programming.*

Should the candidate accept the tech's offer, the test will be immediately terminated and the candidate will be rejected: Ares is not interested in hiring mercenaries who will change sides as soon as a better offer is made. Should the candidate reach for the tech's flechette pistol and spray the photorealistic construct with needles, Ares will compile an overall score and either reject or accept the subject depending on aggregate performance during the rest of the tests. Only then is the strung-out testee released from the black world of the Sculpted Mentality Storm.

CONCLUSIONS

GM NOTES: *The success of the Sculpted Mentality Storm as an enjoyable scenario depends largely on the ability of the GM to ensure that each node is an extremely terrifying experience for the players, by weaving a detailed, shocking description of each event. Every nightmarish encounter should be drawn out slowly, carefully monitoring the characters reactions, and forcing them to take some brash actions. Make certain that the characters senses are sated with all manner of smells, sounds, sights and palpation, and ensure that they are all bad. It is entirely possible that individuals that enter the mentality test could become permanently scarred by the experience. A type of psychosis could develop, such as a fear of heights due to the Metallic Ride, or a phobia of blood could result from the scenes of The Killing Ground. It is largely up to the GM to determine if an individual passes the test. Obviously, severely adverse reactions to any of the nodes would result in failure. Similarly, if after the event the individual begins to suffer any after effects then he/she would also be deemed a failure. The Sculpted Mentality Storm can be utilized in a number of ways. The most obvious is for the players to actually participate in the test, by attempting to join the special unit of Knight Errant Security. Alternatively, and perhaps more enjoyably, is the option of the players simply learning the coordinates of the construct but not actually being able to gleam any information about it. Hence, when they infiltrate the system, the deckers will not have any idea of what is actually occurring. They will have had no forewarning of the impending hells they could face. However, by learning the true purpose of such a construct, the players would possess information that could be sold to Ares' rivals - or potential candidates - for serious nuyen.*

Slade Brockman's

Primogeniture

**...BEING A SHORT SCENARIO
FOR CALL OF CTHULHU**



I was quite shocked by the telegram when it came. An understandable reaction I suppose, it was not as though I was expecting it. I was sitting on the front porch of my home, sipping an after-lunch dry-as-a-bone martini, when a pock-faced seventeen year old in a postman's uniform two sizes too big, came running with earnest fervour up my driveway. His breathless explanation that the Post-Master had said it was urgent, made my heart jump momentarily - but I had no wife, no children to worry about, no ties of any kind, and I was rich. What urgency could a letter to myself hold? I took the folded pink slip of paper from his sweaty hands, opened it, and found myself staring dumbfounded at the words it contained. The post-boy must have thought me paralyzed, for he stood as still as I, staring up at me as though I was about to keel over. I probably shocked him even more when, without a word, I drained my glass, leapt the porch fence, gunned my car into life, and with gravel churning under the rear tyres, headed toward the freeway turnpike at a very unrespectable speed.

A SCREAM OF FEAR



Once heading south on a gun-barrel freeway in my open top Stutz 'Bearcat', I had time to consider the import of what the telegram had said:

SINCERE CONDOLENCES FOR
THE PASSING ON OF YOUR FA-
THER JERAMIAH F TULLEYBEL-
TON STOP THE READING OF THE
WILL TAKES PLACE ON THE 30TH
JULY STOP APOLOGIES FOR THE
DELAY IN FINDING YOU STOP

SHENK SCHULER AND
SPENCE SOLICITORS
29TH JULY 1921.

They were reading my father's
will tomorrow!

When I said I had no ties I was telling the truth. I have not seen my father in twenty years, since I was sixteen. The fact that I have changed my name explains the difficulties the lawyers had in finding me - I made a complete break with my past when I left home, soon after Mama had died. Father was not a kindly man. Well do I remember the beatings suffered at his hands - for whistling, for playing, for talking out of place. Once, when I was just twelve, I dared to enter his precious library where he used to sit for hours on end pondering his books. For this heinous crime I was beaten to within an inch of my life. The little love and solace I received from Mama helped me endure this treatment for seventeen years, but when she died I had to leave - I do not think Father would have been upset. So, I left home, changed my name, made a fortune, and forgot about my sorry past - until now.

Strange as it may sound, considering what he did to me, I felt no particular satisfaction about the passing of my father. Nor did I feel any sadness. A strange compunction drove me to travel back to the place of my childhood - though what I cannot say. Perhaps it was a desire to see my home again, perhaps a need to see the

books that were so forcibly forbidden me when I was young. Or maybe it was just greed - to find out what my father had given me to sooth his own conscience in death. I must admit that the latter seems most likely. Accumulating money has always been a hobby of mine.

Four hours later I backed the Stutz down and rolled at a more sedate pace into the town in which I grew up. I wish I could say something like 'memories came flooding back', but they didn't. The town had radically changed - businesses flourished, people bustled up and down the main street, traffic lights greeted me at the town center. Progress! Whilst stopped at these pillars of modern technology, I asked a passer by for directions to Shenk, Schuler and Spence, Solicitors. Minutes later I pulled up outside a drab, two storey brownstone that would have been at home in any city in this country, and likely as not would have been occupied by lawyers.

Mr Spence, junior partner, was a bespectacled piebald bookworm of the kind I have always despised. With a whining voice he described how my father had died a week earlier from natural causes, and offered me his most insincere condolences. He also described in tedious detail, and with a look of profound distaste on his face, the manner in which they found me - police records. I didn't bat an eyelid - I wasn't caught that often. Though I tried to draw Mr Spence, junior partner, on the contents of the will, he remained tight lipped. He would tell me only that it would be read in these offices tomorrow at eleven in the morning. It looked like I was going to have to stay over night.

Before checking into a hotel, I decided to drive past the old house. It was on the west side of town, the old section, and looked out over a great wood. I remembered getting up some mornings and not being able to see those woods for hours, the mist blanketing them heavily. As the elm trees lining the road began to become more gnarled, and the concrete roads became cobbles, the sights around me became more recognizable. I had a momentary twinge of guilt about my mercenary nature - if I had no feelings for my father, should I take his money? These feelings disappeared, however, when 'home' came into view.

The term mansion does not do justice to my father's home. Though only two stories tall, and not excessively large, the building carries itself with a majesty that is all its' own. It is a hodgepodge of architectural styles - the facade being formed of Greek and Roman columns, intricate cornice work blossoming out around lead-light windows framed in Gothic arches, and a row of gargoyles, hideous and expectant, lining the roof (I suppose they had been in style at one time). For all its' randomness, the house has a certain quality of fascination - all the elements work together in some kind of weird harmony.

Parking the Stutz on the road, I jumped out and hopped over the short steel picket fence onto the front lawn. Unkempt grass rose above my shins, blending with

the rose bushes that grew wild about the yard. My father had obviously not employed a gardener for some considerable time. I kicked through this jungle of weeds and up to the front landing. Ascending the stairs I had no expectation that the door would be open, but thought that perhaps I could peer inside through a window of the house that tomorrow would be mine.

Much to my surprise, when I grasped the door knob it turned, and the door swung smoothly open to reveal a hallway from my distant past. Silently cursing the incompetence of Mr Spence in looking after the property, *my* property, I stepped gingerly onto the red velvet runner and closed the door behind me. My senses were suddenly assaulted from two directions. First, it was dark. Heavy drapes were pulled over the windows, letting only a faint glimmer of light into the hall. At the same time, a pungent odour took my breath away, a strange overpowering scent of old age and mildew, exotic herbs and rotting paper. The kind of smell you find in a storage shed in mid-summer when you discover that a window was left open all winter. My fingers brushed the top of a small table, and I could feel mould growing on it's surface. I strode down the hall more quickly now, my eyes having adjusted somewhat to the lack of light, and my anger at those incompetent lawyers swelling.

I swung open the door at the end of the hall, expecting to be confronted with open windows and an inch of water over the floor. Instead I came face to face with a skeletal figure. I cried out and threw myself back in alarm as it came at me brandishing a broom. Then, in a faint, wheezy, high pitched voice, it spoke to me, asking who I was and what I wanted. Managing to calm down enough to gasp out a reply, I steeled myself to look up and see what it was that confronted me.

It was a man of course, but so old that my first impression of death had been closer to the truth. The skin on his face was pale, almost translucent, drawn tight against his skull. When he spoke, his lips hardly moved, the words coming out in a sibilant whisper. Ancient frail hands gripped the broom handle, gnarled like tree roots, every joint, every bone, every sinew as visible as in an x-ray. His dark blue double-breasted suit was neat, but so far out of style that it would have been more at home in a museum. From under a peaked drivers cap that sat loosely on his head, two narrow-set eyes glared out at me.

My explanation, if somewhat garbled, mollified the man. He introduced himself as Isacc Mellish - butler, housekeeper, cook, driver and gardener[?] to my late father. It seemed that he had been in my father's employ for twenty years. Suddenly I had a competitor for the fortune in my father's will.

Mellish fetched me a drink - a double whiskey - and we sat in the lounge and chatted. I told him of the events of this morning - the telegram and so on - and he told me of my fathers death and complained incessantly about his inability to look after such a huge house. Hopefully, that

Primogeniture

was a duty that would no longer be necessary after tomorrow.

As the light began to fade, with the afternoon nearly over, Mellish asked me if I would like to stay the night. Naturally I replied in the affirmative. If the house was to be mine then I might as well re-acquaint myself with it, and if not, then I'd still save myself the cost of a hotel room. He hobbled off to make up a bedroom, bidding me to take a tour of the house. I did not need to be asked twice. I backtracked down the hall to where two doors faced each other across the passage. To the right I remembered was the dining room and further, the kitchen. I was not interested in either of these.

To the left lay the sitting room, with its bay windows looking out onto the front landing. Behind the sitting room was the library that had always been forbidden to me, but which I was now determined to enter. The sitting room was much as I remembered it. Palatial sofas and leather reading chairs occupied much of the room, with a square card table stuck over in one corner that must have been used by some distant ancestor for surely my father had never played. One thing in the room was different, and it immediately took all reminiscences from my mind. The door to the library, which I remembered as a stout oaken one of normal proportions, was gone. In its place was a monstrosity, a door fully ten feet high and a good five feet in width, finishing just shy of the ceiling. The size did not end its unusualness, for carved onto its surface was an amazing variety of figures - grotesque parodies of the human form preforming unspeakable acts upon one-another. At its center was a carved mouth, gaping wide, with wickedly sharp teeth and a great lolling tongue, glistening as if smeared with a diabolic saliva. I sat down heavily in a chair, staring hypnotically at the door. The mind that carved such a thing could not have been sane - where did my father get this?

Finally drawing my eyes away from the door, I glanced out the windows, over the woods to where the sun was setting. The fading light made me gather my courage, and renewed my desire to see inside the library. I approached the door, and was confronted with no means of opening it. No handle presented itself. With trepidation I reached

out and gave it a push. Under my fingers I could feel the carved figures, and the greasy sheen on the wood made them feel like they were writhing at my touch. The door would not budge. Obviously my father had hidden the latch, so as to protect his books. As the sun dipped below the horizon, I felt it wise to leave this mystery for the moment. I wandered over into the dining room to find that Mellish had laid the table, and the sound of food preparation could be heard from the kitchen. I fixed myself a scotch to calm my shaky nerves and settled down to wait.

I ate alone of course, Mellish eating in the kitchen as was proper. Candle-light may be romantic for two, but by oneself it can be quite unnerving. It seemed that electricity had never been installed in the house. Mellish retired after dinner, bidding me to call if I needed anything. Taking a candelabra, I decided that the wisest course was to emulate Mellish in an early night. I made my way to the bedroom he had pointed out, lay down on the overly soft bed, and drifted into slumber - the dust of the long unused room settling over me where it had been disturbed.

I awoke, I cannot say why, just a few hours later, an unheard noise dragging me from sleep and from my bed. In crumpled clothes, with candelabra in hand, I opened the door and peered into the corridor, not knowing what I sought. From further down the corridor I could see a shaft of light escaping from beneath the door of Mellish's room. This, however, was not the focus of my attention. Another light beckoned me to the left. A red luminescence subsumed the top of the stairway. It seemed to be emanating from below, but it was difficult to tell. The glow did not provide light but merely served to emphasize the shadows all around me. As I approached the stairs the rubescence receded before the feeble light of my candles. The glow pulled me down the stairs, a dread curiosity forcing me to proceed through the lounge, along the hall, and, as I guessed it would, to the sitting room and that terrible door.

The sight that greeted me there sent a wave of fear down my spine. The door was slightly ajar, opening out into the sitting room, and framed in a penumbra of the ruby luminance, brighter now and more penetrating. It no



Primogeniture

longer faded before my candles, but overwhelmed them, their light seeming weak and ineffective against this otherworldly glow. Almost against my will, my feet took me forward towards the library, my apprehension growing with every step. In the light, such that it was, the carved figures on the door seemed to writhe, as if attempting to escape their contiguity with the wood of the door. As I grasped the door and pulled it open, I felt a sharp sting on my hand, as if it had been bitten. For the moment the pain was secondary, however, to the visions I saw as the door fully opened to reveal the library within.

Looking into the interior of the room was like a momentary glimpse of Hell. The fiery glow consumed all, bathing the book-shelves that lined three walls in an unnatural sanguineous hue. The blood-red light came from everywhere, illuminating yet making the objects in the room incorporeal, without substance or being. Dominating the room was a large, heavily framed desk. Its surface was bare but for an unlit candle. Behind the desk was a high-backed leather chair, turned away from me toward the bay windows that looked out over the darkness of the back lawn. A faint tapping upon them could be heard, as from a twig or leaf brushing against them in the breeze.

The beating of my heart sounded all too loud to me, throbbing through my skull at a rate born of fear. I understood nothing of what was happening to me, and wished that it would remain that way - knowledge of what had caused such a phenomenon could only bring evil upon oneself. And yet I stepped into the room, feeling the same irresistible draw that I had experienced earlier. Sweat prickled my brow, and I could feel my grip on the candelabra become less sure as my palms began to sweat. With my back against the towering book-cases, I edged slowly around the room, my eyes darting left and right trying to make some sense of what was occurring. As I reached the corner of the room my heart froze. I could see an arm resting upon the chair. As if signaled by my perception, the chair swung round upon its base, turning to face me. In it sat my father, older but not enough so, his dead eyes staring out at me without emotion, just as they had twenty years before.

The candelabra slipped out of my hand, silently falling into the thick carpet of the floor. My legs collapsed under me, and I sank down, my back against the bookshelf. My eyes were fixed upon the grim visage of my father. His face was lined with age, retaining the frown that I have never seen it without. His face was still fleshed out however, not gaunt, and the hands gripping the armrests still showed a measure of strength about his limbs. It was his eyes that will forever stay imprinted in my mind, holding a terrified, anguished fear - eyes that have seen sights that they should not have, sights enough to chill the very substance out of your mind. We sat staring at each other for the longest time, until something else began to impinge upon my senses. From the windows the tapping had been steadily increasing, as if a great wind had picked up outside. Now the branches, or whatever it was,

screached across the windows, and a dry flapping, like sheets hung out to dry, could be heard. A scream was wrenched from my father's mouth and his body shook in pain. I leapt up, free of the paralysis of fear that had held me. The noise died for a moment, and my father raised his head and spoke.

"The book - find the book, you fool - they're coming."

I know not whether it was fear or sympathy for my father's words, but I fled that fell room and thrust the door closed behind me. As it swung closed, very faintly from inside the room I could hear the words repeated:

"They're coming."

I scrambled through the sitting room, wanting to separate myself further from the library. Tripping over chairs and upsetting side-tables, I dashed across the hall into the dining room to the drinks cabinet. With a scotch in shaky hand, I sat at the dining table facing the door to the hall. Deep breaths calmed my heart but not my mind, which whirled and spun like a top as I tried to fathom what had happened. "The book", what book did he mean? How was I supposed to find it, in a house I had not known for twenty years, and why should I for a father who was supposed to be dead? All thoughts of inheritance had fled my mind, and now I merely wished to leave this house with my sanity intact. After twenty minutes of sitting in the dark, pondering these questions, I came upon an answer, of sorts. A strange house, strange company, and past memories had created a madness in me. I was having delusions about my father, I rationalized - entirely understandable. Convincing myself that this was the case, I made my way through the darkened house back to the second story and my bed, reassured by the non-appearance of any mysterious glowing light. As I approached my bedroom, the light still shone out from Mellish's door, a beacon of normality on such a strange night. Having left my own candelabra behind, I thought to ask Mellish where I might gain another.

Knocking lightly at the door gained no response, so I quietly twisted the knob, not wishing to disturb his sleep. As it swung open, a wave of fear swept over me, and I realized my foolishness - what happened in the library was real and a great danger was loose in this house. A foul stench, like rotting meat, assailed my nose and caused the bile to rise in my stomach. The door opened and inside an ill-lit room greeted me. One candle sat beside the bed, upon a tall candle holder, casting flickering shadows onto the walls. In an unmade bed Mellish sat, cross-legged and hunched over, with his back to me. In sudden realization and revulsion it became clear that the candle holder was a severed arm, the candle held by fingers solid with *rigor mortis*. The gasp that escaped my lips caused Mellish to turn, quick as light, to stare at me over his shoulder. He seemed as I had known him this afternoon, until he smiled at me. The hideous grin froze my blood. Framed by incarnadine lips, his mouth was full of teeth as sharp and pointed as needles, meeting together like the cruel jaw of some inhuman trap. His mottled skin pulsed and wa-

Primogeniture

vered under the candle's glow as he slowly uncurled himself from his sitting position, laying that which had been on his lap in front of him and swinging his legs over the edge of the bed. I caught a glimpse of his fingernails then, stained with blood and tapered to razor points.

I grasped the only thing near at hand, a chair, as he began to slowly stand, that terrible smile still on his face. He took one finger up to his mouth and licked it. The fingernail cut his tongue, and blood ran freely from the wound, out of his mouth and dripped off his chin. Suddenly he spat at me, and I could feel his blood on my face. In desperation I readied the chair for a swing, even though I could not see it hurting the demonic form that stood before me. Like lightning he came at me, a hissing noise marking the attack. A sudden pain in my left arm caused me to swipe the chair crosswise at his head. With a huge crash it connected, spinning his form across the room and against the far wall. Three legs of the chair were broken off and the fourth was severed in a jagged point three-quarters of the way up its length. The thing that had been Mellish turned slowly once more to face me, a long bloody gash open on its forehead and the smile now a grimace of loathing. Panic took hold of me. I charged toward the creature, holding the chair in front of me, my eyes closed. A clash of bodies sent me sprawling away to the floor, my head struck the edge of the bed, and a cool, sweet feeling swept through me, as my conscious mind fled.

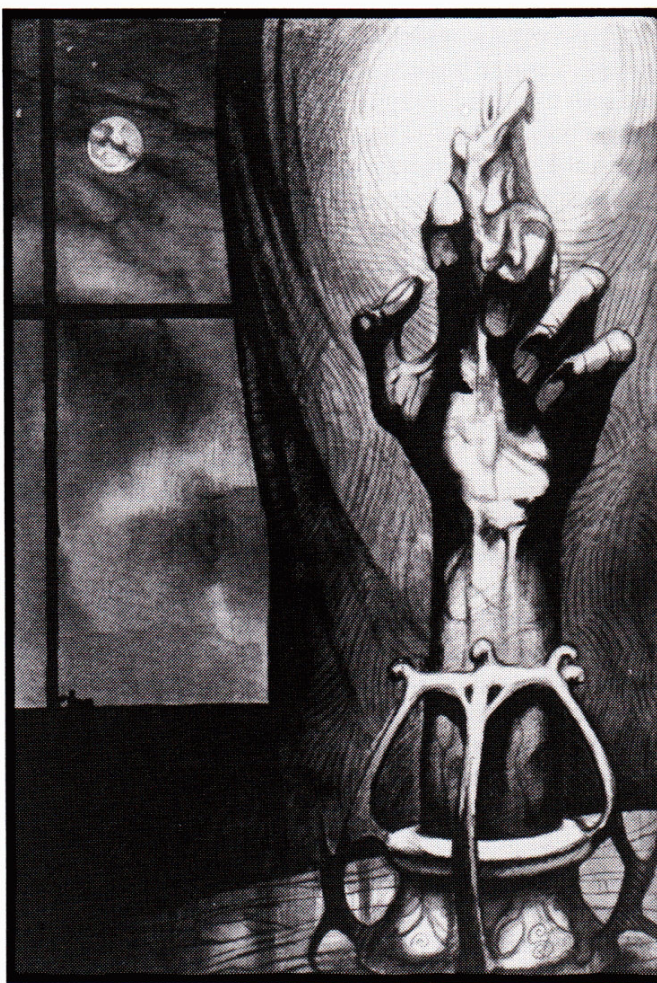
Coming to, I know not how long after, I sat up only to be assailed by dizziness. Clutching the bed, I scrambled to my feet. The candle still burned upon its loathsome holder, illuminating the body in the corner. The wooden chair leg had plunged through the left side of the creature's chest, impaling his heart, if it had one. Red ichor dripped from around the wound, coagulating in pools on the floor where it fell from the twisted body. Upon the pillow of the bed lay that which the evil form had been contemplating when I first entered the room. A book. Ancient it looked, leather-bound with ornately engraved sigils and letters over its cover. I picked it up and found that the words were in some script that I had never seen. Opening it, I found pages of similar indecipherable text printed upon parchment thin and fragile with age. As I

stared at the words a feeling of dread overtook me, and quickly I closed the book, fearing what it contained. I left the room with the book but forsaking the candle and its foul holder.

Once again in the darkness of the house, I navigated my way back toward the library. Loath as I was to re-enter that room, now that I had in my hand the book that my father wanted, it seemed as if I could do little else. My normally amoral mind could not leave my father in that Hell, even though there he would undoubtedly go when he did die. Also, I needed questions answered. I would never be at peace without knowing what had occurred

this night. As I walked through the lounge I crossed to the fire-place, and grasped a poker in my right hand. With the book in my left, I entered the hall, slowly guiding myself by touch along its length. I turned into the sitting room and crossed to the malevolent door. The world was filled once again with the dreadful red glow, the baleful light flowing out of the fully opened door in front of me. I grasped the fire-poker tightly and stood, walking fearfully through the door. The chair was once again turned away from me, and all else was the same as when I first entered. The noise, however was undiminished, and was now accompanied by a discordant chittering. I saw a shape move outside the windows, gliding across them like a great bat. I rushed to the desk, wishing to fulfill the foul task upon me. Around the desk I came, as the tumult outside increased its frenzied tempo. My father

sat there wracked in pain, his arms clenched to his side, his breathing short. He looked older somehow, as if some terrible force was draining away whatever life he possessed. I placed the book upon his lap, almost throwing it down. From behind me came a crash, and I spun around to see a broken pane. Crashing through it was a black chitinous appendage, the end clawed and dripping a dark ichor. The beast to which it was attached could not be seen, for this I am eternally thankful. Outside I could sense a large number of the creatures, trying to get in. What stopped them I do not know. I thrust the poker at the appendage only to have it pulled from me. From behind me another sound rose, a powerful voice the like of which I have never heard. My father sat with the book open on his lap, reading words that I could not understand. They came



from his mouth scrambled and unintelligible, but with them they carried a dread power. He broke off for a second to look up at me and an expression flickered across his face, not of love or thanks, but of pity. In a quiet but commanding voice he told me to leave. Another crash came from the window as I retreated to the doorway, and another foul limb reached in toward my father. As I watched, my father's chair burst into flame, and a sound of intense agony mixed with triumphant laughter burst from him as the fire rose and engulfed him. As I slammed the door closed, the last thing I saw was the book he was reading from fall to the floor beside him, its pages alight.

I fled the house. Only once the Stutz was out on the freeway did I begin to calm down. As the dawn broke over the horizon I rolled into my own driveway, which I had left not twenty-four hours before. I ran inside and bolted the doors and windows. My arm throbbed where I had been struck by the beast that had been Mellish. The long scratches traced a path from shoulder to wrist, still oozing with blood. On one finger of my right hand was a round cut, with tiny incisions around it. It was as if I had been bitten by a tiny mouth. Cleaning and bandaging these wounds, I took a hard drink to calm myself and sat down. Exhausted though I was I could not fall asleep, rather I kept hearing the flapping of alien wings and the gibbering of alien voices. When finally a full bottle of whisky had been consumed, I fell into a deep and troubled sleep.

Epilogue.

I finish off this account of my first experience with the realms of being that are beyond ordinary people. Lucky are they who do not know what lies in wait for an unsuspecting humanity. One more event must I present to you before I end this document. One week after arriving back at my own house a package arrived from Shenk, Schuler and Spence. In it were three items; a letter, a diary and a book. The letter told of the reading of the will, which I had missed, and which unaccountably had no mention of the house, which had burnt to the ground. All that was left to me were the items in this package. The diary was my father's, the pages showing the ramblings of a demented man, tortured by visions of horror. The last object, the book, was at once the most amazing and frightening. It was the same book I had taken from Mellish, the same book that had been burnt with my father. At first I was unwilling to even touch it, but now it seems as though I must. It is in Latin, and I have obtained an instruction text so as to translate it. I feel unwilling to let any scholar see it and so I labour over this impossible task myself, by candle-light in my loft. I am a changed man, money no longer has a draw on me, today only knowledge is my lure. The task is proceeding well, though much of this book seems like the delusions of an insane psychopath. There is one word constantly through the book which makes no sense. CTHULHU. What can it mean? I vow I shall find out.

*Joseph Dixon (formerly Joseph Tulleybelton)
2nd of November, 1921.*

ROLE PLAYING PRIMOGENITURE.

Converting this story into a short scenario is not a difficult task and is one that can be very rewarding as a one-off game, part of an existing campaign, or as an introductory adventure. It is possibly best suited to the latter, as it is not likely to kill characters unless they are exceptionally foolish. It was played by myself as a one off game (when one of my campaign players absconded for the evening), with two investigators, both being relatives of Jeramiah Tulleybelton; one a nephew and one a son. Rather than over one night, as in the story, the investigators spent two nights in a frenzied search of the house and grounds. Being paranoid, as most experienced Cthulhu players are, they quickly located the kitchen's ample supply of knives and choppers, and an axe in the woodpile in the back yard. Going outside in the middle of the night gives a Keeper ample food for fright - gargoyles towering over them expectantly, as though about to leap from the roof; mysterious trees with leafless branches, swaying in the still air; noises from the outdoor toilet that are not man-made. If the investigators do go outside, let them find nothing outside the library's bay-windows - no trees to scratch against it and only a quiet darkness behind the drawn curtains. A Keeper should try and emphasize the dream-like, ethereal quality of events. No answers can be found in this scenario, no great mysteries solved - only a strange house, stranger people, and a very bad night's sleep - all the ingredients for a good Cthulhu adventure.

WHO AND WHY ???

Jeramiah's fate is near at hand when the investigators arrive. Five of these servant creatures come to free Jeramiah from his life. His spell casting in the past has attracted the attention of beings of greater power (as this is only required if this adventure is played as part of a campaign, I will leave its identity up to the discretion of the Keeper involved). The Byakhees will be kept at bay by the controlling spells of Jeramiah for a period of no greater than twenty four hours from the investigator's first meeting with him. Gung-ho investigators who smash the windows in this first encounter will surely die. If the investigators cannot locate the book within this time, they will find the door to the library opened, and the mangled twisted frame of Jeramiah on the floor - Mellish will be gone, and the investigators will have a lot of explaining to do to the local authorities. The following night the house will burn down at the hands of Mellish. If the investigators drag Jeramiah from the library upon their first meeting, then the Byakhees will pursue. Though a Byakhee can be easily outrun by a car, they are also relentless trackers and will attack once Jeramiah is left alone. If they are all killed no more attacks will follow.

The other characters in this adventure, such as Spence, should be developed as the Keeper sees fit. It might be interesting to have a terrified Spence with the investigators, jumping at shadows and causing confusion at every turn.

Primogeniture



Jeramiah Tulleybelton.

Str: 13 Dex: 10 Int: 17
Con: 9 App: 11 Pow: 1
Siz: 13 Edu: 18

SAN: 10 HP: 8 MAG: 0
Move: 5

Skills

Cthulhu Mythos..60%
History..40%
Library Use..70%
Occult..30%

Jeramiah has delved too deeply into arcane tomes, calling to himself creatures of unspeakable evil. One even occupied his house with him for twenty years, drawn by the power of the spells. In his final moments as he sits, trapped by a power unknown, a new hope comes into his life. If one particular book can be returned, then he can end his pain. Jeramiah can be rescued, if pulled bodily out of the room, but pursuit will follow (see below - Byakhee). He will not willing to leave, however, more interested in ending his pain. If rescued, Jeramiah's mind is nearly gone, he will rant and rave about creatures coming to get him and dark things of the night. His final vestiges of magical power are being used as a control spell to keep the Byakhees at bay. It is unlikely that he can become sane again, though an extended stay in an institution might do the trick. If the investigators persist with this line and manage to protect him from that which will come after him, then Jeramiah can be a valuable source of knowledge in a campaign, though he will never be able to adventure again. In my campaign Jeramiah was less of a demon in the mind of the investigators than he is in the story, and more of a peculiar figure from their childhood who unexpectedly leaves them something in his will. His reaction to them should be adjusted accordingly when they first meet.



Isacc Mellish.

Str: 16 Dex: 17 Int: 13
Con: 14 App: 9 Pow: 10
Siz: 13

HP: 20 Move: 10
Claw 60% 1D6
Bite 20% 1D6-2 + special

Sanity loss 1, 1D8

Isacc is a corrupted human - a man who involved himself with the dark arts until they totally consumed his mind and body. He is quick and vicious if cornered, but will not reveal himself to the investigators, unless they offer him violence or are about to discover the book. If asked in daylight hours if he knows anything about the book, he will send the investigators off on a wild goose chase - to a safety deposit box, or into the woods where Jeramiah walked occasionally with a shovel? If told of the investigators encounter with Jeramiah, a grin will flash across Mellish's face (half Spot Hidden to see), and he will put it down to a bad dream. There is a small chance of Mellish actually reading the book when the investigators enter his room (15%). The other foulness in the room will still be present, so if they knock at his door loudly, he will hide the book and come to the door, talking to the investigators outside. There is a small secret chamber just under his bed, where the book is hidden (Listen roll to hear being closed if door is knocked upon). Mellish will fight with bite and claw, and viciously - most investigators will not find him as easy to defeat as in the story. His bite will not heal as other wounds, and will permanently reduce an investigator's Hit Points by one. If sorely wounded and given the opportunity, Mellish will flee - only to set upon the investigators when they take the book to Jeramiah. If the investigators remove Jeramiah, Mellish will burn the house and flee.

Byakhee

Statistics as in *Call of Cthulhu*.

Primogeniture

WHAT ???

The Book.

Again this is largely up to the Keeper, and depends on whether the adventure is played as part of a campaign or as a one-off. Roll one from the list in *Call of Cthulhu*, or invent one of your own. Remember, however, that the events of the scenario will lead the investigators to believe that the book will have a high spell multiplier. A Keeper should only change this if necessary for the smooth running of a campaign. Perhaps even a translation of the dreaded *Necronomicon* would be in order. As to how the book reached the investigators if the scenario proceeds along the same lines as the story, is a question only the Gods can answer.

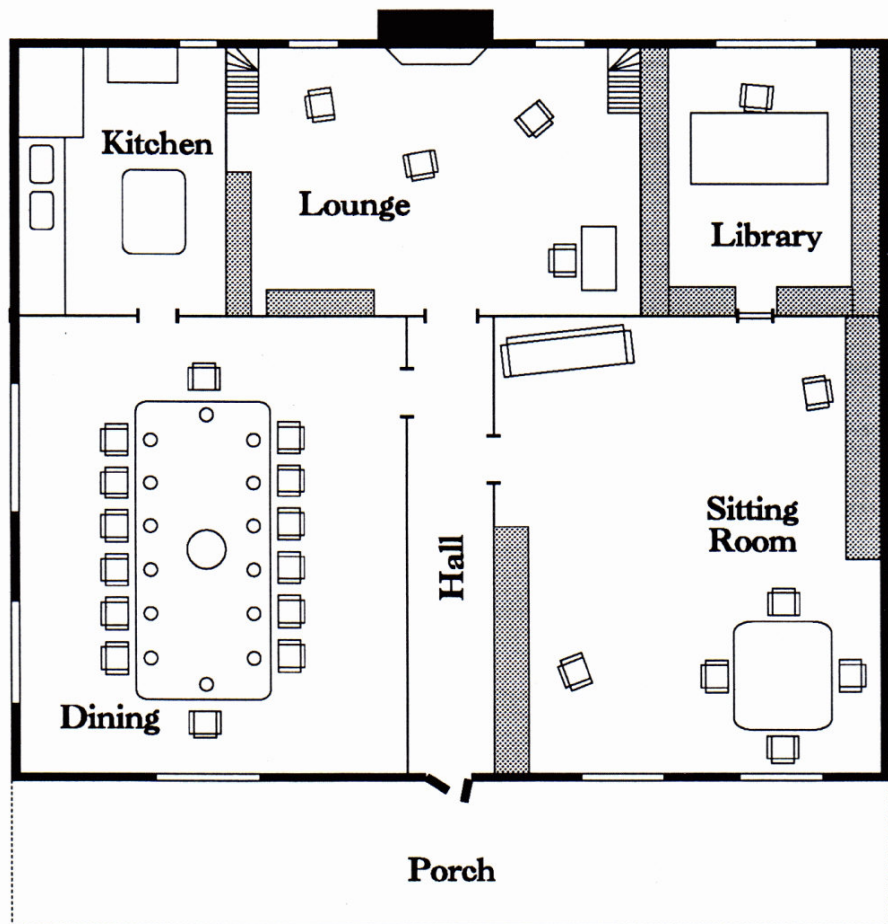
The Diary.

As described in the story, these are the ravings of a man progressively plunging into the depths of insanity. The work is incoherent and garbled, frequently skipping months, if not years, at a time. No spells can be gained from the diary, though it will give some clues to the contents of the book it accompanied. To read the diary in its entirety will lead to a increase in Cthulhu Mythos skill (of 6%) and a loss of Sanity (of 1D4).

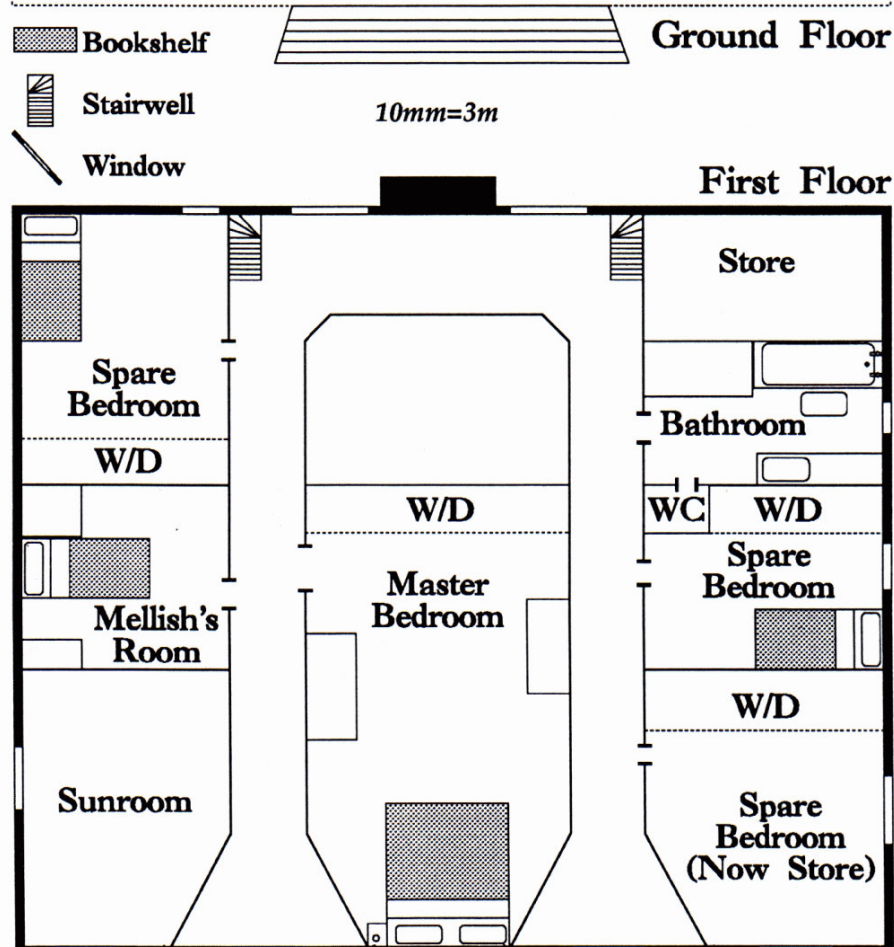
The Door.

What it is and where it came from will likely never be known to the investigators. Jeramiah picked it up a few years before, after he had become interested in the arcane. It took him much labour to fit it in place, which he did with the gleeful help of Mellish. Jeramiah was unwilling to let any workmen into his house and see it. It confers no power on its owner, but is merely an abomination. The writhing carved figures are the trapped souls of many an unfortunate cultist asked to make the ultimate sacrifice. To stare at it will rend the investigators mind (1, 1D6 Sanity loss). The bite inflicted by the figures will cause no damage, but should be used to frighten and confuse.

If the investigators try to destroy the door physically, an unearthly scream will erupt, causing temporary



Ground Floor



First Floor

deafness and further Sanity loss (1, 1D4)

Further Encounters.

The entry into Mellish's room, the candle holder therein and the first time the investigators enter the library all have a Sanity loss of 1D4 if Sanity check is failed, no loss if it is made (eg. 0, 1D4).

The Car.

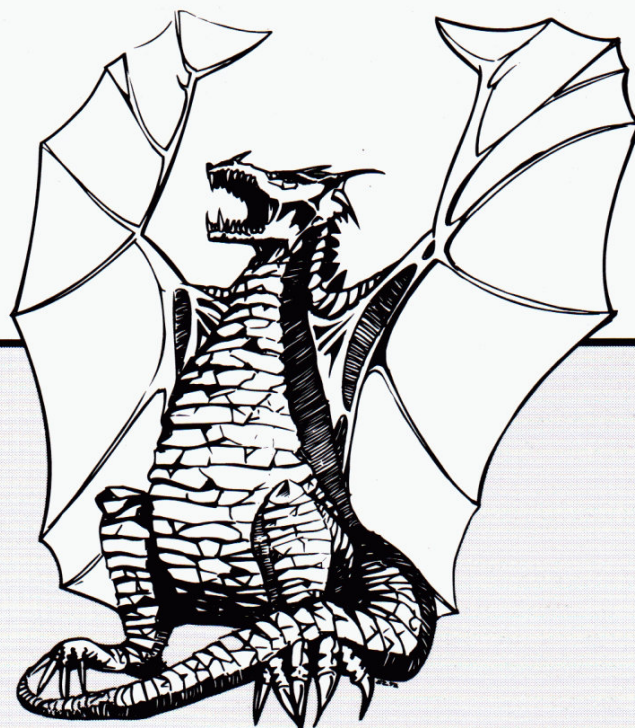
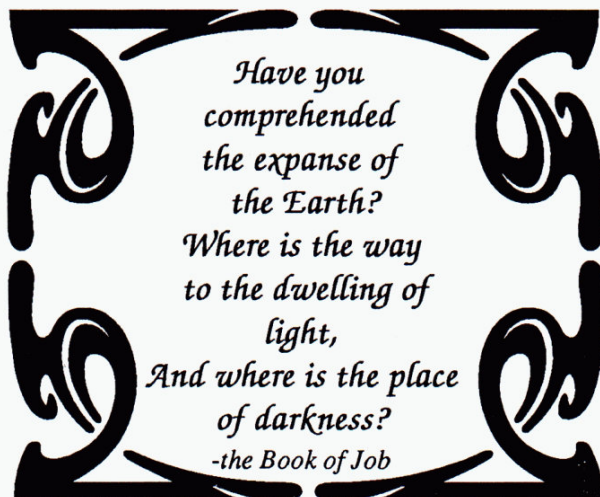
The car in the story is a Stutz 'Bearcat', a rare two seater roadster. It has a 6.6 liter engine producing 60 horsepower. Made in 1919, it is black and has a top speed of 86 m.p.h. Call of Cthulhu stats are;
Max speed: 8 HP: 15 Handling: 11 Seating: 2 Accel: 4x

Conclusions.

Success in this adventure can take many forms. If the investigators follow the path of the story, then give them a Sanity gain of 1D8: they realize that they have freed Jeramiah from torment, but the means of his death was rather gruesome. If they pull Jeramiah out against his will and manage to keep him alive for a significant period of time, Sanity recovery is 1D10. If, however, he dies after this rescue, then no Sanity shall be returned. Similarly if Jeramiah is killed by the Byakhees because of investigator slowness, no Sanity gain will result. Sanity recovered for killing Mellish will be 1D8.

Primogeniture leaves many more questions than answers for the investigators, and this is as it should be. Yet there are rewards, of a sort, for intelligent investigating. The book of the inheritance is a valuable tome, for those interested in such things. Sanity gained for a successful adventure should also outweigh Sanity lost. The challenge for the Keeper is to create an atmosphere of mystery into which the investigators, prowling through a strange house on a strange night, find themselves. Of particular importance is the handling of the first meeting with Jeramiah - the Keeper must relay to his investigators the desperation and terror that this man is suffering. Though this is not a Dreaming adventure, you should try and evoke a dreamlike quality during the hours of darkness. Do not be worried by the unexplained, as it is this that drives the mythos.

Good luck and may your Elder God go with you.



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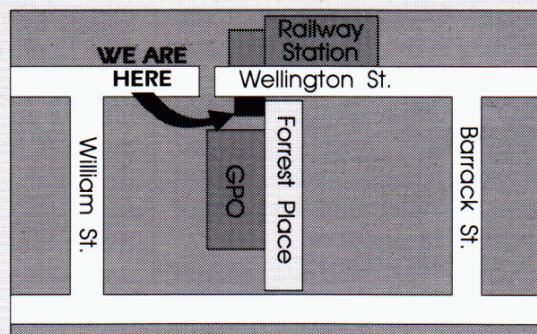
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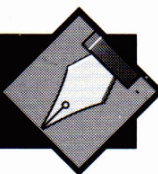


CONSULTAS

WORDS IN BALANCE

DARKNESS AT NOON

by ARTHUR KOESTLER
JONATHAN CAPE 1940
REVIEW: BRAD MARTIN



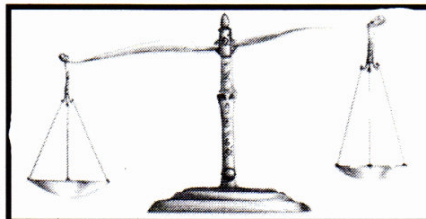
Arthur Koestler joined the German Communist Party in 1931, at the age of twenty-six. After the Nazis took power in 1933, he came to believe that the USSR was the only power able to stand up against Fascism. Disillusionment set in with the Great Purge and his own imprisonment by Franco's army in Spain. He broke with the Party in 1938 and began writing *Darkness at Noon*. He was arrested in France at the beginning of WW II but managed to have the manuscript flown to England. After the German invasion of France he escaped to England via Lisbon.

The central character in his book is Nicolas Salmanovitch Rubashov. Rubashov has served the Party for decades, a partisan leader during the Civil War, a courier for the Central Committee, head of the Trade Delegation to Britain and Director of the Alumina Trust. He is one of the old intelligentsia, one of 'a handful of men of an entirely new species: militant philosophers'. 'They dreamed of power with the object of abolishing power, of ruling over people to wean them from the habit of being ruled'. 'The Revolution was to spread to all countries of the world.

However No.1, the leader of the Party, has realized that a wave of reaction is sweeping the world, and that Russia must be made into a bastion capable of standing alone. The Party policy is thus that '... we have only one duty: not to perish'. Those advocating world revolution threaten to split the Party, which would lead to civil war. The peasantry '... has not yet learnt to understand the sense of the sacrifices imposed on it'.

Rubashov is arrested and sent to a

WORDS IN BALANCE



new model prison. He is accused of counter-revolutionary activities and of being in the service of a hostile power. The Examining Magistrate is Ivanov - a man Rubashov once persuaded against suicide after he lost a leg. He explains that the categorization of the case (rather than the truth of the charge) is what is important. Refusal to confess to criminal activities will lead to a public case. In this case a confrontation with witnesses will lead to the worst points of the accusation being refuted and a twenty year sentence (amnesty after 2 or 3 years). Ivanov is thus holding out the possibility that Rubashov can continue to serve the Party if he confesses, and that his punishment will be light.

The sessions of interrogation lead Rubashov to develop a theory on the political immaturity of the masses. The logical outcome of the theory is the determination that the masses of the "Country of the Revolution" are politically immature. In such a situation only demagogues would appeal to the people. He realizes that as there is no prospect of materializing the opposition's programme, it must be suppressed. He agrees to confess, only to find that Ivanov has fallen victim to the Purge and his case is now in the hands of 'the New Neanderthal', Gletkin. This man offers no hope of amnesty. He demands only one task from Rubashov: '... to gild the Right, to blacken the Wrong ... to make the opposition contemptible; to make the masses understand that opposition is a crime ...'. In order to

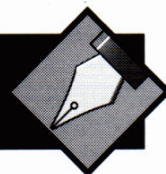
serve the Party one last time, Rubashov has no logical alternative but to agree.

The theory that the Old Bolsheviks confessed to the absurd charges of the great Moscow show trials of the 1930's because they were absolutely loyal to the Party was a matter of great controversy when *Darkness at Noon* was first published. It has since been confirmed - in the case of men such as Mrachkovsky and Bukharin.

For role-players this modern classic is useful in illuminating the daily routine in a political prison. The means by which prisoners communicated with one another, the techniques of psychological torture and the justification for totalitarianism are also of interest. □

THE DARK BETWEEN THE STARS

by DAMIEN BRODERICK
MANDARIN AUSTRALIA
REVIEW: BRAD MARTIN



Broderick is one of the better known Australian SF writers. Two of his earlier works are *Striped Holes* and *The Black Grail*. The ten stories in this collection were written during the period 1964 to 1987. They have all been published previously, either in magazines or anthologies.

However, the collection is not a retrospective: most of the stories were written in the 1980s. Instead, they have a focus on religious questions and motifs in common.

The first story, *All My Yesterdays*, has the resurrected Lazarus, now bored and senile after two thousand years of existence, searching for an opportunity 'to put one over God'. In *A Tooth for Every Child* the protagonist murders the baby whose birth caused his mother's death. The story *Resurrection* sees one of the originators of the computer being revived

hundreds of years in the future. The world he enters has reached the ultimate fruition of his work. The Truth Machine is now God on Earth.

Thy Sting has Jesus reincarnated as a black girl-child.

The Ballad of Bowsprit Bear's Stead postulates that the Neanderthals left Earth because of their loathing for the violence of the New Humans. The 'old magic' would have enabled them to induce a disease that would have destroyed the New Humans, but they refrained. Now the Galactic Emperor, Lyric Music Stirs Too Fierce the Heart, is once again faced with the problem of how to respond to human encroachment. Again the Neanderthals do not resist. Human-kind's God-given right to dominate all other species, and nature itself, is confirmed.

The Magi explores the nature of evil and why God allows its existence. The last five hundred Jesuits have been exiled from Earth. They now wander through space in the 'vast light-jewelled Latin cruciform' shaped monastery ship, the St. Ignatius Loyola. They discover the lost Southern Cross - the world's first starship. There is only one survivor on the colony-ship. Using the organic matter of his dead comrades and the store of frozen embryos, he has spent years cloning trillions of blastulas, and then systematically aborting them. 'Trillions of separate human souls conceived each week and dispatched to the heavenly ranks in a state of grace. They never know sin ...'.

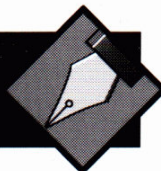
Although now a 'thoroughly ex-Catholic', Broderick's writing is pervaded with religious imagery. For me, the theme is overdone. However, there are a number of useful ideas for roleplaying campaigns. For example, the two 'military executive' robots: Marx [of the Left-Hand Hegemony] and Smith [of the Right-Hand Hegemony] would be useful additions to any SF scenario set on or near Earth. □

TALES OF THE REACHING MOON

The RQ-Glorantha magazine. 52 pages, A4 quarterly. \$4.40+\$1.50 postage; three issue subscription for \$16.00. Contact Michael O'Brien, 2/33 Carween Avenue, Mitcham, Victoria 3132

THE SAPPHIRE ROSE (BOOK 3 OF THE ELENIUM)

by DAVID EDDINGS
GRAFTON, 1991
REVIEW: MATTHEW WOODS



I approached this series with some apprehension. I feared it would have the same somewhat childish atmosphere of his first two series, the *Belgariad* and the *Mallorcan*. However I was pleasantly surprised with the *Elenium*, and as each book drew me in my delight increased.

Eddings climaxed this new series with *The Sapphire Rose*, a dramatic and brilliant conclusion to an epic tale.

His development of a world more real, more adult, greatly improved the strength of the story. Eddings has produced characters of depth and substance, avoiding stereotypes. His heroes and villains both pull upon the reader's emotions, vastly heightening the atmosphere of the book.

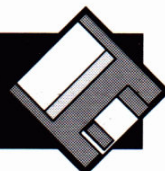
The reader is drawn into a world made dark and ominous. Monsters stalk the shadows and gods walk among mortals. But there is still hope! The heroes hold a great talisman of power, the Sapphire Rose - but it is neither good nor evil and thus through its use the world can be saved or destroyed.

The Sapphire Rose is a book that allows the reader's mind to travel far and explore the world of the Elenium. Eddings involves the reader in a myriad of tense situations, ranging from bloody sieges to the deadly backstabbing arena of politics. This climaxes with a final confrontation between the heroes and the nemesis. If you enjoy parallels between East and West and religious ideology then this book will interest you.

You are not left hanging in any way, nothing is left to chance. The final closing chapters are such that they round off the story, filling in just about all the blanks. This book will bring you great pleasure and enjoyment. I've been busting my guts not to tell you all the good bits (and there are lots). I highly recommend this book and series as Eddings' best thus far. □

MIGHT & MAGIC III

By JON VAN CANEHEM
NEW WORLD COMPUTING Inc. 1991
REVIEW: CLIFF BOER



Having played *Might and Magic II* a couple of years ago, and having enjoyed the game very much, it was with great relish that I rushed out and purchased a copy of the new *Might and Magic III*.

Initially I was more than a little concerned at the scarcity of instructions in the manual included with the game, because *MM II* was quite a comprehensive manual, with a lovely large full colour map included. This had none of that. Instead there was essentially only a background story to the scenario and a small hand drawn map a bit lacking in detail. All of this for a game incorporating seven floppy disks! It was only then that I learned that the real instruction manual was to be purchased separately under the misleading title of the *MMIII CLUEBOOK*. This book, (not booklet, as it has 240 information packed pages), is an essential part of the game and is a must to buy. It costs around \$30, with the game costing around \$80. Having parted with what I thought to be a rather heavy investment I proceeded to try it out. Was it worth it?

The answer is definite and unequivocal: Yes! This is without doubt the most interesting and fun adventure game that I have ever encountered on the computer. You start with a party of six characters in a town called Fountains Head and begin to unravel the world and discover as you play what the ultimate adventure is. New characters can be rolled up and added to or subtracted from the party as you go along, (a bit like the old *Bards Tale* style), and various hirelings are available to complement the party on an 'as needed basis' (for a daily fee). All this allows you to adventure with up to eight characters in the party. Your window into the world is a large one third of the screen area, that simulates full 3D viewing with movement of monsters, etc. Encounters look very real, and the world itself is most interesting.

The game is truly massive. There are 5 towns, 5 continents, 6 major islands, many lesser islands, 5 castles,

8 dungeons, and 5 caverns. There are also numerous huts, houses, caves, wagons, special locations and the like. The towns, castles, caverns and dungeons are really big, and all are very interesting. Each of them has custom graphics, and are great to explore.

There are about one hundred different monster types, which have intelligent movements and actions. They vary from your typical 10 hit-point 400 experience point Goblin, up to a massive 10,000 hit-point 10,000,000 experience point Dragon Lord. There are also about a hundred different spells, including those for Sorcerers, Clerics and Druids. All of this is very AD&D'ish. The AD&D style of weapons, armour and combat is also in evidence, as are the character types and classes.

The game is filled with puzzles, riddles, clues, tricks, traps, plots and story-lines. However, at no time did I find it frustrating, because the world is totally open (and of course if you really want to cheat, the hint book includes all the clues and/or passwords if you want them).

There is always challenging and plentiful action in this game. However, beware of the peanuts syndrome. If you are in the least bit compulsive, you may not be able to put this game down, and it could go for weeks or months!

The graphics are excellent, as is the sound. The playability I would rate exceptionally high. The plot is intriguing and lots of fun to unravel. This is definitely a game for Dungeons and Dragons aficionados. Disk accessing could be a little high, (although I had the good fortune of playing it on a hard disk). All in all I would rate this as the best fantasy game I have played on the computer, (having played dozens of them), and possibly the best computer game to date for me. Although the price is high when considering the addition of the hint book, it is well worth the cost, as it will provide for a lot of top quality gaming over a long period of time. The improvement over *Might and Magic II* (which was a very good game) is significant. The authors have progressed impressively. □

THE PERFECT GENERAL

By WHITE WOLF PRODUCTIONS
QUANTUM QUALITY PRODUCTIONS 1991
REVIEW: KIM SE. JACK



When I sat down to play my first game of *The Perfect General*, it was a joy from the first tank I destroyed to the last city I captured. QQP have captured all the fun of a small to large scale miniatures battle, with all the ease of a user friendly computer program. *The Perfect General* is set in the World War II era. There are 14 scenarios, ranging from the absolutely basic 'First Battle' to the complex and exciting 'Divide and Conquer'. Only 'Alamein' is set on a recognisable WWII battlefield (QQP have released a new scenario disk - the 'WWII Battle Set' which is now available for the Amiga computer). The game rules are good and the colour game maps are excellent. The game disk is in a compressed format, so you will need to decompact it onto floppies (or a hard disk). When starting the game, decide what options you wish to play with, choose a scenario, and then spend the allotted points on your units. This is a critical stage in the game, and a shot has yet to be fired. If you choose the wrong units, you're in big trouble e.g. if speed and territory are important, don't buy slow moving heavy tanks, even if those same tanks won the last scenario for you. Place your units and the fun begins. If you are the attacker start attacking to maximise your early advantage. At the same time take note of what the defender is doing to stop you, as it will soon be your turn to be the defender. If you are the defender plan your defence well, set ambushes and remember time is on your side. Also if you see an opportunity to attack then do so. Victory in the game is primarily determined by control of the cities (victory points are awarded for each turn one of your units occupies a city). The prime focus of your strategy should be to hold the cities you start with and to capture high value cities from the enemy (long range artillery fire aimed at enemy units occupying cities is an excellent method of denying the enemy victory points). At the end of the first half, you will be given a score and a rating: anywhere from 2nd Lieuten-

ant to General. Now the attacker becomes the defender and you play again. The highest total score wins that scenario.

Tactical Hints

Never melee an infantry (worth 1 point) with a Heavy Tank (worth 12 points) unless you are really desperate. If possible completely destroy one unit instead of damaging two units.

Never destroy a bridge you know you may have to use later.

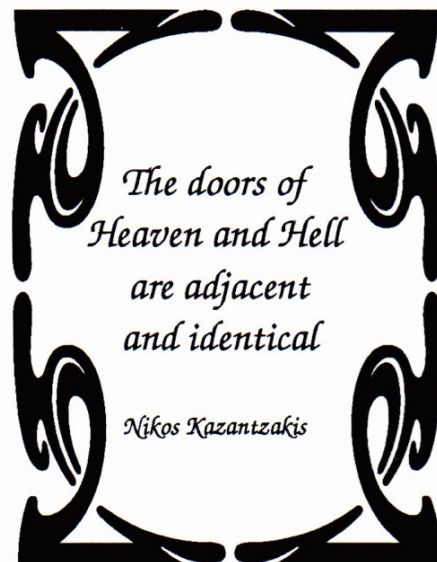
Never mine or destroy a road that your units will advance along.

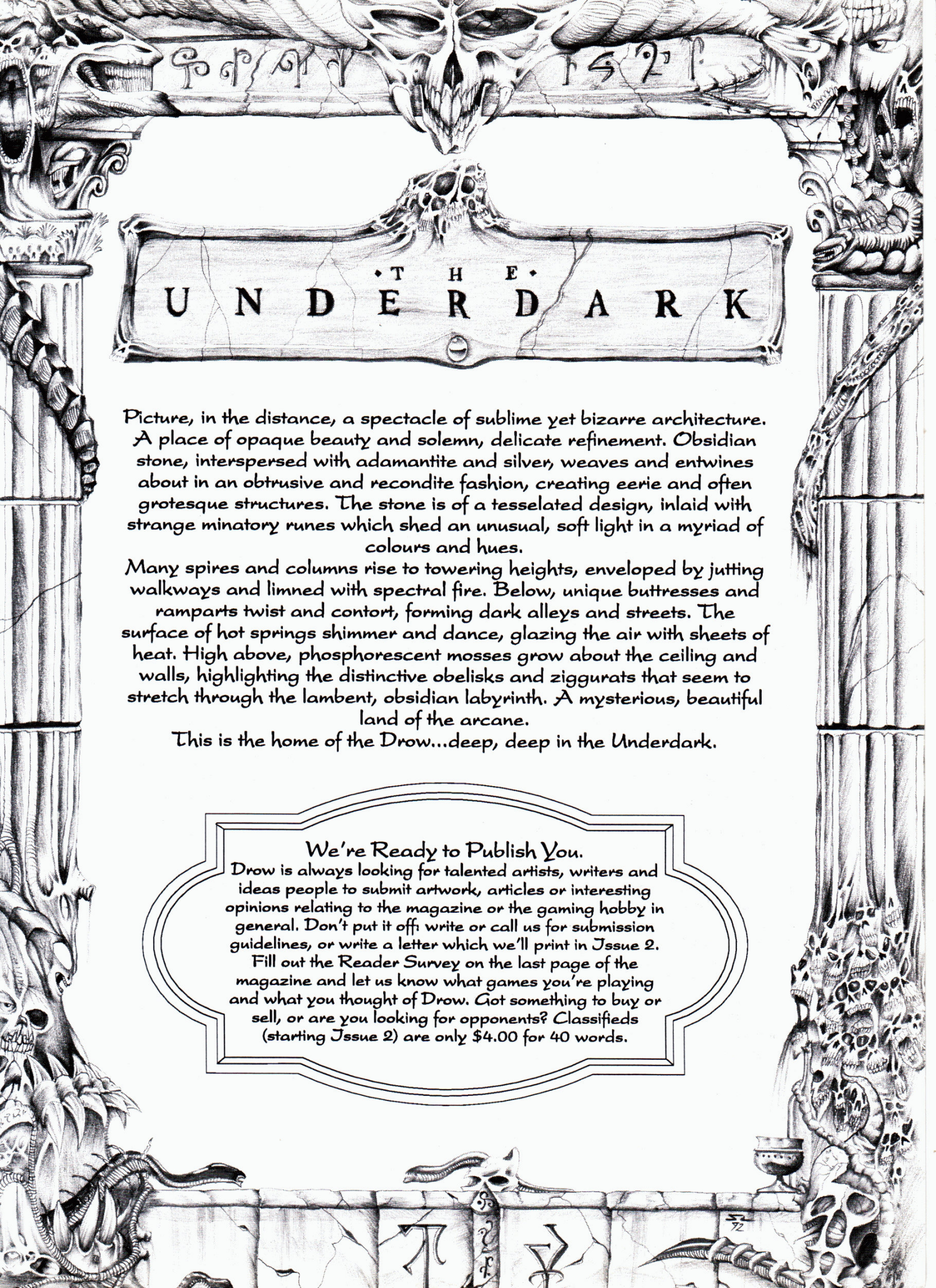
When defending against a sea-born invasion, lots of artillery is a good idea. If attacking, and time is a real factor, buy plenty of armoured cars, move adjacent to the town, drop an infantry and melee the town, then move on.

When defending with a small number of points, buy lots of infantry and a few mines. Use them to give the attacker less time to capture cities.

Warning: Never destroy all the bridges if your computer opponent has units on the other side. The game will go into an endless loop as the computer tries to find a way across an uncrossable river.

I found *The Perfect General* to be an excellent game, even though it has flaws. These mainly revolve around the slow and dim witted computer opponent. Although I won every scenario, the game system kept my interest. I feel the real potential of *The Perfect General* lies in a two player game with opponents connected via modems or null cable. This will give you a worthy opponent. □





THE UNDER DARK

Picture, in the distance, a spectacle of sublime yet bizarre architecture. A place of opaque beauty and solemn, delicate refinement. Obsidian stone, interspersed with adamantite and silver, weaves and entwines about in an obtrusive and recondite fashion, creating eerie and often grotesque structures. The stone is of a tessellated design, inlaid with strange minatory runes which shed an unusual, soft light in a myriad of colours and hues.

Many spires and columns rise to towering heights, enveloped by jutting walkways and limned with spectral fire. Below, unique buttresses and ramparts twist and contort, forming dark alleys and streets. The surface of hot springs shimmer and dance, glazing the air with sheets of heat. High above, phosphorescent mosses grow about the ceiling and walls, highlighting the distinctive obelisks and ziggurats that seem to stretch through the lambent, obsidian labyrinth. A mysterious, beautiful land of the arcane.

This is the home of the Drow...deep, deep in the Underdark.

We're Ready to Publish You.

Drow is always looking for talented artists, writers and ideas people to submit artwork, articles or interesting opinions relating to the magazine or the gaming hobby in general. Don't put it off! write or call us for submission guidelines, or write a letter which we'll print in Issue 2.

Fill out the Reader Survey on the last page of the magazine and let us know what games you're playing and what you thought of Drow. Got something to buy or sell, or are you looking for opponents? Classifieds (starting Issue 2) are only \$4.00 for 40 words.

NEXT ISSUE: DROW CLASSIFIEDS



*'I am bidden to surrender myself to the Lord of the Worlds.
He it is who created you of the dust...'*

- The Koran, Sura 40

This is Drow's first reader survey. Please indicate your preference for the following games with a tick.

	Do you own this game?	Have you played it in the last year?	Would you like to see articles/scenarios for this game in Drow?
AD&D	☐	☐	☐
Aliens	☐	☐	☐
Bushido	☐	☐	☐
Call of Cthulhu	☐	☐	☐
Chill	☐	☐	☐
Chivalry & Sorcery	☐	☐	☐
Cyberpunk	☐	☐	☐
Cyberspace	☐	☐	☐
Dark Conspiracy	☐	☐	☐
Dungeons & Dragons	☐	☐	☐
Empire of the Petal Throne	☐	☐	☐
Hero System	☐	☐	☐
GURPS	☐	☐	☐
Lace & Steel	☐	☐	☐
Mechwarrior	☐	☐	☐
MegaTraveller	☐	☐	☐
Metamorphosis Alpha	☐	☐	☐
Middle Earth RP	☐	☐	☐
The Morrow Project	☐	☐	☐
Mythus	☐	☐	☐
Palladium RPG	☐	☐	☐
Pendragon	☐	☐	☐
Rifts	☐	☐	☐
Rolemaster	☐	☐	☐
Runequest	☐	☐	☐
Shadowrun	☐	☐	☐
Space 1889	☐	☐	☐
Space Master	☐	☐	☐
Stormbringer	☐	☐	☐
Talisanta	☐	☐	☐
Torg	☐	☐	☐
Traveller 2300AD	☐	☐	☐
Tunnels & Trolls	☐	☐	☐
Twilight 2000	☐	☐	☐
Vampire	☐	☐	☐
Warhammer FRP	☐	☐	☐
Other (which?)	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

Do you roleplay -

- More than once a week ☐
 Once a week ☐
 Once a fortnight ☐
 Once a month ☐
 Less than once a month ☐

How did you hear about Drow?

- A friend ☐
 A stranger ☐
 A strange friend ☐
 Advertising ☐
 Impulse buy ☐

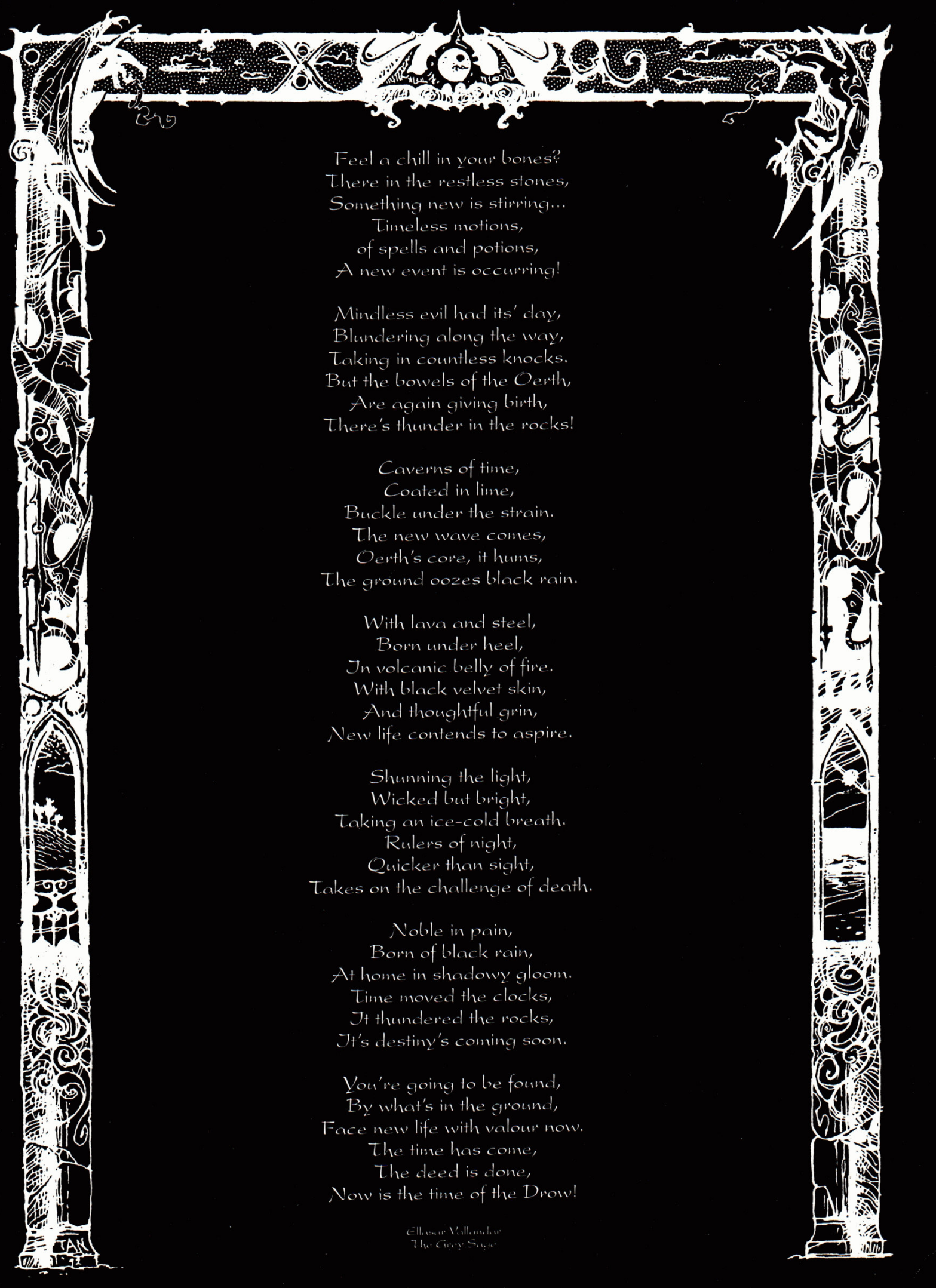
How would you rate:

- | | Excellent | Average | Poor |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Article relevance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Article interest | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Interior artwork | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Cover artwork | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Value | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

What were your favourite articles?

What didn't you like about Drow?

Any other comments?



Feel a chill in your bones?
There in the restless stones,
Something new is stirring...
Timeless motions,
of spells and potions,
A new event is occurring!

Mindless evil had its' day,
Blundering along the way,
Taking in countless knocks.
But the bowels of the Oerth,
Are again giving birth,
There's thunder in the rocks!

Caverns of time,
Coated in lime,
Buckle under the strain.
The new wave comes,
Oerth's core, it hums,
The ground oozes black rain.

With lava and steel,
Born under heel,
In volcanic belly of fire.
With black velvet skin,
And thoughtful grin,
New life contends to aspire.

Shunning the light,
Wicked but bright,
Taking an ice-cold breath.
Rulers of night,
Quicker than sight,
Takes on the challenge of death.

Noble in pain,
Born of black rain,
At home in shadowy gloom.
Time moved the clocks,
It thundered the rocks,
It's destiny's coming soon.

You're going to be found,
By what's in the ground,
Face new life with valour now.
The time has come,
The deed is done,
Now is the time of the Drow!

c.r.e.a.t.i.v.e Aspects

P R E S E N T S

By The Blade: meet the Drow: secretive, cunning, drawing power from the darkness. Our introductory scenario opens the way into their lightless domain...

Imperatum Sanctum: a new cult or religious organisation for use in fantasy campaigns. This issue: the Knights of the Temple.

Historical Aspects: neglected historical figures or settings come to life with notes on campaign use in fantasy roleplaying.

Words in Balance: contemporary and classic books, software and roleplaying systems reviewed and autopsied.

Event Horizon: gaming in the far future never looked better.

Chrome Wave: the darker side of life in the near-future. This issue: the Sculpted Mentality Storm.

Imaginings: the prologue to an ongoing series set in the Runequest world of Glorantha.

Strategic Visions: wargaming news, reviews and scenarios.

A Scream of Fear: a fragmentary glimpse of ancient nightmares uncovered each issue in

•Drow•