

Fictional Reality

September 2004

Issue 17



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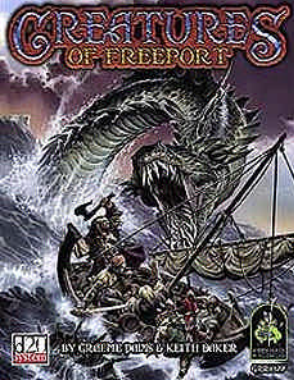
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RPG Reviews



BASICS

Creatures of Freeport is a full size softbound book by Graeme Davis and Keith Baker and published by Green Ronin Publishing. It's a supplement for Green Ronin's Freeport d20 System setting for Dungeons & Dragons® edition 3.5. The book describes in detail around a dozen and a half monsters (depending on how you want to count them) that can be found in the Freeport area. These monsters cover a surprisingly large range of

types from the sea, the surrounding forest and "visitors" to Freeport. The book is 95 pages long and divided into sections to cover the entries which for the most part take three to six pages to cover each monster type (verses the one page normally found in books of this type). The cover art is a very nice full color action drawing and the pictures that go along with each entry are also well done pen and ink drawings.

The book does not simply concentrate on giving the stats for a variety on things to kill, but also presents with each entry "Knowledge" details for GM's to give to players and explicit details on how the creature could be used (such as in being used as an advanced familiar, using it's body parts to make magic items, to enhance magic items, etc). Plus there are a ton of adventures hooks sprinkled throughout the book (normally three to four for each monster). The book's retail price is \$19.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

When I first looked at the tables of contents, my first reaction was "Hmmm, a monster manual with less than a couple dozen choices. How good can it be?" Well, I can say that I was suitably surprised. What it lacks in quantity it surely makes up for in quality. There are seventeen actual monsters (or entries) listed in the table of contents, but in the back there is a chart that lists all the monsters in the book by challenge rating and there are forty-three listings on the table (many of the entries give a number of variations of the monster type, plus there are appendices with more monsters).

The monsters range in challenge rating from a sixth, to a respectable twenty. But the majority land in the two to five range, with several at seven and several more at twelve. As for alignments, all the non-lawful alignments are at least represented, but the vast majority of the creatures are Neutral. For having so few actual monsters, the types represented are quite varied. You have Plants, Undead, Fey, Animal, Magical Beasts, Humanoid, Outsider, Elemental and even vermin. Quite an array for the number of entries I'd say.

But I haven't yet touched on what impressed me most. Each entry goes into a very detailed description of the required skill checks and the knowledge that can be obtained about the creature

in question. It's a section that will help enhance role playing and in my opinion brings a lot of character to the encounter. The next really cool section is called "Uses". This section goes into the detail about how this creature (or parts of it) can be used. Uses includes such things as obvious as extracting their poison, but also goes into more exotic uses such as creating minor artifacts or wondrous items from the creature. Some of the creatures can be used as advanced familiars, be used to make enhanced spell components or potions, or even to make special armor or weapons. I enjoyed this section of the entries so much that I found myself wishing that something similar existed for all the other monsters in our repertoire. But then the size of our books would probably triple in volume and weight.

The next section of the monster entry is "Adventure Hooks". Usually each entry had at least three or four adventure hooks that involved that specific monster in some way. For people looking for adventure ideas, side adventure ideas, or campaign ideas, the book is almost worth getting just for these adventure hooks. Seeing that in total there are almost sixty different adventure hooks in the book, you are sure to find at least a handful that will wet your whistle. As with the "Uses" section, it would be really cool to have a section like this for many of the monster sources that already exist, especially for monsters that are rare. I guess having adventure hooks for a common skeleton or goblin might be a little over the top, but for more exotic monsters it's a great idea.

Another section that some of the entries include is a sample NPC. In all, there are five sample NPC's given in the book that range in challenge rating from six to eighteen. Of course NPC's are not appropriate for all of the monster types (for instance the usefulness of a swarm of vermin has its limits as a NPC), but for the more intelligent and potentially deadly monsters, having sample NPC's is a neat idea.

The end of the book has three appendices that cover, in order, Animals, Vermin, and the Challenge Rating table. The Animal appendix has stats for seven different animal types and the Vermin section includes stats for a variety of vermin that account for almost a fourth of the monsters found on the CR table. So a little less than half of the monsters found on the CR table are actually listed in the first two appendices which helps to explain the why the list seems to be longer than you would expect by looking at the table of contents. The last appendix, as previously mentioned, is the Challenge Rating table, something every book of Monsters should be required to include. I was very happy to see it here. They even added at the bottom the five NPC's listed in order of Challenge rating, another great idea that should immediately be mandated by law!

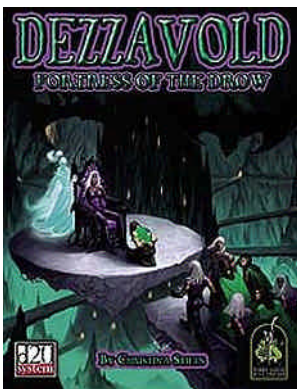
VALUE

I thought this book was well done and has incorporated new ideas in detailing monsters that I would love to see implemented elsewhere. There is a cost of doing this of course and that is space and if you are willing to pay for the pages containing the extra

information. For me, the answer is a resounding “Yes”. Although all the information will not be used all the time, it’s really nice to at least have it available for those of us that are detailed oriented. I could even see that coming up with books that cover the “Uses”, “Adventure Hooks”, and “Sample NPC’s”, as three different stand alone books to cover already existing monsters in other books might be a neat idea (how’s that for a hint?). The main downside to the book is in the lack of quantity of monster types but as I said before, I think the quality of what is in the book makes up for that. The other downside is that above challenge rating seven or so, the available monsters are VERY limited. As such I would have to say that for running games with higher level parties, the book may have more limited usefulness. However, as an idea book, I think the book is really great for any level. For people running campaigns in the Freeport setting, the book is even more valuable since it will help develop the character of the setting. Many of the monster descriptions and the histories relate directly to the history and setting of Freeport. Plus, being a coastal city, there is an emphasis on sea creatures and sea-going creatures.

I give the book high marks and think its well worth the cover price, and I would love to see other monsters fleshed out with as much detail as you find in *Creatures of Freeport*.

Review by Clay Richmond



BASICS

Dezzavold: Fortress of the Drow is a 96 page D&D supplement written by Christina Stiles and Steven Trustrum. The book is published by Green Ronin Publishing and is one of their latest additions to their *Races of Renown* series. It’s a full sized soft bound book with a very nice cover that gives a pretty good flavor of what you find between the covers. Interior art varies in quality from basic pen and ink drawings to very intricate black and white drawings, to rough hand drawn maps. But on the whole, I found the interior art to be a cut above average. The book’s retail price is \$19.95 USD.

The main premise of the book is to detail out the Drow city of Dezzavold. The city is not a large city; in fact you may consider it as being a large town. The population is like 6,250 and the army consists of around five hundred soldiers (and that’s after counting mercenaries). The book ends by briefly touching on the outlying regions, but I imagine, as I will discuss below, that these areas are mostly covered in another book.

Beside the requisite D&D books that you always need to use with supplements of this sort; you will also need *Plot & Poison: A guidebook to the Drow* also put out by Green Ronin. Although you could conceivably do without it by “filling in the holes” where needed, I don’t see it being worth the effort. Bottom line is that if you are going to use this book, I highly recommend you

go out and get *Plot & Poison* as well (trust me; it will save you some grief). Other books that are recommended (but not nearly as critical) are *Corwyl: Village of the Wood Elves* and *Bow & Blade: A guidebook to the Wood Elves*. These books help fill out the entire picture of the situation between these two races and their four hundred year long conflict. They even, on occasion, reference books in the Freeport Series by using things introduced in those books. All this can be taken in one of two ways. The first way is “Wow, how much do I have to spend to use this book the right way?” The second way is that Green Ronin is doing a good job at fleshing out this world. When I read the opening paragraphs of this book and realized that to do it right I would need to get at least three other books, I have to admit I first fell into the “First” way. However, I now think that the setting has been well thought out and very well put together. Well enough in fact that I think its cool how they all tie together so well. I mean you can only cover so much in 96 pages, so if you want a well conceived and detailed setting; you of course will need more than one book. Anyway, a long story short, I have now moved into the “Second” way.

BETWEEN THE COVES

The general organization of the book is very good. First you start with the history, then new rules, followed by a detailed description of the city. The chapter on the city is rightfully the longest chapter in the book. After the city comes a chapter detailing the Queen’s Fortress which is the largest structure in the city. After that, there is a short chapter on the outlying regions and then the appendix.

The history between the cities of Corwyl (wood elves) and Dezzavold (Drow) I found to be intriguing and filled with possible angles for an adventure, or even better a campaign. There are enough characters and shifting alliances over the years that for an imaginative GM, “anything is possible”. For instance, there is a race introduced in *Plot & Poison* called the Drey that make the Drow look like sorority sisters. They first come in to help some Drow kill some other Drow, then the end up turning on their employers and taking the whole farm for themselves (and oh by the way, the city of Dezzavold is still ruled by these nasty ladies even though they make up only 5% of the population). Then there are the serpent people (a race introduced in the Freeport series) that form a mysterious small minority in the city. Of course there are Dwarves and lots-o-slaves that can fill in any needed holes in any adventure.

After the history comes the new rules section. Here two new core classes are introduced. These classes are for below ground denizens of, so as you might guess, they would normally be bad guys (one is especially evil while the other is more “difficult to be good”). For anyone doing an adventure of campaign in this setting, they are probably assured of bumping into NPC’s in these classes. After the new core classes we have four new prestige classes. Again all four are very usable and I can easily see GM’s working all these into the adventure or campaign as NPC’s (three on the bad guy side and one on the good guy side). I actually found these prestige class descriptions (as well as the classes themselves) to be better than what I’m used to, I mean these pres-

tige classes really stand out and I'm already drooling to introduce them as NPC's. The final new rules include a new skill, three new feats, three new weapons, a magic weapon and even a new substance to make weapons, armor and other various items out of (think of spider silk on steroids).

Finally we come to the really good stuff, the city itself. This chapter includes a map of the two main levels of the city with individual descriptions given for the various areas. The upper level has like thirty seven detailed locations, and then there is a half a dozen more for the next level. Sprinkled through all this there is almost thirty NPC's written up for use. I personally don't like the style the stats are given in (the all-in-one-long-sentence-style) since as a GM it makes it difficult to use. But it does save on space and thus cost, so I guess there is a silver lining.

As I mentioned before, the largest structure in the city is the Queen's Fortress. The Chapter after the city gives you all the details and includes maps. There are over eighty locations in all that are called out and described, over seven levels (levels five through seven are all combined, so in reality its more like five levels). Again there are a half dozen or so NPC's written up here

and even a few magic items and spells thrown in.

The final chapter, chapter seven, is only three pages long and gives a brief description of the outlying areas. Here there are a couple of Wood Elf NPC's written up, and a map provided. This is where I'm guessing the book *Corwyl: Village of the wood elves* ties in and takes over.

At the end of book is the appendix. This is a very nice appendix (if the write-up style was in the style of the MM, I would have called this appendix GREAT). There is a wealth of information here with over 40 write-ups of character types and NPC's. The races, scouts, gods, military and other good stuff are all spelled out for you here. There is even a listing of NPC's on the last page that tells the role of the NPC, and page where it's located (this table is great! Why are tables like this so rare?).

VALUE

I found this book to be an excellent book as a campaign focus. That means that you need to get the other three books mentioned if you want to do it right. To me the detail, variety, and flexibility of the setting make the purchase of the set of four a really

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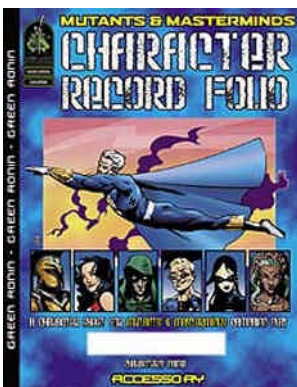
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enticing option. So if you're willing to buy four books to set up and run a really cool campaign, I think this is a great way to go. If you just want to run an adventure in a Drow city, then this book still has some good value, though you have to be willing to fill in the holes since I rather doubt you want to buy all four books to run a single adventure.

Now if you already own copies of the other three books, then adding this to your collection is a no-brainer.

Review by Clay Richmond



BASICS

Green Ronin Publishing has now provided their *M&M* fans with an extremely useful supplement geared exclusively for the player. There is page after page after page of useful sectionalized boxes in which to store all of a character's vital information. While this is nothing new to anyone with experience in other role playing games, there are some interestingly useful tools enclosed in this folio.

This player aid provides everything remotely needed to keep track of the aspiring superhero character, whether he/she is a street-level vigilante or a galaxy traveling being of cosmic power.

PRESENTATION

As you, gentle reader, are no doubt aware most character record sheets are all of two pages in size. The *Character Record Folio* is an impressive sixteen pages in length. As those of you that have read any of my previous reviews know, I am big on variety. Variety is what one gets when this little booklet is opened. There is a place for every bit of information on a super hero character.

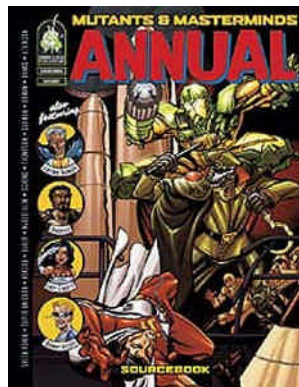
Let me list just a few of the sections for storing of stats and stuff: Ability Scores, Feats, Powers, Devices, a place to draw device schematics, background info, Supporting Characters, Minions (love those minions) and places to draw a diagram of a headquarters. Trust me, there is a lot more that I did not list.

A nice touch, I thought, was the inclusion of important tables from the *M&M* book on the inside front and back covers. Now, you will not have to go thumbing through your rulebook to find the table "Attack Roll Modifiers". It is very handy now that it resides on the inside front cover of the *Character Record Folio*.

VALUE

As this aid says on its back cover, "...the folio is designed to handle your superhero for the entire campaign." That is not game company propaganda. And at a measly \$4.95 MSRP the purchaser gets plenty of bang for his/her gaming buck. Buy it. You won't be disappointed.

Review by Brian Ahrens



BASICS

Published by Green Ronin and Super Unicorn the *Mutants & Masterminds Annual* is a 128-page full color soft cover supplement for *M&M* that bring you several new settings to play in, scores of new characters, new rules and errata, and a handful of mini-adventures. It has a retail price of \$24.95 USD.

INSIDE

The first six sections of the book are detailed alternate settings to play in. Each of them brings something different to the table but leaves plenty of room for the GM to fully flesh things out.

Street Justice is a lower PL setting that is less four-color and more gritty with the heroes taking on the mob, drug dealers and the like. More of a Punisher type game in my opinion. At these lower PLs, around 5 instead of 10, you're also more likely to be fighting groups of villains with a lower PL, that your previous PL 10 heroes would have chuckled at, or maybe single (or villain duos) of PL 10 or so. Additional alternate campaigns fill out this section and each of them has merit and would be worth playing in or running. If you've read *Crooks!* You know that for the most part the villains described there are out of your league if your playing a PL 5 hero. Baddies like *The Monkey*, an intelligent monkey that hates humans and other simians and happens to be a drug addict (gotta love it!) and *Death and Taxes*, a pair of low-powered (PL 6) serial killers that prey on supers.

Against the Gods brings the heroes and villains of epic myth to the forefront of your campaign instead of the group just happening to have Hercules as a member. Hercules, Ulysses, Achilles, Hades all have fully built-out character blocks and fluff and you'll also get to throw down with the likes of Cerberus, Hydra and Siren. Several adventure seeds are planted for the GM but I found this section a little less informative than the previous one and I would use its contents as an add-on to my current campaign rather than its own setting.

Legacy starts by taking back to WWII where pulp style Nazi-pounding is the order of the day and introduces us to the heroes that saved the day(s). Most of the heroes presented here are deceased and found their end fighting the good fight, but there's no reason that you can't bring one or more of them back to the present with a mysterious explanation for their appearance. The reason for their reappearance can be directly tied to their legacy. "I thought we took care of those Nazi pukes back in the war, but they're back and up to their evil ways again. Well, Sarge Shrapnel says the hell with that!" Eight heroes are presented here along with full stats, background and pictures. They range from PL 10-12 and have a nice variety of powers. This was one of the longer sections of the book and was also one of my favorites.

The Freedom League gives us more information on the founding of *Mutants & Masterminds* premier superhero group and also

brings us up through the Terminus invasion that saw the death of Centurian. A short description of each level of Freedom Hall is presented but it's really not down to the nuts and bolts level. Thirteen former members (some inactive, others deceased) are given pictures and write-ups. Those that are inactive are given a current storyline and they could be brought back as PCs if you like. Even those that are dead could be brought back in similar fashion to those in the *Legacy* section. Three adventure seeds are given here along with info on using the Freedom League for your party or even an offshoot branch (West Cost Avengers anyone?) if you like.

The Claremont Academy is fairly short but presents a nice look at this super-school and is definitely worth a read if you want to pay a Next-Gen (or New Mutants if you like) style of game. Major NPCs of the school are described but you don't get a look at the student body other than some pictures. A nice section that I think could have been a bit longer and should have included some character write-ups but I'm not sure if it warrants its own source-book.

The last setting section is *A Bright and Shining Future* which takes us a little more than 500 years into the future of Freedom City and gives us a glimpse of the super (literally) world of tomorrow. Three pages quickly get you up to date with some of the major changes in the world, well, universe really, but it's really the changes to the Freedom League itself that I found the most entertaining. The eight futuristic Freedom Leaguers all get the required backgrounds, stats and pictures but the supporting cast of villains are missing pictures. PL 10-12 is the range we're looking at here for the new heroes and even if you're not playing in the future you could bring one of them into a present-day campaign via time travel or just because you want to. The bad guys are all very usable but there is no world-conquering menace of PL 20 or so to be found here.

The rest of the book picks up with new rules, errata and mini-adventures. *With Great Power* is a 5-page section that goes into greater detail on creating powers than you found in the M&M rulebook. It's a nice addition that will benefit both players and GMs. *Weaknesses* is also an expansion of previous material but it adds three levels to your character flaws because not everyone



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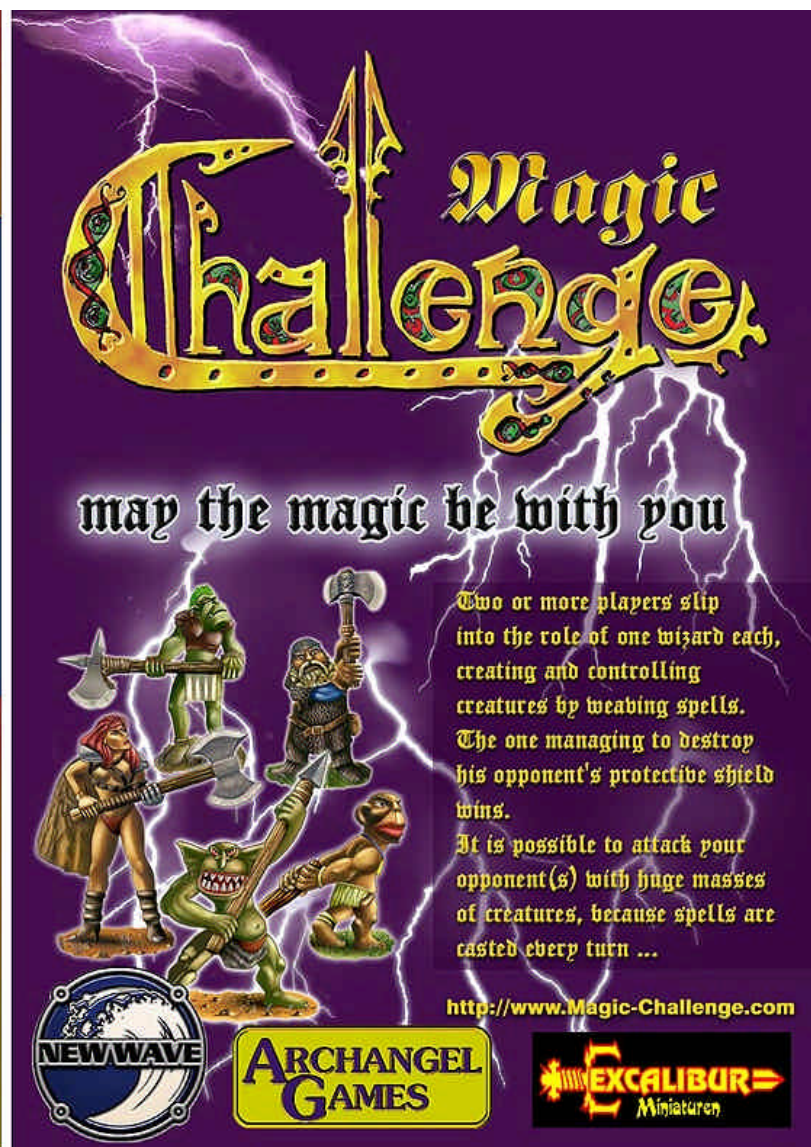
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is debilitated to the same level and not every flaw is worth a big ten points. Each of the weaknesses is fleshed out a bit more and this is also a nice addition to the basic set of rules. In the five pages of *In Shining Armor Arrayed* you'll really get a larger and more detailed look at a staple of superhero games, power armor.

You get lots of sample armors from various groups with many intended uses and there are five questions that any player or GM creating a power armor character should answer when putting together a character that will make it all the easier. No, I'm not going to list the five questions here but they are all basics building blocks of character building. Good stuff here!

Superhero Smackdown! Brings Attacks of Opportunity, and the feats that you'd expect, into M&M along with other new combat optional rules. After playing M&M without AoO for so long I won't be bringing them back into my campaign but you might want to. If that's the case then you probably already have done so but it's not bad to have the rules in this book.

The other rules are other damage models that are similar to hit points but don't require much bookkeeping at all and also ways to head-off, or at least reduce, those nasty one-punch knockouts that might be prevalent in the comics but tend to bring grumbles out of my players especially when they are on the receiving end of one. *The Quality of Heroes* shows some new ways for heroes to earn Hero Points.

The five mini-adventures come in at two pages in length and are more along the line of single encounters (nothing wrong with that though) that can either be used as a side trek during an adventure to throw your players off the scent of whomever they are really chasing or if you don't have time to play out a longer session I think you could easily go through one of these in an hour or less.

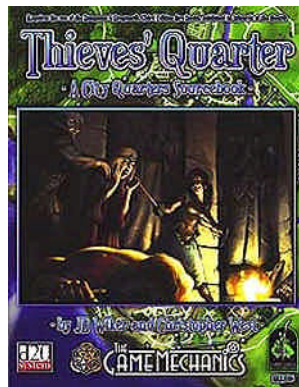
VALUE

The first thing that I missed with this book was the hardcover. I can see why they didn't do the *Crisis* adventure as a hardback book but I really liked that all of the other rulebooks were.

The artwork is pretty much what you expect from a M&M product, which means that there are several styles here all of which are in line with standard comic book / superhero fare. Some I liked, some I didn't but I think overall it's a good looking book and was very easy on the eyes. The missing (or left out depending on your point of view) of supporting cast characters/villains was a little bit of an itch for me that I wish had been included.

I see this more of a GM book than one that players will see as a must-have. Players will benefit from the new rules but I think that one book in a group would suffice. As a GM I'd like to have this book and would probably buy it to add to my M&M / superhero game collection but it would also not be a must-have like the other M&M supplements were for me. So, bottom line is that it's a good book that will make a good addition to your M&M game.

Review by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Thieves' Quarter is a softbound book sporting colour illustrations on the outside of the covers and colour maps on the inside. Throughout there are black and white drawings of both people and places. The product is designed by The Game Mechanics and published by Green Ronin. The book introduces one part of the fantasy city 'Liberty' (the Old Quarter AKA the Thieves' Quarter) and the people and places within. The Dungeons & Dragons core books are required and the book is updated for version 3.5. The retail price is \$17.95.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

Chapter one, **Places**, is the largest section, taking up over half the book. Here over 20 locations are described in a pleasing level of detail. There is more than enough to give a good start point for a Dungeon Master without giving the impression of getting bogged down in details. The places described vary from the obligatory thieves' guild itself (with its front of being merely a tavern), to a brothel, to a menagerie full of strange and frightful creatures. Each location has one or more NPCs associated with it and this is where the quarter's more colourful folk are introduced. With a few notable exceptions these are bad people. They range from the simply greedy and manipulative to the outright evil and murderous. Each character is provided with a short history and a list of allies and enemies. The latter is a nice touch that helps the reader to build up a picture of the many power struggles running rampant through the town at all levels. There are squabbles between orphans and orphanage keepers, ongoing feuds between the thieves' guild and wererats, and simple rivalry between competing smugglers. Each NPC has a full stat block, a description, and simple battle tactics. A common theme amongst many of them is to run away. Few are the people in this neck of the woods that care to risk their lives. It is not all doom and gloom however. One unlikely pair found in this chapter is a young elven noble and his love, a human streetwalker. He has been disowned by his family for loving her but still the pair struggle on, a romantic story in the making.

Chapter two, **People**, builds on the first chapter adding six or so NPCs who are part of the scene in the Old Quarter without actually living there. One gentleman with his work cut out for him is the day watch commander. He is the one that makes life a misery for the thieves and cutthroats of the quarter. Or at least he tries. With no-one willing to stand forth as a witness he is limited to catching people red-handed or beating out confessions to get anything done. Even he is not a good-aligned person, just someone trying to get a job done any way he can.

Chapter three, **Plots**, describes some of the outside parties that are using the resources of the Old Quarter for their personal gain. These include a fairly traditional secret cult in search of members and rituals to return to imminence and a less standard group who take over cities through slow but effective methods. This brutally

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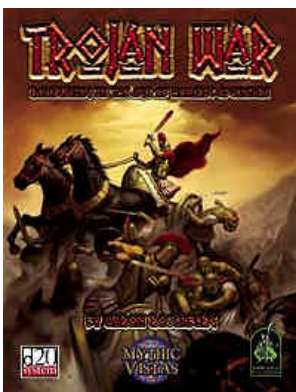
efficient and immoral group and their plan are described in some detail. They would probably make a good basis for a scenario or even campaign with potential for PCs to be members of this organisation and/or others, as a change from more standard adventuring fare.

The final section, covered in an appendix is **Encounters**. Here charts are provided for random encounters for characters on the move in the city. What is good is that in addition to the standard city based events such as in run-ins with beggars, the watch, or pick pockets there are chances on the tables to bump into some of the major NPCs from the book. These potential encounters are described for around 40 or so of the NPCs and run from a simple nod and wink, to offers for work, to threats, and to set-ups. These can easily provide subplots or red herrings for the Dungeon Master's arsenal.

VALUE

Thieves' Quarter is well written and well presented. It does so much more than just present a random selection of people and places. The characters are all part of a city that feels very much alive. Some of the stereotypes that can pervade this kind of setting are notably absent. The criminals described (and almost all the characters are criminals) are neither overlord masterminds nor generous Robin Hood-types. They are selfish and in some cases they are evil. While this is not good for the average citizen of the Old Quarter it does make the whole product ring true. Whether or not you purchase the other books in the series that describe the city of Liberty, this book is well worth buying either for use as a stand-alone or integrating into an existing fantasy setting.

Review by Adam Brooks



"Mythic Vistas: Trojan War" is a d20 fantasy setting of the Trojan War from Green Ronin Publishing. Based on the writings of Ovid and Homer as well as the classic Greek myths, this 160-page soft bound book gives you everything you need to join Hector or Odysseus in the struggle for Illium. It retails for \$27.59 USD.

BASICS

The book is divided into fourteen chapters which cover the Homeric epics, the history of the Trojan war, characters, new character classes, new skills and feats, magic, equipment, the Homeric battlefield, religion and piety, the Homeric world, legendary characters, a bestiary, treasure, detail on the Trojan war, and how to run the game.

DETAILS

The book starts out with an introduction to the Homeric epics and a quick summary of the history of the Trojan War. Starting with The Choice of Paris and ending with the homecoming of all the survivors - including Odysseus, the book gives a quick overview. The author assumes that the reader has a general knowledge of

the Trojan war and he expands upon this to quickly relate the major events and when they occurred.

Next up, the book gets into the game mechanics of character creation. There are rules for the Achaean and Trojan races, as well as Divine Offspring so common to Homer's tales. These three are the only races allowed in the Trojan War setting - two human and one demi-human. After character races, the book moves to classes. In addition to the standard bard, druid, fighter, ranger, rogue, and sorcerer, there are four new character classes. Charioteers are soldiers who fight from chariots, Dedicated Warriors are fighters sworn to only one god out of the multitudes in the Greek pantheon, Magicians are elementalists like priest sorcerers, and the Priest which is a refinement of the usual Cleric class. In addition to these base classes, there are the prestige classes of Orator, Runner, and Seer.

The chapter on feats and skills introduces a few new ones but it also gives new uses for old ones. All skills and feats are tied into the Homeric age and favor battlefield uses.

Magic is used sparingly in the Homeric epics and the chapter on magic addresses this. It offers three opinions on the relative lack of magic: (1) magic went on "off-stage" and is just not recorded much in the epics, (2) magic is subtle and described as an effect - such as Nestor calming the Achaeans with words alone, and finally, (3) the Homeric world is a low-magic one. Any of these will work, but the Trojan War book assumes that the standard magic from the Player's Handbook will be used. To this end, lists of available spells for each class and 53 new spells are introduced.

Since the Homeric epics take place in the Bronze Age, the equipment chapter deals with this change in technology. The entries for arms and armor are for bronze age weapons, so there are definitely no gunpowder weapons.

The Homeric Battlefield chapter expands upon the mass combat system originally presented in "Mythic Vistas: Testament" and adapted for the Trojan War. The system presented in the Trojan War is complete, you don't need a copy of Testament to use it.

The chapter on religion presents entries for the major Greek gods as well as addressing what happens when the Gods go to war. There is information on piety and its game effects. This is similar to the Piety rules in Testament, though not as harsh.

The chapter on the Homeric world gives a geopolitical summary of who's who and what's what for both the Achaeans and the Trojans. This is followed by a chapter listing the stats for all the major characters in the Homeric epics. This includes Achilles, Ajax, Agamemnon, Diomedes, Menelaus, Nestor, Odysseus, Aeneas, Hector, Helen, Paris, and Priam among others.

The section on monsters, the Bestiary, lists a few new monsters, but is mainly concerned with adapting existing monsters to the Trojan setting. The chapter on treasure takes the opposite approach, it is chock full of Homeric items, from the mundane to

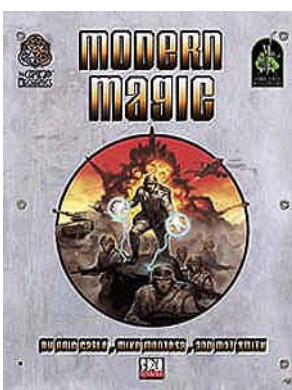
the magical, including minor and major artifacts - an example of the later are the Thunderbolts of Zeus. Sorry, there is no Golden Fleece.

The rest of the book deals with running a Trojan War campaign. Information includes data on the battlefield and the decade long war - as well as periods in the struggle. Topics such as changing the outcome and incorporating characters into the epic story are all covered. This chapter tells how to adapt the original works of Western Literature into a playable RPG.

VALUE

First off, if you are an RPG player with an interest in the Homeric age, then this is the book for you. Playing in the most famous of all wars with the original heroes of western civilization is reason enough to pick this up. The book is also a good option for a group who are looking for something different. With the release this summer of Troy and the upcoming release of Alexander, the interest in Homeric age is high - so why not jump on the band chariot. Maybe you can find the original Achilles Heel in the Achaean forces and save Priam and Helen?

Review by J Michael Tisdell



BASICS

Modern Magic is an 80-page *d20 Modern* supplement written by Eric Cagle, Mike Montesa, Rich Redman, Mat Smith, and Stan! working for *The Game Mechanics* and published by *Green Ronin Publishing*. The soft cover is in full color and the interior is printed in black and white. It has sparse illustration, but the illustration provided is of good quality. It contains new spells, magic items, types of spellcasting, rules for ritual magic,

seven new classes, and new feats. This volume retails for \$17.95.

INSIDE

This book is a printed compilation material originally released in PDF-format through *The Game Mechanics*. The authors have all worked on *d20* system books published by *Wizards of the Coast*. The book is divided into an introduction and six chapters about the special elements this book provides. The introduction covers a general overview of the magic in roleplaying games and how that it is generally viewed in that context. The stated goal of the authors is add a modern slant to the *d20* magic system and to expand the system to include real world beliefs of magic. It also covers what to expect in this book and how to use it (both as a player and GM).

The first chapter appropriately entitled spells covers spells and expands the list of arcane and divine spells found in *d20 Modern*. The first part of the chapter covers which new spells are available as arcane or divine spell and at which level they become available. The second part of the chapter covers descriptions of the

new spells including level, components, casting time, range, duration, saving throw, and a brief description of what the spell actually does. Some of the more interesting spells include the Cellular hand and Download Skill.

The second chapter details ritual magic. This chapter details the Ritualist advanced class, a magic user that cannot cast magic on the fly, but must prepare well in advanced to use her powers. The chapter also details lesser incantations and how to create new ones. The third chapter details Voudon Magic (commonly known as Voodoo). It gives some background and insight into the Voudon tradition. It details new Voudon feats that assist the Voudon spell caster. The next sections of the chapter details the use of Voudon magic, rituals, and incantations as well as the special steps needed to use them. An interesting part of the this chapter details the Zombi template, not to be confused with the Zombie template found in *d20 Modern*. The last section of the chapter deals with the Bokor and the Hougan, the advanced classes associated with Voudon.

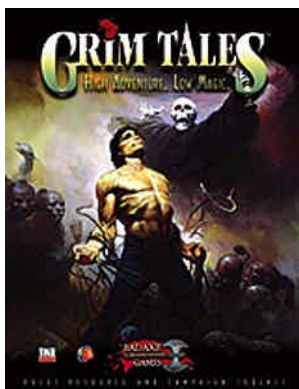
The fourth chapter and perhaps the most interesting is entitled Military Magic. As it's title suggest this chapter handles the use of magic in a military oriented campaign. The chapter gives a brief summation of why a modern military force would choose to use magic, and some details regarding a military magic campaign (such a issued spellbooks, and spell casting and armor). The chapter has three different models for handling how prevalent magic is in the military: the rare and secretive, available and specialized, and common as dirt. The chapter details three advanced classes: the Arcane Spec-Op, the Thaumaturgical Specialist, and the Magic Grunt. The chapter details a few new feats that are applicable to a Military Magic campaign, as well as FX equipment that would be more suited to a Military Magic campaign.

The fifth chapter, Mundane Magic, provides help to the "non-magical" character. The chapter details rituals and talismans that might help ward off magical attack. The chapter details feats that can only be used by "non-magical" characters to help them ward off magic effects. The chapter also details investigating crime that uses magic. The chapter ends detailing the Arcane Investigator advanced class. The sixth chapter details FX equipment. Information about the equipment includes Type, Caster Level, Purchase DC, weight, and a brief description of what the item does. Some of the more interesting items include the Pet Rock of Earth Elemental Summoning, and the Power Tie of Schmoozing. The First Appendix addresses Elementals, while Appendix B Deals with Spells, Elements, and Modes. As usual Appendix C details the Open Game License.

VALUE

The GM running a modern FX game that heavily focuses on magic would find this book extremely helpful, both as a technical resource and a campaign model. There is potential for player abuse, but a savvy GM can handle that. The GM running a lower FX game may find many of the spells and items overkill.

Review by Gabriel Ratliff



BASICS

Grim Tales is published by Badaxe Games with a retail price of \$34.95 USD. It's a 214-page hardback book that is a sourcebook for pulp campaigns using the d20 rules as a backbone, requiring the use of either the d20 Modern rulebook or the D&D Players Handbook.

INSIDE

From looking at the cover I really expected much more of a fantasy/

D&D leaning from this book but right off the bat that was pretty much tossed out the window. It's not that you can't use Grim Tales for a fantasy setting, you certainly can, but the author specifically states that he prefers the d20 Modern rules even when playing in a sword-and-sorcery setting and being billed as a "High Adventure / Low Magic" book might take some of the wind out of your fantasy sails unless you're wanting something more along those lines. Ok, on to the meat of the book...

The first four chapters of the book (Characters, Skills, Feats and Talents) will be very familiar to you if you've even skimmed through the d20 Modern rulebook. I'd guess (no, I didn't sit down with a hi-lighter and check) that everything that is Open Content from the d20 Modern rulebook is here, plus more. The Character chapter details all of the different flavors of "heroes" and also gives archaic (sword & sorcery), modern (recent historical through today) and apocalyptic (Mad Max-ish and near future) examples of each. Missing from this chapter is information on non-human PC's but they do get some representation in the Creature Creation chapter towards the end of the book. In low magic settings it's not unlikely to also have few, if any, fantastic races but I would have liked to have seen some in this chapter.

The chapters on Skills, Feats and Talents are pretty much as you would expect them to be but I also found them very easy reading and well laid out. An excellent job was done here.

Economy & Equipment is next and is a relatively short chapter coming in at just eight pages. It starts off with GM options relating to the handling of money in your game. The standard gold piece (or dollar, shilling, shiny rock, whatever) model that we're all familiar with is presented along with the Wealth rules from d20 Modern that I like so much for that setting, but I'm not sure how well they will translate over to a fantasy game. In my experience, D&D'ers like counting how many gold pieces they have and we definitely planned purchases around our current count. Maybe it's just a slight change in mindset that's needed and since I do like the Wealth model very much it would be worth trying out in a fantasy setting.

Rules for creating weapons are included instead of lists of this, that, and the next thing and I'd say that wasn't a bad way for the author to go. Since you'll need at least one "core" book to use Grim Tales I can see them leaving out exhaustive lists of equipment and relying on your personal library (or whatever today's

price on something is if you're playing in a modern era game) of game books for prices and stat specifics. I found the next chapter, Combat, very easy to read and as well laid out as those on Skills, Feats and Talents. Hazardous Environments immediately follows it is eight pages on stuff like Heat/Cold/Falling/Fallout, etc...

Spells and Magic is given only six pages but what I found within those six pages really caught my attention. Throw out spell-casting as you know it from The PHB or d20 Modern. In Grim Tales, being low magic, not a lot of guys and gals will be tossing around spells like it's nothing. In fact, when spells go off it will probably be a pretty big deal. Spell-casting is no longer automatic but it is something that anyone can *try*. Becoming an arcane or divine adept will help in the process but there is always the possibility that you'll suffer some kind of damage of your own when casting a spell.

All of the spells that you might come across during a game/campaign will be determined by your GM. There are no automatic spells, spells-per-day, bonus spells, etc...A great example of spell-casting is presented and was easy to follow. Granted, this model for the use of magic is not for everyone, but it's not supposed to be either. Firearms are given just eight pages and most of it contains rules specific to guns and rules on creation of weapons. Like the equipment section you're expected to either put together your own or already have stats on-hand.

I was pleased to find a chapter on Horror & Insanity and adding these to a low magic fantasy campaign sounds good to me. Various disorders are explained in game terms and I'd welcome these kinds of rules into any setting as long as they add to the gaming experience and everyone is ok with it. In a recent CoC game we had great fun when I went insane and started randomly shooting, with a shotgun, killed a fellow PC right before the monster ate me and our two remaining party members did an impression of Carl Lewis and ran away. But that's something that we all understood could happen in the game that we were playing. Now, if nobody had known that these kinds of things could happen I can see people being pretty pissed when their friend starts blasting away at cultists and party members with equal fervor. Definitely let your players know what's up in this area before getting started and even in a grim and gritty game setting it might not be something that your players want to play with.

Vehicles and Cyberware each get their own short chapters and I found the latter to have more usefulness. Whether we're playing D&D or d20 Modern we've not had a huge need for detailed vehicle rules and I have found it easier to handle vehicle chases and crashes as narrative story elements more often than not. Creature Creation breaks down the CR of a monster while it was a pretty interesting read, especially if you're a number-nerd like me I'd probably stick to the vast array of monsters already out there. The Gamemastering section is also quite short and relies a lot on your GM using what he picked up from whatever core book s/he's using and their own expertise and experience. It does include a *Campaign Planner* where you can keep track of all of the various optional rules and skill ratings (see below) that you'll be

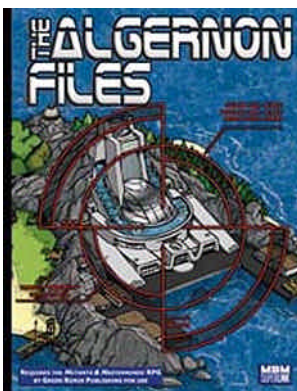
using in your campaign. The book ends in three campaign models and details on how to incorporate them into any of the three time periods. They include an undead campaign, a dragon lords campaign and brain sucker campaign. They would all make good choices for a world to play in and the translated well into each time period.

Throughout the book you'll find *Variant* rules that you can use to add specific flavor to your game. As an example, there is a rule for reducing the amount of bookkeeping needed when your PC's are dispatching "mooks" or "cannon-fodder". It reminded me a bit of a similar rule in the Feng Shui game that makes it easier, not automatic though, for PC's to wade through the masses and get to the main baddies and also reduces the GM's need to have a running total of each and everyone's health. You'll also find rule sections with entries that bear one, two or three little skulls. Here you'll be given three options for how to use a particular rule in your game. These range from standard (one skull) to lethal (three skulls) and you're free to mix and match one-skull, two-skull and three-skull choices throughout your game depending on where you want your PC's to feel the most in peril in terms of game rules and mechanics. A good example would be the Massive Damage options. The one-skull version has your Massive Damage score equal to your CON stat + armor/shield/natural armor bonuses, the two-skull version has it equal to your CON stat and the three-skull one has everyone with a Massive Damage rating of ten (10).

VALUE

I liked Grim tales, a lot. I've already incorporated lots of what's found within its pages into my d20 Modern campaign. You do get a lot of information that you probably already have, presuming you own either the d20 Modern rulebook or the D&D Players Handbook but after delving into the campaign models and optional rules I didn't mind the redundancy much at all. The magic rules may not be for everyone but I found them very appropriate for the setting(s) in the book. I generally like my fantasy games to be high-magic so I'd use them in a modern or futuristic setting, but for a more medieval, with a touch of magic thrown in, setting they would be perfect and really make spell-casting villains something to fear. Grim Tales is my favorite Badaxe publication so far and I was very pleased with it.

Review by Mark Theurer



BASICS

The Algernon Files from BlackWyrM Games is a supplement for Green Ronin Publishing's *Mutants and Masterminds* role-playing game. What we have here is an invaluable addition to anyone that plays *M&M*. This book is chock full of super powered entertainment. You may be asking yourself, "What is a chock and how do you fill one?" Well, I'm not quite sure what a chock is, but I do know that this tome provides a game

master with all kinds of goodies with which to populate a new *M&M* campaign or just drop into an existing one. There are over 100 new characters (both heroes and villains), maps, vehicles and new feats and rules options. A game master will now have a plethora of choices for baddies to throw at his/her would-be heroes. This book has your run-of-the-mill level 10 bad guys along with some level 20+ mega-villains. So, if you want to just give your players a challenge you will not have any trouble finding an evil doer to cross energy blasts with them. Or, if one of your players is annoying you just send **Sepulchre** (he's level 24!) to throw him/her a beating.

PRESENTATION

I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of work that went into the creation of *The Algernon Files*. This is the first item from BlackWyrM Games that I have perused. I will go into more detail on this quality later in this article. The next question you are probably thinking (after the whole "chock" thing) is, "Why does Brian like this book so much?" Well, gentle reader, I am glad you asked me that question. Let me preface my answer with one caveat: I LOVE SUPER HERO GAMES! Ok, I'll turn down the volume now. I have played most of the super hero role playing games that have found their way into print. I must admit that I enjoy playing *Mutants & Masterminds*. So, I guess I could be a bit biased when it comes to reviewing an item in this genre. But, I believe that more is better. This book definitely provides "more"; more villains to bash the players and more heroes to help the players bash the villains.

There are four groups of heroes that can be used as allies for the player characters. **The Sentinels** (Algernon is the A.I. computer that runs their headquarters, thus the name of the book) is your basic super hero team, lots of heroes of differing backgrounds that work together for the common good. **The Aerie** is group of heroes that, as you may have guessed by their name, have a common theme of flying. All of the members have a bird-like motif. **The Arsenal** is a group of heroes with a patriotic theme. This team has the United States government for a sponsor. Its members have names such as **Miss Liberty** and **Anthem**. For your players with a mystical background you can introduce them to **The Covenant**. All of its members have the supernatural as a common bond. Lastly, there are five independent heroes in the Allies section. My personal favorite is **Film Noir**. He is a detective from an old black and white movie (i.e. Sam Spade). He was pulled from a movie as a byproduct of a fight between a hero and a bad guy. This guy probably appeals to me because I'm an old fart and I never miss a chance to watch Humphrey Bogart in *The Maltese Falcon*.

The Enemies section of *The Algernon Files* opens with the "Heavy Hitters" (yes, that's the title of the sub-chapter). These three not-nice folk are your oh-so-popular mega-baddies. We have three with which any game master can conquer his/her imaginary world. First off we have **Praetorian**. He is billed as a "time-travelling conqueror". Praetorian comes to us from a possible future. This gent uses technology as his idiom: power armor, battle spheres and stridermechs. **Sepulchre** (Portuguese for tomb), whom I mentioned earlier, has the title of "world-class

occult terror”. This level 24 monstrosity uses Sorcery and a mystical item called Typhon’s Teeth. This little doodad provides him with bone-looking armor and weapons that look like spines with spikes on the end. He’s nice and creepy. Lastly, we have **The Serpent Queen**, Divine Avatar of the Snake. She is an ancient goddess who was imprisoned by the Greek gods long ago. Today she is free, but much diminished in power. She is trying to grow a following of worshippers so that she can regain her former glory. Oh, I almost forgot: she can turn into a giant snake (Growth +18).

Like in the Allies section, the Enemies chapter provides four groups of villains. **The Black Nights** would be comparable to **The Sentinels** in the Allies section. They are a group that got together for no other reason than they have a better chance of staying out of jail as a group than as individuals. The second group in the Enemies section is not really made up of bad “guys”. They are **Hell’s Belles**. They are a five-member female rock band made up of paranormals. They have chosen to stay out of “the game” between heroes and villains. These are not the girls to take home to meet dear, ol’ Mom. They all have a dark, gothic (one member’s name is actually **Goth**) idiom. **Dr. Prometheus** decided to create his own “family”. He combined his own genetics with that of samples collected from other super beings to produce his children. The media dubbed this organization, **The Prometheans**. **The Sinister Circle** is a group made up of villains recruited by the “precognitive trickster gnome” **Stiltskin**. The one thing these eight diverse people have in common is a grudge against the super hero team, **The Sentinels**. Each member has a hatred for a particular member of **The Sentinels**. They kind of remind me of *The League of Super Villains* from the old *Justice League* cartoon. Not to be forgotten are the independent bad guys. The most colorful of which is **The Assembly**. He (it?) is an amalgam of bits of electronics and machinery. It (he?) has the ability to meld with other machines and control them. See, I told you there was things-a-plenty between the covers of this supplement.

VALUE

Right about now you’re most likely asking yourself yet another question, “How much is a book like this going to set me back?” Actually, *The Algernon Files* is quite a bargain if you compare the price to what you get in return. With an MSRP of \$24.95, that comes out to only .32 per non-player character. This is not even taking into account the various headquarters and gadgets that you’ll find. That’s a bargain any way you look at it. This book is a 128 page, hard-backed treatise. The binding seems above average. I have done a lot of opening and closing of this book and I never hear the scary cracking sounds that come just before the pages begin to fall out of a lot of books. One last item: the artwork. I was quite surprised at the quality of the black and white pictures that provided for each character. Derrick Thomas has done an impressive job in give a each character a picture that sums up their description and their style. Bottom line: Black-Wyrm Games has given us a quality book at a fair price. Now that you know, go buy your own.

Review by Brian Ahrens



BASICS

Into the Blue is a full size softbound book written by Lee Hammock and published by Bastion Press. It is written to be a gaming supplement for Dungeons & Dragons version 3.5. It is not written for any particular game setting but is intended to provide the ground work and some of the general rules for underwater adventures. The full color cover is fairly well done and the pen and ink drawing scattered throughout the book vary in quality

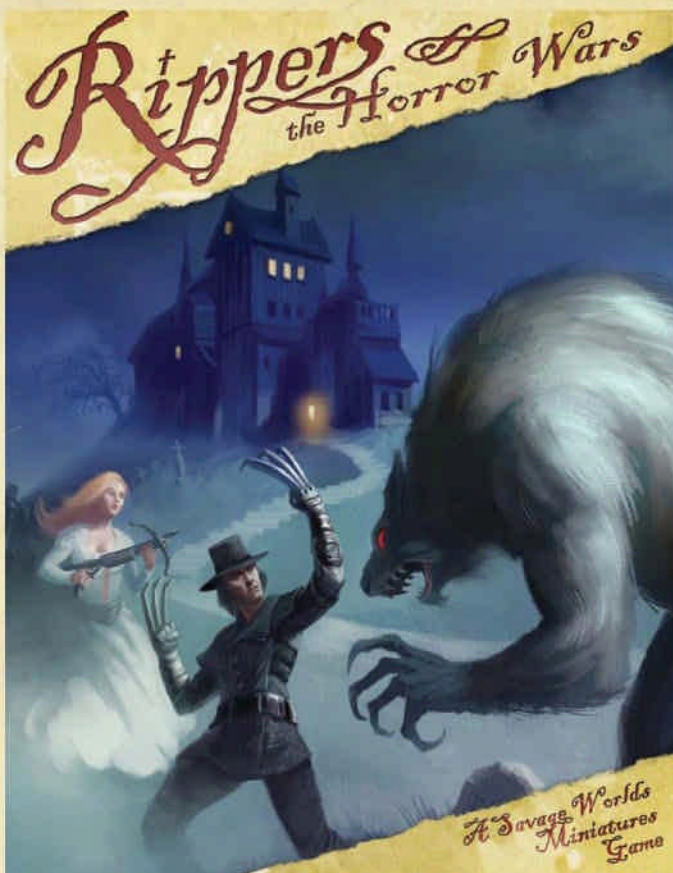
and style. Unlike you usually find in supplements like this, each of the illustrations is titled and has the name of the artist attached. In all there appear to be six artists, one for the border art and the other five for the illustrations (one of these appears to have been left out in the credits though...oops). If anything there are not enough illustrations in my opinion. Many of the new monster types do not have illustrations to go along with them and at least two of them are apparently wrong (two of the new aquatic races have illustrations that make them look alike, and neither fits their descriptions as they have full heads of hair when they are described as having none).

Into the Blue touches upon a lot of the aspects on what a GM might need to incorporate in an underwater adventure. It gives a very detailed description of the underwater environment and what might be encountered there. The details given for the watery environment are more than a little impressive in their detail, and do indeed provide enough material for a GM to build a campaign. What the book does not cover (and they come out and say so at the very beginning) is the underwater combat rules. There are however a variety of monsters and adventure hooks included that may help the GM in fleshing out an adventure. The book’s retail price is \$22.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

When first picking up this book I had a mix of emotions. Having a fair knowledge about the sea, I was excited to see how well a job *Into the Blue* did in covering it. I also came at it with something of a chip on my shoulder thinking that the complexity of the deep would probably be glossed over and/or completely avoided. I was very wrong. In fact if anything, Hammock went to the exact opposite extreme. For the most part, I was very impressed with the exacting detail in which the ocean environment was described. In fact if I had to name anything that was “glossed” over, all I could point to with any certainty would be the description of the tides (but seeing that this particular subject is practically a science in and of itself, one could hardly expect anything else).

Into the Blue is organized into six chapters and an introduction. In the Introduction there is a brief overview of the different chapters and the warning that underwater combat rules are not included in the book. I have to say that I found this to be a rather big disappointment as now it meant that to even use this book one has to buy another book just to cover those rules. I imagine that



TAKE BACK THE NIGHT!

The monsters have lived among us for thousands of years, preying on the weak. The helpless.

But mankind discovered a new weapon to fight the creatures of darkness. “Dr. Jack” developed a way to tear the very essence of these horrors from their undead flesh and graft it into living blood and bones. For many years, the “Rippers” took back the night, and the hunters became the hunted.

The vile fiends of the world were backed into a corner, but under the leadership of Dracula himself, formed a “Cabal” of evil to combat those who hunted them. Their timing was perfect—for the essences the Rippers stole from their prey eventually corrupted the monster hunters. The very men who created the Rippers—Moreau, Frankenstein, and even Dr. Jack himself—went mad and joined the Cabal!

Now Abraham Van Helsing and his mysteriously adopted son, Johann, the Harkers, Witch Hunter Serious Chapel, and a handful of other stout hearts are all that remain of the Rippers. It is their lot to carry on the Horror War.

Rippers: The Horror War is a complete miniatures skirmish game. The *Savage Worlds* roleplaying game is NOT required. Look for miniatures wherever you bought this book, or at www.greatwhitegames.com.



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if the author didn't want to reinvent the rules, then this may well have been necessary, but still for us poor readers it's not a big selling point.

The first Chapter covers ocean life in general. Here things like currents, buoyancy, illumination, pollution, tides and yes even the effects of drinking sea water are covered. As an ex-sailor, I can attest that this chapter, though simplified, is well done and accurately covers all the basics of what you might be facing if going on a trip through the deep blue. Reading some of the paragraphs actually reminded me of things like my SCUBA diving classes and taking thermodynamics in college (that is meant as a compliment even though I hated that course).

The next three chapters are where the meat starts. Chapter two covers the Coastal Waters, chapter three the Open Sea, and Chapter four the Deep Water. Each of these three chapters covers the environment, plant and animal life that might be found, hazards of the area, and the resident monsters. Again the detail here is very good and the reader will get a very good feel for this particular underwater environment. However it is here that I started to notice a down side to the book in general. There are Plant and animal listings for each of the areas, and descriptions given for each (though they are not described in MM fashion as for the most part they are more of a nuisance than a threat). In an appendix in the back there are even encounter tables where these items are listed. But most of them do not appear in the Index or the Table of Contents. To me this translates to a bunch of page flipping every time one of these are encountered. Plus, though most are not really monsters, they can definitely ruin your whole day, so it seem they if they have the potential to seriously harm you, there should be an encounter rating associated with them. Just my two cents I guess.

For the Coastal Waters section, thirteen new monsters are introduced ranging in challenge rating from a third to ten (one of these is actually a template for creating the monster). Most are either Neutral or Evil of some sort. Also, two of these are new aquatic races. The Open Sea chapter adds eight more monsters that like to inhabit that area and again, one of these is a new aquatic race. Of these the challenge ratings go from a third to a whopping 30. This section also includes brief descriptions of things like volcanic islands, Sargasso (stagnant areas in the sea) and Floating islands. All of these have the potential of being good places for encounters and/or adventures. The third of these chapters is the Deep Water chapter and it adds to the mix another seven monsters ranging in challenge rating of a half to fourteen. Two of these monsters are addition aquatic races.

Besides the general adventure/campaign ideas that readers might come up with on their own when reading this book, each of the monster types also has with it campaign hints where there is an adventure hook. I found these hooks to be a good selling point for the book. In fact, this along with the multiple new races and the ground work for an underwater social order. I found to be some of the most valuable parts of the book.

The next to last chapter is on Equipment. This is a very useful

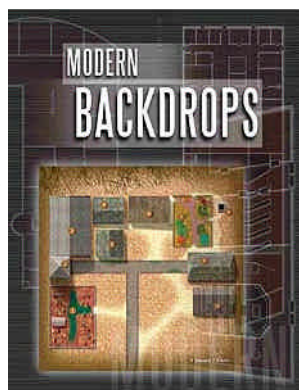
chapter for anyone thinking about doing an underwater adventure. It covers things like economy, New Devices, Magic Items, New Substances, New Weapons, and New Armor. It even goes into detail about who you might find underwater that can make these weapons and armor (cause guess what, your normal stuff probably won't work too well). But here too were some inconsistencies, for Devices, Substances, weapons and armor there are quick reference tables, for Magical items and materials there were none.

The final chapter covers spells. Here there are a total of twenty-six new spells provided to help with the underwater environment. For the most part this section was done pretty well and will again be a must see for parties that decide to go visit the depths of the oceans... and come back to talk about it.

VALUE

Now for the hard question, is it worth buying? I have to say that there are a number of annoying errors in the book, and that the index is not very complete. Also there is no Challenge Rating table (though there is an encounter table, and Challenge ratings are listed there, just not in order). Also the interior art is a tad lacking in quantity. For making an underwater campaign, you will need more than just this book as it is not designed to be a stand alone book. However, as a tool to give players and the GM a very detailed and accurate description of the underwater environment, the book is great. That and the cadre of new monsters and spells make it definitely a book worth reading. To me it comes down to how long of an underwater campaign/adventure would you like to have? If you plan on multiple underwater adventures, or a prolonged campaign, then I think it's worth buying. For a single adventure however, I think I'd lean more in the direction of a single book that would cover all the bases.

Review by Clay Richmond



BASICS

Modern Backdrops is a 96-page soft-cover supplement for d20 Modern. It's published by RPG Objects with a retail price of \$19.95 USD. It boasts having several well-developed cities to use in your games, each with its own plots, subplots and characters. The covers are color and also have color maps printed on the inside of each one. The remainder of the artwork and maps are black & white.

INSIDE

An introduction, five locales and a few pages of new rules are found inside. The intro gets you familiar with the sections (like time lines, organizations, supernatural residents, and other "stat block" types of information) for each city that you'll be reading about. Also, since each city has several plot hooks the introduction explains the level designators of each. Level I is suitable for a low/non-FX game, Level II is more suited for a bit of strangeness, and Level III will have you walking through some strange

doors. Ok, I'm going to talk a bit about the cities themselves now so if you're strictly a player then turn away or risk knowing too much and incurring the wrath of your GM. If you're a GM read on and have a messy way of dealing with players that have continued on.

San Carillo is a perfect small town for a Southwest setting. It could easily be in Texas, New Mexico or Arizona, but it's not listed as being in any of these in the book. It's a small town of under 1,500 residents that started with one man's hacienda being built there in the mid 1600's. The family that originally settled the area is just cursed beyond belief. This curse could certainly be explained in non-FX terms as just bad luck or unfortunate circumstances but just as easily lends itself to strange goings on. There are six plot seeds here that a GM could easily build out into a series of adventures in this small town. Maybe get your party stranded here and have them get drawn into the mysterious nature of this tumbleweed town and its ghost.

Rio Hevri is located in the Southern California desert and has a population of around 2,500. Things take a supernatural step up the ladder here as we find demons, vampires and mutated rats here. Rio Hevri is controlled, mostly, by supernaturals. A few locals of prominence that are not under the influence or control of the evil beings can help out the party or even become one of the party if you need to jump someone into the game without writing up a new character. Not so much a cursed location like San Carillo, but more plagued by these creatures that have found a decent food supply and many locals that are easily controlled.

Schaddo Creek is a logging town of about 15,000 and I see it fitting in perfectly in the Pacific Northwest or maybe even in Canada. If Rio Hevri was a notch up from San Carillo then Schaddo Creek is an even larger leap, but mostly in terms of the very adult nature of the strange goings on there. Adultery, ritual sacrifice, sex slaves and more will be found here. I would have appreciated a "mature content" label somewhere, preferably on the cover of the book, but at least in the introduction section. I expect that most of the audience of d20 Modern will be a few years ahead of your entry-level D&D'ers but a head's up would have been nice. Suffice it to say that some very bad people inhabit the area along with bigfoots (bigfeet?) and a malevolent native spirit.

Delora Valley is on the coast of California and is full of rich snobs, the mob, ghosts, vampires and other monsters are all present here along with a very nice hotel that can be used as a great location for adventures. I thought of it kind of like a cross between West Cost Goodfellas meets Dracula meets even more evil weirdness. Put that all together and you have a good setting for lots of role-playing coupled with massive bloodshed.

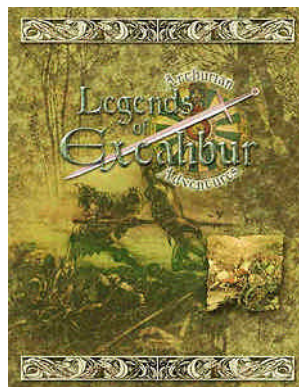
Dunklin is the one city of the batch that didn't sing to me too much right from the start. It's billed as a farm town that grew and grew but now is just shy of a million residents. I could see about a tenth to a fifth of that as being much more in line. After that I found lots of NPCs with good backgrounds and its many supernatural residents will make for good play.

The new rules section presents a new class, the Psionic Student that uses a Power Point system to use FX abilities. Rules for possession and exorcism are also here and are brief enough not to bog the game down but also meaty enough to be useful. A template for a Fiendish Vessel is also found and can be used for when a fiend has taken possession of a mortal.

VALUE

All of the maps are easy to interpret and transfer to a larger playing surface. Additionally, color versions are available at the RPG Objects website, which is a nice free touch. I really liked the time lines for each city as they can be used to plant lots of evidence and information. The old timer in town might be able to rattle off info that's decades old while knowing nothing of the rave that's going on this weekend. For that, your party will have to find a teenager that is actually willing to give them the time of day. The time lines could also be used to play in the various cities in times already gone by. Definitely a GM's book but one that can be used in d20 Modern games as well as in a Call of Cthulhu campaign depending on when your CoC game takes place. The NPCs in each city are given very good backgrounds and reasons for being there and the adventure seeds, thirty in all, will make any GM's job easier. Like I said earlier, beware of the mature content because it's in there but I can see this as a worthy addition to your modern/horror gaming library.

Review by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Legends of Excalibur is a 160-page hardback book put out by RPG Objects and is written by Charles Rice. The book details how to play adventures within the Arthurian world of legend using D&D 3.5 as a basis. The cover art is very well done and of a very high quality. Inside the cover, and on the cover pages front and back, are full color maps of several parts of the world as they are in the setting that is described within the

book (oh yeah, it does happen to look very close to old England). Interior artwork is all black and white ink drawings that are apparently actually reproductions for paintings and/or drawings found in a variety of older sources dating back a century or more in some cases (though most come a couple of works from the early 1900's). All the drawings are titled with credit given to the artists and the sources. After seeing the first couple of these drawings I found that I couldn't stop myself from flipping ahead just to see all the pictures (and here I had thought that I got out of the habit in the third grade). I could have wished for more, especially in the NPC section and the bestiary, but seeing that they would have been hard to pressed to match style of the rest of the book, perhaps it's better the way it is.

The book runs through the core classes in the PHB and tells which of them don't work in this setting and which do. It also

then gives ten more new core classes that are available (some replace the ones declared unsuitable in the PHB). There are sixteen new prestige classes detailed, a new skill, sixteen new feats, eleven new metamagic feats, a new magic system, a listing of what monsters might be found in the world and how they might be modified for this setting, a section on Magic items to be found in the world and how they work, and rules for a very interesting social structure that affects the game at its core. Where you stand in the social order is determined by a characteristic called "Nobility". Your starting Nobility comes from your origins (good 'ole Mom and Pop) but can go up and down depending on your actions. For instance running away from a battle, while screaming like a baby, would tend to drop your Nobility. Your starting Nobility also bears on what professions are initially available to you as well as the range of your starting funds. All in all I found it to be an intriguing system that is definitely well founded in the historical social structure of England and even old Europe. The book's retail price is \$29.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The book is laid out in the following six chapters: Characters, Magic, Guide to Arthurian Legend, Arthurian Adventuring,

Magic Items and Bestiary. The first chapter on Characters is by far the longest chapter and covers in brief many of the types of things that are found in the Dungeons and Dragons PHB. It however is not a replacement but a supplement to the PHB as things that do not change from the normal type of setting when playing a campaign in this setting are not covered. This chapter is the chapter that will be of the most interest to anyone setting up a new campaign or trying to map an existing campaign into this setting. This is also the chapter that convinced me that mapping an existing campaign into this setting would be no small feat. The classes that are not appropriate in the Legends of Excalibur setting include Cleric, Monk, Paladin, Ranger, Sorcerer and Wizard (barbarians are OK, but fits in with a party about as well as a Orc does in most D&D parties). Although these classes are not appropriate, there are replacement classes that cover most of these.

You will notice that just about anyone who can cast spells (Druids and Bard being the exceptions) are on the list of "inappropriate" characters. Needless to say, the magic system used for this setting is a tad modified. In fact, the only spells that carry directly over from the PHB into this setting are Druid spells



NOBILITY

MAGIC

FATE

DESTINY



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and Bard Spells. Chapter two details the spell lists for the new spell casters in this setting and also includes over thirty new spells as well. Current spells casters may be distressed to find out that most of the offensive spells in the PHB did not make the cut and are not to be found on the spell lists in this setting (I know more than one spell caster that will be like a fish out of water without their good ole' trusty Magic Missile). Spell casting is also done on a point system (which I happen to really like) with spell casters having a given number of points. Spells costs points normally equal to their level unless the level of the spell is really challenging (in which case the points cost gets jacked way up) or is considered a no brainer to the caster (in which case the spell points required are discounted). Then spell points are recharged by rest at an hourly rate. This means that once you are a high level spell caster, if you burn out all your spell points you may well take more than a single day to recover, where a fledgling spell caster might well be completely recovered after an hour cat nap.

After the chapter on magic comes the Guide to Arthurian legend. This chapter will give you the flavor of the setting and all the background fluff. I for one found this chapter to intriguing. A history is given of "Arthurian Britain" which is an interesting mix of Legend and History. It starts with Britain being inhabited by giants and eventually moves on to the Roman conquest by Julius Caesar then eventually to the death of Arthur. There is also a list of places of interest that are to be found in the setting. The list covers most the important sites and gives a brief description to each. After that comes the "Who's Who" with characteristics and write-ups of the many of the major characters of the time, there are thirty-one in all.

The next chapter on Arthurian Adventures is the "idea" section for creating campaigns or adventures in this setting. There is a sample town and a sample city fleshed out over several pages. There is a sample Henge (Henges are the equivalent to temples of the day) and even a ruined castle. The rest of the chapter covers the basics of building an adventure or a campaign within the framework of this setting and gives a sample quest and several sample campaign ideas with a page or two of supporting details for each. The end of the chapter ends with a quick section on jousting that looks to me like it can be incorporated as is in most any other setting.

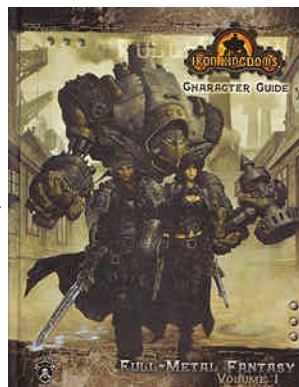
The final two chapters are on magic items and the bestiary. Again, both of these chapters are more about modifying existing items and beasts than there are stand-alone works. But also in both cases there are some new additions. There are entries for new items such as; magic armor, magic weapons, wondrous items, artifacts and monsters. The chapter on the Bestiary not only details nine new monsters but it also gives a list of appropriate monsters that fit the setting (and in some cases are modified somewhat from the MM versions). It's interesting to note that to include non-human PC's is a choice the game master must make, though it is probably more appropriate to not allow non-human races. But if none human races are allowed, only elves and dwarves would be available. I have to say that the visual of a jousting Dwarf leaves something to be desired.

The organization of the book is well done and in most places a table is provided if one is needed (the only notable exception that I found would be the missing challenge rating table). I do wish though that the table of contents had been expanded to include the named spells, magic items and NPC's in the book. Since there is no index, I personally think that letting the table of contents go to two pages would have been well worth it to prevent the inevitable page flipping.

VALUE

This book was a whole lot of fun to read. Reading through it will give you a really good flavor for the setting and will also probably get the creative juices flowing for any wanna-be game master. It's a great idea book with several new and original ideas. However the setting is different enough that I think any campaign or adventure that uses the book should use it from the start rather than try and morph it so that it fits into an existing campaign. For anyone looking to start a new campaign (with new PC's) The Arthurian setting is fleshed out in beautiful detail and the basis for several adventures there for the taking. It looks to me like there is a great potential for some really good role-playing adventures. For those who are not interested in starting a new campaign just yet, the book may not be as useful to you in a gaming aspect, but as I said before, it is still a fun read... especially if you have ever had an interest in that legendary period of Britain.

Review by Clay Richmond



BASICS

The Iron Kingdoms Character Guide (IKCG) retails for \$39.99 USD and is published by Privateer Press for use with Dungeons and Dragons. It comes in at a massive 400 pages and not once during my reading, which included lots of opening and closing and laying the book flat did I ever once have a problem with the binding.

INSIDE

The book's introduction jumps you right into the IK setting and explains what it is and what it isn't very clearly. Privateer Press is not seeking to replace magic with technology with their Iron Kingdoms setting. They have fully merged the two into a darkish grimy fantasy world that is a step away from your typical high-fantasy rpg. It's different, but not just for the sake of doing something different. It's different and it's interesting and I don't think that it will alienate anyone but the most hardline players that want nothing but a Tolkien-like fantasy experience. This is a swashbuckling fantasy world full of political intrigue, magic, firearms and clockwork mechanical constructs. If you're at all familiar with the miniature game Warmachine you'll find that the IKCG puts players and DMs alike right into the world.

Western Immoren: The world of Caen, in which resides Western Immoren and the main nations of the setting, is one of explo-

ration. Not in the plane-jumping sense though. Expect to spend all of your adventuring time right here. Background of the world is well detailed but is also left spotty in places so as to not expose players (the main audience of the book but it will definitely be bought by DMs too) to too many secrets. Littered throughout the book are rumors that give clues as to the fuller picture of what might be going on or points clues to future happenings. Human-kind is absolutely in the majority when talking about the racial makeup of the lands. Twelve varieties of humans, based on locale, are presented with each having their own flavor and starting perks. The other staple races of fantasy games are here along with some extra flavor. Dwarves and elves (two varieties) are here as PC races along with goblins, ogrun and trollkin. Yes, you will see all of these races regularly (fewer in number than humans though) populating the game and its cities, except for among the elves who are more isolationistic and secretive than the rest of the races. Naming conventions for all of the races are also given so you can give a decidedly IK flavor to your character. No gnomes, halflings or half-elves though. Also in this section is a short "State of Affairs" for all of the kingdoms which will provide GMs with lots of adventure possibilities and can also be used to construct specific army-based scenarios for War-machine.

Characters & Classes: Big section of the book here. There are really four sub-sections to this chapter. The first gets your standard PHB classes in sync with the Iron Kingdoms. There are significant changes here, but not things that I found to be deal-breakers unless you are a staunch high-fantasy purist and if that's the case I doubt that you'll really be adventuring in this setting. Never the less, they are things that you need to be aware of if you're looking to get the flavor of IK just right. Bards are here, but they are not the same as in the PHB. In my mind, Clerics have the biggest change when comparing them to their standard high-fantasy cousins. If you're used to getting killed off and just packing up the party to head into town for some quick resurrections then you'll have some getting used to here in the IKs because it's a little harder, actually a lot harder, to come by here. Rangers get an IK makeover and definitely fit into the scout mold. Sorcerers and Wizards might be more uncommon in IK than in your regular game but they are still most definitely here and except for a few spells that don't fit into the setting and getting a few additional class skills are basically unchanged. The second part of this chapter is devoted to four new base classes; the Arcane Mechanik, Bodger, Fell Caller and Gun Mage. The Arcane Mechanik is an (you guessed it) spellcaster of the arcane variety that also has the ability to build the (sometimes) clunky clockwork machines that set IK apart from other settings. Bodgers are the fix-it guys that repair what the Arcane Mechaniks build but they can also take stuff apart with extra vigor. The Fell Caller is restricted to Trollkins. They are fighter types that are not quite as proficient in the hack-n-slash as your standard fighter but they do have a special ability that allows them to produce various shouts that can make up for this. My favorite, and I was pre-disposed before reading these rules being a Cygnar player, was the Gun Mage. A spellcaster that can toss around arcane spells, pepper the area with lead and also channel some spells through their pistols. Don't expect to go running right into mid-

dle of a melee as a gun mage though. They have better hit points than a standard arcane spellcaster but nowhere near that of a real frontline fighter. They are definitely made for ranged combat support but can be quite effective in that role. In the Prestige Classes section you'll find seven entries (Battle Chaplain, Blackclad, Mage Hunter, Pistoleer, Rifleman, Second-Story Man and Warcaster) that are IK through and through. Most of their names give you a good idea of their place in the game. The Blackclad is an outdoorsy type character that delights in the more destructive nature of, well, nature. The Mage Hunter is limited to elves and might cause all sorts of party conflict so take care before bringing one into your game. The Warcaster can start off as either an arcane or divine spellcaster but will now turn into a heavy armor wearing controller of the mammoth Warjacks that are the signature of the IK setting. With all these new character options you might be tempted to just drop them into whatever other setting you're currently playing in but I'd advise against this unless you are going to fully merge IK into your game. Something like the Iron-Forgotten-Kingdom-Realms, you get the picture. If you have a Warcaster in the middle of Waterdeep but there are no Steamjacks around then you're pretty SOL, right? A full blown merge of campaign settings is possible but ends up being at least twice as much info for players and DMs to keep track of so it's probably not the best way to go. Skills and Feats round out this chapter and have lots of craft entries. Faith and Society feats are added to the General, Combat and other types that you'd expect to see here and I'm all in favor of new ways to personalize your character.

Weapons & Gear: Coming in at around thirty pages you'll find the tools of the trade here. Things start off fairly standard with pictures of a few, but not all, weapons. We start to see some technological weapons pretty early on like a wrist mounted mini-harpoon launcher and the net launcher. A picture for everything would have been nice, but was probably not necessary since we all have a pretty good idea of what a maul looks like. Specific weapon rules are included in their text blurb but a comprehensive list of weapons is also presented at the end of this chapter. As you'd expect in the Iron Kingdoms there are new weapon enhancements that are available to you here. We move on into firearms next and spend a bit of time reading about their origins in IK and about the various manufacturers. More pictures are presented in the firearms section due to many of them not being represented outside the Iron Kingdoms. Ammunition, for standard fantasy weapons, firearms and including projectiles like grenades, gets a nice accounting and I think that it goes a long way to keep standard fantasy missile weapons interesting and useful. Of course, guns are a mainstay of the Iron Kingdoms but shooting flaming or explosive bolts from your Twin-bolt Crossbow will also make an impression on your enemy. The armor and gear sections are each shorter than the one on weapons but they contain a lot of the flavor of the setting without repeating what you already know from the PHB. I need to know about how a Greatcoat can work in conjunction with other armors (and it's in here) but I don't need a stat list of standard D&D light armors because it's in the PHB (and not in here).

Cosmology & Religion: Religion, tradition and of course suspi-

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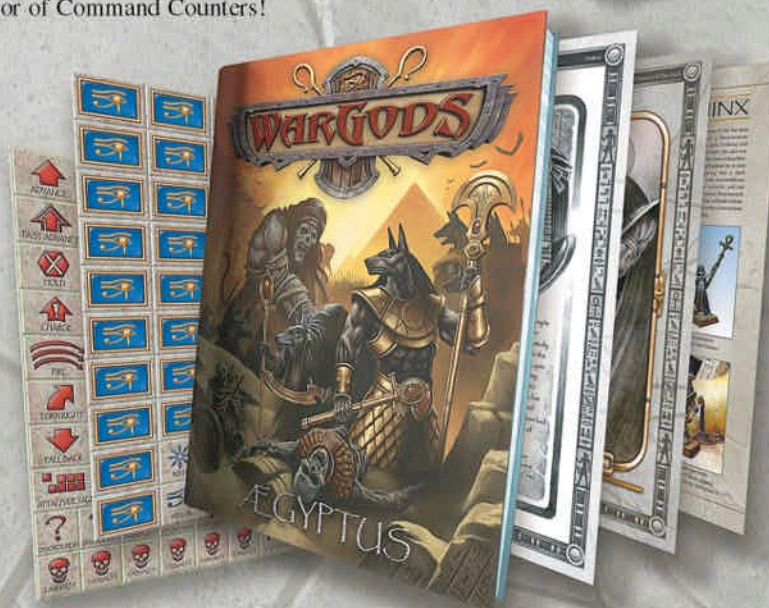


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cion play large roles in the IKs and can be a great start for many an adventure. Each region and race has their own deities described and like the information previously given on each nation's relations with each other we now get a better look at how each faith interacts with each other.

Magic & Mechanika: This chapter starts off talking about how necromancy is very much frowned upon in the IKs and practitioners of this dark art, along with those dealing with infernals, are routinely sought out and eliminated. Also, many spells are either very limited, not available or work somewhat differently in the IKs. For starters, teleportation-like spells are extremely rare and it's unlikely that you'll tossing around *Dimension Doors* or *Teleporting* around very much. Quite a bit of planar magic is also unused in this setting as plane-hopping is not part of the game here. I've already talked about the limited nature of resurrections in this setting, but magical healing is also changed just a bit. A cleric can still heal but is restricted to a "safe" number of hit points that he can heal per day. Going over that invites the gods to look unfavorably upon you for upsetting the balance between life and death. Non-magical healing and potions will be sought after quite a bit and I'd expect them to fetch a pretty nice price. Clerical domains have been tweaked a little to fit into the background, but these changes don't make clerics unplayable in the least. Arcane spellcasters, while still around because the coming of technology has not automatically meant a decline or ebbing of magic, are not as free-wheeling as in other high-fantasy settings and more than one sorcerer has been burned at the stake or hung for being a witch. Alchemy is alive and well here and about ten pages are devoted to salves, powders and incenses. Then we get into steam and iron works and the mechanical and mekanical, the latter being a constructed device that's imbued with magical energy. Examples of equipment, arms, armor and rules for their construction is found herein along with new spells and stat blocks for some basic Steamjacks and Warjacks. These entries do not constitute a full military supplement by any means but there was at least of an upcoming supplement of this nature in the editor's introduction.

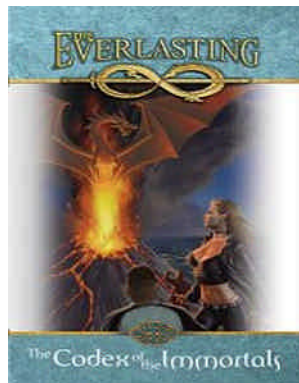
The book ends in several appendices including a section on NPCs (without stat blocks but I'd more expect that in the second volume than this one), tables of class skills and several other. A multi-page character sheet is in here for you to photocopy but I'd pull it off the Privateer Press website instead just for ease of printing. A nice map of Western Immoren is also here but I'm hoping that a color version will soon be available for download on the site as some of the b/w one in the book can be hard to read in places. Index, index, index! A pretty lengthy and useful index ends the book and for a book this size it's something that can't be done without and I'm very glad they took the time to include it.

VALUE

Forty dollars is not an insignificant amount of money to drop on a new book but this one is absolutely worth it. Both players and DMs will get lots of use out of it and aside from everything I read inside its pages it also served to really whet my appetite for the second volume. The artwork is all beautiful. The style of the Iron Kingdoms is exaggerated (big armor and weapons) but is not

overloaded with spiky bits and overdeveloped chests. I guess they haven't invented clockwork breast enhancement yet. Yes, buy it!

Review by Mark Theurer



WHAT IS IT

The Codex of the Immortals is a source book for The Everlasting RPG. It is necessary to own at least one of the four foundation books to make use of the source book. The soft-bound book runs to 192 pages and features colour illustrations on the covers and many black and white illustrations within. It is published by Visionary Entertainment and has a retail price of \$19.95

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The Everlasting RPG revolves around immortals. All sorts of different immortals, originating from a variety of mythologies, appear in the game. These include undead, wizards, faeries and dragons. The first chapter, **Everlasting Society**, starts with a brief history of the setting, an alternate Earth. Then the book moves on to describe some of the particulars of roleplaying an immortal character. It covers items such as the codes they follow, their interactions with mortal characters, and the alliances they make to protect themselves and their domain. The chapter is quite short but provides plenty of material for players and games masters alike.

The second chapter, **Advanced Protagonists**, gives more options for player characters. Although there is a brief section on playing unusual characters (the examples given are children or 'you as your own protagonist') the bulk of this chapter is the introduction of around a dozen abilities. These range from athletics and melee through to criminal and supernatural. Each ability consists of seven skills. Athletics, for example, is made up of accuracy (throwing), acrobatics, climb, dance, focus (feats of mind over body), run and swim. The coverage is good including skills rarely seen in RPGs such as murder (used for getting away with and/or investigating murders) and romance (the skill of making oneself desirable). Each skill is well described in terms of the aspects (stats) used for each type of roll, the sort of things which will typically modify the target number for success, and potential results of achieving particularly many or few successes. Each skill also has a list of suggested specialties and the professions who might be trained in it.

Chapter three, **Character Distinctions**, presents a system of benefits and drawbacks to add depth to characters. There is a very good selection to choose from with over 30 pages devoted to them. Some of the options available are fairly typical, with examples such as ambidextrous, enemy, and deaf. There are also plenty that are more unique to the system and setting. Historical impact is a good example of a benefit in this category. The more points that are spent on this benefit the more of an impact the

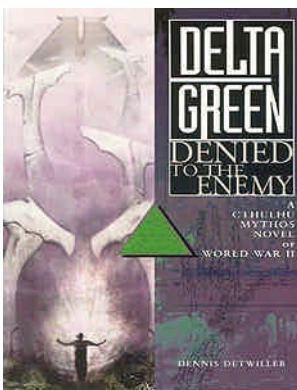
character has had on the world through history. With enough points invested here a character could have been closely involved in some of the most significant historical events. What stands out the most in this chapter though is the way that the benefits and drawbacks are arranged into distinctions. There are nine of these including physique, which governs the physical form; servitors, which describes the character's minions; and temporal, which deals with power in mortal society. Each distinction has a number, calculated from the relevant benefits and drawbacks, which shows an individual's overall strength (or weakness) in that area. This helps add flavour by rounding out the character.

The final chapter, **Preternaturae**, takes up most of the book. Over a hundred spells and powers are described here, though the system uses the word preternaturae. Each of these comes in three power levels – basic, advanced, and master, with the more advanced options costing more points. The effect of greater levels of ability varies. As one example the cause death preternaturae allows a character to kill with a touch, with the effect becoming increasingly hard to resist at the advanced and master levels. Quicksand, as another example, turns soft ground only to quicksand at the basic level. At the advanced level hard ground can be affected, and at the master level even stone and cement can be turned into quicksand. The chapter rounds off with a section on ways of modifying the preternaturae. These are ways of limiting or enhancing the effectiveness of the preternaturae, reducing or increasing the cost respectively, and giving more variety and flexibility.

VALUE

The codex of the immortals provides many options for players and guides alike. The skills are well thought out and give good coverage. The character distinctions are probably the best merits/flaws system I have come across. And there are very many spells to play with. The only negative points I have are that some of the pages seem to be printed at a slant and that there are odd spelling mistakes. Overall I think that this book is a worthwhile purchase for anyone playing The Everlasting RPG.

Review by Adam Brooks



"Delta Green: Denied to the Enemy" is a 260-page trade paperback novel of the Cthulhu mythos that retails for \$15.95 USD and is published by Armistage House. Written by Dennis Detwiler, this book chronicles the struggle of secret agencies of both the allies and the Germans as they try to gain advantage in the Second World War by use of arcane knowledge.

The "Delta Green" organization mentioned in the title of the book was formed after the military raid on Innsmouth, as chronicled in the H.P. Lovecraft story "A Shadow Over Innsmouth". This secret paramilitary organization becomes part of the O.S.S. during the Second World War.

The US is not alone in having a secret arcane organization. The British have PISCES and the Nazis have the Karotechia, a secret organization inside the SS. When "Denied to the Enemy" opens, we follow a member of the Karotechia as he uncovers an ancient secret hidden in the ruins of a Jewish book collector's house. This clue leads the SS to discover the ancestral city of the Aryan race, Thule, in the depths of Africa. A defector in the Karotechia gives his life to ensure that this information also makes it into the hands of the allies - and thus begins a desperate race to see who will first reach Thule.

However, there is more that meets the eye here. As the book progresses, the politics of the ancient time-traveling Great Race come to the front as the real threat to the world. From the French coast to the jungles of Indochina and from the outback of Australia to the heart of the African jungle, "Delta Green: Denied to the Enemy" takes the reader on a race to get to Thule and prevent the end of the world.

"Denied to the Enemy" is based on the Delta Green RPG setting for the Call of Cthulhu game by Chaosium. Using this background, the author ties together elements from the Lovecraft stories "A Shadow out of Time" and "Arthur Jermyn" as well as Nazi propaganda myths to provide an explanation of how the Human race rose above the Neanderthals and what our ultimate purpose is.

"Denied to the Enemy" has all the hallmarks of fan fiction - its basis on the existing works of a popular author and the tying together of heretofore unrelated stories into a single tapestry. Unlike most fan fiction, however, "Denied to the Enemy" is well written. It eschews the minutiae of its setting, which would appeal to only to the most dedicated Lovecraft fan, in favor of telling a good story. However, there is enough of the Cthulhu mythos in the book to keep the experienced Lovecraft reader entertained.

If you are familiar with the writings of Lovecraft and the Cthulhu mythos, then you will find "Denied to the Enemy" an intriguing story that takes a fresh approach to both Thule and the Great Race.

If, however, you are unfamiliar with Lovecraft in general and the Cthulhu stories in particular, this book might serve as an introduction. However, I would urge you to at least read "A Shadow Out of Time" first. As with the other writings of Lovecraft, this story is in the public domain and a quick search of the internet will produce a list of collected stories as well as web sites which have not only "A Shadow Out of Time" but also "A Shadow over Innsmouth" and "Arthur Jermyn".

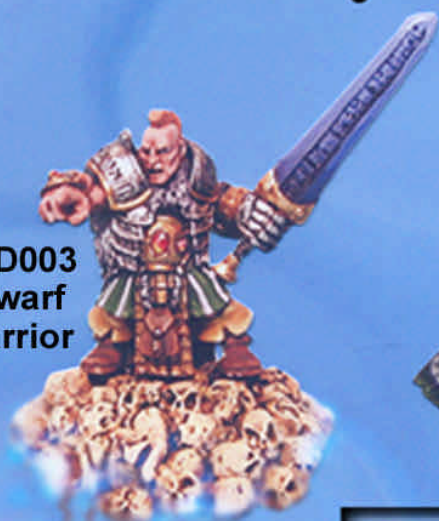
Personally, I enjoyed the book. It has been a while since I read any Cthulhu story or novelization of the Second World War. As such, I found it very refreshing and it has rekindled my interest in not only Lovecraft, but the arcane side of Himmler's SS.

Review by J Michael Tisdell

Fantasy

Sci-fi

HFD003
dwarf
warrior



HFH002
paladin



HFG002
grymn
sergeant



dwarf
princess
HFD004



Hasslefree Miniatures

dwarf
warriress
HFD002



HFC004
shaolin
monk



HFH005
outsized
axewoman



28mm scale
figures sculpted by
Kev White

www.jenova.dk/hassle/front.htm
email: hfpromo@hotmail.com

armoured
ogre
HFM002



winged
demonette
HFX003



RPG Adventure



The Stiffy Blockwar! An Adventure for Judge Dredd d20

INTRODUCTION

The Stiffy Blockwar! is an adventure for 3-5 new Street Judges. No more than one Psi-Judge should be part of the party. This adventure is set in Sector 190, which is where Mongoose is placing their official Judge Dredd setting. If you are a player in a Judge Dredd game, then please read no further. Rather, give this to your games master and ask him to run it for you.

REFERENCED WORKS

The following books are referenced in this adventure. All are published by Mongoose Publishing.

- "The Judge Dredd Role Playing Game"
- "The Rookie's Guide to the Justice Department"
- "The Rookie's Guide to Block Wars"
- "Mega-City One's Most Wanted" from "The Judge Dredd Games Master Screen"

REFEREE'S NOTES

This adventure is designed to pick up after "Full Eagle Day", an introductory adventure published by Mongoose. If the players have not gone through this adventure, the referee may need to change some of the text of this adventure, though such changes will be superficial.

Progs

The adventure is presented in acts, called progs. Unless otherwise noted, each prog should be played in order - that is Prog 1 should be run before Prog 2. However, they need not be continuous. The referee is encouraged to add in diversions between the progs to break up the linear feel of the adventure.

Each prog follows the same format:

- o Synopsis - a one-line introduction to the action
- o Description - a detailed description of the action
- o Dramatis Personae - a listing of the important NPCs involved
- o Special Notes - any additional information

Unless otherwise noted, all the information is for the referee, none of it is to be read to the players.

One-shot Encounters

To provide variety and break up the flow of the Progs there are some one-shot encounters included in this adventure. These one-shots can be used between the progs to divert or add to the adven-

ture. They may also be used in other adventures as a diversion or as the foundation for a larger adventure.

Each one-shot follows the same format as a prog, but includes an additional section giving recommended experience or other awards for the encounter.

BACKGROUND

Setting

It's the summer of 2124 and it's hot in Mega-City One. Weather control is doing the best it can, but the rad winds blowing in from Cursed Earth are playing the cat and banjoes with their equipment. In Sector 190, what this means is that afternoon temperatures hover around 94 degrees - just the temperature when tempers flare.

Justice Department resources are stretched to the limit. This means that the new street judges assigned to Sector 190 are not able to have a mentor on their first patrols. Recognizing that this can only lead to trouble, Sector Chief Barker has decided that all new recruits will patrol in groups - to learn from and support each other. The stress on the Justice Department has not gone unnoticed by those less concerned with upholding the law.

Paula Abdul Block

The Paula Abdul Block is one of the older blocks, built in 2070, PA Block has survived the Apocalypse War, the Necropolis, the Zombie War, and the Second Robot War. Originally a rather squat building, as far as blocks go, PA Block has been enlarged three times by having new floors built on top of the existing block.

The block is dominated by elders, but the Housing Authority has tried to reverse this trend over the years by brining in young families. These young families move into the newer floors, leaving the elders in the lower floors. This has resulted in a rather extreme age stratification among the PA Blockers.

Debbie Gibson ConApt

The Debbie Gibson ConApt was built on the ruins of the old Veronica Andrews Block in the post Apocalypse War Rebuilding Effort. The Debbie Gibson ConApt was designed to be a show place of what could be done with a block. As a result, it is quite a fashionable place to live.

Where as PA Block has been extended, the DG ConApt has been refurbished. As a matter of fact, the ConApt is continuously undergoing renovation. This has had the effect of making the DG ConApt inhabitants quite trendy and fashion conscious.

Block Commons

The Paula Abdul Block and the Debbie Gibson ConApt share a open air common area between them. Designed as a park to allow the inhabitants to meet and mingle, each block resident keeps to his own side. The DG's don't want to associate with the unfash-

ionable PA riff-raff and the PA blockers don't like the snotty-nosed DG's.

Stiffy

Stiffy, marketed as Stein's Natural Male Enhancement Medicine, is currently the best selling male enhancement drug. The drug is produced under rigorous justice department standards and is only available to men aged 50 and over with a valid prescription.

Needless to say, there is a significant black market in this drug - and it is usually the primary income for elder gangs, as they can get it the easiest. Stiffy sells for about 100 creds a dose.

Elevator Trolls

Due to the size of the residential blocks in Mega-City One, stairwells are used only as shelter by homeless or hideouts for law breakers. All real traffic in the block travels via the elevators. Like the Zooms and roadways of the city, elevators move people and cargo inside the block.

Unlike the zooms and roadways, the entrances to a bank of elevators are usually contained in a relatively small area. This is just the kind of place for gangs to congregate and charge tolls. Using intimidation and force, a gang can quickly extort quite a few credits from those who need access to the elevators. This is called Trolling and the participant gangs are Trolls.

Passenger elevators are usually trolled by juvies or elder gangs. It takes the tougher street gangs to troll a freight elevator, as freight shipments are usually guarded.

Trolling is considered Theft (Code 6, 2-20 years) and Obstruction (Code 13, 3 months to 2 years). Related offenses can include Loitering, Unlawful Assembly, Assault of a citizen, Assault with a deadly weapon, or even Manslaughter.

Paula Abdul Block Cloggers

The Paula Abdul Block Cloggers is a Elder street gang. Originally the group met for clogging and square dancing, but this soon lost its appeal and the membership turned to rumbles and drug running. Being elders, they have access to Stiffy, the most effective male enhancement drug available.

Needless to say, Stiffy is quite sought after on the black market and the Paula Abdul Cloggers are using this money to raise funds for a trip to Texas City for the Texas City Clogging Festival.

Debbie Gibson Arboreal Society

The Debbie Gibson Arboreal Society is a organization of DG citizens who want to bring a bit of the natural environment to the DG ConApt by putting potted plants and trees in all public locations. One of the older organizations, the DGAS has moved from its original beautification role to more of a smuggling role.

The DGAS receives the Stiffy from the PA Block Cloggers and then distributes it to their junkies as they walk around the ConApt to water the plants.

ADVENTURE

Prog 1: Roll Call

Synopsis: The new judges at Sector 190 start their day with the roll-call meeting.

Description:

This prog starts at morning roll call for the Judges of Sector House 190. For characters who completed "Full Eagle Day", this will be their first day of regular duty. For others, assume that they have either been re-assigned or, if already at Sector House 190, it's just another day.

The following has been written to be read to the players - modify it to fit your campaign.

You all assemble in Briefing Room 31-A for morning roll call. At exactly 5:30 a.m. in walks Judge Kemp, A-Watch commander. He moves to the podium at the front of the room. After setting down his notes, he addresses the room.

"Good morning everyone.

First off, I would like to welcome our new judges to A-Watch. Judges (X), (Y), and (Z) have just completed their Full Eagle day and have been assigned to us to address our manpower shortage. To you new men, you know the law, apply it appropriately, and keep good records. An arrest is only as good as its paperwork.

Now, on to news of the day. First Sector Chief Barker wants all watch commanders to re-iterate that the Justice Department is understaffed and, as such, all judges are to guard resources and don't call for special assistance unless its really needed.

There have been reports of a pair of reporters sticking their noses in to judicial affairs. So far, they've just been a nuisance, but be warned. A crusading reporter can quickly turn into a casualty - and that generates lots of paperwork for everyone.

Informant reports say that there is a new drug running ring operating at the Debbie Gibson ConApt. All that we know is which drug is being run - Stiffy. So, its probably not a juvie gang. Keep you eyes open for any elder gangs - and submit anything you find in a Form 775/13 - Gang Activity Report.

Finally, I want to add on a personal note how proud I am of A-Watch. According to the latest Form 7533/11, Records Report, this watch has a 85% rating on completing paperwork. That's 15% better than the other two watches. Let's not rest on our success - I know we can reach 100% - because my B-Watch at Sector 188 did.

Now for assignments. Judges Marcus, Sheridan, D'Lynn, Garibaldi, and Psi-Judge Talia, you will be on street patrol today. Pick up your Lawmasters and hit the streets after briefing. Judges Picard, Riker, La'Forge, and Queue, you will be on H-Wagon duty. Judges Corwin, Random, and Gerard you will be on foot patrol at the Debbie Gibson ConApt. Judges (X), (Y), and (Z)

you will be on foot patrol at the Paula Abdul Block. After briefing, those on foot patrol head up to the level 20 Hanger deck and catch an H-Wagon to your assigned locations.

Everyone collect your equipment and head to your stations after roll call. Any questions?

Okay, then, that wraps up this roll call meeting. Lets go out and deliver the law - and remember to keep your paperwork straight."

After roll call, the judges will have about fifteen minutes to catch the H-wagon to the Paula Abdul block.

Since the Paula Abdul block and the Debbie Gibson ConApt are so close to each other, one H-Wagon will be take both groups of Judges. It will drop off the DG ConApt team first, followed by the PA Block team. Use this as an opportunity to describe the difference between the DG ConApt and the PA Block. Be sure to stress how up to date DG looks and how shabby and ill-fit PA looks.

Dramatis Personae:

Judge Kemp is detailed on page 60 of "The Rookie's Guide to the Justice Department".

Judges Corwin, Random, and Gerard are street judges and have had been on street patrol for the last month. They have general judge experience but they don't know much in particular about Debbie Gibson ConApt. Use the Street Judge statistics from page 149 of the Judge Dredd rulebook.

The other judges listed are also street judges - fill in their stats if and when they are needed.

Special Notes:

This is the chance for the players to ask all sorts of intro questions. Judge Kemp will gladly answer all questions - just don't let it drag on too long. Kemp has to write up his Roll Call report (Form 231452/4).

Prog 2: Elevator Trolls

Synopsis: The judges arrive at Paula Abdul Block to relieve the current watch. They do not have much time to get settled as the first report of illegal activity comes in.

Description:

The H-Wagon drops the players off on the roof, where it picks up the three judges that the players are relieving. Judges Howard, Fine, and Howard report the following:

(1) A new juvie gang has formed on levels 321 and 322. Called the "Red Kangs", this all-girl gang has so far only been causing minor problems with defacing public property (Wall Scrawl) and loitering.

(2) There are reports from the 131st Floor Citizen's Action Committee of suspicious meetings of the Paula Abdul Block Cloggers. The 131st CAC is a known gossip club.

Add other possible reports as red herrings for the judges.

The Judicial offices are on the third level - in the offices section above the shopping mall levels. There is a computer terminal to access the Block system as well as the Judicial computer system. There are four iso-cubes, all empty, a break room, a receiving lobby, a weapons locker, and a communications shack with feeds from all the block's sensors.

The com shack is automated. The feeds are monitored by MAC, the Justice Department computer, and normally operates without local assistance. However, there is a console where a judge can sit and tap into the system to monitor specific areas or locations.

The judges arrive and check in. They should tour the facility and get familiar with the layout. Shortly thereafter, they are visited by Amanda Hungenkiss.

Amanda looks terrible - her hair is a mess, her outfit is torn, and she is developing a black eye. She has come to report an assault by some young punks at the 131st landing of elevator block A. The group, dressed in red colors, asked her for some creds. When she refused, they beat her up and stole her purse. The elevator arrived just in time for her to make her get away.

There is a video feed from each landing, and the one for 131-A shows a group of 10-15 juvies in Red Kang markings loitering around and bothering elevator passengers.

The judges can arrive at 131st level by one of the 16 elevator banks (A-P). Four elevator banks are in the center of the block (A-D) and the remaining twelve are arranged around the circumference of the block. It takes about 5 minutes to get from the central blocks to block A and about 15 minutes to get to block A from the circumference elevators. In any case, the judges will certainly come upon the gang still extorting creds.

There are five elevators along one wall. There are doors to the stairs at each end of the elevators.

Most of the juvies will be working the elevators, but there are four who are watching the approaches for judges. Unless the judges attempt to sneak up on the perps, these lookouts will raise the alarm.

Not having much experience, the four of the gangers will be caught flat footed while the others test for surprise as normal. They are not sure what to do as this is the first time they've faced the judges (-4 modifier to an arrest roll). Helen, who does have a past record, will try and exhort her gangers to fight the judges so as to cover her escape.

Needless to say, there are too many juvies to put into the iso cubes. The judges will need to call an H-Wagon to pick up the perps. There are a few holding posts - enough to take care of the juves while the H-Wagon is coming. Remember that there are

WARNING

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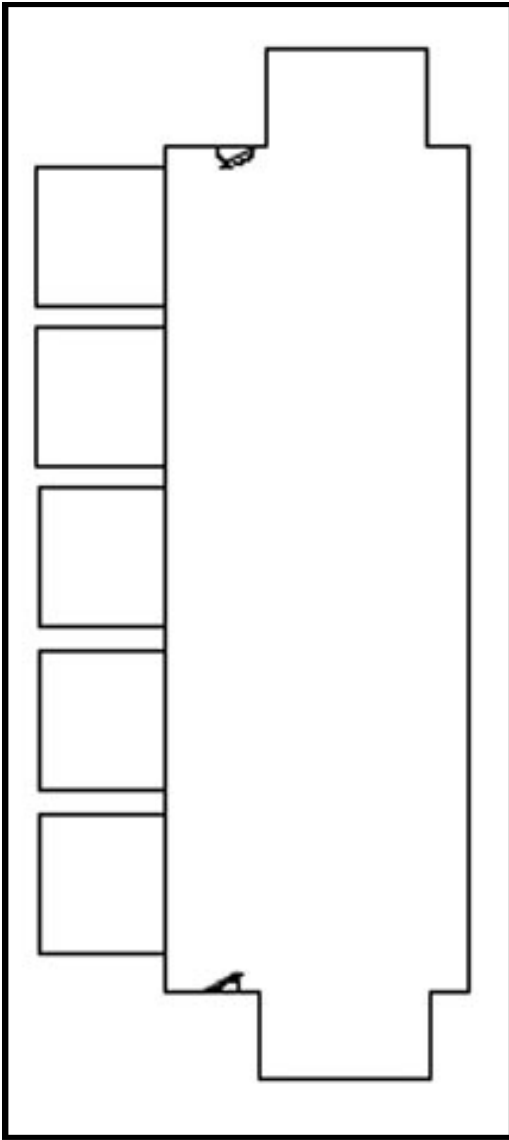
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only 3 judges for the 10,000 people in PA Block, so they really shouldn't hang around.

Dramatis Personae:

Helen (Gang Leader) Citizen 6 (CitiDef), MV 20, HP 26, Init: +7, Attack +4 (melee) +9 (ranged), Sawn Off Stump 2d6 x2 AP 2 10' 10 AOE, 8 shot, Rapid Fire 1, DV 13 DR 8 (shell jacket), Point Blank Shot, Improved Initiative, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (sawn-off stump gun) Fort: +2 Ref: +5 Wil: +2, STR 11 DEX 17 CON 11 INT 11 WIS 11 CHA 17

Gangers Citizen 2, MV 30, HP 8, Init +6, Attack +5 (melee), +4 (ranged), Club

1d8 x2 10', Zip gun 2d8 AP 4 60' 19/x2 10 shot (only 3 gangers have the zip guns), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (gun or club), Fort: -1 Ref: +2 Will: +1, STR 16, DEX 15, CON 9 INT 10 WIS 12 CHA 15.

Special Notes:

If Amanda accompanies the judges (and she will try to do this) she will smirk and say "Serves you right" to Helen, if she's caught. Amanda knows Helen is actually from Debbie Gibson ConApt and is working for the Debbie Gibson Arboreal Society, those who distribute the Stiffy delivered by the PA Block Cloggers.

Helen set up the Red Kangs to try and take over the PA Clogger's distribution of Stiffy to the DGAS.

When arresting the juvies, a successful Spot check (DC 20) will reveal that one has an unmarked pill case that contains six blue pills. These turn out to be Stiffy. She says she got it from Helen -

she used it to pay off her special gangers. Helen, if asked, doesn't know anything about Stiffy.

Prog 3: Mean Machine?

Synopsis: After cleaning up the Juvie gang on level 131, the judges are called to a demonstration on the promenade only to find one of Mega-City One's most notorious villains.

On the way back to the Judicial offices, the judges receive an emergency call from the Public Surveillance Unit (PSU). The PSU reports that Mean Machine Angel has appeared at a legal demonstration on the promenade level (level 2). PSU is checking to see if Mean has escaped or if this is a copy-cat. In any case, the judges are ordered to detain him at once.

On the promenade level, a Rights for Robots demonstration is in full swing. There are various domestic and industry droids marching and carrying signs that read "Rights for Robots!", "Give Voice to the Mechanical Man", and "Let Freedom Ring for All".

There are a few bystanders looking on and a small counter demonstration by neo-luddites saying all robots should be destroyed. The counter demonstration is not authorized.

As the judges approach, 7-Zark-11 (a Hondai Tee-Kay Mk II) is speaking to the crowd. He spies the judges and begins to warn the assembled robots that "the law has come to shut them down". The robots begin to get restless - most are uncomfortable being here, and now they want to leave. Others are confused and don't know what to do. Mostly the droids are just a nuisance and manage to get in the way of the Judges and Mean Machine.

Mean is a robot version of mean from Al's House of Mechanical Horrors (Promenade level 2). The House of Mechanical Horrors is a museum of infamous criminals where robots have been programmed to be like some of the worst criminals in Mega-City One's history. The Mean-Machine robot was the centerpiece of the show - and the owner, Asic Eyesamov, spared no expense on this robot. It was kept in a replica of an iso cube and would react to the patrons of Al's. There is a small plaque which gives the serial number of the robot as well as its owner.

The Mean Machine robot is very advanced - which is why 7-Zark-11 brought him along. This robot is not above its programming - it doesn't even know it's a robot! All it knows is that it is Mean Machine - and it sees law men!

In the middle of the robot group is Mean Machine - looking mean! A successful Spot check (DC 15) will reveal Mean in the middle of the robot crowd. He will set his dial to 2 and immediately move toward the closest judge. If the judges don't spot him, Mean gets a surprise round.

Once the fighting starts, the robots, neo-luddites, and the bystanders will scramble. 7-Zark-11 will not move, as he is up on a planter and can't get down without help.

The demonstration takes place in an open area of the promenade - if you are using miniatures, there is nothing to obstruct line of sight except robots.

After the third round of combat, PSU will radio in that the real Mean is still in his iso cube. Whatever the judges are facing, its not the real Mean.

Dramatis Personae:

For the Mean Machine Angel robot, use the Mean Machine Angel entry in the "Mega-City One's Most Wanted". The robot has been programmed to be Mean Machine, so treat him as such.

7-Zark-11 is Hondai Tee-Kay Mk II. HD 3d13 (19), Init: +0; Spd 20 ft; DV 10; Damage Reduction: 6; Attacks: Slam +0 melee; Damage 1d4/0.

Special Notes:

7-Zark-11 is owned by Amanda Hugenkiss - and is responsible for picking up the weekly allotment of Stiffy for the members of the PA Cloggers. If 7-Zark-11 is arrested, Amanda will be down quickly to try and bail him out. He's got an allotment to pick up - as the PA Cloggers have a delivery.

Prog 4: Stiffy Runners

Synopsis: The judges follow up on clues that have been appearing all day to catch members of an elder gang who are running male enhancement drugs over to the Debbie Gibson block.

After returning to the Justice Offices, the Judges see a message waiting light on the computer terminal. The message is from PSU - the weekly delivery of Stiffy to PA Block is to arrive in 40 minutes.

Due to the number of hijackings of Stiffy transports, there has been a change in delivery protocols. The judges need to be there to protect the delivery. The Judges are to meet Dr. Whatzis, and escort him and the Stiffy to the Medical Dispensary where the product will be locked up until distribution time.

The judges meet Dr. Whatzis on the roof of PA Block. Shortly after they arrive, a justice department LawPod flies in with the delivery of Stiffy. As the Law pod moves in to land, a rocket streaks up from the roof and impacts on the pod. A luck shot hits the pod's fuel tank and the secondary explosion rips the pod apart. A quick search of the roof reveals the spent rocket launcher next to a roof access hatch. The hatch leads down to level 321, where it empties into an arcade. This arcade is full of juvies, most of which are wearing the colors of the Red Kangs. When questioned, the juvies are very nervous and don't give much information.

While the Judges are poking around, one juvie will make a break for the door. If Alice is apprehended, she won't say much, but a chemical analysis will reveal propellant particles on her jacket. If questioned, she will reveal the following:

- (1) Helen originally recruited her from Debbie Gibson ConApt.
- (2) Before she set off to start a distraction (the elevator trolling), Helen requested that Alice wait for the Stiffy delivery and blow it out of the sky.

Shortly after the judges arrest Alice, Amanda Hugenkiss will show up at the Judicial offices. She wants to know when the next delivery of Stiffy will be made. She is adamant that it must be today. Amanda is nervous because she must make her delivery to the DGAS tonight.

According to central, there won't be any more deliveries to Paula Abdul this week - the supply is limited and their allocation went down with the LawPod.

Dramatis Personae:

Alice Citizen 2; HD 2d6+2 (8); Init: 0; Spd 30 ft; DV 10; Attack +2 melee +2 ranged; Fort +0; Ref: +0; Will +0; Average abilities; No skills; Club.

See Prog 2 for information on Helen.

Special Notes:

The DGAS plan is to break the Clogger's supply line so that they can get their own supply in - at a higher rate. Amanda Hugenkiss is in charge of the Stiffy run and knows that, unless they can deliver, things will go bad really quickly.

Prog 5: Debbie Gibson Raiders

Synopsis: Denied their fix of Stiffy, some extreme elements from the Debbie Gibson ConApt stage a raid on Paula Abdul block, and things rapidly deteriorate.

After the arrest of the ganger Alice, things quiet down. As the shift winds down, the Judges receive a call from Judge Kemp. Their B-watch relief has been pulled off to support a riot over on the other side of the sector. As such, the judges will need to pull a double shift. The riot in question has taken about half of the Sector's forces. The shift is quiet for a while - too quiet almost. Play this up with the players. No juvie incidents, no boingers, no nothing. In fact, even the Red Kangs have disappeared.

Then, when the waiting has gotten on everyone's nerves, there is a muffled thump and the local computer klaxon goes off. A quick survey will show that the Debbie Gibson ConApt defense force has decided to open fire on Paula Abdul Block. The PA def force is scrambling to repel the invaders. Across the common area, an armed group of people, wearing DGAS insignia, are quickly exiting PA block under the cover of the DG CitiDef. They are being chased by the PA Cloggers - who are leading the PA Defense forces.

The Sector can provide some resources, but it will take time. Most are involved over at the riot.

Now, at this point you have two options:

(1) You can role play out the block war where the players are charged with tracking down the reasons for the block war. This will lead the players to Amanda Hugenkiss as the procurer for the PA Cloggers. She is also the connection to the DG Arboreal Society who peddles the stuff to the citizens of the con apt.

The DG Arboreal Society staged the raid to grab the last of the Stiffy. They launched the attack once they learned of the riot on the other side of the sector - when the Judges would be too busy to interfere. Then, playing on the basic distrust between the two blocks, the DGAS started the Block War.

(2) You can fight out the Block War using the rules from "The Rookie's Guide to Block Wars". The different units involved are listed below. Use the map for the Madonna Ciccone Block and Cher Skyrise. As a result of suppressing the block war, the judges will uncover the background of the event as described in item 1.

The Debbie Gibson Con Apt fields the following forces:

CitiDef Patrol (4 units)

Class: Citizen (Citi-Def)
Level: 3
Unit Size: 400
Unit Leader: None
HP: 1,320 (Con bonus)
Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)
DV: 13 (+3 Lightning Reflexes)
DR: 8 (Shell Jackets)
Attacks: Melee - +3 (club) 1d8 AP 0
Ranged - +3 (stump gun) 2d6 AP 2
Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes,
Weapon Focus (stump)
Fort: +2
Ref: +3
Will: +1
STR: 13 DEX: 10 CON: 12 INT: 10 WIS: 10 CHA: 8

CitiDef Heavy Weapons Unit (1 unit)

Class: Citizen (Citi-Def)
Level: 3
Unit Size: 100
Unit Leader: None
HP: 330 (Con bonus)
Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)
DV: 13 (+3 Lightning Reflexes)
DR: 8 (Shell Jackets)
Attacks: Melee - +0 (club) 1d8 AP 0
Ranged - +3 (Missile Launcher) 2d8 (x3) AP 20
20' AOE
Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes,
Weapon Focus (stump)
Fort: +2
Ref: +3
Will: +1
STR: 13 DEX: 10 CON: 12 INT: 10 WIS: 10 CHA: 8

Debbie Gibson Arboreal Society (1 unit)

Class: Citizen
Level: 1
Unit Size: 500
Unit Leader: None
HP: 500
Initiative : +4 (Improved Initiative)
DV: 13 (Lightning Reflexes)
DR: 4 (Padded)
Attacks: Melee - +1 (club) 1d8 AP 0
Ranged - +1 (stump gun) 2d6 AP 2
Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Fort: +0
Ref: +0
Will: +0
STR: 10 DEX: 10 CON: 10 INT: 10 WIS: 10 CHA: 10

The Paula Abdul Block forces include:

CitiDef Patrol (6 units)

Class: Citizen (Citi-Def)
Level: 2



Unit Size: 300
Unit Leader: None
HP: 660 (Con bonus)
Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)
DV: 13 (+3 Lightning Reflexes)
DR: 8 (Shell Jackets)
Attacks: Melee - +3 (club) 1d8 AP 0
Ranged - +3 (stump gun) 2d6 AP 2
Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (stump)
Fort: +2
Ref: +3
Will: +1
STR: 10 DEX: 10 CON: 10 INT: 10 WIS: 10 CHA: 10

Gangs (6 - Paula Abdul Block Cloggers, John Brown's Body Society, Red Kang, Blue Kang, Da Bruddaz, Bob's Flippant Folks)

Class: Citizen
Level: 1
Unit Size: 100
Unit Leader: None
HP: 100
Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)
DV: 13 (+3 lightning reflexes)
DR: 4 (padded)
Attacks: Melee - +3 (club) 1d8 AP 0
Ranged - None
Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Fort: +0
Ref: +0
Will: +1
STR: 10 DEX: 10 CON: 10 INT: 10 WIS: 10 CHA: 10

ONE-SHOT ENCOUNTERS

Eye-Witless News

Synopsis: A young reporter is looking for her break through story - on about judicial abuse

Description:

A reporter and her camera man begin following the judges as they may their arrests. They film them and interview bystanders to get information on the judges and their overly harsh treatment. Eventually they will try to interview one of the arrested perps. The pair will be present at many of the judge's arrests and encounters. Initially, it will be just as spectators but they will get more intrusive as time goes on - eventually Emily will accost the judges after one of their arrests and charge them, in front of a rolling camera, with police brutality. This one-shot should come up after a day of rough encounters - play up their appearance. They should be the cherry on top of a sundae of really annoying events!

Dramatis Personae:

Emily Scoop, a cub reporter for Channel 647 Eye-witless News, is looking for the story to take her to stardom, the anchor desk and, eventually, the day time talk circuit. She's decided that a reported case of judicial corruption would be just the thing. So,

she's taken a week's vacation and, along with Animal, her boyfriend/camera man, she has decided to follow our judges.

Special Notes:

When Emily interviews a perp, this should be the time for the judges to pick her and Animal up for interfering with a judge. If not, the next event will turn into a hostage situation - Emily will be grabbed by the perp as a shield against the judges.

The Lollipop Guild

Synopsis: The judges encounter one of the youngest juvie gangs operating in the city.

Description:

The one of the judges hears the sound of a baby crying accompanied by the laughing of a group of children. Coming around a corner, the judges see a woman holding a crying infant. She is backed up against the wall by a group of children who appear to be taunting her and waving large lollipops at her. The woman is obviously afraid and, when she sees the judges, she screams for help. On hearing her scream, the children turn around, see the judge, and scatter. Due to their small size, the children are able to flee into air-shafts that are too small for an adult.

As these children are all between the ages of 4 and 7, some are not coordinated enough to effectively elude the judges. Any that are picked up will immediately begin crying and wailing - accusing the judges of "hurting my widdle hand" or something similar. This will have the effect of gathering a crowd who will immediately side with the children against the judges. Depending on the circumstances, this may turn into a riot.

The children are easy to interrogate and the woman is quite willing to talk. The gang, called the Lollipop Guild, hangs around in this area and extorts candy, muncie, sugar, umpty, or creds from those in the area. Their hide out is in a old furnace room from which the furnace was long ago removed. Their escape tubes lead here.

In the furnace room are the wrappers of their ill-gotten gains, soiled diapers, and children sleeping off their sugar and umpty binge.

Dramatis Personae:

Clive Younger is the leader of the Lollipop Guild. He's 7 years old and the younger brother of Knotso Younger who is currently serving a five year stint in the iso-cubes for extortion.

Special Notes:

There are no stats for the children or their lollipop "weapons" as this encounter should be easily handled without combat. If necessary, treat all the children as normal people with 1/4 average stat values.

Recommended Experience: 20 xp per judge for the encounter; and additional 80 xp each if the hide out is located and the entire gang rounded up.

Written by J Michael Tisdell

RPG Adventure



The Return of the Rat King An Adventure for d20 Modern

An Old nemesis returns. This time he has the financial backing of a major corporation. Can the heroes stop him? Will he escape again?

Levels

To organize and run the following adventure, the GameMaster (GM) needs a copy to the d20 Modern rulebook. Read through all the accompanying text. Pay special attention to any GM characters, both their personalities and motives for non-combat characters, or any special abilities or feats for combat characters. Make sure you are familiar with the rules for combat and movement.

This scenario is an adventure based for a group of 4 fourth level heroes. The scenario may need to be customized to fit a higher-level group or a group with more or fewer players. Text written in italics (*italics*) should be read aloud to the group. Opponent's statistics are provided in short form. This scenario takes place in a large city, mostly in an office building. The scenario assumes that the group is working for D7, but with little modification the players could be working for any large organization or even be independent agents.

Most information provided beyond this point is not appropriate for players in your campaign reading could give them unfair advantage and potentially ruin the scenario for them. If there are incremental skill checks for either diplomacy or gather information and the characters get a higher roll, assume that the information at the lowers checks are also available to them.

Synopsis

This scenario assumes that the players successfully completed the Rise of the Rat King scenario in the last issue of *Fictional Reality*. The scenario could be easily reworked if that is not the case, but the players will not have the emotional impetus to stop the Rat King. Since the players should be at level 4 to complete this mission it is assumed that they have had some adventures between the last meeting with the Rat King and now.

The Rat King has been busy since the heroes last confronted him, he took what he had left of his stolen loot and turned it into control of the powerful Tonaw Corporation. He had his rodent friends steal information to black mail various members of the board and gained majority control of Tonaw. He is now the enigmatic CEO of Tonaw, under the alias of Mr. Benjamin. Oddly enough no one in the corporation has seen Mr. Benjamin, his office is kept conspicuously dark and he enters well before anyone arrives and leaves well after everyone is gone. Under his leadership Tonaw headquarters has developed something of a

rodent problem, but exterminators are never called and the workers seem to have gotten over it.

Now that he has control of Tonaw, the Rat King is using his rats to grow his corporate empire gathering information on his competitors and undercutting their bids, recently he has shown he is not above sending his minions to sabotage the competition and that is what has gotten d7 involved. Accidents at the Tonaw competitors have finally led to two fatalities. Before each one, the plants mentioned a rodent infestation and safety controls gnawed through.

Further Background on the Rat King

The rat king was born to wererat parents. He was born hideously deformed and could not assume a human form. As was the custom for wererat society he was left in the sewers to die. By a stroke of luck, he was found by city workers in the sewers and left at an orphanage. But because of his disgusting appearance he was mocked and beaten by his peers and abused by the cruel staff. The rat king befriended the rats that lived in the orphanage and with their help escaped to the solitude of the sewers.

Character Hooks

The Characters hear about the accidents from a newspaper article and opt to investigate

Workers die at Fortuna Inc.

In the second fatal accident in manufacturing sector this month a dock worker at Fortuna Inc. was crushed to death in an apparent forklift accident. OSHA inspectors point to an uncontrolled rat infestation eating through cabling as the source of the accident and have heavily fined Fortuna. Between Fines and Civil suit Fortuna may have to declare bankruptcy.

The characters are ordered by their superiors to investigate. The hulking Agent Smith walks into the break room.

"Well I hope you've recovered from the last fiasco, you called a mission and are ready for your next assignment. I need you kids to investigate and see what you can find out about these accidents at major manufacturing plants."

Beginning the Adventure

The heroes' research should result in finding out that all major manufacturing plants in the area have been hit with major accidents or financial problems, and all have experienced rodent infestations with the exception of Tonaw Corp. After they report this to Smith.

"Well looks like you kids are going undercover. Infiltrate Tonaw and see what's going on there. We should be able to get you hired in there as something."

DARWIN'S WORLD

POST APOCALYPTIC ADVENTURES

"I do not know what weapons will be used in World War III, but I assure you that World War IV will be fought with stones."

-Albert Einstein



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If the heroes requisition equipment, don't be too generous. False identification, cover uniforms, is all the equipment they'll really get. As far as jobs for Tonaw are concerned have them hired on in positions that match their former profession or that match their skill sets. It won't be necessary to have them all working in the same department.

A. Week 1 at Tonaw

So far you have all worked at Tonaw without many results. One of your coworkers invites you and your friends to a bar on Friday where most of the Tonaw corporate staff likes to chill at the end of a hard week.

If the heroes decide to go and decide to gather information from their coworkers

Gather Information Check	Information
14+	The corporation has been able to underbid just about every contract they are competing for with the competition. Mr. Benjamin is a strange CEO. No one has seen him or knows what he looks like. Though a few (obvious liars) have seen him and give strange details about his appearance and habits.
18+	The rat infestation at the headquarters building began soon after the new CEO took over.
22+	A few marketing guys think it's strange how fast the contracts for unexpected work get written. It's almost as if someone knew the competition couldn't fulfill the contract and wrote them ahead of time.
26+	The last CEO left after he was found out to be having an affair and having Tonaw pay for her flights for their rendezvous'. Mr. Benjamin took his place soon after.

B. Week 2 at Tonaw

The second week at Tonaw begins much like the first. The characters should be performing some investigation of their own to try to find evidence of criminal activity on the part of Tonaw. The noise the rat's make will provide a -2 distraction penalty to all skill checks the heroes make the first 7 days they are in the Tonaw building. At Day 8, they may make a will save (17+) to adjust to

the noise and disregard the penalty. After a successful save the hero will not have to save again as the sounds are just background noises to him now. At some point during the week the character whose investigation has been the least quiet gets a cryptic email.

"I've seen some of your non-business activities here at work. I think we may have the same goals. Meet me in the company courtyard at 10pm tonight."

C. Simon

If the heroes decide to investigate the mysterious email they will encounter a strange individual known as Simon. He is hiding in the shadows, (spot check 18+ to see him). After he comes out into the moonlight, they see a young dark haired man. On an Int check of 15+ the heroes will recognize him as an employee they have seen around the building. On an arcane lore skill check of 20+ they will realize he isn't exactly human, on a 30+ they will recognize him as a wererat.

The players will interview him and he will claim to only be interested in bringing out the truth of Tonaw.

Sense Motive Check	Result
15+	Simon has more interest in the CEO than bringing out the truth.
17+	Simon seems overly concerned with disposing the CEO.
22+	But, He is awfully concerned about the safety of the man he hopes to bring down.

The heroes will have to convince Simon that they have the best interest of the community at heart and will not attempt to use any information he gives them for financial gain. If they do so they will receive a thick stack of documents implicating Tonaw and specifically Mr. Benjamin in blackmail, fraud, and other illegal business activities.

D. Bringing Down Tonaw

Now that the heroes have information they need to close down Tonaw. They need to decide how to approach it. They cannot distribute it freely, besides the public is very unlikely to believe story about rodent spies. But the heroes need to find a way to bring

the Sabotage and corporate espionage out into the public, before the rat king has any more people killed. However they decide to do it, the results will be almost immediate and the rat king will hole him self up in his corporate tower. D7 cannot allow the civilian police to get their hands on the Rat King, the heroes have to capture him fast before anyone else.

You are called into Smith's office. Smith's face is drawn and grave, he speaks not in his usual jocular fashion but serious manner you haven't send before, "He has holed him self in his office at Tonaw He. We cannot allow Mr. Benjamin to get into the hands of civilians who knows what kind of freak he is and what that might do to the public. He is still at his headquarters find him and bring him in before the cops do."

E. Tower Climb

The heroes will have to go through several floors of Tonaw HQ to make it to the Rat King. The Rat king is on the 20th floor. The building has 3 elevators. Elevator A usually stops at floors 1-10. Elevator B usually stops at Floors 6-15. Elevator C usually stops at floor 1-20.

However the rat king has made himself harder to get to. Elevator A stops only on odd floors (1-10), Elevator C only stops on even floors (2-20). Elevators A and C have a relationship that Elevator C is always on the floor double the floor Elevator A is at (i.e. If elevator A is on Floor 1 Elevator C is on Floor 2; A Floor 6, B floor 12). Elevator B can only go to the floors (6-15) wholly divisible by 3 (i.e. 9,12,15). Elevator A starts on the 1st floor, Elevator C the 2nd floor, and Elevator B on the sixth.

The basic layout of every floor is very similar, mostly cubicle work areas with 2 large executive offices on the North Side. For every floor the heroes stop on except the first roll on the following table.

Roll (d20)	Floor is inhabited by:
1-4	7 rat swarms (Hp 8, 9, 10, 10, 10, 11, 12)
5-8	4 dire sewer rats (Hp 15, 16, 16, 17)
9-11	6 dire sewer rats (Hp 15, 15, 16, 16, 17, 17)
12-14	2 wererat guards (use Wererat fast hero example) (Hp 13, 14)
15-17	14 rat swarms (Hp 7, 7, 8, 8, 9, 9, 10, 10, 11, 11, 12, 12, 13, 13)
18-19	8 dire sewer rats (Hp 14, 14, 15, 15, 16, 16, 17, 17)
20	4 wererat guards (Hp 12, 13, 14, 15)

The creatures on the floor immediately more to block the heroes path and will fight to the death. It is up to the GM, but each floor will have some amount of concealment (between ¼ and 9/10) as many of the lights have been knocked out. The heroes may choose to avoid the elevators but the stairs are blocked between floors 1 and 2; 5 and 6; 7 and 8; 19 and 20. If the heroes choose to use the stairs the creatures rolled for that floor will still attack them.

Showdown

The heroes find themselves in the main office of Mr. Benjamin. The office (90 feet x90 feet) is cluttered with Furniture. He has a whiskey bottle in one hand and a revolver in the other. He is obviously drunk.

"I knew I should have taken care of youss...This time you won't be so lucky, I won't have the kidss, do my dirty work, time to die."

At this point the fight is on. When either the last hero is down to 10 hp or less or Mr. Benjamin is down to 10 Hp or less Simon and a crew of 20 will burst into the room and the lights will go bright. Some of the 20 look like normal people and some are in a Man/Rat hybrid form. Those in Human form are in what looks like swat team gear and have submachine guns.

Simon, " I want to thank you guys for your help, but this is our matter to deal with now. You may leave."

The heroes may be reluctant to leave. Simon will explain to them that this is a problem for his kind and they will deal with it. If pressed, Simon will explain.

"It is a tradition amongst our kind. Those that are born with certain deformities are left to die in the elements. Somehow this one survived, and sought revenge against your kind and my own for the wrong that was done to him. We intend to rectify our mistake. We have seen the errors of our ways and will now embrace him as a brother and teach him that which he missed out on so many years ago."

Once you have let the tension significantly build.

The Ratking starts laughing at first it's a little chuckle then it grows until finally it is quite maniacal and disturbing.

"What's so Funny" Simon queries.

The Ratking pulls out a small device from his belt, there is a light on it flashing.

On a Demolitions skill check of 12+ or a Wis check of 15+ the hero will recognize the device as a remote detonator. An explosion rocks the building and the lights go out. There is a crash of glass and the rat king can be see hurling out the window. As the heroes run to the window (presumably to watch him fall) the see nothing. If they look up they will see him climbing a rope ladder that was just to the right of the window, he is climbing to the rooftop. And a listen check (DC 12) they will hear a helicopter approaching. Simon and the heroes will make it to the roof just in time to see him jump on to a rope hanging outside of the helicopter.

As he flies away you can hear him screaming, "I will make you pay for this, I will make all of you pay." Simon turns to the heroes, "Well let you know when we've caught him, we won't rest until we do. You can tell Smith that"

Luftwaffe 1946 Miniatures



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Conclusion

The Rat King escapes yet again. Smith isn't too concerned, with the wererats chasing him down. Smith will not reveal how Simon knew him if pressed and the heroes will notice that their reports are censored regarding that piece of information.

New Creatures

Rat Swarm

A rat swarm is a swarm of 15-20 rats. Depleting the hit points of the swarm doesn't kill all rats in the swarm, just enough to make them ineffectual as a swarm. Swarms will exist due to over population, Summoning, or a Control: Rats FX type ability.

Rat Swarm (Tiny Animal, swarm); CR1 HD 3d8 ; hp 10; Init +2; Speed 15'; climb 15'; Defense 14 touch 14, flat-footed 12(+2 size, +2 dex); BAB +2; Grap N/A; Attack: swarm (plus disease); Full Attack: swarm (plus disease); Special: Disease, distraction; Face/Reach 10'/0'; Special Qualities: Half damage from ballistic, slashing & piercing weapons, low-light vision, scent, swarm traits; Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Balance +10, climb +10, hide +14, Listen +6, Spot +7, Swim +10

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse (swarm)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, Pack (2-4 swarms) or infestation (7-12 swarms)

Combat

A rat swarm seeks to surround and attack any prey or food source it encounters. It will avoid humans, Fire, and loud noises unless controlled. (As the swarms in this scenario are.) A swarm deals 1d4 points of damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—swarm attack, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a swarm in its square must succeed on a DC 12 Will save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

Skills: A rat swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Balance, Climb, and Swim checks. A rat swarm can always choose to take 10 on all Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. A rat swarm uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb and Swim checks. A rat swarm has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line

Dire Sewer Rat

Dire Sewer Rats can either be scientific experiments gone wrong, visitors from another world, or a prehistoric creature from our own world that has avoided discovery. These creatures are omnivorous scavengers, which will retreat unless controlled or defending their nest. A Dire Sewer rat is about 5 feet long (8 feet with tail) and weighs 150-300 pounds.

Dire Sewer Rat CR3 (Medium-size Animal); HD 3d8+3 ; hp 16; MAS 12; Init +3; Speed 40'; climb 20'; Defense 15 touch 13, flat-footed 12(+2 natural, +3 dex); BAB +2; Grap +2; Attack: +4 melee (d6+1, bite) Full Attack: +4 melee (d6+1, bite); Special: Disease ; Face/Reach 10'/0'; Special Qualities: low-light vision, scent; Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Balance +3, climb +12, hide +8, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +12

Feats: Alertness, Toughness, Dodge, Weapon Finesse (bite)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or pack (2-10)

Advancement :4-5 (Medium);6-10 (Large)

Combat

Unless controlled or defending its nest the Dire Sewer Rat will avoid combat with creatures it does not view as food. When attacking, members of a pack will simultaneously attack different targets in hopes to overwhelm its prey.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever--bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

Wererat (Template) (copied from the Arcana SRD)

Wererats retain whatever languages they spoke before they contracted lycanthropy. They are generally 5 to 6 feet tall and weigh 125 to 150 pounds.

Template Traits

Wererat is a template (usually acquired by contracting lycanthropy, but very occasionally inherited when two wererats mate) that can be added to any humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the character). A wererat uses the character's statistics and special qualities in addition to those described below.

Challenge Rating: Same as the character +2.

Hit Dice: Same as the character plus the dire rat's base Hit Dice (1d8).

Speed: Same as the character while in humanoid form. In hybrid or rat form, speed becomes 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Defense: Same as the character while in humanoid form. In hybrid and animal form, the creature gains a +1 natural armor bonus to Defense. This bonus does not stack with other natural armor bonuses.

Base Attack: Same as the character.

Grapple Bonus: Apply modifiers for Strength and size depending on the lycanthrope's form.

Attacks: Same as the character while in humanoid form. In hybrid and rat form, a wererat attacks with its bite, dealing 1d4 points of damage plus its Strength modifier.

Special Qualities: A wererat retains all the special qualities of the character and gains the additional special qualities listed below.

Alternate Form (Su): A wererat can assume rat or hybrid form, but its gear is not absorbed into the new form. The bipedal hybrid form is about 5 feet tall, with a long tail and thin fur. The limbs are human, but the head looks like a rat's. Changing to or from rat or hybrid form is a move action. Upon assuming either form, the wererat regains hit points as if having rested for a day. A slain wererat reverts to its humanoid form, although it remains dead. Afflicted wererats find this ability difficult to control. The rare natural wererat has full control over this power.

Curse of Lycanthropy (Su): Any humanoid bitten by a wererat's bite attack (in rat or hybrid form) must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or contract lycanthropy.

Damage Reduction 15/Silver (Su): A wererat in rat or hybrid form ignores the first 15 points of damage dealt by a nonsilver or nonmagical weapon but takes full damage from silvered weapons or weapons with +1 or better magic bonus.

Scent (Ex): This ability allows a wererat in rat or hybrid form to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Rat Empathy (Ex): A wererat can communicate with rats in any form and gains a +4 species bonus on Diplomacy checks when influencing a rat's attitude. A friendly rat understands and heeds simple commands, such "wait," "watch," "flee," and "attack."

Darkvision (Ex): In their rat and hybrid forms, wererats have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Allegiances: An afflicted wererat gains the law and evil allegiances (displacing other allegiances, if need be). They also generally gain an allegiance to other wererats, although this need not be the primary allegiance. The allegiances to law and evil can be removed only when the wererat has the ability to control the curse of lycanthropy by taking 10 on a Control Shape check.

Saves: Same as the character, with a +2 species bonus on Fortitude and Reflex saves.

Ability Scores: Wererats gain the following ability score in-

creases: Dex +6, Con +2. In addition, they gain the following ability score increase in hybrid form: Str +2.

Skill Bonuses: Same as the character, with a +4 species bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks when in humanoid form. In rat or hybrid form, these bonuses increase to +8. A wererat in rat form also gains 3 ranks in Climb, 4 ranks in Hide, and 3 ranks in Move Silently.

Bonus Feats: Same as the character. A wererat gains the bonus feat Weapon Finesse (any one eligible weapon) in humanoid form and the bonus feat Weapon Finesse (bite) in rat or hybrid form.

Wererat in Humanoid Form (Human Fast Hero 1): CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2 plus 1d8+2; hp 13; Mas 15; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+5 Dex, +3 class); BAB +0; Grap +2; Atk +5 melee (1d4+2/19–20, knife) or +5 ranged (2d6, Colt Python); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+2/19–20, knife) or +5 ranged (2d6, Colt Python); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ alternate form, rat empathy; AL law, evil, wererats; SV Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +0; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 21, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Balance +9, Climb +11, Escape Artist +9, Hide +10, Knowledge (streetwise) +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Search +3, Spot +4, Tumble +9.

Feats: Dodge, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Finesse (knife).

Possessions: Loaded Colt Python (.357 revolver), knife, casual clothes.

Advancement: By character class.

Wererat in Hybrid Form (Human Fast Hero 1): As humanoid form except: Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; Defense 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+5 Dex, +1 natural, +3 class); Grap +3; Atk +5 melee (1d4+3/19–20, knife) or +5 melee (1d4+3 plus lycanthropy, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+3/19–20, knife) or +3 melee (1d4+3 plus lycanthropy, bite); SQ curse of lycanthropy, damage reduction 15/silver, scent, darkvision 60 ft.; Str 16.

Adjusted Skills: Listen +8, Search +7, Spot +8.

Adjusted Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite) instead of Weapon Finesse (knife).

Wererat in Rat Form (Human Fast Hero 1): As humanoid form except: Small humanoid; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; Defense 20, touch 19, flat-footed 15 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +1 natural, +3 class); Grap –2; Atk +6 melee (1d4+2 plus lycanthropy, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+2 plus lycanthropy, bite); SQ curse of lycanthropy, damage reduction 15/silver, scent, darkvision 60 ft.

Adjusted Skills: Climb +14, Hide +18, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Search +7, Spot +8.

Adjusted Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite) instead of Weapon Finesse (knife).

Mr. Benjamin (a.k.a the Rat King)

Mr. Benjamin (Wererat in Hybrid form (no human or rat form)(Human Fast 2/Tough 2/ Telepath 2) CR 8;Medium Humanoid;

HD 3d8/2d10/2d6 +30; hp 60; Mas 21; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +7 class); BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/20, club) or +7 ranged (2d8, S&W M29); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/20, club) or +7 ranged (2d8, S&W M29); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ alternate form, rat empathy; AL law, evil, wererats; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6; AP 5; Rep +3; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 18, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +4, Search +4, Spot +4, Balance +8, Bluff +7, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +4, Disguise, Escape Artist +10, Gather Info +4, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +6, Move Silently +11, Sense Motive +5

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Combat reflexes, Defensive martial Arts, Dodge, Improved Damage Threshold, Simple Weapons

Proficiency, Wild Talent, Weapon Finesse (Club).

Possessions: Whiskey Bottle (Club), S&W M29 (.44 magnum revolver) 12 rounds of .44 ammunition, Business Suit, Rat King outfit, Street Disguise

Power Points: 10

Telepath Powers: Burst, Daze, Far hand, (The following apply to rat's and wererats only, they are half cost and considered ¼ their level) Forced Mindlink, Domination, Mindprobe

Written by Gabriel Ratliff

PAINTED BY MAHON



'HASSLEFRIESIAN'



So who are we then??

We are a fairly new company run by Kev and Sally White. Currently based in a sleepy village in the UK.

Kev is the in-house sculptor (Privateer Press, Celtos, GZG and a few others) and Sally (thats me) does EVERYTHING else. And i mean everything!

We produce good quality figures suitable for painting, RPG's, collecting and wargames

Somewhere in this magazine is a nice big ad with some cool painted pics of our figures (credits below), but for all of the latest news, gossip, pics & 'heads-up' on future releases then feel free to visit the 'Forum of Doom'

<http://www.heresyminiatures.com/forumofdoom/phpbb2/index.php>

If you feel the need to buy then dont let me stop you! Go direct through us or keep an eye out for yet another ad that lists our friendly retailers.

You can find us online at www.jenova.dk/hassle/front.htm or email us at hfpromo@hotmail.com

Thanks for reading,

PAINTING CREDITS

- HFD002. 'Kristian,' male dwarf. Painted by Christian Weiss. www.battlefield-berlin.de/
HFG002. 'Kjaran', male grymn sergeant. & HFM002. 'Axenarf', armoured ogre. Painted by Mahon. www.chestofcolors.com
HFF003. 'Tiriell', kneeling female paladin. Painted by Zaphod. www.minipainting-guild.net/
HFF004. 'Anghela', female dwarf. Painted by Saxonangel. www.blackmoor.ca
HFC004. 'Osato', Shaolin monk. & HFD002. 'Svala, Female dwarf warrior. Painted by Michael Garcini
HFX003. 'Imogen', Winged demonette with flaming sword. Painted by Mikkel Nyboe. www.headblast.de

PAINTED BY JENOV A



'LIBERTEE'

Game / Product Reviews



BASICS

Dracula's Revenge is a new board game from Green Ronin and Humanhead Studios. The game takes place in England after the events of Bram Stoker's novel and builds upon the basic theme that Dracula is amassing a hoard of minions in the tunnels under the city and must be stopped. It is packaged in a pretty tightly packed and weighty (for its size) box that measures about 5" x 8". You'll be set back \$29.95 USD to go on this vampire hunt in merry old England.

COMPONENTS

Inside the box you'll find a small (about 4.5" square) 32-page rulebook, twenty board tiles, two quick reference cards, bunches of counters (standees) and cards representing vampires (and their minions) and hunters, plastic stands to hold the character standees and nine more d6 to add to your collection.

The board sections each depict part of the tunnels under the city and they can be put together in what is probably an unlimited number of ways. They seem pretty sturdy and should hold up well under normal use. The cards and standees are printed in color on heavy card and feel like they are plastic-coated. I'd expect them to really hold up well.

THE GAME

The rules of the game are actually quite simple and will take but a single reading to pretty much get down. You'll refer to the quick reference cards more than digging through the book to find some obscure rule. Everything is pretty black & white and not too hard to wrap your brain around. Movement and combat is taken care of with each figure (cardboard standee) having a set number of action points. It takes 1 to Move & Turn, 2 to perform a Ranged Attack, etc. You can increase the amount of action points you get to use through the use of Reaction Points, which each player gets a random number of each turn. So, you can end up thinking that you have your prey cornered only to have them attack with a last ditch effort for survival. I liked this touch of not always knowing if your opponent was really "all done". The sequence of activation is handled with Action Cards, one representing each standee. These cards are used to build a timeline of activity for each player's troops. You have to make strategic decisions on who you want to act when and try to figure out when your opponent is going to do what. Combat is also simple with both combatants rolling a d6 plus adding either an attack or defense bonus and the high roller winning. There are rules for vampires feeding and mesmerizing and the heroes using a stake, crossbow or crucifix but none of these rules are difficult to grasp or use in the game.

The book contains five scenarios that pit Van Helsing against the foul minions of Dracula and eventually against the big man him-

self. Each of these scenarios has a mission, a force list and some special rules that make it a bit more unique when compared to the others. You'll probably be able to play through all five of them in a couple of sittings so building your own scenarios is definitively in the cards.

The game ended up feeling somewhere in between a more classic board game and a miniatures game that happens to use a board. It felt a bunch like Space Hulk in its versatility of having different board setups and point costs for troops so you could build your own scenarios.

VALUE

If you're looking for a light board game that still has a nice dose of strategy and tactics and like the horror theme then give Dracula's Revenge a whirl. One way to get a more in depth feel for the game, and a huge plus in my mind, is that the rules are available for free at www.draculasrevenge.com. You can check them out ahead of time and decide if the game is really for you before you plunk down your hard-earned cash. In my book, that's a really solid thing for a game company to do. In the future there is supposed to be other free support for the game and other games in the same line that will use the same basic rules and horror theme.

For me, I see this game fitting into my schedule when we have a regular rpg night or long-playing board game scheduled and someone shows up early and we want to toss some dice around and kill stuff without making a big production of things.

Review by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Dundjinni is a Java-based software program for Windows machines that can be used to create maps for your fantasy

role-playing games. It also has an adventure writing module so you can write, all in one program, a full adventure. It's published by Fluid Entertainment and is available now.

THE MAP PROGRAM

After installing Dundjinni, which went off without a hitch by the way, the first thing I did is play around with the map building part of the program. You are given a blank canvas with a map grid (or graph paper if you rather) background where you can start building your map. If you're at all familiar with programs like Photoshop you'll have some immediate familiarity here. I'm not saying that this is a full-featured photo editor but it 'feels' like many graphics programs out there and that built in familiarity will lower the learning curve. That's not to say that you have to have graphic design experience to use Dundjinni because that's not the case. Of course it will help you, but if you're looking for some computer software to build maps with then you're

probably intuitive enough to poke around and get the hang of things pretty quickly. There is a manual (as a standard Windows help file and as a pdf file) so you book hounds out there can also learn as you go that way. I hit the manual a couple of times early on myself just to speed up my learning and would advise printing it out for easy reference.

When building a map dropdown menus guide you through genre choices (just Fantasy right now), Pack selections (stuff like Castle, Temple, Village, etc...) and Types of graphics (these are your specific floors or beds or treasure that you'll drop on the map). Everything is usable with everything else so if there is a bed in the Village pack that you want to drop into the castle or dungeon that you're building go for it. The dropdown menus simply categorize objects into where you'd most likely find them.

There's also a spot for user created objects and you'll find tons of them on the Dundjinni website already and more are being built by users all the time. I spent a few hours on the site increasing my library of objects and it was time well spent, especially considering that I can barely draw a stick-man. Just be sure to give proper credit to the designers of these objects if you use them on a map that you toss up on the web. You can create your own graphics in png format which means that there is a virtually unlimited number of objects that the software can support.

After first poking around the software to get a feel for things I set out to build my first map. I chose a pre-made map (Wreck Ashore from the WOTC free D&D adventure library) that I thought would be a moderate challenge for a first-timer. I wanted something that would be more than just 90-degree angles and doors but I was not ready to jump into something truly radical...yet. Anyway, within an hour or so I had built all four levels of the lighthouse and populated it with lots of furniture, dead bodies, and bunches of other stuff.

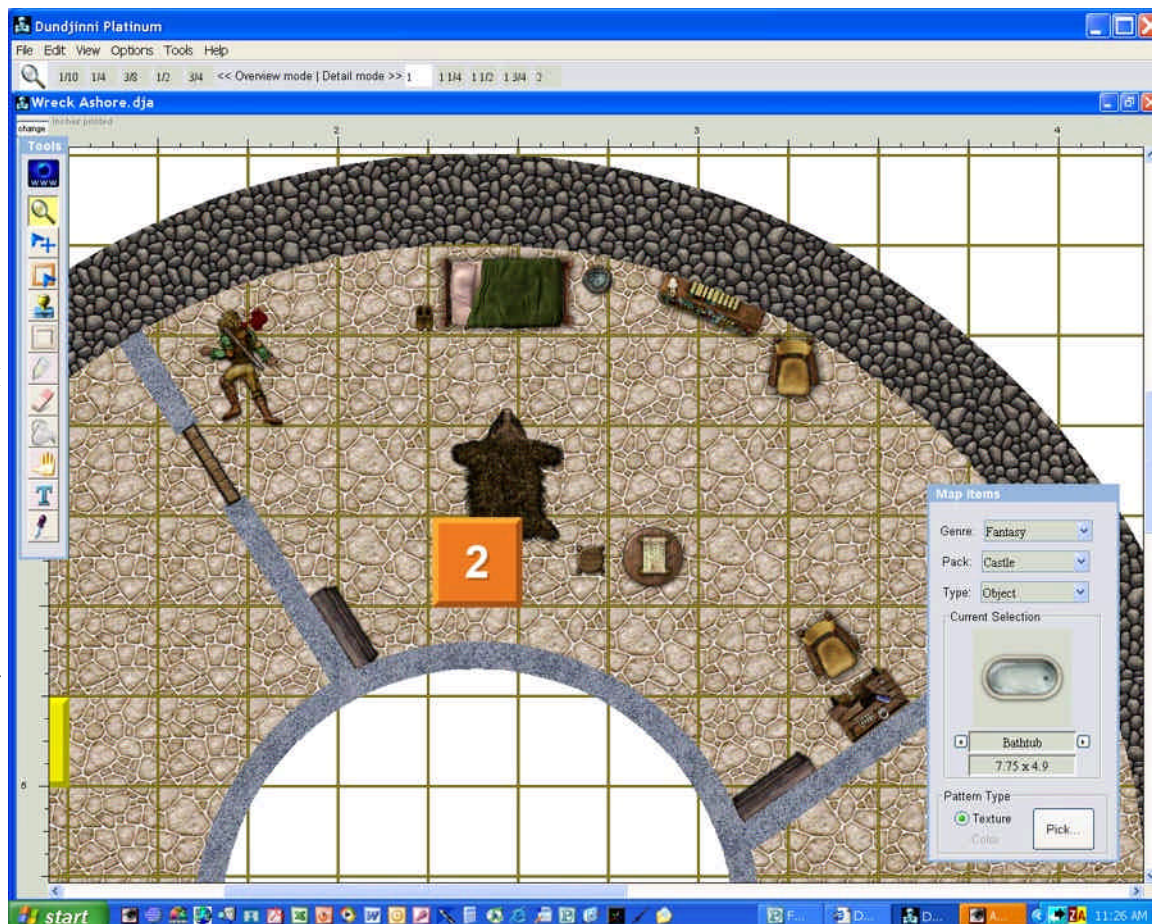
The program itself is quite intuitive and knows to link up sections of wall when you are building rooms that might not be linked up upon your initial build. Let's say that you build part of a room curved and part of it with right angles, but

you do so on opposite sections of your working space just to keep your head and layout clear until you're ready to put it all together. Grab one section of the room and drag it into place with the other and they will link up and now you can move the whole room around if you want/need to. I was definitely not expecting this to be the case but the authors of the software must have really spent some time thinking about how to make this as easy to use as possible. Once you've created a room just pick the flooring that you want and use the fill icon to "bloop, bloop, bloop" drop in the pattern and it too will link up where it needs to so the pattern is continued properly wherever it meets.

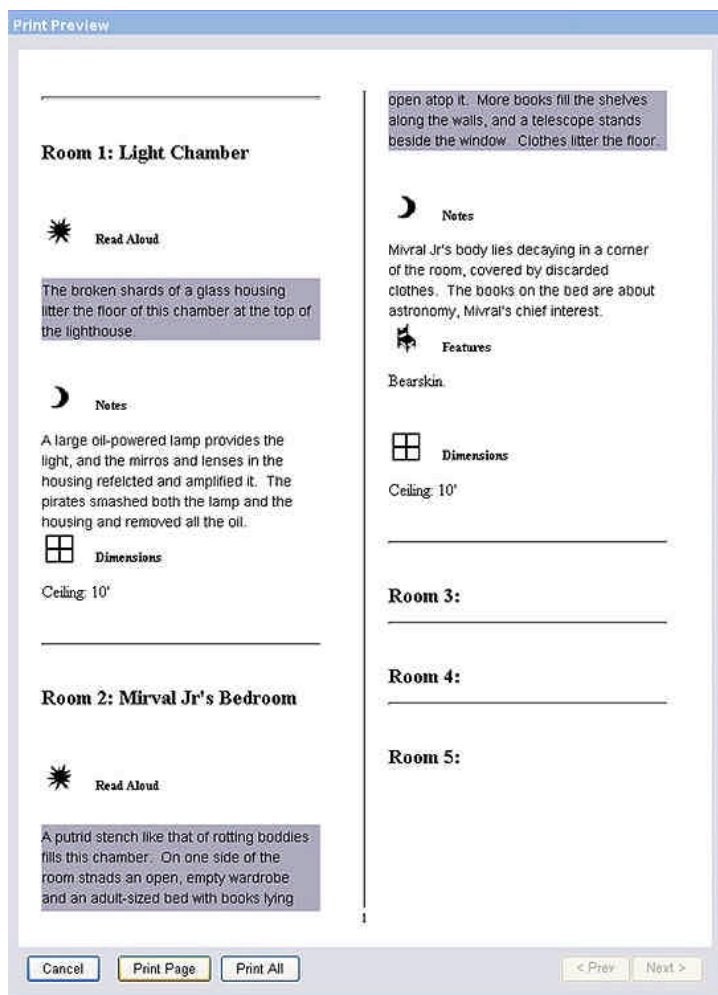
One challenge that I found myself in early on was building diagonal walls that were straight. Of course, I then found the polygon marquee tool and I couldn't be stopped. Rotating objects, duplicating them, cutting, etc... is all very easy (Ctrl-C, Ctrl-V and Ctrl-X work as you'd expect them to) and if you spend an hour fooling around with it you'll easily end up teaching yourself enough to put together even fairly complex maps. Below is a portion of the lighthouse that I built. The big '2' is the room number designator which will be further explained next.

ROOMS

Once you assign room numbers (another standard object) the program will keep track of each one and allow you to enter all of the information about the room that you would see in a standard store-bought adventure. Stuff like what text to read aloud to your players, size of the room, etc... is all there and you can fill out as



much or as little of this as you like. Below is a sample print preview of the adventure that I was working on to give you an idea of what you'll get when you print out your adventure.



PRINTING

Speaking of printing let's talk about that for a bit. Printing out the text (above) portion of your adventure is easy enough and put you out any more than printing off standard black and white pages. I'll be tossing mine into sheet protectors and putting them into a 3-ring binder for safe keeping but you could even have your local printshop put them into a simple book format if you like. The color maps are a different story though. I first saw Dundjinni's full color cardboard printouts at GenCon SoCal (almost a year ago) and they just blew me away. They looked gorgeous and I've even used those maps to play a few games of D&D Miniatures on.

When printing out the color maps the program gives you the option of printing out reference maps (1/4" or 1/2" squares) or full-scale (1" squares) ones. The reference maps will take up a full printed page per page that you've generated and are well suited for handouts or as map pages within the text of an adventure or as campaign maps to track wars, political boundaries or stuff like that. But you can't drop miniatures on a map this size. For that you need to print it out with 1" squares (there is a custom option

also, which is nice if you want to build a Mage Knight map or something similar). At full scale you'll end up with between 1 and 16 regular printed pages. I would highly suggest calling up your local printshop and seeing what kind of deal they can cut you on printing straight to cardstock. I've seen people online with stories of paying \$20 for an 11" x 17" sheet of full color printed cardstock to just paying a flat fee for computer and printer time use. I guess it depends mostly on the clerk that you talk to when you go in or call. These maps really do look best, and hold up longer, when printed on cardstock so I'd look for the best deal that you can get.

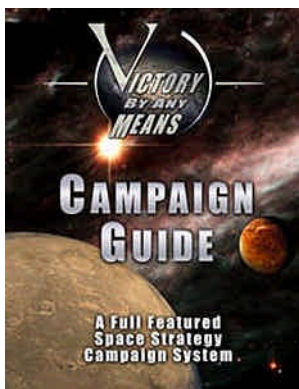
VALUE

I didn't mention prices earlier on because you have several options on how to go with Dundjinni. The cheapest is the demo version of the software which you'll get for free but it is missing some critical functions like printing and saving but after playing with this version you'll be able to decide if you want to move on to a version that you'll have to pay for or not. If you, actually I mean when you, decide to pick up a version of the software that you'll have to pay for you'll have to pick which version. I say 'when' because if you're the kind of GM that wants to create and print out your own maps I don't think you can find something better or easier than this.

The three versions (Silver, Gold and Platinum) will set you back either \$40, \$60 or \$80 and as you go up in price you get more included art packs and creature stat blocks from publishers that Fluid Entertainment is working with, but all versions let you create, print and save your maps (You can't create adventures with the Silver version though). If all you want to do is dungeon crawls then maybe the Silver set is fine for you (Dungeon and Wild art packs) but what if you're necromancer lord down at the bottom of your dungeon has a taste for the finer things in life? The Gold version adds lots of monster stats (for creating adventures) and the Platinum edition adds the Castle, Temple and Village art packs as well as more monster tokens and stats. In terms of what you get the Platinum version is the best deal if you're looking to be able to do map and adventure making all from one program. I can see using Dundjinni for all of my adventure creation needs and once a full-blown modern (or maybe future) art set is released its usefulness will only increase.

Additionally, if you're a big fan of the D&D Miniatures game you can whip out 5" x 8" terrain tiles in just minutes. For about the price of two hardback game books you can get the Platinum version of this software that I honestly feel will give you more than its price in value added to your game, especially if your group is made up of big miniature fans like mine is.

Review by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Victory By Any Means is a soft cover, spiral bound book published by the VBAM Project. The front and back covers are full color while internal illustrations are black and white. This 110-page volume is a futuristic empire building strategy game sold for \$25.00 (\$17.50 download price). This Campaign Guide is a basic system for setting up and running a space-based empire building type game. The rules allow for creating

futuristic land-based or space-based battles, but this book is specifically for the overall campaign system including exploration, resource development, political maneuvering, intelligence gathering and construction.

INSIDE

Victory By Any Means consists of six chapters and a set of appendices. The first chapter is the introduction and includes the book overview, organization, a listing of materials required to play the game, and a glossary of basic terms used throughout the book. The Chapters are titled Before the Game, Sequence of Play, Optional Rules, Source Materials, and Acknowledgements & Credits. There are about 20 pages of reference materials included in the end of the book.

Chapter 2 is entitled Before the Game. It outlines race selection, and other basic pre-game selections. One of the issues I have with the manual is its lack of personality regarding the details that make a game like this fun. The races are listed in the Source Materials, but they are simply listed as race names. There is nothing setting one race apart from another except statistics of the technology specific to the race.

Chapter 2 continues to discuss the development and setup of the game. System setup tables are included and described in detail. Several sample systems are included in the source materials. Probably the biggest decision to be made in the pre-game setup is whether or not to have a Campaign Moderator (CM). The rules allow for non-moderated games with simple objectives, but the beauty of this system is in its flexibility to be as large or small as necessary, as simple or as complex as a CM wants to make it. For example, a CM can introduce secret intelligence gathering missions to the campaign and can thus keep track of each player's results and subsequent resource gains or losses. A CM provides the ability for the game to be highly flexible.

Chapter 3 is about the Sequence of Play. It is the most detailed chapter of the book and includes all of the necessary calculations and several examples to go by. The turn sequence includes the following elements: Income Phase, Turn Orders Phase, Tech Phase, Intel Phase, Movement Phase, Combat Phase, Supply Phase, Encounters Phase, Space Combat Phase, Orbital Bombardment Phase, Troop Combat Phase, Construction Completion Phase, Update Asset Phase and End of Turn Phase. So as you see, the rules provide for a very detailed space empire scenario.

This is not a futuristic "hack-and-slash" war game.

Basic movement rules are included along with encounter rules, reinforcement rules and diplomacy management information. A nine-and-a-half page scenario example is included in chapter 3 to help learn the rules.

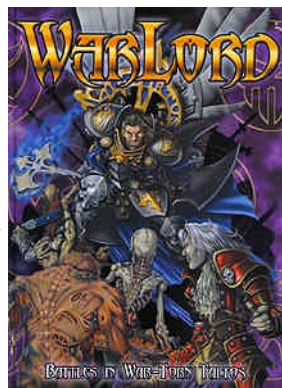
Chapter 4 is entitled Optional Rules. It includes rules and ideas to help add additional flexibility to the game. As usual, all optional rules must be discussed and agreed upon by all players before game play can begin. The optional rules include such things as Wartime Economics, Peacetime Economics, optional movement rules, black market opportunities and even a Random Events table.

Chapter 5 is the game source material. In this chapter, there are brief descriptions of the available races, their strengths, weaknesses, and general abilities. There are some sample game scenarios including scenarios for 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 or 7 player scenarios. Lastly, chapter 6 is Acknowledgements and Credits including Designers Notes and Submission Guidelines for adding source materials to the VBAM derivative materials.

VALUE

The creation of a space-based empire building campaign system is a complicated endeavor. The folks at VBAM have the basis of a very good system. I can't imagine using this system to play a non-moderated game. Patience is probably required to play this game the first few times. Hopefully, the folks at VBAM will be introducing additional materials to enhance this system. My biggest complaint is that there is no personalities in the individual races, making the game seem a bit boring or one-dimensional unless you are importing races from your favorite tabletop game, which they do recommend as a very viable way of using the system. I can see many gaming groups going with this option. If you are interested in a space-based empire building game with potential to be as simple or as detailed as you want, this is the game for you. But you will have to work very hard to setup an interesting campaign that will keep you and your player's attention. Fortunately, all of the required rules and structure for a respectable space-based game are here. Visit the VMAB website (<http://www.vbamgames.com>) for VBAM discussion, updates, battle reports, game ideas and new source materials.

Review by Larry Naeyaert



BASICS

Warlord is Reaper Miniatures' entry into the fantasy skirmish game genre. It is a 144-page hardcover book that is full-color inside and out. The game is supported by Reaper's already impressive line of Warlord miniatures.

INSIDE

Before reading anything I did a quick flip-through of the entire book to get a first impression. I was quite impressed

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to say the least. The interior of the book is printed on glossy paper and in addition to full color illustrations it boasts color pictures of miniatures painted by Reaper staff painter Anne Foerster and others. This is one gorgeous book!

The book is broken down into four main sections (Introduction, Core Rules, Playing the Game and Campaign rules) and several sub-sections within each larger part.

The Introduction section, a bit over 30% of the book's volume, starts off away from any rules or such and gives you a look at the lands of Taltos, where the game takes place. The intro looks at the land and its occupants from the view of a young man who's traveling there for the first time, just like you. Through a back and forth dialog between several characters you learn about all ten of the armies that will make up the combatants in your games. You get a view of each faction from your newfound guide but each faction also has a representative (in a sidebar) that gives you their view of each of the other factions. You end up with about two pages of information about each army, which is a bit short but it is enough to give you the main flavor of each one of them and help guide you towards which one (or more) that you'd like to play. One thing that I enjoyed was the sidebar text where you get the insiders view of things and see that just because two races might be looked at as "good" doesn't mean that they get along too well and the same goes for the "evil" or "neutral" guys. A couple of more page are devoted to more descriptive info on the land itself and then a section on role-playing in Taltos. Yes, we're still playing a miniatures game here but Reaper has seen

that there's crossover appeal to their figures (for miniature and rpg enthusiasts alike) and they've included a short section on 'porting Taltos into your rpg world and system. I think that it's very likely that we'll see more rpg-specific material in upcoming Warlord supplements but I don't expect them to be system specific. The intro ends in a sub-section on assembly and painting of your figures. Reaper is really looking at the whole-hobby aspect of their game and talk about subjects like thinning paint, effective washes, basing and more. It's a very nice section that I think all but painting masters (and mistresses) can get something out of.

THE GAME

OK, into the Core Rules now. We start off with army construction and you'll be building *troops* that is either comprised of a bunch of guys and a leader or a solo model. Leaders of your (non-solo) troops will be either Sergeants, Captains or your Warlord himself. What kind of leader you pick will determine how many guys (Grunts and/or Adepts, which are specialists) he can control and how many elites can be in the troop. Elites are things like Clerics, Heroes, Mages and Rogues. You could think of them as PC-types that have joined a fighting unit to bolster its strength or provide a specific type of support. Solos are things like monsters, solitary warriors (like an assassin) or war machines.

Warlord is mostly d10 based but also makes us of d6. Warlord also has a randomly staggered activation sequence like that of CAV. Basically, each you are given a number of cards each stand for one of your troops and your cards along with your op-

ponent's create a draw deck that is shuffled each turn and used to see who goes when. Special abilities can add more cards to your pool and thereby give you a better chance to pull off more activation's in a row or get to choose who to activate.

During each activation each model can either choose to take two non-combat actions (like moving or picking up something) or one non-combat and one combat (shoot, smash, cast a spell, etc...) action. Movement ranges range from 4" (dwarves) to 6" (lots of troopers) to 12" (gargoyles and horsemen). Combat is easily resolved by adding a d10 roll to your Melee Attack Value and needing to equal or exceed your target's Defense Value. If successful he takes a wound but may also get a Defensive Strike if you were in his front arc. As you'd expect, special abilities and other situational modifiers can affect combat. Ranged combat is similar except there is no Defensive Strike. Pretty much everything other than soldiers will have more than one wound and their effectiveness degrades as they get more wounded. Before playing the game I thought that this might turn into an excessive amount of bookkeeping but after playing just a few games I found this to not be the case at all. The expected terrain and morale rules are here along with those for looting bodies, over fifty special abilities, over a dozen spells, bunches of magic items, and special rules called stunts for leaping, climbing, fighting through doorways, pushing people out of windows and more.

THE ARMIES

Below is a very quick rundown of each of the armies. I won't mention who they like or don't like though as you need some stuff to figure out for yourself.

Good Guys

Crusaders Holy human warriors of various flavors, from scouting archers to heavily armored shock troops, backed up by magical (angelic?) lions and a Guardian Angel.

Dwarves Not too far off from standard fantasy fare here but with a definite Nordic theme to them. Yup, still slower than other armies but they have a Griffon and a Bear Rider in their army list.

Elves If you take a bit of Wood Elves, a bit of High Elf and then toss in half-elves, Giant Eagles, Centaurs and a Treeman you'll have the elves of Taltos.

Bad Guys

Darkspawn Evil nasties here, no doubt. Large demonic monsters and a greater demon bolster their forces of already evil line troops.

Necropolis Close to what you might think of as a standard *undead* army in that it contains a vampire character, wraiths, skeletons, bats, a Banshee and gargoyles.

Overlords An army that has a some undead (lich and a wight) along with evil humans and constructs.

Neutral Guys

Nefsokar Egyptian-themed undead that includes mummies, dervishes and the jackal-headed Anubis Guard.

Reptus Lizard men that have an Asian flavor to them that is comprised mostly of various types of Reptus warriors (archers, rangers, and standard grunts)

Reven

Mercenaries Bad news in all sorts of varieties including humans, a halfling, lupines (large bipedal wolf-men) and a minotaur. All could prove very useful additions to whatever base army you go with.

Other Generic

Stats are included for non-faction armies if you decide that you want to build an army other than the ten listed above. While only tournament legal if the GM approves (I would) they are perfect for casual play and have a point system for a good degree of figure customization.

CAMPAIGN

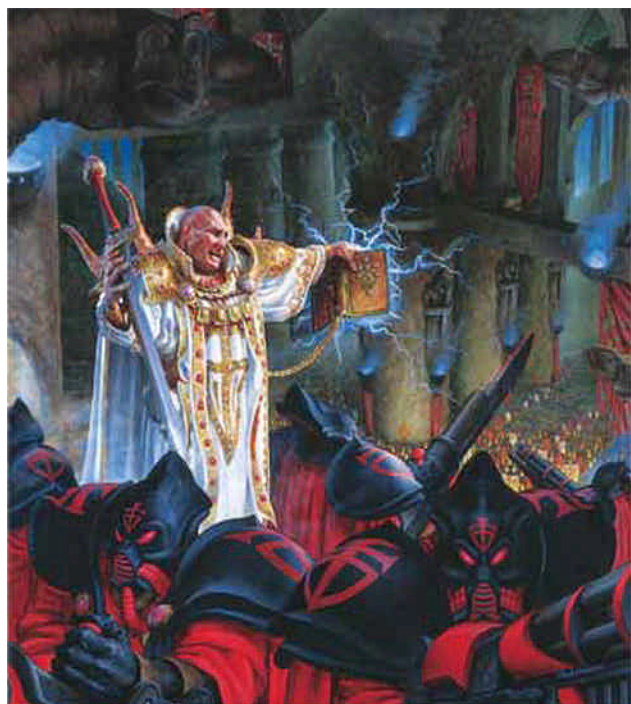
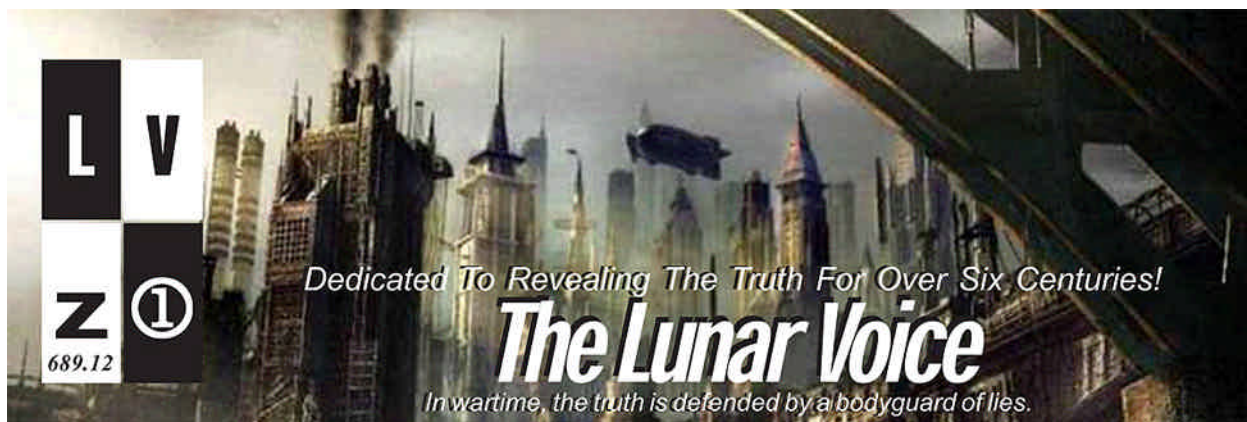
The included campaign system is more than a simple game delivery system. There is exploration, negotiation, backstabbing and bookkeeping involved, all of which suit me just fine. It will work best with multiple players and a GM (not strictly needed, but will be nice to have) to keep everyone's secret plans secret. A great addition in my opinion.

VALUE

Warlord is an easy to learn fantasy skirmish game that provided me with fast-paced battles that moved along well and were filled with action. The price of the book versus the quality of its contents is a big selling point for me and seeing that it will only set you back the cost of just a handful of blisters of miniatures it's easily worth picking up if the genre interests you. There is no index but a comprehensive table of contents starts things off and reading the book was easy and I found the rules well organized.

Another thing that increases the value of this game is the amazing array of miniatures available from Reaper. The Warlord line is constantly growing but the Dark Heaven line is just simply huge and even though it's not guaranteed that a "generic" army would be allowed in a tournament (it's up to the GM) I fully plan to keep increasing the size of my *Dungeon Monster* army (Yes, I already have made up my mind to add the Faceless Horror that is reviewed later in this issue to my motley crew of Gnolls, Hobgoblins and other dungeon denizens.) that I used in our Warlord battle report a few issues back and have plans in my head to start a jungle-themed army. I'd expect that tournament GMs will be more prone to allow any Reaper models in their games than not. Ok, maybe that's my own wishful thinking but I'll keep my fingers crossed. The binding was very sturdy and I heard not one single cracking when I opened the book and left it lying flat in several sections. I expect it to hold up very well. It's a book that I've looked forward to since playing the demo rules and Reaper has not disappointed.

Review by Mark Theurer



It was a terrifying and awe-instilling assembly as Cardinal Confessor Dominic, spiritual leader of the Brotherhood on Luna, called for the faithful to gird their armor and take up arms against the return of The Enemy.

Four hundred and sixty seven thousand faithful crammed around the Lunar Cathedral to hear his message of hope, justice and strength.

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CARDINAL CALLS FOR CALM!

Thousands lay dead, stacked like cord wood in the McCarthy Coliseum, the only building capable of housing so many casualties. Thousands more suffer horrific pains caused by the toxic smoke and severe heat that have spread through the north and western quarters of Old City Luna. There is no specific tally for the number of citizens missing at present. Indigent numbers alone, themselves not considered in the sacred census, could total in the tens of thousands according to the Constabulary. Seismic activity, hitting Luna severely this past week seem to have abated, though the explosions and fires remain a problem only now being brought under control.

The panic in Luna City is palpable. Riots and chaos spread wildly over the past four days as doom-sayers and the newly repentant clamored for protection, pleas barely audible over the cries of the suffering and dying.

In an impromptu assembly at the great Lunar Cathedral on Friday, Cardinal Durand LVXXI has called for humanity to remain calm in the aftermath of the cataclysm that has rocked Luna City for the past week. Crowding the great cathedral and spilling out into the streets beyond, hundreds of thousands of Faithful flocked to hear his reassuring words projected over the great monitors. Indeed the eyes of the systems were on their vids today. As the Cardinal's residence has sustained severe damage, it is fortunate he was offworld on a diplomatic mission to Ganymede at the time of the first explosions.

Cardinal Confessor Dominic, the ranking Curia on Luna has imposed marshal law until the current crisis has past. Brotherhood curfew is marked for 8:00pm daily and set to last until

Lunar Crisis Continues!

until 7:00am. Corporate Security personnel are requested to aid the efforts of the Brotherhood beyond their own districts. While Cartel personnel stand ready to aid in the crisis, Cardinal Confessor Dominic has not given them leave to operate within the devastated zones. At present, the causes for this catastrophe are unknown.

For six months, the Lunar Voice has been reporting on strange and disturbing incidents that have been occurring throughout the system worlds. We have been however unable to establish any connection between these incidents beyond the coincidental. From the depths of Mercury to the far reaches of Asteroid Belt and the Fringe beyond, The Lunar Voice has been recording a number of dark omens and unexplained phenomena that seem to point to one inescapable conclusion, the Dark Legion is back and has struck a blow to the heart of the spiritual center of humanity.

Cartel officials dismiss the Dark Legion theory as ridiculous, citing a number of alternative causes to be blamed. The most discussed alternative theory as to the cause of this chaos is an attack made by the Shadow Lord, the self-proclaimed Mutant King of Luna's under realms. While existence of a mutant kingdom is known to exist beyond Lost Luna, the possibility that they could amass the resources for such an attack are believed improbable.

A theory proffered by a vocal minority feel responsibility lies with the Black Apostasy, that radical Brotherhood offshoot known for its coordinated attacks on the Curia, and though this type of activity does not fit their established profile, it is nonetheless suspect.

Whatever the true cause of this crisis, natural disaster seems the last consideration. While the ravaged areas seem to have no apparent commonality between them and the locations seemed concentrated on the Old District, the chances of a series of unexplained explosions and quakes is high improbable. We will remain poised as this gruesome story unfolds.

There is an ancient saying that those who forget the past are condemned to relive it. In spite of this most ominous adage, it seems our vigilance has indeed



Corporate patrols within their own districts assess the damage from the explosions and quakes and search diligently for survivors. All corporate patrols are required to include a member of the Mission to serve as advisors and representatives of the Brotherhood.

become lax. Considered by many as little more than myth meant to keep the throngs of humanity loyal to the Brotherhood, the stories of old are very true. It is this reporters opinion that the Dark Apostles are indeed returned and their assault on humanity can no longer be denied. Stay tuned for our four part expose' entitled "The Conspiracy Within" starting next issue.

- Mikal F. Murtha

Lunar Voice Correspondent

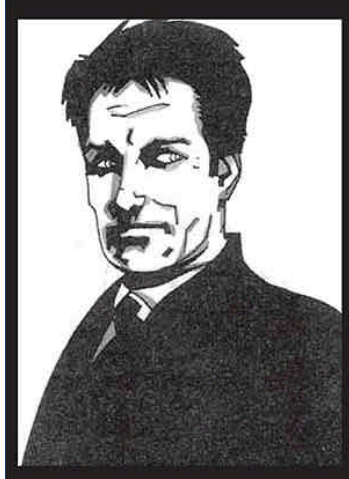
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Crisis on Luna: Day 8 **Casualties Confirmed: 11,342** **Wounded: 34,879** **Known Missing: 9,324**

According to reports posted by the Curia, the current state of the Lunar Crisis is listed above. If you have family who you are unable to locate, friends or coworkers who have disappeared, you are urged to stay indoors and let the Brotherhood do their jobs. File all missing person claims at your local Chapel.

The names of the confirmed dead and wounded are listed in continuous feed on Lunar Channel 7, and will be updated every hour until the crisis has passed.

Transit into and out of Luna City is in its sixth day of restriction.



My friends,

The current crisis on Luna is nothing short of a tragedy of the highest order. Regardless of the cause, we need to remember the important issue, the human issue. We are suffering, and in pain. The cause for this crisis can be hunted down once we have eased our wounded and buried our dead.

Cybertronic stands ready to help. We have raised more than four million Crowns for the suffering so far and strive each day to do more. We have set up collection depositories throughout the districts for your convenience. Hospices have been opened for the wounded and those seeking comfort. We have instituted an across the board 20% reduction at the Cyclon Organ Centers for the duration of this tragedy.

Now is not the time for politics as usual. Let us heal our wounds now and quell the fires raging in our city. As always, Cybertronic stands ready to help.



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Black Ship Sightings

Lunar Voice investigators have been monitoring reports which have been gaining more frequency and validity over the past year. Unidentified ships, completely alien in design, have been spotted in the shadows of the shipping lanes. When confronted, contact has been lost with the vessels who have spotted them.

In a log report from the Minos, an Imperial Argosyclass ship, a "massive shape" was moving with purpose in quadrant D13.64.2. It ignored all known hails and was, at first assumed to be a rogue asteroid. As the Minos closed in on the object it became obvious that not only was it not an asteroid, but one of the fabled Black Ships of the Dark Legion.

The Minos was fired upon and their last transmission indicated they were being boarded.

Similar sightings have been reported by numerous Corporate sources over this past year. By all accounts news of this activity has been suppressed by the Cartel, who was unavailable for comment.

According to the Brotherhood Mission, deep space listening posts have sighted far less of these ships than have been reported in known space, leading this reporter to believe the Black Ships are not using conventional routes or methods of travel.

The Capitol Naval Base on Eris has been on full alert and its premier Dreadnaught, The Patriot, has left its traditional port and taken an active patrol about Mars space. The Brotherhood has urged all space travel to be accompanied by increased escort.

Complicating these events further are the opportunistic attacks made by business rivals and corporate aggressors. In a time when we face the return of a vast enemy, our own petty rivalries have prevented us from galvanizing a resistance.

Mishiman Tsunami Fighters have been reported to have attacked Capitolian convoys while Bauhaus bases have endured numerous Capitolian assaults. The lawless castaways who have relocated to the anonymity of the Fringe have grown more proactive and bold, no doubt spurred on by the presence of the Black Ships and the chaos they have caused in the shipping lanes. Piracy is up 33% according to Cartel sources.

When confronted by this information and asked about our seeming lack of organized resistance, Cartel Director of Public Relations Cooper Voilles made this statement. "While we have established that the recent hostilities on our worlds can be attributed to the return of the Dark Legion, we can confirm that their presence is far less impressive than their first appearance. We have beaten them before when we were unprepared and innocent and now, better armed and more numerous, we are more than capable of suppressing this aggressor again. We feel their threat is a manageable one and have asked that the major corporate powers to concentrate their efforts on quelling their presence when it is discovered."

By contrast, Brotherhood Inquisitor Mavolic stated clearly a different opinion. "The threat of the Dark Legion is far more serious and life threatening than is being reported. Only by petitioning your leaders to follow the guidance of the Cardinal can this menace truly be stopped. Anything short of that concentrated effort will prove catastrophic for humanity. We must not delay further"

The Cartel has not responded officially to these claims though they have assured the LV that everything that can be done is being done. According to Mr. Voilles, "The Brotherhood is known for its apocalyptic rhetoric and should not be allowed to panic the good citizens of this system."

Whomever is right, we will keep our eyes and ears open. Since this story had been started, two new developments have occurred. The first, the Cartel has called for a Level 1 delegation be convened at Dyson Towers. The second is the untimely death of Cooper Voilles, who plunged to his death from his 97 story balcony.



In what may be considered the systems largest gala event shy of the Cardinal's High Mass, plans are underway to celebrate the 28th birthday of Princess Sakura, youngest daughter of the Overlord Mishima.

While gala celebrations are not unknown to the Mishiman executive body, the breadth of this event exceeds the scope of their previous functions. While the Celestial Plaza on Luna will be the site of the gala proper, the Rhand Pavilion and the Great Park have also been requisitioned for the event. The reason for the size and scope of the event seems routed in the wishes of Princess Sakura.

According to her attendant and media manager Konichi Osato, "the Princess was not in favor of so opulent a display of wealth and ceremony. However one does not refuse the Overlord and as a dutiful child she acquiesced to his wishes. Her acceptance was not without condition and the Princess requested that the celebration her father planned be extended to the rest of the city and lesser dignitaries."

It would seem therefore that the birthday gala planned for the Princess will be used as a political vehicle. When we asked Ms. Osato about this planned exposure, she seemed genuinely surprised and dismayed.

"For over a millennium we have seen our great corporation become more and more isolated from our neighbors and the Princess wishes that to change. She wishes for the common citizens of Luna to bear witness the grandeur that is Mishima and appreciate its culture for what it is."

Certainly this will mark the first time non-Mishiman will be able to take part in so intimate an occasion. Inside sources indicate the Sheriff of Luna was not in favor of this event but the Cardinal himself wished it. Political ploy or a turning point in Mishiman attitude, only time will tell.

BROTHERHOOD ALERT! ATTENTION FAITHFUL

Current intelligence has confirmed the presence of a foul abomination stalking the wazones of our fair system.

Believed to be the newest assault troopers spawned by the decaying evil of the Befouler, these vile monstrosities have been termed Blight Commandos.

Unlike traditional forces cataloged to serve the Decaying Lord of Filth, these undead soldiers share none of the shambling mindlessness that permeates the rest of their hordes. They are seemingly possessed of a malevolent intelligence, a remnant from the former lives as soldiers.

In what manner the Befouler has been able to spawn such a wretched hybrid of decay and intelligence is unknown. What is known is that Blight Commandos are fast, strangely cunning and utterly devoid of human emotions or compassion. They are quite simply skilled and vicious fiends.



It is therefore the mandate of the Curria that all warriors of light not leave a fallen comrade behind. Should a comrade in arms fall to the Black Bullets of the Befouler, they should be burned completely or their brains destroyed at the very least to prevent their addition to the hordes of evil.

- Arch Inquisitor Hyrum Savaggio, Opus Dei

EXE-40260



Blight Commando Tainter (1)

UPCOMING NEWS

Organized Play Leagues Starting
- International Rankings

UWZ rules in new languages
- Updates on Mars: WaW

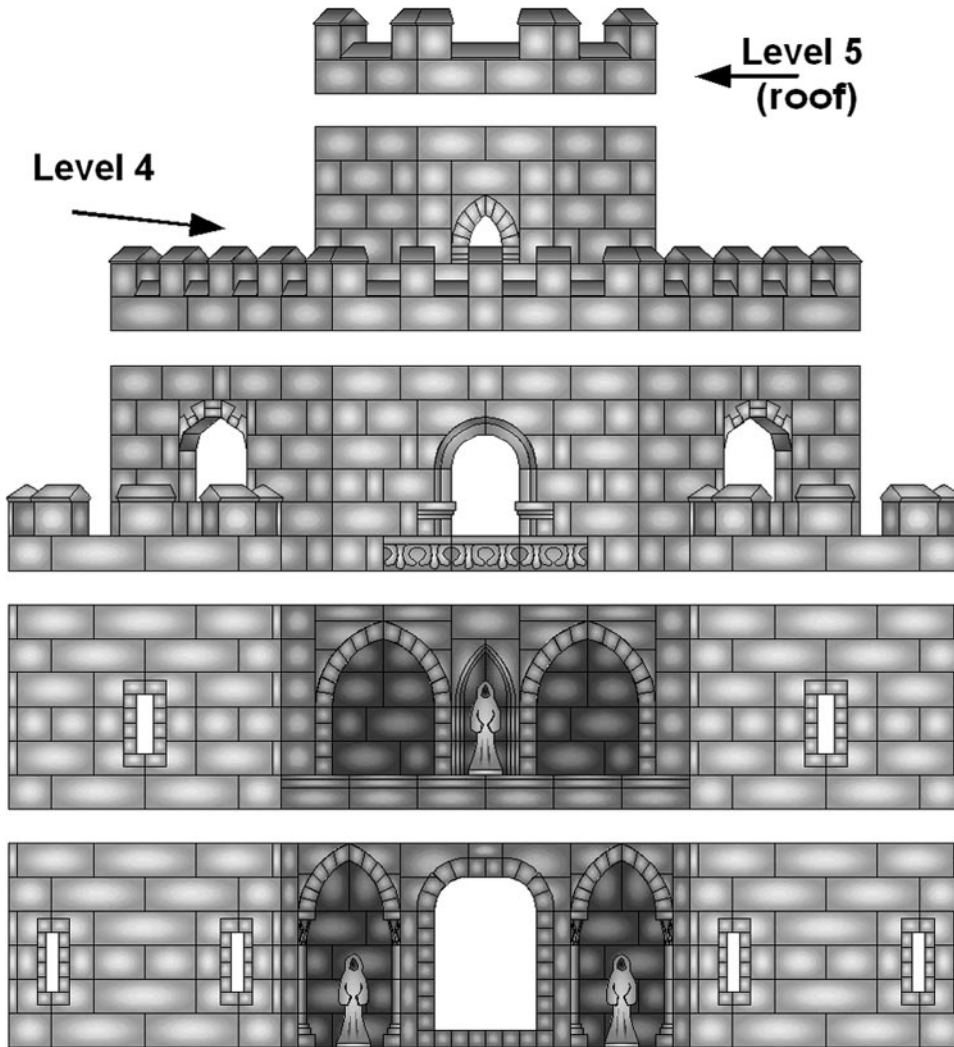
Tekron Warmasters and more new release

News & Scoops should be sent to:

Adrian Florio

Lunar Voice@excelsiorentertainment.com

Terrain Workshop



Fantasy Buildings – Part II

With the first three levels being finished (check out the last issue if you missed out and want to catch up) all that is left to do for the Minotaur Keep is the top level and the small roof piece. Of course then comes the finish work. I have found that when doing big projects, the finish work is often the real killer. My personal preference is to do all the painting after assembly. The reason for this is purely out of expediency. Nearly all the pieces I build I use for gaming, which means that they see some significant wear and tear. Because of this I'm not usually willing to put in the

extra time and effort required to do the "Paint as you go", "build for ease of painting" or "paint pieces prior to building" routines. This does lead to the disadvantage of ending up with some nooks and crannies that are very difficult to paint. But the majority of these end up falling into the – If you can't see it to paint it, then you can't see it during game time – category. The one exception I make to this rule is when I build pieces that are for display. In that case it might be worth the extra effort because it never fails for some dude, who has no idea how much time and effort you put into building that beautiful castle, to walk up and see nothing except the one spot where you didn't paint.

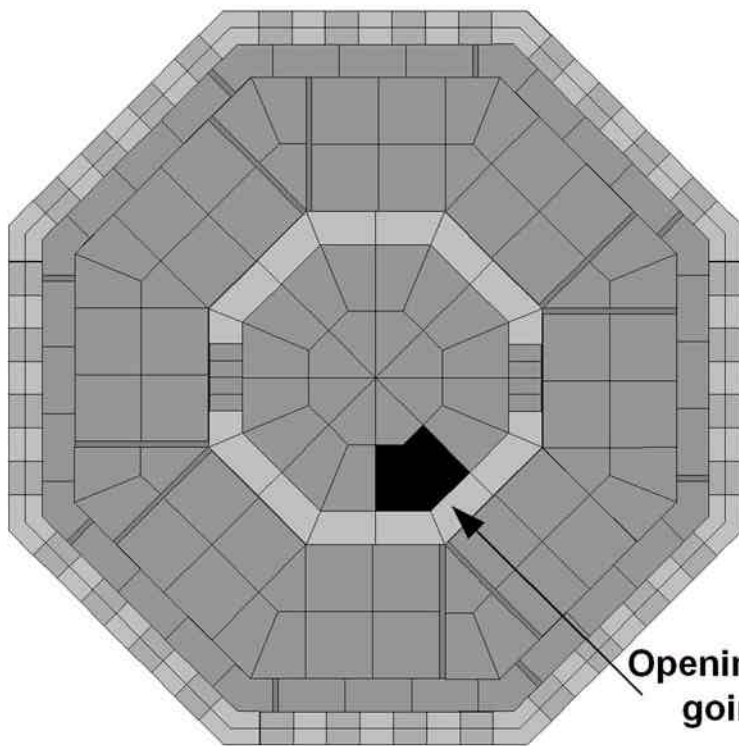
But I'm getting ahead of myself. Before I could get started building the final two pieces I had to start up my production line and run the molds a bunch of times. In this case the most limiting piece I was using was the octagonal floor tiles. Doing level three from last issue ran me out of these little guys and seeing that level four would need sixteen of each of the three varieties, and the roof another eight, I knew I was in for a few runs. My wife of course took the news with a stoic sigh as it meant another handful of days where I would be taking over her kitchen as I turned it into a Plaster Brick Factory. Of course doing only a single mold is never an option for me, so I took the opportunity to replenish my drawers with a variety of other shapes as well.

With my pieces from the Octagonal Tower replenished, and my other pieces filled to bursting along the way, I could start back up with the project at hand.

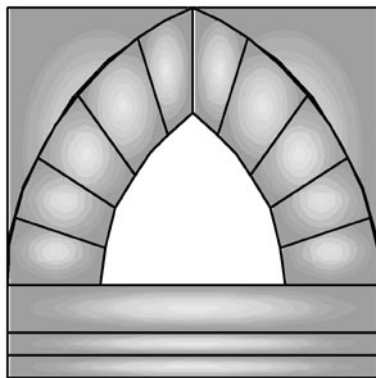
Level 4

Looking at the floor plan for this level you will see that it is very similar (at least at the floor level) to the plan I used for Level three, and it can be built using the same instructions as I used when starting out with that level. The only differences would be that this time there is a solid rim around the entire perimeter topped with crenellations, and the center room has two doors rather than one. I put two doors in purely on a whim as I decided that this room was more of a roof access point than it was a real room. There is one other difference not really shown and that is the pieces I used for the half inch wide rim just inside the outer wall. This time I used floor tiles that matched the rest of the floor

Floor Plan Level 4



tiles rather than using the smooth tiles. For the corner pieces I simply cut the corner wall pieces from the Octagonal Tower mold in half, and did some sanding (as I said in the previous issue, these bricks are too easy to work with, that cutting and sanding bricks is not much of a chore).



As shown in the level three floor plan, there was some gap filling that you will need to do for this level as well. Looking back on it, I would have to say that doing the floor for this level and level three are the hardest and time consuming parts of the project. The remainder of the work for this level was a no-brainer and was done very shortly after agonizing over the floor. The outer rim I

used regular wall pieces from the Octagonal Tower mold (filling in between the corners with standard one inch blocks) so that the floor ended up being a quarter inch below the rim. After the entire floor was completed, I then added the inner room (again done as on level three, but with a door on each side and two small windows in front and back) and the crenellations. The small window I put in was made using the small archway pieces from mold #45

was the easiest level. In fact it's hardly worth qualifying as a level, but a building does need a roof after all.

Finishing the Keep

Now for the fun part! My technique for finishing my Plaster of Paris creations has been developed through trial and error over the last several years, and I would be a fool to claim that I have tried everything or that I'm not still trying different methods. But for this project I used the techniques that I have currently adopted as my favorite. Early on I learned, as I imagine anyone painting Plaster of Paris castles would learn, these three lessons:

- 1) Plaster of Paris is very thirsty and will suck up the paint when first painted.
- 2) Castles have a whole lot more surface area to cover than the normal painter of miniatures is accustomed to.
- 3) When painting bricks, there are a whole lot of nooks and crannies that need to be addressed.

The finishing method I use does a pretty good job of tackling these issues. First, I seal the Plaster of Paris with a primer coat. I have tried different colors for different situations, but I think that black seems to give buildings the best effect (I know, using black as a primer is anathema to many miniature painters, but I maintain that Castles fall in a different category altogether). This primer coat I put on with a brush, and I am very generous with the paint. Even so, as it dries white spots will appear as the paint

with a trim piece below it. I decided not to put stairs in this room but rather a ladder access to the roof above. This I put in the middle of the room. If you are real observant, you may have noticed that the design of the crenellations on this level changed between this issue and last issue. This was for two reasons, the first is that I ended up liking the look of the current design better, and the second is that the one inch long decorative caps that you need for all of them, to be consistent, can only be found in Mold #132, and that happens to be one of the few molds I don't have yet. Guess I might have to pick that up when I get his new Egyptian mold that hit his web site not too long ago.

Level 5

The last piece of construction to do was the final roof piece (next page). This was very simple and is essentially like the plans seen for the Octagonal tower on the Hirst Arts web site. The one difference being that the access point is in the center (for the ladder) rather than on the edge. But instead of cutting a hole for the ladder, I simply glued on two shutters from the Dragon's Inn mold (mod #51) to serve as the trap door to get to the ladder below. This obviously



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Mix and pour plaster into the mold

Afterward, scrape the top of the mold with a putty knife or ruler. You can find Plaster of Paris in the paint department of any Wal-Mart or hardware store. There are other much stronger casting materials available.



After 25 minutes, remove the blocks

Think of the blocks as Legos that you'll never run out of because you can make as many as you want.



Stack and build

Since the blocks are textured on all sides (except the side you scraped), you can make a building with stone texture inside and out!



Glue the blocks with wood glue

Be sure the blocks are completely dry first. Elmer's wood glue works fine, but my favorite glue is "Aleen's Tacky Glue" which you can find in the craft department at Wal-mart. It's usually used to glue cloth.



Paint the model with latex paint

Exterior latex house paint works the best. You can also use acrylic craft paint that you would find in the craft department of most stores.

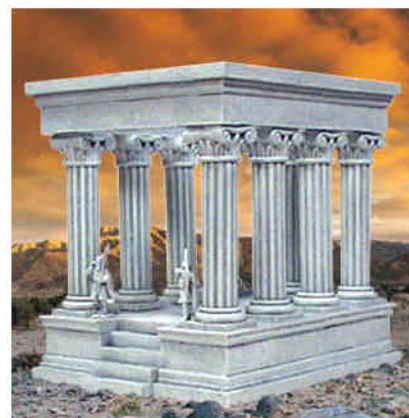
How To Use CASTLEMOLDS



Castlemolds can be used to make buildings for 28mm wargames.



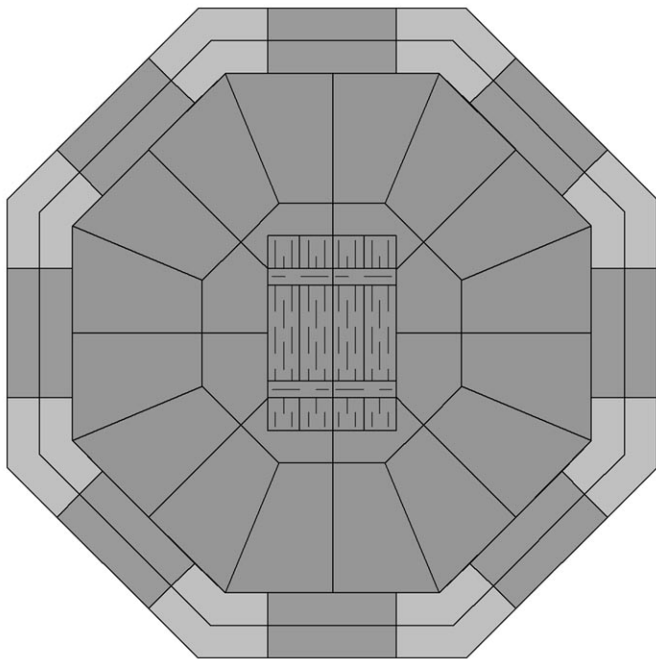
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shrinks when it dries. These spots are simply nooks and crannies either between bricks or on the brick face where the paint did not touch or adhere and was exposed when the paint dried. As long as these are not overly numerous, they are not a problem. I will sometimes go back with a touch-up second coat, but not usually. I also normally attempt to cover ALL sides of the piece just to seal the Plaster of Paris if nothing else. Since I go through a lot of paint in this step, I normally use inexpensive flat black house paint. To give you an idea, I went through the better part of a quart of paint for this one project.

Step two is applying the base color. For this step, the amount of paint used is far more reasonable, and this time you cannot allow any “spots” to get by. I have therefore grown to appreciate the usefulness of an airbrush for this step. With an airbrush I can quickly and easily get a coat of paint on that reaches places that a large brush can only dream about. As for the color, when doing castles I like using a dark grey or charcoal color as the base. For this step you have to be a tad more careful about the amount of paint you throw on. Unlike the last step, where excess paint will



most likely be sucked into the brick, for this step excess paint will pool and run down you walls. So I will normally put on two thin coats

rather than the one thick coat I put on in step one. Also, this time make sure to hit all the spots you missed in the previous step. It's not a problem if the spots end up being a slightly different shade. It's a rock after all.

Step three consists of dry brushing on the exterior color. Dry brushing these bricks is about as easy as it gets. The texture of the bricks makes them like



ultra-easy to dry brush. Once again the only hard part is getting to those hard to reach spots. The color I like to use for this step is a light grey that will contrast nicely with the dark grey used for the base. It is probably better to do this step in at least two different phases. For the first phase I use a one inch or wider brush to hit all the major areas with a lot of surface area, then going back on the second phase with a smaller brush to hit the more detailed areas. I usually even go through a third time with a long handled brush to get those pesky hard to reach spots. Each one of these phases is so quick and easy that this whole step is probably about the easiest part of the entire project. As in any dry brushing effort, be careful not to over-do it, and try to be consistent. This is the step that will define the finished look of your project.



At this point I do some finish up painting work. Normally this is pretty quick and easy since the stuff that needs color is the furnishings rather than the walls.

The only exceptions in this project was the wood trap door on top (wood has been the most common exception in all my projects), and the flames of the torches on level three and four. After that is the last step which is felting the bottom. This again is pretty easy after you do it a time or two. What I normally do is cut a piece of felt (chosen in color to best match the color of the building...the final color) the will at least cover the entire approximate base. Then I lay the piece on the bottom, and using a piece of chalk rub the edges of the castle and any openings that needs

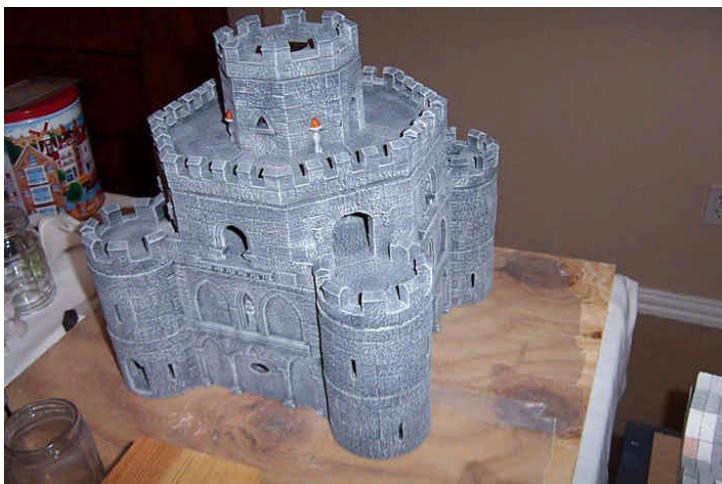


cutting. Then I do the hole's one two with the scissors (always cutting on the inside of the chalk line) and you might be amazed at how well the result-

ing piece fits the bottom of you project.



The first time, I thought "wow, that was an amazing coincidence!" After the fourth or fifth time I figured that "Hey, maybe this actually works". Ok, I'll stop. Just let me say that this works really well.



The last thing to do is put it on the game table. This of course is what its all about. Anyone that knows me at all, will also know that a major project of mine like this will debut with a scenario. This was no exception. We played a four player game complete

with Minotaurs as non-player guardians of the keep. I won't go into details (I mean we all ready have a battle report for this issue) but to make a long story short... the Minotaurs only had to watch as the rest of us killed each other. Perhaps we will have better luck next time, but at this point... the Minotaur keep yet to be conquered.



Hmm, take note of the "adult" beverage in the picture below (Just say no kids!). Maybe that's why nobody could stick to the mission of getting into the keep and fighting the Minotaurs?



Miniature Reviews



2610 Black Legionnaire \$3.99

Sandy Garrity

The Black Legionnaire is an intriguing model that has an Egyptian look to it. It is a single cast piece complete with attached base. In his right hand he holds a notched sword, and on his left is a shield emblazoned with what looks like a representation of a sphinx. He is heavily armored and wearing a tunic with what appears to be a special symbol on the chest.

The headdress, or helm, has a distinctly Egyptian flare to it and really is what makes the model different from the run of the mill figure. Flash and mold lines were moderate to light and the sword had to be straightened some. This looks to me like it would be a good special purpose NPC model.



2613 Dark Elf Sorcerer \$4.29

Sandy Garrity

The Dark Elf Sorcerer is a model with quite a bit of detail on its clothing. First off, there are many layers of armor, tabard, gloves, tunic and cloak. Each of these layers has designs or plates of sculpted on them. The result is a very complex surface which would greatly benefit from a limited color palette.

The head is surmounted with very long hair blowing in the breeze. This, combined with the detail on the clothing, breaks up the essentially planar stance of the model. This model need not be used as a dark elf, but would work well for any Baroque style wizard.



2614 Rhauga, Lich-Sage \$4.29

Bob Ridolfi

When I first looked at this figure, it reminded me of one I had seen before. A quick search of the Reaper catalog (Ain't the web a wonderful thing?) produced Galladon (#2114). Galladon and Rhauga both are wearing the same style of outfit and both are in the same pose - both are even holding a staff in their



right hand. I don't know if it was intentional, but the pair make an excellent before and after combination. The Lich is quite ghastly and boney. Combining it with Galladon, an entire dark adventure arch spills out - a party is hired by Galladon to find an artifact which turns the once good sorcerer into a Lich that now must be slain by the same group of adventurers. Well, what are you sitting there for - get busy painting up these models and writing the adventure. I'm itching to play this game!

2620 Spider Centaur \$14.99

James VanSchaik

Ok, say "Drider" so we can all get it out of our system and we can move on. After putting this model together the word "big" just stuck in my head. It's large and imposing and a pack of these will definitely



make an impression on your PCs. The legs fit onto the bottom of the spider body easily enough but you will need to do some careful bending to give them some separation and give the model a more stable platform on which to stand. No big deal but if you're looking to just drop him on the table right out of the blister you'll need to invest some more time than that as assembly is definitely required here. The human upper torso part of the model is bare-chested and carries a longsword in his right hand. His only armor is a pair of plate gauntlets. Along with the assembly came some cleaning of flash on all of the parts but there were no defects. I expect it to paint up quickly and well. At fifteen bucks a pop you'll need to have a specific use in mind when picking it (or a group of them) up but this can be easily found especially if your GM will allow you to run a drider PC or if you will be descending to confront the queen of the demonweb pits.

2636 Blacksting, Wyvern \$14.99

Bob Olley

Blacksting comes in four pieces (body/head/tail, right wing, left wing and a metal base). I would have expected more pieces for a figure of this size but fewer pieces should lead to an easier assembly. The tail has a tab that fits into the base (rocks) easily and should prove to be pretty stable as the model, with or without the wings attached, is well balanced. Flash was present on the tail and some along the spines and the mold line was visible coming down his belly.



WARLORD

BATTLES IN WAR-TORN TALTO

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I expected some cleaning would be needed so neither of these were a surprise. Both wings needed cleaning similar to that of the body but they fit into place without trouble. I would recommend pinning these if you have the time just to keep them secure in case he takes a spill. Also, regarding the wings, you'll need to bust out some putty as each of them has some small voids that need filling. The neck can be bent a little if you want to modify the pose a bit, but be careful as it's kind of thick and you could break it or deform some of the scales. Here's where I could have done with an extra piece on the model that could have allowed for a few more posing options. Overall, it's a good model that will require a bit of work out of you before being painted but it's a nice staple of D&D games so I'm glad to have it for that alone.

2639 Manticore \$9.99

G. Valley

The Manticore is a two-piece model with the pair of wings being the second piece. Although flash and mold lines where low, there is a row of spikes going down the spine that may need some tweaking to get them all straightened out. The figure has its right paw raised with claws extended. The face and head of this model have some really nice detail, but I have to say it does not look all that menacing. The face looks more like a kindly old man rather than a minion of evil. In fact except for the spikes on the back, and the bat wings, the guy looks more regal than evil. I would even go so far as to say that the model could be used to depict a Sphinx as well as a Manticore.



2646 Prince of the Undead \$15.99

Ben Siens

If you're old enough to remember the first Monster Manual from TSR, then you will quickly recognize this figure as the old Orcus - well, except that this Prince of the Undead has a bull's head rather than that of a pig. This is a very striking multi-part model - the body and head are well sculpted and fit together nicely. The wings attach to the back with a very small gap. This is a very impressive model, except for one thing: it's rather flat. This feeling comes from how the arms and wings are sculpted. Both arms are in line with the torso and the wings are parallel - the result is a rather two dimensional effect for the whole model. However, this can be easily remedied by bending either the arms or the wings into a more dynamic pose. Personally, I would probably bend the wings, as the arms are well balanced in their original position. For the adventurous converter, this model would serve as an excellent basis for a Daemonic Prince or Champion for Warhammer or Warhammer 40,000.



2654 Narglauth, Fire Demon \$15.99

Bob Olley

This is a cool figure. Narglauth is a model that stands almost four inches tall measuring to the top of his wings (2½" if you measure to the top of his head) and he comes in three pieces (two wings and the torso). He is about as demonic looking as you could possibly hope for, and he is really decked out in excellent detail. In his right hand he has a large sword that is trailing flames from the back edge. In his other hand is a whip and he has skulls and claws adorning him in a several places. I especially like the detail in his head and face. This is one bad dude that is sure to get eyes to pop out when you plop him down on the table



2655 Townsfolk III \$10.99

Bobby Jackson

his multi-pack of soiled doves is the third in the townsfolk series. Like others in this series, the figures can be used for different milieus

- from medieval to Victorian. They can serve as excellent NPC's for fantasy, western, or even Gaslight Cthulhu settings.



The first model in this pack is the madam. She is heftier than the strumpets and is more concerned with her open ledger than with attracting new clients. Though, she has not forgot how she got into this business, as the cut of her bodice reveals. The other two models are strumpets showing off their wares. One is showing off her cleavage and winking while the other has lifted her skirt to show stocking and undergarments.

All three models are well sculpted with Victorian style dresses. I would suggest painting them with deep reds and blues with many lacy white accents. These are not your common street harlots, but women of a known house.

2788 Dragon Lion \$12.99

G. Valley

The Dragon lion comes in three pieces, two wings and a torso. Basically it appears to be a dragon in the shape of a winged lion. In my mind the wings look to be disproportionably small for a creature like this, but that's just me. The torso of the model is covered in heavy scales with a ridgeline going down the spine and there is also what appears to be a mane around the neck (so don't ask me it's a reptile or a mammal). Flash and mold lines



2787 Cupid and Cherubs \$7.99

Sandy Garrity

This multi-figure pack includes four winged boys. The largest is obviously cupid as he is carrying a bow and a



quiver. He wears only ribbon where a loin cloth should be. The other three cherubs are similarly "dressed" and are sculpted in poses taken from classic art. One is standing playing a lyre, one is sitting on a cloud holding a bunch of flowers, and the third is lying on a cloud holding and resting on his elbows. I really see this only as an accessory to the Reaper Guardians of the Heavens boxed set. These four models complement very well the angelic models of the boxed set.

2795 Paladin Initiate \$3.99

G. Goumon

The Paladin Initiate model looks to be a heavily armored knight with a rich looking under tunic. His shield is strapped to his back and he is standing erect resting his right arm on the hilt of his tall slender sword. His stance gives you the impression that he is either surveying the aftermath of a battle (though if he is, he appears to have gone through the ordeal unscathed), waiting for something, or perhaps he is standing a lax guard duty. The model has very nice detail and had surprisingly little flash or mold lines.



2804 Plague Harbinger \$6.49

J. Holloway

The Plague Harbinger is a multipart model of a rather nasty personification of sickness. The model comes with its arms on a separate sprue - one holding a large axe and the other a curved knife. The lugs on the arms fit into deep wells on the shoulder of the model, providing plenty of surface for glue to adhere. The model is of a large hunch-backed creature wrapped in tattered

where almost non-existent on the model and the pieces fit together very nicely. The facial detail is very well done and to me the best part of the model.

cloth and armor. The skull is partially covered by a hood and scarf. The spikes on the model, as well as the tattered cloth give this model more than a passing similarity to the Nurgle models found in Warhammer. In fact, this 30mm model would make an excellent champion for a Nurgle Chaos army.

2819 Gloom Wraith \$3.99

James VanSchaik

The Gloom Wraith is a very dynamic model. It is sculpted in a running pose, holding its sword as if its about to thrust into its victims belly. The other arm is held out to balance it. All told, it is one of the most dynamic models of a dead thing I've

seen. As it is a wraith, its only form is that of its clothing. For this model, that means a long robe over plate armor. There are many fold on the cloak as well as a fur-trimmed hood. This kind of detail makes the model more interesting, but what really makes

this figure is its pose. That alone sells this model.



2820 Karedwyn, Druid \$3.99

Ben Siens

At first glance, this model appears to be more of a forest blade maiden than a druid. Karedwyn is sculpted as she advances, holding aloft a spear in her right hand while she holds a shield in her left (the shield is a separate piece). She is wearing long fur boots, a cloth tabard and nothing else. Her modesty is enforced by her long locks of hair. The model is sculpted with a tiara to which two stylized antlers attach. The effect is of a medieval Atalanta, ready to hunt the Calydonian Boar.



2822 Laumarak the Pale \$3.99

James VanSchaik

Laurmarak is a hunched over lich (or extremely decayed necromancer) that is carrying a staff and sword. He wares tattered clothes along with a crown and a few bits of chain armor. He also has a few scrolls and a dagger on his belt. Mine had a bend in the staff and the sword that had to be carefully bent back into place. There's a lot of fine detail on the figure that might be a bit intimidating for a novice painter but he could come out looking



would make a good villain or leader of an undead horde or could even be used as a PC if you're playing in an evil campaign. I was just not immediately wowed by him though. I think that this is one figure that will get my attention much more once painted.

2823 Rasia with Spiked Chain \$3.99 **Werner Klocke**

Rasia is not your typical buxom female adventurer that is running around in skimpy clothes and a giant sword. Can't say that there is much wrong with that but it's nice to have some variety now and again. Rasia is wearing lots of heavy plate armor and carries a spiked chain, an unusual weapon to say the least. She's in a pose that suggests that she is ready to start swinging the weighted

really good if painted up in a green or purple tint to a normal flesh color to emphasize his decaying nature. After the bends were put back into place he developed a bit more animation than the picture suggests. This

end of the chain around her head but is waiting for whoever she is looking at to make the first move. The chain is really well done along with both weighted ends and her armor is nicely detailed without being too intimidating for a novice painter. She also carries a long dagger, or short sword if you prefer, at her side along with a couple of pouches. The face is well done with her long hair braided down her back, but I think her weapon is more of a focal point of the figure. A good figure but one that is kind of specific in its appeal.



2825 Townsfolk V \$10.99 **Bobby Jackson**

The fifth pack in the Townsfolk series is also the most limited. Of the three models in this pack, only two of them could be used in Medieval to Victorian eras.



The farmer has a medieval appearance due to the cowl that covers his head and shoulders. This, in addition to the style of his tunic and pants makes him look like an extra from "The Adventures of Robin Hood". The other two models are not so limited. The maid with her broom would easily fit in from AD 1000 up to the end of the 19th century. This is also the case with the mother and two children - though the boy is wearing a medieval-style tunic. Once again, these models make perfect background figures for any inhabited setting of your RPG.

2826 Terezinya and Familiar \$4.29 **Werner Klocke**

Terezinya is a rather slight female warrior when compared to the other female figures reviewed this month. She is as tall as the average Dark Heaven model, but here arms and legs are much thinner. She would definitely wear Petite dress sizes. That set, there is quite a bit of detail on the model. from the intricate adornments of her leather bodice to the three belts at her waist there are lots of little things to pick out when painting this model.

The familiar included with Terezinya is a small homunculus with

spikes protruding from its shoulders. It is crouched in a three point stance with its right arm slightly elevated and its mouth opening. It looks like its just shuffled quite a ways and is taking a bit of a break.

2828 Thornback Troll \$6.99

Ben Siens

Squat, muscled and full of piss and vinegar. That about covers a very quick description of this bad boy. He's not too dissimilar from Mr. Siens previous Cave Trolls to have him tag along in a warband with them,

but he also very much stands out on his own. This one-piece model has both arms extended from the body and just has mean written all over him. His upper torso is massively built and contrasts nicely with his smaller legs. He has the warts and gangly nature

that you'd expect from a troll but his name and differences come from the spiky bits that protrude from his upper back and also his face which has large meaty jowls that hang down past his chin. His face kind of reminds me of a bulldog. Well, expect for the fact that he has just two little holes in the middle of his face instead of a nose. A bit of flash and a visible mold line also accompanied him out of the package and he did take a few minutes to prep before priming. His club is not unlike that of the Ogre Chieftain (next) but lacks anything that makes it look magical. He's wearing a few bits of cloth and leather on his arms and a loincloth covers his nether-regions. I'll never understand what makes trolls wear just a loincloth but I'm glad they do. I'll be immediately dropping him onto a large round plastic base and using him not only in D&D Miniatures, but also in D&D (rpg) and adding him to my Warlord army of dungeon monsters.

2832 Ogre Chieftain \$7.99

Jason Weibe

This burly ogre leader type reminded me a lot of Mr. Weibe's bugbears that I reviewed in last issue. So much in fact that I have plans to use this model as a bugbear champion, that's just grown overly large, rather than add him to my sizable number of ogre models. He may not have the flat-ish head and big floppy ears that the bugbears do but his beard, long teeth and familiar muscu-



lature just sent me in their direction. This one-piece model is carrying a large war club in his left hand and his right is clenched in a fist. I'll go ahead and speculate that his club is magical (and quite possibly intelligent) as it has a face set into it that looks more than just carved. Either that or it's some kind of evil tiki doll. He's standing upright ready to give the order for his mates to crush whatever they happen to be facing. He's got bits and pieces of armor, belts and pouches on him and his really big belt buckle (perfect since he comes from Texas) has a mastodon decorating it. Whether you use him as an ogre or choose to do something like me he's a very affordable big guy that's worth picking up.

2833 Medusa \$3.99

Bobby Jackson

The Medusa figure bears more than a passing resemblance to the Medusa from Ray Harryhausen's "Clash of the Titans". Like the one in the movie, Medusa has a woman's head with a mane of snakes, but her lower body is that of a large snake. The figure is sculpted holding a bow and drawing an arrow from the quiver on its back.

This is a very well done model - and captures the feel of the movie monster almost exactly - even down to the rattle on the monster's tail. The only difference is that the model is topless - a radical departure from the one in the G-rated film. The Medusa and the sea monster were my favorite parts of Harryhausen's film, and for that reason alone, I like this model. It is a different take from the normal "hag in a night shirt" style of most Medusa models.



2834 Deladrin, Assassin \$3.99

Werner Klocke

Deladrin is a rather nasty looking piece of work - and I'm not talking about the quality of the figure. The figure is very nice,

with lots of detail on the armor plates and a nicely flowing robe. No, what I mean is I wouldn't want to run into her in a dark alley. The model is sculpted with a sword in one hand and a nasty curved knife in the other. Unlike most Dark Heaven figures, Deladrin is a multi part model. Her



right arm with its sword is a separate piece though it comes out of the package attached to the base by a bit of sprue. The arm fits into a corner socket between the model's body and robe. A bit of careful filing will make sure this is a snug fit. Deladrin is wearing a full suit of plate armor and is wrapped in a full length cloak. Now any assassin who can successfully skulk around in full armor has my respect.

2837 Haunt \$5.29 G. Van Horne

This restless spirit is sculpted as it is rising from a pile of faceless corpses or from a rather sudsy bath. With its arms outstretched and its oversized mouth open, it definitely gives the impression of the tormented spirit who has forsaken group therapy for a good scare. The model is clothed in a

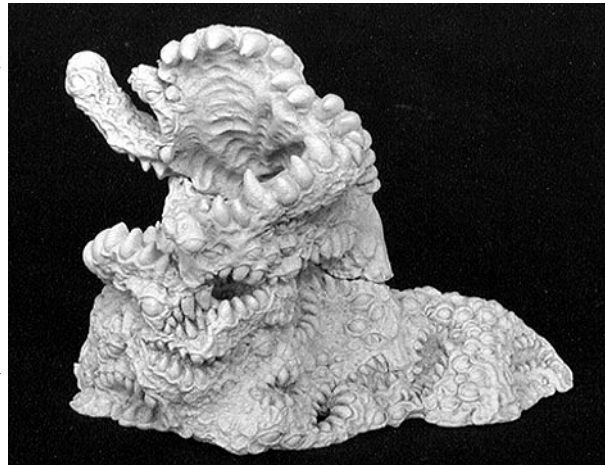


billowing tunic which merges seamlessly with the bubble bath or corpses. One problem with the legions of undead is after a while you run out of poses and types. Reaper has definitely pushed the boundaries of the living dead miniatures and, all kidding aside, this model makes a good addition to their rather large Undead line. Now, all I need to do is to decide whether to paint corpses or scrubbing bubbles...

2838 Faceless Horror \$12.99 Julie Guthrie

The Faceless Horror, or Gibbering Mouther if you're a strict purist, is a two-piece model that is covered in eyes and mouths. It took a few tries at positioning the two parts to get them to line up as intended and it will be visible where the two come together so I'll be adding just a bit of putty to a couple of spots to get rid of the seams. If you go with a black undercoat and paint the figure in dark colors you might be able to get away without any putty at all though. You might also be intimidated by the large number of eyes and teeth that need to be painted but I think they can be

knocked out pretty quickly. There was a tiny bit of flash on each piece that cleaned up easily. You can look



down inside the "main" mouth of the creature to see the remains of a humanoid skeleton, which was a nice added bit of detail that could have been easily left out by the sculptor but I'm very glad was added. This figure does two things for me. First, it comes a step closer to having very passable, if not almost exact, versions of archetypal creatures from D&D that I might not otherwise get and second, it really helps to move me in the direction of using some non-standard (to my games anyway) creatures in my games. At about thirteen bucks it's really a model that you'll need, or want to create, a specific use for but I'd still recommend that any D&D DM pick one up just to spring on your party.

2840 Dark Stalker \$4.99 G. Van Horne

The Dark Stalker looks like a humanoid assassin-type character that has large flowing robes and hood over a masked face. Even though I was really taken in with the flowing robes it was the mask under the hood that ended up really sticking out as a focal point of the model for me. I can see the robes of the model painted up in shadowy grays and blacks with a stark white mask. He (could be a she I guess) carries a dagger in both hands and has no other visible weaponry or equipment. The dagger in his right hand, almost held behind his back, was bent a little in the package and I had to take care not to bend it too straight when putting it back into place. Doing so would cause it to look out of place when compared to the rest of the flowing portions of the model, including the left-handed dagger that almost seems to curve with his robe. There was also a small metal tab connecting the right-handed dagger to the body (for molding purposes) that needed to be removed. Some careful work was needed to ensure that the robe was not marred. A clothed leg and boots can be seen outside the cloak but the only visible flesh are his two hands. Even with virtually no exposed flesh, especially no face to see, this model still has a great deal of character. This is one figure that



you'll want to take real care when painting to get an awesome effect. Cleaning was needed on mold lines in several places and there were some bits of flash here and there. Be very careful and take some extra time to make sure that your cleaning is done as perfectly as possible with this figure because I think the paint job will really be better for it. This will make an awesome assassin or rogue PC or a villain NPC.

2841 Basilisk \$5.99

James VanSchaik

The Basilisk is a solid cast model that measures about two and a quarter inches in length and stands about three quarters of an inch tall. There was a slight mold line under its neck and tail and a small amount of flash, but nothing out of the ordinary. The beast (it has the look of either a very large Lizard or a very small Dinosaur) is straddling what looks to be a pile of rocks with its eight legs, so there is no visible voids under its body which should make painting it less problematic. In fact painting this guy



should be quick and easy since the creature appears to be in search mode rather than in a fighting stance and there looks to be very little detail required.

2842 Galdor the Barbarian \$3.99

S. Quirion

Galdor is a well done barbarian that sports a heavy sword in one hand and a battle axe in the other. As is normal for this class of fighter, his armor consists of a few furs and an intimidating battle yell. Again the flash and mold lines are within acceptable limits and, more importantly, are in easy to access places so clean up is a breeze. I think the detail on this guy is very good and has cleanly defined features. His stance looks like he is in this midst of battle, so it's a nice action pose. This would be an excellent character model.



2843 Undead Bathalian

\$4.99

Sandy Garrity

This figure is quite sinister looking - it appears as either an undead Mindflayer or a small version of Great Cthulhu - in either case it's quite a scary model. The model is sculpted in ornate but decaying robes with quite a bit of



decoration along the hem, shoulder pads, and cowl. The model is holding a human skull in front of itself as the focus for some arcane power. This is an excellent model for an unnerving Dungeon Crawl adventure or for a rather interesting Call of Cthulhu adventure - a Cthulhu version of the Spawn of Yog-Sothoth. Eeew!

2845 Townsfolk VI \$9.99

Bobby Jackson



The sixth set of townspeople is made up of a grave robber and his brutish assistant. Ever since I laid eyes upon the greens of these models I couldn't wait to get them into my hands. It was mainly the assistant that struck me as the more remark-

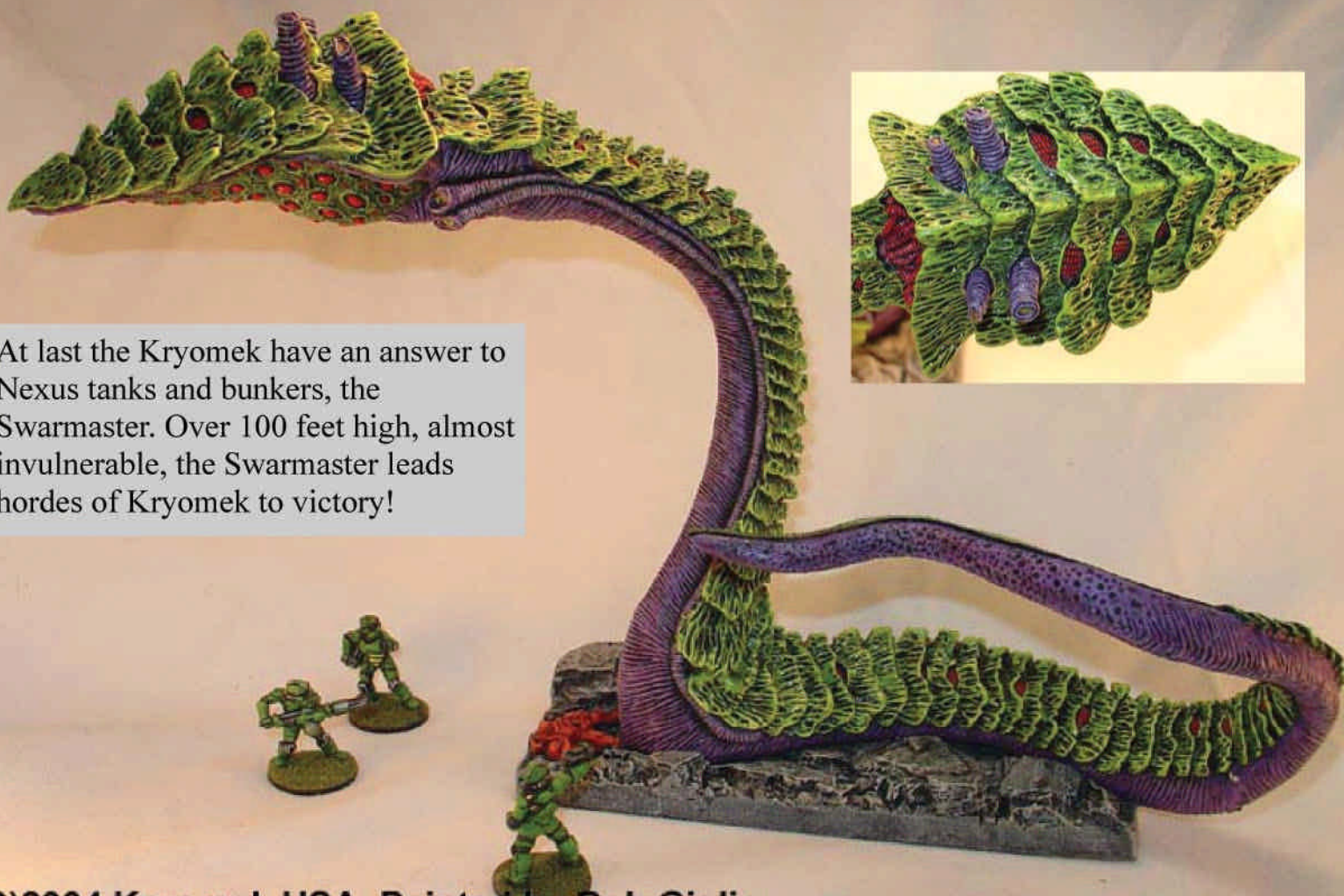
able of the two characters but the grave robber is no slouch either. The leader of the duo is dressed in a long coat and large brimmed hat. His sunken cheeks really help to portray his less than scrupulous demeanor well. He carries a shovel in one hand and a lantern in the other but has no visible weapons. The lantern bears four skulls, presumably to shine out in a scary looking effect when the lantern is lit. His coat also has two skulls but in my mind they look just a bit out of place and I'll probably file them off. He looks menacing enough without them and I just don't think they were needed. The dim-witted, but strong-backed, assistant is wearing a collection of tattered clothing (pants and jacket) and is carrying a coffin that is slightly smaller than man-sized if you gauge size by the brains of the outfit. It's a nicely detailed resting place with the addition of a padlock. He has a stooped posture and a dull expression on his face with his mouth open and tongue hanging out. If you paint him up and then can use some clear resin for drool coming out of his mouth you are definitely a master. I know that my abilities don't rank that high but I might just try to pull it off myself. Mold lines were visible on both and each had some flash that needed cleaning but I had been anticipating these two enough that it didn't matter much to me. These would both make great characters, not only in D&D, but to me they seem custom-ordered for Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay where they would be right at home. I know that the townsfolk are more immediately thought of as useful as additions to a diorama or maybe as cannon fodder but these just scream with personality and beg to be made into PCs. An excellent duo worth picking up as either a player or GM.

2846 Reaper Death \$7.99

Werner Klocke

This manifestation of Death comes as a two-piece model (scythe/arms and the rest of the model) and even before I opened up the blister I could tell that a pretty decent amount of cleaning was in order. Flash and mold lines were clearly visible and needed attention before assembly but the end result was worth it. The skull under his cap (that has visible stitching, nice touch) is very

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well done and he has a few bits of armor made from bones around his shoulder area. He stands taller than a standard human model and while it's not a massively detailed model it does look imposing. Much of this scary look comes from the large scythe that he's carrying in both hands. I

can imagine him cutting a swathe of destruction through a group of men-at-arms or villagers as the heroes move in for the fight. Definitely a figure for a DM, but a great one. Laumarak the Pale makes a good necromancer or lich but Death makes a great one! He would also work as a superb wraith.



14102 Avatar of Sekmet \$6.99

Julie Guthrie

This is a very interesting two-piece model. The staff and the hands holding it come separate from the torso. The model looks like an Egyptian style god with the body of a human and the face of an animal (in this case a tiger). The headdress and tunic look distinctly Egyptian and though I can't put a name to the staff/weapon he is holding, it definitely looks like it's meant to put the hurts on someone. It appears to be a large bladed spear on one end, and then a triple headed axe on the other. The figure is very clean and nicely detailed, all in all an excellent model.



2847 Jade Tiger, Monk \$3.99

James VanSchaik

Jade Tiger resembles a Shaolin monk wielding a pair of Kamas. Jade Tiger is in a wide stance with his arms extended to either side. The basic two dimensional sculpt gains a feeling of three dimensional motion by the slight turn of the head and the forward position of the right knee. The model's robes are well sculpted and provide many folds and wrinkles. The only downside to the model is the distinctive Vulcan look of the head. This is a combination of the long face, its bangs, and the shape of the eyes. This gives the effect of Spock practicing for the Koon-ut-kal-if-fee.



2848 Familiar Pack V \$6.99

Garrity/Brand

I really got a kick out of this familiar pack. Six different small animal models come in the pack and they are not your normal everyday familiars. For starters we have a turtle, raccoon, and a fox. Then we get into the road kill section and we have an armadillo and a skunk. Lastly we move into the bizarre section with a penguin. All six of the animals are well done and pretty detailed (just the fact that I could identify them for what they are is proof of that). Not only that, but unlike many familiar packs I've seen, I can think of "non-familiar" roles these models could be used in to add some humor to a game.



14103 Templars w/2HD Sword \$13.49

Bobby Jackson

Three Templars come in the blister, and in mine two of them are of the same pose (not sure if this was a mistake or not). These are all single cast pieces and come with standard plastic slot bases. As you would expect, they are heavily armored with chain mail, steel Gauntlets and boots, and a full helm and each is swinging a big honking sword. The armor and tunic is a fairly basic design though there is some nice detail on the shoulder and helm. There was very little flash on these guys and the mold lines are barely noticeable when visible at all. All three are in action poses with feet braced and sword at the ready.



14109 Templars w/Sword \$11.99

Bobby Jackson

This blister again has three Templars but this time with sword in their right hand and a shield on their left arm. These three are all in different poses and like their brethren heavily armored (this time with an additional breastplate). I did have to do a little sword straightening, but again the flash was of little consequence.



quence and the mold lines were difficult to detect. These are also all single cast pieces in action poses, but instead of plastic slotta bases these came with metal slotta bases. These also have a little bit more fancy detail on the breastplate and shield. These figures I think are pretty versatile and could be used to fill a variety of roles.

14110 Centaur Archer \$10.99

Sandy Garrity

This centaur for Warlord comes in two pieces (right arm holding his bow and the rest of the model) and a large square slotta base. Being very familiar with the centaurs that populate the Confrontation Keltois army (as they make up a nice block of my personal army) the first thing that came to mind when looking at this guy is how this one is noticeably larger (closer to the size of a large warhorse) than the Rackham ones and also this one is a more detailed sculpt. This is one really well done model. He's armed with a bow with a quiver on his right side that is next to a sword. His weaponry is very typical for his creature type but I could have done with him having a longer bow though. You'll notice the size of the model first but I think that the face and hair will draw you in as the model's focal point as it's really, really well done. The army fit easily into the socket so assembly was no problem. There was noticeable flash in several places and the mold line was also visible, mostly on the back. As a D&D creature, or even PC if your DM is inclined to allow you to play a monster-race, this would be a great model. Of course, as part of your Warlord army (I'm guessing he's going to go with the elves but I haven't seen the final rulebook yet so I can't say for sure) he should be a good heavy hitter. The hand carrying the bow looks easy enough to modify so I might just slap a plastic bow across his back and then replace the one in his hand with an axe and toss him into my Confrontation army.



dwarves, these guys are down right skinny. All three poses are dynamic, but do not extend over the edge of their base - thus allowing them to be easily ranked up.

The weapons are nicely done, and attach to the models at the wrist. The nub on the torso is large enough to provide a good gluing surface. What really elevates this miniatures, though, are the shields. They attach to the left arms by posts, but the shield fronts have simple but striking detail, and only one of them is round. These models would add a great variety to your ranks of dwarf warriors, though they might look a little bulimic.

14114 Ironside Templars \$13.49

Bobby Jackson

These three Templars are all armed with long spears and nothing else. Like all the other Templars, they are



heavily armored. These however are plainer than the others with very little ornamentation (these must be the raw recruits). They do have tunics that look a cut above those of their brethren, and there is even a cross emblazoned on their chest. There are three to a blister and all three are in slightly different poses. Plastic slotta bases are included. The flash and mold lines were tad more severe on these guys and I had to play with the spears some to get them straight but nothing serious. These models look like they would make good guards or escort troops.



14112 Dwarf Warriors \$12.99

Werner Klocke

This multipart set of three dwarven warriors includes three dwarf bodies, three right hands holding weapons - two axes and one hammer - three shields, and three plastic bases. The first thing I noticed about these dwarves was how skinny they were. Unlike the dwarves of other manufacturers, these guys are big bellies covered by long beards. Yes, the models have the typical bread and plate and chain armor, but in comparison to other



14115 The Awakened \$13.49

Bob Ridolfi

This group of three mummies would be equally at home in a Warlord army, a game of D&D or on the table in a game of War Gods of Ægyptus. They each come with a metal base (yeah!) and separate shields, swords and heads. Each is similar but you can mix and match parts however you wish. The arms can also be bent a bit

if you want to work out some more variety in poses. Each of their bodies is different also so you really are getting three differ-

ent models and when putting together a unit you can just about ensure that you won't have exact duplicates if you like. They are dressed in the decaying mummy wrappings that you would expect and each has bits of metal armor and decoration. My only negative with these three is that their 'tab' was a bit thicker than the opening on the base and it had to be trimmed to make them fit. Flash was minimal and the mold lines were just about undetectable.

14116 Elven Archer Captain \$4.49

Werner Klocke

Rounding out this issue's look at Reaper miniatures is a female elf archer. My joy immediately increased upon seeing that she came with a metal base. Her bow is a separate piece that had to



be removed from a metal tab that was attached to her base. Be careful when separating it as it could be marred if you're not paying attention to what you're doing. She is wearing very light armor made up mostly of cloth and leather and carries a scabbard and quiver on her backside. The bow fits onto her left wrist and it's large enough to pin if you like. The figure itself, and even the base, had

some flash that needed to be cleaned but I found no defects on the model. She's in a more relaxed pose, kind of just standing there and reaching for an arrow. She is very well proportioned without being top-heavy like a Baywatch model. A very natural looking female model who's face is remarkably well done (as I've come to expect from Mr. Klocke) and is not hidden by her large amount of hair, which also does not hide one of her pointy elf ears. This figure has player-character written all over it and would also be great as part of an elf army either in a skirmish (Warlord, of course) game or one of a larger tactical nature like Warhammer.

Reviews by Mark Theurer, Clay Richmond
and J Michael Tisdell

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Skaard Father (special edition alternate sculpt)

This version of The Father is a special edition figure that is only available as part of a pre-built warband package. [DAG 3101 \$39.99 for 9 figures (Father, Chitin, Raze and 6 Buzzblades) that will net you an army of close to 300 points] He looks quite a bit different than the original figure that is standing with arms extended in an almost meditative pose. This one is armed with a sword and a hand extended towards the enemy. Some flash and mold lines were visible, mostly along the edge of his cape. This is a well detailed figure but I do like the original one better. If you're about to start a Skaard army then this would not be a bad place to drop your cash as you'll get a nice starting force that includes a large and brutal Raze model.



Skaard Buzzblade (alternate sculpt)

Like the new Skaard Father this Buzzblade is one of two that you'll get only as part of a warband deal. He is dressed in minimalist armor, including what looks like a door for a shield, and carries a spiked metal club for dispatching his enemies. He had more flash and more visible mold line than other figures in this group that I took a look at. In addition to his clothing type armor that includes pants and a sash he also has a heavy metal collar that actually looks bolted into his flesh. This guy has taken body modification to another extreme, in addition to the collar, and has sections of his flesh (on his head, shoulders and chest) that have been cut into triangle shapes and peeled back, but are still tacked on to his body. Gruesome indeed! Alternate uses for this guy could easily include as a ganger in Necromunda or in any futuristic or post-apocalyptic setting. Actually, he made me think a lot of the computer game Fallout from years gone by.



Skaard Abomination DAG3011 \$14.99

The Abomination comes in four pieces (right and left arms, mechanical body and remains of a human that is wired into the contraption. Assembly went pretty well with minimal cleaning needed and each joint fitting together cleanly. This model is definitely not hi-tech in its appearance. It has a very banged-together look to it and works well not just in Dark Age but could also find

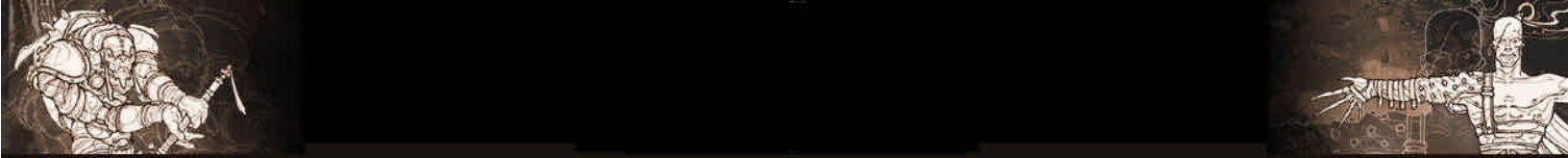


double duty in D&D as some type of construct or golem that incorporates a living human element or it would be pretty at home in a fantasy campaign that has incorporated steam and clockwork technology. He stands close to twice the height of a standard human figure and if you choose to extend an arm upward he will be even taller still. As I mentioned the model looks very banged up and that's not to imply that it's a bad sculpt. It's a well done sculpt of a beaten up and weathered human-machine hybrid. The right arm has a mechanical fist and the left bears a snapping claw and also what looks like some kind of flame thrower. The human (actually, all that's visible is the torso and head with arm and leg stumps) looks very good and bears an expression testifying to his tortured existence. For a Skaard player this is probably a no-brainer to add to your army but other gamers, especially fantasy RPG GM's should also take note of its other uses. It's never a bad thing to drop an unfamiliar model on the table to spook your players when starting off an encounter. Painted up as a rusted lumbering hulk of a machine should prove successful here.

Forsaken St. John (special edition alternate sculpt)

This sculpt of St. John is a special edition that is part of a warband package. [DAG 1103 \$29.99 for 7 figures (St. John, 2 Haniels and 4 Banes) that will net you an army of just over 300 points] This sculpt of St. John is a single piece model that is standing on a rock in more of a ready-for-action pose than being engaged in combat. When compared to other human-sized models, even without the rock underfoot, he would still stand a bit taller than average and does have a nicely striking appearance in his heavy armor. He carries the usual shield and hammer that Dark Age fans expect to see him armed with a power pack on his belt with some wires leading down to the hammer. Detail on this figure was quite good but also simple enough for a beginner to get good painting results with. I found 3-4 bits of flash that needed to be trimmed (not excessive) and the mold line was mostly visible on the edge of his cape but cleaned up easily enough. Is he a "must have" figure? Well, not exactly, but I think that some Forsaken players might just plunk down the \$30 for the warband that he comes with just to get an alternate sculpt of their leader and then just add the Banes and Haniels to their existing troops. If you're fleshing out an existing army then I can recommend picking them up. If you're thinking of getting into Dark Age and the Forsaken are your chosen army then this is also a good deal and can get you on the table in short order. Of course, you'll probably need to, at least, double the size of your army to compete in tournaments but there's plenty of figures to choose from and this would provide a good base. Another thought that ran through my head when looking over this figure is that with a little putty work, which I am not an expert at so I won't be attempting this, he could make an excellent fantasy paladin. The wires and power pack are what you'd need to monkey with but I'm sure some of you out there are skilled enough to pull this off. Unfortunately, this figure is only available as part of the 'package' and I can't see spending \$30 just for one figure to convert unless you're either getting into the game or are already a





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fan. Still, a very cool figure and I found nicely different from the more jumping-into-action pose of the original.

Forsaken Bane (alternate sculpt)



This female Bane is an alternate sculpt that can only get into your hands through the warband deal that I outlined above. I'm all for alternate sculpts, and the addition of females to units, to break up the monotony of single figures. Dark Age already has several Banes and this one is another good addition. She looks just like the rest in terms of armor and her weapon but like I said, I like some variety in squad poses so she's welcome any time. Flash was just about non-existent and the mold line, where visible, was very faint. Your only problem with this figure will be matching her up perfectly to the Banes you might already have painted.

Reviews by Mark Theurer



This selection of figures for review from Pulp Figures consists entirely of sample figures. Their final blister allotment is unknown at the time of this review (early August). If you are playing a pulp-era RPG, like "Savage Worlds", this is definitely a line of figures you should acquire!

They are also quite useful for "Call of Cthulhu" adventures.

Zeppelin Trooper Samples

First off, we have three samples of the Pulp Figure's Zeppelin Troopers. All three figures are wearing 1930's era flight suits, including a harness for a parachute but no chute. Their trousers blouse over their boots, where they are tucked in. Two of the figures are wearing aviator helmets with the goggles pulled down. The third is bare headed - and shaved bald at that. I guess he's the sergeant. The sergeant is reaching for his holstered pistol, while one of the other troopers has his out, and the final trooper is carrying a sub-machine gun. These figures are cleanly sculpted and will make excellent mooks in almost any situation. Who says flight suits are only for Zeppelin crew - surely any villain worth his salt would equip his heavies in flight gear. Its more menacing.



Tropical British Samples

After the Zeppelin troopers, we have some British Tropical fig-



ures. All are dressed in the requisite shorts and hunting jackets, but only two have are wearing pith helmets. The third has an officers cap and looks remarkably like Sir Alec Guinness from "Bridge Over the River Kwai". He's standing at parade rest with his swagger stick under his left arm. Of the other two models, one is obviously a soldier, advancing with a bayonet affixed to his rifle. The third is a portly relative of Stanley Livingston, with large binoculars and a folio under one arm. The bushy mustache makes completes the image of the stuffy botanist out in the jungles. These are just the men you need to take on your expedition to find the ancient city in the middle of Darkest Africa!



Assorted Japanese Samples

To continue our jungle theme, we now have four Japanese figures to examine. Two of these are regular soldiers and are outfitted with the bowl helmet and bayonet-affixed rifles. One his squatting while the other is standing - both look rather menacing. To lead these brave soldiers we have an officer figure. Wearing an officers hat and a long coat, he appears the model of a bushido leader - his unsheathed samurai sword to his side completes the image. The final figure in this bunch is of a squad leader or sergeant. He is more portly than the other figures, but his sword and aimed pistol show that he means business. Of the four figures, however, this is the weakest. It is hard to tell from the sculpt that it is a Japanese soldier - not so much the Asian features as the blandness of



the uniform. These will make great forces to oppose the British Tropicals mentioned above.

Assorted Gangland Justice Samples

Now to complete our tour of samples we have a collection of those who deal out rough justice. There are four of these models, which cover the major justice archetypes of the river front world.

First up is the bowler-wearing, cigar-smoking heavy. This is the guy who keeps a knife and knows how to use it. The model is well sculpted and could be used for either a river-front foreman or a gangland enforcer. Either way, say "sir" when talking to this man.



Secondly, we have a thug (bottom picture / right) with a shotgun. Like the bowler man, this well-built man could either be a dock-yard mook or Monk from the Doc Savage books. Don't say "sir" to him, just stay away.



Up next is the stout southern sheriff (top picture / left) or north-eastern detective. His hat is pushed back on his head and his hands are on his hips. The suspenders barely hold up his pants while his too-short tie emphasizes his love of donuts. Definitely a good guy, but one who follows the Law. I think of Inspector Kramer from the Nero Wolfe stories when I see this figure.

Finally we have my favorite figure of all reviewed today. This is obviously meant to be the Shadow - he's got the hat, cloak, and nose. More importantly, he has the twin Model 1911 pistols in his hands and ready for a fight. One note about the Shadow, his right hand is a separate piece, but it fits easily into a hole in the wrist. Just be careful as the piece is awful small.

Reviews by J Michael Tisdell



From Adiken we have two player character types and one monster staple to take a look at.

Morloch, Small Black Dragon AF034 \$12.99

Morloch is a young black dragon that comes in three pieces (both wings and the rest of the model) but without a plastic base. The first thing that caught my eye is that the head is a very good rep-



resentation from the WOTC Monster Manual. The body was well cast and I found no defects on it and just a tiny bit of flash that needed to be cleaned. The wings each needed a bit more work as they both had some flash and a faint mold line. Also, you're likely to need some putty to fill in some small gaps that are present where the wings attach to the body. Big, massive, castle stomping dragons are nice and all but this is one that can actually fit in a dungeon and will pose a threat to a mid-level party of characters instead of having to wait until they are high level to toss a dragon at them. Even with a bit of work to do on your own this is a good model at a reasonable price.

Orc Bowman AF035 \$3.49

Typical of Adiken's orcs this bowman is thinner and, in my humble opinion, a bit goblinoid in appearance. You'll find that in all of their orcs and while this may keep you from including them alongside other manufacturer's orcs they would make excellent goblin heavies or leaders. This guy is carrying a long bow that he's just fired along with a quiver of arrows on his back and a heavy, but small, chopping blade on his belt. Also standard for Adiken orcs is their heavy plate armor. Even being an archer he has on several large metal plates for protection in addition to



cloth. There were a few bits of flash on the bow but otherwise he came out of the blister clean and ready to go.

Reviews by Mark Theurer

Shania, Squire with Spear AF036

Shania is a tall female squire that carries a long spear and not a whole lot else. She is dressed in commoner's clothes which are a bit sparse and show off her ample cleavage. Her pants ride low in the waist and her butt-crack has also been detailed on this model. I didn't find anything offensive in the previously mentioned details of this model but it's not something that you see every day on a miniature either. She also carries a small pack on her belt, but is otherwise without gear. Shania is a thin, but athletic, woman that does not have over exaggerated detail but still retains clean lines that should prove easy to

paint. There was a bit of flash that needed cleaning but other than that she was ready to go. I see her being used more as a hired hand for a party of adventurers than a PC herself. Her face and hair are nicely done and I think that this feature, along with her height, will make her stand out.

Bognar, Dwarf with War Hammer AF037 \$3.49

Bognar comes in two pieces (body and hands holding his hammer). He sports a long braided beard and hair that pokes out from under his helmet and goes down past his shoulders. The hammer fit into place easily and cleanup was very minimal for this figure. Mold lines and flash were at a real minimum and he was ready for priming quickly. Bognar differs from most other dwarves in that he's not portly at all. He looks to have very little body fat at all, not something you see everyday in a dwarf model. His belt is actually tied around his waist and is not simply there to keep his belly from hitting his knees. Dwarf purists might scoff at this but I figure it's good to go outside of the box once in a while. He is wearing pretty light armor. Just a metal hel-

met and some shoulder plates in addition to what appears to be cloth and leathers. Detail on the model was clean and should not be too hard for a novice to paint at all. I found the focal point of the model to be his hammer and if painted up as a magical weapon could really draw your eye to this model.

Adiken also has a new miniature game coming out soon to go along with all of their figure. Michael got a quick peek at Gen-Con and told me that his first impression was that it looked like a dungeon-crawl (don't quote us on this please) kind of miniatures game. As soon as we have more information we'll be sure to pass it along to you.



Hasslefree Miniatures is a company run by Kevin White and his wife Sally. Kevin does the sculpting while Sally handles the rest of the business. All of the models below are sculpted to be attached to a plastic base, and the base is included. Imogen makes a great succubus figure or a leader of a demonic unit for a fantasy battle game.

Liberty, Female Viking HFM005, £3.50

Liberty is a single-piece sculpt of a warrior woman with a winged hat and an axe. Kevin used his wife as the model for Liberty. The figure is posed with one leg on a rock and her arms resting on the handle of her axe. The blade of the axe has a very detailed Celtic knot design on both sides. Though not a dynamic pose, this one is dramatic. One can almost hear Liberty say "alright, I'll have to teach you a lesson" to some whining orc. This is an excellent model for a female fighter or leader of a squad of vikings.

Axenarf Armoured Ogre HFM002, £10.00

Axenarf is a large model, about 54 mm, made of four pieces. The pieces all fit together very nicely with very little in the way of gaps. Axenarf is not subtle, with his clanking great armor and large war axe, he finds grunting and pointing to be sufficient to communicate his needs. This is a very good model for an ogre chieftain or player character. It would also make a great unit leader for a fantasy battle game.



Imogen, Demonette with Flaming Sword
HFX003, £4.50

Like Axenarf, Imogen is a multi-part model. She has two wings and her sword arm in addition to her body. She has been sculpted



in mid-swing, with the flames of her sword licking backwards. Her shield is turned back and held behind her - this gives the model a very dynamic pose. The interesting thing about this model, however, is not in its sculpting, but in its assembly; specifically the wings. The right wing fits into the body of the model between the shoulder blades and the left wing then fits into the right.

This is accomplished because the "base" of the wings is part of the right wing.

Dwarf Tavern Patron



HFV002, £3.00
Strumpet



HFV003, £3.00

Old Couple

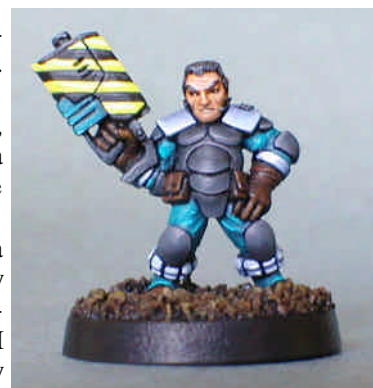
HVF006, £5.00

These four models are from the Villagers line. All are single-piece figures. The Tavern patron is sculpted standing with his ale mug in his right hand. The Strumpet is standing with legs spread, as if haggling price. The Old Man is bent over with one hand on his waist while the other holds his cane. The old woman stands stoop shouldered holding her handbag with both hands. All four models are cleanly sculpted with good details on the faces. These models are well suited as innocent bystanders for any bar room brawl you may have.

Kjaran, Male Grymn

HFG002, £3.00

The final figure from Hassle-free is a sci-fi dwarf warrior. He has a huge gun that would make Cable green with envy, but no beard. The latter is not a problem as it allows one to see the armor plates he is wearing. This is a clean sculpt with a crisp set of lines - definitely not in the style of a gothic Science Fiction game. Rather, I see Kjaran as a mercenary



from a high-gravity world in Traveller.

It's been a while since we've been able to review stuff from Armorcast but this issue we really get a one-two punch as the Dark Legion Defiler Pods are manufactured by Armorcast but are intended for use (and licensed for) Excelsior Entertainment's Ultimate Warzone.

Each box of pods has a retail price of \$20.00 USD and comes with one closed pod and one that has spilled open to disgorge its contents. You also get a painting guide from the folks at Armorcast along with a list of troopers that each dark apostle would use in the pods. No rules are given but you do get to see which figures you'll also need to pick up.

The closed pod is about 2.5" wide by almost 3.5" tall and is detailed with veins, folds and armored plates at the bottom. There is no separate base as the pod sits flat on the game table when it lands. There are three "petals" on each

pod and they look almost stitched together to keep the pod sealed while plummeting towards whatever planet the fight is taking place on. The closed pod definitely resembles some kind of huge demonic egg. The open pod has popped some of the aforementioned stitches and has burst open in a gooey mess. The exterior of the pod is the same as the closed one but the inside of this one has also been detailed. The un-popped stitch can be seen on the inside of the cavity and there are other details on the inside walls that could have easily been left off, but I'm glad they didn't.

There was a very tiny bit of flash (thin bits of resin that would be flash on a metal model) but it's much easier to trim these from the model. You'll want to wash these in some soapy water before priming them. I heard that Armorcast sold out of these on the first day of GenCon Indy 2004 and I'm not too surprised at all. I expect that pretty much any Dark Legion player, regardless of faction, will be picking up at least one set of these. Me? I can see adding a second or third set to my band of evil brothers.

Review by Mark Theurer



Father Ted DC-001

This bald-headed monk is resting an ornate looking heavy mace on the back of the shoulder. His left hand rests on what is probably a holy book that is suspended from his belt. He is cast in a

single piece with an attached base that is sculpted as if he is on an outside trail. This guy, unlike your classic cleric, is wearing no armor, but rather a habit in the Benedictine style and a friar Tuck hair cut. I found no mold line or flash on this guy and though there is not a lot of detail required for a habit, what there is on him is well done. Besides the mace, there are no other armor or weapons, which again is appropriate for his appearance. He has a friendly smile on his face as if he is going to make a friend rather than bash in someone's head. This guy could function either as a out of the ordinary player character, a proprietor of the local temple, or even a comic relief NPC.



Paladin DC-002

The Paladin is cast in a single piece with an attached base. He is in a kneeling position as if paying homage or in prayer. As with the previous Eastern Front mini, there were no mold lines or flash on this guy. The detail on this model is ex-



ceptional and very cleanly done. He rests a large sword, tip down, in front of him with an ornate shield strap to his back. No other weapons are visible on him, but he does appear to be heavily armored. I think it's a very nice looking model with only one downside; the scale appears to be somewhat off. I don't know if it's just my eyes or not, but both this model and the Female Thief model below seem to be off in scale compared to other models or even the Father Ted model. This unfortunately detracts from the model somewhat.

Female Thief DC-003

Much that was said for the Paladin model can be repeated here. This is a very nicely done model with very fine detail.

There was some flash on her (for a change) but again no mold lines. Her base is pretty cool since it is actually a portion of a stairway with a few adornments. In her right hand she is brandishing a large dagger or short sword, and in her other hand is coiled a length of rope at her side. Again the only downside to the model that I could see is the scale. As I mentioned in the Paladin model, the scale here seems to be somewhat off. Besides that, a very good looking model.



Ogress DC-006

The Ogress model stands two inches tall and comes in two pieces. The right hand, which happens to be gripping a big ole people planter,

comes detached. She is not wearing more than rags and furs except for a pair of shin guards. It's a clean sculpture with moderate detail which is appropriate for her primitive accoutrements. Her only weapon is the afore mentioned club and her presumably bad temper. Her right hand is empty, but balled into a fist as if in frustration. She comes with an attached base that is smaller than the normal base (especially for a model her size) but even so, she seems to be relatively well balanced (a surprise since when I first saw her I assumed she would be top heavy). The best part of the model in my opinion is the head and face. Here the detail is very nice and especially clean. The way she is standing appears as if she is looking or listening for something. The base is surfaced with flagstones as if she is in a dungeon or inside a building. All in all, this is a very nice monster model that will probably invoke more comments than normal due to its uniqueness.



Reviews by Clay Richmond

MAGNIFICENT EGOS

Animated Weapons

Below we'll see three animated weapons (actually two weapons and a shield), each on their own integrated bases.



The detail on the back of the shield is also very well done with the straps for where you would normally hold it and also the rivets from when it was constructed. The swirling bit of magical energy that connects the shield to the base is considerably smaller than on the mace or sword and is ok instead of looking great like the other two. Each of the three needed some cleaning. The least required on the mace and the most on the sword, which had the most swirling detail. Mold lines were very faint on all three and they will be ready for primer in no time at all. Use of these is definitely limited to (or geared to) spellcasters that will be tossing out animated weapons and the like, but I think that audience will be quite pleased with them.

Tingrim Skullcrusher, The Dragon Hunter (#MEO1072) \$6.99



Tingrim is a dwarven dragon hunter and the figure bears proof of his latest kill, the severed head of what was probably a nicely sized dragon. The figure, other than the base, comes as two pieces; Tingrim and the dragon head which fits nicely at his feet. Painting them separately will be the best option to take to make sure that you get

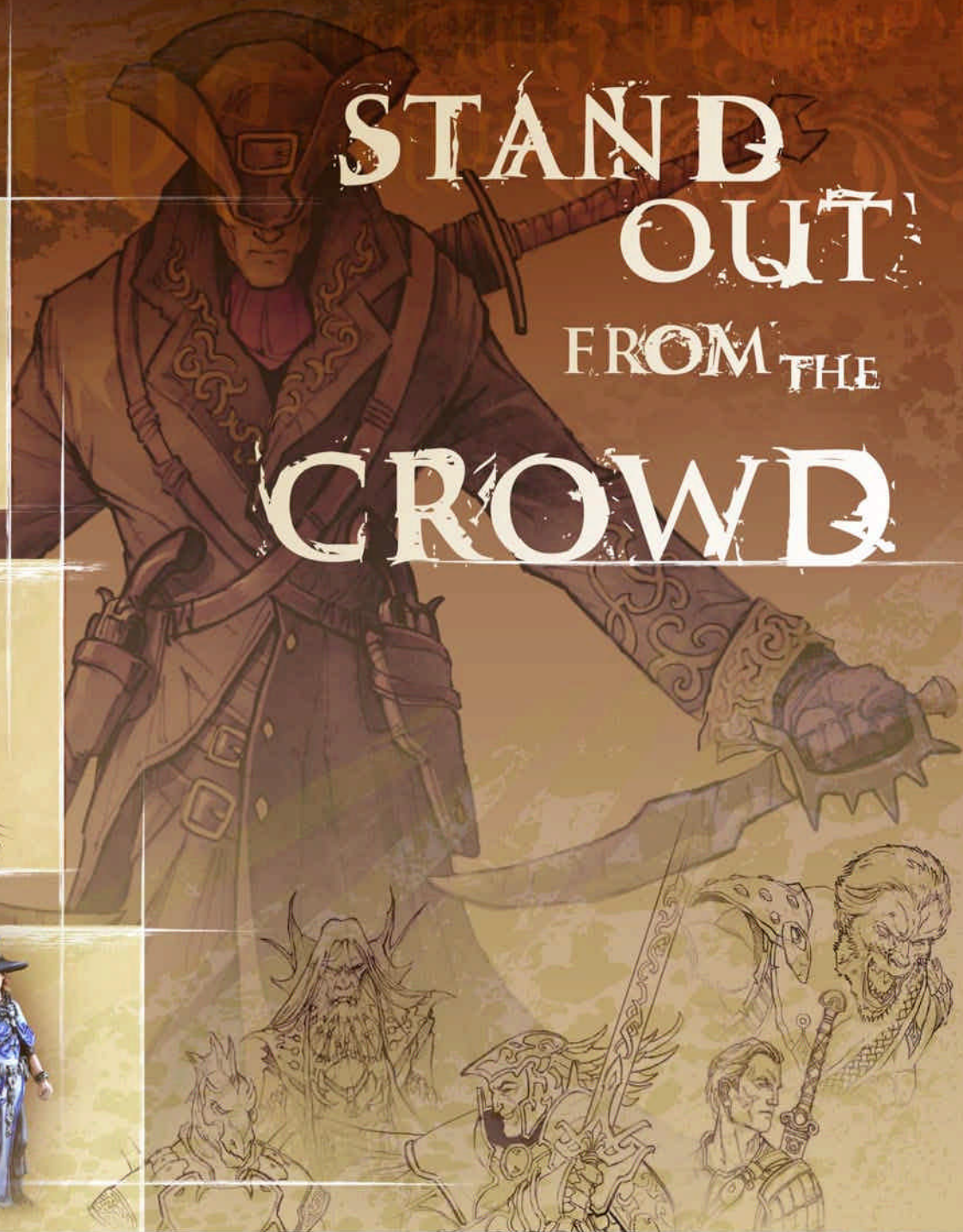
best results from the dragon head and his boots. Tingrim is wearing heavy plate armor with bits of chain in places and is in a more stoic pose like he's presenting his latest trophy for a portrait. It reminded me a bit of those guys that go out deep sea fishing and get pictures taken after catching some big-ass fish. Of course, I don't expect that Tingrim has (or needs) guides to show him where to hunt (fish) and how to bring the beast down. His helmet is held at his side and his chosen weapon, a large single-bladed axe (obviously good for chopping through dragon hide/scales and tough neck muscles) is strapped to his back. Another nice detail (you might think it's silly but I generally like stuff like this) is a small pig poking out of a bag on his back. He's just there, kind of along for the ride and according to Tingrim's background (available on the Magnificent Egos website) it's actually a teddy-pig (you know, like a teddy-bear) that Tingrim made out of old socks (yikes!) and that he regularly talks to. By the way, Tingrim's also an alcoholic (read the story on the website for details) so we have an alcoholic dwarf that talks to stuffed animals and kills dragons. Man, if that's not great backstory to build a new PC around I don't know what it. His face is well done and looks menacing even when out of combat. The dragon head is great and if you look at where it was severed the neck bone are still visible. A detail that they didn't have to put on the piece but I'm glad they did as it adds authenticity (yeah I know, authenticity on a fantasy creature, but you know what I mean) to the whole look. A very nice figure with good detail, not too much of it though, that will be easy enough for novices to paint to a good standard and one where expert painters can really go to town on the dragon head.

Isabella, The Iron Maiden (#MEO1074) \$7.99

Miss Isabella is a female fighter type that comes in three pieces; sword, shield and the rest of the figure. Continuing with Magnificent Ego's theme of unusual figures that fit standard archetypes she is very scantily dressed for being a fighter but does have plate armor on her arms and shoulders along with some bits of plate on her boots and bustier but she is also wearing a bikini bottom, not a chainmail one though. She is on the top-heavy side. The girl, not the model. Not the Pam Anderson kind of top-heavy but the amount of skin being shown (nothing above

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PG kiddies, though) is definitely the focal point of making this model different from a standard fighter that happens to be a female. There's a lot of detail on the figure and it might be a bit intimidating to novice painters but I wouldn't dissuade them from attempting. The shield glues directly on to her left hand with no ball-and-

socket joint as part of the design. Superglue should really be enough for this connection unless you drop the figure off the table and then a ball-and-socket might still not be enough to hold it together so I have no issue here. I'll be painting them separately and gluing the shield onto her arm after both are done. The sword is of a little concern to me. It has a small ball-and-socket joint where the sword and hand will match up with the wrist but the joint is small. Of course it's small because she's got a normal sized wrist and doesn't resemble some former East-German female weightlifter in the least, but it's still a small joint that you'll need to be careful with. She has fairly short hair that doesn't quite reach her shoulders and a nice, very natural looking face with good features but not excessive detail here. This is a great figure that I've put into line to be painted on my desk. Of course, the rest of the line has to be dealt with but that's another story.

Orryn Marliir
(#MEO1033) #6.99



Orryn is a male figure that is carrying two swords (each of pretty significantly different design, which turns out looking pretty cool) and is wearing what looks like padded leather and ringmail armor. The first sword, in his left hand, is more of a short sword than anything else but it has a nice design that makes it noticeable. The second

is more of a curved affair that ends abruptly, not quite at a 90-degree angle, rather than in a point. Designed much more for chopping than thrusting, I'd imagine. There is also a dagger secreted away in his right boot. He has a couple of pouches on his belt in the small of his back and belts that go around the front. The armor really stood out to me and I think that he'll do very well as a rogue-ish adventurer and could also work as a dexterous fighter rather than a brute. As much as I liked the armor it was the head/face that held my attention the most. He has sharp, clean features and his hair is flowing all over the place without

detracting from the face. His shoulder plates have some inscribed detail that will be easy to pick out. Very nice figure with sharp detail.

Pseudoego
(#MEO1058) \$5.99

his model is a small model that is larger than the normal familiar model. In fact he stands an inch tall and has a wingspan that tops an inch and three quarters (in all, this little guy will be as large as or larger than some of the smaller character models). He is cast in three pieces; the head, wings, and torso. His tail (which ends in a nasty looking stinger, and he loops over his left arm) drops below the level of his feet making it impossible for the little guy to put his feet perfectly flat on the ground. I personally think that this model can be used as a "comic relief" NPC as well as the obvious familiar model. It just seems to me that this guy has a little more personality than your typical familiar.



Kalysa, Weapons Master with Polearm
(#MEO1008) \$7.99



This model is cast in two pieces, not counting the base, the torso and the weapon. The base it comes with is a very nice solid metal slotta base. I was actually very pleased with the base as is has more weight to it than your normal base (plastic OR metal). The model itself is an excellent piece of sculpting. It's a very clean and very detailed

depiction of a lady warrior wearing a breast plate and thigh high lever boots. Her hair is tied back and flows down to the middle of her back, all very well done. On the torso I found no flash or mold lines and very little on the weapon. The weapon is an ornate halberd with a very slender shaft. I really like the slender shaft as it's more to scale than your normal weapon of this sort. However you have to be very careful with it as it bends with hardly any pressure. In fact the two hands on the weapon wouldn't line up with the torso until I realized that they were 180° out. I easily twisted the shaft around and lined them up with no ill effects so I'm not sure if they were cast 180° out or somehow got twisted in packaging and shipping. All in all this is a very nice model.

Malryte, Half Dragon Dire Wolf
(#MEO4009) \$21.99

This model might have a long name, but it also has the metal to back it up. This chunk-o-lead stands four and a half inches tall and is the same in width. From the claws of its outreached left



paw to its trailing wing tip he stretches almost six inches. He is mounted on a stout two inch square metal base. Not counting the base, he is cast in six different pieces which fit together quite nicely. This is an impressive model and one of my favorite for this issue. The wings are large enough that they might actually be able to sup-

port the beast's body weight, not to mention the fact that they are more than a little impressive. The head and legs look like they favor the dire wolf, where the tail, back armor, wings, and shoulder spikes definitely take after its dragon heritage. The sculpting is very well done with very nice detail. Best of all, the piece is very nicely balanced and will be next to impossible to casually knock over which I think is nearly essential for a model this size. Both the mold lines and flash were less than minimal. This is another excellent monster model that I can't wait to plop down in front of some surprised characters.

Turnbull Taterhead, Dwarven Rager (#ME10023, \$6.99)

Its not often that I see a spikey dwarf. No, I can safely say this is the first one I've seen in years. Turnbull Taterhead has the typical Dwarf beard, and that along with his stature is the only thing he has in common with other dwarven models. Turnbull is covered in spikes and blades - the crown of the helmet, the pads on his shoulders,



down his spine, and the the toes of his boots are all spiked. Rather than a hammer or axe, Turnbull wields two fist daggers, which give him even more spikes. Turnbull would make an excellent chaos dwarf or dwarven Bloodbowl star player.

Gerrard Longfellow, Royal Falconer (#ME10103, \$7.99)

Gerrard Longfellow is a very well done miniature. It is a two part miniature - the right arm with the falcon is a separate peice which fits snugly under the model's shoulder pad. Gerrard has quite a bit of small detail on the model - but not enough to overpower it in an orgy of Riccoco filagree. The model has a definite Caledonian feel to it, this is probably a result of the beret and the facial hair on the model. Though it is no a dynamic pose, the model comes across as natural: a falconer holding his bird just prior to launch. This model really doesn't fit a categorization, but if you need a



Enlightenment era Highlander Nobility for your RPG, this is definitely the model for you. Otherwise, get it to paint it up. It's that good.

Turk the Warlock (#ME10012, \$7.99)

Turk is another two piece model - with his right hand and staff being a separate piece. The hand attaches at the

elbow, but the joint is small with very little area for glue to adhere. I highly recommend pinning this figure. Another thing to be careful of is the staff itself. The shaft is very thin and could easily break. This model should be based as soon as possible. Like Gerrard, Turk has quite a bit of small detail on his clothing - from his left fastening doublet to his high riding boots. However, the model has a definite planar feel to it - one which the addition of the hand and staff do not alleviate. This planar feel really detracts from an otherwise excellent model.



Faust (#B0004, \$6.99)

Faust is a rather emaciated hyena-esque biped armed with a curved sword similar to a Batleth; okay, that's definitely different. This model comes in two pieces, the right arm with the sword is separate from the body and fits snugly into the model's shoulder. The lug on the arm is large enough to give the glue plenty of adhering surface. This figure's bent-knee stance along with its hunched shoulders give it a definitely feral look. In true 25mm, Faust would make an excellent Lycanthrope or, in 30mm, it would make an excellent daemon. It will all depend on how the miniature is painted.



Reviews by Mark Theurer, J Michael Tisdell and Clay Richmond



This time around from Maidenhead Miniatures in Australia we have two groups of barely clothed female warriors to review, however this is not another batch of the amazons that we've previously seen but are Noble Feral Elves. Of course, you could easily supplement the ranks of your amazons with these femme fatales. Oh, and yes, all of the figures (nine in all) in this review have nudie bits (bare-chested) so if that's going to send you off into a tizzy or if you'd just prefer to avoid them then please jump a few pages ahead.

The nine figs that I got a look at included a Standard Bearer, three Musicians, two Sorceresses, one staff-bearer and two Champions.



The Standard Bearer is a single piece figure that carries a banner in her left hand and a stone axe in her right. The banner is made of an animal skin and has a design on the front. She is wearing a bit of fur and skins herself but that's all except for her helmet, or maybe they are large horns. She needed flash cleaning and mold line trimming but this took just a few minutes. Her pose is a bit flat but I haven't seen a ton of standards that come as a single piece, as she does, that weren't a bit on the less animated side.

The first two musicians are definitely a bit out of the ordinary. The first one reminded me a lot of the Ricola cough drop commercial that has the guy blowing that really long horn up in the alps. Same concept here as she is cradling the horn in both hands and sounding the horn. Her pointed ears can be seen poking out from her hair and that's the only thing that immediately identifies her as an elf rather than a human. The second also has a



wind instrument that is sort of a makeshift set of bagpipes except it's the whole darn animal that looks like some kind of elephant/slug creature. She is blowing into the snout and three "pipes" are protruding from its back. I'd guess (hope) that the creature is dead but its tail is wrapped around her right leg. Like her coun-

terpart above her elvish ears poke out, but from underneath a helmet this time. Both are dressed in boots, a loincloth and shoulder coverings but not much else. Both of these had almost invisible mold lines and really no flash that needed cleaning. The horn on the first lady might be prone to bending considering how long it is so take a bit of care with it. It might be worth mounting her on a larger than normal base so the horn can be secured to the base. The third musician is a drummer who is



wearing the same clothing (or lack thereof) as the first two. Her drum comes in two pieces and I would also base her on a larger than normal square or circle plastic base. Her pose has a lot more animation than the previous two but her drumsticks (mallets?) will be the weak point of the figure since their shaft is pretty thin. Of these three

she is the best of the musicians in my opinion. Of course, with all three you can drop one into each of three units of fighting chicks.

The two spellcasters are each sending out malevolent energies, both apparently powered in some fashion by a potion as they are each carrying one in their right hand. The first has a spell materializing from a small cup and the magical trail of the flying beast circles the head of the sorceress and then takes off in front of her. The spell effect looks like a couple of miniature flying female/animal hybrids. The second carries a larger brazier (separate piece) and has a much larger woman/snake creature emerging from it. The piece glued easily onto the peg on her hand and is not so heavy that it will pull the miniature over. Like the musicians these are



dressed in similar fashion to each other. Each has leggings and jewelry on along with a sash that covers them from the waist down (in front) that goes around their neck but exposes their breasts. The first wears a helmet made out of an animal skull and the second looks like she has two horns protruding from underneath her hair. Both have their mouths open as if in



mid-incantation and the second is definitely the more elf-like of the two as her ears are clearly visible her face just looks a little less human. A little more cleaning was needed on these two as the mold line was visible in places.



The staff-bearer is a two piece model (girl and then both arms holding a large bone/staff) that is kneeling and when put together is holding the staff in her outstretched arms. It's a good figure but I'd say it's mostly useful along with the two additional bits (a clay pot and large animal skull) as part of a large based

presentation of one of the spellcasters above.



The last two figures are absolutely the pick of the litter here. The others are not shabby but these really shine. The first carries two swords and comes as a single piece. Both arms are extended in a combat pose and she wears lots of animal skins (not covering her chest or butt of course) and has a helmet made of large horns on her head. This is an excellent figure that would make a fine PC

for D&D or any other fantasy game or she could act as a leader of a unit of warriors. A bit of flash was found on her swords but other than that she was ready to prime. As much as I liked the first of the two Champions the second is even better. It's a two piece model (right hand and sword are connected but separate from the body) that you'll need to do a little model work on as there is a tab of metal between her

right arm and sword that needs to be removed. The arm fits into the socket perfectly and there is a peg on the sword that fits right into her leg. She is standing on a stool and carries a horn in her left hand in a toast. She wears skins and furs like her friends. Her face, eyes and large horned helmet are very well done. Her mold line was visible but not excessive.



No Pamela Anderson types in this batch but also no Lori Petty (see the movie Point Break) clones either. Also, while all of the figures have good poses and athletic builds none of them are weight-room types (or former East German female Olympians) and look good. So, what am I going to use them for? Well, I have two things in mind (Not like that, get your

mind out of the gutter!). I'm slowly building up an amazon army that will use Maidenhead figures along with selected figs from Reaper (giant killer frogs, frogmen, etc...) to create jungle-themed armies for both Ares (by Majestic 12 Games) and Warlord (by Reaper Miniatures). These figures are certainly not for everyone, but while they do show more skin than most other female models I did not find them offensive. If you're looking for amazon types then you've come to the right place.

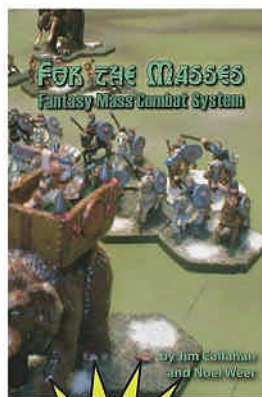
Reviews by Mark Theurer



30mm Human Female Warrior (GenCon Pre-Release, \$3.00)

For quite a while there has been chatter on the internet about various unrealistic fantasy female warriors. The focus of this chatter is not on the inherent oxymoron of "realistic fantasy female warriors" but on the proportions of these women warriors. Most manufacturers tend to be on the "Pamela Anderson" side of the debate, but Thunderbolt Mountain has decided to take the other side. The result is their 30mm Human Female Warrior.

Now Available from Majestic Twelve Games



For The Masses is a complete fantasy mass-combat wargame system. But it is also much more: The flexibility of the system allows players to use any fantasy setting and armies to play out famous fantastical scenarios and ancient epic battles. Several sample army lists are included in the book but the real strength of *For the Masses* is the unit creation system. This system encourages players to be creative, use their imagination and have fun, which is the way wargaming should be.



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This model is very well sculpted, and is armored in historical mail. This, combined with her more normal proportions, is what makes here the "realisting female warrior". I leave the fantasy moniker out because this is more of an historical miniature as is evidenced by her 12th century Rus armor.

The figure itself comes in three pieces - body, sword and sheild. The details on the figure - especially her armor and face, are very well done and, combined with the historical shield and sword, make a understated by striking model. This is definitely a good choice for a realistic female warrior character.

30mm Goblins (GenCon Pre-Release, \$3.00)

Thunderbolt Mountain is working on a goblin line which they will release after they get started on their wood elves. However, some pre-release goblins will be available in September.



The first of these is the goblin archer. This is a rather spindly goblin with a recurved bow - spindly at least if you are used to the current style of goblin/orc sculpts available from other manufacturers. The model has a round head with pointed ears and a fang-dotted mouth. The goblin is dressed in

just a loin cloth. The sculpt is vary dynamic and appears that the little guy has just let fly with his arrow.

The second and third goblin models are the heavier goblin spearmen. These models are larger - bulkier, actually - than the archer and come with a separate scimitar, shield and spear. The first pose, with the spear held low, is also wearing a loin cloth with the addition of a helmet. His hair is bound up in a club behind him. The pose is as if he's running forward in a charge.



The third goblin model, is posed with his spear ready for an overhand thrust. This model is wearing a chain mail shirt with shoulder and back plates of armor.

The style of these goblins suggest that the smaller, quicker ones are archers while the larger ones are shock troops - like the Bodyguard of Bolg from "The Hobbit". While not ideally suited for a rank and file miniatures war game, these goblins will make excellent dungeon denizens for your RPG adventures.

CROCODILE GAMES

WarGods of Aegyptus

Ok...starting from biggest to smallest. The first mini is Titan Master I from the Wargods of Aegyptus line. This piece of work comes in at \$24.95 US. He stands in at about 7.5cm and is pretty stout. He comes in 6 pieces. The main body and legs, right and left arms, tail, head and lower jaw.



Pros: A very fine looking figure. The sculpt is very nice, and there is an excellent amount of detail in the figure. He balances well. Which is important because he did not come with a base.

He has a sculpted metal base that is attached to his feet. I am not a big fan of that, but it seems to work out well, and may be more in line with game rules than aesthetics. He fits together nicely, also. There are a few gaps. But nothing severe, and they are very slight considering a figure of this size. Under the head, the right arm, and the underside of the tail. Nothing too noticeable or too big for even the most inexperienced green stuff user.

Cons: There were some annoying mold lines. One in particular running down the left center part of his back, which is covered in bony spike things. So to fix this I had to cut out part of the detail and then cut it back in. Some lines on the hands were not too bad, but the back and left leg were a pain. The pegs for the arms and head were either a bit too long, or had flash on the end of them. Once again, nothing too severe, but worth noting. Nothing that a file or pair of clippers cannot fix in a few minutes. Overall, I really do like the figure and look forward to painting it. It is a very nice piece of work.

Next we had the Wendigo. The Wendigo models are preview models for the Wargods of Hyperborea game. A grand total of 6 models were available for purchase; mainly to whet the appetite and give an idea of the future.

Wendigo Warriors	(2) \$8.95
Wendigo Hunters	(2) \$8.95
Wendigo Chieftain	(1) \$14.95
Wendigo Shaman	(1) \$7.50

The Warriors are single pieces. The Hunters are a single piece (the one with two sets of javelins) and 3 pieces (body, hand w/ javelin, and arm). The Shaman is 3 pieces (head, staff, and

body). The Chieftain is body and weapon arm. I will go over them as a group instead of individually, as they all share common traits.

Pros: These models are absolutely breathtaking. They are without question some of the nicest figures that I have seen. The sculpts are detailed and complete. There is a difference in the models that would be consistent with rank. The Chieftain is noticeably bigger than the others, while the Shaman looks more haggard and older. They fit together very well. Some tiny trimming is needed but nothing major. There are no mold lines or improper parts. I did not need to clean them up at all except for a tiny bit of flash.

Cons: The bases are thin and seem kinda flimsy. I might just be used to GW or Rackham bases, but these seem very weak and I am not sure if I will keep the minis on them. They are just a bit off the other companies sizing, both smaller (infantry) and larger (large base) by a mm or two. They are also precut, so you get to put them in the base in a prescribed manner. Not really a quality issue, per se, but worth commenting on.

And that is about it. I really like these figures, and am looking forward to learning more about the War-gods line. In fact, I was told about future releases involving the Wendigo holding swords made of ice and the like, but nothing concrete. We will see what the future holds.

Reviews by Mat Andrews

Like Titan Master 1, this is a brute of a figure. In most respects, he is a variant sculpt of the first Titan Master. The six pieces fit together very well and only at the shoulders, where the head and neck fit is there any significant gap. This is caused by the placement of the molding tab. You must be very careful to file this smooth so the pieces will mate up. I would suggest pinning this joint. This is a very impressive piece and, if not used for the War Gods of Olympus would make an excellent demon or swamp monster for an RPG adventure.



Titan Overlord (\$49.95)

The Titan Masters are just chumps when compared to the Titan Overlord. This monster stands over 11 cm tall. Like the Titan Masters, this is a multi-part model. The eight pieces include the base, both legs, a stub of a tail, check, back and shoulders, left arm, right arm, and the head.

There is quite a bit of work that goes in to making this model. The torso is two pieces and needed some filing to get to fit. The arms attach to the torso by large lugs. These needed extensive filing to fit into the slots in the body. The rest of the pieces fit without much effort. However, the model does need to have filler applied to most of the joints. Given the size of this model, I don't think this work is excessive.

As for mold lines, there were none worth mentioning.

The model is well sculpted, as we've come to expect from Crocodile games. Its dynamic, hunched over pose gives it a sense of menace and its single eye only adds to this impression. Personally, I will take my time painting up Polyphemus, as I have named him, and can't wait to pull him out in one of my RPG games.

Reviews by J Michael Tisdell



Battle Report



It had been far too long since Brian kicked me in the head while playing a game of Warmachine so we sat down to plan out another game and battle report.

We decided to try something a bit different this time around (well, different for us but from reading the Warmachine forums it's something that others have played around with) and that's an all-infantry army. No Warjacks at all. Yup, a straight infantry battle. Warcasters (actually still just one per army) will definitely be allowed and I have a feeling that they will prove to be very powerful in this setting.

We decided to go for a 400 point game, which is actually pretty close to a standard game of Warmachine that includes Warjacks. With this many points we should each be able to bring around four nice units along with at least one character type.

In sitting down to put together my army I was able to consider pretty much any of the various Cygnar troop types but would not be able to field an all-painted army yet. On the other hand, I would not be fielding any proxies as my collection of Cygnar models is complete and up to date as of the time we played the game.

I started off with a unit of Long Gunners. I hoped to use their rather long range (14") to whittle down Brian's troops before we got into too much close combat. At just 64 points they are a bargain that just needs to get into position. Next up was a unit of Gun Mages. I've had decent luck with them in the past and they remain my favorite Cygnar unit. Not to mention that they're about the only unit in my army that's had any recent success. Next I grabbed a full boat of Trollkin lead by Greygore Boomhowler. I've used them once before in a regular game and they blew a test after losing half their number and ran away. I'm hoping for better results this time. My units were rounded out with a squad of Trenchers. I've recently added these to my Cygnar army and while I haven't had a chance to paint them yet I'm very eager to throw them out there behind a nice line of smoke. For my Warcaster I took Ms. Haley. I just love the Chain Lightning spell and her Feat will hopefully allow me to unleash an extra effective volley of fire in Brian's direction. Backing her up would be Reinholdt. That puts me at 403 points, which would not be Kosher for a tournament but for our purposes today it's ok.

So, what to do with all these guys running around the field? Well, I really have a good feeling about the Trenchers "line in the

sand" type defense where they set up dug in and then I'll be tossing out smoke on my first (and maybe second and third) opportunity. Whomever is advancing behind them should benefit also. The trolls need to get into close combat, and quickly. I've found their extra save to be useful but definitely not something to be counted on so I'm really looking for them to get the charge off on one of Brian's units. As for Haley, her staying alive is not quite as imperative as in a game with Warjacks, but she's not going out there just to become another statistic either. Chain Lightning is the first thing in my mind for her. Gotta get her close enough to toss this out there and zap some of Menoth's finest.

Brian's Pre-Battle Musings

Ok, Mark has asked me to give him another kicking at Warmachine. Well, those weren't his exact words, but that's what's happened the last two times he has asked for my assistance in doing a battle report for Privateer Press' miniatures game of heavy metal combat.

We were going to try something a bit different this time. We were going to go for an all-infantry fight, no Warjacks. We settled on 400 points. This would make for a sizable conflict and would not be too hard to get figures together for it. As I had several weeks warning I got to painting. I wanted to try out some troops with which I had no experience. I was going to field several units that had not seen service for me, yet.

Here's what I decided to use to punch Mark in the brain. The biggest question: which Warcaster to take? All four of the Menothian 'casters have their charms and their gimmicks. I decided to give The High Reclaimer a whirl. I had painted him up a few months back and he had yet to see combat. He would need some help. A Paladin of the Order of the Wall had to take part. I really, really (really!) like this model and he's a mean motor scooter in combat. To help him out I decided to try out my freshly painted Knights Exemplar. They look mean on paper, now I want to see how they do on the table. Of the more mundane units I decided to include a group of Temple Flameguard and Deliverers (9 of each). I also wanted to include a unit of Holy Zealots, but mine weren't quite completed. But, a new friend of mine was kind enough to let me use his painted Zealots along with a Monolith Bearer (thanks Daniel). Lastly, to add some long-range firepower, I decided to bring along Arquebus Jonne and his little buddy, Herne Stoneground. If nothing else this would be an educational fight. This would be my first time using The High Reclaimer, Knights Exemplar, Holy Zealots and Herne and Jonne.

As is my usual tactic, I would try to keep things simple. I would advance with the Knights, Zealots and Flameguard while Herne and Jonne and the Deliverers provided Mark's troops the some artillery lovin'.

Deployment

We played on a 3' x 4' table at a local game store (Game Wyze in Plano, TX www.gamewyze.com) on one of their tables using store terrain (seen throughout this report). I ended up being 1st player and set about to dropping my figs on the table. I had my Trolling down in front of an incline where the Long Gunners were standing, hoping to be able to fire over their heads down-field. Haley and Reinholdt were standing behind the riflemen but I'm sure she wouldn't be hanging around there too long. This was all over on the left side of my table edge. Towards the center my Gun Mages plopped down. The Trenchers would have to wait until Brian deployed his troops but I expected them (and they ended up being) to start the game dug in right in front of the Gun Mages.

Brian ended up with a line of troops extending across his side of the table. His Flame Guard to counter my left side of Trollkin and then his Paladin and Knights more towards the center. His Deliverers atop a hill in similar fashion to my Long Gunners but over to my right with the High Reclaimer and the Zealots down in front.

Turn 1

Pics of turn one can be seen above and below. On my turn the Trollkin ran forward readied their axes for some action. I was not in the frame of mind to have them try any shooting and was pretty single-minded about getting them into close combat. The Gun Mages did the same and sought to close the gap between themselves and their foes. The Long Gunners also moved into what I hoped was a better firing position and shave a few inches off the distance to the Flame Guard. Haley and her vertically challenged friend moved towards the Gun Mages but still had an elevated position at the end of the turn. My final action was to have the Trenchers create a line of smoke in front of them that marked ahead of time right where Brian's Zealots would clash with my Trenchers.



For Brian's part of the first turn Herne and Jonne ran up through the creek splishin' and a splashin' as they went. The Zealots ran towards me and right into the smoke. Below you can see that a handful of them were able to get close to the Trenchers but could not attack since they ran. Also, "Greater Destiny" was activated for the Zealots. The Flame Guard moved up and created two ranks of shield walls. The Knights, High Reclaimer and Paladin all ran up to get closer to the clash that was ready to develop in the center of the battlefield while the Deliverers spread out a bit looking for better firing angles.

Turn 1 Synopsis

I didn't expect too much more out of the first turn than what we got. A lot of positioning before charging in and making a mess of things or getting ready to let fly with spell and lead.





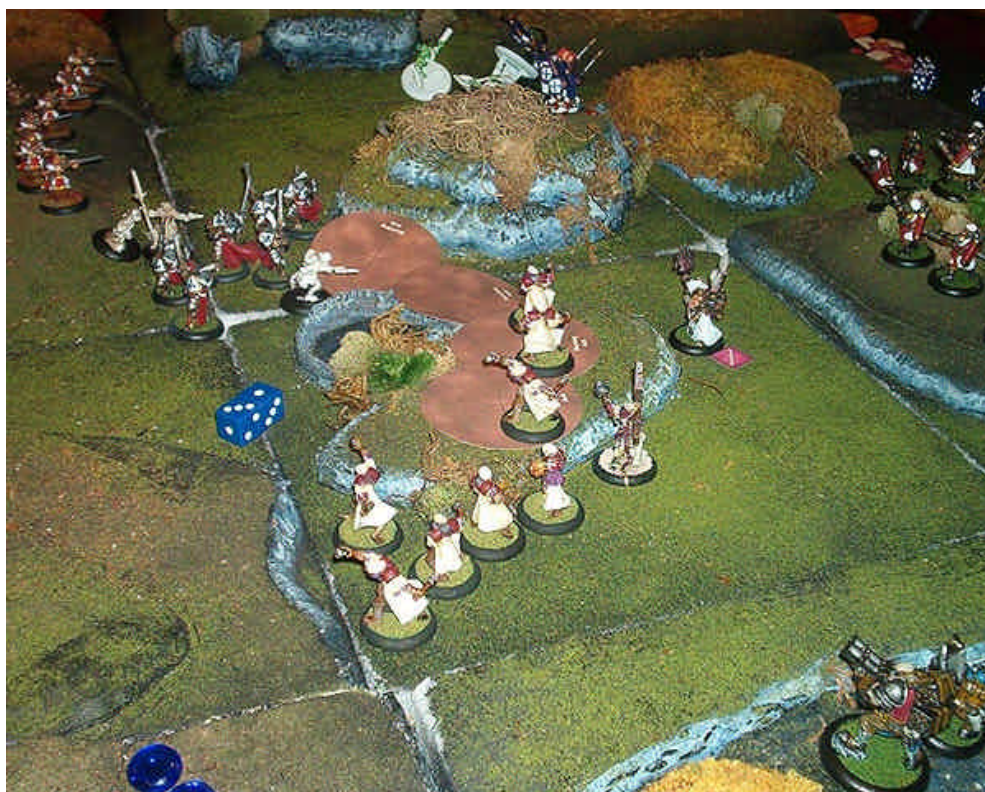
was under the template. Stupid, stupid, stupid! Even with Brian's Knights dead, giving his High Reclaimer many soul tokens by the way, I was not relishing the idea of the Zealots charging in and I did something decidedly un-Warmachine like and pulled my Trenchers back and unloaded some more smoke. I could not pull off a Bayonet Charge due to the terrain around and in front of me and I

Turn 2

The party really got started in earnest during turn 2. My smoke markers went away and then to start things off, and hopefully soften up the Flame Guard before the Trollkin got to them, the Long Gunners let loose in the direction of Brian's spearmen. With my riflemen lined up (above) it reminded me a bit of a Civil War firing line. I was very pleased to hit four times but only one of the Flame Guard fell. Still, better than nothing I guess. Boomhowler and his crew charged into the wall of metal (Flame Guard) and all four of the beasts that made it into close combat hit their targets. Three more of the guard fell to the ground dead. Drat! One more would have caused a test to see if they wanted to chicken out and run home. Haley took a few steps forward and then unleashed hell on the Knights Exemplar. She cast Chain Lightning and fried all six of them to crispy little bits of metal and flesh. It must have been like at the end of *"Raiders of the Lost Ark"* when the holy fire shot out of the Ark of the Covenant and lit up those Nazi's. In true Warmachine fashion Brian allowed me a bit of celebration before picking up his Exemplar McNuggets and then making plans to kick me in the nether-regions on his turn. Ok, now here's where I pulled a real boner of a move. I had a few Gun Mages that could see and had range (I figured they had range anyway) to the Zealots so I dropped an Inferno on them, knowing full well that it would hit one of my own Trenchers. I was hoping that being dug in like an Alabama Tick (line credit to Jesse Ventura in *"Predator"*) would save him. Of course, I completely forgot that the Zealots could not be hurt this turn due to Greater Destiny. and all that happened is that I was able to roast the Trencher that

(being honest here) was definitely scared of the Deliverers up on that hill. Sure, they'll deviate all over the place but with lots of troops out there I was worried about his bottle rockets causing all sorts of casualties. I lost one Trencher to free-hits as they pulled back but dropped down a new line of smoke.

Brian started off his part of turn 2 by having Herne and Jonne trudge up a bit more through the water and then "boom, boom, boom" firing at the Gun Mages. All of the templates deviated but still managed to find my rather fragile Gun Mages and killed four of them. The remainder of the unit stood their ground. The Zealots moved up again, some getting into the smoke some not, and tossed Firebombs at the Gun Mages and Trenchers. The Gun



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Mage Lieutenant was the first to be struck down and then lots of deviation followed from the rest of the Zealots but with all of my guys (Trenchers and Gun Mages) packed so close it didn't matter much and by the time the smoke cleared all of the Gun Mages and all of the Trenchers save one were dead, blown to bits. The Paladin charged into the fray where the Trollkin and Flame Guard were duking it out and killed one of the beasts, who in turn decided to stay dead and not regenerate. The Flame Guard then set about their task of poking my Trollkin with their spears. We had two spearmen each gang up on a Trollkin and then a one-on-one fight. All of Brian's thrusts struck true and three Trollkin hit the ground but one refused to die and they refused to run away. From their elevated position the Deliverers sent forth their rockets towards the Trollkin. They missed in all but one of their shots and deviated very little and scored many hits, but only one kill. Still, the Trollkin were steadily being whittled down and that's not a good thing for me. Brian's kick to my crotch came at the end of Turn 2 when the High Reclaimer used his Resurrection Feat and brought back the whole unit of Knights and three of the Flame Guard! Oh, crap on a stick this is gunna suck!

Turn 2 Synopsis

We had an excellent back and forth exchange this turn but Brian ended up on the better end of things. If the High Reclaimer was not around I'd have a much better feeling going into Turn 3 but as things stand I'm going to have to do something spectacular to snatch victory out of the waiting jaws of defeat.

Turn 3

The end seems pretty nigh so it's time to try and pull a rabbit out of my hat. The most pressing issue that I'm addressed with is the full boat of Knights that are standing right in front of Haley. Well, if Chain Lightning worked once it's time to fire it up again. She managed to kill four of the six Knights and also fried the last Trencher in the process. Along with that she activated her feat, Blitz, and shot dead one of the Zealots. My Long Gunners sent a huge amount of fire downfield at the Flame Guard but only manage to kill one of them. With their recently bolstered numbers there was no chance of them running away when just moments



ago they would have needed to test. Boomhowler gave the Paladin the middle finger (Wait, how can you do that with just four fingers?) and killed one more of the Flame Guard before Brian's part of Turn 3 commenced.

First, the Paladin headed over to Boomhowler and smacked him but was only able to knock him down. The rest of the Flame Guard whaled on the Trollkin and finished off Boomhowler and his last mate. The High Reclaimer then moved up a bit and cast Immolation several times at Miss Haley and she and Reinholdt were reduced to piles of ash.

We called the game after Haley died. Not because of the usual crippling effect on Warjacks when you lose your Warcaster but because a single line of Long Gunners would not be able to salvage this fight and I conceded that Brian was the victor.

Turn 3 Synopsis

I'm glad that I was able to take down some more guys before the end came but it was not to be a happy day for Cygnar today. I think that we both did the best that we could this turn and Brian's best was better than mine. I'd have wished for more production out of the Long Gunners but I was firing at very tough targets and should have made better target selections.

Brian's Post-Fight Chortling

It's nice to be right all of the time (my wife would disagree).



Once again I managed to give Mark a pretty good drubbing in a Warmachine battle report. No disrespect to Mark, but things just have not gone his way in our fights. We can't even blame the dice this time because he used mine and they were just as good for him as they were for me.

So, what did I learn in this game? I learned to **HATE** the spell, Chain Lightning. They bar-b-q-ed my Knights not once...but twice! Everybody pretty much did what they were supposed to. I expected the Temple Flameguard to take a beating from Boomhowler Company. They took a pounding and still hung in there and won out in the end. They did receive some timely aid from the Paladin and the Deliverers. I can't decide which unit should get high honors for their performance in this battle. It's probably a toss up between The High Reclaimer and the Holy Zealots. The Zealots did a lot of damage to Mark's Trenchers and Gun Mages. The High Reclaimer really made his presence felt when I rolled that "9" when I used his Resurrection feat. The look on Mark's face when I plopped all six Knights and three Flameguard back on the table was priceless. Too bad there's no picture of his gaping mouth.

Overall, I was quite pleased with how everything came together. The Monolith Bearer's ability to make the Zealots invulnerable for one turn was invaluable in breaking up the dug-in Trenchers. I was a bit worried when Captain Haley whacked all of my Knights that first time with Chain Lightning. But, they "lived" to fight another round, thanks to Resurrection. The good part about the death of the Knights was that it gave The High Reclaimer plenty of Soul Tokens to convert into focus points the next turn. These gave him the ability to lay out Haley with multiple castings of Immolation and win the game for my little religious fanatics and me.

This was a very fun game. Both Mark and I had a great time and we're still talking about it over a week later. All I can say is that if you're into Warmachine and have yet to try an all infantry game, by all means, give it a go. Since you won't be allocating focus points to Warjacks you'll have a lot more for casting those high-powered spells for which you never seem to have enough focus in a traditional game. Trust me, you'll have fun and you'll have a different realm of tactics to consider and try.

Mark's Post-Fight Thoughts

Hey, buy me dinner next time! Ok, maybe it wasn't that bad. In fact, I'd say that half of the game went in my favor and then it swung back over to Brian's side...in spades!

I absolutely have to agree with Brian on the fun-factor of this game. It was very enjoyable and also different from our regular Warmachine games. Not different in that it was still me getting pounded like a new fish in Shawshank Penitentiary at the end of the game, but different in that an infantry-only game brings a whole different feel to the game that we've come to enjoy very



much. With just infantry running around there you don't have the staying power of a mighty metal 'jack but the game still holds up well for the most part.

As much of an integral part of your army as Warcasters are in a standard game they are even more powerful when the 'jacks are not around. My Chain Lightning spell was as devastating as in a normal game and I'd expect further infantry-only games to continue to produce this effect of spells being at least as powerful as normal and probably a bit more so since more viable targets for offensive spells are out there.

Feats, on the other hand, are a mixed bag. In a standard game Brian's Resurrection would be a tough thing to deal with but in an infantry only game it's likely to really bring about an expletive from your opponent. Still, I liked playing this style of Warmachine and would like to again some time soon, after going back to regular style for a while though. It's definitely another viable way to play this great game. On the bright side, my record (yes a losing record of 0-3) in Warmachine battle reports is intact!

Game played by Mark Theurer and Brian Ahrens

Battle Report



Firstborn Pre Game Thoughts

I've been playing Chronopia since it first came out back in the day, though I did shelve it for a while. With the release of the second edition by Excelsior, I've dusted it off and brought it out. In second edition, I've been playing my Stygians exclusively. However, for this battle report I'm going to field my Firstborn. To be blunt, its because I've not gotten the hang of the Stygians yet - I'm 0-5 with them to date.

Clay and I have been playing each other for years, but we've not squared off against each other for a long time. This will make things challenging as I remember how Clay played 3 years ago, but I don't know how he's changed. He was always a good player that gave me a good run for my money. This looks like its going to be an interesting and hard fought game.

We're playing the Capture the Standard scenario from the Chronopia rule book with 1,000 point armies. This is the classic capture the flag game - which means I have to play both defense (protect my flag) and offense (take his flag). To do this, I'm building a 2 part force - defenders and attackers.

First off, the Defenders (698 points):

- o Enlightened with the spells Second Chance and True Sight.
- o A unit of 4 Macemen with a Great Maceman and a Standard

Bearer with the Standard of Fright.

- o A unit of 4 Swordsmen with a Great Swordsman and a Standard Bearer with the Standard of Fright.
- o A unit of 6 Crossbowmen.

The larger of my two forces, the Defenders will set up around the standard with the Macemen and Swordsmen forming the defensive line. The Crossbowmen will be deployed to cover the best approach. The Enlightened will be deployed where he'll do the most good - close to the standard.

For a game this size, I don't think the Chronomancer is worth his points. Alone he's 10% of the force and that's without his spells. The Enlightened gets some of the spells, the same interruption trick, and the Truthbringer. Also, you may notice that there's no Repulsor Knight - this is a change for me as I usually include one. But, again, he's 10% of the force and I think the two Standards of Fright will help by causing fear.

Now, for the Attackers (296 points):

- o Nightwalker
- o War Chariot
- o 4 Desert Crusaders

No, there's not much here, but then its a fast moving force. The plan is to send the Desert Crusaders out screening the War Chariot. When the force gets close, the War chariot will break free and punch a hole in the defenders which the Desert Crusaders will then exploit. The Nightwalker will slip in and grab the standard and sneak away - using his Hide ability and high movement to best effect. So, that's the forces - the actual plan will depend on the terrain deployment.

Crystal Lotus Elf Pre Game Thoughts

Wow, I get to play a game using Crystal Lotus Elves. These guys were my first army in Chronopia and have long been my preferred army. Of course, after a while I started branching out and playing with other armies, and now it seems like an eternity since I've actually been able to play a game with them. I guess I'll find out if I still know how to use



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them. When planning my force, I started with my list of “must haves” for this scenario. That list was pretty simple to come up with:

Blue Lotus Eater with **Sky Chariot** (need I explain why teleporting entire warbands 15” is a good thing in a scenario like this... or in any scenario for that matter?). **Dragonbane Warkiller** (could function as a flanking unit or as mobile reserves). **Archers** (since the scenario called for a certain amount of defensive play, I figured archers could shut down avenues of approach better than most). And lots of grunts (we had to get across the board and back while maintaining a defensive force, which meant we had to have a fair number of troops).

My “nice to have” units I had on my wish list where: **Crystal Knight** and **Lotus Guard** (both for their punching power) and **Dream Warriors** (for their tendency to be able to advance in the face of missile fire).

Now I went to the books to see what my 1000 points could actually afford once I fleshed out the forces with the requisite grunts. After playing with the numbers, I found that to have a balanced force I could not get both the **Lotus Guard** and the **Dream Warriors**, so I opted for the **Dream Warriors** giving me the following list:

Blue Lotus Eater w/ Sky Chariot and Ethereal	
Dragon	(81 points)
Crystal Knight	(72 points)
Dragonbane Warkiller	(117 points)
Archers (4 plus leader)	(157 points)
Spearmen (4 plus leader)	(132 points)
Axemen (4 plus Standard Bearer and leader)	(145 points)
Dream Warriors (4 plus leader)	(177 points)
Militia (8 plus leader)	(119 points)

My initial idea was to have the **Warkiller**, **Dream warriors**, **Axemen**, **Militia** and **Crystal Knight** detailed to go get the enemy flag with the **Axemen**, **Militia** and **Crystal Knight** going down the center while the **Dream Warriors** and **Warkiller** went down the right flank. The **Archers** and **Spearmen** would hold the fort back home. The **Blue Lotus**

Eater was supposed to help take the middle using **Sky Chariot** offensively and **Ethereal Dragon** defensively as the situation warranted. But as everyone knows, plans rarely survive past turn 1.



Terrain Notes:

The following terrain rules were used in this game:

- The area of terrain effects is denoted by the area of the terrain's base.
- A model that touches the edge of a wood is counted as in the woods.
- Movement in a wood is at half rate, unless along a path. A path allows movement at full rate.
- The entire base of a ruin is considered hard cover.

Set Up:

Clay's Crystal Lotus Elves had 8 Unit Cards and 2 False Leads. Michael's Firstborn had 7 Unit Cards and 2 False Leads. In the roll-off to determine sides, Clay won and picked the west board edge, giving Michael the east board edge. Michael began the deployment.

Turn 1:

Michael won the initiative and chose one of Clay's Unit Cards to activate. It was the Blue Lotus Eater, who moved three times toward the Firstborn lines.

Michael next activated his unit of Crossbowmen and advanced them to the hill just in front of his deployment zone.

Clay activated his Axemen and ran them toward the Firstborn line. Michael activated his Desert Crusaders, who began a flanking move to the south.

Clay's next activation was to move the Crystal Knight forward toward the south and go onto wait. Michael activated his Macemen who fanned out to protect the Firstborn Standard from the North side.

Clay activated his spearmen and moved them forward down the center of the battlefield. Michael activated his Swordsmen who fanned out to protect the Standard from the South side.

Clay activated his Militia who ran forward through the woods toward the Firstborn lines. Michael activated his Enlightened who went on wait next to the Standard.

The next four activations were of the False Lead cards. Clay then activated his archers and moved them up to cover the South flank approach.

Michael activated his war chariot and it followed the Desert Crusaders in their flanking maneuver.

Clay activated the Dream warriors who ran out on the Southern Flank, heading to an eventual meeting with the Firstborn flanking force.

Michael activated the Nightwalker, who skulked forward in the woods close to the southern end of the elf line.

Finally, Clay activated his Warkiller that advanced out to the south, bolstering the elf line in that area.

At the end of turn one, the Firstborn and the elves both deployed in depth to defend their standards while at the same time send out flanking forces to the south. One wonders who swiped who's playbook.

Turn 2:

Michael won the initiative again and selected the Warkiller to start. The Dragonbane moved forward and went on wait.

Michael moved the Crossbowmen onto the hill and put them on wait.

Clay's militia came out the other side of the woods and fanned out. The Firstborn Macemen shifted slightly and went on wait.

Clay moved the Spearmen in to close proximity to the Elf banner and went on wait. Michael repositioned the Swordsmen slightly and put them on wait.



Clay strengthened his Southern flank advance by running his Dream Warriors forward. Michael shifted the Nightwalker toward the center of the table and took cover behind a rock.

The Blue Lotus Eater attempted to case Ethereal Dragon but fumbled his roll. Michael ran the Desert Crusaders toward the middle of the battlefield. This brought the Elf Archers off wait. They were able to let fly with two shots, one of which hit but failed to wound.

Clay then activated the Elf Archers who brought down a Hail of Arrows on the Desert Crusaders who took one casualty. Michael continued the turning of his flanking force by wheeling the war chariot toward the center of the battle field.



Clay's spearmen advanced, leaving the standard behind while Michael's Enlightened shifted his position relative to the Swordsmen and Macemen and to end the turn Clay advances his Crystal Knight on the Southern Flank.

In this turn, Michael turned his flanking force toward the center while Clay continued to move his forward. The center of the elves advanced while the center of the Firstborn prepared for the coming assault.

Turn 3:

Michael again wins the initiative and chooses to move his Desert Crusaders into the ruins in the center of the board. Clay activates the Archers who again bring down a Hail of Arrows on the Desert Crusaders, killing 3 of them. The survivors panic.

Michael activates the War Chariot and continues to move it across his front toward the North end. Clay activates the Warkiller and presses his Southern Flank movement.

Michael pulls the Nightwalker back toward the woods on the South while Clay send the Dream Warriors after the Warkiller.



Michael rotates the Swordsmen to provide a defense in depth against the Elf Southern thrust. Clay advances the militia out of the woods, putting the front rank on wait.

Michael shuffles the Macemen to backup the Swordsmen. Clay moves the Crystal Knight after the Dream Warriors but slips him into the same woods as the Nightwalker.

The Enlightened remains on wait while the elven spearmen reform their line a bit. Michael then advances the crossbowmen off the hill to get better coverage on the ruins in the middle of the battlefield. Clay then advances the Blue Lotus Eater and the Axemen, the later moving into the ruins in the center of the battlefield.

With this turn, the Elves continue their flank advance while the Firstborn try to pivot the force - and manage to loose their first unit in the process.

Turn 4:

Yes, Michael wins initiative again and activates the Nightwalker. The Nightwalker slips out of the woods and throws his dirks at the rear of the Warkiller. He scores a hit but fails to wound. Knowing the Crystal Knight is behind him, the Nightwalker goes on wait.

Clay activates the elven archers who attempt to shoot the War Chariot. They miss and then advance to close the range.

Michael activates the Crossbowmen; two of which fire on the Axemen in the ruins bringing one of the elves down. The rest of the Crossbowmen go on wait.

Clay moves his spearmen forward toward the center of the board while Michael runs the Chariot toward the North end of the battlefield.

Clay activates the Warkiller who turns and spots the Nightwalker. The Warkiller charges and the Nightwalker countercharges. The Firstborn swings first but misses. In the return attack, the Warkiller kills the Nightwalker.

Michael activates the panicked Desert Crusaders who flee toward the First Born lines. Clay continues to advance the Dream Warriors.

Michael slightly repositions the Swordsmen and then the Macemen. Meanwhile The Crystal Knight advances along the flank and the Blue Lotus Eater fails to cast Sky Chariot.

The Enlightened shifts along with the Swordsmen while the Militia advance. Then both the Militia and Axemen go one wait.

The round sees the Firstborn take another casualty while trying to shift the attack to the North Flank. The Elves are resolute and advance on the center and south.

Turn 5:

Yet again Michael wins the initiative and forces the Elven militia to activate. They stay on wait. Michael then retreats the Desert Crusaders into the Firstborn Deployment Zone where they will rally next turn.

Clay then advances the Dream Warriors, the Crystal Knight, and the Warkiller along the Southern flank. While this is going on, Michael advances the crossbowmen to get a better view of the ruins and put them on wait. The Swordsmen and Macemen go on wait.

The Blue Lotus Eater successfully casts Sky Chariot and whisks the Elven Archers into the upper level of the ruins in the middle of the battlefield. Two of the Firstborn crossbowmen react and manage to kill one of the elven archers.

Michael lines up the War Chariot to charge into the Elven militia while the newly repositioned Elven Archers fire into the Firstborn crossbowmen, who take one casualty.

The remaining forces on both sides go on wait.

The turn sees the elven attack forming up while the Firstborn are still milling about helplessly. Hey, I can be hard on the Firstborn,



I was playing them!

Turn 6:

Breaking with tradition, Clay wins initiative. He nominates the Swordsmen to move first - and they slightly reform and go on wait. The Elven crossbowmen now fire on the Firstborn Crossbowmen resulting in 3 casualties which panics the unit.

Michael activates the surviving Desert Crusaders who rally and turn to face the eventual Elf advance. While this is happening, the Dream Warriors finally complete their end run and begin forming up for the attack on the Firstborn Swordsmen.

Michael flees the Crossbowmen into the Firstborn Deployment zone while Clay advances the Crystal Knight up to the line formed by the Dream Warriors.

Michael redeploys the Macemen to receive the coming attack of the Axemen while the Elven Warkiller positions itself parallel to the Crystal Knight.

Michael advances the chariot but swings it wide of the Militia and their pointed sticks. This ends the Firstborn activations.

Clay moves his remaining units. The militia charge the rear of the Chariot and attack it, doing some wounds. The Axemen advance out of the rubble and in sight of the Firstborn line. The Lotus Eater fails to cast the Sky Chariot spell, so the spearmen have to advance on foot.

The turn sees the Elven forces form up for their last assault. The Firstborn are still shuffling around.

Turn 7:

Clay maintains initiative and activates the militia which finish off the chariot. Michael activates the Crossbowmen who fail to rally and plunge headlong into the Firstborn Deployment zone.

The Elven archers let fly a Hail of Arrows into the Firstborn Macemen who stand there and take it - their leader obviously forgot about diving for cover. This costs the Macemen 2 comrades, but their morale holds. The remaining Desert Crusaders move up behind the Swordsmen and go on wait - hoping to blend in.

The Elf spearmen advance while the Macemen, continuing their ineffective synchronized shuffling, fall back.

The Blue Lotus Eater fails to cast Sky Chariot again while the Swordsmen advance toward the Elven Flanking force. Their pride forces them to do something, unlike the Macemen.

The Axemen advance further out of the ruins while the Enlightened follows up behind the Swordsmen.

Now the elves cut loose with their attack on the South flank. The Crystal Knight charges first only to be counter-charged by a Swordsman. The Swordsman manages to wound the Crystal Knight before the elf kills him. The Crystal Knight then charges the Great Swordsman, who also counter charges. However, the Crystal Knight easily dispatches the Firstborn.

Clay then activates the Dream Warriors who follow the lead of the Crystal Knight. They charge the Swordsmen, who counter charge. After the dust clears, one swordsman is down and one is still fighting with three Dream Warriors around him.

Finally the Warkiller charges into the swordsmen and manages to kill the Leader, Standard Bearer, and the last unengaged Swordsman while taking only one wound in the process.



At the end of turn 7, the elves are rolling up the south flank while pinning the center. The Firstborn have discovered that the one thing they do really well is die.

Turn 8:

Clay wins the initiative and forces the activation of the Crossbowmen, who rally in the deployment zone. Clay announces he will activate the Dream Warriors, but the Enlightened interrupts and charges the Warkiller. With a swing of the Truthbringer, the Enlightened kills the Dragonbane. He then follows up into the Dream Warriors surrounding the lone Swordsmen and kills one.

Clay continues with the activation of the Dream Warriors who manage to kill the lone Swordsman and eventually pull down the Enlightened. Michael activates the Desert Warriors and moves them up to slow the advance of the Elves from the south.

The Elven archers let fly with another hail of arrows against the Macemen, killing the standard bearer. The Macemen react by pulling back some more! Cowards!

Clay moves his Axemen forward while the Blue Lotus Eater successfully casts Sky Chariot on the Militia. The Militia now charge the crossbowmen and manage to kill only one. The spearmen advance and finally, the Crystal Knight charges and kills the Desert Crusader.

At the end of this turn, with only the shuffle-step Macemen surviving, Michael concedes the game.

Firstborn Post Battle Analysis

That was horrible! I mean I've had some bad games in my time, but I've not played this badly in years. Writing this up, I can see just how horrible it all went - so where to start?

Okay, what did I do right? My deployment was exactly what I wanted - but after that everything went into the toilet. I started second guessing myself - rather than meeting the elves in the middle of the field, I tried to turn my advance. This only resulted in slowing my attack and placing my units in the line of fire of his archers.

The rest of my army basically stood around and waited for the elves to come. The Enlightened did nothing until it was too late and the chariot managed to run up to the enemy and give him a free shot at its rear.

Looking back even farther, I can see I also had problems with my army composition. There were too many points tied up in grunt troopers - the swordsmen or the Macemen alone would have been sufficient. I should have bought more elites for my assault force. With a larger assault force, I probably wouldn't have run from the Elven assault force.

Well, I guess I'll be putting these guys back on the shelf for a while. They're embarrassed to be seen with me.

Crystal Lotus Elves In-Game Analysis

Well my initial plan changed pretty quickly, or at least was modified. Luckily deployment was so crowded that it hardly mattered where a unit was initially placed and could easily change its plan without much lost time. Both Michael and I deployed with the idea to move down my right flank (his left). The other flank was essentially ignored. I was also surprised that his forces seemed to be almost all grunts, and with the exception of the Chariot, he didn't have any of the fast movers that I was expecting. That was going to give me a little bit more latitude in my movements. The bad news is that I thought he outgunned me on the flank I was intending to move down, so I diverted my **Crystal Knight** to go beef up the **Dream Warriors**. Also with his crossbowmen covering the center, that looked too dangerous so I sent the **Militia** around the left to try and utilize the cover there and the relative safety due to lack of enemy troops. The **Axemen** still went up the center, and the **Spearmen** took up guard duty.

But then Michael evidently decided that he was outgunned so diverted most of his flanking force to the center. In my mind, that was probably a costly error. In his shift, I was able to drop a couple "hail of arrows" on his **Desert Crusaders** all but annihilating them. It also left his **Nightwalker** all by his lonesome with Crystal Lotus Elves all around him clamoring to take home his ears as trophies. However, he did manage to get a couple of wounds on my **Warkiller** before he gave up his ears. Michael's **Chariot** also made a run all the way across the battlefield from right to left (from my perspective) and never made it into combat until much later when I attacked it from the rear and took it out with my **Militia**.

After the **Desert Crusaders** stopped trying to catch arrows in their teeth and started running for the hills, my **Blue Lotus Eater** was able to get off a Sky Chariot (after failing to get off a single spell in several turns) and put my **archers** in a commanding location in the center of the board. They proceeded to trade shots

with the Firstborn **Crossbowmen**. Being in hard cover while the **Crossbowmen** where in the open proved to be too much of an advantage to be overcome and the surviving **Crossbowmen** turned to catch up with the fleeing **Desert Crusaders**. That left me in control of the center and the right flank. The rest is history.

Crystal Lotus Elves Post Battle Analysis

Well this game was a perfect example of “all offense” vs. “all defense”. Though I doubt Michael intended to play an all defensive game (that would hardly be like Michael) that was the position that he was forced into. And as in most games, being all defense when you are not in a prepared position or a choke point of some sort, it is a difficult position to be put into.

I was very disappointed in my magic for the game, seeing that Elven magic was supposed to be my strong suit, but when the dice won't cooperate what can you do? The **Lotus Eater** did manage to get off the one Sky Chariot for the archers which proved very helpful so I guess I can't complain too much.

The stars of the show (from my prospective at least) where my **Archers** and my **Crystal Knight/Dream Warriors** combo. The **Archers** scored a bunch of kills (some of them happened to be my own guys... oops) and were single handedly responsible for taking the center. The **Crystal Knight/Dream Warriors** combo was something I've never tried (but is mentioned in the Chronopia FAQ, which is what gave me the idea) and found it to be a potent match-up. When they did finally bowl into a warband of **Swordsmen** on wait, they came away unscathed (though they did finally lose one of their number to the Firstborn **Enlightened** who then promptly offered up his own ears in apology). My **Warkiller** did his duty and helped escort my forces into the enemy Deployment Zone. But in the end, his previous wounds from the **Nightwalker** proved to be his undoing and he too fell. All in all I was happy with the way things went and looking back on it, the final execution actually had some resemblance to my initial plan, and that is something you can't always claim.

Game played by J Michael Tisdell and Clay Richmond



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20 Questions



1. What's the difference between the RAGE system and the current CAV rules?

That is not easy to answer. At certain levels in the engine there is not much difference, at other levels there are dramatic differences. The best way to view it would be that the RAGE system is an evolution of the CAV engine. CAV was our first serious design of a professional level miniatures game engine. RAGE incorporates all of the lessons learned with CAV so the primary areas of change in the RAGE system would be found in the areas where the CAV engine was weakest.

2. So, it sounds like RAGE is more of an evolution and refinement on the CAV system and not a huge change? With that assumption, I'd expect that the Warlord beta rules haven't changed too much now that they're in their final form.

The CAV rules were specific design to CAV. The CAV architecture and engine were the basis of the RAGE but RAGE is designed to be much more than CAV ever was. RAGE will power Warlord, AICOM and CAV second edition. The Warlord Beta rules went through several dramatic changes and improvements to get to their final form. The changes were mostly in procedures but one major change in the architecture was made.

3. What's the latest word on AICOM?

Ok, now you want to get me in trouble with Matt :) AICOM is still in architecture development. In a nutshell when we begin a project like AICOM the first step is Architecture (broad brush stroke design) At this level initial concept art, background design and line objectives are established. The second phase of the project is Alpha Testing. At this level closed Alpha game testing combines, or mates, the world with the RAGE system. Closed Beta Testing refines the project and cleans it up. Open Beta gives us feedback from thousands of gamers around the world and allows us to prepare for the actual release. With the completion of the RAGE system for Warlord, AICOM will begin to move forward at a much faster rate so Open Beta might be available by the end of the year if not sooner.

4. Are there models for any of the CAV alien races in the works?

Again, you just want to get me in trouble with Matt Ragan :) All I can say is yes and wow!

5. Can we expect a flood of cool sci-fi figs soon?

I believe the release to the public of AICOM models will occur during open Beta.

6. We've seen one 28mm CAV so far. Any more on the way?

Yes, currently there is an awesome Scorpion going into production.

7. How about any modern-era miniatures. Modern Fantasy or regular modern.

None are on the release schedule in the next few months. Several projects are in the works at the moment that will cover several subject matters, but I can't go into that at this time.

8. What's in the immediate future for Warlord?

TONS of FUN! It is currently at the printer. It is a hard cover full 4 color book that will definitely raise the bar in the miniatures world. A new website is being created for Warlord the will allow players to guide the events in the Warlord world and rate themselves as players against each other.

9. Will faction books be coming out and will playing a generic (non-faction) army still be possible and viable?

Faction books are already in the works! One of the key design and world features was the ability to play a non-aligned army. The only overall limitation on designing a Fighting Company was that Good and Evil could not be in the same Company. Open army design has the benefit of choosing models from several factions and independents to build a force that that is very flexible. Pure faction forces have the benefit of special faction skill sets. Ultimately these choices allow players to build forces that suit their style of play.

10. Why the move in facilities?

No choice, we had to expand. We did not schedule several releases in 2003 because of a lack of space at the old facility. The new factory is 20,000 square feet and as you can see we filled that up pretty quick. At the moment we are efforting the construction of a second building at the rear of the existing one.

11. With the new, and rather large, Reaper home have you increased staff at all?

Not really, a few have left and a few have joined us. Overall efficiency has dramatically jumped.

12. Speaking of staff, how many people work for Reaper and in what capacity?

Production and Shipping 22

Art and Pre-production 8

Admin and IT 6

13. How did ReaperCon come about and how did it go?

ReaperCon came about largely from fan requests. The first one was a test run of the idea and was a huge success so more are now in the works.

14. What's the average time from figure concept to 'for sale'?

That's a loaded question! Several factors come into play here and

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anyone of them being late can derail a model's release for weeks or months. That said, in a perfect world: Concept art and design - 1 week, sculpture of the model - 4 weeks, putting the model into the factory production system and tooling of molds - 2 weeks, production packaging and shipping 1 - week. All of this occurring without a hitch and shipping on time - priceless :)

15. Do you do concepts (artwork) or just tell sculptors, "Give me a wereshark and make it however you like."?

Both actually, each sculptor is different on how they like to approach their work. Some prefer art, others like to create it based on a general description, some like to simply create stuff and send it in on the hopes we will buy it, me, I just want it on time:)

16. Do you see a trend in what kind/style of fantasy miniatures sell the best for Reaper? Stuff like standard character archetypes, staple fantasy monsters, big buxom women in chainmail bikinis...?

We used to put a lot of effort years ago in attempting to find some common ground or trend in model styles/sales. We never found it and the instant you see a trend everything changes. There are many factors that drive sales in one direction or another. A new focused player guide, a new world release a PC combo that becomes popular with a new rule. Bottom line is it is all in the consumers court and if I could predict what would be popular I would have patented the cell-phone, laptop, etc J

17. When pulling together concepts and moving on to having a sculpt made of a staple of fantasy gaming, stuff like Stirges, Spider Centaurs, Faceless Horror, etc, how fine of a line do you have to walk to not get some pointy-headed lawyer knocking on your door?

It is not really that fine of a line. As an example; I want to do a big bad ass vampire with big teeth. First there is mythos for that kind of monster in several cultures so the line you are talking about comes with interpretation of the idea or concept.

WOTC codified their interpretation of the concept/idea with their art. AEG, White Wolf, Steve Jackson Games etc also codified their interpretation of the concept/idea with their art. The line is making sure your interpretation does not copy their interpretation. It doesn't mean you can't do a vampire.

I know, a vampire is obvious, but what about a floating eye beast with eye stalks and big teeth. Again the same thing applies. First we establish mythos (I have several hundred mythos books) then we establish interpretation of the mythos. It is really that simple.

We do get emails all the time from consumers asking "how can you do the X from the Y book?" What they don't realize is that 95% of the creatures in those books are derived from some mythos and that they usually have good descriptions of their appearance as well. Mankind has been thinking up and documenting creatures for thousands of years. D&D has only been doing it for 30 years :).

18. Are there more rpg supplements/modules planned?

Sadly no. WOTC keeps changing the parameters of the D20 concept and it is just not something we are interested in doing.

19. Off the top of your head, how many figures is Reaper shipping off each month, or quarter, or year...whatever is easiest to pull a number out of.

We don't really track figure numbers as a whole, all I know is that its in the millions a year. I can tell you we use approximately 2-3000 pounds of metal each week.

20. What do you get to play? What do you like to play, other than CAV and Warlord, or course?

Table top is just that, Reaper driven. I haven't played an outside table top game in years. Computer games: DOOM 3 & Rise of Nations at the moment On Line games: Star Wars Galaxies.

22. How successful have the Reaper line of Pro Paints been and is there anything new on the horizon for them?

ProPaints have been wildly successful and as such paved the way for the new Master Series Paint Line Coming out in November of this year. ProPaints will see some new colors next year but at the present time the focus is on launching the Master Series.

23. What are the differences between the lines? Is there room for another paint line?

Definitely there is both room and demand at the moment for and advanced paint line. The big difference between the lines is that they have nothing in common but the little shaker skull in the bottle. ProPaints are formulated in a more traditional paint style and lend themselves well to painters at all skill levels. The Master Series paints are specifically formulated for advanced painting techniques like subtle shading and blending and are released in three color combinations that compliment each other. An example of this is 9016 Sapphire Blue, 9017 True Blue and 9018 Sky Blue. These three blues are formulated to work in combination with each other to achieve amazing balance and transition. Several meetings in late 2002 led to us developing a working relationship with the Sherwin-Williams Research and Development Department and I cannot begin to tell you how much we learned about paint and they were very helpful and instrumental in helping create the Master Series paint line. Everyone is very excited about this project!

24. Can we buy those little skulls that come in the pots of paint separately?

Oh Yes! We will have them in jars soon, both in blisters available at your FLGS and on the website.

Ok, so that's twenty four questions for the price of 20!

By Mark Theurer and Ed Pugh



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Tournament Report

CONFRONTATION

2004 Texas Spring Confrontation Tournament

When it was announced that Lone Star Comics in Arlington would host a North Texas Confrontation Tournament I immediately began preparing for it. Tournament events normally provide an impetus to buy new miniatures and to paint older ones who have stayed naked for too long.

First order of business was to pick which of my armies to choose from. I had just gone through a phase of painting and playing my Orcs, so I planned a return to my first army, the noble Lions. I then took up paper and pencil, actually the wonderful Army Builder program, and began drafting lists. I had to create a 400-point principal list from which 300-point armies would be chosen before each game. I find it easier to think of it as a 300-point army with a 100-point sideboard.

The Texas Tournament Rules stated that your principal list **must** contain at least one character and the character with the highest discipline (if you have more than one) is designated the force commander and must be played in **every** game. With the Lions I had a few choices, Alahan, Agonn, The Red Lioness, Sardar, or Meliador. With the armies being three hundred points I decided to steer clear of the larger point models so Meliador and the Red Lioness were out of the picture. This left me with Alahan, Agonn, or Sardar. Since I know that I would probably take a Bard, I felt that he or she could fill the role of magic user good enough alone so Sardar was out of the running. I finally decided upon Agonn as he has leadership 10. Having played against fear causing armies, I prefer to have a courage high enough with the Lions that I auto pass my fear checks and maximize the Bravery skill.

Figuring on at least one Wolfen and Undead opponent I brought a standard bearer and a musician as well. Since we are using a sideboard I could leave them in the case if fighting a non-fear causing army. A female bard of Alahan was chosen next as a lot of my tactics center around her running and throwing her dagger into hand to hand and then following up with the Mana Bolt spell from the primagic spell book. Having chosen 115 points it was time to select my troops.

The Pistoliers of Doriman were an obvious choice. At 25 points a piece these guys sport both a decent short ranged combat ability and war fury combined with a high initiative. I took the maximum allowed under the

tournament rules, three.

To take advantage of the Pistoliers of Doriman's high initiative, I decided to throw in 2 Paladins. These guys are there to worry people, as they kill outright on any doubles on the wound chart. This doesn't seem to happen very often, but it is normally cause for my opponent to put a bit more dice into defense than normal. All of this has brought me up to 243 points. To assist my Paladins I chose two of the Falconers. The Falconers have a move of 12.5 centimeters and the harassment skill and can be used to snipe at characters and other targets hiding around terrain or behind other troops. To add to this wonderfulness their falcons can be given the "kill" order to effectively cause a "pseudo light wound".

The next selection is the much-maligned Valkyries. These women seem to be missing from many of the English speaking lists, but present in French ones. I chose them to team up with the paladins or others to use their defense of 4. The Valkyries are my speed bumps picked to slow down troops by blocking. Two of these put me to a total of 310 points.



My next choice was simply to help with the victory conditions of one of the scenarios. Three Reapers of Alahan cost 60 points for three models with scout. They are inferior in stats to the Pistoliers of Doriman, but are a gamble in this tournament.

A final three Spearmen of Alahan rounded me off to an even 400 points on the nose. The spearmen are truly inferior, but still might spend a turn or two slowing stuff down. Alas more speed bumps.

Tactics

The main purpose of this army is to use the mage and falconers to maximize my grunt troops. Point for point I find that many of the Lion troops just can't hang with their point equivalent, but when fighting wounded troops they truly come alive. I intend to get the Pistoliers of Doriman and the Paladins into combat and using the "kill" order and a shot from the Mana Bolt to give their opponents a -2 to their dice rolls. This allows me to use war fury and attack as often as possible. The five pistols that most of my army lists will contain are their for free shots, not for any special tactic, although I will have no problem shooting into combat if the opponent's model is of a larger than normal size.

When my gaming group started playing these scenarios we noticed that the scenarios that could end on turn two or three could keep an opponent from achieving their objective by stopping the game early. With this in mind I endeavor to always choose those that stop early, and avoid those that require mobility and the full four turns. Below are my plans for each of the scenarios.

First Crusade and Second Crusade: These are the two missions I feel I can best achieve. My plan for these is a full-on push. As soon as the game starts I need to calculate in my head "exactly" the least amount of models that I can kill to achieve this goal. Remember as soon as you achieve one of these goals you can end the game, so I do not plan to worry about losses and hope that I kill my opponent's guys before he takes out half of mine.

For the Honor and Boundary Stones: Both of these missions require the game to progress to the 4th turn. This makes me nervous, but given my plan on holding up opponents figures and doing light wounds into combat, these two are my next favorite choices. Due to the need for only one boundary stone to be claimed on turn four "For the Honor" is slightly easier than "Boundary Stones".

No Mercy: I love this one. If I can keep the game going to turn four, I generally have a great shot at this one. Shooting into hand to hand and getting the cheapest guy to a critical wound early and then putting all dice into defense is paramount to achieving this mission. Combined with the falconers a fourth turn kill should be almost guaranteed.

Refusal: Another mission requiring a four-turn game, but this one is easier to fake out your opponent. Tossing 2 cheap guys onto the boundary stones may convince my opponent that I have "Boundary Stones". Hanging back typically gives away this mis-

sion and makes it a lot easier for your opponent to foil your plans. Fast armies full of mounted troops, flying troops, or their equivalent concern me greatly.

Bounty: Although this mission doesn't require the full four turns and can end the game upon completion, I am very worried about some of the characters that others may field. Trying to kill the Gorgone in three turns with her spells and ignoring headshot seems to be a really hard thing to do. This is a mission I will avoid if possible. If I can't avoid it then I will use the Reapers of Alahan's scout ability to get some cheap shots in and then rush around with my falconers. Hopefully I can get a bead on the target with my bard.

Retaliation: This is the reason I included the reapers. Using scout to deploy ahead and then charging a wide-open camp just makes me feel all warm and fuzzy. It seems odd that I would sideboard 60 points for one mission, but I was trying to play the odds. I knew that some missions were to be avoided and those I could deal with I would choose. If the reapers do not succeed then hopefully they will draw back enough of my opponents forces as to let my troops run around and charge the camp.

Ransom, The Messenger, Booty, and Breakthrough: Ouch!! These missions all require movement that I do not have in my army list. These are to be avoided whenever possible. I figure that I have a chance with breakthrough by tossing away enough troops so that half of those left will be in the opponent's back quarter. For example, if I start with twelve figures then I can lose 6 of them and then I only need three living figures in the back quarter. As soon as I get that many I need to make sure my guys fall...no dice in defense, and shooting into hand to hand. The Messenger is pretty close to impossible if I do not put down the first figure. Being pushed back during deployment almost always does you in. Ransom and Booty require speed and staying power. My speed is bought in the death of comrades...this definitely hinders the staying power.

If all else fails I must remember, if I cannot achieve my mission, try to kill at least half of my opponent's forces so that we can tie. It is a tournament and a tie is better than a loss. Our gaming group gave each of the scenarios a test run so that we could get used to playing them, and playing against them. I need to identify my opponents mission and try to keep him from achieving it.

How the tournament went

Game 1:

First game out of the chute and I drew to play an Undead army played by James Knight. Expecting the usual high fear that I come up against, I took the full command. This meant that I was effectively immune to fear as long as I kept my command staff together. James's army was not an undead army that I was used to playing. He had both Azael and Melmoth in the army to maximize the blood brother skill. He also fielded some scavengers of Archeron, which no one in my group had ever fielded. Drawing my missions I chose the second crusade out of the two I drew.

Deployment saw James putting his fast moving stuff on a flank with me centrally deployed to use the standard and musician effectively. The ghouls and my paladins got stuck in fast as Melmoth, the scavengers, and the other fast moving guys flooded my left flank. I used my Pistoliers to shoot at the centaur and scavengers. Turn two and three saw Melmoth running out of my reach, and my Pistoliers piling into the scavengers. The fierce ability kept me from getting any follow ups, and by the end of the third turn I had killed just a little over 100 points. Two scavengers alone accounted for 66 points. At this point I felt the game was over, I had fulfilled my victory conditions and still had half of my points on the board. The fact that Melmoth was obviously the messenger did not change this. A judges ruling confirmed this. I felt bad winning this way. James's gaming group had interpreted a line of the tournament rules a little bit differently than my gaming group and the judge. To be fair to James, three things in this game went against him.

1. He did not realize that other people completing their missions would stop the game.
2. Azael seemed to lack the will to toss spells around (there was no small amount of bad rolls here).
3. On turn two **and** turn three the card draw went my way and allowed me to charge keeping the fast stuff from running away.

Game 2:

Another Undead player lines up against me. This time a common nemesis of mine would be my opponent; Joe Schirmer. To say the least I could have closed my eyes and called out most of his list. Here is an idea: Gorgon + 2 Familiars + Arrow of Hectate, 2 Morbid Angels, 1 Wolfen zombie, 4 Morbid Puppets, and 1 Specter.

I drew both "Boundary Stones" and "For the Honour". Hmmm...hard choice. I went with "For the Honour". My list was everything but the three Reapers, one paladin, and one spearman. Upon set up I realized that the mission was for the most expensive model not the force leader...crap. That meant it was up to my Bard to stand upon a boundary stone. The terrain had a bridge, and my setup was such as to draw Joe's forces across it. I wanted to slow them down. On turn two my bard stepped onto the boundary stones. I flanked her by Valkeries, a Pistolier and the edge of the board. Joe's morbid angels and the zombie made a beeline for the bardess. I charged the Wolfen Zombie with one of the Valkeries hoping to slow it down...it didn't. The specter slowly disengaged his way across the bridge, but it became obvious that he was not going to make it.

I started to get real concerned that I was going to lose half my points causing me to lose, but lots of defending and selling out troops kept that from happening. The angels did get the charge off on the bard, but she held her ground, and in two turns dispatched her. Joe started tossing Arrows of Hectate at the bard, and we had a review of the rules to absorb a spell. Joe kept casting that spell until I was out of gems and would toss it one more time. At the end of the game the bard was seriously wounded, but still standing. Joe revealed his mission was Bounty, and that he just couldn't kill the bard. It was one of the tensest games I

have ever played. Joe is a very analytical player, and this really was a stalling game.

Game 3:

Out of Undead players, and the Swiss pairing system caused a showdown between Matt Andrews and me. Matt brought his Devourers, another fear causing army. With this being the last game I was really happy I brought the full command staff.

This time around my mission choice was "No Mercy" and the ever-popular "Boundary Stone". Knowing my opponent was a devourer player, and that I would outnumber him I chose "No Mercy". Upon deployment my target was obvious. Matt had include The Corbeau in his devourer army. Cheaper than any other devourer figure he was deployed up front as a speed bump. To my best recollection Matt had one Tyrant, The Corbeau, 1 Headhunter, 2 Eclipsantes, and 2 Voracious Warriors.

As the game started Matt dodged and kept out of my pistol range. He was able to get a bead on some of my troops with his head hunter. The Tyrant started swinging down the flank. As melee in the middle started tying up the Tyrant continued heading for my board edge. It became apparent by turn two that Matt had drawn messenger. That left my numerically superior forces two more turns to take down 150 points of his army to deny him his mission and try to kill The Corbeau on the last turn. The game was very tense until the combat phase of turn three saw me rolling doubles on a sacred weapon. In one fell swoop Matt's center began to collapse. Follow ups started swinging more combats in my favor. The continuous little jabs from the bard helped along the troops pulling down the devourers. The Falconers, due to poor deployment, didn't really get to use their "kill command" until turn three or four. Matt very cleverly used The Corbeau's ability to copy stats, not to copy mine, but moved one of his troops in base to base with him to steal his resilience. This allowed him to shrug off the Mana Bolts and dagger from the bard. With one side blocked off only 3 fighters could take swings at The Corbeau. Attacking all out it took almost every one of their wound rolls not to finally bring him down. It was a good game. My only sacred weapon kill swung the game in my favor. The deficit that Matt was playing to due to his mission and the Tyrant effectively out of the fight was just too much at that point.

Wrap up:

It took a month of playing to hammer into myself to never forget the victory conditions. Killing stuff is so fun that I have a tendency to get carried away with it. I really enjoyed playing new people. Confrontation's following is pretty small, so playing new people was a refreshing change from playing the same handful over and over again. Winning first in the tournament was a nice plus. I used the gift certificate to finally buy a second incarnation of the Red Lioness. I was also very proud to walk away with the best-painted miniature award as voted on upon the people in the store. I am disappointed that I won't make GenCon, but look forward to the next Confrontation tournament in the Dallas, TX area.

Written by Christopher Carr