# Tales of the Reaching Moon

## The RuneQuest™ Magazine

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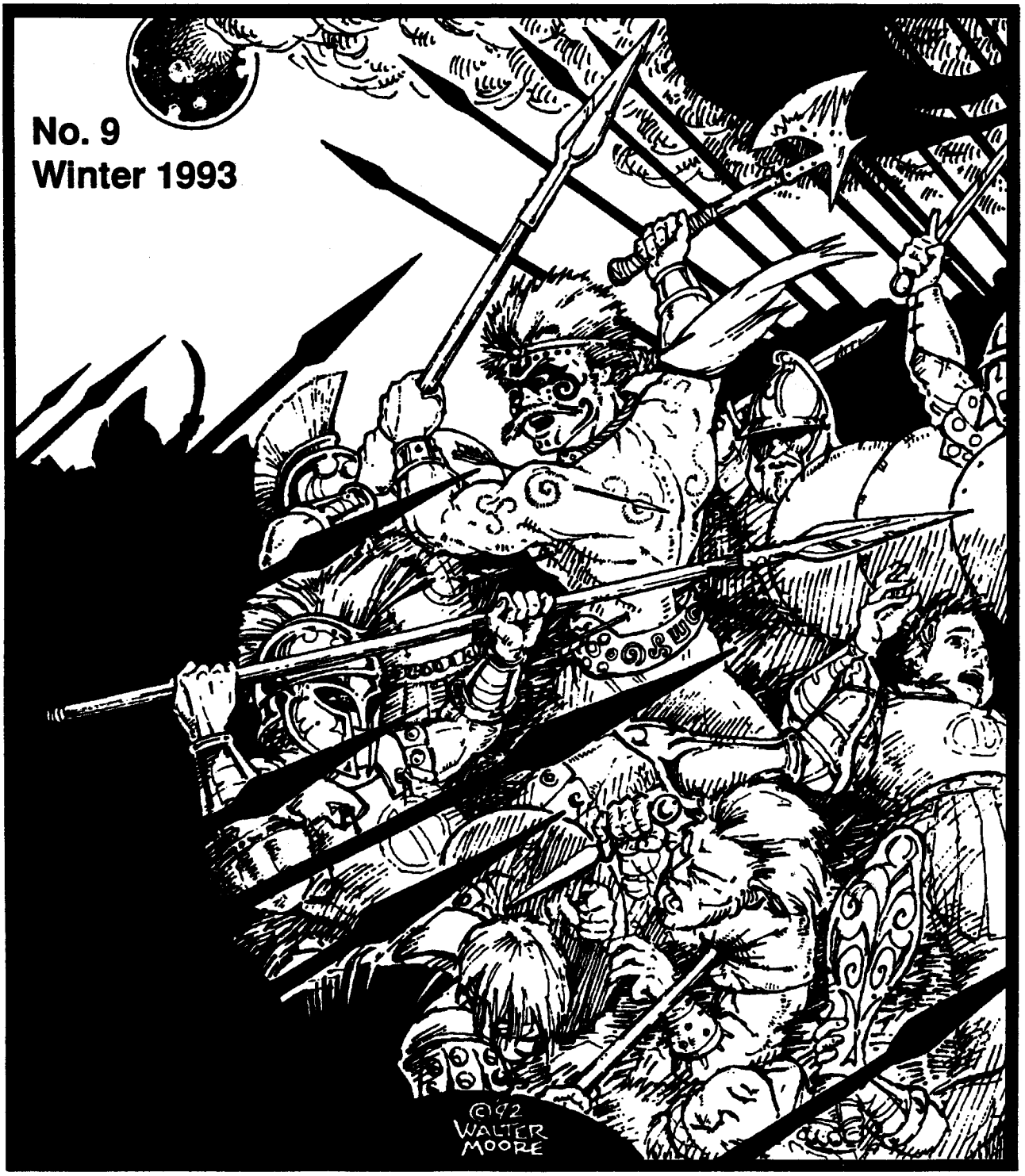


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## Tales of The Reaching Moon

### The RuneQuest Magazine

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## Contributions:

*Contributions are gratefully received,. Write to the editorial address enclosing an SSAE or International Reply Coupon for our writers guidelines. All written contributions should be doubled spaced and typed. Contributions on floppy disc will be given preferential treatment! We can accept IBM 3.5" discs in various formats - details are in our writers giudelines. Please remember to give full credit to all of your sources. For artwork please don't send originals by normal post, good photocopies are preferred. As ever, the generous reward for publication is a FREE copy of the issue!*

# EDICT

## Gloranthan Renaissance

The next offering for Glorantha junkies is *King of Sartar*, which is due out late in December and at 300 pages will make quite a stocking-filler! See page 34 for a review. If sales go well, rumour has it that Greg will follow it up with a similar book on the Lunar Empire.

## Questionnaire

Yes, it's interrogation time again! In the centre pages you'll find our user-friendly pull-out wysiwyg questionnaire. Please fill this in as it is your opportunity to influence the future of *RuneQuest*, *Tales* and the free world. I want a big response from all of you, especially those furriners across the sea whose opinions have yet to be heard.

Send completed questionaires to the address on the form, or to your local *Tales* rep who will be more than happy to pass it along.

## Next from Reaching Moon Megacorp

Issue ten will be a Sea special. Also featured will be Warhamster, dropped from this issue for technical and space reasons. I'm still looking for contributions with a sea theme.

Issue eleven is planned as a Pamaltelan special. It is being put together by Michael O'Brien in Australia, so contributions to him first please. The objective of this issue is to provide an introduction to the continent, as well as being a limited source pack.

## The Griselda Collection

Our next *Reaching Moon Megacorp* project is a limited edition collection of Griselda stories. This will have the definitive versions of every Griselda story ever written, the famous Griselda song, stats, and a chronological bibliography. Illustrations by Walter Moore and Dan Barker. More details on this in issue ten.

## Wyrms Footprints

After that, the next item on our list of projects is *Wyrms Footprints*, a reprint of the best articles in the late and much lamented *Wyrms Footnotes*. It will be about 64-72 pages in size, and as well as having reprinted information it will include extra details on Starbrow's Rebellion and the complete Sartar High Council article, which I managed to dig out from the Well of Chaos. No doubt we'll also try and cajole Greg into letting us slip in other new stuff. Due sometime in 1993.

## Revised Stafford Compendium

At last! The publication you've all been waiting for! The fully revised, and now completely correct bibliography of everything Staffordian, as well as a listing of all the cult write-ups you can eat. We've limited the number we've published, and they are available from me, or from all good *Tales* reps. UK cost is £1.50 plus 20p postage. European readers should add 40p postage, and those in the rest of the world £1.00.

## Convulsion USA?

A US RuneQuest convention has been mooted for Autumn/Fall 1993 in Baltimore. The Reaching Moon Megacorp team is all set to fly (at their own expense) over to the USA to run our highly successful Boldhome Freeform Game if it can be arranged. If you want to organise, help or just attend such a convention then get in touch with David Cheng at 313 East 85th Street, Apt 2C, New York, NY 10028. The organisers need an idea of how much support there is for such a convention - so get writing!

## Home of the Bold Book

In the New Year we will be printing a booklet of character reports of the events of the Home of the Bold freeform. This will be sent out free to those who sent in their reports but will cost £2.50 to other players of the game (cheques payable to "Convulsion '92"). If we have spare copies we may offer them to outsiders, but wait until issue #10 for details. Character reports can still be sent to us for publication up until mid-January.

## Beer & Pretzels III, 15th - 16th May 1993

Spirit Games are sponsoring this open gaming convention at Burton Town Hall. There will be RPG's, boardgames and table-top games organised, a free games library, as well as trade stands. Tickets will be around £3.50 for a day, and £6.00 for the weekend, and can be pre-booked. For further details, including help with local accommodation, ring (0283) 511293, or write to: Spirit Games, 98 Station Street, Burton on Trent, Staffs, DE14 1BT. Spirit Games are keen to have some RuneQuest games run at the convention.

## Another RQ Character Generator!

Martin Dudman informs me that he has written a generator for the Amiga. It currently rolls up over 100 character/monster types, with more on the way. The program allows you to give the character armour and weapons, and age the character with the quick experience system. It requires 1 Mbyte to run. Cost is £2.50 (+£1.00 overseas) for disc and postage, from Martin at: 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent, BR2 8HU, England.

## SSAE's Again!

Another reminder to y'all to please send me an SSAE if you want a reply to your letters. Every little bit of financial aid helps keep the zine afloat. An SSAE in your letter, makes the Editor feel better...

David Hall

# Revolution in Leicester

## – *Not Many Hurt!*

by Kevin Jacklin

On Saturday 25th July 1992 what is believed to be one of the biggest role- playing games ever to have been played in Britain was run at Convulsion '92, in College Hall at Leicester University. For eight hours a total of 81 players, half a dozen referees, and an indeterminate number of observers watched the events collectively described as Home of the Bold unfold. Even now no one is entirely sure what happened, but everyone seems to agree that it (whatever it was) was fun. And could they have another one please?

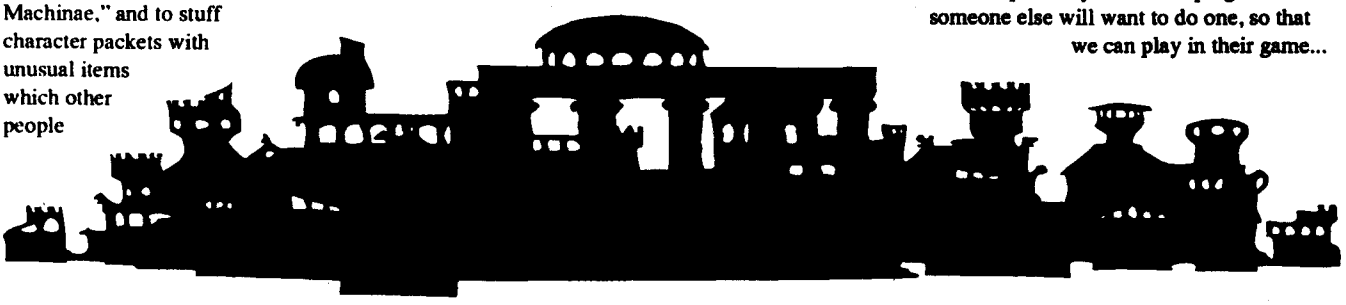
Home of the Bold was an attempt to introduce a true free-form RPG to Britain. The term "free-form" is the general description of an RPG which tends to a) have large numbers of participants; b) have simple rules; and c) is limited to a convention timetable. (They are also called Interactive Literature, or sometimes Live Action Role-playing.) Free-forms have been seen mostly at science fiction and games conventions in Australia and the U.S.A. As with many "innovations" variants have sprung up at about the same time in Britain too – ranging from murder mystery parties to roleplaying D&D-style down caves. However, having read of the sheer sweep that a good free-form can generate, and subsequently experienced one in Maryland last year, I was determined to bring one to Britain.

A free-form is different from many RPG's in that a scenario only tends to be half written. That is to say, the writer may have several plots which he wants people to explore – but there is no GM to strictly guide them to a resolution. The trick in free-forms is to liberally lace character sheets with clues and hints, to use mechanisms which subtly point, to very occasionally use "Dei Ex Machinae," and to stuff character packets with unusual items which other people want. The game then starts and the plots begin to unwind, but after that it is entirely up to the other players to determine the results. In effect, in the usual RPG where a GM would provide an NPC encounter for a group of half a dozen, in a free-form there are enough character players to be able to dispense with this. Thus a referee's job should, if the writer has done his job correctly, be a matter of solving rules disputes and generally making the game run smoothly. There are certain themes or topics which make good free-form game material. Science fiction or fantasy is one favourite, espionage or diplomacy another. Essentially anything which involves negotiation and wheeler-dealing works very well. Personally I like to give the players a feeling of getting involved in "something big" going on around them. Choosing a theme which involves, say, a key point in history evokes a feeling of importance. It also saves having to explain the whole of a "background universe" – people know it already. The best "theme parties" which I have run usually revolve around a well-known story – Casablanca or Robin Hood for instance.

At the inception of Convulsion '92 we knew that we wanted to set a free-form game in Greg Stafford's Glorantha universe – most well known through the RuneQuest RPG. Glorantha is extremely well detailed and is perfect for that "getting caught up in something big" feeling. Given that many of the convention attendees would know a fair amount of background already, then, it would not be too difficult to set something "realistic" in motion. However, so that no one would be left out in the cold, we produced a background book *(The Rough Guide to Boldhome)* which gave any player enough background to play the game (and a souvenir to take away). We also decided to make the money 'real' by minting our own Gloranthan coinage (Lunar pieces) – thus making the players very cautious about spending it!

Casting also plays an important part in free-forms. We were very fortunate in that two of our guests from the U.S.A. had not only a good background in Glorantha but free-form also. Therefore it was not difficult to cast Sandy Petersen and Ken Rolston in major roles. Our guest of honour had the most impeccable Gloranthan knowledge of all - so to Greg Stafford we gave the pivotal role of the Lunar Provost of the City of Boldhome. We were pleased to see that all the rest of the cast also rose to the challenge which we gave to them, and they played no less key roles (it is the referees who end up playing five minute bit-parts!). Besides their formidable acting talent, the players outdid themselves in other areas too. Those with the inclination made costumes for their characters (although we stressed that this was entirely optional many people took the trouble). Many players continued non-stop for the whole game period although, again, we stressed that this was optional. We were amazed at the sheer energy and enthusiasm with which people threw themselves into the fray! From the confusion at the start (a common stage in playing free-forms) to the "grand coup de theatre" at the close (the City in the throes of revolution?) we felt that we really were taking part in "something real, something big". But this was due at least as much to the efforts of the players as it was to writers and referees.

At the finish there were two questions which were asked more than any other. One was, what happened (and did you intend that)? The answer is that the referees knew least about the actual minutiae of the events of the evening. I have asked players to send me their accounts and they will be published in a booklet at some point. Did we intend that? Maybe, but if it turned out different then that doesn't mean it was wrong. The second question was, when is the next one? Well, the circumstances I think were very special and we will be very fortunate to repeat them. However, we may do another one. Maybe. More importantly, we are hoping that someone else will want to do one, so that we can play in their game...



# The Sandy Petersen Interview

The author of *Call of Cthulhu*, in Britain for Convulsion 92, talks to Kevin Jacklin of *Tales* about his contribution to *RuneQuest* and to Glorantha in general.

## RUNEQUEST

***RM: Thank you for agreeing to talk to Tales of the Reaching Moon about RuneQuest. You originally wrote in to Chaosium with your Gateway Bestiary and have not looked back. What has been your favourite contribution to RuneQuest?***

SP: I guess I would argue in favour of the Bestiaries... But, no, I'm going to back up and say that the best thing I ever did for RuneQuest was Gods of Glorantha. I think that was an impressive work. Trollpak was good too, there had never been anything like Trollpak before. Gods of Glorantha was a little like Cults of Prax had been, but it had that little secret of the three different ways to look at your cult. It had the God Learner way, which was in the front of the book, and which looked at all of the cults objectively. Then it had the "inside the cult" way which is what your priest tells you. This was looking at the cults very subjectively, and it explained why all the other cults were evil, and yours was the only true cult. Then it had the "rules" way, looking from the viewpoint of a guy outside Glorantha entirely, saying "here's the rules of how the cults work." I think that was a breakthrough in role-playing.

Obviously, it would have been better if all the cults were in the long form, but given that we wanted to do 60 cults, that was the way to do it. I've had players tell me that the "What the Priest Tells You" section alone (those eight pages) was worth the entire price of the box. I'm not sure I buy's that theory, but it certainly was a useful role playing tool.

***RM: When David Hall and I were putting 'Home of the Bold' together, we found the central book still one of the most useful, especially when we were trying to make characters relate to each other.***

SP: One of the virtues of it was that it pointed out strongly, for the first time, that people in Glorantha relate on a cultural level not just on a cult level. "What Your Father told you" wasn't just the Orlanth cult guy, it was the Lightbringer/ Barbarian guy – it was from the point of view of the whole culture. Humakt was in that culture, Chalana Arroy was in it, and a whole pantheon of cults. They all talked in the same way. In old RuneQuest, depending on the campaign obviously, it was a matter of mixing and matching however you wanted. People would say "I'll be Chalana Arroy," or "I'll be Storm Bull," or "I'll be Waha" – like things on a Chinese menu. That would be fun for a while, but it is more fun to have a culture. Then you still could have a guy from Prax, and a guy from Dragon Pass, in the same party but they interact in a different way, even if they are both Storm Bulls. They think of each of each other differently. They have this common bond because of their cult, but the way they act is very different because of their culture. I think that is, or could be, a very good thing for role-playing.

***RM: One of the criticisms that I've heard with RuneQuest is that you have got what you might call in modern jargon "a steep learning curve" for the Gloranthan background. Because there is so much going on it intimidates some referees - having to learn so much about the world before they can start. Can you give any hints on "an easy way in"?***

SP: As far as the players go, I think that this is a good thing! The reason why I think it's a good thing is because one of the most fun things about Glorantha is learning about it. It's also fun when you know everything about it. In my campaigns in Glorantha with players who did not know much about it, as they played the game they got to learn. It was fun, they'd say "Oh I see how this works out now!" A steep learning curve for players can be wholly beneficial - it adds to the game. Once they know about the world, the GM must keep on going beyond.

It is hard for the GM, because the GM has to know about what is going on in order to run the game properly. I guess the best thing to do is to buy one of the "canned" packs, Sun County or something. Start the players out somewhere he knows well. My advice on starting a new campaign with new players, so that you don't have to know everything about the world, is to have the players be the equivalent of cave men. Balazarings or some other primitive group, because this way they don't know anything about the way the world works. Or alternatively have your players come from a really highly advanced, sophisticated city. Because that way they also know nothing about the way that the world works. Their experience in the city is the same as it is in a modern city - they really won't know what is out there! Either way you have players that are raw and new. As the characters get killed off or retired, and are replaced with guys from the areas you are in, they will already have learned about those areas.

For instance, we took our campaign to Pamaltela, and there was player-character attrition like there always is. But just about the time a character would die or retire, they would have learned enough about the local culture so that they could bring on one of these guys. They could have local man in the group now, or a turtle-person or something... He may not know all the secrets of the turtle-people, but he would know enough to know what questions to ask. If they were going to do something, he'd say "Wait GM. Is it OK for us to kill this animal? Because I know enough about the turtle-people to know we can't just kill any animal." Start the players off ignorant and work their way up, that's fine. By the time the GM has played a couple of times with the players he will realise that he doesn't have to know everything about Glorantha to run a Gloranthan campaign - he just has to know more than the players.

***RM: There's a lot of "history" going on. Is it a good idea to stick with that background?***

SP: Well, it's part of that steep learning curve. If you ignore the history going on, you just say "OK, here is Duke Raus, in the village of Weis in the Borderlands. He comes from the Empire. The Lunar Empire is a long way off. What you really have here

is one duke and his family, here in the wilderness, with Indians around you." That's not so hard for the players to comprehend and deal with. They don't have to know that there's this big historical drive with the Lunars colonising Prax, or that there's unrest in Pavis. All they know is there's good guys and there's bad guys. As the GM and players learn more about Glorantha they can choose how much of that stuff they want to add in. You could play forever in the Pavis Rubble and never care anything about the overall political situation. But you can read the Pavis political situation in a couple of pages of text. You can't learn all the history of how the Lunar Empire was formed and all that stuff, but then again you don't need to know that.

***RM: In RuneQuest III there were a couple of packs that had alternate universes in, Vikings and Nippon. Do you think that worked? Did it transfer well?***

SP: I think that that they were good packs. They were fun to play in. But I think it was a big mistake on the part of Chaosium and Avalon Hill to do those instead of pushing Glorantha. There was nothing wrong with the Viking and Ninja packs, but in hindsight we realised that what players really wanted was Glorantha. The game system was secondary to that.

I was drawn into RuneQuest because of Glorantha, I had played White Bear & Red Moon. When the role-playing game came out based on that world, I said "That's kind of a neat idea." Then after I had bought it because of the world I then got interested in the game system. I said "Hey! This game system is a heck of a lot better than D&D." I don't think that you can go to a person and say "This game system is a heck of a lot better, please change." That might convert some guys. Clearly when RuneQuest III came out (isn't hindsight great?), instead of trying to appeal to a whole new group of guys, and just depending on the old RuneQuest stand-bys to keep on buying it, we should have said "We're going to bring this out so that it will appeal to these old stand-bys and let the new guys come in as they see fit." We kind of abandoned our core group when we came up with Vikings and Ninja, good as they were.

We abandoned the Gloranthan guys even worse when we started coming out with rehashes of what had gone before. Of course they wanted new stuff. For that matter, the very first pack we came out with was terrible. I think Monster Coliseum was an awful supplement.

***RM: It had chariot rules and...?***

SP: It had a whole bunch of monster stats. Well now Gods of Glorantha, that's tremendous, and the Genertela and Glorantha packs are good too. Those should have been the very first things out. Then the core RuneQuest guys would have known that they weren't abandoned, and known Avalon Hill wasn't being bad, and that Chaosium wasn't being bad. RuneQuest wouldn't have been killed, like it pretty much was.

> I think Monster Coliseum was an awful supplement.

***RM: Hopefully it is going through a renaissance now...***

SP: Yes, I think it is. Avalon Hill is clearly very dedicated to returning it to its former position of power.

***RM: They are still calling it "Voted No 1 at Games Day," but that was in 1985, I think. It has taken off in Britain amazingly, there is still a hard core following, and we have Tales. Do you think there could be a reason why British people take to it so well?***

SP: Yes, I think the reason British people take to it more readily is geography. In America if you had five or six guys who wanted to play the game, and they lived in different states, there would be no hope. They couldn't keep playing the game. In England your country is smaller, you're likelier to find guys nearby who want to play the game. RuneQuest in America is also a geographical thing. You find RuneQuest players in northern California, and in the East - there are certain places you find them. In the US, say you go to college at Berkeley, you play RuneQuest. You say "Wow! What a game!" You finish college and you move a thousand miles away. There is no-one there who plays RuneQuest, you can't get in touch with them, you can't find out who they are, and so you stop playing RuneQuest. You either don't play or you play something else. In England you seem to be much less mobile. So people tend to live in their town, grow up in their town, die in their town. You've only moved a few miles, so you're still in touch with all the guys you play RuneQuest with. That is a big plus.

***RM: The people who I started playing RuneQuest with ten years ago, I'm still playing RuneQuest with.***

SP: There you are, you see. The guys who I started playing RuneQuest with ten years ago all live in California. Now I live in Baltimore. So I can't play with them any more, and I wish I could. The group broke up for a while after I left because I had been the GM. It was a tremendous campaign. It lasted six years, and twenty years of Gloranthan time passed - our game ended in 1631 or something. There was all this epic stuff. The players, not just the characters, the players themselves, grew up during the game. One guy started the game aged thirteen, and by the time we finished he was nineteen years old. We had seen him mature with us. It was a very emotional experience to break up that group, but we did. The guys said "We could never recreate that experience."

Now they are playing RuneQuest again, but it is in not the same group. They broke up and went into several different groups. They play RuneQuest and Call of Cthulhu, and one of them has to play Champions because all of the other guys in his group play that. Anyway, that's why in England RuneQuest has been able to maintain itself. Because the smaller cult following is more easily maintained. What we've got to do in America is get it to grow - to expand beyond some areas with a high density of population, like New York or California..

Now, I've talked to Eric Butt at Avalon Hill, and he says one of the main reasons for keeping RuneQuest going, to be perfectly frank, is not the American sales, but the foreign sales. It does well in Britain, it does well in France, but it doesn't do so great in America. So you British guys can be proud of yourselves in maintaining RuneQuest's existence. If it had died in England, the way it did in America, RuneQuest would probably not be around today. So thanks from me, too, I'm grateful!

***RM: Just to round off our little chat about RuneQuest, where is it going now? We've now got Sun County, we've just got back to the stage of the "classic period" of 1982-3, and we're starting to move beyond that.***

SP: The impression I get from talking Ken Rolston and Eric Butt is that what they want is to recreate that classic period. They are going to be coming out with Dorastor Pack, and they're coming out with Prax Pack. They want to do the same kind of things they did back then, but not repeat the scenarios. So if you have Borderlands, for instance, hang on to it because those scenarios are not going to be reprinted. There's going to be new scenarios and new stuff. There's going to be interesting new stuff as well. I think Dorastor will be a striking pack.

I am not yet convinced that they can recreate the ambience that RuneQuest had in its heyday, though I wish them all the luck in the world. I think that the game market is different from what it was then, that's my reservation. The game market was booming in the US in that period, so that a good quality game made inroads. Today you could come up with the perfect role-playing game and it wouldn't make that big a deal, because people are now set in their systems. They don't really want to try something new. In some ways that is good because us RuneQuest grognards (sic) will stick to RuneQuest and won't leave it for other systems. Well, maybe it is just that a better system hasn't come out yet... But anyway the goal is to bring back the ambience, and if they do it that would be great. I wish them luck.

***RM: Will you be contributing?***

SP: I've contributed Dorastor and Prax Packs so far. I haven't vowed to stop. I also did a whole bunch of stuff on Pamaltela, as did Greg, and Teleos and East Isles, that we thought would be organised the same way as in the Genertela Pack, but it never was published. So it's all still sitting there ready to publish. I'm not sure if it ever will be, because Ken Rolston wants to have scenarios for when it does come out. So we'll see. But it's all there. It will probably come out via the Reaching Moon.

***RM: You mean...***

SP: I think you should get Ken to put one area of Pamaltela out in an issue, if Reaching Moon could handle it. The players would like it, it would be a little look at a part of Glorantha you don't see much of. Because I'm a Gloranthan fan I'm interested in parts of Glorantha that are inconvenient to get to for campaigns. One of the things I did in my campaign was to sail down to Pamaltela and we spent most of our campaigning there. In doing that we learned a lot about Pamaltela, and explored it. I guess that most players stick to Dragon Pass. Understandable why, but I felt no qualms in going to a distant area and doing things there. Partly because I knew more than the average GM about Glorantha. But I think that the average GM shouldn't feel constrained to make up stuff. He should feel free to go to Seshnela and make up whatever he wants.

***RM: I think Dragon Pass is a good place to start. But then after...***

SP: All you need is the seed. The way I learned so much about Pamaltela, as it is in the book, is because we went there and played the campaign. The stuff that we played which we liked we put in the book! I said great, in this area there are cities that do this, so we put it in. Just because that is what I did does not mean you shouldn't! If anything, there's a danger that Glorantha is so well defined, it's so clearly the product of one man's mind, Greg Stafford, that GM's are reluctant to tamper with it. They might do something "wrong." They shouldn't worry about that, they should just go ahead and do things! Once they buy the game, it's their game, and Glorantha is their world. It's not Greg's any more - Greg was the first to admit that. They should feel free to do things. If they enact something that is contrary to a later publication then they should fit the later publication in, or say well it doesn't work that way here, or it works that way now. Whatever they want. Glorantha and role playing should be free and open. You should not be fearful of "making an error." That's my opinion and that's what I do. I put all kinds of things in, and I have, well, practiced what I preach.

## CTHULHU

***RM: I cannot do an interview with you without talking about Call of Cthulhu. Perhaps you could take us over the genesis of the game...***

SP: When I was about twelve years old I came across a falling apart paperback book printed in 1942 for the use of "Our Boys Overseas Fighting the Japanese." It was a collection of Lovecraft's stories. So I read this and – Wow! – I liked these stories a lot, they were really great. I lost the book for two years, actually a friend had borrowed it and not given it back. I looked for other Lovecraft stories but couldn't find them. About the age of fourteen I found them in a library. They were these original Arkham House editions, The Outsiders & Others, and other such stuff. I checked those out for several years, until the library found out that the original versions of H.P. Lovecraft's books

> "It was like something was conspiring against the release of this game..."

were valuable and put them in a locked cabinet. Luckily I'd bought them on my own by that time (I was about seventeen and Ballantine brought out an edition). So because of my great quest to find Lovecraft, which took me ten years to complete, it made me more interested in him than I deserved to be.

I always liked horror. Then I got into role playing games, and started corresponding with Greg Stafford. I sent him some monsters and we worked on The Gateway Bestiary for RuneQuest. Then I wrote to Greg and said "I think we should do a RuneQuest game based in H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands. There are monsters and swords & sorcery; it's a kind of magic place. It'll be a cool supplement." He said "No, I don't think would be a good idea because we already have the rights to H.P. Lovecraft. We're having this guy in Texas write a whole game based on Lovecraft in the modern age with the Horror stories." I thought, "Wow! What a great idea!" So I wrote back and grovelled, and said "I'd sure like to participate in this. Could I, like, read the manuscript or anything? I could edit it, look for flaws, you know? Anything!" Greg replied "You know, this other guy is being kind of slow, he's taken a year to do it, and his contract has defaulted. Why don't you just do the whole thing?"

So I picked myself up off the floor and said "Wow! The whole thing. Great!" Then a year later the whole thing was done. I kept asking Greg to send me the stuff this other guy had done. He never sent it to me, so my game ended up being completely different to the way his was going.* So a year later the game was out. It got published on Friday 13th November 1981 in the worst thunderstorm Northern California had had in 20 years. While they were working on the game there were mysterious power outages in the building. But only in the part of the building where they were typesetting Call of Cthulhu! They also went through four typesetters, who kept quitting mysteriously and giving no reason. The editor in charge, Lynn Willis, almost had a nervous breakdown. It was like

something was conspiring against the release of this game...

But then it came out, and it's done staggeringly well. I thought it would be a fun game that a few guys would like playing. It would be a little cult game, sell a few thousand copies. Now it's gone all over the world, it's in English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Japanese... It's outsold RuneQuest by a huge margin.

***RM: Really?***

SP: RuneQuest sales stopped a little while ago... But actually I think it would have outsold RuneQuest even if RQ had kept selling at the rate it had been. Call of Cthulhu has done much better than I had any right to expect. It has lasted eleven years now, and that's quite a long time for a role playing game. How many role playing games are around now that were around eleven or twelve years ago? Traveller's pretty much dead now. RuneQuest, well I think RuneQuest might make a come-back, but it will be a resurrection, not a continued life. D&D... that's about it. Not many games have made it through that long. Call of Cthulhu is still going strong... I don't delude myself that it will go on forever, and I can't take the credit for the success...

***RM: Oh come on!***

SP: Well some of the success maybe. I think it was the Lovecraft connection that inspired people. I just under-estimated how many people liked Lovecraftian horror stories. Actually plenty of people play it who don't read Lovecraft so maybe it's just the horror connection. The Lovecraft monsters are very specific kinds of creatures. You don't find Deep Ones or The Outer Gods in other forms of horror. Horror is a very popular genre. Lovecraft's monsters are very specific but the game seems to have a universal appeal Although we talk about having non-Lovecraftian monsters, like werewolves and vampires, the fact is, that in most games, there are no werewolves or vampires, there are Deep Ones, Sand Dwellers or something...

***RM: You have to intersperse your games with non-Lovecraftian things just to keep the players on their toes.***

SP: There's some of that tension going on. But how often do you have a vampire that worships Cthulhu? Of course, maybe the monsters are irrelevant in Call of Cthulhu, because you don't spend much time fighting them. Even in the best RuneQuest campaign you spend a lot of time interacting with monsters and creatures, killing them and taking their money. But in Call of Cthulhu it's quite normal to go through an evening and have no-one fire a shot. They're talking, and exploring, and figuring things out. I think that was the appeal the game had: that it's such a different milieu from fantasy role playing games, which are combat oriented.

***RM: In some ways it's an anti-role-playing game because of the sanity rule. You know if your character does "well" you're going to have to say goodbye to them in short order...***

SP: It's better to call it anti-powergaming. The thing that convinced me that sanity was a great thing was when I was playing the game and the players all got together and, well, they summoned a monster. They found this old spell in a house and they said, "Wow! We've going to cast this spell. We'll bring it here are we'll see this strange thing that goes between the dimensions. That'll be cool!" So they got together and they all did this little chant and their magic thing... and they did the spell. The Shambler came and, just when it was about to appear, half the players said "I'm covering my eyes." Well, I thought, that would never happen in D&D or RuneQuest. What a great role playing thing, the players are covering their eyes. Of course, technically that's because there's a rule that will hurt them, but really it is because they are afraid of seeing this thing! That is a drive towards role-playing and away from powergaming. Although you could powergame in Cthulhu if you really tried, it is the least suited to that of any game. Anti-role-playing? It's anti the mainstream of role-playing.

> Something that intrudes upon the world, and then at the end it leaves again. Maybe it kills you, maybe it doesn't.

***RM: I remember the sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach when I first found out what Sanity did...***

SP: Sanity is like energy level draining in D&D. The worst monsters in D&D are undead because it takes away the whole point of the game – which is your experience points! You hate that! RuneQuest didn't have an equivalent to that until Tap came along. The Tap spell is now that equivalent. Don't play with them, they'll Tap you! Sanity is like that in Cthulhu, except because you expect your character to die, you don't really mind going insane – for a little bit. It's all in a good cause. To use a different culture, you watch a monster movie and everyone but one dies at the end of the movie. So in Cthulhu if only a couple of guys die you go "Wow! We did a great job!" Of course a whole bunch of you die and go crazy anyway. It's a bit like Paranoia where you look forward to being killed.

Call of Cthulhu is a fun game. One of the secrets about Call of Cthulhu is that, well, you never hear anyone tell war stories about their campaigns. If you hear a war story about RuneQuest it's usually about some clever deed or victory by the players. In Call of Cthulhu it almost always involves someone dying. I think that's an interesting difference in the culture of the game. The orientation is different. What's fun in RuneQuest is the adventure. What's fun in the

(XXIX. 21-001) To quote an old God Learners proverb, it's better to steal the Candle of Eternal Light than to curse the darkness. (XXIX. 21-002) The Sedalpists are based in Enkloso and Vralos, and do not believe in killing other humans in warfare (they hire mercenaries). They are experts in killing non-humans, however, with spells such as "Poison Troll", "Wither Elf Bow", and of course, the various "Smite Nonhuman" spells. (XXIX. 21-003) From the journal of the famous Kralori explorer and trader, Du Yan Long: "Among the awful, towering heights of the Jankley Bore we came upon a spire on which was carved "YBB loves LJJ". (XXIX. 21-004) An old curse of the Heortlings: "May the Darkness refuse you solace/ May the Waters refuse your thirst/ May the Earth refuse your bones/ May the Air the Earth refuse your breath/ May the Sky refuse your soul." (XXIX. 21-005) This is a mystical explanation of the universe, popular among the Earth-rune cultists of the Holy Country and cosmologists like myself. It is disliked by the Lunar authorities (who have officially "disproved" it), probably because they have not managed to insert a verse in praise of the Red Moon. Columbus Mercator, Grey Sage. "In the beginning there was only Chaos, eternally consuming. That which could not be consumed by Chaos was gathered together, and became the Darkness. That part of Darkness

Call of Cthulhu game is the horror and the death. They have different focuses – and that's why they co-exist and don't drive each other out. They satisfy different parts of your emotions. I never feel impelled to play any other type of game! Actually I take it back, every once in a great while I feel a call to play a superhero game in which the players are powerful, there's that impulse too, to be satisfied.

***RM: Is there any more Cthulhu in you – in the way that there is RuneQuest?***

SP: Yes, but I currently satisfy it by playing Call of Cthulhu. I'm running it rather than writing it. I'm not claiming that I'm never going to write anything more for Cthulhu, but I'm not currently writing anything.

***RM: Are you happy with the way it is going?***

SP: Yes. Cthulhu seems to be going very well. I was a little worried for a while after I left, I wasn't so impressed by the scenario packs. But now the quality is going back up. I think that The Stars Are Right is a really great pack. In some ways you could say it seems to have stagnated because it's just more scenarios about killing monsters and being horrified. But that it what is supposed to do – and it is doing that now. It's like when you go to see a horror movie, they're not breaking new ground in horror movies. But I still like seeing them! I don't need a movie to break new ground for me.

***RM: In Stark Raving Mad you mentioned that there were three different types of horror genre, the traditional...***

SP: Something that intrudes upon the world, and then at the end it leaves again. Maybe it kills you, maybe it doesn't.

***RM: The world is the same. It has gone back to normal.***

SP: Most Cthulhu campaigns are like that. Although Lovecraft stories aren't like that. What Lovecraft stories are like is the second type [the revolutionary] where the monster comes in and you suddenly realise that the monster is the norm! The world that you had thought of was the falseness...

***RM: The world will never be the same again...***

SP: That's right, you can't get back out again. That's what the Sanity loss is intended to represent in Call of Cthulhu. Your realisation that the world isn't the way it is supposed to work. The fact that you don't go all insane right at once is that you are still struggling against it, trying to live a normal life anyway. Even though all of human existence is pointless, and that at any moment, things as gross as Cthulhu can come and just wipe everything out.

***RM: Then there's the third type...***

SP: The symbolic. In this the horror is already part of the way the world works. It is not something new. Really the horror is all in your mind. Sometimes there's a ghost in there too. For instance the story The Yellow Wallpaper. What a creepy story, it's all in the woman's mind, but there might be a ghost there too. But it is really her gremlin. Or movies like Jacob's Ladder. Or the Lovecraft story The Rats in the Walls – they are all examples of this. The horror is the way the world works and it is really a normal part of society. Most of Robert Ayckman's stories are like this. They are very symbolic kind of stories. You're not sure whether it is intended to be a story or just symbolism. Robert Ayckman is a British horror story writer who wrote excellent short stories that happened to be horror stories. He is now dead, alas, but he has collections of stories: Sub Rosa, Cold Hand in Mine, Painted Devils. Any British horror fan should try to look this guy up.

***RM: So, do you think if the Cthulhu writer tried writing scenarios for the second two types he would be pushing Call of Cthulhu forward...***

SP: I think he would be. I try to do the second two types. Actually I try to do the revolutionary. It is really hard to do symbolic type of story. I try to do the revolutionary type in my Cthulhu games as best I can. I could tell you war stories about it but I won't...

***RM: That's all right. But more of the second type from writers...***

SP: Sure. Things like when you walk into – I guess I should say a pub – you see a bunch of women sitting at the next table. But when they get up and leave you notice that they are all the same woman – except they are different ages. That kind of frisson would be a good revolutionary horror. Something is really wrong here!

***RM: I'm glad you think Call of Cthulhu is in safe hands now.***

SP: Lynn Willis and Keith Herber are doing a fine job. Keith is now the main writer for it, and I look at the stuff and say "Gee! I wouldn't have written it this way." But of course not because it wasn't me that wrote it, but because it has virtues I don't have.

***RM: When you read it are you entertained?***

SP: Some more than others. I've read a lot of that stuff now...

**As Greg Stafford tells the story, the guy in Texas spent over a year producing a five page manuscript, of which the best part was "the creepy noises to hear at night in the graveyard" table! DH.*

# INTERACTIVE LITERATURE

*Sandy and a group of six friends in Maryland have formed a company, Cruel Hoax Productions, which produces Interactive Literature games. Sandy is obviously very keen as I find it difficult to get a word in edgeways.*

SP: There's a hobby in the states, which is six or seven years old now, called Live Action Role-Playing or Interactive Literature. In this hobby you get a mix between acting and role-playing games. A lot of the players come from the role-playing field.

The way the game actually works is this. You sign up for the game months or weeks in advance. You get paper from the organisers asking you what kind of character you actually want to play. When you show up at the game you are handed a character packet that has a description of your specific character. For example: "Mike McGuire. Private Investigator." Or "Hans Troll-crusher. Mighty Storm Bull Warrior." You have a description of his background, where he comes from, his goals, who he knows, and some rules. About 20 pages of stuff usually. This will happen on Friday night. You go to a hotel with 60 to 70 other players and you are in the hotel for all of the weekend: Friday night; all day Saturday; part of Sunday – playing out this one character.

The rules are much simpler than in role-playing games. Combat, for instance, is usually extremely simple: rock-paper-scissors, for example. Mostly you talk with the other players to accomplish your goals. You do get special abilities – these are usually on cards. They will say some thing like "I'm invisible. Carry on with your conversation as if I were not here." A difficult one to role play well, that one. There are GM's. Our group usually has about six GM's in our games. The GM's are actually more like referees or directors. They don't really master the game because they don't have any idea what is going on in the game after it starts. The players take the ball and run with it. Playing in one of these is like a cross between a regular role playing game, interactive theatre, and a game of Diplomacy with 60 guys. All of them interacting, making their little plots and goals, working together to accomplish their needs.

When you walk into one of these games the first thing to realise is that, out there in

the game, somewhere among those 60 guys, there is a person who wants to help you. There is also a person who wants to kill you, or would want to kill you if he only knew the truth about you, and there is a person out there who will help you if you help him or her. You have to find out who these people are.

The game has a different ebb and flow to it. Usually you spend Friday night trying to figure out who's who, so you can start dealing with them. Then on Saturday you know who your friends and enemies are, some of them at least, and you start working towards your goals. By Saturday night you've usually accomplished them, or if you don't then you spend Sunday accomplishing them. If you accomplish them on Saturday then you spend Sunday trying to protect them from being destroyed, or doing new goals.

It's really a lot of fun. Some people come in costume. Some players come just to role play, and act out their parts. They have really complex goals like "Tell extremely outlandish lies down at the pub." (There's physical space in the game. One room at the hotel will be the Casbah; one room will be Rick's Cafe; one will be the Police Headquarters. So you actually have to go walking around.) Some players play the game by carefully calculating their chances of success. Being a diplomat and figuring everything out – organising their guys together. Everyone has their own reasons for going into it. It appeals much more to women than paper role-playing, for whatever reason I do not know. The last one we did, The King's Musketeers, half the players that came were women. This was actually a problem, as we thought it would be about a third women. We had to do some sex changes among the characters; instead of having the Duke of Padua we had the Duchess, and we also had the Countess of Monte Cristo. It worked just fine. They had the same goals and powers, but they were female, and so there was a lot more romance going on. We have romance in the games. This is something lacking in most paper games; you don't have guys falling in love and getting married. In Interactive games you do have that, guys flirt with the women (in character of course!). We have special rules in the Cruel Hoax games where characters will trade hearts with their beloved. Then they can share their goals, as it were.

The games are very intense. By the end of the weekend you are drained. It is like going to a very intense convention. Then you want to go home and crap out for a while!

***RM: I think these game are lacking in Britain...***

SP: In America it's mostly on the east coast. There's about 1,000 people between Boston and Washington. They've now started to crop up in St Louis too.

In live action games you do all kinds of things that wouldn't make sense in regular role-playing games. One of the virtues of it is that, in a regular role playing game, if you have a really good GM the world seems real. That's one of the virtues of Glorantha, it's a world where you do things and you feel that you're in a real place. When you're in a live action game it is a real place. All these players are doing things that have nothing to do with you. For instance, a guy in his first live action game saw some players doing a bad thing. So he went to a GM, and said "GM, how do I call the cops?," GM: "You just call them." Player: "Police! Help!!" And two other players trotted over and said "What's all this then?" They were the cops! They had their own goals, their own agendas. Obviously one of their goals was: solve the crimes. So they went off and dealt with the matter. Just the thought of having other players "being the cops" is part of what drew me to the hobby. It's all out there. When you walk into the Rick's Cafe in Casablanca – it's in the opening scene of the movie – there's all these guys in the cafe all doing their little things. There's the guy doing the jewellery, there's the evil spies watching out for the Nazis, there's the Nazis, there's criminals, there's spies, and there's intrigue. In a live action game that's all there. You walk in and you can get involved in whatever plot you want.

***RM: One of the things that people have commented on in playing Home of the Bold (Convulsion's very own Interactive Literature game) was that, during the game, they were totally confused. The only thing that I could advise was: "Get involved!"***

SP: Go out and mix. HotB was a very short live action game. By the time you had started to sort things out, then the game was over! That's not a bad thing. It was very intense. It was much more intense role-playing than you usually have in a one or two day thing, because you had to get it all done at once. My character was the centre of all anti-Lunar plots. So I sat back and said "There's way too much going on. I'm getting too confused. Here's the plan: I'm going to sit right down in front of Geo's and just be a clearing house. I'm not going to do any politicking any more! You guys all come to me with your information and I'll send you out again with it. That's how we'll keep things under control." That kind of worked, though I was still swamped with stuff. We also ignored things outside our area, or we tried to, there really was too much to do. Guys would come up and say "What are we going to do about this? Shall we raid the Lunar HQ?" "No don't raid – let someone else do that! We've decided our abilities. Let's stick to them." Even with trying to only focus in on that, we were so busy we

couldn't do just that, we did have to help other players. For instance: "Oh Sartarites! My problem is that my evil brother is this horrible toad. If you kill him we can get this tribe." So we had to work on killing him and getting the tribe. Of course, as you know, that is what it's like all day long in a live action game.

My character was a little more devoted to intrigue than usual in one of these games. He had other goals as well, trying to seek vengeance or whatever, but that was fine for a short game. I thought it was great.

***RM: Do you think there are topics in an interactive game that are better served than in an ordinary role-playing game?***

SP: Absolutely. A Casablanca, film noir, type game worked out really well in live action. It wouldn't be as fun in role-playing. Romance is much better served in a live action game. Plots for vengeance are much better served. Because in a role-playing game you have to have everyone on the same side. Whereas in a live action game there's other players to take care of their own side. In your plot for vengeance, there's a guy you are going to get vengeance upon, and he's trying to avoid it. Political manoeuvring is much better served in a live action game. In a role playing game the GM has to do all the other factions, which is tough. If you have all the players doing it at a convention then that's better. A peace conference, or a war conference.

It's also good for one-off games. In American TV you have this system where you have a series which goes on year after year. For example, take The Avengers (an American type show). You can never have anything happen to Steed and Mrs Peel, they can't be killed, they can't be crippled, they can't retire, they can't get married, and they can't really fall in love (unless the person's girl gets killed by the end of the show!). If any of those did happen the characters would change and then it wouldn't be the same next week. A regular role-playing game is a step up from that. Nothing can really happen to seriously change your character, because you have to play him again next week. When the push comes to shove, your character will come down on the side of "I want to stay alive." Whereas, in a limited series on TV, like The Prisoner, the character undergoes some basic changes. By the end of the show the whole world can be changed! In a live action game you can have that. It's like a one-off thing. By the end of the game there could be the French Revolution to overthrow the king. The whole of society can be different. This happened in our game (The King's Musketeers). That's okay. Because the game is over then and everyone can look back and say "What a great game!" It's more like a movie than a TV series.

There are genres that aren't that interesting in a role-playing game. How long could you role-play Musketeers before you finally got tired of it? It's not that deep a genre. All the characters are going to want to do the same. But for a weekend it's perfect. There's plenty of political intrigue. That's the big difference.

I'm not suggesting that they are going to replace role-playing games. It's just another hobby that now I'm into. I strongly recommend it to anyone with the slightest bit of interest! I can't make it sound as fun as it actually is.

***RM: It is very difficult, you get so wound up in your part.***

SP: All the details of these things have nothing to do with rules – it's all the players doing it. The GM's don't drive the game, the players are talking and acting things out. You hear war stories of a role-playing game: "He rolled critical hit to the 20! That saved the day!" There's no critical hits to the 20 in live action, it's just a matter of psychology, of personality. For example, I mentioned the invisibility spell where you walk up to two players, and then you're invisible. Some players are going to be better at reacting to an invisible listener than to others. You, the guy with the invisibility spell, must be hip to that and know who to use it on properly. It depends a lot more on your social skills. There's also gimmicks in live action games – a lot more.

***RM: One of the "disappointments" of a referee or writer is that you don't get to be one of the characters...***

SP: Being the referee in a game is not as much fun as playing in one. It can be fun. When you're GM of a paper game you know everything that's going on. When you're GM of a live action game you spend all your time saying "What is going on? What's the Queen doing?" You have no idea – the players are doing all this stuff and you're just in the dark. The players only know their own plots. It's really quite appalling.

***RM: Let's end with a quick plug for Cruel Hoax. You've done Cafe Casablanca, The Kings Musketeers, and you are going to do a Floating Vagabond next year...***

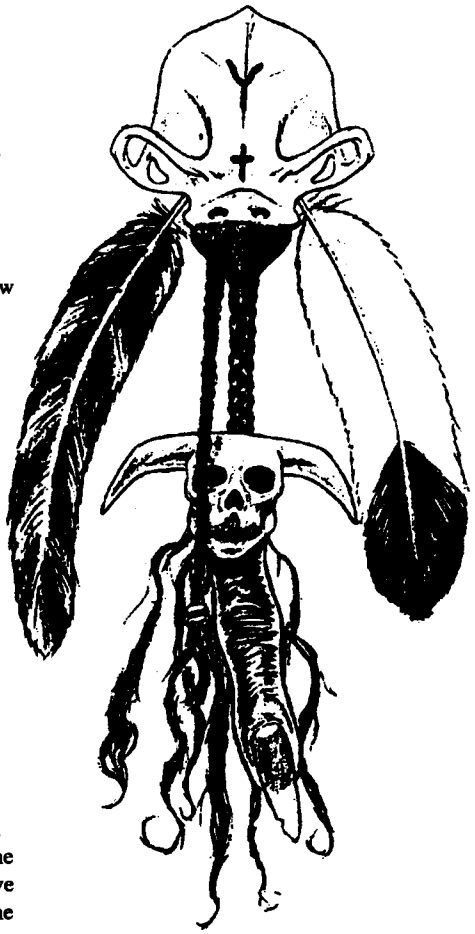
SP: Yes. After that we're going to do Orient Express. We're going to run it on a train – The Red Caboose Lodge in Maryland. It consists of a whole bunch of cabooses end-to-end, set up for sleeping in, with a dining car too. We're going to run the game on those cabooses. Everyone will have a room. They'll have to run up and down the train to do things. Every couple of hours the train's going to stop in a new country. The police, for instance, will start out Turkish, then they'll be Bulgarian, then Yugoslav – they'll be the same players, but different characters.

The Floating Vagabond is a game in which everyone gets to play whoever they want to be. We already have Captain James T. Kirk of the Enterprise signed up, as well as some dinosaurs. We're going to run it in a theme park, Waltworld, with Stewey Shrew as the central guy. "Stewey Shrew, he's all right, he's got the venomous bite!"

We're going to be running Cafe Casablanca and the Musketeers again. Musketeers was the most highly praised live action game ever, as far as I can tell. We had guys who had been playing these games since the beginning saying so. One of our goals at Cruel Hoax is that soon we hope to have everyone else doing games of this calibre so that we can play in them!

***RM: Sandy Petersen, thank you for a marvellous interview.***

*Cruel Hoax Productions are at 7220 Sunrise Drive, Lanham, MD 20706, U.S.A. If you send them $5 you will receive a quarterly newsletter (called Lies, Damned Lies!) and a $5 voucher against any of their games. You can get on their mailing list for free.*



# SUN COUNTY ERRATA

from Michael O'Brien

*SUN COUNTY LEADERS (p.8, 12-15)* The ransom figures for these characters should be expressed in Wheels, not Lunars. For example, Count Solanthos's ransom is 1500W (30,000L), not 1500L.

*VEGA GOLDBREATH (p.12)* Lady Vega's hoplite shield is iron, as its AP rating of 27 suggests.

*SUN DOME MILITIA CHART (p.43)* A = Acolyte.

*TWO-HANDED SPEAR AND SHIELD TECHNIQUE (p.43-44)*

The armour point value of shield used in conjunction with the 2-handed-spear-and-shield technique is not halved. Thus, a hoplite shield affords 18 points of armour protection to the left arm, chest and abdomen of a templar employing this combat style, rather than 9 points as indicated.

*(NOTE: This is just my own unofficial ruling. The rule where a slung shield only gives half its AP protection applies in this instance, there would be little point using this technique. Why would a Templar use it, if it only gives him one measly extra AP in a few locations and he has to sacrifice all parries? RQ2 didn't halve the shield AP. MOB)*

*JAXARTE VISITS HARPOON (p.56)* The final sentence of the boxed section reads: "His recollections are quoted here (with the notes of his biographer, the Grey Sage Floriat Fedora, in italics.)"

*PREGENERATED CHARACTERS (p.62-65)* All divine magic known by these characters is one-use except for Delishi Koris (p.63), who knows a reusable Catseye spell gained as a Yelmalio gift.

Lynnell Turri and Delishi Koris are both 19 years old, not 17.

As a Lhankor Mhy initiate, Skeelios Hemper requires a 90% skill in a language, lore or Evaluate. Raise his Read/Write Sartarite from 81% to 91%.

*THE WRESTLING (p.73-74)* All spirit magic except Befuddle, Demoralize and Disrupt is permitted in this event, but can only be cast after the bout begins. It is considered unsporting to win this event using an overt magical advantage, and some opponents may agree among themselves not to use magic before their bout.

*AROUND TOWN IN GARHOUND (p.79)* The Lightbringer temple also includes a shrine to Odayla, the hunter god of the Orlanth pantheon; the hunter shrine at the Praxian cult site actually honours their own hunter god, Foundchild. The Solar temple has major shrines to Yelmalio and Ernalda, not Eiritha.

The Garhound lands are bounded by the Zola Fel river to the west, and not to the east.

*STIKKLEBRIXX THE STORMBULLY (p.90)* Stikklebrixx has a Sense Chaos skill of 46%.

*SUN COUNTY RUINS: THE SCHOLAR (p.110)* The final sentence of this section reads: "If she's really impressed with their performance, they may even get a copy of her thesis."

*THE VAMPIRE'S CRYPT: VAMPIRE STATS (p.115)*

Divine Magic: Replace "River Eyes" (which is actually a spirit magic spell) with another use of "Drown".

Although Gloranthan vampires do not have characteristic POW, they suck divine spells and POW from their victims. Sucked POW lasts only until sunrise, but can be sacrificed for the few Vivamort divine spells, or made into enchantments. Every time a vampire drains a victim to zero magic points (rendering them unconscious) either the latest divine spell for which the victim sacrificed or 1 point of POW is stolen. The vampire must overcome an almost irresistable urge not to go into a feeding frenzy at the sight of a helpless victim that has just yielded their last magic point. If the victim dies, no POW or spells are gained. (Thanks to Maurice "Boris" Beyke for help with this clarification).

*(Editor's note: The above is also MOB's own unofficial ruling. But for now it looks like the best way to square up the Vampire's use of divine magic. I personally favour the view that vampires have their own unique magic which is similar to sorcery but requires POW (blood) sacrifice from their victims to work.)*

which was lighter flowed upward, and was called the Primal Ocean or First Waters. That part of the waters which was solid floated to the top, and became the Broad Earth. That part of the Earth which was not bound was lifted up and placed above the Earth, and became known as the Sky or the Primal Flame. That part of the Primal Flame which was impure was cast out of Heaven, and was later called Umath the Destroyer, who started the Godswar and ended the process of creation." Alternate last verse: "The Earth seduced the Sky, tarnishing the dome of the Heavens. It cast off impurities, which were later called Umath the Destroyer, whose final act was to separate Earth and Sky forever." (XXIX. 21-006) The use of eunuchs as court functionaries has long been a practise in the theocratic queendom of Esrolia. The custom was taken from the East, and, over many centuries, expanded upon; there are now 33 distinct grades. (XXIX. 21-007) *[This entry is regrettably no longer legible. It listed, in graphic detail and with diagrams, the distinctions between the 33 various types of eunuch, ranging from the enigmatic "false" eunuch, through to the most extreme measure - the eunuch who has had all his privy parts removed; a split bamboo tube is inserted into the bladder so that unfortunate may pass water. Theo. P.]* (XXIX. 21-008) The operation itself is cheap, quick and simple, though not without a fair measure of pain (particularly if the patient is mature). The cost of the procedure is fixed by matriarchal statute at 5 taels of silver and can only be carried out by a eunuch-priest of the Asrelia cult *[an Esrolian tael - an ancient unit of measurement no longer used except a payment for these operations - is worth approximately 23 guilders, Theo. P.]* Though the

# Coven of Five Part two

## By Eric Q. Bogwort

# Larcemal

### Third Of The Coven

*Larcemal is third among the Five, and the most fearsome to behold. Larcemal is after Ornaya because its kind lived in the darkness before they were attracted to the light. There is a lesson there, Mehmet my son, one which you have read about in the Tome of the Inspired Saint.*

*"Mehmet my son, beware Larcemal, Thing of Spiders. This is a lesson which I am loth to teach you, but which must be learned. A magician's weapon is knowledge; knowledge protects him more surely than the thousand-jewelled armour of Kirijann, and is a sword sharper than the steel-biting blade of the wizard of Enkloso.*

*"Larcemal is a great spider with the stench of chaos about it. Ten eyes see the world with hatred, and two great fangs seek to poison it. A strand of Larcemal's web is as thick as the waist of one of the eunuchs of Princess Korisrama the Virgin, and as strong as ten of the fine warhorses in the barracks of Company of Fiery Truth.*

*"Heed well the tale of a sorcerer on the Isle of Jang in the east. Jang had one city, and was ruled by sorcerer-priests whose vying for leadership was not always restrained to peaceable means. Nobody knows what happened to Jang once the Great Curse came upon the seas, but we thank the Saints that the Curse came.*

*"The tale goes that an aspiring sorcerer of Jang set about summoning the Thing of Spiders in a great ritual. When Larcemal appeared the sorcerer beseeched it to destroy his rival; the Spider-Thing agreed, asking in return that the summoner should erect a shrine to her and her spawn once Jang was in his grasp. Eagerly the sorcerer agreed, and astride the back of the daemon they set off through the city in search of his rival.*

*"Alas, for Larcemal's wrath was not confined to the ruler of the city; wherever her venom dropped the populace were transformed into her spawn; and whatever he did, her summoner could do less than Mrolak the Unmover to stop it. Now they say Jang is a ruin populated by spider-like monsters, ruled by an insane king who is half spider, half man. Remember well this tale, Mehmet my son."*

## Introduction

Larcemal is a huge daemonic spider, possessing a chaos taint. Of the Five, Larcemal is the most fearsome. Its usual form is that of a gargantuan spider, with a human face placed between eight spider's eyes.

## Worship

Worship is conducted using a summoning ritual exactly as described in The Horned God cult in Gods of Glorantha. Followers of Larcemal are very hard to find indeed, although devotees of other members of the Coven often employ her Divine Magic through discorporation. Followers of Ornaya are closer to Larcemal than most others. The following Divine Magic is available from Larcemal:

**Common:** Command Lesser Spawn of Larcemal, Summon Greater Spawn of Larcemal, Summon Larcemal.

**Special:** Daemon Pact, Spawnvenom (5).

## Summons

Summoning Larcemal is a long and arduous task, and has been attempted perhaps four times in history. Very often the summoner goes insane, since Larcemal's manifestation is accompanied by

## Lesser Spawn of Larcemal

Lesser spawn of Larcemal are produced from the Spawnvenom Divine spell and thousands of them are always found about Larcemal itself. Aside from the fact that they appear in copious quantities and are slightly unnerving, they are pretty much harmless unless the referee wishes to rule otherwise.

## Greater Spawn of Larcemal

Greater spawn of Larcemal have two sources. Firstly, they are hatched by Larcemal itself. Secondly, Greater Spawn venom turns other creatures into Greater Spawn. Spawn look like giant spiders of red and black hue, with prominent human heads at the front of their abdomen. Either side of this head are two pincers which are the source of the monsters' bite attack. All Greater Spawn hate surface dwellers, and are always hostile to them.

| *characteristics* | | *average* | *attributes* |
|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 3D6 | 10-11 | Move: 6 m/SR |
| CON | 5D6 | 17-18 | Fatigue: 29 |
| SIZ | 4D10 | 22 | Hit Points: 20 |
| INT | 2D10 | 11 | Magic Points: 14 |
| POW | 4D6 | 14 | DEX SR: 2 |
| DEX | 4D6 | 14 | |

| *location* | *melee* | *missile* | *points* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| r fourth leg | 01 | 01 | 4/4 | (.16) |
| l fourth leg | 02 | 02 | 4/4 | (.16) |
| r third leg | 03 | 03 | 4/4 | (.16) |
| l third leg | 04 | 04 | 4/4 | (.16) |
| abdomen | 05-08 | 05-11 | 4/10 | (.40) |
| r second leg | 09-10 | 12 | 4/4 | (.16) |
| l second leg | 11-12 | 13 | 4/4 | (.16) |
| r first leg | 13-14 | 14 | 4/4 | (.16) |
| l first leg | 15-16 | 15 | 4/4 | (.16) |
| head | 17-20 | 16-20 | 0/7 | (.33) |

If a leg is reduced to negative total Hit Points, the Greater Spawn counts damage down to zero towards his Total Hit Point loss, and is not incapacitated. If a Spawn loses two legs on one side, halve its Move Rate; if it loses three, quarter it; if it loses all four, the Spawn can no longer move.

ARMOUR: 4 point chitin.

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Attack%* | *Damage* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | 6 | 50+3 | 1D6+1D6+Venom |

SKILLS: Dodge 15+3, Hide 40-12, Sneak 80-12, Climb 100+3.

ABILITIES: If a Greater Spawn penetrates armour with its bite, it injects a venom with POT equal to its Magic Points. If this venom overcomes the Magic Points of the victim, he suffers the effect of the Spawnvenom spell. If the victim is unfortunate enough to survive this, he will slowly transform into one of the Greater Spawn; his characteristics remaining unchanged. This process takes two to three weeks. Strangely enough, this venom only affects humans.

VULNERABILITIES: Greater Spawn are Demoralised by fire.

hundreds of thousands of unrestrained Lesser Spawn. Precisely where a Summon <Larcemal> spell could be obtained (aside from Larcemal) is an unanswerable question. Presumably somewhere on the Isle of Jang one could be found, if that abomination survived the Closing.

Should anybody attempt such a feat, Larcemal has SIZ 200, and POW 150. The ritual required to summon her is of great complexity. We have not presented statistics here for Larcemal, since we consider these to be largely irrelevant to most games.

## Seeking Out Larcemal

This is the most common method of gaining the use of Larcemal's Divine Magic. Larcemal resides in a stinking pit at the edge of the Plains of Plenty, a fungoid wonderland.

# Gordol

## Fourth among the Five

*Gordol is most like us among the Five, Mehmet my son, and he is numbered fourth because a part of him has Man as his form, and man was the last of the higher order of things that was made. The daemon Gordol is known under many names, but in all guises he is just as evil. But you must learn this lesson, Mehmet my son, because a magician's weapon is knowledge; knowledge protects more surely than the thousand-jewelled armour of Kirijann, and is a sword sharper than the steel-biting blade of the wizard of Enkloso.*

*"Gordol's form is like a man, but great in stature, and with a third eye in his forehead. His skin is more purple than the royal robes of the city kings, and his hands are clawed like the feet of a roc. Worst of all, Mehmet my son, are the three eyes of Gordol, for he is the Enslaver, the Three-Souled.*

*"First there is the Eye of Blank Memories; a glance from this eye and you will become more mindless than the four thousand Zombies of Ompalam. Second, there is the Eye of Tortuous Submission, which makes the will of the mightiest man melt like a Candle in the River of Fire. The Third Eye is the Eye of Joyous Adulation, this eye will disillusion you ten-thousand times more than the Hazia you see those traders at the docks peddling sometimes.*

*"There is a tale told in Afadjann of a man who tired of his wife's flirting with other men, and the disobedience of his two concubines. He approached Gordol and asked him for a gift of the power of his Three Eyes. For a while the man was happy; his wife became utterly but unwillingly obedient; one of his concubines set about the household chores without a whisper of complaint; and the other gladly appeased every whim of the man.*

*"Eventually the man of Afadjann tired of things in the new way: he discovered his wife had never taken another lover; he missed the disobedient laughter of his first concubine; and he became bored with the mindless obeisance paid by the other. Alas, for when he asked the daemon Gordol to restore things to their norm, the daemon refused, and showed the man the souls of his three loved ones enslaved in the Pits of Perdition. Gordol eventually relented; the three women were set free, and the man of Afadjann even now slaves in the Pits doing work enough for three.*

*"Remember, Mehmet my son, an Afreet will always be the last to laugh."*

# Gordol the Enslaver

He of Many Names, Three-Souled.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 53 | Move: 6 m/sr | |
| CON | 60 | Fatigue: 113-10=103 | |
| SIZ | 40 | Hit Points: 50 | |
| INT | 20 | Magic Points: 33/50/26 | |
| POW | $33^1/50^2/26^3$ | DEX SR: 1 | |
| DEX | 50 | | |
| APP | 4 | | |

Note: POW totals correspond to eyes.

| *location* | *melee* | *missile* | *points* |
|---|---|---|---|
| right leg | 01-04 | 01-03 | 30/17 |
| left leg | 05-08 | 04-06 | 30/17 |
| abdomen | 09-11 | 07-10 | 30/17 |
| chest | 12 | 11-15 | 30/21 |
| right arm | 13-15 | 16-17 | 30/13 |
| left arm | 16-18 | 18-19 | 30/13 |
| head | 19-20 | 20 | 30/17 |

ARMOUR: Gordol's purple skin acts as 30 point armour.

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Attack%* | *Damage* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Eye | 1 | POW1 vs.MP | Erase Memory |
| 2nd Eye | 1 | POW2 vs.MP | Tortuous Submission |
| 3rd Eye | 1 | POW3 vs.MP | Joyous Adulation |
| Whip* | | 1(1/R) 750% | 2D8+5D3 |

* — Gordol's whip is a huge two-handed affair, with a range of 25 meters.

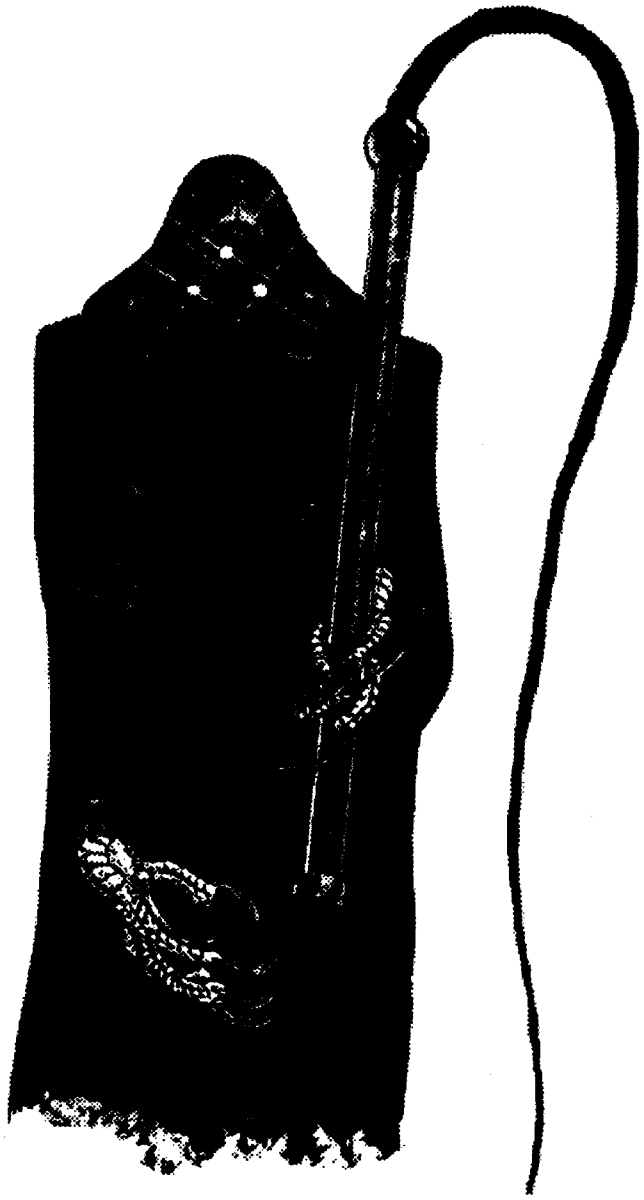
Note that Gordol may use all four attacks on SR 1, but his whip attack must be directed at one of the recipients of an attack from any eye. Each eye may be used against a different foe and functions with its individual POW total. Gordol's magic eye attacks have the exact same effect as the spells given above, except that they last for as long as Gordol wishes.

TALENTS: Gordol is a moron who has little subtle knowledge to offer. He is very accomplished in the discipline of torture, however.

SKILLS: Dodge 300%.

ABILITIES: Eye attacks. Each eye functions with its individual POW total. Incoming spells are matched successively against all three Magic Point totals. Spirits may attack one Magic Point total at a time, and must reduce all three to zero to possess Gordol. Gordol may attack in Spirit Combat with all three Magic Point totals. If a Magic Point total is reduced to zero, the relevant eye can no longer function.

Gordol can use his three powers against a foe of a summoner on his behalf, if they so desire. The price for this is that Gordol becomes custodian of the victims souls (which he gets to remove to the Pits of Perdition), and that every year, for the rest of his life the summoner must give Gordol a third of his POW. Victims who are to be subjected to this by the summoner must be presented to Gordol during a ritual; their INT becomes 6, they lose their POW total, and their Magic Point total remains constant. If the victim's MP total ever becomes zero, the body dies.



## Introduction

Gordol is a monstrous, ogreish daemon, in reality a grovelling servant to some greater deity. Gordol can only ever adopt a single form, in the likeness of a man with three eyes. Gordol has three POW totals; he is not three-souled as is sometimes thought, all three POW's share the same INT.

## Worship

Worship is conducted using a summons ritual exactly as described in The Horned God cult in Gods of Glorantha. The following Divine Magic is available from Gordol:

**Common:** Summon <Gordol>

**Special:** Daemon Pact, Erase Memory (2), Tortuous Submission (2), Joyous Adulation (3).

## Summons

Gordol has many names in many places, and a summon spell for him may be found widely. He is especially popular in the

land of Afadjann, and in Peloria he is often invoked by Collosseum masters and suchlike.

The summons rituals for Gordol vary widely. In Afadjann they feature sacrifice of slaves whose souls will accompany Gordol back to his Hellpit; in Peloria Gordol can be summoned in a Collosseum or similar place and representatives of specific deities must all be present; among the shamans of the Pent nomads, Gordol is sometimes called forth using a matrix of staves each bearing one of the binding signs of slavery.

## Seeking Out Gordol

Gordol lives in the dungeon-like Pits of Perdition. Consult the Seeking Out the Five section for further details.

# Egrekol

## Last of the Coven

*Ah hello Mehmet my son. Are you feeling fine today? I hope you ate a breakfast of only Junjup fruit and leavened bread as I told you, for today you need a stomach tougher than that of the Great Hydra of the mountains, so foul is the daemon about which I will teach you. Remember Mehmet my son, I must teach you this because a magician's weapon is knowledge; knowledge protects him more surely than the thousand-jewelled armour of Kirijann, and is a sword sharper than the steel-biting blade of the wizard of Enkloso.*

*"Egrekol is last among the Five because he is lowest among them all; numbered among the carrion which prey on the dead and death. Egrekol looks like an Agimori man; he is short and plump. He is surrounded by the stench of decay fifty times worse than the stench around the embalmers' place on the Street of the Dead! Egrekol is more filthy than the entrails left out for Lord Vulture by superstitious butchers down at the Market of Succour; stay away from this wretch, Mehmet my son; leave him to meddle with the barbarous witch-doctors of the leech-people.*

*"It harrows me to relate this account of such vile propensity, Mehmet my son but I must tell to you the tale of the Vizir of Annitrea, a man of great wealth and prowess who owned many slaves. A twisted soul, the Vizir followed many strange and foreign gods, and indulged in the most hideous of practices, including feasts in which blood was drunk by the Vizir and his guests in gory rites.*

*"A power crazy man, the Vizir invoked Egrekol often to watch over his feasts, and each time the Vizir gave Egrekol his due portion of the offering. But the Vizir grew less satisfied each time, and greedily desired a greater gain from his spectacles. Egrekol was much put out, but agreed that on the next feast the Vizir must consume his portion of the blood offering. When the time came for the next feast, the Vizir greedily drank from Egrekol's cup, and Egrekol drank from that of the Vizir. Alas, for Egrekol's cup was never empty, and unable to control his greed, the Vizir drank and drank until his eyes bulged from his head, and his swollen belly burst forth, spilling blood and bile all about the feasting hall. Beware the wiles of Egrekol, Mehmet my son."*

## Special Larcemal Divine Spell

**Spawnvenom** **5 points**
*touch, instant, non-stackable, reusable*

Spawnvenom injects a magically potent venom into the victim, and takes effect on SR 10 of the round in which it is cast; for it to work, the caster must touch the victim and draw blood in the place where he touches. This delightful spell turns the target's innards into spider-like creatures which are actually tiny little replicas of Larcemal (Lesser Spawn).

On SR 10 of the round on which the spell takes effect, and on the two subsequent rounds, subtract 1D6 from all the target's characteristics except SIZ and POW. The target is incapacitated during this time. If at the end of the three rounds none of his characteristics have been reduced to zero, he survives.

Characteristic points lost during the three rounds can only be regained through Restore Health spells or similar measures. Few people survive the experience sane.

## Special Gordol Divine Spells

**Erase Memory** **2 points**
*touch, temporal, reusable*

This spell reduces the INT of the recipient, once Magic Points have been overcome, to 6 for its duration. The victim cannot really think for himself, and is likely to respond to simple incentives. Thus: "if you wash up, you can have that sweetmeat". This spell is only effective against creatures with POW.

**Tortuous Submission** **2 points**
*touch, temporal, reusable*

Under the effect of this spell, once his Magic Points are overcome, the recipient will not disobey the commands of the caster, although still retaining freedom of thought. In addition, the recipient is subject to a great sense of frustration while under the effect of this spell. This spell is only effective against creatures with POW.

**Joyous Adulation** **3 points**
*touch, temporal, reusable*

This spell makes the recipient become dedicated to the caster for its duration. During this time, the recipient will do everything in his power to please the caster. He retains all memories prior to the spells effect, and need not contravene old loyalties unless he wishes to. Under this spells effect, the recipient has a look of moronic pleasure appear on his face every time he pleases his new master. Where two loyalties contradict, the target may do nothing (acts as if Befuddled) until his master issues a new command. The target's Magic Points must be overcome for this spell to be successful. This spell is only effective against creatures with POW.

## Special Egrekol Divine Spell

**Blood Offering** **2 points**
*ritual, reusable*

This spell must be cast in Egrekol's presence, and affects all active worshippers of Egrekol at the ritual. The spell stirs up a need to drink blood among all those present; the bloods source being sacrificial victims. These need not be sentient, although the benefits are greater if they are.
Firstly, four-fifths of the blood must be offered to Egrekol, the remainder may be drunk by those present; the more that is consumed the greater the benefit. Each litre of blood consumed gains the drinker 1D6 Magic Points if the blood is from a sentient victim, or 1 if from a non-sentient victim. The referee should judge how much blood is available and can be consumed.
The Magic Points are lost at a rate of 1D6-1 per hour, if they are not otherwise expended.

# Egrekol, Drinker of Blood, Foul Abomination

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 50 | Move: 9 m/sr | |
| CON | 72 | Fatigue: 132-15=117 | |
| SIZ | 23 | Hit Points: 48 | |
| INT | 33 | Magic Points: Variable. (3D100). | |
| DEX | 25 | DEX SR: 1 | |
| APP | 3 | | |

| *location* | *melee* | *missile* | *points* |
|---|---|---|---|
| right leg | 01-04 | 01-03 | 15/16 |
| left leg | 05-08 | 04-06 | 15/16 |
| abdomen | 09-11 | 07-10 | 15/16 |
| chest | 12 | 11-15 | 15/20 |
| right arm | 13-15 | 16-17 | 15/12 |
| left arm | 16-18 | 18-19 | 15/12 |
| head | 19-20 | 20 | 15/16 |

ARMOUR: Egrekol's fifteen point armour stems from daemonically tough skin.

| *weapon* | *sr* | *attk%* | *damage* | *par%* | *pts* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scream* | 1 | MP vs.INT | Incapacitation | — | — |
| Bite*1 | 4 | 550% | Blood Drain | — | — |
| Stone Dagger*2 | 4 | 340% | 1D4+2+4D6 | 70% | 12 |
| Spiked Buckler | 4 | 300% | 1D4+2+4D6 | 450% | 50 |

* — Egrekol's scream is identical that of a ghoul in most respects, except that instead of Demoralising foes it incapacitates them.

*1 — Egrekol possesses a tongue which is a leech; if he succeeds in a bite roll (usually against an incapacitated or immobilised foe) on SR 10 of that round, and each successive round, he drains 5D6 Fatigue from the victim. Once twice the victim's maximum Fatigue points have been drained, Egrekol drains STR instead. Points drained in this way are added straight to his Magic Point total.

*2 — Egrekol's dagger drains Magic Points equal to Hit Point loss when he strikes with it.

TALENTS: Egrekol has very little to offer. To most he would appear to be mad.

ABILITIES: Egrekol needs to drink blood to maintain his Magic Point total. Aside from his bite attack, each litre of blood he drinks from sacrificial victims or from his Cauldron of Unfilled Vileness gains him 1D6 Magic Points. Egrekol loses Magic Points at a rate of 1D6-1 Magic Points per turn.

Egrekol usually carries his Cauldron of Unfilled Vileness, which never empties of blood, being filled by sacrifices made by his devotees throughout the world. He may lend this to followers; the price is usually that the borrower must drink Egrekol's share (50 Litres in a sitting), must supply enough of his own blood to fill it, or similarly unreasonable requests.

VULNERABILITIES: Egrekol suffers from crossing through running water. Doing so results him taking damage to total Hit Points and Magic Points equal to the STR of flow of the water.

## Introduction

Egrekol is a foul daemon with no obvious allegiances or affiliations. Some say that he was once one of the Hsunchen Leech people. He appears as a small, plump Agimori with misaligned eyes which seem to look right through you.

## Worship

Worship is conducted as with The Horned God cult in Gods of Glorantha. Egrekol makes the following Divine spells available to his devotees:

**Common:** Summon <Egrekol>

**Special:** Daemon Pact, Blood Offering (2).

## Summons

The summons ritual for Egrekol should be very simple due to the nature of his Blood Offering spell. Typical components usually include sumptuous surroundings or a battlefield, the stench of death, and a blood sacrifice in which the blood is channelled to encircle the area in which Egrekol is expected to appear.

## Seeking Out Egrekol

Egrekol is found picking among the dead at the Battlefield of Eternal Sorrow.

# Oliver Dickinson's

# CHAOTIC FEATURE COMPETITION

Honour to the eight who submitted entries, Carl Fink, David Ford, Rachel Gardner, Oliver Jovanovic, Vesa Lehtinen, Jamie MacLaren, Keith Nellist, Jamie O'Shaughnessy, and Paul Woodman-see, and my apologies for referring to them henceforth by initials and abbreviating their often entertaining accounts, but I only have a short space for comments, and I want to explain some of the reasoning behind my choices.

I got enough for a whole new table, especially from J.O'S., who sent a mass of variants on tying characteristics to elemental runes, so that they wax and wane with the season, weather, or time of day, a variety of Chaotic Limbs, and tables of results for two Ceremony spells, Attain Perversion of Head/Breath. In my announcement of the competition I used words like 'original', 'weird', and 'unusual', but I have to say that true originality/weirdness was rare. Admittedly, they are not easy to achieve; my admiration for major scenario writers like Michael O'Brien and Jon Quaife is high, for Greg Stafford's amazingly fertile imagination boundless - I have enough trouble thinking up Griselda plots. But I mainly got variants, often interesting enough, on two main themes of the standard Chaos Features and Curse of Thed lists, that is, features affecting the size, function or nature of parts of the body, and special vulnerabilities of various kinds (e.g. water affects skin like acid, which cropped up twice); some like sticky skin or fire breath do appear in The Big Rubble and other sources. I cite a few worth noting that GMs can fill out for themselves: Fire Grasp (J.M.: anything inflammable ignites when held), Detachable Hands (J.O'S.: can be hurled and attack like claws on their own), Dysfunctional Organs (K.N.: organ does wrong job, e.g. eyes pump blood, brain in backside, etc.), Low Melting Point (K.N.: when gets warmer than normal, e.g. through hot weather or vigorous exercise, creature becomes gorp until cools down), Animal Fear/Hate and Insult to Animals (J.M.: Demoralised/made Fanatical by/attacked on sight by a particular species or class of animals), Nest Site (J.M.: insect species uses creature's surface/body as nest), Vulnerable to Speech (V.L.: creature takes damage, 1d6 suggested, to general HPs in any MR spent speaking by opponent).

I allowed some credit for ease of use in gaming, which works against several of V.L.'s suggestions, Totally Random (number of appendages is rolled for each MR in combat, each minute otherwise), Transfer (creature and its possible opponent transfer their abilities erratically, including attributes, HP values, and souls), and Mirror-man (assumes appearance of opponent or anyone who notices it; if multiple opponents, can have multiple features from all. SIZ will change, but not HPs). Similarly, J.M.'s Magic Instability (all spirit magic cast will have an opposite effect, not necessarily the same one) would require careful preparation.

Some would work better as curses than "natural" Chaotic features, like a requirement to move continuously or lose 1 HP per MR (J.O'S.) and K.N.'s disgustingly funny Reverse Eating I and II (with I you simply eat and excrete through the opposite organ, bad enough, but with II you eat turds and "egest" grass, small animals, particularly horrible if the creatures emerge alive! It could even be used as a method of Resurrection: you get eaten, the resulting turds are eaten by something with this feature, then you are excreted alive, but if the creature is small or constipated enough!). K.N.'s Loud Voice (normal speech is deafening, a shout can be heard for miles) would make for good role-playing if received as a curse, also a useful last resort for GMs, since it would probably kill at close range (anyone seen *The Shout*?), certainly deafen permanently and so probably force characters' retirement. A mild version of R.G.'s Eraser Attack (best for disembodied spirits; destroys 1 point or 5% of a characteristic, skill, or spell with a successful spirit attack) would be a way for GMs to cut characters down to size.

Well, there is plenty of food for thought here (I will slip in J.O'S.'s Eats common substance (e.g. rock, wood, metal) instead of food, though Trolls do this anyway!). But it is time to make a decision and let Editor(s) decide whether to print any of what I have received at greater length. I append ten further nasty/intriguing examples.

## The Winner

So, for the winning feature, which would be readily understood, easy to play, and conducive to good role-playing, I nominate Vesa Lehtinen's Chaos creature that does not exist for any other than its immediate opponent/victim. Others cannot see or attack it in any way; they just wonder why their friend is yelling, where that wound came from, etc.

# Unusual Chaotic Features

**Fade (D.F.):** creature is able to fade temporarily out of existence and become undetectable, disappearing to reappear about 1 second later and thus avoiding all attacks (including by magic) in that SR; this is a skill like Dodge, starting at 1d100% and increased by experience (if over 100%, can be split over several SRs), and cannot be used while spell-casting or attacking. There is no need to state on which SR the Fade will take place, though it must obviously precede an attack. A Fumble will mean that the creature never reappears.

**Gorp Slugger (D.F.):** tube from back, 9 APs, hangs over shoulder, can launch one random gorp per MR at cost of 1 abdomen HP, at DEX x 5% chance to hit, range = CON in m.

**Stomach Attack (O.J.):** creature attacks by disgorging stomach lining, with 50% chance to hit 3 x 3m. area in front of it, cannot be parried, only dodged. Those hit take POT 10 acid attack against 3 random locations on SR 10 each round, escaping only by cutting through stomach (3 AP), with attacks at half-normal because of its confining nature. Attacks from outside are at normal level, but damage over 3 HP affects the trapped person. This will work for 3 successive victims, but the stomach must then be healed to be usable like this again.

**Tongue Attack (C.F. & O.J.):** creature possesses immense prehensile tongue, dangling out of mouth to below waist. In addition to normal attacks, tongue will attempt to thrust itself down opponent's throat; if successful (chance starts at 25%, attacks as SR 3 weapon, typically 8 AP, can be parried or dodged), will do so, doing 1 HP to head location. Victim must roll CON x 3 then and in subsequent MRs to overcome nausea and function normally. In next MR, tongue reaches stomach and starts sucking out body fluids, doing 1d6 HP to general HPs on SR 10 each round (armour does not protect against this or original damage). Attempts to hit tongue must be Aimed, and a miss may hit victim. Tongue is resistant to acid damage, and may secrete POT 1D10 acid itself.

**Growing Pains (J.M.):** grows one feature (1d6: 1 head hair, 2 tail, 3 claws, 4 fingernails, 5 toenails, 6 teeth) at an extreme rate of 5 cm. per CON point per day. This can be controlled by cutting or breaking, which may result in temporary loss of CON due to pain, at GM's option.

**Raw Spot (J.M.):** a vital organ (e.g. brain, heart, lungs, liver, veins) emerges on the outside of the body. No armour can be worn in that location, as it will rub against the organ, causing damage or even death.

**Ignores Substance (K.N.):** the creature cannot interact with a specified substance: it cannot see or feel it, and objects made of it will pass straight through the creature without harm.

**[Produce] Living Turds (K.N.):** these crawl around looking for shoes to smear themselves on, and are probably disease-ridden. *[A nice addition to the attractions of a Chaotic base. O.D.]*

**Crystallize (P.W.):** creature turns into mobile crystalline-looking rock, with APs equal to HPs of each location (any armour but leather will wear away the natural protection), need no longer eat, drink, or breathe. Damage that gets past APs has no effect unless equals or exceeds HPs, in which case location shatters and is gone for ever. APs can be Repaired, but Heal is useless.

**Vital Location (P.W.):** all pain cells and vital organs, including eyes, nose, and mouth, are in one location; damage to this has the same effects as in the standard rules for damage to the head. All other locations are functional, but do not count against the creature's HPs, nor is there any effect for cutting them off *[though it will presumably fall down if enough legs are chopped off. O.D.]*

# Rumours

*T* - *This indicates that the rumour is true*
*F* - *This indicates that the rumour is false*
*M* - *This indicates that the rumour is so general as to be meaningless.*
*R* - *This indicates that the rumour may or may not be true at the referee's option.*
*B* - *This indicates that the rumour is generally true but that it also has a substantial false component.*
*A* - *This indicates that the rumour is too awful to even think about.*

Arolanit has been described as "gray... like the radiance was taken from the light." This is because of the Brithini practice of free tapping. With their own unique rituals they have managed to suck the vitality from the environment itself. T

In Orlanthi society the ability to belch is highly respected, as it shows the strength of one's Inner Wind. R

The "Blind King" of Blind King's Hill in the Big Rubble, is actually a Mistress Race Troll Vampire. Get it? B

The existence of grotaron in Glorantha is a really good idea R

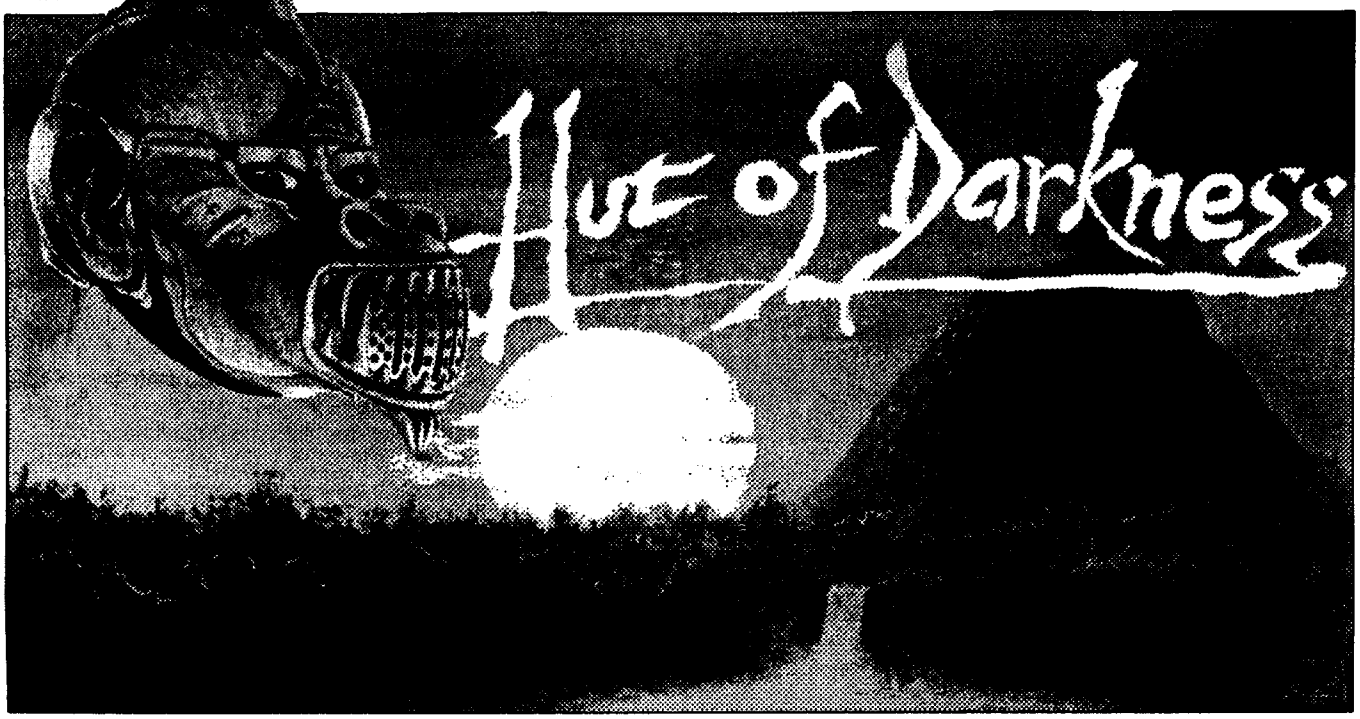
Everything, bad, awful, sickening, and really far-fetched that the Brithini say about their arch-enemies the Vadeli is completely true. T

The Seven Mothers Cult of Queen Deezola ("Binder Within") teaches much earth magic, as well as Sustain Life, Prevent Decay and Protect Location. I wonder how she learnt those spells? T/M

Never bet "heads" on the Toss of Uleria Temple currency (or, indeed, "tails"). B

The next Gloranthan releases will be late. R

statute forbids a higher fee, this charge does not include the return of the actual severed parts, for which the canny surgeon may demand upwards of 150 taels. As no eunuch may serve at court without a sealed jar containing his missing organs, it is imperative that he get them, and so must pay the price. There is a flourishing black market in these organs: frantic eunuchs will pay any price to get their parts back - indeed, anyone's parts - if theirs go missing or are stolen. (XXIX. 21-009) One of the most curious customs of the Esrolian city of Willford is the day, once a year, when the men dress up in women's clothes and perform women's duties, in the hope the earth-mother will not punish them for being men. *This custom was once observed here in Nochet in ancient times, but has fallen into disuse. An attempt was made to revive the festival by the last matriarch but one, my mother, the blessed Eudoxia II [whose tongue, it was said, was sharper than her axe maidens' halberds], but this was not successful. EUDOXUS, deputy chief librarian.* (XXIX. 21-010) Paramount among the shamans of Pent is Little Dog, who studied under Sheng Solaris. This primacy is contested by Joloi




# Introduction

## Apologies Now

This scenario, which bears more than a passing resemblance to a certain film about the Vietnam war, is divided, like Gaul, into three sections:

PART ONE "The Esrolian Queen", wherein the adventurers board the clockwork-driven Esrolian Queen and venture upriver to a waterfall known as the Thundershower.

PART TWO "Rune Metal Jacket", wherein the party scales the cliffs down which the falls cascade, and continue on foot to a native village deep in the jungle.

PART THREE "The Valley of the Trolls", wherein the characters arrive at the village to do battle with the mysterious new headman.

## Setting

This adventure takes place in the wild uplands of eastern Wenelia, and begins in the small coastal trading city of Peelos, which, like many of the enclaves perched at the river mouths along this desolate shore, is ruled by a Malkioni Trader Prince. Peelos sits at the mouth of the Volior River (also known as the Solanthi River), which winds its way down from the Solanthi lands of the great chieftain Greymane. The Trader Prince of Peelos however, acknowledges no overlord, but there is significant trade along the river between Peelos and the Solanthi. From Peelos, ships travel regularly along the New Coast to the great Holy Country ports of Nochet and Rhigos to the east, and to Kaxtorplose and Handra to the west. For more information, refer to the Maniria chapter of the Genertela Book, or the Holy Country section of the *RuneQuest Companion*.

The adventurers are hired by a trader who plies the Volior and its tributaries. One of these tributaries is the Green River, which runs deep into the jungle below the Pelushi Volcano. The Volcano is surrounded by thick rainforest, which thrives in the rich volcanic soil. Like the tribes of Caladraland to the east, the natives here are simple horticulturists who practise slash-and-burn agriculture. They led a primitive existence, worshipping their ancestors and occasionally propitiating the volcano. The natives' contact with the outside world is limited to the few traders who make the dangerous river journey, to exchange metals and trinkets with them for the beautiful feathers of jungle birds, certain exotic herbs, and other rare commodities.

The natives share and compete in the jungle with a small but vibrant community of Green Elves, descendants of refugees from the Arstola Forest. These Aldryami also carry out limited trade with the humans of Peelos, and are generally considered friendly by the merchants of the Trader Prince.

## Recruitment

In return for certain favours, past and future, the trader Thurla Santhwain has agreed to carry out a mission on behalf of the Trader Prince of Peelos. She seeks to hire a gang of swordsmen, preferably with experience, and offers each recruit a healthy sum, more than enough to turn the head of the average blade, especially in these parts. Thurla sizes up each candidate, and offers a fee that can be abstracted as 10L x their best weapon attack. If a non-fighting type complains that his skills are more magical than martial, Thurla just snaps, "I am looking for swords, not rabbits feet. Take my offer or leave it."

Thurla will not discuss the nature of the mission, beyond saying it is a trade trip "just a little further upriver than I normally go - that's why I want you guys along with me". It is local knowledge that she regularly runs trade trips up the Green River.

# Part the First: The Esrolian Queen

Throughout their voyage up-river two principal NPCs figure: Thurla (pronounced "Ter-la"), an influential trader and well-seasoned bitch; and Mohare, Thurla's dwarven henchmen, an eccentric little engineer who ensures that the machinery which powers the Esrolian Queen is kept running.

On no account will Thurla or Mohare join a fight by choice, preferring to withdraw below deck as circumstances dictate. Thurla is paying the player characters to fight for her, and that's what she expects them to do.

## The Esrolian Queen

The Esrolian Queen is the pride of Thurla's trade fleet. It is a screw-driven flat-bottomed barge, 12 meters long and in good condition. Below decks is taken up with cargo space and clockwork machinery. Thurla orders this area strictly off limits. On deck there is a wheel house above a small cabin. All surfaces of the deck are accessible by small wooden ladders. There is an arbalest on a swivel mount at the bows, wrapped in an oilskin. Ammunition is stored in a sturdy waterproof box beside it.

Show the players the deck plan of the Queen (Handout #1). Have them indicate their positions, state of readiness, and Perception skills being used.

## Setting Off

Once Thurla's party is assembled, the Esrolian Queen sets out from Peelos for the upriver journey to the confluence of the Volior and the Green River. The little craft soon passes the cleared lands around the city, and enters the jungle, which grows more thicker and lush with every mile. In the distance, the volcano is an imposing sight, belching smoke towards the heavens.

The trip to where the rivers meet is uneventful and takes all day. The Esrolian Queen passes several similar trading vessels and a number of natives paddling their canoes. Just as the sun is setting Thurla pulls in at a tiny settlement where the party can rest for the night inside the stockade. This fort, known as Maldros (after the local tribe), is a rough frontier town where the characters get their first glimpse of the natives, even though the ones that hang around the settlement have fallen victim to civilized ways and vices. Lightly built, tawny-skinned Warerans, they are not unlike the people of Caladraland, although they speak a different language.

The Esrolian Queen leaves Maldros the following morning at dawn, and turns from the wider Volior into the Green River soon after. Although Yelm has barely cleared the horizon, already the jungle is awake with the calls and rustles of its countless inhabitants. The Queen plods lazily upstream against the current of the Green River - actually more of a muddy brown - with Thurla at the wheel and Mohare below deck, swearing and cursing as he gets the little boat up to full speed.

Note that the Queens method of propulsion (clockwork) is unknown to the player characters, and is describably exotic. The local natives believe Thurla has a demon chained to the bottom of her boat, something which the player characters may well believe too. Only Mohare knows how to run the immense coiled spring which powers the boat, which he built himself.

## The Letter

The settlement soon becomes lost in the impenetrable jungle behind the countless twists and turns of the Green River. As it is getting onto noon, Thurla reveals to the characters the true nature of the mission. Mohare takes the wheel as she calls the adventurers forward.

Their task is best explained in a letter she received from the Trader Prince of Peelos, which she shows them (Handout #2).

Once they have taken it in, Thurla spreads out a chart (Handout #3) and continues the briefing:

"This is the Green River and here is the Thundershower. The waterfall is as far as I will be accompanying you. It should take us about three days to reach it. Once there, I can offer you some of my sorcery magic, which will last long enough for you to reach Kunda and carry out the deed. It is up to you to find the village, which I believe lies somewhere along here. The only way I know to scale the cliff safely is here, where huge vines hang down to the valley floor. I am told that there is a path to the village from there. I advise you to stay on the path, as I'll not be sending out any search parties.

"Once you reach Kunda, you will have to make your own arrangements to kill the headman. Try not to kill any of the villagers; they're simply misguided at present, and once the headman's disposed of the elders will return from their jungle hideouts and reestablish the ways of ancestor worship. Whatever you do, don't attack him openly, or you'll be fighting every man, woman and child.

"Until we reach the Thundershower, I expect you to guard me and my property."

*In the Name of the Invisible God, who brought us Law. In the Name of the First Prophet Malkion, who brought us Solace of the Body. In the Name of the Second Prophet Hrestol, who brought us Joy of the Heart. In the Name of the Saint Goriant, who taught us Union with Solace. In the Name of the Visible Issaries, the Lord of Trade who dwells in Glory with the Creator. And in the Name of all the Visible Gods, manifestations of the Creator, who help us reach Union with Solace.*

*My dear Thurla,*

*I trust your trading goes well. I shall not pause to exchange pleasantries with you, as I am sure we know each other far too well for that.*

*My carpet still bears the stains where Wafruki crawled across it last night. As you well know, Wafruki was the shaman of the isolated village called Kunda, which lies beyond the Thundershower on the Green River. It's a post he's no longer able to occupy - I hope Daka Fal greets him warmly. With his dying gasps he told me of a new headman at the village, who has come out of the mountains and brought with him new ways - the ways of death. The younger warriors flocked to him, and the rest of the tribe soon followed, except for poor old Wafruki and a few old die-hards, who were soon driven out. The others went into hiding, but Wafruki tried to reestablish himself. In his absence, the tribe had become fanatical in their new devotion - unnaturally so. They nearly killed him: it took him until last night to die, which he did rather unthoughtfully on my carpet. Still, not a bad journey for one mortally wounded. Says a lot for berries and nuts, eh?*

*Thurla, I want this new headman terminated, with extreme prejudice. You shouldn't mistake him: Wafruki described him as being possessed of a most terrible countenance, more beast than man. To strengthen himself, he has a number of foreign mercenaries, but it seems his popularity is such now that he doesn't need them. He's got these coconut-headed simpletons eating out of the palm of his hand.*

*My daughter of Issaries, I'm sure I need not remind you of the odd service I've done for you. The more than fortunate search my troops made of Sterry's barge, even though we've known for years that he's been running Hazia. The most tragic firing of Strothelm's piers, and while the army was stationed so close! And they've still not found Hargo's vessel, even though thorough searches have been made - but you and I, Thurla, we know better. I've let you establish your position, and I'm sure you're interested in maintaining it. Political complexities prevent me from sending in the troops at this stage: besides which, the terrain is hardly favourable.*

*But I appeal to your better nature my dear, and I'm confident you've got one. Surely this man will come to threaten your trade in due course? I knew that I could count on your understanding.*

*If he's not gone by the end of Fire Season, I may see fit to impose a few new tariffs.*

*Ever your humble servant,*

*Graftus Attrachium, Trader Prince of Peelos.*

Handout #2

## The Croc

Morning stretches into afternoon, and the river widens somewhat, with sandy banks on either side. There are a lot of rotting

logs on the bank, some of which (Scan) have eyes.

Suddenly, Mohare, who is aft repairing the railing, falls in. He sinks immediately. As the players take stock of this, they are momentarily distracted by a sliding sound, followed by a soft splash as one of the "logs" on the western bank glides into the water and commences to swim towards where Mohare fell.

"Get him!", screams Thurla. Does she mean her engineer or the crocodile?

It takes the crocodile 3 melee rounds to reach Mohare, and it attacks him in the 4th. The party may shoot at it during this time if they have weapons handy. The arbalest requires a DEX x5 roll to untie the oilskin cover, and a further 4 rounds to load.

Rescuing Mohare requires a melee round to reach him, a round to grab him, and a round to return with him, a Swim roll being necessary each round. Failing this, he will drown, if he's not eaten first. Mohare cannot swim at all, and won't even attempt to grab hold of ropes or floats. If nobody looks like jumping in to rescue him, Thurla simply pushes in the person nearest to her. Mohare's engineering skills are vital to her business. and she can't afford to lose him.

## Aldryami Ambush

As the afternoon goldens into evening Yelm begins his fiery descent. Up ahead, Thurla notices a snag and, cursing, steers very close to the left bank.

Scanning the left bank reveal four figures in the brush. As the characters react an alien war cry whoops across the river. Suddenly, there is a lethal hiss as a flight of green-fletched arrows come whistling out of the jungle!

All four arrows have been Speedarted, and are aimed at the most obvious targets.

Thurla has had dealings with the elves of the jungle before, and commands the party to hold their fire. As four more missiles strike the craft, she begins calling out in a foreign tongue (Aldryami). If the player characters don't retaliate, the elves stop shooting immediately. If they continue to fire back, Thurla has her Fast Talk percentage each round to convince the elves she is a friend. In between her shouts to them, she screams at the party to put down their weapons.

Once the truce is reached, the four elves swing onto the boat with vines and have a brief chat with Thurla, in halting Maldrosite. Once they go, Thurla tells the characters that the elves said there were "dark folk" up the river. She says they did not elaborate further.

## Night Time

The Queen chugs another kilometre up the river before pulling in for the night. Thurla orders the group to set watches, and then retires below with Mohare. The cheerful sounds of the day are replaced by the monotonous dronings of the night. Despite the irritating insects that flock around the lanterns, nothing eventful occurs this night.

## Insect Swarm

Later that afternoon, the river widens again. Yelm may be going down, but is showing no signs of relenting. It is as humid and unpleasant as ever. Looking ahead, the river appears to be shimmering with the heat.

Scan will reveal that the shimmering is actually thousands of insects! When the boat comes closer, the characters see several skeletons of large animals on the banks, stripped clean. "Somebody steer!"-cries Thurla as she jumps through a trap door in the wheelhouse.

The insect swarm is the equivalent of a large hive (see Deluxe RQ Creatures Book, p.26). It takes the boat three melee rounds to pass through the swarm, if someone remains above deck to steer it. If all characters go below, the boat ploughs into the bank. Thurla will have to send someone up to steer it out. during which time they are exposed to insects for 3D4 melee rounds.

## Nightfall

Once again Thurla puts into the bank, this time checking carefully for insects. The night passes uneventfully again.

## Another Day on the River

As the Esrolian Queen heads further upstream, the river once again narrows. To either side, the jungle gets progressively thicker, until it forms a green fronded roof overhead. Dangling vines wetly slap in the characters' faces, and a new note creeps into the machinery as it struggles against the foliage.

## Additional Encounters

Late in the afternoon, the Queen reaches its destination. Just before the great Thundershower falls, the boat is ambushed by a band of crazed natives from the village of Kunda. If the Gamemaster

desires, additional river encounters may occur before the ambush. Suitable events might include a river toad attack (similar to the cliff toad, see Deluxe RQ Creatures Book. p.37), a gorp attempting to eat away the rudder (RQ Glorantha Book, p.28), a huge snake dropping down from the vines and attempting to constrict a character (RQ Creatures Book, p. 33) or perhaps even a raid by marauding apes, attempting to steal anything not nailed down (RQ Creatures Book, p. 13).

## Swinging Warriors

Soon the boat is in a eerie green cocoon of vines. A dull roar can be heard ahead.

Scanning (at -50% of normal chance) the jungle canopy to the right detects a group of naked humans, daubed in greenish mud, blending almost perfectly into the jungle background. Seconds later, the warriors swing down onto the deck, shrieking with rage. There is at least one for each player character. Each fanatic has a Death rune tattooed on his or her forehead. These warriors fight to the death, and attempting to hurl their opponents overboard. As they die they spit curses at their killers.

## The Thundershower

Not long after the assault, the Queen rounds the next bend and the adventurers finally face the full cascading glory of the Thundershower. It hurtles down a 60 meter cliff into a wide, foaming basin, and the air is full of spray. The noise is deafening and everyone will soon be soaked to the skin. The Esrolian Queen pitches and rolls as it cuts through the churning waters. The characters may marvel at the skill of their captain, as she negotiates the turbulent water.

## The Assassin

Distracted by this awesome sight the characters may not notice that a painted warrior has swum out to the boat, and is clambering over the stern. He strikes the most likely victim from behind. Like the others, the assassin has the Death rune tattooed on his forehead.

## Farewell to the Esrolian Queen

Once the Assassin has been taken care of, Thurla swings the wheel hard and beaches the little boat on the western shore. As Mohare busies himself securing the vessel, Thurla leads the characters a little way into the brush.

Cupping her hands, she shouts her final instructions to the characters:

"Mohare and I will take the Queen back downstream a way. We will wait four days. If you have not returned by then, we'll go without you. Good Luck!"

Thurla offers to cast Damage Boosting 8 on one weapon, "the killing weapon", with a duration of three-and-half days. This procedure costs her 17 magic points.

Thurla gives a thumbs up sign, and hastily departs. It is now up to the characters.

# Part the Second: Rune Metal Jacket

## Going Up?

Off to the west are the vines that Thurla discussed in her initial briefing. They look some distance away, through incredibly dense bush.

Impatient characters may wish to climb the cliffs by the falls, in order to save themselves the long, difficult walk through the jungle. The rock face is sheer, and anyone with a decent Climb skill knows that such an attempt would be extremely dangerous. In effect, six Climb rolls are needed, one for each 10 meters. If any roll is missed, the character must roll DEX x 3 or fall, i.e. if the character misses his 4th roll, he falls 40 meters. Ugly!

## The Vines

Assuming the characters do the right thing, they have quite a trek ahead of them. It takes them the rest of the afternoon to reach the vines. They reach the spot as afternoon fades into evening, not the safest time to climb. If they try, all Climb rolls are at -50%.

But for the marauding insects, night passes uneventfully. A Listen roll picks up the distant sound of beating drums, over the unabated roar of the falls.

By day, the vines look easy to climb. Thick, gnarled, organic cables of surprising strength, they stretch down to the valley floor.

Although 6 Climb rolls are still required, all rolls are at +20%. If a roll is failed, the character stays in the same place, and must try another hand-hold. If the roll was fumbled, the character falls.

Once any character has made it 20 meters up, a loud crack is heard as a slingstone bounces past. A naked, painted figure at the top appears to be reloading her sling. The slinging warrior continues slinging until she is stopped or runs out of stones. She then commences climbing down the vines to take on the characters hand-to-hand.

Characters can climb a distance equivalent to their movement rate in meters per melee round (3 meters for humans). Using missile weapons or casting spells while climbing is extremely difficult. Anyone trying to use a 2-handed missile weapon must roll their DEX x2 just to hang on. Anyone who tries to use a 1-handed missile weapon or cast a spell must roll their DEX x 3. If the DEX roll fails, the action does not succeed the weapon is dropped, and the character must make a successful DEX x 5 roll or fall himself. Using a 1-handed melee weapon is easier, but a DEX x5 roll must still be made. If the roll is failed, the attack must be aborted. Glue spells, extra rope, etc. may help characters fight while hanging on the vines.

## The Clifftop

When the characters make it to the clifftop, they may inspect their assailant. She too, has a death-rune on her forehead.

From the top, the party get a spectacular view of the jungle below. Looking to the east, they can see the Green River as it winds lazily through the jungle. Far beyond, the mighty volcanoes of Caladraland spout smoke and ash. Looking south, they can see the desolate New Coast, and far-off Peelos, nestled at the mouth of the River Volior. There is no sign of the Esrolian Queen (because Thurla and Mohare have cunningly hidden it), but the suspicious players might think she has gone and deserted them!

Behind them, the Pelushi Volcano looms large and menacing. Jungle creeps up around all sides of it, almost to the cracked summit. A long way in the distance beyond the volcano is a range of even higher mountains, which are bare and rocky, and laced on top with snow. Thick jungle stretches between the volcano and these mountains, and all around them.

## The Path

Leading off into the dense jungle is a narrow path, well-travelled. Track rolls determine that the people who used the path had bare feet, like all the natives they have encountered thus far.

If the group wish to move off the trail, they find it extremely time-consuming and very hard work hacking their way through the thick foliage. If they stray too far off it, they will become lost. Movement rate is at least quartered.

## The Pit

It is easy going along the path, aside from pushing aside the odd fern. The jungle around the characters is alive with colour and noise. Some distance down the track a Track roll will reveal both bare and booted feet. A bit further on, the leading character's Scan may reveal a slight difference in the surface of the track.

Track skill reveals that there are no footprints in this area. Search skill will uncover a cunning pit trap. If the lead character was not using Scan, or failed his Scan roll, he will fall in. The pit is 3 meters deep, and is full of sharpened stakes. Damage is 1D10+1 in 1D3 locations.

## The Corpse

Pushing past some low hanging leaves, the characters come face-to-face with a headless corpse, lashed to the tree with its own entrails The corpse is naked, but is not coated in the same body paint as the other natives the characters have encountered.

## Zombie Junction

The jungle trail twists and turns for quite a way, until the party find themselves heading northward. Up ahead, they notice a junction in the path, northeast and northwest. There is a grisly signpost here - a crucifixion. The body is lashed to a crude wooden cross with vines.

When the party comes within 5 meters, the corpse bursts forward, one of its rotted hands tearing off as it breaks free. The zombie shambles forwards flailing wildly, its half-severed head flopping backwards and forwards.

The zombie attacks until destroyed. If the party runs, it shambles aimlessly after them.

## The Northwest Path

The northwest path is less travelled, which Track skill can reveal. There are no more grisly sights on this trail, because this track is the wrong way. It winds through the jungle for about 20 kilometres or so, and leads to a fog-enshrouded valley. There is a low cairn here which was once a focus for the tribe's spirit worship. Hopefully the party can spot the lemon after a few kilometres.

## The Northeast Path

This is the right way to go, and Track picks up a lot of evidence of traffic, some barefoot, some booted.

## Totem

The track winds gradually downhill through the jungle, and the path becomes sandy underfoot. After several kilometres, the characters notice a stake up ahead, in the middle of the path. Set askew on it is a rotting human head, the mouth set in a perpetual expression of horror. Bound into the head is the ghost of Uncle Boanga, one of the slain elders of the tribe. He is forced to attack in spirit combat anyone who approaches the totem within 20 meters, unless they are marked with a death-rune. Destroying the totem frees Uncle forever. To do this, the post must be uprooted and broken, and the head smashed apart.

Uncle must attack, but attempts to warn the party away at the same time. What he spectrally shouts cannot be heard unless the hearer is in spirit combat with him, or uses Mindspeech, Mind Link or Visibility. Even then it will be incomprehensible, because none of the characters understand the obscure dialect spoken at the village. Finally, in frustration, Uncle uses the few words of Esrolian he knows in the hope someone understands:

"Go! Go! Bad Men! Go! Evil Men! Go! Head-takers!, take my head, take your head! Go! Go!"

(If no member of the party understands Esrolian, the Gamemaster may decide that Uncle speaks another tongue one of the character does understand, such as Safelstran, Solanthi or Ditali. If your campaign uses the artificial game construct Tradetalk, perhaps he speaks that.)

If he manages to possess a victim, Uncle continues to shout this while attacking the others. If they do flee he is compelled to make the body commit suicide, then return to the totem.

It is possible that the characters will misunderstand Uncle s reference to "head-takers". With his feeble gasp of the Esrolite tongue, it is as close as he can get to saying the new headmen and his gang are murderers. Unfortunately, the characters may think they are now up against the infamous and disgusting Thanatar cult, who ritually sever the heads of their victims, trapping their souls within. They couldn't be further from the truth.

## Another Junction

Just beyond the totem, there is another split in the path. Both eventually cross the river and lead to the village. Track reveals footprints leading both ways with no particular preference. One track veers off to the south, the other to the north. Both trails led to the river, and about 100 meters from the junction have cunningly concealed pit traps, as in The Pit above. These have both only recently been dug, and are thus easier to spot (Scan at +30%).

## North: The Stones

The northern trail winds down to the Green River. Above the falls the river is much narrower and faster-flowing. Scattered across the river are a number of flat-topped boulders, each about half-a-meter in diameter. On the other side, the path resumes, winding off into the jungle. Somewhere, a parrot cries out despairingly.

## South: The Bridge

The southern path leads to a rickety suspension bridge, lashed together with vines. It spans the river, and on the other side the trail leads off into the jungle. As the characters approach the bridge, they hear the despondent trill of parrot in the trees.

## Crossing

The set-up for both the bridge and the stepping stones is the same. The river can be crossed by the means available by rolling DEX x6, assuming the character takes his time (about 4 rounds). If he chooses to go rapidly (2 rounds), DEX x3 is required. If a character misses his roll, he falls in and must commence to Swim or drown, as per the rules in RuneQuest.

When the first character is almost the whole way over, a Listen roll pick up the parrot sound again, followed by movement in the bushes on the other side. Moments later, six painted warriors give a cry and attack. After hurling their darts, they run to the river bank, hurl a second volley, and charge across. They are adept at using the crossings, and won't fall in. Like the others, the war party fights to the death.

## The Paths Rejoin

The two paths continue uphill and join up at the crest of a rise, not long after. From the junction a plume of smoke can be seen above the trees ahead.

## Arrival at the Village

The jungle begins to thin out as the path slopes down, and eventually the terrain becomes a wide, grassy basin. As the characters draw closer, the sounds of the village become more and more apparent. Soon it is visible, at the centre of a broad clearing. A new grisly totem pole, decorated with severed heads, confirms that the party has reached Kunda, the destination they seek.

# Part the Third: Valley of the Trolls

## Kunda Village

Having reached their destination, the characters should seek cover in the jungle around the clearing. From here they can observe the goings-on in the village (pass out Handout #4).

Close by, cattle graze in the meadow, watched by a pair of young boys. In a field further away to the north about a dozen figures are listlessly ploughing. Along the southern edge of the clearing a group of natives are working at felling trees. Others drag them into the village. To the north-east, a freshly cut path leads off into the jungle, and a number of villagers are making their way along it, balancing baskets on their heads. Down the south-eastern slope, a party of hunters are returning, sporting a boar swaying on a pole. The victorious young warriors take turns at smearing themselves with the gore of their trophy.

Kunda village itself is a mixture of mud and thatch dwellings. In contrast to these rude structures is the large stockade the natives are busy building around their village. Within the village numerous cooking fires burn, and various figures are moving around - men, women, children, and squat armoured forms.

The Ploughers are zombies. A successful Scan reveals their ashen skin and lifelessly dull hair. Their movements are slow and jerky.

The Fellers are collecting wood for the stockade.

The Hunters come and go during the day, in bands of varying sizes. Scan picks out the death-rune tattoos on their foreheads.

The Basket Carriers travel up and down the north-eastern path throughout the day.

The squat armoured creatures are trollkin sent here to oversee. There are at least two present during the day. It is a roster they loathe, as it means being out in the sunlight, so they will keep to whatever shade they can. The characters may guess these figures are trollkin, but it is not immediately obvious.

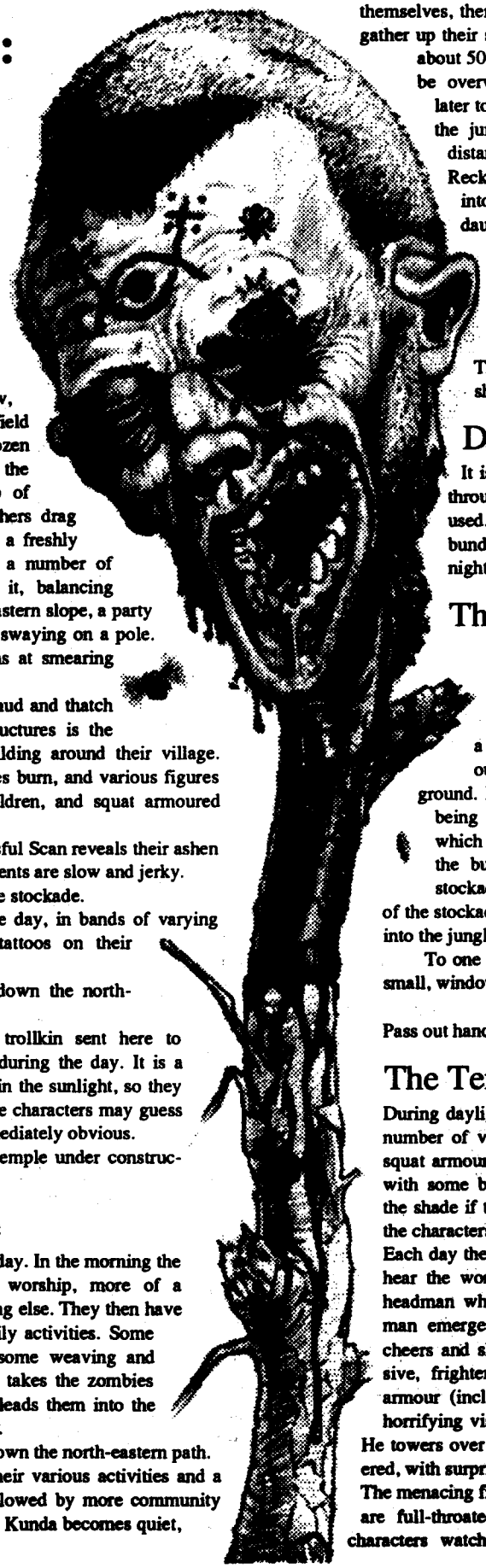
The north-eastern path leads to the temple under construction (see below).

## Staking Out the Village

The village is fairly busy most of the day. In the morning the whole community gather together for worship, more of a communal screaming session than anything else. They then have a meal together and disperse to their daily activities. Some set off hunting, some gathering food, some weaving and weapon-making, etc. The zombie herder takes the zombies out of their special windowless hut and leads them into the fields. They are rounded up again at night.

There is quite a bit of traffic up and down the north-eastern path.

At night, the villagers return from their various activities and a communal evening meal takes place, followed by more community screaming. They then gradually retire and Kunda becomes quiet, dimly lit by the glow of dying fires.



If the party stay hidden, they will not be noticed. If they present themselves, there is an immediate cry, and the villagers gather up their spears and charge at them. There will be about 50 warriors. If the party don't run, they will be overwhelmed and slaughtered, their bodies later to become zombie fodder. If they flee into the jungle, the warriors only pursue a short distance.

Recklessly daring characters may wish to slip into the village: either by stripping off and daubing themselves with clay from the river, or perhaps by slipping in among the Zombies.

At night they will be able to creep around, but there is little they can achieve.

The action lies down the path, and this should soon be apparent.

## Down the Path

It is possible to shadow the path by moving through the jungle. It is wide, recent and well-used. Parties of villagers, carrying various bundles and baskets, travel back and forth. At night, the path is deserted. There are no traps.

## The Temple of Gloom

The path snakes down the slope through thicker and thicker jungle. Eventually, the characters find themselves walking through a murky green half-light. About a kilometre from the village the path opens out into a recently cleared expanse of open ground. In the center a huge wooden structure is being constructed. It has a high sloping roof, which has only been partially thatched. Around the building is the beginnings of a wooden stockade, about 3 meters high. Each corner post of the stockade is decorated with leering skulls, facing into the jungle.

To one side of the gloomy clearing stand several small, windowless huts, and a large cage.

Pass out handout #5.

## The Temple: Daylight

During daylight hours, the characters observe a large number of villagers swarming over the temple. The squat armoured figures lope around them, overseeing with some brutality. Again, these overseers keep to the shade if they can help. Again, it may not occur to the characters that they are trollkin.

Each day the warriors of the village assemble here to hear the words of their new leader, the mysterious headman who has brought the ways of death. This man emerges from the largest of the huts, to the cheers and shrieks of the warriors. He is an impressive, frightening figure: clad in dull, heavy metal armour (including a huge full helm, crafted into a horrifying visage), and swathed in a blood-red cloak. He towers over the slight villagers, and is broad-shouldered, with surprisingly long arms.

The menacing figure harangues his warriors; their replies are full-throated and enthusiastic. The first time the characters watch this assembly however, one native's

replies are somewhat hesitant and he is singled out by the leader and questioned mercilessly.

The hapless youth is goaded until he cracks, at which point he tries to run away. Before he can get far, his fellows catch him and beat him to death with the blunt ends of their spears. After the grisly deed is done, the leader calls upon two of the overseers. As the rest of the warriors cheer, their slain comrade is dragged by the ankles into one of the huts.

After the meeting, the warriors disperse and the leader goes into the hut where the body was dragged. About an hour later he emerges again, accompanied by a figure in a heavy cloak. This figure is taken by a native back to the village. The characters may notice that it shambles rather than walks. It is, of course, a zombie, newly fashioned from the corpse of the reticent warrior.

Later in the day the huge leader strides over to the cage. There is a dark shape in the cage, which he commences to feed.

## The Temple: Dusk

At dusk, the leader claps his hands and all of the villagers return along the path. The pair of the overseers from the village shamble back up the path. They join the other squat overseers in the huts. Soon after, half-a-dozen more of these stunted forms emerge from the huts, some still strapping on their armour.

## The Temple: Night

The night-shift trollkin spend much of their time lounging around, eating, drinking, swearing and fighting. Meanwhile, their leader withdraws to the temple construction, where he chant and prays. At certain points he raises his arms; at other times he bellows at the top of his voice. At one point, he suddenly leaps up and charges out into the jungle at the opposite side of the clearing to the characters, belting and smashing the vegetation with a huge, spiked club. The splintering, combined with his crazed roar, echoes across the clearing and into the still night.

Unless any of the party understand Darktongue, they cannot understand him. It should be obvious though, that the headman is praying to his abominable god.

## Ajan Toranj

The horrific leader is Ajan Toranj, a dark troll Death Lord of Zorak Zoran from the distant icy mountains beyond the volcano. His associates are all trollkin, his children. Ajan has come here to convert the natives to the gruesome ways of Zorak Zoran. So far, he has done extremely well.

Soon, he plans to lead his crazed followers against the elves down-river, and already rumours of his war bands abound among the local Aldryami. Although a few punitive raids have been launched, Ajan wishes to have his temple complete before he launches his first all-out assault, so that when he returns victorious he can consecrate it with the sap of mangled dryads.

The Cage contains a guard beetle, trained to attack non-trolls. It is usually penned, but Ajan occasionally lets it forage around. The natives know to keep well away from it when it is loose.

The Huts are the temporary dwellings of Ajan's trollkin, and are filthy, even for trolls. None contain anything of value. There are a dozen trollkin overall, three to a hut. Half sleep during the day, while the others oversee, and vice-versa. These trollkin are Ajan's children all, and are exceptional specimens of their breed. Though their in-bred servility to trolls compels them to grovel at the feet of their father-master, they love lording it over the guileless humans, who have never seen trollkin before and fear them as demons.

The Zombie Hut often contains bodies awaiting Ajan's divine magic, though it is empty at present. Nevertheless a putrid smell issues from it, and anyone hiding in there for over an hour is exposed to 1D3 diseases.

The Temple is protected by a Warding 1 spell. The wards for the spell are the skull-festooned corner posts. They are set very deeply into the ground, and it is unlikely that anything the characters could improvise could remove them.

The temple is not yet active, but a number of cult spell spirits are present. Ajan has been using them to teach his followers the spirit magic of Zorak Zoran. They pose no threat to the player characters, but if spotted using a Detect Spirit or Visibility spell, may cause the characters unnecessary worry.

Ajan's Hut is the largest, of course. Besides rough furnishings. it contains three large boxes, lead plated and securely padlocked. One is full of uncut gems, presented to Ajan by the villagers. Another contains an array of beautiful feathers, each wrapped in large leaf. These were collected by the villagers from the splendid birds of the jungle. Ajan has no use for wealth or beauty, but is building up a cache so he can buy superior metal weapons for his followers from a crooked trader (no, not Thurla). Evaluate or Mineral Lore will determine that the gem cache is worth about 500L, but if well-cut and polished, could fetch ten-times that. The feathers are of immense value in the jaded Heartlands of the Lunar Empire, where they are worn as ornaments by the decadent gentry.

The second chest is protected by a POW 21 Sever Spirit spell set to attack any non-Death Lord who dares open it. The box contains an assortment of Zorak Zoran religious items for the new temple, few of which have any worth but to the cult. One item, a blackened tusk with tiny runes etched on it, is actually a Seal Wound matrix, usable only by Zorak Zoran cultists. Non-trolls who handle it are cursed with a Seal Wound spell the next time they suffer an injury. A small square of black felt serves as a Summon/Command Shade matrix; however, if a non-troll handles it, the shade is summoned and attacks until the matrix is put back in its rightful place. Use the stats for medium-sized shade in the RQ Creatures Book.

If any of these religious items are stolen, it is unlikely that the Zorak Zoran cult would buy them back. Instead, they will satisfy themselves with the annihilation of the thieves. However, any troll-hating cult will look kindly on anyone who destroys the items.

Ajan sleeps in here between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m. He would prefer to rest in the day, but must remain active to supervise the construction of the temple and maintain the fanaticism of his followers. Before he retires he always chains the guard beetle to the door of his hut, and four trollkin form a cordon.

Ajan sleeps in full armour, being a good Zorak Zorani. Perhaps as a consequence he sleeps rather fitfully, and will be wakened by noise if he succeeds in a Listen roll and a POW x5 roll. If the noise is especially loud (e.g. a trollkin thumping on the door screaming "Wake Up!") he will rouse automatically.

## Extreme Prejudice

At some point, the characters must make their move against Ajan and company. The assault should sensibly come at night; during the day, every man, woman and child from the village will rush to protect their leader, and the characters will probably perish. If they do manage to flee, they may try again later. However, the trollkin night watch will be boosted to eight.

If the attack occurs at night, the villagers do not move to investigate on their initiative: they are used to howls, screams, shrieks and grunts coming from the temple after dark, and know that anyone who goes near the temple is fair game for their new headman's pet.

If possible, Ajan defends himself from the temple, where the Warding spell will afford him additional protection and counter-magic. He bellows out commands to his trollkin as follows:

- three trollkin immediately charge to engage the attackers, while Ajan prepares and casts his own spells.
- one trollkin runs to release the beetle, taking two rounds.

- one trollkin runs to awaken the sleeping trollkin, taking two rounds.
- the last trollkin sprints for the village, taking him 15 rounds.
- should the temple be set alight, it will be Extinguished. The same applies for Ajan's hut, but the others will be left to burn. The resulting fire may attract the villagers earlier.

Five rounds after the melee begins, the remaining trollkin emerge from their huts, semi-clad.

Thirty rounds after the trollkin is dispatched to the village, about 40 screaming natives arrive. They turn up in waves of 1D10 every round thereafter. Eventually, almost every able person from Kunda will come to the temple, enraged and baying for the raiders' blood.

The Zorak Zorani all fight to the death, as they have no fear of it, and they die with gusto and relish.

Once the party is victorious, they may wish to search the huts and the temple. As described, the trollkin huts contain nothing of any worth, and the temple is currently unfurnished. Only Ajan's hut has items of any worth in it. Each location takes at least 5 melee rounds to Search. Listen will pick up the sound of war drums if the villagers were warned, adding to the urgency to get away.

## After the Fall

The Zorak Zorani's defeat is followed up by a village-wide identity crisis. If the party show up at any stage a number of villagers will set upon them and tear them apart.

For three days, the villagers search for the assassins.

For four days, they will try to appoint a new war leader. Civil war breaks out.

Three weeks later, word reaches the elders who had fled, and they will return. There will be much bloodshed, but eventually the old ways are restored in Kunda.

## If the Party Failed

The first effect is four new zombies out in the fields. Thurla will return downriver when they fail to show, and reluctantly alert the Trader Prince. A native-elf war erupts, and trade along the river is disrupted. The Trader Prince will be forced to commit his army, eventually defeating the Zorak Zorani in a costly and unpopular war that will cost him his reign.

Hopefully, this will not be the case. Assuming they succeed, move on to the epilogue!

# Epilogue

After their epic struggle with the Zorak Zorani, the party must make its way back through the jungle. Warriors from the village frantically pursue them, but the loss of their leader has taken the edge off their abilities and they are easy to elude.

Some time later they party will made it back to the cliff top. There is no sign of the Esrolian Queen. Thurla and Mohare have taken it a way downstream and hidden it, remember?

After the party clamber down the vines, they must make the long trek back to the Thundershower. From there. Thurla's hiding spot is about three hours hike through thick jungle, full of stinging insects and blood-sucking leeches. The characters are hot, thirsty and tired. They might think that Thurla has gone and left them here, to face an arduous journey through trackless jungle back to civilisation.

Assuming they decide to stay by the river, they will eventually pass by the place where the boat is hidden. Thurla and Mohare have been keeping a lookout for them (and anyone else), and as they pass she casts Detect/Find Enemy. Ask the players what they think of Thurla. If the response from even one person is negative, Thurla will let them pass by.

The boat has been cunningly hidden by Thurla, and a character's Search must be matched against her Conceal skill (88%) to find it. If someone does spot it but Thurla has sensed threatening feelings, she will try to hold the characters off with the arbalest while Mohare starts up the Queen's motor and reverses out into the river. Only the most persuasive Fast Talking can convince Thurla to let them aboard. The same applies if the characters blundered past the boat and she overtakes them some time later.

Hopefully, the characters do get aboard the Esrolian Queen somehow. Mohare then start up its trusty engine, and, with the dull clunking of the machinery in their ears, the characters begin the slow journey back down the Green River to civilisation, soft beds, tepid beer, amiable companions and their reward.

*This scenario was written for RQ3 by Michael O'Brien, who developed the original manuscript by Mark Morrison, who freely stole the idea from Mark Holsworth, who in turn stole it from Francis Ford Coppola, who stole it from Joseph Conrad. Additional Assistance from Richard Barker, Brad Ellis, Mark Holsworth, Gary James, Tim Leask and Leigh Southall.*

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# Stats Digest

## The Esrolian Queen

### Thurla Santhwain

Thurla is a skilled bargainer who has used unscrupulous methods to get to where she is today. Her methods involve getting other people to take the risks for her. She is tall, tough and weatherbeaten, with a sharp tongue. She constantly smokes huge Porthomekan cigars.

**Thurla, Stygian Worshipper of the Invisible God and Trader Princess of Issaries.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 10 | Move: 3 | Head | (12)/6 |
| CON | 15 | Fatigue: 25 - 2 ENC = 23 | L.Arm | (12)/5 |
| SIZ | 16 | Hit Points: 16 | R.Arm | (12)/5 |
| INT | 17 | Magic Points: 18 + 17 | Chest | (12)/8 |
| POW | 18 | (in power spirit) = 35 | Abdm | (12)/6 |
| DEX | 08 | | L.Leg | (12)/6 |
| APP | 11 | | R.Leg | (12)/6 |

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Attk/Parr%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Iron Quarterstaff | 7 | 69/53 | 1d8+1d4+4 | 1.5/12 |
| Arbalest | 4 | 66/— | 3d6+1 | —/— |

**Spirit Magic:** (100% - all in matrixes) Glue 1, Mindspeech 1, Detect Enemy 1, Multimissile 1.

**Sorcery:** *(FREE INT 17, Intensity 80%, Duration 73%, Range 36%)* Damage Boosting 73%, Sense Silver 66%, Form/Set Wood 43%, Skin of Life 29%, See Rune Magic 32% - all stored in Intellect Spirit. Matrix for Damage Resistance Intensity 5, knows spell at 97%.

**Divine Magic:** Worship Issaries, Heal Wound 2, Lock, Passage, Path Watch, Spell Trading, Spell Matrix Enchantment, Find Enemy.

**Skills:** Ceremony 79%, Enchant 70%, Bargain 104%, Fast Talk 86%, Orate 47%, Human Lore 81%, Boathandling 90%, Conceal Boat 88%.

**Languages:** Safelstran 67/55, Esrolian 37/30, Solanthi 25/—, Ditali 21/—, Caladrian 21/—, Aldryami 18/—, Maldros 11/—.

**Armour:** None. Every week, Thurla casts Damage Resistance 12 with a one week duration on herself, and later on Mohare. Every season she casts a Damage Boosting 4 spell on her quarterstaff.

**Special Items:** Thurla has all her spirit magic stored in matrices, worn as knotted cords and hidden in her hair. These matrices have the condition that only Issaries cultists may use them. A gold tooth filling contains a bound intellect spirit (INT 5), which memorizes her sorcery spells for her and enables her to keep a high level of Free INT. A magic spirit (POW 17) is bound into a gold ring. Thurla's Damage Resistance matrix was a gift from the Trader Prince of Peelos, and has the condition that he can cancel or restore its powers at any time. It is a small iron brooch in the image of St. Goriant.

**Treasure:** Thurla has a large personal fortune, currently tied up in a number of trading ventures. Her ransom is 10,000 silvers.

### Mohare

Mohare is an Individualist heretic dwarf, who left his home-hold decades ago. He has worked for Thurla for years. He built the Esrolian Queen's unique engine, and it is his pride and joy (although he is always cursing it as he works on it).

**Mohare, Dwarf Heretic.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 15 | Move: 2 | Head | (12)/4 |
| CON | 16 | Fatigue: 31 - 3 ENC = 28 | L. Arm | (12)/3 |
| SIZ | 06 | Hit Points: 11 | R. Arm | (12)/3 |
| INT | 10 | Magic Points: 10 | Chest | (12)/5 |
| POW | 10 | | Abdm | (12)/4 |
| DEX | 11 | | L. Leg | (12)/4 |
| APP | 05 | | R. Leg | (12)/4 |

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Attk/Parr%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Iron Tool | 8 | 55/55 | 1d6 | 1.5/08 |
| Arbalest | 3 | 36/— | 3d6+1 | —/— |

**Spirit Magic (100% - in matrix):** Glue 6.

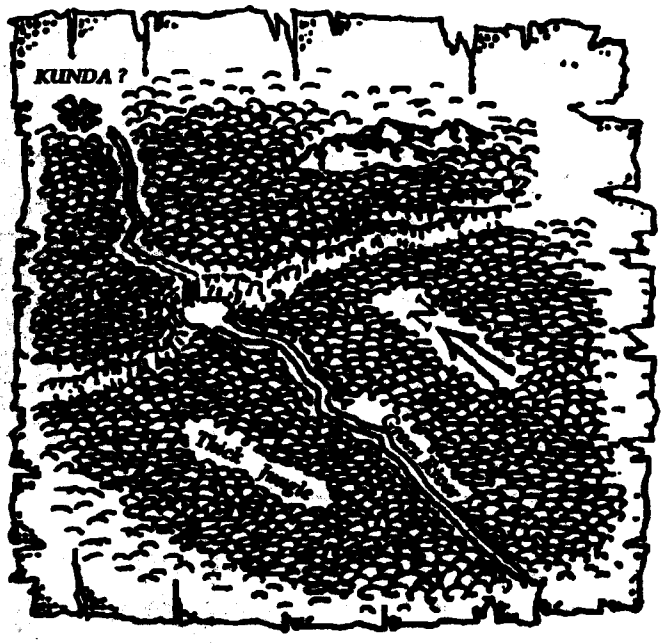
**Skills:** Devise 136%, Repair Engine 85%, Swim 00%.

**Languages:** Mostali 30/30, Safelstran 31/10.

**Armour:** None. Every week, Thurla casts Damage Resistance 12 with a one week duration on him.

**Special Items:** Mohare's Glue 6 matrix was a gift from Thurla. It is useful when he has to coil the clockwork engine's spring. This matrix has no user conditions that Thurla is aware of.

**Treasure:** None. Thurla would pay a ransom of up to 5,000 silvers for her trusty engineer.




Handout #3

# Elves, Initiates of Aldrya

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Attk/Parr%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elf Bow | 3/9 | 60/30 | 1D6+1 | 0.5/5 |

**Spirit Magic (65%):** Speedart, Heal 2, Protection 2, Befuddle (2).

**Skills:** Hide 75%, Sneak 75%, Scan 66%, Dodge 55%.

**Languages:** Aldryami 37/—, Maldrosite 12/—.

**Notes:** Elf bows store 10 magic points, which can be drained to cast Speedart on arrows.

## Katy

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/4 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/3 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/3 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/5 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/4 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/4 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/4 |

POW 14
DEX 14
Fatigue: 21 - 05 ENC = 16
Hit Points: 11
Magic Points: 24
Move: 4

## Aja

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/4 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/3 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/3 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/5 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/4 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/4 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/4 |

POW 14
DEX 14
Fatigue: 21 -05 ENC = 16
Hit Points: 11
Magic Points: 24
Move: 4

## Gaucho

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/4 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/3 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/3 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/5 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/4 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/4 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/4 |

POW 14
DEX 14
Fatigue: 21 - 05 ENC = 16Fatigue: 21 - 05 ENC = 16 Hit Points: 11
Magic Points: 24
Move: 4

## Herzl

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/4 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/3 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/3 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/5 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/4 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/4 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/4 |

POW 14
DEX 14
Hit Points: 11
Magic Points: 24
Move: 4

# The Assassin, Initiate of Zorak Zoran

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| STR | 17 | Move: 3 |
| CON | 18 | Fatigue: 35 - 01 = 34 |
| SIZ | 13 | Hit Points: 16 |
| INT | 13 | Magic Points: 08 |
| POW | 20 | |
| DEX | 17 | |
| APP | 15 | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 6/6 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 6/5 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 6/5 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 6/8 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 6/6 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 6/6 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 6/6 |

| *Weapon SR* | *Attk/Parr%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kukri Knife 6 | 90/— | 1D4+6+1D4 | 0.5/08 |
| Grapple 6 | 80/— | special | —/— |

**Spirit Magic:** (100%) Fanaticism (1), Protection 5, Bladesharp 3, Mobility 3.

**Skills:** Jump 99%, Swim 86%, Climb 101%, Dive 80%, Dodge 43%.

**Languages:** Kundian dialect 33/—.

**Notes:** The Assassin is depicted with all his spells running. Once he has chosen his victim, he attempts to stab him in the back and wrestle him into the water.

# The Swinging Warriors

All the natives of the village are lightly built, tawny-skinned Warerans. The most fanatical followers of the new headman are of both sexes and have Death runes marked on their foreheads. They daub their naked bodies in greenish mud from the river back near their village. Using a secret magical process, this oily clay confers 1 point of armour protection.

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Attk/Parr%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kukri Knife | 8 | 68/— | 1D4+4+1D4 | 0.5/8 |
| Grapple | 8 | 68/— | special | —/— |

**Spirit Magic** *(50%)*: Fanaticism (1), Bladesharp 1, Protection 1.

**Skills:** Jump 50%, Swim 56%, Climb 72%, Dive 50%, Dodge 48% (reduced to 24% under Fanaticism).

**Languages:** Kundian dialect 32/—

**Notes:** Each warrior is depicted with his or her spells running. They are all under the influence of a Fanaticism spell, and have cast Bladesharp and Protection. In between hacks of their long, curved knives, they will attempt to grapple their opponents overboard. The warriors can swim, and have the added advantage of being lightly encumbered.

## Barka

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/5 |

POW 11
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 8

## Shakri

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/5 |

POW 11
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 8

## Jeet

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/5 |

POW 11
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 8

## Konna

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/5 |

POW 11
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 8

## Meert

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/5 |

POW 11
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 8

## Jansi

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 2/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 2/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 2/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 2/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 2/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 2/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 2/5 |

POW 11
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 8

## Crocodile

*Refer to Deluxe RQ Creatures Book.*

# Rune Metal Jacket

## The War Party

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Attk/Parr%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kukri Knife | 8 | 73/— | 1D4+5+1D4 | 0.5/8 |
| Dart - Atlatl | 3 | 73/— | 1D6+1D6 (+3) | —/— |

**Spirit Magic (50%):** Fanaticism (1), Bladesharp 2, Protection 2, Speedart.

**Skills:** Jump 60%, Swim 60%, Hide 76%, Sneak 73%, Dodge 74% (halved to 37% due to Fanaticism)

**Languages:** Kundian dialect 34/—

**Notes:** Each warrior is depicted with his or her spells running. They are all under the influence of a Fanaticism spell, and have cast Bladesharp and Protection. The first dart each throws is Speedarted.

### Krori

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 3/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 3/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 3/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 3/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 3/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 3/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 3/5 |

POW 15
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 9

### Geri

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 3/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 3/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 3/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 3/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 3/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 3/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 3/5 |

POW 15
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 9

### Atru

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 3/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 3/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 3/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 3/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 3/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 3/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 3/5 |

POW 15
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 9

### Mota

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 3/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 3/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 3/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 3/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 3/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 3/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 3/5 |

POW 15
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 9

### Yarra

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 3/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 3/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 3/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 3/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 3/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 3/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 3/5 |

POW 15
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 9

### Darnu

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 3/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 3/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 3/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 3/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 3/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 3/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 3/5 |

POW 15
DEX 13
Fatigue: 27 - 01 ENC = 26
Hit Points: 13
Move: 3
Magic Points: 9

## The Slinging Warrior Initiate of Zorak Zoran

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 12 | Move: 3 | Head | 1/5 |
| CON | 11 | Fatigue: 23 - 01 | L.Arm | 1/4 |
| SIZ | 15 | ENC = 22 | R.Arm | 1/4 |
| INT | 15 | Hit Points: 13 | Chest | 1/6 |
| POW | 14 | Magic Points: 15 | Abdm | 1/5 |
| DEX | 18 | | L.Leg | 1/5 |
| APP | 16 | | R.Leg | 1/5 |

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Attk/Parr%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kukri Knife | 6 | 46/40 | 1D4+3+1D4 | 0.5/08 |
| Sling | 3 | 59/— | 1D8 | —/— |

**Spirit Magic: (100%)** Speedart, Countermagic 3, Bladesharp 1, Fanaticism 1.

**Skills:** Jump 74%, Climb 91%, Dodge 80%.

**Languages:** Kundian dialect 37/—.

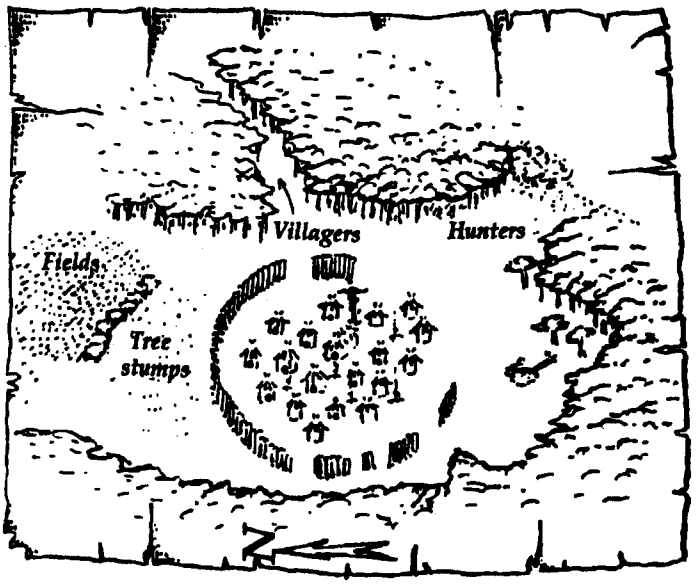
**Notes:** The Slinging Warrior is depicted before she has cast any spells. There are eight sling stones in a neat pile by her side. Before the ambush she casts Countermagic and Fanaticism on herself. She Speedarts every stone before slinging them, and when she has run out, casts Bladesharp on her knife and climbs down the vines to attack hand-to-hand.

## The Zombie

Refer to the Deluxe RQ Creatures Book. Wears no armour, carries no weapon. Has been commanded to attack anyone not bearing a death rune on the forehead.

## The Totem - Bound Ghost of Uncle Boanga

Uncle has a POW of 16 and an INT of 16, and does not use spells. He speaks his own dialect, and Esrolian (or another suitable tongue) at 12%. He cannot stray further than 20 meters from the totem.




Handout #4

# Trollkin

| *Weapon SR* | *Atk/Par%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-h Heavy Mace | 7 | 78/43 | 1D10 | 2.5/10 |
| Target Shield | 8 | 28/61 | 1D6 | 3.0/12 |
| Sling | 3 | 58/— | 1D8 | —/— |

**Spirit Magic (35%; off-duty 45%):** Fanaticism (1), Bludgeon 2, Disrupt (1), Extinguish 1, Speedart (1), Fanaticism (1).

**Skills:** Darksense Scan 66%, Darksense Search 66%, Visual scan 21%, Visual Search 33%, Hide 40%, Sneak 50%, Dodge 23%.

**Languages:** Darktongue 30/—, Kundian dialect 20/—

**Notes:** These trollkin are all values, and are the children of Ajan Toranj. As initiates of Zorak Zoran, they are truly exceptional members of their species. Unlike most trollkin, these have the force of will to go about in sunlight without penalty, even though they dislike it intensely. On duty, the trollkin wear an enclosed plate helm, bezainted limb armour and a heavy scale hauberk. Off duty, they may just have time to put on their helmets before entering the fray. They are depicted here without spells running.

# Valley of the Trolls

## Villagers

All villagers speak Kundian, their own dialect of the Maldros tongue, which is unknown to the player characters. They typically wear little or nothing, but only the warriors are permitted to daub themselves in the special magic clay. Whipped into a frenzy of fear and hate by their new headman, they will attack outsiders with anything that is at hand. Use the "Swinging Warriors" stats, but choose only one spirit magic spell and note that they do not have the 1 AP protection from the magical mud.

## Attack Beetle

*Refer to the "Giant Beetle" in Deluxe RQ Creatures Book.*

## On Duty Trollkin

### Yog

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 5/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 5/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 8/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 8/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 5/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 5/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 15 ENC = 10
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Sot

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 5/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 5/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 8/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 8/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 5/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 5/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 15 ENC = 10
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Hoth

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 5/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 5/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 8/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 8/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 5/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 5/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 15 ENC = 10
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Nyar

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 5/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 5/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 8/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 8/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 5/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 5/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 15 ENC = 10
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Lath

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 5/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 5/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 8/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 8/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 5/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 5/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 15 ENC = 10
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Otep

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 5/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 5/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 8/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 8/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 5/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 5/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 15 ENC = 10
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

## Off Duty Trollkin

### Hast

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 1/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 1/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 1/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 1/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 1/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 1/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 05 ENC = 20
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Ur

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 1/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 1/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 1/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 1/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 1/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 1/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 05 ENC = 20
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Itha

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 1/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 1/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 1/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 1/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 1/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 1/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 05 ENC = 20
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Qua

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 1/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 1/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 1/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 1/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 1/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 1/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 05 ENC = 20
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Cthu

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 1/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 1/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 1/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 1/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 1/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 1/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 05 ENC = 20
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

### Lhu

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/5 |
| 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 1/4 |
| 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 1/4 |
| 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 1/6 |
| 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 1/5 |
| 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 1/5 |
| 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 1/5 |

POW 10
DEX 13
Fatigue: 25 - 05 ENC = 20
Hit Points: 13
Move: 2
Magic Points: 10

# Ajan Toranj

Death Lord of Zorak Zoran. Male dark troll. Ajan Toranj is a great war leader, but was put to shame in his original community because of his inability to breed true. So he left, taking his finest trollkin sons with him.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR | 21 | Move: 3 | 19-20 | Head | 20 | 9/6 |
| CON | 14 | Fatigue: 34 - 31 = 3 | 16-18 | L.A. | 18-19 | 4/5 |
| SIZ | 20 | Hit Points: 17 | 13-15 | R.A. | 16-17 | 4/5 |
| INT | 16 | Magic Points: 15 | 12 | Chest | 11-15 | 7/8 |
| POW | 15 | + 21 (ally) = 36 | 09-11 | Abdm | 07-10 | 7/6 |
| DEX | 14 | | 05-08 | L.L | 04-06 | 4/6 |
| APP | 05 | | 01-04 | R.L | 01-03 | 4/6 |

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Atk/Par%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lead Maul | 4 | 99/83 | 2D8+2+2D6 | 5.5/16 |
| Lead Maul & spells* | 4 | 158/83 | 2D8+8+2D6+3D4 | 5.5/16 |
| Sling | 3 | 99/— | 1D8 | —/— |

*Bludgeon 6, Crush 3, Seal Wound.

**Spirit Magic (75% - ENC):** Bludgeon 6, Demoralize (2), Detect Enemy (1), Dullblade 3, Extinguish 4, (known by allied spirit) Fanaticism (1), Firearrow (2), Protection 7.

**Divine Magic:** Worship Zorak Zoran, Sanctify, Warding, Spell Teaching, Berserker, Create Ghost, Crush 2, Fear 3, Seal Wound, Sever Spirit (one-use).

**Skills:** Ceremony 59%, Darksense Scan 88%, Darksense Search 55%, Visual Scan 40%, Visual Search 32%, Listen 85%, Orate 116%, Beetle Care 32%, Beetle Training 23%.

**Languages:** Darktongue 86/36; Kunda Dialect 26/—.

**Armour:** Full plate helm, cuirboilli limb armour and a scale hauberk. The helmet and hauberk are made of enchanted lead, as is his maul.

**Spirits:** Allied Spirit "Dee Dee Tee" in spiked war maul, INT 10 POW 21. Magic Spirit bound into a tattoo on his chest (INT 08 POW 26) knows Heal 8.

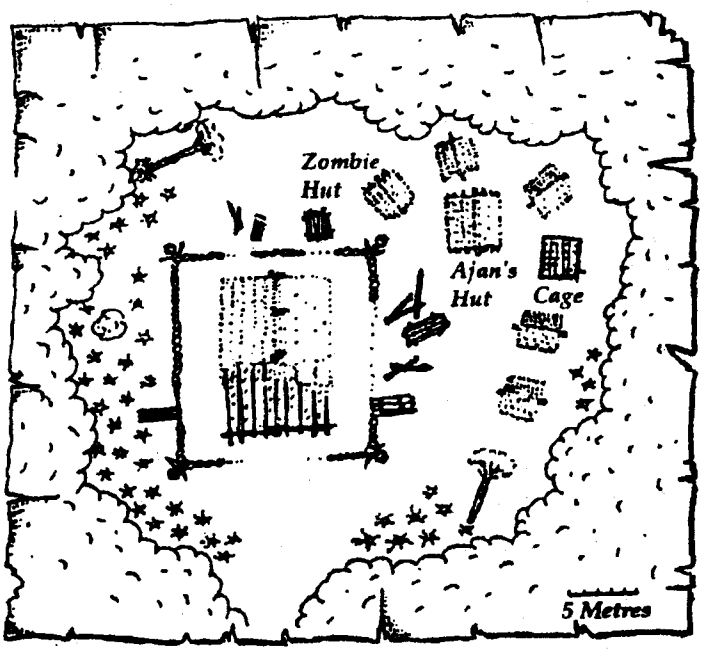
**Special Items:** In addition to the cult items stowed in his hut, Ajan carries a solid lead baton that is always deathly cold to the touch. It contains a POW 44 cult spirit that knows Create Zombie 6. The frenzied villagers sacrifice POW to this spirit to power the enchantments. This item causes 1 point of cold damage per melee round to non-trolls who touch it (including the villagers when they sacrifice), and the spirit can only be commanded by a Death Lord.

**Tactics:** As described in the text, Ajan remains behind the Warding in the event of an attack, or will try to get behind it. Note that this gives him 1 point of additional Protection and Countermagic. Ajan has no compunction about using his divine magic, and begins by targeting his foes with Fear spells. Meanwhile, his allied spirit is busy putting up Protection 7 and Bludgeon 6, followed by Seal Wound and Crush 3. The allied spirit then uses its remaining magic points to Fanaticise as many trollkin as possible. Ajan's magic spirit has been trained to Heal when when required. Ajan won't cast mind-affecting spells such as Fanaticism or Berserk on himself, unless he perceives that his situation is hopeless. He then tries to take as many as he can with him to Hell.

Eventually someone must enter the temple and engage him. Don't forget the 1D3 damage as the character crosses the Warding. Ajan is in a foul temper, and in no mood for sport. His huge spiked maul has a menacing black sheen to it, and his frightful armour makes a horrifying visage. Ajan is an extremely formidable opponent with his spells running, doing an average of about 30 points of damage each time he hits! The way to get him is by ganging up. Another way would be to try to pick him off with missile fire. In this case Ajan would be quickly provoked into leaving the temple confines and getting after the missile users. If really hard-pressed, his allied spirit will Sever Spirit a likely foe.

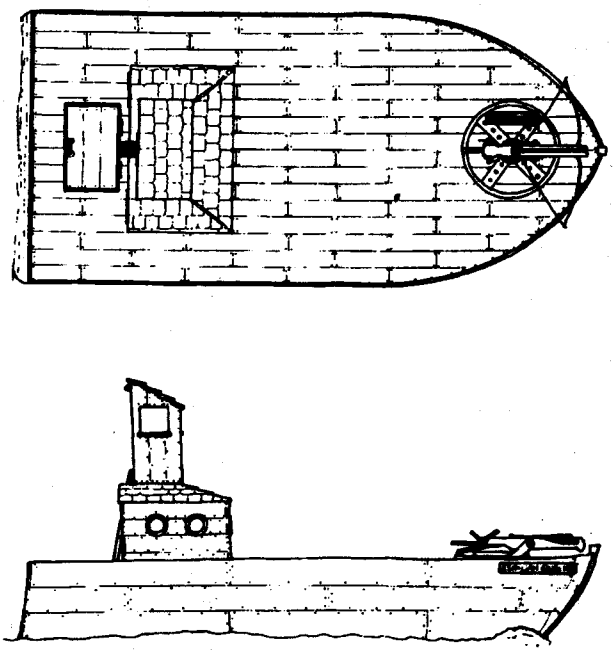
In death, Ajan Toranj performs divine intervention, bellowing out to his god. As he dies, there is a momentary roar of wind, but further effects are not obvious. Many months later, a slavering party of Zorak Zorani hunters will set out to avenge Ajan's death, led by the lich of Ajan himself. This war party is accompanied by Hell Roar, the Zorak Zorani spirit of retribution (see *Troll Cults*, p.77 or *Cults of Prax*, p.94). As the avengers draw closer, the characters begin to hear a low whistling sound, the fell wind of the underworld. When the attack finally comes, the sound will be deafening!

# The Temple Of Gloom




Handout #5

# The Esrolian Queen



*Handout #1*

# The Hungry Ghosts

## Cult of the Cannibals

## Mythos and History

The hungry ghosts are the people that have died, but are for some reason tied to the mundane plane of existence, because of unfinished business. They are forced to prey upon the living. Often, they do not know that they are dead, and know only that they are always hungry but cannot eat, that they are always cold but cannot get warm, and that they are always in need of comfort, but cannot touch anything.

The cannibal cult's origins are lost in the early days of the second age. Evidently trolls introduced it. In the Wastes, where ghosts, wraiths, and tortured spirits of previous ages are endemic, the cult became large enough to form an entire, if minor, tribe.

The dead of the cannibal cult are cooked and eaten. This is also a troll custom.

The Runes associated with this cult are those of Death and Man. The latter Rune is named Food by cannibal cultists.

## Cult Ecology

The cannibal cultists believe that, but for their cult's labors, the armies of the evil dead would rise and overwhelm the world. The cultists receive magic power from their worship, which they feel is only their just due for their unappreciated services. The cannibal cult is found only in remote areas, and its fanatical members stay together, unable or unwilling to mingle with other peoples.

Outsiders consider the cannibal cult just short of chaotic, and the cult's willingness to take in anyone who follows their ways has made the tribe a refuge for murderers and exiles.

The cannibal cult's holy days are set by the cult shamans. At these times, mass Feed Ghost ceremonies are performed.

## The Cult In The World

The cannibal cultists persist because of the great powers they derive from their obscene rituals. This not only strikes intense fear into all who might oppose them, but the appeal of being able to draw strength from a foe's soul as his body is eaten brings new members into the faith.

The cannibal cult is divided into various clans. Each clan supports its own shrine. Clans too small to support a shrine combine with other clans for periodic worship services. When multiple clans meet together in numbers sufficient to support a minor or major site, worship services are nearly always held.

Each cannibal shaman is independent of all others. However, they maintain communication with one another to coordinate inter-clan worships and mass raids upon their enemies.

The cannibal cult has been independently discovered by peoples all across Glorantha. In many places where evil ghosts are powerful, these anthropophagic practices have arisen. However, the cult is small everywhere it is found. Centers where the cult is significant include the Wastes, among the Veldang of Zamokil, and Kralorela. Among non-humans, certain outlaw troll gangs practice this form of cannibalism, as do broos, especially in Dorastor.

## Cannibal Cult Special Rune Magic

**Feed Ghosts** **1 point**
*ritual spell (Summon), stackable, one-use*

The shaman must sacrifice a member of his own species. Thus, a broo must sacrifice a broo, a human must sacrifice a human, and so forth. As the individual is sacrificed, all the ghosts and wraiths within 100 meters are drawn to feast upon his soul. Each additional point in the spell increases the radius of effect by 100 more meters.

The sacrifice takes 1 hour per spell point to perform. When finished, all the ghosts drawn to the site are satiated and must return harmlessly to the spirit plane for one week per point of POW the sacrificed victim possessed.

This spell only attracts and appeases ghosts and wraiths of the same species as the shaman and his victim. If an area was haunted by hungry non-human ghosts, a human shaman could not satisfy them with this spell.

**Devour Foe** **1 point**
*ritual spell (Enchant), non-stackable, reusable*

This ritual must be performed over the corpse of an enemy, who must have been of the same species as the caster. The caster eats one or more parts of the enemy's corpse and sacrifices one or more magic points and POW simultaneously. More than one person can perform this ritual over a single corpse, but each person must devour different parts. Benefits vary with the portion(s) eaten.

- Bowels: caster gains 1D3 CON per 6 full points of CON the victim possessed in life.
- Brain: caster gains 1D3 INT per 6 full points of INT the victim possessed in life.
- Gonads: caster gains 1D3 APP per 6 full points of APP the victim possessed in life.
- Hands: caster gains 1D3 DEX per 6 full points of DEX the victim possessed in life.
- Heart: caster gains 1D3 STR per 6 full points of STR the victim possessed in life.

Magic points expended are multiplied by the POW sacrificed by the caster. The benefits last for one day per point in the product. For example, if a cannibal cultist sacrificed 15 magic points and 2 points of POW, his increased characteristics would remain for (15 x 2) = 30 days.

The caster gains no benefit if the ritual is performed over the body of a friend, innocent neutral, or a being of a different species. Hence, the cannibal cultists try to cultivate powerful foes.

## Initiate Membership

Restrictions on membership are solely up to the clan's presiding shaman. Anyone that has shown himself to be brave, fanatical, and ruthless is a potential initiate. If the shaman is willing to accept him, the candidate need only sacrifice a point of POW to attain membership.

Each band of cannibal cultists must provide their shaman with at least one suitable sacrifice per year for the hungry ghosts. They must also support and obey their shaman. Additional sacrifices are brought to the shaman so that the cultists can gain strength for their necessary battles with the world.

Initiates can sacrifice for the divine ritual of Devour Foe.

## Shaman Membership

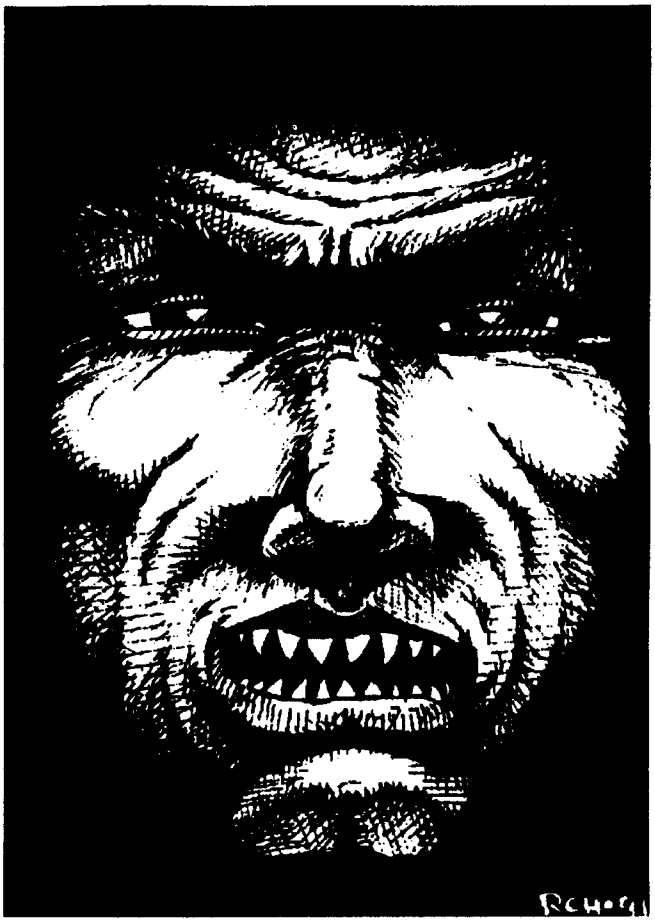
The shamans of the cannibal cult control the doorway between the land of the dead and the land of the living. They can block this doorway to protect the living from the malignance of the dead, and they can open that doorway to permit their servants to share in the strength that can be gained from the souls of their enemies.

Cannibal shamans undergo normal procedures to become shamans. The only difference between them and other shamans is that they practice the obscene rituals of man-eating.

A cannibal shaman must cast the Feed Ghosts spell at least once a year, feeding as many ghosts as possible. Hungry spirits of his own species that have been satiated by Feed Ghosts will permit themselves to be bound to his fetch without necessitating spirit conflict.

Cannibal shamans have access to the rituals of Devour Foe and Feed Ghosts. Special Divine Magic: Devour Foe, Feed Ghosts

*By Sandy Petersen and Greg Stafford. Copyright 1992 Chaosium Inc.*



*Tales Review!*

# King of Sartar

## by Greg Stafford

### Reviewed by Nick Brooke

King of Sartar marks Greg Stafford's long-awaited return to one of the most popular Gloranthan settings. The 300-page book is presented as a compilation of documents relating to the peoples of Dragon Pass and their history up to and through the Hero Wars, brought together by a scholar researching the enigmatic figure of Argrath, High King of the World, in the late Fourth Age of Gloranthan history. His reasons for conducting the research become apparent in a postscript of Conclusions; they are significant, to say the least.

The material included comes from five separate ancient sources: the Annotated Argrath's Saga, the Composite History of Dragon Pass, the Argrath Book, Jalk's Book, and Orlanthi Mythology. The provenance of each of these is discussed in an introduction; they range from straightforward narrative (Argrath's Saga) and well-ordered research (the Composite History) to a Jonstown Compendium-like jumble of possibly-relevant fragments of information (the Argrath Book and Jalk's Book). The book also includes maps of Dragon Pass, and timelines of the Hero Wars and the Fourth Age, as well as a comprehensive index.

As an introduction to Glorantha, the book is perhaps too eclectic for the general reader. This is not to say that everything in it is obscurely symbolic or requires previous knowledge on the part of the reader, rather that the density of information presented is probably too great to be assimilated by anyone unfamiliar with the world background. For example, the Lunar Empire and Sheng Seleris, two major foes in Argrath's Saga, are hardly described at all. True to its title, the book is primarily an examination of the King of Sartar himself, the powers he used and the peoples he ruled; the enemies he faced are beyond its scope. Reading it, you'll understand why: there wasn't enough room in the book to squeeze them all in! (That said, Greg now intends to produce The Lunar Empire as a second volume: wish him luck).

It would be easy to use the book as a reference source for a Gloranthan RuneQuest campaign, especially one set in Dragon Pass. Material supports Sartar and the Grazelands in depth; Lunar Tarsh would be more difficult to handle – both native and Lunar religions are scarcely described – while other realms of the Pass are hardly

touched upon. Sir Ethilrist, for example, appears in just one footnote. This is not just "the book of the boardgame."

Argrath's Saga will be a fertile source for gamemasters wishing to run epic adventures in the Hero Wars. The story of the Great King's battle against the Red Moon is riddled with internal contradictions and confusions (more so when compared with other accounts later in the book), which makes it ideal for anyone who wants to retell the events in their own way. Moreover, the saga is presented as a combination of two manuscripts which do not always agree, nor even tell the same story in places. For example, one of the variant texts omits a clash between the two Superheroes, Harrek and Jar-eel, completely from the narrative; the other version has one of them definitively killed, only to reappear on the next page without any hint of explanation. No dating is provided within the document; the timelines and discussion emphasise that after 1640 or so all dating is "Traditional," with the possible exception of the downfall of the Red Moon herself (preserved in a child's skipping rhyme). In short, the source is deliberately made suspect. Use it as you will.

The Composite History is probably the section of most use to a "historically accurate" RuneQuest campaign, including as it does a detailed history of the Grazer tribe and the lands of Tarsh and Sartar from the start of the Third Age through to about 1640. As well as a wealth of previously-unpublished details about the foundation of the peoples, the narrative gives us full and colourful accounts of several famous events in Gloranthan history – including the Fall of Boldhome, Starbrow's ill-fated Rebellion, and the rise of the Dragon of Wind Top – while allusions in passing cast new light on the society and religion of all three peoples.

The Argrath Book includes, among various snippets about the hero himself, a two-week ritual form of the Lightbringer's Pilgrimage as enacted by the Orlanthi tribes of Sartar, and a miscellany of information about Argrath's Draconic connections and the Empire of the Wyrm's Friends – which, it now appears, may never have gone by that name!

Jalk's Book is an apparently-random collection of written knowledge made as a bulwark against an age of illiteracy. Some of the most fascinating material of all is in this source: an article on the Orlanthi sun-god Elmal, formerly a loyal thane of Orlanth's who later evolved into Yelmalio; the 'Colymar Book' ('Kolymarsbok' in the original), which examines in detail the structure and history of the oldest tribe of Sartar; a 'Report on the Orlanthi' which provides an excellent, user-friendly account of Orlanthi society, law and custom; and perhaps the single most worrying text of all, the myth of 'Argrath and the Devil.'

The final section, Orlanthi Mythology, is just that: not the sanitised, homogenised tales distorted by the Jrusteli God Learners which until now we have been accustomed to, but the original stories as told by the Orlanthi themselves. It's quite a change: for example, Umath's Camp atop his Law Rock replaces the Perfect Palace on the Spike. At times the 'barbarian' elements make them hard going: genealogies and references to local landmarks are scattered through the myths, but they only add to the feel of authenticity this source is meant to purvey. The collection includes new myths – such as 'The Initiation of Orlanth,' or 'How Peace Was Made' – as well as retold familiar stories: the origins of the Unholy Trio, or Eurmal's antics with the First Sword. And, of course, there is the most complete version of the Lightbringer's Quest ever published.

If you have ever enjoyed Glorantha, whether as game-player or scholar, this book is a must. King of Sartar provides answers to many of the questions we enthusiasts have been asking for years: as a social service, perhaps, it poses just as many new questions, so we'll still have plenty to argue about when we meet. By presenting its contents as documents of Gloranthan origin, it avoids the problems an 'omniscient' narrator would have brought; by highlighting and criticising its own inadequacies as history, the book acts as a spur to the imagination. If any parts of the story simply don't work for a reader or gamemaster, they can be dismissed as "dud texts," written hundreds of years after the events they describe. We, after all, can traverse Dragon Pass at the time of the Hero Wars to see the King of Sartar for ourselves; the anonymous compiler, writing under the allegedly benign rule of the Harshax Dynasty, has given us the source material we need to do so, but cannot enjoy our supreme advantage: that of going there to find out for ourselves.

*King of Sartar by Greg Stafford, published by Chaosium Inc. price $14.95/£(?), 300pp, U.S. Release Date 11th December, available in the U.K. early in the New Year.*

Maskoss, also called Always Awake Twice, yet she lacks the prestige that Little Dog's connection with Sheng Solaris brings him. Other shamans of note include the Grandmother of Horses (who is nearly a goddess), Too!Kay, the red-haired chieftain of the Shengites, and Pintoff, the repulsive leader of the Teetons. (XXIX. 21-011) The Origin of Humanity - excerpts from conversations with Monastavrolakhos, once of the Brick House in Kam Ramal: "According to our oldest records, the Brithini once claimed to be descendants of the only "true" humans on Glorantha. According to K'rzalis this is partially true, but certain other races, including the dreaded Ogres, are also descended from the First Men and thus are distant cousins of the Brithini. In any case, it is well known among Western scholars that the Brithini refer to almost all non-Western races as "animal-men", or, more precisely, "animals with human form". Most people think of this as an insult or metaphor based on our shorter lives and or our lack of "proper" (ie. Brithini) human behaviour. In fact, during the Golden age, when they were much more open, the Brithini claimed that as they had travelled around the world they "awakened" various animals and taught them to assume human form. This was apparently their explanation for the origin of the Hsunchen, and no-one knows if it is true. some of these animal-men then proceeded to lose touch with their beast-selves and attempted to imitate human human ways and even civilization, especially the ape-men and monkey-people. So if this ancient Brithini claim is true, then they are correct in their reference to us as "animal-men"; if they hold this belief, it explains much of their behaviour toward us, including their horror of mating with normal humans. (XXIX. 21-012) The Westerners of Seshnela and other former Brithini colonies present another puzzle. Perhaps the orthodox Brithini view them as "devolving" into animal-like behaviour and lifespan; who knows? The Brithini became increasingly close-mouthed during the Darkness, and since Time have been practically mute on these questions.

# Revenant

## Ancient Hero

## History

Revenant was a charismatic and ambitious leader in the city of Pavis sometime between the years of 1237-1376. At this time, Pavis consisted of cyclopean walls surrounding an area of 25 square kilometers. This whole area was dominated by troll invaders from the northern land of Dagori Inkarth, and humans led a tenuous existence in fortified settlements spread around the area. At some stage in history, Revenant ruled such a settlement, although which one is a matter of bitter contention between the Pavis Rubble clans.

In order to fight his troll foes, Revenant sought to learn their secrets by questing on the magical paths of the otherworld. He is noted for many wonderful deeds, such as when he had an eating contest with Argan Argar and won, granting him Darkness powers. Another of his famed feats was stealing an iron cauldron full of water from the magical river Styx, previously possessed by the Mostali of the Palace of Marble on Ice, in order to gain a component of his immortality. Revenant's most famed tale however, is that of his demise.

Questing for the powers of darkness, Revenant sought out the Only Old One, master of the Castle of Black Glass. At one time, the Only Old One proved to the Mostali that he was human, and to the Uz folk that he was a troll. Such secrets would have served Revenant well.

Before he could enter the gates of the castle, however, Revenant was ambushed by a group of chaotic deities who had been hiding from Zorak Zoran. They were led by Ulforg, a lackey of slain Ragnaglar. Revenant fought them bravely and desperately, but was outclassed and fell, bleeding out his darkness powers. He called to Zorak Zoran, who hastened to the scene. In true troll fashion, Zorak Zoran drank Revenant's escaping powers and proceeded to slay the assailants. Unbeknownst to the Death god, Ulforg was skulking nearby, and was soon to attack the defenseless Revenant when the troll god left the scene.

Revenant, whose spirit powers were still intact, beheld Ulforg devouring his body and in a fit of revenge all but destroyed the foul chaos god. He threw Ulforg's cursed soul down to the Devil's Playground, where it still roams. In performing this act, Revenant has discovered his niche in the Cosmos, acting as an agent of divine retribution against those who truly deserve it.

Some say that Revenant now sits on the right hand of Daka Fal, and petitions for the right of his followers to attain their just retribution.

There was no organized religion of Revenant until later in the Third Age, when Entin Kreeth, a ruler in the old city and a notorious foe of raiders and bandits alike, revived the worship of the ancient hero. Kreeth established the first holy site to Revenant in what is now called the Real City in the Pavis Rubble, and to this day it has been the centre of the cult's limited influence.

Revenant can offer no afterlife to his adherents, who usually embrace the ways of major deities to cater for such spiritual requirements. Revenant's ritual of retribution prevents the worshipper being resurrected or brought back as any undead form which requires the soul of the initiate as part of its creation.

Revenant is associated with the runes of Spirit and Death. He was once associated with Darkness, but is no longer so connected.

## The Cult In The World

The cult exists primarily because it provides protection against murder. It has members from all human cultural groups found in the Rubble and New Pavis, including Theyalan Orlanthi and Pelorian Lunars – this cult has proved particularly popular among devotees of the Seven Mothers.

The outside world sees little of the cult, and the more dedicated adherents are considered to be unnecessarily gloomy and paranoiac. Revenant disapproves of those who would prey upon the pitifully weak, or who would use Undead for their own gains. The temple also maintains a regular watch on the Devil's Playground looking out for chaotics who might attempt to appease the spirit Ulforg which resides there. To date, they have caught up with one

broo worshipper of this chaos spirit, who was promptly lynched, much to the chagrin of the local Lhankor Mhy sages interested in the nature of the unfamiliar entity.

Revenant has only one temple, in the Real City. This counts as a Minor Temple, although there are only eighty or so initiates and priests. The full range of Revenant's Divine Magic can be learned and regained here. He has one shrine, located in the temple of Pavis in the new city. This shrine teaches the special spell of *Retribution*.

The high holy day is Freezeday, Truth Week, Earth season, the date of Revenant's demise. The festival is held in private, and nothing is seen of the cultists for the day. Weekly services are held on Godday.

## Initiate Membership

Requirements are standard. Worshippers of Zorak Zoran or a chaos god cannot join the religion. Orlanthi were once acceptable, but have since been outlawed by the Lunar governor. A fee of fifty guilders (pennies), or an equivalent in kind must be paid each year to maintain an active status. Initiates need not attend on the high holy day, but must attend at least one worship service a year in which they give up all their Magic Points but one. Initiates can only sacrifice for the *Retribution* ritual on the high holy day.

All worshippers must maintain a code of fair combat which incorporates never murdering a bound, drugged or similarly helpless foe, and should never participate in an assassination. Revenant worshippers are forbidden to fight each other and must resolve quarrels peacefully. Failure to comply with these restrictions leads to immediate excommunication and visitation by Dark Wrath, the cult spirit of reprisal. Furthermore, the deviant is declared fair game for any other worshippers of the Hero and any *Retribution* ritual spells which may have been cast on the individual are lost forever, even though they are enchantments.

Skills relevant to the cult are: Scan, Search, Devise, Human Lore, and Mace or Maul Attack. The cult does not have the resources to offer its initiates training.

Initiates may learn the following spells from the cult spell spirits at the normal rate: Spirit Screen, Detect Enemy, Detect Undead and Detect Spirit.

Initiates are expected to undergo the *Retribution* ritual. Although this is not compulsory, it is practically the only benefit the religion can offer.

## Priesthood

Priests of the cult are, needless to say, extremely rare. As of 1620, there are three in Pavis as a whole, the highest number in centuries, no doubt due to the stability the Lunars have brought to the region. The priests serve purely as go-betweens for their deity and their congregation. One, Enwin Kreetha, claims precedence over the others because his descent from Entin Kreeth, which the others tolerate.

Requirements for the priesthood are standard, except that the applicant need only know 6 points of Divine Magic gained from Revenant, and must have been an initiate for ten years. The applicant must also have a Ceremony skill of at least 70%. The priest need only dedicate 50% of his time to the cult.

Priests of the cult must use Darkness weapons (maces, mauls, slings and the like), and these must be ritually destroyed every high holy day, symbolizing Revenant's loss of Darkness powers.

The common Divine spells of Worship (Revenant), Excommunication, Summon Cult Spirit and Command Cult Spirit can be gained. In addition the special spell of *Retribution* can be learned.

## Special Revenant Divine Spell

**Retribution** **Variable**
*Ritual enchant, stackable, one-use*
*(duration equals period of active initiation)*

This spell is available to both initiates and priests, and is cast upon oneself. Each point of this spell allows the recipient to attack his slayer after death in spirit combat for 1D6 melee rounds, or 1D10 melee rounds if he is a priest.
This may only occur if the death was subject to one of the circumstances below:

- The killer is an initiate of Revenant, or is killed in a manner contrary to the common code of both the killer and the victim (thus if one Humakti were to stab another in the back).
- The killer is a long-standing enemy of the victim, or an agent of him.
- The killer attacked from ambush.
- The killer is a hired or discreet assassin.
- The killer possesses a chaos feature or chaos taint.
- The killer is a Zorak Zorani or worships the spirit Ulforg.
- The killer murders the victim when he is helpless (asleep, bound, drugged, but not incapacitated through combat with the killer).
- Any other similarly despicable or adverse circumstances.

If the Revenant worshipper wins the spirit combat before he runs out of melee rounds (ie. he reduces the opponent to 0 Magic Points), he may continue, attacking the victim's Hit Points just as if it were his Magic Points total. Note that, even though the victim is unconscious, the roll vs. Hit Points must still be made. If the victim's Hit Points are reduced to 0, he dies. If the victim has a chaos taint, he automatically dies when his Magic Points reach 0.

All melee rounds in which the attack is made must be consecutive; thus a priest with five points of *Retribution* must state he is engaging in spirit combat with his slayer, roll 5D10, and attack for that number of melee rounds. A Revenant initiate may attack at any time within 24 hours of his death; for priests the period is 48 hours. Cultists may prolong the period by 24 hours per point of spell enchanted specifically for this purpose. During this time, the caster's spirit follows his slayer, visible to those with Mystic Vision or similar spells.

At the conclusion of the spirit combat, the soul of the Revenanti proceeds to his after-life, exactly as if he had just died.

Humakti or similarly restricted cultists are forbidden to learn this spell, as are Chalana Arroy healers.

As the cult has no real wish to kill, lists of those who have sacrificed for the *Retribution* ritual are posted on the gate of the temple in Real City and at the shrine in New Pavis in order to frighten off potential enemies.

## Dark Wrath

INT 20 POW 30

**Spirit Magic:** (170%): Spirit Screen 10, Dispel Magic 10

**Divine Magic:** Sense Assassin x1

**Note:** Dark Wrath can draw on up to 20 points it has stored on the Spirit Plane to cast its spirit magic.

It does not hesitate to use its Dispel Magic to eliminate defensive spells (such as Spirit Screen) cast against it.

**Special:** Dark Wrath is immune to the effects of Spirit Block cast by Revenant cultists (or former cultists).

## Special Dark Wrath Divine Spell

**Sense Assassin** **2 points**
*Ranged, temporal, non-stackable, reusable.*

This spell must be cast with a specific victim in mind. It will give a general feeling of ill, like that of the Humakti ability, in the general direction of the intending assassin. The victim must be alive when this spell is cast, but need not be throughout the duration of the spell. In effect, the spell confers upon the caster the Humakti ability "Sense Assassin" for fifteen minutes, with a chance equal to the casters POW x 5.

## Cult Spirits

The cult priests have access to two cult spell spirits, actually the psychic remnants of cult foes destroyed and enslaved by Entin Kreeth. The first, known as Robber Baron, was a former Rubble bandit. It has INT 5 POW 10 and teaches the spirit magic spell Spirit Screen 5. The other has no name, has INT 01 POW 06 and teaches Detect Enemy; Detect Undead and Detect Spirit.

Worshippers who break cult vows will be visited by Dark Wrath, said to be an alias of Entin Kreeth, the cult founder. Dark Wrath appears to apostates as a horrifying spectre, who rakes his victims with spectral claws. It engages initiates in spirit combat for as many melee rounds as the transgressor knows of Revenant divine magic. It attacks priests until it succeeds or is driven off. If Dark Wrath manages to possess its victim, it quickly and effectively causes the victim to suicide using the most effective means available.

Dark Wrath can also be summoned by the priests for other purposes, including a limited form of divination. In these instances it appears as an urbane, middle-aged man, dressed in clothing of antique fashion who can speak with charm and wit about Pavis in bygone days. It uses an archaic form of Pavic and knows a unique divine spell which it may cast for the summoner if requested. This spell is not available to the Revenant cult by normal means.

## Associated Cults

Many Revenant worshippers participate in ancestor worship, and believe that their god sits at the right hand of Daka Fal, petitioning him for the right of his followers to exact their just retribution. Daka Fal taught Revenant the divine spells Spirit Block and Free Ghost. Revenant's Free Ghost is a one-use spell, and may only be cast to free ghosts who are in that status unwillingly.

*By Michael O'Brien & Neil Todd. Invaluable assistance from Jon Quaife (c) 1992*

# Niall's Revenge

## by Michael O'Brien

*This adventure cameo follows on from the Stony Bones scenario that accompanied the Ulforg spirit cult in issue #8.*

Once the story gets around about the evil chaos horrors that the player characters faced in the Jumble in the Wastes, they are approached by Niall of the Real City, a dour fellow garbed in black who is one of the priests of the Revenant hero cult. He says he knows more of the evil spirit Ulforg, and offers more work for such proven chaos-killers as they, if only they would go with him to the fabled Real City, deep in the Rubble (see *River of Cradles*). There, he explains, is the only temple of their hero.

The PCs are taken through one of the official gates into the Rubble without difficulty, as the Revenant cult is on cordial terms with the Lunar occupation forces. They are escorted by Niall and two initiates; one, Harko, is a dour fellow like his master, the other, Runall the Fair, is a native-born Pavic trader who joined the Revenant cult on the side and cheerfully sings its praises to the characters as they travel through the perilous ruins towards the Real City: *"Y'know it protects you 'gainst murder – who's gonna do you in when they know you'll just come and get 'em back, eh?"* This sort of banter continues until the group is ambushed by one of the many chaos-gangs which lurk in the Rubble. (Use one of the chaos-gangs in *Big Rubble* if you've got it, otherwise cobble together a gang of motley Broo-kind.)

Although the raiders should eventually be driven off, the Revenant Harko is killed, the first to fall with an arrow through his throat. While the fight goes on around his corpse, the PCs get a chance to see the Revenant *Retribution* ritual in action as Harko's spirit rises up and destroys his hapless slayer in spirit combat. Runall gives an awed commentary of the action as it happens, and at the end of the fight the priest Niall tells the characters they have been privileged to witness the power of Revenant the Hero.

Carrying Harko's corpse with them, the party later arrives at the massive dwarf-made gates of the Real City, a walled enclave containing the original temple of Pavis, which has survived the troll and barbarian onslaughts better than other areas of the Rubble. Posted on the gate is a list of names which Runall says are those who have sacrificed for the *Retribution* ritual (he adds that there is a similar list on display at the Revenant shrine in the New Pavis Temple and that Niall regularly hires out a crier to cry the names on Market days). This list, Niall says, warns off potential enemies, and the players might be surprised to see (if they are lucky enough to be able to read) the names of a number of prominent Pavis citizens, including several members of the Lunar hierarchy. (Just who these identities are is up to the referee).

The characters are led into the Real City and to the temple of Revenant, which now occupies an ancient, semi-ruined place close to the Pavis temple. There the characters are shown to surprisingly comfortable rooms: spacious, but the plumbing no longer works. The next morning they are to meet Enwin Kreetha, the ranking priest of Revenant. In the meantime the characters have the opportunity of sightseeing in the Real City, where the residents live in the ruinous grand habitations of their ancestors. The highlight of such a tour is the original Pavis temple with its crystalline walls, seemingly carved from an enormous piece of translucent stone. It is marred by a huge crack running down the front, the closest the nomads ever came to destroying it. Runall the Fair offers to act as guide.

The next day the characters are taken to meet the leaders of the cult. Niall is there, as is the ranking priest, Enwin Kreetha, along with the other priest of the cult, Brondrath the Silent. The priests are a rather gloomy bunch, but also present is a charming fellow of middle age, dressed in somewhat old-fashioned style. It is he who does most of the talking, in thickly accented archaic Pavic. Enwin translates when any meaning is not clear. The man is very interested in the PCs description of the *Stony Bones* episode, particularly their final encounter with the broo shaman at the Jumble. Brondrath takes notes. Only at the end of the interview can characters (with a successful Scan roll) notice that they can actually see through the strangely-accented man's hand to the arm of the ornate chair he is sitting on. For this is actually Dark Wrath, the cult spirit said to be the alias of Entin Kreeth, the cult founder. It has been summoned by Enwin to hear the characters' story and then discuss with the priests what course of action to take.

The discussion takes several hours after which the characters are again summoned from their rooms. When they return to the audience chamber Dark Wrath has gone, returned to the spirit world. This time Niall does the speaking. He explains the ancient enmity between the Hero Revenant and the demon Ulforg, and how the cult is sworn to prevent Ulforg's reappearance. The cult has known all along that Ulforg can be summoned in the Devil's Playground; now it appears he can be contacted in the Jumble. He wants the PCs to lead him and a small party of Revenanti to investigate. In return the Revenant cult offers them 100 silvers each, freshly minted at the Pavis Old Mint and each worth 1.25 Lunars. In addition, the cult extends its friendship, which means free entry and safe refuge in the Real City should the party ever need it during their adventuring in the Rubble. Finally, Niall offers free initiation into their cult should they choose it, and if the High Holy Day is near an opportunity to sacrifice for the *Retribution* spell before they set out.

Niall's party consists of himself, Runall the Fair, and three other initiates - Attaboy and Corboy, both Real City youths, and Red Steivos, a rather gloomy Yelmalion from the Sun Quarter of Pavis. All are reasonably armed and armoured. Niall, Runall, Corboy and Attaboy carry maces and mauls, and slings; Red Steivos is armed in typical Sun Dome style. All have sacrificed for the *Retribution* ritual; the priest Niall taking the most with 11 points and Attaboy the least with just 2. All but Red Steivos are mounted on mules, and they carry sufficient supplies to last the party for the outward and return journeys.

Not long after the party begin their journey down the Pavis road towards the Jumble, a group of riders ride out from the Pavis gate after them, bellowing the song "Men of Storm Bull" (see *Tales #8*) at the top of their voices. They are a small band of young but eager Storm Bull cultists seeking glory, who have heard that the PCs are off to a chaos nest and want a piece of the action. Their leader Rogar Inrani demands that the PCs lead him to the chaos site. Unfortunately, Niall wants to have nothing to do with such rowdies, for they may disturb his investigations. He asks that the PCs make them go away. Unless the PC's can put them on the wrong track the Storm Bullies will try to follow at a discreet distance, overtaking the characters when the final destination is known and generally making as much of a nuisance for the PCs and the Revenant cultists as the referee desires.

Once in the Jumble, Niall orders the player characters to scout the area and make sure it is safe to enter. Depending on how long it has been since the PCs fought and destroyed the shaman Mundigak and his Broos, the Jumble could be unpopulated, hold a handful of wild broo, or once again be repopulated with chaos horrors, perhaps even recruited by one of the surviving members of Mundigak's band.

When Niall finally chooses to enter the Jumble he asks to be taken directly to the site where Mundigak summoned Ulforg and was later destroyed. This site is pretty much how the PCs left it, probably with broo corpses lying in a state of decay. Niall asks for another description of the fight, showing him where the spirits were summoned, etc. With cloths over their mouths and noses, Niall and the other Revenanti spend a short while poking amongst the carnage, while the PCs stand guard. After their investigation is finished the PCs may be interested to note that the Revenanti remove and burn all their clothing, then wash themselves all over before changing into new clothes.

Using magical means, it doesn't take Niall and his associates long to determine that the Jumble is indeed a chaos holy site and has been used recently to summon the foul Ulforg. The Jumble's connection with chaos is intrinsic, and not easily removed, but Niall intends to perform a special Revenant ritual of purification which is designed to make any attempt to summon Ulforg here again very difficult. There are a number of stones and boulders with chaos symbols at the site, some encrusted with centuries of blood sacrifices. Niall points out one in particular which he has identified as the focus for summoning Ulforg. From his pack he takes out a fresh sheet of parchment. Before the party set out Niall had the purification ritual copied onto it from an old tome in the temple archives.

The purification ritual must be performed at night. While waiting for the sun to go down the Revenant cultists prepare for the ritual, and the PCs stand guard. As Yelm sinks, furtive movements are heard amongst the rocks around the Jumble, along with unidentifiable gibbers and squeaks.

The ritual begins when all traces of the sun are hidden under the horizon. Red Steivos, Runall and Corboy stand around the stone chanting, while Niall reads from the scroll in archaic Pavic. Attaboy stands by the stone with a heavy mace in his hands, preparing to smash it at a later point.

Unfortunately, somehow the ritual goes wrong - perhaps Niall fumbled his Ceremony roll, or perhaps the ritual was incorrectly copied. Whatever the case, the runes carved into the stone begin to glow, and rather than banish him, Niall calls up a manifestation of Ulforg himself.* The PCs will recognise Ulforg from their last encounter. What may disturb them though, is the corporeal quality of the visage: the horned drooling monster is no insubstantial spirit this time, but has a *physical* presence. This is made all too obvious when it reaches down and rips Attaboy apart with its huge claws. Ulforg is accompanied by his gaggle of chaos spirits, who he sends against the characters in an unusual form of spirit combat (see below).

Niall shouts to the PCs that they must smash off the glowing runes from the stone to banish Ulforg. He must continue chanting, he says, as he dodges Ulforg's raking claws. The PCs may prefer to run, but at this point the group is suddenly attacked by a number of broo who, like those the PCs fought earlier at this site, have their right ears torn off! They had been watching the party for sometime, and were finally drawn by the appearance of their demonic master. A successful Scan allows PCs to notice that the blood around their wounds is dry, and that they are in a bad condition: their eyes look dull, and if they speak, their words are slurred. These broo are survivors of the original fight who have hidden here since. They were lucky (or unlucky) enough to survive the end of the *Devotio* ritual, which requires a successful POW x 1 roll! They fight to the death, making sure that they do not survive the combat.

Smashing the runes is not easy: for one thing, Ulforg is standing virtually atop the stone, also the stone has the equivalent of 12 armour points. Only smashing weapons (such as Corboy's mace, which has Bludgeon 4 cast on to it) will damage the stone, and each time more than 12 points of damage is done, the stone is reduced by one HP. A special hit does 2 points of damage and a critical does 4. The stone has 12 hit points. Once it is reduced to zero, the glow ceases and Ulforg and his spirits are once again banished.

This fight is designed to be desperate and deadly, with the PCs furiously trying to smash the runes off the stone while fighting off crazed broo and myriad spirits, not to mention dodging the swipes of Ulforg. Niall continues chanting his ritual, his remaining initiates defending him. If the PCs decide to run, then once Ulforg has dealt with the Revenanti he will pursue them, moving at great speed until he is forced to return to the spirit plane.

(XXIX. 21-013) The Book of K'rzal, of which we had only a partial summary in the House, claimed that the early humans separated into the Tribe of Law and the Tribe of Chaos. The Brithini are supposedly the descendants of one branch of the Tribe of Law; the Tribe of Chaos took on many forms. According to the same Book, they quarrelled, leading to the open break between the Tribes. In other sources they are described as "twins", "brothers", "siblings", "half-brothers", or even as "mirror-selves" in the Dark Book of Gharkor. No living man knows the truth of these claims save perhaps those who in the councils of the Brithini or among the Hidden Wakbothi - most deities are younger than this split. Perhaps Dread Subere could shed some - er, light, on the subject. (XXIX. 21-014.a) There are, it is said, supposedly ten thousand myriad deities of the Vormain and the East Isles, of which I, Goliard the Peripatetic, after a decade of travel in that region (including, to my displeasure, three years on a prison-isle of Golden Mokato and nine months as a galley slave in the service of Haragalan Commonwealth) can name but a scant few: (XXIX. 21-014.b) The aboriginal inhabitants of the Ulithi atoll worship their own lagoon god, Mogmog, yet hold that the magic of any foreign deity is always more powerful than their own. This has of course emasculated Mogmog and enabled privateers from Haragala to enslave the populace. The Haragalans promote the myth of Mogmog's weakness, and may have even started it. (XXIX. 21-014.c) The natives of the isles of Tl'loc present a most fearsome visage, what with their filed teeth and scarified bodies. What is more, these savages regularly practise human sacrifice.

# Physical Manifestation of Ulforg, Chaos Demon.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| STR | 34 | Move: equal to current MP's |
| SIZ | 22 | Hit Points: 22 |
| INT | 11 | Magic Points 44 |
| POW | 44 | |
| DEX | 05 | |

01-20 Body 22*/22

**Note: Armour equals half current magic points rounded up.*

| *Weapon* | *SR* | *Atk/Par%* | *Damage* | *Enc/AP* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Claw | 7 | 65/— | 1D6+2+3D6* | —/— |
| 2nd Claw | 10 | 55/— | 1D6+2+3D6 | —/— |
| Freezing Wind | 1 | MP vs DEX | See below** | —/— |

* *Ulforg attacks with both claws in a single melee round, the second follows the first by 3 strike ranks.*

** *Alternatively, Ulforg can use a magical attack against a chosen victim's DEX. This attack feels like a freezing blast of air, and temporarily reduces a victim's DEX by as many magic points as Ulforg chooses to expend. DEX is recovered at 1D3-1 points per melee round. The range of the attack is 6 meters.*

**Chaotic Features:**

• Absorbs spirit and sorcery spells of up to 7 magic points, adding these magic points to himself (and thus also increasing his armour points). Magic points cannot be boosted above 44 in this way.

• Can convert magic points into hit points, at a rate of 1 per melee round.

• Ulforg is covered in slime and blood that is tainted with Disorder. Anything that comes into contact with it is slowly broken down into its elemental particles. Each time Ulforg is hit, reduce the weapon's AP by 1D4-1. Weapons that penetrate Ulforg's skin suffer 1D6 damage.

• It costs Ulforg 1 magic point to remain on the physical plane each melee round. Once his magic points drop to zero he must return to the spirit plane.

Ulforg is accompanied by fifty or more spirits, each with 1D4+4 POW. These spirits are those who have pledged their souls to the service of Ulforg as a part of the *Devotio* ritual. It costs Ulforg 1 MP to command one of his spirits to attack a character in spirit combat. If the spirit succeeds in one round of spirit combat against the character it does not reduce MP's but instead inflicts its own chaotic effect on the PC. It is then free to go, having fulfilled its obligation to Ulforg. Spirit Screen defends against these spirits, and characters can fight them in spirit combat.

| 1d100 | Type of Ulforg Spirit | 1d100 | Type of Ulforg Spirit |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01-04 | Absorption (1) | 54-60 | Ironhand (3) |
| 05-09 | Befuddle (2) | 61 | Light (7) |
| 10-19 | Bladesharp (3) | 62-66 | Mobility (8) |
| 20-28 | Bludgeon (3) | 67-75 | Protection (5) |
| 29-30 | Conflagrate (4) | 76-79 | Reflect (9) |
| 31-36 | Coordination (5) | 80-84 | Regenerate (5) |
| 37-41 | Countermagic (6) | 85-89 | Shimmer (5) |
| 42-46 | Endurance (5) | 90-94 | Strength (5) |
| 47-49 | Fireblade (4) | 95-97 | Vigour (5) |
| 50-53 | Glamour (5) | 98-00 | Magic Points (5) |

**Notes to Spirit Table:**

*If the spirit succeeds in overcoming the targets MP's:*

(1) The victim has 1D3 points of Absorption cast upon him. This prevents the casting of Heal, Dispel Magic and similar spells upon the target.
(2) The victim is Befuddled for 25 melee rounds.
(3) The victim suffers a slashing or smashing injury to a random hit location, causing 1D4 damage ignoring armour.
(4) The victim suffers 1D4 points of general hit point fire damage. Armour does not protect.
(5) The victim loses 1D4 magic points. These spirits cannot turn their effect on the victim and therefore they enter normal spirit combat and can continue attacking until they possess the victim.
(6) The victim has 1D6 points of Countermagic cast upon him.
(7) A bright point of luminescence shines from a random part of the victim's body. It has no ill-effect but may distract the PC and his friends. It lasts for 48 hours and cannot be Extinguished.
(8) The victim gains 1D6 points of Mobility. This increases Fatigue loss.
(9) The victim has 1D3 points of Reflection cast upon him.

If one of the broo kills one of the Revenanti, the PCs will again see a demonstration of the *Retribution* ritual. Since the Broo only have 1 POW, it is very simple for them to be annihilated in spirit combat. Also, because of the special nature of this event all Revenanti spirits are allowed to remain in combat until Ulforg is destroyed, or until Ulforg destroys them. Attaboy, slain at the outset, should be able to annihilate many Ulforg spirits.

The scenario might end with the PCs fleeing into the Wastes with Ulforg after them, in which case they lose the respect and friendship of the Revenant cult (if they survive). Hopefully though, they remain behind to finish the chaos demon off, and so return in triumph to the Real City with Niall. As an additional reward they will again be offered the opportunity to be initiated into the Revenanti ranks. Regardless of whether they accept or not, they will depart the Real City having earned the respect and friendship of this tiny hero-cult, which has survived for so long in the Big Rubble.

**Editor's Note (optional). In fact the ritual does not go wrong. Niall has failed to translate the tome properly. For the ritual to succeed Niall must be killed by the divine manifestation of Ulforg. This will allow Revenant himself to possess the spirit of his worshipper and re-enact his divine retribution against Ulforg.*

*As Niall does not realise this he will try to avoid being killed, and the PC's will be forced into a desperate fight. Even if Niall is killed, and Ulforg is banished by Revenant, the priests of Revenant will view the death of Niall as a great loss and as a major set-back to the cult (unless the description of events given by the PCs convinces them otherwise).*

*Only in the case of Ulforg being banished by Revenant will the Jumble be completely cleansed of Chaos worship.*

# LETTERS

### *Oliver Dickinson*
### *Haxby, York*

*Tales #8:* The cover is horribly good. I mean both parts of that: it is not the sort of thing to show to people who may be prone to believe nasty things about FRP, though appropriate in the context. I found it a salutary reminder of how we tend to discount the sheer unpleasantness of Chaos and "the stark horror most Gloranthans experience when facing creatures of Chaos" (*Sun County* p.94), as I acknowledge that I may do in Devil's Play.

*Letters:* I sympathise considerably with Marion Dhwyde, but would like to put forward my own view that earth/fertility cults were not something separate in the ancient religions - the fertility of the soil, livestock, and humans is crucial to the survival of society and was therefore the major purpose for which religious ceremonies were conducted. I would also query John Hughes' description of Lunar society as matriarchal: most of its major functionaries, from the Emperor downwards, are male, even if individual females can achieve positions of great power or influence. Females are not generally superior, as in troll society. The fact that the supreme deity is female does not make the society matriarchal.

### *Steve Gilham*
### *Haslingfield, Cambridge*

To Marion Dhwyde, I also say "Do your own thing". Though I do notice now looking at it, that the ritual (Ceremony) nature of Transfer Pregnancy got lost along the line. Like all healing and damage spells it is of "instant" duration; which is to say it doesn't wear off. Unwilling participants would have to be restrained during the ceremony (to prevent them running away). One of the intended uses of the spell would be to allow women whose health might be at risk in childbirth to be spared this ordeal - after all, a Troll would almost certainly find it much easier to bear a human infant than a narrow-hipped woman. The spell would also avoid the dilemma of one of the legendary empresses of Japan, who, being close to term, but involved in directing some military campaign, resorted to some practice involving placing a stone in her girdle (details are omitted in retelling, but one might hazard a guess) to delay labour.

Since, as I specified in the cult, only women can access these spells, they would still retain the monopoly of control over reproduction. But they would be freed from the constraints of their biology; constraints that historically led to the rise of patriarchy.

### *Jon Quaife*
### *Crawley, Sussex*

The article on Broo Society was a most unwelcome contribution. *First off*, do we care? *Second*, consistent and established social norms will only rarely exist among broo - think about it. A broo male sneaks into a sheep pen and impregnates all the ewes. Some time later a whole pack of feral broo emerge and run off into the wilderness; they establish their own social codes and dialect and upon encountering another broo gang are more likely to fight than integrate. When two groups merge, the customs and dialect of the tougher grouping is more likely to be adopted.

*Third;* I would doubt that social codes and relationships (even in established groups) would be anything like as consistent as those given in this article. The idea of a "big brother" should definitely be confined to George Orwell. Radical ideas of this sort are better confined to small case studies, such as well known organised broo clans of Fi'lith in the Krjalki bogs or Dorastor or wherever.

*Fourth;* I thought the case for broo virility was overstated; check the broo essay in Borderlands and the unicorn essay in the RuneQuest Companion. Again, information contrary to such sources is better given as small case studies rather than sweeping generalisations.

*Fifth; Lunars and Broos.* Maybe the Lunars do have chaos units working with them, in limited roles. Even so, such information would certainly not be disclosed to such liberals as historians and scribes and is best kept secret unless one craves to see broo guards springing up in peoples' games worldover. Inclusion of chaos in the Lunar military policy is an exception, not the rule, and would more likely be on a mercenary basis (examples being the Hydra or Hungry Jack in the Dragon Pass boardgame, or the broo counters in Nomad Gods) than anything else. The idea of broo centurions is obviously some ridiculous rumour engendered of a Tarsh Exile. To my knowledge official published material has broached this subject only rarely; Cults of Terror alludes to a vampire regiment, and broo units (the ally counters in Nomad Gods) fought against the Lunar army at the Battle of Moonbroth.

### *David Scott*
### *Tooting, London*

*Coven of Five.* What a waste of six pages in Tales! It's in two parts! More drivel to come! To me this article smacks of AD&D monsters and Demons from the Monster manual. It seems to be five mediocre spirit cults

glued together to produce something a bit more interesting. If they had been kept separate it wouldn't have been so bad. Why bother with stats, the only need for them is in a dungeon bash and both are more than a match for Rune level characters. Please print a limited edition Tales 9 for me with blank pages where this article resides

*The Crimson Bat.* Ace. An excellent RQ3 update. However a few questions arise when looking at the old cults of Terror write-up. Allied Spirits, do the little bats still exist? Are priests still forbidden to have chaos features, and are the Seven Mothers still associated (providing Mindblast)? The bat picture is the best one yet (better than Cults of Terror and of course Elder Secrets), roll on more Brother Dog (I hope he has free subscription just on the basis of Arkat (Tales 7) and D&D. Give this man a job, commission him to do Cragspider, Argrath, Harrek, etc).

Live Action Troll Ball... sad, sad, sad...

*Which leads us on to...*

### *Nathan Gribble*
### *South Brent, Devon*

Did you know that people have been playing live action troll ball for at least 3 years to my knowledge? Variations have been fought (play is not really an appropriate word) at many live action clubs throughout Britain culminating in the championships which were run at the National convention "Summerfest" each summer. Unfortunately this event has been hit by a schism due to complaints about the people running it. So whether the troll ball championship will still be held at either this year's Summerfest or the opposing "The Gathering" remains in doubt.

### *Steve Gilham*
### *Haslingfield, Cambridge*

I like JK McLaren's idea of doing short pieces to a given topic along the lines of the Humakti matter of honour (*Tales #5*). One topic I'd like to see discussed is the Hero Wars and after; something to encourage a diversity of views with no official "One True Way". In fact given the "do your own thing" line that Greg has taken recently, I'd like to see TRM avoiding the trap into which it seems to be falling of a "One True World" (one of the big sources of negative reactions from fans to RQ in the olden days); and instead encouraging divergent opinions. I'm more interested in the myths and jigsawing them together with our own world's history to build interesting situations which can bring interesting role-play.

The idea of emphasising the tiny issue of the Sartarite Mujhadeen vs. the Red Army to the exclusion of almost everything else does not appeal.

*I'd be interested to hear readers views on this, as it is important for the future direction of the zine. Is the zine falling into a "One True World" trap? Do you want articles on divergent future history, unofficial cult write-ups, or a contradictory Prax? Is the emphasis on the Dragon Pass region unappealing?*

### *Jackson Y. Dott*
### *President, The Avalon Hill Game Company, Baltimore*

One of the customers' letters you sent us was bothersome. The spirit of our original agreement with Chaosium was one where Avalon Hill would act as publisher and marketer, not designers, developers or editors. Are you (as well as RQ fans) still not aware that RQ3 was written, designed and authorized by Chaosium? We have taken a bum rap on this and to my knowledge your magazine has never defended us.

### *Greg Stafford*
### *Chaosium Inc., Oakland, California*

I am not clear on what Jack was saying, exactly, without seeing the letter in question. But I think we should put credit and blame where they deserve to be. I think Jack might be satisfied with my making a statement about the RuneQuest 3 design.

RQ3 IS A CHAOSIUM PRODUCT. People who do not like the rules ought to complain to us. We did have some design restraints imposed by AH, but CHAOSIUM TAKES DESIGN RESPONSIBILITY for the rules, layout, and artwork. We take responsibility for the lack of scenarios, five Kyger Litor write ups, and so on.

Things have changed. there is a new president at AH, a new editor there, and new RQ material coming out. Let's let bygones be bygones, and move ahead to a better Glorantha.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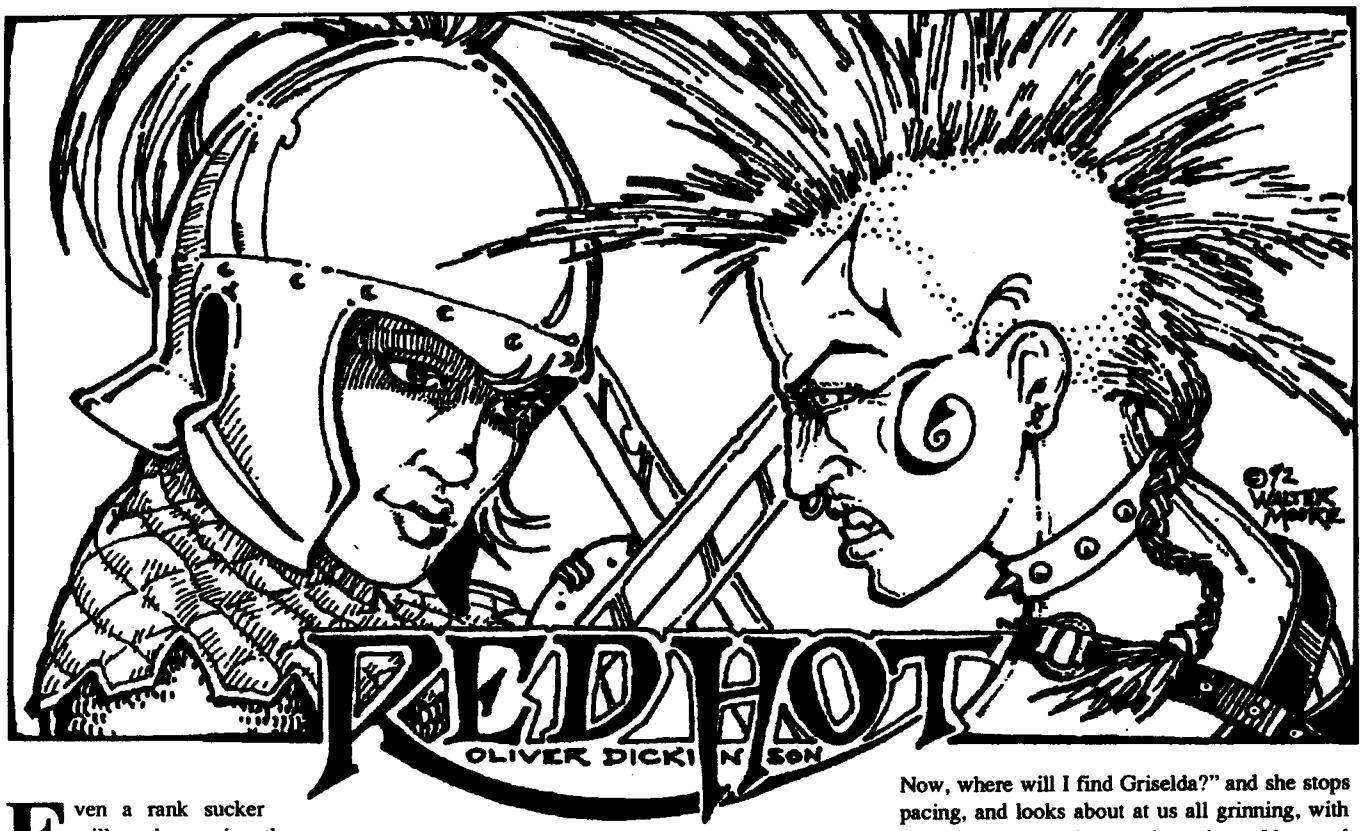


Even a rank sucker will not bet against the chance of its being hot in Fire Season, and at the time I speak of it is certainly hot. In fact, it is very hot, indeed. It is so hot that nobody is wearing any more than they can help, and one and all go around saying what they will do for a nice cold drink, and those who can offer such drinks figure to be doing very nicely. I hear some citizens even try to work up a little betting action on whether the sun is shining hot enough to cook food, and places where there is any shade are much sought after, unless of course they are in the neighbourhood of guard posts. For the army and the watch have to keep wearing much of their gear, and they are bound to be suffering keenly, and when such persons are suffering they are apt to take it out on anyone in reach that they disapprove of. But as I am known to many in the army and the watch as a guy who can come up with good stories and even a nice betting tip now and then, I can generally take my ease in the shade of the guard posts if I wish it, and I often do, for it is a good place to be if you want to keep an eye on what is going on.

Now it comes on the latest in a series of hot days that lasts so long most citizens lose track, and I am by the Old Gate, half asleep, when I hear voices inside the post, and since one of these voices is that of a doll who sounds to be talking very tough I rouse a bit and consider taking notice. But before I can work myself into getting up, one of the guards puts his head round the side and says, "Hey, Olav, come listen to this. There is a doll here who states that it is her purpose to run Griselda into her hole." Well, this gets me up, all right, and I step in quite briskly, and there is this doll pacing up and down as if she cannot stand still, and arguing with the clerk, who evidently does not consider that her stated purpose for entering Pavis, which one and all are bound to give, is right and proper.

"I am being honest, am I not?" she is saying. "I make no attempt to deceive. Why, the way I hear it, half of this town will consider it a sight for sore eyes, to see Griselda taken down a peg, and where is your problem, mister scribbler?"

"I cannot write down such stuff," he says. "But you give me an idea; I will enter you as coming to see the sights, and you better accept that, miss, or maybe I will write you down as a potential troublemaker."

The doll shakes her head and gives a funny kind of laugh. "All right, all right," she says. "That is not a bad gag; write it down like that. Now, where will I find Griselda?" and she stops pacing, and looks about at us all grinning, with her hands on her hips, and I get a clear view of her, and this is surely one of the strangest-looking doll adventurers I ever see. She is short, and fairly skinny, and nothing much to look at, but you will hardly fail to notice her, for she has her hair all shaved off bar a bit on the top, which is dyed blood-red and stiffened up like flames coming out her head, and she has a black ring through her nose. What gear she is wearing is black also, but this is not much, being mainly a pair of very short breeches and a cover for her top half which is tight enough to indicate that there is very little to cover, in fact, and straps and belts going here and there, with weapons and pouches and stuff hanging from them. Her arms are bare apart from studded bracers, and they show good muscles and enough scars to suggest that she has plenty of experience, but what makes me inclined to take her seriously is the look in her eyes, which are grey, for it is hard to explain why, but they give me the feeling that she is ready for anything. In fact, they remind me of someone, but I cannot think who it is.

None of us feels called upon to answer her enquiry, for everyone in this man's town knows that it is not wise to be passing around information of this nature, and especially when it relates to someone like Griselda, whom even the guards are wary of because there are rumours now and again that she has influence with the Governor. They do not bother to say anything at all, and the clerk hems and haws and says it is not his business to provide such information. Then the doll fixes on me.

"You seem like a knowing guy," she says. "Let me have this information and I may even pay you," and she laughs again. I do not care for the sound of her laugh or for the way she looks at me, but before I can decide what to say, the guard commander chips in.

"See here," he says, "you may be a heller where you come from, but Griselda handles tougher persons than you look to be without raising a sweat, and I will give you some good advice free, which is to stay away from her. Moreover, I get this feeling that you are planning to disturb the peace, and you must see that we are bound to take a poor view of this, especially in this heat."

The doll cocks her head at him. "Why," she says, "anyone will think I aim to do Griselda some permanent harm, but such is by no means

my intention. I simply aim to prove that she has an inflated reputation, and I am better than she is, any day of the week."

"That is what Carver Donan says, so I hear," says another guard. "Maybe you better talk to him about reputations."

"Oh, no guy is going to manage it," says the doll, very off hand. "It will take a doll like me to put a head on Griselda."

It is strange how the way she is talking seems to irritate everyone there, and makes them determined to show her what a tough proposition Griselda is, for now the clerk speaks up. "She is capable of handling women too," he says, "if the story about Ragna the Wrestler is true." *

Up to now, this doll is behaving very cool, but at this she changes amazingly. She swings fast on the clerk, and seems about to strike him, but holds herself back in time and snarls at him, "Never mention that name to me."

The clerk backs off, looking half-scared to death, but now the guard commander steps in. "OK, that does it," he says. "We put up with your foolery long enough. Go and look for Griselda in Loud Lilina's, and she can carve you into cutlets for all I care, so long as it is out of our sight, and Olav, you see she gets there and does not go wandering off to bother folks."

Well, I can think of many things I will rather do than take this crazy doll to Lilina's, but I figure that I am bound to be going there anyway to see what comes off, and besides, I know better than to say no to a guard commander. So I motion to the doll to follow me, and off we go down Parade Way. I am trying to keep in the shade and move inconspicuously, hoping that no one I know will notice me, but that is not her idea at all, for she is coming along as if she is in a parade, in fact she is capering about, and clapping her hands together, and now and then she whoops and cries out stuff like, "Griselda, here I come! Red hot and ready!", which attracts some attention. By the time we are into Founders Market there are already persons following us, despite the heat, and by the time we make the turn into Sword Street there is quite a bunch in attendance, and more are coming as the word is going round that this doll is after Griselda. Some even try to ask her why, and wherefore, and so forth, but she takes no notice.

When we reach Lilina's the doll looks up at the sign, and laughs in her crazy way, and then she jumps up and grabs it as easy as you please and swings on it, which shows that she is certainly very limber, but after one swing the sign comes away with her. The noise this makes and cheers from some of those present bring out most of Lilina's customers, but Griselda is not among them.

"You got Griselda in there?" cries the doll, waving the sign about, and when no one replies at once, she throws it down and yells, "I say, you got Griselda in there? Are you all deaf?"

Now among those who come out is Elsa from Adari, and this comment seems to irritate her, for she pushes to the front and says, "See here, if you do not stop making so much noise I will feel compelled to do something about it. Griselda is not here, so leave us in peace."

The doll cocks her head at her. "I do not come here aiming to tangle with anyone but Griselda," she says, "but if you insist on horning in I will not consider myself responsible for the consequences," and she suddenly takes a swing at Elsa. Now, Elsa has experience, and so she ducks the swing easily, but somehow this makes her duck into the doll's other fist, and this knocks her right off her feet. I seldom see a prettier punch delivered, and anyone can see that this doll knows what time it is when it comes to the rough stuff. One and all step back a bit as Elsa sits up, expecting mayhem to break out, but she does not seem to wish to take the matter further, or even to feel particularly hostile towards the doll.

"You pack a nice punch," she says in a surprised tone.

"And you have a hard chin," says the doll, shaking her hand about. "No hard feelings? Some other time I will be ready to give you a proper fight, but just now I wish to keep myself fresh for Griselda."

"So I see," says Elsa. "Well, she may happen by at any time, so why do you not come inside out of this heat, and maybe take something to cut the dust from your throat like a sensible person?"

The doll grins, and nods yes to this. "This seems like a good idea," she says, "and in fact, if you can tell me of Griselda, I will set them up."

"That depends on what you want to know," says Elsa as they go in, "and on who wants to know, as well," and I realise that in all this time I do not hear the doll's name. But all she says is, "I go by the name of Red Hot, and that is how I feel, red hot and ready to cut Griselda down to size."

"Is that so?" says Elsa as they fetch up at the bar. "You are not the first to try, you know," and then she catches sight of me and gives me one of her best glares. I am already backing off when Red Hot notices and turns around. "Ah, the guy who brings me here," she says. "If you like running errands, why do you not fetch me Griselda for five clacks?" and she laughs most unpleasantly. I can see that if I hang around anywhere near her she may come out with worse, and so I depart from the premises to find some shade nearby that is not fully populated, because I do not wish to miss any more of this than I can help.

Well, nothing happens for a while except for people going in or out of Lilina's, and then all of a sudden out come Elsa and Red Hot and just about everybody else in the place except Lilina, it seems like, and all start heading off down the street. So I fall in, and ask Old Gil what is coming off.

"Someone arrives with word that Griselda is down at Homar's Fish," he says. "So naturally Red Hot is going to look her up."

Now this is a great coincidence, to be sure, for it is in Homar's Fish that Griselda catches up with Ragna the Wrestler, and it really seems like a sign, but of what I cannot be sure. It is something of a walk to Homar's Fish, and Elsa and Red Hot are setting quite a pace, so that many are complaining no little by the time we arrive. Sure enough, Griselda is in there with Wolfhead and some of his boys, putting on the soup and looking very relaxed, which is the way the soup they do in Homar's Fish is bound to make you feel. But when she sees us coming she certainly takes notice. In fact, when Red Hot reaches the table, Griselda has her eyes fixed on her and does not wait for her to say anything, but asks, "Something I can do for you?" in a sharp sort of way.

"Why, yes," says Red Hot. "Red Hot is the name I go by, and red hot is what I am, to show that I am better than you at anything you care to name."

Griselda yawns in her face. "Your name means nothing to me," she says.

"Does it have to?" says Red Hot. "Come on, Griselda, show me your best. Back off and I will name you a faker all over Dragon Pass."

At this, Wolfhead growls, "I do not see why you have to accommodate every fresh punk that feels like challenging you, Grizzie. Want us to run her off?"

* *See "Down among the Dead Men, Different Worlds #43*

But Griselda shakes her head at him. "This is the first time anyone comes on at me like this in quite a while," she says. "It is like old times." Then she looks Red Hot over. "So you think you can beat me?"

"Try me," says Red Hot.

"I aim to," says Griselda. "This is some contest of skill, I take it? Because if you have anything more in mind, we better go somewhere out of town; I cannot afford to have the local law take any more interest in me than they do already."

Red Hot laughs. "If you are trying to scare me off, forget it. Maybe you have everyone around here sweating with your tough doll act, but it will take more than that to worry me. As for the contest, it is not your scalp I am after but your reputation."

Now, ever since she arrives in Pavis Griselda is hardly ever addressed like this, and I judge that it is getting to her slightly, for her cheeks are redder than usual, but all she says is, "Well, perhaps you will at least do me the courtesy of waiting till I finish," and she picks up her spoon again. But Red Hot whips out a knife so fast you will scarcely have time to blink, and plunges it into the table right by Griselda's bowl, snarling, "I mean now." Evidently this startles Griselda somewhat, for she drops her spoon. She looks up at Red Hot leaning over her, still holding the knife, and everyone seems to hold their breath, even Wolfhead. Then she says, "You know you are laying yourself open to me gutting you?"

Red Hot grins like a curly wolf, and does not move a muscle. "I can be planting that knife just as easily in your throat, if I wish."

Griselda goes on looking for a moment, and then shakes her head. "You certainly come on strong," she says. "Very well, let us go to Rowdy Djoh Lo's, where it is most unlikely that we will be interrupted by the watch or other such busybodies." She speaks as if nothing unusual is occurring, but Wolfhead and Kroked exchange a look, and so do others, and it seems to me that they are all thinking what I am thinking, which is that we just see Griselda back off.

"I do not know this place," says Red Hot, "but evidently you do. Can I be sure of getting a fair shake?"

Griselda smiles a little, as if she scores a point. "Do not be worried," she says. "You have my word," and off we all go. Rowdy Djoh Lo's is only a step down the way from Homar's Fish, and when we get there the joint is closed, for it is still afternoon, but Rowdy Djoh Lo opens up quickly enough when he is informed that a contest of skill is planned between Griselda and a challenger, and pretty soon some of his regulars like Snakefang must get the word, for they commence showing up. In fact, before long it seems like half the hard cases and tough adventurers in Pavis are present, for such persons are always keen to watch contests of skill, and maybe bet on them.

Well, once they get started, they try all sorts of things, like pulling and throwing at a target at speed, or while moving, and hitting a mark accurately with a sword from a fast draw, and mumblety-peg, and all the time Red Hot is right up alongside Griselda, and sometimes even better, for though Griselda can always get something out faster she is not always so accurate. It certainly looks as if Griselda encounters her match in such skills, and she can be observed to be glancing at Red Hot with increasing respect. In fact, Red Hot is suggesting each type of contest, and after all these she says, "It is time for a tougher test. Let us take turns in making a real fast hack at the other, which must be parried with the sword without striking back."

"This gives a big advantage to the one with first strike," says Griselda.

"We can roll for it," says Red Hot casually, and Griselda agrees, though it seems to me that she is not too keen on this idea, and when she rolls the higher number on the dice she seems to tense up, though Red Hot does not seem at all bothered. They pull swords and Griselda circles Red Hot for a while, until suddenly she steps one way but strikes the other, very fast. I will expect this to be a winner in any fight, but Red Hot not only stops it but turns it off in such a way that Griselda nearly loses her balance. Red Hot lets her straighten up, looking quite pleased with herself, but Griselda slaps her sword back into its sheath crisply and says, "I will never top that. I give you best."

"You are ducking out?" says Red Hot, as if amazed, and she is not the only one, for gasps are heard all around.

"Look," says Griselda, very serious. "The way this is going, one of us will wind up doing fatal injury to the other. But you say you do not wish to kill me, and I surely do not wish to kill you. I see no point," she says, "when all that rides on it is who can be fastest in a set-up like this. That does not matter; what matters is whether you can hack it out there," she says, jerking her thumb in the direction of the Rubble. "Probably you can; you are red hot, all right, and you are welcome to say that you beat me, if that is what you want." With this she turns away, and when Red Hot cries, "You cannot walk out on me like this," she just says, "Watch me," without looking back, and heads off.

Everyone gives way before her, and even when she is gone no one seems ready to speak, while Red Hot stares after them in a sort of daze, until Elsa gives a loud hurrah and claps her on the shoulder. Then there is much crowding around Red Hot, and cries of admiration, and Snakefang offers her the freedom of the house, all of which seems to pleasure her no little, and it looks as if something of a party will develop. But I decide to leave, for the liquor in Rowdy Djoh Lo's is no bargain at any time, and especially if I have to buy it myself, and although it is still early evening I head off to my room, because I have some thinking to do, and I find this so wearing after the excitement of the day that I turn in quite early, for me.

Well, the next day the story is all over town, and because I am known to be among those present, and also to accompany Red Hot to Lilina's in the first place, my account of everything is much in

demand, and my opinion is frequently canvassed. I decide the previous night to be very discreet in what I say, for it may get back to the ears of either Griselda or Red Hot, and neither is a person who I wish to have mad at me, ever. So I state that Red Hot is a most striking character, and puts up a very fine performance, and also that Griselda does her best, or so it seems to me, and I report her reasons for refusing to continue, and will not be drawn on whether I think she chickens out, for this is a subject on which I personally am unable to make up my mind.

But plenty of others who are there, or hear about it, are not so prudent, and are willing to state openly that she loses her nerve when faced with really serious opposition, and among these are some of Carver Donan's Storm Bull pals, although I notice that Carver himself has nothing much to say on the topic, which may be because he considers that he is already providing Griselda with serious opposition, when they have their duels. But Red Hot becomes something of a favourite with the Storm Bulls, and this seems to be what she is aiming at, for she has plenty in common with them, to judge from her behaviour around town. In fact, it seems that it is her life's ambition to be accepted as an initiate, but that the cult leaders require some good Chaos-fighting experience, which she is aiming to get in the Rubble, when a good opportunity presents itself. But in the days that follow she is mostly about town, and she is widely welcomed, for she likes to hang around drinking and gabbing, and has many tales to relate of her activities around Dragon Pass.

Many say that she is easier to get along with than Griselda, but I cannot see this, for Red Hot is certainly a doll to give plenty of room to, because she behaves in such a manner that no one can tell what she is going to do next. When she takes offence at remarks which she can do very easily, she will not reply in kind, like Griselda, or even belt out those who offend her, like Hanufa, but will maybe throw her drink over them, or trip them so they fall, or tread on their toes, or do something else unusual, and she will do likewise if all of a sudden she decides that she does not like someone's face, or the style of their gear, or the topic of their conversation, and in all such matters her standards are very exacting. So overall her behaviour appears quite strange, indeed some are heard to describe it as bizarre, but this does not prevent her from being a favourite with many of the customers in Loud Lilina's and other dives.

Now during this time Griselda is by no means hiding out, but comes and goes quietly, as if nothing unusual happens, and no one dast to suggest otherwise in her presence. For the first time some blowhard adventurer claims that she must lose her nerve where she can hear it, she calls him on it right away, and asks if he wishes to try her out, and the blowhard departs rather hastily. So the matter is not discussed as much as you will expect, and some even get to saying that maybe Griselda has a point, at that, and there is no sense in risking life and limb when she already proves all that she needs to prove. Nobody knows what Red Hot thinks of the matter, for she does not say, though I perceive that she does not care to look at Griselda when she is around.

For Griselda does not avoid places where Red Hot is, but will enter Lilina's quite frequently, and takes some interest in what she is saying or doing. I know this because Griselda will generally sit with me, since I am choosing a seat as far from Red Hot as I can get, and she will sometime pass comments to me on Red Hot's behaviour. In fact, we take to discussing Red Hot, for plainly Griselda is finding her as strange as I do, and one morning I find myself describing Red Hot's behaviour when she first arrives in Pavis, which is not a story I tell unless I am sure that it will not get back to Red Hot. But Griselda displays considerable interest, and she presses for details of everything Red Hot says as I am going along, and when I am done she nods her head and says "Ah", in a way that indicates that she sees something which I am not seeing. But she says no more, so finally I ask, "Why do you say 'Ah' like that, Griselda?"

Griselda grins at me. "Well now," she says. "Maybe this is something I ought to keep to myself, for it is nothing but a hunch; but does it never occur to you that Red Hot resembles somebody I have dealings with once?"

Now, as I state before, I am indeed having a feeling when I first see Red Hot that there is something familiar about her, but for all the thinking I do I cannot place it. But when Griselda says this, all at once it is like a light turns on in my brain, but just as I am about to speak Griselda reaches over and lays a finger across my lips.

"Let us sit on this one a while," she says. "It may come in handy." Then both of us are distracted, for there is some commotion at the bar, which is where Red Hot likes to be, mostly, and when we turn to look, there she is doing a little dance on and around a guy on the floor, who evidently does something to displease her. It is quite a comical sight, with her red locks of hair wagging, and her thin limbs going this way and that, but of course I know better than to laugh where she will hear me. But Griselda does not seem to care a cuss about this, for she gives a whoop and claps her hands.

"What is this, Red Hot, some kind of war dance you learn in a primitive land?" she cries. "Is there a tune that goes with it?"

At this Red Hot stops what she is doing and turns round slowly to Griselda, and the whole joint goes quiet. If I am on the receiving end of the look she gives Griselda I will be packing my bags, but of course Griselda is not scared of looks; she just leans back on the table and smiles at Red Hot, and I know only too well what this smile means.

"See here, Griselda," says Red Hot. "I do not care for that kind of talk. Remember, I make no attempt to push my advantage over you, so be grateful, and do not provoke me."

"Oh, I am grateful, all right," says Griselda. "I have many a good laugh out of you, which I will not get if we push it to a real conclusion."

Now Red Hot fires right up. "Then maybe we better push it to a conclusion now," she snarls.

"Right," says Griselda lightly. "You want to set a time some way ahead, to give the gang a chance to get some bets down?"

Evidently Red Hot is not expecting Griselda to take her up like this, and for a moment she acts quite taken aback. "OK," she snaps, finally, "but it is your funeral. This time I will not be holding back anything. Let us make it an hour or so off sundown, at the fighting place outside town."

to feed and appease their ever-hungry god Ta'atapec. Yet it is perfectly safe to visit these isles, for only initiates of the religion are ever seized and slain, for Ta'atapec only eats his own. However, be warned! Never eat meat on Tl'loc, for the natives cook and eat what their god does not want and they consider partaking in such a meal tantamount to joining their religion. This three of my comrades learned at the cost of their own lives. (XXIX. 21-014.d) The inhabitants of the neighbouring Ranga atoll also practise cannibalism, although they would recoil at the suggestion. For they only consume outsiders, who they consider less than human and thus fit for eating. Their goddess, a gentle nature spirit known only as Lagoon Green Woman, apparently deplores the practise, but the people of Ranga have no other source of meat.

"You mean you are holding back before?" says Griselda. "Tut, tut. That is not my impression. But, anyhow, I will see you there. Come, Olav," and she marches out, with me hurrying after her.

We are barely outside when I can see that Griselda is trying hard not to laugh. "I have her puzzled, for sure," she says, grinning sidelong at me. "She cannot think what I am up to. Now why I call you out is because I want you to lay some money on for me, for if I am known to be betting much on myself some people will smell a rat and the odds will shorten."

"You think you can take her?" I ask, feeling doubt in my own mind, because after all I see Red Hot wrong-foot her very slickly.

"I am betting on it," says Griselda. "Here, take this," and she hands over her money pouch.

Well, once the news gets around town the excitement is practically intense, and some citizens start heading out at once, to be sure of a good viewpoint. But I have no wish to be standing around in the sun, though to be sure it is not as hot as it is when Red Hot first comes to town, in fact it is getting cooling down and even somewhat cloudy. So I wait in the shade, and join a bunch of Lilina's clients when they set out, and they tell me that Red Hot is doing some drinking, but eats nothing. At the gate we meet up with Griselda, who is heading out with Wolfhead and his boys, and they give me a nod and a wink, as if they have confidence in the outcome, and Kroked even tells me confidentially when I ask that Griselda eats a good meal.

When we get there, the crowd is almost as big as for Griselda's duels with Carver Donan, though there are no Trolls and few high shots from the cults. It is to be a sword duel pure and simple, without magic of any kind, and Griselda is all armoured up, but Red Hot is wearing very little protection, though plainly this is worrying some of her backers. When this is perceived it has some effect on the odds, but I still get eight to five for the dough that Griselda gives me, and after much thought I put some on too, for I think to myself that I see Griselda come through tough opposition before.

Red Hot says she wishes to fight until one goes down, and Griselda says she will accept this, as long as that ends it and there is no hitting at the one on the ground. Red Hot sneers a little, and one of her Storm Bull backers yells it will make no difference, for Red Hot will not need more than one blow, but this does not seem to bother Griselda. When both state they are ready, a Storm Bull gives the word and off they go. It is one of the toughest fights to watch that I ever see, for they circle a lot, and then one or both will move very fast indeed, but they will pull back again, and it is only the sight of blood here and there that shows that any hit lands. It is without doubt a contest of skill and science, as I can tell from the appreciative murmurs and comments by those who look to be connoisseurs of sword-play, but for us ordinary folks it is a mite dull.

Griselda does not try the trick she uses before, obviously, but otherwise she is doing all right, and seems very cool, and those who take bets against her are not looking too happy, and one or two are even trying to lay off. But Red Hot seems to be aiming to live up to her name, for her face is getting red, and she is beginning to yell now and then, and even call Griselda names. This does not shake Griselda either, but Red Hot is beginning to push in on her, and Griselda finds it harder to get away after Red Hot slices her in the left thigh, as she is limping somewhat, and I am commencing to feel that my dough is at risk after all, while Red Hot's supporters are urging her on. But the next time Red Hot comes in, Griselda holds the blow very close to her body, instead of turning it off some way, and while they are this close she says something to Red Hot, which no one can hear because there is too much noise. But whatever it is it seems to stir Red Hot up no little, for she yells something back; then Griselda says something else, which really seems to shake Red Hot, for she almost staggers, and while she is off balance Griselda swings her sword round and cuts her right behind the knee, and down goes Red Hot. Everything is getting quiet while this is going on, as people can see they are speaking and wish to hear, and now the silence is total.

Griselda points her sword at Red Hot as she lies on the ground, and says calmly, "Now you see what a good thing it is that I make that stipulation. The way I see it, we are now even, and I have no interest in making any trouble for you, so long as you make none for me. Do I make myself clear?"

Red Hot chokes out yes, and Griselda nods. "That is showing sense," she says. "You still have it to your credit that you beat me once, and when you get more experience, who knows, maybe you will be better than me. But you still have a bit to learn yet; fighting without armour makes a good show, but when you come down to it, it is dumb. Remember, no one stays red hot for ever."

Then she backs off, and her friends move up to side her, in case any of the Storm Bulls feel like taking this up, but they only wish to see to Red Hot. After the bets get paid off everyone starts moving back to town, and Griselda surely has a bigger following than when she starts out. Wolfhead suggests going to Rowdy Djoh Lo's for a little celebration, and Griselda insists that I come along when I step up to hand over her winnings, and she seems in such a good mood that I think to myself that for once it will be relaxing to be around her in that place, and so I join them. Well, it is a long night, and the following day I have such a noggin on me that I am wishing I beg off, even though it does not cost me anything. But my head is not so thick that I do not remember that I finally get around to asking Griselda what it is she says to Red Hot, while she and I happen to be at a table on our own, as the others are engaged in a very noisy bout of arm-wrestling.

"Oh, that," she says, looking at me sidelong and grinning. "You remember what we are speaking of when this blows up? Well, I say it may come in handy, and I am right. I can see that if I do not do something she may outlast me by sheer stamina, so I remark on her great resemblance to Ragna the Wrestler. In fact, I ask if they are related, and she denies it strongly, which for me is confirmation. So then I wonder aloud what her Storm Bull friends will think about this resemblance, and that shakes her into letting me get one past her guard." *

"But she cannot be Chaotic herself," I say, "or some Storm Bull will surely recognise it."

"Sure," says Griselda, "but the Storm Bulls may not like the connection anyway. You know, I bet she comes here to show me up just because I am responsible for Ragna's decease, but of course she cannot say so, for she wishes to be a great Chaos-fighter."

"Is that not a bit of a dirty trick, then?" I say.

"Look," says Griselda earnestly, "if I really need to win, I will use any edge I can get. That other time I do not need to win, though she surely does; I recognise it in her, for I see that type a fair bit when I am adventuring around Dragon Pass."

Now this causes me to think quite hard, and this takes time because the old brain does not seem to be working so fast. Finally I say, "Then do you let her win, that other time?"

Griselda smiles just a little. "You will never know, will you?"

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* *Ragna was a member of the chaos cult of Cacodemon (see Elder Secrets)*

*A Zorak Zoran runemaster breaks through a line of warriors during a battle in Dragon Pass.*

## Free INT #2

**October 1992, A4, 40 pp. 4 DM.**

This magazine is the German equivalent of *Tales*, and very good it is too. The layout for *Tales #2* was never as good as this. It is presented as the magazine for *RuneQuest, Cthulhu, Elfquest, Stormbringer* and *Hawkmoon*, but the first two issues have so far been exclusively RQ. Inside this issue there are a couple of old *Tales* articles (Adari by Oliver Dickinson & Jaxarte Whyded by MOB), as well as new creatures, a Convention '92 report, review, scenario and letters page. Looks excellent if you can read German! Contact: RuneQuest-Gesellschaft e.V., Theodor-Heuss-Ring 1, 5000 Koln 1.

## The Unnamed #3

**1992, A5, 44pp. £1.00 (Ir £1.50).**

"The Unnamed is a fanzine which aims to cover as much of the hobby as possible." As indeed the contents of this issue shows, there's a *Pendragon* scenario, two *Paranoia* scenarios, an NPC and occult books for *Cthulhu*, fiction, interviews, and various reviews of RPG's, novels and zines. The zine is still rather rough and ready (the scenarios are more like cameos), but the editor is enthusiastic and it looks promising. Contact: Colin Tate, 18 Parkview, Old Eglish Road, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland, BT71 7JP.

## Les Reveurs de Runes #1 (The Runic Dreamers)

**May 1991, A4, 32pp, 22 Francs.**

Completely dedicated to the fantastic (writes Jean-Louis Bernard), the first issue of this French zine features a scenario for *Malefices* (a French horror-based RPG), an interview with Jacques Tardi (a well known illustrator and cartoonist), a review of the work of WH Hodgson, and articles for *Call of Cthulhu*. Some really good stuff for a first try. Contact: 14 rue de la Garenne, 78350 Les Loges en Josas, France.

## Beaumains #1

**October 1992, A4, 40pp, £1.75.**

This one is for *Pendragon* fans. I've not seen it yet but when I last spoke to Gareth it was at the printers, so when you read this it will be available. This issue includes three scenarios, background info, book and game reviews. There will be an interview with Greg Stafford in #2. Contact: Gareth Jones, 69 Atherley Road, Shirley, Southampton, SO1 5DT.

## Zine News

*Aslan*, according to its editor Andrew Rilstone, will be folding after #13. Apparently Andrew feels that the zine has reached the end of its natural life with many of the topics from early issues beginning to be recycled. His experiences with the now defunct *Gamesman* magazine were probably instrumental. He arrived at that magazine too late to save it (or even get an issue out) but in time to take much of the flak when it folded. It's a bad day for fandom.

There are two new UK prozines in the planning. The first is linked to the team that is behind *PerChance*; it's called *Role Player Independant* and a dummy issue was auctioned at Convention '92. The first issue is out now - so check out your local WH Smiths! Secondly, an organisation called Last Province Publishing was planning to release a bi-monthly magazine in September, called, not surprisingly, *The Last Province*. Good luck to both of them - they'll need it. According to my source in the magazine industry there just isn't enough advertising around to support a prozine.

## RQ Digest.

This is no longer being edited by Andrew Bell. The new editor is Henk Langeveld, and he operates from the Netherlands. The new Internet E-Mail address for it is *Runequest@Glorantha.Holland.Sun.COM*. Or, in case of trouble, *Henk.Langeveld@Holland.Sun.COM* Other computer whizz-kids might like to know that there is another RQ discussion bulletin board on GEnie in the USA. This can be found in the Avalon Hill section of the RPG/Games Bulletin Board.

*From de MOB:*

## Australian Realms #8

**Nov/Dec 1992, A4, 40pp. A$4.50.**

Issue #8 of the new look *Australian Realms* is out, and it looks damn fine! It reminds me in some ways of *White Wolf*, with better artwork, and aimed at the younger end of the market. This issue features articles on a variety of gaming systems, including Shadowrun, Warmallet, AD&D and RuneQuest. The latter includes "RQ - Art of Staying Alive" from *Tales #2*, and an interview that Greg Stafford gave when he was Down Under recently. For more information contact the editor, Nick Leaning, at PO Box 220, Morley, WA 6062, Australia.

# Next: Sea Special

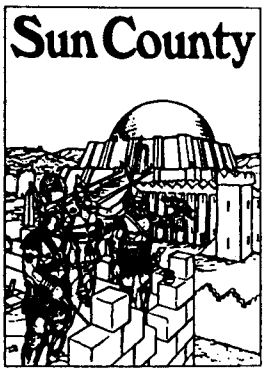
*The Cult of Dormal, The Oceans of Glorantha, Spirits of the Sea, Secrets of the Sea Gods, News, Scenarios, and Much More!*

# RuneQuest Renaissance 1992

## RuneQuest is back with the goodness of pure Glorantha!

Here are the next five RuneQuest supplements planned for publication in 1992-1993 by Avalon Hill with a tentative US release schedule:

## Sun County




**Runequest Adventures in the Lands of the Sun**

**(Available Now!)** Sun County, a small enclave of staunchly independent citizen soldiers, home of the renowned Sun Dome Templars, has endured in Prax for centuries. This Gloranthan supplement features:

- Four scenarios ready for immediate play
- Schemes for expanding your own campaign
- Extensive historical notes on Sun County and its culture
- Profiles of important persons and peoples of the region
- New Yelmalio cult description
- Extensive Encounters Tables and Entries
- Personal notes and observations of Jaxarte Whyded, Commissioner of the Imperial Census, on his travels through the land
- Sundry useful and ornamental details of interest to the inveterate Gloranthan scholar

## Shadows on the Borderlands

**RuneQuest Adventures on the Frontier**

**(December 1992)** Labyrinthine caverns honeycomb the cliffs of frontier lands along the Valley of Cradles, and in such darkness the seed of corruption breeds. Shadows on the Borderlands includes four scenarios:

- "The Black Broo of Dyskund" — A small hole in the earth leads to vast caverns unseen by human eyes since the Second Age.
- "A Tale to Tell" — Treasure Trove Hurbi's got a swell treasure chart. "Ancient shrine to Tienin the wilderness! Antiquities to loot and foul chaos taint to scourge! Special discount to Storm Bulls and Zoran Zorani!"
- "Beneath the Salt" — An informer who has taken refuge in the salt mine prisons of Sun County must be silenced. Getting into prison is easy. . . .
- "Gaumata's Vision" — Gaumata, Light Keeper of Sun County, has a sacred vision of chaos corruption hidden within an otherwise apparently pious Sun Domers hamlet, but which hamlet? It had better not be in your militia unit's district!

These scenarios develop the theme of subterranean wilderness adventuring, with detailed maps of extensive cavern passages and chambers.

## Dorastor

**Travelers Abroad in the Land of Doom**

**(March 1993)** Dorastor — the heart of Chaos — where the dead walk freely upon the earth, the trees scream and bleed when cut, and the very air is moist and green with poison. Accompany the annual Lunar trade expedition and view this land first-hand. Or gain your grossest RuneQuest character an honorable end on crusade against the spawn of Chaos. Designed by Sandy Petersen, *Dorastor* includes revised and updated cults, mysteries, and secrets from the lamentably long-out-of-print RuneQuest supplement Cults of Terror.

## Strangers in Prax

**Outlanders and Outland Cults**

**(May 1993)** This Gloranthan supplement, an anthology of cults, settings, scenarios and feature NPCs, explores the role of outlanders in Praxian campaigns. Here you'll meet: the dreaded Lunar Coders, agents of the Red Emperor; a sorceror of the West and his entourage; a shipwrecked captain lying under a terrible curse; a Pamaltelan shaman seeking the Copper Sands to reenact an ancient duel between gods. Includes new cult descriptions by Sandy Petersen and Greg Stafford.

**The Avalon Hill Game Company**
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Baltimore MD 21214
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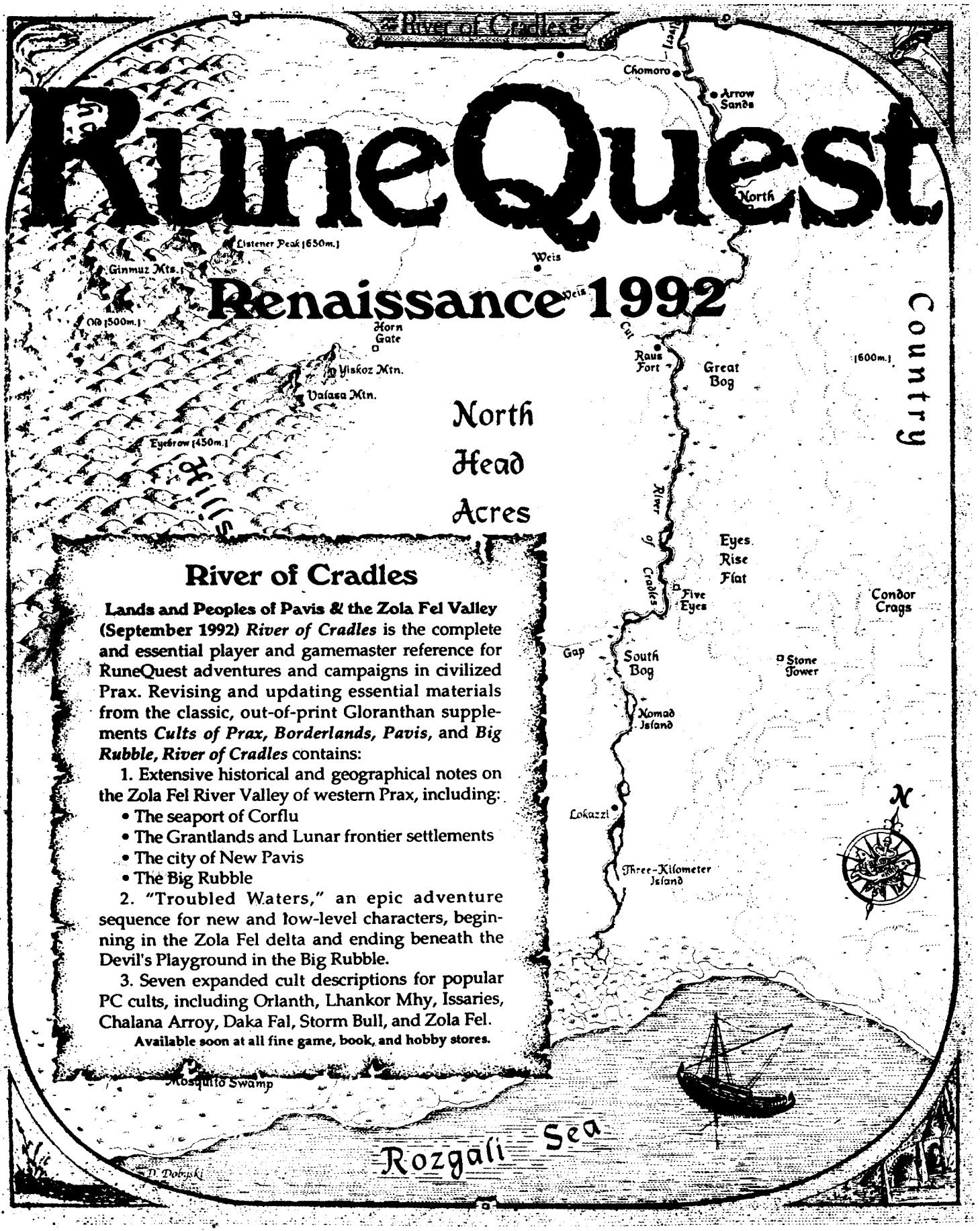
(410) 254-0991

# RuneQuest Renaissance 1992




## River of Cradles

**Lands and Peoples of Pavis & the Zola Fel Valley**

**(September 1992)** ***River of Cradles*** is the complete and essential player and gamemaster reference for RuneQuest adventures and campaigns in civilized Prax. Revising and updating essential materials from the classic, out-of-print Gloranthan supplements ***Cults of Prax, Borderlands, Pavis,*** and ***Big Rubble, River of Cradles*** contains:

1. Extensive historical and geographical notes on the Zola Fel River Valley of western Prax, including:
   - The seaport of Corflu
   - The Grantlands and Lunar frontier settlements
   - The city of New Pavis
   - The Big Rubble
2. "Troubled Waters," an epic adventure sequence for new and low-level characters, beginning in the Zola Fel delta and ending beneath the Devil's Playground in the Big Rubble.
3. Seven expanded cult descriptions for popular PC cults, including Orlanth, Lhankor Mhy, Issaries, Chalana Arroy, Daka Fal, Storm Bull, and Zola Fel.

**Available soon at all fine game, book, and hobby stores.**