



WAR'S END

THE FINAL BATTLE HAS BEGUN

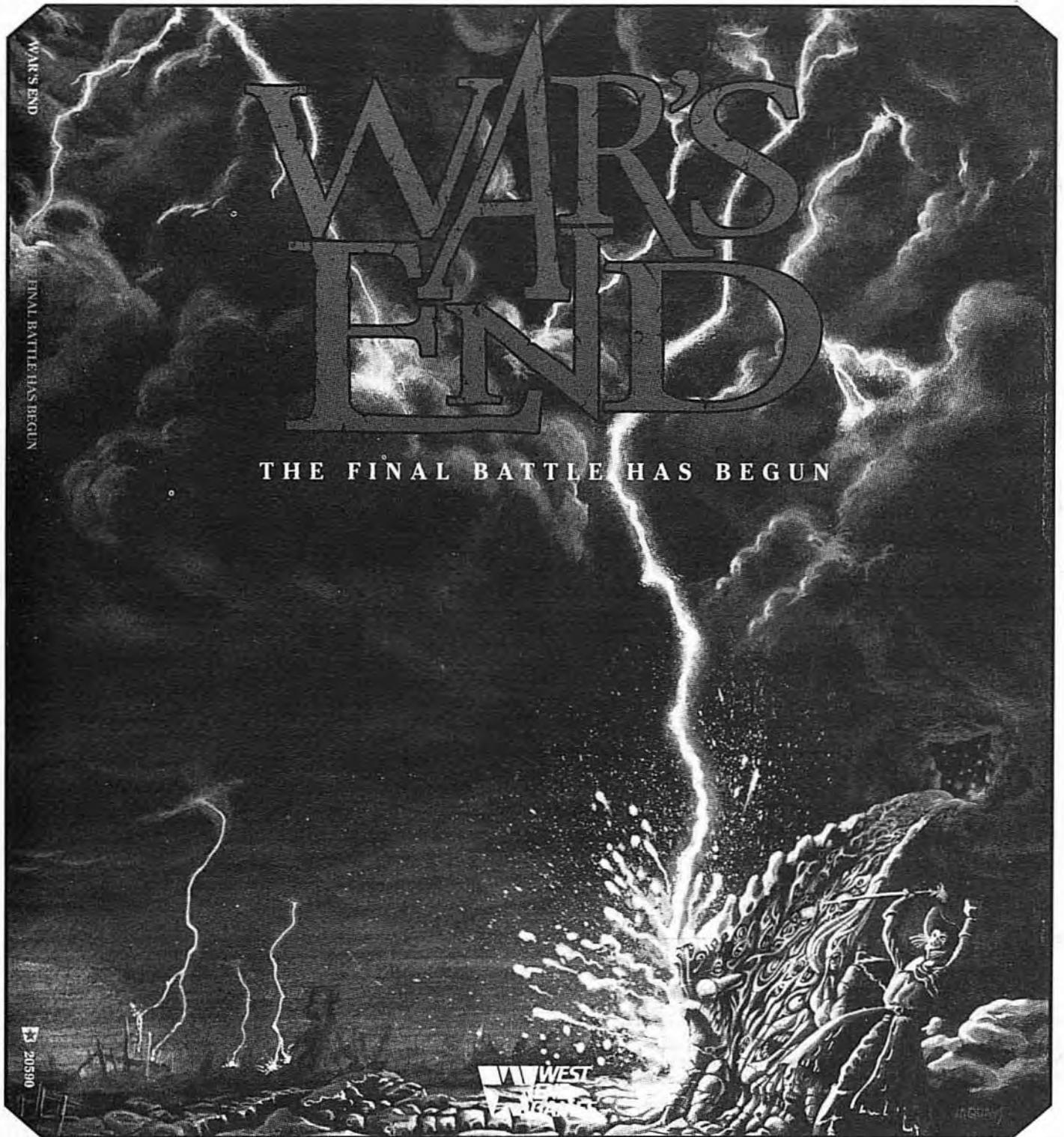


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By John Terra

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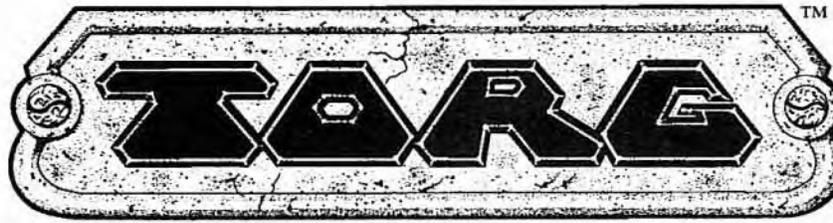


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Roleplaying the Possibility Wars™

War's End

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Introduction



he Gaunt Man woke up one morning and knew it was time. Time for this war — and this world — to end.

Actually, of the two actions, awakening would seem to be the more unusual, as the High Lord of Orrorsh had no need for sleep or even sustenance. But he enjoyed plumbing his unconscious, and often found inspiration for new and deadlier Horrors there.

He rose and walked into his chamber of war. There before him hovered an image of Earth, tainted with colors representing territory held by each of the seven invading realms, as well as that occupied by the Akashans. It was the fifth year of what Core Earthers called the Possibility Wars, a struggle begun when the Gaunt Man led denizens of other realities to invade this sphere. They had met unprecedented resistance from Earth's Storm Knights, as well as those of other realms — the Gaunt Man himself had been imprisoned for far too long in a reality storm by interfering Stormers. Now he felt a grim resolve to bring matters to a close — to assume the mantle of Torg that had been meant for him from the start, and reduce this world to blood-spattered ash in the process.

"Brooding again, master?" Heketon, the Orrorshan Darkness Device, said with a wry chuckle.

"It's more than time to end this," the High Lord replied. "This war holds my interest no longer."

The heart-shaped Darkness Device hovered in the air. "And so it ends, just like that? Just because you say so? If this is so, then why didn't you end things sooner?"

The Gaunt Man picked up a crystal decanter in the shape of a hu-

man skull. From it, he poured a scarlet liquid into a goblet and drained it slowly, savoring the taste. "It is not enough to conquer and destroy," he said as he paced the chamber, cradling the goblet in one hand. "I need to inspire fear, to taste the terror of my victims."

"Of course, Gaunt Lord. But you know as well as I that we are draining far too little possibility energy from our realm for you to attain the rank of Torg to which you aspire."

"Our' realm, creature?" the Gaunt Man snapped. "I have taken this place. I rule here!"

"With my help, High Lord, remember that," Heketon responded evenly. "Without my powers and my counsel, you would be as a babe in a very dark and lonely cosm."

"I can do without your counsel," the High Lord said sharply. "And as for your powers ..."

The Black Heart waited in silence for a moment before saying, "Well?"

"They are far less than what I need, Heketon. You have been a ... disappointment."

"And what shall you do, Gaunt Man? Cast me to the Dire Wolves, as you did Uthorion? Dispatch me as you have a hundred other servants? Spare me your empty threats. Even your madness would not allow you to —"

"Have a care, thing of stone!" the Gaunt Man spat coldly. "Your lord does as he will! Remember that, of all the High Lords in this cosm, only I truly understand the nature of Darkness Devices. Only I know that you are not seven separate entities, but portions of the same being: the Nameless One himself. And what was once merged could be merged again, eh,

Heketon?"

"Surely you do not mean —?"

"Ah, but I do! No single High Lord, no single Darkness Device, controls enough territory to provide the possibility energy needed to become Torg. But all of them together, that is another matter entirely. I shall summon the Devices using a ritual that was old when this world was new, and they shall join with their brother once more. Then I shall benefit from the possibilities of all the realms!"

"This is madness," Heketon declared flatly. The Darkness Device did not like the direction in which this conversation was going at all.

"Oh, is it?" the Gaunt Man grinned. "No, it is enlightenment. It is a breakthrough. This world — and all others — shall be mine!"

"Others may rise to stop you," Heketon warned.

"They will be the first to die, and then I shall absorb their energies into myself. The Gaunt Man slammed his crystal goblet against the wall. Each shard of crystal flew in a different direction, wailing like a lost soul (not so surprising, considering what the goblet was made of). "Then I need only seize the physical energy and I am Torg — once I have moved my pawn into place, that is."

"And the Stormers? What of them?"

"I am counting on them rising to stop me," the Gaunt Man said, smiling. "I have accounted for every contingency this time, Heketon, and so I cannot fail."

"You have taken leave of your senses," Heketon said quietly.

"On the contrary, my slave — yes, slave, for that is what you are, in truth — I have finally regained them."

Without another word, the Gaunt





Peter Venters

Man spun on his heel and left the room. Earth's days were numbered — the only question remaining was which Darkness Device to summon first. And then he thought of Kanawa — that arrogant, posturing fool who had dared to pit his realm of antiquated ninja and modern corporate greed against a land of true horror. Yes, he would be the first ...

Surely a businessman like Kanawa would appreciate the need to collect on old debts ...

Pax Torg

War's End is a super-module for the *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*. This book contains the final adventure in the saga of the Possibility Wars, an epic that has stretched over five years, in that time taking its place as one of the most unique and innovative role-playing games on the market.

This adventure is recommended for six or more veteran Storm Knight characters. Gamemasters should be aware that this module was designed to be lethal, and they may wish to modify it if they are playing with fewer or less experienced characters.

Interspersed throughout this adventure are fiction sidebars that detail the fates of many of the High Lords. Thanks to the power of the Avatar of Apeiros, the characters will be teleported to the sites of these dramatic events and will have the ability to intervene. Gamemasters need not feel they are bound to the outcomes presented in the fiction — if the actions of the characters markedly change an event, great. This is your and their adventure, and should be run that way.

Act Four permanently resolves the Possibility Wars. However, it is possible that your *Torg* players may wish to a) keep fighting or b)

stay together and adventure in some other setting. In the back of this book, you will find an appendix listing a number of different "post-war" directions your campaign could go in, as well as a brief conversion to West End's new *MasterBook* rules system.

What You Need

You will, of course, need the *Torg* boxed set to play this adventure. The *Nippon Tech*, *Orrorsh*, *Cyberpapacy*, *Tharkold* and *Nile Empire* sourcebooks will also be helpful, but are by no means required. Keep in mind that if you don't have a particular book, though, some modification of the adventure may be necessary, as certain spells gamemaster characters have, etc. are spelled out in the relevant sourcebooks rather than here.



Adventure Overview

The adventure begins in the Nile Empire, where the characters are on a case involving the disappearances of numerous fortunetellers, prophets, and clairvoyants. After encounters with Gaeen gypsies and the villainous Wu Han and his minions, the Knights go to Thebes for a showdown with Dr Mobius himself, who gives a little exposition before attempting escape back to his cosm.

In Act Two, the Storm Knights travel to Cyberpapist New England, specifically to Boston, to attempt to find a witch who apparently has more of an idea about what's going on. The Storm Knights wind up meeting Thratchen, and eventually going to Salem in order to rescue the witch from being burnt by the Cyperpapal Inquisition. The Storm Knights also cross the path of Randolph Chapman, a psychotic Core Earther who wishes to kill as many Storm Knights as he can.

New Orleans in the Orrorsh/ Core Earth mixed zone is the focus of Act Three. What the Storm Knights are unaware of is that the feud between Basjas and Sabathina has shifted battlegrounds to New Orleans and vicinity. Here, the

Storm Knights learn the horrible truth of what the Gaunt Man intends to do in California. The Randolph Chapman subplot ends here.

Act Four is the end-all, where the loose ends are tied up. Starting off in Los Angeles and then moving to an uninhabited area near the San Andreas fault, the Storm Knights must contend with an invasion by Ayroa and the Kantovian Dire Wolves; a deadly clash between Jezrael and her errant son; the revelation of the identity of the Avatar of Apeiros; Baruk Kaah's last stand; and the final battle with the Gaunt Man.

Adventure Background

The Gaunt Man has always known a good deal more about the nature of Darkness Devices than the other High Lords. He instructed his Device, Heketon, to attempt to summon the Devices and merge with them — but, unwilling to lose its own identity, the Black Heart has made no real effort. The Gaunt Man has now resolved to perform the task himself.

His plan is simplicity itself: by allowing the other Devices to merge

into one whole, the Gaunt Man will benefit from all the possibility energy being drained from Earth from all the realms (the various Devices will still serve their former masters, but all their energy will be fed on by Heketon and thus profit the Gaunt Man). That means he needs only a huge amount of physical energy to become Torg — and this he will achieve by triggering a massive earthquake at the San Andreas Fault.

He has the explosive, he but needs the fuse. And so he has used occult rituals to get Baruk Kaah, former Living Land High Lord and now half-mad amalgam of all realities, to the fault. Kaah will be used to start the quake itself.

But a plan this dark and deadly cannot be hidden for long. Mobius, suspecting something is about to happen, has ordered the abductions of seers and fortunetellers. Meanwhile, a Cyberpapal witch who has been plagued with visions of the end is about to be burnt at the stake by the Inquisition in Salem.

Into the midst of this come the Storm Knights, thrust into the search for the missing seers and little dreaming that the world as they know it is about the change forever ...





Act One

In a State of De-Nile

The Major Beat

The Storm Knights are in Cairo, in the Nile Empire, where they get involved in investigating a kidnapping case for some Gaean gypsies. After encounters with Akashan Monitors and Wu Han, the Knights travel to Thebes and meet Dr. Mobius, who winds up giving them more information than they bargained for. This will set them on the road to Boston.

Play this act as typical Nile, starting off slow, then rapidly speeding up. Danger upon danger should be stacked up on the characters, building suspense and tension until the final scene.

SCENE ONE: A "Prophetable" Venture

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights are in a marketplace in Cairo. Note that this is a Nile pure zone. Read aloud or paraphrase:

Your adventures of late have deposited you in the city of Cairo, an ancient city filled with modern intrigue. Your band is in the marketplace, where the shouts of the merchants hawking merchandise mingle with the sounds of livestock, and the air is filled with the scents of spices and produce. It is three in the afternoon.

Something is odd in Cairo these days; there's an undercurrent of

tension as if a storm were about to break. Still, your contacts have no concrete information for you — it's just a feeling they have.

One tent does catch your eyes, though. A gypsy sits before the flap of this multi-colored silken shelter, doing his best to convince passers-by to enter. "Fortunes told!" he shouts. "In these uncertain times, you need to know what tomorrow will bring!" He beckons you to enter.

A *Perception* or *scholar* (*Orrorshan lore*) total of 9 reveals this man to be a gypsy from the cosm of Gaea.

The Action

Once inside, it's obvious that the tent is broken up into several rooms. The largest of these by far is the main entry, where incense hangs in the air, and everything feels *different*. There is a logical explanation for this: the entire tent is under Orrorshan axioms thanks to a small statue with a clock in its belly, situated in the precise center of the tent. It is an Orrorshan talisman, extending a pure zone throughout the tent's confines.

The fortuneteller introduces himself as Karlo. He gives the Knights a blatantly incorrect reading (a *Perception* total of 10 shows that he really doesn't know what he's doing). When confronted with this, he stares at the party for a minute (using *True Sight* on them), then speaks:

"Yes, I am a fraud, I admit. At least in the province of telling the future, I am incompetent. But I do have the Sight, and I see that you





Peter Venters





Paul Daly

are knights of the storm. I am doing this work only because my family must eat—and those among us who read the cards have disappeared.”

If the characters inquire about this, Karlo will add that several local mystics have disappeared as well ... or so says the word on the street. Both his mother, Agatha, and one of the other women of the tribe, Valara, disappeared within

the last 24 hours. Agatha had gone to a nearby silversmith to buy some trinkets and was never seen again after she left there. Valara went to a club on the waterfront and also vanished. Both women were gypsies, and both gifted with the ability to see the future.

Karlo is willing to hire the characters to find the two, but has little money. At most, he can scrape together 100 Sterlings. He can also offer four vials of holy water, a

silver Sacellum cross, a silver sabre (damage value STR+5/19), and an occult kit. Karlo is playing square with the Knights, and can give directions to the waterfront and to the part of the bazaar where the silversmith works.

Flags

A *Connection* means that the Knight knows Karlo, and the gypsy leader will offer the money and all the items without negotiation. An *Alertness* card reveals that Karlo's fortunetelling is a sham, and that he's profoundly disturbed about something. A *Personal Stake* means that the Knight knows either Agatha or Valara and is willing to do whatever needs to be done to get them back.

Variables

If the Knights turn Karlo down, he scowls at them and vows that they will be cursed for their indifference and cowardice. From here, the gamemaster has several options:

Option 1: Now It's Personal. If any Storm Knight has precognitive abilities, he or she gets kidnapped by ninja and dragged to the sewers. This should be done in such a way that the rest of the Storm Knights cannot foil the kidnapping.

Option 2: Whoops, Our Mistake. If a Storm Knight has no precognitive abilities but does have a *Mistaken Identity* card, the ninja kidnap him like in Option 1, under the mistaken impression that the Storm Knight does possess such a gift.

Option 3: In Media Res. The Storm Knights stumble onto a kidnapping in progress; an Ayslish elven mage with fortunetelling abilities (and rather weak offensive capabilities) is being assailed by the ninja, who are intent on dragging the elf away.



With any of these options, it is easy for the Storm Knights to go back to the gypsies, if necessary, in order to get the leads again. When they do go back, the gypsies will be very difficult, giving the Storm Knights a hard time. Once the gypsies feel that the Storm Knights are contrite enough, they will be glad to give them the information again.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights decide to follow the trail of Valara, cut to Scene Two, "On The Waterfront." If they go looking for Agatha, cut to Scene Three, "The Monitors and the Merry Mac."

SCENE TWO: On The Waterfront

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights go down to the docks of Cairo looking for leads on Valara's disappearance. Read aloud or paraphrase:

Numerous freighters lie tied up at the wharves as musclebound stevedores load and unload cargo from all over the world. Mobius may be a power-hungry madman, but he at least knows enough to keep trade flourishing between his empire and the rest of the world.

A dingy little wooden shack called "The Cairene Cafe" catches your eye, just as your presence catches the eyes of numerous shady characters lurking about.

The Action

The docks are a known hangout for muggers, thieves, kidnappers, smugglers, pimps, whores, and any-

one who wants to drop out of sight. There is also a thriving black market here. A *Mind* or *streetwise* total of 14 will give the Knight a contact that will allow him to purchase Nile hardware that is otherwise illegal and/or impossible to get through normal channels.

A *Mind* or *streetwise* of 13 allows the Knight to ask questions of the locals. Use the appropriate character interaction skills, bearing in mind that the local toughs consider the Knights to be Enemies. Furthermore, the toughs are Neutral towards the kidnappers. Any failure to get positive result points results in a fight (see "Event," below).

Event

Be it because of a botched interaction attempt, or just to give the Knights a little action, a gang of toughs decides to roll the Knights for their money and equipment. This should only be attempted if the group of Knights does not exceed four. Since in many cases, the Knights may wind up splitting up at the docks in order to cover more ground, this is a good likelihood.

There should be two toughs per Storm Knight, although this can increase to three per Knight (the number of hoods travelling together should be no more than a dozen in all).

Dock Toughs (2 per Storm Knight)

Reality: Nile

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 12, fire combat 10, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 8

Find 10, trick 10

MIND 7

Streetwise 9, willpower 10

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 11

Possibilities: None

Equipment: Either a switchblade knife (STR+2/12), a club (STR+3/13), brass knuckles (STR+3/13), or 9mm Luger (damage value 15, ammo 8). Note: Only one out of three toughs has a gun. Use these stats for any dock encounter, including inside the Cairene Cafe.

Any level of success in interrogating the toughs yields one of the three following paragraphs:

1. "Da whole docks is a dangerous place, bub. People disappears all da time, shanghaied on ships. Don't know about no gypsy dame. But I do knows that dere seems to be more disappearances when da Frenchie ships are at dock."

2. "If it's disappearances ya wanna know about, no one knows more about kidnappin' than Gat "The Grabber" Grabowski. The gunsel specializes in kidnappin' people! Here's his address, and just say 'Ali sent me!' Now leave me alone!"

3. "A gypsy dame? Yeah dere's one cutie who likes ta dance at the cafe. She's a tough cookie, lemmetellya. She enjoyed pick-pocketing suckers in the alley next to the cafe. Dey always thought she was takin' them out dere for some fun, then she cleans em out and runs away. Never gets caught. Heard she got snatched by some guys in black last night."

Note that there is a French cargo ship docked here: the *Aix La Chapelle*.

The Cairene Cafe

Calling this shack a cafe is a joke; it is a rundown bar with a sawdust-covered floor and a back room used for conducting illegal transactions of every conceivable sort. It is run by a nasty ex-sailor named Nob. There are about two dozen toughs in here, drinking and





Rick Schmitz

gambling, at any given time.

If Nob is interrogated, he knows the following, obtainable upon any level of interaction success:

Yeah there's been a lotta kidnappin's round here for the last two weeks. All I hears is dat the dark shadows demselves stalk da victims an take em away."

If asked about Valara specifically, use his *willpower* of 10 as the difficulty number. Depending on the success level, he says:

Minimal: "Ya mean Val? Yeah I know her. She dances in my club and tells fortunes sometimes. A real looker."

Average: "She lures drunk sailors out to the alley in back heres, and dey think she's gonna have some fun wit' 'em. Oh she has fun, alright: she picks their pockets and dey pass out from too much booze, and she gets away scot free."

Good: "I last saw her last night; she didn't leave wit' no one though."

Superior: "She used to tell fortunes here ... come ta tink of it, last night this Japanese fella came in, seemed especially keen on gettin' his fortune told. But when Val came in ta dance, he didn't stick around, even though I pointed her out ta him as the fortuneteller."

Spectacular: "Seems like there's a shortage of fortunetellers and seers and folks like that. Someone told me that they've all been rounded up and taken ta Thebes, ta see the Pharaoh himself!"

The Kidnap Site

The alley next to the Cairene is where Valara was taken. She was ambushed by four Nile ninja types. A *Perception* or *find* total of 12 reveals a torn piece of black cloth. A *Perception* or *evidence analysis* total of 14 shows it to be silk. A *find* total of 17 reveals a small silver charm, a miniature tambourine; an *evidence*

analysis total of 12 says that it's part of a charm bracelet, apparently ripped off with great force.

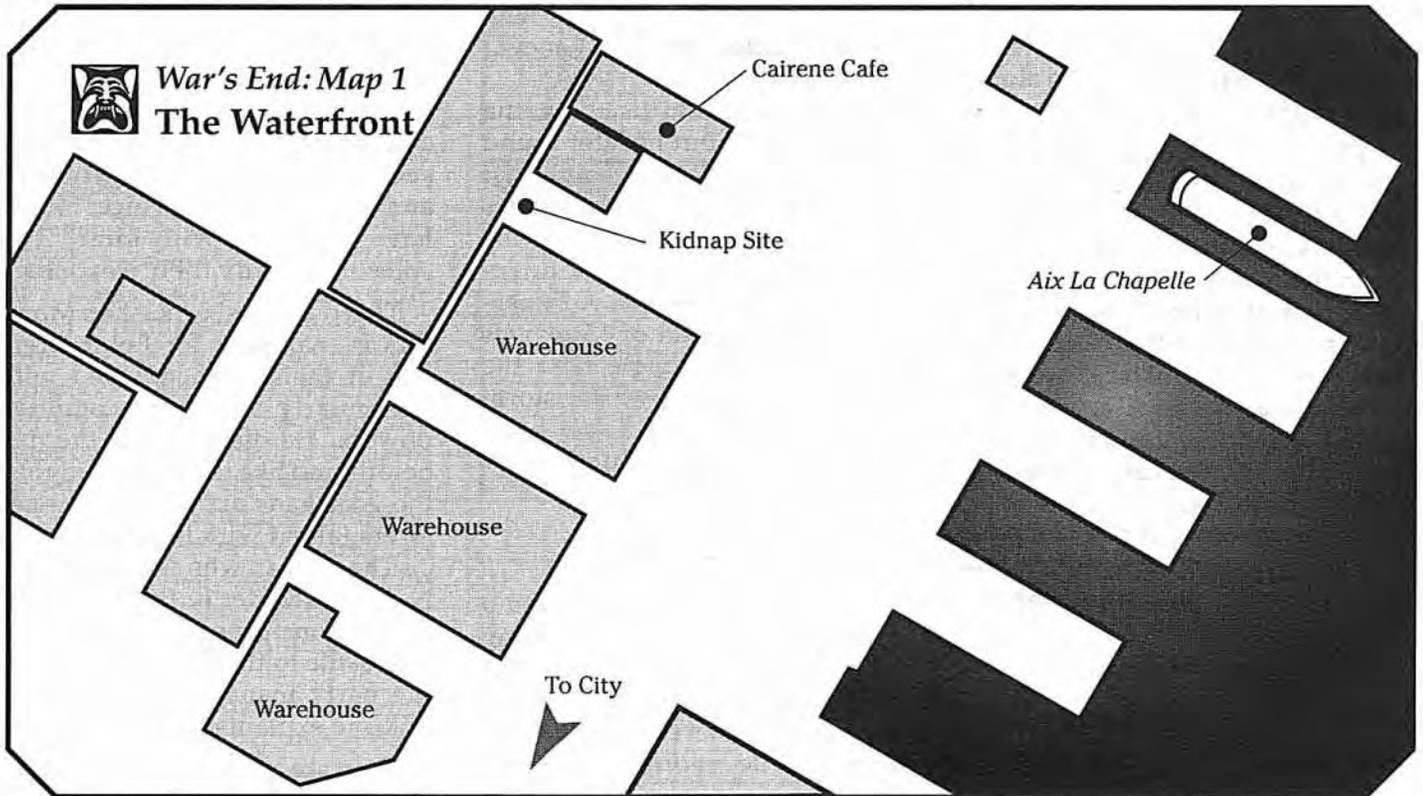
Flags

A *Connection* card means the Storm Knight knows Nob, who is willing to give out the info with no effort. An *Alertness* card reveals the clue in the alley. A *Mistaken Identity* means that the toughs think that the Storm Knight is a wealthy man, and a group of a dozen will tail the Storm Knight, looking for an opportunity to mug him sometime during the Cairo portion of the Act.

Variables

The French cargo ship *Aix La Chapelle* is an utter red herring. However, there are 20 Church Police on board as security. The ship's cargo is a load of dates bound for Marseilles in the morning.



**Church Police (20)**

Reality: Cyberpapacy
DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 12, energy weapons 13, fire combat 12, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (17)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 10, first aid 10, tracking 10
MIND 9

Test 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Cyberpapal) 10, intimidation 11, reality (Cyberpapacy) 10

Possibilities: 3

Equipment: Armor of God, armor value TOU+8/17; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30, with Smartgun (+3 to hit)

Cyberware: EpiphaNeur; CSI EyeKill Mk IV; BelleSee Telesight (+3 to *find* at range), CyberHam Receiver/Homer/Throat Mike (fully functional radio and homing signal); MB Charger1 (DEX+1

for 3 min), MB Blocker (Ignore K results, 3 less shock per hit).

Cyber value: 18

A *Setback* indicates that a truckload of 24 Nile veteran shocktroopers has arrived at the docks in a sweep of the local scum. Anyone who does not have official Nile papers is subdued and brought in for questioning.

Veteran Shocktroopers (24)

Reality: Nile Empire

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 11, fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 7

Find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 7

Survival 9, test 9, willpower 12

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidat-

tion 12

Possibilities: None

Equipment: KK81, damage value 19, ammo 24; two grenades, damage value 19; bayonet, STR+4/13; field kit

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights go to examine the disappearance of Agatha, cut to Scene Three, "The Monitors and the Merry Mac." If they decide to pay Mr. Grabowski a visit, cut to Scene Four, "Grab Bag."

SCENE THREE: The Monitors and the Merry Mac

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights investigate the disappearance of the



old gypsy woman Agatha, and wind up finding some rather different individuals altogether. Read aloud or paraphrase:

You are at the outskirts of the bazaar, close to a section of the old city wall. The silversmith's booth is located a little ways away from the major crowds: no doubt the proprietor has his steady customers and has little need to be set up along the busier thoroughfare. However, the silversmith is not at his booth today; a small sign says "Closed for the Day" in Arabic and English. The only things you see are the closed booth, the old wall, and a drunken vagrant slouched against it, singing happily.

The Action

Ahmad, the silversmith, is indeed taking a holiday today. No foul play is involved. The vagrant

is "Merry Mac," a derelict who gets in a giddy mood whenever he's drunk.

Merry Mac didn't see Agatha get kidnapped, but he later found and picked up a silver comb that she dropped in the struggle. There's a nearby storm drain set into the wall, which is where the kidnapers made their escape. A *Perception* or *tracking* total of 13 reveals the signs of a struggle near the wall, with tracks going to the storm drain. No objects have been dropped anywhere around.

The Monitors

Before the Storm Knights get a chance to question Mac, a searing bolt of energy passes over their heads and takes out part of the wall. Gamemasters should go into rounds, while reading the following:

Standing before you is a squad

of six heavily armed and armored individuals, each one bearing the attributes of the race known as Akashans. They stare at you with eyes narrowed in suspicion. "We seek Lotar," a striking brunette announces in a cold voice. "What have you done with him?" The Akashans ready their weapons.

This team of six Akashan Monitors is searching for Lotar Grell, one of their race endowed with particularly strong precognitive powers. He disappeared the day before, and like the Storm Knights, the Akashans are looking for answers (albeit with less subtlety).

The woman who spoke is Darah Nahl, the leader of this team. For interaction purposes, she starts out as Hostile to the Storm Knights. If the party manages to get her to talk she explains her story:

"We are searching for one of our number, Lotar Grell, a fellow Monitor and a member of my



Paul Daly



squad. He disappeared in this area very early yesterday morning. When I saw you people poking around here, I hastily assumed that you were involved with his disappearance in some way. My apologies."

Darah goes on to explain that word has arrived from Rotan Ulka: the Akashans are to depart the planet within the next week. It's apparently been decided that the prospects of helping Core Earth's people against the invaders are dimming in comparison to the harm already done to this sphere: the spread of the Comaghaz virus, the theft and misuse of Akashan reality tree technology (particularly by the Orrorshans), etc. All Monitor squads are expected to account for their members.

Darah adds grimly that she hopes Lotar has not decided to desert, as she has heard some have. The Rotan has proven reluctant to use force against those who are determined to stay on Earth, and she fears that remnants of their species may well remain behind when the lightships leave.

Darah assures the Knights that her group will persist in their search, and if the characters should encounter Lotar, he should be informed of the situation and instructed to report in.

Akashan Monitors (6)

Reality: Star Sphere
DEXTERITY 10

Biotech weapons 11, dodge 11, energy weapons 11, maneuver 11, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10 (20 w/armor)

PERCEPTION 9

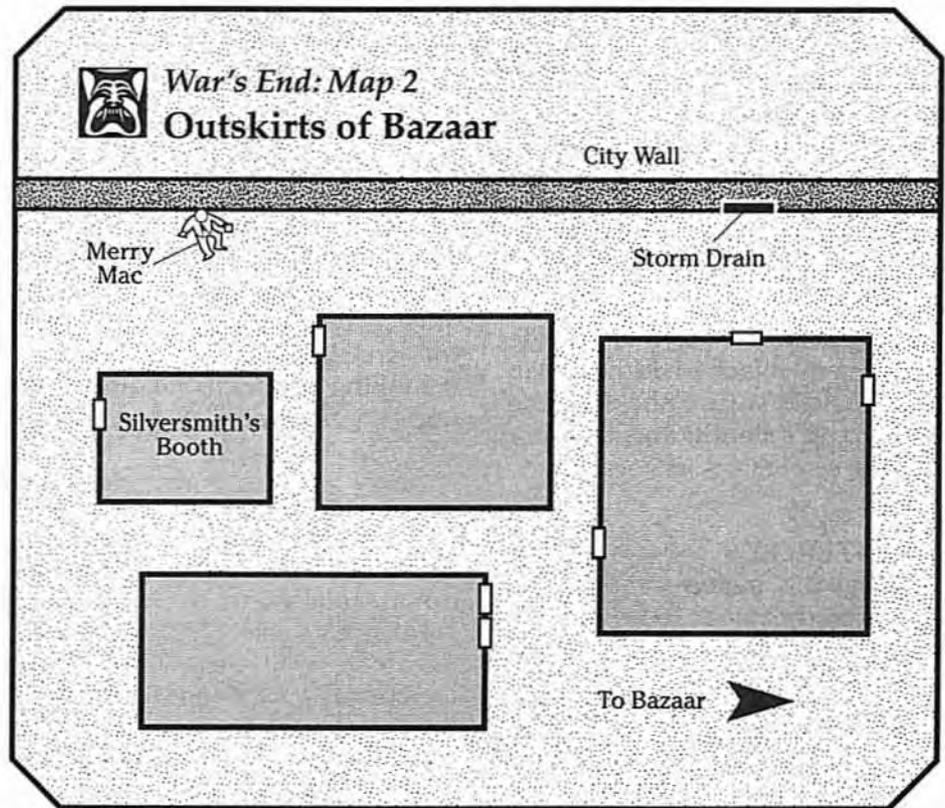
Find 10, language 10, psionic manipulation 10, trick 10

MIND 8

Psionic resistance 11, survival 9, test 10, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 10



SPIRIT 8

Faith (Akashan) 10, intimidation 11, reality (Star Sphere) 12

Possibilities: 5 each

Equipment: Kinetic armor, armor value TOU+10/20; gravitic ray, damage value 30; pulse cannon, damage value 23, ammo 25; tentacle sword, damage value STR+6/16; gutadatl (DEX+2/STR+2); volent rope; transtec

Alignment: Coar

Psionic Powers: Coar Powers (*psychic assault, telekinetic attack*), Telepathy (*beacon, mind meld, send thoughts, thought scan.*)

Description: These Monitors are on a short fuse and prone to shooting first, asking questions later. They are under a deadline, and will soon be heading back to Machu Picchu.

Hey! What About ME!?

If there are Akashan Storm Knights in the group who protest

the news, citing a lack of knowledge of any pull-out, Darah shrugs, saying "Well, word WAS sent out to all our units ... perhaps if you spent less time gallivanting with the natives of this planet, and were more attendant of your duties as a Star Sphere representative, you'd know about it."

While Darah concedes the Knight can stay on Earth if he chooses to, she does point out that there is no guarantee he will ever be able to find his way home again. There may be a few straggler ships that the Storm Knight can catch after the deadline has passed, if there is room, but Darah can't promise anything. All she knows is that her particular squad is due to leave very soon, and they have to find their missing member.

This can make for an interesting subplot during this adventure, as the Knight decides whether to abandon the planet and his newfound friends or his entire species.



Merry Mac

Merry Mac will only part with the silver gypsy comb if given at least \$40 US money, in addition to any level of success using *persuasion* (Mac starts out as Hostile to the party if they approach him, asking questions and such; otherwise he is Neutral to them.)

All that Mac knows is that he saw several black shadows grab the old lady after she left the silversmith's booth, and take her into the sewers.

Merry Mac

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 11, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 8

Find 10, trick 9

MIND 7

Artist (singing) 9

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 12, reality (Nile Empire) 9

SPIRIT 7

Possibilities: 1

Equipment: Sharp stick, damage value STR+1/8; begger's bowl; bottle of cheap hooch

Flags

A *Connection* card means that the Storm Knight knows Darah, and she immediately trusts him or her, once she gets a look at the Storm Knight. An *Alertness* card finds the tracks leading to the sewer, or the silver comb sticking out of Mac's filthy tunic. A *Personal Stake* means that the Storm Knight knows Lotar, and will do whatever he or she can to get him back. A *Suspicion* card means that the Monitors do not totally trust that Storm Knight, and if there are no results in twelve hours, the team hunts down the Storm Knight courtesy of a small organic tracer (a bug in all senses of the word), and at-

tempts to fry the Knight and his group.

Variables

If the Knights attack the Monitors, let two rounds of combat occur, then have each Knight generate a *Perception* total of 12. Those who succeed realize that the Monitors are clearly acting agitated, as if looking for someone, and feeling very frustrated.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights go to hunt down Valara, cut to Scene Two, "On The Waterfront." Should they decide to visit the esteemed Mr Grabowski, cut to Scene Four, "Grab Bag." If they go into the sewer, cut to Scene Five, "Night of the Ninja."

SCENE FOUR: Grab Bag

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights visit a speakeasy, the headquarters of "Gat" Grabowski, known gangster. When the party arrives at the door of the speakeasy, read aloud or paraphrase:

Your group stands in front of a nondescript metal door with a single bare 40 watt light bulb burning feebly overhead. When you rap on the door, a small sliding plate opens up, and a pair of large, bloodshot, watery yellow eyes look out at you. A gravelly voice says, "Yeah?"

The Action

The code phrase is "Ali sent me." If this is not said, the sliding panel slams shut. Any further knocking

brings the bouncer out, plus puts the gangsters inside on alert.

"Knuckles" McGee

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 12, melee weapons 13, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 14

TOUGHNESS 14

PERCEPTION 7

Divination magic 10, find 10, trick 10

MIND 7

Streetwise 10, test 12, willpower 14

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 10

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 15, reality (Aysle) 10

Possibilities: 10

Arcane Knowledges: Folk 7

Spells: *Detect truth, telepathy*

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/17

Equipment: Club, damage value STR+4/18; pinstriped suit

Description: "Knuckles" is an Ayslish troll who decided that getting paid to hit people in the Nile Empire made a lot more sense than having paladins shove pigstickers in him every other day in Aysle. He is the doorkeeper, using his magic to screen out liars and inform Grabowski of any trouble. He's very good at this, and at breaking people's heads open. Aside from those two skills, he's a dim bulb. (Note that the two spells he knows are of a sufficiently low *Magic* axiom that they can be used in a Nile pure zone without contradiction.)

When the Storm Knights give the pass phrase and enter the speakeasy, read aloud the following:

After the smelly Troll gangster opens the metal door and lets you in, you walk down a flight of steps into the speakeasy itself. From your vantage point on the stairs, you can catch a very good glimpse of the entire establishment.

The place is packed with unsavory looking characters in



pinstriped suits, spats, and fedoras, swilling illegal gin and grabbing at their giggling molls. A man in a derby pounds out a ragtime melody on a battered piano. Two muscular, bald bartenders serve the customers. Four ceiling fans twirl about lazily, doing precious little to move the cigar smoke which hangs heavy in the air.

Nice Family!

A *Perception* or *find* total of 12 reveals a hidden door against one wall. Behind this is the office where Grabowski does his business. There are 15 gangsters in his employ, two of whom are seated near the secret door, posing as customers.

The bartenders are twins; thick necks, bald heads, muscular bodies. They're the Smash Brothers (Butch and Bonzo), best bartenders/legbreakers this side of the Nile.

Smash Brothers

Reality: Nile Empire
DEXTERITY 9

Melee weapons 13, missile weapons 13, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 8

Find 10, scholar (bar drinks) 14, trick 10

MIND 8

Streetwise 11, test 12, willpower 15

CHARISMA 8

Charm (16), persuasion (16), taunt 13

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 16

Possibilities: None

Inclination: Evil

Equipment: Each brother has a baseball bat under the counter, damage value STR+3/15, and a Luger, damage value 15, ammo 8, tucked in a pouch on their bartenders' aprons.

If the Storm Knights want to see Grabowski, they are going to have



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to persuade the Smash Brothers to set it up (initial attitude towards the Storm Knights is Hostile, their attitude towards Grabowski is Loyal). A bribe of 100 Royals adds +4 to any attempt to influence them. Of course, a successful Player's Call on an *intimidation* attempt works wonders as well.

On the other hand, getting scuttlebutt from the bartenders is a far simpler matter. A five Royal bribe or a successful *streetwise* total of 14 gets one of the following:

- "I hear tell dat da sewers have become a real dangerous place dese days. Ya never can tell what ye'll find dere!"
- "Da waterfront is da best place ta find missin' persons, so dey say. Ya know, all dat guff about shanghaing people for ship crews!"
- "Somethin's weird about da shocktroopers. One minute they're actin' specially nasty, da next, dey

don't seem ta care, like dey ain't gonna be around much longer!"

However, if the Storm Knights begin causing trouble, all fifteen gangsters pull out their Thompsons, draw back the bolts, and try to ice the Storm Knights.

Gangsters (15)

Reality: Nile Empire

DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 14, melee weapons 13, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

Find 11, land vehicles 12, tracking 12, trick 13

MIND 8

Streetwise 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 12

Inclination: Evil

Equipment: Thompson subma-



chineguns, damage value 20, ammo 30; brass knuckles, damage value STR+3/12

The Meeting

If and when the Storm Knights finally get the chance to meet Grabowski, they are taken behind the bar and through an entrance there, *not* through the secret door. After all, if the door was used casually, it wouldn't be much of a secret for long.

Once in the back, they are taken through another secret door, this one leading into the same room that the first secret door leads into. The room is a well-appointed office with a huge desk. Four Thompson-toting gangsters stand here as guards. Sitting behind the desk, puffing on a big stogie, is Gat Grabowski himself.

Gat "The Grabber" Grabowski DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 15, fire combat 16, maneuver 17, melee weapons 14, running 14,

stealth 16, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 10

Find 13, land vehicles 13, scholar (master criminal) 15, trick 14
MIND 10

Business 14, streetwise 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 12, taunt 13

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 12, reality (Nile Empire) 12

Possibilities: 15

Inclination: Evil

Equipment: Thompson submachinegun, damage value 20; weird science brass knuckles, delivers an electro-jolt, damage value STR+9/20.

Pulp Power: Brainbuster (value 15)

Power Flaw: A power setback,

triggered by a very loud noise occurring when he uses the power.

Description: Grabowski is a conning sneak, possessing a pulp power but not letting on until it's too late. He makes his living kidnapping people, either for ransom or for hire by a third party.

Gat is a tall man with a perpetual smirk, forever chewing on a thick stogie. He's dressed in a pinstripe suit, spats, and fedora.

If successfully questioned/interrogated, he claims ignorance of the kidnapping of prophets, seers, and fortunetellers. He has heard that someone has been horning in on his racket, snatching up a whole bunch of people. He thinks, personally, that the Empire itself is behind the disappearances, and that the victims are being shipped out of the city, since there is no trace of them, dead or alive, and no ransom note. Nothing. Grabowski knows kidnapping, and these aren't normal ones.

But What's This?

There is a *third* secret door in Grabowski's office (found on a *Perception* or *find* total of 17). When opened, the air smells of human sweat and urine. Down a very short hall is a large cell, with 11 people chained up. These are all middle-class/wealthy citizens of Cairo, being held for ransom. They will all be quite happy to be released. None of them are gifted with the ability to predict the future, however.

Needless to say, Grabowski will do his best to make sure that the Storm Knights don't find or use that secret door. He and his men will fight like wildcats to keep them out.

Flags

A *Connection* card means that the Storm Knight knows one of the

Smash Brothers, and will easily get a meeting with Grabowski. A *Nemesis* card means that Grabowski "doesn't like your face," and marks that Storm Knight as an enemy. This means that gangster drive-bys (eight gangsters in two cars) become a fact of life for that Storm Knight for the rest of the act.

Variables

If the Storm Knights are low on cash, they each get \$5,000 reward for rescuing the kidnap victims.

A *setback* for the heroes means that a squad of Nile veteran shocktroopers has picked this point in time to raid the speakeasy. Since the Storm Knights are in here, they are guilty by association. The shocktroopers attempt to arrest them as well.

Veteran Shocktroopers (20)

Reality: Nile Empire

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 11, fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 7

Find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 7

Survival 9, test 9, willpower 12

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12

Possibilities: None

Equipment: KK81, damage value 19, ammo 24; two grenades, damage value 19; bayonet, STR+4/13; field kit

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights go to hunt down Valara, cut to Scene Two, "On The Waterfront." If the Storm



Knights go to examine the disappearance of Agatha, cut to Scene Three, "The Monitors and the Merry Mac." If the characters go into the sewers in search of the old gypsy woman, cut to Scene Five.

SCENE FIVE: Night of the Ninja

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights enter the sewers, looking for the old gypsy woman, and find that the kidnapers are none other than Wu Han and his army of pulp ninja assassins. Read aloud or paraphrase:

Great. Here you are, in the sewers of Cairo, and not surprisingly, it stinks. Huge water bugs the length of a grown man's forearm

crawl on the slimy walls. The sounds of rodent chittering echo loudly around you. The brackish water is about half a meter deep. Fortunately, this is a single tunnel run-off with no man-sized side passages, making the trail easy to follow ... you hope.

The Action

This is a layered obstacle scene. Each obstacle should follow on the heels of the previous one, never giving the players much of a chance to catch their breaths. Use them in any order, except for "Catch a Wave," which should be the final one before finding Wu Han and his ninja.

The sewer tunnel is round and 2.5 meters in diameter, with about half a meter of brackish water. Climbing the walls is a difficulty of 10. There are no branches that give access to the Storm Knights.

The only conduits into the sewer are small drain holes and pipes connecting to buildings.

It's A Gas

Sewers are notorious for having quantities of methane and other combustible gasses. If anyone brings down an open flame (e.g. an Ayslish Storm Knight with a lit torch), the flame glows blue for one round. This is the heavy-handed hint that the fire better be extinguished ... NOW. If the flame isn't extinguished, it sets off a fiery explosion of damage value 30, with a 20 meter blast radius.

Optionally, the gas explosion damage can also apply if anyone casts a flame-based spell, such as a *fireball*, in the sewers.

Oh, Rats!

A massive number of rats emerge from every pipe and cranny, driven



wild by the flood of water coming down the tunnel as well as by the scent of warm flesh. The wave of rats comes from behind the party, chasing them deeper into the sewers.

Rat Swarm (200)

DEXTERITY 5

Running 9, stealth 8, swimming 9, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 3

TOUGHNESS 3

PERCEPTION 7

MIND 3

CHARISMA 3

SPIRIT 3

Possibilities: None

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+2/5

What a Crock

A horrible, twisted version of the urban legend of alligators lurking in the sewer, massive crocodiles swim down here. These huge reptiles are mummified as a result of the Nile reality, making them more monster than animal. They bar the way of the Knights as they flee down the tunnel, requiring the adventurers to use *maneuver* to get past them.

Mummified Crocodiles (12)

DEXTERITY 9

Swimming 12, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10 (14)

PERCEPTION 5

Find 12, tracking 14, trick (11)

MIND 3

Test (17), willpower 10

CHARISMA 1

Taunt (10)

SPIRIT 5

Intimidation 13

Possibilities: None

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+6/16; tail, damage value STR+4/14; mummified hide, armor value TOU+4/14.

Let's Rock

Falling masonry, loosened by all the action down here, rains down on the Knights. Each one must generate a *Dexterity* or *dodge* total of 12 or suffer damage value 16.

Whirlpool

The brackish water obscures a deadly drain, which sucks volumes of water (and anything else) down with it. Escaping it is a Dramatic Skill Resolution, steps A,B,C. Step A is a *Dexterity* or *swimming* total of 10, Step B is a *Dexterity* or *swimming* total of 12, and Step C is a *Dexterity* or *swimming* total of 14. Failure results in being pulled down and drowned.

What A Tangled Web

Four mutated spiders lurk here, subsisting on rats and such. Snapping their webs requires a *Strength* total of 14. Trapped victims can do nothing else but attempt to break out.

Giant Mutated Spiders (4)

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 12, running 12, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 14

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 12

Find 14, trick 15

MIND 5

Willpower 9

CHARISMA 3

Taunt (10)

SPIRIT 3

Intimidation 12

Possibilities: None

Natural Tools: Mandibles, damage value STR+5/13; poison, delivered on an *unarmed combat* attack that produces at least one *wound* — damage value 16 each round for ten rounds or until death.

An Old Favorite

What would a jaunt through the Nile be without some gospog? Wu Han has secured a number of gospog from Mobius to guard the sewer, and not let anyone by who doesn't belong.

Gospog of the Third Planting (18)

Reality: Nile Empire

DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 12, melee weapons 13, swimming 14, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 15

TOUGHNESS 17 (20)

PERCEPTION 10

Find 12, tracking 10, trick 12

MIND 9

Survival 12, test 12, willpower 12

CHARISMA 8

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Egyptian) 14, intimidation 16

Possibilities: None

Equipment: Treated skin, armor value TOU+3/20; spiked staff, damage value STR+5/20

These gospog lurk in the water, down a length of the tunnel, and will erupt out along the length of the party, attacking them everywhere. This is especially effective if the party is running, as the Storm Knights are probably not watching where they are going.

Catch A Wave

Whether by bizarre coincidence or some odd dramatic event, a massive gout of water issues forth, creating a huge wave of filthy water. The wave moves at a rate of three meters per round (this should be played in rounds). If the wave overtakes anyone, they must make a *Dexterity* or *swimming* total of 12 to avoid being drowned. Even if the Storm Knight beats the difficulty number, he will still be carried along by the wall of water. Cut to "Event."





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Event

The wave essentially herds the Storm Knights into what appears to be a dead end. The pipe has a large solid grating in the floor, into which the sewage drains. It is impassable by the Storm Knights, the pipe beneath too narrow for them to escape through. However, a *Perception* or *find* total of 12 reveals a secret door in the sewer wall. Opening the door reveals a large chamber. The door is watertight, and springs back to a closed position on its own. Read aloud the following:

You stagger, wet and winded, into a large vault, clearly not part of the Cairo sewer system. Gasping for air, your eyes adjust to the lighting, and a shiver of dread runs through you as you hear dozens of swords unsheathing. You look up and see dozens of figures dressed in black, all with katanas. Standing behind them, a smug smile on his face, is none other than Cairo Overgovernor Wu Han.

The mastermind shakes his head at you. "Unless you Stormers have somehow gained precognitive powers, the Pharaoh has no need for you at his grand palace in Thebes. He would tell you that himself, but he is currently holding court there, seeking the counsel of his unwilling guests. As for you ... it seems somehow fitting you should perish in a sewer, amid the rest of the city's filth." He turns his attention to his ebon-clad army and says simply, "Kill them."

Pulp Ninja (6 per Storm Knight)

Reality: Nile Empire

DEXTERITY 13

Acrobatics 16, dodge 17, long jumping 15, maneuver 16, melee weapons 16, stealth 18, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 14

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 10

Find 14, trick 16

MIND 10

Test 15, willpower 15

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 14

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 15

Possibilities: None

Equipment: Katana, damage value STR+7/17; black clothing

Inclination: Evil

Wu Han

DEXTERITY 11

Fire combat 13, melee weapon 14, missile combat 14, stealth 13, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8 (15 with robes)

PERCEPTION 13

Find 15, hieroglyphics 15, language 15, scholar (master criminal) 17, scholar (Core Earth realm lore) 16, trick 16

MIND 14

Test 16, willpower 18, weird science 17

CHARISMA 13

Charm 17, persuasion 17, taunt 16

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 12, reality (Nile Empire) 16

Possibilities: 25

Equipment: Weird science-treated silk robes, armor value TOU+7/15; poison on fingernails, damage value STR+2/10 — if a wound or better is caused on an *unarmed combat* attack, poison is injected, doing damage value 25 per round until treated; pouch full of radion dust (a weird science concoction, which, when tossed on armor, neutralizes it for one hour — characters should be treated as if they are unarmored). Note that this works on interdermal armor as well. Wu Han has a dozen doses, each of which requires a successful *missile weapons* total to hit. It works immediately, so if Wu Han gets initiative and uses the dust successfully, the armor will be neu-

tralized. In fact, if given the opportunity, he will try a One-On-Many attack, neutralize the armor of three or four Storm Knights, then direct the ninja to attack those helpless individuals while he himself makes his escape.

The Escape

Wu Han's stats reflect his experience from his conversion to Core Earth axioms, and subsequent return to Nile axioms. He will watch the battle, and when it's apparent that the ninja are getting the worst of it, he will bow, salute, and slip out the back entrance (see map).

This area is a minor staging place for Wu Han's more secret machinations in Cairo. The room contains a teak desk and expensive Oriental rugs. Wu Han activates a trap door in the ceiling, triggers a silent alarm, steps into a huge box-kite (a weird science device), and takes off into the skies of Cairo.

The characters can search the desk. A *Perception* or *find* total of 10 will reveal the following: a document referring to the kidnapped seers, indicating they have been taken to Mobius' palace in Thebes; a notation that a Cyberpapal witch, Roxanne D'Aramis, eluded Wu Han's men and fled to Boston; and a memo mentioning that Mobius is holding court in Thebes and security has been relaxed to allow petitioners to see the Pharaoh.

Event

The alarm brings a horde of veteran shocktroopers, who arrive the moment after the Storm Knights climb out of the underground chamber. It's a good way to get them moving to Scene Six.

Veteran Shocktroopers (40)

Reality: Nile Empire

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 11, fire combat 12,



heavy weapons 12, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 10**PERCEPTION 7**

Find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 7

Survival 9, test 9, willpower 12

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12

Possibilities: None

Equipment: KK81, damage value 19, ammo 24; two grenades, damage value 19; bayonet, STR+4/13; field kit

These shocktroopers travel in two troop trucks (speed value 100/60/12, TOU 20), two Senehem jeeps (speed value 150/100/13, TOU 15), and two Serseru recon vehicles (speed value 100/60/2, TOU 26).

Flags

An *Alertness* card reveals the secret door in the sewer wall.

Variables

If the Storm Knights attempt to bargain with, control, dominate, or otherwise intimidate Wu Han into taking them to Mobius, it will fail. Mobius has placed a post-hypnotic suggestion on his lieutenant, making him impervious to inclination seduction, hypnotism,

psionic domination, magical charm, the Tharkoldu Law of Domination, or any other will-bending method.

Actually, “impervious” isn’t quite accurate: if a Storm Knight gets a result that would otherwise mean a complete success (such as a Player’s Call), Wu Han clutches his head, and trickles of blood run from his nose and ears. If the Storm Knights make a second attempt, he writhes on the ground, swearing fealty to Mobius one second, then swearing violently *at* Mobius the next. His heart suddenly seizes up, and he dies, eyes wide with pain.

Cut To ...

Saving the seers means going to Thebes — and with a horde of shocktroopers on their trail, now might be a good time to leave. If they decide to make for the train station, cut to Scene Six. If they decide instead to head to the US and look for Roxanne, cut to Act Two.

SCENE SIX: Wild Ride

The Situation

Standard. This short scene covers the train ride from Cairo to Thebes. The train pulls out of the station at around five o’clock in

the afternoon; assume that the previous scenes take about two hours. The timing should be such that the train is pulling away just as the Storm Knights reach the platform — perhaps requiring a *Dexterity* or *long jumping* total of 12 to make it.

The trip takes seven hours, arriving in Thebes at midnight. Besides the steam locomotive, there is the mail/baggage car, troop command car, dining car, four passenger cars, and an observation car in the rear. Note that tickets can be bought on the train via the conductor (a mere 10 Royals).

The train is crawling with Nile veteran shocktroopers (about four dozen), all on alert for possible troublemakers. Mobius’ decision to hold court has them tense and papers are being checked very carefully, to screen out potential assassins.

The Action

Travelling in squads of three, the Nile shocktroopers carry out routine checks on the passengers. Eventually, they will reach the Storm Knights, demanding papers, and using *find* to see if they are packing weapons. If weapons are found, more shocktroopers are called for, weapons are impounded, and suspicious characters are trundled off to the troop command car. The troops are under the command of Captain Azhad.



War’s End: Map 3

Cairo Train



Observation Car



Dining Car



Troop Command



Mail and Baggage





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Veteran Shocktroopers (48)

Reality: Nile Empire
DEXTERITY 9
 Beast riding 11, fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 9
 Climbing 10
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 7
 Find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9
MIND 7
 Survival 9, test 9, willpower 12
CHARISMA 7
 Taunt 9
SPIRIT 9
 Faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12
Possibilities: None
Equipment: KK81, damage value 19, ammo 24; two grenades, damage value 19; bayonet, STR+4/13; field kit

Captain Azhad
DEXTERITY 11

Beast riding 14, dodge 13, fire combat 14, heavy weapons 14, melee weapons 14, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11
PERCEPTION 10
 Find 13, first aid 11, languages 11, tracking 12, trick 11
MIND 9
 Survival 11, test 11, willpower 14
CHARISMA 8
 Persuasion 10, taunt 11
SPIRIT 11
 Intimidation 15, reality (Nile Empire) 13
Possibilities: 15
Equipment: K08, damage value 15, ammo 8; field kit.

Description: Azhad is a strict commander, slavishly devoted to the Pharaoh. He has *very* little tolerance for Storm Knights.

An ideal fight would take place on the train's roof. A *Dexterity* or

maneuver total of 12 would be required to maintain one's footing atop the moving train. Anyone fooling off gets one chance — at a *Dexterity* difficulty of 10 — to grab on to the train. A *Strength* total of 10 per round is required to hang on until the character is pulled back up — if he pulls himself up, a *Strength* total of 12 is needed.

Agent of Fear

The Gaunt Man has an agent aboard the train, an Ayslish manticores who was transformed to Orrorshan axioms and quickly became one of the Gaunt Man's most trusted "overseas operatives." In his human guise of "Mr. Manuel T. Koar," he walks the train, looking for any sign of Stormer activity. He is a shapechanger. The stats on the left are for human form, on the right for the manticore-humanoid form.



Mr. Koar**DEXTERITY 10/14**

Acrobatics 12/16, dodge 13/17, flight -/18, maneuver 14/17, stealth 12/16, unarmed combat 16/20

STRENGTH 11/15**TOUGHNESS 10/15****PERCEPTION 12/10**

Evidence analysis 16/14, find 16/14, language 15/11, tracking 17/17, trick 14/12

MIND 10/8

Occult 13/-, test of will 12/10, willpower 14/12

CHARISMA 13

Charm 15/-, persuasion 15/-, taunt 13/10

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Orrorshan evil) 17, intimidation 19, reality (Orrorsh) 15, shapeshifting 20, true sight 15

Possibilities: 20

Natural Tools: (in mantichore form) wings, speed value 12; claws, damage value STR+4/19; scorpion tail, damage value STR+3/18; venom, delivered by tail on a wound or better from an *unarmed combat* attack—damage value 16 per round unless treated.

Equipment: Sword cane, damage value STR+5/16

Powers: *Paralyzing touch*, *armor defeating attack*, *resistance to normal weapons*, *dark vision*

Corruption Value: 14

Fear Rating: 3

Perseverance: 15

Weakness: Salt (severe weakness)

True Death: Stabbed in the heart with a knife while seeing its face reflected in a mirror.

Description: In human form, Koar appears as a sharply dressed American. He has no pronounced accent and smiles a little too much. In mantichore form, his head changes into that of a deformed lion with three sets of teeth in its mouth. A scorpion tail erupts from his tailbone, bat wings spring from his shoulder blades, and his hands twist into claws.

Koar will most certainly find the Storm Knights, but rather than reveal his true nature, he will tail them for much of the adventure. He will not strike at them by choice until they reach New Orleans.

attack on them, luring them to the observation car (which will be cleared out first); either that, or Mr. Koar knows exactly who the Knight is, and intends to play with him a little as he follows him.

Flags

A *True Identity* means that Azhad knows exactly who the Storm Knight is, and will lead an all-out

Variables

If the Storm Knights have caused a major ruckus in Cairo, there is a squad of 24 veteran shocktroopers



Rick Schmitz



at the train station, watching everyone who gets on board. If the Storm Knights are being chased to the train station by shocktroopers from a previous scene (a VERY possible situation), the shocktroopers at the station will be waiting specifically for the Storm Knights (news of their flight was radioed ahead).

There is also the possibility that the Storm Knights have their own air transportation. If they choose to use it, they will find another two dozen shocktroopers at the airport, forbidding all private planes/gyros/whatever from taking off. If they do get airborne, throw as many Paket fighters at them as needed to bring them down. And where do they crash? Why, right near the tracks of the Cairo-Thebes Express, and the train is coming! A good time to jump on, no?

Cut To ...

When the Storm Knights arrive at Thebes, cut to Scene Seven, "Now Appearing at The Palace."

SCENE SEVEN: Now Appearing at The Palace

The Situation

Standard. This scene takes place at Mobius' palace in Thebes. Bear in mind that the city is crawling with shocktroopers; stealth and secrecy will carry the day. When the Knights eventually reach the palace grounds, read aloud the following:

Something is very wrong ... or very right. The artificial sun that is supposed to be Mobius' pride and joy is nowhere to be seen. But there's been no word in the circles

in which you travel about its being moved.

Before you stands the walled courtyard of the Imperial Palace. The walls are easily five meters high, and access is gained by a huge golden gate decorated with Egyptian hieroglyphs, and flanked on both sides by a pair of seated Egyptian pharaohs carved from marble.

Mobius may be "holding court," but he's not letting just anyone in. Atop the walls, and at the gates, are numerous armed figures wearing Egyptian style headdresses. At certain odd intervals along the wall are strange tower-like emplacements with what look like a cross between a weird science ray gun and an anti-aircraft battery. The gates are shut.

The Action

The Knights have two options here. They can present themselves as petitioners or they can attack. We'll deal with the former choice first:

One of Mobius' advisers, Ketif, is posted at the gate to entertain all requests for an audience with Mobius. He is a canny middle-aged man, and will not be easily fooled. The characters will need good disguises and one heck of a good story.

Ketif

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 11, fire combat 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 12

Evidence analysis 16, find 17, hieroglyphics 16, trick 18

MIND 11

Test 16, willpower 16

CHARISMA 12

Persuasion 17

SPIRIT 11

Intimidation 17, reality (Nile Empire) 16

Possibilities: 13

Equipment: .455 Webley, damage value 17, ammo 6

Description: Ketif rose to power as Sesetek fell, and he has come to play much the same role as that worthy did in Mobius' court: someone to gently steer the High Lord away from his madder schemes. He is clever and quick, and though he disapproved of the idea of holding court, he held his tongue on the condition that he be the one to question petitioners.

If the characters are able to convince Ketif they are legitimate subjects of the Pharaoh with a grievance, they will be allowed to pass through the gates and into the palace proper (cut to Scene Eight). If they fail, they may have to fight or flee.

The walls are manned by Second Planting gospog and veteran shocktroopers, whose orders are to stop anyone from entering the palace without authorization from Ketif. There are three dozen gospog and two dozen veteran shocktroopers stationed on the walls surrounding the palace. Each of the eight tower/battery units contains a dozen gospog and six shocktroopers. Add as many gospog and troopers on the grounds as you want to, depending on how the characters are doing and how bloody you want to make this fight. Play the combat out until you feel the characters are getting bored, then let them get in and cut to Scene Eight.

Gospog of the Second Planting

Reality: Nile Empire

DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 12, heavy weapons 11, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 14

PERCEPTION 10

Find 11

MIND 9



Willpower 11
CHARISMA 7
SPIRIT 7
 Intimidation 13
 Equipment: KK81 rifle, damage value 19, ammo 24

Weird Science Electro-Ray Gun
Damage Value: 30
Range: 10-100/500/1000
 Note that the guns need only a crew of two to fire successfully.

Scaling The Wall

Storm Knights who decide to try and scale the wall without being seen must do it using Dramatic Skill Resolution, performing actions ABCD. Action A requires a *climbing* total of 12; Action B a *stealth* total of 14; Action C a *climbing* total of 10, and Action D a *stealth* of 16.

Variables

The electro-ray guns are to be used on anyone who attempts to fly into the courtyard.

Cut To ...

Once the Storm Knights manage to penetrate the front gate (or somehow get over the wall) and are in the courtyard, cut to Scene Eight, "The Will and the Way."

SCENE EIGHT: The Will and the Way

The Situation

Dramatic. The Storm Knights encounter Dr. Mobius ... for the last time? Read aloud or paraphrase:

In the courtyard of Mobius' palace is a sight to take your breath



Rick Schmitz

away. The circular yard is roughly 30 meters in diameter, with its floor composed of millions of tiny mosaic tiles which make a beautiful rendition of the Zodiac. At the far northern end, a tall, thin, cowled figure sits on a throne. Behind him rests a small bunker, and beside him an idol of a man with the head of a crocodile, made of black obsidian. But even this is not the most arresting sight: Mobius' grand palace is on fire!

The Action

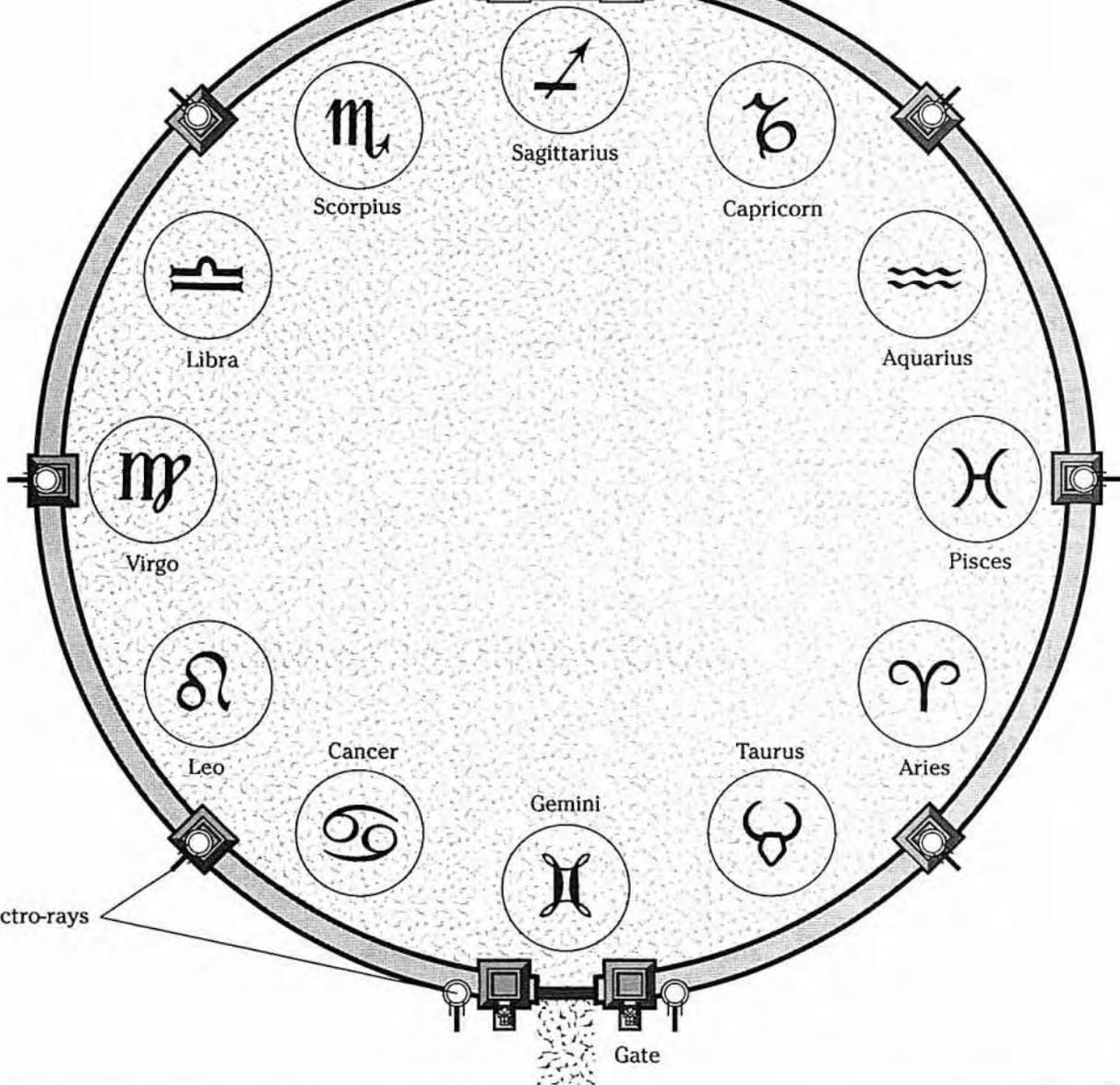
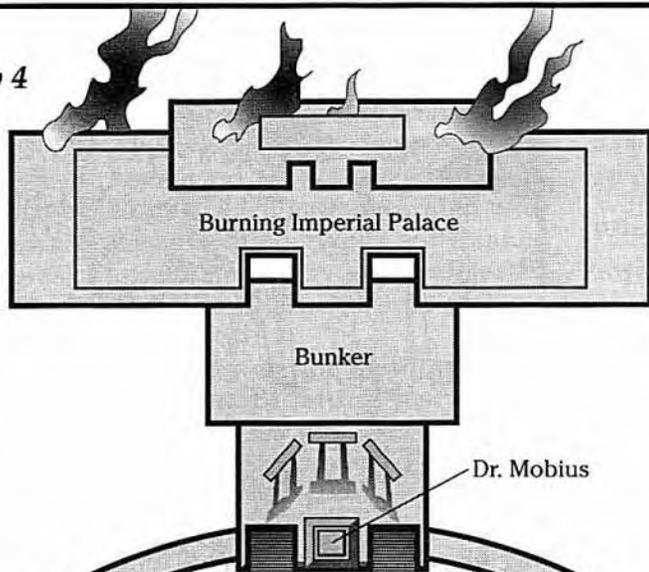
A *Perception* or *scholar* (Nile lore) total of 8 reveals that the statue is indeed the Kefertiri Idol, the Darkness Device of Dr. Mobius. The hooded figure — Mobius himself — beckons the Knights closer, at the same time ordering his remaining troops to lower their weapons. Read aloud or paraphrase:

The cowled figure's right hand





War's End: Map 4
Palace of
Dr. Mobius





absently pets the black idol, which pulses with blue and red light. Then he looks up at you and speaks:

"Greetings, Stormers! So glad you could join me for this momentous occasion. No doubt you are here for the missing prophets and sages. Ah, me ... well, they are here somewhere. But they may well die of Cancer before you find them.

"You are most likely wonder-

ing why I, the mightiest intellect in this cosm, should undertake to abduct fortunetellers and their ilk. It's quite simple: the mark of true genius is knowing what you do not know. I knew something was amiss in this cosm — very amiss — but I did not know what. I brought the seers here to determine for me what is going to happen, and praise be to Sebek, the poor fools did. And do you know what? It's going to happen in three ... two ... one!"

Before your startled eyes, the Kefertiri Idol begins to shimmer, to fade, and then ... it is gone. Mobius sighs and continues:

"It's such a burden being right all the time. Farewell, Kefertiri, you fickle piece of stone. It's over, you know. He's won. The Gaunt Man, that is. He's a genius — almost as brilliant as myself!

"Of course, I don't know the whole story. The last piece of the puzzle was that D'Aramis woman, and she vanished into Malraux's Boston before my bumbling henchmen could grab her.

"Still, I digress. I have enjoyed matching wits with you, Stormers, even if yours are pitiful compared to mine. What makes this truly tragic is that I was winning, you know. I was winning! I would have conquered this miserable cosm, made its inhabitants bow before me, and you, you would have been the lowliest slaves of all!!!"

Mobius pauses, as if trying to regain control of himself. When he has sufficiently recovered, he says simply, "Where was I? Oh, yes, now I remember — so long, suckers!"

Suddenly, a panel opens beneath Mobius' throne and man and chair drop through it. The hole is promptly sealed again by a thick steel plate.

Dr. Mobius

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 14, fire combat 11, lockpicking 14, melee weapons 11, stealth 20, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10 (30 with Force Field)

PERCEPTION 17

Air vehicles 20, Egyptian religion 21, evidence analysis 20, hieroglyphics 22, land vehicles 19, language (Arabic) 20, scholar (eternity shards) 20, scholar (mythology) 20, trick 21, space ve-



hicles 19, water vehicles 19

MIND 25

Hypnosis 30, meditation 28, medicine 29, science 34, test 27, weird science 39

CHARISMA 25

Charm 27, persuasion 30, taunt 27

SPIRIT 22

Faith (Egyptian) 26, intimidation 25, reality (Nile Empire) 27

Possibilities: 260

Inclination: Evil

Equipment: .455 Webley, damage value 17, ammo 6; force field belt, armor value TOU+20/29; weird science ruling staves: one has Electro Ray 19, the other has Fear 26.

The Burning Palace

The royal palace is ablaze, the work of Mobius. The rock itself of which the fortress is made burns now, albeit slowly. The palace has already been stripped of all its treasures, which have been hauled back to Terra.

Once Mobius is out of sight, the entire complex begins to tremble. A *Perception* or *find* total of 12 at any of the Zodiac signs reveals a trap door. Each trap door appears to drop into a tunnel. However, all of them, except for the Zodiac sign of Cancer the Crab, are death traps. In all of the signs except Cancer, hidden wall jets pour gouts of flame into the individual tunnels, causing damage value 35. Spotting the jets requires a *Perception* or *find* total of 15. Total time to open a trap door, go down, explore it and return: four rounds.

The Cancer the Crab trap door leads to a large cell, which contains Lotar the Akashan, the gypsies Agatha and Valara, and nine other people gifted with precognition of one sort or another. Opening the cell require a *Dexterity* or *lockpicking* total of 14. The bars have a TOU of 30. Total time to open the

trap door, go down the hole, find and rescue the prisoners, and leave the hole: eight rounds.

The steel trap door that shut behind Mobius has a TOU of 40. If somehow broken through, it leads to a tunnel which heads north to the small bunker. A *Perception* or *find* total of 16 notes that the tunnel has another, secret, spur that leads to the Palace proper.

The bunker is a seamless, steel structure with no apparent windows or doors.

Follow this timeline to determine the chain of events. Remember to keep things moving!

Round 0: Mobius and his throne disappear into the ground and the steel trap door shuts tight.

Round 1: The entire facility begins to tremble. The surviving gospog open fire on the party and attempt to close with them.

Round 6: The tremors get worse.

Round 8: The bunker's roof opens up to reveal a one-man rocket, with Mobius' symbol emblazoned on the hull.

Round 9: The rocket takes off into the sky.

Round 11: The rocket explodes in mid-air, in a violent burst of red, orange, and yellow fire.

Round 12: The tremors intensify. From this point on, everyone must generate a *Dexterity* or *maneuver* total of 10 to stay on their feet.

Round 15: The courtyard, the bunker, and the palace erupt in a huge explosion that is neatly limited to the immediate environs. Anyone caught in any of those three areas at the time is vaporized. As the Storm Knights flee the complex, remember that any surviving gospog are still on the walls, and will stubbornly continue firing at them, heedless of the destruction about to take place around them. Things should build to enough of a climax that the Knights have at least a couple of rounds' warning that everything is about to blow.

What Goes On Here?

The Gaunt Man has, of course, summoned Mobius' Darkness Device and it has been absorbed into Heketon. As for Mobius — he was never in the rocket ship. There is, however, a dead body of approximately his size and weight inside, and since it's doubtful that the characters have ever seen him without his hood, how can they know whether it is him or not?

In truth, Mobius has decided to depart this cosm while the departing is good. Prior to the Knights' arrival, he had a slave dressed in clothing identical to his own and strapped into the ship. The ship was then launched and blown up by remote control to fake his death. Mobius then slipped through a gate to Terra (created by weird science). (Note that the machines that created the gate are programmed to self-destruct, to prevent anyone following.)

Of course, if you, as gamemaster, really want Mobius dead through his own machinations, go right ahead. We're kind of fond of him and prefer to think he escaped and is plotting anew somewhere else ...

Prophets With Honor

All of the prophets say the same thing: they have seen visions of an evil man with the powers of a god. He is tearing apart the Earth at a place where it is most fragile, where it has already been wounded. The Akashan, Lotar, has seen a beautiful woman being burned by cyberpriests — a woman who knows something that could stop this great evil before it takes place.

Flags

An *Idea* card can give the Storm Knights the Zodiac-based clue about where the prisoners are. An *Alertness* card shows the Knight



R eturnings ...

The old man sat on a stone bench and stared at the lovely garden. Behind him stood the imposing, ornate building that had been his home for the last three months. He was better now, or so they said.

The sky here was a dazzling blue, so far removed from the stormy grey skies of Berlin. Of course, the fact that the sanitarium was located outside of Leipzig, far from Berlin and safely within Core Earth axioms, might have had something to do with it.

The old man smiled as he watched a fat bumblebee buzzing from flower to flower. A few months ago, he was so obsessed with his work that it had become a mania; he never would have noticed something so elegantly amazing as an insect whose body isn't aerodynamic yet it flies anyway.

But that was ... so long ago. He was a different man then. He was a better man now.

Three shadows fell on him, prompting him to turn about, curious. He drew in his breath. Standing before him were three of his oldest, dearest comrades: the Guardian, the Wraith, and Colonel Cairo.

"Hello again, Doctor Frest," the Guardian announced. "You are looking well."

Doctor Frest nodded weakly. "Greetings, friends! If my friends you still are?"

The Wraith nodded as Colonel Cairo gave a slight smile.

"Of course we are," the Colonel replied. "Your ... illness was scarcely your fault. And it was your efforts to help us that ... well ..."

"Drove me mad?" Frest prompted. A moment of awkward silence ensued. Frest, frustrated at his inability to create a means of getting the Mystery Men back to Terra, had snapped some time back and fled to Berlin. Once there, he fell in with the Tharkoldu, forming an unholy alliance in hopes of opening a gateway to Mobius' home cosm. The Tharkoldu reality pushed him further over the brink, driving him to use innocents as guinea pigs in his experiments. It was their screams that haunted his nights.

"I ... I have done much evil," Frest muttered at last, hands cradling his head.

"You were tainted with madness," the Wraith declared quietly. "But it has past. What was done is done. It is all over now."

"It ... is over?" Frest echoed in confused wonder.

The Guardian nodded his head. "More so than you know. The war is over. Our agents in Thebes report that Mobius is no more."

A smile of rapturous joy spread over Frest's face. "Defeated? At last?"

"Yes, Alexis," the Guardian said. "Come along now. It's time to go home."

"Home? But how?"

"When word of Mobius' death spreads, there will be confusion in the ranks of his shocktroopers. We

can return via one of the maelstrom bridges. We know the route home."

"Strange, though," Colonel Cairo said. "Strange that the bridges should be still standing. We heard that the Darkness Device disappeared."

"What? Amazing! Impossible!" Frest said excitedly, rising to his feet. "Unless ... no, it couldn't be."

"What is it?"

"The only explanation I can think of," Frest began, "is if someone else is maintaining the reality here. Someone other than Mobius is draining the possibility energy from this realm."

The Guardian allowed himself a smile. "Now that's the Frest I know! Back to his reality mechanics technobabble!"

"All quite fascinating," Frest said, scratching his head. "But you say we are returning to Terra. For a well-deserved rest, I presume?"

"No," the Wraith answered grimly. "Back to resume our own personal war on the forces of evil. Don't worry, Doctor—I am sure there will be plenty for us to do back there."

No one spoke for a while, each reflecting on the war that had been won and the struggles that still awaited them. Evil was never truly vanquished—the best they could hope to do was stop it, one battlefield at a time.



that there are trap doors built into each Zodiac sign.

Variables

If the Storm Knights wish to attack Dr Mobius, let them. Mobius, aware that Kefertiri would go soon, succeeded in tapping a huge amount of possibility energy before it left. Mobius will attempt to simply subdue the Knights and go back to his monologue.

Aftermath

Once the two gypsy women are reunited with their family, Karlo gives the Storm Knights a token that marks the group as friends of the gypsies. Any gypsy encountered will do one favor for the token bearer and his group.

Lotar will reward the group by offering himself as a teacher to any one Storm Knight who wishes to pick up the psionic skills. Informed of the Akashan departure, he will decide to remain behind.

Going in search of Roxanne is a matter of hopping a DC3 to Rome, and catching a 747 direct flight to Logan International Airport in Boston.

But before they can do that ... there is a great flash of light, one that bids fair to blind the characters. When they can see again, they find themselves standing in the courtyard of a German hospital. Before them stand three Mystery Men and an aged man they may or may not know as Dr. Alexis Frest. Cut to "Returnings," below. The characters may intervene in this scene in any way they wish, perhaps attempting to talk the Mystery Men into staying on Earth. Or they may choose to just observe, in which case the scene plays out as

Back to the Stars

Rotan Ulka looked out over the assembled High Council. Sarila sat at his right hand, outwardly calm, inwardly seething.

"The decision has been made and it shall stand," he intoned. "It is a wise species that knows when it is in error, and we have erred by returning here. Preparations for departure will continue."

"What of all our forces here?" the Lorbaat representative clicked in anger. "What of all our casualties? All of our efforts?"

"What would you have me do, Lorbaat? Answer bloodshed with more bloodshed? That is not the way of the Akashans. We have indeed lost many since coming to this place. It is the price we all must pay for ... humility."

As the Lorbaat hissed in contempt, the Draygakk representative held up a hand for peace. "What of the reality trees?"

"Those which have taken root here will remain. The rest return with us."

"And so?" Sarila demanded. "Do we now flee to the stars, forgetting all we have seen here? There was danger, true, but there was also much of interest."

"Indeed," Ulka replied. "And so we shall leave a small contingent on Earth's moon to observe the progress of the human species. Perhaps ... when they are more advanced ... we shall return again."

"I thank you all for your counsel," the Rotan said, rising. "Continue with the evacuation. It is time to go home."

written. None of the four men present noticed the characters' appearance, or can answer any questions about how they got there.

At the end of the scene, the flash of light occurs again and the characters are back in Thebes, with only a few seconds having passed. The gypsies are stunned at the powers of these Storm Knights, who can appear and disappear at will!

Note that the characters will not be transported to the Akashan High Council Chamber (see "Back to the Stars") — but when they rematerialize in Thebes, they will suddenly, mysteriously have knowledge of the events there.

Awards

Each Storm Knight gets four Possibilities for surviving the act. Award an additional two Possibilities for each of the following accomplishments: killing/capturing Wu Han; rescuing the prisoners. Note that if Wu Han died because of the post-hypnotic suggestion, the Storm Knights get no award for the deed.

Cut To ...

Once the Storm Knights decide to find Roxanne, cut to Act Two, "Banned In Boston."





Act Two

Banned In Boston

The Major Beat

The Storm Knights travel to Boston, MA, which is under Cyberpapal axioms, in search of Roxanne D'Aramis. Roxanne is a witch who holds a vital clue to the Gaunt Man's plans. But learning it means saving her from a Cyberpapal version of the Salem witch trials.

The Storm Knights go to Boston with no specific information on where to start. They are going to have to figure it out for themselves. Thus, the first several scenes can be played in any order.

Gamemasters should run this act with the deadly, in-your-face attitude of cyberpunk. It's every man for himself and damn everyone else. Also, bear in mind that the Cyberpapacy does not control this zone with the same iron fist as it controls France. It's not a military occupation, at least not yet. In Boston and vicinity, the CyberChurch is rather engaged in a competition for the hearts and minds of the people. The Cyberpapacy has taken a battering in recent years, and there is a certain sense of urgency in the action of its agents — tempered by a concern that too much overt action will stiffen resistance. Let the people be lulled into the CyberChurch, goes the common wisdom, rather than bludgeoned into it.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following at the start of the act:

It's drizzling as you land at Boston's Logan International Airport. You know that the Cyberpapacy has extended its realm south from Canada into New England,

and only recently has Boston been altered. It's a tense situation in Beantown these days; the CyberChurch does not rule the city, but rather is attempted to gain influence slowly, offering the average citizen protection from various horrors; horrors which, you realize, didn't start showing up until the Cyberpapacy landed here.

It is quite apparent that city, state, and federal governments are still intact here; but the Cyberpapal authorities are given a wide breadth of discretion to act for their own defense and the greater good of the people. Every day, however, the Cyberpapists push the limit just a fraction more.

Boston has an extensive subway and bus system, making for easy access to any part of the city, including the airport. Rental cars are also available.

Note that Boston, and most of the state of Massachusetts, is in a Cyberpapal dominant zone.

SCENE ONE: The Cathedral

The Situation

Standard. The Cyberpapists' main cathedral in Boston is on the former site of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, otherwise known as the Christian Science church. This scene is to be used if the Knights try go get some information on Roxanne through the Cyberpapal authorities.



based on sight), CSI LEDs, CyberHam Receiver/ThroatMike/Homer, TSE LeMotion (+3 to *find* for detecting movement), DATAS Boomer (amplifies voice), MB Charger (+1 DEX for 3 min), ChipHolder 3. Cyber value: 21

3. Church Police: This is the barracks/security work space for the Church Police contingent, plus the location of the church's computer and eight Netmonitor stations.

The security work space con-

trols alarms and locks. Also, it can bring in the cygoyles from Room 4.

The computer contains files with the names of all known heretics, in custody and at large. Breaking into the system requires a *science (computers)* total of 15. Getting file contents requires a *science (computers)* total of 17. The data indicates that Roxanne D'Arakis was arrested for witchcraft four days ago, and shipped to Salem, Massachusetts for an upcoming "public lesson."

The file goes on to say that Salem, MA was the site of witch hunts centuries ago, and that it would be fitting to revive the tradition, especially if the fears of the people can be manipulated.

Other files talk about possible areas where insurrection and disruptive behavior are found, notably Boston Common, and Kenmore Square. A file on "other-cosm activity" notes that Nippon Tech is in Boston, in the form of the Bank of Japan, which is owned by Kanawa Corp.

There are a total of 24 Church Police stationed in the church. Six are off-duty, asleep in the bunks, four man the room, and 14 patrol the church. Eight cyberpriests are always manning the Net stations.

Church Police (24)

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 12, energy weapons 13, fire combat 12, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (17)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 10, first aid 10, tracking 10
MIND 9

Test 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

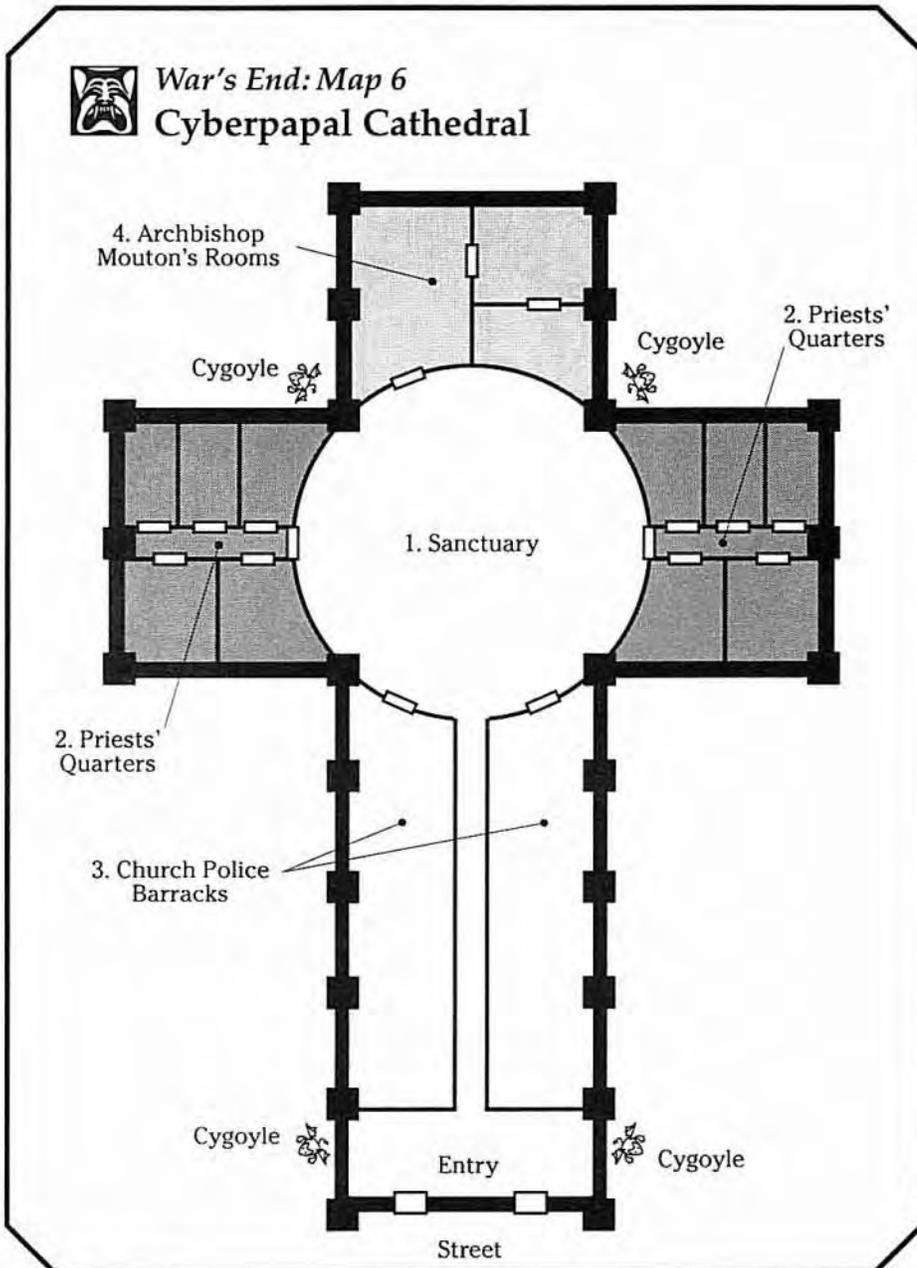
Faith (Cyberpapal) 10, intimidation 11, reality (Cyberpapacy) 10

Possibilities: 3

Equipment: Armor of God, armor value TOU+8/17; God Meeter, damage value 20 with Smartgun (+3 to hit)

Cyberware: EpiphaNeur, CSI EyeKill Mk IV, BelleSee Telesight (+3 to *find* at range), CyberHam Receiver/Homer/Throat Mike (fully functional radio and homing signal), MB Charger1 (+1 DEX for 3 min), MB Blocker (ignore K results, 3 less shock per hit). Cyber value: 18

4. Archbishop Mouton's Rooms: This room is locked (*Dexterity* or



lock picking total of 18), and alarmed (a *Perception* or *find* of 16 to locate the alarm, and a *science (electronics)* total of 16 to deactivate it).

This elegantly appointed set of rooms contains Mouton's office/study and bedroom. Mouton is usually found here, overseeing the church's activities and reporting to his superiors in Quebec.

The archbishop's desk has a computer terminal which gives access to the computer from Room 3.

Archbishop Daniel Mouton

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 12, fire combat 12, melee weapons 12

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10 (15)

PERCEPTION 11

Cyberdeck ops 14, find 12, languages 14, trick 12

MIND 10

Science (computers) 12, test 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 10

Charm 14, persuasion 13, taunt 13

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Cyberpapal) 15, focus 15 (17 w/ crucifix), intimidation 15, reality (Cyberpapacy) 16

Possibilities: 20

Equipment: HalloMesh, armor value TOU+5/14; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30; blessed crucifix (+2 to *focus*).

Cyberware: NeuraCal, Epipha-Neur, BelleView 20-20 (+2 to PER based on sight), CSI LEDs, CyberHam Receiver/Throat Mike/Homer, TSE LeMotion (+3 to *find* for detecting movement), DATAS Boomer (amplifies voice), MB Charger (+1 DEX for 3 min), ChipHolder 3. Cyber value: 21

Description: Mouton is a strong, stern-faced man in his early 40s. His zeal for service to the CyberChurch is exceeded only by his lust for personal power.

Cygoyles: A quartet of cygoyles "live" here. They are the beefed up security for the cathedral, though



Paul Daly

as a rule they never move from their perches until after sundown, and return just before sunrise.

Cygoyles (4)

Reality: Cyberpapacy

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 15, fire combat 14, flight 14, stealth 15, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 15

TOUGHNESS 15 (23 with interdermal and Trigon plating)

PERCEPTION 11

Find 12, trick 13

MIND 12

Test 14, willpower 14

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 12

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Cyberpapacy) 14, intimidation 15

Additional Skills: Three at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: Some (30)

Natural Tools: Claws, damage



value STR+2/17; teeth, damage value STR+1/16; razor-tipped wings, damage value STR+2/17, speed value 13

Equipment: GWI GodLight, damage value 24, ammo 50, plus SmartGun attachment

Cyberware: NeuraCal, Epipha-Neur, CSI EyeKill Mk IV (+3 to hit with GodLight), FFO Night View (+3 to *find, tracking* up to 50 meters), DATAS Snooper (+2 bonus for normal hearing), Fangs (bite 17), Slashers (claws 19), interdermal plate and Trigon body plating. Cyber value: 19

Flags

A *True Identity* card means that the Storm Knight's name appears in the church computer's heretic files. For the rest of the act, that Storm Knight and all his associates will be followed, harassed, and perhaps even detained by the Cyberpapists.

A *Connection* card played here means that the Storm Knight actually knows Archbishop Mouton, and can even get the information about Roxanne simply by asking. However, once the information is given, the group will be followed for the rest of the act, and if they do anything remotely blasphemous or disobedient, they will be arrested.

Variables

Killing the Archbishop puts the Storm Knights' faces on every Cyberpapists' DatChips, and vidscreens. For the rest of the Act, the Storm Knights will be hunted down by squads composed of six cyberpriests and a dozen Church Police. Anytime a *Setback* comes up in conflict, it means that a squad has entered the fray, with the intention of arresting the Storm Knights (although they will just as easily accept the corpses of the Storm Knights instead).

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights decide to check out the more "cyberpunk" street action in Kenmore Square, cut to Scene Two, "Moshing At The Rat." If they go check out Boston Common, cut to Scene Three, "Anything But Common." If they decide to check out the Kanawa connection, cut to Scene Four, "You Can Bank On That."

SCENE TWO: Moshing At The Rat

The Situation

Standard. Kenmore Square is the site of thriving Boston night life for students and cyberpunks. Here, the Storm Knights may find some more hints about what's going on, as well as some possible danger. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Situated within walking distance to Boston University and Fenway Park, Kenmore Square is a loud, crowded place these days, humming with a diverse nightlife of students, sports fans, cyberpunks, and runaways. Always a busy place even before the war, it has been transformed into a leaner, meaner, and more exciting place than ever.

The Action

Occasional bands of CyberKnights, punkers sponsored by the CyberChurch, roam the Square, causing trouble and chasing down supposed heretics.

During one such "sweep," the Storm Knights happen upon a pack of CyberKnights chasing a young woman.

CyberKnights (8)

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 12, energy weapons 12, fire combat 12, long jumping 13, melee weapons 12, running 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (14 with armor and legs)

PERCEPTION 10

MIND 8

Survival 10, test 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 9

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Cyberpapal) 10, intimidation 11, reality (Cyberpapacy) 9

Possibilities: 2

Equipment: Plexiflex armor, value TOU+9/13; Herod IV, damage value 19, ammo 50, with CSI SmartGun; power dagger, damage STR+5/14

Cyberware: NeuraCal, Epipha-Neur, CSI EyeKill MKIV, Homer, Kreelar tendons, PlazHop legs (STR+3, running limit value 13, jumping limit value 6, +1 armor add, kicking damage value 12). Cyber value: 16

The CyberKnights are chasing a woman named Linda Sanderson, who practices minor magic. If the characters defeat the CyberKnights, any remaining conscious will flee to the cathedral (Scene One).

Linda hangs out at the Commons most of the time and knows that many newcomers to the city gravitate there. She doesn't know Roxanne, but is certain someone at the Commons would.

Linda Sanderson

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, running 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8 (10 with leather jacket)

PERCEPTION 12

Divination magic 15, first aid 14, land vehicles 14

MIND 9



Artist (drawing) 14, willpower 10

CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, persuasion 13

SPIRIT 10

Reality (Core Earth) 11

Possibilities: 2

Equipment: Leather jacket, armor value TOU+2/10; pocket knife, damage value STR+2/10; magic components; \$50.

Arcane Knowledges: *Light 2, Magic 1, Folk 2*

Spells: *Away Sight, Detect Magic, Possibility Shadows*

Description: Linda is a modestly attractive redhead with bright blue eyes and a strong Boston accent. She used to be an art student, but got interested in magic when the Cyberpapal axiom wash hit. Her magical abilities are unremarkable.

The Rat

The Rat is a dark, crowded, noisy nightclub featuring the latest up and coming punk/cyberpunk acts. It's characterized by lots of beer, moshing, and ear-shattering music.

The Rat is run by Slug, a profiteering entrepreneur. He charges a five dollar cover charge to come into the Rat, and word has it that he has good connections. Slug also has a line on Nippon Tech black market items; he knows that Nippon Tech is strong in Boston, since the New York Stock Exchange moved to Boston early in the wars, making the city a major financial force.

Unfortunately, the Kanawa folks have caught wind of Slug's black market activities. A pair of corporate ninja are always skulking around the club, invisible to everyone else.

Corporate Ninja (2)

DEXTERITY 13

Acrobatics 14, fire combat 14, maneuver 14, martial arts 16, melee weapons 14, missile weapons 14, stealth 15, unarmed com-

bat 14

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

Find 12, tracking 10, trick 11

MIND 9

Meditation 11

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 12

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 14, reality (Nippon Tech) 12

Possibilities: 4

Equipment: Shimisword, damage value STR+5/14; 13mm Chunyokai, damage value 18; heat-seeking throwing stars (4), damage value STR+3/12; Niyoki camouflage suit; Allied camcorder; smoke pellets (6); smoke lenses; mini-parabolic mike and recorder

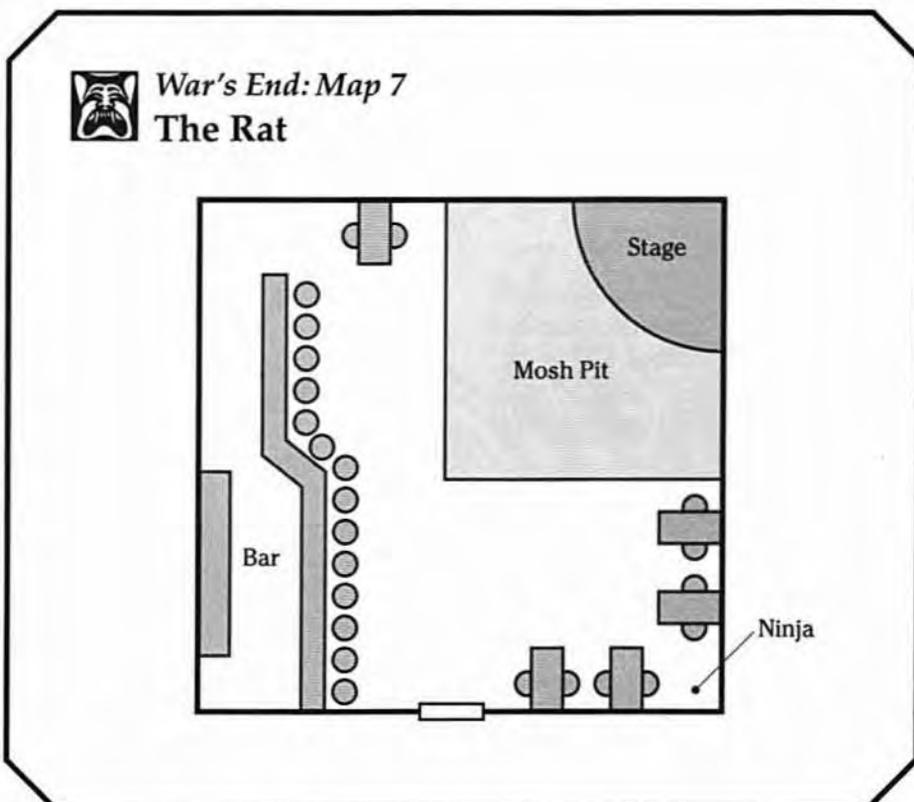
Martial Arts Style: Ninjutsu (all minor maneuvers, plus the major maneuver of *Invisibility*).

The ninja will photograph and record any suspicious activity.

A *streetwise* total of 12 is needed (one attempt may be made per Knight, every 10 minutes) to ex-

tract information from the locals. Any level of success yields one of the following rumors. A "T" or "F" notation marks it as true or false:

- There's a huge, winged, nasty dude skulking around the city at night. Seems to be looking for someone (T).
- Boston Common is the best place to look for new arrivals to the city (T).
- Part of Boston Common has been turned into a gospog field (F).
- "Old Ironsides," the USS *Constitution* in Charlestown Navy Yard, is a Core Earth hardpoint (T).
- There's a Bank of Japan branch in Boston's financial district (T).
- Boston's North End is being plagued by Orrorshan style Horrors at night (F).
- Tharkoldu techno-demons are terrorizing the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (F).
- People who practice magic in Boston and vicinity are rounded



up quietly by the Cyberpapal Church Police and executed as witches (T).

Anyone who desires either cybernetic repairs/modifications or black market Cyberpapal equipment must generate a *streetwise* total of 18, in order to find someone who can help them.

Other than questioning people, the Storm Knights can dance, mingle, and flirt. Anyone who moshes to the music suffers damage value 16 for each separate moshing attempt. Each attempt takes 10 minutes.

Fight!!!

At any point in the scene, whether it's in the Rat or on the street, there is a very real possibility of getting into a fight with local punks. The reasons are not very important; perhaps the punks don't like the look of the Storm Knights, or covet a piece of their equipment, or the Storm Knights are asking too many questions. In any case, the stats are given below. During the fight, give each Storm Knight a chance to generate a *Perception* total. On a 16, they notice the two ninja lurking in the shadows, observing all.

Punks (2 per Storm Knight)

Reality: Cyberpapacy

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, energy weapons 10, fire combat 11, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (14 with armor)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 11, trick 10

MIND 9

Test 12, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 12

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 12

Possibilities: None

Equipment: HalloMesh armor, value TOU+5/14; God Meeter,



Rick Schmitz

damage value 20, ammo 30

Cybernetics: NeuraCal, Belle-View 20-20, Slashers, damage value STR+4/13; cyber value: 8

Flags

A *Romance* card means Linda falls for a male Storm Knight, or vice versa. If Linda falls for the character, she insists on following him for the rest of the act. A *Mis-taken Identity* card means that a group of cybered hoods thinks that the player and his friends are undercover Church Police. A *Connection* card makes the Storm Knight friends with Slug, the owner of The Rat. Slug can fix up the Storm Knights with a black market contact or a cyberlegger. A *True Identity* card marks the Storm Knight as a known threat by the Nippon ninja, who will radio for a few more of their friends and follow

the party.

An *Alertness* card tips off the Storm Knights to the ninjas' presence. The party can follow the ninja back to the bank.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights decide to visit Boston Common, cut to Scene Three, "Anything But Common." If the Storm Knights decide to follow the ninja back to the bank, cut to Scene Four, "Bank Shot."

SCENE THREE: Anything But Common The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights find themselves at Boston Com-



mon, a large park in downtown Boston, and a place which now attracts all manner of interesting people. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Before the war, Boston Common was a grand park that was a pleasure to walk in during the day, and best avoided at night. It attracted its share of street people, muggers, junkies, and whores. Nowadays, in addition to the "usual" folk, the Common has become a meeting ground of punks, dissidents, and people who are simply trying to flee their circumstances. Many runaways and out of towners wander the Common, looking for a place to crash or just somewhere to hide.

The streetlights give off a hazy glow in the evening mist. Occasional lights and fires dot the park, where people are no doubt camped.

The Action

The Storm Knights aren't the only one looking for Roxanne. Jezrael has caught wind of what happened in the Nile Empire, and has sent Thratchen to Boston to search for her. The Tharkold High Lord is curious about this so-called witch's precognitive powers, and what she may know about the future. Thratchen is now in Boston Common, interrogating people none too gently, in a so far futile effort to ascertain Roxanne's location.

Each Storm Knight should generate a *Perception* total — on a 14, they hear a small struggle, a few gasps, and the unmistakable sound of cyberclaws being extended. A *Perception* or *find* of 12 points them in the right direction.

The Storm Knights come upon Thratchen, forcibly interrogating two teenagers. A third lies curled in a fetal position, bleeding to death. A dozen techno-demons hover behind, all of them bearing a mark

on their cheeks which identifies them as followers of Thratchen.

When Thratchen sees the Storm Knights, he growls:

"Ahhh, Stormers! I would know that stench anywhere! You are like insects, so easily exterminated, yet still found wherever one looks! Come then! Face he who was regent of Orrorsh, and is now the favored one of Jezrael! My wing here craves blood, and you'll do quite nicely."

Thratchen

DEXTERITY 15

Dodge 17, energy weapons 17, fire combat 16, flight 18 (19), maneuver 18, stealth 18, unarmed combat 23

STRENGTH 18

TOUGHNESS 24 (29)

PERCEPTION 24

Alteration magic 26, divination magic 26, evidence analysis 26, find 27, scholar (the Nameless One) 27, scholar (Orrorsh realm lore) 26, scholar (Tharkold realm



Peter Venters



lore) 29, tracking 25, trick 26

MIND 25

Apportation magic 27, conjuration magic 27, cybertech 28, occult 26, test 27, willpower 27

CHARISMA 16

Charm 21, persuasion 22, taunt 23

SPIRIT 24

Faith (Cult of the Dominant) 29, focus 30, intimidate 26, occultech 28, pain weapon 25, reality (Tharkold) 29

Possibilities: 40

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+2/20; status armor, value TOU+5/29; wings swift flight, speed value 11, damage value STR+7/25

Spells: *Monkey form, command obedience*

Equipment: Res-14 laser, damage value 25, ammo 50

Cyberware: Nanocord, nervejacks, EMVue, Sharpsight, Cyberwings, cybertalons, damage value STR+5/23, cyberarm (right), LifeCyber, Mem-Sift; Cyber value: 20

Miracles: Thratchen has access to all the miracles of the Cult of the Dominant.

Thratchen will put up a good fight, but if he suffers more than two wounds, he will give up on this errand. His survival instinct overrides any loyalty he feels to Jezrael. Thratchen doesn't think any monkey meat could be worth taking any more pain than absolutely necessary. Thratchen will use his wing of techno-demons as a means of running interference for himself.

Bear in mind that the Gaunt Man can still see and hear everything that Thratchen sees and hears, thanks to an occult ritual. He will make sure that Mr. Koar (from Act One) picks up the Knights' trail, if he hasn't already done so.

Saving the bleeding teenager requires a *first aid* total of 14. If the Storm Knights think to ask the

youths why Thratchen was even here, they say that the techno-demon was looking for a witch, someone named Roxanne. When they didn't know who she was, let alone her whereabouts, Thratchen got angry and started slicing them up.

Tharkoldu Techno-Demons (12)

Reality: Tharkold

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 14, energy weapons 14,

fire combat 12, flight 15 (18), melee weapons 12 (15 defense), missile weapons 12, stealth 11, unarmed combat 15 (18)

STRENGTH 16

Lifting 18

TOUGHNESS 16 (21)

PERCEPTION 10

Alteration magic 13, divination magic 13, find 14 (17), first aid 11, land vehicles 12, tracking 14, trick 12

MIND 11



Paul Daly



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

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 11, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 16, intimidation 16

Additional Skills: Two at +2 adds

Possibilities: Some (45)

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

Spells: *Monkey form, pop*

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+2/18; talons, damage value STR+3/19; wings, speed value 10, wing strike, damage value STR+7/23

Equipment: Res-14/Alphasers, damage value 25, ammo 50

Cyberware: Nanocord, Wind-sniffer, Balance Wires, Interdermal Plate, armor value TOU+5/21, Cybertalons, damage value STR+5/21, Cyberwings, Lifecyber, 3-slot Chipholder; Cyber value: 16

Description: This wing of Tharkoldu are fanatically loyal and subservient to Thratchen. In fact, they hold the means for Thratchen to escape death, as they will interpose themselves between their master and the Storm Knights.

Asking Around

If the Storm Knights ask around at various little camps and lean-tos, have them generate a *streetwise* total. On a 12, they learn that that Roxanne was taken during a random sweep of Boston Common by the Church Police, and transported north to Salem.

Flags

An *Alertness* card reveals the attack scene without needing to generate any totals. A *Nemesis* card makes that Storm Knight into a hated foe of Thratchen.

Variables

The Storm Knights need not meet Thratchen at Boston Common, per se. Gamemasters should feel free to insert the encounter with Thratchen anywhere in Boston, just so long as it is in a relatively secluded area. This may become necessary, especially if the Storm Knights don't visit the Common. In that case, they should hear rumors about some gruesome and especially painful-looking murder/mutilations in the Boston Common. Hopefully, the word "painful" will trigger the idea of Tharkoldu presence. An *Idea* card may help the Storm Knights in making the connection.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights decide to go to Salem, cut to Scene Six, "Witch Hunt." If they visit the Kanawan faction, cut to Scene Four, "Bank Shot." At some point after Thratchen meets the Storm Knights, insert Scene Five, "Enter Randolph Chapman."

SCENE FOUR: Bank Shot

The Situation

Standard. Kanawa Corp has a branch office of their Bank of Japan in Boston's financial district. The entire facility takes up the ground floor and the second floor of a skyscraper. From here, Kanawa's agents keep track of the stock market and financial dealings. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Since the beginning of the war, Boston's financial district has been a vital part of America's economic well-being. With New York and

Washington, DC out of commission, and Philadelphia surrounded by hostiles, Boston became the logical choice as the headquarters of the major stock exchanges.

The Bank of Japan, Boston Branch, is a gleaming, clean, efficient operation. The bank proper is located off the lobby of a large office building, while the administrative offices are located directly above, on the second floor.

Several maroon-jacketed security guards stand by politely, keeping the peace, and security cameras pan back and forth.

The Action

During the daytime, access to the second floor is almost impossible; one needs a Kanawa Corp ID card to be scanned by the reader installed in the elevator. To override this requires a *science (electronics)* total of 18. A failed attempt makes the alarm go off.

Anyone walking into the bank with weapons is immediately intercepted by security (which of course is composed of MarSec agents), demanding that weaponry be relinquished until any business transactions are done. Troublemakers will be detained while the Boston Police are called, arriving in two minutes.

The bank president, Mr Takashima (otherwise known as 4401), is not seeing anyone without an appointment. No one is allowed into the offices. The well-dressed, friendly Japanese tellers are Neutral to the Storm Knights. If they are threatened, they can press alarms at their feet, which alert the MarSec security personnel in the bank and summon six armored MarSec agents from upstairs.

At night, the MarSec agents ditch the polite jackets, and patrol the facility in full armor, and with big guns. The exterior doors are locked



(*Dexterity* or *lock picking* of 18), and alarmed (*Perception* or *find* total of 16 to locate them, *science (electronics)* of 18 to disable them.)

MarSec Agents (20)

Reality: NipponTech

DEXTERITY 9

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

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8 (15 with Kyoto RKD armor)

PERCEPTION 8

Find 9, tracking 10, trick 9

MIND 8

Test 9

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 9

SPIRIT 7

Intimidation 9

Additional Skills: Two at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: Some (55)

Equipment: RKD armor, value TOU+7/15; nunchaka, damage value STR+5/13; Impala chain gun, damage value 23, ammo 600; Note: During the day, the MarSec security men carry only KM11 pistols (damage value 18, ammo 12), and wrist mounted telecoms to call for backup.

Corporate Ninja (12)

DEXTERITY 13

Acrobatics 14, fire combat 14, maneuver 14, martial arts 16, melee weapons 14, missile weapons 14, stealth 15, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

Find 12, tracking 10, trick 11

MIND 9

Meditation 11

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 12

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 14, reality (Nippon Tech) 12

Possibilities: 4

Equipment: Shimsi sword, dam-

age value STR+5/14; 13mm Chunyokai, damage value 18; heat-seeking throwing stars (4), damage value STR+3/12; Niyoki camouflage suit; Allied camcorder; smoke pellets (6); smoke lenses; mini-parabolic mike and recorder

Martial Arts Style: Ninjutsu (all minor maneuvers, plus the major maneuver of *Invisibility*).

The ninja will photograph and record any suspicious activity.

These ninja are the team from whence comes the two ninjas at The Rat (see Scene Two). If their ranks have been depleted, note it here.

4401 (Mr Takashima)

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 13, fire combat 12, martial arts 12, stealth 13, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 10

Evidence analysis 11, find 11, land vehicles 13, language 12, scholar (Core Earth financial theories) 15, trick 14

MIND 12

Business 15, computer science 14, test 13, willpower 13

CHARISMA 11

Charm 13, persuasion 15, taunt 12

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 12, reality (Nippon Tech) 12

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: LOV 9mm pistol, damage value 15, ammo 12 (+3 to *fire combat* when attempting vital blow); smoke screen lenses; Sony Talkman

Martial Arts Style: Seda Chen (all maneuvers)

Description: The handsomely dressed Mr Takashima is an ambitious executive in his early 30's, and a martial arts enthusiast. He is greatly disturbed by the recent developments within Kanawa Corp and fears for his future. He's secretly a Rauru Block member, but

it's unlikely he'll blow his cover (see "Flags," however).

Boston Police (8)

Reality: Core Earth

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12, melee combat 11, running 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

Evidence analysis 10, find 12, land vehicles 12, tracking 11

MIND 8

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 11

Additional Skills: One at +1 add

Possibility Potential: Some (50)

Equipment: 9mm Glock, damage value 17, ammo 9; nightstick, damage value STR+2/11; cuffs; radios

Description: Eight patrolmen with two squad cars will be dispatched if the alarm goes off. If heavier backup is needed, the Tactical Squad is called in. Use the same stats, except that they wear Kevlar vests (TOU+5/14), and wield Savage 77E shotguns (damage value 18, ammo 5). A dozen Tactical Squad members in two vans will respond.

The Layout

Ground Floor

1. Lobby. This contains the elevators, two ATM machines, and a security desk with two MarSec agents. The desk has phones, an intercom system, and a directory. Floors 3-10 have normal, legitimate businesses and offices.

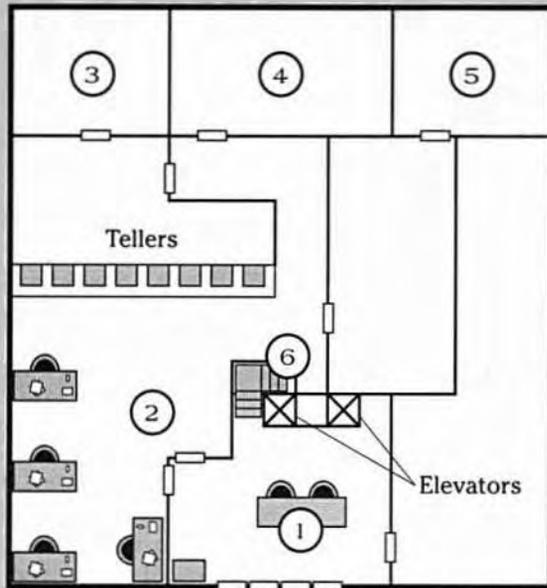
2. Bank. There are eight teller windows, and four customer service desks here. Two MarSec agents keep watch here.

3. Vault. The vault has a complex electronic lock (*science (elec-*

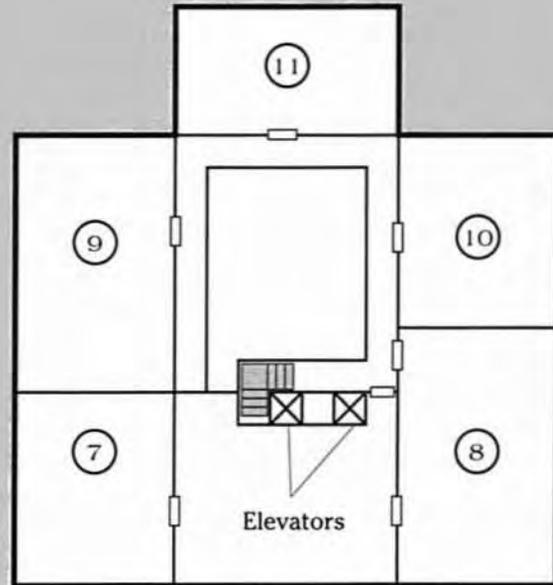




War's End: Map 8
Bank of Japan



Ground Floor



Second Floor

tronics) total of 25 to disable). On any given day, there's \$1,500,000 in US bills and Japanese yen here.

4. Safe Deposit Box Area. Two MarSec agents watch over this area. The customer has one key, and the bank official has another key. Both must insert their keys in order to open a box.

5. Supervisor's Office. The supervisor is Miss Akimoto. She reports directly to 4401. Her office contains a desk, computer terminal, several chairs, and filing cabinets.

6. Private Stairwell. This gives access from the ground floor to the second floor.

Second Floor

7. Security Room. Staffed continuously by eight MarSec agents, this room coordinates the cameras, alarms, and general security measures. The control boards here control all cameras and alarms.

8. Computer Room. Staffed by four technicians, this room contains the bank's computers, plus the links to the main corporate computers in Japan. See the "Computer Information" section for what data can be retrieved.

9. MarSec Quarters. There are

four guards here at all times, sleeping or just relaxing off-duty.

10. Ninja Quarters. This simple, austere room has 14 mats for the corporate ninja. Two ninja are here at all times.

11. President's Office. An expensively decorated office with computer terminal, phone, fax machine, bar, even a continuously running stock price report display. On the floor at the foot of his desk, Takashima has a "panic" button which, when pressed, brings a half dozen heavily armed MarSec agents in two rounds.





Rick Schmitz

Computer Information

Getting into the computer system without the passwords requires a *science (computers)* total of 14. Once in, the directory list comes up. The number in parentheses is the *science (computers)* total needed in order to break into that directory:

- Banking Records (14)
- Profit/Loss Reports (14)
- Personnel (16)
- Kanawa Corp Affairs (18)
- Special Resources (22)

Perusing the first three directories and generating a *Mind* or *business* total of 13 shows that everything is in order. Reading all this takes about half an hour. The only information of note is that Takashima lives in an elegant condo along the Charles River.

Once in the Kanawa Corp Af-

fairs directory, another *science (computers)* total must be generated against a difficulty of 20. Consult the chart below for results, based on success level:

Minimal/Average: Listing of Kanawa businesses/subsidiaries in New England.

Good: Memorandum announcing 3327's "slash and burn" policies, with a list of companies to be shut down.

Superior: Listing of Kanawa businesses/subsidiaries in North America.

Spectacular: The following interesting memo:

"It is with regret that Kanawa Corporation announces that the world known as Earth is no longer a valid site for continued business and trade. For a number of reasons, it has been decided that nothing less than a full withdrawal and reconsolidation back in Mar-

ketplace is necessary to ensure our continued prosperity.

"All holdings on Earth that have not been liquidated by the end of fiscal '95 shall be turned over to a handpicked consortium of executives, who shall run the businesses in our absence, in essence, leasing them from our megacorporation. This is done with the understanding that if we ever deign to return, all resources and assets revert back to us.

"This venture has been a beneficial one, in which many lessons were learned and many profits made. Our wisdom has increased greatly as a result. In fact, it is that wisdom which tells us that the time to leave is now.

"We wish to express our gratitude for your loyalty and service to Kanawa Corporation."

— Ryuchi Kanawa, CEO
Kanawa Corp



Flags

If a *Connection* card is played, and the Storm Knight is from either Nippon Tech or Core Earth, he or she is known to 4401. It should be arranged that the executive walks by the group if they visit the bank during regular hours, and he will recognize the Storm Knight (and vice versa), but give no hint of such recognition. If the Storm Knight manages to talk with 4401, he will give the full story about how Kanawa is returning to Marketplace and the realm is collapsing.

Variables

If the Storm Knights cause trouble in the bank during business hours, they will be arrested by the Boston police, and charged with something ranging from disorderly conduct, to illegal possession of firearms, to possibly assault and battery. Bail per Storm Knight will be set at \$10,000. If they can't make bail, they're thrown in jail, with a court date set for within 30 days.

Cut To ...

Before the Storm Knights can head for Salem, they have one more encounter waiting for them. Cut to Scene Five. Once they are on their way to Salem, cut to Scene Six.

SCENE FIVE: Enter Randolph Chapman

The Situation

Standard. This scene can be inserted at any point in the Act when the Storm Knights are on the road, either driving through Boston or

on the highway to Salem. If it takes place in Boston proper, then it occurs on a quiet stretch of thruway. Randolph Chapman is deliberately setting up a situation to draw the attention of "heroic" individuals, who more often than not turn out to be Storm Knights.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Even though the Cyberpapacy does not have a stranglehold on Boston and its surroundings, things are still bad enough that there are not many cars on the streets.

On a wooded stretch of road, you notice a van, pulled over to the side of the road, its hazard lights blinking. Bumper stickers are plastered all over the rear door and bumper, declaring things like, "Question Authority," "Save The Whales," "I Support Edeinos Rights," "Visualize World Peace," "Kanawa Out Of U.S. ... NOW!"

The Action

Have everyone who is looking at the van generate a *Perception* total. On a 12, they notice that the driver is slumped over on the steering wheel. Anyone getting a *Spectacular* success also notices that there is a second figure, seated in the front passenger seat, head leaning on the driver's shoulder.

If the characters examine the scene, they will find that both people are dead. They appear to be middle-aged hippies and their throats have been slashed. An *evidence analysis* total of 14 or a *medicine* total of 12 reveals that they were killed with a sword. There's blood all over the front seat.

Randolph Chapman is lurking nearby, waiting for his moment to strike. He was careful enough to obliterate his tracks around the van. He is hiding in the brush, waiting for the perfect opportunity to surprise the Storm Knights. If he

wounds or kills even one, he will be content, jump on his motorcycle and flee. If possible, have him survive this scene — you want the player characters to build up a real hatred of him.

Randolph Chapman

DEXTERITY 12

Beast riding 14, dodge 15, energy weapons 16, fire combat 16, heavy weapons 13, lock picking 14, maneuver 14, martial arts 14, melee weapons 15, missile weapons 13, running 13, stealth 16, swimming 14, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 11 (15 with his right arm)

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 11 (18 with armor)

PERCEPTION 9

Air vehicles 11, cyberdeck ops 12, disguise 11, evidence analysis 12, find 14, first aid 10, land vehicles 11, language 10, scholar (Living Land realm lore) 12, scholar (Nippon Tech realm lore) 12, tracking 15, trick 14, water vehicles 10

MIND 9

Meditation 10, science (computers) 14, survival 14, test 14, willpower 14

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt 11

SPIRIT 11

Intimidation 15, reality (Core Earth) 14

Possibilities: 26

Cybernetics: NeuraCal, J-Jack, Bellescan eye, MB Blocker, Trigon Hercule Arm (right); Cyber value: 15

Martial Arts Style: Jujitsu (all disciplines including Master)

Equipment: Kevlar/Ceramic Armor, value TOU+7/18; Res-14 laser pistol, damage value 25, ammo 50; Uzi submachinegun, damage value 17, ammo 11; .45 Colt Auto, damage value 16, ammo 7; MAS Grenade Launcher with bandolier of 12 frag grenades, damage value





some man with wavy white hair, weathered face, light blue workshirt, blue jeans, biker boots, and a Fedora hat.

Sword of Vlad the Impaler

Cosm: Core Earth

Possibilities: 40

Tapping Difficulty: 18

Purpose: To find and dispatch the most dangerous enemies swiftly and surely.

Powers: The sword adds +12 damage bonus to the wielder's STR. Randolph enjoys using his cybernetic arm to swing it, thus his base damage is 27. The sword can also detect possibility rated beings in a 10 meter radius, automatically, at will.

Group Power: Judgment

Restrictions: The sword can detect possibility-rated beings only six times a day.

Description: This is a jeweled scimitar with a blade that is permanently stained with blood. It was used by Vlad the Impaler (Count Dracula of legend), and drank the blood of many foes.

The van is a battered Ford Econoline. If the Storm Knights have no ground transportation yet, this could be their means for getting around (if they have strong stomachs). The van has no useful equipment.

Van: Tech 22, speed value 12, passengers 8, TOU 15.

Flags

A *True Identity* card means that the Storm Knight is the one whom Chapman must kill in order for the dreams to stop. A *Nemesis* card makes the Storm Knight a hated enemy of Chapman, for no other reason than that he is a Knight. An *Alertness* card allows the Storm Knight to realize that he is being watched by someone, as they are checking out the car.

21; burst radius 0-3/8/15; modern compound bow, damage value STR+7/22; hunting knife, damage value STR+3/18; nylon rope; backpack; C-rations; first aid kit; Kokoru Avenger motorcycle, Tech 23, speed value 13, TOU 13.

Chapman wields an eternity shard, the sword of Vlad the Impaler.

Description: Chapman is a former Spartan who has become

slightly unhinged, and now hunts down Storm Knights and murders them. Lately, his sanity has been stretched a little further thanks to dreams implanted in his head through occult means by the Gaunt Man. He now hunts with even greater ferocity, convinced that when he kills a particular Storm Knight, the dreams will stop.

Chapman is a ruggedly hand-



Variables

If the Storm Knights manage to kill Randolph Chapman before he manages to kill at least one Storm Knight, the Gaunt Man raises him as a Horror and sends him back on their trail. Randolph comes back as a walking dead version of himself. Add the following abilities to his stats:

Powers: *Regeneration, Armor Defeating Attack, Attack Form Resistance (Firearms/Explosives)*

Corruption Value: 13

Fear Rating: 1

Perseverance DN: 12

Weakness: Any holy symbol

True Death: Impaled with his own sword

Cut To ...

When the Storm Knights decide to go to Salem, cut to Scene Six, "Witch Hunt."

SCENE SIX: Witch Hunt

The Situation

Standard. A little over an hour's drive north gets the Storm Knights to Salem. At the town limits, however, they are met by an angry mob blocking the streets. This is a scene that is meant to be resolved by good dramatic speeches and clever interaction, not by large caliber guns and explosions. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You drive north of Boston until you arrive at the town of Salem, infamous for its witch trials in the 17th century. Salem's a coastal town, still with the feel of a colonial settlement; the age of the town is almost a tangible thing. Per-

haps it's a result of the axiom wash, or just the fact that the town has been around for over 300 years.

Your progress is interrupted, however, just past the town line, by a roadblock. In addition to two squad cars, there's a crowd of townfolk blocking your way. One of the policemen gestures for you to leave your vehicles.

The Action

The citizens of Salem and surrounding towns have been whipped into a state of paranoia by the Cyberpapist preachers wandering the suburbs. The people are genuinely afraid of gargoyles, witches, curses, and the undead.

The Cyberpapists' criteria for a suspected witch is a simple one: anyone who looks odd is probably a witch. Creatures like elves, dwarves, edeinos, Star Sphereraces, all are easily fingered as witches. People who dress oddly or talk strangely are also good candidates (e.g. Ayslish Knights and wizards, pulp heroes, etc.).

Once the crowd sees the Storm Knights, a chorus of boos and gasps erupts, as they realize that the Storm Knights are "different." The crowd begins to get ugly, hurling accusations of witchcraft and consorting with the Devil.

The policemen instruct the Storm Knights to drop their weapons and come quietly to the town square, where, they are sure, the Inquisition will sort things out after the hanging that's set to take place in a little while.

Mob (40)

Reality: Cyberpapacy
DEXTERITY 7

Melee weapons 9, missile weapons 8, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 7

PERCEPTION 8

Find 9, tracking 9

MIND 7

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 10

SPIRIT 8

Possibilities: None

Equipment: Variable, either: torches, damage value STR+4/11, set fire to flammable material; clubs/baseball bats, damage value STR+3/10; broken bottles, damage value STR+2/9; knives, damage value STR+3/10; rocks/bricks, damage value STR+4/11, hurled

A *Perception* or *scholar (psychology)* total of 10 reveals that the mob is frightened and potentially dangerous. If the characters wish to use *persuasion* or some other skill to try to calm them, the mob's attitude should be considered Enemy.

Town Police (6)

Reality: Core Earth

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12, melee combat 11, running 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

Evidence analysis 10, find 12, land vehicles 12, tracking 11

MIND 8

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 11

Equipment: .38 revolver, damage value 14, ammo 6; nightstick, damage value STR+2/11; cuffs; radios.

Description: The police aren't quite under the Cyberpapal sway, and very few have actually transformed to the new axioms. Still, they are here to keep the peace, and right now, the citizens' idea of peace is to cooperate with the CyberChurch.

If the Storm Knights surrender, the police will confiscate their weapons and lead them into the next scene in the town square. Cut to Scene Seven.



Flags

A *True Identity* means that several people in the crowd recognize the Storm Knight for what he is, and shout that he is a "demonspawn," like the Cyber-Church warned. A *Connection* card means the Storm Knight knows one of the policemen, who will explain the situation in town.

Variables

The Storm Knights can certainly fight the crowd, though this will be a less than heroic thing to do. Twenty more police will respond within six rounds. Four rounds after the police reinforcements arrive, a contingent of a dozen Church Police and six Hospitallers will rush in to "save" the crowd.

Cut To ...

When the Storm Knights go to the town square, cut to Scene Seven, "A Good Day For A Hanging."

SCENE SEVEN: A Good Day For A Hanging

The Situation

Dramatic. In Salem's town square, a huge spectacle is prepared: the mass hanging of suspected witches, and a book burning, overseen by the Inquisition and watched by a frenzied mob.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The first thing that catches your eyes is the large bonfire in the middle of the square. In the fire you see numerous books, CDs, records, comics, roleplaying games, decks of cards, and Bibles



Rick Schmitz

burning brightly.

A huge platform and scaffold has been erected. Surrounding the area are a score of black uniformed Church Police, supplemented by a half dozen cybernetically enhanced warriors wearing white surcoats with red crosses over their black armor. These sit high on cybernetically enhanced steeds.

Atop the platform stand eight men in white robes and skull-caps, listening to a man in red

robes screaming, "The time has come to purge ourselves of the influence of witchcraft and false religions! As we are burning the mind- and soul-poisoning materials found in our homes, we shall also remove from our midst those whose minds and souls are so poisoned with deceit that they are a threat to us all!"

The crowd cheers, punctuated with exclamations such as "Burn the witch!" and "Save us!" as the



man with red robes raises a hand for silence. "Brothers and sisters, I present to you, the condemned! May the Lord have mercy on their souls!"

You see a line of people at the scaffold, each with a rope around their neck. You can quite clearly make out clergymen of various faiths, three young women, a young man, a male dwarf, and a Mystery Man. One Church Policeman, close to the gallows, holds a strange red helmet in his hands, evidently taken from this Nile hero.

The red-robed figure gestures up in the sky, and everyone sees a robed skeleton with oily black wings and a scythe. Some people scream in terror. "Behold!" the robed man shrieks, clearly building the tension up to a fever pitch. "Behold, the Angel of Death, Uriel, awaits the souls of the condemned! Let the executions commence!" The crowd roars its approval.

The Action

Things are about to get real ugly, real fast, but it can be played in several ways. The Storm Knights may attempt to take to the platform and try to plead with the crowd, appealing to their sense of reason. For purposes of interaction, the crowd's *willpower* is considered to be a 20; this reflects the large number of people (100) and the mob mentality. Consider the crowd's attitude to be Enemy.

Gamemasters should feel free to add a bonus of no more than +3 if the speech given is an especially good one. If the crowd at the roadblock has been won over, add another +3 bonus. If the Storm Knights somehow brought the evidence from the Boston cathedral's computer room, detailing how the Cyberpapacy was manipulating the people of Salem, add a +2 bonus.

If the crowd is convinced, they will begin shouting for the condemned to be let go, and begin to press forward. The Cyberpapists, angered, launch an attack on the Storm Knights, loudly proclaiming that *they* are the witches.

If the Storm Knights instead decide not to speak at all, but rather to just attack the Cyberpapists, the crowd shouts its outrage at the Knights, and many people begin spilling into the battle site, in a mad attempt to subdue the characters.

Cardinal Andre Froussard

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, fire combat 11, stealth 10

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (16 with armor)

PERCEPTION 11

Cyberdeck ops 17, evidence analysis 15, find 13, language 13, scholar (Avignon Doctrine) 15, trick 14

MIND 12

Test 14, willpower 14

CHARISMA 13

Charm 15, persuasion 16

SPIRIT 18

Faith 22, focus 21, intimidation 20, reality (Cyberpapacy) 21

Possibilities: 20

Cyberware: NeuraCal, EpiphaNeur, interdermal plate, armor value TOU+7/16; FFO CamEye, CSI LEDs, FFO NightView, AVRO PR II.V, damage value 19, ammo 20; slicers, damage value STR+2/11
Cyber value: 17

Miracles: Has access to all Cyberpapal miracles.

Description: Andre is a favored Cardinal of Malraux's. He usually runs his affairs from Quebec, but Malraux himself ordered him to Salem to kick off the new witch hunts. A handsome, square-jawed man with salt and pepper hair and a booming voice, he's practically a walking recruitment poster for the Cyberpapacy.

Church Police (20)

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 12, energy weapons 13, fire combat 12, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (17)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 10, first aid 10, tracking 10

MIND 9

Test 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Cyberpapal) 10, intimidation 11, reality (Cyberpapacy) 10

Possibilities: 3

Equipment: Armor of God, armor value TOU+8/17; God Meeter, damage value 20 with Smartgun (+3 to hit)

Cyberware: EpiphaNeur, CSI EyeKill Mk IV, BelleSee Telesight (+3 to *find* at range), CyberHam Receiver/Homer/Throat Mike (fully functional radio and homing signal), MB Charger1 (+1 DEX for 3 min), MB Blocker (ignore K results, 3 less shock per hit). Cyber value: 18

Hospitallers (6)

DEXTERITY 10

Beast riding 12, dodge 11, fire combat 13, energy weapons 13, maneuver 12, melee weapons 13, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (17 with armor)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 11, first aid 11, tracking 11

MIND 9

Test 11, willpower 12

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 10, taunt 12

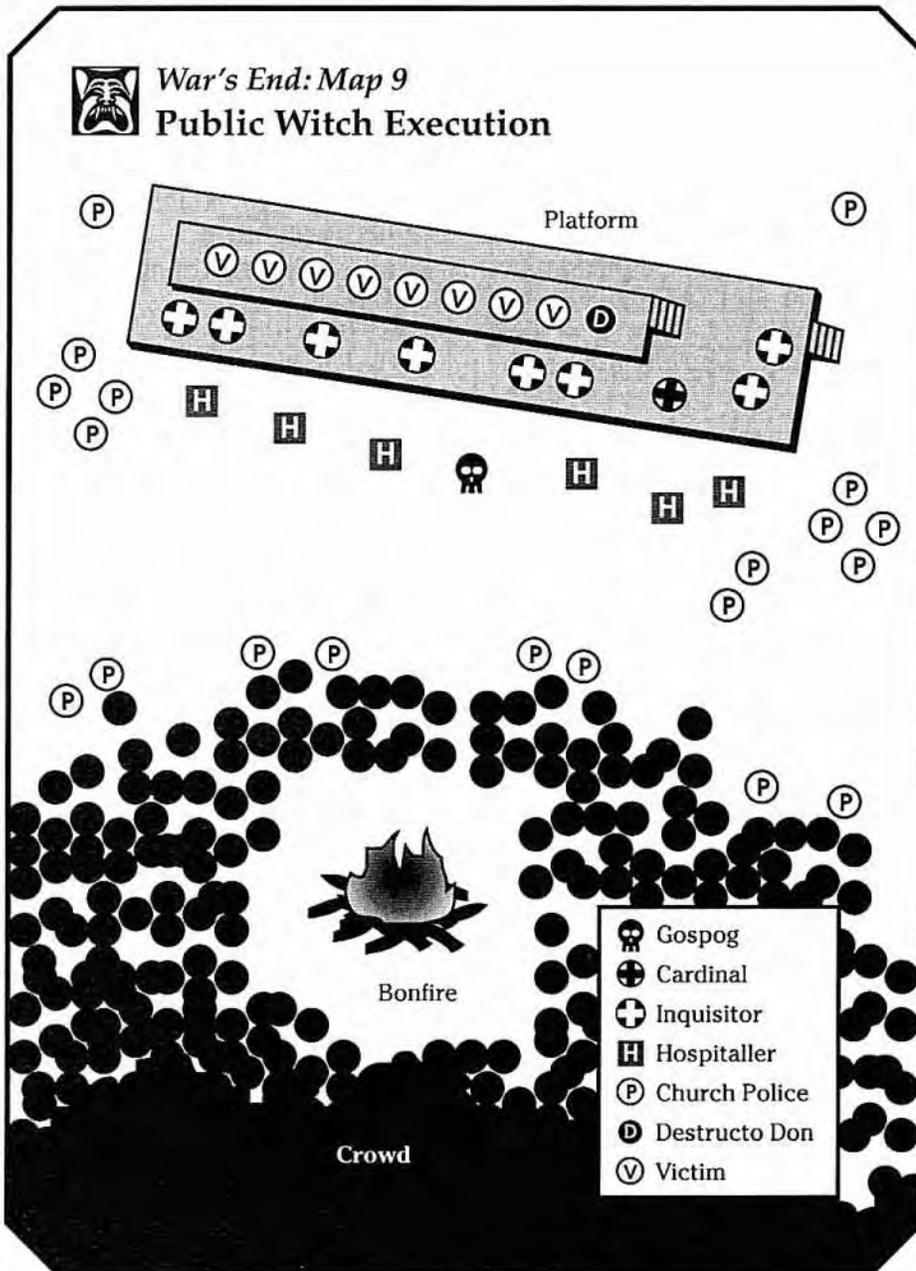
SPIRIT 12

Faith 17, focus 13 (15 due to crucifixes), intimidation 15, reality (Cyberpapacy) 14

Possibilities: 4

Equipment: GWI Armor of God, armor value TOU+8/17; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30; MAS StormGun with CSI Smart-





Gun, damage value 22, ammo 12 (+6 to hit with SmartGun bonus); power broadsword, damage value STR+8/17; crucifix (adds +2 to focus). Each Hospitaller rides a Charger

Cyberware: NeuraCal, Epiphaneur, CSI Eyekill Mk IV, CSI HotShot, CyberHam Receiver, TSE LeMotion, Throat Mike, Homer, MB Charger 2 (+2 DEX for 3 min), MB Blocker, Compté's Stabiliza (+2 to defensive skills). Cyber value: 19

Miracles: Can use any Cyberpapal miracle except *excommunication*.

Charger (6)

DEXTERITY 10
Dodge 12, running 12 (speed 12), unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 12
TOUGHNESS 12 (18 with interdermal plating)
PERCEPTION 5
MIND 3
Willpower 8

CHARISMA 3

Taunt (6)

SPIRIT 3

Intimidation 9, reality (Cyberpapacy) 9

Possibilities: 2

Cyberware: NeuraCal, CSI LtFilta, Interdermal Plating, value TOU+6/18, Homer, MB Adrenal Booster, MB Blocker, The Clamp. Cyber value: 15

Inquisition (8)

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 10, energy weapons 10, melee weapons 10, stealth 12, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9 (14 with armor)

PERCEPTION 11

Cyberdeck ops 12, evidence analysis 15, find 12, scholar (Avignon Doctrine) 14, trick 12
MIND 10

Test 12, willpower 14

CHARISMA 8

Charm 11, persuasion 11, taunt 11

SPIRIT 12

Faith 15, focus 14 (16 with crucifix), intimidation 15, reality (Cyberpapacy) 14

Possibilities: 8

Equipment: GWIHalloMesh, armor value TOU+5/14; GWI GodLight housed in a staff, damage value 24, ammo 50; electroprod in same staff, damage value 16, non-lethal; crucifix (adds +2 to focus).

Cyberware: NeuraCal, Epiphaneur, BelleView 20-20, CSI LEDs, CSI LtFilta, FFO ColEnhantz, DATAS Snooper, CyberHam Receiver, TSE LeMotion, Throat Mike, Homer. Cyber value: 15

Miracles: Any Cyberpapal miracles allowed.

Gospog of the Fifth Planting — Angel of Death

Reality: Cyberpapacy

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 15, flight 18, melee weapons 20, unarmed combat 20





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STRENGTH 14
TOUGHNESS 30
PERCEPTION 14

Find 19, materialization 20, tracking 25, trick 16

MIND 13

Test 16

CHARISMA 12

Persuasion 16

SPIRIT 20

Faith 25, focus 21, intimidation 25

Possibility Potential: None

Natural Tools: Wings, speed value 15

Cybernetics: NeuraCal, BelleSee Tele-sight (+3 to *find* at distant objects), CSI LEDs, FFO NightView (+3 to *find*, plus *tracking* up to 50 meters away), True Spirit Toner, TSE Sifter (homes in on specific sounds), slashers, damage value STR+8/22. Cyber value: 15

Equipment: Death scythe, a two-handed weapon with a damage value equal to *faith* of user (25)

Miracles: May use all the miracles of the Cyberpapacy except *excommunication*.

Frenzied Crowd (100)

Reality: Cyberpapacy

DEXTERITY 7

Melee weapons 9, missile weapons 8, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 7

PERCEPTION 8

Find 9, tracking 9

MIND 7

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 10

SPIRIT 8

Possibilities: None

Equipment: Variable, either: torches, damage value STR+4/11, set fire to flammable material; clubs/baseball bats, damage value STR+3/10; broken bottles, damage value STR+2/9; knives, damage value STR+3/10; rocks/bricks, damage value STR+4/11, hurled

A *Perception* total of 10 reveals that the crowd is out for blood, anxious to find scapegoats and

punish them. Their base interaction attitude toward the Knights is Enemy.

The Would-Be Victims

The three clergymen are Reverend Edward Charles White, Father Joseph Carroll, and Rabbi David Baruch. The dwarf is an Ayslish refugee named Pandar Goldsmith, who just arrived in New England and was unaware of the atmosphere in Salem. The other human female is Fiona Crag, a practicing witch, and the man is Rob Trainor, a student of the occult. The Mystery Man is Destructo Don, who may choose to aid the characters if they free him. None of the victims but him are possibility rated, and all just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Destructo Don

DEXTERITY 8

Acrobatics 9, dodge 9, flight 12, heavy weapons 9, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 15

Climbing 17, lifting 18

TOUGHNESS 10 (13 with suit)

PERCEPTION 9

Air vehicles 12, find 10, trick 11

MIND 8

Weird science 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 12, taunt 14

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 12, reality (Nile Empire) 14

Possibilities: 22

Inclination: Good

Equipment: DD suit, armor value TOU+3/13; Warheadpiece, armor value TOU 12, damage value 14; 16 meters of rope, flashlight. The Warheadpiece is shaped like the nosecone of a missile and is about .6 meters high. The only way the helmet can be used properly is if the target(s) are rammed courtesy

of his *flight* power. Every successful attack on an opponent inflicts one shock point of damage on Destructo. A complete miss means that Don has crashed into a wall, ceiling, floor, tree, whatever, and he suffers three more shock points of damage.

Power Flaw: Don's *flight* power is neutralized in any form of darkness.

Description: Destructo Don is a well-meaning Nile pulp hero who was trying to fly from Cairo to Houston (to battle the Nile elements there), and wound up "slightly" off-course, crash-landing in Salem. There, his fire engine-red metallic suit and glowing warheadpiece helmet branded him as a demon. Don is naturally very confused by all this.

Roxanne D'Aramis

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 12, melee weapons 13, stealth 14, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (11 with leather jacket)

PERCEPTION 13

Alteration magic 15, divination magic 15, first aid 15, land vehicles 15, language 16, trick 14

MIND 11

Artist (flute) 14, streetwise 12, survival 12, test 14, willpower 14

CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, persuasion 14, taunt 13

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 13, reality (Cyberpapacy) 12

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: Power dagger, damage value STR+5/14; spell components. Cyberware: NeuraCal, J-Jack, TSE Taster, ChipHolder 3, Slasher, damage value STR+4/13; Cyber value: 12

Arcane Knowledges: Water 4, Earth 4, Light 3, Magic 2

Spells: *Cleanse, Away Sight, Detect Magic, Fog, Mage Light, Path-*



finder, Tracker, Water Spray

Description: A French woman in her mid-20s, with long blonde hair and hazel eyes, D'Aramis radiates a wholesome attractiveness rather than a sensual beauty.

She is indeed a witch. Of all the prisoners, she is the only one gagged, for fear she will hurl spells at her captors.

Roxanne has had a number of precognitive dreams. In one, two women, one who feeds on blood and one who lurks in webs, battle to the death in a city that is somehow both American and French. She feels a strong sense of occult-driven horror, and somehow knows that the women hold the key to events in the near future.

Her most recent dream was of a one-eyed ruler, or monarch, seeking refuge in that same city. She doesn't know what the dream means, but senses it is important.

Flags

A *Romance* means that Destructo Don has fallen for a female Storm Knight, or Roxanne has fallen for a male Storm Knight. The love-struck gamemaster character will follow the Knight into the next Act. An *Idea* card lets the Storm Knights know that the city in question is New Orleans.

Variables

If Destructo Don regains his Warheadpiece during the battle, he will enthusiastically fight for the Storm Knights, doing his best to clobber the mob into stunned unconsciousness. Roxanne will do likewise if freed.

Aftermath

As soon as the characters have gained the information they needed from Roxanne, that flash of light

appears again and whisks them off to the Aysle realm. Cut to "My Enemy, Myself." Again, upon their return to the same place and time from which they left, they will be mysteriously aware of the events of the sidebar "Deliver Us From Evil."

Act Awards

Every Storm Knight who survived the act gains four Possibilities. Saving the condemned victims, or killing Thrachten nets them an additional three Possibilities. The following acts each net the Storm Knights an additional two Possibilities: saving Linda, killing the Cardinal. The following acts each net the Storm Knights an additional Possibility: saving the bleeding teenager in the Common, getting by the Salem roadblock without firing a shot.

Cut To ...

When the Storm Knights decide to go to New Orleans, cut to Act Three, "Southern Inhospitality." Getting from Boston to New Orleans will most likely be done by car. This takes about 24 hours of non-stop driving, including having to drive through the Land Above (assuming you don't disconnect). Flights in and out of New Orleans airport have recently been suspended due to a large amount of winged Horrors sighted in the vicinity.

It is possible to fly to Atlanta, then take a train to New Orleans. There is no direct rail service from Boston to New Orleans, since the Land Above cuts the rail lines at its frontiers.

My Enemy, Myself

(**Note:** The characters emerge from the nimbus of light to find

themselves standing on a battlefield beside Tolwyn of Tancred. The characters may or may not intervene in the scene below—but their presence will be noticed by the Warrior of the Dark, as you will see in the text.)

"Onward!"

The commanding voice of Tolwyn Tancred soared above the din of the battle. The Warrior of the Dark, High Lord of Aysle, had chosen this time to attack Oxford and eliminate the dispirited Army of the Light once and for all. What she had found, however, was a well-rested, rejuvenated force prepared to meet her challenge.

Having beaten back the Warrior's first assault, the Army of the Light now launched a counteroffensive. At their head stood Tolwyn, slashing through the ranks of the Dark army, leaving a trail of corpses in her wake.

"It ends now."

Tolwyn halted at the sound of the chillingly familiar voice. Before her were the tents of the Army of Darkness' commanders, and standing alone, the black crown Drakacanus on her head, was the Warrior of the Dark herself. The two women confronted each other for the first time, even as the fighting raged around them.

"You were a fool, Tolwyn, to emerge from behind your walls," the Warrior said coldly. "You would have been well served to remain beyond the bridge and let this world fall to me."

"Nay, villainess," Tolwyn snarled. "I tire of this madness. The war has been won on the world of Asyle; now it shall be won here."

The Warrior of the Dark threw back her head and laughed, the great helm hiding her features. "Fool! It will end, but only with your death. We meet now, blade to blade, and I have the added advantage of Draka —"

At that moment, the Darkness Device vanished. All around, the



fighting began to cease, as the soldiers noticed the impossible: the Warrior of the Dark *was* Tolwyn of Tancred ... or so it seemed.

"This is the second time I have faced my reflection in a dark and twisted mirror," Tolwyn said. "Are you, then, another Horror of Orrorsh?"

"No, sister," the Warrior responded, with a malicious grin. "I am you — the darkness within you, plucked from your soul during your sojourn in limbo. I am all that you could have been, if you did not wear the chains of Light."

"I wear no chains, thing of evil!" Tolwyn shouted. "And if you are my darkness, then I shall make an end to you, here and now!"

(Note: At this point, the Warrior eyes the characters.)

"As ever, you seek allies unworthy of your opponents' steel," the Warrior said. She made a gesture with her hand and from the clouds there came a massive dragon. "Let me thus give them a gift so that they will not be bored while I flay the skin from your bones."

The Warrior of the Dark

DEXTERITY 14

Beast riding 16, dodge 20, fire combat 16, maneuver 23, melee weapons 25, unarmed combat 27

STRENGTH 15

TOUGHNESS 15 (30)

PERCEPTION 14

Alteration magic 17, evidence analysis 18, find 19, scholar (battle tactics) 20, tracking 17, trick 21

MIND 13

Conjuration magic 15, science (logistics) 19, survival 17, test 20, willpower 24

CHARISMA 13

Charm 18, persuasion 21, taunt 20

SPIRIT 12

Corruption 30, faith (Kalim) 21, intimidation 30, reality (Aysle) 28

Possibilities: 50



Manshite Soya

Arcane Knowledges: Fire 4, metal 4, darkness 4

Spells: Altered fireball (improved), keen blade, create fear

Equipment: Wheelock dag, damage value 13, ammo 1; two-handed sword (enchanted), damage value STR+7/22; plate mail, armor value TOU+15/30 (enchanted permanently by spell armor of Draconis Metallica — see page 80 of *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire*); dagger, damage value STR+3/18, coated with poison (delivered into victim with a *melee weapons* attack that causes at least one wound; damage value 25 per round)

Kelvun (Draconis Teutonica)

DEXTERITY 9

Flight 12, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 27

TOUGHNESS 23/35

PERCEPTION 19

Alteration magic 22, divination magic 22, evidence analysis 21, find 23, trick 22

MIND 15

Test 21, willpower 18

CHARISMA 7

Charm 9, persuasion 11, taunt 11

SPIRIT 7

Intimidation 16, reality (Aysle) 10

Possibilities: 25

Arcane Knowledges: Air 6, Darkness 4

Natural Tools: Scales, armor value TOU+12/35; claws, damage value STR+3/30; arctic air breath, damage value 36

Description: Kelvun is an arrogant Draconis Teutonica who has become somewhat of a favorite of the Warrior of the Dark. He is an adept tactician, whose only weakness is his supreme ego, and his undying contempt for Storm Knights.

Once the fight ends, hopefully with the Storm Knights victorious, continue reading the narrative. During the fight itself, make sure to relate to the Storm Knights the details of the duel between Tolwyn and the Warrior of the Dark. If any one of the Storm Knights try to rush and help Tolwyn, she com-



mands them to stay back — this fight is between her and the High Lord.

Both Armies let out cheers and catcalls as the two warriors clashed, sparks flying from their swords. The Warrior swung her blade in a wide, lethal arc, but Tolwyn easily ducked it, and, summoning a great burst of strength, swung her own two-handed sword from left to right. Her blade slashed the Warrior, and then she reversed her stroke, catching the High Lord a second time. The Warrior of the Dark staggered backward, bleeding.

A predatory smile crept across Tolwyn's face. "Whatever is the matter, 'sister'? Are you finding that without your precious Darkness Device, you are nothing?"

"What have you done with it?" the Warrior screamed as she barely deflected Tolwyn's next blow.

"I wish it had been destroyed by my hand, abomination, but it was not," Tolwyn replied. "Ah, but you ... that is another matter."

Tolwyn's blade fell again, this time slicing into the Warrior's left shoulder, gravely injuring it. The High Lord attempted to lift her heavy sword and her face contorted in pain. The weapon fell to the ground.

"Mercy!" the Warrior cried out. "I appeal to you, in the name of Dunad, to spare me!"

A loud cry went up from the assembled armies, as a horde of barbarians charged at the Army of Darkness. Tolwyn smiled and turned back to the bleeding High Lord. She took a deep breath and said quietly, "Go ... go and take your life with you. Your power is broken, monster. In Dunad's name, I spare you."

Tolwyn turned her back on the defeated Warrior, contemptuously. She raised her sword in victory before her mighty army.

(Note: At this point, the Light soldiers will begin to celebrate their victory. The Knights will see a second flash of light and begin to fade from the scene. As they do so, the following happens. It is also possible the Knights may take action (they have one round in which to do so) and stop the Warrior themselves.)

With surprising speed, the Warrior reached her feet even as a dagger slid from a sheath on her wrist. She raised it high and charged, its point headed for Tolwyn's back.

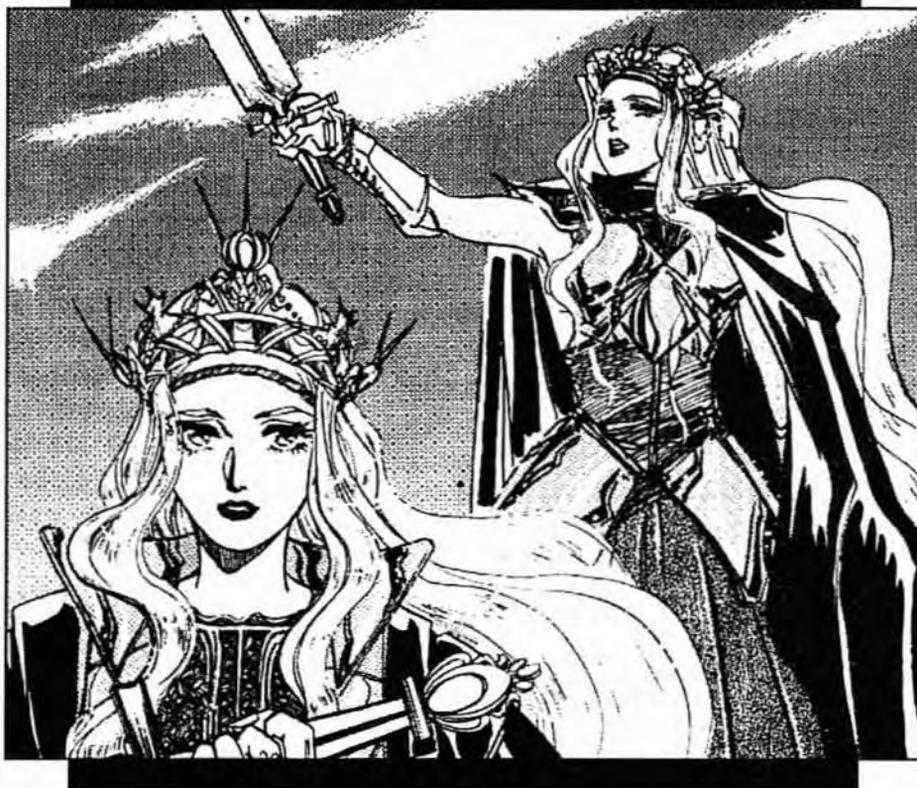
But for some reason that may never be known ... perhaps because, in some way, the two were truly one ... Tolwyn turned in time to see the murderous attack. She wheeled and brought her sword down, severing the hand of the High Lord and sending the dagger spinning into the grass. Where blade met earth, there came a hissing

sound as if the soil was burning. Around where it lay, the grass withered and died.

The Warrior of the Dark howled in furious pain and fell to her knees, cradling the stump of her left wrist. Her features warped in sheer hatred, she looked up at Tolwyn. "I will always defy you!" she swore. "Somehow, somewhere, I will get my vengeance!"

"I showed you mercy, and you would have repaid me with treachery. Die, creature of evil!" Tolwyn said. With a mighty swing of her sword, she beheaded the High Lord. An instant later, the corpse had disintegrated and vanished from sight.

Tolwyn turned back to her army. "Slaughter any of the Dark who will not surrender!" she shouted. "This is the dawning of a new age for the people of Aysle ... and of Earth!"



Deliver Us From Evil

High Lord Jean Malraux I knelt at his small altar, where Ebenuscruz, his Darkness Device stood proudly. The tenor of Malraux's prayers revealed his frustration and anger at the way the realm was unraveling. Oh, certainly, the Quebec portion of the realm had expanded south into New England, and inroads were being made into New Orleans, but even Malraux's madness-fevered mind knew that these gains were pitiful in light of the bigger picture. In that, he was losing support, here and in Magna Verita. Storm Knights ran rampant through his realm, causing untold damage and turning the people against the Cyberpope.

And Malraux knew why things had gotten so bad; he was surrounded by traitors. Judases lurked around every corner. And those who were not traitors were simply incompetent, unable to carry out the simplest of Malraux's directives without blundering.

Still, all was not yet lost. Outside his window, a vast crowd was assembled, awaiting his Papal address. All that Malraux needed to turn things around was a truly inspired

speech, with a discreet nudge from Ebenuscruz, to relight the fires of revival.

A light humming filled the air, and Malraux's eyes snapped open, then went wide with disbelief. His Darkness Device was vanishing! With a scream, the Cyberpope lunged at the Ebon Cross, but it was too late. The Device was gone.

Rising from his knees, Malraux screamed, snatching up anything near at hand and hurling it against the wall. He cursed this cosm, this realm, and most of all he cursed the Gaunt Man — for he knew the Orrorshan High Lord was somehow responsible for this!

It wasn't fair! It wasn't right! To have his Device ripped from him on the eve of redemption. Already, Malraux could feel the possibility energy conduits failing; he was no longer connected with his stelae. That the reality existed at all must mean that, somehow, the Gaunt Man was maintaining it. It was yet another part of the grand conspiracy against him. All he had left now was his God.

In desperation, Malraux fell to his knees. "Do not forsake me now, Father!" he screamed at the ceiling, his hands balled into tight fists. "Not now! Not when I am so close! I need power! Your power! Fill me with your holy cybernetic

spirit, pure and free of corrupt flesh! Fill me! Fill me!"

And Malraux's prayers were answered; though not in the way he wanted.

The spirit of God did indeed fill him, but it wasn't the cybernetic spirit of the so-called Magna Verita God. It was the pure spirit power of the Trinity, the godhead that is worshipped in Core Earth.

Malraux's body shook uncontrollably as the awesome power of God filled him. Its purity and light ripped away all the deceptions, and Malraux stood face to face with the truth about his religion. It was Ebenuscruz, lurking on Magna Verita and yet undiscovered by Malraux, that manipulated the Magna Veritan timeline so that in 1415 AD, Benedict XIV of Avignon became the one true pope. At that moment, worship shifted from God to the Darkness Device. It became clear to Malraux now that the worship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit hadn't truly occurred on Magna Verita for over five centuries. The so-called CyberTrinity was a sham, a lie.

And still, the raw holy power of God was not through with the mad Cyberpope. He was forced to look at himself, as he truly was — and what he saw was a hideous charlatan, no better than the thou-



sands of heretics he had so casually condemned to death.

Malraux screamed again as his body began to move of its own accord, carrying him to the balcony that overlooked the multitudes assembled to hear him. They numbered in the thousands, each face turned upward toward Malraux and the heavens (which they considered much the same thing). Holocam crews covered the event, beaming it all over the Cyberpapacy. Security was airtight. Directly under the balcony, a small gallery had been erected, occupied by a dour collection of Cardinals and high-ranking Inquisitors. At the far end of the square, the shining maelstrom bridge arched upwards into the clouds like a high-tech version of Jacob's Ladder. All was in readiness; the air charged with anticipation.

Malraux staggered out and clutched the railing, his distance from the crowd concealing his haggard, panicked expression. With one hand, he grabbed a microphone. An expectant hush fell over the crowd. The square was silent, save for the soft humming of the holocam transmitters.

"It's a lie!" Malraux said in a ragged shout. "It's all a lie! We have been deceived by Satan, the

Devil in a form of a black cross! Yahweh is the one true God! Jesus is His Son! Muhammad is Allah's Prophet! Cybernetics ... cybernetics are an abomination."

A collective gasp erupted from the crowd. The faces of the assembled CyberChurch clergy went white with shock, then red with fury.

But Malraux was helpless in the grip of a will far more powerful than his own. "We ... are all heretics! We have blasphemed against the Lord! And we must pay!"

A senior Cardinal rose. "Shut those cameras off!" he boomed. "NOW!" An Inquisitor looked questioningly at the clergyman, who nodded. The Inquisitor signalled in turn to a group of Hospitallers, who rose to follow him.

The cameras were still rolling. Malraux was still ranting. The Cardinal turned to a second group of Hospitallers and shouted, "Shut those cameras down!"

The warriors replied by opening fire on the holocams. Screams rose from the crowd as bullets whined over their heads, and the need to escape turned a once-rapt audience into a frenzied mob.

The Cardinal turned to look at Malraux. The Cyberpope was still speaking, repeating his message

in over a dozen of Core Earth's languages. All the high clergy knew that he did not know these tongues — this was a powerful miracle at work ... perhaps even witchcraft.

The clergymen bowed their heads and attempted to invoke miracles of their own. But their prayers went unanswered. And the crowd read the fear and panic on their faces and surged forward, offering the priests the chance to die for their faith.

Malraux was in the middle of yet another repeat of his address when the Hospitallers seized him. The Inquisitor at their head looked at him with disgust and said, "Heretic! Take him home. He will be ... reeducated."

The crowd parted as the Hospitallers levelled their weapons. Behind them, the Cyberpope, once mighty High Lord, was dragged kicking and screaming toward his maelstrom bridge. Frightened clergy followed behind, their power seemingly gone, the mob they had once so easily manipulated now at their heels.

It was the beginning of the end ...





Act Three

Southern Inhospitability

The Major Beat

The Storm Knights arrive in New Orleans, a city under the influence of an Akashan reality tree, which houses an Orrorshan. Currently, the city and its suburbs are in a Core Earth/Orrorsh mixed zone, giving it the highest of each realms' axioms, and both realms' world laws are in effect.

The atmosphere in New Orleans is a mix of old and new. Gaslights and electric street lights stand side by side, horse-drawn hansom cabs jockey for road space with automobiles and motorbikes, and gentlemen in silk top hats and ruffled shirts associate freely with leather jacketed and denim-clad partygoers.

The Cyberpapists are here in force, drawn to the French population, and Nippon Tech still controls many offshore Gulf oil rigs. Voodoo now works all too well in this area.

Gamemasters should play up New Orleans as an easy-going, friendly, seductive place, with many secrets that could lead to danger and death. There is Southern hospitality and the well-known New Orleans party atmosphere, but there's also a sinister undercurrent, thanks to the presence of Orrorshans.

Currently, there is a "turf war" raging between the Nightmare Sabathina, a vampyress, and the Hellion Court member Basjas, a

demonic spider creature. The Gaunt Man, weary of their constant squabbling, banished them to New Orleans to settle their dispute. Thus, both females and their followers have taken up residence there, and are battling it out in a bloody, grotesque little war.

In this Act, the Storm Knights get dragged into the battle, all the while trying to fathom exactly what the Gaunt Man is up to. Mr. Koar from Act One makes his move against the Knights, and the Randolph Chapman subplot is resolved once and for all. The Act culminates with the Storm Knights getting the chance to uproot the reality tree.

Regarding Mr. Koar

If Mr. Koar is still following the Storm Knights, he lurks in the St. Louis Cemetery, in one of the crypts. He does his best to follow the Storm Knights without being seen, all the while trying to sabotage their investigations. If any Storm Knights split off from their party, in groups of one or two, Koar will follow the smaller group and attempt to wipe them out. A harsh lesson, but a good one: in Orrorsh, there's security in numbers.

Researching

As we all know, knowledge is power, and the best way to build



up perseverance and gain information on weaknesses and true deaths of various Horrors is to use the *research* skill. There are two places in New Orleans where the Storm Knights can do this: the library in the manor house of the Southern Gentlemen, a secret society, and the New Orleans Public Library. The latter, in true reality-altering fashion, now carries ancient Orrorshan grimoires.

SCENE ONE: A Grim Introduction

The Situation

Standard. No matter how the Storm Knights get to the New Orleans area, they are stopped just eight kilometers short of the actual city. If the Storm Knights are coming by car, it is a roadblock; if they are coming by train, the train stops at a railroad crossing (where there is also a roadblock).

Read aloud the following:

The night sky is lit by the flashing red and blue strobes from the domes of three police cars. To be precise, two Louisiana State Trooper cars, and one Sheriff's car.

The damp chilly air is filled with the crackling static of police radios and the orders and commands being shouted out to several of the law enforcement members. Here, at this lonely railroad crossing, a gruesome scene awaits. Three bodies lie at the side of the road, near the gravel of the railroad bed. Two of the bodies appear half-covered in webs. The other body appears somewhat shrivelled, as if drained of fluids. Strands of webbing hang from gnarled shrubs and low-lying tree branches.

However, that is not the worst of it; strewn about haphazardly

are the bodies of four giant spiders, each two meters long, and three gray blobs covered with dull red eyes. The giant spiders have human skulls for heads.

The police seem to be going about their business, doing their jobs despite their obvious discomfort and disgust. One man, a sheriff, hooks his thumbs in his belt and ambles towards you, idly chewing on a toothpick. "Cin ah help you folks?" he asks.

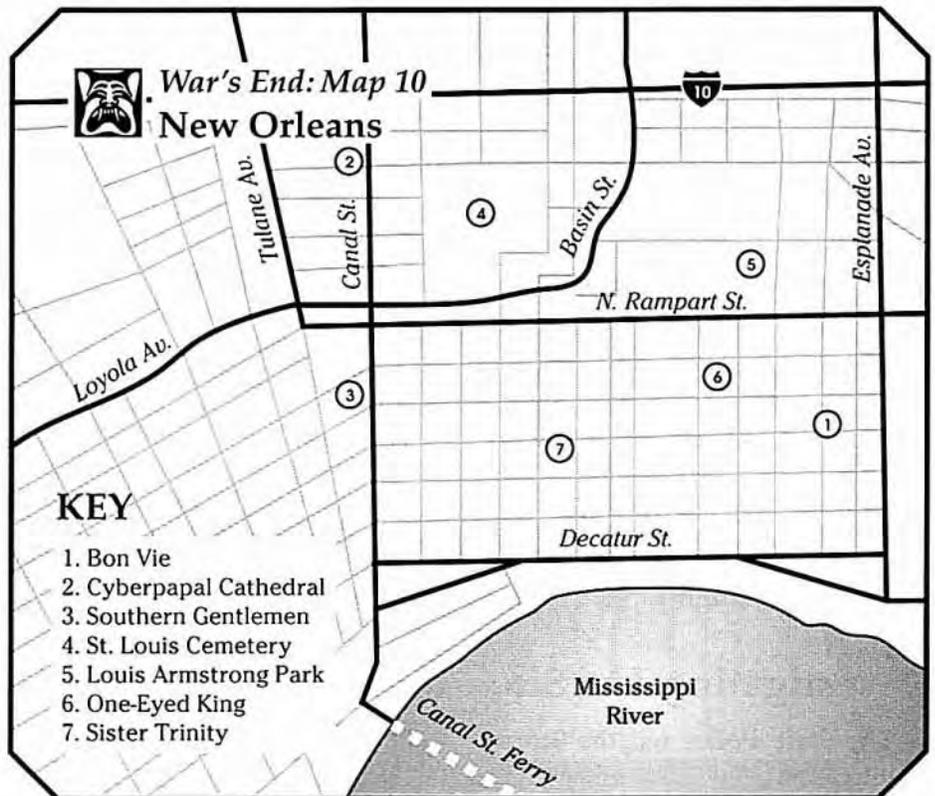
The Action

The sheriff is named J. T. MacAllister. Though slightly out of his jurisdiction, he was just passing by when he saw the murder scene, and, having had some experience lately with investigating bizarre murders, decided to offer his help. The five State Police on the scene were more than happy to accept.

Louisiana State Police (5)
Reality: Core Earth

DEXTERITY 9
Fire combat 12, melee weapons 11, running 12, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 9
Evidence analysis 10, find 12, land vehicles 12, scholar (police procedures) 12, tracking 11
MIND 8
CHARISMA 8
Persuasion 10
SPIRIT 9
Intimidation 11
Possibility Potential: Some (35)
Equipment: .38 revolver, damage value 15, ammo 6; Savage 77E shotgun, damage value 18, ammo 5; nightstick, damage value STR+2/11; cuffs; radio

Sheriff J.T. MacAllister
DEXTERITY 9
Dodge 10, fire combat 15, maneuver 11, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11



PERCEPTION 10

Evidence analysis 14, find 15, first aid 11, land vehicles 14, tracking 12

MIND 8

Survival 10, test 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 12, taunt 13

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Southern Baptist) 12, intimidation 16, reality (Core Earth) 12

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: 44 Smith & Wesson magnum, damage value 17, ammo 6; nightstick, damage value STR+3/13; handcuffs; flashlight; dark glasses

Description: Sheriff MacAllister looks and acts like your stereotypical Southern sheriff, but with a few extras. Though he has the right "look" (dark glasses, slight gut, etc), and the right vocal inflections (e.g. "Yoah in a heap o' trouble, boah!"), he is a devoted lawman who really does want to see justice done. He's polite, slow to anger, and speaks in a lazy but comforting drawl that hints at the strong confidence underlying his words.

MacAllister can prove to be a valuable ally to the Storm Knights. All that he asks is that people respect the law, the people of the town, and his role as lawman, in that order. The State Police have already cleared the way so that MacAllister's law enforcement powers are still in force, even out here.

The State Police have put MacAllister in charge of the site. The Storm Knights are going to have to convince/persuade MacAllister that they are well suited to commence an investigation. MacAllister starts out as Neutral to the Storm Knights.

Investigating The Site

The State Police tell the Storm Knights that one of their own men

stumbled upon this grisly scene while on patrol. Right now, everyone's waiting for the coroner to come. In the meantime, the Storm Knights are free to investigate the area, providing they don't mess up the scene of the crime or take away any evidence.

A *Perception* or *tracking* total of 12 reveals many pock-marks in the soil. An *evidence analysis* total of 13 identifies them as the tracks of giant spiders. Looking at the giant spider-things, a *scholar* (*Orrorshan realm lore*) total of 12 identifies them as spider-kin, elite servants of Basjas. Another total of 14 informs the Storm Knight that Basjas is a member of the Gaunt Man's Hellion Court. A *Perception* or *evidence analysis* total of 12 shows a single hole in the spider-things' chest; a *medicine* total of 14 or a *first aid* total of 17 shows that the spider-things were drained of what passes for blood in their bodies.

A *scholar* (*Orrorshan realm lore*) total of 14 identifies the blobs as blood-thirsts, soldiers of Sabathina. Another total of 15 identifies Sabathina as a Nightmare of Orrorsh, and also that she and Basjas are at war with each other.

A *Perception* or *evidence analysis* total of 12 on the shrivelled corpse reveals a single hole in the neck. A *medicine* total of 12 or *first aid* total of 15 shows that the corpse was drained of all blood.

A *medicine* total of 14 or a *first aid* total of 17 on the two web-bound corpses shows that they had been poisoned.

All three victims are African-American males in their early 40's. A *Perception* or *find* total of 13 on one of the webbed victims uncovers a small talisman. A *scholar* (*occult lore*) 12 identifies it as a voodoo charm, used to ward off danger. A *Perception* or *find* total of 12 on the body of the shrivelled man reveals a business card reading "The Southern Gentlemen," and an ad-

dress on Canal Street, in central New Orleans.

Seeing this scene requires a Perseverance check against a difficulty number of 25 (Basjas' Perseverance difficulty number).

Calling It A Night

Sheriff MacAllister can give the Storm Knights an address in New Orleans for a fine bar/restaurant/rooms establishment: La Bon Vie, located on Bourbon Street. It is a perfect place to spend the night. In fact, the Sheriff himself is staying there, though he doesn't say so unless he's become friendly with the Storm Knights.

Perseverance Awards

The Storm Knights start out with a base Perseverance of 8. Seeing the scene initially drops it by -1, but later adds +2 as it increases the Knights' determination to stop such things from happening again. Finding the charm and the business card adds +1 to the group's Perseverance apiece. Identifying the two antagonists gives +2 to Perseverance.

Flags

A *Connection* card means the Storm Knight knows Sheriff MacAllister, and will be immediately allowed to help in the investigation. A *Suspicion* card means that the State Police feel the Storm Knight (and maybe his friends) are involved in the situation, perhaps responsible for the grisly murders. The party will be discreetly tailed by State Troopers and perhaps even by Sheriff MacAllister himself. An *Alertness* card means the Storm Knight feels as if he is being watched by someone or something (it can be either Chapman or Mr. Koar).





Paul Daly



Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights decide to go to the Bon Vie, cut to Scene Four, "Calm Before the Storm." If the Storm Knights instead plan on visiting the address of the Southern Gentlemen, cut to Scene Three, "A Not Very Secret Society." Note that Scene Two can be inserted anywhere during the Act.

SCENE TWO: School of the Damned

The Situation

Standard. This scene occurs at any point during the visit to New Orleans, and is especially useful if the Storm Knights are burning through this Act way too fast, or

start complaining about the lack of "action." This encounter is not crucial to the storyline, but does provide atmosphere.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The streets of New Orleans are even wilder than usual these days. Aside from Orrorsh and Core Earth realities conflicting, it is known that Kanawa Corp has a subsidiary in New Orleans, dealing in petroleum, and the Cyberpapacy has a cathedral.

A lot of the changes also affect the so-called average person, and you see evidences of this everywhere: gentlemen in Victorian dress, shadows flitting by which may or may not be ninja, and Cyberpapal street preachers warning about the dangers of New Orleans' style hedonism.

Another interesting change is heading towards you right now. It starts with a low rumbling, like a flight of demons on the wing.

Next, you see many spots of bright light, diffused in the New Orleans' evening mist. All at once, you see the source of the light and noise: a pack of young women on motorbikes, riding recklessly through the streets. They're all wearing distinctive plaid skirts, dark green blazers, and black patent leather shoes. Some of them have blades coming out of their knuckles, while others seem jacked into their machines. Many of them have a tell-tale red glow in one eye.

The girls cast malevolent glances at you and gun their throttles, bearing down on you.

The Action

These "schoolgirls" are of the Cyberpapal variety, out "wilding," supposedly in search of heretics and troublemakers. But their definition of that is anyone who isn't



Rick Schmitz



part of the CyberChurch and sometimes they even get that wrong. They're basically just a gang of thugs.

When the girls close in on the Storm Knights, they open fire on any vehicle the Storm Knights have, in the hopes of disabling it. The girls will do their best to stay on their bikes, even fighting from them.

While some of the girls will shoot to kill or maim, others are more interested in hefting any expensive looking items off the Storm Knights, especially high-tech weaponry.

Cyberpapal Schoolgirls (2 per Storm Knight)

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 12, fire combat 12, maneuver 10, melee weapons 12, running 11, stealth 11, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8 (13 with blazers)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 10, land vehicles (motorcycles) 15, language 11, scholar (Avignon doctrine) 11, trick 12

MIND 8

Streetwise 12, willpower 10

CHARISMA 11

Charm 15, persuasion 12, taunt 15

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Cyberpapal) 14, intimidation 12, reality (Cyberpapacy) 12

Possibilities: 4

Equipment: GWI God Meeter pistol, damage value 20, ammo 30; power dagger, damage value STR+5/13; blazers with HalloMesh weave lining, armor value TOU+5/13; totalamine (4 doses), headbanger (4 doses); Dazzleomine (4 doses); Peugeot Chargers, speed value 12, passengers 2, TOU 14). Note that the girls are interfaced with their bikes, giving them a +3 bonus to any *land vehicles (motorcycle)* ac-

tion. Cyberware: NeuraCal, EpiphaNeur, BelleView 20-20, DATASnooper, Apotheduct, MB Adrenal Booster, slashers, damage value STR+4/12. Cyber value: 16

Any girl who receives two wounds or more will leave the scene. Once half of their number is wounded/departed, the rest leave as well. They return to their Cyberpapal school, a facility which is adjacent to the Cyberpapal Cathedral.

Flags

A *True Identity* card means the girls recognize the Storm Knight as a wanted heretic, and decide to score some points with the clergy by capturing the victim and bringing him or her back to the Cathedral.

A *Nemesis* card means the Storm Knight has really irritated the girls, who have marked him or her for nasty treatment at some later time. Before the Act is over, the girls will make another appearance, gunning especially for the one Storm Knight. This makes a lot more sense if the Storm Knight with the *Nemesis* card is a female.

Variables

If the Storm Knights intend to pursue the girls back to the Cathedral, the gamemaster will have to make up the floor plan. It should be staffed similar to the Cathedral in Act Two, but with double the number of cyberpriests, a dozen cybernuns, and two dozen Hospitallers.

Cut To ...

Once this scene has played itself out for all its worth, cut to Scene Three, "A Not Very Secret Society," or Scene Four, "Calm Before the Storm."

SCENE THREE: A Not Very Secret Society

The Situation

Standard. This is the manor which houses a new Victorian secret society, this one composed primarily of New Orleans gentlemen, transformed from Core Earth to Orrorsh. They call themselves simply "The Southern Gentlemen," and their goal is to defend New Orleans and her people against the Horrors, but do so with a sense of style and class.

When the Storm Knights reach the Canal Street address, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You stand before an old, ivy-covered mansion, a stone wall and metal gate sealing its grounds off from passersby on the street. Lights shine from the mansion's many windows. A buzzer and a speaker are imbedded in a metal plate in the wall near the wrought-iron gate.

Canal Street itself is quiet; a light mist rolling down the street, diffusing the glow of gas lights and electric lights, standing side by side in a technological incongruence.

The Action

Ringing the buzzer alerts the occupants that visitors are here. The gates swing open of their own accord, allowing the Storm Knights to walk up the driveway to the ornate front door.

At the front door, the party is greeted by Reeves, the butler, who is Neutral to the party for purposes of interaction. If the Storm Knights can persuade Reeves that they have genuine business with



the Southern Gentlemen, then the butler will let them in and make them comfortable in the sitting room. After doing so, Reeves will fetch Sebastian Orwell, the leader of the Southern Gentlemen.

Reeves

DEXTERITY 9

Unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 10

Find 16, scholar (etiquette) 17, scholar (home economics) 15, scholar (Orrorshan realm lore) 14

MIND 11

Occult 13, science (horticulture) 14, test 15, willpower 16

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt (17)

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 12, reality (Orrorsh) 11

Possibilities: 4

Equipment: Tuxedo; silver Sacellum cross (inside jacket pocket)

Description: Reeves is the archetypical snooty butler, very devoted to Sebastian and to the Southern Gentlemen. He is originally from Gaea, and has been valuable in filling in the Southern Gentlemen's information gaps about Orrorshan life.

Sebastian Orwell

DEXTERITY 10

Beast riding 13, fire combat 14, melee combat 13, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 12

Evidence analysis 14, find 14, land vehicles 14, language 14, research 16, scholar (Core Earth occult) 15, tracking 13, trick 16

MIND 10

Occult 14, test 15, willpower 16

CHARISMA 9

Charm 13, persuasion 14, taunt 15

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Christian) 13, intimidation 14, reality (Orrorsh) 12

Possibilities: 10

Equipment: Cross Heavy Revolver, damage value 16, ammo 6; sword cane, damage value STR+5/15; Holy Bible; vial of holy water; silver cross

Description: Sebastian is the sharply-dressed, impeccably mannered leader of the Southern Gentlemen. He is in his early 40's, with black hair, handlebar moustache, muttonchop sideburns, and a very expensive suit.

The Manor

The manor contains an occult lab, dining room, studies, work rooms, sitting room, a massive library, meeting room, carriage house with two buggies, and a greenhouse with two dozen Gaeon Peace Roses in bloom.

If the Storm Knights manage to win the confidence of the Southern Gentlemen, they may be able to return to the manor in order to use the library for research, and the occult lab for conducting rituals.

At any given time, there are eight society members (not counting Reeves) at the mansion.

Gentleman's Agreement

Sebastian begins the conversation by asking for introductions and engaging in small talk while Reeves serves coffee and brandy. In order to have him open up about anything important or related to the occult, his confidence needs to be won. Just showing him the society's card found on one of the victims is scarcely enough proof of the Storm Knights' honorable in-

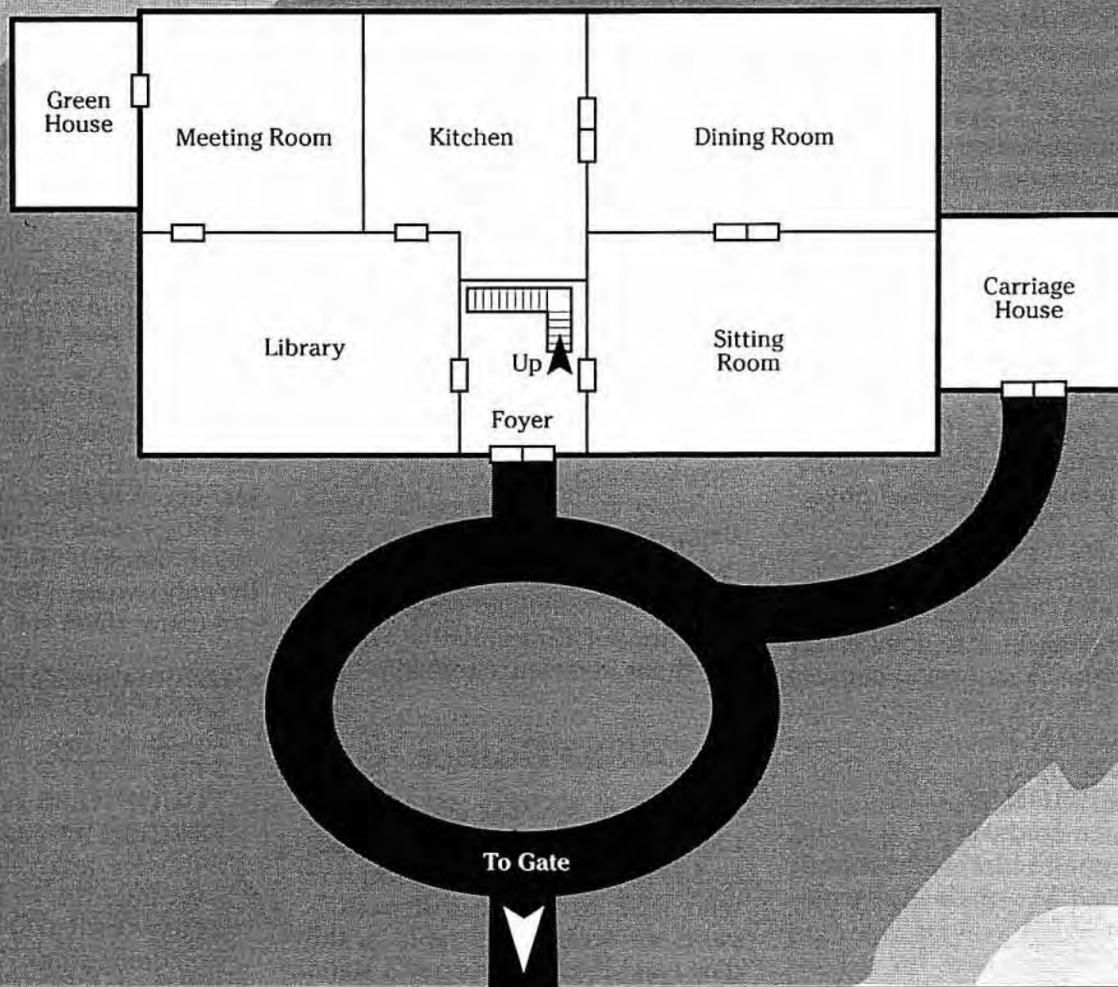


Rick Schmitz





War's End: Map 11
"Southern Gentlemen" Manor,
Ground Floor



tentions. For purposes of interaction, Sebastian starts off as Neutral.

Note that this is *not* a place to come into for purposes of crashing for the night, or picking up weaponry or silver bullets. This isn't some "safe house" for Storm Knights. Anyone who is pushy, rude, or demanding will be promptly ejected.

If asked about the dead men in Scene One, Sebastian mentions that yes, he knew of them, but they

seemed more interested in voodoo practitioners, which the society frowns upon. Sebastian recalls that they were worried about some looming occult disaster, and wanted all the protection they could get. They came to the Southern Gentlemen for help, but refused to give them enough information to act upon. They seemed afraid to say too much, as if someone or something could hear them. Sebastian recalls one of the men, Albert, as asking if the manor had any spi-

ders lurking about.

If asked about Roxanne D'Aramis' reference to a one-eyed monarch, all that Sebastian recalls is that there is a club called The One-Eyed King, on Basin Street, near St Louis Cemetery #1. According to Sebastian, it comes across as a combination coffee house, bar, dance club, done in a very Gothic theme.

If pressed about a turf war, Sebastian says that two members of the Gaunt Man's retinue, the



Nightmare Sabathina and the Helion Court member Basjas, were rumored to be in the city. They are said to be at war with each other, with the citizens of New Orleans caught in the middle. Perhaps that's the reference, perhaps it isn't.

The voodoo token found on one of the dead men in Scene One can be identified here by the Gentlemen as coming from a voodoo practitioner on Bourbon Street, a Cajun woman named Sister Trinity.

Any Storm Knight with the *research* skill can use it here in the manor's library, once permission is secured.

As far as the Peace Roses are concerned, the Storm Knights can take only four of them on a vine, and then only if Sebastian is now Friendly with them.

If the Storm Knights are injured, they are in luck, as one of the Southern Gentlemen is a licensed physician.

Dr. Jack Watson

DEXTERITY 10

Beast riding 11, fire combat 12, maneuver 12, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 13

Evidence analysis 15, first aid 15, language 12, scholar (occult practices) 14, scholar (pharmaceuticals) 15

MIND 13

Medicine 18, occult 15, psychology 16, science (chemistry) 16, willpower 15

CHARISMA 10

Persuasion 13

SPIRIT 9

Reality (Orrorsh) 10

Possibilities: 8

Equipment: Doctor's bag; flask of brandy; Rutherford Single Barrel, damage value 14, ammo 1

Description: Dr. Watson is a compassionate man, a cross between a good old-fashioned country doctor, and a well-bred Southern

gentleman. He is unflinchingly brave and loyal to the cause.

The Gypsies

The Southern Gentlemen, in their efforts to get to know more about Orrorsh, have taken the unusual step in inviting a group of four Gaeen gypsies into the manor for consultations. The Gentlemen introduce the gypsies to the Storm Knights, and ask that they help the characters with any questions or problems. Sebastian will even propose a seance, as one of the gypsies is a spirit medium.

The gypsy band consists of their spokesman Lazlo, his daughter Elysa, his bodyguard Gregor, and his mother, Grandmama Kella. Grandmama Kella is the spirit medium, and she will do the seance for 10 Sterlings or its equivalent.

For a single Victorian Sterling, Grandmama Kella will read a Storm Knight's fortune. Gamemasters can drop hints of things to come, couching them in obscure terms.

The Seance

The participants include Kella, Lazlo, Reeves, Sebastian, Watson, and as many of the Storm Knights who wish to join in. All participants sit around the table in the darkened dining room, and Kella goes into her trance. No one need hold hands; Kella sees no purpose in it.

Before Kella asks any questions, she goes into a prophetic trance and utters the following cryptic clues:

"Once on high, now one in many, it walks the Earth in rage and defeat, looking for blood. A tool it is, to be used by he who would take all." (A reference to Baruk Kaah, former High Lord and now an amalgam of all the cosms, wander-

ing, enraged, until he is to be used by the Gaunt Man in California).

"Unholy Horror within arbor prison sleeps, changing all we know into its own twisted vision. Strong it grows, rooted where the trumpeter is honored." (An Orrorsh Horror once occupied a reality tree in Louis Armstrong Park).

"Metal priests of heresy, failing, fading, have no part in this part of the play of horror and pain." (The Cyberpapacy's involvement in current and future events is nonexistent).

Kella can ask as many questions for the Storm Knights as they want, though each attempt takes ten minutes. However, if more than three questions are asked, Orrorsh's evil kicks in, and a Chthon coalesces out of the ether, lands on the table with a loud crash, and begins attacking everyone.

The gypsies scream and run for cover. Reeves and Sebastian are the only two allies the Storm Knights can count on in the fight.

Grandmama Kella

DEXTERITY 7

Dodge 8

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 12

Evidence analysis 14, find 15, language 14, scholar (Gaeen gypsy culture) 17, scholar (fortunetelling) 17

MIND 11

Occult 13, willpower 16

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 14, taunt 14

SPIRIT 12

Intimidation 13, reality (Orrorsh) 14, spirit medium 18, true sight 17

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: Tarot deck; crystal ball; bones; cane; a handful of nails made of solid silver

Description: Grandmama Kella appears to be the oldest woman alive, her face a roadmap of wrinkles



and her long hair of snow white, braided down her back. She wears the bright silks of the gypsies, and has a rather sweet disposition.

Chthon

Reality: Orrorsh

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 14 (19 with Blur Form), flight 15, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 14

TOUGHNESS 16 (25)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 12, tracking 12, trick 12 (15)

MIND 8

Test (15), willpower 15

CHARISMA 11

Taunt (15)

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Orrorshan evil) 15, intimidation 15

Possibility Potential: None

Natural Tools: Pincers, damage value STR+5/19; layered bodies as armor, value TOU+9/25; wings, speed value 11

Powers: Attack Form Resistance (firearms), Blur Form

Corruption Value: 17

Fear Rating: 1

Perseverance DN: 11

Weakness: None

True Death: Occult Ritual

Perseverance Awards

Give the party 2 Perseverance points if they get answers in the seance. Erase a point at the first sight of the chthon; if they beat the Horror, award them two points.

Flags

A *Connection* card means that the Storm Knight knows Sebastian, and will get in easily to see him; any help the Storm Knights need will be freely given, but only for this one visit. Otherwise, the *Connection* can be played on Grandmama Kella, who will hug the Storm Knight as if he or she were a missed grandchild, and will

do the seance for only a single Sterling or equivalent. A *Suspicion* card means that Sebastian suspects the Storm Knight of being a Horror, and will have him tailed by several society members. A *Romance* card means that either the female Storm Knight is smitten with Sebastian, or vice versa.

An *Idea* card interprets one of Grandmama's cryptic prophecies.

Variables

If any Storm Knight has the gypsy token from Act One, the gypsies will do the seance for free, and give three free fortune readings.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights decide to go to the Bon Vie, cut to Scene Four, "Calm Before the Storm." If they decide to go to the One-Eyed King bar, cut to Scene Five, "Revelations." If they go to Sister Trinity's, cut to Scene Six, "Voodoo Lounge."

SCENE FOUR: Calm Before the Storm

The Situation

Standard. This place provides a chance for the Storm Knights to rest up and get better acquainted with the city by means of its people. The atmosphere in the establishment should be one of hospitality and joviality, as a defense against the lurking Horrors outside.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You have stepped into a Colonial style building, where the waitresses are clad in the styles of the early 1800's. You breathe a

sigh of relief as you realize that this is a tourist thing, not signs of yet another cosm invading Earth!

The atmosphere here is active and friendly; people chatter in French and English, as they eat, drink, and make merry. The downstairs consists of a bar and restaurant, the two separated by a curtain. Soft jazz piano filters from the dining area. Upstairs, there are rooms to rent for the night.

The place is filled with people of all shapes and sizes, here to have a good time and forget the horrors so prevalent in their city these days. This is New Orleans, after all; the party must go on.

The Action

La Bon Vie is a fine establishment, though its clientele is a little unusual and diverse. It has a late 18th-early 19th century feel, with pewter mugs and plates, and authentic, old-fashioned French, Creole, and American dishes. The proprietor is Louisa Saint-Michel, an always smiling, ample woman who has been widowed for the past five years. She's in her mid-40s, and is a huge flirt.

Rooms are \$55 a night single occupancy, \$85 a night double occupancy. Breakfast in bed is provided at no extra charge. The dining room stays open till 1:00 a.m., the bar till 3:00 a.m. It should be noted that Sheriff MacAllister has a room here, since he decided to stay overnight in order to help with the triple murder case.

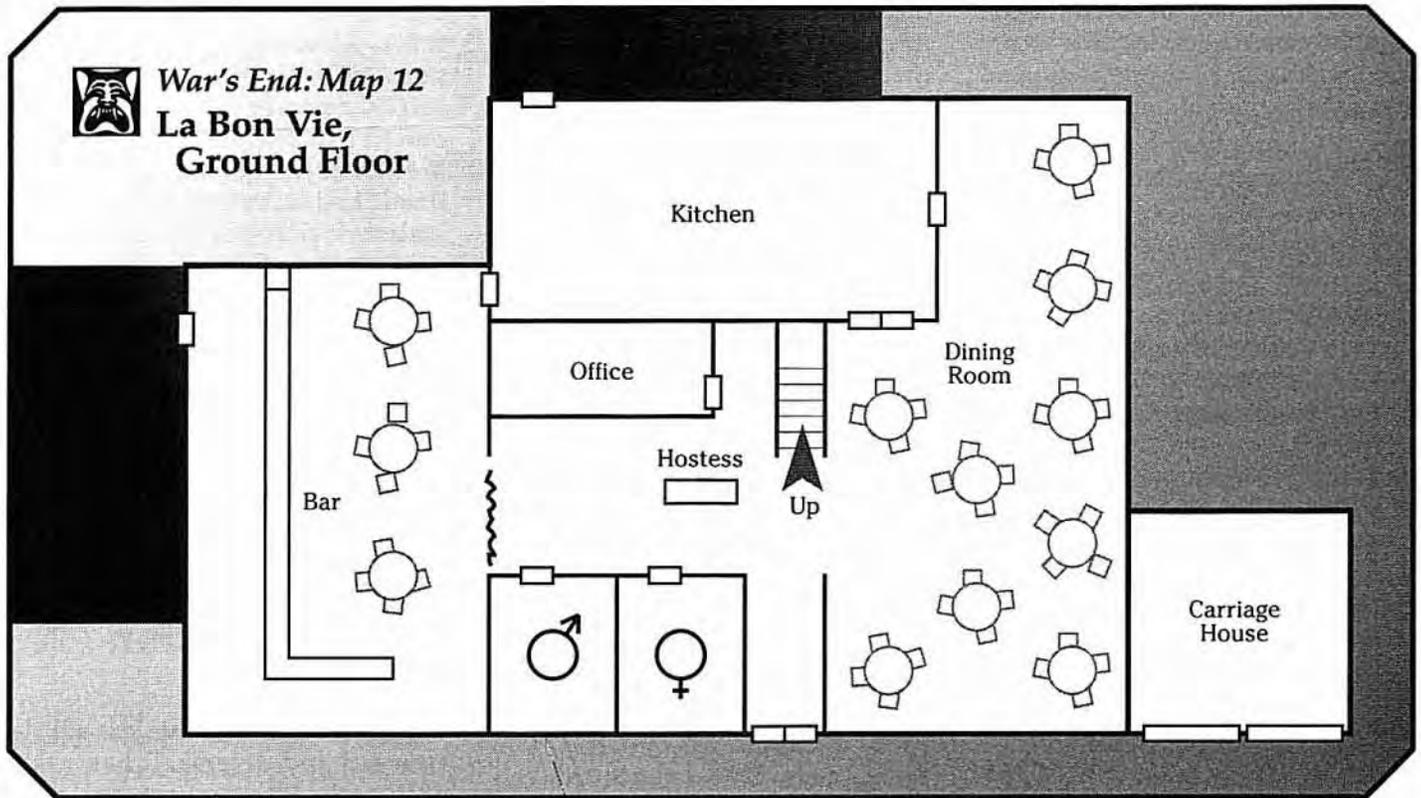
There is even a carriage house and stable, to accommodate the horses of Victorians. Stabling an animal costs \$10 a night.

The following is a list of people present in the bar/restaurant:

Etienne (Steven) LeBeau
DEXTERITY 13

Acrobatics 16, dodge 18, lockpicking 16, maneuver 15, me-





lee weapons 15, prestidigitation 18, running 15, stealth 19, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 8**TOUGHNESS 8****PERCEPTION 10**

Find 14, land vehicles 12, scholar (gambling) 15, trick 14

MIND 8

Streetwise 12, test 13, willpower 14

CHARISMA 12

Charm 16, persuasion 15, taunt 15

SPIRIT 8

Reality (Core Earth) 10

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: Blackjack, damage value STR+3/11; lockpick tools; trenchcoat; gloves; loaded dice; marked cards

Description: Etienne is a local thief, and accomplished pickpocket. He has an extensive knowledge of New Orleans and its interesting sites. If somehow the Storm Knights manage to get him to cooperate with them, they will have a reliable guide to the city. Most likely,

though, Etienne will pick their pockets of any valuables, or break into their rooms and take choice stuff that can be pawned.

Linda Fujiyama

A Japanese-American woman in her late 20s, working for Gulf Oil in New Orleans. She's a bit standoffish, which will be ideal for the Storm Knights, who probably think every person of Japanese extraction is Nippon Tech. Keep them going for a while on this.

Sergeant-Major Crawford**DEXTERITY 9**

Beast riding 12, dodge 12, fire combat 12, maneuver 10, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 9**TOUGHNESS 11****PERCEPTION 9**

Scholar (military tactics) 13, trick 14

MIND 8**CHARISMA 12**

Persuasion 14

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Sacellum) 9, intimidation 9, reality (Orrorsh) 9

Possibilities: 8

Equipment: Rapier, STR+5/14; Cross Heavy Revolver, damage value 16, ammo 6; eight silver bullets; silver Sacellum cross; vial of holy water; wooden stake and mallet

Description: Sergeant-Major Crawford is a spit and polish Victorian military man. Looking resplendent in his dress red uniform, slicked back hair, square jaw, and walrus moustache, he cuts quite a figure. He is here with his squad for a drink and a bite to eat.

If politely engaged in conversation, he says that he and his men hail from the 7th Regiment, Victorian Royal Order, which specializes in hunting down Horrors. The Regiment is here on a goodwill mission, advising the local authorities how best to handle the Horrors.

Victorian Soldiers (4)

Reality: Orrorsh

DEXTERITY 9

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

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

MIND 8

Willpower 10

CHARISMA 7

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Sacellum) 9

Possibility Potential: Some (50)

Equipment: Weston Bolt-Action, damage value 17, ammo 8; (value 18)

Description: These are just four Victorian soldiers, on a bit of leave. They do not instigate anything unless Crawford orders it.

Reverend Montague Winter

DEXTERITY 8

Beast riding 9, dodge 9, fire combat 9

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 10

First aid 12, scholar (Sacellum Doctrine) 15

MIND 9

Test 11

CHARISMA 12

Charm 13, persuasion 14

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Sacellum) 14, focus 15, intimidation 14, reality (Orrorsh) 14

Possibilities: 10

Equipment: Sacellum Bible (Book of Power); silver Sacellum cross; whip, damage value STR+2/14

Description: Reverend Winter is a huge, imposing man with bushy blonde eyebrows, piercing steel eyes, and a booming voice. He is determined to eradicate sin, real or imagined, anywhere he finds it.

Minou

A cute brunette with a big smile and a short red dress, Minou is a local "good-time girl," from the

suburb of Port Sulphur. She has come to New Orleans in hopes of finding better fortunes. She is well aware of what Horrors are and what they can do.

Pere Alfonse Gastoneau

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 11, fire combat 11, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10 (15)

PERCEPTION 11

Cyberdeck ops 14, find 12, scholar (Avignon Doctrine) 15, trick 12

MIND 10

Science (computers) 12, test 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 10

Charm 14, persuasion 13, taunt 13

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Cyberpapal) 15, focus 14 (16 w/crucifix), intimidation 14, reality (Cyberpapacy) 14

Possibilities: 8

Equipment: HalloMesh, armor TOU+5/15; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30; blessed crucifix (+2 to *focus*). Cyberware: NeuraCal, EpiphaNeur, BelleView 20-20 (+2 to PER-based on sight), CSI LEDs, CyberHam Receiver/Throat Mike/Homer, TSE LeMotion (+3 to *find* in detecting movement), DATAS Boomer (amplifies voice), MB Charger (+1 DEX for 3 min), ChipHolder 3. Cyber value: 21

Description: Pere Gastoneau is a small, bald man with dark, beady eyes and a commanding voice. He is in his late 40s. Gastoneau is assigned to the Cathedral in New Orleans, and travels with a retinue of six Church Police.

When the Storm Knights enter the establishment, Gastoneau is having a theological discussion with Reverend Winter.

Church Police (6)

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 12, energy weapons 13, fire combat 12, melee weapons

12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (17)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 10, first aid 10, tracking 10

MIND 9

Test 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Cyberpapal) 10, intimidation 11, reality (Cyberpapacy) 10

Possibilities: 3

Equipment: Armor of God, armor value TOU+8/17; God Meeter, damage value 20 with Smartgun (+3 to hit)

Cyberware: EpiphaNeur, CSI EyeKill Mk IV, BelleSee Telesight (+3 to *find* at range), CyberHam Receiver/Homer/Throat Mike (fully functional radio and homing signal), MB Charger1 (+1 DEX for 3 min), MB Blocker (ignore K results, 3 less shock per hit). Cyber value: 18

Cassandra Riley

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 10, running 9, stealth 10, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8 (10 with leather jacket)

PERCEPTION 10

Find 13, land vehicles 14, language 13, scholar (journalism) 14

MIND 10

Willpower 14

CHARISMA 10

Charm 13, persuasion 13

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Christian) 10, reality (Core Earth) 10

Possibilities: 4

Equipment: 35mm camera; mini-tape recorder; notepad and pens; press credentials; leather jacket, armor value TOU+2/10

Description: Cassandra "Cassie" Riley is a freelance journalist who has been covering the Possibility Wars for four years now, concen-





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trating mostly on the United States. If she smells a story, she will go after it, and will follow the Storm Knights if they seem to be moving with a purpose.

Cassie is in her late 20s, athletic, and attractive. She is also happily married, and is not above slugging any man who refuses to take the hint, or see the ring on her left hand. She can be a good source of rumors about goings-on in the United States, but will expect a favor in return (like an exclusive story).

Event

Reverend Winter and Pere Gastoneau's discussion eventually gets heated up to the point of explosion. What follows is a sample of the dialogue in the latter stages of disintegration:

RW: "I think I have heard enough, sir. After some consider-

ation, it is clear to me that either you have been duped into believing this rubbish, or you are, by choice, an accomplice in this heresy!"

PG: "How dare you! If your God is so powerful, why hasn't He just removed the Horrors? Eh? Tell me that!"

RW: "The ways of our God are mysterious. We become stronger in our struggles."

PG: (laughs derisively) "Bah! That sounds like Tharkoldu talk to me, m'sieu!"

RW: "You take that back, you wine-swilling Cyberpapal heretic!"

PG: "I'll see you in Hell first, you tea-guzzling apostate!"

RW: "Provincial hedge-priest!"

PG: "Cochon!" (pig)

RW: "Right! That does it, then!"

A hand signal from the Reverend brings the Sergeant-Major and his men to a fighting stance, weapons ready. A sharp nod from the

cyberpriest does likewise for the Church Police. It's a standoff, as people scramble under tables, and the owner begs them all to stand down, offering everyone free drinks if peace is maintained. Neither side, however, seems interested in drinking.

Sheriff MacAllister pulls out his own revolver and demands that both sides stand down and put away their weapons. Both sides ignore him, though Pere Gastoneau calmly says, without taking his hate-filled eyes off of the Reverend, that this is an inter-cosm dispute, and that the sheriff should keep out of it. MacAllister keeps his gun levelled at the antagonists, and repeats his demand.

The Storm Knights will have to do some fancy talking in order to resolve this thing peacefully. For Storm Knight interaction purposes, consider the Victorians to be Neutral, and the Cyberpapists to be



Enemy. If one side apologizes to the other, then the other side will stand down and be willing to mutter a return apology. If a firefight/brawl breaks out, everyone dives for cover, except for MacAllister, who wades into it, shouting Miranda rights at them all and announcing that they are all under arrest. Ms. Riley crouches behind a table and takes photos of the proceedings.

The Gang Of Four

Trouble comes walking in later that night, in the form of three men and one woman, all apparently in their early 20's. They're dressed in dressed in black leather jackets, chains, biker boots, faded jeans, and a red scarf tied either as a headband, an armband, or around the thigh. All four look slightly drunk or high as they wander in, talking loudly, jostling customers, until they seat themselves and begin yelling for a waitress.

All four of them are vampyres, who have wandered here after their carousing at the One-Eyed King, intent now on raising some hell. They aren't afraid of anyone and, if sufficiently provoked, will reveal their true natures and attempt to make a meal of the crowd.

Vampyre Gangers (4)

DEXTERITY 12

Acrobatics 20, dodge 19, maneuver 17, melee weapons 15, running 17, stealth 20, unarmed combat 20

STRENGTH 16

Climbing 19

TOUGHNESS 18 (20 with leather jackets)

PERCEPTION 11

Find 14, land vehicles 13, language 15, trick 16

MIND 14

Test 23, willpower 23

CHARISMA 14

Charm 26, persuasion 21

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 18, intimidation 17, reality (Orrorsh) 18

Possibilities: 8

Equipment: Leather jackets, armor value TOU+2/20; switchblades, damage value STR+3/19; cocktail napkin from the One-Eyed King

Natural Tools: Fangs, damage value STR+2/18

Powers: Life Drain, value 29, drains TOU by drinking blood; Infection, Regeneration, Resistance to Normal Weapons.

Corruption Value: 24

Fear Rating: 6

Perseverance DN: 18

Weakness: Salt (severe)

True Death: A wooden cross pounded through their hearts.

Description: These four are extremely hard to kill, hence their cockiness. They feel that they can go anywhere, do anything, because no one can hurt them. All four are followers of Sabathina, and often use her name as a rallying cry. They know that a big rumble is set for dusk tomorrow in the St Louis Cemetery.

Perseverance Awards

Award two points if they find out about the rumble in the cemetery, and one point if they find the clue to lead them to the One-Eyed King.

Flags

If the Storm Knights are frustrated in trying to find a weakness for the vampyres, an *Idea* card shows that the gang swept the salt and pepper shakers off the table when they sat down. A *Connection* card means that the Storm Knight can know either the Sergeant-Major, the Reverend, Etienne, or Cassandra.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights decide to go to The One-Eyed King, cut to Scene Five, "Revelations." If they decide to visit Sister Trinity, cut to Scene Six, "Voodoo Lounge." If they go to Louis Armstrong Park, cut to Scene Eight, "A Tree Grows In New Orleans." If the Storm Knights decide to wait for the rumble, cut to Scene Seven, "Turf War."

SCENE FIVE: Revelations

The Situation

Standard. This scene takes place in a combination coffee shop/bar/club, a favored hangout of self-absorbed, angst-ridden, depressed Generation X types all dressed in black.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The establishment's facade is a looming Gothic affair, lit by several electric blue neon lights bordering the main entry. A signboard lined in purple neon shows a playing card, a King, facing sideways so that only one eye is visible. Over the door are carved the words "In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king."

The interior is broken up into two large rooms. The first one's darkness is broken only by the dim candles at each table, and the background glow of interior neon lighting. The unmistakable odor of coffee hangs in the air. A small stage stands against the far corner. A man in black sits on a stool upon it and reads poetry.

Beyond an archway lies the second room. There's a bar and another stage here, where a quartet of new wave musicians play some



odd combination of a dirge and a rock song. Alcohol is served here.

Regardless of the room, the clientele is the same: young people, ranging from late teens to late twenties, sit at tables or lean against the interior walls. Most are clad in black: trenchcoats, leather jackets, blazers, jeans. There is a preponderance of jewelry with skull, dagger, and ankh motifs.

You've been in everything from the gangster-owned speakeasies of the Nile, to the raucous taverns of Aysle, and the smash clubs of the Cyberpapacy, but never have you seen a club where the mood is so deliberately subdued, even depressing. Most of the clientele appear to be posing, overacting, or overdosing on angst.

You might be tempted to just laugh and dismiss the whole place as a gathering area of preening, self-absorbed, pseudo-intellectual losers, except for the fact that there is definitely an underlying sinister current of evil. The place has

many shadowy corners, and you could swear that sometimes you can catch the glint of a badly concealed weapon, the flash of cyberware, even the hint of a fang or two in a mouth opened wide with sarcastic laughter.

Maybe you *will* be a little more careful in here.

The Action

This club is the perfect place for tortured, angst-ridden people, it's true, but many of these pitiful people can also be very dangerous. A sampling of the regulars:

Skarlet

DEXTERITY 12

Acrobatics 20, dodge 19 (24 with Blur Form), maneuver 17, running 18, stealth 20, unarmed combat 21

STRENGTH 16

Climbing 18

TOUGHNESS 18

PERCEPTION 11

Find 14, land vehicles 13, trick 17

MIND 14

Artist (singer) 15, streetwise 17, test 20, willpower 21

CHARISMA 14

Charm 26, persuasion 21

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 14, intimidation 16, reality (Core Earth) 18

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: None

Natural Tools: Fangs, damage value STR+2/18

Powers: Life Drain, value 29, drains TOU by drinking blood, Infection, Armor Defeating Attack, Dark Vision, Blur Form

Corruption Value: 24

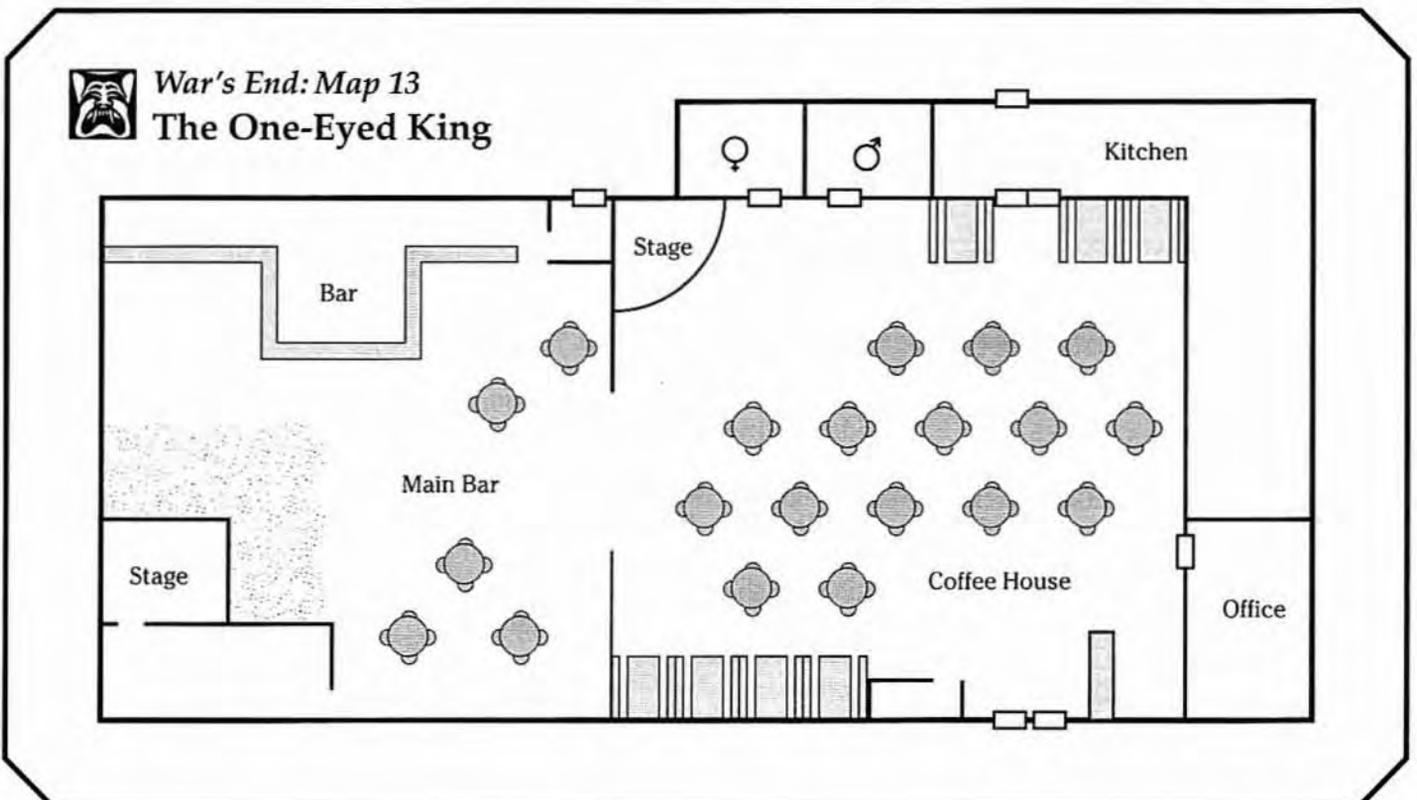
Fear Rating: 6

Perseverance DN: 18

Weakness: Sunlight (severe)

True Death: A wooden stake through the heart.

Description: Skarlet (she always introduces herself as "Skarlet ... with a K") is a ravishing brunette in a tight leather mini-dress and



stiletto heels. Of course, she's also a vampyre, which does tend to complicate her one-night stands. Although she does not lack for sensuality, she can also be very cruel and cold-blooded.

Tezel Rak-Four

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 13, energy weapons 14, fire combat 13, melee weapons 13, prestidigitation 14, stealth 15, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 12

Alteration magic 16, cyberdeck ops 14, divination magic 15, evidence analysis 15, find 14, language 13, scholar (Core Earth legends) 14

MIND 12

Apportation magic 16, conjuration magic 16, streetwise 15

CHARISMA 9

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 12, occulttech 14, reality (Tharkold) 15

Possibilities: 8

Cyberware: Nervejack; 3-slot Chipholder; cyberfangs, damage value STR+2/12; Cyber value: 5

Arcane Knowledges: Entity 5, Light 4, Darkness 3, Fire 4, Living Forces 4

Spells: Pop, laser armor, foeblaster, chilling darkness, conjured fireball, charm person, detect living beings, create fear, sense undead

Equipment: Res-14 laser pistol, damage value 25, ammo 50; 9/ Gam Snub Pistol, damage value 15, ammo 9; mass impact staff, damage value STR+5/15; Kap/3 mesh armor (woven into leather trenchcoat), armor value TOU+3/13; scanner wand; spell components; SpellChips with all his spells

Description: Tezel is a cybermage from Tharkold, yet his immersion into Core Earth culture is so thorough that he can easily pass as a native. He wears a black trenchcoat, has his black hair tied in a ponytail, and stares with in-



tense violet eyes at whoever he's speaking with. Tezel has no real moral base; he looks out for number one. Still, he could be persuaded to offer a hand, or exchange spells, provided he is given the proper incentive. Unlike others in the One-Eyed King, he dislikes the self-pitying dramatics, and holds such people in contempt. The party should meet Tezel, in one way or another, and make their natures known to him. Tezel has contacts

with the LA resistance, and can facilitate their arrival in Act Four.

Les Miserables (7)

Reality: Cyberpapacy

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, energy weapons 10, fire combat 11, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (14 with armor)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 11, trick 10



MIND 9

Streetwise 12, test 12, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 12

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 12

Possibilities: None

Equipment: HalloMesh armor, value TOU+5/14; God Meeter, damage value 20, ammo 30; Cyberware: NeuraCal, BelleView 20-20, Slashers, damage value STR+4/13; Cyber value: 8

Description: Les Miserables are a CyberFrench gang of punks who have violent mood swings: one minute they wax philosophical; the next, they lash out in random violence. They are always more than willing to get involved in a brawl. There are four males and two females.

Lester St-Jean

Les is an Ord who wants to be something special. He wears a black t-shirt, black trenchcoat, and black jeans, and even stoops to the ridiculous low of wearing fake vampire fangs.

Lobo

Lobo is another poser, who occasionally growls and looks menacing, but is yet another Ord trying to be something he's not.

Andre Valliancourt

Andre, on the other hand, is a *real* werewolf, who enjoys hanging out at the cafe and feeling sorry for himself. However, once he becomes a wolf, he revels in the transformation. The stats on the left are his human stats, the ones on the right are his werewolf stats.

Andre Valliancourt**DEXTERITY 9/12**

Beast riding 12/-, dodge 10/13, fire combat 10/-, maneuver 15/18, running 11/14, stealth 11/14, unarmed combat 15/18

STRENGTH 9/12**TOUGHNESS 10/17****PERCEPTION 12/11**

Find 15/14, land vehicles 14/-, tracking 13/12

MIND 10/6

Streetwise 13/9, test of wills 13/9, willpower 21/17

CHARISMA 10/5

Taunt 13 (17)/8 (12)

SPIRIT 10/10

Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 15, intimidation 15, reality (Orrorsh) 12

Possibilities: 12

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+2/14; teeth, damage value STR+10/22

Powers: Shapechange, regeneration

Corruption Value: 19

Fear Rating: 2

Perseverance DN: 14

Weakness: None

True Death: Slain with a silver bullet

Description: Andre is dressed in black, except for a frilly white shirt. His clothing appears vaguely Victorian in style.

The Action

After the Storm Knights have had a chance to settle in, a poet takes the stage and begins reciting. The text of the verse is as follows:

So draws the curtain on the struggle for what's real

As the thin one draws all the nameless pieces to himself.

Swallow them all, one by one, to become more nameless,

Then off to angel city, then to find a fault.

It's a party, and everyone's invited

And not just those who ride the storm.

Mister-All-In-One will be there, because he's the hammer,

That the High one needs to crack the world.

Mother and child will be there, but they don't get along,

A fight to the death marks their reunion.

But all's not lost, because life's walking symbol is there,

Take his gift before he slips away.

Then give the gift to the dark man,

And bring an end to his day.

The crowd nods and snaps their fingers, though they don't have the slightest idea what it's all supposed to mean.

If the Storm Knights try to talk to the poet afterwards, he simply looks at them and smiles. If they press him, he smiles wider, and his eyes glow a bright white. He whispers, "Finish the work here, then go west; Apeiros needs you." The light becomes brighter, covering the poet's entire body. When the light fades, the poet is gone without a trace.

Attack!

Basjas decides to send a flock of her spider-kin to the One-Eyed King, knowing that Sabathina's devoted enjoy frequenting it. This occurs after the poetry reading.

Spider-Kin (6)**DEXTERITY 11**

Dodge 14, long jumping 15, maneuver 14, stealth 16, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 15**TOUGHNESS 15****PERCEPTION 14**

Find 17, tracking 18, trick 16

MIND 10**CHARISMA 5**

Charm (14), persuasion (15), taunt 10

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 15, intimidation 16, reality (Orrorsh) 13

Possibilities: 5

Natural Tools: Mandibles, damage value STR+5/20; poison, damage value 16, injected if a wound or better is caused by an *unarmed combat* attack; webs, *Toughness* 19

Powers: Resistance to Normal



Weapons, Magical Resistance

Corruption Value: 16

Fear Rating: 1

Perseverance DN: 16

Weakness: Bones of birds (severe)

True Death: Impaled with a branch from a tree, removed from the tree no more than an hour before.

Description: These Horrors resemble huge spiders two meters long and 1.5 meters high. Their heads are human skulls with glowing green eyes and black mandibles extending from both sides of the mouth.

Perseverance Awards

Award three points for hearing the poem. Subtract one point at the sight of the spider-kin, and then add two if they are defeated.

Flags

An *Alertness* card reveals Skarlet's fangs as the real thing. A *Romance* card makes a male Storm Knight fall for Skarlet (or vice versa), or a female Storm Knight fall for either Tezel or Andre (or vice versa). A *Suspicion* card makes Skarlet think that the Storm Knights are in fact spies of Basjas. She will tail them, attempt to seduce the information out of a likely male Storm Knight, and kill him.

Variables

As stated earlier, the party should meet Tezel Rak-Four, the Tharkoldu cybermage. Tezel is the ideal link to Act Four. If the party doesn't go to the One-Eyed King, arrange for Tezel to meet the Storm Knights before the Act is over, perhaps at the Bon Vie's bar.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights decide to check on Sister Trinity, cut to Scene Six, "Voodoo Lounge." If the characters intend on making the rumble, advance time and cut to Scene Seven, "Turf War."

SCENE SIX: Voodoo Lounge

The Situation

Standard. This shop belongs to a Cajun woman named Sister Trinity, an expert in Voodoo and Santeria. She may provide the Storm Knights with some answers, if they are clever enough.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The modest, unassuming little shop on Bourbon Street takes on a whole new image when you walk in; the strong smell of scented candles, rare herbs and plants makes you dizzy as you walk into the dim store, lit only by the candles. You wonder how much of this is done for the sake of the tourists, and how much is legitimate.

Numerous counters, shelves, and display cases offer a wide variety of voodoo books and paraphernalia. There's plenty of skulls, feathers, and small statues of Christian saints everywhere, and even a dead chicken, which hangs from the rafters.

Behind the counter stands a dark-haired, middle-aged Cajun woman. She's wearing a great deal of jewelry and still has some of the exotic beauty that was hers in youth. A curtain behind her leads to a back room. The woman smiles and says, "Welcome, to my shop. I can see that you are not the average tourists ... it is something

more than souvenir hunting that brings you here, oui?"

The Action

Sister Trinity is part Voodoo practitioner, part show-woman. If asked to identify the voodoo trinket, she asks for \$5 US up front. Once paid, she says yes, that the trinket is hers, sold to a middle-aged African-American named Albert, who feared some major disaster. The voodoo charm protects against winged demons of all kinds.

Sister Trinity

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 10, stealth 11, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8 (see below)

PERCEPTION 12

Alteration magic 16, divination magic 15, first aid 14, language 14, scholar (Santeria) 16, scholar (Voodoo) 16

MIND 10

Apportation magic 15, conjuration magic 15, streetwise 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 10

Charm 15, persuasion 16, taunt 15

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Santeria) 16, faith (Voodoo), focus 15, intimidation 15, reality (Core Earth) 15

Possibilities: 15

Arcane Knowledges: Folk 4, True Knowledge 4,

Voodoo Spells: Bestow luck, bones, love spell

Voodoo Miracles: Break gris-gris

Equipment: Amulet that gives her TOU+5/13 versus bullets and melee weapons

Sister Trinity has four zuevmbies in the back room, that she can summon by letting out a short, sharp whistle.

Zuevmbies (4)

Reality: Core Earth



DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 9, stealth 10, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 20

Climbing 22, lifting 23

TOUGHNESS 20

PERCEPTION 1

Trick (25)

MIND 1

Test (25)

CHARISMA 3

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 11 (15)

Possibility Potential: None
Powers: Attack Form Resistance (Melee Weapons and Firearms)

Corruption Value: 15

Fear Rating: 1

Weakness: None

True Death: Occult Ritual

Description: These zuvombies were created by an associate of Sister Trinity's, as she cannot do Haitian Voodoo. As a result, she loathe to call upon them unless she really has to, as she doesn't want

to expose them to needless risk.

The shop's back room is a veritable workshop/shrine. Any possible voodoo component and Christian symbol/trapping can be found here. There is a back door which leads to an alleyway. It is always locked (*lockpicking* difficulty of 12) and barred from the inside (TOU 20).

Let's Go Shopping

Sister Trinity can sell the Storm Knights any paraphernalia they want: crucifixes, rosaries, statues of Christian saints, holy water, voodoo charms, corpse dust, voodoo books, and love potions.

The most useful things, however, are her four voodoo medicine bags. Two of these add +5 to the difficulty numbers of any actions performed against the Storm Knights by spiders or spider-like creatures. The other two do the same to vampyric creatures.

Each bag costs \$100. They are small leather pouches with long leather drawstrings, which enable the Storm Knight to wear it around his or her neck like a pendant.

Perseverance Awards

Award the party two points for acquiring the bags, no matter how many they get.

Flags

A *Connection* card means that the Sister Trinity knows the Storm Knight, and will offer whatever help she can. She cuts her medicine bag costs in half for the Storm Knights. A *Romance* card means Sister Trinity falls for the male Storm Knight, and may wind up using her *love spell* on the "lucky" man.



Paul Daly



Variables

If Mr. Koar is still alive and knows that the Storm Knights are coming here, he will try to get here ahead of them, kill Sister Trinity and destroy her shop.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights are going to the rumble, cut to Scene Seven, "Turf War." If they go to Louis Armstrong Park, cut to Scene Eight, "A Tree Grows In New Orleans."

SCENE SEVEN: Turf War

The Situation

Dramatic. This is one of two dramatic scenes in the act. Basjas and Sabathina, both instinctively realizing that something big's going down, are marshalling their forces to have it out in the St Louis Cemetery.

When the Storm Knights arrive, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The eastern sky is turning dark, and one by one, the stars wink into view, as the western horizon runs blood red. Already, the night time mist is creeping down the mysterious streets of New Orleans.

The iron gate squeaks as you push your way into St Louis Cemetery #1. Since the soil of New Orleans is so moist, burials are done in stone vaults rather than in the ground. You walk among a small city of the dead, each tomb resembling a small block house.

Near the middle of the cemetery, where there are fewer tombs, two women stand off, a distance of ten meters separating them. One is old, perhaps in her early 60s. Her skin is wrinkled, and her short

hair is grey, but she radiates power, nonetheless. Swirling around her are a flock of amorphous grey blobs, covered in hideous red eyes. Many of them hover in the air above her.

The second woman is a tall, attractive woman in her early 30's, clad in a flowing Victorian dress with a high collar, her long brown hair piled atop her head in a bun. Sheer hatred burns in both women's eyes. A host of spiderkin, huge spiders with heads that resemble human skulls, crawl around her, clacking their mandibles impatiently.

As both small armies crawl towards each other, the women step forward as well. "It ends tonight," the older one hisses, and you see fangs glistening when she opens her mouth. "That it does," the younger one says, "And it ends with a stake of ice through your heart!"

Suddenly, the older woman pauses. "Hold," she says, raising her hand. "We have visitors!"

Both women unerringly turn and look at your group. Evil smiles, frightening in their similarity, spread across their faces. "What say, Sabathina?" the younger woman laughs. "A little snack before we settle this once and for all?"

"Aye, Basjas," the woman you now know as Sabathina nods, licking her blood-red lips. "And a contest as well. Whoever collects the most Stormer hearts gets to strike the first blow when we resume our duel."

"Done!" Basjas replies. Both women close in as their armies, still obeying their respective mistress' last orders, clash in a horrible fury of webs and blood. Before your eyes, Basjas' form changes from an attractive woman to a bloated spider form three meters high.

The Action

The Storm Knights have really put their foot in it. They are now up against two of the Gaunt Man's nastiest servants, who are willing to put their differences aside long enough to trash the Knights. This is a flat-out combat scene.

Basjas

DEXTERITY 18

Dodge 22, stealth 24, unarmed combat 24

STRENGTH 22

TOUGHNESS 18

PERCEPTION 16

Find 19, tracking 18, trick 19

MIND 19

Test 21

CHARISMA 11

Taunt 14

SPIRIT 17

Intimidation 21, reality (Orrorsh) 31

Possibilities: 70

Natural Tools: Mandibles, damage value STR+6/28; web (can spin a web large enough for one human-sized victim every 10 minutes, the web has a Toughness of 35).

Powers: Cold Aura, Darkness, Silence, Resistance to Normal Weapons, Life Drain (*Dexterity*, drained when person is trapped in web)

Corruption Value: 23

Fear Rating: 3

Perseverance DN: 25

Weakness: Gold

True Death: Basjas must be wrapped in her own web for three days, and then she will be permanently dead.

Sabathina

DEXTERITY 15

Acrobatics 24, dodge 22, maneuver 17, running 18, stealth 18, unarmed combat 23

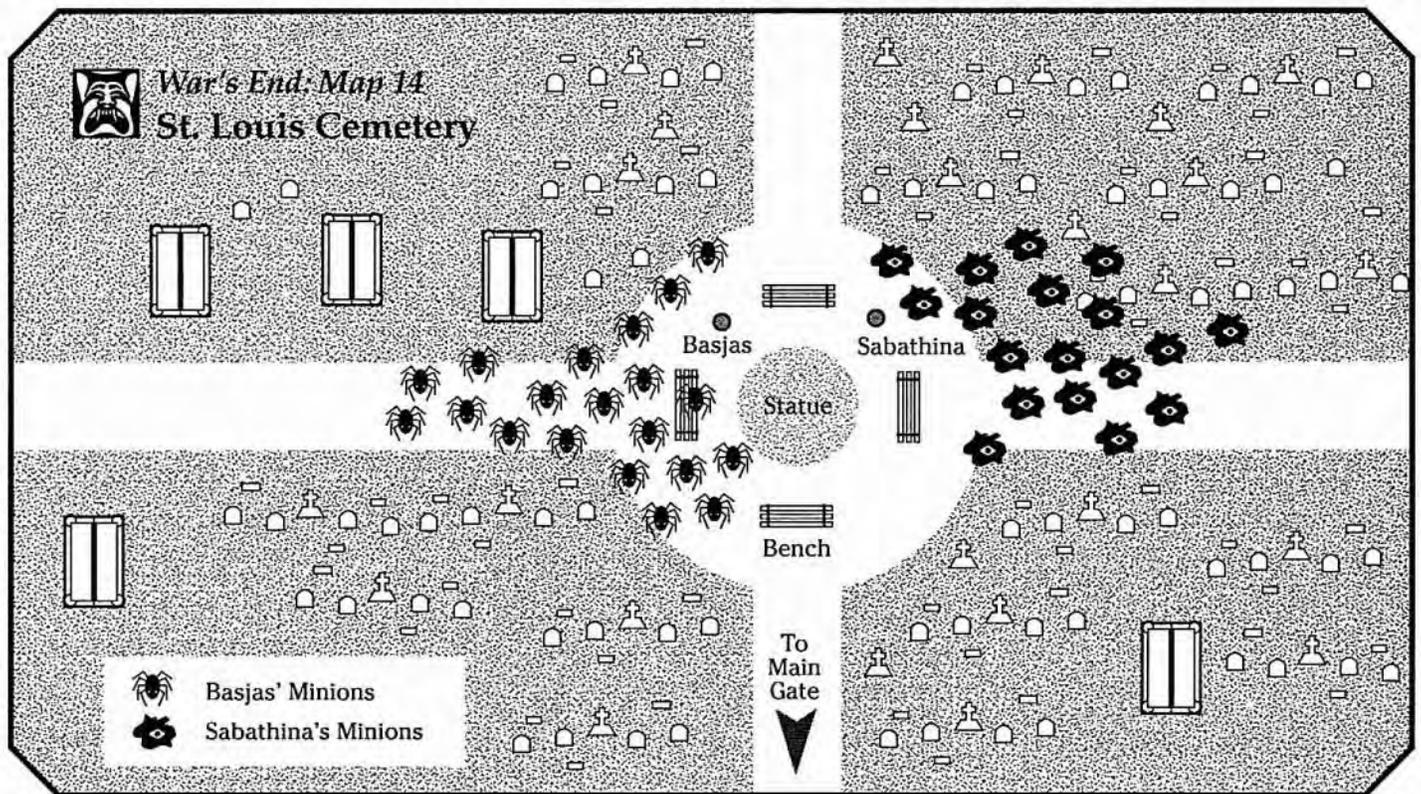
STRENGTH 22

Climbing 24

TOUGHNESS 21

PERCEPTION 14





Find 16, tracking 18, trick 19
MIND 17
 Test 24, willpower 23
CHARISMA 16
 Charm 28, persuasion 23
SPIRIT 13
 Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 21, intimidation 23, reality (Orrorsh) 22
Possibilities: 50
Natural Tools: Fangs, damage value STR+2/24
Powers: Life Drain (*Spirit*, by biting), Shapechange (wolf), Animal Control, Resistance to Normal Weapons, Infection
Corruption Value: 30
Fear Rating: 3
Perseverance DN: 24
Weakness: Vassen, the holy symbol from Sabathina's home world (a circle with a triangle within it) (severe)
True Death: A stake of ice driven through Sabathina's heart
 The Horrors' respective armies will fight each other, but any survivors will help out their mistresses if called upon to do so.

Spider-Kin (20)
DEXTERITY 11
 Dodge 14, long jumping 15, maneuver 14, stealth 16, unarmed combat 16
STRENGTH 15
TOUGHNESS 15
PERCEPTION 14
 Find 17, tracking 18, trick 16
MIND 10
CHARISMA 5
 Charm (14), persuasion (15), taunt 10
SPIRIT 12
 Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 15, intimidation 16, reality (Orrorsh) 13
Possibilities: 5
Natural Tools: Mandibles, damage value STR+5/20; poison, damage value 16, injected if a wound or better is caused by an *unarmed combat* attack; webs, *Toughness 19*
Powers: Resistance to Normal Weapons, Magical Resistance
Corruption Value: 16
Fear Rating: 1
Perseverance DN: 16
Weakness: Bones of birds (severe)

True Death: Impaled with a branch from a tree, removed from the tree no more than an hour before.
Description: These Horrors resemble huge spiders two meters long and 1.5 meters high. Their heads are human skulls with glowing green eyes and black mandibles extending from both sides of the mouth.
Blood-Thirsts (18)
DEXTERITY 10
 Dodge 13, flight 14, maneuver 12, stealth 15, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 14
TOUGHNESS 15
PERCEPTION 12
 Find 14, trick 15
MIND 12
 Willpower 15
CHARISMA 4
 Charm (16), persuasion (15), taunt 11
SPIRIT 13
 Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 16, intimidation 17, reality (Orrorsh) 15





Paul Daly



Possibilities: 5 each

Natural Tools: Fangs, damage value STR+6/20; wing-like appendages, speed value 14

Powers: Cold Aura, Resistance to Normal Weapons, Life Drain (*Toughness*, by blood drain), Infection

Corruption Value: 18

Fear Rating: 2

Perseverance DN: 18

Weakness: Salt (severe)

True Death: Wrapped in the thorny vines of the Gaeen Peace Rose.

Description: Blood-thirsts come from Sabathina's world of Lereholm. They are sickly gray colored blobs of opaque protoplasm covered with red, unblinking eyes. Flaps of skin act as wings, allowing them flight.

People who are bitten by a blood-thirst become a vampyre, but not a "conventional" vampyre. The victim's skin slowly turns a putrid gray. Next, dozens of tiny red eyes erupt all over their skin, followed by the shrivelling up/sloughing off of the victim's limbs, and the eruption of a toothed sphincter on his chest. Finally, the head shrivels and falls off, and the transformation is complete. The entire process takes two weeks.

Bundles of Joy?

A *Perception* or *find* of 14 shows that there are two small bundles lying where Sabathina and Basjas were originally standing. Getting to them means getting the past the women and overcoming either a blood-thirst or a spider-kin, depending on which bundle the character is heading for.

Each woman brought the other's weakness and true death along, to use on the other: Basjas' bundle contains a holy symbol from Sabathina's world, a stake made of ice, and a mallet; Sabathina's bundle consists of two small bars of gold

(each worth \$500), and a large amount of spider-web, wrapped around a pole much like a bundle of kite string.

The Battle

Keep in mind that for every round of combat between Basjas and Sabathina, there is a round of combat between the two armies and a chance that their ranks will be reduced by attrition. For every round that the Storm Knights fight the two Horrors, roll the die and divide the result by 2, rounding up. This is how many total casualties the armies suffer. Thus, if a 16 were rolled, that would be eight dead, four from each army.

If one female falls before the other, the armies of the fallen one immediately break off combat and charge, shrieking, at the Storm Knights, heedless of their own safety. The surviving female, if suffering from two or more wounds, will declare herself the winner and flee, her armies covering her escape.

Perseverance Awards

The party gains three Perseverance points for eliminating Sabathina and three for eliminating Basjas. The characters earn an extra point for each army that is completely eliminated (none escaped).

Event

If the gamemaster wishes, several of the spider-kin get away, and scurry out of the cemetery, heading down some dark alleyways. If the Storm Knights pursue, read aloud the following:

As you dash off in pursuit of the spider-kin, the dark and twisting alleys of old New Orleans embrace you, its shadows home to

who knows what sort of horrors and abominations. You try your best not to look to either side, keeping your eyes solely on the damp cobblestones of the paths.

At last, you emerge in a cul-de-sac, surrounded on all sides by darkened buildings, the only means of egress being the way you came in. You recoil at what awaits you.

The four spider-kin, their backs against the far wall, hiss at you, but it is not they that make you pause. The cul-de-sac is decorated with many strands of spider webs, and human-shaped bundles hang suspended in them.

The abominations leer at you, and you can almost see them imagining how you will look, webbed up like the other victims, hanging on the web like some grotesque ornament. The spider-kin move closer to you, you and they both realizing that only one faction is leaving this cul-de-sac alive.

Reduce Perseverance by -1 and make a check. If the characters defeat the spider-kin, add +2 to their Perseverance total.

Spider-Kin (4)

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 14, long jumping 15, maneuver 14, stealth 16, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 15

TOUGHNESS 15

PERCEPTION 14

Find 17, tracking 18, trick 16

MIND 10

CHARISMA 5

Charm (14), persuasion (15), taunt 10

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 15, intimidation 16, reality (Orrorsh) 13

Possibilities: 5

Natural Tools: Mandibles, damage value STR+5/20; poison, damage value 16, injected if a wound or better is caused by an *unarmed combat* attack; webs, *Toughness* 19

Powers: Resistance to Normal



Weapons, Magical Resistance

Corruption Value: 16

Fear Rating: 1

Perseverance DN: 16

Weakness: Bones of birds (severe)

True Death: Impaled with a branch from a tree, removed from the tree no more than an hour before.

Description: These Horrors resemble huge spiders two meters long and 1.5 meters high. Their heads are human skulls with glowing green eyes and black mandibles extending from both sides of the mouth.

Flags

An *Alertness* card reveals one bundle. An *Idea* card gives the Storm Knight the hint that the contents of a bundle constitutes the true death of the owner's opponent.

Variables

If the players have a huge party of Storm Knights with every conceivable weapon and spell imaginable, an obscene amount of possibilities, or skills with abnormally high adds, then don't hesitate to throw the females *and* their armies at them. On the other hand, if the party has been badly worn down by previous events, give each female one wound and say that they started fighting before the Storm Knights arrived. Once they arrive, of course, they spot the Knights and agree on a temporary truce; in effect, they're taking a "lunch break."

If a *Setback* occurs for the Villains, the Victorian forces from the Bon Vie come charging in on horseback — literally and figuratively, the cavalry has arrived.

A *Setback* for the Heroes could be the gang of four Vampyres, who serve Sabathina, coming upon the battle and joining it.

Cut To ...

If the Storm Knights decide to go to Louis Armstrong Park, cut to Scene Eight, "A Tree Grows In New Orleans."

SCENE EIGHT: A Tree Grows In New Orleans

The Situation

Dramatic. This is unusual, in that it's the second dramatic scene of the Act. The reason for this is that the uprooting of a reality tree is a big deal, and theoretically it could happen at any point in the act once the Storm Knights put the clues together.

When the Storm Knights enter the park, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You enter Louis Armstrong Park and discover, to your surprise, that at first glance it appears to be quite normal and sedate. However, to your trained eye, it's obvious that something is amiss, in the form of the large, strange tree that grows in the park's center. To the average person, it looks like a regular tree, but you know better; it is fueling Orrorshan reality in New Orleans and vicinity.

The Action

The tree is obviously full grown — that means the host inside has departed. All that has to be done to end the Orrorshan hold on this area is to uproot the tree.

This is harder than it looks. Reality trees are extremely tough. What's more, this tree has several unlikely guardians: if Randolph Chapman is still alive, he chooses

this time to lunge out into the open and attack the Storm Knights. If Mr. Koar is still alive, he too attacks. Both of these beings somehow know that the tree must remain where it is so that the reality which brings Fear and Wickedness lingers here forever.

Orrorshan Reality Tree

DEXTERITY 0

STRENGTH 0

TOUGHNESS 50

PERCEPTION 12

Trick (35)

MIND 12

Test (35), willpower 20

CHARISMA 0

Charm (40), persuasion (40), taunt (40)

SPIRIT 25

Intimidation 30, reality (Orrorsh) 40

Possibilities: 40

Description: A ghoulish was planted in the tree, which gave the tree five adds of *intimidation*. The tree doesn't have much to defend itself with. It relies on *intimidation* to make itself look like a twisted, gnarled, animated spectral tree, with its "Player's Call" being for the Storm Knight(s) to run screaming from the park, not being able to return until daylight. Of course, the reality tree will attempt to *intimidate* them yet again, doing this as many times as necessary to keep the Storm Knights at bay.

Mr. Koar

DEXTERITY 10/14

Acrobatics 12/16, dodge 13/17, flight -/18, maneuver 14/17, stealth 12/16, unarmed combat 16/20

STRENGTH 11/15

TOUGHNESS 10/15

PERCEPTION 12/10

Evidence analysis 16/14, find 16/14, language 15/11, tracking 17/17, trick 14/12

MIND 10/8

Occult 13/-, test of will 12/10, willpower 14/12



CHARISMA 13

Charm 15/-, persuasion 15/-, taunt 13/10

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Orrorshan evil) 17, intimidation 19, reality (Orrorsh) 15, shapeshifting 20, true sight 15

Possibilities: 20

Natural Tools: (in manticore form) wings, speed value 12; claws, damage value STR+4/19; scorpion tail, damage value STR+3/18; venom, delivered by tail on a wound or better from an *unarmed combat* attack—damage value 16 per round unless treated.

Equipment: Sword cane, damage value STR+5/16

Powers: *Paralyzing touch, armor defeating attack, resistance to normal weapons, dark vision*

Corruption Value: 14

Fear Rating: 3

Perseverance: 15

Weakness: Salt (severe weakness)

True Death: Stabbed in the heart with a knife while seeing its face reflected in a mirror.

Randolph Chapman

DEXTERITY 12

Beast riding 14, dodge 15, energy weapons 16, fire combat 16, heavy weapons 13, lock picking 14, maneuver 14, martial arts 14, melee weapons 15, missile weapons 13, running 13, stealth 16, swimming 14, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 11 (15 with his right arm)

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 11 (18 with armor)

PERCEPTION 9

Air vehicles 11, cyberdeck ops 12, disguise 11, evidence analysis 12, find 14, first aid 10, land vehicles 11, language 10, scholar (Living Land realm lore) 12, scholar (Nippon Tech realm lore) 12, tracking 15, trick 14, water vehicles 10

MIND 9

Meditation 10, science (computers) 14, survival 14, test 14, willpower 14

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt 11

SPIRIT 11

Intimidation 15, reality (Core Earth) 14

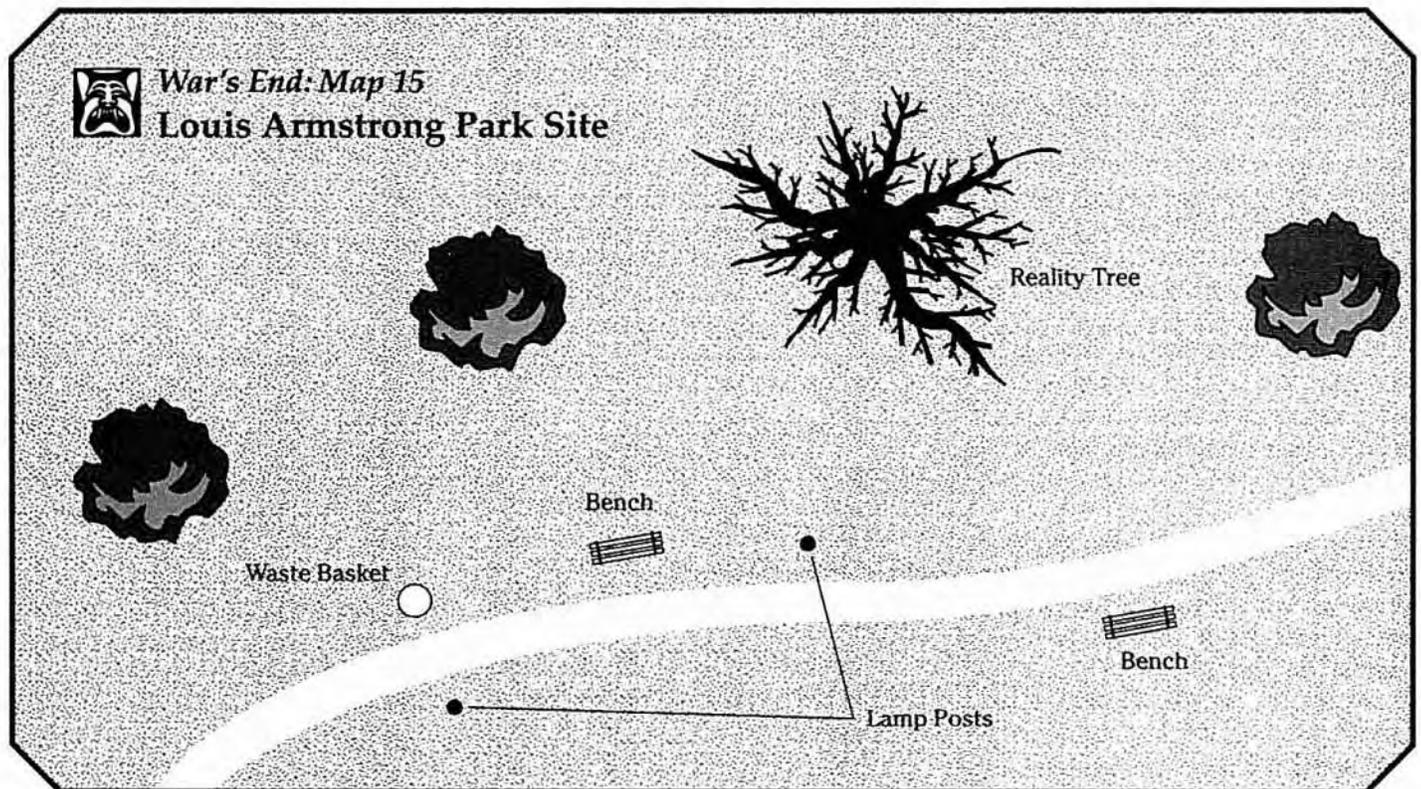
Possibilities: 26

Cybernetics: NeuraCal, J-Jack, Bellescan eye, MB Blocker, Trigon Hercule Arm (right); Cyber value: 15

Martial Arts Style: Jujitsu (all disciplines including Master)

Equipment: Kevlar/Ceramic Armor, value TOU+7/18; Res-14 laser pistol, damage value 25, ammo 50; Uzi submachinegun, damage value 17, ammo 11; .45 Colt Auto, damage value 16, ammo 7; MAS Grenade Launcher with bandolier of 12 frag grenades, damage value 21; burst radius 0-3/8/15; modern compound bow, damage value STR+7/22; hunting knife, damage value STR+3/18; nylon rope; backpack; C-rations; first aid kit; Kokoru Avenger motorcycle, Tech 23, speed value 13, TOU 13.

Chapman wields an eternity



shard, the sword of Vlad the Impaler.

Both men will fight to the death.

Woodsman, Don't Spare That Tree

Destruction of the tree can only be accomplished in one of two ways: by wounding it to the point of death (a *very* difficult thing to do), or by nailing a ghoul to the trunk using at least four silver nails. Finding out the latter method of destroying the tree requires using the *research* skill in the New Orleans public library. The gypsy grandmother staying with the Southern Gentlemen has such nails, selling each one for the equivalent of \$20 US each.

Where to find a ghoul? Well, as it happens, the one who was in the tree is still hanging about, along with a few friends.

Ghouls (8)

Reality: Orrorsh

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 11, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 15

PERCEPTION 6

Find 11, track 12

MIND 3

Test 9, willpower (11)

CHARISMA 2

Taunt (18)

SPIRIT 7

Faith (Orrorsh) 13, intimidation 14

Possibility Potential: None

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+2/15; teeth, damage value STR+3/16

Powers: Armor Defeating Attack (their especially long, sharp claws can slip between armor seams and rend flesh).

Fear Rating: 1

Weakness: Fire

True Death: Sever spinal column

Once the tree is destroyed, read or paraphrase the following:

The tree collapses on itself, smoldering, dying. Suddenly, it heaves to life again, pulsating as if it were breathing rapidly. At last, it explodes like an overripe melon, except that instead of pulpy fruit matter, a hurricane laced with red and blue lightning erupts from within.

Call for *Dexterity* totals. On a 12, the character has found something to hang on to and avoided being buffeted about. Failure means the

character suffers damage value 20 from the shockwave.

Read aloud:

You grit your teeth and narrow your eyes as the violent wind slices into you. Managing to turn your heads and look toward the city, your hearts leap with excitement as you see hansom cabs and gaslights vanishing, to be replaced by electric street lights and automobiles. Top hats, waist coats, bonnets, and hoop skirts change



Paul Daly



back into baseball caps, leather jackets, berets, and blue jeans.

You realize that thanks to the fact that Core Earth was already present here, no story seed needed to be planted. You hang on for dear life for what seems like an eternity, but in reality is only about 70 seconds. Finally, the wind dies down to a light breeze, then stops altogether.

Shaking, you pick yourselves up, brush yourselves off, and look around. All is quiet. Apparently, the hurricane was limited only to the confines of the park. You leave the place on wobbly legs, eyes wide. New Orleans seems none the worse for the experience; all traces of Orrorsh are gone. You did it. You freed the city.

Flags

A *Martyr* card will destroy the tree, and the Storm Knight along with it. An *Idea* card tells the Storm Knight that, since the reality tree was nurtured by an Orrorshan host, perhaps the tree itself has a weakness now. Otherwise, an *Idea* card can be used to tell the Storm Knights that the gypsies or the Southern Gentlemen would be the people most likely to have silver nails.

Variables

If both Chapman and Koar have been eliminated already, feel free to use any stragglers from Sabathina's or Basjas' armies as defenders of the tree.

Perseverance Awards

Uprooting the reality tree gains the Storm Knights four Perseverance points.

Act Awards

Surviving this grisly act gives each Storm Knight five Possibilities. If they uprooted the reality tree, add three more. Killing Basjas and/or Sabathina gives the Storm Knights an additional two Possibilities per death. Killing Randolph Chapman, Koar, or preventing the Cyberpapacy and Victorians from ripping into each other at the Bon Vie is worth one Possibility each.

Concluding The Act

Read aloud the following:

Your job in New Orleans is done. You have been through hell, but it's over, and you've emerged triumphant, though probably a little shaken. Staring off at the western sky, you see dark storm clouds gathering, with what you'd swear are forks of blue and red lightning. You know that your destiny now lies out there, in California. After over five long years, at last you have come to the end of it all. The Gaunt Man must be stopped, one way or another, and it looks like it's up to your group to do it.

This is it. The final battle of the Possibility Wars. Maybe the last battle you'll ever fight.

But first ...

Yes, it's that nimbus of energy again, this time sweeping the characters to Japan and "With All My Selves Against Me ..." below. Again, the characters will be returned from whence they came at the end of that section, with awareness of what went on in "A People Betrayed."

Cut To ...

Once the Storm Knights are ready to go to Los Angeles, cut to Act Four, "It's The End Of The World As We Know It."

Getting from New Orleans to Los Angeles is a simple matter of taking a train from New Orleans to Houston, then catching a flight out to LAX. If New Orleans has been freed, flights resume the next day, and the Storm Knights can fly direct to Los Angeles.

With All My Selves Against Me ...

(Note: The characters do not appear until midway through this scene.)

The CEO of Kanawa Corporation stood patiently in the darkened lab and looked at his chronometer. He gave a slight smirk of satisfaction. "Daikoku is gone," he announced. "The time is now!"

"Excellent," replied Kanawa.

"Then let us go and fulfill our task," added 3327.

"For the glory of ... " Ryuchi began.

"... our lady Jezrael," finished the High Lord of Marketplace.

The eyes of all five Ryuchi Kanawas pulsed with a disturbing orange light as they filed out of the lab.

It was the perfect infiltration, one that any ninja would be proud of. All five of Kanawa's surviving clones had been replaced by Tharkoldu duplicates, under the control of Jezrael. Now with the Nippon Tech Darkness Device gone, and Kanawa attempting a pullout of Core Earth, the opportunity to strike had come at last.

The first stop of the five Kanawa copies was a small private storage locker, which could be opened only by achieving the seemingly impossible: the palm-print reader had to scan the owner's right hand palm-print three times, simultaneously. Three of the clones placed their right hands, palms down, on the reader. The scanner confirmed them, and the lock slid open with a



loud click. The fourth clone took out a bundle, and opened it, distributing Tharkoldu Res-14 laser pistols to each clone. There were six pistols, and Ryuchi took the extra pistol and tucked it in his pants at the small of his back. It was always a good idea to have a backup.

Now that all five clones were armed and walking down the halls of Kanawa's high-rise headquarters, their demeanor switched to a more aggressive, warrior posture. The halls of the building were much less crowded than the headquarters of a megacorporation should be. Most of the staffers had already gone back to Marketplace, taking essential equipment back to the main headquarters in that cosm.

All five men stood impassively in the elevator as it shot up to the penthouse offices of Ryuchi Kanawa, their images reflecting in each other's mirror shades. As one, each tugged on the collar of their black turtle-necks, then straightened the lapels of their grey sports jackets.

The elevator door opened, and a dozen heavily armed and armored MarSec troops levelled their Impala Chain Guns. The squad's leader began to ask for identification and verification of the visitors' appointment with the now very reclusive High Lord, when his jaw dropped in a most uncharacteristic fashion.

"Im ... impossible," the commander gasped. "What trickery is this?"

"You're all fired," the CEO of Kanawa Corp announced as five lasers blazed away at the MarSec troops. In seconds, all twelve men lay dead.

Satisfied, the clones walked up to the ornate steel office door. 3327 placed his palm on the reader. The door hissed open smoothly, and the five men walked through the secretary's office. It was empty — Miss Mikuma had already gone back up the maelstrom bridge, back

to Marketplace.

This time, the High Lord of Marketplace had the honor of placing his palm on the reader. The door opened, granting them access to the sanctum of none other than Ryuchi Kanawa, aka 3327, aka the High Lord of Marketplace, aka the CEO of the megacorporation known as Kanawa Corporation.

The man who sat at the desk, Ryuchi Kanawa, frowned as he stood up, hands resting on the desk. He knew, of course, what this tableau meant. "Computer!" he barked. "Initiate program Judo One!"

The clones raised their laser pistols and took careful aim. Five beams lanced out and struck the High Lord, who was blown backwards by their sheer force. He was bloodied and burnt ... but still alive.

Computer program Judo One activated itself in the next millisecond, sending a powerful electrical current arcing through all five clones, overloading the laser pistols in their hands. The resulting explosions left the real 3327 with the only intact right hand. Only one clone, in fact, did not lose both a hand and an eye, and he was the only one who remained standing.

Suddenly, even this clone staggered slightly, dizzy and disoriented. Yes, of course ... all the original clones were linked together by a shared consciousness. The Tharkoldu replicants had a similar system built in. He was feeling the pain of his clone brothers!

"Excellent," the clone muttered. "A new system?"

The true High Lord said simply, "I still live ... and all five of you have outlived your usefulness. Even now, MarSec troops are coming to my aid. Your time is almost through."

Note: At this point, the Storm Knights appear in the outer office. The door to the corridor is open, and the door to Kanawa's office is

open. The Storm Knights can see inside Kanawa's inner office — the four damaged clones have roused themselves and all five now confront the High Lord. Spilling in from the corridor are MarSec troops, coming to the aid of their master.

MarSec Troops (24)

Reality: NipponTech

DEXTERITY 9

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

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8 (15 with Kyoto RKD armor)

PERCEPTION 8

Find 9, tracking 10, trick 9

MIND 8

Test 9

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 9

SPIRIT 7

Intimidation 9

Possibility Potential: Some (55)

Equipment: RKD Armor, value TOU+7/15; nunchaka, damage value STR+5/13; Impala chain gun, damage value 23, ammo 600

The MarSec troops will not be eager to sit down and have a chat with the Storm Knights. They will assume that the Storm Knights are the intruders, and blaze away at them. 3327, meanwhile, will shout at them that "Those *gaijin* are not the enemy, you fools!"

In any case, the clones may attack the Storm Knights, mistaking them for stormers hired by 3327 as extra security.

3327 (and his clones)

DEXTERITY 13

Acrobatics 17, dodge 17, energy weapons 20, fire combat 20, lockpicking 16, maneuver 19, martial arts 21, melee weapons 18, missile weapons 18, prestidigitation 17, stealth 23, unarmed combat 20

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 14

TOUGHNESS 9



PERCEPTION 18

Disguise 25, evidence analysis 27, find 27, language 26, scholar (economics) 28, scholar (Japanese history 24), trick 27

MIND 25

Business 32, meditation 28, science (psychology) 28, test 31, willpower 31

CHARISMA 21

Charm 23, persuasion 30, taunt 33

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 25, reality (Nippon Tech) 32

Possibilities: 30 for each clone and for Kanawa

Equipment: For the clones: Res-14 laser, damage value 25, ammo 50; for Kanawa himself: 13mm Chunyokai, damage value 18, ammo 9

At this point, gamemasters can take it one of two ways: Apeiros can take the Storm Knights back to where they came from, or they have to get out of the building before the bomb blows (what bomb, you ask? The one 3327 is going to set off in the second half of the fiction, below). If the latter is used, the Storm Knights have four rounds before the explosion goes off. Once they clear the building, Apeiros takes them back to the spot they started from.

If the characters depart, the scene plays out as follows:

One of the clone assassins grinned wickedly as he took his backup laser from behind his back. "Farewell, once High Lord. Lady Jezrael sends her compliments."

Kanawa made a business decision. His men were pinned in the hallway by the laser blasts of the other four clones. The market was rapidly plummeting. But he would not let Jezrael have the satisfaction of seizing his secrets.

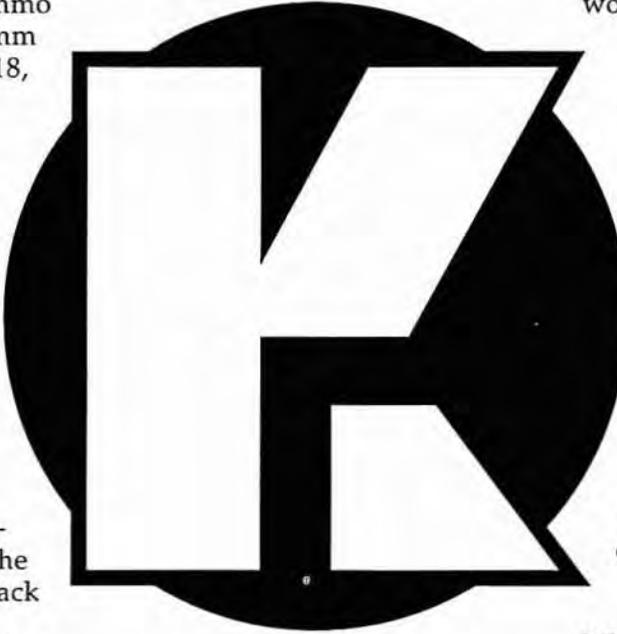
The clone fired. The laser beam sizzled toward the High Lord's

head, even as he spoke the words, "Computer — initiate Kamikaze One!"

Ryuchi, the clone, looked down at the original, dead on the floor. It suddenly occurred to him that he was now the leader of the Kanawa Corporation. Of course, he would have to share the power with the other clones ...

Or would he?

He was still armed, and the only one of the clones who was whole. Without a word, he spun around and slew his four clone brothers. Why bother to share, when it could all be his?



When it was over, he wondered what had inspired him. Perhaps, despite the disappearance of Daikoku, this was still a Nippon pure zone. Even though he was an artificial being, perhaps he had transformed. Perhaps he was true Nippon now.

He knew his cover story would have to be a good one. Jezrael had sent five Kanawa lookalikes to assassinate the Kanawa CEO, but the computer defenses had stopped them. All he had to do was take the body of the assassinated High Lord

and place it next to the other clones, making him look like just another assassin.

Ryuchi tiptoed around the dead bodies of his clone brothers, and ambled behind the huge glass and steel desk. Leaning down, he was about to pick up the headless body of the High Lord when he heard an odd beeping coming from the corpse's chest.

Curious, Ryuchi tore open the body's Yves St Laurent shirt and saw a small box with a beeping red light. It was a heart monitor telemetry broadcast unit, standard equipment for any Kanawa executive of mid-level or higher. The monitor would track the executive's heart rate, and if the heart ever stopped, it sent an emergency signal to building security and to an Emergency Medical Technician team.

Frowning, Ryuchi couldn't help but to wonder why it was beeping. It wasn't supposed to beep. And shouldn't MarSec and the EMTs have been here by now? Was something wrong with the computer?

The computer!

Suddenly, like a thunderbolt, Ryuchi remembered the dying High Lord's last words: "Computer — initiate Kamikaze One!" His mind raced.

What command was that? Kamikaze meant divine wind ... kamikaze was also the name of the Japanese pilots on this world who, in their last major war, committed suicide by ramming their planes into the enemy ships. The pilots died ... but they took the enemy with them.

Ryuchi's eyes went wide. He dropped the corpse and realized there was nothing more to do now.

Nothing to do but die.

The explosion could be seen for kilometers. When the smoke and dust had cleared, the top three floors of the Kanawa Building were gone.



A People Betrayed

Parok, Warlord of the Ravagons, stood on the battlements of Illmound Keep and surveyed his surroundings with distaste. It was quiet now, save for the screams of the writhing damned that made up the maelstrom bridge. Interlocking his long, clawed fingers together, he brooded over recent events. And it was in this state of mind that Arrgurk Verzta, The Twice Named, Guardian for the Irishantza, found him as he swooped down to land gracefully.

Arrgurk nodded respectfully to his superior. Parok gave the smallest inclination of his own head in response.

"Something ails you, Warlord?" Arrgurk hissed.

Parok's eyes narrowed, but he never looked at Arrgurk, so great was his shame. "We ... have been deceived."

Arrgurk clacked his teeth in the accepted gesture of curiosity and confusion. Parok nodded and repeated. "Deceived."

Parok turned about and walked into Illmound, an Illmound that was lacking its master. The Gaunt Man had already taken his host and headed off for what the natives of this world called California. Arrgurk followed, disturbed, but daring not to question Parok.

"He lied to us. He whom I followed as the Sixth Prophet," Parok said at last.

Arrgurk's eyes went unchar-

acteristically wide. "Sallsboratza? A deceiver? Impossible!"

Parok glared at the younger ravagon. "Fool. He has twisted and manipulated us. Ravok help me, but the Denyers were right! The rejected him for his use of sinful acts, and they were right!"

"What proof have you of this?" Arrgurk croaked, not wanting to see his whole world, as he knew it, collapse.

Parok wordlessly led the young warrior into the Gaunt Man's situation room. Near the giant floating globe-image was the Gaunt Man's journal, with his plan neatly written out.

"Does he think so little of us," Parok spat, "so little of our powers, that he thought he could just leave his twisted plan lying about where it could be found? Does he not fear our might? Does he think we cannot stop him?"

Arrgurk quickly read the last entries as Parok ranted, then stopped and stared at the Warlord with a killing gleam in his eyes. "Then let us do so, lord!" he said. "Let us kill him and his armies! Our numbers are great, our warriors strong! Let us take our vengeance!"

"No!" Parok replied. "Whatever he has done ... I have pledged an oath of fealty."

"He has broken his oaths to us!"

"And I will not share his dishonor."

"You will let him betray us

and suffer no consequences?" Arrgurk pressed.

Parok smiled, slowly. "Ah, but I never said there would be no consequences ..." He returned to the balcony, his lieutenant in tow. "Spread the word to all our kind. We leave this wretched world ... now!"

Arrgurk looked surprised, but wisely held his tongue.

"The Great Deceiver will soon end the life of this world. The hunting shall come to an end here. We have done our share; we have helped him gain a victory here; honor is preserved. Let us return to our blessed Tz'Ravok, and there I shall place myself at the mercy of our people. They may judge me."

Arrgurk nodded as he unfurled his wings. "Do not fear this judgment. Sallsboratza was very convincing; his words touched us."

"Do not call him by that name!" Parok snarled. "I name him Kazarokza, the Great Deceiver! Let that be his legacy!"

With a grim nod, Arrgurk took to the air, intent on his mission.

Within one day, every ravagon on Earth had gathered at Illmound Keep, there to follow their Warlord back home. But if they believed their departure would strike at the heart of the Gaunt Man, they were sadly mistaken.

For Kazarokza had no heart ...





Act Four

It's The End Of The World As We Know It

The Major Beat

In this Act, the adventure, as well as the entire war, is wrapped up. The Storm Knights go to America's West Coast, specifically Los Angeles, to stop the Gaunt Man and meet their destiny.

Thanks to Jezrael's divination spells, her questions to Malgest before it disappeared, and information gleaned from Thratchen after his encounter with the Storm Knights, she now knows the identities of the Storm Knights coming to LA, and has set in motion several plans to stop them. (Jezrael knows the Gaunt Man is up to something, of course, but fully believes she can wrest control of his plan from him and does not want the Storm Knights interfering.)

En route to Los Angeles, the Storm Knights' mode of transportation is attacked by techno-demons as it approaches LA. Once they make it into LA proper, Tharkoldu gang member-vampyres meet the party, trying to pass themselves off as fellow Storm Knights. Promising to take them to Sidon, the vampyres drive the Storm Knights to an isolated location and attempt to slaughter them. The party is reinforced by the real contacts, a gang of Tharkold-transformed Storm Knights. They do take the Knights to meet Sidon, Jezrael's offspring who has sided

with the humans and the Race against the Tharkoldu.

The action continues in a remote area of California. Led by Sidon, the Storm Knights travel to the site and battle Orrorshan gospog, only to witness the arrival of the incredibly powerful Gaunt Man.

Almost immediately afterwards, the Kantovian maelstrom bridge lands, as Ayroa (better known as the Guildmaster) and Kurst fight for the last time. Orrorshan Horrors wipe out the invading shapechangers, but at a very big price. The Kantovian invasion ultimately fails, as techno-demons arrive on the scene and mop up the last of the resistance.

Jezrael and Sidon battle it out as the techno-demons appear on the scene. The maddened Baruk Kaah appears, the Gaunt Man intending to use the crazed ex-High Lord as a possibility energy-laden bomb-trigger to crack the San Andreas Fault.

Jeff Mills, the avatar of Apeiros, shows up with a mighty weapon to slay the Gaunt Man, but the High Lord slays Mills. As he's dying, Jeff gives the weapon to the Storm Knights, who must either strike at the Gaunt Man, or see their world die.

A Word of Warning

Gamemasters must exercise extreme caution during this act. Not





Paul Daly



only are there loads of opportunities to kill off Storm Knights, there is also the unfortunate chance that the Storm Knights could wind up just sitting around and watching the action unfold around them, since some pretty significant things happen in rapid succession in this Act. A lot of loose ends get tied up.

The roster of gamemaster characters who appear is a Storm Knight's nightmare: Jezrael, the Guildmaster, Baruk Kaah, the Gaunt Man, etc. Even though Jezrael and her son Sidon wind up fighting each other and possibly the Storm Knights never get a shot at her, there is no reason why Baruk Kaah would ignore the Storm Knights. Considering how his realm was wrecked, it is safe to assume that he has a burning hatred of Storm Knights and will attack them with reckless, homicidal abandon.

The Guildmaster, otherwise known as Ayroa of Kantovia, may also justifiably lead a small group of shapechangers in a charge against the Storm Knights, claiming that their interference has ruined her plans. After the Storm Knights and Ayroa have had the chance to exchange a few blows, Kurst could come in and attack her, insisting on the right to face her in solo combat to the death. (Keep in mind, though, that if you think it would be more fun for the Knights to take out one of these heavies, go right ahead. Don't feel that the confrontations have to run the way they're written — feel free to give the Knights more bang for the buck!)

The various armies (e.g. the Gaunt Man's gospog, the techno-demons, the shapechangers) can each easily have some stragglers that see the Storm Knights as a group of weak opponents that may give them an amusing skirmish.

The worst thing that could happen in this Act is for the gamemaster to be sitting back, reading long-winded descriptions of all this neat action taking place beyond the

Storm Knights' reach, while the players, bored and feeling unable to do anything, tune out. This is **THE LAST ACT OF TORG**. Excitement should be everywhere.

There are some events that should happen for the sake of the adventure, like the death of Jeff Mills. However, all the others should be up in the air — maybe Storm Knight intervention prevents some, but not others. The adventure is written from the perspective that the Knights will have their hands full battling the Gaunt Man, but if they want to get involved in some of the "sideshows," by all means, let them.

It may seem like this act is rather linear, dragging the Storm Knights from one big bang-up battle to the next. Well, that's because it is. This is the act where the forces of evil and the forces of good duke it out. No quarter, no compromise, no shortcuts — it's now or never, folks.

Above all else, have fun with this. This is the last act of the Possibility Wars, and should be a very big deal. It's been five years in the making, and when it's over, the world will never be the same.

SCENE ONE: Interception

The Situation

Standard. The aircraft that the Storm Knights take into Los Angeles International Airport is attacked by a flight of techno-demons. Jezrael has long since pieced together that something significant is happening in California, and has dispatched her spies and scouts to stay alert for any teams of Storm Knights or other groups of possibility-rated beings heading into the Tharkold's zones. She is especially looking for these particular Storm Knights!

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Your passenger flight is nearly at an end as the jetliner banks gracefully for its final approach to LAX. Looking out the window, you can see cars and trucks below you. Shifting your gaze to the interior of the plane, you note that it's only half full: not too many people seem interested in going into LA these days, what with the Tharkoldu presence.

Tezel Rak-Four, the cybermage that your group met in New Orleans, has already sent word to his contacts in the Warrior's Peace resistance group in LA, notifying them of your arrival. They will meet you at the airport, and help you in any way they can.

With your seat belts fastened and your trays returned to an upright, locked position, you unconsciously clutch the armrest as the plane begins its descent towards the runway. Suddenly, a loud shriek of ripping metal alerts you that the plane has intruders. You look ahead several seats and see a chunk of the cabin torn away, a pair of nasty looking techno-demons squeezing in through the hole. The two passengers in the adjacent seats have scarcely time to be startled before the Tharkoldu hurl them screaming through the ragged hole.

Panic erupts as passengers and crew scream and scramble to get away. One woman stands up, pulls out a very large pistol, and begins firing at the Tharkoldu. To say that she's outgunned and needs help is an understatement.

The Action

A pair of Alpha techno-demons has ripped open the jetliner, looking for Storm Knights. In a true Possibility Wars coincidence, they have found the player characters. The woman is Allison Hawke, a





Storm Knight who works as a freelance air marshal for LA-bound flights.

Alpha Techno-demons (2)

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 15, energy weapons 15, fire combat 14, flight 16(19), melee weapons 16 (19 defense), missile weapons 15, stealth 15, unarmed combat 16 (19)

STRENGTH 17

Lifting 20

TOUGHNESS 17(23)

PERCEPTION 12

Alteration magic 16, divination magic 16, find 15, first aid 13, land vehicles 14, tracking 16, trick 14

MIND 13

Apportation magic 17, conjuration magic 17, test 17, willpower 18

CHARISMA 11

Persuasion 13, taunt 15

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 18, pain

weapon 16, intimidation 18, reality (Tharkold) 15

Possibilities: 10

Arcane Knowledges: Folk 4, entity 4, inanimate forces 4, living forces 4

Spells: Alpha stretch, foebuster, foe stretch, horrifying arrival, monkey form, pav crush, pop

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+2/19; non-cybered talons, damage value STR+3/20; alpha sense (Perception total); wing strike, damage value STR+7/24, speed value 10

Equipment: Pain baton (pain weapon+3/ damage value 19). Cyberware: Nanocord, balance wires (+3 to skills using agility, noted in parentheses above), interdermal plate (TOU+6/23), enhanced cyber talons (STR+5/22), cyberwings (+3 push to flight), backlash buffer 2 (magic skill total +2 for purposes of backlash only), LifeCyber, 3 slot chipholder. Cyber value: 16

Allison Hawke

DEXTERITY 10

Acrobatics 12, dodge 13, energy weapon 14, fire combat 16, land vehicles 13, melee combat 13, maneuver 15, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 10 (15 with syntheleather)

PERCEPTION 11

Air vehicles 13, evidence analysis 13, find 15, language 14, scholar (Sioux lore) 14, scholar (Tharkold realm lore) 14

MIND 10

Streetwise 13, test 14, willpower 15

CHARISMA 10

Charm 14, persuasion 15, taunt 13

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 14, reality (Tharkold) 15

Possibilities: 12

Equipment: 13/Zan Magnum



pistol, damage value 18, ammo 21 (with Smartgun attachment +2 to hit); Kap/5 syntheleather jacket, armor value TOU+5/15; monofilament dagger, damage value STR+4/14. Cyberware: Nanocord, Killseeker eye, Modspotter eye, Soundcatcher ear, Truthear, Shock Suppression Booster (absorb 3 shock per blow), cybertalons (STR+2/12). Cyber value: 15

Description: Allison is a very attractive, very professional freelance air marshal. Born and raised in the LA suburbs, Allison is half AmerIndian. She has been fighting the Tharkoldu, in one way or another, since they arrived. Allison is slow to trust people, since you never know who you're dealing with in the Tharkoldu zones.

Death, Tharkoldu Style

At some point during the melee, one of the Alphas grabs a stewardess and hurls her out the gaping hole. In order to rescue her, a Storm Knight must make a *Dexterity*, *acrobatics* or a *long jumping* total of 14. A success enables the Storm Knight to catch her, although the rescuer and his or her charge are now dangling out of a hole in the jetliner. It requires a *Strength* or *lifting* total of 18 for the Storm Knight to pull both of them back into the plane. Naturally, the Storm Knight's comrades can help. Also just as naturally, one or both of the Alphas will take the time to try and loosen the rescuer's grip on the plane and send both people plummeting to the runway below.

Take Me To The Pilot

The Alphas intend to go to the cockpit and eliminate the crew, forcing the jet to crash. (Of course, the winged demons will have long since flown away from the impend-

ing disaster.) It takes the Tharkoldu two combat rounds to reach the cockpit, and an additional round to wipe out the crew. The Alphas will attack the Storm Knights as they stride to the cockpit, making the melee a sort of running battle. The Alphas may even each hurl two people out of the plane, hoping to divert the Storm Knights; while the heroes are off rescuing the victims, the Alphas could make it to the cockpit unimpeded.

If the crew is killed and a Storm Knight attempts to land the plane, an *air vehicles* total of 17 is needed. If the radio is still functioning and the Storm Knight can get in touch with LAX, he can land the plane on a *Perception* or *air vehicles* total of 15.

If the plane crashes for any reason, 114 people die, Allison survives, and each Storm Knight suffers damage value 30 (no armor protection allowed) in the ensuing explosion.

Talking With Allison

Allison proves to be a good source of information. She starts out Neutral toward the Storm Knights, but becomes Loyal if she sees them battling the techno-demons.

Allison knows the following:

- "There's been an increase in occult phenomena in LA the last few weeks. Talk of vampiric cybernetic gangs, shapechangers, and such. It's been building steadily; something's up."
- "The Kanawans are keeping such a low profile that they appear to be nonexistent. Even though it seems that they are out of the LA picture, that may be just what 3327 wants us to think."
- "Sidon, Jezrael's son, has hooked up with some Tharkold-transformed Storm Knights, and is making vague hints that he will face off

against his mother soon.

- "It's getting harder to tell the good guys from the bad. Trust no one unless they've really proven themselves. That's what I do!"

Flags

A *Connection* card means that the Storm Knight is friends with Allison, and any information will be easier to obtain. An *Alertness* card played by someone who doesn't know Allison tips off the Storm Knight that there's this armed, cybered woman on the plane. A *Romance* card means that the Storm Knight falls for Allison; note that the reverse *does not* happen. Allison is fighting a war, she has no time for romance now. If either of the Alphas escape, and a *Nemesis* card appears, that Storm Knight is now marked by the respective Alpha, and will be stalked by the techno-demon. The Alpha will fight the Storm Knight to the death before the act is over.

Variables

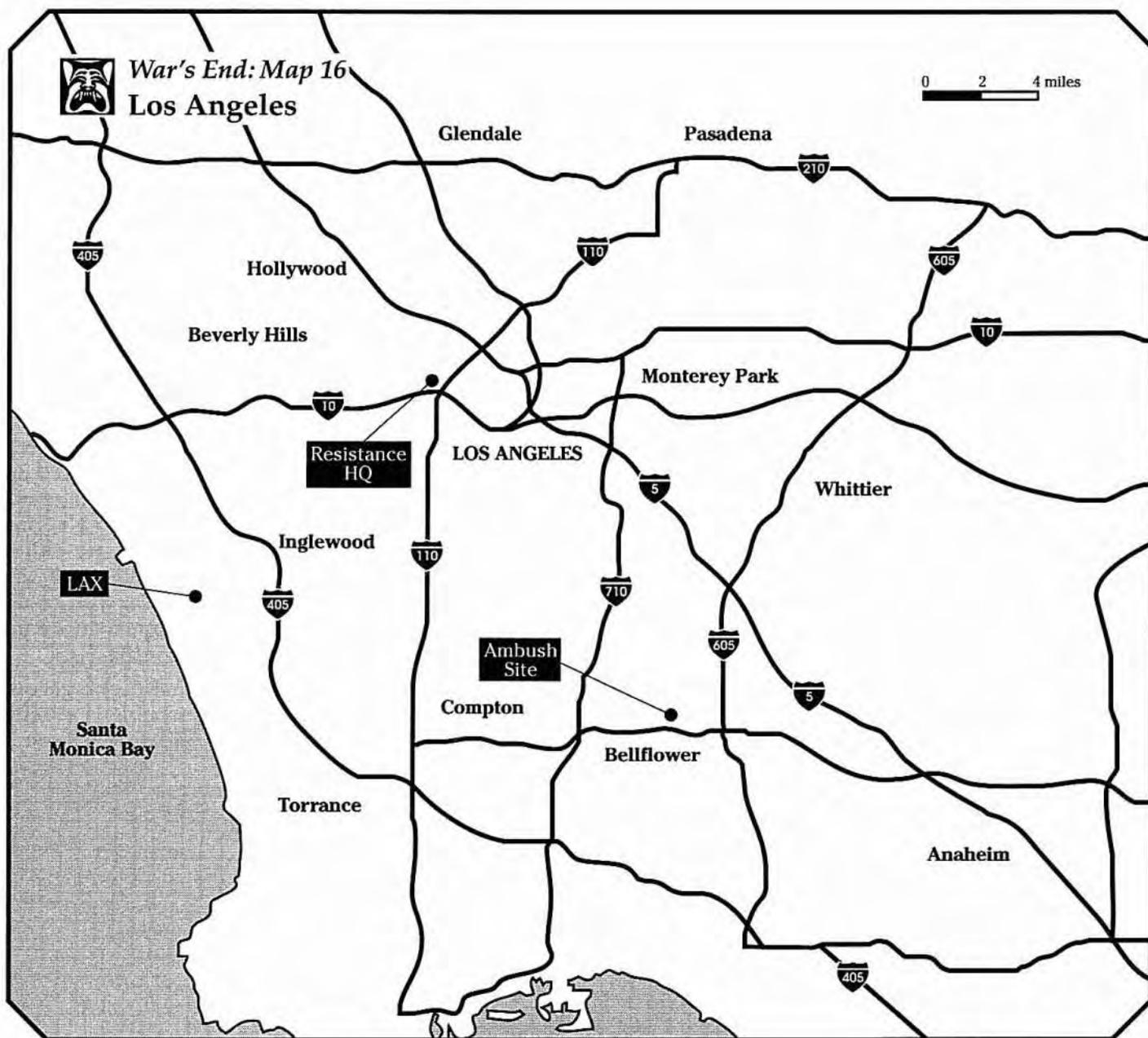
If the Storm Knights take their own private plane/copter/airship, they meet Allison as they go through LAX security. In this case, the Alphas are in the airport in *monkey form* guise.

If the Storm Knights take a train to LA instead, the encounter runs pretty much the same; the train's wall is ripped open, the Alphas throw people out of the hole, and they attempt to get to the engine, speed the train up, and derail it. Allison is on board as railroad security.

Cut To ...

Once the Storm Knights arrive at LAX, cut to Scene Two, "Your Hosts For Your Stay."





SCENE TWO: Your Hosts For Your Stay

The Situation

Standard. A gang of cyber-vampyres, loyal to Jezrael, meet the Storm Knights, and attempt to lure them to an isolated area where they can be killed.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Once past security and baggage claims, you wander to the outside concourse, where taxis, limos, and shuttles await their passengers. The place is teeming with people, arriving at and departing from the airport. Many drivers stand outside their vehicles, with placards, to help the new arrivals know where their rides are. Among the placards you see are: "Mr. Fujimoto's party," "Ms. Reed's party," "Mr. Sidon's group," and "The Taylor Party."

The Action

If the party asks you, the people holding the "Mr. Sidon" sign are two young men with black jeans, black turtle-necks, black suit coats, dark glasses, and ponytails. They are indeed supposedly from the resistance, and if approached, they ask the Storm Knights the following question: "If you are here to meet Mr Sidon, we need to ask you this. How has Mr Sidon been get-



ting along with his mother?"

Naturally, the answer is something along the lines of "Not very well." If the party responds as expected, they are escorted to two limousines. Split the player characters up so that half ride in each car.

The drivers won't speak much, except for questions like "Were you followed?" or "Did you encounter any trouble getting into LA?"

Drivers (2)

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 14, energy weapons 14, fire combat 16, land vehicles 17, melee weapons 13, running 15, stealth 16, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 10 (13 with Mesh)

PERCEPTION 11

Find 13, scholar (Tharkold realm lore) 14

MIND 8

Streetwise 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 9

Charm 12, persuasion 11, taunt 13

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 13, reality (Tharkold) 13

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: Vav-9 machinepistol, damage value 19, ammo 18; black blazer with Kap/3 Mesh woven into it, armor value TOU+3/13; dark glasses with Text LED and Darksight capabilities; trail bugs (2). **Cyberware:** Nanocord, nervejack, Radiohear ear, Radiotalker, Voice Mask, Adrenal Booster (+3 STR+DEX), cybershroud. **Cyber value:** 11

Description: These two drivers are part of a group of gangers that work for the Tharkoldu. They are the only two that haven't turned into vampyres.

Note that their VoiceMask cyberware prevents anyone from trying to determine whether or not they are telling the truth. The VoiceMask masks vocal stress, rendering things like Truthhear useless.

The drivers jack into their vehicles directly, giving them a +3

bonus to *land vehicle* totals.

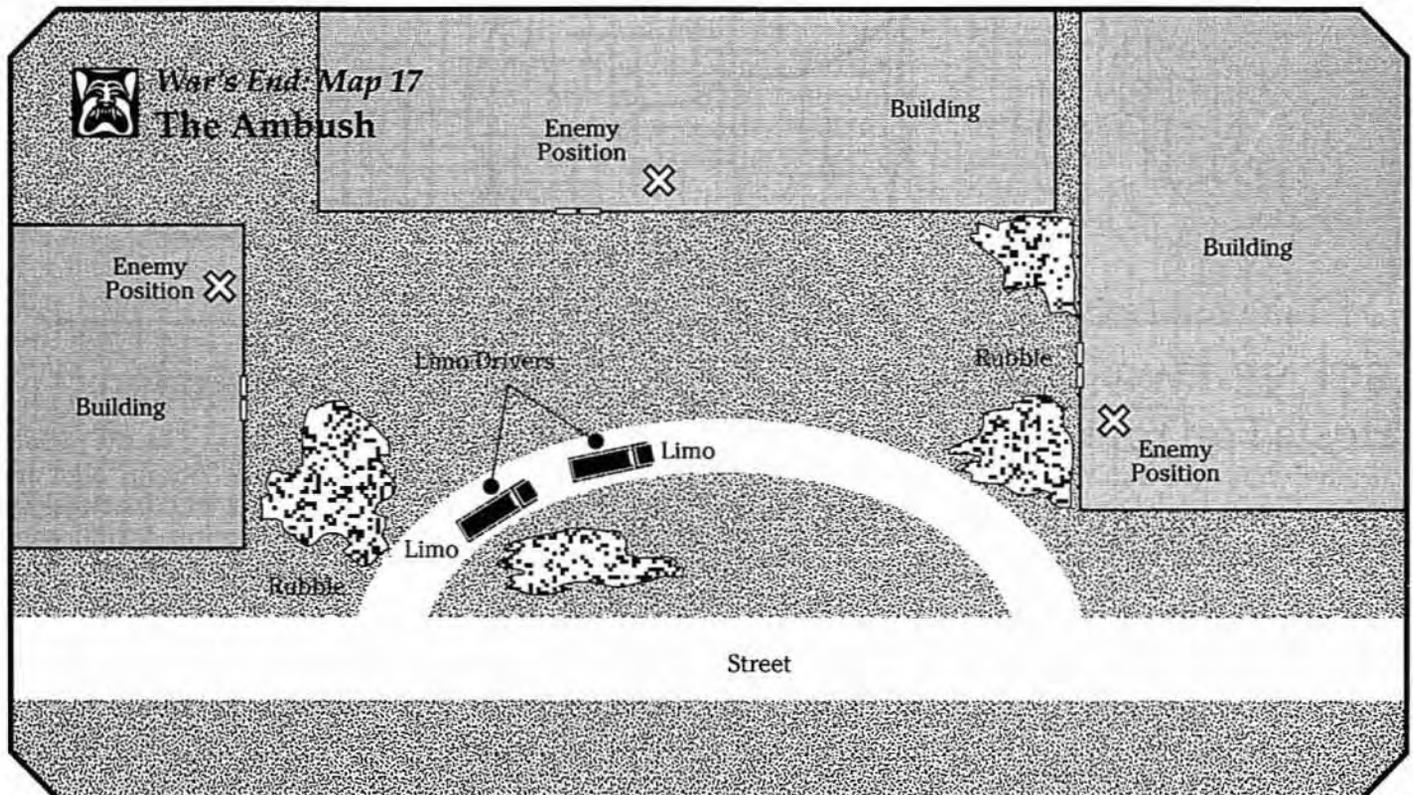
The Ambush

The limos depart LAX and drive east to Bellflower. Once they arrive, read aloud the following:

Bellflower has changed little since the initial mass destruction of the Tharkoldu arrival. Bombed-out buildings and rubble dot the landscape. An occasional straggler looking for food dives for cover as the limos go by. No one trusts anyone in Bellflower these days.

The limos silently pull into a ruined courtyard, surrounded on three sides by blasted out apartment buildings. The area seems devoid of life. Looking to either side, the drivers get out of the limos and motion for you to do the same. They appear to be on the lookout for trouble.

When the Storm Knights get out of the vehicles, trouble is exactly what happens. Laser blasts erupt



from the ruined buildings, and the Storm Knights see the two drivers crumple to the ground (they're faking it).

The gangers spill out of the ruined buildings and from under the rubble, eager for fresh blood and the chance to inflict pain.

Tharkold Vampyre Gangers (2 per Storm Knight)

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 14, energy weapons 14, fire combat 16, land vehicles 17, melee weapons 13, running 15, stealth 16, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 10 (15 with armor)

PERCEPTION 11

Find 13, scholar (Tharkold realm lore) 14

MIND 8

Streetwise 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 9

Charm 12, persuasion 11, taunt 13

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 13, reality (Tharkold) 13

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: Res 14/Alph laser rifle, damage value 26, ammo 30; Chod/5 Skirmisher armor, value TOU+5/15. **Cyberware:** Nanocord, Hidehunter eye, Cybershroud, Cybercestus (STR+2/12). **Cyber value:** 8

Natural Tools: Fangs, damage value STR+2/12

Powers: Shape Change (rat), Life Drain (TOU), Regeneration, Infection, Dark Vision

Corruption Value: 17

Fear Rating: 2

Perseverance DN: 15

Weakness: Sunlight, cross (severe)

True Death: Wooden stake through chest

Description: This gang lost a "disagreement" with an Orrorshan vampyre, here to scout things out for the Gaunt Man. As a result, all

of the gang is now infected with vampyrism.

During the battle, the two drivers will cease playing dead and attempt to attack the Storm Knights from behind. They will do this when the opportunity best presents itself. Before they actually attack anyone, though, the drivers will plant a trail bug on a Storm Knight; this sets the situation up for the next scene. (Naturally, the drivers will not attack the Knight on whom they placed the bug.)

The object of the gang's ambush is simple: complete destruction of the Storm Knights in the most painful way possible; no quarter asked for, no quarter given. If that seems brutal, that's exactly what it's meant to be; this is Tharkoldu Los Angeles, not a Nile action romp. People die in LA, and they don't die pretty.

If any gang members survive and are successfully interrogated, the only thing the Storm Knights manage to get out of them is that



Paul Dally



Jezrael somehow knew that the Storm Knights would be on the plane/train in question.

Trail Bug

The trail bug has a broadcast range of 160 kilometers. Its chameleon chip enables it to blend into the clothing of the tagged person, requiring a *Perception* or *find* total of 30 in order to locate it.

The Cavalry Has Arrived?

When the last ganger falls and the echo of the last gunshot/laser blast hasn't yet faded, another group of gangers appears. These are members of the resistance, working directly with Sidon. They were notified by a New Orleans acquaintance of the Storm Knights' arrival, but one of their members turned out to be a Tharkoldu infiltrator. The Tharkoldu gangers managed to intercept the Storm

Knights before Sidon's people could.

In any event, the gangers help bind up the injured, bury the dead, and offer to take the Storm Knights to Sidon.

Resistance Gangers (5)

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 13, fire combat 16, land vehicles 14, melee weapons 14, running 15, stealth 16, unarmed combat 17

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10 (13 with armor)

PERCEPTION 11

Find 13, first aid 14, scholar (Tharkold realm lore) 13, tracking 14, trick 12

MIND 9

Streetwise 11, survival 10, test 11, willpower 12

CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 12, taunt 14

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 13, reality (Tharkold) 12

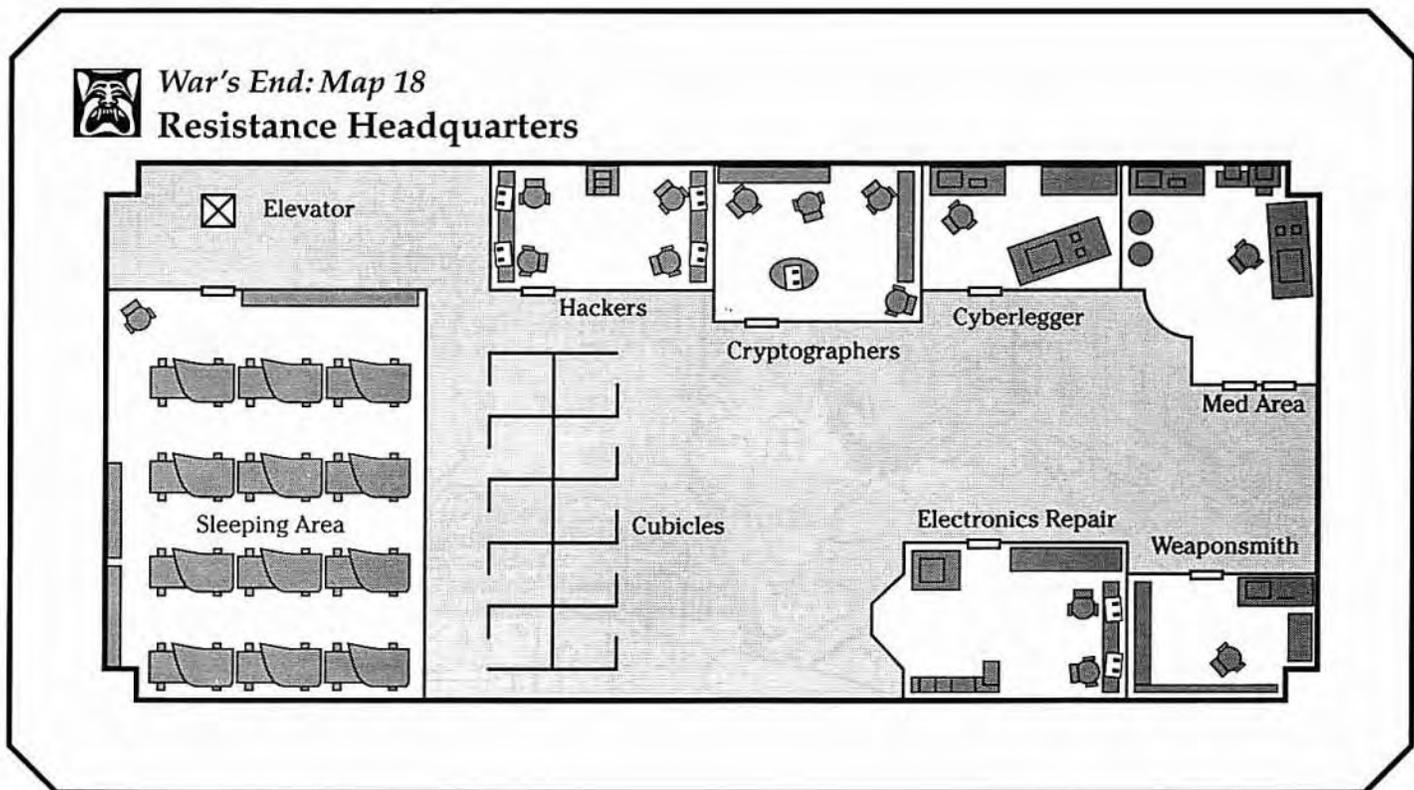
Possibilities: 6

Equipment: Res-14 laser pistol, damage value 25, ammo 50; Kap/3 Mesh woven into denim jackets, armor value TOU+3/13; monofilament dagger, damage value STR+4/14. Cyberware: Nanocord, Nervejack, Farsight eye, Darksight eye, Soundcatcher ear, Endorphin Boosters. Cyber value: 12

Description: These gang members work for the LA resistance, not making much effort to stay inside the law, but for the most part staying on the side of the angels.

Flags

An *Alertness* card gives the Storm Knight advance notice of the ambush, or perhaps the Storm Knight sees the two drivers falling, despite the fact that no shots hit them. A *Suspicion* card makes the resistance gangers believe that the Storm Knights are in fact working for Nippon Tech or the Guildmaster.



War's End: Map 18

Resistance Headquarters



Variables

If the Storm Knight group is getting annihilated by the vampyre gang (two or more player characters die), the resistance charges in early, this time arriving like the cavalry in the nick of time.

Cut To ...

Once the Storm Knights are ready to go see Sidon, cut to Scene Three, "Sins of the Mother ..."

SCENE THREE: Sins of the Mother

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights are taken to see Sidon, who explains precisely what the resistance is up against. The scene ends with a techno-demon attack, giving the Storm Knights a chance to kick some major Tharkoldu tail.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

At the intersection of Interstates 10 and 110 stands an innocuous looking building, a typical Core Earth structure converted to Tharkoldu axioms. The three story building seems to be made of smooth black plastic, with no obvious windows. The building's roof sports a billboard advertising "Demon-Pruf Home Security Systems."

Once they are sure that they were not followed, the resistance takes you round back, to a freight elevator. The elevator descends into the basement, where a gang of a dozen Race soldiers and resistance gangers waits. Once the gangers who accompany you vouch for your identities, everyone relaxes slightly, and you are welcomed.

The basement of this building is practically one huge room. Par-



Rick Schmitz

titions are set up, giving groups of resistance members privacy for their various activities. You catch sight of a med area, a cyberlegger, weaponsmiths, hackers, codebreakers, worktables covered with electronics, everything you can possibly imagine a resistance cell needing. The entire place is buzzing with activity.

From behind one partition, a swarthy young man in torn jeans and a leather jacket emerges and

walks towards you. His eyes glow green as he looks your group up and down. After a few seconds, he gives a curt nod and walks back to the cubicle, signalling for you to follow, but not the other resistance personnel.

In the cubicle, the young man sits and looks you over. "Word has it that you're here for the big End of the World rumble. I'm Sidon, son of your enemy," he says smiling.



The Action

Sidon goes on to explain that he and the resistance members are planning an assault on Jezrael. If the Storm Knights are willing to fight beside them, they'll be offered what hospitality the resistance can afford. If they choose not to, they'll be thrown out and warned to stay away.

Sidon is more than willing to answer any questions that don't betray the resistance in any way. The offspring of Jezrael has been having visions lately, and he knows where the fight is to be destined to occur: Devil's Playground, an area 193 kilometers east-northeast of Los Angeles.

Sidon and his allies will be departing in the morning. Those Storm Knights who are joining up will be welcome to rest up and eat before the coming battle.

Sidon

DEXTERITY 14

Acrobatics 16, dodge 19, energy weapons 20, fire combat 18, flight 17, heavy weapons 18, maneuver 19, melee weapons 18, unarmed combat 20

STRENGTH 18 (21 in left arm)

Climbing 23, lifting 22

TOUGHNESS 17 (22) (27 with armor)

PERCEPTION 20

Air vehicles 25, camouflage 22, cyberdeck ops 24, demolitions 24, find 26, first aid 24, land vehicles 27, scholar (Tharkold realm lore) 25, scholar (tactics) 26, tracking 25, trick 26

MIND 20

Cybertech 24, psychology 23, science (computers) 25, streetwise 27, survival 27, test 28, willpower 28

CHARISMA 18

Charm 20, persuasion 22, taunt 25

SPIRIT 20

Faith (the Way) 26, focus 26, intimidation 25, reality (Tharkold) 26

Possibilities: 40

Miracles: Sidon has access to all Way of the Race miracles.

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+2/20; wings, speed value 14

Equipment: Pe-Ain chaingun, damage value 24, ammo 12; Res-14 laser pistol, damage value 25, ammo 50; monofilament dagger, damage value STR+4/22; Chod/5 Skirmisher armor, value TOU+5/27; cyberdeck. Cyberware: Nanocord, nervejack, eye package (right eye): Dangerscan, Darksight, Sharpsight, ear package (left ear): Bugsweeper, Soundcatcher, Truthear, Poison-snooper, Nanodoc, interdermal armor, value TOU+5/22), Tendon Augmenter, Cyberarm 3, Slashers, damage value STR+4/25, 3-slot Chipholder. Cyber value: 18 (reduced by *psychology*)

Warrior's Peace Resistance (24)

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 13, fire combat 16, land vehicles 14, melee weapons 14, running 15, stealth 16, unarmed combat 17

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10 (13 with armor)

PERCEPTION 11

Find 13, first aid 14, scholar (Tharkold realm lore) 13, tracking 14, trick 12

MIND 9

Streetwise 11, survival 10, test 11, willpower 12

CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 12, taunt 14

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 13, reality (Tharkold) 12

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: Res-14 laser pistol, damage value 25, ammo 50; Kap/3 Mesh woven into denim jackets, armor value TOU+3/13; monofilament dagger, damage value STR+4/14. Cyberware: Nanocord, Nervejack, Farsight eye, Darksight eye, Soundcatcher ear, Endorphin Boosters. Cyber value: 12

Race Soldiers (12)

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 14, energy weapons 15, fire combat 15, heavy weapons 13, melee weapons 14, running 13, stealth 13

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 12, lifting 12

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 9

Find 10, first aid 11, trick 10

MIND 8

Survival 10

CHARISMA 7

SPIRIT 9

Faith (the Way of the Race) 10, intimidation 11, reality (Tharkold) 11

Possibilities: 4

Equipment: 11/Alph pistol, damage value 16, ammo 21; Mim-8/Bith Smart-Gun assault rifle, damage value 22, ammo 30; monofilament dagger, damage value STR+4/14; Chod/8 power armor, value TOU+8/19. Cyberware: Nervejack, eye package: Darksight, Hidehunter, Killseeker. Cyber value: 6

Description: These soldiers from the Tharkold cosm are sympathetic to the LA resistance, and have sworn their loyalty to Sidon and his attempts to rid Earth of Jezrael and her ilk. They are rather rough and abrupt, but they are tough, loyal fighters without an ounce of fear.

Raid!

During the night, a wing of techno-demons smashes into the building and breaks through to the cellar, attacking everyone in sight. The Tharkoldu found this locale courtesy of the homing bug planted on at least one of the Storm Knights. The attack comes at midnight.

Techno-Demons (36)

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 14, energy weapons 14, fire combat 12, flight 15 (18), melee weapons 12 (15 defense), missile weapons 12, stealth 11,



unarmed combat 15 (18)

STRENGTH 16

Lifting 18

TOUGHNESS 16 (21)

PERCEPTION 10

Alteration magic 13, divination magic 13, find 14 (17), first aid 11, land vehicles 12, tracking 14, trick 12

MIND 11

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

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 11, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 16, intimidation 16, reality (Tharkold) 14

Possibilities: 8

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

Spells: *Monkey form*

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+2/18; talons, damage value STR+3/19; wings, speed value 10; wingstrike damage value STR+7/23

Equipment: Res-14/Alph lasers,

damage value 25, ammo 50. Cyberware: Nanocord, Wind-sniffer, Balance Wires, Interdermal Plate, armor value TOU+5/21, Cybertalons, damage value STR+5/21, Cyberwings, Lifecyber, 3-slot Chipholder. Cyber value: 16

Two of the raiding Tharkoldu have a miniature receiver that enabled them to pick up the trail bug's signal. The techno-demons' mission is a simple one: search for and destroy the Storm Knights and as many of the resistance as possible, and return with a confirmed sighting of Sidon.

When the battle is over, Sidon will find the bug on the Storm Knight. The Knight can expect to be questioned at length about just where his loyalties lie.

Flags

A *Suspicion* or a *Mistaken Identity* card played means that Sidon and/or the resistance views that Storm Knight as a possible traitor. That

Storm Knight will be watched very closely, with any innocent move possibly being misconstrued as a traitorous one. A *Romance* card means the female Storm Knight has fallen in love with Sidon and will follow him anywhere. Sidon, naturally, is not interested in romance right now.

Cut To ...

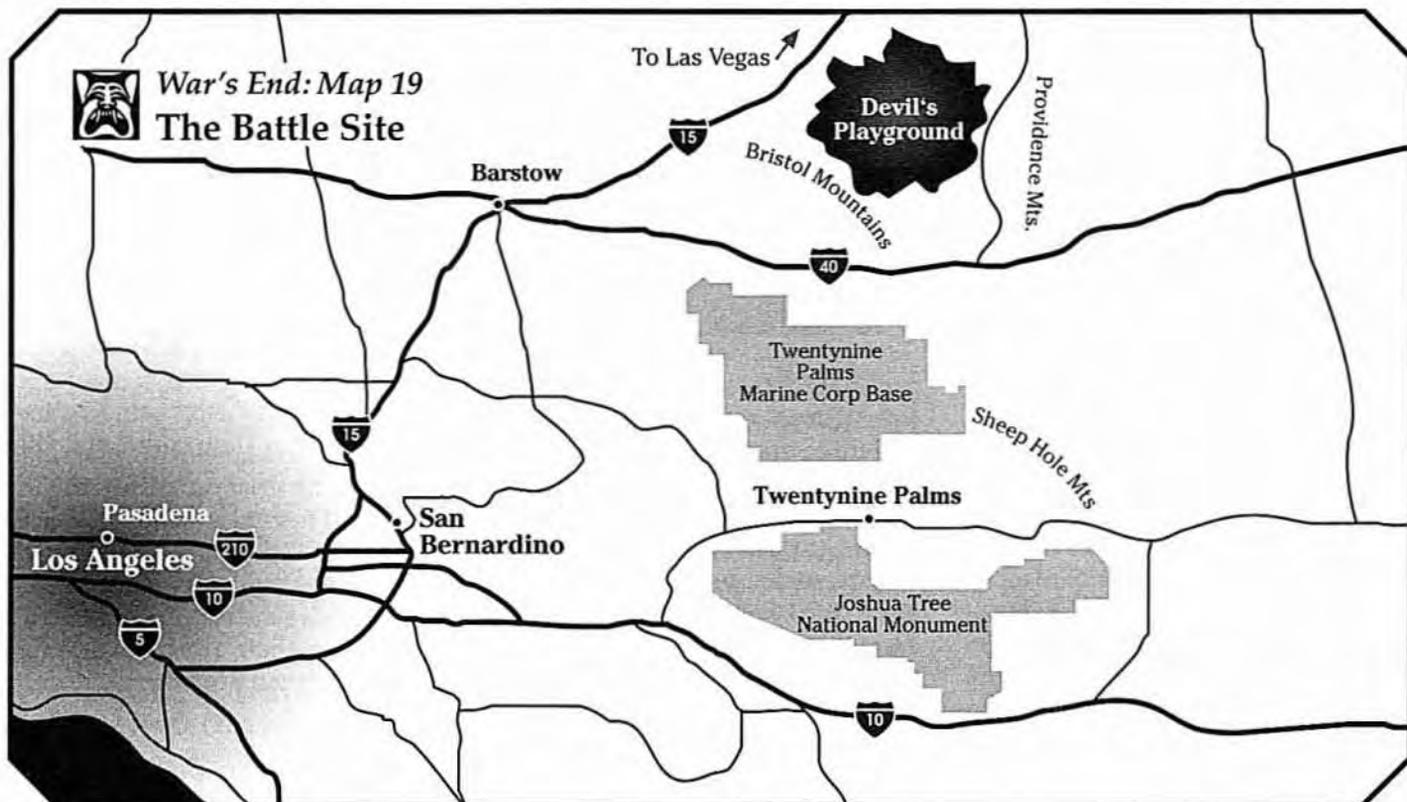
Once the fight is over, cut to Scene Four, "The Devil's Playground."

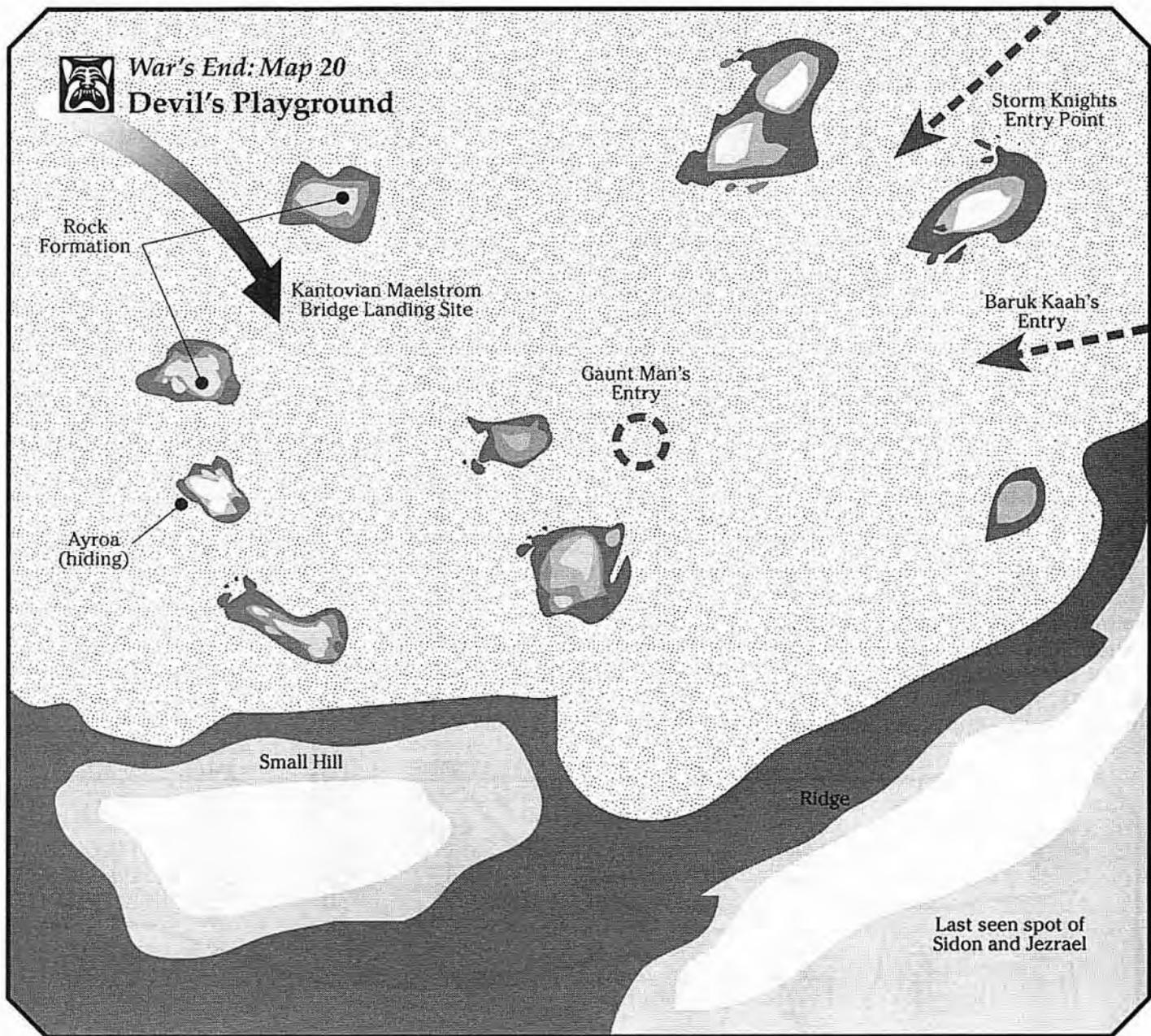
SCENE FOUR: The Devil's Playground

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights arrive at the site, only to find that others have arrived as well. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Taking Interstate 10 East, then





Interstate 15 North, three hours of driving finds you at the place called the Devil's Playground in the Mojave Desert. The Tharkoldu axiom wash has changed this terrain into a mixture of desert and rugged rock formations of almost alien shape. You survey the desolation as the wind moans through the rocks, and you can't help but wonder if this is what the entire Earth will look like if the Gaunt Man wins.

Your force consists of your

group of Storm Knights, Sidon, four dozen resistance members, and three dozen Race soldiers. The increased numbers do little to bolster your courage.

The ground suddenly shifts and erupts, rocks shatter and crumble, spewing forth a host of gospog. They are all around you, closing in eagerly for kill. You can feel the power of Fear radiating off them, tipping you off as to exactly who sent them.

The Action

The Gaunt Man has dimthreaded a horde of gospog to herald his arrival. They have been sent with orders to kill everyone they see. The only gospog type the Gaunt Man didn't send is the Fourth Planting, since their function is radically different from the other four types.

Gospog of the First Planting (72)



Reality: Orrorsh

DEXTERITY 8

Energy weapons 9, fire combat 9, melee weapons 9, missile weapons 9, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 9

TOUGHNESS 8 (10)

PERCEPTION 7

Find 10, tracking 8

MIND 7

Willpower 10

CHARISMA 7

SPIRIT 7

Possibility Potential: None

Natural Tools: Armored hide, TOU+2/10

Equipment: Broadsword, damage value STR+6/14

Gospog of the Second Planting (Caretakers) (36)

Reality: Orrorsh

DEXTERITY 10

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

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10 (12)

PERCEPTION 9

Tracking 13, trick 12

MIND 8

Test 12, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 12

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 10, intimidation 12

Possibility Potential: None

Natural Tools: Armored hide, value TOU+2/12; fangs, damage value STR+2/12

Equipment: Blunderbuss, damage value 18, ammo 1

Powers: Attack Form Resistance (energy weapons)

Corruption Value: 14

Fear Rating: 1/2

Perseverance DN: 10

Weakness: Holy Symbol

True Death: Shot and killed with own blunderbuss

Gospog of the Third Planting (Weretigers) (18)

Reality: Orrorsh

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 15, maneuver 20, running 16, stealth 15, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 14

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 10

Tracking 13

MIND 7

Test (18), willpower 15

CHARISMA 5

Taunt (12)

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 16, intimidation 14

Possibility Potential: None

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/17; teeth, damage value STR+10/24

Powers: Shapechange, Magical Resistance, Attack Form Resistance (fire)

Corruption Value: 22

Fear Rating: 1

Perseverance DN: 14

True Death: Killed only in animal form

Gospog of the Fifth Planting (wraith) (one per Storm Knight)

Reality: Orrorsh

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 16, stealth 21, unarmed combat 19

STRENGTH 15

Climbing 18

TOUGHNESS 21

PERCEPTION 12

Find 14, tracking 15, trick 16

MIND 8

Test (15), willpower 20

CHARISMA 10

Taunt 17

SPIRIT 14

Faith (Orrorshan Evil) 20, intimidation 17

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+4/19

Powers: Paralyzing Touch, Armor Defeating Attack, Resistance to Normal Weapons, Attack Form Resistance (energy weapons), Attack Form Resistance (magical physical damage)

Corruption Value: 33

Fear Rating: 2

Perseverance DN: 19

True Death: Occult ritual

Description: The Gaunt Man has allocated one wraith per Storm Knight. The wraith softly speaks the intended victim's name over and over as it attacks.

The Coming of the Gaunt Man

Once the last gospog falls, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The sound of the last attack echoes through the desert as the last opponent hits the gritty sand in a spray of foul-smelling viscera and plant matter. Gasping to catch your breaths, you survey the scene; the desert is littered with scores of corpses, the brown desert sand stained the sick green of spilled gospog blood.

A light breeze puffs out of nowhere, blowing sand onto the remains. The breeze becomes a wind, pushing sand faster and faster over the ruined gospog, until each piece sinks into the desert. In a matter of seconds, all trace of the battle is gone.

The wind doesn't die down; on the contrary, it roars into a huge funnel, whirling in front of your battle-weary group. Suddenly, blue and red bolts of jagged lightning crackle up and down the vortex, as a humanoid form begins to coalesce inside the funnel.

With a loud explosion of red and blue light, the vortex terminates. Your blood turns to ice when you see what stands within. It is the Gaunt Man, his cane in hand, his eyes glowing red. He holds forth one hand, conjuring several globes, some red, some blue, orbiting each other rapidly like mad planets orbiting an erratic sun. He throws his head back and utters a laugh that echoes across the Mojave.



"Greetings, stormers, and others ... I am pleased to see that you have made it this far. It is good to have witnesses to the end of all things. The power of the combined Darkness Devices now rests securely within my form.

"It is time to end this war, stormers. It is time for me to take my rightful place as Torg. How fitting that those who for the last half decade have thwarted the

plans of the various Possibility Raiders, are now here to witness my ultimate triumph!

"Your world now dies screaming, stormers. And so shall you!"

With a wave of his hand, gospog erupt from the sand. The precise same number of gospog you had already dispatched!

As gamemaster, you can call for a Perseverance Check now against a difficulty number of 27.

The Gaunt Man

DEXTERITY 17

Dodge 22, maneuver 18, melee weapons 20, prestidigitation 20, unarmed combat 18

STRENGTH 21

TOUGHNESS 28

PERCEPTION 29

Evidence analysis 31, find 30, language 32, scholar (eternity shards) 32, scholar (the Nameless One) 33, trick 31

MIND 28

Test 32, occult 34, willpower 34

CHARISMA 22

Charm 26, persuasion 27, taunt 23

SPIRIT 28

Faith (Orrorsh) 37, intimidation 38, reality (Orrorsh) 35

Possibilities: 225

Equipment: Cane with small living head, damage value STR+4/25, can cause Fear in a 30 meter radius around the Gaunt Man when the High Lord raises it.

Powers: Attack Form Resistance (from physical, mental, and spiritual damage from mental attacks), Regeneration, Resistance To Normal Weapons, Silence.

Corruption Value: 61

Fear Rating: 5

Perseverance DN: 27

Weakness: His absorption of the Darkness Devices has allowed the Gaunt Man to overcome his weakness to all eternity shards save the sword of Apeiros, to which he has a severe weakness.

True Death: Slain by the sword of Apeiros.

Flags

An *Alertness* card can tip off the Storm Knight that the initial fight with the gospog is just a warm-up for something much worse. Aside from that, there is little that any *Subplot* or *Connection* is going to do for the group.



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Cut To ...

Once the gospog rise again, cut to Scene Five, "Interlopers."

SCENE FIVE: Interlopers!

The Situation

Dramatic. The Kantovian maelstrom bridge drops down in the desert, and Ayroa leads her Dire Wolves in a last ditch attempt to invade Earth and gain revenge against the Gaunt Man.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you stand in the middle of the battlefield, dark clouds gather overhead, like a major thunderstorm forming in fast-motion. The vast gospog host, the ones that you went through all that trouble to kill, stand patiently, obediently, awaiting the last High Lord's word to attack.

Suddenly, a hole opens in the clouds and a vast structure descends from the sky. It almost resembles the Living Land's maelstrom bridge, but not quite; it seems to be a mixture of rock, mud, and tough plant fiber, wreathed in small flames.

Coming down the bridge is a vast horde of humanoid wolves, fangs bared. A ripple moves through the invading army, and you realize that what you are seeing is the effect of scores of shapechangers shifting into more feral forms. There can be little doubt of what you see: the cosm of Kantovia, the Gaunt Man's first conquest, is invading Earth!

The Action

Leading the Dire Wolves is a woman the characters might rec-



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ognize as the Guildmaster (if they have ever encountered that worthy). In fact, she is Ayroa, current High Lord of Kantovia. For details on her history, see the sidebar, "The Company of Wolves."

Ayroa pays no attention to the Storm Knights or their allies. Instead, she turns on the Gaunt Man, blazing hatred in her eyes. The Orrorshan High Lord seems unimpressed — he mimes snapping his cane over his knee and instantly

the Kantovian bridge shatters, sending hundreds of Dire Wolves plunging to their deaths.

But the Gaunt Man isn't finished. With a wave of his hand, another Dire Wolf appears, larger and stronger than any other the Knights have seen. This is Kurst.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Once my servant, always my servant," the Gaunt Man chuckles. The High Lord nods his head



The Company of Wolves

Ayroa was the mate of Kurst, High Lord of Kantovia, centuries ago when the Gaunt Man arrived. The Gaunt Man insinuated himself into the court of the shapechangers, laying the groundwork for his first conquest. Ayroa betrayed Kurst to the future Orrorshan High Lord and was betrayed in turn, exiled to a pocket dimension with her surviving followers. The Kantovian

Darkness Device was defeated in battle by Heketon and fled to Earth.

Later, as Huitzilopochtli, that Device would have an effect on Meso-American cultures, and later attempt to establish a realm based on the Aztec Empire. Defeated, it was dispatched back to Kantovia, where it made contact with Ayroa. Suspicious that such a thing had happened, the Gaunt Man sent Uthorion to that cosm to investi-

gate. He was killed there by Dire Wolves.

Ayroa dimthreaded to Earth and took on the guise of the Guildmaster, funding Storm Knight and stormer operations while she gauged the strengths and weaknesses of the High Lords and bided her time to strike. And that time is now ...

For further information, see the novel *Interview With Evil*.

The Gaunt Manifesto

"Ever since I began this war, I have had to suffer numerous setbacks thanks to the efforts of your pathetic kind. Storm Knights, indeed! You are all nothing but a handful of dust particles whose pathetic existences somehow allowed you to catch an iota of the power that I have!

"It was no better for me that I managed to surround myself with associates who were either incompetent, foolish, insane, or traitorous! Thratchen the opportunistic demon! Kranod, the idiot who bungled the original Tharkold invasion of Russia! Uthorion,

that ox-brained moron! And all of the others, not a worthy ally among them!

"And you, you pathetic stormers, daring to pit your puny might against mine! No matter how often you met defeat, you continued to oppose me! Like a hydra, I kill one and two more spring up to take his place.

"It is over, stormers. Finished. No more will you interfere, no more will you spread hope, no more will you use the power of possibilities against me! You precede your cosm in death by mere moments!"

chasing after them like a big, malevolent, sadistic cat, toying with them. If there are one or two Storm Knights who do have the taint of corruption (or who for the entire adventure thus far have been completely wretched and uncooperative), kill them. It would hardly be dramatic if there were not one or two demonstrations of the Gaunt Man's power, right?

During the entire cat and mouse chase, the Storm Knights will run afoul of gospog and/or Dire Wolves. This is especially true if the party scatters in different directions. Throw several opponents at small groups of Storm Knights ... keep them busy as the conflict erupts around them.

As the Gaunt Man chases and harries the party, he vents his spleen in true villainous fashion by uttering a monologue during his attack. Although it is presented in one large chunk, it need not be read straight through — feel free to read a portion of it as the Gaunt Man closes in on some Knights, then cut away to characters fighting Dire Wolves, then back to the Gaunt Man and his dialogue. When you are reading it, do your best to keep any generic game talk away from the speech. Do the Gaunt

and Kurst jerks towards Ayroa like a marionette controlled by a madman. "Growl for me, Kurst, like you did in the old days, then kill that idiot spouse of yours once and for all."

At this point, the battle breaks out in earnest. Kurst attacks Ayroa, the two meeting in mid-air, all slashing claws and flashing fangs. The

LA resistance members and Race soldiers open fire on the advancing gospog. And watching over it all stands the Gaunt Man, thoroughly enjoying the carnage.

Naturally, the Gaunt Man could utterly crush the entire party in a handful of rounds, but that's hardly fair, dramatic or fun. Instead, the Gaunt Man will play with the party,





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Man's dialogue as you're rolling the dice for his attack, consulting the results chart, etc. Unnerve the players. This is the Gaunt Man, master of fear, their ultimate enemy.

Dire Wolves (200) (Wolf Form)

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 14, maneuver 15, running 14, stealth 17, swimming 15, unarmed combat 17

STRENGTH 13

Climbing 16

TOUGHNESS 13 (15)

PERCEPTION 9

Trick 12, tracking 16

MIND 8

Survival 10

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 10

SPIRIT 12

Intimidation 15, reality (Kantovia) 13 shapeshifting 14

Possibilities: 4

Natural Tools: Hide, armor value TOU+2/15; claws, damage value

STR+3/16; teeth, damage value STR+5/18

Description: In true Kantovian Survival of the Fittest fashion, the only Dire Wolves to successfully survive in their new mini-cosm were those who were possibility-rated, hence the entire force's having possibilities to use. Each Dire Wolf is fanatically loyal to Ayroa.

Ayroa (Dire Wolf Form)

DEXTERITY 18

Dodge 20, maneuver 22, running 24, stealth 23, swimming 20, unarmed combat 25

STRENGTH 18

Climbing 20, lifting 21

TOUGHNESS 20

PERCEPTION 12

Trick 14, tracking 18

MIND 10

Survival 17, willpower 17

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion (14), taunt 14

SPIRIT 14

Intimidation 20, reality

(Kantovia) 22, shapeshifting 22

Possibilities: 50

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/21; teeth, damage value STR+5/23

Description: Ayroa is in her Dire Wolf form, spurning her human form in order to deliver the most possible pain to Kurst. She realizes that this Kantovian invasion of hers is a last stab at getting a foothold on Earth. Casting aside her Guildmaster cover, she is singlemindedly intent on killing Kurst, neutralizing the Gaunt Man, and establishing her realm here.

Kurst (Dire Wolf Form)

DEXTERITY 20

Dodge 22, maneuver 24, running 26, stealth 25, swimming 22, unarmed combat 27

STRENGTH 20

Climbing 22, lifting 23

TOUGHNESS 22

PERCEPTION 13

Trick 15, tracking 19





Rick Schmitz

them. Neither of the combatants will be all that pleased to see them, but they might tip the scales one way or another. While the Knights are better off if Kurst wins, either Dire Wolf will prove to be an ally against the Gaunt Man, at least temporarily.

At some point during the battle, call for a *Perception* or *find* total. On a 12, the characters will notice that Sidon is missing.

Cut To ...

Eventually, inevitably, the Gaunt Man will corner the player characters. At this point, cut to Scene Six, "Mother and Child Reunion."

SCENE SIX: Mother And Child Reunion

The Situation

Dramatic. As the Gaunt Man is about to finish off the Storm Knights, they are inadvertently given a little more time by the sudden appearance of Jezrael.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The High Lord who would be Torg looks at you, his dry skin stretched tight on his skull, his lips curled back in a perverse smile of triumph. Behind him, a confused bloody massacre continues, with *gospog*, *Dire Wolves*, and *Tharkoldu* resistance members locked in frantic battle. The air stinks of putrefying flesh, blood and cordite, as screams and swears punctuate the fight. The roiling storm clouds overhead have plunged the battlefield into an odd, disquieting twilight. Occasionally, a stroke of red lightning gives the scene a bloody crimson cast.

MIND 9

Survival 16, willpower 16

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion (13), taunt 13

SPIRIT 15

Intimidation 21, reality (Orrorsh)

23, shapeshifting 23

Possibilities: 50

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/23; teeth, damage value STR+5/25

Description: Given the choice, Kurst would be fighting on the

side of the Storm Knights. But right now, he is under the mental control of the Gaunt Man. It's possible that, once Ayroa is subdued or killed, the Gaunt Man might relax his control as he turns his attention elsewhere and Kurst can add his power to that of the Knights.

Keep in mind that the characters may choose to intervene in the battle between Kurst and Ayroa. If they choose to, by all means let



The Gaunt Man raises his walking stick at your group and whispers in a sepulchral voice, "Farewell, stormers."

Suddenly, a maniacal shriek splits the air, and two figures, locked in a deathly embrace, lunge from out of nowhere. Intent on their fight, they crash into the Gaunt Man, actually upsetting his footing. Your eyes manage to make out the combatants: it's Sidon battling his mother Jezrael in hand to hand combat. Obviously, Sidon had laid low, conserving his strength for the fight he knew he was destined to have. Each combatant has their cybernetic slicers extended, each is taking out huge chunks of flesh from the other.

A wing of techno-demons, obviously Jezrael's escorts, move forward. Many of them fly off to embroil themselves in the massive melee. The tougher Tharkoldu move to help their High Lord, only to be frozen in their tracks by an icy, defiant glare from their mistress. "Stay back!" she snarls to them. "If you want to make yourselves useful, rip apart my son's friends. That should unsettle him!"

The Action

Sidon wants this fight to be private as well, but when has that ever stopped Storm Knights before? The battle has moved, separating the Gaunt Man from the Knights and giving them a little breathing room. They have to fight their way through some Alpha techno-demons, and give them a reasonable amount of time to do that. Then, if they want to join the attack on Jezrael, let them.

Jezrael

DEXTERITY 18

Acrobatics 20, dodge 25, energy weapons 26, fire combat 21, heavy weapons 20, maneuver 22, melee weapons 20, unarmed

combat 23

STRENGTH 21 (Right Arm: 23)

Climbing 24, lifting 24

TOUGHNESS 19 (25)

PERCEPTION 23

Air vehicles 28, divination magic 24, find 28, first aid 24, land vehicles 24, tracking 27, trick 25

MIND 24

Conjuration magic 26, science 27, survival 28, test 27, willpower 30

CHARISMA 19

Persuasion 24, taunt 26

SPIRIT 22

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 29, focus 24, intimidation 25, pain weapon 25, reality (Tharkold) 31

Possibilities: 60

Equipment: Chod/10Power Armor, TOU+10/29; plasma jets, Nu-15-Ket CAW mounted in left arm, plasma shells, damage value 25; plasma axe, damage value STR+8/31. Cyberware: Nanocord, two Nervejacks, cybervisual package (left eye): Dangerscan, Darksight, Hidehunter, Killseeker; natural implant (right eye): Sharpsight; poison snooper; interdermal armor, armor value TOU+6/25; bodymax, STR+3; right cyberarm, STR+2/23, equipped with monofilament-edged slicers, damage value STR+5/28; hand-mount Res-14 laser pistol with Smartgun link, damage value 25, ammo 50; Cyber value: 15 (reduced through *psychology*).

Alpha Techno-Demons (one per Storm Knight)

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 15, energy weapons 15, fire combat 14, flight 16(19), melee weapons 16 (19 defense), missile weapons 15, stealth 15, unarmed combat 16 (19)

STRENGTH 17

Lifting 20

TOUGHNESS 17(23)

PERCEPTION 12

Alteration magic 16, divination magic 16, find 15, first aid 13, land vehicles 14, tracking 16, trick 14

MIND 13

Apportation magic 17, conjuration magic 17, test 17, willpower 18

CHARISMA 11

Persuasion 13, taunt 15

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 18, pain weapon 16, intimidation 18, reality (Tharkold) 15

Possibilities: 10

Arcane Knowledges: Folk 4, entity 4, inanimate forces 4, living forces 4

Spells: Alpha stetch, foeblaster, foe stetch, horrifying arrival, monkey form, pav crush, pop

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+2/19; non-cybered talons, damage value STR+3/20; alpha sense (*Perception* total); wing strike, damage value STR+7/24, speed value 10

Equipment: Pain baton (*pain weapon*+3/ damage value 19). Cyberware: Nanocord, balance wires (+3 to skills using agility, noted in parentheses above), interdermal plate (TOU+6/23), enhanced cybertalons (STR+5/22), cyberwings (+3 push to *flight*), backlash buffer 2 (magic skill total +2 for purposes of backlash only), LifeCyber, 3 slot chipholder. Cyber value: 16

Techno-Demons (48)

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 14, energy weapons 14, fire combat 12, flight 15 (18), melee weapons 12 (15 defense), missile weapons 12, stealth 11, unarmed combat 15 (18)

STRENGTH 16

Lifting 18

TOUGHNESS 16 (21)

PERCEPTION 10

Alteration magic 13, divination magic 13, find 14 (17), first aid 11, land vehicles 12, tracking 14, trick 12

MIND 11

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



CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 11, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 16, intimidation 16, reality (Tharkold) 14

Possibilities: 8**Arcane Knowledges:** *Folk 3, entity 3, inanimate forces 2, living forces 2***Spells:** *Monkey form***Natural Tools:** Teeth, damage value STR+2/18; talons, damage value STR+3/19; wings, speed value 10; wingstrike damage value STR+7/23**Equipment:** Res-14/Alph lasers, damage value 25, ammo 50. **Cyberware:** Nanocord, Windsniffer, Balance Wires, Interdermal Plate, armor value TOU+5/21, Cybertalons, damage value STR+5/21, Cyberwings, Lificyber, 3-slot Chipholder. Cyber value: 16

Two of the raiding Tharkoldu have a miniature receiver that enabled them to pick up the trail bug's signal. The techno-demons' mission is a simple one: search for and destroy the Storm Knights and as many of the resistance as possible, and return with a confirmed sighting of Sidon.

When the battle is over, Sidon will find the bug on the Storm Knight. The Knight can expect to be questioned at length about just where his loyalties lie. These techno-demons are involved in the battle, but not engaged with the Knights.

If the characters do not intervene in the Jezrael-Sidon battle, Sidon attempts to move the fight by flying off. Jezrael sinks her slicers into his flesh and goes along for the ride. Her added weight throws Sidon out of control and they plunge toward a mesa in the distance. When they hit, there is a huge flash of light and the two of them are gone. (Later investigation will reveal no traces of either one of them.)

Cut To ...

Once the Jezrael-Sidon aspect of the battle is resolved, cut to Scene Seven, "The Lizard and the Avatar."

SCENE SEVEN: The Lizard and the Avatar

The Situation

Dramatic. Kaah, the Gaunt Man's cataclysmic trigger, appears on the scene, followed by Jeff Mills, the avatar of Apeiros. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The Gaunt Man watches the huge battle with the delighted countenance of a child watching electric trains chugging on their appointed circuits. The sands of the Devil's Playground are saturated with blood. Tharkoldu, gopog, Dire Wolves, and LA resistance fighters continue their struggle, all sides suffering horrendous casualties.

Suddenly, from behind you, there comes a disturbingly familiar, sibilant voice. "Ssstormerss! Good! I have a bloodlust only you can sssate!" You turn and find yourself staring into the face of Kaah, the denizen of all realities, armed and ready for battle.

The Action

Kaah has arrived, led here by mad dreams planted in his already shattered mind by the Gaunt Man. The Orrorshan High Lord intends on using Kaah as his trigger — the edeinos would cause the detonation that would shake the San Andreas fault and provide the Gaunt Man with the physical energy he needs to become Torg.

Kaah is the only being to have stepped into the subterranean Nexus, and as a result, is an amalgam of all cosms. His body is now the source of a tremendous amount of potential energy, just waiting to be released. In more ways than one, Kaah is a walking time bomb.

Kaah harbors a psychotic hatred for Storm Knights, who he blames for the collapse of his realm. He will attack the Knights immediately upon seeing them.

Kaah

DEXTERITY 21

Beast riding 28, biotech weapons 25, dodge 24, energy weapons 25, fire combat 25, flight 22, lockpicking 22, long jumping 23, maneuver 28, martial arts 22, melee weapons 29, missile weapons 29, running 23, stealth 27, swimming 23, unarmed combat 28

STRENGTH 24

Climbing 26, lifting 27

TOUGHNESS 23**PERCEPTION 18**

Alteration magic 19, cyberdeck ops 19, divination magic 19, evidence analysis 20, find 28, first aid 19, land vehicles 19, language 19, psionic manipulation 19, scholar (Living Land realm lore) 27, tracking 22, trick 30

MIND 18

Apportation magic 19, business 19, conjuration magic 19, cybertech 19, hypnotism 19, meditation 19, occult 20, psionic resistance 19, psychology 19, science (biotech) 19, science (computers) 19, streetwise 19, survival 23, test 27, weird science 19, willpower 24

CHARISMA 19

Persuasion 22, taunt 25

SPIRIT 25

Corruption 27, faith (Keta Kalles) 33, focus 31, intimidation 33, reality (all) 41

Possibilities: 100**Corruption Value:** 25**Fear Rating:** 4



Rick Schmitz

Powers: Fire attack (damage value 34) (comes from his eyes), animal control (snakes and lizards), blur form.

Perseverance DN: 18

Weakness: Touched by an eternity shard (severe)

True Death: Slain by a sword with a metal handle and pommel, wooden blade, and magically enchanted.

Pulp Power: Sonic scream (value 24)

Equipment: .45 automatic, damage value 16, ammo 6; katana, damage value STR+7/21; Res-14 laser, damage value 25, ammo 50; binoculars; I/R goggles; lockpick tools; backpack; Marseilles/Hermes cyberdeck; medkit. Cyberware: NeuraCal, J-Jack, optical package (CSI LED, Belle©View Low Light, BelleSee TeleSight), cybercorder ear, cybershroud, cyberwings +2, nanodoc, slashers, damage value STR+4/23. Cyber value: 23

Inclination: Evil

Arcane Knowledges: *Metal 1, living forces 4, plant 4*

Spells: *Steel shower, charm person, heal, sixth sense, plant shackles*

Miracles: Any miracle from any cosm

Alignment: Coar

Psionic Powers: *Psychic Screen, Awareness, Life Sense, Psi Detection, Beacon, Domination, Psychic Assault*

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/27; teeth, damage value STR+2/26; tail, damage value STR+1/25

Additional Notes: Kaah can use a Possibility to remove only two packets of damage rather than three. His CSI LED gives him data readouts, his Belle-View Low Light amplifies existing light, and his TeleSight gives him a +3 to find at range. He can record sounds with his cyber ear. Kaah's cybershroud shields his cyberware from a Modspotter, plus gives him a +5 vs electronic detection and a +2 defense vs smart weaponry. His

Nanodoc makes self-repairs with a *medicine* skill value of 20. All factors and bonuses have already been applied to Kaah's skills.

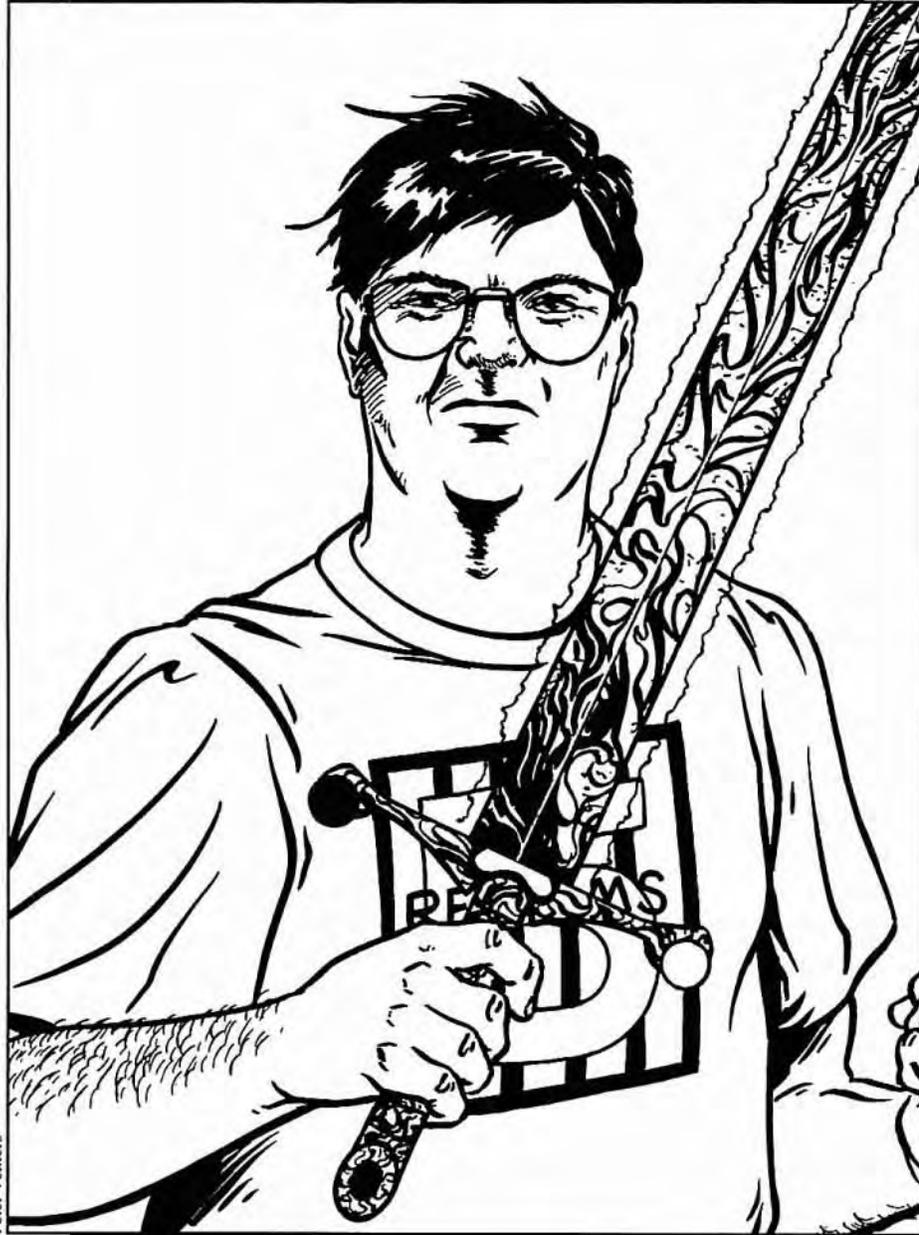
Since his transformation, Kaah has managed to learn how to use all of the diverse talents that he has been "blessed" with. He has become a very formidable opponent, and is most anxious to demonstrate this to the Storm Knights.

Let Kaah and the Knights bloody each other for a while, but don't let them kill him if it can be avoided. At some point, the Gaunt Man should summon Kaah to his side and then send him into the middle of the battlefield, there to await his new master's signal.

Enter the Avatar

It's time for yet another new arrival. A bright light suddenly flares beside the Knights, similar to the one that teleported them





quake along the San Andreas fault. He'll use that to absorb the physical energy he needs to become Torg. If he succeeds, millions will die and then millions more when he ascends."

If one of the Knights points out that they are nowhere near the fault, the Avatar will explain impatiently that nevertheless, this is the ideal point for a detonation. The Gaunt Man is playing his own version of geophysical dominos.

The Avatar hefts the sword. "This is the only thing that can stop the Gaunt Man ... and I'm the only one who can stop him. You must go and stop Kaah. He's the explosive — the Orrorshan is the detonator. Stop one and you stop the other. Now go!"

The Action

Kaah must be stopped once and for all. That is the sole object of this scene. Naturally, the Storm Knights will have to wade into the bloody melee, which may mean more attacks against the above-listed combatants. Gamemasters should use their best judgment; if the Storm Knights still aren't bloodied much, throw more combatants at them.

Cut To ...

This time, let the Knights kill or subdue Kaah if they're able. Once they do — or once you feel too much time has gone by — cut to Scene Eight.

SCENE EIGHT: In Final Battle

The Situation

Dramatic. The Gaunt Man strikes down Jeff Mills with a fatal blow,

early in the adventure. Read aloud or paraphrase:

A being walks forth from the light. At first, he looks like a young man clad in jeans and a Five Realms shirt. Then he begins to shift back and forth between this form and one of pure energy. In his hand he holds a glowing sword made of red and blue stone. He looks at you after a moment and says, "I hope I'm in time. Some of

you have known this body as Jeff Mills — I used that guise, the *Five Realms* game and later my powers to try and slip you information without drawing the Gaunt Man's attention. But it's too late for games now. So now you see me for what I truly am: the Avatar of Apeiros in this cosm, he who embodies creation.

"You have to listen. The Gaunt Man is planning to use Kaah as the trigger for a massive earth-



and the Storm Knights need to grab the sword and use it against the would-be Torg.

The characters may have downed Kaah at this point. If they haven't, the edeinos goes stiff and glassy-eyed as the events of the "read aloud" begin. Either way, he is out of the fight.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You hear a sound like the rushing of wind, followed by a terrible scream. Then you suddenly realize silence has descended on the Devil's Playground.

You look around, and realize that the battle is over. In every direction, dead bodies lie stretched out. Flies have begun gathering on the corpses. Gospog, Dire Wolves, techno-demons, Race soldiers, and LA Resistance, all are dead. A single first-planting gospog, missing the right half of its face and its right arm, staggers amidst the fallen, too stupid to know that it should be dead too. A solitary techno-demon, its wings broken, tries in vain to fly, and only succeeds in making its wounds even worse, hastening death.

You see the Gaunt Man grinning madly, and at his feet, the burning corpse of "Jeff Mills," the Avatar of Apeiros. A short distance away from the body, about six meters from where you stand, lies the sword that the Avatar was trying to use. Looking at the Gaunt Man, it becomes apparent that his foe never landed a blow on the High Lord. As you stare at the sword, it fades from view.

The Gaunt Man looks at you and smiles. "And so it comes down once again to you, stormers, as it always has, as it always must. I commend you for actually surviving long enough to face me ... but all good things must come to an end."

The Action

If Kaah is not dead, the Gaunt Man snaps his fingers at this point and the edeinos collapses to the ground. A swirling mass of green vapor appears in the Gaunt Man's hand. Read aloud or paraphrase:

"All this death, stormers, all this glorious death. This is the combined life energy — physical energy, if you will — of all those who died on this field. Add to that the energies of this pitiful Avatar, and poor, bedeviled Kaah ... and I have much of what I need. But not quite all ..."

In the air above the Gaunt Man, the dark figure of Ardinay appears. She is not there to attack — merely to observe. On the horizon, the clouds begin to shift madly, and for only a moment, it seems as if a horrible, formless face is looking into this world. This is the Nameless One, preparing for the feast that must surely follow the Gaunt Man's ascension.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"I offer you a choice, stormers, as I have done in the past: crawl to me, beg for the mercy that is mine to give, and your end will be swift. Refuse, and you will live to see your world die around you. You will be the last living things remaining on this barren planet ... and I will make you relive your failure again, and again, and again. I give you a moment — this cosm's last moment — to make your decision."

Looks pretty hopeless, doesn't it? Battle-weary Storm Knights against a High Lord growing more powerful by the moment, and the only weapon capable of stopping him lost from view. But all is not lost ...

In that moment of grace given by the Gaunt Man, the characters hear the voice of the Avatar in their minds.

"Creation can never truly be destroyed, Storm Knights. Though my physical shell is dead, and my spirit quickly dying, I will live on in you. Seek, and you shall find my blade, for only the wicked are blind."

The characters suddenly feel renewed strength. Any and all damage they have taken is healed (of course, dead Knights stay dead) and they receive a temporary +5 to their *Dexterity* and +10 to their *Strength*, courtesy of the dying Avatar. A *Perception* or *find* total of 15 reveals the sword to be just where it was seen last, but cloaked from the sight of the Gaunt Man.

The Storm Knights still have a problem — how to get the sword. Once they have it, they'll be close enough to engage the Gaunt Man in battle. Some sort of distraction is needed, and it's up to the players what kind (might be a good time to use those *Martyr* cards). Figure at a run it will only take the characters a round to grab the sword.

Once the sword is grasped, it shifts to a shape familiar with the wielder's reality:

Aysle: The weapon becomes a beautifully crafted elven sword.

Core Earth: The weapon becomes a large hunting knife.

Cyberpapacy: The weapon grafts itself onto the wielder's hand, and becomes a set of three blades, as if it were cybernetic slashers.

Land Below/Land Above: The weapon becomes a spear.

Living Land: The weapon turns into a spear with living leaves poking out of the shaft.

Nile Empire: The weapon becomes a scimitar.

Nippon Tech: The weapon turns into a katana.

Orrorsh: The weapon turns into a cavalry saber.

Space Gods: The weapon becomes a sword of pulsating light.

Tharkold: The weapon grafts





Peter Venters



itself onto the wielder's wrist, turning into a cyber-cestus.

The Sword of Apeiros

Cosm: All

Possibilities: Thousands

Tapping Difficulty: 19

Purpose: To slay the Chosen of the Nameless One

Powers: The sword is the only weapon that can bring true death to the Gaunt Man.

Group Power: *Gate*

Restrictions: None

Damage Value: STR+10/35

The Storm Knight with the weapon must get four wounds on the Gaunt Man. Due to the Apeiros-charged nature of this weapon, the Gaunt Man will be unable to use Possibilities to heal himself. He will, however, have his cane reshape itself into a sword (damage value STR+6/27) and attempt to parry the Knights' attacks.

Death of the Gaunt Man

If and when the Gaunt Man is slain by the sword of Apeiros, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As the weapon of Apeiros plunges into the Gaunt Man, a huge blast of red and blue energy knocks everyone down onto the blood-soaked sand. The weapon remains lodged in the High Lord's chest.

Pure white light erupts from the Gaunt Man's eyesockets as his jaw drops lower than any normal person would think possible,

and a shrill death shriek leaves his mouth, the sound carrying for miles. Vainly, the Gaunt Man's now shrivelling fingers try to pull the weapon out, but it is to no avail. You shield your eyes as the High Lord's body is wracked by a series of increasingly powerful explosions, each one sending a jolt of agony through his frame.

Finally, one last explosion erupts, blasting the Gaunt Man to the four winds, and unleashing a massive rippling pulse of possibility energy. You shield your eyes as the energy wave keeps expanding outward, and something deep within you realizes that the wave will cover the entire earth. Fearfully, you wonder what effect it will have.

As your eyes adjust to the blinding light, the very skies themselves appear to rend open. Something dark and seductive roils within the breach. A huge chunk of black matter flies up from the explosion's ground zero, and hurls itself into the hole. You have this queasy feeling that you shouldn't look into the breach, at least, not if you want to keep your sanity intact.

Have each Storm Knight generate a *Mind* or *willpower* total. They'll need a 12 to avoid looking into the breach. If they do look, they see the following:

Within the tear in space, you see a face that is both more and less than human ... something made of shadows and mist and a deeper darkness than any you've ever seen. You feel a tidal wave of rage and frustration pass over you as the entity begins to recede and

the wound in the sky begins to heal. This, you know, was the Nameless One ... stopped just short of devouring this cosm.

There is one more scene to be played. Above them, the dark goddess that is Ardinay transforms back to the Lady of the Houses of Aysle, Pella Ardinay, and plummets to Earth. The sands shift to cushion her body as she lands, and though not unhurt, she is alive. The death of the Gaunt Man and the retreat of the Nameless One have purged her of her taint of corruption. In saving the cosm, the Knights have saved a soul as well.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Now, at last, the battlefield is at peace. The sword is no more; the Gaunt Man is no more. It takes several long moments for you to realize the import of what has just happened: after five long years, the war is over.

And Earth has won.

Adventure Awards

All Storm Knights who survived the adventure should receive 25 Possibilities. The character who actually killed the Gaunt Man should receive an additional five.

What Now?

The Possibility Wars may be over ... but the adventure need not end there. Check out the Appendix at the end of this book for some ideas of where you and your *Torg* characters can go from here.





Appendix A

What Lies Beyond?



Corey Jones sipped her coffee and stared out the large windows of Tavern on the Green. Just six months ago,

New York's Central Park had been a gospog field of massive proportions. No longer.

The reality wave that swept across Earth had succeeded in driving the remnants of the invading realities away, but there was still much work to be done. Over 2.5 billion people had died as a result of the war; trillions of dollars worth of damage had been done to cities around the world. An almost frantic desire to rebuild had gripped the populace, but it still might take decades to undo all that had been done in a mere five years by the Possibility Raiders.

Corey sighed as she took another sip of coffee. She had gone back to her old job at International Cable News, and shook her head as she thought about all the hype that had surrounded the end of the war: parades, books, movies, and virtually every other kind of merchandising possible. Even the piece of music ICN used to introduce its reports on the Possibility Wars had been released as a single.

Her thoughts shifted to her friends. Kayla, the Ayslish barbarian, Daremo, the ninja from Nippon Tech, and Marcel Berge of Magna Verita had returned to their home cosms, courtesy of the Nexus of reality. They had joined a massive migration of non-Core Earthers who used the rapidly healing reality interface to get back home.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of that final battle had been the re-

turn of Major Havoc. Presumed dead in battle with the Scarlet Asp, he had revealed that an antidote taken prior to the fight had saved him from her venom. She had perished in the fall into the Tharkoldu reactor pit, but Havoc's superb reflexes had allowed him to survive.

Havoc was gone now, too. He had not even kissed her goodbye — simply smiled, saluted, and stepped into the gem-like gate that would bring him back to Terra. Wu Han would be waiting, he was certain, to resume their decades-old battle. She was certain of one thing, she would not miss that Oriental despot, any more than she would miss ...

"Corey Jones, your soul is mine."
The Gaunt Man.

Corey leapt out of her chair, reaching into her pocketbook by reflex and pulling out a ... compact. Fortunately, the man facing her was not the High Lord of Orrorsh, but a young fellow in jeans, dress shirt, and black suit coat.

"Who ... who the hell are you? That was *not* funny!" she snapped.

The young man looked chagrined, and ran a hand through his sandy brown hair. "Aw, Corey ... you don't recognize me?"

Corey stared at the young man a bit longer, then her eyes suddenly went wide with recognition. "Doc?" she whispered, a smile coming to her lips.

"Just plain ol' Jeff Lambert now," he smiled back, as he leaned down and kissed her cheek.

"My god, I almost didn't recognize you," she marvelled. "You look so different without a gun in your hand ... and a full head of hair





that isn't dyed!"

Jeff chuckled. "Yeah, thanks, I guess! So, how's it goin', Corey?"

"Oh, the same. Wars, famines, floods ... our own reality seems to have plenty of disasters of its own. And I'm back to covering them. How about you? Not much of a career as a ganger anymore, huh?"

"You've got that right. Once UCLA was back up to speed, I went back into med school. I'm studying ways of researching cybernetics, trying to bring them to our tech level, using them as prosthetics. It's a tough job, let me tell you. But I'm on break now." Jeff paused and seemed to stare at an imaginary point in the room, then looked back at the newswoman. "So ... are you happy?"

The question caught Corey off-guard. "Happy? Well ... yes, I'd say so ... career's going well ... I have a nice condo ... met a guy, Mitch, he's an assistant director. He's nice."

Jeff nodded. "Uh huh. And boring, too, I'll bet."

Corey tried to look insulted, but couldn't carry it off. "He is not boring. He's just ... normal. And nice."

"Yeah," Jeff snorted. "And boring." As Corey shook her head, Jeff leaned closer. "Yo, Corey. I have something to show you!" He rested his right elbow on the table, and moved his hand so only she could see it. He closed his eyes for a millisecond, and a trio of monofilament blades slipped out of his knuckles.

Corey's eyes went wide. "How did you —" she began, then shook her head. "And that's how you imitated the Gaunt Man's voice! A cybernetic speech synthesizer!"

"Bingo," smirked Jeff, using the voice of the Gaunt Man again.

"Wait," Corey narrowed her eyes. "All the other realities are gone. Sure, there are a few hardpoints left here and there, but that's all."

"Right!" Jeff's eyes gleamed. "But Corey ... I went back."

"What??" Corey said, shocked.

Jeff raised his finger to his lips. "Shh. Yeah. I went to Tharkold, and found that I could recharge my reality for another three months, and so on," he grinned. Jeff's eyes suddenly had a faraway look in them. "But I didn't only go to Tharkold, Corey. I saw other places too. Places we never even dreamed existed."

"How, Jeff? How did you get past the guards?" The United Nations had taken over security at the Nexus to prevent any armed incursions of Earth through it.

"The UN's as effective at securing the Nexus as they are at keeping peace in the Balkans."

"So what does this have to do with me?" Corey asked finally.

"I'm going down again," Jeff announced in an excited whisper. "Come with me! We can go to a thousand places. Maybe we can even visit Kayla or Daremo!"

"I don't know, Jeff," Corey sighed. "I have responsibilities, a boyfriend ... bills to pay, a car that needs tuning up ..." Corey stopped as if something just dawned on her. She reached into her purse, took care of the check, and rose. "Gotta find a phone," she murmured. "Got two phone calls to make."

"Oh?" Jeff smiled. "To whom?"

"The first to Mitch, to give him the 'we can always be friends' spiel," she grinned. "The second one to work, announcing that I'm taking two months of my vacation time, starting today!"

"Yes! Attagirl, Corey!" Jeff gave a soft cheer. "You won't regret this! It will be just like old times!"

"Then let's get started before I change my mind," she said, smiling.

"Fat chance of that," Jeff replied. "Once you step through the Nexus ... you won't ever want to come back."



All Good Wars Must Come To an End

The fiction piece above is veteran *Torg* author John Terra's view of what life is like after the Possibility Wars. But it's not the only possible outcome — assuming the Storm Knights win, there are many post-war settings in which they might find themselves.

For one thing, it might not even be post-war. Perhaps, in your campaign, the defeat of the Gaunt Man does not spell the end of the Possibility Wars. Or maybe your party only managed to prevent the Gaunt Man's becoming Torg, but didn't kill him. In that case, you may want to keep fighting the war, and that is possible. Omni Gaming Products has licensed first-edition *Torg* from West End and is planning to keep producing *Infiniverse* and Possibility Wars products. For more information, write:

Omni Gaming Products
1452 Michele Drive
Palatine, IL 60067

It's also possible that the characters will decide to carry the war to other cosms, or simply explore other worlds. The "home cosm"

information presented in the various *Torg* sourcebooks can be of great use in this kind of campaign — it's also a great way to bring your *Torg* characters into one or more of West End's new *MasterBook* worlds. As of this writing, these include:

The World of Bloodshadows
The World of Indiana Jones
The World of Tank Girl
The World of Species
The World of Necroscope

See below for a *Torg-MasterBook* conversion.

But This War Had Such Promise ... !

So the war is over, but your *Torg* party doesn't want to go gently into that goodnight. And they want to know what Earth is like in the wake of their victory. Listed below are three possibilities:

Post-Scenario #1: This is essentially the world as defined by John Terra above. The invading realities have been driven from Earth by the global reality storm. Some of the invaders have left, some remain hidden, making use of the Nexus to come and go from their home cosms. Why are they remain-

ing? Well, there's a little matter of Core Earth's Darkness Device, which has never been recovered (remember, the Device in *High Lord of Earth* was actually from Kantovia). Getting a hold of that would allow one to reign without rivals in the cosm.

The setting for this is essentially a world rebuilding, very much like post-World War II Europe. It puts the emphasis more on intrigue than on big battles and such, but remember that elements of the other two scenarios presented here can also be incorporated into it.

Post-Scenario #2: Fans of the *Mad Max* films, *A Boy and His Dog* and *The World of Tank Girl* will like this one. The global reality storm was a cataclysm of epic proportions. Entire cities were levelled. Food, water and energy are in short supply. Some hardpoints and pockets of non-Core Earth reality remain in this post-holocaust world, but no one knows just where they are. Storm Knights remain the best defense against invaders from pocket dimensions, etc., but must also band together for mutual survival. The benefit of this scenario is that it essentially wipes the game board clean, so gamemasters don't have to deal with any aspects of *Torg* they don't like. The downside is that too many adventures can wind up being just about staying alive, with the characters' actions hampered by constant searches for water and ammunition.

Post-Scenario #3: This is possibly the most interesting and fully realized of the three. The global reality storm was a disaster, but not as devastating a one as in #2. Its effects include the burning out of all stelae in place on Earth and disruption of communication systems other than those at really short-range. (This has the effect of rendering the characters blind and deaf to what is going on in the rest of the world — if they want to find



out what post-war Cairo is like, they'll have to go there.)

Although the stelae are gone, the realities remain, burned into the land where they were for five years. Most likely, these are mixed zones or dominant zones — regardless, England is still Aysle, France the Cyberpapacy, for purposes of axiom levels. The High Lords are gone or out of power, their armies dissolved, but many of their minions remain. Possibility energy has been restored to the people, so everyone has at least a little, but many, many people died in that last transformation.

The Nexus remains tainted. Those areas that don't have a reality burned in are prey to constantly shifting ones (and the last minute Kantovian invasion means their reality is thrown into the mix, too). Characters with especially strong *reality* skills can temporarily lock a place into their own reality, but only eternity shards placed along the borders can completely stabilize it. The search for shards is a big part of this setting.

Although they're not the only ones with possibilities, the Storm Knights are still the best at handling shifting realities. As they wander the world, trying to determine what has happened to different areas, they encounter all sorts of strange sights. Former servants of High Lords have established fiefdoms of their own realities, bounded by shards. And, as in #1, there is the search for the Core Earth Darkness Device.

Another effect of the global storm is that access to pocket dimensions is far easier, with gates to be found in many places on Earth. This gives the characters a lot more options, should they tire of adventuring on this world. This scenario emphasizes exploration and the unknown as well as high adventure and constantly changing settings.



Torg–MasterBook Conversion

MasterBook is the new universal rules system developed by West End in 1994, and with the exception of *Star Wars* and *Paranoia*, all

of West End's games will be under this system. If you want to bring your *Torg* party into a *MasterBook* world or continue to play *Torg* with the new rules, what follows is a very brief conversion. Note that *MasterBook* has its roots in the *Torg* system, so many of the concepts —





the Value Chart, the bonus table, etc. — will already be familiar to *Torg* players. For a complete explanation of the new system, gamemasters are encouraged to purchase the *MasterBook*.

Converting Characters

Character conversion is really quite simple. Where *Torg* has seven character attributes, *MasterBook* has eight, including one derived attribute, Toughness. Here are the steps to converting your *Torg* character's stats to *MasterBook*:

1.) Take your *Torg* character's Dexterity value. This will be the value for your *MasterBook* character's Agility and Dexterity.

2) Take your *Torg* character's Toughness value. This will be the Endurance value of your *MasterBook* character.

3) The Strength value transfers directly from one to the other. Now find your *MasterBook* character's

Toughness using the following chart. Add the two sets of Toughness Points together to find out what the character's Toughness is:

Strength	Toughness Points
10 to 13	4
7 to 9	3
5 to 6	2

Endurance	Toughness Points
12 to 13	8
9 to 11	7
7 to 8	6
5 to 6	5

The *Torg* character's Perception becomes *MasterBook* Intellect; Mind transfers to Mind; Spirit value becomes the Confidence value; and Charisma transfers to Charisma.

4) Now it's time to think about your skills. Note that some skills can be found under different attributes in *MasterBook* than they were in *Torg*, or under slightly different names. To transfer your skills, simply take the number of adds your *Torg* character had in a skill

and transfer it to the appropriate skill in *MasterBook*. For your convenience, the basic *MasterBook* skill list is reprinted here. Where names have changed, the *Torg* name is given in parentheses after the *MasterBook* name.

Background Generation

Players converting established *Torg* characters to *MasterBook* need not make use of the Background Advantages and Compensations system in *MasterBook* if they don't choose to. Essentially, it's a way of codifying and assigning values to character traits that probably already exist as part of the *Torg* character's background. In this case, players should view the system as optional.

Possibilities Vs. Life Points

MasterBook's Life Points work in much the same way as Possibilities. Their damage reduction powers are the same; they can be used to counter expenditures by other players or the gamemaster; and they can be used to gain roll-agains. In addition, Life Points can be used to reduce the success of an opponent's interaction attempt by one level.

There are a few important differences, namely that every character (with the exception of most animals and completely mindless beings) has at least one Life Point; starting characters have five Life Points; and there is a cap. No character may have more than 10 Life Points — excess Life Points must be converted into Skill Points, to be used in improving the character's skill levels or buying new skills.

Playing *Torg* With *MasterBook* Rules

If you are continuing your *Torg* campaign with the *MasterBook* rules,



MasterBook Skill List

AGILITY

Acrobatics
 Beast Riding*
 Climbing
 Dodge
 Flight*
 Long Jumping
 Maneuver
 Martial Arts
 Mechanical Maneuver*†
 Melee Combat (*Melee Weapons*)
 Melee Parry†
 Running
 Stealth
 Swimming
 Unarmed Combat
 Unarmed Parry†

CONFIDENCE

Alteration (*Alteration Magic*)*
 Cont
 Faith*
 Interrogation†
 Intimidation
 Streetwise
 Survival*
 Willpower

DEXTERITY

Energy Weapons
 Fire Combat
 Gunnery*†
 Heavy Energy Weapons*†
 Heavy Weapons*
 Lock Picking
 Missile Weapons*
 Prestidigitation
 Thrown Weapons†
 Vehicle Piloting (*Air Vehicles, Land Vehicles, Water Vehicles, Space Vehicles*)*

MIND

Artist*
 Business
 Conjunction (*Conjunction Magic*)*
 Hypnotism
 Language*
 Medicine
 Scholar*

ENDURANCE

Resist Shock

STRENGTH

Lifting

CHARISMA

Charm
 Disguise
 Persuasion
 Summoning*†
 Taunt

INTELLECT

Apportation (*Apportation Magic*)*
 Camouflage
 Computer Ops
 Deduction
 Demolitions
 Divination (*Divination Magic*)*
 Forgery
 First Aid
 Linguistics†
 Navigation
 Perception (*Evidence Analysis, Find*)†
 Psionic Manipulation
 Science*
 Super-Science†
 Teaching*†
 Tracking
 Trick

*Macroskill; must select a focus

Boldface: Skill cannot be used *untrained*. † Skill new with *MasterBook*.

you should keep the following things in mind:

- *MasterBook* uses a 2d10 system, as opposed to the 1d20 system in use in *Torg*. If you wish, you may continue using the 20-sided die, as it allows for more "heroic" rolls which is part of the tone of *Torg*.
- *Torg* card play rules — number of cards handed out, etc. — remain in effect.
- Use of a Possibility/Life Point cap in *Torg* is optional, but recommended. One of problems cited by *Torg* gamemasters in the past is characters who have 75-100 Possibilities and are impossible to stop.

This should ease that problem.

- The *reality* skill will continue to work the same in the *Torg* setting.

Playing MasterBook With Torg Characters

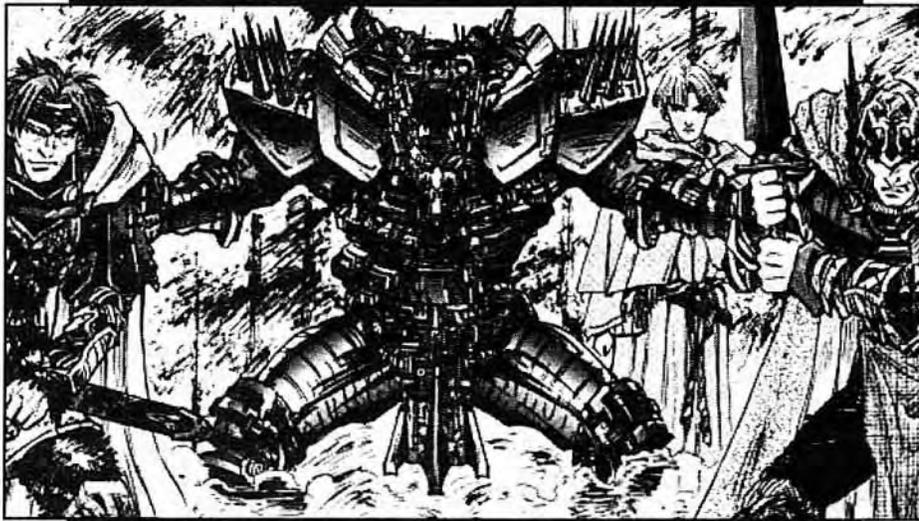
If you are taking your *Torg* party into a *MasterBook* world, the following should be kept in mind:

- You may continue using the 1d20 system if you want to, providing player characters and gamemaster characters alike get to use it.
- Card play rules for individual universes (i.e., you get fewer cards

to start with in *The World of Bloodshadows* than in *The World of Indiana Jones*) supercede those of *Torg*.

- New characters created need not have tag skills, though they are not allowed to have more than three initial adds in a skill. But they are not *required* to have three adds in any one skill.
- The *reality* skill does not exist in any of the *MasterBook* worlds at present. If characters wish, they may shift *reality* skill adds into the *willpower* skill.
- The Life Point cap is in place in *MasterBook* worlds and should be





used. If you aren't going to use it, the number of Life Points for gamemaster characters should be increased to reflect this and keep the game in balance.

Final Words

From the beginning, *Torg* has been a labor of love. It was an extremely successful effort at multi-genre gaming, which introduced such innovative concepts as an interactive newsletter and card play in roleplaying. Its rule system was strong enough to spawn the *Shatterzone* system and now *MasterBook*. Its adventures and sourcebooks were exciting and creative and reflected the enthusiasm of the writers and editors who worked on them.

But from the beginning, designer Greg Gorden intended the Possibility Wars to last only five years. Those five years have passed, and

for West End, it is time to bring the saga to a close. We felt we owed it to the devoted fans of the game to give the story an ending, one that would tie up some loose ends, solve a few mysteries, and leave the door open for future adventuring.

Will there be a second edition of *Torg*? With the *MasterBook* system in place and as successful as it has been, it's possible. *Torg*, from the beginning, has been about listening to the voices of the players — and if that voice says they want a new edition and a continuation of the story, West End will do its best to listen.

As this last paragraph is written, and we prepare to take down the stela maps from the "Torg Situation Room," it feels more and more like we are saying goodbye to an old friend. For all the highs and the lows, the Possibility Wars were an experience for everyone involved that will never be dupli-

cated ... or forgotten.

Finally, we'd like to thank all of those who helped make the *Torg* experience possible: Sandy Addison, Eric Aldrich, Paul Balsamo, Jim Bambra, Grant Boucher, Jeff Brown, Steven Brown, Tim Brown, Kevin Carroll, Jonatha Ariadne Caspian, Gary Corbin, Stephen Crane, Greg Detwiler, Dr. George Exner, Greg Farshtey, Patrick Flanagan, Matt Forbeck, Dr. Michael Fortner, Greg Gorden, Dan Greenberg, Rebecca Hall, Shane Lacy Hensley, Richard Hawran, Paul Hume, Phil Inkpen, Robin Jaskow, Douglas Kaufman, Christopher Kubasik, Mike Lansdaal, Jamie Lewandowski, Frank Lind, James Long, Robert Maxwell, Shawn Metcalf, Scott Mitchell, Paul Murphy, Genichi Nishio, Mike Nystul, Jim Ogle, Bill Olmesdahl, Daniel Scott Palter, Denise D. Palter, Brian Sean Perry, Lou Prosperi, Brian Schomburg, Ron Seiden, Bill Slavicsek, Bill Smith, Lester Smith, Shari Smith, Caroline Spector, Ed Stark, Kevin Stein, Lisa Stevens, G.D. Swick, John Terra, Lawrence Trainer, C.J. Tramontana, Chris Weeks, John White, Stephan Wieck, Stewart Wieck, Jennifer Williams, and Ray Winner. We also pay our respects to two good friends and contributors to this game universe, Nigel Findley and Martin Wixted, whose passing is mourned by the entire industry. Finally, we'd also like to thank all of those who contributed to our *Creatures* books, and most of all, the fans whose love for and participation in *Torg* made it the unique and special experience it was.





Appendix B

Arachnidia

The domed world of Arachnidia is connected to Core Earth by a series of tunnels, most of which come up in the northeastern or north-central US. Like the rest of the pocket dimensions, this area survived the end of the Possibility Wars. The best known entrance is in Upper Michigan, through which the ustanah emerged in the early days of the war. The ustanah are the insectoid beings whose defeat on Takta Ker marked the first conquest of former Living Land High Lord Baruk Kaah.

Arachnidia is said to a rich source of eternity shards, possibly as the result of an extracosmic invasion at some point in its history.

Axioms and World Laws

Arachnidia has the same axioms as the Land Below in general, including Merretika (*Magic 12, Social 8, Spiritual 17, Technological 10*). However, the ustanah have no mages to take advantage of the first axiom, while their Stone Age society lags behind the realm's Tech potential. Spiritual power is their primary strength; the realm has a higher *Spiritual* axiom than any of the realities that invaded Earth, save Takta Ker/the Living Land. This turned the original edeinos/ustanah war into a bitter religious crusade that made the fighting even more vicious. Now this domed world is the last stronghold of the ustanah and their religion. (To illustrate this, any non-ustanah miracles performed in Arachnidia will be a one-case contradiction.)

Ustanah society is a cross between an anthill and a city state of Classical times on Earth. As with spiritual power, the Social axiom has been pressed to the limit here. The queen of the hive directs all activities, which mostly consist of gathering food. Each ustanah adult gathers his or her own food; any surplus gleaned during the day is placed into a communal storage building. Among other things, this food supports the troops of the ustanah standing army, which defend the hunters and gatherers from the domed world's more dangerous wildlife.

The Law of Cooperation

From the unanimity of onslaught similar to that of an outraged hive of bees, the ustanah have evolved battle tactics that take full advantage of the principles of cooperation. The Law of Cooperation demonstrates this quite well. Whenever two or more characters are working together toward a common goal, such as fighting the same individual enemy or using their combined *Strength* totals to lift a heavy object, they receive a +1 to their efforts.

There is, however, only a single modifier for characters making a single combined effort, as in the lifting example given above or the *heavy weapons* skill roll for the operators a single crew-served weapon.





Masahide Seva

The Law of the Hive

If Arachnidia is the last refuge of the ustanah race in the cosmverse, then the hive city is their last refuge in the domed world. Consequently, any characters foolhardy enough to attack the hive will discover the hard way that hives are fiercely defended. Characters defending a hive receive a +2 bonus to actions taken to protect it. This includes use of the *dodge*, *maneuver*, *melee combat*, *mechanical maneuver*, *missile weapons*, *unarmed combat*, *fire combat*, *willpower* and *intimidation* skills and — for those who have it — the *reality* skill as well. The rare ustanah shaman may also use it for their *faith* rolls when casting combat miracles.

The Domed World

Arachnidia is similar in appearance to Merretika and many other domed worlds, with terrain fea-

tures ranging from snow-capped mountains to deserts and tropical jungles. The major difference is this: the animal life of the realm, including the only native intelligent race, consists entirely of invertebrates, chiefly arthropods. Due to the high Magic axiom, greatly enlarged versions of normal Earth invertebrates are both possible and common, providing Storm Knight explorers with a series of deadly threats.

Aside from native wildlife, Arachnidia is also to many huge invertebrates from other realities. Many of these are creatures who fled the chaos in the final days of the Living Land, such as the bonkthra, karkata, langatok, meksobat, nosktret, quartek, restra, ropraj, shestike, torada and voskat. However, other immigrants include giant desert beetles from the Nile Empire, the kraken of Aysle, and the werligar from the tunnels of the Land Below. Also present are

“wild” versions of the wasps ridden by the Darooni of Merretika. There are also plenty of giant insects, spiders, scorpions, crustaceans, worms, etc. to give Arachnidia its own distinctive flavor as regards fauna.

Besides the kraken, an Earth sea monster that inhabits Arachnidia is the tullimonstreum, an enormous marine worm that is the source of many “sea serpent” stories. This prehistoric creature dates back to Paleozoic times, but only its young have been fossilized, causing severe underestimation of the true size of the “tully monster.” Oddly shaped for a worm, it has a thick body with a noticeable head and neck, paddlelike flippers up front and large triangular tail to the rear. It has a mouth full of sharp teeth.

Overall, it looks like a Mesozoic plesiosaur, due to its similar lifestyle and convergent evolution. It is 30 meters in length. (Note that all stats given in this section are produced using the *MasterBook* system.)

Tullimonstreum

AGILITY 10
Swimming 10, unarmed combat 11
DEXTERITY 3
ENDURANCE 18
STRENGTH 20
TOUGHNESS 19 (23)
INTELLECT 7
Perception 8
MIND 6
CONFIDENCE 7
Intimidation (11), survival 10
CHARISMA 3
Charm (25), persuasion (25), taunt (25)
Life Points: None
Natural Tools: Hide, armor value TOU+4/23; teeth, damage value STR+5/25; flippers, speed value 13

Ustanah Civilization

As noted above, the ustanah have refined hive life to the point where



it is roughly equivalent to that of a human city state. These insects are well-disciplined, all working together for the good of the community. As such, they have no need for laws — the army is there to defend against outside threats alone.

Ustanah military organization is based on multiples of four, with the smallest unit the “appendage” of four warriors, corresponding with the four limbs of an ustanah or human. One of these four is in charge of all the others. These units may work in pairs for hunting or gathering missions. In war, though, the “quartet” or 16 warriors is almost invariably the smallest unit to operate independently.

In pitched battle, quartets advance in four rows, each row taking turns using its club/atlatl to hurl a volley of sharpened crystal discs at the enemy. These discs may also be hurled by hand at close quarters if there is no time for precise firing ranks to operate. Ustanah believe in firing off all their ammo at once, then marching in close quarters, wielding their atlatl devices such as clubs and fighting with mandibles and pincers as the situation dictates.

A favorite tactic is to have one or two appendages engage an equal number of enemies in combat, while the remaining appendages in the quartet swing around the flanks for a double envelopment. Single flanking attacks are also possible if the enemy is numerous enough, and if the odds are equal, or against the ustanah, there is nothing the warriors can do but stand where they are and fight.

In battle, ustanah units communicate with each other by means of various pheromones released by their scent glands. This works in Arachnidia, where the only winds are gentle breezes, but has led to disaster elsewhere. A strong wind, whether natural or created by magic, will reduce their army to a

collection of separate quartets operating out of step with each other. When weather permits their system to work, they operate like military automatons, reminding at least one scholar who saw them in battle of the Roman legions and their similar small-unit tactics.

Current estimates are that there are at least 10,000 ustanah in Arachnidia, within 4000 of them in the standing army. In times of emergency, virtually all citizens are required to serve; they already know what units they serve in and with what comrades. Thus, “reserve” units are just as skilled in battle as the “professionals,” though whether this is due to instinct or practice is, as yet unknown. Both male and female ustanah serve in the military.

Of the entire ustanah race, only the queen herself and perhaps a dozen scholars are exempt from serving in the ranks. The queen does organize the warriors, as her pheromones have a range of a half of kilometer — the pheromones of all other ustanah barely make it 100 meters — making her the equivalent of a general.

Standard Ustanah Warrior

Reality: Arachnidia

AGILITY 10

Dodge 11, climbing 11, melee combat 13, melee parry 11, missile weapons 11, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 10

ENDURANCE 12

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 12 (14)

INTELLECT 8

Camouflage 10, first aid 10, perception 9, tracking 10, trick 9

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 3–5

Natural Tools: Chitin, armor value TOU+2/14; pincers, damage value STR+2/12; mandibles, dam-

age value STR+3/13; club-atlatl, damage value STR+4/14; crystal discs, damage value STR+3/13, range 3-10/40/100

Lands Below

As noted in Appendix C, the Land Below and the various domed worlds survived the conclusion of the Possibility Wars relatively unscathed. In fact, access to these areas is now far easier than it was before, due to the proliferation of extradimensional gates on Earth. Below are in-depth looks at the tunnels beneath two of the former realms:

Tharkold

The tunnels beneath Los Angeles are a curious combination of natural and artificial conditions. While the caverns themselves are natural, with dark damp spaces of irregular shape, they are lit by dim fluorescent and neon lights. The light they give off is sufficient for explorers to pick their way about, but it leaves plenty of areas in shadow, particularly in the corners, where anything can lurk.

In addition, some areas are sealed off by solid steel doors which, when blasted or battered through, seem to conceal nothing worth the effort of putting them here. Since the doors, like everything else, appeared with the initial Tharkold axiom wash, their true purpose — if any — may never be known.

Entrances to this portion of the Land Below can be found in basements, underground parking garages and subway tunnels throughout L.A., San Diego, Tijuana, and Berlin.

Many of the creatures of this realm are the wilder inhabitants of the cosm itself: bochdogs, direwings, necros, quons, swarmrats, etc. In addition, some ghuls and rogue Tharkoldu use the more out-



of-way caverns as lairs to rest in between attacks on the human population. There are also rumors of rogue gospog—those Tharkoldu gospog who defeated the demons who tried to use the Law of Domination on them—roaming the tunnels. They attack anything they encounter.

The following is an example of a creature unique to the caverns:

Cyberpede

One of the primary predators of Tharkold's Land Below is the cyberpede, a glittering golden centipede five meters in length. It attacks prey by using its mandibles, which appear to be of brass. Its golden exoskeleton provides decent armor protection, and it has a number of natural cybersystems. One of its eyes is a Dangerscan cybereye; the other is a Darksight. It has a pair of antennae which it waves incessantly; they serve as substitute olfactory organs, with the left and right ones serving as equivalents to the Windhunter and Windsniffer, respectively. Finally, it has a special adrenal gland which is a natural Adrenal Booster gland, giving the creature its benefits once every full day (24 hours).

Cyberpede

AGILITY 11 (14)

Dodge 14, maneuver 12, stealth 13, unarmed combat 17

DEXTERITY 11 (14)

ENDURANCE 12

STRENGTH 12 (15)

TOUGHNESS 12 (16)

INTELLECT 14

Perception 16, tracking 17, trick (16)

MIND 6 (15)

CONFIDENCE 6

Intimidation 17, survival: subterranean 17

CHARISMA 3

Charm (28), persuasion (22), taunt (26)

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Cybermandibles, damage value STR+5/17; metallic exoskeleton, armor value TOU+4/16; Darksight eye, see normally in darkness; Dangerscan eye, +3 to *perception* when seeking hidden dangers; Windhunter antenna, +3 to *tracking* by smell; Windsniffer antenna, +3 to *perception* using smell; Adrenal Booster gland, +3 to Agility, Dexterity and Strength (works once per day)

Akasha

In the Andes Mountains, from southernmost Ecuador to southern Chile, and extending west into Bolivia, Brazil and Argentina, is a massive and fantastic tunnel network. There have been rumors that such existed before the arrival of the Space Gods (no doubt constructed by the Machu Coar during the Akashans' first visit to Earth), and is filled with incredible treasures.

Still, almost no one bothered to look into the matter until the start of the Possibility Wars, when it became apparent that a bizarre and unique system of caverns had sprung into existence under each of the invading realms. Now exploring Storm Knight teams have uncovered the true nature of these caverns.

The tunnels beneath Akasha are clearly man-made in nature, being long, straight square galleries whose ceilings range in height from two to seven meters, with an average width of three meters. These hallways lead to rooms both large and small. Some are empty, while others boast parts of a large horde of plaques, statues and other items of copper, silver and gold.

Contacts among the Space Gods (prior to their departure) claimed that the passages and rooms were carved out of solid rock by means of thermal drills tipped with the metal wolfram — among the last items of "pure" machinery the



Akashans created — and electron ray guns. These last are bazooka-sized versions of the biotech electronus, firing bolts of electricity powerful enough to blast apart rock strata too hard for the drill.

The drill heats all debris to the melting point, and the resulting fluid then solidifies to a diamond-hard glaze that covers the walls, floor and ceiling. This glaze is so hard that it holds the ceiling up all by itself, without the need for pillars and supports.

It also makes the tunnels system watertight, with the only water present being those underground pools or rivers that were deliberately left uncovered to supply the residents.

Electron Ray Gun: Tech 30, damage value 31, ammo 50, range 3-150/500/1k

Due to the artificial nature of the halls, there is no wildlife that is native to them. However, many creatures from outside have come in to take up residence in them, just as if they were ordinary caverns. Among them are many of the bizarre creatures the Akashans either brought with them or inadvertently created via their genetic experiments. The iemisch, lemekanns, and munjabu are most common, as are mylodons (like megatheriums, but only half as large). Other creatures never recorded before have also been encountered in the tunnels, such as ashlangs.

Ashlangs are poisonous serpents two meters in length which have an innate psionic power similar to telekinetic flight, but designed for atmospheric flight. This gives it a tremendous advantage over other snakes in the hunt, as it can actively chase down prey. Their flight is totally silent, and what is worse from a Storm Knight's point of view is the fact that they are gregarious, coiling together in the corners of rooms in extended families of up to several dozen.

Up to a half dozen ashlangs can attack a man-sized target at once, with a Many-0n-One advantage. They are quite fearless, relying on the speed of their flight to keep them out of trouble in combat.

Ashlang

AGILITY 11

Dodge 17, flight 13, maneuver 12, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 5

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 6

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 10

Perception 11, trick (11)

MIND 6

Survival 10

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 11

CHARISMA 5

Charm (40)

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Fangs, damage value STR+3/9; poison, damage value 13 per round; telekinetic flight, speed value 11

Aside from wild animals, rogue clans of Gudasko who remained behind and small knots of Lorbaat dissidents seeking refuge have moved into some of the rooms and hallways, using them as a base of operations. Human smugglers, guerrillas and bandits have done the same.

The treasure to be found in these caverns is quite substantial, with items made of precious metal to be found quite literally in the hundreds of tons. Golden statues and statuettes of animals from all over the world, or from Akasha and other worlds in the Star Sphere, predominate, but there are also books of gold or silver leaf and plaques depicting scenes from Akashan history. Finally, a few walls have been adorned with bas-reliefs of copper, silver or gold, showing the same scene as the plaques.

Next to simple exploration, the most common adventure Storm Knights will have in the tunnels is to either secure some of this vast treasure or prevent others from getting it. Other possibilities include wiping out monsters, bandits or terrorist gangs. Although the glaze over the tunnels seems indestructible, it is possible that it might be shattered in some spot, possibly allowing creatures from the Land Below to find their way in. Some teams might even decide to set up shop there themselves; as bases go, they could do worse.



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