TORG

ADVENTURE BOOK

Introduction

he group waited in dark silence, feeling the walls of the small cabin pressing in. Outside, they could hear the frightening howl of a tresir on the prowl. They hoped the savage beast wouldn't find their hiding place as it trekked through the new-grown jungle.

"If he doesn't show up soon, I say we give him up for lost," the Yellow Crab muttered, his muffled voice loud in the silence. "Let's face it, the scales probably got him and are enjoying a good meal while we sit here ..."

"That's enough," commanded Crowfire. All humor fled from the Crab's manner. "We'll give Quin another hour and then ..."

"And then what?" The cabin door swung open, stirring the stale air.

Crowfire, the Yellow Crab and Sabrina looked up to see Quin Sebastian standing in the open doorway. He was dirty and ragged, but he was alive — and there was

fire in his eyes. The Crab shifted nervously. He'd seen that fire before.

"I've got the information we needed," Quin stated as he shut the door. "And it's all bad. The Edeinos are going to storm Philly. They're just waiting for the newest crop of gospog to bloom - - a couple of hundred third-generation gospogs, due in two days, max. There's no way the Army will be able to stop them. They need time to regroup and resupply."

The Yellow Crab turned pale beneath his mask. "You're not suggesting —

"That's exactly what I'm suggesting," Quin said flatly. "We have to destroy the gospog fields before the harvest. Otherwise the city will be overrun."

Quin looked at each of them in turn; Crowfire, the Yellow Crab, Sabrina, Vancen. Each one, reluctantly perhaps, nodded in assent.

The soldier of fortune smiled grimly. "Then what are we waiting for? Let's move out!"

Important: This book is for gamemasters only. Players should not read it — or at least they should delay reading it until after their gamemaster has run the adventure and hooks within.

The Adventure Book contains information on how to run *Torg* adventures and how to design adventures of your own. It also contains a complete adventure to introduce gamemasters and players to the world of *Torg,* as well as adventure hooks to give you ideas of the types of adventures that can take place in the Near Now.

The Adventure Book builds on information provided in the Rule Book and World Book. The gamemaster should read the Rule Book first, then at least skim the World Book before reading this one.

What's in this Book

The first chapter of this book introduces you to the gamemaster and explains just what this important person does. The second chapter talks about "Running Adventures." It examines the methods and techniques of gamemastering a role playing game session — especially a session of *Torg.* The third takes an in-depth look at card play, a critical part of the *Torg* game. The fourth takes you through the steps of creating adventures, from story concept to the ready-to-play, fully-realized version. Next is the first adventure for *Torg,* called "Before the Dawn." Finally, we present a series of adventure hooks. These are brief plot synopses that serve as starting points for building your own adventures.

In addition, on the center eight pages we have gathered together the most important charts and tables needed to run the game as well as handouts for the adventure. These can be removed for easy reference; we suggest that you photocopy them and keep a backup set well away from the gaming table (which is usually covered with glasses of soda just waiting to be knocked over in the heat of battle).

Bob Dvorak

Chapter One

Introduction to Gamemastering

The essential difference between roleplaying games and other adventure games is the referee, or gamemaster. While other games are designed so that players interact with situations defined by the game rules, roleplayers interact with situations created by a gamemaster, who uses the rules *as* a guide. The rules are not meant to limit or constrain a gamemaster: they are meant to give him direction.

A good gamemaster is more than a rules lawyer. Gamemastering requires quick wit, dramatic flair, a sense of timing, and a level of fairness and impartiality not found in other types of games. Remember, the gamemaster is not playing against the players - there are no winners as the term is defined in traditional games. Everyone, players and gamemaster alike, wins if a roleplaying session is fun, exciting, and extends a sense of accomplishment (or acceptable loss) to all involved.

The gamemaster, then, is a judge, a referee, and a storyteller all in one.

There are plenty of tricks and simple principles that can improve your gamemastering style, and we'll go over a few of them here. But the best way to become better, more dramatic, and more creative as a gamemaster is to gamemaster.

The Role of the Gamemaster

The gamemaster's primary task is to create and present adventure stories for his players to participate in. The players' characters are the heroes of the stories, blessed with extraordinary abilities and destined (or cursed) to play a central role in the Possibility Wars.

The players cannot be heroes without you. You devise the fiendish plots of the villains. You play the roles of the bad guys, their henchmen and minions, the threatened innocents, and the cast of thousands. Yours are the huge fortresses filled with evil mist, the mighty war machines of the new Empire of the Nile, and the creatures that rule the night. You combine these elements into a story, a story with a goal, obstacles, opposing characters, interesting encounters, and a satisfying climax.

Gamemastering is more difficult than playing. A player controls his character — one piece of the story. If he plays his role well, he's doing all he's supposed to. The player does not even have to know the rules very well — the gamemaster can be counted on to correct any missteps. The gamemaster is responsible for the rest of the world.

Isn't This a Lot to Do?

In a word, yes. But it's well worth the effort. Every bit of energy you put into the game will result in a better session. A session in which the players are enjoying themselves is quite a payoff — when they become excited by the story, their enthusiasm is infectious. They win, you win, and everybody has a good time. Despite the appearance of the gamemaster as the one running all the bad guys and doing his best to thwart the heroes, one of the most enjoyable aspects of roleplaying games is when you and your players really work together to create an exciting story.

There is another benefit for all the work you do — you are the only one who really knows where the story is going. We find that gamemastering is the most exciting form of authoring a story, with your ideas played out right in front of you.

The gamemaster's job can be broken down into six tasks: refereeing, roleplaying gamemaster characters, describing the scene, setting the tone, sustaining suspension of disbelief, and responding to players' wishes.

Refereeing

Refereeing means interpreting the rules, making sure that the players abide by them, and resolving disputes in an impartial and reasonable way. To do this, you of course need to have a good understanding of the rules (and it is important to know them at least as well as your most knowledgeable player does). When the rules do not cover a situation, you have to improvise a solution. If a dispute arises, *your decision is final.*

As the players describe the actions of their characters, you decide whether or not they can do what they describe, or how difficult the action is. You interpret the card play and dice rolls according to the rules, and then tell the players what happens. You also decide what the gamemaster characters are doing, roll the dice, and determine the results of their actions as well.

We find it useful to think of roleplaying games as a *language* for telling interactive stories. The roleplaying language has many rules, akin to grammar, which control what sort of things you may and may not do in the context of the game. If a friend said to you, "Roses quickly very bullfrog alien gazebo," she has spoken a sentence which makes no sense. To communicate her idea, she would have to rephrase it according to the rules of English.

The same holds true for the language of the game. If your friend tries to have a character do something which makes no sense according to the rules, you have to tell her that the character's action cannot be done. Your job is not to guard the "purity" of the rules by adhering to every line of every paragraph, but to make sure that what is being done in the story makes sense in the language of the rules.

Roleplaying Gamemaster Characters

The players are the heroes of the stories you create together. But adventure stories also need dozens of characters besides the heroes, including villains, allies, and bit players. You are expected to bring these *gamemaster characters* to life when they appear in the story, giving them unique personalities, perhaps with individual quirks and beliefs.

If a particular gamemaster character is going to be prominent in a story, it is worth lavishing some time and effort to flesh out his personality. What does he look like? Where does he come from? Does he have any unusual mannerisms or speech patterns? The more detail you put into characterizing important characters, the better. And if the player characters are likely to interact with the character through the game system — that is, they are likely to fight, bargain with, spy on, ensorcel, or be ensorcelled by him — you had better give some thought to his attributes, skills, spells, equipment, and so forth.

But some characters are just spear carriers, minor functionaries who help the story along and then disappear. Don't bother working up much detail on them—doing so is actually counterproductive. If every character is described in a wealth of detail, they will all blur together after a while. A single detail will often suffice to distinguish a character who plays a supporting role: a policeman may have a very rotund face, a clerk at the night desk may have a squeaky voice. Only the very important gamemaster characters need complete backgrounds, turns of phrase, and game values.

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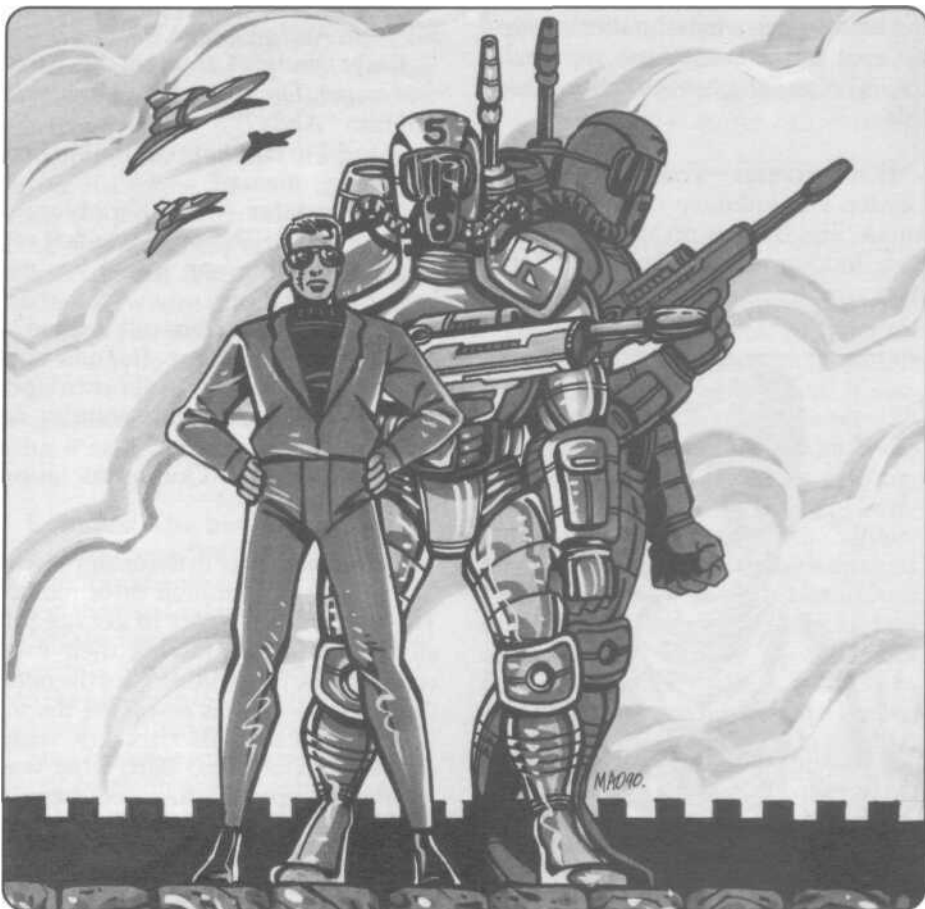
Describing the Scene

You are the senses of your player characters. You describe what they see, what they hear, touch, taste and smell. Descriptions with sensory depth help suspend disbelief, and make players believe their characters really are in the scene. Props can help, but props cannot integrate a character into a scene as well as a good description.

Remember that most of the time your descriptions to the players will be from their characters' point of view. For the most part you should limit the information they receive to what their characters can sense. Sometimes, for story purposes, the point of view can change, as it does in movies; this technique is described in the next chapter.

Example: The player characters visit Dr. Leyden, an acquaintance in Cairo. The gamemaster knows that two Nile shocktroopers are holding the doctor in an upstairs bedroom, having forced Leyden to write a hurried note excusing his absence when the shocktroopers spotted the heroes' car approaching. The game goes something like this ...

Gamemaster: The door to Dr. Leyden's townhouse is locked. You knock, and there is no answer. A second, louder knock brings no better response.

Barb: Fortunately he gave Sabrina the key (rotates wrist to mimic opening the door). I open the door.

Paul: Hold on here. What if he's just in the kitchen making some warm milk, and we sneak in ...

Doug: Who said anything about sneaking? (cups his hands) "Doctor Leyden, it's us!"

Paul: ... Of course, if it is a trap, we just let everybody know we're here.

Barb: Fine time to bring that up. What do I see?

Gamemaster: The foyer is a mess, with lots of dust and papers piled on the endtables. The coat closet is open, the hat rack is piled with weathered pith helmets. Smells as though dinner tonight was roast beef.

Doug: I'm checking the kitchen.

Gamemaster: Dishes are piled in the sink. The kitchen is filled with the smell of cooked beef. Vancen (Doug's character) notices heat from the oven and a note on the kitchen table.

Paul: Quin is going upstairs.

Doug: What does the note say?

Gamemaster: It says "Dear Fellows. I have been called away on a bit of urgent business. Back by Friday. All my best, Andy Leyden."

Barb: Andy? I thought he hated that name. Didn't he tell us never to call him "Andy?"

Doug: I'm checking out the kitchen. Anything unusual?

Gamemaster (while scribbling a note for Paul): The oven was left on, and the roasting pan inside has not been cleaned.

Barb: But the pan hasn't burned?

Gamemaster: Nope. (Hands note to Paul which reads): "A shocktrooper motions for silence while pointing an automatic pistol at you."

Doug: Uh-oh. "Quin, you found anything up there?"

The gamemaster in the example was giving out very limited information. The players had to act to get the full story, and were drawing their own conclusions. By handing Paul the note, the gamemaster has restricted the information even further; though, without telling Doug and Barb what was happening upstairs, he clued them in to the fact that *something* was up. While limited, most of the description provided was pertinent -- the smell of dinner led to the kitchen, for instance. Not wishing to make it too obvious, the gamemaster also threw in a few other details to muddy the water; the players could have chosen to ignore the smell of dinner, instead deciding to, say, search the closet or examine the dusty correspondence in the hallway. But basically, the gamemaster limited his description to information important to the story.

Setting the Tone

The gamemaster sets the tone of each play session by the way he describes the scene, the characters, and the available information. Each of the realms has a different feel to it, and a similar encounter taking place in two different realms might have two very different tones. When playing a gamemaster character, remember that they are living examples of their home realm.

Example: *In the Nile Empire ...*

Player (as character): Excuse me, do you know where the offices of Menhotep Excavations are?

Gamemaster (as gamemaster character, rustling a newspaper): Say, would you take a gander at this! Soon they'll be sending rocket ships to the moon! All the science wizzes need is a mineral some big ape lord is trying to keep for himself — the silly sap! Ain't he learned yet that what the Pharaoh wants, the Pharaoh gets?

Player: Fascinating. But about Menhotep Excavations?

Gamemaster: It's two blocks, over on El Asimat, past the new pyramid; can't miss it. You know, pal, going to the moon might be easier than getting in there — it's tighter than a gambler's smile. See? This rag's got pictures: shocktroops, burp-guns, half-tracks. Say. Why do you want to get in there, anyway?

Example: *In Orrorsh ...*

Player (as character): Excuse me, but do you know how to get to the governor general's office?

Gamemaster (as gamemaster character, rustling a newspaper): Who knows anything these days? Look at the nonsense they print in this ... this

yellow rag! "Shredded Bodies Found After Climbing Mishap: Fall Blamed." Ten experienced climbers *all* fell to their deaths? And how did they get "shredded" - perhaps the bloody mountain goats did it. Preposterous — absolute rubbish! Can't anyone see what is going on around us?

Player: I can see I may not get to the governor general's office.

Gamemaster: Well excuse me all to bloody hell for wasting your valuable time, your lordships! The governor general can be found in the ornate mansion beside the cemetery.

You can do the same thing with descriptions of scenery, or the tone of you voice. Think of books and movies which have the tone you want, and draw on them for inspiration.

Suspension of Disbelief

Roleplaying sessions are works of imagination. Playing the game requires you and your players to suspend your disbelief while playing — otherwise it is just like a novel or movie where you cannot believe the character can or would do the things he does. Disbelief destroys a story. Keeping disbelief at bay requires the cooperation of the players, but you are the key.

Be consistent. Be consistent in your interpretation of the rules. If you decide that a skill can be used in a way not mentioned in the rules, make sure the skill works that way for all characters from then on. Be consistent in your descriptions. If a dining room has mahogany furniture, it should not have oak furniture, or no furniture, the next time the characters see it, unless there is a good reason. Keep notes to jog your memory.

Another important way to keep your players believing in your story is to make sure that gamemaster characters act according to their personality, motivations, and the knowledge that they — *not you* — have. As gamemaster, you have knowledge of your player character's plans and actions which the villains of the story would not. Your villains should be as clever, or incompetent, as their skills and per-

sonality allow—and they should only have information they could obtain through actions they have taken, not information gained from your omniscient viewpoint as gamemaster.

For example, if the characters are plotting an escape from prison in a dark corner of their cell, you can hear the players discuss their plan ... but the guards cannot. So don't have them act as if they could.

Respond to Your Players' Wishes

Respond to your players' wishes. Get feedback about the sort of stories they want to see. Do they like mysteries and puzzles? Lots of fast action? Confrontations with many repercussions across the realms? Personal gain? When playing, do they want more or less descriptions? Fewer fights, more character interaction? If players have questions, try to answer them (as long as you don't divulge any critical plot twists). If they are confused by your stories, try to discover where the confusion lies and clear it up. By responding to the wishes of the players you can better cooperate to build an exciting story.

Respond to the players' wishes during the game, as well. Improvise when the player characters do something slightly unexpected; "wing it" as best you can. A strictly linear, rigid plotline — where the characters *must* go where you tell them, *must* do exactly what you have planned for them to do — severely inhibits the players' imagination. But when you wing it, wing it with the rest of the story in mind.

Example: The heroes are looking for a lost diamond mine, recently found by the Tankhanic Corporation. You expect them to find an old map hidden in the false bottom of a chest they have inherited, hire guides and march off into the jungle to look for the mine. To that end, you have created a number of jungle-type encounters and a climactic battle in the mineshaft itself.

However, the players don't even look for the map; instead, they decide to infiltrate Tankhanic Corporation

Tricks of the Trade: Maintaining Secrecy

Discourage your players from reading much beyond the players' section of the Rule Book. Part of the fun of *Torg* is in discovering the secrets of the realms as play proceeds. Also, as long as they don't know what's in the rest of these books, they'll always wonder what you know that they don't know. It doesn't matter if you have secret information or not. If your players *think* that you do, you'll be able to maintain a sense of mystery and uncertainty.

Let this carry through in the way you run adventures. Never give away any information that your player characters cannot know through normal senses, and never give away secrets that they haven't worked to uncover. Remember, secrets keep them striving for answers, and provide you with a powerful controlling tool — curiosity.

posing as rich entrepreneurs looking to invest their money in the New Empire's growing mining industry.

Thinking quickly, you let them set up a meeting with an unctuous underling and attempt to con him. If successful, they earn an appointment with the villain herself, who puts them through a pretty rigorous grilling, threatening to unravel their cover altogether. If they can con the villain, they can bid for rights to the mine and thus obtain its secret location. Once they've got it, they hire guides and set off into the jungle - - and the adventure's back on track.

All of the improvisations have led the players back into your original plotline. You could have had them get caught in a stockholders struggle for control of the corporation, but you didn't: that would not advance the plot at hand.

Chapter Two

Running Adventures

A roleplaying game adventure is a story told by a group of people as they play a roleplaying game. In other words, the people take on the roles of characters, and these characters interact with the game system, and with situations and events set up by another person, the gamemaster.

These elements are expressed dramatically within a definite structure. All adventures have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The characters may go on to experience other adventures — which may be linked together in a campaign — but each individual adventure follows the basic story format.

Adventures are stories created for players — stories that their characters can experience, complete with supporting cast, an interesting plot, and rewards for success. What's more, players help the stories grow to a satisfying conclusion by the things they bring to an adventuring session - their own ideas, the way they have their characters behave, and the way they interact with the other players.

When you play a *Torg* adventure, you create your own Torg "movie." The "movie" stars the player characters, and the gamemaster acts as director, writer, and supporting cast.

Preparing for a Session

By now, you've read the rules and have a basic understanding of the *Torg* game. Now what do you do to begin to play?

Read the Adventure

Well, if you're using a packaged adventure, the first thing you should do is read it. We suggest you run the adventure that comes with this book, "Before the Dawn," as your first adventure. It was designed to introduce you and your players to the world and game of *Torg*.

Make sure you read through the adventure at least once so that you can identify the main events of the story and have an idea of the characters you'll be called upon to portray. You don't need to memorize it word for word, but you do need to know where you can find things later. If you absorb the essential elements, you'll be able to improvise or look up specific details as you need them.

Stock Up

It's good to be prepared, so stock up on all the props and accessories you're going to need for a night of play. A photocopy machine will make your job infinitely easier. Photocopying character templates, important maps, or other props makes the game run more smoothly and gives the players something to hold on to and examine (players love hand-outs). Having lots of copies of important charts can make your life easier, as well.

You'll also need plenty of pens and pencils, paper to write and draw on, as many 20-sided dice as you can find (or have your players each bring their own), and something to eat and drink. Gaming is meant to be a fun social activity, and munchies make for a fun time. But be fair; have everyone contribute to the refreshment pool.

Gather Your Friends

Finally, after you have done all of your preparation, invite your friends over to play. We find that the most manageable-sized group for a role-playing session ranges from three to six players.

Session Length

A session of play should last as long as you are comfortable running, the players are comfortable playing, and the game remains fun. While this can vary from group to group, we've found that most gaming sessions last from three to five hours.

If an adventure runs over one session of play, we suggest that you end the sessions with the old cliff hanger gimmick. Leave the player characters in some perilous situation — in the middle of a firefight, on a raft heading straight for the falls, or, indeed, dangling over a 1000-meter cliff. This way, you leave the players wanting more. They'll go home thinking about their situation and trying to figure out what to do next.

Running a Typical Adventure

What goes into a typical adventure session? Let's examine one and see ...

Introducing Characters

At the beginning of a session, have each player introduce his character to the rest of the group. Introductions should be short and to the point so that play can begin quickly. The players should announce their characters' name and template type and describe their appearance, including distinctive garments, armor and visible weapons. It helps build mood if the players introduce themselves "in character," speaking as they think their character would.

Getting the Adventure Rolling

Next, you have to get these characters into the story you have devised. This involves providing background information that the characters would know because they live in the game universe, as well as getting them interested and emotionally involved.

You could accomplish this with a long monologue, but there are better ways available. Setting up short scripts for the players to read to each other in character can begin an adventure with a bang. You can give them quite a bit of information through the dialog, and no one is bored because everyone participates.

Another method for getting things rolling is to begin *in media res.* That's Latin for "in the middle of things." Starting an adventure *in media res* is a technique that plunges player characters right into the action. The game session begins with something interesting, instead of spending a lot of time getting to where the action is.

For example, in "Before the Dawn," the adventure opens with the heroes fighting a group of Edeinos. They don't learn the adventure's objectives until after the battle is over.

Maintaining a Lively Pace

Players may take a little while to get going. They may get stuck on what to do next, or they may not be able to solve a problem you've placed before them. They may bicker over some little thing, not know what they are to do next, or they may simply be too cautious. If it seems that a particular scene is taking too long, or the session is getting dull, then it is up to you to the story moving again. Here are some suggestions:

Villains

There are a lot of bad guys in *Torg.* You can always have Nile shocktroops or Nippon ninjas or Aysle dragons show up in a scene. Nothing focuses a player's attention like the appearance of a vile villain.

Information

If the players are at a dead end or torn between too many options, feed them new information: a new clue, a cooperative or venal gamemaster character, a bit of overheard conversation; any of these can be used to point the group in the right direction.

Bob Dvorak

Time

Time passes, even in a game world. Time in the adventure must always move forward, or the illusion of story and world are lost. If the characters are dithering, that doesn't mean that the villains are simply waiting patiently for them to resume their actions. Set time limits as to how long before a patrol comes along, or the invading army arrives, or an important contact tires of waiting for the player characters to show up.

Also, you can skip over the "boring parts" of a story by using a combination of cinematic techniques. If the player characters are jetting over to Australia and you have nothing scheduled to occur on the plane ride, simply wipe to (or fade to, or cut to) Sidney Airport instead of roleplaying out the uneventful trip.

Avoiding Anticlimax

Heroes should not die in the first reel of a movie, or the first chapter of a book. Death and failure — while real possibilities — should not be common experiences for heroes. On the other hand, they shouldn't defeat the main villain 10 minutes into the story, either. The purpose of a roleplaying game such as *Torg* is to tell an *epic* story. The heroes may win or they may lose, but only in true heroic style.

The rules allow you to decide if actions succeed or fail; sometimes, as we've mentioned before, the rules get in the way of the story. This usually occurs during those scenes when, for dramatic reasons, the heroes must succeed or fail in order to tell a satisfying story.

For example, say your adventure opens *in media res,* with the heroes chasing the evil Dr. Mobius down the Pacific Coastal Highway. The object of the scene is to get everybody's blood racing and to give the heroes a clue (a scrap of paper the Pharoah leaves in his car when he abandons it at the end of the scene). If the heroes get off a lucky shot and blow out Dr. Mobius's tire, sending the car and the doctor

plummeting 75 meters straight down into the Pacific Ocean, the story isn't exactly satisfying to you or your players. Similarly, if Dr. Mobius sends the heroes to a watery grave with a single, well-placed shot of his disinto-ray, ending the adventure before the opening credits have finished rolling, nobody is going to be happy.

At these times, you must use your power as gamemaster to come to the rescue of the adventure. How? You have a couple of alternatives.

Alter Reality

What the players don't know won't annoy them. You have control over the environment and reality; you can easily change either out of the players' sight.

In our example above, when the heroes got off the lucky shot, sending Dr. Mobius's car off the cliff, you had assumed that the good Doctor was driving a standard automobile. However, to salvage the adventure, you quickly decide that the car was a special pulp-style auto, full of weird science gadgets and gizmos. As the car plummets, explosive charges blow the roof off and the car seat ejects the Doctor into the air. Mobius activates his rocket boots and, as the heroes watch helplessly, flies serenely out into the Pacific Ocean (to be picked up later by a Nile submarine). The battered car lies in a crumpled heap at the foot of the cliff, waiting for the player characters to climb down and investigate it.

Don't do this lightly: if the players suspect that you are capriciously changing reality on them, they will soon become frustrated. If you are forced to alter reality because the heroes have been too successful, you should reward them with an extra Possibility each at the end of the act.

Fudge Dice-Rolls

This is even easier than the above method. If you make rolls for the gamemaster characters in secret (or without revealing the characters' values), you can lower or raise the result points as necessary.

Again, in the example above, when Dr. Mobius fires his disinto-ray at the heroes' vehicle, he rolls incredibly well, getting, say, 15 result points on the car, totalling it and sending it in an uncontrolled crash through the guard-rails. You decide that this is an inappropriate way to end the adventure (and probably the heroes' lives).

If you rolled for the Doctor in secret, you could simply lie about your roll, and tell the players that Mobius got only, say, four points, enough to puncture the radiator and knock the heroes out of the chase. They have to stop and repair it; they limp into the nearest town several hours later, where they find the Doctor's abandoned car sitting on the beach (Mobius radioed his submarine to send a boat to pick him up there).

Remember, this is "cheating" in favor of a satisfying game, not to victimize players or benefit one over the other.

Dramatic failure is always acceptable, but random, senseless failure is not. However, never let your players know this. To keep the dramatic tension, they must believe that their characters can fail. Otherwise, why play? Use your gamemaster prerogative sparingly.

The Reality Skill

According to the rules, characters must make a reality check for disconnection every time they begin a scene in a cosm whose axioms are lower than necessary to maintain the passive equipment they carry. Additionally, any time "they actively use a piece of equipment and roll badly — from a straight 1 to a 1-4, depending upon the cosm and the circumstances — they may disconnect. These rules are important to maintain the flavor and balance of *Torg*.

Remember that disconnection affects more than just equipment. A character who disconnects in the Living Land must live under *all* of the Living Land's axioms, not just the technological axiom. As the Living Land's social axiom is remarkably low, he will lose his ability to understand esoteric concepts such as "nations,"

"money," and "health insurance." As the Living Land's magic axiom is zero, the character will not be able to use *any* magic until he reconnects. In many ways, these effects are as devastating as losing the ability to understand how to pull a trigger.

Disconnection means more than just loss of high-tech or spiritual or magical goodies. A character who disconnects becomes part of the realm in which he disconnects. Until he reconnects, he should roleplay his character as if he were a native of the realm. In the Living Land, he might wonder what all of that funny green paper he is carrying around is for and use it to start fires. In the Nile Empire, he might start wearing strange costumes and speaking only in exclamation points.

Encounter Balance

Are five elves with crossbows equal to two soldiers with M-16s? How many magicians does it take to kill a dinosaur? Can a cyber-priest take on a ninja-werewolf? As you can see, with so many possible mixes, Torg can be an extremely difficult game to balance.

The player characters are heroes, and, with heroes, you naturally expect them to face overwhelming odds — and, hopefully, emerge victorious. So what kind of odds are overwhelming, but beatable?

The 10-Point Advantage

To get a rough handle on various characters' relative abilities, add together each character's relevant attack skill, defense skill, damage value of the weapon they are using, and armor points. If one has a total 10 points higher than the other, he's got a decisive advantage and, all else being equal, will win 99 percent of the time.

A character who is that much better than his opponents can take on three or four of them without raising much of a sweat. This holds true no matter what they are fighting with: spells, chainsaws, blunderbusses, miracles, or any combination thereof.

Naturally, if the difference is less than 10 points, the odds begin to even out, though the higher character still has a bit of an edge even if he betters his opponent by only a couple of points.

Remember that this is only a rough estimate of combat potential. It can easily be crocked by environmental conditions, or if one of the combatants has an unusually high or low value in one of the categories. Note also that it is easier to defeat three characters who have a 10-point disadvantage than it is to defeat one who has an equal number of points.

Home-Cosm Advantage

The odds change if one of the characters is fighting in his home cosm and the other is an intruder, shifting by a significant amount in the home character's advantage as the intruder risks disconnection with every action. The shift is smaller if the invading character is Possibility-rated, but he is still at a disadvantage.

Possibility-Rated Characters

A Possibility-rated hero can whip an Ord who is his equal or better under almost any circumstances — if he has the points and is willing to spend them. A hero can even overcome Ords with 10-point or greater advantages, though she may go through an exorbitant number of Possibility points to do so. More on this below.

Standard Encounters

In standard encounters, the deck is weighted in the heroes' favor. They receive the initiative more often than not; the villains are often stymied, fatigued, or otherwise hindered. In all likelihood, the heroes are facing Ords (a battle against Possibility-rated opponents is, almost by definition, dramatic).

Under these circumstances, the heroes should wipe the floor with their opponents no matter who they are.

They can easily face twice their number in soldiers, or a couple of decent magicians, or a medium to large monster without much trouble.

The combat is quick, and the heroes are expected to win in a short time. They should not have to spend more than one Possibility point each; if they have had to spend much more than that, the encounter was probably somewhat unbalanced against them. (See "Adventure Balance," page 11.)

Dramatic Encounters

In dramatic encounters, the heroes are expected to work for their victory. The villains are tougher, more powerful, and, quite possibly, Possibility-rated. The cards are stacked against them: the villains often receive the initiative and other advantages; the heroes are sometimes stymied, confused, or otherwise hindered.

The best way to balance a dramatic encounter is to use Possibility-rated villains in the battle. They should be as tough or tougher than the player characters, (though probably fewer in number), and backed up by a couple of Ords.

In general, the villains' side should receive around two Possibility points per player character they face; i.e., if three cyber-ninjas face six player characters in a dramatic encounter, they should have 12 Possibilities between them, split up as you like.

On average, the heroes should expend two Possibilities in a dramatic encounter. If they are always spending a lot more or less than that, your dramatic encounters are probably too difficult or easy.

Approved Actions

As said before, the purpose of approved actions is to introduce a new dimension to combat, i.e., to keep player characters from merely bashing on their opposition until they have pounded them into the ground.

We picked "Maneuver," "Trick," "Test of Wills," "Taunt," and "Intimidate" because they occur most frequently in the action movies and seri-

als we like to watch; these are generalizations of a whole gamut of tactics used by adventure heroes throughout history to dismay or outwit their opponents.

What exactly do these represent?

• **Maneuver**. Using your speed and *Dexterity* to confuse, outflank, or tire out your opponent. Rolling between the giant's legs as he swings at you is a good example, as is leaping onto the back of the triceratops or faking left and then dodging right.

It would be basically impossible to out maneuver an opponent who does not move, for example a stone statue who attacks strictly through magic.

• **Trick**. Essentially, this is an attempt to outwit your opponent, to do something completely unexpected. Throwing sand in his face, for instance, or reaching down and jerking out the rug he is standing on, or attempting to convince him someone is right behind him.

It is difficult to *trick* someone who is really smart; it is also difficult to *trick* someone who is really, really stupid (like a dinosaur).

• **Test of Wills**. An attempt to pit your willpower and determination against your opponent, to stare him down, to make him doubt himself. Gunslingers do this before pulling their guns. A modern variant would be playing "chicken."

It is difficult to stare down a skeleton or a robot. It is, however, possible to stare down a bear or a lion.

• **Taunt**. Any attempt to mock your opponent, to infuriate him into making a mistake. Telling someone his mother smelled of elderberries, making a rude noise or gesture, laughing at him, would all count as taunts.

Again, not having egos, skeletons and robots are remarkably resistant to *taunting. A* lion probably couldn't be *taunted,* while a dog or great ape could. Vampires and pulp villains, being egomaniacs by nature, might be easy to *taunt.*

• **Intimidation**. This is quite similar to *Test,* except that you are pitting your indomitable human spirit against your opponent, not the force of your mind. *Intimidation* involves an element of fear; if there seems to be no reason to fear a character, he cannot *intimidate.* Standing up and roaring at the black bear who is about to attack is an example of *intimidation* in action, as is a man walking directly toward his opponents and calmly telling them to surrender or they will surely be killed by the three dozen soldiers hiding in the surrounding woods.

Animals can be *intimidated;* once again, skeletons and robots probably cannot (unless the robots are as sophisticated as, say, the ones in *Star Wars).* It is very tough to *intimidate* a vampire or a blue whale.

Defensive Skills

Though a pulp robot may be resistant to *intimidation,* it is unlikely that the robot will attempt to *intimidate* someone else; unless very sophisticated indeed, it is much more likely to simply try to shoot its opponent with its mega-death ray.

Creatures or beings with a high resistance to a combat skill but who are unable or highly unlikely to use that skill against an opponent are given values in the skill, but they are parenthesized to show that they cannot use the skill offensively. Some creatures might be given two values, one parenthesized and one not, the parenthesized value used defensively, the unparenthesized one offensively.

Rewarding Characters

There are two types of awards to be given to player characters. These are *Act Awards* and *Adventure Awards.*

Act Awards

Adventures are broken down into segments called *acts* (see the next chapter). At the conclusion of each act, you must award Possibilities to the player characters. We recommend from one to three Possibilities for each character after each act, with two being the standard. You are encouraged to award Possibilities according to the play of each individual character. Guidelines for this follow.

Adventure Awards

After the final act in an adventure, rather than give out act awards, you must distribute the big payoff — adventure awards.

At the conclusion of an adventure, give each player character from six to 12 Possibilities, with nine being the standard. In addition, for each successfully played *Glory* card, award every player character three Possibilities. And, for every *Drama* card retained in a player's hand, award that player's character three additional Possibilities. See the Rule Book, Gamemaster Section Chapter Four, for more details on the play of these cards.

Award Guidelines

You should vary the actual Possibility awards depending on:

• **How Well the Players Did Overall**. If the players solved all the puzzles, came up with ingenius solutions, and out-fought and out-thought the oppenents, give them each an extra Possibility or two. If they failed, award zero or one.

• **How Well Each Player Did Individually**. If a player really contributed to a session — coming up with good ideas, refereeing group disputes, acting intelligently — give that player an extra Possibility or two. If a player did nothing, give him no extra Possibilities. If a player actively obstructed the other players, remove a Possibility or two from his award total.

• **Whether the Players Cooperated or Argued**. If the players worked together and mediated disputes, reward them appropriately. If they argued among themselves and threw tantrums, penalize them.

• **Whether They Amused You and Each Other**. If you and everyone else had a good time, that's worth a Possibility all around.

• **Whether They Played in Character**. If a player had his character try something risky or lose something valuable — because that's how the character would act — reward that player. In a *role*playing game, someone willing to play his role well should

always be rewarded. On the other hand, if a player constantly acts contrary to his character's nature, or fails to develop a character's personality just to "win" the adventure, he should be penalized.

Adventure Balance

In *Torg,* Possibilities are the coin of the realm. They are used to dramatically enhance a character's chance of survival, perform great feats, and improve his skills between adventures. Characters receive more Possibilities when they are doing well, less when they are not. You can judge the way an adventure is going by the characters' expenditure of Possibility points. Here's how it works.

At the start of the adventure, write down each character's starting number of Possibility points. As the adventure progresses, keep track of points they spend and new points awarded them between acts. This will give you a good idea of how they are doing.

In general, if her player is wise, a character will spend at most one or two Possibilities per act in non-dramatic situations — interaction, skill use, standard conflict, and the like. She will probably spend two possibilities during each dramatic conflict scene. So, if your adventure has one dramatic conflict per act, she will be spending around three or four Possibilities each act.

If you follow the guidelines above, you will be giving her around two Possibility points back at the end of each act. So, she will be running a deficit of one or two points each act. This is just what should be going on.

If your adventure is properly balanced, a character will be down four to six Possibilities by its conclusion. If the character's play was competent, you will award her around nine to 12 bonus Possibilities at the adventure's end; this will mean a net gain of around five or six Possibilities per adventure.

This *does not* include *Glory* or *Drama* card bonuses; those are special bonuses the player earns by herself and should not be included in your calculations.

Chapter Three

Tips on Card Play

Chapter Four of the Gamemaster Section discusses drama card play in *Torg* in detail. This chapter provides additional tips and suggestions to help you use the cards more effectively.

Gamemaster Fiat

You are able to invoke gamemaster fiat up to three times during each dramatic encounter. You take the top four cards off of the drama deck, discard three, and place one on the action stack. When do you do this and which card do you pick? Well, there are basically two reasons to invoke gamemaster fiat: the players are doing too well or the players are doing too poorly.

According to our play tests, an average dramatic encounter runs about 12 to 14 rounds. It doesn't seem to matter much how tough the opposition is: by that time, the player characters have won or have been defeated. If, in your dramatic encounter, the player characters have virtually wiped out the opposition by the third or fourth round, you might wish to invoke gamemaster fiat and search for a card to slow them down. If, on the other hand, it's the seventh or eighth round and the heroes haven't really yet made a dent or built up good pools, you might invoke gamemaster fiat to find a helpful card.

Note: It's important to remember that you can use gamemaster fiat to help the players; this kind of option is not usually open in other roleplaying games and is all too easily forgotten.

D ead Time

In the heat of battle, as it approaches the climax and everybody has a big pool in front of him, you are likely to find yourself spending a lot of time waiting while the players wrestle with their cards. They will be feverishly attempting to figure out the optimum way to play the ones they have; they may be trading cards with each other, playing *Leadership Cards,* and doing anything else they can think of to enhance somebody's upcoming Big Attack.

One of our gamemasters has clocked the time spent setting up a single player's Big Attack as just over four minutes of extended card-trading! During this time, he had nothing to do except sit there and watch the players argue.

What should you do to speed the players up?

Nothing.

This is *fun.* The players are cooperating on a critical portion of the story, using one of their most important advantages — the cards — to whup the opposition. Unless it goes on interminably, say five minutes without sign of conclusion, let the players go.

You should spend that dead time embellishing later scenes in your adventure or scarfing up the nacho chips.

Which Cards to Play

Villain Inspiration is about the nastiest card there is. *Villain Up* and *Hero Setback* are almost as bad. Less vicious but still unpleasant are *Hero Stymied* and *Villain Flurry*. The most beneficial cards are *Hero Flurry, Hero Up,* and *Hero Inspiration.* Failing any of these, you should look for a card which fatigues the side you wish to penalize, or gives the other side the initiative, or both.

Glory Cards

Glory Cards are extremely difficult to get into play. There aren't many of them, and it isn't often a player character manages to roll 60 or better under any circumstances. In short, a *Glory Card* is a really big deal.

Glory Cards represent a great deed worthy of the telling, filling everyone who hears of it with hope and possibility energy. Therefore, when one is played, the characters have done something spectacular, and people know about it.

In addition to the three Possibility points you award the player characters at the end of the adventure, you should award them some glory, too. Maybe they get a ticker-tape parade in Philadelphia. Perhaps they are approached by representatives of Pella Ardinay and asked to join her Knights Templar, or the Delphi Council decides that they are a force to be reckoned with, and makes high-tech weaponry and vehicles available to them at little or no cost.

By the same token, the villains will also begin to take note of the heroes. Perhaps the player characters will shortly find themselves the targets of a ninja hit squad, or Dr. Mobius will attempt to capture them to place them in his eternity machine. With increased glory comes increased danger — but that comes with the territory.

Note: It is very bad form to take a *Glory Card* out of a player's pool after you have *Intimidated* or *Taunted* his character successfully.

Subplots

Subplots are fun, and add an extra dimension to the game, as your players get directly involved in determining the course of the adventure. Encourage all of the players to get their characters involved in them.

If Quin is romantically involved with the slave girl from Queen Erika's court, it would be fitting (and amusing) for the Yellow Crab to declare himself also smitten with the slave girl and do his best to woo her away from Sebastian. This adds a neat complication to an already difficult situation, and provides much-needed comic relief too. Give every player character who advances the story of a subplot a possibility point award, not just the player character who played the card.

It's important, however, not to let a subplot overshadow the adventure itself - - they must always remain secondary to the main plot. Whether or not Quin Sebastian is in fact the Lost Dauphin, it does not change the fact that he and his friends have to destroy the gospog fields before the Edeinos trash Philly. If a subplot begins to get in the way, use your power as gamemaster to write it out of the story.

Connection Cards

These cards can be quite useful at getting the characters out of a jam; they can also mess up a story something fierce. Remember that, to play a connection, there has to be at least a marginally plausible connection. If you can't think one up, and your player cannot either, the card cannot be played. At your option, you can give the player a Possibility and have him discard the card, or allow him to return it to his hand for possible later use.

Francis Mao

Chapter Four

Designing Adventures

When you roleplay, you are engaged in group story telling. But how do you tell these stories? And what kind of stories do you tell? Does it all happen spontaneously?

To answer the last question first, no, it doesn't. Every good roleplaying session began with an *adventure* for the gamemaster to follow. An adventure is a guide to a story, complete with plot, setup, confrontations, and possible resolutions. When you add players, their characters work within the framework of the adventure to create the story. Every adventure tells a different story depending on the players who run through it.

An adventure must be more than a series of battles. You must come up with a storyline, complete with a beginning, middle and end, a goal for the player characters, and a full cast of gamemaster characters to help or hinder the player characters.

Types of Stories

What types of stories can you tell with *Torg?* The game is built upon the premise that alternate realities have attacked Earth, bringing their laws of nature with them. We designed these realities to correspond with certain *genres* of fiction—a particular kind of story that is easily recognizable. The easiest stories to tell in *Torg* are stories which conform to those genres, or stories which mix those genres.

The Living Land is our "Lost World" genre, complete with dinosaurs and primitive people. The Nile Empire is our pulp adventure genre. Aysle is our fantasy setting; Orrorsh is our horror genre. The Cyberpapacy pays tribute to cybertech, but with a dash of religious fanaticism thrown in for spice. And Nippon Tech allows you to run high-tech science fiction and espionage adventures. Because each can be combined, you can design crossover stories that jump from one genre to another, or create a whole new setting by mixing the genre elements in new ways.

Genres

These are the major reality genres that invade Earth in *Torg: The Possibility Wars.* Please see the World Book and separate sourcebooks for more information.

The Living Land

The primitive reality of the Living Land is designed to tell action/adventure stories in the tradition of Edgar Rice Burroughs and Arthur Conan Doyle, stories about lost worlds, prehistoric creatures, and the arrival of modern-day explorers. Except, the lost world in *Torg* is in your own back yard, a United States that has been mutated by Baruk Kaah and his Edeinos followers.

This genre is often filled with straightforward action stories. Characters are presented with tasks (finding the hidden city, exploring the primitive settlement, capturing the strange beast), then confronted by obstacles they must overcome to complete the task (natural disasters like earthquakes, natural obstacles like water-falls and mountains, wild creatures, evil enemies). Exploration, tracking and survival are central to these stories, and opportunities abound for characters to use their combat skills here.

The Empire of the Nile

The pulp adventure reality of the Empire of the Nile is designed to showcase stories similar to those from 1930's and 40's movie serials, old pulp magazines, and early comic books. These are also action/adventure stories like those told in the Living Land, but with implausible science, flashy magic, and strange religions added. Here, the weird science of E. E. "Doc" Smith and A. E. Van Vogt governs technology, the soldiers of a conquest-crazed dictator march in the streets, stalwart heroes battle crime, perfidious villains plan schemes, and the dark gods of ancient Eygpt brood in their hidden temples.

This genre deals with the same type of straightforward plots prevalent in all action/adventure stories, with a few added conventions. These tales are of good versus evil, with highly motivated heroes and villains, lots of high-speed action, and a touch of humor and melodrama.

Tasks here range from recovering lost artifacts, to stopping dangerous cults, to thwarting the plots of archvillains and their minions. Obstacles include dastardly traps, ancient curses, jackbooted Nile shocktroopers, and awful supernatural creatures.

Aysle

The reality of Aysle follows the conventions of the fantasy genre. It is a realm of dreams; a place of noble warriors, of beautiful princesses, of evil dragons. It is a fantastic world of unmapped regions and powerful creatures, of magic swords and skillful sorcery. But, as a flipside to the realm of dreams, we have built a region of nightmare. Here is dark fantasy coexisting beside the light, making life more interesting — and more dangerous.

All kinds of stories are possible here, as long as they follow a few guidelines. Monsters and fantastic beings abound, as do unknown lands and dark dungeons. Magic items and treasure exist for the taking, if one knows where to look. Political intrigue is a way of life since the changes wrought by High Lord Pella Ardinay's transformation. And epic battles are commonplace; indeed, everything in this genre should have an epic or grand feel to it.

The Cyberpapacy

Here is a genre melded from two seemingly opposite concepts. Because of this, we think it is one of the more interesting places to set adventures.

Take all of the conventions of the dark, brutally cynical cyberpunk genre, combine it with a warped theocracy, and you get the Cyberpapacy. This bleak realm is ruled by a dark-ages philosophy that slaughters heretics, wages holy wars, and practices inquisitions. Here grim, fanatical priests, armed with high-technology devices and the might of a vengeful god, do battle with drug-addicted, bionically-enhanced street punks.

The tone is oppressive and grim. Stories can be action oriented, but many will be stealthy, mysterious, and horrific in nature. Some will concentrate solely on either the cyber or fanatical religion elements, others will combine the two in nasty, brutal ways.

Tasks include rescuing "heretics," escaping inquisitors, breaching the GodNet computer, helping the orthodox church, and gaining powerful cyber weapons. Obstacles include evil cyberpriests, inquisitors, the GodNet and its defenses, cygoyles, and cyber knights.

Nippon Tech

Nippon Tech is science fiction of the near future. The technology is better than ours, but not so much that we cannot understand it. Again, however, we have added a twist, adding the popular mythos of Japan to the sf. Nippon Tech is a realm of great corporations, of espionage, of spies and ninjas with high-tech gear.

Mostly, the scenarios of Nippon Tech are active and grim. They involve cloak-and-dagger deeds like spying, sabotage and assassination. Tasks require intricate and clever plans to succeed; stealth is more useful than bloodshed. Grim, efficient enemies lurk behind every corner, and betrayal is commonplace.

Big business intrigue and Japanese stereotypes abound. Nippon Tech is filled with corporate power brokers, high-tech samurai, martial artists, giant robots and radioactive monsters, all battling to take control of the world's economy.

Valerie Valusek

Orrorsh

The horror reality of Orrorsh follows all the conventions of classic and modern horror stories. Tales set here are tales of terror, designed to scare both the characters and players. As the realm is based upon a world view similar to the Victorian Era, there is a host of opportunities for using gothic trappings. However, shambling monsters and run-down houses are not enough to make it a horror genre - the shambling monster must first frighten before it attacks, the house must induce fear before its skeletons appear.

Monsters lurk in these stories, hiding just out of sight. Around the next corner, perhaps. Or out in the jungle, or lying, cold and clammy in their coffins with preternatural patience, waiting for night. And whatever you do, *don't go down in the basement!*

Old, dark settings, deep shadows, the supernatural invading the natural, things lurking just beyond one's vision, terrified gamemaster characters, inexplicable monsters, strange weather — these are characteristics of the horror story. Keep the players off guard — and scare the pants off of them, if you can.

Common Adventure Themes

Besides telling the traditional stories associated with our genres, you can tell other kinds of stories, as well.

Mystery

The mystery presents player characters with a puzzle to solve. Often, this puzzle takes the form of a murder or some other crime. This is a thinking adventure, not usually a combat-oriented one, requiring lots of interaction with gamemaster characters and plenty of roleplaying. A good one to set in Orrorsh, the Cyperpapacy, or Nippon Tech.

Revenge

Revenge is a grim adventure theme characterized by violence and strong emotions. Someone has done something terrible to the player characters or to someone they love. It could be a dastardly crime (murder of a loved one), a grave insult, or a blood fued that inspires the course of the story. A good theme for an adventure set in the Nile Empire, or possibly Aysle.

Comedy

While the tone of *Torg* is usually grim — or at least serious — sometimes a humorous story is just the ticket for a change of pace. It is fun for fun's sake, light entertainment with little true danger. We do not suggest using this theme constantly in *Torg,* but once in a great while you should lighten things up a bit.

Comedy is characterized by plans that go completely astray, witty dialogue, weird encounters, strange gamemaster characters, amusing villains, bumbling henchmen, and peculiar goals.

Building an Adventure

An adventure for Torg is made up of a number of *acts* needed to tell a particular story, usually from one to six. Each act is divided into *scenes,* the exact number depending on how many you need to get the characters to the next act. But before we can go further, we need an idea for a story.

Where do you get ideas? They can come from a lot of different places. From published adventures, from books, from movies, from TV shows, from your players — ideas can come from anywhere.

Once you have the idea, you have to build a plot around it. Then you need to break the plot into a sequence of acts, each with its own minor problem that has to be solved in order to

Chapter Four

advance the plot toward the story's climax. Finally, you have to translate the problems you present into game terms so that you can resolve them as they occur during a gaming session.

Outline

Okay. You've got an idea for an adventure and you've worked out a plot. You have to break the plot into several acts, saving the resolution of the major problem until the climax. For example:

• **Adventure Idea**. A group of Storm Knights is hired to protect a news crew on a journey through the Living Land.

• **Background**. The news crew is actually an elaborate cover for a group of big game hunters hired by the Delphi Council to wipe out a tribe of humans who have gone native and apparently learned to communicate with a special breed of dinosaurs.

Though the humans have in fact gone native and made friends with an especially intelligent breed of dinosaur, they are diametrically opposed to Baruk Kah, and have rescued many a traveler from his forces' clutches and other perils. They are a definite force for good in the Living Land, and deserve to survive.

The hunters, while quite willing and able to deal with the humans and dinosaurs they have been hired to kill, want protection from other incidental perils of the trip. They are especially fearful of a band of Core Earth scavengers who operate along the route they must take to the tribe's territory.

The hunters hope to keep their cover at least until the Storm Knights help them reach the tribe's grounds. Then they will show their true nature and exterminate the "traitorous" humans and their special dinosaurs.

The trail will take the Knights and their devious charges from Core Earth Kentucky, through a transformed Indiana, and finally to the tribe's home in primitive Ohio.

• **Act One**. The Storm Knights meet with the news crew's producer about employment as guards. Then comes the first leg of the journey. The Knights must get the crew past carnivorous dinosaurs and other dangers of the primitive realm. They find themselves being followed.

• **Act Two**. The caravan is attacked by a Core Earth scavenger team. The scavengers are intent on robbing the travelers as they make their way across the mutated Indiana landscape. A chase ensues, followed by a pitched battle as the scavenger team corners the caravan.

After the battle, the group is attacked by a herd of terrible thunder lizards. They fight the herd, but there are too many of them. The Knights are about to be overwhelmed, when, suddenly, a weird, high-pitched cry is heard in the distance. The thunder lizards flee at the sound, and whatever made the cry gives chase. The journey continues.

• **Act Three**. The Storm Knights finally get the news crew safely to Ohio. Here they find a tribe of humans who have flipped over to the primitive reality of the Living Land and allied themselves with a herd of medium-sized dinosaurs, gifted with a docile disposition and superior intelligence. The tribe is peaceful, and, the heroes learn, were the ones who saved them from the thunder lizards.

The big game hunters don't care: they draw their weapons and begin gunning down the helpless humans and dinosaurs.

• **Conclusion**. The Knights battle the hunters to save themselves, the converted humans, and the gentle dinosaurs that saved their lives.

Acts

Each act should be interesting in its own right, including all the same ingredients that make the entire story exciting. Each act is a block of dramatic action that has its own beginning, middle and end. An individual act should also have its own tone, based upon which of the different realities it is set in.

Act One is the *setup*. It presents the player characters with a situation, defines the major problem that faces them, and gets them started toward the climax. Near the conclusion of the act, a *plot point* is presented. A plot point is an incident or event that the act builds toward. It gives the act its payoff and leads to the next act.

Example: In the outline above, the setup presents the Storm Knights with a simple job — accompany and protect a news crew through the Living Land while the crew films a documentary for a Core Earth television station. Shortly after the journey begins, the dangers of the primitive reality start to manifest themselves. The plot point here is an event that reveals that the danger that has been stalking them is not Edeinos, but something that uses "dead" tools and weapons.


Alan Jude Summa

Act Two (and subsequent acts other than the last act) contains one or more *confrontations*. The basis of all drama is conflict, and this act is filled with incidental conflicts leading toward the major conflict. Another plot point should be planned to give the act payoff and send the characters onto the rest of the adventure.

Example: Using our outline again, the confrontation in Act Two takes the form of a major obstacle between the characters and their goal. This obstacle is the scavenger team, and they are trying to waylay the heroes and prevent them from getting the news crew to their destination (the supposed goal of the entire adventure at this point). The plot point that leads to the climax is the attack of the thunder lizards and the timely rescue by the humans and the dinosaurs.

Act Three (or the final act) is the *climax and resolution. Here,* all the major threads of the story come together for the ultimate climax. And it comes together in a strong ending that anchors your strong story.

Alan Jude Summa
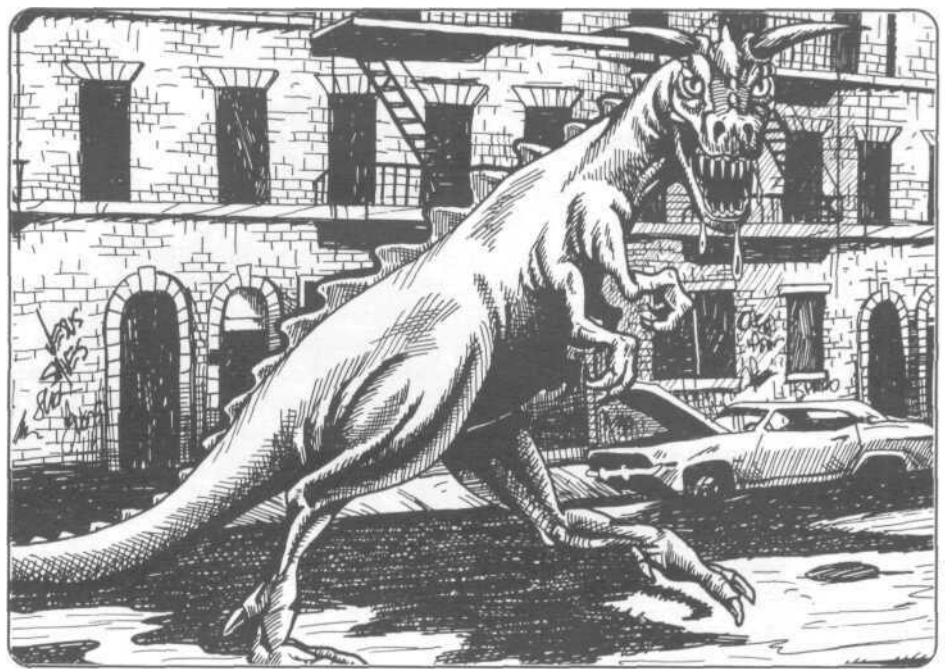
Example: Back to our outline, the final scenes are set in and around the camp of a tribe of humans who have succumbed to the primitive axioms. A plot twist is thrown in here, revealing that the Storm Knights have been duped. The news crew is really a gang of big game hunters out to wipe out a tribe of humans and their tame dinosaurs. They needed the Knights to help them past the scavengers. The Knights must step aside, or be blown away along with their targets. Now comes the climax, where the story is resolved. Great acts of heroism are performed, important decisions are made, lots of Possibilities are used up, and the heroes win or lose in a Big Finish.

To Recap: An adventure is a dramatic structure defined as a linear arrangement of related events leading to a dramatic conclusion. It is divided into a number of acts, each having its own beginning, middle and end. It has direction determined by plot points, the place in each act you want the characters to get to. And it has interesting gamemaster characters who serve as enemies, allies, and neutrals for the player characters to interact with.

Most importantly, as you plot each act, think about your players' characters. Keep in mind all of their strong points and weaknesses, and try to picture what each will be able to do in a scene. In this way, you'll be able to plan scenes where each character has a chance to shine and show off. The players will feel that they were involved in the story — and that's the purpose and attraction of roleplaying.

U sing the Drama Deck

The drama deck helps the flow of the story as your adventure unfolds. Be aware that you may need to plan for certain card play during the course of an adventure.

Specifically, you may want to determine how the following special villain actions work during dramatic encounters: *Taunt, Trick, Intimidation, Test of Wills, Maneuver, Attack,* and *Defend.* These have standard default meanings, which certainly can be employed, but, if you have the time, you might find if enhances play to have a few special results up your sleeve.

For example, in the adventure outlined above, a *Villain Intimi-* *dation* comes up in the final, climactic battle. The head villain calls to a Core Earth Knight during a lull in the battle, telling him that the Delphi Council knows where his family is, and threatens them with retribution if he does not come over to their side now. This is certainly an *Intimidation,* and a potent one, at that!

Also, be prepared with a few villain and hero setbacks, and throw in a Dramatic Skill Resolution or two during the course of an adventure.

See the previous chapter and Gamemaster Chapter Four of the Rule Book for more information on using the drama deck.

Scenes

Scenes are discrete units of action within each act. The purpose of every scene is to move the act forward. Each scene is made up of a setting, gamemaster characters, and goal. Scenes can be used to provide information, or to set an action sequence -- be it combat, a chase, interaction, or problem-solving. Use as many scenes as necessary to move the act to its conclusion.

Within each scene, you need to decide what the action will be and what events you want to occur.

Example: In Act One, the first scene is a meeting between the head of the "news crew" and the Storm Knights. It is set in a dimly-lit bar in Core Earth Kentucky. The major gamemaster character is Alexander Becker, who claims to be the producer for the *"LA Action"* TV news magazine. The Storm Knights' goal is to find out what the producer wants and to come to terms if they want the job.

The Action

The action in a scene tells us what the player characters will be doing. Not in a specific sense, mind you, but in general. In the above example, the action is a meeting between the Storm Knights and a gamemaster character. The action, in general terms, involves discussion and negotiation. How the players decide to have their characters

Beginnings

Always try to start with some sort of action. This can be accomplished by dropping the player characters into a combat scene *in media res,* by presenting them with a problem to solve, or by forcing them to interact with other characters. No matter how you do it, if you can start things off with a bang, then the rest of the adventure will follow the lead.

Settings

Settings work along with tone and genre to place an adventure firmly in front of the players. Ideally, each act should have its own unusual and distinct setting. Stories can be pretty much the same from genre to genre, tales of desire, greed, foolishness, love, honor and valor. But what makes a *Torg* story truly horrific or fantastic or mysterious is the setting. A Victorian mansion sequestered in a dark, Indonesian jungle; an enchanted circle of standing stones on an English moor; a shadowy, rain-slicked street, bathed in the glow of neon and fluorescent lights. Each of these settings is simply a background, but each makes its presence felt and makes the story seem complete. Pay attention to one or two details, and the setting becomes real.

handle the action is up to them. When the action is finished, they should have done a good deal of roleplaying, a fair amount of dice rolling, and perhaps some note-taking. You have gotten them into the adventure and given them a good idea about what's going on.

The essence of roleplaying is action. In some scenes, the player characters act, and gamemaster characters react to their actions. In other scenes, the player characters react to actions happening to them. You need a fair mix of both kinds of scenes to make a satisfying adventure.

Each scene should involve only one primary action. If there is another action, it should probably be split into another scene.

Torg divides scenes into two types — *standard* and *dramatic.* A dramatic scene is one which is pivotal to the resolution of the act. In general, there should only be one of these in an act. All other scenes are standard — they keep the action moving, but rarely mean life and death for the characters or the adventure. Put more time into developing the dramatic scenes, and the standard scenes will take care of themselves.

Events

An *event* is an interactive situation which depends upon timing and setting. It is an occurrence or incident of significance within a particular scene.

Events can occur whenever a gamemaster wants to use one within a scene.

In the scene example above, the Storm Knights are meeting with the news crew producer. The event scheduled for this scene is an encounter with a storytelling drunk. He overhears the ongoing conversation and decides to put in his own two cents. He tells a story about the time he went into the Living Land and was stalked by a carnivorous monster. The only thing that saved him was the intervention of a group of primitive humans riding dinosaurs. If the player characters try to send the drunk away, they lose a valuable piece of intelligence — though they may not recognize it as such at the time.

Variables

Variables are sections that plan for alternate directions in the storyline. They are not designed to cover every possibility -- indeed, no adventure could—but they are set up to give you some guidelines if the players decide to stray.

In our famous first scene, the Storm Knights decide not to accept the producer's offer. This is a probable variable and one that should be planned for. What do you do if they take this course? You could have the producer offer more incentives, but you never want to give too much up front. Or you could have the drunk inform them that the producer is actually a big game hunter recently seen in

P lot Twists

Even in the most straightforward adventure, it pays to throw in a surprise or two. A plot twist grabs the story as it runs along its track and hurls it in a new direction.

Adventures must begin by giving players enough information for them to determine their characters' actions intelligently. But an adventure will become a lot more interesting if you keep some information secret until later. In the outline above, the major plot twist is revealed when the news crew turns out to be something other than it seemed. Twists surprise players and keep them alert.

In general, plot twists depend on the players having incomplete information. If you give the players just enough information to make them think in the direction you want them to, you can easily hit them with twists. The unexpected happens -- or the expected fails to happen. You'll create an adventure that will keep the players guessing — and excited to see what happens.

B its

Bits, like stacks, are events that are not part of the central storyline. But, like stacks, they can be inserted into the adventure to provide running gags, comic relief, red herrings, or to just spice up a stretch that has turned out to be duller than the way you planned it.

Bits should be short bursts of action that are not set in any specific locale. They should be free floating, available for you to use as you see fit.

For example, you could design an attack by a large flying dinosaur, who swoops down out of the mist and attempts to carry off the smallest character. This could occur virtually anywhere in the Living Land or nearby Core Earth; it could be inserted virtually any time things begin to drag.

S tacks

Stacks are scenes that exist separate and apart from individual acts. But they are designed to tie into the storyline smoothly if the need arises.

Stacks work with the subplot cards in the drama deck to add new elements to the overall plot. You should plan for these subplots in very general ways, because you may not be called upon to drop a stack into an adventure. But if a player decides to play a subplot card, you will need a general idea on how to integrate that particular subplot into the story.

The subplot cards are:

Martyr, Mistaken Identity, Nemesis, Personal Stake, Romance (there are two of these cards), Suspicion, True Identity, and Campaign.

In addition, there is a special Connection card that you will need to plan for as well.

You will find detailed explanations of these cards and their specific uses in the Rule Book, Gamemaster Section, Chapter Four.

the company of agents for the Delphi Council. This might convince the player characters to play along with him, to find out what he is up to.

Plan for two or three variables that are most likely to arise during play. If something you weren't expecting occurs, you'll have to rework your variable scenes to account for it, but at least you'll have a place to begin.

Flags

Flags are conditional events that are activated by the player characters' actions, and not necessarily connected to a specific setting. In fact, a flag may not even occur, depending on what the player characters wind up doing during the adventure.

Design flags that add new twists, new menaces, or new information to the adventure when they are activated.

Here are two examples of flags in action.

Flag One: If the Storm Knights decide not to take the job offer in Act One, a flag is activated. It presents an event to get the characters back into the storyline. A delegation from the Common Ground Association asks the Storm Knights to lead them into the Living Land to meet with a primitive tribe in Ohio. If they accept, it will be easy enough to retrofit the rest of the adventure to this new plot; most of the intermediate acts can be used virtually as is. And if the player characters reach the tribe at the same time as the hunters, the climax will remain almost exactly the same, as well.

Flag Two: In Act Two, if the Knights are having too easy a time, a menace flag is activated. This triggers an event that introduces a tribe of Edeinos warriors roaming the area, searching for human prey.

Awards

At the end of each act and at the end of the adventure, you must award characters for their efforts. See the previous chapter for award guidelines.

Cut To...

The final section of an act is the lead-in to the next one. It is brief, giving simple directions on how to shift from the current act to the next one. This will always be included in our published adventures, but you can certainly do it on the fly or skip it altogether in your home-grown adventures.

Before the Dawn Map 1
Assault on the Digging Device

KEY   N

1 River   5 Digging Device
2 Swamp   6 Trees
3 Path   x Shocktroopers
4 Rubble

Bernadette G. Cahill
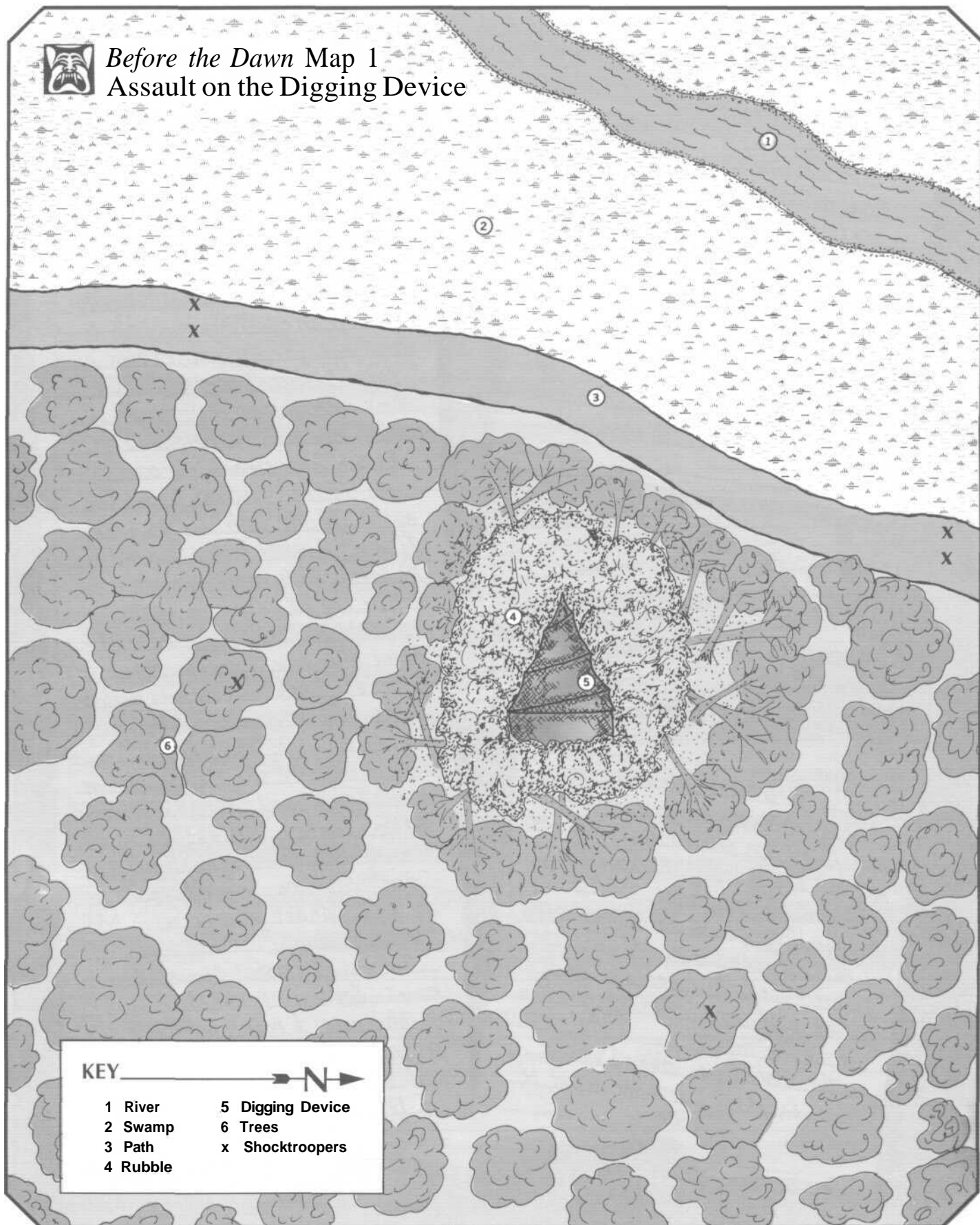
Excerpts from Professor Shariff's Diary

~ May

Pharoah has given me a very important assignment. I am to arrange for a transport plane to fly him to Indonesia in a week's time. It has something to do with the world slowing down, I think.

Work proceeds on the digging device. With his daughter in my care, Professor Marlene has been very co-operative.

~ May

The digging device is completed. Pharoah is pleased.

~ June

The preparations have been completed. The aeroplane is ready; the pilot has the co-ordinates and worked out his flight plan. He says that he cannot carry enough fuel for a round-trip voyage; I have ordered a vessel to leave immediately, to meet the aeroplane half-way to its destination for refueling.

The world has slowed down even further. I wonder what it means.

~ June

New orders. I am to take Professor Marlen's digging device to the Living Land. Once there, I am to pick up an egg from the lizards, in exchange for several crates of weapons. The lizards will give these weapons to their gospog for the assault on Philadelphia.

An egg for weapons! It sounds insane. I asked Pharoah what the egg is for; he said it was a key. To what, I asked him. He said, as he laughed, to everything. The egg is the key to unlocking the power of the world's energy! With the Gaunt Man gone, someone must seize all that wonderful, wonderful energy gained by stopping the world; why not me, he said.

And what if the lizards change their minds and do not give you the egg, I asked. He laughed again. Than you shall be punished. And I shall still be Torg. If you have no key, cannot a door still be battered down?

The night lasted almost 20 hours. Several of our slaves died of the cold. I hope Pharoah's sun project is operational soon, or we will all die.

I leave Immediately.

Bernadette G. Cahill

INTERACTION RESULTS TABLE

Result Points	Intimidate Test	Taunt Trick	Interrogate	Charm Persuade	Maneuver
S	Unskilled	Unskilled	Enemy	Loyal	Unskilled
1	Unskilled	Unskilled	Enemy	Friendly	Unskilled
2	Unskilled	Unskilled	Enemy	Friendly	Unskilled
3	Unskilled	Unskilled	Hostile	Neutral	Unskilled
4	Unskilled	Unskilled	Hostile	Neutral	Unskilled
5	Stymied	Stymied	Hostile	Neutral	Fatigued
6	Stymied	Stymied	Hostile	Neutral	Fatigued
7	Stymied	Stymied	Neutral	Hostile	Fatigued
8	Stymied	Stymied	Neutral	Hostile	Fatigued
9	Stymied	Stymied	Neutral	Hostile	Fatigued
10	Setback	Setback	Neutral	Hostile	Stymied/ Fatigued
11	Setback	Setback	Neutral	Hostile	Stymied/ Fatigued
12	Setback	Setback	Friendly	Enemy	Stymied/ Fatigued
13	Setback	Setback	Friendly	Enemy	Stymied/ Fatigued
14	Setback	Setback	Friendly	Enemy +1	Stymied/ Fatigued
15	Break	Up/ Setback	Loyal	Enemy +1	Setback/ Fatigued
+2	Player's Call	Player's Call	Loyal	Enemy +1	Player's Call

COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

	Ords	Possibility-rated
S	1	1
1	O1	1
2	K1	O1
3	O2	K1
4	O3	2
5	K3	O2
6	Knockdown K/O 4	Knockdown O 2
7	Knockdown K/O 5	Knockdown K 2
8	Wnd K/O 7	Knockdown K 2
9	Wnd K/O 9	Wnd K 3
10	Wnd K/O 10	Wnd K 4
11	2Wnd K/O 11	Wnd O 4
12	2Wnd KO 12	Wnd K 5
13	3Wnd KO 13	2Wnd O 4
14	3Wnd KO 14	2Wnd KO 5
15	4Wnd KO 15	3Wnd KO 5
+2	+1Wnd	+1Wnd

GENERAL AND PUSH RESULTS TABLE

	Success	Speed	Power	Storm
S	Minimal	0	+1(3)	-1
1	Average	+1(4)	+1(2)	-1
2	Average	+1(3)	+1(1)	-2
3	Good	+1(2)	+2(6)	-2
4	Good	+1(1)	+2(3)	-2 Storm x2
5	Good	+2(10)	+2(1)	-3 Storm x2
6	Good	+2(9)	+3(10)	-3 Storm x5
7	Superior	+2(8)	+3(8)	-4 Storm x2
8	Superior	+2(7)	+3(6)	-4 Storm x5
9	Superior	+2(6)	+4(10)	-5 Maelstrom
10	Superior	+2(5)	+4(8)	-6 Maelstrom
11	Superior	+2(4)	+4(6)	-7 Maelstrom
12	Spectac.	+2(3)	+5(10)	-8 Maelstrom
13	Spectac.	+2(2)	+5(8)	Transform (5)
14	Spectac.	+2(1)	+5(6)	Transform (5)
15	Spectac.	+2(0)	+6(10)	Transform (5)
+2			+0(-2)	

LINK DIFFICULTY CHART

Character is from:	Character is in:						
	Core Earth	Living Land	Aysle	Nippon Tech	Cyberpapacy	Orrorsh	Nile Empire
Core Earth	0	18	11	8	6	8	6
Living Land	16	0	10	16	12	9	9
Aysle	14	20	0	17	11	6	8
Nippon Tech	5	19	11	0	7	8	7
Cyberpapacy	9	21	12	12	0	9	8
Orrorsh	11	17	8	15	8	0	6
Nile Empire	11	16	10	12	8	5	0

BONUS CHART

Die Roll																									
Die			3	5	7	9	11	13							21	26	31	36	41	46					
Roll	1	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	+5				
Bonus #	-12	-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	+1				

ACTION SUMMARY

Tactic	Attribute
Intimidate	Spirit
Taunt	Charisma
Test	Mind
Trick	Perception

COMBAT OPTIONS CHART

	Action Value	Damage Value
RANGE MOD		
Point Blank	Ml	0
Short	0	0
Medium	-3	-3
Long	-5	-5
FIRE OPTIONS		
Burst fire as single	0	-3
Full Auto	+3	+3
Single fire as multi	0	+3
ATTACK OPTIONS		
Aim	+3	0(a)
Vital Blow	-8	+4
All-out Attack	+3	+1 (b)
Sweep Attack	+5	-5
Opportunity Attack	-3	-3 (c)
Location Attack	0	0 (d)
DEFENSE OPTIONS		
Active Defense	Ml	na
Aggressive Defense	-4	0 (e)
CONCEALMENT		
Partial	-3	**
Medium	-5	**
High	-10	**
SITUATION		
Blindside Attack	+3	+3
Complete Surprise		(f)
Normal Surprise		(g)

KEY

Ml = Minimum bonus of one; ** = Use Cover Value chart for damage modifiers; na = not applicable; (a) = Takes one round; (b) = Attacks against are +3/+3; (c) = Holds action; (d) = Holds for location; (e) = Defense total decreased by 2; (f) = Two rounds of cardplay; (g) = One round of cardplay

SKILL CHARTS

ANALYSIS CHART

Physical Evidence	Difficulty
Familiar objects, expected use	8
Familiar objects, uncommon use or unfamiliar objects, common use	10
Uncommon objects, uncommon effect	12
Criminal tried to conceal evidence	+2
Master criminal concealed evidence	+5

LANGUAGE CHART

Situation	Difficulty
Different dialect of own language	3
Language is derived from common language (e.g. Spanish and French)	8
Completely foreign language (e.g. Chinese)	12
Alien language, language from another Cosm	22

ARTIST CHART

Success	Work Quality
Minimal	Good beginner's effort (no mini- mum time)
Average	Journeyman effort (minimum one hour)
Good	Professional effort {one day)
Superior	Expert craftsmanship (one week)
Spectacular	Masterpiece (one month)

FALLING CHART

Distance Fallen	Difficulty #
1 story (15 feet)	3
2 stories (16-30 feet)	8
5 stories (31-100 feet)	12
Over 5 stories	15

LOCKPICKING CHART

Sample Locks	Difficulty
Typical Interior Door	3
Padlock	8
Wall Safe/Deadbolt	12
Bank Vault	15

STEALTH CHART

Condition Modifier	Difficulty
Rain, sleet, etc.	-1
Dawn or dusk, fog, trees, walls, crowd, etc.	-2
Night	-3
Dozing guards	-3
Dense concealment (jungle, crowd in costume)	-5
Very close scrutiny	+1
Open terrain	+2
Broad daylight	+3

VAULTING/SPRINGING CHART

Obstacle	Difficulty #
Hopping a Fence	3
Grabbing an overhang and swinging over a pit	8
Vaulting or swinging over a tricky obstacle	12
Bouncing off an awning during a free fall to reach a specific destination	15

SURVIVAL CHART

Wilderness Type	Difficulty #
Woods	3
High Mountains	8
Desert	12
Polar Regions	15

CLIMBING CHART

Climb	Difficulty
Ladder	-3
Tree	5
Wall w/handholds, natural rock	8
Smooth stone, metal	15
Darkness	+2
Rain	+5
Ice-covered	+5

TRACKING CHART

Situation	Modifier
Trail is a day old	+2
Trail is a few days old	+5
Trail is a week old	+8
Tracking during inclement weather	+5
Tracking over a hard surface (e.g. cement)	+10
Tracking through mud or snow	-5
Tracking a vehicle	-5

FIRST AID CHART

Wound Level	Difficulty
Wound, K, O, and/or shock	8
Heavy Wound	12
Mortal	15
Dead	No first aid possible

SCIENCE CHART

Complexity	Difficulty #
Simple	8
Average	12
Complex	15
Prototype	18
From cosm with lower tech axiom	-5
From cosm with higher tech axiom	+10
Consists of many integrated systems	+5
Consists of hundreds of integrated systems	+10

TORG VALUE CHART

Val.	Meas.	Val.	Meas.	Val.	Meas.
0	1	35	1E+7	70	1E+14
1	1.5	36	1.5 E+7	71	1.5E+14
2	2.5	37	2.5 E+7	72	2.5 E+14
3	4	38	4E+7	73	4 E+14
4	6	39	6 E+7	74	6 E+14
5	10	40	1E+8	75	1 E+15
6	15	41	1.5E+8	76	1.5E+15
7	25	42	2.5 E+8	77	2.5E+15
8	40	43	4E+8	78	4 E+15
9	60	44	6 E+8	79	6 E+15
10	100	45	1 billion	80	1E+16
11	150	46	1.5E+9	81	1.5E+16
12	250	47	2.5 E+9	82	2.5E+16
13	400	48	4E+9	83	4E+16
14	600	49	6 E+9	84	6E+16
15	1,000	50	1 E+10	85	1E+17
16	1,500	51	1.5E+10	86	1.5E+17
17	2,500	52	2.5 E+10	87	2.5 E+17
18	4,000	53	4 E+10	88	4E+17
19	6,000	54	6 E+10	89	6 E+17
20	10,000	55	1E+11	90	1E+18
21	15,000	56	1.5 E+11	91	1.5E+18
22	25,000	57	2.5E+11	92	2.5E+18
23	40,000	58	4E+11	93	4E+18
24	60,000	59	6E+11	94	6E+18
25	100,000	60	1 trillion	95	1E+19
26	150,000	61	1.5E+12	96	1.51+19
27	250,000	62	2.5E+12	97	2.5E+19
28	400,000	63	4E+12	98	4E+19
29	600,000	64	6E+12	99	6E+19
30	1 Million	65	1E+13	100	1 E+20
31	1.5 E+6	66	1.5E+13		
32	2.5 E+6	67	2.5E+13		
33	4 E+6	68	4 E+13		
34	6 E+6	69	6 E+13		

TORG BENCHMARK CHART

Value	Time	Weight	Distance
0	Second	1 kilo	1 meter
2			Tallest human
3		Human baby	
9	Minute	Human female	
10		Human male	Football Field
11		Lion	City block
12		Brown Bear	
15		Small Car	Kilometer
16		Large Car	Mile
17		Elephant	
18	Hour		
20		Empty Truck	
22		APC	
23			Marathon race
24		Loaded Truck	
25	Day	Blue Whale	
27		Boeing 747	
28		C5A Galaxy	
29	Week	Tramp Freighter	
30		Destroyer	Length of Great Britain
32	Month	Six-flat building	Paris to Moscow
33		Fully loaded train	New York to L.A.
34			New York to London
35			London to Tokyo
38	Year		Circumference of Earth
39		Battleship	
41		Aircraft Carrier	
45		Loaded Oil Tanker	

DIFFICULTY NUMBER SCALE

Description	#	Modifier
Very Easy	3	-5
Easy	5	-3
Average	8	0
2:1 Against	10	+2
Difficult	12	+4
10:1	13	+5
Heroic	15	+7
100:1	18	+10
1000:1	22	+14
Never Tell Me the Odds	25	+17

THE AXIOMS OF THE COSMS

	Magic	Social	Spirit.	Tech.
Core Earth	7	21	9	23
Living Land	0	7	24	7
Aysle	18	18	16	15
Nippon Tech	2	22	8	24
Cyberpapacy	10	18	14	26
Orrorsh	15	20	17	19
Nile Empire	12	20	17	21

SKILLLIST

CHARISMA	PERCEPTION
Charm	**Air vehicles**
Persuasion	**Alteration**
Taunt	**magic**
	Divination
DEXTERITY	**magic**
Acrobatics	Evidence
Beast riding	analysis
Dodge	Find
Energy	First aid
weapons	Land vehicles
Fire combat	Language
Flight	Scholar
Heavy	**Space**
weapons	**vehicles**
Lock picking	Tracking
Long jumping	Trick
Maneuver	Water
Melee	vehicles
weapons	
Missile	**MIND**
weapons	**Apportation**
Prestidigitation	**magic**
Running	Artist
Stealth	**Conjuration**
Swimming	**magic**
Unarmed	**Medicine**
combat	**Science**
	Survival
SPIRIT	Test of Will
Faith	Willpower
Focus	
Intimidation	**STRENGTH**
Reality	Climbing
	Lifting

Skills listed in **boldface
cannot** be used unskilled.

COVER VALUE CHART

Type of Cover	Example	Add/Max.
Soft	Bush, car door	+3/15
Medium	Logs, brick wall	+10/25
Hard	Steel, stone wall	+15/40

TRANSFORMATION TABLE

Time	Pure Area Transform	Roll #	Dominant Area Transform	Roll#
1 second	1 /E7	105	2/E8	130
1 minute	5/E6	90	9/E7	100
1 hour	3/ E4	60	5/E5	77
1 day	7/1000	40	1/E4	72
1 week	5/100	26	9/1000	38
1 month	20/100	18	4/100	28
3 months	50/100	12	11/100	19
6 months	75/100	6	25/100	17
1 year	93/100	3	37/100	14
18 months	98/100	2	50/100	12
2 years	100/100	—	60/100	9
3 years	100/100	—	75/100	6
4 years	100/100	—	84/100	4
5 years	100/100	—	90/100	3

The "E " notation is shorthand for large numbers. "E7" would be 10,000,000, which is 10 to the seventh power, or a one followed by seven zeroes.

MEASURE CONVERSION CHART

Measure is in units of	Value Modifier
Seconds	0
Minutes	+9
Hours	+18
Days	+25
Weeks	+29
Months	+32
Years	+38
Meters per round	0
MPH	+3
KMH	+2
Kilos	0
Pounds	-2
Tons	+15
Meters	0
Feet	-3
Kilometers	+15
Miles	+16

MULTI-ACTION CHARTS

Many On One

# Char.	Bonus Modifier	How Many Succeed
1		DN
2	+2	DN+2
3-4	+3	DN+4
5-6	+4	DN+6
7-10	+5	DN+8
11-15	+6	DN+10

One On Many

# Char.	*Toughness* Increase	How Many Succeed/ Difficulty Increase
1		DN+2
2	+2	DN+4
3-4	+3	DN+6
5-6	+4	DN+8
7-10	+5	DN+10
11-15	+6	DN+12

DN = difficulty number; DN + ? means add the listed amount to the difficulty number.
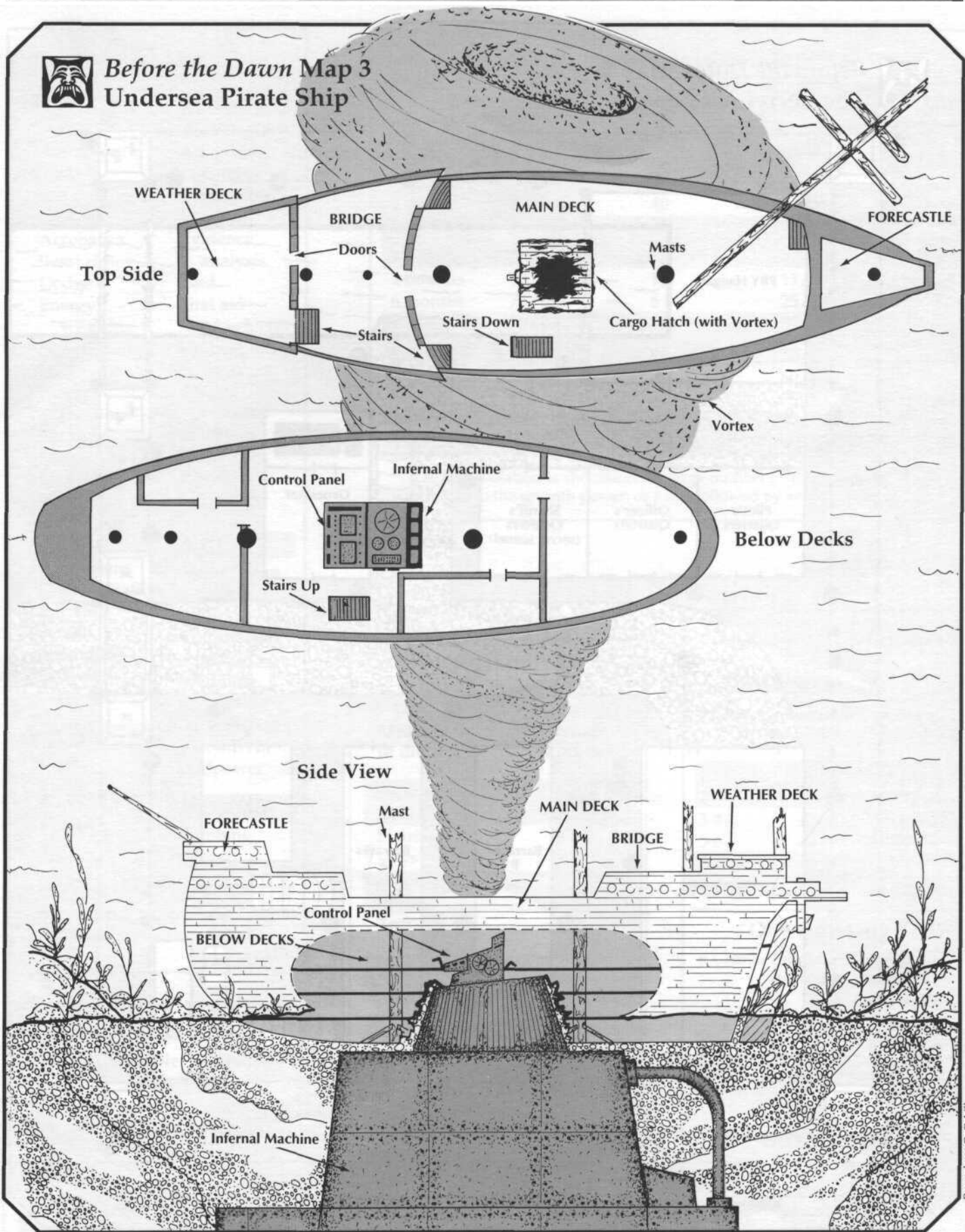
Before the Dawn Map 2
The Secret Air Base

PBY Hangar

Runway

X

Pilot's
Quarters

Officer's
Quarters

Shariff's
Quarters
(secret tunnel)

Generator

X

X

Warehouse

Barracks
B

Barracks
A

CO's
Quarters

X

X

X

Kennels

X
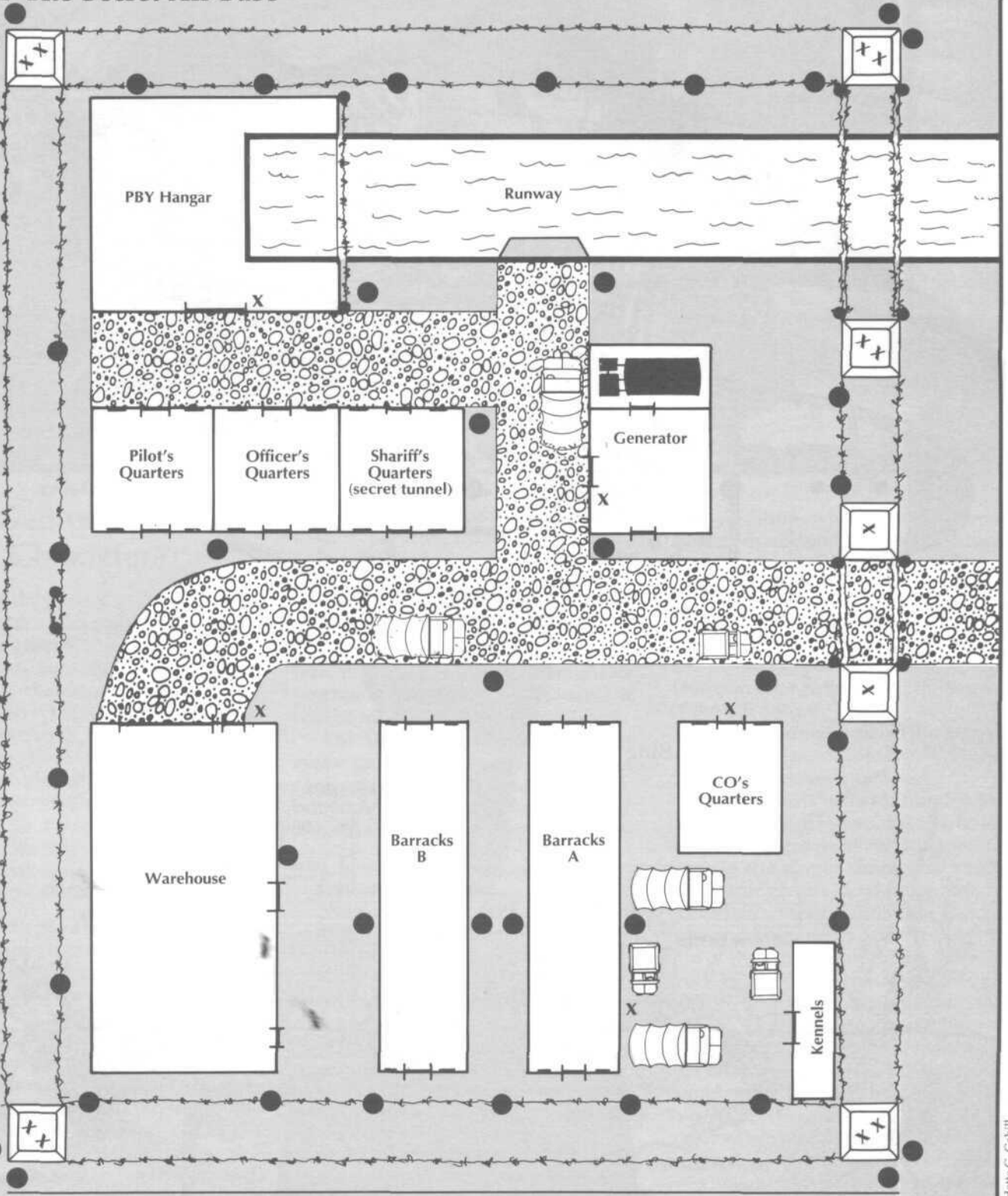
KEY: x = shocktroopers   = Guard Tower   = Truck   = Car   = Light

Bernadette G. Cahill

27

Before the Dawn Map 3
Undersea Pirate Ship

Top Side

WEATHER DECK

BRIDGE

MAIN DECK

FORECASTLE

Doors

Masts

Stairs Down

Stairs

Cargo Hatch (with Vortex)

Vortex

Below Decks

Control Panel

Infernal Machine

Stairs Up

Side View

FORECASTLE

Mast

MAIN DECK

WEATHER DECK

BRIDGE

Control Panel

BELOW DECKS

Infernal Machine

Bernadette G. Cahill
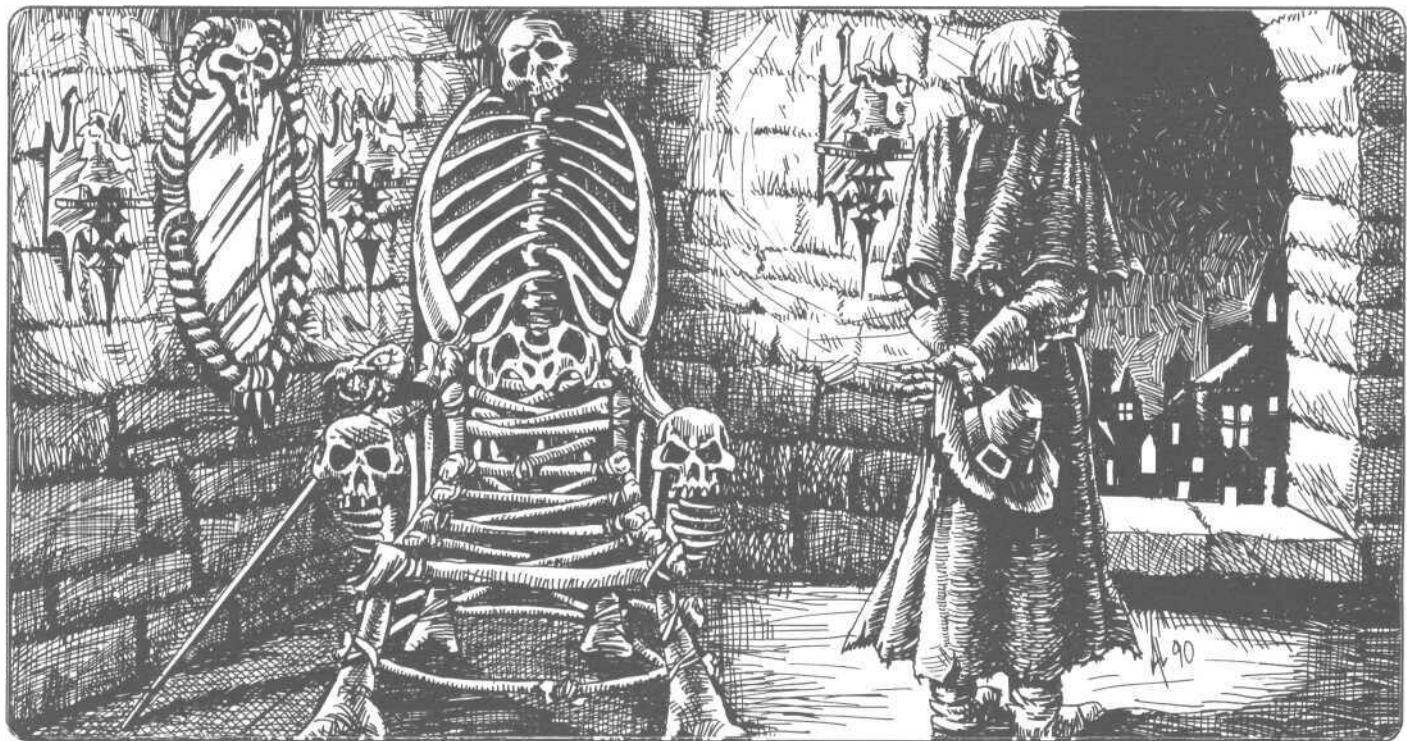
Alan Iude Summa

Gamemaster Characters

One of the great joys of gamemastering is playing all the allies, neutrals, creatures, and villains that exist in an adventure to help, hinder, and oppose the player characters. These are the gamemaster characters, and if they are designed right, they can enliven an adventure. Even a combat-oriented scene can be jazzed up by creating an opponent who has a few unusual skills, or a trick or two to use against the player characters.

What makes a gamemaster character interesting?

• **Distinctive Appearance. Jot** down an adjective or two to use when you describe the character's appearance to the players—bald, ugly, beautiful, thin, tall, bulky, short, dark, fair, etc. This gives the players a tag with which to visualize the character.

• **Distinctive Speech.** Different .characters should talk in different ways. A street thug, for example, speaks much differently from a college professor, and an Edeinos hunter differently from a pulp villain. Vary different characters' accents, vocabularies, and figures of speech.

• **Definite Objective.** Every gamemaster character, from a lowly Ord to a Possibility-laden master villain, should be given a definite objective. The character should want to get something out of his encounter with the player characters, be it information, help, power, or a few laughs. If you know what the character wants, it will be much easier to portray him.

• **Skills.** You do not need to design every gamemaster character with a complete set of skills and attributes, but you should note those you expect the character to use during an encounter.

Example:

Name: Alexander Becker

Template: Big Game Hunter (disguised as TV news producer)

Appearance: six feet tall, blonde hair, chiseled features

Speech: Hollywood mogul style — "Let's feel the vibes on this shot. Work with me baby, work with me."

Objective: To trick the player characters into believing he is a producer; to wipe out the human tribe.

Values: DEX 11, STR 10, TOU 10, PER 10, MIN 9, CHA 8, SPI 8; reality 9, dodge 13, fire combat 13, unarmed combat 12

Possibility Points: 9

In addition, when creating gamemaster characters, spend some time thinking about the role they will play in your plot. Types of roles include:

• **Motivation.** The character's purpose is to motivate the player characters toward a specific series of action. This character helps direct the course of the adventure.

• **Information Source. This character** is used to provide information and clues to the player characters.

• **Obstacle.** Whether through combat, uncooperativeness, or some other means, this character is designed to impede the player characters' progress through the adventure. Many obstacle characters are minor henchmen and lieutenants of the major villain of the adventure and are actively working against the characters, though others — officious customs officials, punks, highwaymen, missionaries, wild dogs — are merely in the way.

• **Major Villain.** No adventure is complete without a hateful major villain to serve as an antagonist. The major villain must be powerful enough to stand up against a group of Storm Knights, clever enough to be behind the evil plans, and interesting enough to warrant a major role in the story.

In some adventures, the major villain is a shadowy figure who manipulates events from behind the scenes, never actually showing himself at all — or only in the last scene of the last act. "Before the Dawn" is an example of this type. Dr. Mobius is the antagonist of this adventure, but the player characters never get within a mile of him — and a good thing for them they don't, too!

• **Comic Relief.** This bumbling, funny, or otherwise amusing character is designed to lighten up portions of an adventure.

• **Mood-Setting Device.** Any characters designed to work with and reflect a particular setting help set the mood and tone of an act or whole adventure. For example, a fly-eating madman named Igor met at the start of a story will certainly set the horror mood.

Maps

By drawing simple maps for the players, you help them visualize what is going on and where they are in a particular act or scene. Most of the maps you'll want to sketch are those areas where combat is likely to occur. But you might also want to draw simple maps of buildings, towns or cities, in case someone asks for details.

It is sometimes useful to prepare two versions of the same map

one for your reference with all the pertinent details in place, and one for the players showing them only what their characters could know or believe.

Scripts and Handouts

Anything you feel inspired to prepare for the adventure will only make the story that much more memorable and exciting. A good script to open the adventure *in media res,* clue-filled handouts such as newspaper clippings or computer screen printouts, and other types of props all work together to make the adventure more visual — and, therefore, more real.

Take a look at what we include in our published adventures to get a better idea of the range of handouts you can create.

Remember, all scripts and handouts should serve the following purposes: to impart information, to help visualize a scene, to give the players something to examine and refer to.

A Further Word on Plots

Below we'll briefly discuss the most common plots used to set up *Torg* adventures. You'll notice that most involve movement from one setting to another. An experienced gamemaster can run an adventure set in a single setting but, unless the setting is unusually rich and well-thought out, it is difficult to maintain the players' interest.

The Quest

The quest is an epic plot, wherein the player characters undertake (or are given) a task to perform. These tasks could be anything from removing a stelae, to rescuing a captured innocent, to throwing an evil magic item into a deep crevice. But while the goal might be quite straight-forward, the path leading up to that goal must be fraught with danger, intrigue, false clues, and deceptive omens.

Often, a quest will require that some item be acquired first, and then something done with that item before the major task can be performed.

The Gauntlet

This dramatic type of plot also involves a quest of sorts, but the path to the goal is deadly. Along the route to the specific goal, the player characters must "run the gauntlet." In other words, they must make their way through obstacle after obstacle, through villain after villain, in order to achieve their destination. Each step of the gauntlet has a distinctive personality, and each step wears down the heroes — perhaps even killing a few — so that by the time they reach the final goal, they have no doubt that one side or the other will be utterly destroyed in the final conflict.

The Gathering

In this type of plot, the player characters must go from place to place and accumulate elements to be used to complete their goal. They may be forced to roam from realm to realm in their travels, or the entire adventure might take place in a single realm. They may be gathering anything from clues, to pieces of a powerful relic, to hard evidence, or even allies to help fight against a terrible threat.

Finally, the Climax

In addition to everything else, the climax should present the player characters with plenty of opportunities to accomplish amazing feats. Never design an adventure where the player characters take a back seat to a gamemaster character. They should be totally involved and completely instrumental in the climatic events and resolutions of the adventure. After all, they didn't play through the entire thing just to sit and watch the conclusion happen to someone else!

Some types of climaxes include the classic fight-to-the-finish with the major villain, the timely arrival to prevent the villain's goal and save the day, the chase to the villain's last refuge, and the bloody clash of major forces while the heroes confront the bad guy. It doesn't matter which climax you use, just as long as the player characters play a major role in the outcome.

Chapter Five

Before the Dawn
A *Torg* Adventure

Mobius, perplexed, stepped away from his Darkness Device. He examined the thread that led to the realm of Orrorsh, running his gloved hand over its stone surface. The hieroglyphics carved into the smooth stone praised his power and dominion in a thousand different ways. Then the praises started again, curving up to where the thread faded in mid air.

"I do not understand," Mobius said aloud. He turned to address the six sarcophagi of the previous pharaohs of Egypt which rested at the base of the Device. "Why does not my loyal servant return from Orrorsh realm? Why does not the Gaunt Man answer my request for an audience?"

"Perhaps, Pharaoh," replied the ravagon as it entered the vast chamber, "the Torg would grant your request if he were able. But his most-trusted lieutenant, Thratchen, sends his greetings."

"I told you and your kind never to enter this room!" Mobius raged at the winged demon.

"A thousand pardons, High Lord," the ravagon said in mock regret. "I assumed you would want the information that I have brought. But if I disturb you ..." The ravagon let the sentence hang unfinished as he turned to leave.

"Wait," Mobius commanded. "What news have you brought?"

"Just this. The Torg has taken a short trip, as he is wont to do. During his absence, he has left Thratchen to oversee the realm. Thratchen says to carry on with your work, and leave him to carry on with his."

The Gaunt Man is away? At this critical moment? Well, thought Mobius, then perhaps the time is right for me to put my plan in motion ...

"Summon Professor Shariff," Mobius called, striding from the chamber. There was work to be done.

Lieutenant Adams wiped the sweat from his brow as he swept the forward area with his binoculars. The perpetual storm surrounding Philadelphia obscured much of his view, but, from what he could see, the Edeinos were once more in retreat.

"All right. Call this another win for the good guys," he said to Corporal Morrison, his radioman. "The enemy is pulling back."

He squinted up at the sun, cursing its immobility. By his watch, it was 2:00 am; the sun had been in that same position for 20 hours. Already, the temperature had risen nearly six degrees from yesterday's record high.

The casualty reports began to come in. Adams listened with growing dismay. Two men of his depleted company killed, three missing, and 12 wounded. Half of the injured were cases of exhaustion and heat-prostration. Hell, they had lost more men to the weather than to enemy action!

If the temperature continued to climb, he didn't think his company would survive a week.

Introduction

"Before the Dawn" is the first adventure set in the Near Now of *Torg*. It is designed for up to six players and a gamemaster. The gamemaster should read the World Book and the entire adventure prior to play, in order to become familiar with the overall *Torg* story and the adventure plotline. Players should not read the adventure, as knowing what is going to happen removes the suspense and excitement of the story.

This adventure is designed to introduce a group of Storm Knights to each other and to the world of *Torg*. It is set just after the Earth has stopped spin-

ning (see "Core Earth" in the World Book), and allows them to meet denizens of the Living Land, the Empire of the Nile, and Orrorsh.

Everything you need to play "Before the Dawn" is in the game box. Begin by helping the players create characters (see the Rule Book), then start the adventure.

Adventure Format

Each act starts with its own synopsis, called "The Major Beat," which outlines what the player characters must accomplish before they can move on to the next act. Within an act the characters can move about rather freely, perhaps even skipping some scenes, but until they finish the major beat, they cannot move forward in the adventure. Acts are broken into smaller segments, called "Scenes," and these are defined as either "standard" or "dramatic" for purposes of drama card play (see the Rule Book). Scenes begin with sections called "The Situation," and these may be read aloud or paraphrased by the gamemaster in order to set the scene.

Adventure Background

Some important things have happened to Earth over the past three months. It all started with the appearance of the maelstrom bridges and the sweeping storms that changed reality. The World Book describes what the realities of different portions of Earth have changed to, but suffice to say that in some places the laws of nature have become very strange indeed. Millions of people have transformed into beings more suited to these new realities. Technology has broken down in some places; in others it has become frighteningly advanced.

Death and destruction accompanied the storms of change, as did the terrible Possibility Raiders. These invaders have attacked our planet with blinding speed and ferocity, killed hundreds of thousands, enslaved countless others. And now, as the third month of the invasion comes to a close,

the planet itself has started to break down — the planet Earth has stopped spinning and even more deaths are imminent from heat and cold.

The Gaunt Man, leader of the invading realms, has been neutralized by another group of Storm Knights (see the "Possibility Wars" novel trilogy, available where you purchased this game). This has left his mystic-science machine for siphoning off the Earth's energy unsupervised. It rests beneath the Indian Ocean, in the Java Trench, waiting for the command to release its stored energy.

Pharaoh Mobius, High Lord of the Nile Empire, has discovered the great vortex of power that marks the machine's location. With his own weird science, the Pharaoh knows he can get the machine to give him the energy. Then he can claim the Torg title and the cosmverse will be his!

But a second group of Storm Knights - the player characters — happen upon the Pharaoh's scheme. Not only must they deny Mobius this energy, they must return it to the Earth so that the planet can resume its spin before all life is destroyed by the extreme temperatures settling across the planet's surface.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins during the second night of the Still World. The player characters are in the Living Land, returning from a successful resupply mission, when a tire blows on their army vehicle. While they are repairing it, a young woman rushes up to them and begins shouting wildly at them — unfortunately, in German. While they attempt to calm her and figure out what she is saying, they are attacked by a group of Edeinos.

After the attackers are beaten off, the woman tells the heroes that she and her father have been taken prisoner in the New Empire of the Nile, and forced to accompany Professor Shariff to the Living Land in a fantastic digging machine of her father's design, from where she recently escaped. She also tells them that, from what she has overheard, Professor Shariff's mission has something to do with the stopping of the Earth!

Act One climaxes with the battle between the Storm Knights and Professor Shariff's forces.

In Act Two, the heroes meet the girl's father, Doctor Marlen, and search the digging machine. They discover that Professor Shariff was in the Living Land at Dr. Mobius's command, to trade Edeinos warriors weapons, in return for some kind of an "egg," which would be useful to him in stealing the energy the Gaunt Man gained by stopping the Earth. They hope to discover the Earth-stopping machine's location by journeying to Shariff's base in the Nile Empire.

The heroes may choose to stick around and, pretending to be Shariff's men, trade the weaponry for the egg (or steal it from the Edeinos); if so, they will be puzzled to discover that it is a Faberge egg, a stunning and beautiful piece of jewelry, but of dubious military, magical, or scientific value.

The Storm Knights take the digging machine back to the base in the Nile Empire. Here, they skulk around, evading Nile shocktroopers, interrogating prisoners, and attempting to discover the location of the Earth-stopping device. They learn its exact location — and that Mobius himself will shortly be arriving to board a seaplane (in a nearby hangar) to go there himself!

The Storm Knights determine to steal the plane and beat Mobius to the punch. The battle to steal the plane is ferocious and bloody, but, as the shocktroopers are surprised to be attacked this deep within their own lines, they are ultimately defeated, and the Storm Knights steal the seaplane.

Act Two ends with a battle between the seaplane and a pair of Nile fighter planes. The fight is complicated by the arrival of Shul, a huge brute of a mechanic who was hidden aboard the seaplane when it took off. Shul does his very best to kill everyone he encounters — while the fighter planes pepper the seaplane from outside!

In Act Three, the heroes arrive in the realm of Orrorsh. They fly to the location marked on the map, discovering there a weird, unnatural tornado, fixed in position directly at the coordinates. They land their plane as close to the tornado as possible.

Francis Mao

Once landed on the sea, their airship is attacked by a huge white shark, who slams into its hull with frightening violence. This shark is a demon named Gibberfat. Once they "kill" the demon shark, it transforms into a vicious electric eel. Once the eel is dispatched, Gibberfat assumes his true form. He calls to them in English, telling them to desist or they will perish. If the Knights have the egg, they can use it to buy Gibberfat off, otherwise, they must fight him. Once he dies or is bribed, the heroes must face the last obstacle between them and the Gaunt Man's device.

The climactic battle for the Earth takes place 50 meters beneath the surface of the ocean. The Storm Knights, wearing old-fashioned diving suits and armed with various weird science weapons from the arsenal of Dr. Mobius, battle against the final guardians of the Earth-stopping device - skeletal, long-dead pirates! Some of the heroes must hold off the pirates while the others work feverishly to master the controls of the machine. Meanwhile, the ocean floor itself begins to bubble and melt; soon

it will be so hot that the device will fall straight through into the mantle, taking the heroes, and all hope of restarting the Earth, with it!

If they are successful, the Earth gradually resumes its spin, and thousands of people's lives are saved. If not, the Still World is permanent; in a few short years, most of this planet will be uninhabitable.

ACT ONE
A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight
The Major Beat

In this act, while traveling in the Living Land, the heroes meet Hildy Marlen, a beautiful young damsel in distress. They rescue her father, Doctor Marlen, from the clutches of the evil Professor Shariff, a servant of the even more evil Dr. Mobius. The heroes (incorrectly) come to understand that Dr. Mobius has something to do with

the stopping of the Earth. They may acquire a Faberge egg, which they believe will aid them in restarting the world.

Following their slim leads, they board a fabulous tunneling machine to a secret base in the Empire of the Nile, where they hope to find the location of the device which has caused the Earth to stop and possibly learn how to restart the planet.

SCENE ONE: The Meeting
The Situation

Standard. The heroes are running supplies into the Living Land. This scene takes place on a dirt road, deep in the jungle, when their tire blows out. As the heroes are changing a tire on their truck, they meet a beautiful young German woman.

The world has surely gone to hell recently. The USA has been invaded by dinosaurs and lizard-men; the United Kingdom and Scandinavia

have been overrun by knights in armor, Vikings and sorcerers; France has been transformed into a dark-ages theocracy; the Middle East has been taken over by a raygun-weilding lunatic who wishes to recreate the glories of Ancient Egypt. It's been a bad couple of months.

And now the Earth has stopped moving. The sun has been in the same place for over 20 hours — somewhere over the ocean near South America — and the temperature over North America has risen almost six degrees above the record high for this day. You shudder to think what it must be like in South America now — and what it will be like here in a week.

But there's nothing you can do about that, so you are doing the best you can, running supplies into the boundaries of the so-called "Living Land" - a place that used to be called Ohio. Despite the invasion of the dinosaurs and the Edeinos, despite the destruction of the cities, despite the collapse of technology, people still live there, refusing to leave their beloved homes.

They may be foolish — even crazy - but you cannot simply let them starve or die for lack of food or proper medicine. So, every day for the last couple of weeks, you have been running a truckload of supplies into Ohio from still-normal Kentucky, at the same time, attempting to convince the people to leave.

After a few terrifying experiences in the first trips, you've gotten the hang of it by now — more or less — and this trip has so far been uneventful. You are heading down a dirt road back toward Kentucky. The road has degraded significantly, and, hitting a sharp rock, your front left tire blows out.

The Action

Have the Knight driving the truck generate a *land vehicles* total. If the total exceeds 5, he brings the truck to a safe stop. If less, the truck crashes. An army deuce-and-a-half, the truck is sturdy and emerges unscathed; each Knight is hit with a damage value of 5.

The Deep Mist

The Living Land is enshrouded in a veil of mist, called "The Deep Mist." The Deep Mist obscures vision; a character cannot ever see more than 10 meters around him. In addition, the Deep Mist screws up compasses and other direction-finding devices, making it very difficult to get anywhere without getting lost.

Deuce-and-a-Half: Tech 22, Speed 100kph/60mph (value 12), Passengers 14, TOU 22. Price: 60k (value 24).

Description: The deuce-and-a-half is so-named because it weighs around 2.5 tons; it's not so easy to change a tire. The difficulty of changing a tire is 8 *(land vehicles* skill); the base time value is 17, or around 40 minutes. Subtract one from the time value for each level of success above *minimal* the character receives (that is, on an *average* succes it takes 25 minutes; *good* success, 15 minutes; etc.). The coordination difficulty of this task is 5.

Enter Hildy

While the heroes are repairing their tire (at least five minutes before they have finished), they hear something coming down the road toward them. Whatever it is, it is not attempting to be silent; they can easily hear it splashing through puddles, cracking branches, and so forth. The Knights may attempt *find* or *Perception* rolls against a difficulty of 8 to learn more.

Under no circumstances should the Knights be allowed to kill Hildy. If anyone foolishly wishes to fire off a burst before seeing what they are firing at, Hildy gives off a frightened scream (she saw a large snake in the trees) just as they are about to fire. If the Knights insist upon firing anyway, they miss. Period.

Seconds later, Hildy appears out of the Mist. Seeing the Knights, she throws herself in the arms of the nearest handsome male and begins jabber-

ing at him hysterically -- unfortunately, in German — while pointing down the road from whence she came.

Hildy Marlen (Damsel in Distress): DEX 8, STR 7, TOU 7, PER 7, MIN 8, CHA 12, SPI 10.

Skills: dodge 10, running 10, unarmed combat 9, scholar (geology) 13, charm 14.

Description: Beautiful young blond German woman. Dressed in standard explorer's gear in pretty disarray.

Once the characters succeed in calming her, she manages to remember her English, and says, "Please help me! I am being chased by those terrible, how you say? I forget the words. Oh, yes, I remember now! Lizards!"

Right about then the lizards show up.

The Edeinos Attack

There are seven Edeinos in the hunting party — six warriors and one optant (an Edeinos priest). They picked up Hildy's trail about three miles back; though they could have captured her at any time, they let her run, to increase the fun of the chase. They are about to pay dearly for that decision.

When they left their tribe this morning, the hunting party was blessed with the miracle *See Through Mist,* allowing them to see up to 40 meters through the Deep Mist (remember, the heroes can see only 10 meters). When they get within sight of the truck, the warriors spread out, planning to encircle the truck and hit it simultaneously from all sides. Meanwhile, the optant begins to cast the miracle, *Animate Plant* on the jungle around the truck. Once cast, the Edeinos attack.

Edeinos Warriors (6): DEX 11, STR 9, TOU 10, PER 9, MIN 9, CHA 8, SPI 10.
Skills: dodge 12, melee weapons 12, missile weapons 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12, tracking 10, focus 11, faith 11.
Natural Tools: claws 13, teeth 11, tail 9.
Equipment: hrockt spears; damage 12, range 5/10/15.
Notes: Can see 40 meters through mist because of *See Through Mist* miracle.

Edeinos Optant: Same attributes and skills as warriors, except: SPI 12, faith 14, reality 13. Possibilities 2.

Miracle: *Animate Plant,* community rating 12, difficulty 16; range: sight; duration 18. Area of effect: 20 meter radius. Cast time two rounds. Effect: Immobilizes victims.

When the *Animate Plant* miracle is cast, all of the plants within the area of effect writhe and wriggle as if alive, seeking to entwine anything nearby, attacking animals and beings with an *unarmed combat* skill of 12. If successful, the plants have wrapped around the character, immobilizing him and causing him to suffer a -4 to all *Dexterity-based* skills or any skills which require movement. The character may attempt to break free by making a *Strength* roll of difficulty 13; other free characters can help, coordination difficulty 5.

The plants are animate only for one round (though anything they catch will be held for the full duration of the spell); after the first round, other characters can enter the area without risk.

Hildy's Story

Read the following or paraphrase it in answer to the Knights' questions:

"I am the daughter of Herr Doctor Heinrich Marlen, a famous engineer. We were in Cairo when the Pharoah came. My father was captured, and forced to work for the Pharoah, under the direction of Professor Shariff." *(Here she gives a pretty shudder.)* "Professor Shariff said he would do things — terrible things! — to me if my father did not work for him.

"In the next two months, my father built a fantastic digging device. He could never do this before; I think he changed somehow when the world did." *(In fact he transformed into a weird scientist.)*

"Three days ago, Professor Shariff took my father and myself onto the digging device and forced my father to drive it to this place. During the two-day trip, we overheard the Professor talking to the soldiers. He told

them that they were to meet some Edeinos, to trade weapons — there are several hundred rifles on the device— for a key. He said that Pharoah would be able to use the key to unlock the power of the Still World!"

"When we arrived here this morning, the Professor met with some of the lizards — I do not know what they said. Then the lizards left; we have been waiting ever since. Two hours ago, my father and I were let out of the device to get some fresh air. My father hit our guard on the back of the head and told me to run and get help. As I left he was struggling with the guard.

"An hour later, I was discovered by the Edeinos. They chased me until I met you.

"My father is an old man; they are sure to kill him! Won't you please rescue him?"

The Storm Knights may be more interested in the "key" to the Earth-stopping device than in rescuing the doctor; in any event, they must go to the digging device if the adventure is to continue. Hildy knows the way back (more or less); the journey takes about 45 minutes.

Cut To...

Forty minutes later. The Knights follow Hildy back down the road and up a trail. She tells them that she thinks the camp is just up ahead, somewhere in the mist.

SCENE TWO: Doctor Marlen's Incredible Digging Device

The Situation

Dramatic. The heroes head down the road in the direction Hildy came from. Ten minutes later, they hit a path leading off into the jungle. Following that, they eventually reach the clearing where Doctor Marlen's incredible digging device is located.

From what Hildy has told you, the digging device is just up ahead, maybe 50 meters down the path, which runs between the jungle and the swamp off to your right. There are 10 shocktroopers on board, armed with some kind of machine pistol or gun; Hildy doesn't know what kind of weaponry Professor Shariff may have. She also tells you that it takes five minutes to start up the digging machine when the engine is cold. Other than that, she doesn't know much of any use.

The Action

See the "Assault on the Digging Device" map in the pullout section: the guards are located at the spots marked "X"; six more and Professor Shariff are inside the digging machine. The heroes arrive from the south, about 30 meters below the two shocktroopers guarding the southern path.

The shocktroopers' first priority is to sound the alarm. The moment they spot the Knights — or, if the Knights are being sneaky, the moment they are attacked by the Knights — they fire their weapons to alert the other guards. The other guards rush toward the sound of battle, except for the guard atop the pile of dirt and rubble, who has orders to stay there and guard the machine.

The guards inside the digging machine emerge in the first round following the alarm sounding; Professor Shariff emerges in the next round. Professor Shariff is a fanatically loyal servant of Dr. Mobius; he fights to the death. If it looks as if he is going to be defeated, he retreats into the digging machine and attempts to initiate the start-up sequence. This takes roughly five minutes (or 30 rounds). The door to the digging machine has a *Toughness* of 24; the lock has a *lockpicking* difficulty of 10.

Shocktroops (10): DEX 9, STR 9, TOU 9, PER 7, MIN 7, CHA 7, SPI 9.

Skills: dodge 10, fire combat 10, unarmed combat 10, climbing 10.

Equipment: Schemisser Machineguns; damage 17, range 15/25/100. Knives; damage STR + 3.

Professor Shariff: DEX 9, STR 10, TOU 8/20*, PER 9, MIN 12, CHA 9, SPI 9.

Skills: reality 12, dodge 13, energy weapons 14, maneuver 11, unarmed combat 10, land vehicles 12, scholar (weird science) 13, science 13, test 13, weird science 14, willpower 14, charm 12, taunt 11, intimidation 12.

Possibilities: 10.

The Sound-Gun: This weird science gizmo looks like a cross between a megaphone and raygun. It has three settings and power for 12 shots.

Stun Setting: +3 to hit. Damage: 20 (Stun, KO, Knockdown damage only).

Wound Setting: Damage: 16 (normal damage plus deafness for a number of rounds equal to half the result points of the shot).

Kill Setting: Damage: 20 (two charges per shot. Normal damage plus deafness for a number of rounds equal to the result points of the shot).

*Force Field Generator: This gizmo looks like a bulky backpack. When turned on, Professor Shariff is surrounded by a heavy nimbus of electrical energy, making him almost painful to look at. There is power for 15 rounds' continuous use. The force field gives the equivalent of +12 armor protection, increasing Professor Shariff's *Armor Value* to 20.

Variables

The main risk here is that the Storm Knights will be defeated. If so, Professor Shariff will attempt to capture them and imprison them in the digging machine, so that he can gloat over them at his leisure, and bring them back to Dr. Mobius as prizes. If this occurs, you will have to give them an opportunity to break free of their bonds and overwhelm their opponents, either during the trip, or when they reach the base (see the next act).

Another risk is that the heroes somehow manage to completely destroy the digging device — possibly by the injudicious use of magic or high explosives. *Don't let them!* This causes you no end of headaches — it destroys an important clue, kills Dr. Marlen, and removes the vehicle which is supposed to take them into the next act. Assume that, since most of it is still underground, the device gains a lot of
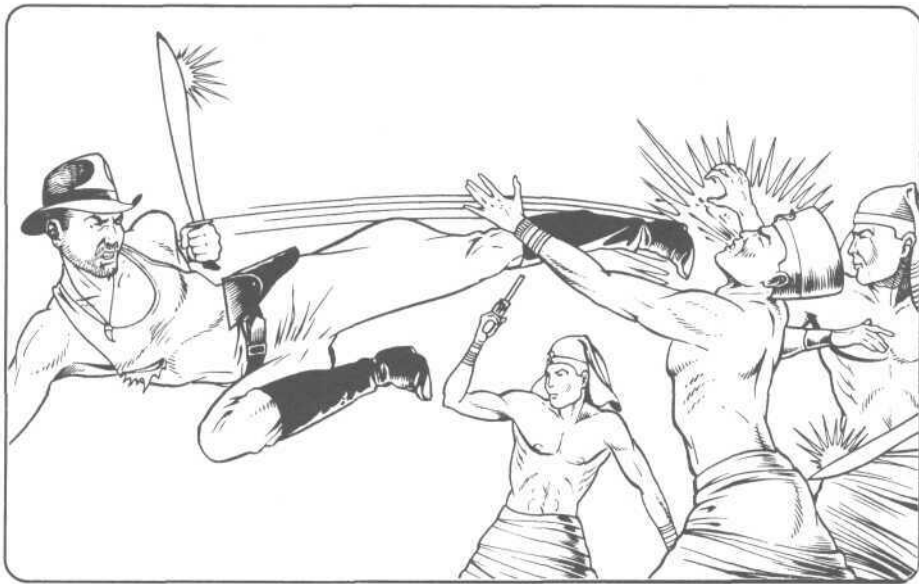
protection from the rock and dirt. Any potentially lethal attacks do at most heavy damage to the digger, requiring several hours' time to repair.

Finally, you may be in trouble if the Knights decide not to attack at all, instead preferring to return to Kentucky to get help or do something else altogether. You have a number of choices: you can use Edeinos to herd them back to the encounter; once they are in Kentucky, you can feed them clues and hints suggesting that they go to the Nile Empire and find the hidden base; or you can somehow get them directly to Act Three in Indonesia, skipping Act Two altogether.

If the Knights simply refuse to have anything to do with Dr. Mobius or attempting to start up the Earth, you will have to run your campaign in the Still World setting, as described in the World Book.

Aftermath

In all likelihood, the heroes have emerged victorious, having killed Professor Shariff and killed or driven off the shocktroopers. Hildy has a tearful reunion with her father, tied up inside the digger. After ransacking the machine, the Knights find Professer Shariff's diary; give the players "Professor Shariff's Diary" handout from the pullout. If they don't find the diary, Dr. Marlen knows the information, having snuck a look at the diary during the trip.

Cut To...

If the Knights stay around to get the egg, cut to Scene Three. If they proceed directly to the secret base, cut to Scene Four. If they do something completely unexpected, cut to the Act Awards and following Cut To section for advice.

SCENE THREE: Guns for Butter (or Eggs)

The Situation

Standard. This scene occurs only if the heroes decide to stick around and get the egg from the Edeinos.

The heroes have several hours before the Edeinos return; they can spend this time tidying up the battlefield, questioning Dr. Marlen, disguising themselves as shocktroopers, and so forth. Once they have completed their preparations, cut to the arrival of the Edeinos.

The Action

Clever Storm Knights will attempt to con the Edeinos into giving the egg in return for the weapons (which they have time to render inoperable before the Edeinos arrive); bloodthirsty Knights will probably choose to fight it out with the lizards. If so, they may be a bit dismayed when a dozen Edei-

nos show up riding a Bor Aka, a dinosaur roughly the size of a bad-tempered football field. This may convince them to take a less violent approach: if not, let the chips fall where they may.

The thing to remember is that the Edeinos are not expecting any trouble. They have been given an assignment by Baruk Kaah himself, to pick up a package from another group of Edeinos and bring it to Professor Shariff, who will in return give them several crates of weapons. If the heroes keep cool, the Edeinos will notice nothing (all humans look alike, after all). They will be unable to test the weapons, which they detest as dead things and do not understand how to operate anyway.

If the humans give them any trouble, the Edeinos riding the Bor Aka will cheerfully turn it loose, telling it to stomp all of the humans into so much paste.

Edeinos (12): Same as those in Scene One. There is no optant in this party, and they have not been blessed with the miracle *See Through Mist.*

Bor Aka: DEX 10, STR 41, TOU 43, PER 10, MIN 5, CHA 5, SPI 5.

Skills: running 11, swimming 11, trick (13), test 12, willpower 12, intimidation 14, taunt (7).

Natural Tools: bite 42, trample 44.

Description: A very, very large creature, roughly similar to a brontasaurus. The Bor Aka is a vegetarian; so (for whatever it is worth) it will spit out any characters it picks up and chews to a pulp.

W hat are those Guns For, Anyway?

Baruk Kaah plans to arm several hundred Gospog with the weapons and use them to lead the next assault upon Philadelphia. If the Storm Knights do not disable the weapons before giving them to the Edeinos, the soldiers at Philly are going to be in for a very nasty surprise...

Cut To...

Scene Four.

SCENE FOUR: Off to Egypt

The Situation.

Standard. The Storm Knights will probably choose to commandeer the digging device and head back to the secret base in the Empire of the Nile. Doctor Marlen will gladly operate the device, as long as they first go to Kentucky and drop his daughter off with the authorities. The trip to Egypt takes two days (the device travels amazingly quickly underground); there's just enough power left in the mega-batteries to make the return journey.

The Knights -- particularly any weird scientists in the bunch — can fiddle with the device to their hearts' content; it looks a lot like a Flash Gordon-like space ship with a big screw at either end. Feel free to make up internal details to match; it should have lots of dials and floor-mounted throttles, sparking Van De Graaf generators, and be built almost entirely of big riveted plates. It's a goofy weird science device, so have fun with it (see the accompanying diagram).

Remember that Professor Shariff's diary is hidden in the captain's cabin.

Digger: Tech 21ws (24s), speed 160kph/100mph (value 14), Passengers 20, TOU 32.

Act Awards

The player characters should receive around two Possibility points for this act. One if their play was well below average, and three if they were outstanding.
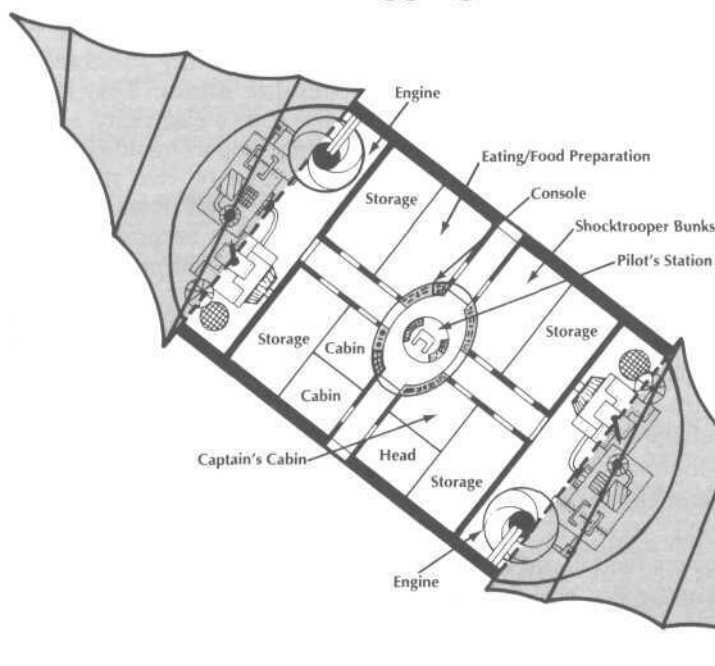
Cut To...

Act Two, Scene One. There's nowhere else they can easily go; if they somehow learn the Earth-stopping machine's location through their own devices (esoteric magic or whatever); they can skip the next act and go directly to Act Three. If they do this, they will need to provide their own underwater gear, however.

Diagram
The Incredible Digging Device

Engine
Eating/Food Preparation
Console
Shocktrooper Bunks
Pilot's Station
Storage
Storage
Storage
Cabin
Cabin
Captain's Cabin
Head
Storage
Engine

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ACT TWO

Into the Empire of the Nile

The Major Beat

The Knights travel to Egypt, to a secret airbase deep within the Empire of the Nile, to learn the location of the Earth-stopping device. They can steal the pilot's flight plans or they can steal the pilot. Once they have the plans in their possession, they travel to the Indian Ocean near Indonesia, probably stealing Dr. Mobius's PBY seaplane to do so.

SCENE ONE: The Airbase

The Situation

Standard. The airbase is located about 10 miles outside of Thebes proper, in a Pure Nile zone. If the Knights have taken the digging machine, they have no problems finding the base, as the machine is pre-programmed to return to its dock (a secret chamber located below Professor Shariff's quarters in the base). If the heroes haven't taken the digging machine, Dr. Marlen knows the base's location; if he's not around, they will have to bribe or con Empire officials to find it.

S till World and the Nile

Remember how it was very hot in the Kentucky scenes, and the sun was high in the sky — even at 3:00 a.m.? Well, the Nile is just the opposite — or it would be if not for Mobius' science. The Nile Empire is on the dark side of the Still World, and it is very cold. But Mobius has placed an artificial sun in the sky, and this provides light and heat to his realm.

The Action

There is a map of the base in the pullout; refer to it when reading the following descriptions.

The base consists of a number of prefabricated metal buildings surrounded by barbed wire. It is located in the middle of the desert, 10 miles from the nearest population center, Thebes. There are 20 guards on duty at all times (at the locations marked on the map), plus 10 or more workers doing maintenance, repairs, and so forth. There are an additional 20 guards asleep in barracks A.

Barbed Wire Fences: The wire is three meters in height. There are two sets of fences, with two meters between them. That area is patrolled by four guard dogs.

Guard Towers: The towers are seven meters tall. They are standard prison-camp-style towers -- small rooms on top of an open wooden framework. Each tower is equipped with a searchlight and is manned by two guards.

Kennels: Small building where the dogs sleep.

CO's Office: This building contains a small office with two desks, a large two-way radio, and a tactical map of the base and surrounding area on the wall. The commanding officer, Colonel Manotep, and his secretary are usually found in this building.

Motor Pool: Contains the base's vehicles, mainly army trucks and jeeps.

Generator Room: This building holds the base's electricity generator and water pumps. Outside is the gasoline tank. One or two maintenance workers here at all times.

Barracks: A: Contains 20 sleeping shocktroopers. B: Empty; where workers sleep.

Shariff's Qtrs: Semi-opulent house with substantial library of weird science literature; secret door in kitchen leading down to tunneler dock.

PBY Hangar: A large open structure with a canal running in under garage-style hangar door on north side. The walls are lined with airplane maintenance tools; the center of the building is taken up by the PBY airplane, floating in the canal. It barely fits through the hangar doors. Small pilots' office in southeast corner; possible location for flight plans. Two maintenance workers here; plus the pilot, Captain Lefleur.

Officer's Qtrs: Four beds and footlockers line the walls; table in center of building. Nothing of special interest here.

Pilot's Qtrs: Beds, weather reports, map case, other pilot stuff. Possible location for flight plans.

Warehouse: Food, equipment, weapons locker in back, contains several dozen schmeisser machineguns, ammunition, grenades, and the like. Two workers here.

Cast of Characters

Shocktroopers (40): DEX 9, STR 9, TOU 9, PER 7, MIN 7, CHA 7, SPI 9.

Skills: dodge 10, fire combat 10, unarmedcombat 10, climbing 10.

Equipment: Schmeisser Machineguns, damage 17, range 15/25/100. Knives, damage STR +3.

Colonel Manotep: DEX 10, STR 10, TOU 11, PER 10, MIN 8, CHA 8, SPI 9.

Skills: reality 10, dodge 12, fire combat 12, unarmed combat 12, climbing 12, trick 12, test 12, taunt 12, intimidation 12.

Possibilities: 4.

Equipment: Schmeisser Machinegun, damage 17, range 15/25/100. Knife, damage STR +3.

Personality: Shrewd, careful. Follows orders to the letter. Not too easily conned or frightened.

Workers: DEX 8, STR 8, TOU 8, PER 8, MIN 8, CHA 8, SPI 8.

Skills: 10 in work-related skills (maintenance, dish-washing, vehicle repair skills, etc.).

Captain Lefleur (Pilot): DEX 10, STR 8, TOU 8, PER 10, MIN 10, CHA 10, SPI 10.

Skills: air vehicles 14.

Personality: Bitter, sarcastic. Hates Mobius, Nile Realm, and everything else. A native of Terra, Lefleur works for Mobius because he sees him as his

only chance to get back home. Might jump at a chance to hurt Mobius — if it involves no personal risk. Speaks English. Has memorized the location of the Earth-stopping device.

Objectives

The Knights need to learn the location of the Earth-stopping device. There are a number of places within the base where they could find this information — in a locker in the pilots' quarters, in a small office in the PBY hangar, or from the pilot, Captain Lefleur, who could be found in either the hangar, the pilots' quarters, or, if you want to be difficult about it, in the brig (in the CO's office) for drunken and disorderly conduct.

Attached to the flight plans is a cargo manifest, listing, among other things, a half-a-dozen diving suits and oxygen tanks. From this, the heroes should assume that their final destination is somewhere under water.

Once they have the location, the heroes can escape in any way they choose. For your purposes, it is much better if they take the fueled PBY seaplane — not only do they then get the diving suits necessary to finish the adventure, but it also allows you to run the exciting climax to this act — the "Big Dogfight."

Running the Scene

This scene is a big production — if this were a movie, probably 30 percent of the film's budget would be spent on the special effects for this one. The heroes of the film are infiltrating the enemy base. In the beginning, they may disguise themselves as shock-troopers or Nile officials, bamboozling the foolish enemy, but at some time they will probably be discovered and the scene ended in a blaze of gunfire.

On the outside, things look pretty grim for the Knights. The heroes face around 50 well-armed and trained opponents. The base is surrounded by barbed wire, and soldiers with spotlights watch all approaches. Even if the Knights use the digging device to get in, arriving at the secret dock under Professor Shariff's quarters, there are

Bob Dvorak

a number of guards stationed on the inside of the base, and a whole lot more within easy hailing distance.

However, in this case, appearances are deceiving. This encounter is standard, not dramatic. That means that the Drama Deck is heavily weighted in the Knights' favor. Though things may appear tough, if the Knights keep their wits about them, they should have little trouble defeating the shock-troopers. Try to run this encounter as though it were a scene from your favorite *Macho American Bodybuilder vs. the Dimwitted Foreigners who Can't Shoot Worth a Damn* film. The hero wades out into a storm of automatic fire, taking not a scratch, and, with a single burst of his M-16, knocks the enemy soldiers down like tenpins. Encourage the players to be flambouyant — let even outrageous plans succeed, if they are cinematically appropriate to the genre.

Let the Knights attack a sentry (or, if outside, a patrol) to get their uniforms. Let them blow up the generator to create a lovely pyrotechnical diversion, hopefully immolating a bunch of guards in the process. Let them steal a

truck and drive it through a barrack or two, or into the base of a guard tower. Maybe one hero slips outside and fires off a burst of gunfire, drawing a large number of guards out after him while the other heroes trash the base. The hero outside dispatches a bunch of soldiers, leading the others on a merry chase. When the other heroes accomplish their mission and head down the canal in the PBY, the hero leaps onto the outside of the airplane, clinging to a strut while it roars off into the sky.

The scene is dangerous, and with an unlucky turn of the dice a hero could get hurt or killed, but, more than anything else, this should be a lot of wholesome, violent fun.

Don't worry about going too light on the heroes; you can really hammer them in the next scene.

CutTo...

Scene Two if the Knights steal the seaplane; you'll have to extemporize their escape if they do not. The heroes will have to find their own transportation to the Indian Ocean; they will also have to come up with their own diving suits or other underwater gear.

SCENE TWO:
The Big Dogfight

The Situation

Dramatic. The heroes have stolen the flight plans, giving them the location of the Earth-stopping device. They have also stolen the PBY seaplane and are roaring off into the night.

When the heroes are in the plane, describe it according to the accompanying diagram. *Don't* mention the secret compartment, unless someone specifically searches the area behind the cargo and generates a *find* total of 14 or higher — with all hell breaking loose, the heroes probably won't do this until it is too late. If they *do* search this area successfully, they will meet Shul ahead of schedule, which is unfortunate, but not catastrophic.

In any event, in this scene the heroes get to experience a dogfight. Their plane is very slow and very unwieldy, but it has been equipped with three machinegun cupolas. The opposition is in the form of two Nile fighter planes, Spitfires, manned by Possibility-rated pilots.

And just when things look their grimmest, they get a whole lot worse. The mechanic, Shul, who has been hiding in the secret compartment aft, steps forth and does his best to pound the heroes into dust. As Shul is a huge brute of a man and also Possibility-rated, this should be quite an interesting experience for the heroes.

You've got the flight plans; you've got a plane capable of getting there; and it's loaded with the equipment you need to complete your mission. Considering that you have had to go through 50-odd guards to get this, everything has gone quite smoothly, indeed. Why does that make you nervous?

In a moment you find out why, as two Nile Spitfires come screaming out of the clouds. Taking up positions to your rear, they call over the radio and demand to know who you are and what you are doing.

The Action

There are two things the heroes can do: attempt to con the pilots into letting them pass, or say "the heck with it" and blast merrily away.
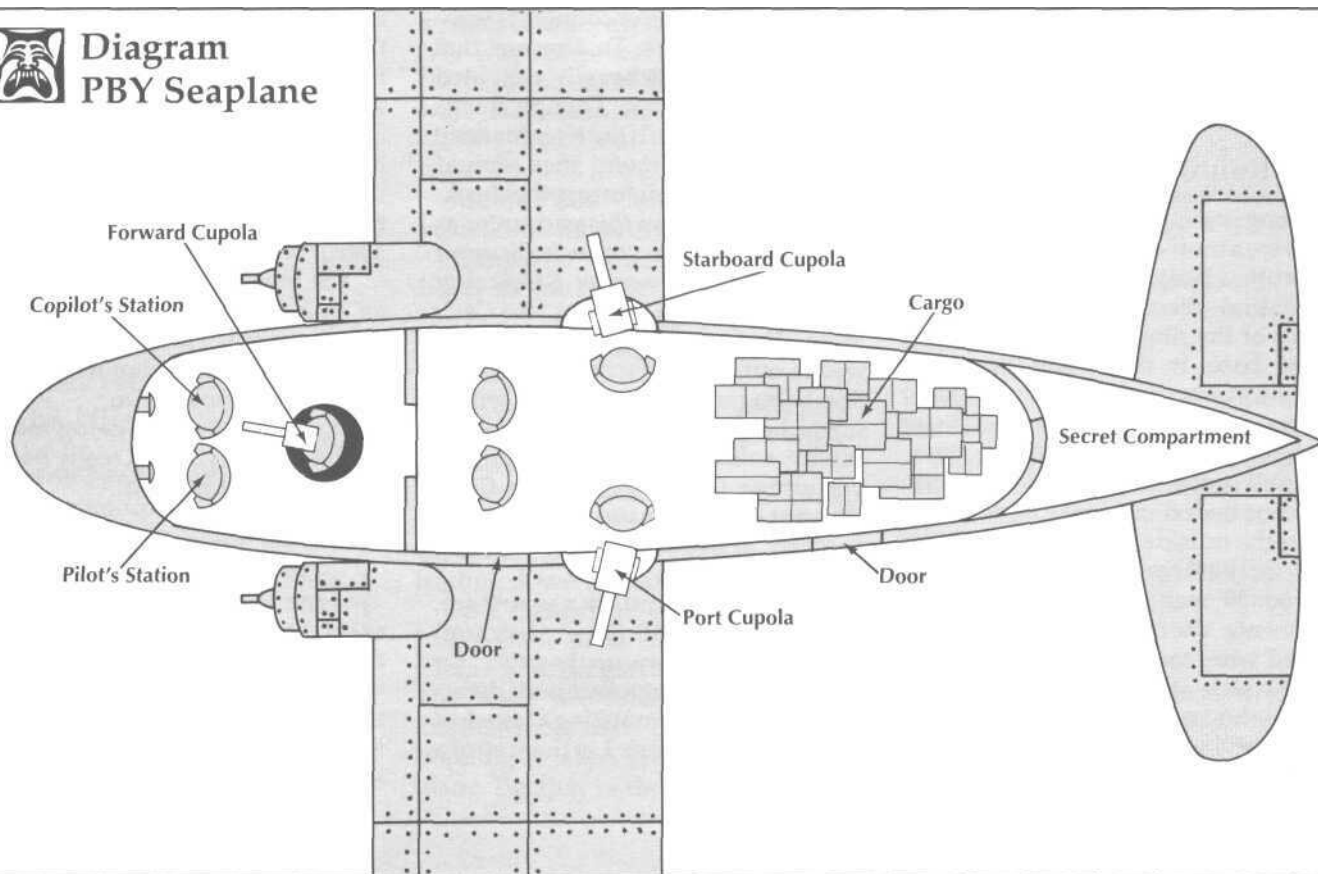
Conning the Pilots

The pilots' statistics are below. Both speak English (on Terra, as on Earth, all international pilots must speak English). They are aware that Dr. Mobius is supposed to take off in the PBY, though they were told that he would not be leaving for another few hours. If the Knight on the radio concocts a plausible story, let his player generate a *Persuade* total against the pilots' *Minds* of 11.

The pilots are currently *neutral* to the plane. On a *negotiated agreement,* the pilots will hold off attacking; however, they will not let the plane travel any further toward the Nile border until they receive confirmation from Ground Control (it will take Ground Control about 10 minutes to contact the base, which will probably blow the heroes' story sky-high).

Diagram
PBY Seaplane

Forward Cupola

Copilot's Station

Starboard Cupola

Cargo

Secret Compartment

Pilot's Station

Port Cupola

Door

Door

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On a *yes* result, the pilots will let the plane proceed. They will still radio in to Ground Control for confirmation, however; when the heroes' story is blown, they roar off after the plane, catching up to it about two minutes before the plane leaves Nile airspace.

The Dogfight

The air battle will resemble more a fighter attack against a WWII B17 Flying Fortress than it will a dogfight between fighters. The PBY is slow and clunky; there is no way it can outrun the Spitfires (see the chase rules in Chapter Seven of the Rule Book).

During the chase, if the Knight flying the PBY generates a higher *air vehicles* total than a pilot, he decides what his airplane's relationship to the Spitfires is — he can be in front, behind, to the left or right. The co-pilot can combine on this roll: coordination difficulty of 8. If the pilot's total is higher, you decide where the Spitfire is in relationship to the PBY.

This is important because the PBY's machineguns have limited fire arcs: one can fire only to the front, one to the left, and one to the right. Note that the Spitfires' machineguns are forward-firing only; however, because of their greater speed and maneuverability, the pilots can always manage to make their attack runs head-on — they fire each round, if they choose, no matter whose *air vehicle* totals were highest.

The pilots can use all of their combat skills, including *maneuver, trick, test* and so forth in this battle. They can spend Possibility points to reduce damage to their vehicles. Normally, all damage caused by machinegun fire is against the target vehicle; the gunners can attempt to shoot at Knights visible within the vehicle — the pilot, anyone in a cupola firing a weapon — this is a *vital blow* attack.

PBY Seaplane: Tech 21, Speed 200kph/120mph (value 14), Passengers 20, TOU 17.

Weapons: Three Vickers Machinegun Cupolas, 2 aft, 1 fore; damage 23, range 100/500/1K.

Spitfires: Tech 21, Speed 600kph/380mph (value 16), Passenger 1, TOU 17.

Weapons: One Spandau Machinegun on each; damage 24, range 100/500/1K.

Pilots: DEX 11, STR 9, TOU 10, PER 11, MIN 11, CHA 8, SPI 9.

Skills: air vehicles 14, air vehicle weapons 14, maneuver 14, reality 10, trick 12, test 12, taunt 10, intimidate 12.

Possibilities: 4.

A Small Complication

At about the time the air battle begins, a small complication arises. When the Knights entered the seaplane's hangar, Shul, a mechanic, was inside the airplane, supposedly making some last-minute repairs. However, he had decided to slip into the secret compartment of the plane to catch a quick nap. He slept through any unpleasantness at the base (the compartment is soundproofed), and only awoke once the plane was airborne. At first terrified that Dr. Mobius was on the plane and would punish him severely, he kept hidden. Once the air battle commenced, however, he emerged to offer his services.

Imagine his surprise when he discovers that the plane has been hijacked. Not the subtlest of individuals, Shul decides to do what comes naturally: he picks up heavy things and attempts to bounce them against the heroes' heads.

Shul: DEX 10, STR 14, TOU 12, PER 8, MIN 8, CHA 8, SPI 8.

Skills: reality 9, dodge 12, fire combat 12, unarmed combat 14, trick 10, test 10, taunt 14, intimidation 14, vehicle repair 14.

Possibilities: 4.

Weapons: Luger; damage 14, range 10/25/50. Knife; damage STR +3.

Running the Dogfight

Remember the fight between Indiana Jones and the big hulking bruiser outside of the airplane in *Raiders of the Lost Ark?* Well, the combat in the back of the plane should work like that — except with the added complication of a dogfight in progress.

The pilot of the PBY dives straight down, attempting to avoid the Spitfires, dumping everyone in back in a heap; Shul yanks someone away from his machinegun and tries to throw him out a door; the crates in the back of the plane come loose and slide alarmingly across the floor; a burst of gunfire rakes the PBY's wing, puncturing a gas tank and setting an engine on fire...

Cut back and forth between the action outside the plane and the action inside; keep things moving. Though there are a lot fewer opponents, this is probably a lot more dangerous than the previous encounter.

If the heroes' airplane is mortally wounded, it will stall and head toward the ground. The pilot must make a difficulty 12 *air vehicles* roll to land safely. The heroes must then either repair their vehicle or find other transport to Indonesia.

Searching the Plane

In the crates stored aboard the pontoon plane, the Knights find 10 full diving suits with air tanks, 10 spear guns, 10 octi-grenades, 10 Nile sun blades, and 10 torpedo pistols. See Act Four for their statistics.

Cut To...

As the characters fly off into the darkness, read:

It is dark and very, very cold - outside of the range of Dr. Mobius's artificial sun, it is about 15 degrees colder than it should be. Below you, you see the lights of a few cities and towns bravely attempting to carry on in the face of the unending night, but you know that, if the Earth does not soon begin moving, they will all die in the cold darkness.

Hours pass. You cross the Indian ocean, flying south to avoid Indian airspace — a good thing to do, flying a Nile airplane. Up ahead you see lightning and dark black clouds. It is the border to Orrorsh, the dark realm. Beyond, in what used to be the Indonesian Sea, is your destination. You tighten your seatbelts and prepare to brave the storm.

Act Awards

The heroes should receive three Possibilities for this act.

ACT THREE
It's Always Darkest
The Major Beat

The final act takes the Knights to the Indian Ocean, inside the Orrorsh realm, where they must destroy the machine that has stilled the Earth and return the energy needed to restart the world's spin. They must first get past the outer guardian, a demon named Gibberfat; once past him, they must hold off the machine's inner defenders, skeletal pirates, while one of the Knights reverses the machine.

SCENE ONE:
The Dead Sea

The Situation

Dramatic. The plane approaches the area marked on the flight plans, but you would recognize it anyway. A great vortex of energy spirals out of the sky and plunges into the sea, piercing the darkness with unearthly light. According to the charts, you are just north of Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean. The water around the vortex is surprisingly calm.

The Action

First, the Knights must get past Gibberfat, a demon placed here by the Gaunt Man to ward off intruders. Gibberfat has three different forms— that of a great white shark, a giant electric eel, and his true form, a deep red, horned, somewhat portly humanoid. All three must be defeated in turn.

Round One:
The Shark

When the Knights land their seaplane, they notice a giant white fin cut the water near their boat. After circling once, the fin disappears. Several seconds later, their plane is rocked as

the shark rams it from underneath. The shark continues to attack the plane from underneath, where the plane's machineguns cannot hit it, until the heroes come out to play.

Gibberfat's Great White Shark Form: DEX 12, STR 18, TOU 18, PER 8, MIN 12, CHA 12, SPI 12.

Skills: reality 14, dodge 14, maneuver 14, swimming 14, unarmed combat 14, trick 10, test 14, willpower 14, taunt 14, intimidation 14.

Possibilities: 10.

Natural Tools: hide armor +3, bite 21, ram 18.

Round Two:
The Electric Eel

When the shark is "killed," the body sinks out of sight, where it transforms into a giant electric eel. The eel will wait to attack the Knights when they are in the water. (See the sidebar for descriptions of the equipment and weaponry the Knights will most probably use in this battle.)

Gibberfat's Electric Eel Form: DEX 18, STR 12, TOU 12, PER 12, MIN 12, CHA 12, SPI 12.

Skills: reality 14, dodge 20, maneuver 20, shock 20, swimming 20, trick 14, test 14, willpower 14, taunt 14, intimidation 14.

Possibilities: 10 minus those used in round one.

Natural Tools: hide armor +2, electric shock 20.

Round Three:
Gibberfat's True Form

Once the eel is killed, its body too will sink into the ocean, where it will transform into Gibberfat's true form, that of a pudgy, bright red humanoid with gills and webbed feet and hands. The demon will swim up to the Knights and tell them in a sonorous voice: "Flee puny humans! Or I will send you to the coldest pit of hell, where you will writhe in agony for all eternity!" He will ruin the effect somewhat by sneezing violently at the end of his recital.

The heroes have two options: if they have brought the egg with them, they can offer it to Gibberfat in exchange for free passage; otherwise, they must fight him.

Bribing Gibberfat

If the heroes have got the egg, Gibberfat takes it eagerly. He thanks them profusely, telling them that he can use it to buy his way out of this unpleasant assignment, bribing the Gaunt Man's demon overseer, an Efreet with a real weakness for fine craftsmanship. He apologizes for his earlier attacks, explaining that "one has to keep up appearances — when the Gaunt Man gives you an assignment, you had better live up to it, you know?"

Beyond that, Gibberfat is an amiable, somewhat vainglorious sort. He's from another plane, doesn't know anything about conditions on this one, and couldn't care less. He can tell the heroes something about the Earth-stopping device (see sidebar), and that there are further guardians below, "some dead humans, I believe. Nasty, reclusive sorts; I'd be careful of them if I were you."

Then he takes his leave, disappearing into a vortex of black light, clutching his precious egg to him.

Fighting Gibberfat

Though he looks pudgy and somewhat ridiculous, Gibberfat is anything but a pushover. He is physically powerful and well-versed in the magic arts. He will use all methods at his disposal to defeat the heroes.

Gibberfat will continue to fight until he is mortally wounded, at which point he is banished back to his own plane of existence for 1,000 years and a day.

Gibberfat in True Form: DEX 14, STR 14, TOU 14, PER 14, MIN 12, CHA 12, SPI 12.

Skills: reality 14, dodge 16, maneuver 16, swimming 16, unarmed combat 16, alteration magic 16, divination magic 16, trick 16, apportation magic 16, conjuration magic 16, test 14, willpower 14, taunt 14, intimidation 14.

Possibilities: 10 minus those used in rounds one and two.

Natural Tools: magical toughness +2, rending claws 17.

Arcane Knowledge: death 3, life 3, inanimate forces 3, living forces 3, water 5, elemental 3, control 3.

Spells:

Charm Person: As spell in Rule Book.

Cold: This spell works exactly as the *Lightning* spell, except that the caster sends out waves of numbing cold for four rounds, effect value of 15. The skill is *alteration inanimate force 19*.

Ink: Similar to *Mage Dark,* but works underwater.

Strength: As spell in Rule Book.
Weakness: As spell in Rule Book.

SCENE TWO: The Final Battle

The Situation

Dramatic. The Knights follow the Vortex down to its source far below the waves. 100 meters down, they find that the vortex funnels into a thin beam and enters a 17th Century shipwreck resting atop an undersea mountain.

The vessel, an old pirate ship, contains the main controls to a gigantic machine that extends far below into the crust of the planet. Guarding the machine is the ship's undead crew of skeletal pirates. To succeed, some of the Knights must hold off the pirates while the others use dramatic skill resolution to deal with the machine.

Treat your descriptions as if they were part of a horror story, for even with their suit lamps, the shadows are thick and murky. Build suspense by telling the Knights they catch movement out the side of their helmets, but they see nothing when they turn. And sound is muffled and strange under the sea and inside a pressurized suit.

When the heroes touch the ship, the vortex begins spinning faster and faster. Several skeletal figures emerge from below decks, walking drunkenly, carrying cutlasses. The dramatic conflict begins.

See the map of the pirate vessel in the pullout.

The Pirates

There are 12 pirates aboard the vessel. They cannot be reasoned with; they cannot be tricked; they cannot be frightened off. They have only one responsibility: to hold off attackers until the Earth-stopping device has a chance to retreat deep into the center of the Earth. They fight until destroyed.

The Equipment

There are 10 of each of the following aboard the seaplane, packed in the crates in the back. When clad in a diving suit, a hero can carry up to three of the weapons strapped to his belt where he can get at them easily; any additional equipment must be awkwardly tied or strapped on, requiring two or more rounds to get at.

Diving Suits: These are bulky, cumbersome, 30's-style suits. They are composed of heavy rubber-coated cloth covering torso and limbs, with big steel helmets with little glass portals to the front and sides. They have big airtanks on back, connecting to the helmet, with enough air for two hours. When wearing a suit, a character suffers a penalty of -1 to all *Dexterity*, *Perception,* and *Strength*-related skills. The suits are equipped with head-mounted lamps and radio communicators.

The suits provide +3 protection. They are segmented & self-sealing; if a section is punctured (the character takes a wound or worse), several gallons of water pours in and then the hole or slash seals. The victim suffers an additional -1 to *Dexterity* and *Strength-based* skills.

If the attacker gets 12 result points or better in one attack, he has cracked the glass on the suit's helmet. The victim begins to drown in a number of rounds equal to his *Toughness* - 6; before that time passes he must activate the emergency escape rockets on the suit's boots; this will propell him immediately to the surface.

Spear Gun: damage 14, ammo 5, range 5/10/25.

Torpedo Pistol: damage 18, ammo 3, range 25/40/100.

Octi-Grenade: damage 20, ammo 1, range 3/5/7.

Nile Sun Blade: (Designed to provide light, and serve as a weapon against Orrorsh creatures) damage STR+5, max 19.

Skeletal Pirates (12): DEX 6, STR 8, TOU 9, PER 4, MIN 6, CHA 2, SPI 12.

Skills: melee weapons 9, swimming 10, unarmed combat 9, trick 8, test (12), taunt 10, intimidation 16.

Natural Tools: Bite 12. Do not take shock damage; cannot be KO'ed. Regeneration: Completely healed when *Villain Up* card is drawn. Can only be stopped permanently if dismembered once "killed" (takes three rounds of concerted breakage).

Equipment: Cutlass, damage STR +5.

The Infernal Machine

Below deck the Knights find an item that was definitely not aboard the vessel when it sunk. A large machine fills much of the forward hold. The machine is covered with dials, electric globes, switches, and other mecha-nisms out of a mad scientist's dreams — the vortex control center. Atop the machine is a rotating globe. This is where the tight beam of the vortex terminates.

Beneath the control center, through places where the deck has broken away, the Knights can see that the rest of the machine descends down into the ocean floor. The machine is huge, warm to the touch, and glitters with power. As the Knights study it, it grows appreciably hotter.

The Gaunt Man has somehow imbued the machine with Possibility energy. Any physical, mental or spiritual attacks against it are absorbed as though "bought off" with Possibility points. Short of effects not in any way available to the heroes, the machine cannot be destroyed. It might also be noted that it would do no good to destroy the machine; it would not

restore movement to the Earth. To do that, the machine has to be reversed.

There is a certain urgency to the task, as well. The machine continues to grow hotter from the moment the heroes touch the pirate ship, a security measure placed there by the Gaunt Man: if any Possibility-rated being touches the ship, the device releases some of its stored energy as heat, melting the ground around the machine, causing it to sink deep into the planet's core.

This of course makes it exceedingly difficult for the Gaunt Man to get at the machine to take its stored energy and become Torg, but he figures that he is more capable of doing so than almost anyone else. He's correct.

From the moment they set foot on the pirate ship, the Knights have 20 rounds to fight through the pirates and reverse the machine. Deactivating the machine must be done through dramatic skill resolution; if all steps are not completed by the 20th round, the heroes will have failed and the Earth will not regain its motion. It is also quite likely that they will be parboiled by the heat of the machine, but that's small potatoes when compared to the calamities the rest of humanity will suffer.

Dramatic Skill Resolution

While the pirates attack, some Knights must try to figure out and reverse the Gaunt Man's machine. This is simulated by dramatic skill resolution. Knights may coordinate their efforts on the machine (as long as they are not involved in combat). The coordination difficulty is 8. All coordinating characters must have at least one of the following skills to use: *science; weird science; air, land or water vehicle repair; scholar (engineering); alteration magic; etc.*

The steps involved in this skill test are as follows.

Step A allows the Knights to determine the machine's controls; difficulty 10. Step B allows them to turn off the vortex; difficulty 12. Step C lets them reset the controls to reverse; difficulty 10. Step D throws the proper switches to return the energy to Earth; difficulty 12.

If the Knights only get as far as step B or C by the 20th card flip, the ma-

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T he Infernal Machine and Other Loose Ends

As is described elsewhere in full detail, the Gaunt Man has intiated the attack against the Earth for one purpose: to gain the Possibility energy necessary to achieve immortality and become Torg. However, there is another, little-mentioned facet to the process of becoming Torg: the High Lord must, at the same time he infuses himself with Possibility energy, infuse himself with physical energy as well — otherwise, he would literally burst from the power of the Possibility energy he consumed.

The physical energy required is enormous. The Gaunt Man has stolen this energy from the Earth. Basically, the infernal machine has taken the Earth's kinetic energy — that which caused it to spin — and stored it in a huge, otherworldly battery, deep below the planet's surface. The vortex is merely a side-effect of the energy drain.

The Gaunt Man had planned to tap into the device as soon as it had fully drained the Earth of motion, but he was prevented from doing so by the timely intervention of several Storm Knights (see *The Possibility Wars* novel trilogy).

Figuring out the Gaunt Man's intentions, Professor Mobius decided to take advantage of his absence to steal the energy from the device. Mobius sent a party to scout the device; they did so, reporting the existence of the guardian Gibberfat who, after killing several, let the others escape, telling them that he would let anyone pass who carried "a gold and silver egg of unsurpassed craftsmanship and beauty."

Mobius correctly interpreted that to refer to a Faberge Egg, several of which were on exhibit in New York City when the invasion began. Mobius made a deal with his ally Baruk Kaah to trade the egg for weapons — though, of course, without telling Kaah what he wanted it for. The heroes arrived when Mobius sent Shariff to pick up the egg.

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chine collapses through the now magma-hot ocean floor. The Knights cannot return the stolen energy back to the planet, but neither can Mobius use it to become Torg. It is sealed within the machine until the Gaunt Man claims it. You must set your campaign within the Still World (see the World Book).

If the Knights return the energy to the planet, then the machine destroys itself in spectacular fashion (another failsafe so that it cannot be used again). You are ready to begin a *Torg* "Infiniverse" campaign.

The Epic Conclusion

Assuming the Knights use the machine to restore the stolen energy to Earth, once they reach the surface they see a most heartening sight.

As they take off in the pontoon plane to head back home, the sky slowly brightens as the sun rises over the horizon. The Earth has resumed its spin and, although the Raiders are still here, there is hope for the future.

Awards

If the Knights stop Mobius from becoming the Torg but don't restart the Earth, give each character six Possibilities.

If the Knights reverse the machine and restart the planet, give each character 12 Possibilities.

In addition, see Chapter Two of this book for other award guidelines.

Chapter Six

Adventure Ideas

H ere are a series of adventure ideas that you can expand into full adventures like "Before the Dawn." You will need to break the acts into scenes, determine where to use standard and dramatic encounters, and design statistics for the characters, creatures, and equipment described.

IDEA ONE:
Terror Island

Setting: Orrorsh.
Theme: Horror.
Goal: To survive and escape.

A thick, lush jungle sprawls in all directions, covering the island. But for all the flourishing life, the island is silent, still. On closer inspection, the plants appear as nightmarish parodies of themselves — sharp thorns drip from tangled vines. Foul fungi hang from bent, twisted trees, which seem to rustle though there is no wind.

And then, breaking the unnatural silence, a terrible sound echoes out of the jungle. And the sound is coming closer ...

Background

In this adventure, a group of Storm Knights is marooned on a small island in Indonesia. The island, in good horror-story fashion, is alive. It is the monster of the story. It hopes to lure the Knights to its lair somewhere in the center of the jungle. The Knights must survive the obstacles that the island throws at them and defeat the monster, or find a way to escape before they are destroyed.

Unknown to the Knights, the island is being explored by Orrorsh Victorians at present, and they have set up a command post on the far side of the island. The Victorians do not know

what is going on here either; depending upon the heroes' actions, they may be additional foes or possible allies for the Knights.

ACT ONE:
The Crash

The Storm Knights, on their way through the Orrorsh realm, encounter a terrible storm. The storm disables their vehicle (be it plane or ship) and washes them ashore one of the small islands that dot the seas around Indonesia. You can make the opening more exciting by calling for *survival* checks as they battle the elements to survive the crash. Or, if you really want a dramatic opening, they can be stranded some distance from the shore when a huge sea monster attacks. They must then fend off the creature as they rig paddles to get them to shore.

The Knights eventually find themselves on a deserted beach. The beach is surrounded on three sides by the dark jungle, on one side by the ocean. The beach is eerily quiet. No sounds can be heard anywhere, except the constant lapping of the waves.

Decide up front whether or not you want this to be a true test of survival. If so, you can have most of the Knights' equipment lost in the crash. Then they will have to build weapons and other gear from whatever they find in the jungle.

ACT TWO:
The Labyrinth

The island is a living, semi-intelligent entity with animal-level cunning. It provides the Knights with a clear path into the jungle, but if they try to go back the way they came they find the path overgrown and blocked off. The island forms a labyrinth of plant

Rick Harris

growth that leads the Knights toward the island's center; the path is filled with minor hazards to weaken the island's prey. As they trek deeper into the jungle, the Knights can encounter any of the following hazards:

Vine covered pits; tangling, thorny, self-propelled plants; man-eating plants; walking trees; human-shaped extensions of the island made from rock, mud, or plants; quicksand; earthquakes; and frightened Victorians (who are also being pursued by the island).

While the Victorians and Knights will probably initially distrust each other; they may eventually agree to ally against the common foe. (In addition, the Victorians make useful mood-setters: whenever the tone gets too light, you can have the heroes stumble across the remains of a soldier, killed in some gruesomely spectacular fashion.)

If the Knights decide to fight their way along the coast (and make some heroic die rolls), they discover the remains of a cargo ship. No sign of the crew remains. But the Knights do find material to make passable firebombs (styrofoam pellets, gasoline, and long-necked soda bottles).

Eventually, the path leads them to the very heart of the island.

ACT THREE: Heart of Darkness

At the center of the island the Knights find an ancient statue. Framed by a living canopy of leaves and brush, the statue resembles a demonic gargoyle. Its stone lips are locked in a permanent grin; its jewelled eyes glow with evil intelligence.

The statue is host to a foul entity that has extended its control to the

island itself, and now the island serves as one of Orrorsh's outer defenses. Craving warm flesh and hot blood, the entity has led the Knights to its center of power in order to consume them.

As the heroes approach the statue, the very ground they walk on begins to form itself into huge stone and dirt hands, which attempt to grab and crush them. The statue comes to life and strides toward them as well. The statue is impervious to *all* damage, unless the attack is specifically targetted toward its jewelled eyes. These too are remarkably resistant; however, if destroyed, the whole statue shatters into a million pieces and the stone hands subside. Several minutes later, the island itself begins to break up.

The heroes have only a short time to reach the Victorian camp and the boat that is moored there before the island disintegrates.

IDEA TWO:
The Cruise

Setting: Core Earth.
Theme: Mystery.
Goal: Protect Core Earth scientists.

The passengers are enjoying themselves this night, putting the problems of the reality-torn world behind them until the start of the conference in the morning. They talk and joke, but none speak of the invaders. That is for tomorrow, to be discussed in the light.

Then a scream comes from the Lido pool. A figures lies face-down within, framed by a slowly growing red stain. The problems of the world have found even this tiny vessel floating in the Caribbean Sea.

Background

In this adventure, a group of Storm Knights joins the passengers aboard *The Caribbean Lady,* a luxury cruise ship bound for the Caribbean Sea. The Knights have been hired to provide protection for the passengers — scientists from the nations of Core Earth attempting to come up with a defense against the Possibility Raiders.

The United States is host to this gathering, and attending scientists come from the Soviet Union, Australia, West Germany, China, and other nations. But some uninvited guests have stowed away on the ship also — agents from the invading realms.

Each of these agents has his own reason for coming aboard. The Dark Shadow, a pulp villain from the Nile, has been sent by Mobius to disrupt the meetings through sabotage. Brother Pierre, a cyberpriest, is aboard to gather information on the scientific capabilities of the heathen nations that must be purified by the fires of the Cyberpapacy. Lady Yuka is an assassin sent to foster animosity among the Core Earth nations by murdering selected scientists and leaving evidence that blames delegates from another nations. Finally, Lord Bonterre, a vampire from Orrorsh, has been sent by Thratchen to observe the other High Lord's agents, and perhaps assist the Core Earthers if the opportunity to discredit the other Raiders presents itself.

ACT ONE:
Who Done It?

The Knights are hired as guards for the First Conference of World Scientists They spend some time mingling with the various passengers aboard *The Caribbean Lady* when the first murder is discovered. The victim is a phycisist from Italy, and evidence at the scene points to a German biologist as the likely suspect. Additional murders occur, and the Knights encounter loads of possible suspects, including Brother Pierre. To complicate matters, Lady Yuka decides to play up to one of the Knights in a romantic fashion in order to stay near them in case they get too close to discovering her role in the murders.

ACT TWO:
A Dagger in the Dark

The Knights interrupt the Dark Shadow as the villain goes about an act of sabotage. After that battle, they find themselves too late to save the Soviet delegate — an assassin's dagger is buried in her back. Finally, the bloodless body of the Brazilian diplomat leads the Knights to Lord Bonterre. The vampire is powerful and a shape-changer, and unless the Knights can dispatch him quickly, he will escape into the night.

ACT THREE:
Assassin Foiled

Deciding that the conference must go on, the remaining scientists meet in the morning. But by being all in one place, they play into the assassin's hands. Lady Yuka and her team of Ninjas cut the lights and begin to stalk the scientists. Now the Knights must defeat the high-tech killers before all of Earth's top scientific minds are murdered. If they succeed, the conference can go on to develop some important theories which may in a year's time yield a defense against the invading realms.

IDEA THREE:
Wizard's Shame

Setting: Aysle, Cyber France.
Theme: Fantasy, Cyberpapacy.
Goal: To stop a war.

The wizard stepped away from his work table, removed his glasses, and wiped them with a dirty cloth, smearing the grease more than removing it. Replacing the glasses onto his long nose, he once again bent to examine the item on the table.

"I have no choice, Quebert," the wizard said to the cat-sized dragon that sat on his shoulder, holding the note up for the dragon to read. "I must kill Bishop Bernard ..."

Background

The wizard Duncan's name comes to the Storm Knights via a dead cyberpriest. The cyberpriest was on his way to exterminate the wizard when the Knights dispatched him. Now all they have is a data readout with Duncan's name, Nottingham address, and extermination order on it.

Though the heroes don't know it, agents from Orrorsh have kidnapped the wizard's daughter. If he does not do what they want, they will kill the young woman. To secure her freedom, the wizard must go to Cyberpapist France and destroy Bishop Bernard, a high-ranking church official, using the most potent spell he can cast in the Avignon reality. This will set in motion a war between the Cyberpope and Aysle, which will keep Lady Ardinay too busy to provide adequate help to the nations of Core Earth — or to bother Thratchen as he fights to secure his own station in Orrorsh.

Since Lady Ardinay is not yet in full command in Aysle, there is no reason to believe that she would emerge victorious from the battle — her defeat at this time would be disastrous to Europe and to the entire Earth.

ACT ONE:
Presto Chango!

The Knights arrive in Nottingham, England, at the address of Wizard Duncan. The wizard, who has divined that the Knights would come to stop him, has set a trap for the heroes. Being a good man, he does not want to hurt the Knights, but he does want to detain them so they cannot interrupt his mission. He will not risk his daughter's life by failing the task set before him.

So he prepares a massive spell to change the Knights into something harmless — frogs! After the spell goes off, the wizard apologizes and takes his leave, shutting the Frog Knights up in his English flat. But the Knights are still Possibility-rated heroes, no matter what their form, and they figure that one of the potions on the far table will change them back. All they have to do is survive such hazards as the now giant-sized apartment and the wizard's pets — a snake, three white rats, and a tiny dragon.

ACT TWO:
Cyber France

Once the Knights reach the potions and turn themselves back into their original forms, they find the note from Dr. Randall of the Victorian Institute of Science, which tells the wizard that they are holding her daughter and tells him what he must do to get her back. This leads the heroes to France,

which is now operating under the axioms of the Cyberpapacy. As Storm Knights, they are marked by the Inquisitor and must deal with his agents and the church police. Then they again pick up the wizard's trail. But he evades them using more spells.

The heroes also discover that the wizard plans to kill the bishop at this evening's midnight mass. That gives them a few hours to find the wizard's daughter before they return to the church to stop Duncan from starting a war between the realms.

Orrorsh has an embassy in Cyber France, and this is where Dr. Randall holds Duncan's daughter. The embassy is guarded by gospog, a ravagon, and the doctor himself, who changes into a berserk monster by downing a vile potion of his own design. The Knights must defeat him to rescue the young woman.

ACT THREE:
Burn the Wizard!

With the rescued daughter in tow, the Knights return to the church where Bishop Bernard is holding mass. They arrive just prior to midnight and find that things aren't the way they thought they would be. Duncan has been captured and is tied to a stake set in the church's courtyard. The bishop himself is about to begin a mass which will conclude with the burning of a heathen practicioner of the foul arts.

Of course, Duncan's daughter now pleads with the Knights to save her

father. After all, Duncan is a favored advisor of Lady Ardinay, and burning him at the stake will just as effectively begin the war that Orrorsh wants.

To save the wizard, the Knights must defeat the church guards and the attending cygoyles. Bishop Bernard, in typical villain fashion, escapes by inciting the crowd of believers to suicidal action.

OTHER IDEAS

Torg provides many unique opportunities for interesting play. And, because of its very nature, you can play *Torg* without giving up the campaign that you have been playing in for years.

For example, if you have been part of a long-running fantasy campaign and have grown very attached to your characters, you can bring them over into the *Torg* world. On one hand, your fantasy world can be part of Aysle, which has attached itself to Earth. Or, if you want to go back in history, Uthorion could invade your fantasy world for its possibility energy. Even better, instead of Earth being the focus of the Gaunt Man's invasion, your fantasy world can be the cosm he and the other High Lords choose to invade. You could even make your particular roleplaying campaign world a good cosm which decides to attach to Earth in order to help stop the Possibility Raiders. The story is the thing in *Torg,* and there are so many ways to hook into it. The possibilities are literally endless.

"There are always possibilities, my sergeant told me.
But he never had his possibilities torn away
like wings from a fly."