TARGET GAMES

ADVENTURE

THE VENUSIAN APOCALYPSE™

THE FOUR RIDERS



MUTANT CHRONICLES

THE VENUSIAN APOCALYPSE

PART 2:

THE FOUR RIDERS

MUTANT CHRONICLES

Heartbreaker

TARGET GAMES



DESIGN:
Richard Dakan

EDITING:
Matt Forbeck

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS:
Paul Beakley, Nils Gulliksson, Michael Mörsare, Henrik Strandberg

CONCEPT:
Nils Gulliksson, Henrik Strandberg

ART DIRECTION:
Nils Gulliksson

PAGEDESIGN:
Marcus Thorell, Andreas Rondahl

COVER ARTWORK:
Studio Parente

INTERIOR ARTWORK:
Peter Bergting, Jens Jonsson
Stefan Thunberg

MAPS:
Marcus Thorell, Andreas Rondahl

LINE EDITOR:
Michael Mörsare

CONTENTS

WELCOME 3

INTRODUCTION 5
What has happened 5
Give in to the darkness 5
The battle for the second seal . .5
Hardings plan 6
The secret of the disc 7

CHAPTER 1:
THE SETUP 8
A simple phonecall 9
The disc 10
The offer 10
Researching Hardings story 11
David Hardgrove 12
The truth about David Hardgrove 14
The Venusian Heritage Museum .14
Museum security 16

CHAPTER 2:
THE BETRAYAL 18
The post grand theft blues 19
The frame up 20
The Red Duke 20
On the run 22
At the Howling Monkey 23
Meeting Tyson 23
Questions and answers 24
The blackmailers 25
Caught! 27

CHAPTER 3:
PAY BACK 28
Finding Fletcher 29
Calling Harding 29
Back to Konstantine´s 30
Melissa´s apartment 32
J. Gustav´s Cookery 33
Fletchers apartment 33
Fletchers plan 35
The ritual 36
Oops! 39
Wrapping things up 39

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Heartbreaker
P.O. Box 105
Folsom, PA 19033
USA

Heartbreaker
c/o Gamecraft
A16 Gardner's Row
Liverpool L36JT
ENGLAND

Heartbreaker
c/o Walrus Carpenter
1 st Floor
97-99 Argyle St.
Parramatta, N. SW: 2150
AUSTRALIA

MORE INFORMATION ALSO AVAILABLE AT THIS SITE: www.target.se
YOU CAN ALSO E-MAIL: hrtbrkr000@aol.com or mutant@target.se

Copyright © 1996 Target Games AB. All rights reserved. Mutant Chronicles, The Venusian Apocalypse and all character names and the distinctive likeness(es) thereof are trademarks of Target Games AB. Mutant Chronicles is a registered trademark in the USA.
Used under Authorization. Printed in the USA.

WELCOME

WELCOME TO THE VENUSIAN APOCALYPSE! The Four Riders continues the story that began in The Second Seal of Repulsion. You need not have played the first adventure in order to run this adventure, but it is helpful to have knowledge of the events that took place in The Second Seal of Repulsion (see What Has Happened below).

The Venusian Apocalypse is a trilogy of adventures set on Venus and dealing with events that could have catastrophic consequences for all of humanity. In the first part, *The Second Seal of Repulsion*, one of the most terrible of these event rears its ugly head: the breaking of the very same Seal, that mystical barrier that kept the Heart and Soul of the Great Darkness at bay. Of course the characters have no idea what they're getting into when things get started. They think its just going to be a little recon mission.

In this second part or this trilogy, *The Four Riders*, the PCs face the wrath of the Dark Legion as they race against time to prevent a deadly plague from being released upon Heimburg. The third and final part of *Venusian Apocalypse*, *Beyond the Pale*, brings the characters face to face with the most dangerous agent of the Great Darkness in a final, climactic battle which will determine the future of mankind.

CHARACTER REQUIREMENTS

THE FOUR RIDERS IS THE SECOND PART in a trilogy of adventures, collectively known as *the Venusian Apocalypse*. However, it is not necessary to have the other two parts in order to enjoy playing this adventure. It is a stand alone story that Game Masters can integrate into existing campaigns as they see fit. The adventure is best suited for a group of five to seven middle power characters, but you as Game Master may find it necessary to alter the number of foes the characters encounter in order to better tailor the adventure to his or her group's needs. There are no hard and fast requirements for character professions, but it is very helpful if at least one player works for or has good relations with Capitol. Also, it is advisable that none of the starting players are Heretics, although this is not absolutely necessary.



INTRODUCTION

WARNING: *This entire adventure is solely for the GM's use! If you're a player, you should stop reading immediately and hand this volume over to your highly revered Game Master!*

WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

In *The Second Seal of Repulsion*, the players met Commander Randall Harding, an officer in the Capitol Armed Forces. Harding led the players on a mission deep into the Venusian jungle to survey some land Capitol had purchased from House Renauld, a minor Bauhaus noble family. where the players discovered an ancient tomb hidden under the jungle canopy. Within the tomb the players found a sarcophagus containing the Second Seal of Repulsion. Not knowing what it was they had before them, Commander Harding opened the seal releasing the Dark Tempter, a powerful aspect of the Dark Soul that had been kept at bay by the Second Seal.

GIVE IN TO THE DARKNESS

The First Seal of Repulsion kept the physical manifestations of the Dark Soul from entering our world. When it was broken the Dark Apostles were free to come into the solar system and wage war on the children of the light. With the second seal broken, the powerful corrupting psyche of the Dark Soul forced its way into the world, manifesting itself as the Dark Tempter. The Dark Tempter is purely psychic energy that can flow through space without any need for a physical body. It can insinuate itself into thousands of minds at a time, tempting them into corruption in a fraction of the time it would take using the Dark Legion's normal techniques.

It is possible that the players managed to recreate the seal, forcing the Dark Tempter back from whence it came, but it is also possible that the Dark Tempter remains free in our universe, creating thousands of new heretics every day. Even the player characters may have become corrupted by the Dark Tempter. What is certain is that Commander Harding gave into the Tempter. He was given a special gift by the Tempter - the ability to hide his corruption from Brotherhood seers. This potent gift makes Harding one of the most dangerous agents of the Dark Legion in the solar system, for there is no way to discover his treachery.

THE BATTLE FOR THE SECOND SEAL

As soon as the players opened the Seal, both the Dark Legion and the Brotherhood became immediately aware of the great evil that had been released. While the players fled the tomb, Dark legionaries and Doomtroopers both rushed to the site and subsequently fought a tremendous battle in the Venusian jungle. The Brotherhood owed much of its initial success to the Renauld family, the former owners of the land. They had already sent a force of soldiers into the region even before Harding opened the Seal. It seems the Renauld family may have known that the Seal was there all along. The truth may never be known, for in the course of the battle for the Seal, every single member of the Renauld family joined the battle, all fighting to the last. They held the site against the Dark Legion until reinforcements from the Brotherhood arrived and continued to fight until none were left.

The Battle for the Second Seal, as it has subsequently become known, lasted for fifteen days. The entire region surrounding the tomb was eventually scoured clean of all life as both Dark Legion and Brotherhood forces used every weapon in their arsenal to win the fight. Hundreds of miles of jungle were burned to the ground and thousands of men and women died in the fight, but eventually the Cardinal's forces won the day and the Dark Legion's forces lay dead on the field. The Brotherhood has since



THE CALL WENT OUT AND WE ANSWERED.

The Dark Symmetry rose again in the depths of our beloved jungles, threatening all humanity with its mind contorting evil. The Brotherhood, our noble and pious brethren, called on the Homebuilders to once again save the universe from the greatest of evils and we answered that call. In the deepest, darkest heart of the jungle some damn fool Capitols had released something so awful the Brotherhood couldn't even tell us what it was. But there wasn't time to ask questions, and we didn't much care for details. We knew out time had come once again. Fighting for our Homes is what every citizen of our Corporation lives for, and we are the front line in that fight. The Venusian Rangers were once again in the vanguard of the fight for our jungle home.

We were loaded and ready in less than an hour, and four hours later we were getting ready to land. We were probably the first troops on the scene, besides the Brothers who were already there and who had sent out the call. We flew in low over the tree tops, sometimes cutting off branches in our wake. Over the intercom we could hear the pilot cursing about the radar screen. Apparently the night's sky was alive with



Dark Legion planes, scouring the area for signs of their enemies. We had no idea at the time, but the air war was already beginning about fifty miles to the north. All three fighter wings stationed around Heimburg had already been dispatched at the request of the Cardinal himself. Beyond the horizon the night sky was no doubt burning bright with machine gun and rocket fire, planes crashing to the jungle floor.

Unfortunately we had little or no air cover to escort us in to the LZ, and had to worry a lot about the flying fortresses cruising only a kilometer above us. Luckily we were almost there before they caught on to us. From the back we had no way of knowing what the hell was going on. The plane started to jerk erratically as the pilot tried to avoid incoming rockets. There was a flash from the port window as one of our fellow transports suddenly burst into flame and then exploded. 30 good rangers died without ever firing a shot in the battle, and we all looked at each other with grim frustration.



placed a quarantine around the area within a hundred kilometers of the site of the Second Seal. Only those with the explicit permission of the Brotherhood are permitted to even enter the airspace, and no one but members of the Brotherhood are allowed within the tomb complex itself.

The Brotherhood's most skilled practitioners of the Art in have come to Venus to help guard the Second Seal from the Dark Legion. If the players failed to create a new seal, they are also doing their best to create a barrier between the Dark Tempter and the rest of the solar system. Either way, they are expending a great deal of mental energy on the site, both keeping the Legion from getting in and the Dark Soul from getting out. They are either trying to recreate the seal or make the seal the players made much stronger.

The Battle was a tremendous drain on the military resources of the Brotherhood and the supporting corporations. Bauhaus in particular lost a great many soldiers in the long battle and now their forces are spread thin. The problem is heightened by the fact that the Brotherhood has called upon Bauhaus to supply arms and equipment to help protect the site of the Second Seal. Heimburg, the closest major Bauhaus city to the site, has put up most of the money and security personnel for the operation. If the players did not close the Second Seal, the problem is even worse. The Dark Tempter runs loose through the streets of the city, corrupting all those of weak will or poor conscience, resulting in a dramatic increase in violent crime within the city. The city is close to the breaking point.



HARDING'S PLAN

It is now three months since the Battle for the Second Seal, and the players have had time to recuperate from their misadventures in the jungle. They were questioned by members of the Brotherhood as to what exactly happened in the temple and what took place when the seal opened. Of course, if the Dark Tempter managed to corrupt any of the players, they will probably want to avoid Brotherhood scrutiny. This is easy enough to do in the chaotic time after the breaking of the Seal. The Brotherhood is preoccupied with fighting the Dark Legion and at first they are not even aware that the players had any part in the breaking of the seal unless the players told them. Corrupted characters foolish enough to present themselves before the Brotherhood Inquisitors will undoubtedly be taken into custody and dealt with accordingly. Harding does present himself to the Brotherhood, but because of the Dark Tempter's gift he passes their inspection with flying colors. He is hailed as a hero for surviving the Dark Soul's worst and is given a promotion by Capitol for his bravery in the line of fire.

Since the Battle the Brotherhood has been tearing apart the tomb of the Second Seal, trying to discover its secrets. The excavation has recovered a number of strange artifacts, some of which are definitely evil, but many of which are of unknown design and purpose. These artifacts were originally brought back to the Cathedral in Heimburg for study.

Since then, those artifacts shown to have no inherent evil, psychic, or magic potential have been shipped out to some of the city's top researchers in the hope that they will be able to unravel the mysteries of the Second Seal and who created it. Among these artifacts is a stone disk with a large sapphire at its center. Brotherhood seers feel that the disk is harmless, and probably some sort of ancient burial treasure or a decorative piece.

The disk is now in the possession of a the Venusian Heritage Museum in Heimburg. The Bauhaus researchers there are among the best in the Corporation, specializing in archeological finds from the first days of human settlements on Venus. The disk is one of three artifacts in the museum recovered from the tomb of the Second Seal. It was recovered from underneath the sarcophagus containing the Second Seal. The disk itself measures some 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with circular patterns of runes on both sides. A large sapphire, some 50 carats, pierces the center of the disk. With it were an oblong clay table encrusted with runes similar to those on the disk and a green crystal sphere. The language on the artifacts is totally unknown, but it is hoped that the Bauhaus scientists will be able to find some clue to their meaning.

THE SECRET OF THE DISC

What the Brotherhood does not realize is that the threat represented by the disk has little to do with the Dark Symmetry and is not easily detectable by the Art. The disk itself is really quite harmless. The danger lies in what is contained within the sapphire in the disk's center. The sapphire contains the seeds of a plague so virulent that its release could easily spell the end for all life on Venus. The plague was created many eons ago by the Dark Soul for use in another world. In fact Demnogonis himself came into being from the same dark substance from which the Dark Soul forged the plague. Despite its extradimensional origins, the plague is a purely natural virus, although far more virulent than anything known in human history.

Long ago the Dark Soul released the plague upon its ancient foes, but they managed to isolate the disease and seal its last remnants within a specially prepared sapphire. They then place the sapphire in a stone disk with accompanying runes warning of the danger. When they created the Second Seal of Repulsion, they felt that the tomb of the heroes would be an appropriate place to keep the disease from evil hands. Keeping the disease at all seems a somewhat questionable decision, bit there were certain ancients who felt that the disease might someday be useful as a weapon should new foes arise or the Dark Soul break free of its bonds. The Dark Soul has alerted Harding as to the presence of the plague within the sapphire, and now Harding is determined to get his hands on it. However, his main concern is that no one begins to suspect him of being a heretic. to this end, he has decided to work though intermediaries in obtaining the disk from the museum. Once he has the disk he will release the plague upon the city of Heimburg. As the disease spreads across the city it will leave a tremendous trail of death in its wake. The city is already strained to the point of breaking, and the plague is sure to push it over the edge into chaos. Harding hopes to take advantage of the opportunity to launch an attack against the Cathedral and destroy, thus crippling Brotherhood operations on Venus, and enabling the Dark Legion to take back the site of the Second Seal of Repulsion.





It is a horrible thing to leave your fate in the hands of another, to not be able to fight back when the enemy is upon you.

The pilot was doing a good job of keeping us safe, but less than a kilometer from the target he clipped a wing on a tree and down we went. The transport plowed through the jungle before finally coming to rest in a shallow river. The whole crew of the plane died in the crash, along with the two squads seated towards the front of the plane. The rest of us scrambled out the back as quick as we could, knowing that the crash would being more Dark Legion planes to investigate, not to mention whatever they had on the ground.

The three remaining squads quickly formed up and headed out into the jungle. I un-slung my PSG-99 and took point. As the only surviving sniper, it was my job to also act as a scout and forward observer. Hopefully our friends up in the sky would beat back the Dark Legion enough for me to be able to call in some air support. Right then the airwaves were so thick with radio traffic and jamming signals that it was impossible to get through to anyone. I went ahead of the rest of the group, heading in the direction we assumed was correct. The near constant gunfire and explosions clued us in pretty quickly to where the action was.

CHAPTER 1: THE SETUP

We hadn't gotten more than a hundred meters into the jungle before we heard the sound of low flying planes strafing the remains of our transport, followed by a resounding thump as the gas tanks of our crippled aircraft exploded. the jungle all around us showed signs of troop movement, with literally scores of newly made paths cut through the jungle by Dark Legion troops and tanks. The deep ruts left by advancing Dark Legion armor gave me pause to wonder for a moment. It would be hours before any Bauhaus armor would arrive on the scene, and we had no heavy weapons to speak of.

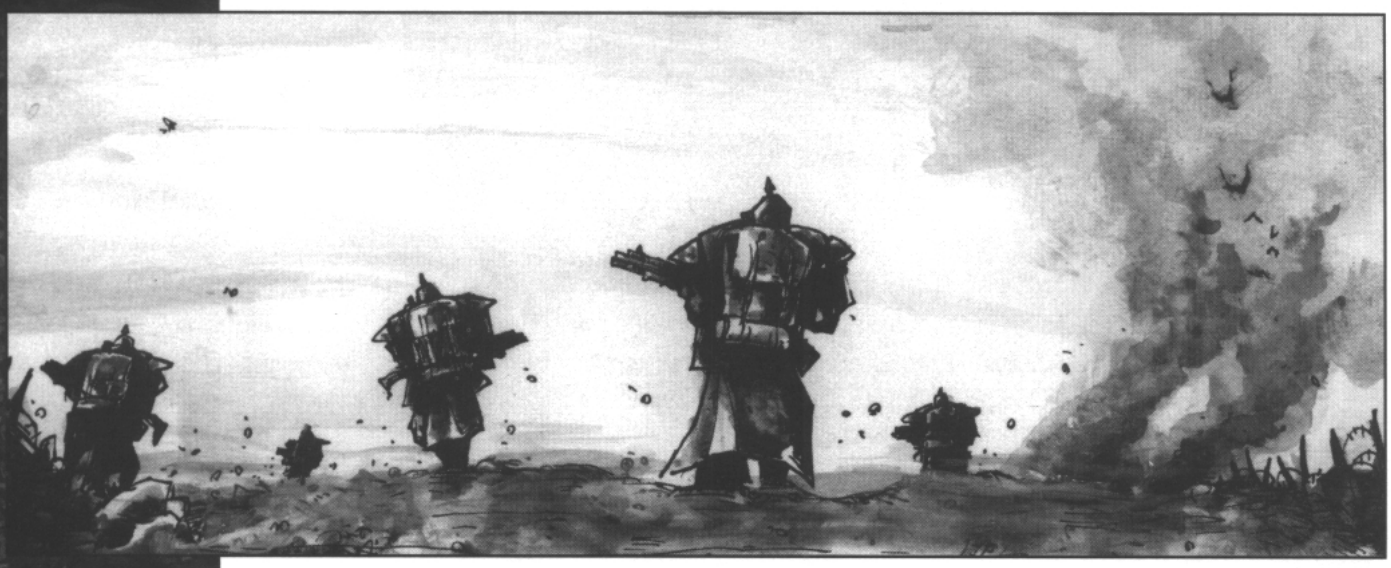
Moments later I saw the enemy. I gave the signal to my comrades behind me and took cover. They hadn't noticed me, so I had a moment to observe them and come up with a plan. It appeared to be some sort of staging area or supply depot. There were some two dozen undead legionnaires milling about, shuffling boxes of

The players will have heard all about the Battle for the Second Seal. Indeed, the Game Master may wish to create a small scenario for the players in which they participate in the battle, assuming they would be inclined to do so. The battle itself was fairly straight forward: a great deal of automatic weapons and high explosives and only the most brave or foolhardy are advised to sign up for such action voluntarily. It is more likely that the players spent the time during the battle recovering from the physical and emotional beating they took in the jungle.

The Brotherhood's official claim is that the Second Seal of Repulsion has been recreated and that they evil within is being held at bay. This may well be a lie (depending on what the players did in the last adventure), but the Cardinal wants to avoid causing any sort of panic. Nevertheless, players will be aware the Brotherhood is out in force looking for heretics and that many Inquisitors and other Brotherhood members have been called in from other planets to help fight the Dark Tempter's influence on Venus.

The adventure is designed with the idea that the players already know Harding. They worked together in the previous adventure and probably trust him. He has proven himself to be a brave warrior and capable leader, even if he is a little gruff at times. The players should have no qualms about working with him again. They will have heard that the Brotherhood has duly interviewed him and proclaimed him free of corruption. Of course if the players themselves have all become heretics, then Harding will be happy to reveal himself to them and use them in his plans. Either way, he sees the players as expendable pawns to be used in his great game.

If the player characters are all unfamiliar with Harding or if this adventure is being played without playing The Second Seal of Repulsion, the game master will have to figure out a way to get Harding and the players together. The game master should look at the player characters' backgrounds and decide what in them Harding could use to convince them to work for him. He can offer them any number of incentives from money and power, to the good feeling that comes from doing a good deed. Harding has all of Capitol's security services to draw on when finding out about the characters, and will find out what it is that makes them tick. It is highly recommended that this not be the party's first adventure together. Harding is looking for a team that has a history of working together, a group that everyone will believe might come together to rob the museum.



A SIMPLE PHONECALL

Harding contacts the player characters and asks for a meeting. He says that what he wants to discuss is very confidential and that they cannot meet in his office, there are heretic spies everywhere. He asks to meet them in a public place of their choosing, somewhere were they can have some privacy. He says that they should come alone and to make sure they are not followed. If anyone asks them where they are going, it's fine to mention that they are meeting with Harding. Just a few old war buddies getting together to discuss old times eh? He wants to meet the player characters the day after he contacts them, but is willing to arrange for a different time if they can not make the meeting.

If the players use the time between Harding's call and the meeting to look into what Harding has been up to, they won't find much. They easily discover that he has been named head of Capitol Security Service's Department of Ancient Artifacts and Historical Investigations for the planet Venus. Harding has only held the post for a month, and has done nothing distinguished in the short time he has served in his new capacity. If the players have Brotherhood contacts they find that he was for several months the subject of an investigation by the Inquisition. They did not take kindly to the notion that Harding had been responsible for opening the Second Seal of Repulsion all on his own. Despite two months of in depth background check and constant undercover surveillance, they found no indications that Harding has any connections with the Dark Legion.

Harding comes alone to the meeting, carrying a briefcase with a pistol at his side. He seems happy to see the player characters and greets them warmly, inquiring after their health and well-being. He makes small talk with the players for some while, commenting on the Battle for The Second Seal and the mess he and the players caused. At this time Harding uses a Gift of the Dark Symmetry to cause any recording devices the players might have to malfunction. He wants no record of the meeting. He says that he often has nightmares about that day in the jungle and the evil he is responsible for releasing. He says that daily he lives filled with remorse for his foolhardy action. He should have known better! His only consolation is that he withstood the temptations of the Dark Soul and survived to fight on against the Dark Legion. Throughout the conversation he is surprisingly open and confiding with the player characters, treating them like old, dear friends. The game master should play Harding appropriately, as if he trusts the players fully and is confiding his deepest fears in the player characters.

He goes on to say we are living in troubled times, and that it is a sad day when even the Brotherhood cannot be trusted to do the right thing. He pauses a moment to let his rather shocking statement sink in. If the player characters challenge him on this statement he simply holds up his hand and begs the player characters to hold their judgment until they have heard him out. He continues, saying that although the Brotherhood means well, they do not understand the true danger of the forces they are dealing with. He asks the players if they know anything of the artifacts removed



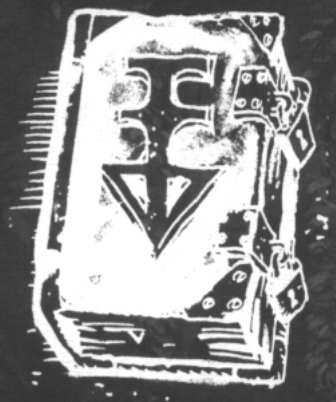
from the site of the Second Seal. Unless the players have contacts within the Bauhaus government or the Brotherhood and have been looking into events related to the Second Seal they do not know anything.

Harding tells the player characters that the Brotherhood has been tearing apart the tomb of the Second Seal piece by piece and have found a number of artifacts within and underneath the tomb site. The Brotherhood has been examining them and determining whether or not they represent a threat or are simply of historical value. The former are locked up in the Cathedral or destroyed, the latter get sent on to scientists for further study. Some of these have come into Harding's hands in his new role as Chief of Security for Capitol's Department of Ancient Artifacts and Historical Investigations. However, because the Elector Dukes hold so much influence with the Cardinal, most of the artifacts have gone to Bauhaus for further study.



ammunition from one place to another, all under the direction of a Necromutant who clearly wanted to be up where the fighting was. I saw a runner come back from what must have been the front lines. The thing came and went quickly, taking with him a satchel of grenades and a crate of hand held rockets.

Using a combination of bird chirps and hand signal I communicated to the rest of the team the number and kind of enemies I had in my sights. Slowly, quietly, we moved into position, surrounding the enemy camp. We had worked together long enough that there was no need to speak or plan. Everyone knew their job without having to be told. In less than five minutes we were in place. I had moved up into one of the giant trees that surrounded the scorched clearing the Legionnaires were using. From here I could see the whole camp, and I put the cross hairs of my PSG-99 right on the necromutant's forehead. When I heard the signal from Sarge, I squeezed the trigger ever so gently, releasing a single high velocity bullet into the necromutant's



THE DISC

Harding gets a dreamy look in his eyes at this point. He asks the player characters to think back to the time in the tomb when they opened the Seal and the Dark Soul tried to tempt each of them into serving the Dark Legion. Harding tells the players that the Dark Soul offered him the power to destroy all of Capitol's enemies. In the Vision a strange man offered Harding a stone disk with a sapphire embedded in its center. The stranger was of course the Dark Soul, and he said that the power within the disk would be great enough to fulfill all of Harding's dreams. Of course, Harding says, he did not fall for the Dark Soul's trickery, and he knows that you can't make deals with the devil and expect to come out ahead. Until a week ago, Harding thought that he had heard the last of the matter. He had resisted temptation and was devoted to his new duties. Then he heard reports of a new artifact that the Brotherhood had found beneath the sarcophagus of the Second Seal. It was nothing less than the very disk the Dark Soul had shown Harding in his vision.

Harding only heard of the disk because the Brotherhood was planning to release it for further study by the Bauhaus Venusian Heritage Museum. Harding of course informed the Brotherhood as to what he knew of the disk and his dream. The Brotherhood assured him that the they had thoroughly examined the disk and that, if anything it showed less signs of taint from the Dark Symmetry than any of the other artifacts. (This is all true, Harding did warn them, but only because he knew they would not heed his warning. The Dark Soul has told him that the presence of the plague in the sapphire is totally undetectable by The Art). They pretty much told Harding to mind his own business.

Harding tells the player characters that he is sure that there is something dangerous about the disk, but that the Bauhaus scientists won't let any outsiders even look at the it. He says that there is a lot of resentment between Capitol and Bauhaus right now. Capitol is upset that they spent a small fortune on a tract of land that has since been totally leveled by the Battle of the Second Seal. Capitol has tried to claim some sort of recompense from the Renauld family, but Bauhaus has staunchly refused to pay back even a fraction of the land's value. Meanwhile the Brotherhood has declared the entire region off limits, and now Bauhaus and Brotherhood troops are stationed on land that Capitol paid for. If that were not bad enough, Capitol is getting only the least valuable of the artifacts that come out of the site!

Harding has become incensed as he tells his tale, going on about how Capitol has been treated badly in the whole affair. He goes on to say that many in the Bauhaus government have grown resentful of Harding's constant pestering for Capitol to have a greater share in the artifacts. He has made some powerful enemies in his short term in the Department of Ancient Artifacts and Historical Investigations. Of course, if any of the players are staunch Bauhaus supporters, he will use a different tactic to persuade them. Harding will also emphasize the danger the disk represents. He feels that, historical value aside, the disk should probably be destroyed or at least be in the hands of someone who understands the danger inherent in the disk. What if the Bauhaus scientists unknowingly release some great evil from the disk, much as Harding himself foolishly opened the Second Seal.

THE OFFER

Finally Harding comes to the point of his interview with the players. He asks them to help him steal the disk from the Venusian Heritage Museum. He insists that it is the only way. He's tried all the official channels but has run up against bureaucratic walls at every turn. Now it is time for action before something happens that they will all regret. He needs the players to do this for him, because there is no one else he can trust. They have first hand experience with the power of the Dark Soul and its evil temptations. He can not undertake the mission himself because he is almost sure that he is being watched by Bauhaus agents. It seems that the Homebuilders do not trust him.

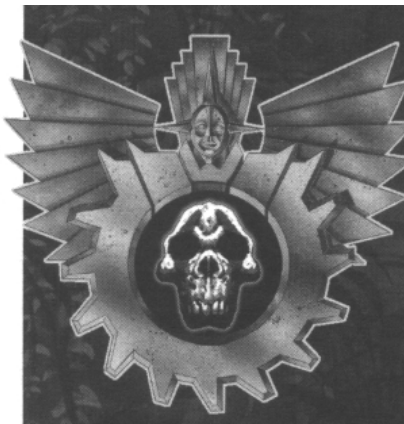
Harding wants the players to break into the Museum and take the disk without killing any of the guards or scientists in the building, and without causing too much damage. The scientists are innocents and do not deserve to die just because they are unwittingly endangering all mankind. (Harding of course does not care in the least, but he thinks that it will help the characters believe that he is not a servant of the Dark Soul) It is a stealth mission, not a full frontal assault. Harding has a trusted scientist who will go along with the players and take custody of the disk. He is David Hargrove, a young but brilliant Capitol scientist, and an expert in Venusian antiquities. Hargrove will take the disk back to a secret lab that he has set up, far from the prying eyes of Bauhaus security.

Harding hopes that the players will readily accept his plea for help, but he is prepared to offer a number of incentives to get the players' help. He can offer them a substantial cash fee for their services. Additionally he can offer commissions in the Capitol armed forces if this is appealing to any of the players. He offers scientifically inclined characters a chance to examine the disk once it has been recovered. The game master should tailor Harding's offer to meet the needs and desires of the player characters. Harding is a skilled manipulator, and knows all the right things to say in order to convince others to do his bidding.

Harding will give the players as much help as he can, and will try to get them any equipment they feel they need in order to perform the mission successfully, including knockout gas if they as for it. Harding wants the players to move in as soon as possible, citing his fears that the Bauhaus scientists will make some tragic mistake if they do not act quickly. He tells them that Hargrove will be in touch with them later that evening and they can get together with him to plan the raid. Harding bids the player characters farewell and wishes them good luck. He tells them not to contact him unless there is an emergency of some sort.

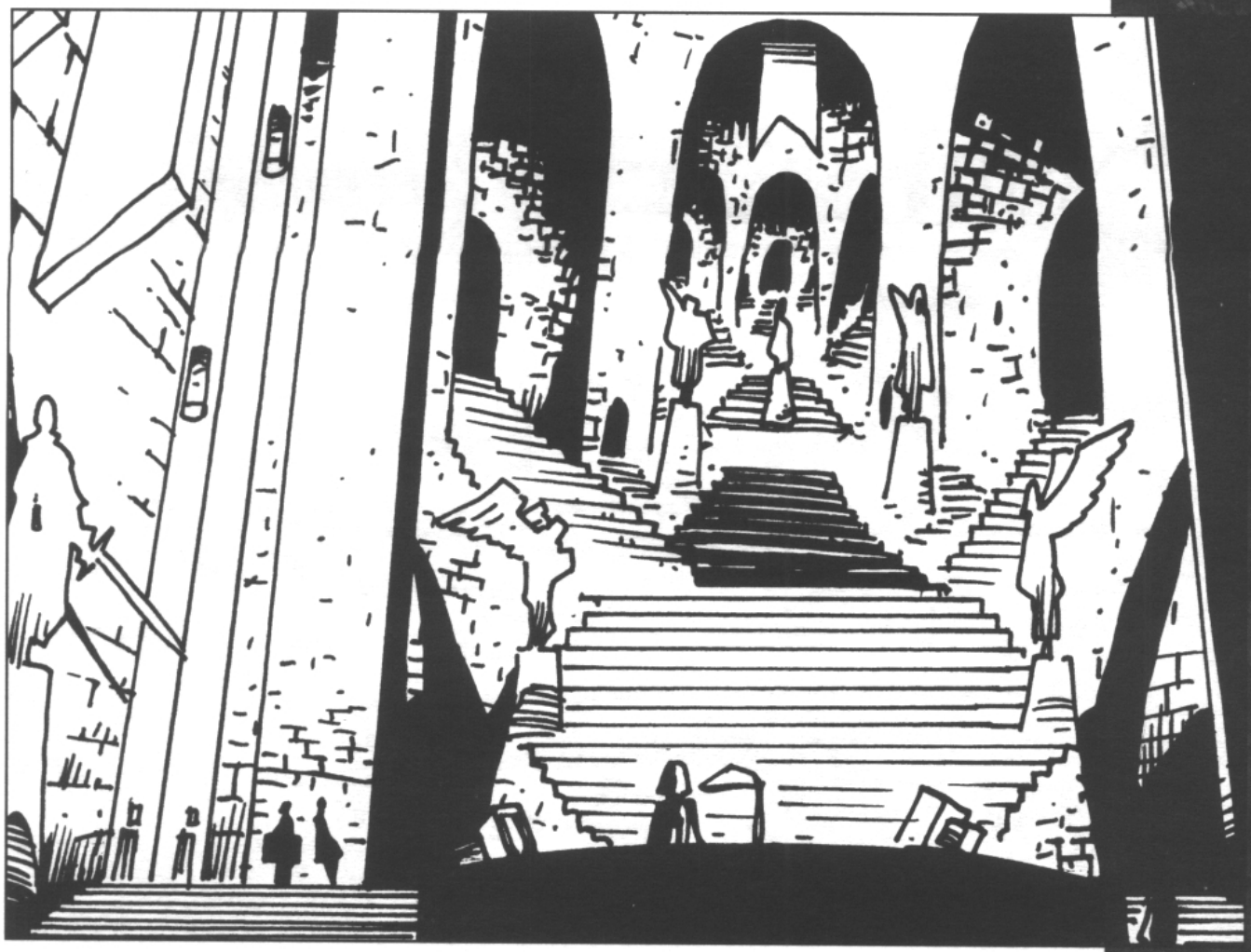
RESEARCHING HARDING'S STORY

The players are now on their own until Hargrove contacts them late that night. They may want to check out the Venusian Heritage Museum while it is still open or they may want to dig into Harding's recent past or learn more about Hargrove. Details of the museum are given in a later section since Hargrove will suggest that they do the same thing before they break in. Checking up on Harding requires that the players have or make some contacts in either the Capitol governments or within the Brotherhood. His story checks out on all levels. Although it is a well known fact that the Brotherhood has excavated items from the jungle tomb, there is no information available to the players about the disk or specifics about any of the other artifacts recovered from the tomb of the Second Seal. This information is all highly classified, and even descriptions of the artifacts are impossible to come by. It is possible to discern that most of the artifacts have been going to Bauhaus research facilities, and Capitol is very angry about the money they have lost on their property surrounding the site of the Second Seal.



cranium. With the silencer and flash suppresser there wasn't any noise but a quiet clacking as the next bullet automatically chambered. The bastard fell like he'd been pole axed.

It happened so fast that it took a minute for the rest of the scum to notice what had happened. I had time to flatten three more of them before they even realized they were under attack. Three quick shots, three more dead. Then the whole perimeter erupted into fire as the rest of the squad opened up. I'm not even sure if the things managed to get off a single





shot. I kept watch from the tree as the rest of the squad made a quick search of the camp. There wasn't much there we could use, so Sarge decided to torch the place. Once it was all set, I came down and we melted back into the jungle. a few seconds later and the whole depot went up in a ball of fire. As spectacular as that was, it pretty much told everyone in the world where we were, so we got out of there fast, heading again towards the site where the Brotherhood was making its last stand. It took us half an hour to work our way through the jungle without being noticed. I spotted several more Dark Legion squads on the way through, but Sarge decided

The players may also discover that there is quite a bit of animosity between Harding and his counterparts in the Bauhaus government. There is even a rumor that Harding almost came to blows over a Bauhaus official who refused him access to some of the artifacts from the tomb of the Second Seal. If the players have contact within Bauhaus security, they will learn that the Heimburg security forces have been keeping a close eye on Harding and everyone he comes into contact with. (Harding managed to elude them when he met with the player characters). Although they suspect him if conspiring against the Bauhaus government in some way, they have found absolutely no proof.

David Hargrove's record can be checked either through the Capitol security services or through questioning the staff and faculty of the history department of the University of Heimburg. Hargrove is 24 years old and a citizen of Capitol, although he has been doing research in association with the University of Heimburg for the last fifteen months. He is an expert in ancient languages and has published several articles on the subject for scholarly journals. He has a reputation for being a loner and a risk taker. He is not afraid to stand up to even the most respected scholar, and has made a number of enemies, particularly among the Bauhaus faculty. He is himself independently wealthy, the only surviving heir to his family's great fortune. His parents apparently passed away when he was a boy.

DAVID HARGROVE

Late that night the player characters get a call from David Hargrove. He is very brusque on the phone, asking the players to meet him at Konstantine's, a bar in a rather run down section of Heimburg near the University. He says that he will be there in an hour and that if the he will wait fifteen minutes for them. If they do not show, or if he does not show he will contact them later to arrange an alternate meeting place. He tells them to make sure they are not followed, and to dress and act as inconspicuously as possible.

Traveling the streets of Heimburg late at night is often an adventure in and of itself, but tonight players see signs of just how bad things are getting in the city. The security Forces are out in large numbers, patrolling the streets in armored vehicles and full riot gear. In the past three months, gang violence, street crime, and riots have all risen dramatically. In some areas crime rates since last year have skyrocketed a dizzying two or three hundred percent! The security forces are strained to the limit trying to keep order in the streets. Every night seems to bring another riot or gang war to one of the poor areas of the city. Many of these areas are now under a strict curfew.

The area around the University is buzzing with activity, even this late into the evening.



Music and light poor into the dark streets from the bars and dance clubs. Radical students stand on street corners handing out pamphlets decrying the corrupt government of the nobility. On opposite corners stand frenzied followers of the light, preaching against the sins of Darkness that they see in all the passing students. In wine bars and coffee shops the young intelligentsia gather to discuss the future of mankind in the wake of the breaking of the Second Seal, and whether or not the Bauhaus government can maintain its popular mandate. The homeless and destitute perch on stops and in store fronts begging for spare change to save them from the Dark Soul. The players are accosted by all of these people and more, from streetwalkers to thugs offering to sell them stolen merchandise.

Konstantine's is typical of these University area hangouts, and is filled with students and faculty alike. The loud music makes it almost impossible to be heard, let alone listen in on conversations at other tables. The players manage to find themselves a table and sit down to wait for Konstantine's. Scanning the crowd closely, the player characters see no signs of any undercover security agents or of anyone following them. Security has better things to do than spy on hot head students and bumbling faculty radicals. About five minutes after the appointed meeting time, Hargrove walks in, a short, somewhat pudgy young man with glasses and a long black overcoat. He spots the characters and heads for their table.

Hargrove is a soft-spoken young man, but there is fire in his eyes. He is not at all nervous around the players, and acts calm and professional at all times. He greets them with the politeness allows and then suggests that they get down to business. He has arranged for them to have a private meeting room in the back of the bar. He leads them back there and then begins to discuss plans with the player characters. First he wants to hear what they think of the mission and how they feel the mission should be carried out. He follows their lead in all aspects of planning the mission, although he adheres to Harding's ban on killing any of the guards or museum staff. If none of the players make the suggestion, he offers that it might be a good idea to check the museum out tomorrow during visiting hours. Hargrove never gives the player characters his address or any way to contact him. He says that for security reasons he will always get in touch with them. If the players are very insistent on being able to contact him, he gives them the number for a message service.

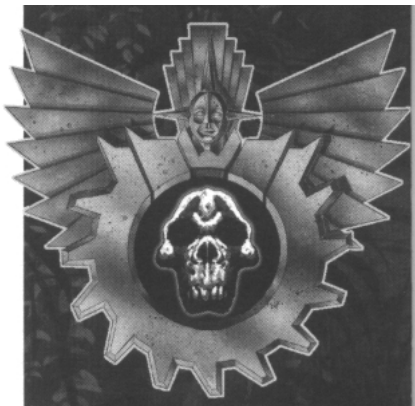
Harding tells the players the little he knows about the disk. It is said to be a solid piece of black stone, pierced through the middle with a large sapphire. The stone is said to be of the same substance as the tomb in which it was found and probably weighs around five kilograms. Hargrove has no idea as to what the disk represents or what kind of threat it might represent, but he has faith in Harding's judgment that the disk is thing of evil and needs to be taken from the hands of incompetent Bauhaus scientists. He has little respect for The Homebuilders, and if there are any Bauhaus citizens among the player characters he will be rather cold to them, preferring to talk to other members of the party.

GERARD FLETCHER

STATISTICS:
STR: 18
INT: 17
COR: 15
PHY: 17
MST: 16
PER: 20
MOVEMENT: 3/225
OB: +2

ACT/CR: 3
AVOID/PARRY: 7
BP'S:
Head: 3
Arm: 6
Stomach: 6
Leg: 7
Chest: 7
FIELDS OF EXPERTISE: Combat 15,

Firearms 15, Communication 17, Movement 13, Technical 9
Dark Gifts: Resist Pain,
Special Abilities: Night Vision, Multiple Personalities



not to engage. He was in a hurry to get to the Brothers and didn't want to waste anymore time. Avoiding the trails left by tanks I led our team to the edge of the vast clearing that was now the battlefield.

The clearing itself was a recent occurrence. It was easy to see that what had once been jungle had since become several kilometers of scorched earth. Even the tallest trees had been felled during the massive artillery barrages that had raked back and forth over the region. Thick black smoke coming up off the ash laden ground filled the entire clearing. We couldn't even see the center of things from our location. Dotting the landscape ahead of us were makeshift fortifications and trenches from which the Legionnaires were firing into the center of things. Occasionally a rocket would flash out of the smoke and explode, taking a handful of scum with it. We were behind enemy lines, with emplacements of Heretic Legionnaires to the left, right, and directly in front of us. Looking up we saw that some of the transports had made it through, and were still





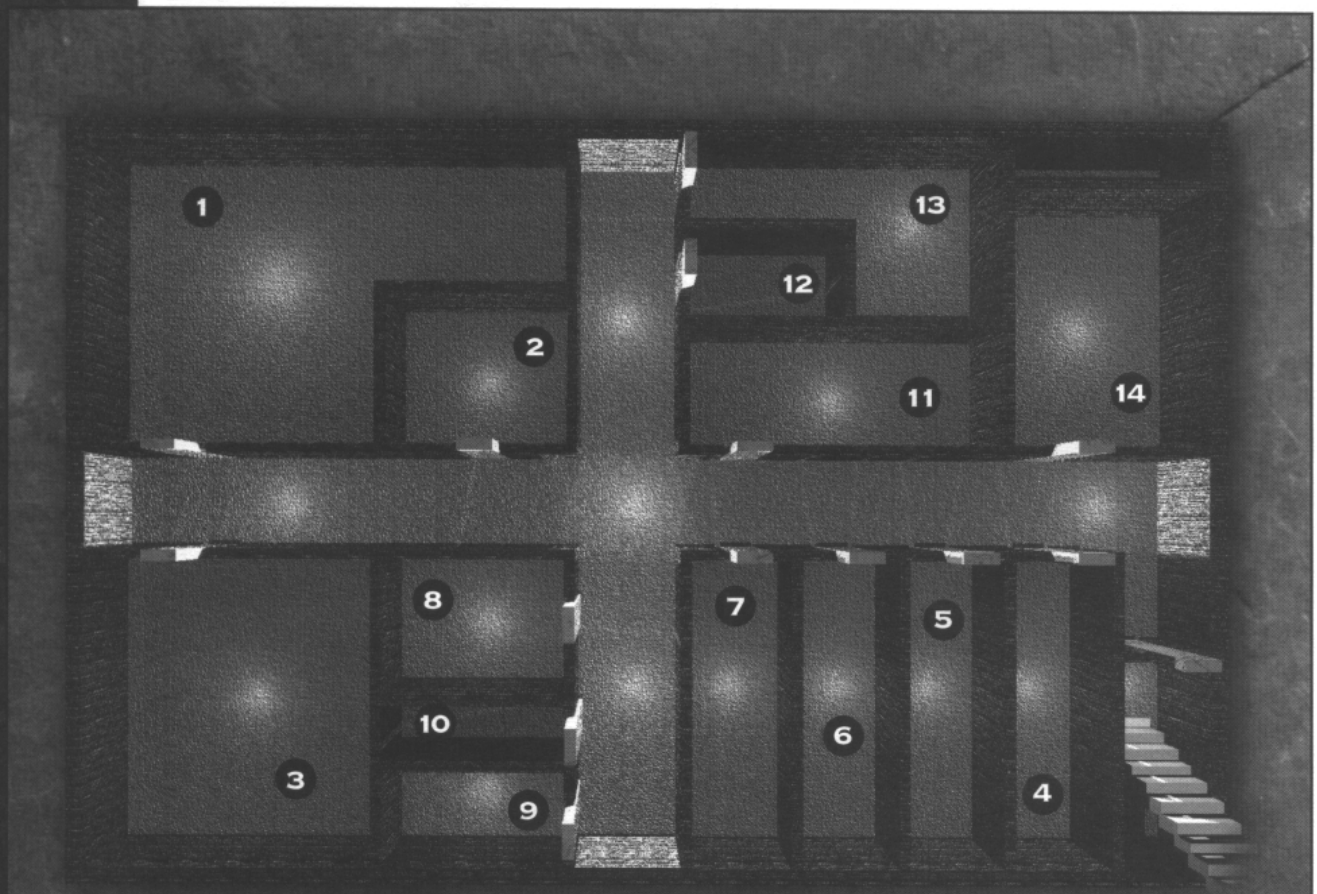
making it through, as parachutes drifted slowly into the center of the field of battle. It was all too clear that most of those men were reaching the ground as corpses, cut apart by Dark Legion machine-gun nests all around the perimeter. Suddenly I thought it might not be so bad to have crashed. Even as I watched,

THE TRUTH ABOUT DAVID HARGROVE

The fact is that David Hargrove is not at all what he seems to be. In fact, the players are not even dealing with the real David Hargrove. Before them sits an agent of Harding's, a long time heretic and professional killer named Gerard Fletcher. He has killed the real Hargrove and assumed his identity. The two were of similar builds, and Hargrove was such a loner that making him disappear for a few weeks without anyone noticing was easy. Fletcher is setting the players up to take a fall for stealing the disk. The only weak point in Hargrove's facade is that he does not know much about Venusian history or archeology, and will try to steer any conversations away from these subjects. He has read all of the articles Hargrove wrote, and knows enough to pass as a scholar in casual conversation, but a close scrutiny will reveal the shallowness of his knowledge.

THE VENUSIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

The museum is in the heart of Heimburg, close by the halls of government and many of the Corporate offices. The museum itself is five stories high and covers an entire city block while below ground the museum has three levels of basements. The museum is open from early morning until early evening, keeping the same hours as most businesses in Heimburg. The first three floors of the museum are given over to exhibits about Venusian history. Most of the exhibits feature mannequins posed in scenes from important times in Bauhaus history on Venus. The mannequins are often shown using real artifacts from Bauhaus'



1. LABRATORY ONE
2. RECREATION ROOM
3. LABRATORY TWO
4. OFFICE ONE
5. OFFICE TWO
6. OFFICE THREE
7. OFFICE FOUR
8. MEN'S REST ROOM
9. WOMEN'S REST ROOM
10. CLOSET
11. CONFERENCE ROOM
12. STORAGE ROOM
13. FILE ROOM
14. CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

history. The more valuable items such as antique weapons and jewelry are kept in clear plastic cases with alarms attached to them. There are also sections displaying the stuffed and mounted carcasses of many of the more exciting fauna to be found on the planet. There is also a large lecture hall, a cafeteria and a gift shop.

The top two floors of the museum are devoted to administrative offices and the museum's library, which takes up half of the building's fifth floor. The library contains the planet's most extensive records of Venusian history, perhaps only second to the records kept by the Brotherhood. The basements are of prime interest to the players. Here is where active research projects are carried out and where the museum stores items not currently on display. The lowest basement is used solely for storage, while the middle basement has more offices and a supplemental library and research facility. It is in the first basement that the museum staff carries out most of the important research , and it is here that they are keeping the disk.

ROOM DESCRIPTIONS

Laboratory One: This room contains all the equipment and chemicals necessary to carry out chemical analyses. Beakers, burners, and almost arcane seeming glass contraptions crowd the tables, and storage lockers filled with chemicals line the walls. It also contains the taxonomy equipment, used for creating the exhibits of stuffed animals for the museum. Almost every night there is at least one researcher working here on one project or another.

RECREATION ROOM: This is where the scientists and lab workers come to relax and take breaks for meals. There is a couch, a table with chairs, and a small kitchen area. When the players choose to break into the museum there is a maintenance worker sleeping on the couch.

LABORATORY TWO: Museum scientists use this lab for the detailed analysis of artifacts and it is where they are studying the disk during business hours. There are microscopes, cameras, and magnifying lenses of different sorts. Books about ancient languages, geology, and art history are stacked around the room, open to various pages. The disk itself is not here during the night if the players come then, although there are pictures of it all over the room.

OFFICE ONE: Two researchers, Helmut Frost and Stefi Beirbaum, share this office. During the day they can both be found either here or in Lab Two. If the player characters break in at night Stefi Beirbaum is working late in her office, trying to decipher the runes on the disk from photographs. There is a small handgun in Frost's desk, and if there is any sign of trouble, Stefi will get the gun and investigate.

OFFICE TWO: This office is shared by three lab assistants, none of whom are present in the evening. There are desks, chairs, filing cabinets and bookshelves crowd the room, leaving little room for anything else. There are some notes and more photos of the disk as well as other artifacts from the site of the tomb of the Second Seal.

OFFICE THREE: This office is occupied by two guest researcher who have been called in specifically to work on the artifacts from the tomb of the Second Seal. They are Fritz Pfeifer and Tyler MacDougall, experts in ancient lithographs and epigraphy. Neither of them are present during the evening. Papers, photographs, and notebooks cover the office in a seemingly random pattern. If the players take the time to search through the papers carefully they will find a rough guess at a translation Prof. MacDougall has begun. The notes suggest that the disk has something to do with a terrible disease of some sort that was created by some sort of archetypal demonic figure. The disease was later contained within the gemstone in the disk. Finding these notes and deciphering them requires at least half an hour of searching.

OFFICE FOUR: This door is locked with a strong lock. Inside is the office of one of the senior researchers, Prof. Caitlin Sommers. Her office is clean and well organized with locked filing cabinets and a locked desk. There is nothing of interest here, since the professor is on sabbatical on Mars working on her next book.

MEN'S REST ROOM: All the standard fixtures.

WOMEN'S REST ROOM Again, everything you might expect and nothing you wouldn't.

Janitor's Closet: The room contains mops, brooms, cleaning supplies, and a large sink, as well as the water heater for the floor and the fuse panel for this floor. Behind the water heater is a small packet of narcotics the janitor enjoys during his breaks.

CONFERENCE ROOM: This room has a long table with ten chairs around it. During the night it is often used by Prof. Pfeifer instead of his normal office since it affords him more space to spread out his reference books and documents. There is a good chance he will be in the room until late into the night. The wall of the Conference room that faces onto the corridor has a large window in it so anyone



a hundred meters to my right two Heretics of Seam were painting the sky red with their Nazgaroth machine-guns. I brought my sniper rifle to bear, but Sarge motioned me to stop. He didn't want to give away our position yet.

The sight of battle engaged, of my friends and comrades being shot from the sky had made me temporarily lose my cool. Cursing my own weakness, I lowered the rifle and prepared to move into position. Sarge, being Sarge, had a calmer head and realized that although many were being killed in the air, the center was rapidly being reinforced. He felt that the thirty of us could do more good out behind enemy lines than by getting killed trying to cross all that dead land between us and the Brotherhood position. Not that he explained all this at the time. There was no need, he made his decision and we followed orders.

We split into three teams, each of which was going to take out one of the Semai machine gun nests that surrounded us. I was assigned another task however. I was to be the distraction that would let the others approach their targets unseen. In most cases, a sniper has problems in the jungle: too many trees blocking line of sight. Here along the edge of the burned out battlefield however I could get clear shots at several different enemy positions. Sarge knew that I was one of the best shots in



the outfit. I'd been winning shooting competitions since I was a boy, bringing further honor and accolades for my family. All the contests, all the skirmishes had led inexorably to this single moment. My team depended on me to be the best shot on Venus, and I was determined to do just that.

The team faded back into the jungle and I set up my sniper's nest. I forgo the treetops, although they would have afforded my a better line of fire on the neighboring machine-gun nests. I wanted to stay on the ground so I could move out at a moment's notice. I worked my way to the jungle's edge, into a thicket from which I could turn to see the Semai positions to my left or right, as well as the small fortification of few hundred meters out in the battlefield. I was to wait fifteen minutes for my comrades to get into position. I couldn't do anything to help the third team, who was hitting an enemy position I couldn't see from my position. I decided to concentrate at first on the position to my left. The third



in the conference room can see into the hall and vice versa.

STORAGE ROOM: This room is locked at all times, but the door can easily be broken or the lock picked. Inside are rows and rows of shelves with cardboard boxes on them. Each box is labeled with a date and an alphanumeric code. Boxes date back well over twenty years. These are items that are either being used in current research or have yet to be properly cataloged for the museum. There are all sorts of things here, from fecal samples to stuffed monkeys. There are a fair number of clay and stone tablets scattered throughout the room in various boxes, but no stone disks. It could take hours to go through all the boxes.

FILE ROOM: This room contains rows and rows of filing cabinets in which are stored museum newsletters, memos, invoices, catalog description, scholarly articles, newspaper clippings, and various other materials of little interest to the players. There are no notes or files on the material from the tomb of the Second Seal. The scientists are too busy studying the stuff to bother filing anything yet.

CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE: This large office belongs to Prof. Josef Protgoff, head of the museum's research department. Unlike the other offices, this one is lavishly furnished and immaculate. Fine wood bookshelves with glass doors line one wall, while an ornately carved desk and elegant leather chair dominate the room. Paintings hang on the walls, including a two meter by two meter landscape picturing the Venusian jungle at dawn. Behind this painting is a vault in which the disk and two other artifacts are kept. The vault is a heavy steel door with a combination lock. Everyone on the Museum staff knows that the vault is behind the painting and that the disk and other artifacts are kept in the vault. Only Prof. Protgoff knows the combination to the vault (it's his wife's birthday), so it may be necessary to try and blow the door off. It may be easier to simply come through the concrete wall that separates the vault from the offices next door. The walls have not been reinforced in any way, so this can be done without too much problem.

Inside the vault are seven steel boxes containing artifacts from various sites around Venus. Three of them are from the tomb of the Second Seal, and the contents of each box is clearly marked on the lids. The boxes have simple locks that are easily picked or broken. The artifacts from other sites are all precious jewelry from long ago, and would be worth quite a bit if the players could find the right buyer. From the tomb of the Second Seal there is a small box containing a green glass sphere measuring 5 cm in diameter, with no markings or obvious function. There is also a clay tablet measuring 15 by 5 cm, covered with ancient runes of the same sort found on the disk.

The disk itself is quite large, 60 cm in diameter and five cm thick. It is a single piece of black stone, polished smooth and bereft of any cracks, scratches or blemishes. Both sides of the disk are covered with runes that form concentric circles over the entire surface down to the center of the stone disk A large sapphire pierces the center of the disk, fitting snugly into the hole in the center of the disk. It is impossible to remove the sapphire or pry it loose without somehow destroying the stone around it. Knives, bullets, and hammers have no effect on the stone, although a high explosive or diamond bit drill will work. The disk is quite heavy, weighing a little over 30 kilograms.

MUSEUM SECURITY

The Museum has been around for a long time, and does not have the latest in security systems. The museum relies mainly on its own security personnel to patrol the building and capture intruders. There is an alarm system, but it is relatively simple. If any windows or doors are forced open a loud bell sounds and a call goes out to the local security forces. The call the police is over the museum's normal telephone lines, so if they are cut the security station will be none the wiser. Many of the more valuable exhibits are connected to the same alarm system. Anyone with some expertise has a chance at circumventing the alarm system by making an Electronics skill roll. There are no security cameras in the building, as it was decided they were much too expensive to be worth while.

During the day there are fifteen guards on duty, only five of whom are armed. The other ten are there to keep an eye on museum guests and make sure they do not disturb the exhibits. After hours the second shift comes on duty; seven armed guards who patrol the museum all night long. Each carries a flashlight, a nightstick, handcuffs and HG-25 Equalizer handguns (see Bauhaus sourcebook page 73). They also carry radios which they use to communicate with each other, but which could be used to alert security if necessary. They do not wear armor, and none of them have ever had cause to fire their weapons while on duty. It has been years since there was an attempted break in, and even that was just a group of young gang members who were too drunk to know any better.

THE GUARDTOWER

Right off the first floor lobby is the Security office, and there is always at least one guard here. Often several guards will congregate in the area to drink coffee and play guards instead of doing their rounds. The office has a couple of desks, a table with five chairs, some filing cabinets and a radio. The Security office also houses the master control panel for the alarm system. It is in a locked metal cabinet on the wall, but all of the guards have keys to open it. Once open, it is a simple matter to shut the entire alarm system down. However, if the alarm has already been activated and Bauhaus Security has been alerted one of the security guards must call and give the all clear code within five minutes. If Security does not receive the call, they will dispatch officers to the museum. There is also police radio here that can be used to contact Bauhaus Security in case the phone lines or power is cut.

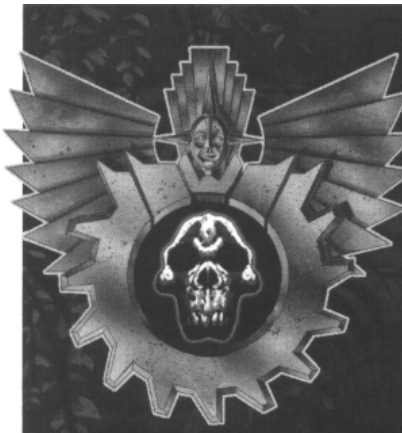
THE BURGLARY

Breaking in to the museum should not prove too difficult for the players. The biggest problem they face is circumventing the alarm system, and once this is accomplished they should have no problem subduing the security guards. The only other snag is trying to avoid killing or seriously hurting any of the museum staff. The guards will put up a fight unless they are obviously out-gunned or outnumbered. In addition to the security and research personnel there are ten members of the janitorial staff cleaning the building. They will refuse to fight unless threatened with no alternative but death. Some of the scientists may try to stop the players even at risk to their own life if they understand that the players are trying to steal the disk.

Hargrove is very professional during the entire break-in, following the player characters' lead, and obeying their instructions. He proves himself to be amazingly proficient with a gun. He has no qualms about threatening the Guards into showing them where the disk is, and he is constantly urging the players to hurry. The game master can use Hargrove to prod the players in the right direction if things start to go badly for them, or if they are in danger of making some sort of catastrophic error.

Hargrove has stashed a get away vehicle of his own just a few blocks from the museum. He will try and take custody of the disk once they are out of the museum and take it back to his base by himself. If the players insist on accompanying him back to the hideout, he takes them to an alternate location: an abandoned warehouse in one of the city's industrial parks. Here he has set up a small research facility expressly for the purpose of fooling the players. Should the players decide to try and secretly follow Hargrove, he does his best to lose them, and they will have to be very good to keep on his trail. Eventually he will lose them, even if he has to go into the city's sewers.

If Harding promised the player characters any money, Hargrove pays them before the go their separate ways. Mission accomplished, the players can feel good about what they've done for humanity. The player characters are free to do as they please once Hargrove (really Fletcher) has the disk. He suggests to them that they might want to go out somewhere public and establish an alibi for themselves, or at least celebrate a little. He even offers to meet the players for drinks in a few hours back at Konstantine's. Secretly he wants to arrange a time when he knows the players will be away from their homes. As to why this is, read on in Chapter Two...



position (the one I couldn't see) was further to my left, and I figured that if I helped them out first they could help finish off number three.

The seconds crept by and my heart pounded with excitement. It was damnably hot under my armor, and I took off my helmet to have a clear look through the sights of my rifle. I checked the



magazine and the chambered round. Forty-eight round plus one in the chamber. The target area was about three hundred meters Through the telescopic sight I could see the heretics still firing their Nazgaroths, a seemingly never ending stream of fire. Heretic Legionnaires scrambled about, keeping their heads low and passing the gunners more ammunition. I had a clear shot at one of the gunners who was in turn obscuring his companion from me. I chose my shots and waited.

The moment came. It was time and I trusted that my comrades were in position. The first bullet ripped through the gunner's cheek, tearing off his lower jaw. The second bullet followed less than a second later. Since I had no shot on the second gunner, I had chosen the next best thing. The round slammed into the Nazgaroth, ripping it from the gunner's hand and leaving it a worthless hunk of metal. As the first gunner fell back, screaming in agony, chaos erupted in the machine-gun nest. I was simply aware of small arms fire from the jungle, but my sights were on the unharmed gunner who was already reaching for his partner's gun. The third bullet, less than two seconds behind the second, pierced the Heretics armor and sent him reeling back. The fourth blew off the top of his head.

I whipped around and brought my rifle to bear on the other machine-gun nest. They hadn't even noticed what was going on. This group was much closer, only fifty meters

CHAPTER 2:
THE BETRAYAL

The players think their part in things is all done, but in fact their troubles are just beginning. Harding and Fletcher have set the players up to take the fall for what happened at the museum. Unknown to the player characters there was another team at the museum that night, hidden in a building across the street. They photographed the players entering the building and leaving with the disk. If the players planned to wear masks during the break-in, the spies will have been following them for some time and will have pictures of them putting on the masks if at all possible. The pictures alone are enough to convict the players of breaking and entering and whatever other crimes they may have committed subsequently.

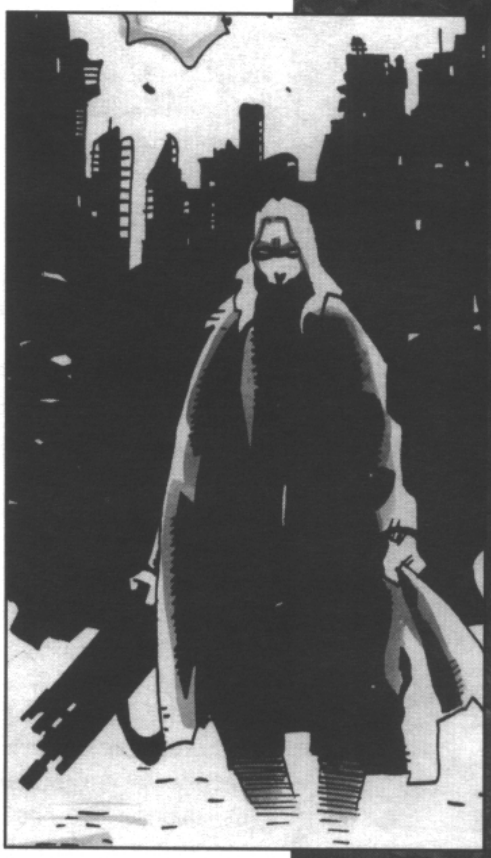


But there is more to it than that. After the player characters left the building, Hargrove's team went into the Museum and brutally murdered all present. The murders were carried out in a very sadistic, almost ritual fashion, with human blood and entrails strewn all about the museum's labs and exhibits. They will also steal many of the more valu

able items from the exhibits. No one managed to escape the slaughter. Of course if the players were clumsy or foolish and the police are already alerted and on their way, Fletcher's men will not enter the building. They have been monitoring Security's communications and will know if any law enforcement personnel is on the way. Should this be the case they will instead quickly throw several incendiary devices into the museum and start huge chemical fire in the building. This will most likely kill anyone inside before the police and fire department can rescue them. Either way, they have just set the players up to take a fall for mass murder.

The primary goal of all this chicanery is to draw attention away from the theft of the diskand concentrate on the mass murder and destruction of the museum. Harding wanted the players to steal the disk so he would have expendable people to pin the crime on. This way he won't draw attention to anyone in his own organization. Harding is also worried about the players because they are the only other people he knows who have had direct contact with the Dark Tempter. He fears that they may begin to suspect him of corruption and warn the Brotherhood about him. Since he wanted to kill the players anyway, setting them up gives him the perfect opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. The players will be arrested or killed, drawing attention away from the disk, while all along they will think that they are working for Harding and humanity's best interests.

Harding had Fletcher hire three veteran criminals to help set the players up and to act as a backup in case the players proved unable to complete the job themselves. They are: Gunner Tyson, Stuart Carlsen, and Maurice "The Nail" Ingersol. All three are lifelong criminals with long records for theft, extortion, and even murder who Fletcher found for Harding. He has paid them well for their services, enough to make each of them rich for the rest of their lives. (The money came from accounts controlled by Heretic servants of the Dark Tempter.) However, these are petty, greedy men, and they smell the opportunity to make even more money by blackmailing the player characters instead of turning all the photos they took over to the police.



THE POST GRAND THEFT BLUES

The players will hear on the news or read in the next day's paper about the grisly murders at the Venusian Heritage Museum, no doubt to their profound shock and disturbance. They know they didn't do it, but they have no idea who might be responsible. Their first inclination will be to contact either Harding or Hargrove. It may be only now that they realize Hargrove has never given them any way of contacting him directly. They can call Harding at his office, but they will find that he is out of the city on business for the day, but the secretary would be happy to take a message. This should leave the characters a little worried, but not too worried, after all, no police have come knocking at their doors yet.

The news reports will simply state that there were over fifteen people murdered at the Venusian Heritage Museum without any details as to the grisly nature of the deaths. (Or that the museum was burned down by arsonists). If the players have contacts with the Bauhaus Security forces or bribe an officer involved they can find out more details about the crime, including the fact that the murders took place right around the same time that the players were robbing the museum. They will also discover that the murders stole many of the more valuable items on exhibit in the museum, but there is no mention of the disk or any of the other artifacts from the tomb of the Second Seal. The investigators do not seem to even know that the items were there. (Fletcher's team stole most of the relevant records and destroyed the laboratory).

The players may be inclined to make a run for it, but the game master should try and dissuade them from doing this. The easiest way is to have Fletcher (as Hargrove) contact one of the players and ask for a meeting. He will act

away, but the silencer and flash suppresser had allowed me to fire unnoticed. I took about tens seconds to line up my target, this time I had clear line on both gunners. I shot the first one twice: once through the neck and once in the shoulder. The next two bullets caught the other gunner in the side of the head, punching through his helmet and into whatever brain he had inside his head. the Rangers opened up on the rest of the heretics then and I turned my sights on the enemy position directly in front of me.

They had no idea what was going on only a hundred yards to their rear. The position was dug in fairly deep, and when the Heretics



there crouched down I could not see them at all. However, they had to come up to load and fire the mortars they were using to pummel the Brotherhood position. I got their timing down after a few minutes and waited for the next bastard to raise his head. He popped up and dropped round into the mortar. I jerked a little as a fired and the shot wen wide, grazing his helmet. His partner was already popping up to load the other mortar and I caught him square between the shoulder blades.

They kept their heads down after that. When I saw they weren't going to be coming up any time soon, I took a few shots at the tubes of the mortars which were sticking up out of the hole. I knocked a few rounds into one of them, hopefully making it useless. They were quick enough to pull the other one down before I could hit it. They waited and I waited. I took a chance to look around real quick. To my left things looked pretty much wrapped up. The Rangers had taken the nest and were moving off to help their comrades further to my left. I swung around to the right and saw that things weren't so good over there.

It had come down to hand to hand fighting in the trenches of the machine-gun nest. apparently that one had been better manned than I had thought. I lined up one of the heretics and caught him twice in the gut. I moved on to another who was grappling with Hans. Hans was under him and getting

very alarmed at what has happened and wants to question the players about the murders. He seems outraged and incensed. Fletcher wants the players to stay in the city so they will be around to take the fall for the murders. Alternatively, Harding can contact the players, also asking for a meeting. Neither actually plans to meet the characters since they hope the players will have been arrested already by the time the meeting comes around. In any case, they ask for a few days to look into things before they meet with the player characters.

THE FRAME UP

Tyson, Carlsen, and The Nail are not done setting the players up. They have been watching the player character's quarters, waiting for a chance to break in while the players are out. They will choose the homes that are easiest to get into, and sneak in and plant false evidence that the player character was involved in the museum murders. They will find a place in the character's home that is out of the way and where the character is unlikely to look in the near future: the back of a closet, under a bed or sofa, and so on.

They have several items they will spread out among the various player characters' homes. There are three knives covered with blood that were taken from exhibits in the museum, the very blades the three men used to eviscerate the museum staff. There is also a packet of photographs they took while committing the murders, photos that show the victims right after they were killed and which could only have been taken by the killers. They will also stash some of the less valuable items they stole from the museum If they were forced to firebomb the museum they will plant small amounts of incendiary material and the parts for making bombs. None of the planted evidence has any fingerprints on them or any way to trace them back to Tyson and company.

Having planted the evidence, the conspirators are ready to make their next move. Fletcher hired them to plant the evidence, take the photos and then turn it all over to Bauhaus Security. The idea was that Security would raid the players' homes while they were sleeping and either arrest them or (even better) kill them for resisting arrest. Fletcher has already paid off the Security SWAT team leader in charge of the area in which the player characters are staying. He will order his men to go in shooting.

Tyson, Carlsen, and The Nail have a different plan altogether. They will do everything they were told, but they will also make sure that the players are not at home when Security raids their homes. They see the potential to make even more money from this operation by blackmailing the player characters. Each of the players will receive a call asking them to come to The Red Duke, an upscale bar in one Heimburg's wealthier districts, in exactly forty-five minutes. There the caller says that the players will meet someone with information about the museum murders. If the players seem reluctant to go, they will be asked to go to their front door and look at what is taped there. On the door they find an envelope showing the characters breaking into the museum.

As soon as they have confirmation that the player characters have left their homes they will phone both Bauhaus Security and the media and tell them where they can find the museum murderers. Security has been warned that the call is coming and they are ready to move at a moment's notice. The media has also been made ready for the event, and they will send a mobile camera unit to one of the player character's homes to capture the raid for a live media broadcast. the Ministry of Truth feels that it will be good publicity to show the swift hand of Bauhaus justice descending on the perpetrators of the heinous museum murders.

THE RED DUKE

The Red Duke is a large, well established bar with a clientele comprised chiefly of young corporate executives. The players may seem somewhat out of place, especially if they are toting around large firearms. The area of town the Red Duke inhabits shows marked differences from Konstantine's and the University area. Here, closer to the centers of Bauhaus wealth and government, the Security presence is less obvious, but still strong. Transients and street people are kept from these streets, and everyone moves about their business quickly and quietly. Bars and restaurants like the Red Duke are found on most city blocks; distinguished, tastefully decorated gathering places with quiet music and expensive drinks.

At this hour the Red Duke is still about half full, but the players have no trouble finding an out of the way table if they wish to do so. No one gives them any sign of recognition, although a few might stare at them if the player characters seem out of place. A waiter will approach the players once they have sat down

and offer to take their order. The players have only a few minutes to wait before something interesting happens. Around the bar are various video screens tuned into local media broadcasts. After a few minutes the bartender turns down the ambient music and turns of the volume on the broadcast system as a special live report comes on. (He has been paid by Tyson to do exactly that).

Much to the player characters' surprise they see one of their own home being raided by Bauhaus security while a reporter gives running commentary. The reporter says that they are live on the scene as a special Security Team moves in on one of the criminals behind the mass murder at the Venusian Heritage Museum a few nights ago. The players watch as a team of ten men in full combat armor break down the door and go in shooting. After five minutes of watching the Security Commander comes out and says that the house was empty but that they have found evidence that the murderer was here recently. As he says this he holds up one of the bloody knives the blackmailers planted in the player character's home.

Even as the players wonder what to do next a well dressed teenage girl walks in the front door of the bar and looks around. She spots the player characters and heads straight for them. She hands them an envelope and then turns to leave, ignoring any questions they may have. If the players want to stop her they have to do so immediately or she is out the door and on her scooter. Remember, they are in a crowded, respectable bar in a high security area of Heimburg. If the characters try and detain the girl she will raise a shout and demand that they unhand her. Several inebriated patrons of the Red Duke will immediately rise to the young lady's defense. If the players do manage to corner the girl outside she will relent under threats of violence or offers of cash and tell the players that a tall pale man in an overcoat paid her to deliver the envelope to the characters. She says he approached her just up the street and seemed like a decent sort of guy and he said that she reminded him of his daughter. He seems to be long gone now.

Inside the envelope is a letter and ten photographs showing the players breaking into and then leaving the Venusian Heritage Museum. The letter is typed reads as follows:

DEAR (THE CHARACTERS NAMES)

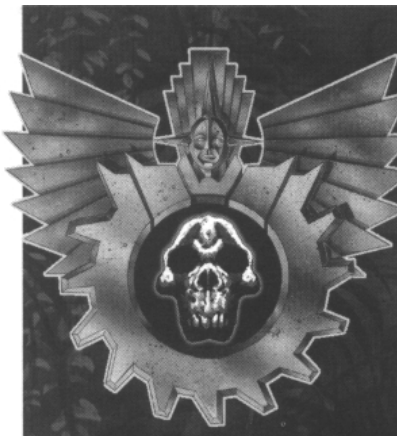
I am so sorry to have to deal with you in this way, but I can see no alternative. I am but a poor working man whose daughter is in need of an expensive operation. I need money desperately as you can see, and it seems as if fate has shown me the way out of my problems. I happened to be walking by the Venusian Heritage Museum the other night when I noticed something strange going on. I had my camera with me so I took a few pictures, and well you can see the result. I waited around for a while, and then saw some more men come into the museum. They came out covered with blood and looking rather nasty. Change the letter of the museum was bombed I guess that means that you probably did not kill all those people, but judging from the newscast you just saw, I doubt if Security would believe that. Unless of course they saw my pictures. I thought to myself, since you stole all those valuable things, you must have some money now, and it would only be right that you pay for your sins by helping my poor daughter out her jam.

You see where this is going I hope. I will sell you the negatives of these photographs for 500,000 crowns which will just barely cover my daughter's medical expenses. I'll give you a day to get the money together, and please make it payable in small, unmarked bills. Put the money in a black leather briefcase (the kind they have at Jaeger's might be nice). Once you have the money together I will give you further instructions as to where to meet and exchange money for pictures. Wait at the public phone in the back of the Howling Monkey Cafeteria at midnight tomorrow and I will call you. You probably shouldn't go home tonight, otherwise I would just call you there.

I look forward to doing business with you, and I'm sorry things had to be this way.

Yours,

T.B.



the worst of it. I blew off the heretic's knife hand first, then caught him in the left kidney. Hans finished him off and I moved on to the next target. I took the top off one last heretic before I became dimly aware of a horrible shrieking noise growing rapidly louder, from the direction of the mortar nest.

I swung around and was all of a sudden blind. Under the powerful magnification of the sight, the huge form less than ten meters from me blocked out everything else. I looked up to see an Ezoghouls bearing right down on me. Where had he come from! my mind screamed as I raised the rifle and fired wildly at the juggernaut. I slammed five rounds into it and it didn't seem to notice. It batted my gun out of my hands and picked me up, preparing to toss me in the air and slice me in two with its Ashreketh blade.

As the blood drained from my face and I started to pass out there was a sudden roaring. The rear of the Ezoghoul exploded as a rocket slammed into its hind quarters, tearing it in half. I fell to the ground, the monstrous hand still clutching me. One of the rangers to my left had used a Dark Legion rocket to save my life. I had to use my knife to cut through the rest of the ezoghoul's hand in order to get free. In the meanwhile, my comrades finished up their jobs and moved back to help me. Two more rockets flashed into the mortar position, setting off the unused mortar shells. We



had a few moments to regroup before we had to move on.
Fading back into the jungle, Sarge set about planning our next attack.

We spent the next two days fighting on the outskirts of the battlefield. We had no idea what was going on in the center, how the Art and Dark Symmetry were in constant collision, sometimes lighting up the night' sky with their conflicting power. We lost three quarters of our men, but managed to take out five times as many Legionnaires. We finally hooked up with a column of Wolfclaw Jungle Battle Tanks and mad it into the center of things. The battle went on from there, defending the Tomb against all comers. Eventually, as must always be the case we one. At least for a time.

ON THE RUN



Well, the players are now in quite a fix. The police are looking for them, and the only way to prove they did not commit the murders is to deal with the blackmailer. Even then they still face the possible charges from breaking into the museum in the first place. There is a lot for them to think about in the letter, and they may or may not buy into the false story about the sick daughter. Tyson and his gang are trying to throw the player characters off from what is really happening. The players may take any number of actions from this point, so here are answers to some of the potential questions they might have:

THE BARTENDER: If they ask him, he will admit that a tall pale guy in an overcoat paid him to monitor the news broadcasts and turn up the volume if the players were in the bar.

THE SICK DAUGHTER: The players may wish to try and track down their blackmailer by looking for a sick girl in need of aid. Of course, in a city the size of Heimburg there are several thousand young women who fit the description. They may even get the bright idea of trying to cross reference sick girls with fathers who are photographers. This requires access to hospital records and would take several weeks to sort out, only to find that there are no possible matches.

JAEGER'S: The department store mentioned in the letter is one of the biggest chains in the city, with stores across Venus and other planets. The do carry a range of fine leather brief cases starting at 750 crowns and going up to several thousand.

THE HOWLING MONKEY CAFETERIA: The Howling Monkey is a popular all night hang out for middle class youths, with the average age of the clientele being around eighteen. It serves cheap food and sometimes hosts live music. If the players go there and ask about a tall pale man in an overcoat they will get little but shrugs and quizzical looks from the young staff and patrons of the restaurant.

THE NEWSCAST: If the player characters have media contacts or wish to find out more about the reporter who covered the raid on their home, they will have to be careful. Tomorrow morning their faces will be on the cover of very paper in the city. Through a contact in the media or by bribery they learn that the news crew was acting on an anonymous tip, presumably from the same source that tipped off Security.

SECURITY: Trying to get any information out of Security is even more dangerous than going to the media. Every officer on the force will be looking for the player characters. If they have some contact in Security they may learn that the Security team was acting on an anonymous tip and that they had orders to go in shooting.

Harding and Hargrove: The players are likely desperate at this point to talk to Harding and Hargrove, both of whom remain unavailable. It seems that Harding's business out of the city is taking longer than expected, but his secretary offers to give him a message. No, they cannot call him in the field, he's on important Corporate Business and is not to be disturbed under any circumstances.

As for Hargrove, the players have even less luck there. The hide out he may have shown the players earlier is now abandoned and there is no sign of him anywhere. The players may try to look him up in the University directory or through some other means. They easily discover David Hargrove's address, but if they visit his flat, they find no sign of him. In fact it looks as if no one has been there in weeks: the mail is piling up, the room is shabby and dirty, and his neighbors have not seen any sign of him in quite a while.

While the players make preparations for dealing with the blackmailer Bauhaus Security will be searching for them everywhere. The airports, rail, and bus stations are all being watched as are the main roads out of the city. There are checkpoints that everyone entering and leaving the city has to go through. These were set up recently in response to the recent riots and Security is taking advantage of them to help find the player characters. Clearing their name is probably going to be easier than getting out of town. If they do make any serious attempts to leave, the game master should have Harding contact them and offer to sort everything out.

AT THE HOWLING MONKEY

Even this late in the evening young men and women enjoying themselves and listening to the blaring music of a local band crowd the Howling Monkey Cafeteria. The Large gathering place is dimly lit and filled with stuffed Looter Monkeys placed in life-like poses on the tables, walls and hanging from fake vines on the ceiling. Towards the rear of thebuilding are the rest rooms and a public phone. When the players arrive, a young woman is talking on it. The players will have to get her off the phone if they want to be available to answer the black mailer's call.

The call comes just a few minutes late. On the other end of the line they hear a deep muffled voice. (If the players have some way of tracing the call it is coming from another public phone on the other side of the city). The voice tells the player characters to take he money and go to a park in one of the city's poorer neighborhoods. In the part the player will fine a recreation building with a swimming pool in it. The door will be unlocked. The players are to go in and wait in the pool for the blackmailer. He says if they are not there in thirty minutes the deal is off and he gives the police the set of pictures that incriminate the player characters.

MEETING TYSON

Unless the players have immediate access to air travel, it will take them close to half an hour just to get to the meeting place. It is in a run down section of Heimburg, and Security has already placed a curfew over the area because of a large civil disturbance earlier that evening. Consequently, the characters will have to be extra careful to avoid the patrols. The park in which they are to meet the blackmailer. If they are late Tyson and company will have moved on, leaving a note for the characters. The note directs the players to go back to the Howling Monkey tomorrow night and await for another call.

The park itself is somewhat overgrown with bushes and trees. Hidden away is the Community Aquatic Recreation Center, a run-down building with a tepid 30 meter pool that has not been cleaned in weeks. Surrounding the pool is a second floor balcony with seats, presumably in the event an athletic contest were to be held here. The door is unlocked and the pool light is on. The bulbs have been removed from all of the other lights in the room. As they enter, the players hear a voice from the upper balcony directing them to wade out into the center of the shallow end of the pool. The voice goes on to say that, they should make sure not to try anything, because he has left some copies of the pictures with a friend as a kind of insurance. He tells the player characters that after they get in the pool, they should open the case and show him the money.

Tyson's plan is as follows: If he sees that the players have brought the money, he will go down and make the exchange of photographs for cash. Meanwhile, Carlsen and The Nail are outside moving into position to ambush the players as they leave the building. If the characters try to cheat Tyson or attack him, he will flee the building and have Nail throw a fire bomb in the building to flush the players out into the ambush. It is up to the players as to how they want to play things out. Any way they choose they end up in a fight.

The blackmailers are experienced men and capable fighters. They will not take unnecessary risks, and will do their best to use their tactical advantage to the fullest extent. They will probably attack from a distance, using high-power rifles and telescopic sights. Their first priority is to ensure that Tyson gets out of the building alive and with the money. Once this is accomplished, they will call the police if they do not think they can take the player characters on their own.



DEATH TO THE INFIDELS

The time for Blood approached on the back of swift winged fighter planes. Gorath grinned with anticipation. Now it was time to take vengeance on those who had opposed his Dark Lord for so long. Now it was time to take back the world that by all rights was his and his kind's. Long ago the foul light had invaded his world, driving even his all powerful lord before it, driving him and all his kind back beyond the solar system itself. Back beyond the boundaries of reality and into the Abyss. He remembered the time of sorrow as if it were yesterday, for he was a creature of prodigious memory. Unlike the foolish children of the light. They forgot everything they didn't write down. Even then they often fail to read their own writings.

All the better for him and his lord.

Gorath laughed aloud at the thought of how stupid these foul creatures of light could be. Once already they had committed a grave error, one from which they would never recover, and one which every member of the Dark Legions relished without end. They had opened the First Seal of Repulsion, a seal that they themselves had set to keep the Darkness at bay. Forgetful wretches that they are, they had not even realized what they were doing. The Dark Legion flooded back into the solar system, leaving death and destruction in its wake.



Now they were a part of the universe again, and the creatures of light had lost the power to send them back.

For centuries now the Dark Legion had fought with its foes, the Brotherhood and its pitiful sycophantic corporations. Stalemate seemed to have settled onto the conflict, and nothing either side could do seemed to be able to break the war wide open. The lightlings were weak, but a fraction of their former glory, but still they held on. Meanwhile, the Dark Lord was himself still held at bay by the ancient power of the Light. A Second Seal of Repulsion lay hidden somewhere within the solar system, unknown to creatures of light and darkness alike.

Who knows how long the stalemate would have lasted, but the damn fool humans made the same mistake again! Gorath could not help but grin at the thought. So forgetful, so stupid were these children of light, that even when they knew their history they were doomed to repeat it. They found the Second Seal of Repulsion, placed millennia ago deep within the jungles of Venus. The mere discovery would have been enough to send the dark hearts of every Legionnaire in the solar system fluttering with excitement. Of course merely discovering the Seal was not enough for that foolhardy band. Bringing destruction upon themselves and their race, the humans again broke the seal.

Gorath could remember the moment so vividly that for a moment he forgot where he

The players should try hard to capture one of the blackmailers alive. This is the easiest way to find out what is really going on here. Although all three criminals will fight hard, they will give up rather than die, and will answer questions under threat of death or torture. Of course, they will try to get away with telling the player characters lies at first. At first they will claim to be working on their own. They say that they just happened to be in the neighborhood and took advantage of the situation the players presented to them. Under more pressure they reveal that they are the ones who planted the evidence in the player characters' quarters. Even more pressure reveals that they were actually working for Hargrove, and if the players still want more and know how to ask, they reveal that Hargrove is really a criminal named Fletcher. They will offer all of the evidence they have in their homes in return for their freedom. They say that they have enough to clear the player characters of any charges pending against them. They have no knowledge of Harding's involvement.

Even though they have managed to elude capture so far, the characters will still probably want to try and clear their name. The easiest way to do this is with the photographs Tyson and his pals took as they broke into the museum. Questioning the blackmailers will reveal the location of their respective homes and the fact that most of the loot from the museum is still there. The pictures and negatives of the murders are hidden in Tyson's home. It won't take much for the players to realize that all they need to do to clear their name is bring this information to the police and pin the whole crime on Tyson, Carlsen, and The Nail. After all, they all have long criminal records, and the players are respected adventurers. (Well, maybe not respected).

Searching Tyson's home is the most useful thing the players can do, for here they find not only the pictures and some of the stolen museum property, but tape recordings of Tyson's meetings with Fletcher in which they plan setting the players up. Harding is not mentioned on any of the tapes, and it appears that the whole thing was Fletcher's plan. Listening to the tapes gives the players all the information about the setup, including bribing the police to shoot first and ask questions later. All of the meetings seem to have taken place at Konstantine's, where Fletcher seems to have been a regular. Several times on the tapes the players hear Fletcher refer to other patrons and the bar staff by name as if he were familiar with them. The tapes do mention that the players will be breaking into the museum, so the characters might want to edit them before turning them over to Security.

Stuart Carlsen's home has less of interest in it. He is in possession of several antique weapons and some jewelry stolen from the museum. Additionally there is his own personal stash of some 45,000 crowns. The Nail's home is more interesting and disturbing. He lives in a basement apartment underneath one of the city's older tenements. The whole place stinks of death. All across one wall, Ingersol has nailed a series of twenty pairs of ears to the wall with iron spikes. Inside a small bedroom there is a kind of shrine set up to the desiccated corpse of a middle aged woman. She has been dressed in some of the fine clothes and jewels stolen from the museum. The woman is propped up with metal wires, and holds in her hand a whip made from tanned and cured human flesh. Placed before the corpse are scores of candles and pictures of the player characters. This disturbing tableau in and of itself is enough to remove suspicion from the player characters, especially since some of the ears appear to have been taken from victims at the museum.





THE BLACKMAILERS

GUNNER TYSON

Tyson is a native of Heimburg, born into the city's criminal element. His father and mother operated a loan sharking business, and when he grew up he took over from them. But Gunner had dreams of a better life, dreams that could only be fulfilled through high-risk, high profit crimes like armed robbery and contract killing. He always had a knack for planning and executing crimes, and if he has a fault it's that he sometimes over plans, becoming mired in the details. Ten years ago that's exactly what happened to him, resulting in his incarceration until six months ago. It was in prison that he came into contact with Carlsen, Ingersol, and ultimately Fletcher's agents.

Tyson is a tall thin man, some would even say cadaverous. He is now in his late forties with long stringy white hair that reaches down to his shoulders. He typically tucks this up under a hat and wears a larger black overcoat that comes down to his ankles. In conversation, Tyson is always quiet and reasoning, never seeming to lose his temper. Behind this facade is a man who will accept no disrespect from his men. He is at heart a killer, especially after his years in the harsh Bauhaus prisons, and will use knife or gun at the drop of a hat.

STUART CARLSEN

Stuart Carlsen originally hails from Luna where he worked as a runner for one of the city's larger crime organizations. When he kept the 15,000 crowns he was supposed to deliver to pay off the local constabulary with. He used the money to catch the next space ship off Luna, and went on to Mars. Ever since he has jumped

was. The memory of the divine Darkness spreading out into the world flooded him with agonizing joy. A human named Harding had broken the seal, setting free the part of the Dark Soul know as the Dark Tempter. From the confines of the tomb of the Second Seal the Dark Tempter let loose a cry of triumph, heard by the entire Dark Legion on Venus and beyond. Harding, as a reward for his service was the first to fall to the Dark Tempter, his soul joining the Dark Legion in an instant. Across Venus the forces of the Dark Legion went into a frenzy of activity, doing their best to reach the tomb of the Second Seal as quickly as possible.

Cursed be their souls for eternity, the Brotherhood and its lackeys were also aware of the Dark Tempter's return. When Gorath and his comrades arrived the Brotherhood had already managed to fortify the position. A great and glorious battle ensued, one the Dark Legion felt sure that it was destined to win. Somehow though the foul light things had managed to block the Dark Tempter's power, again holding him within the confines of the Second Seal. The battle outside raged for days, destroying mile after mile of forest and saturating the ground with sweet, red blood. Inside, the Brothers fought a constant struggle to retain their tenuous hold over the Dark Tempter.

The tomb would have fallen into the hands of the Dark Legion had it not been for the continued Bauhaus



reinforcements arriving from the damned city of Heimburg. Gorath sneered at the thought of that hateful city, a city that was the pride and joy of the hated Bauhaus. The sneer turned to a grim smile as he contemplated the city's very short future however. He had to admit, Harding had a certain flair one did not usually associate with humans, no matter how corrupt they are. The Dark Tempter had indeed smiled upon the fortunate human.

The combined effort of Brotherhood and Bauhaus troops proved to be enough to drive off the Dark Legion. Gorath tried not to think about the moment he had received the withdraw order. Withdrawing was something a human did, something he had never contemplated. He would rather die fighting for his lord Algeroth and the Dark Soul itself! But the great Nepharite to whom Gorath had sworn fealty ordered Gorath personally to withdraw. Even so, Gorath was the last to leave the field of battle, his Nazgaroth the last to be fired at the enemy. All this Gorath gave less than a moment's thought to. Always a practical being he had all but forgotten his and his lord's disgrace. Now he focused on the victory that was at hand.

Harding's plan was complicated. Very complicated. Gorath had little use for complicated plans. Centuries of warfare had taught him that complicated plans could go wrong in too many ways. Even so, it was obvious that Harding had a gift for such



from planet to planet supporting himself with petty theft, con games, and the occasional murder. Finally his lifestyle caught up to him in Heimburg, when a con he was pulling on a gullible member of the Bauhaus nobility backfired on him. Four years later he's just getting out of jail. But it was while he was in jail that he met Gunner Tyson and his strange friend Maurice Ingersol. When all three left jail within a month of each other, it seemed only natural that they go into business together.

Carlsen is a large bear of a man, barrel chested with a fiery red beard and a flowing mane of hair. He is an enormously likable man, always telling jokes and patting people on the back. People have a way of opening up to him and telling them very personal things. This all works together to make him an excellent confidence man. But Carlsen is no stranger to violence, and in fact has a strong sociopathic side to him. Hurting and killing come easily to him, and he has no compunctions about harming others for his own good. He gets on well with his new partners, but at the same time he does not feel duty bound to them in any way. If worse comes to worse, he will readily betray them to save himself.

MAURICE "THE NAIL" INGERSOL

Maurice is a short, tank of a man, seemingly as wide as he is tall. He has a fondness for iron spikes, which is how he earned his nickname "The Nail". As a youth The Nail was little more than a bully, mugging people on the streets and eventually attracting a group of followers and hangers on that became a kind of gang. Soon his operation was big enough to draw the attention of other gang leaders who challenged his authority. Invariably these individuals found themselves nailed to a wall with 20 cm iron spikes and then eviscerated. Eventually, The Nail became so obsessed with these "crucifixions" that he moved from gang violence to serial murder, killing fifteen innocent people in Volksburg before he left for Heimburg eleven years ago.

In Heimburg The Nail again took up a life of crime, principally stealing cars and breaking into homes, and occasionally performing one of his ritual murders. He was finally caught in the act, but luckily for him it was only in the act of breaking and entering. He was sent to prison where he met Gunner Tyson. Tyson immediately saw potential in the stout man and set about winning him over. Now the two are almost inseparable. The Nail is basically a quiet man, with close cropped hair and glasses. He spends much of his day exercising and developing his muscles. He has incredible upper body strength: enough to drive a iron spike through someone. He will not betray Tyson unless under the greatest duress, but he has no problem giving Fletcher's name over to the player characters.

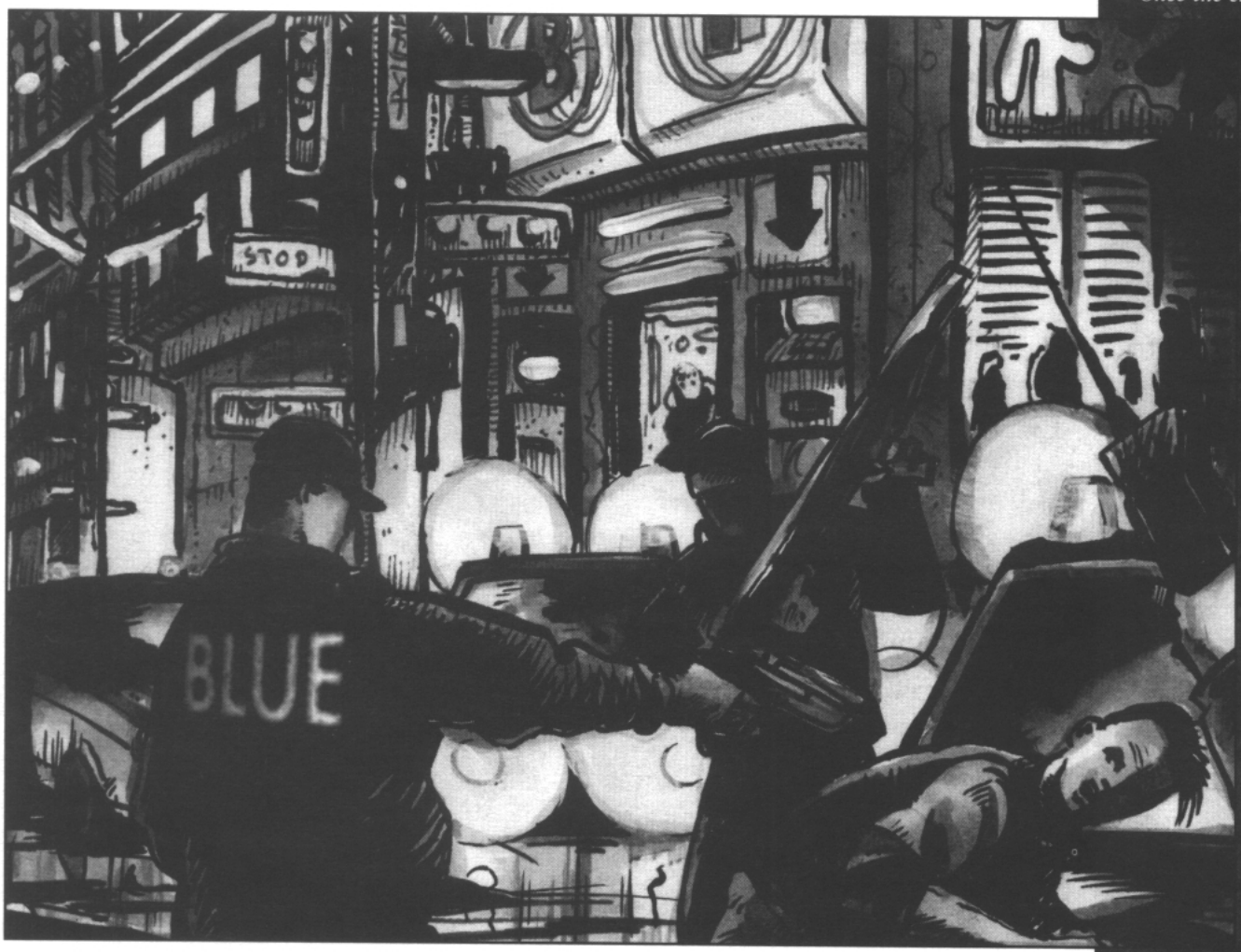
CAUGHT!

Suppose the players are not very clever and they get caught. This is a very real possibility, and the players could face the death penalty unless they find some way to clear their name. It was Harding's plan that the players would be killed while the police were trying to arrest them, and that is why he had the police paid off to do just that. However, the blackmailer's took it upon themselves to help the characters escape that trap, and so if the players are later caught by Security, it will probably not be men whom Harding has paid. Thus, the players could well end up in jail.

Once in jail, the players may start giving up names like Hargrove and, even worse, Harding. This is of course the last thing Harding wants. Although there is no evidence to link Harding to the crime, he would rather not endure a detailed investigation by Bauhaus Security or, even worse, The Second Directorate. With these goals in mind, Harding will do his best to make sure the characters are silenced. If they want to meet with him he will come, and give assurances that he is doing his best for them. He says that Hargrove must have been behind it all, and blames himself for being a fool and trusting him. He denies any knowledge that Hargrove is actually Fletcher and says that he only met the man in person for the first time a few weeks before the robbery, although they had corresponded before that. Needless to say, Harding will do and say anything in order to ensure the characters' silence about his involvement.

Meanwhile, Harding will also do anything he can to have the characters' in prison silenced permanently. Using his own Security contacts and Fletcher's underworld ties, he will have a contract put out on the player characters' lives. There will be a series of murder attempts while they are in jail, some by fellow prisoners, some by guards. Things will be pretty bleak for the characters unless they can figure out a way to escape, something that could become a whole other adventure in itself.

If there is an investigation, Harding will come out of it relatively unscathed. There is no proof linking him to the crimes unless Fletcher is caught and made to confess, and since Security already has their suspects in custody (the characters) they will not be looking too hard. The players' trial will be the definition of swift Bauhaus justice, and nothing they say to implicate Harding will stick to him.





things, and that he had laid all the groundwork for victory. Here, less than an hour before the attack, all the forces were in place. Portals had been opened and creatures of the most sublime darkness summoned. Throughout the sewers of Heimburg the forces of the Dark Legion wandered seemingly at will. No doubt their presence would soon draw the attention of the Brotherhood Seers, but by then it would be too late. The attack would begin in jut a few heartbeats and soon Gorath would have his victory. Once the Cathedral itself had fallen, the city would follow. Once the city lay in ruins, the tomb of The Second Seal would be without support. The Brothers there would tire in their struggle to hold the Dark Tempter at bay and there would be no one to relieve them. The Legion of the Great Darkness would march into the jungle and free their Dark Lord for all time. Gorath, razide of Algeroth, devoted servant of the Dark Soul, would be in the vanguard, a place of honor suitable to one who would shortly kill more humans than any razide in the history of time ever had.



CHAPTER 3: PAYBACK

Gorath held his nazgaroth with easy assurance. Around him crowded a horde of undead legionaries, necromutants and centurions sprinkled among them. The razide swiveled his massive torso to look over his assembled troops. There's was a doomed lot. They would surely all be destroyed in the ensuing battle. Gorath knew that his orders were nothing more than a feint, meant to draw off the heavy Bauhaus garrison stationed near the Cathedral. Even though death was assured, their was nothing but elation and pure and holy blood lust among the assembled legionaries. They were ready to a man, ready to drink blood, eat flesh, and destroy. Gorath himself knew that no such fate awaited him. He had fought his entire existence and never fallen in battle. It seemed impossible that he might die tonight of all nights. Tonight was a night of victory.

Raising his weapon, Gorath let out a soul wrenching battle cry, signaling that the attack had begun. All over the city others did the same. In an unspoken communication, each knew that the moment had finally arrived. Nothing but death and destruction lay before Gorath and he relished it. Firing his nazgaroth into the sewer's ceiling he displaced a hole large enough for him to fit his massive frame through. Above was one of the main city streets of Bauhaus. Scrambling out of the hole, the razide found himself face to face with a Bauhaus motorcar which was screaming to a halt.

Now it is time for the player characters to get even with those who have tried to besmirch their names and, even worse, have them killed. Hargrove/Fletcher is the obvious enemy now, but the question remains: how to find him? But there are other problems lurking out there for the player characters, threats they are not even aware of yet. Since the players avoided the fate he had planned for them, Harding is doing all he can to kill them off. To this end he has enlisted the aid of the Dark Legion to directly intervene. This was something he had been loathe to do before, not wanting to risk drawing the attention of the Brotherhood. Now however, he feels that it is more important that the players are dealt with quickly.

Harding has called upon one Algeroth's Dark Huntsmen to track the players down and kill them. The Dark Huntsman is an undercover agent who has been in place in Heimburg for several years. He lives and works under the name Carlos Sobel as a city maintenance worker, allowing him access to much of the city's infrastructure. The cover also allows him to access even the highest security areas of the city under the guise of making a maintenance check or repair. Over the years he has come to know every street, alleyway, and sewer in the city, remembering it all with the aid of his Necro-bionic implants. He also has full documentation for three other identities, including an office worker in Bauhaus Corporation, a Cathedral groundskeeper, and a security agent.

Sobel will be looking for the characters full time from the moment Harding learns that they have managed to defeat the blackmailers and know that Hargrove is really a criminal named Fletcher. The Dark Huntsman has a variety of the latest weaponry available to him, but he has no back up to speak of. He will be very careful, hoping to ambush the characters when they least expect it. First however he has to find the characters. He will be watching their homes and places they are known to frequent. If Harding ever has any idea where the players are, he will immediately tell Sobel.

THE DARK HUNTSMAN

STR: 18
INT: 14
COR: 18
PHY: 28
MST: 18
PER: 18
MOVEMENT: 7/500
OB: +5
ACT/CR: 5
AVOID/PARRY: 9

BP'S:
Head: 5
Arm: 9
Stomach: 9
Leg: 10
Chest: 10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE: Combat: 16, Firearms: 17, Communication: 12, Movement: 13, Technical: 16

BIO-TECHNICAL GIFTS: Necro-Bionic Arms, Necro-bionic Legs, Necro-bionic Skeleton, Necro-bionic Restructuring, Necro-bionic Innards, Lung Implants, Night Vision, Pain Control. The effects of all these gifts have been worked into the Dark Huntsman's statistics.
DARK GIFTS: none
ATTACKS: As weapon or Fist: 1d6, Kick 1d6+1
Weapons Available: MP-105 Machine Pistol, SMG MK. IVP "Plasma Intruder", PSG-99 Sniper Rifle, and various knives secreted al over his body.
DARK GIFTS: none

FINDING FLETCHER

How the players go about finding Fletcher is up to them. They may want to report him to police, but it might be wise to remind the players that if they do so they are incriminating themselves in the theft of the Disk. The biggest lead they have is the tape that Tyson had in his home which points to Fletcher being somewhat of a regular at Konstantine's bar. This final chapter of the adventure is less linear than the first two, and the players should let the players instigate events. Where in the first parts the players were constantly trying to catch up with those who were setting them up, now the ball is in their court and their enemies are on the run. It is their job to catch them and find out what's going on.

The game master can keep things exciting through the careful use of the Dark Huntsman. Fletcher simply wants to stay away from the players until he can figure out how to release the power of the Plague Disk upon the city. In order to open the sapphire that pierces the center of the disk and let loose the disease, Fletcher must perform an involved ritual and sacrifice. Completing the entire ritual takes eight days, and when the players finally get around to hunting Fletcher down there are just three days left. After that, The Demnogonis Plague will be set loose upon the city and Venus as a whole.

CALLING HARDING

Harding does not plan to be in the city when Fletcher frees the disease from the Plague Disk. He is currently in Volksburg, attending a multi-Corporation meeting concerning the provenance of certain Venusian artifacts. Harding had hoped that the players would be killed while he was gone, and has been trying to avoid them. Now that they have managed to avoid death or arrest at the hands of Bauhaus Security, Harding wants to make sure they stay in the city so that either the Dark Huntsman or the Plague will get them. He has ordered that any calls from the players to his office in Heimburg be forwarded to him in Volksburg.

When he gets a call from the players he expresses great concern for their safety. How exactly he treats the players depends on whether or not he has talked to the players before this since the museum break-in. If this is the first time he will express outrage at Fletcher's betrayal and offer to do whatever he can to help the player characters. Heoffers them a safe house in the city where they can stay if the police are still looking for them, or if they do not feel at home. His primary goal is to find out where exactly the players are so he can direct the Dark Huntsman to them.

The most important thing for Harding is that the characters continue to trust him. They have no real reason to suspect him yet, although they might feel wary anyway. With the Dark Tempter's aid, Harding has become a consummate liar and actor, and knows just what to say and do to gain their trust. Harding has such faith in the Dark Huntsman, that he is willing to give the player characters a few hints as to where they might find Fletcher. He tells them that when he met with Hargrove/Fletcher, it was always at Konstantine's Bar near the university. He also reminds the players that it is very important that they find the disk as quickly as possible. He says Fletcher probably does not even know what he has, and that he's just a common criminal. Having offered this tip, he will then tell Sobel to look for the players at Konstantine's.



Gorath fired the mammoth nazgorath one handed, sending flaming rounds of lead screaming into the car, the stunned driver, the three passengers, the crowd of screaming onlookers, the next three cars down the road, and four store fronts filled with early evening shoppers. Fire burst up in his gun's roaring wake. The car in front of him was reduced to a shredded mass of flesh and metal. Gorath estimated that he had managed to cut down thirty or so creatures of light in the few moments he had been above ground. He Pulled himself out of the hole entirely, realizing that he was blocking his own troops. He stood in the middle of the road letting out another soul curdling cry as his followers welled up out of the ground, rushing into the street, firing at anything that moved. Gorath took a moment to simply stand and watch, enjoying these early moments when it seemed as though he and his troops could



kill with impunity forever. Once his force were all in the street he ordered them to follow him. A mile to the south stood the Great Cathedral of Heimburg. Gorath could see its towering spire from here, could hear the alarms sounding. With a touch of remorse, Gorath turned and broke into a run, charging north away from the Cathedral. He had orders after all. He and his had only moments to get to the Bauhaus Security garrison down the street.

The running razide's nargaroth continued to roar as he raced down the street. All around him the weapons of the undead legionaries fired as well, destroying shop fronts and automobiles up and down the street. By this time most of the residents had fled the streets in fear, so there were few live targets for the invaders to focus their malice upon. In a few minutes they were nearing the Security Garrison. As Nazgorath rounded the corner he found himself face to face with a fully armed and armored Security armored personnel carrier. Gorath dove to the left, firing wildly at the vehicle. As it sped by, tires screeching, the nazgaroth left a line of pock marks along the side armor. The APC slammed into a crowd of undead legionaries,

BACK TO KONSTANTINE'S

The University area is still as vibrant as ever, untouched by the horror the characters have found themselves mired in. Now the players have every reason to be paranoid, and it seems that everyone is watching them. Remember, unless they have done something to clear their name, their faces have been on every newscast, wanted for mass murder. Vagrants, activists, and drunken students all accost the players as they walk through the crowded streets on the way to Konstantine's. Outside the bar a crowd



has gathered to watch a street performer recite poetry, among them may be the Dark Huntsman, looking for all the world like anyone else in the crowd as he secretly watches the player characters.

Inside, the place is abuzz with activity, packed to the brim with students, academics, and members of the city's counterculture. The players now have to decide where to begin. There are probably seventy people in the small bar, including three bartenders, five servers, the manager, the bouncer, and a band getting ready to go on stage. Konstantine's is a place where those who fancy themselves the young intellectual elite if the city gather. Everyone here has an attitude of one sort or another, and most will look down on player characters who are obviously not intellectuals of some sort. A list of those who might have some information follows below:

THE MANAGER: Harmut Ricouer is actually the assistant manager. His brother Gregor owns the bar, but does not like to come down to this part of town if he can help it. Harmut is a thin, almost emaciated man in his late twenties, dressed in the latest Bauhaus counterculture fashions. He has thin, sandy blond hair and dull, grey eyes. He quite obviously does not want to be where he is, but is willing to talk to the players for a few minutes.

He recognizes Fletcher's picture if the players show it to him. He's been a regular in the place for the past six months or so, but he has not seen him in a week or so (since the museum robbery). He does not know the man's name, but says he always seemed a nice enough fellow. He tipped well and seemed to be friendly with all o the staff. For his part, Ricouer cares more about whether or not his employees are stealing from him than about who comes into the place, and he has nothing else to offer the players.

BARTENDER: Only one bartender is on duty when the players come in. Sean Mendenhall serves drinks from behind the bar that runs across one wall of Konstantine's. Sean wear his long black hair tied back in a ponytail, a rather unfashionable look in modern Bauhaus society. He is a heavyset young man, who is constantly sweating. All the same, he is popular with the elitist crowd at Konstantine's maybe because Mendenhall holds two doctorates, one in philosophy and one in history. He is a surprisingly erudite man, and will have pleasure engaging in a little verbal dueling with the player characters.

Mendenhall has many fond memories of conversations with Fletcher, but he only offers this up if the players have a picture of him. As far as Mendenhall knew, the man's name was Gene, and he was a student at the University. He says the guy was quite smart, but had some rather radical views, even by the barkeep's somewhat liberal standards. He remembers one conversation particularly where Gene had had a little too much to drink and went on and on how the only decent thing to do was tear down the whole planet and start over. Sean only laughed, but was somewhat taken aback when Gene turned on him with the fiercest look in his eyes. He remembers vividly what Gene said: "Oh, I wouldn't laugh so hard Sean. I just might do it sooner than you think." Then he laughed and ordered another drink.

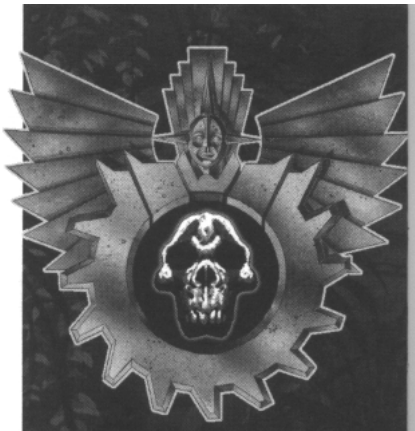
Mendenhall says Gene was an amazing drinker, capable of guzzling it down all night and showing no sign of it. He has a lot of friends in the area, and seems to be very popular with the ladies. He has a penchant for young University

girls, but has also been known to go home with some of the women that work at Konstantine's. He says that he's pretty sure he was seeing a server named Melissa most recently. Melissa called in sick the last few nights, but maybe some of the other servers know something.

SERVERS: There are two servers on duty when the player characters come into the bar, both of them young women. They are Maureen and Jelka, two University students who earn some extra money working at the bar. They are both dangerously thin women, Maureen with thick black hair in a page boy cut, and Jelka with her head shaved entirely bald. Both are attractive but very aloof. They deal with the pitiful flirtations of Konstantine's patrons every night, and are not easily impressed. Both women know Fletcher, although they have very different views of him. Like Sean, they know him only as Gene.

Six months ago Gene came into Konstantine's and swept Maureen off her feet. They had a whirlwind romance, and Gene even lived with Maureen for a month. Then, a month ago he just dumped her, saying it was over between them. He didn't even have the decency to find a new bar, and soon he took up with her coworker-worker Melissa. Needless to say, Maureen is no longer very fond of Gene, and will gladly take the opportunity to tell the players all about his faults. She calls him a drunk, a lecher, a pervert, and worst of all abusive. More than once he threatened her life and the lives of those who bothered him. Even though they lived together, he kept another apartment somewhere near the bar, although he would never let her see it or even know where it is. He obviously had something to hide, and Maureen suspected him of having another woman there, maybe even Melissa.

Jelka is Melissa's best friend, and does not care much for Maureen. She thinks Gene is a great guy, very intelligent, and adventuresome. She feels Maureen is just letting her jealousy get in the way of her true feelings for Gene. In fact, she confides, Gene is a perfect gentleman. Why, he has promised to marry Melissa, and so Melissa is saving herself for her wedding night. If the players ask, she admits that Melissa is not really sick, but that she went off with Gene a few nights ago and she has not heard from her since. Jelka has been covering for her. She stopped by Jelka's flat a few times, but there was no one there. She's heard Melissa mention that Gene has his own apartment somewhere near the bar, but she's never been there. She thinks the flat is behind a restaurant or club of some sort.



crushing several under its heavy, solid rubber tires. The low rumble of a muffled explosion escaped from under the APC. One of the victims had managed to detonate a satchel of grenades even as the Bauhaus security vehicle crushed both of his legs. The explosion lifted the APC into the air, landing a second later on its side. The undead legionaries swarmed over the crippled vehicle, their chain bayonets biting into the armored flesh of the vehicle. One of the security troopers inside tried to escape the passenger are which seemed to be on fire. A centurion cut

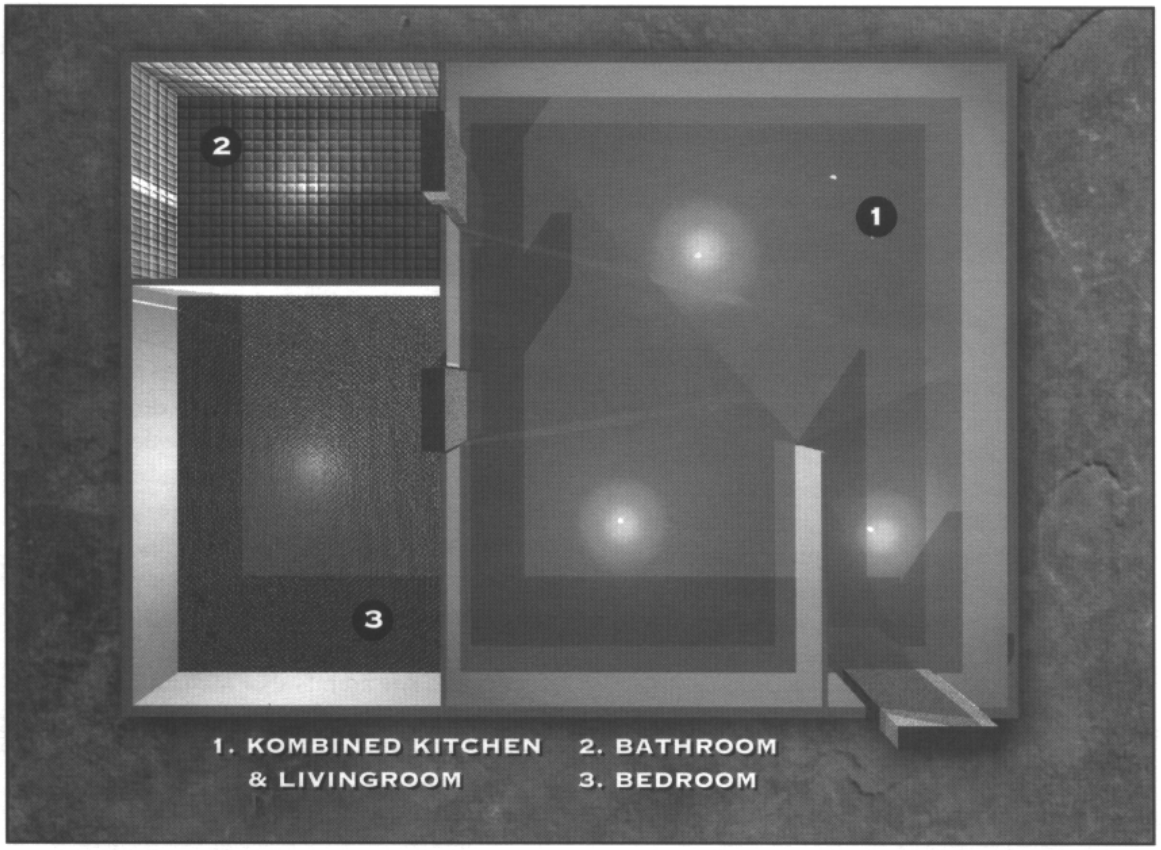




him down as soon as he showed his head, while a legionnaire tossed a blast grenade into the open hatch.

Gorath took all of this in with relish, and almost did not notice the two other APC's racing towards him. It was not until the lead APC's autocannon ripped apart the wall next to him that Gorath turned his attention back towards the Security Garrison. The razide crouched and fired, aiming this time for the lead vehicle's front tires. When he wanted to be Gorath was a dead on shot, and this time he shredded the two front tires in a matter of milliseconds. The APC skidded to a halt less than ten yards from the razide. From behind him he heard a dull roar and saw three rockets streak from the pack of undead legionaries behind him. The first impacted uselessly in a store front down the street, but the other two slammed into the second APC, blowing off the turret and destroying the vehicle's drive train.

Gorath scarcely noticed the results however, his attention focused entirely upon the autocannon that even now was swiveling towards him. Although its tires were gone, the APC was still dangerous. Gorath leaped up from his crouch and sprinted towards the APC. Before the cannon could fire the razide was on the roof of the crippled APC. With his right hand he fired the ponderous nazgaroth into the roof of the APC. With his right he took hold of the barrel of the autocannon. Straining mightily he pulled back on the cannon, bending the barrel until it was useless. The high



MELISSA'S APARTMENT

Melissa lives in a tenth floor apartment in a building catering to University students. Getting access to the building requires getting past the locked front door and the security guard in the lobby. Only those who live in the building are allowed to enter unless they are on a guest list or accompanied by a resident. The guard is not armed, but has a panic button behind his desk that will bring the police within three minutes. Melissa's friend Jelka is on the guest list and could conceivably gain access to the apartment for the players. She is unlikely to do this for the players unless they can convince her that Melissa might be in danger or find some other way to convince her.

The apartment itself is locked, but it is not hard to pick the lock or break the door down. Inside the room is a mess. Clothing, books, magazines, and papers litter every surface, as if a tornado has swept through the room. If Jelka is with the player characters she is unfazed by the mess. If questioned she seems surprised and says that the place always looks like this. The apartment consists of a combination living room and kitchen, a bedroom with a walk in closet, and a bathroom, all seemingly in a state of disaster.

In the bedroom the players find several pictures of Gene and Melissa hanging on the walls. Some show the two standing in some of the city's more famous landmarks. There is one of the two of them in Konstantine's and two pictures taken on different occasions at a restaurant called J. Gustav's Cookery, a hole in the wall diner in the University district. If Jelka is present she will comment that the diner was a favorite of Gene's and that he often went there with Melissa and Maureen before her.

Jelka will also be able to tell the players that some of Melissa's clothes and bags seem to be missing. Likewise, the bathroom seems to have been cleared of all cosmetics and toiletries, indicating that Melissa left of her own accord. Likewise, there is no sign of any of Melissa's identification documents or valuables, another indication that she has left of her own accord. The biggest find is under Melissa's bed however, and that is a box of letters and keepsakes. If Jelka is present she will insist that the players not look at the letters or through any of Melissa's private papers.

Reading through the letters takes about an hour, and involves slogging through pages of bad poetry written by Gene. Certainly this may seem an unexpected side of Fletcher, but he is a complicated man. One letter in particular catches the player characters' attention. It is a letter from Gene dated three days ago, asking her to meet him at his apartment "above the restaurant" and asks her to bring enough clothes for several nights. The letter goes on to make promises of a romantic weekend in the country, and asks that Melissa not tell anyone, even Jelka just in case Maureen should find out and try and spoil everything for them.

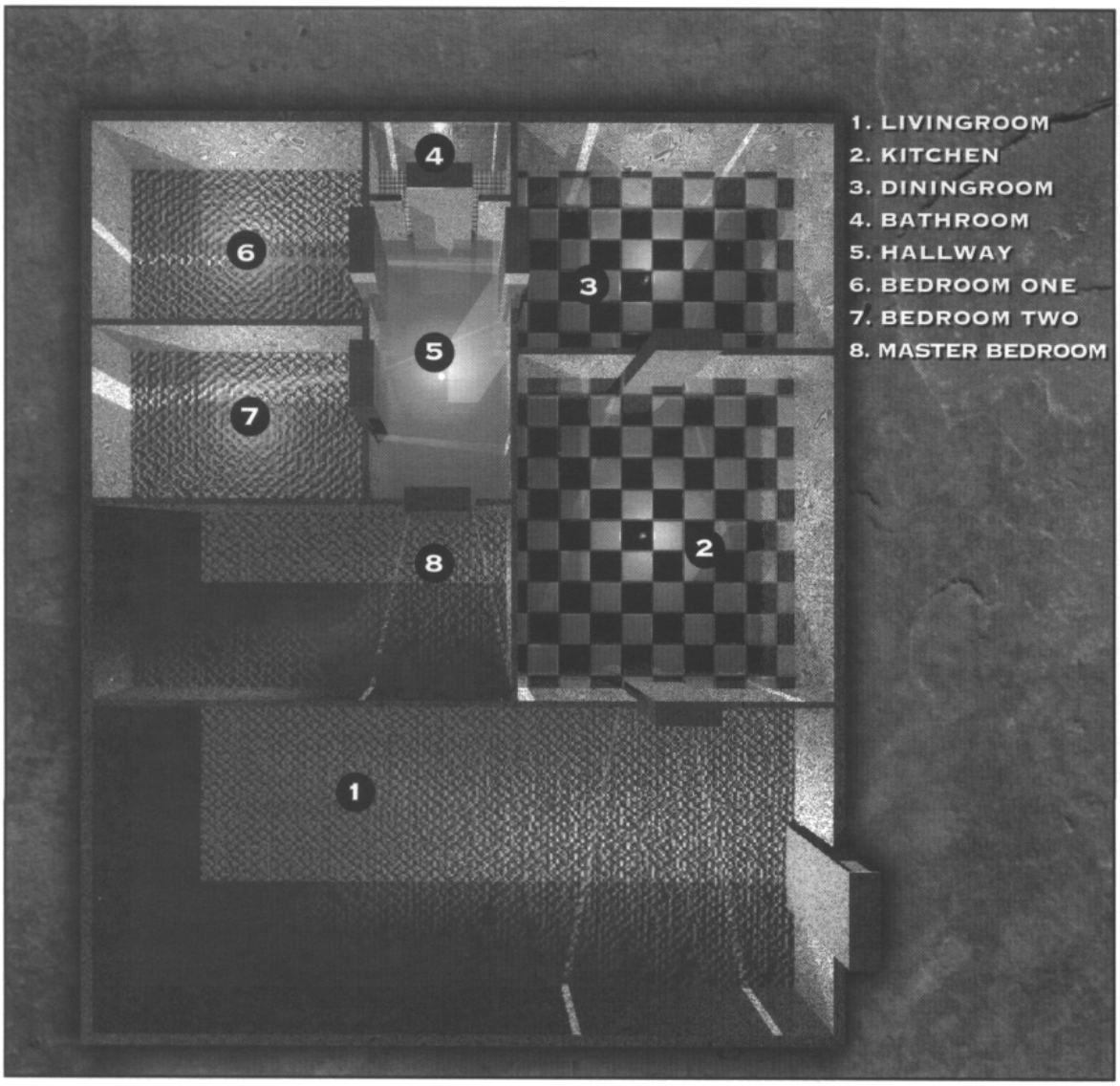
J. GUSTAV'S COOKERY

The seedy little diner is only ten blocks from Konstantine's, occupying part of the bottom floor of a twenty story apartment complex. J. Gustav's is a quiet place, more out of sulleness and despair than quiet reflection. It serves cheap, greasy food that is a favorite with poor students and street people. The staff is sullen and resentful, as are the clients. They will grudgingly answer the characters' questions, although they are loathe to give out information about the customers. They will at first claim not to know Fletcher, without even bothering to look at the picture. If the player characters become violent or offer cash, they will admit that he was a regular here but they do not know his name. If really pressed, they will say that they think he lives in the building above the restaurant.

FLETCHER'S APARTMENT

Fletcher does indeed live above J. Gustav's. In fact he lives in the second floor apartment directly above the restaurant. Finding the apartment is a different matter entirely. The building does not have security like Melissa's does, but that also means there is no obvious person to ask where Fletcher might live. The building superintendent lives in an apartment in the basement. His name is Karl, and he has taken care of the building for over twenty years since dropping out of University. He is a chronic drug user, and when the player characters find him he is stoned out of his mind. He does have keys to all the apartments, as well as a list of who lives where. Fletcher is renting his room under the name Gareth Everton, so this will not help the players track him down. Karl does not recognize the photo the players show him, but he can easily be bribed into giving the players a key to his room if they figure out which one it is.

There are 150 apartments in the building, and searching them all would cause quite a disturbance among the residents. Most of the residents are students and low wage workers



power rounds of the nazgaroth had punched through the thin armor in a few places. Bauhaus troops scrambled out the rear door of the APC, fleeing the rain of lead from above.

Again consumed by his own bloodlust, it took the razide a moment to realize that his prey was escaping. Suddenly a series of stinging sensations running up his left leg and back brought the situation to his attention. A Security trooper had emptied the clip of his MP-103 Hellblazer submachine-gun into the razide's back. The low power bullets did little more than make the razide aware of the hapless trooper's presence. Gorath spun and opened up with his nazgorath, instantly turning the trooper into so much ground meat. Without pause he went on to cut down the rest of the squad as well. Satisfied that his work here was done, Gorath looked up to see how the battle progressed around him.

His legionaries had managed to dispatch the other APC without too much trouble. Bright flames consumed the other APC, and as Gorath watched the last of its crew stumbled out, his body a living, walking bonfire. Laughing to himself, Gorath turned his attentions back towards the actual Garrison further down the street. He took a moment to ponder his next move as his legionaries fanned out along the course of the wide avenue on which the Garrison fronted. Gorath had gauged the situation in a moment and knew what had to be done. He was confident that the Garrison would fall within the next ten minutes.





It ended up taking more like half an hour. Gorath had not counted on reinforcements arriving so quickly, nor had he counted on there being a member of the Brotherhood skilled in the Art. The blasted garrison smoldered quietly behind him, raining embers and ash down upon the bodies of most of his troops and over a hundred dead security and Brotherhood soldiers. Gorath glanced disparagingly at the motley crew that remained under his command. He had no use for them now. To a man, they suffered from serious wounds. Gorath himself had lost a large chunk of flesh from his left leg and now walked with a limp. Nevertheless, the razide relished in his victory. He had accomplished his part of Harding's complicated plan, and felt sure that around the city his fellow Dark Legionaries were doing the same. He could still see the look of surprise on the faces of the dead. They had no idea what was coming.

Whirling around upon the handful of undead legionaries and the sole necromutant, Gorath waved his arm dismissively. "You're on your own." He growled at them, "Go out and cause some trouble." With that the razide turned and headed off down the street, looking for signs of the enemy.

They were everywhere of course. He saw before him a block of apartments, the ants nests that housed the

who are not Bauhaus citizens. If the players ask around on the second floor, they will find at least one person who recognizes Fletcher as the resident of apartment 2-D. They say he's a nice quiet man, who pretty much keeps to himself. They have not seen the man in well over a week.

Breaking into Fletcher's apartment is easily done, but if the players are too obvious about it one of the other building residents may well call the police. Given the neighborhood, it could take the police as long as fifteen minutes to arrive on the scene. Inside the room is in complete darkness. From the dim bulb in the hallway, the player characters can make out the dim shapes of furniture in the apartment's living room. Fletcher has painted the windows black, making the rooms dark any time of say. The light switch by the door does not work, and there is no sign of any other light sources in the room. The characters will have to bring their own light. Fletcher himself has no need of light.

The apartment is one of the largest in the building, comprised of five rooms. The door opens into a living room, an area seldom used by Fletcher. There is a couch, and several chairs as well as empty bookshelves. Floor plans and pictures of the Venusian Heritage Museum cover the large dining room table. There are also maps of the rest of the city, including some photographs of an old industrial region deep in the lower levels of the city's center. It is one of the oldest regions in the city, and was once the heart of the Bauhaus industrial base. Over the centuries the city has grown out above and beyond the old industrial center, and now it is a slum of abandoned factories and old row housing. Fletcher has circled several buildings in the area. All five of the buildings are old factories that manufactured large machines and vehicles.

The kitchen is of to the right of the living room and seems to be used even less than the living room. There is no food in the kitchen at all, only several partially full bottles of alcohol and the garbage left over from eating weeks of take out meals. A hallway leads off the left side of the dining room. There are three bedrooms and a bathroom along the hall. The first bedroom door is locked, but inside the players find nothing but a floor lined with old newspapers. The second bedroom is also locked, sealing in the remains of a large dead dog. The room stinks of decay and festering meat, flies and maggots swarm about the room. A close examination of the corpse reveals that all of its internal organs have been removed, leaving only fat, muscle and bone.

The last room is also locked. It is the master bedroom, and where Fletcher spent most of his time. This room is boobytrapped, and unless the players use a key or pick the lock, there will be a blinding flash of light when the door is open. Anyone in the hallway will be blind for the next few minutes from the flash. This would normally serve to blind intruders and alert Fletcher to their presence in his room, but since

Fletcher is not present there is no there ill effect from the flash. However, it should put the players on guard an assure that they take nothing for granted any more.

Inside the room there is simply a bed and a chest of drawers. Books and magazines are piled in neat stacks around the bed. The books are all about ancient Venus and what is known of the early settlers of the planet. There are also copies of all the articles and papers Hargrove has ever written, as well as a hand written report containing all the details of Hargrove's life. Fletcher used all of these materials to prepare for impersonating the missing scholar and research anything that might be relevant to the Plague Disk. There is also a file that Fletcher used to keep track of expenses. It contains receipts from restaurants, clothing stores, taxi rides, and even transit system ticket stubs. Among the myriad receipts is a rental contract with a real estate broker. The lease is for a year, and gives the address of the property in downtown Heimburg, deep within the old industrial area. It is one of the buildings that Fletcher has photographs of out in the living room.

There are no other letters or personal correspondence of any kind in the room. One thing of possible interest are the bullet holes in the wall opposite Fletcher's bed. there are over twenty holes in the wall, made with a small caliber pistol of some kind. There are also holes made from what appears to be a throwing knife of some sort. If the player characters move the bed, underneath they will find a strange pattern drawn on the floor in blood (now long dry). The pattern consists of interweaving lines and circles, with strange words written throughout. Some of the phrases are recognizable such as "Freedom from Death" and "Oblivion is the Way". All point to someone who is either a heretic or quite disturbed.

FLETCHER'S PLAN

Gerard Fletcher is a complete madman. From early on in his life he has suffered from bouts of schizophrenia and multiple personality disorder. Even before he fell under the sway of the Great Darkness, he was a nihilist and a misanthrope, wanting nothing less then the destruction of everyone around him. When he fell into the hands of heretics he gladly joined the Dark Soul's cause. Ironically, it was the Dark Soul that turned the normally psychotic Fletcher into a somewhat grounded and controlled individual. Serving the Darkness gave him purpose and clarity, and the Dark Gifts allowed him to channel his psychoses into assets.





creatures of light and their families. The front door to the building had been boarded shut, fairly recently by the look of it. Gorath strode up the front stairs of the massive granite building. Placing his nazgaroth on the ground for a moment, the razide slammed himself bodily into the boarded up doorway, shattering the wood and glass into thousands of splinters. Small arms fire echoed from within, probably from the building's security guards. Gorath ignored the gnat like stings of the pistol bullets has he nonchalantly bent down to retrieve his weapon.

He turned and fired, the Dark Legion weapon tearing apart the reception room and its unfortunate defenders. Gorath proceeded down the hall, stopping at the first door and kicking it open with his good leg. He smiled as he heard the screams from within.



As far as he could tell he'd only missed the one woman, and soon she would fall to him as well. Trapped by their own makeshift fortifications, there had been nowhere for the building's tenants to run. He was covered from head to in the blood of the hundreds of men, women, boys, and girls whom he had torn to pieces with his own hands (he was running low on ammunition). Now only the one woman remained. She had slipped passed him, making a run for the ruined

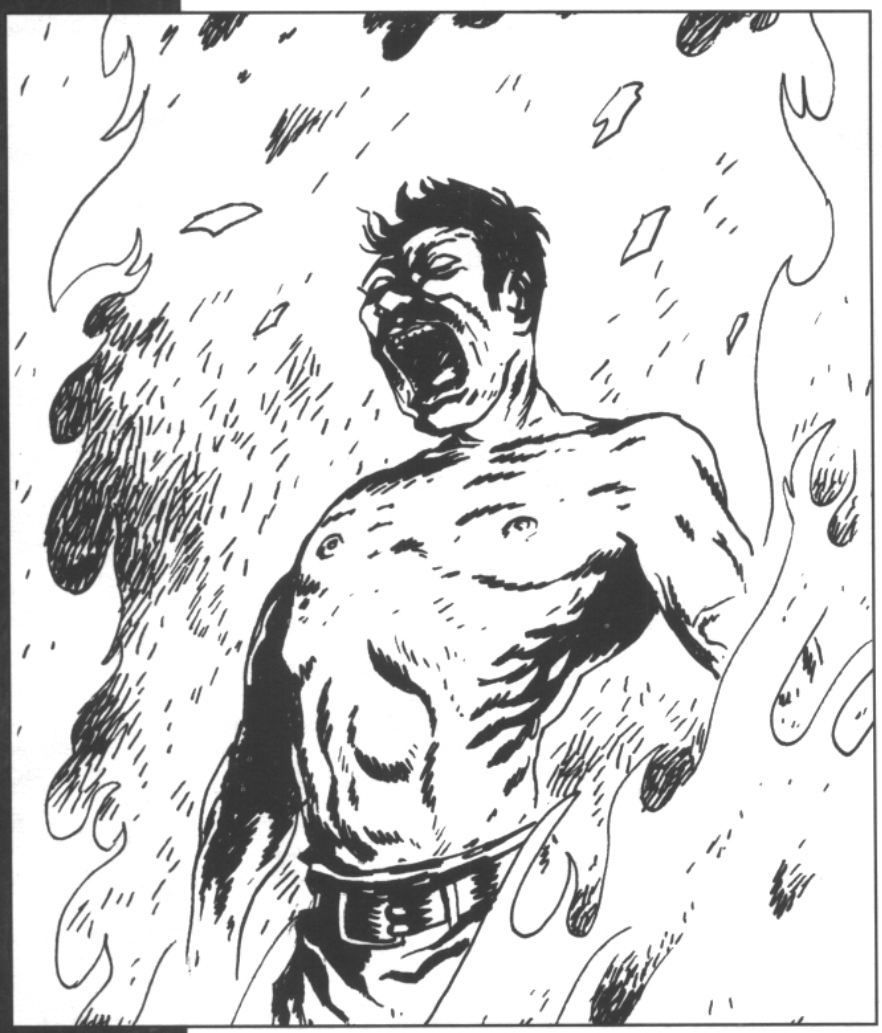
Fletcher's real name is long lost, even to him. He is an expert at assuming new identities at the drop of a hat. He can hold in his mind detailed histories for dozens of different personalities, each one entirely convincing. Had he pursued a life on the stage he would surely have been acknowledged as one of the city's best actors ever. As it is it has allowed him to assume a variety of identities when undertaking missions for the Dark Legion, including that of David Hargrove.

One of Fletcher's other personalities is Gene, the romantic student who seduced first Maureen and then Melissa. Fletcher was often only dimly aware of the Gene personality, and sometimes he would slip into the personality for days and even weeks, only to wake up not knowing where he had been or what he had done. This worried Fletcher, but when he received the orders to help Harding retrieve the disk, he saw some value in the contacts he had made as Gene. Unleashing the power of the Plague Disk requires a human sacrifice, one, who must by a virgin and willing accomplice to the proceedings.

Fletcher has been preparing Melissa for the sacrifice over the week leading up to the final ritual. Through a combination of drugs, hypnotism, and suggestion Fletcher has brought Melissa to the a nearly catatonic state in which she is willing to give her life to Fletcher, something he might never have been able to achieve if he had not first won her love as Gene. Now the preparations are complete, and Fletcher is ready to bring the Great Plague that will end it all. The players, hot on his trail are the city's last chance for survival.

THE RITUAL

Fletcher has rented an old machine factory in the core of Heimburg, deep beneath the newer levels of the city. The neighborhood is one of Heimburg's oldest, one of the first areas built when the Homebuilders came to Venus. Since then the skyscrapers and megalithic factories of the great Corporation have sprung up around and over the old industrial center. Only a few of the factories still operate today, the rest has become a haven for the lowest level of society. Here even the bravest Security patrols only come in when they have to, and then only in large numbers.



Here on the surface of Venus there is no day. The tall buildings and overhanging structures block out all direct sunlight. Here at the lowest level there is simply twilight and night. The homeless sometimes light fires for warmth and light, but only when they are lucky enough to find some fuel for the flames. The more powerful gangs manage to tap into the city's power grid, illuminating their territory with meager second hand lamps. There is no law to speak of down below, and unless you have friends to watch your back, life expectancy is short.

In the midst of the twilight world of down below, Fletcher has been performing the long ritual to free the Demnogonis Plague. Long ago the ancients imprisoned the essence of the Plague in the great sapphire within the Plague disk. They created a ritual for freeing the disease, should the need for such a destructive weapon ever be needed. Now Fletcher has perverted the meaning of the ritual. Where once only one pure of heart and free of evil intent could free the Plague, Fletcher turns that part of the ritual over to one of his multiple personalities. Where once a willing virgin needed to give her life to save



her people, Fletcher has brought prepares to sacrifice a drugged and brainwashed student. A ritual that needs to be kept from the light of day is being performed in a part of the city that no longer knows sunlight.

Now, as the players ready their attack on Fletcher's abandoned the ritual nears its finish. Melissa is dead, sacrificed three days ago, the corpse long since torn to pieces by the Curator of Demnogonis Fletcher summoned to protect him during the ritual. Now it is only necessary for Fletcher to say the right phrases and commit the final sacrifice: kill himself and fall upon the disk. Then the Curator will then remove Fletcher's thigh bone and shatter the Sapphire, releasing the disease upon Venus.

The factory building in which the ritual is taking place is now just an empty shell, all of the machinery having long sense been sold off or melted down as scrap. In the center of the factory floor lies the ritual circle, a perfectly circular trench one meter deep, two meters wide, and twenty five meters in diameter. Specially prepared pitch and resin fills the circle, lit on fire for the final phase of the ritual. Flames reach up two meters, creating a wall of fire around the center where Fletcher prepares the final stages of the ritual. Within the circle Fletcher has painted an intricate design on the floor, using a mixture of herbs, ground minerals, and Melissa's blood. Fletcher kneels there, stripped to his waist a ritual knife in one hand, a street modified HG-14 close by just in case.

Standing in the shadows, as far from the site of the ritual as possible lurks a Curator of Demnogonis, armed with a curator sword and a plague gun. Placed elsewhere both inside and outside of the building are several Blessed Legionaries, also here to protect the ritual's



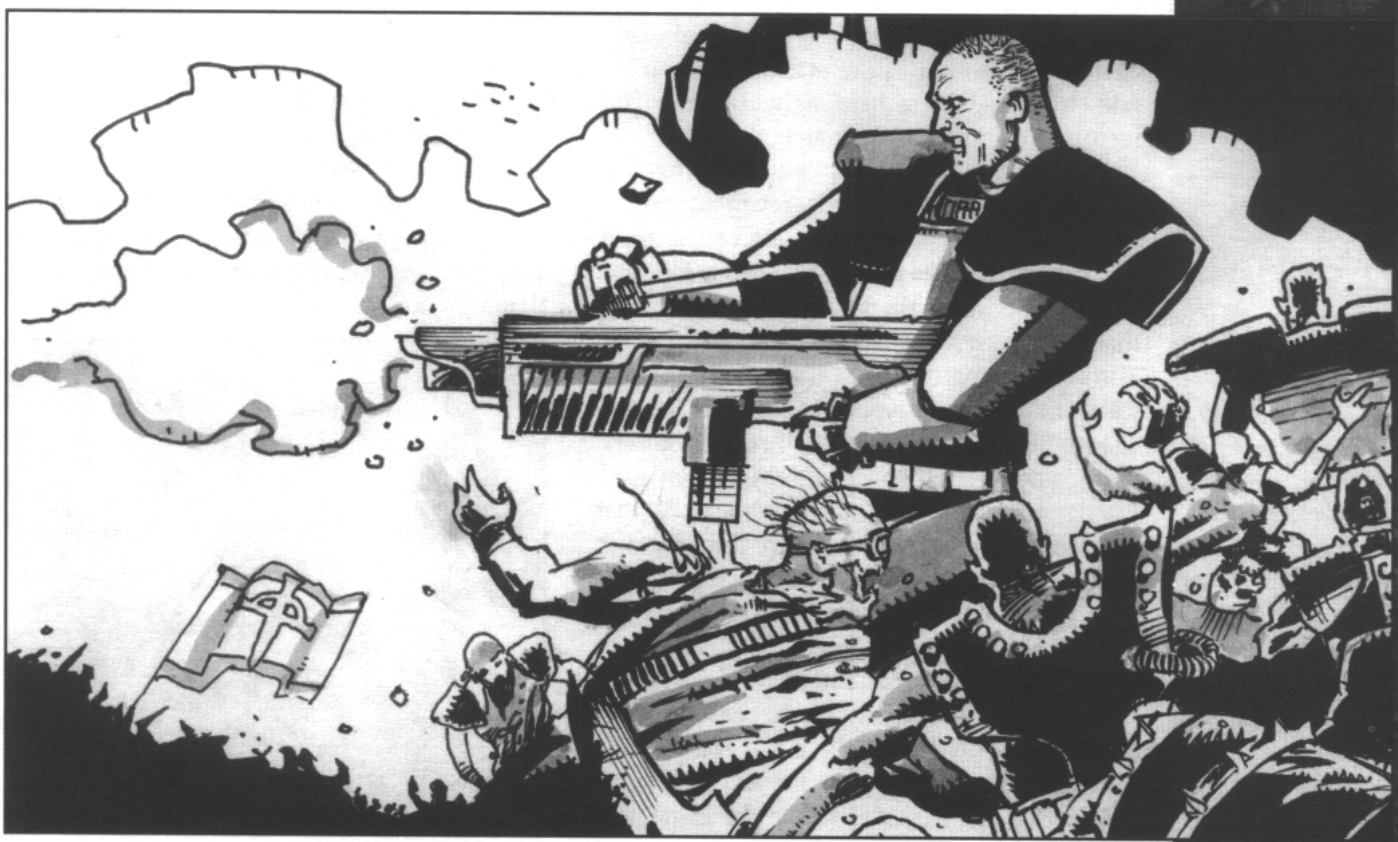
front door. She only had a few yards to go. Gorath lazily raised the nazgorath and sighted the center of the young woman's back.

He squeezed the trigger as gently as his monstrous hands would allow.

Nothing happened.

Gorath stared incredulously at the weapon. It had never failed him! Never! He couldn't be out of ammunition, he had in fact kept careful track of his expended rounds. He pulled the trigger again. Nothing.

Howling in rage, the razide charged forward as quickly as his shattered leg would take him. He came upon her in the street, just a few steps from the entrance to the building. He snatched her up in his arms and prepared to rip her in two.





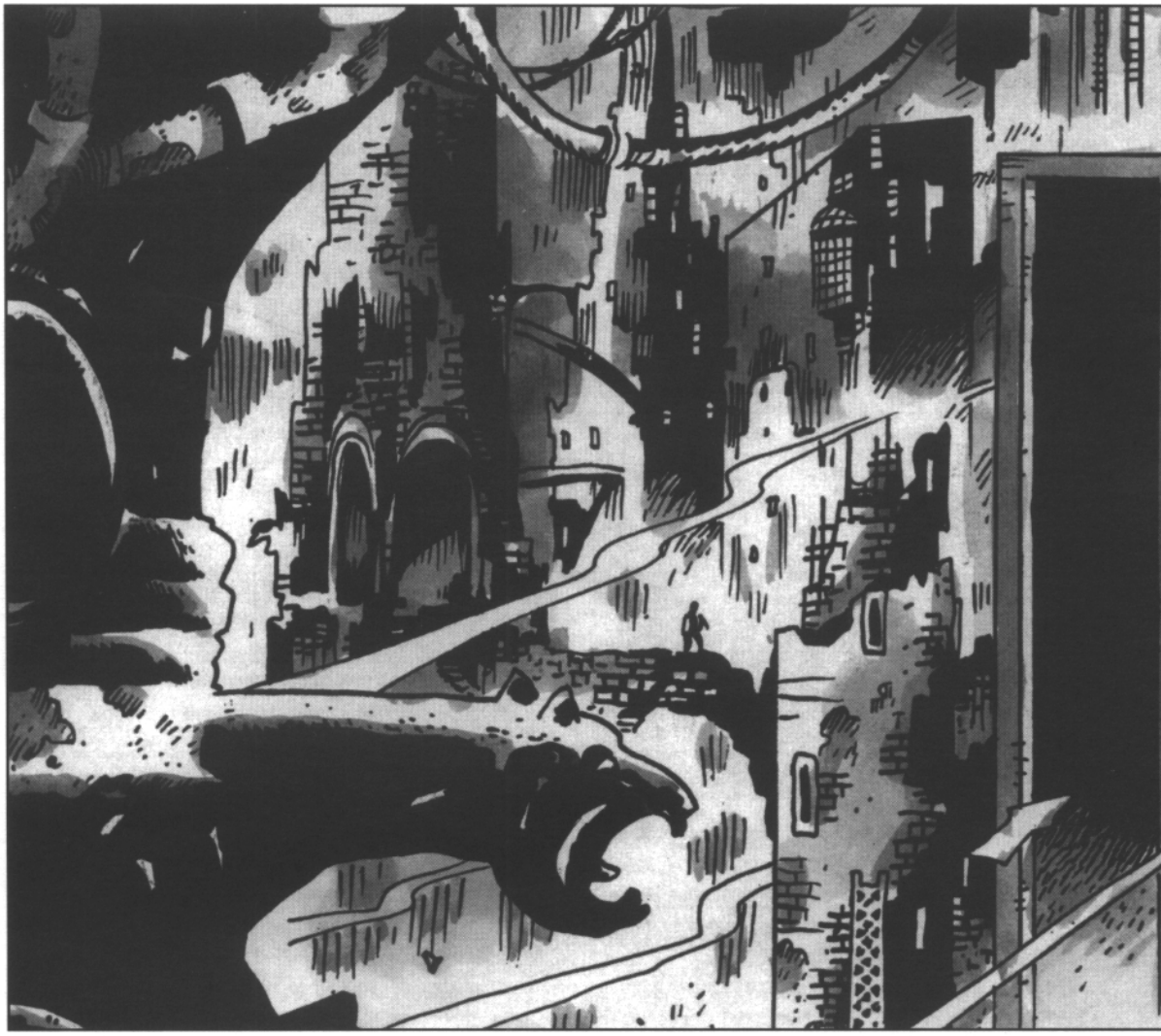
A split second before he finnished off his five hundred and ninth victim of the day he noticed the familiar stinging sensation of small arms fire thudding into his flesh.

He looked around to see himself surrounded by Bauhaus military troops. These were not simple minded security troops, but rather elite Venusian Rangers. There were some twelve ranger circled about him, two of whom wielded rather large looking rocket launchers.

Survival instincts kicking in in a flash, Gorath spun the woman around in his grip and placed the red hot barrel of his nazgorath against her head. Crouching down against a car, Gorath did not need to communicate his meaning to the Bauhaus troops. If they fired she too would surely die. The red hot barrel burned the young woman's cheek, causing her to sob uncontrollably.

The Bauhaus commander nodded to his troops, ordering them to hold their fire. It was a stand off, and Gorath struggled furiously trying to figure out his next move. He gripped the woman tighter, shattering several of her ribs. This proved to be too much for her, she passed out with a great heaving sob of agony.

Mistakenly thinking the girl dead, two of the Rangers opened fire. The rounds from the first man's Panxerknacker slammed into the razide's bony head and probably would not have been enough to kill him. The

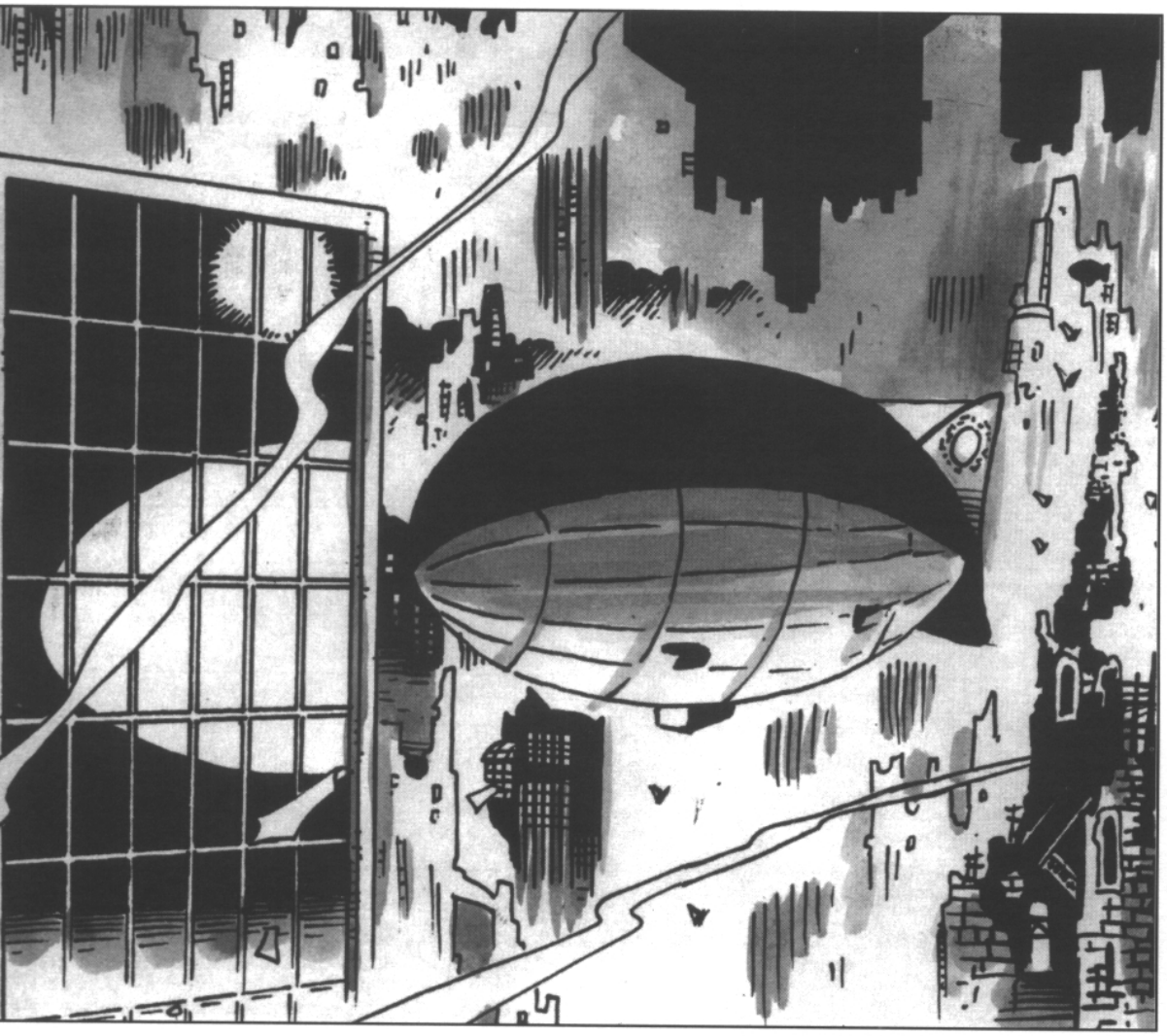


completion. The number of Blessed Legionaries should be appropriate for the number of player characters involved in the attempt to stop the raid. It should be a hard fight, but the characters should not be outmatched.

Fletcher will try to stay out of the fight as long as possible. He needs seven rounds of combat to rush through the rest of the ritual and kill himself. As soon as the ritual is finished, the Curator will make straight for the disk so that he can release the Demnogonis Plague. Nothing else matters to it. If Fletcher sees that the Curator and everyone else is killed, he will change his plans. Killing himself does no good if there is no one left to release the Plague upon the city. He is far enough along in the ritual that he can easily remove the sapphire from the disk and try and make a run for it, which is exactly what he will do. he wants to live to release the Plague, even though it might take months or years to recreate the ceremony.

The players should be able to chase Fletcher down. He is tired from the ritual already, and really has nowhere to run. He had no expectations of being alive this late in the game, and in many ways he is a broken man. If escape looks impossible he will turn and fight tooth and nail. His life is over. As far as he is concerned, he is a walking dead man. If the players manage to disable him completely or capture him in some way, Fletcher reverts to a catatonic state. The stress has broken his already fragile mind, and he is good for nothing. He will never regain a full state of awareness, and has no memories of Harding's involvement in the whole scheme.





flash of the ARG-17 however obviated the effects.

An incredulous Gorath stared in amazement as his body was ripped apart by the explosion. He hadn't killed her! She's still alive! he thought as he returned to darkness.

OOOPS!

Suppose the disease gets out. Everyone is now in a lot of trouble. The Plague is a self replicating airborne virus that can exist outside of a host body for up to thirty hours. It will spread throughout the lower levels of the city quickly and gradually rise up through the levels. there is no cure, there will be no survivors. The virus enters the body, and within hours the internal organs and brain of the victim turn to a liquid mush. the skin breaks out in festering sores that burst with infected pus. In only a few days the city will fall as the virus spreads out across the planet. The only possible salvation is to entirely incinerate the infected area, effectively burning Heimburg from the map. If they are lucky, the powers that be may be able to act quicker, sacrificing the heart of the city in a ball of fire to save the rest. It's best not to think about how bad all this could be for the players.

WRAPPING THINGS UP

It is not long before the experts at the Venusian Heritage Museum and other institutions figure out the meaning of the runes on the Disk (working from photographs of course). The information is not released to the public, and the Brotherhood begins an all out search for the disk. If the players return it to the Brotherhood or the museum they will be seen as heroes. Hopefully the characters will have already cleared their names of any suspicion for the murders and they can resume their normal lives.

Harding, his plan a failure, returns to the city and does his best to make up with the players. He acts very pleased at the characters' actions, and asks again if there is anything he can do to help. Assuming the Dark Huntsman has failed in its duty, he will recall it. He has new plans for the player characters. Plans that he will spring upon them in the next adventure.



GAMEMASTERS NOTES

THE VENUSIAN APOCALYPSE™

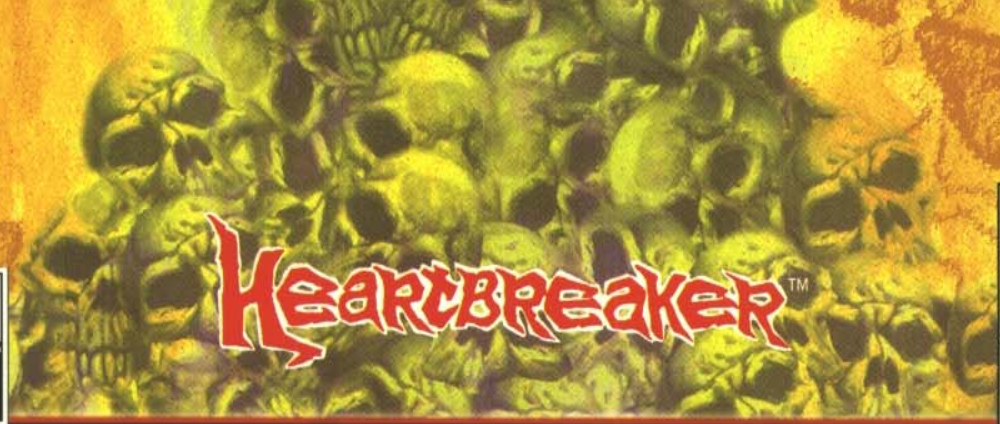


The Venusian Apocalypse

Venus: the jewel in the crown for Bauhaus, site of their greatest cities and most productive factories. Home to two Cathedrals, and millions of staunch Brotherhood supporters, Venus is a bastion for the Brotherhood on the face of the evil of the Dark Legion. Yet mighty Venus also stands as one of the largest and least explored of the colonized planets and hidden within its deep jungles are secrets that could undo all mankind. When the greatest of all evils escapes its bonds to wreak havoc there can be only one result: the final destruction of Venus and maybe the whole system. Unless of course someone can stop it first.

The Four Riders

Heimburg quakes in the wake of the Battle of the Second Seal. A lone Capitol Officer plots the downfall of all humanity, starting with the city that is Bauhaus' pride and joy. The players become dupes in a scheme to release the deadliest plague mankind has ever known, a disease that could wipe out life on Venus in a matter of weeks. Framed for a crime they did not commit, our heroes must fight to prove their innocence and hopefully save the world from a madman's scheme for bringing an end to humanity's hold on the second planet from the sun.



HEARTBREAKER™

TARGET GAMES

TM & © 1996 Target Games AB. All Rights Reserved. MUTANT CHRONICLES, The Venusian Apocalypse and all Character names and the distinctive likeness(es) thereof are Trademarks of Target Games AB. Mutant Chronicles is a registered Trademark in the USA.

ISBN 91-7898-437-8

9 789178 984374

#4013