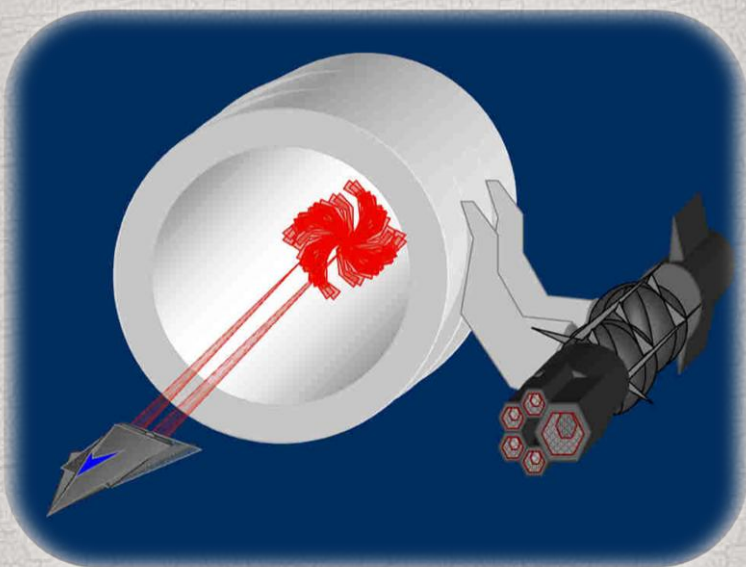


Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES



Dark

Spirit

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Copyright Information	3
Giant Carnivorous Slug Correspondence	4
Oops We Messed Up!	6
A Yellow Dingo Ate My Baby	8
The Real World.....	11
The Brynryfe Campaign.....	17
Goblin Poetry Invitational.....	27
Uberspace.....	29
Twenty Adventure Ideas	32
Event of a Moon.....	46
Agricultural Economics	49
Intriguing Mechanism	51
The Path Less Travelled.....	57
New Homeworld	65
Fascinating Locality	69
Space Odyssey	72
Quest for Inspiration	76
Adventure Review Board.....	78
Electronic D&D	81
Character Development.....	85
Curious Expedition	89
Rowan's Weekend.....	91
Skill Conduit Contest.....	101
Other Worlds than These	104

Copyright Information

Cover: 'Stargate Traveller' By Sean .R. Meaney

Contributing Writers & Artists This Issue

Editor in Chief: James Holloway E-Mail: Lokiare1@hotmail.com

Editor and Artist: Sean R. Meaney E-Mail: Reddeerrun@Hotmail.Com

Writer: Chris Holloway

Writer: Philipp Kampmann

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Compatibility Logo, D&D, PLAYER'S HANDBOOK, PLAYER'S HANDBOOK 2, DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE, MONSTER MANUAL, MONSTER MANUAL 2, and ADVENTURER'S VAULT are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries and are used with permission. Certain materials, including 4E References in this publication, D&D core rules mechanics, and all D&D characters and their distinctive likenesses, are property of Wizards of the Coast, and are used with permission under the Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition Game System License. All 4E References are listed in the 4E System Reference Document, available at www.wizards.com/d20.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 4th Edition PLAYER'S HANDBOOK, written by Rob Heinsoo, Andy Collins, and James Wyatt; DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE, written by James Wyatt; and MONSTER MANUAL, written by Mike Mearls, Stephen Schubert and James Wyatt; PLAYER'S HANDBOOK 2, written by Jeremy Crawford, Mike Mearls, and James Wyatt; MONSTER MANUAL 2, written by Rob Heinsoo, and Chris Sims; Adventurer's Vault, D&D 4E Game System License ©2008, 2009 Wizards of the Coast page 3 of 7 written by Logan Bonner, Eytan Bernstein, and Chris Sims. © 2008, 2009 Wizards of the Coast. All rights reserved.

Anything not covered by above is either copyright © 2009 James Holloway doing business as Dark Spire or their respective owners.

Giant Carnivorous Slug Correspondence

Our first round of letters
(Letters) article by James Holloway

Sparkchaser Says:

Loved the issue. I'm glad to see new, non-WotC material out there.

Thank you; we enjoy the fact that you like it!



НАНД ПАНА
DEAD OF WINTER
AT DEARKHAMMER HALL

with Wokrah's Dungeon

A winter wonderland
awaits those who enjoy
pleasant vacations.
Special rates for those
who are early and beat
the rush!

REX BAKER JOE TALKINS

BLACK DEATH

Oops We Messed Up!

This month's errata
(Fixes) article by James Holloway

There were a few mistakes in our last issue. Here we correct them and give credit to the people that pointed them out.

Fascinating Talent - The range of the Flare power should be "Close blast 1"
DeanW on the WotC Chat

About a Dungeon (page 13) - for clarity the math should be "Cave-edge
collapse radius = $\sin(35 \text{ degrees}) * \text{depth of cave bottom}$ "
DeanW on the WotC Chat

BLACK DEATH PUBLISHING

Hanan Pacha: A dangerous realm where heroes become famous and wealthy, if they live!

25 NPCs & Monsters

A Yellow Dingo Ate My Baby

The Space Goblins Threaten to Flush James M. Ward Out an Airlock

(Interview) Article by Sean R. Meaney

Metamorphosis Alpha: What inspired you to create a Sci-Fi Set on a Colossal Spaceship in desperate need of a Space dock and competent technical crew?

I've been a science fiction reader for many years. I learned to play D&D with Gary Gygax and Brian Blume in 1974 and while I was playing I suggested to Gary that he do a science fiction version of the game. He was kind enough to see some talent in me and he suggested I try to write it myself. I was reading Brian Aldiss STARSHIP at the time and the ship evolved out of my readings and Gary's good advice. -JAMES M. WARD

Why Mutants? Why not Space Elves?

There is actually one elf on the Starship Warden. Gary one night in a moment of teasing fun placed an entire D&D group on the Starship, much to my horror as I really liked my elf character. I was then put in the GMs chair and I had to run my character and other poor D&Ders through life on the starship. I was also a huge comic reader and the concept of red kryptonite and what it did to poor superman was the germ of the idea that helped me create mutants. -JAMES M. WARD

Any chance of a Movie, Comic, or Anime?

Wouldn't that be fun. I started a script for a movie but the group I was talking to let me down. I'm wide open to such a thing, but haven't been asked. -JAMES M. WARD

Where next for the Metamorphosis Alpha Game?

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

There is a group working on a version that will be compatible for D&D 4e. They tell me it's coming out in January of 2010. I would seriously like to do a short story anthology and a set of novels on the ship. Only time will tell. - JAMES M. WARD

**Welcome to Hanan
Pacha!**

**The land where orcs are
deadly, in the tradition of J.
R. R. Tolkien**



The Real World

Moral Conundrum...

(Real World, Psychology, D&D) Article by Chris Holloway

D&D has always enjoyed a place in the public spot light as a controversial icon of pop culture. A quick search of Wikipedia will reveal a host of references to articles concerning anti-moral depictions of D&D, and religious viewpoints from the 1980's on. These references range from Christian tracts depicting Satan worship, to organizations created for the sole purpose of having role playing games removed from the market. Notably, one such organization was founded by a mother who claimed her son committed suicide because of D&D. In the mid 90's I remember watching a program on a Christian TV network that showed a group of teens playing an RPG strongly alluded to be D&D. All the teens were required to wear black robes, and each had a candle burning in front of them. In front of the "game master" there was a rule book in the form of a large black tomb. As the reenactment progressed, one of the female players failed a role of the dice, and was dragged away from the table crying. You got the impression that something unimaginably horrible was about to happen to her.

The laundry list of bad press the game received doesn't end with the misinformed Christian viewpoint of role-playing. Writers and film makers cashed in on the growing fear surrounding the game in the eighties. Several real life cases of murder and suicide with shallow links to D&D have fueled the imaginations of many novelist and screen writers. In fact, the ability of these writers to create such outlandish fantasies would have made them great players! Again, I suggest a search on Wikipedia for a list of these movies and books. However, beyond the entertainment industry, researchers have done studies on the psychological effects of RPG's, finding no links to suicide or depression. It would be interesting to note that some forms of treatment for depression or other psychological ailments involve a clinical form of role playing, though this type of role playing bears little resemblance to Table top gaming.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Still, there remains a question about the effects of table top RPGs on ones sense of right and wrong. According to a news story by ynetnews.com the Israeli army gives lower security clearances to soldiers who play D&D.

"A security official tells Ynet there are specific criteria for deciding the level of a soldier's security clearance. 'One of the tests we do, either by asking soldiers directly or through information provided us, is to ask whether they take part in the game,' he says. 'If a soldier answers in the affirmative, he is sent to a professional for an evaluation, usually a psychologist.'

More than half of the soldiers sent for evaluation receive low security clearances, thus preventing them from serving in sensitive IDF positions, he says."

This raises the question, does the game cause players to be less trust worthy, or does the game just attract people of that moral caliber? I am not sure that there is a definitive answer to this question. According to newadvent.org on the matter of morals, "Morality... may be defined as human conduct in so far as it is freely subordinated to the ideal of what is right and fitting." from dictionary.com, morals are defined as "of, pertaining to, or concerned with the principles or rules of right conduct or the distinction between right and wrong; ethical: moral attitudes." so, we can see that morals deal with right and wrong. But what I would like to focus on is the word in both definitions, conduct. Does dungeons and dragons change the way we conduct ourselves in regard to what is right and wrong? Put another way, can a game that is played in the imaginations of its players effect the actions of those players out side of the game?

To role-play well, you must put yourself into the shoes of your character. You have to imagine what he or she would do in the situations presented to you by the DM, and how to react to the actions of other players. If you are playing an evil character, you have an environment to "act out" anti moral conduct without the negative consequences that are the natural result of that conduct in the real world. In other words, you are safe from any real repercussions from the actions you make your character take in the game. Now, granted, the DM can and should cause your character to suffer the appropriate ramifications for your moral decisions. However, in your imagination, you will not feel the full weight of the "reward" for your actions. In fact, it would be impossible to imagine the emotional and psychological impact of say, killing another person in real life, unless you

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

have actually done it. You might be able to conjure up some feelings from your childhood of when you purposefully dropped your gold fish on the floor out of the water to see what would happen, but even this would pale in comparison to taking a human life. Also, there are consequences to actions that are far reaching and subtle, that may not surface for many years after a choice you have made. Many of these consequences cannot fit into the span of a normal D&D session, or even a long drawn out campaign. So how might taking imaginary negative moral actions during game play effect your real life?

Without going into detail about right and wrong, I will give you an example of how a person can go from doing right to doing wrong. Think back again to your childhood. Your mom has told you not to get into the cookies. You being a good boy or girl cannot imagine disobeying your mom. So, in your mind you have a brick wall set up between you and disobedience, a wall not easily taken down. Now, that first time that you decide that the cookies are too tempting, and you just got to have one. You eat one and this begins to dismantle the wall in your mind that previously stopped you from disobeying your mother. It becomes a little easier the next time you are told not to do something you want to do. The more you disobey, the more you tear down the wall in your mind. When the wall is gone, you have no moral compulsion to refrain from eating the forbidden cookies. Now, if you decide you no longer want to obey your mother when she tells you not to eat the cookies, you no longer have a wall to stop you. There is only a line that you have decided to draw in your mind, and this line is easy to cross. The wall can be rebuilt, but it will take a whole lot of time, and it will never be as strong as the original wall was.

In order for you to do something against your conscience you tear down a part of a wall in your mind. The end result is that you no longer have a problem doing the things you once thought as wrong. However, it never starts with the actual action; it always starts in the mind. Your thoughts become your words, your words become you actions, your actions become your habits, and your habits define who you really are. No matter what your intentions are, other people only see your actions, and if you consistently do things that are wrong, then you are known as someone who does wrong things. How does this relate to D&D? Role playing takes place primarily in the mind. When you open your mind to doing things that you normally

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

wouldn't do in real life, you weaken the walls that stop you from doing those things. In the case of therapy, this is a good thing. Some mental barriers stop you from doing beneficial actions. When it comes to doing things that are harmful or unscrupulous, you don't want to have weak walls.

Having said all this much, much more could be said on the subject, (we haven't even begun to talk about subjective truth), let us take a look at some of the things that gamers have done in the real world. We have already explored some of the negative situations gamers have been in, such as being of weak character, murder, and suicide. All of which have very weak links to the actual game. As Mark Antony said "the evil that men do lives after them, but the good is off' interred with their bones." the same can be said of the living, or in this case the inanimate, when they have been defamed to the extent D&D has. All the negative press the game has received has overshadowed the good that some of the gamers have done, or tried to do. First and foremost we should acknowledge the countless individuals who play the game, and also live upright and moral lives. Many men and women of the armed forces play for leisure and fight to protect our freedoms. Also one of the creators of the game himself donated to charities on a regular basis, including Christian charities. And as a way of honoring Gary Gygax's memory, Gencon collected donations in the amount of \$17,000 to give to one of his favorite charities. Now, the controversy surrounding that event and the charity that supposedly turned down the donation is infamous, and does more to show the tensions between the religious community and the gaming community than it does to show any moral fiber on the part of the average gamer. To read more on that subject, just do a Google search on Gencon 08' and donations, or CCF and Dungeons and Dragons. Also here is a link to clear up the misunderstanding that arose from the situation

<http://community.gencon.com/forums/t/18786.aspx>.

Despite the history of D&D, with all its misguided and misinformed negative press, we should remember that it is just a game. We should also remember that this game caters to a very large and diverse group of people from different backgrounds and experiences. If a larger number of people with lower standards of what is morally correct are attracted to the game, this doesn't mean the game itself has made these people who they are. Certainly RPGs influence a person's attitude toward right and wrong (mostly

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

because of the time invested in playing the game). We are left with the conclusion that we are ultimately responsible for our actions outside the game. So, play with the knowledge that what you think about ultimately becomes who you are, and that your actions in the real world carry the heavy weight of consequences that you never fully experience through your character in the game.

BLACK DEATH PUBLISHING PRESENTS

REX BAKER'S

INTO THE GATES OF HELL

And The Ghost of the Crypt

ONE HELL
OF A DEVILISH
ADVENTURE.

BRING
FRIENDS.

Visit the gates to the Nine Hells and
meet the unique inhabitants. They
would like to have you for dinner!



The Brynryfe Campaign

Part 2: Secrets of the Heavens

(All systems, how-to, adventure) Article by Sean R. Meaney

It is at this point that we begin stripping ideas from our hundred and putting them down on a framework through which we will describe our Campaign setting.

We will now begin to contemplate the heavens: The Sun and Stars, the worlds and Moons of our Solar System, our Pantheon of Gods. Firstly let's get down our Pantheon. We have a large number of Gods in the list of 100 ideas and some thought as to what they are up to:

THE OLD GOD

AVESTAN: once a Patriarchal god of the old monotheistic empire. Avestan has become forgotten god; Avestan has become the markings on a stone in the threshold of the door. At the current time Avestan is little more than a holy symbol warding off evil. This really combines with the idea that all buildings have a Kel aspect. These Threshold Stones are found associated with pretty much every residential building. They prevent the Kel aspect from occurring in Private residential buildings (at least most of them). A mistreated Avestan might mean all manor of Kel (other worldly presence). Although Threshold stones are weakening - this is Due to Dwerf Worship of Avestan. In a way, Avestan is becoming the world on which our Campaign setting is to be based - progressively blurred with the Idea that Avestan is the World beneath our feet. Avestan took a hit when the empire fell apart. While Os was destabilizing the cosmos the repelled and ignored Lawful Dwerf discovered the old Human God Avestan, By worshipping the Stone they (as philosophically Lawful Crusaders) began drawing on the Lawful and leaving chaos in increased concentrations. Chaos, strengthened by it found refuge in the very heart of the world (further down than the Underworld). Stone failed and life - chaotic life flourished there.

Name: 'Avestan'

Rank: Greater God

Divine Abilities: Immortality [nigh indestructible though disembodied super sentient], Multi Tasking [Imparts Protection from Kel to Dwellings through their Threshold Stones], Sensing [Omniscient to any distance].

Worshippers Alignment: Any

Clerics: Any Alignment, Rare [currently Lawful Dwerg

Crusaders (Cleric-Fighters)]

THE KIRYA – They who choose

Most of our Gods from the list of 100 ideas, These Barbaric Gods represent a new era: a post-AVESTAN era.

1. WAT – Here is our Mad God. WAT represents the centre of our 'barbaric' Pantheon.

Name: Wat the Mad God

Rank: Intermediate God

Divine Abilities: Immortality [likely indestructible]; Sensing [Omniscient to any distance].

Worshippers Alignment: Chaotic

Clerics: Chaotic Human Clerics only.

2. OS – Considered more of a Spirit entity, Os is the God of Men and Demons. When the Empire fell and Avestan was forgotten, Os escaped the Underworld and slew the Lawful fate of the Dwerg. A Lawful being, Os failed to take over the role of Law for the Lawful Dwerg instead compelling men to hunt down the Dwerg and destroy them.

Name: Os, God of Men and Demons

Rank: Intermediate God

Divine Abilities: Immortality [likely indestructible and Spirit-like], Shape shifting [Often assumes the form of some Demon to torment one of his wayward and failing Clerics — being a failed Puritan of Os carries a high price].

Worshippers Alignment: Lawful

Clerics: Lawful Human Clerics only

THE FATE PANTHEON

3. **THE NORN** – The three Fates of the Dwerf. Mortal thought on Norn is disjointed. They think of Norn as a single goddess of Fate yet there were three Fates and each represented an alignment: Lawful, Neutral, and Chaotic. The Lawful aspect has been slain by another God (Os) thus leaving an imbalance. Norn now has two aspects: the 'Goddess of the Underworld', and 'the Whisperer'. The Underworld – This is a place of Ghosts and darkness. Giant mithril spheres functioning as columns/bearings separate the upper surface world from the lower. As the Lower stone fails due to rising Chaos, so will this bearing layer. The Goddess Kel is guardian of this realm.

Name: The Norn, the Fate of the Dweg

- Kel - Goddess of the Underworld (Neutral)
- Norn – 'The Whisperer' (Chaotic)

Rank: Intermediate

Divine Abilities: Immortality [although this is disputed by the destruction of the Lawful Fate at the hands of Os],

Communication [Norn is not known as the whisperer for nothing, she may communicate with any being over any distance], Sensing [Kel is pretty much omniscient and can sense what is happening within 100 miles of themselves, the worshiper of any god, or an artefact of any god].

Worshippers Alignment: Neutral or Chaotic [Depends on which one they follow]

Clerics: Norn 'the Whisperer' only [Norn has found clerics amongst the Mael and some of the darker Dweg]

THE FERTILITY PANTHEON

4. KER – Goddess of Agriculture and Fertility; KER is one of the three 'lords of fertility'.

Name: Ker, Goddess of Agriculture (Fertility)

Rank: Demigod God

Divine Abilities: Immortality [likely indestructible].

Worshippers Alignment: Any

Clerics: Human Clerics only.

5. NER – Goddess of Water; NER is an unusual entity. NER is bi-sex as the God of Water.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Name: Ner, Goddess (and God) of Water (fertility)

Rank: Demi God

Divine Abilities: Immortality [likely indestructible]

Worshippers Alignment: Any

Clerics: Human Clerics only.

6. VANR – God of Fertility. VANR is your god of Sex for reproduction.

Name: Vanr, God of Fertility

Rank: Lesser God

Divine Abilities: Immortality [likely indestructible].

Worshippers Alignment: Any

Clerics: Human Clerics only.

7. ASTU – Goddess of Crafts, Guilds, Towns, and Civilization in general. ASTU is the end of Barbarianism.

Name: Astu, Goddess of Towns, Guilds, and Crafts

Rank: Lesser God

Divine Abilities: Immortality [likely indestructible].

Worshippers Alignment: Any

Clerics: Human Clerics only.

THE STORM PANTHEON

8. TIG – As God of Sky, and to a lesser extent, War.

Name: Tig, God of Sky and War

Rank: Lesser God

Divine Abilities: Immortality [likely indestructible].

Worshippers Alignment: Any

Clerics: Human Clerics only.

9. STENE – God of Thunder. This Demigod is new to the Pantheon. He might be encountered in any NPC Form.

Name: Stene, God of Thunder
Rank: Demi God
Divine Abilities: Avatar [Stene loiters in the world].
Worshippers Alignment: Any
Clerics: Human Clerics only.

THE ANCIENT EVIL

10. THE LEVIATHAN (Dagon, Tiamat). An ancient evil trapped and confined for all eternity.

Name: The Leviathan (Dagon, Tiamat)
Rank: Ultimate God
Divine Abilities: Immortality [disembodied super sentient],
Planar Travel [Can cross the deep dimensions of the Khaos Sea],
Creation [Can create a focus for planar travel for Demons],
Sensing—incapacitated as long as eye of the Dragon is closed.
Worshippers Alignment: Evil only
Clerics: Evil Mael and Human Clerics only.

Frankly these gods are worshiped with little return. Clerics who worship them receive a measure of clerical power based purely on belief in their gods, and the number who worship them. Clerics could just as well worship a rock (and some do).

Now we have more of an idea of our Pantheon we can look at the motion of our worlds in the Sphere and our constellations.

1. Of interest is the Eye of the Dragon. There is a legend. When the Eye of the Dragon opens disaster will be unleashed. The Ryfe is the 'closed eye'.
2. The constellations are as Watchtowers set against the Khaos of the Void. That Void is known as the Khaos Sea. It is infinitely deep (eg. Eye of Ra: $1/2 + 1/4 + 1/8 + 1/16 + 1/32 + \dots$). Here the Worlds and are Islands with shallow waters. The Leviathan swims deep beneath the surface (Tiamat and Dagon are some of its primitive human

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

- names). At the Extreme is the Asteroid belt. Out here there are things better left undisturbed. Here Pirates and predators alike sail the sea of Khaos with Demons chained to their Prow.
3. The Furthest of the Worlds is the Moonless Thule. Its odd orbit takes it from close proximity to the Asteroid belt and once every five years Thule approaches the world of Norn at the Dragon's Solstice – an event where the Sun is closest to Norn once every hundred years. Once every thousand years Thule passes closely to the Moon (Hammyr of Wat) orbiting the Sun.
 4. NORN is our home world. The Primary focus of our campaign setting. Norn has no moon. Its tides are a consequence the exotic orbits of its star and other worlds.
 5. The Star (Satr) actually orbits the solar system centre. About Satr orbits the Hammyr of Wat. Hammyr and the other moon Anvyl collide from time to time hurling Asteroids at Norn causing untold destruction.
 6. The Innermost world is Monolith. It has a Broken Moon (anvyl of Wat) which serves as a base for the Fae Imperia that dominates the inner sphere. Their Slave Barges rarely voyage beyond the inner sphere but once they reached as far out as Thule.
 7. Hammyr & Anvyl are two moons that collide every thousand years hurling asteroids across the star system.

Finally we can look at our Constellations: As stated earlier, the Constellations are as watchtowers against the Chaos of the Void.

1. The First Constellation is a great dimensional fire known as the Ryfe (the Rift) that burns across the Heavens once a year. It comes from somewhere beyond the Asteroid belt and that is where it returns – always a new location.
2. The Ryfe has a second state we know as the Eye of the Dragon. This is tied to the emergence of the Leviathan as a force capable of striking near the 'surface' of the Khaos Sea. If the motion of the Ryfe ever halts and opens like an eye, bad things happen.
3. The next in the sequence is 'The Interposing Hand' (the Asteroid belt). It will begin to break up and large rocks will close on Thule creating destruction there and forcing a tide of Refugees (Mael) and

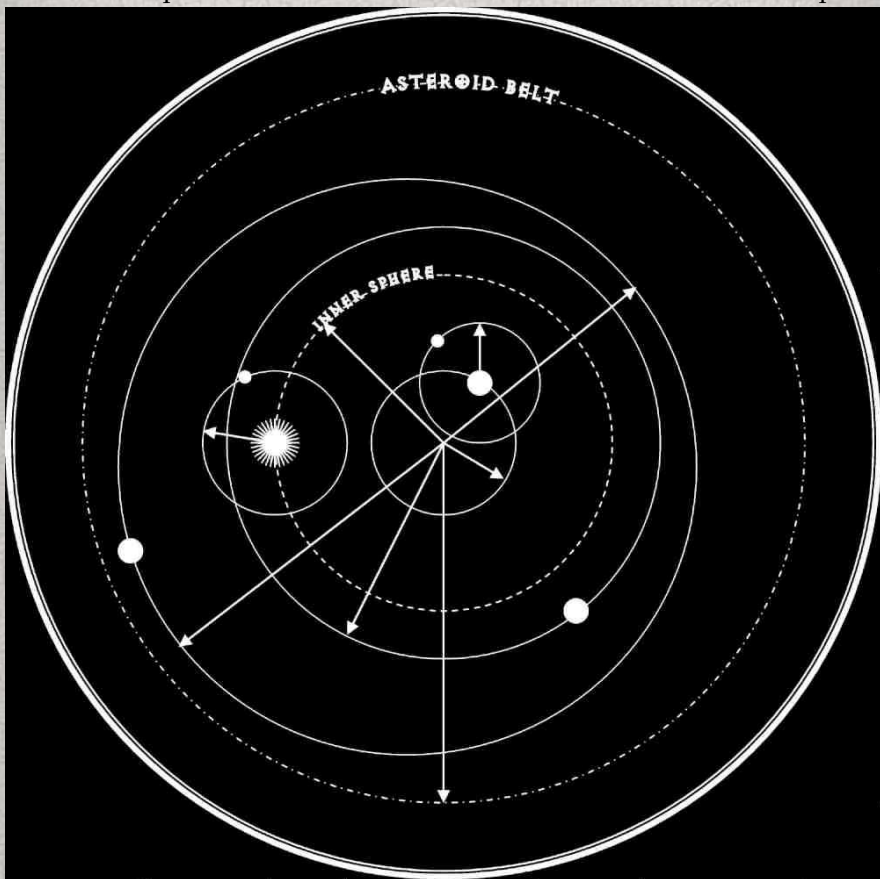
Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

other undesirables in Demon-Prow Ships to migrate inward toward Norn.

4. The fourth Constellation is the Prevailing Mistwall. This in fact the outer sphere. With the first two constellations weakened, the Sphere



will become translucent allowing passage between the Khaos Sea and the Phlogiston.

These are some weird Constellations. They are 'events' - constellations that you pray never show up. Regular Constellations like the interposing hand

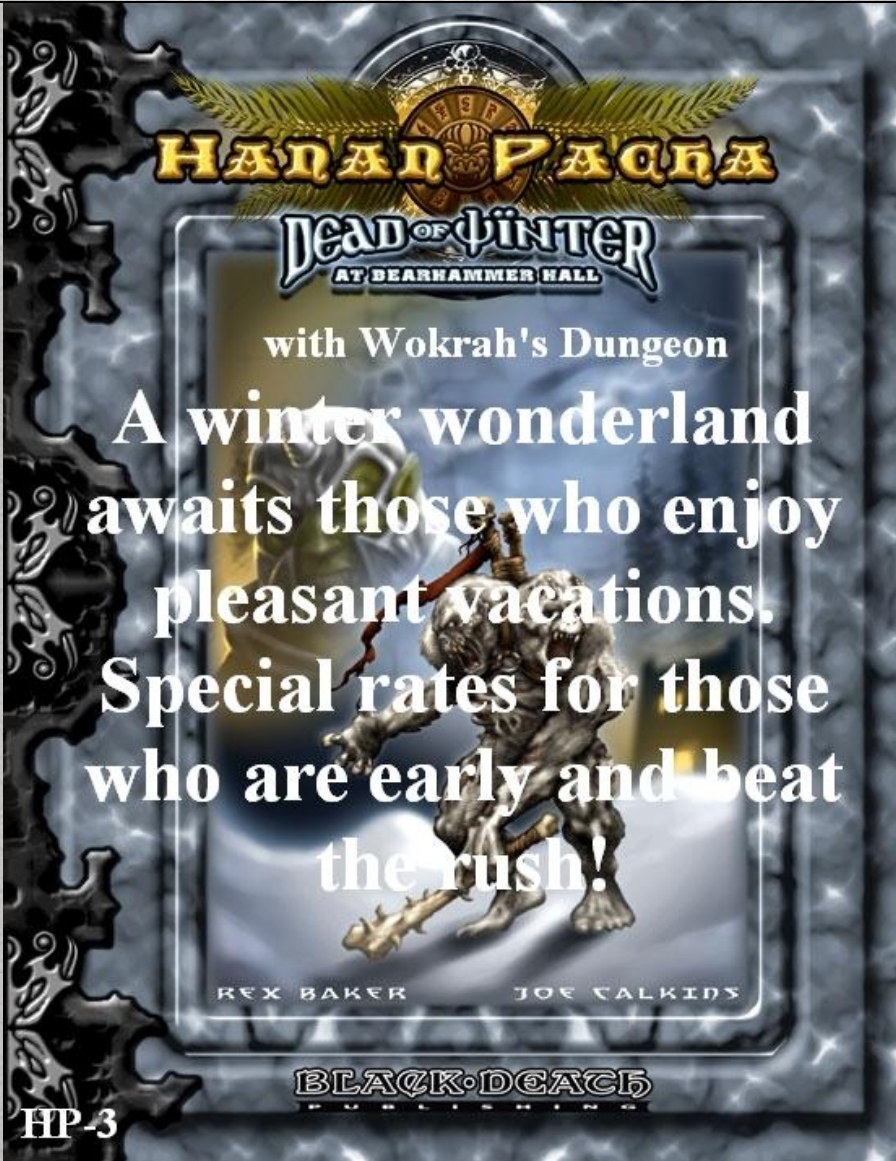
Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

are there permanent (at least until they break up – but by that time you are not going to want to be looking at the heavens anyway)

And that is it for now. At the next tier of Campaign Development we will look at our campaign world itself and will map it at varying scales.



НАНД ПАНА

DEAD OF WINTER
AT BEARHAMMER HALL

with Wokrah's Dungeon

A winter wonderland awaits those who enjoy pleasant vacations. Special rates for those who are early and beat the rush!

REX BAKER JOE TALKINS

BLACK DEATH

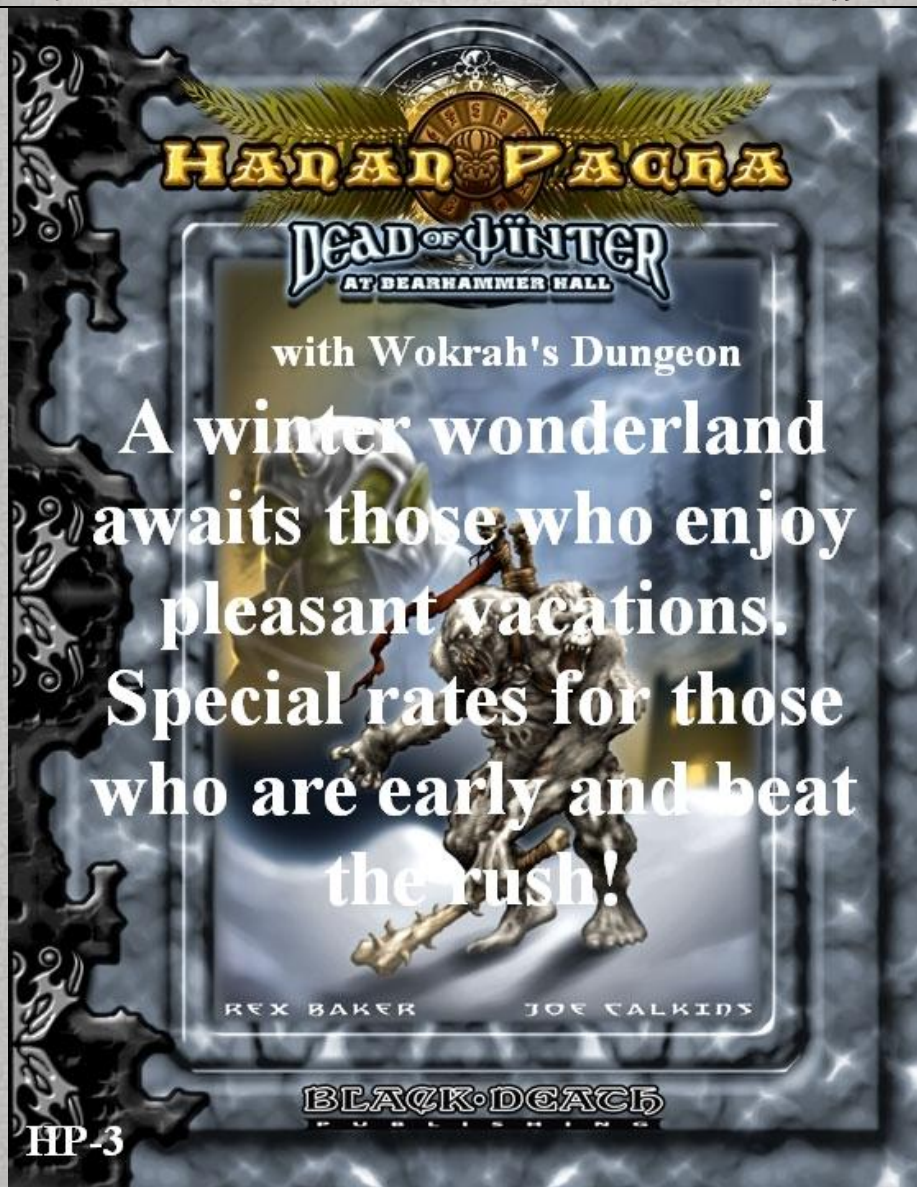
HP-3

Goblin Poetry Invitational

Fae on the Bridge
(Poetry) Article by Sean R. Meaney

*What bloody matted hair this raven of the wood,
She holds the bridge between Alfhieim and Orcland.
Sword nicked and stained with stomach acid of a thousand angry foe furious for her
flesh and bone.
Naked ivory flesh beneath a thousand fine scales of Armour long since failed.
Halav, love her in the winter of the moment as the next Bullywug converges on her
from afar
Swift, precise movements turning again and again in the intestines of her foe, blood
dropping, bile sprayed across the timbers and stone.
Arrows from afar now. A hail of eternity.
Furious and direct they come with ripples of unnatural air gliding over the wind and
thumb.
She succumbs to their veil of certainty.
A bakers dozen.
Shafts of wood with shell barbs cutting into her and leaving their poisons.
She falls to timber, descends into stream.
It is done.*

SR Meaney (18-06-2009)



НАНД ПАНД
DEAD OF WINTER
AT BEARHAMMER HALL

with Wokrah's Dungeon

A winter wonderland
awaits those who enjoy
pleasant vacations.
Special rates for those
who are early and beat
the rush!

REX BAKER JOE TALKINS

BLACK DEATH
PUBLISHING

HP-3

Uberspace

A Space Oddity

(Short Story, Sci-Fi) Article by Sean R. Meaney

Uberspace. A cluster of Stringships sat with precision at the very zenith of a galactic spiral arm and from there overlooked a Universe of possibility. The gathered cluster of Uber contemplated every aspect of the decision ahead of them. They finally had within their means the technology to answer the ultimate question. Firstmother Shuuk-Surt-Yeft extolled orange joy at the prospect of the great experiment discovering the creator of all. Orange rippled across the sensate glands of the rest of the populace.

A beam directed out from the stringship and reached out from the gathered fleet towards an unsuspecting Universe.

Somewhere ahead of the beam a Stringship drifted unnoticed, its systems in disarray. Technician Quet-Ques-Tuuk hung upside down as she struggled with the repair of the active spline module that had become the problem. The triantiwantigon slipped from her grasp and plunged through the containment field and into the core. Her sensate gland flashed embarrassment yellow. The Stringship vanished in a change of possibility and a black hole expanded in its place.

The beam altered direction just enough that it would now miss the planet where a small purple cloud of sentient energies busied itself with creating life. Instead it worked its way past entire galactic clusters teaming with beings of advanced awareness. On and on past star after star the beam raced before plunging toward a simple world orbiting a single star. The beam reached down through its distorting atmosphere and settled on a strange entity sitting on the edge of an even stranger machine. The sensors analysed every aspect of this beings existence.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

In its limited selection of appendages was a strange container of liquid filled with molecules common in the formation of life. The gathered Uber experienced the moment and orange rippled across a sea of sensate glands.

This was the Creator.

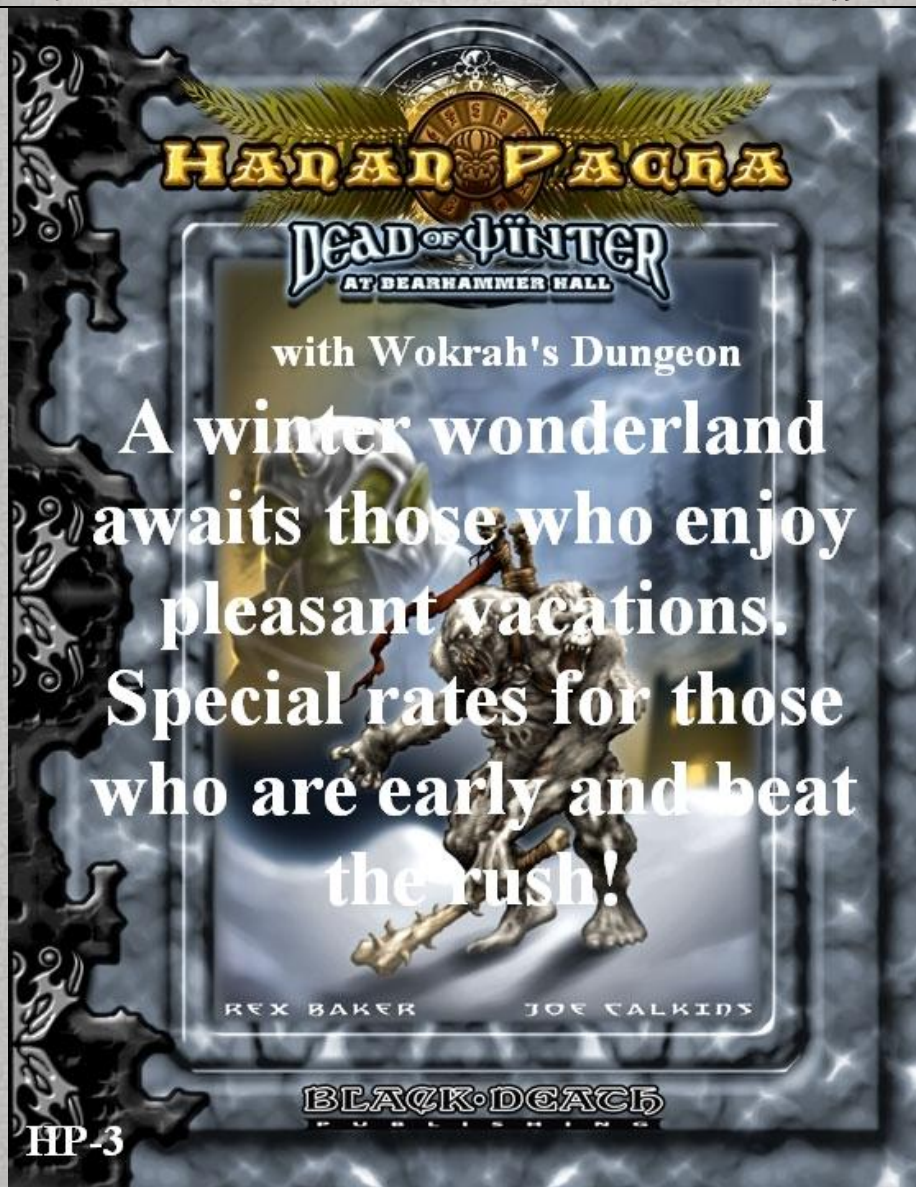
A small group of technicians clustered around the replication module. The Creator's beverage emerged with all reality.

A rainbow of indecision rippled through the group until one sampled the mix of molecules. The effect was immediate and almost toxic as it affected certain neural capacities. The Technician experienced an odd warm feeling washed through the sensate gland. Every Uber present experienced it before the technician's form collapsed into unconsciousness. It was something that the unsleeping Uber had never experienced. Technicians rushed the replication module as everyone wanted one.

Fift-Ftan-Plook came to nexus inebriated with a holy beverage tightly grasped in an appendage bundle. Firstmother Shuuk-Surt-Yeft was expressing deep redness on the virtues of not consuming the holy beverage. Firstmother's sensate gland swelled red-yellow-red-yellow as the now drunken Fift-Ftan-Plook ineptly grasped at the Firstmother's procreation bundle and the sensation was soon replaced with a red admonishment of Fift-Ftan-Plook's religious choices. Dejected, Fift-Ftan-Plook grasped the narrow bottle neck, shattered the bottom end of the emptied beverage, and went the firstmother with the broken, jagged end.

The conflict was relayed across the fleet and out into the Universe before the communication system failed. The gathered Uber descended into anarchy. Those with beverage attacked those without.

The Human race sat in awe as every television channel that had begun receiving the all blanketing alien signal suddenly went to static. First contact had ended before it began in a drunken brawl.



НАНД ПАН
DEAD OF WINTER
AT BEARHAMMER HALL

with Wokrah's Dungeon

A winter wonderland
awaits those who enjoy
pleasant vacations.
Special rates for those
who are early and beat
the rush!

REX BAKER JOE TALKINS

BLACK DEATH
PUBLISHING

HP-3

Twenty Adventure Ideas

Another Twenty Adventure Ideas

(All Systems) Article by Sean R. Meaney

Hopefully you enjoyed the last twenty adventure ideas. Here are twenty more.

1. SIEGE GUN (WARMACHINE I)

"Your village will surrender to my rule." Ichabad the Druid stared at the villagers who had been plundering his forest earlier that morning.

"On yer way ya crazy old fool before we tell the Wizard", Replied the leader of the pack.

"So be it." A wolf in the forest howled.

A sound of distant thunder came then something fell from the sky on the village. The old Wizard's Tower disintegrated under the impact crushing several homes in its shadow. The villagers turned toward the chaos.

"It would appear your village is on fire." Ichabad waited for their surrender.

DM Briefing: Druids, enraged by the plundering of their forest subjugate a village using a 20 ton Steam Mortar with a one mile range.

GREAT STEAM MORTAR (D: 20d6, R: 1 mile, MW: 20 Tons, SW: 1 Ton, RL: 3 Minutes).

2. SECOND VOLLEY (WARMACHINE II)

Thunder ripped the dawn sky and hammered into the Baron's Keep. The alarm sounded with panic.

"Perhaps the other half of the Keep?" Ichabad stared at the Baron who had ridden out to meet him in the field.

Again the Thunder came. The Baron's Knights watched the Keep collapse under the destructive force of a second hit.

"Oh dear. Defiantly not up to standard".

DM Briefing: Druids, enraged by the plundering of their forest are forced to destroy the Baron's Castle using their steam mortar to solidify their control over the villages plundering their forest for timber and firewood.

GREAT STEAM MORTAR (D: 20d6, R: 1 mile, MW: 20 Tons, SW: 1 Ton, RL: 3 Minutes).

3. THE BIRTHING

Franz looked at the eggs that lay before him in the vast cavern. They were a sea that went on forever.

A tremor shook the closest egg. Its leathery form pulsed with a heartbeat as its treasure awoke with life, Then another, and another. The great hatchery echoed the sound of a million beating hearts.

"By all that is holy! Flee!" Franz's Companions turned from their suffering at being dumped down gravel ridge and drove weapons into potential footholds looking for an escape.

DM Briefing: The PCs encounter a hatchery of a million dragon Eggs while exploring a network of Caves. The Eggs sense the body-heat of the PCs and begin to Hatch from their period of Hibernation. A Million baby dragons hunting the PCs and each other through the network of caves (and possibly discover a way to the surface). They are the beginning of the end for a world that has not known Dragons for a million years.

4. THE RED TIDE

Durn turned the ships wheel to port.

"Brace for collision. Boarding teams at the ready." His call resounded across the men labouring on the main deck.

"Remind me never to put you in charge of a working ship..." Anders shook his head in disgust.

"What do you mean?" Durn was feeling put out when the old man walked on deck.

"What's going on?" Durn passed the stranger off as one of the Labourers.

"Just taking criticism of my Captaincy..." The old man stared at the labourers pulling up the rotting deck.

"I mean, what are you doing with my ship?"

DM Briefing: The RED TIDE: An old pirate ship long since beached and within a half a day's walk of the Port where the PCs are living. Unfortunately there is an old man living in the wreck he considers a home. Normally they would just evict the resident but this one is a Wizard of considerable power.

5. THE CAGE

"Help a fellow out." The voice out of the darkness ran like a chill down the spines of Algaern the Magist and Fina the Swordsman. They pulled their weapons and readied for the onslaught of pain that they knew would follow. It didn't.

"Oh...It's you two." Hadden the Vile relaxed back in the hanging Cage.

"Well! Well! How the undesirable have fallen." Algaern the Magist laughed at the sight

"Going to Haukford are you my dear Fina?" Hadden relaxed back into the shadow of his Cage.

"Yes actually..." Fina smiled at the Cage and put her sword away.

"See you soon then Algaern..." Hadden the vile kicked at the empty cage next to him and laughed.

DM Briefing: A Cage has been recently erected outside the Town the PCs are about to visit. The Cage hangs from a pole supporting several other such cages. Each is crafted from a metal that prevents magic-use. This should concern PC Wizards. The Town is under new Leadership...and they have outlawed non-cleric spell-casters.

6. HEXEN

"So great the suffering unleashed upon we who have been dwelt amongst by these Witches." Lord Jon Deadeye rambled on as their families cried and despaired.

"Woe unto the victims of their dark machinations." The fires grew slowly in the wood piled about them.

Sula walked into the town square with her companions.

"It must be a local custom..." Frills whispered it to her with a smile...he knew exactly what she thought of local customs.

Sula the Mad pulled her Great-axe and advanced on the crowd from behind.

DM Briefing: A number of women have been rounded up by the local lord and are being burned at the stake when the PCS visit Town. If they rescue the old women without killing too many locals and take them to safety, their families will be secretly grateful.

7. THE FRUIT TRADE

"Hoyuk! Hoyuk! Apricota!" The old Goblin cried out amongst the market sellers.

His fruit cart teemed with beautiful, fresh fruit, certainly a far cry from the withered and spotted fruits that filled the small containers of regular sellers.

"Hoyuk! Hoyuk! Apricota!" The Cart pushed through the crowd. A few stopped him

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

to purchase his cheap yet quality wares

Gregor looked it over.

"That is a rather nice fruit selection." The old Goblin smiled at the compliment.

"YesYes! You buy!"

"Well they are very nice..."

"Ah... You wish buy Shatu." The Goblin nodded and pulled a Bottle of the Goblin made Liquer...

"Only ten gold coin." The exchange was made.

DM Briefing: The Goblins have come to town to sell a vast crop of fruits, nuts, both dried and fresh, as well as a rather fruity alcoholic beverage called Shatu. After considerable negotiation with the leaders of the town (and an agreement to pay the Mayor half their profits), the Goblins are allowed to sell their wares in the Market Place. The Fruit causes the Populace to transform permanently into Goblins at the next new Moon. The PCS are in a position to cure everyone and prevent the take-over. The Shatu is in-fact a cure to the effect, although it must be drunk regularly to prevent future transformation.

8. THY LAND SHALL SINK INTO THE SEA

"Urgar, you know this fruit should cost coppers. Why the prices hike?" Denwyn was astonished at the cost increase.

"Dont Know. There has been a shortage this last harvest. My farmers are telling me we are...THyLandShaLLsinKintOThEsea... slipping into famine and the aristocracy

ain't listening." Urgan didn't even notice what he had said. Denwyn stared in astonishment at his grocer.

Unwyn waved an apple in Denwyn's face.

"Hullo? You want the fruit or not?" Urgan waited. He could wait.

DM Briefing: Ordinary folk begin spouting Prophecy.

9. SHOCK AND AWE

"These folks are respectable folk, Jarvik. What ever you do, don't insult them with your Barbarian nakedness..." Carl Tall-trees brushed his hair as he walked down the road toward the Town of Purvew.

Jarvik struggled with the unfamiliar clothing his companion had forced upon him.

"I'll wear the cloth but I'll not take the abuse Tall-tree."

They reached the Town Gates. The Regular Guards were absent.

Beyond the entry peasant and aristocrat moved about the streets in bold nakedness.

Carl's jaw dropped in shock as he stared at the naked men and women wandering the streets.

Jarvik pushed Carl's jaw shut and smiled.

"Finally, a people I like."

DM Briefing: The people of the Town of Purview decide to do without clothing. This has more to do with a recent visit by a Sorceress (L20) who decided to use mass domination on the populace after they insulted her lack of clothing. The problem for the PCs is that she wished it permanent.

10. THE SHIPWRECK

Deran the Sworder pulled himself up out of the narrow chimney that had led him another hundred feet up the side of Mount Wraith and into a ravine separated by the Two peaks that he would have to choose from during the next leg of his ascent. He pulled Kail up on the Rope assisting his companion. Kail flopped on the hard rock edge.

"I hope the down is better than the up." Kail looked around.

"Well hell...It looks like we are on the wrong mountain." Kail Pointed over at Mount Blood. Deran looked to where his companion was pointing.

There, on the glacier of a high valley pass on Mount blood was what looked like a very large Sailing ship, its masts broken.

DM Briefing: Exploring Mountains, the PCs stumble across a sailing ship in a mountain glacier at six thousand feet.

11. PIRATES OF CAROMAL

The village woke to the screams as the ship smashed against the great cliffs just below

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

the Village of Caromal. Crew screamed as they jumped into the terrible waters and were pounded against the rock face.

Franco waited until all the cargo had freed itself and the crew had drowned.

"Booms!"

The Booms were pushed out over the wreckage being smashed against the rocks.

Franco signalled the crews on the nets to begin hauling their bounty from the Raging sea.

"Hoist away!" cried Franco.

DM Briefing: Pirates opperating from Caromal use signal lamps to crash Merchantmen into the Cliffs below the Village.

12. PEACE IN OUR TIME

"...and in conclusion, I King Valmort do here in authorize a Treaty of Mutual Security and Peace between our Kingdom and the Theocracy of Waryan that these border disputes may be resolved peacably.

Consequently a Signing of Peace Treaties will be set for the first of Shadowfall this Calender year in the Town of Briarwall." The crowded nobles seemed uncertain. Few clapped.

DM Briefing: A Peace Treaty signing is to take place at a location and time

known publicly beforehand. It will most certainly be attacked by those opposed to the terms of that treaty.

13. MAD DOG

The dog howl from the graveyard drew the attention of Father Jeron instantly as he made his way past the gated entrance to the Graveyard. A second howl came from the Dog that could now be seen digging on a grave.

"Must miss its Master..." Still It seemed odd...Jeron looked back at the dog...wasn't that particular grave a century old?

DM Briefing: The Local Graveyard is being frequented by a Dog seemingly consumed with grief at the death of its Master even though the grave is a hundred years old.

14. THE PIT

"Get back to work!" The Foreman's whip turned cruelly through the dust filled air of the pit and fell across the back of Avarad Steembyndr. He struggled under the pain. The others toiling in the Pit ignored his suffering and worked stone with their own hammers.

DM Briefing: After a drunken night out the PCs find themselves in the PIT.

A Mine where Convicts toil in Labor deep beneath the Earth (a Mile Down) digging for a Mystical Metal.

15. THE OBSIDIAN SCROUNGERS

Aros the Sworder watched from concealment as the Goblin riding the Ash Crawler over the volcanic ash of halted. A Makeshift net on a wooden stick was jammed into the ash and only retrieved when the net held a large piece of Obsidian.

"Ookluk!" cried the Goblin and the beast lumbered on...

DM Briefing: Goblins are scrounging for Obsidian at the base of a dormant volcano to trade with Artisans in a Village famous for its Obsidian Bowls and Artifacts.

16. BOAT FOR SALE

"...and if you look at this wood, you will notice that there is the presence of an oil designed to protect it from long term damage." Estebo the Merchant looked up from where he had touched the vessel.

"Well? what do you think?" The buyers seemed a little jittery but he could tell they were sold on it.

"We'll have to think about it..." The drew off in a group to discuss it. One of them nodded to the others before their chief negotiator turned back to face Estebo.

"Yes!" Estebo smiled and stretched out a hand to offer a done deal.

DM Briefing: The party are sold someone else's Ship while in Port. The entire crew are spending a few days in lockup while allegations of Smuggling are investigated.

17. PENANCE FOR A SIN

"You have violated the Tomb of Urlic the Holy! Your penance shall be to travel to the Quarries at Sturgat and once there volunteer as mule." Kail grimaced at the thought.

"You shall tow on sled a one ton block of granite along the wandering way road to the Abbey of Sarkroy." Kail nodded.

"Yes Holy Father!" Father Turnin smiled at his acceptance. Certainly the tomb incident was necessary, still penance had to be paid...

DM Briefing: The Paladin, having made some transgression is forced to tow a block of Granite some eighty miles from a Quarry to an Abbey currently under construction. Certainly not on a wheeled cart but a sled.

18. THE DEAD SEA

Agrin clambered up the mast to watch it.

The ship swayed beneath him as it positioned on suddenly exposed reef.

He could see the distant shore gaining width as the ocean retreated from it.

The reef rapidly became an island running much of the length of the land.

"So much for getting in the fish." Agrin smiled down at his fellow fishermen.

DM Briefing: The Sea begins to pour into a Chasm that has opened deep in the bottom of the sea. It effectively lowers permanently by 200 feet before leveling off. This is a cyclic event occurring once every fifty thousand years. Now over the next fifty thousand years the sea will be ejected from the chasm as steam until the sea is restored. At which time it will happen again.

19. THE FERRY

It sailed out of the mists of the edge of the world propelled by a dozen Skeletal Oarsmen.

Between them, on a raised bier, the clothbound body of some great lord lay in honor.

DM Briefing: The Boat carries the corpse of the Dewa Sorcerer Gornissal. It has carried him from the Dewan Empire far across the Shallow Sea and over the edge into lands unknown. The Skeletons will attack with clubs (short Oars) and the Body has with it The Sword of BloodyBone.

The Sword of BloodyBone is a +1 Bastard Sword of Abyssal Bone. It requires a Willcheck at DC30 from anyone looking upon it least they fall under its dark sway (they will attempt to acquire it for themselves and will plot and

scheme to do so-they will also seek to kill with it at all times it is in their possession).

20. THE PALADIN'S CRUSADE

"And thou shalt divide all the lands of this kingdom into one square mile holdings that every family may farm..." Throw down the Monarchy and establish a Commonwealth of Equals...Equals? Theobald the Paladin felt a life time of emotion welling up in him. He had spent a decade in the Company of the King as his church appointed protector and now he would have to throw down this king he loved and his Complacent Church because his God demanded it.

DM Briefing: The Party Paladin is sent to tear down a Lawful Good Monarchy and the Church which has ingratiated itself in the Hierarchy and establish a Government that requires the direct and regular Participation of every citizen (every citizen must regularly vote on every act of Government, Law, and Constitution to ensure that it is a Commonwealth founded in Consensus). His god instructs him to inform the Monarch that this is the New Form of Government and all must conform to it or be expelled for all time. If the Monarch does not surrender to this new Government, The Paladin is authorised to use Poison to eliminate the Monarch and his Loyal Troops to ensure that no ordinary or good people are killed in a terrible conflict to achieve this by force.

Event of a Moon

Evil Unleashed on Ministry

(All systems, Continuing Adventure Idea) Article by Sean R. Meaney

The more significant Horrors that were previously confined to the Brynstan District have apparently spread to the Ministry district of the Capital.

Witnesses report spotting a dozen small, Ape-like humanoids with scythes for hands moving along the roof tops of that district and into the Ministry Building itself.

Up to a hundred and twenty of the Ministry officials and support staff who were thought to be inside the building at the time of the incident have apparently gone missing. Initial encounters were thought to been made with these Apes by City Guardsmen stationed on the Ministry rooftops, however Investigators for the Crown are remaining tight lipped as to where those guardsmen are, as no bodies have at this time been recovered. It is thought that the creatures have carried off the remains of the dead.

The Ministry district has now been included in the evacuation cordon with the Brynstan district and all citizens currently residing in the Ministry district have been instructed to leave their homes.

No word as yet from the Prime Minister who is on retreat at the Synod Council of Churches where the Crisis is in church review but he is expected to return within a few days to emergency Ministry quarters currently being established in the west wing of the Palace to take control of the remains of the Ministry and get things functioning again. Despite this tragedy, and the

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

growing Crisis, the King has declared that he will remain in the Palace once the Prime Minister returns while rest of the Royal family is evacuated.

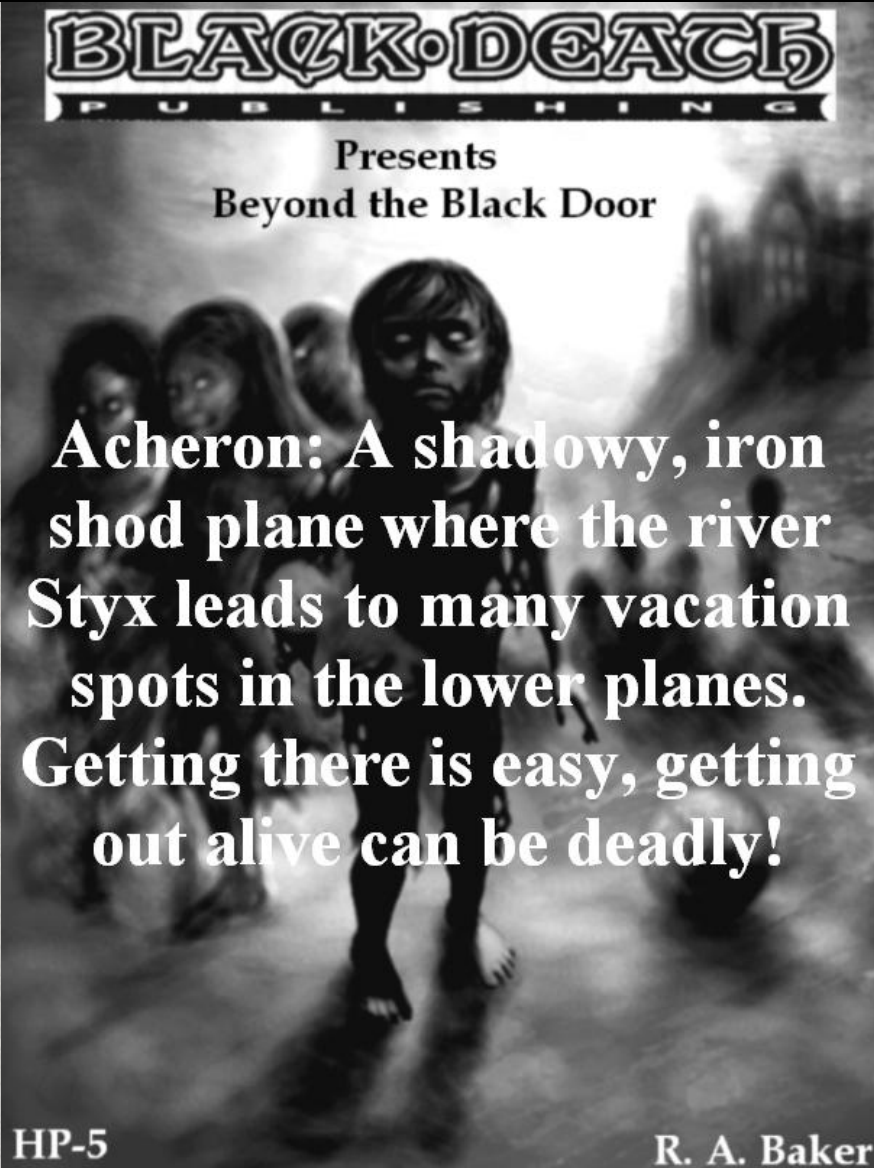
The Crown has at this time placed a restriction on river travel. Only official vessels with vital commerce have been granted a movement order.

DM Briefing: The Ministry had been attacked by fiends and Ministry personnel have been slaughtered. All eight floors of the mile long timber building are now home to fiends looking for nesting grounds.

BLACK DEATH

PUBLISHING

Presents
Beyond the Black Door



Acheron: A shadowy, iron shod plane where the river Styx leads to many vacation spots in the lower planes. Getting there is easy, getting out alive can be deadly!

HP-5

R. A. Baker

Agricultural Economics

Adventuring in the East

(All Systems, Eastern, Location) Article by Sean Meaney

The Farming Community of Yan Po

Description

This is a family of twelve working some four acres of rice paddy. These rural people are living isolated in the jungle along a little used dirt road that crosses the jungle that divides two provinces. This is literally the beaten track and they live just off it. Their home amounts to a couple of wooden huts built on stilts, a few pigs, hens, and catfish in the muddy waters of their fields.

Agricultural Yields

- [Millet | 30 bushels]
- [Rice | 40 bushels]

Rice Paddies of Yan Po

Rice: 4 acres x 40 bushels = 160 bushels (8,000lb)

64% Yield (5,120lb)

12 people x 365 days x 1lb = 4,380lb

5,120lb - 4,380lb = 740lb

- seed rice (200lb) = 540lb

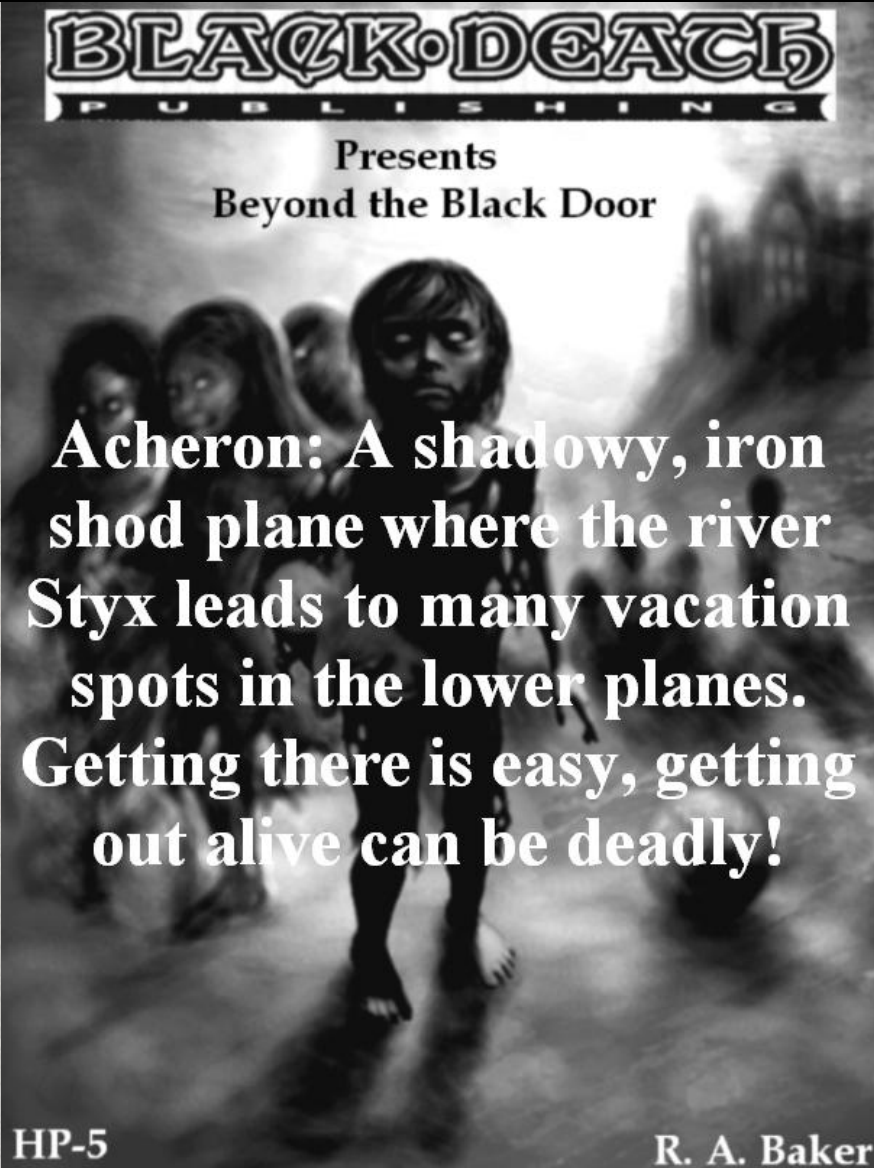
Surplus = 540lb Rice

DM Briefing: The Farmers of Yan Po are regularly threatened and extorted from by local bandits. The prospect of Aid from some hero would do little other than draw attention to their existence beyond the local warlords Tax men and they are unlikely to be thankful for interference in their situation.

BLACK DEATH

PUBLISHING

Presents
Beyond the Black Door



Acheron: A shadowy, iron shod plane where the river Styx leads to many vacation spots in the lower planes. Getting there is easy, getting out alive can be deadly!

HP-5

R. A. Baker

Intriguing Mechanism

Living Armor and Weaponry

(D&D 4th edition, magic items) Article by James Holloway

"As the sword swished across his armor a line of blood appeared and began to drip. 'Hah, I have drawn first blood', the swordsman said. 'Ah, but you haven't', was the reply as seemingly magically the armor knit itself back together a scar forming where the slash had been."

Living armor and weapons can liven up what once was a dead or boring campaign or adventure. It can add another element to an otherwise mediocre game. It can also be used in place of random treasure or where treasure is going to be scarce.

Living Equipment

Living equipment levels at the same rate as its owner. It must be used at least once per day to level in this way. If the character does not have a combat encounter in a day, they may spar with the weapon instead, however real combat is preferred. Too many sparring matches and the weapon won't level properly. If it is not used once per day, it doesn't level with the owner. When living equipment levels it learns a property, critical, or power. If it already has one of each of these, it instead can retrain one of them out for another one of its level or lower. Living equipment cannot have more than one each of properties, effects, or powers. Due to the way that the living equipment attaches its life force to whoever wields it, the shock of a stranger wielding it makes it become inert until the proper owner wields it. The only way to pass it on to a new owner is for the current owner to die. If the Living Equipment dies, 24 hours later a new Living Equipment of the same type hatches out of the rotting corpse of the dead item. This new item starts at the lowest level and has only one property, critical, or power determined by the DM. When the wielder of a Living Item dies the shock to the Living Item reduces it to the lowest level and removes all but a single property, power or critical.

Living Armor

The way living armor works is that it grants the wearer 5 temporary hit points per enhancement bonus. The player at any point may opt to take the damage directly to their character instead of taking it from the temporary hit points (this only applies to hit-points granted by the Living Armor). When the temporary hit points are reduced to zero the armor is considered to be dying. It gets to fail a death save per plus of the armor, so if the armor has a +2 bonus it can fail 2 death saves before it dies. A dead armor is useless since it cannot be raised from the dead. A Living Armor recovers all temporary hit points after an extended rest.

Living Weapons and Implements

Living weapons usually have interesting and very useful powers. Anytime a living weapon is used and a natural 1 is rolled the weapon temporarily loses one of its pluses, if a weapon reaches 0 or less pluses it is considered to be dying and must make death saves every round. If it fails a number of death saving throws equal to its original total enhancement bonus, it is dead and cannot be revived. Dead Living Weapons cannot be raised and are worthless and decay as any living thing when dead. A living weapon recovers all of its pluses during an extended rest.

Below are some Living Weapons and Armor.

Swirling Orb

Level 5+

The swirling orb has the essence of some magical creatures with a variety of spell-like attacks.

Level 5 +1	2,000 gp	Level 20 +4	250,000 gp
Level 10 +2	10,000 gp	Level 25 +5	1,250,000 gp
Level 15 +3	50,000 gp	Level 30 +6	6,250,000 gp

Implement(Orb)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

(5th) Mental fortitude (Property): While using the total defense action the wielder adds the enhancement to their Will defense.

(7th) Fire Beam (Daily): Free. When you hit with a power with the implement keyword, after you hit you deal an additional + 1d6 points of fire damage to all targets of that power.

(9th) Sparkle (Critical): +1d6 per plus

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

(11th) Ice Ray (Daily): Free. When you hit with a power with the implement keyword, after you hit you slow all targets until the end of your next turn.

(13th) Stone Beam (Encounter): Free. Use this power when you hit with a spell that has the implement keyword. Make a second attack roll. Hit: The target is covered in stone and dazed and immobilized until the end of your next turn.

(15th) Spark (Critical): +2d6 per plus.

(17th) Impenetrable sphere (property): When taking the total defense action add the enhancement bonus to all defenses.

(19th) Arcing power (Daily): Free. Use this power when you hit with a spell with the implement keyword that targets only a single creature. The spell now targets a burst 1 area targeting all creatures within the area.

(21st) Life Drain (Encounter): Minor. Use this power when you hit with a necrotic spell with the implement keyword. You make a secondary attack roll using the same bonuses as the first against one of your targets. Hit: you can use a healing surge and the target is weakened until the beginning of your next turn.

(23rd) Quick Spell (at-will): Standard. When you gain this power choose an encounter power that you know. You may use it in place of this power as if it were an at-will. All damage dice are reduced by 1 (minimum 1), all effects that are (save ends) become (until the end of your next turn). You may still use this power normally without restrictions, but to use it as an at-will you must follow the above instructions. Once chosen you may not choose another power until you retrain this power. You may not choose utility powers.

(25th) Powered Spell (encounter): Minor. Use this power after you hit with a spell with the implement keyword, but before you deal damage. You may increase the damage dice of the spell by one dice category using the weapon chart in the *Player's Handbook*.

(27th) Reactionary Spell (Critical): + 2d6 per plus and once per round you may choose to use any at-will spell you know as a free action immediately after you roll damage. (You must target the target of your critical attack and make the appropriate attack and damage rolls).

(29th) Spastic Energies (at-will): Standard Action. Choose any two at-will implement powers that you know. You may use both of them as a standard action with a -2 to attack and a -2 to damage on both.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Carapace Armor

Level 1+

This armor looks like nothing more than a giant beetle's carapace covered with many different kinds of antennae and tiny legs.

Level 2	+1	1040 gp	Level 17	+4	130,000 gp
Level 7	+2	5,200 gp	Level 22	+5	650,000 gp
Level 12	+3	26,000 gp	Level 27	+6	3,250,000 gp

Armor: Cloth, Leather, Hide, Scale

Enhancement: AC

(2nd) Toughness (Property): +1 to fortitude defense.

(4th) Thick Skin (Daily): Immediate Reaction. When the wearer of the Carapace Armor is hit by a melee attack, they may choose to double the enhancement bonus of the armor. This enhancement lasts until the end of the their next turn.

(6th) Sludge (Daily): Immediate Reaction. When the wearer of the Carapace Armor is hit by a melee attack, they may choose to have the attacker become grabbed by the armor. The grabbed opponent may make escape attempts as normal against the character. If they are still grabbed at the end of their next turn they are automatically freed.

(8th) Spider Walk (Property): The wearer may ignore up to 3 squares of spider webs when moving per round. This includes any poison, status effect, or difficult or hindering terrain associated with the web.

(10th) Chitinous Restoration (Daily): Immediate Reaction. When the Carapace Armor's temporary hit points are down to half or less, the wearer may choose to regenerate 1 hp of the Carapaces temporary hit points per round for the rest of the encounter.

(12th) Acidic Respite (Encounter): Immediate Reaction. When the wearer is damaged by an attack, they may choose to shoot acid at the attacker. The attacker must be within burst 3 and visible. The wearer makes an attack using the enhancement bonus of the Carapace Armor against Reflex. Hit: 2d6 + enhancement bonus acid damage.

(14th) Improved Armor (property): Due to the hardening of the armor fortitude is increased by + ½ the enhancement bonus of the armor.

(16th) Explosive Push (Daily): Move. The wearer may choose to shift up to 3 squares.

(18th) Swift move (At-Will): Minor. If the wearer expends 1 of the armor's

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

temporary hit points they may move 1 extra square.

(20th) Status Absorption (at-will): Minor. The Carapace Armor absorbs a status affect from you. You are unable to use any of the armor's powers until you make a successful save. You continue to make saves as normal until you succeed.

(22nd) Powered Attack (Encounter): Minor. Use this power after you hit with a melee attack, but before you deal damage. You deal an additional + 1d6 points of damage and the target is slid 1 square.

(24th) Flaming Acid Spew (Encounter): Standard. Blast 3 Dex vs. Reflex. Target: each creature in burst. Hit: 1d8 fire + 1d4 Acid and ongoing 4 acid damage (save ends).

(26th) Withdraw Into Shell (at-will): Standard Action. You withdraw into the armor. You gain resist all 20 until the beginning of your next turn. Your turn also ends immediately and you cannot attack until the beginning of your next turn.

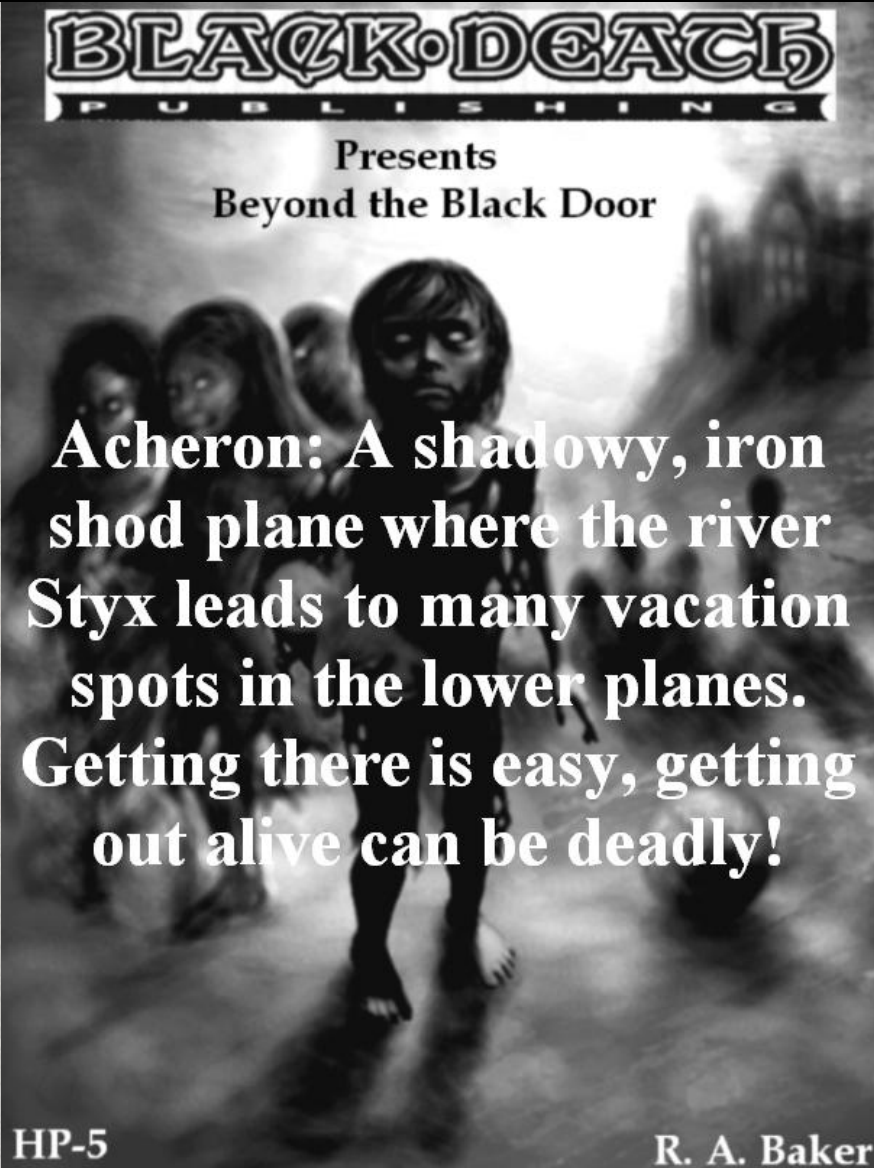
(28th) Poison Web Burst (Property): You gain: Poison Web Burst (poison) aura 1; Any creature starting its turn next to you takes 5 points of poison damage and is slowed until the beginning of its next turn.

(30th) Regenerative Movement (At-Will): You may make any one of your regular at-will attacks; in addition you regenerate 5 hit points.

BLACK DEATH

PUBLISHING

Presents
Beyond the Black Door



Acheron: A shadowy, iron shod plane where the river Styx leads to many vacation spots in the lower planes. Getting there is easy, getting out alive can be deadly!

HP-5

R. A. Baker

The Path Less Travelled

A Custom Look at the Inquisition gaming system
(Inquisition, magic items, first appearance "Dark Heresy") Article by Philipp
Kampmann

You have been told about the Inquisition.
You have been told they are the heroic defenders of Mankind.
You have been told they are staunch, unyielding and pure, ready to shield
Mankind from any threat, from within, without or beyond.
You have been told they are the most powerful of all men, because they
alone are forever uncorrupted and faithful in His service.
Everything you have been told is a lie.

The Path Less Travelled

*Do not dare to judge me or the methods I choose to employ, petty-minded fool! You
can understand neither the magnitude of the task I have undertaken, nor the
consequences should I fail.*

-Inquisitor Lichtenstein

In their battle against the threefold enemy of Man, there have always been
those who chose to take a step further than their peers; those insane or
headstrong enough to dare and go where no other had gone before; those
willing to use the tools of the enemy.

And, in some cases, the tools of *the* Enemy.

In some cases, these were a majority: despite what some acolytes of Goldo
would have us believe, the powers of the Immaterium can be – and indeed
have been – harnessed for the good of Mankind. Psychic potential powers
some of the foremost institutions of Mankind, such as the Astronomican, the
Navis Nobilite and the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, and is a powerful tool for
many an Inquisitor.

And thus, many wonder, why not take the next step? If the realm of the Enemy can be harnessed, why not the Enemy himself?

Such practice is, of course, highly controversial, to say the least. In fact, most Inquisitors who have attempted it met an untimely end at the blades of their former colleagues. However, this does not stop others from trying, and, when all is said and done, those Inquisitors using such methods are often highly effective. That is, before being declared Excommunicate Traitoris.

Daemon Weapons in Dark Heresy

A daemon weapon has two main components: the weapon and the daemon (surprise!).

The weapon must be a primitive close combat weapon (although the mono upgrade is allowed). Although exceptions to this - Khornate chain-axes, Kai Guns, and the like - are possible, these fall entirely under the GM's purview. Daemon weapons are unbreakable by mundane means.

Binding the daemon is something outside the scope of this article (and anyway, I would rather leave this up to every individual daemon and GM), so I will concern myself merely with the results. The daemon within the weapon has one of six power levels. This indicates two things: First, the daemon's Willpower (which will become important later), and second the number of special abilities it has. A power level of one indicates a daemonic beast, or maybe a securely bound servant, while a power level of six would be a just barely contained daemon prince.

Power Level	Willpower & Abilities
1	20 + 2D10; one ability
2	30 + 2D10; two abilities
3	40 + 2D10; three abilities
4	50 + 2D10; four abilities
5	60 + 2D10; five abilities
6	70 + 2D10; six abilities

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

DISCLAIMER: I do not claim authorship the daemonic properties listed hereafter. They – as well as much of the overall inspiration – come from the (highly recommendable) Inquisitor game system. I merely adapted them to Dark Heresy.

Bound: The weapon is psychically bound to the wielder and will not leave him. He can call it to his hand with a free action (including the benefits of Quick Draw); he cannot be disarmed if he does not want to. However, every turn he is parted from the weapon, he must make a Willpower check (opposed with the weapon) or take one point of nonspecified damage.

Breathe: The weapon is connected to the nauseatingly sweet warp winds, feeding his wielder with the essence of the Immaterium. The wielder can breathe in any environment and is immune to poison gases.

Brain Leech: Seared in the flames of a thousand burning books, this weapon seeks to steal knowledge. Everyone hit by it must make an opposed Willpower check against the weapon or lose D10 Intelligence.

Corrupter: The blade has been consecrated on the altar plague to visit death and decay upon the living. Any time a living being gets hit by the weapon, it must pass a Toughness test every turn until made, each time failing taking one point of damage. If somebody gets hit while still infected, he takes a -5 penalty on the check.

Daemonbane: The demesne of an incredibly jealous daemon, this is a boon to all daemon-hunters. Whenever it hits a psyker or a daemon, it casts Banishment (to be found in this excellent article:

<http://www.darkreign40k.com/psychic-powers/daemonology.html>) – without taking damage from a failure, though.

Deathlust: This bloodthirsty incites the wielder to quench its unholy thirst as fast as possible. When it is drawn, the wielder immediately gains the benefits of the Frenzy talent (without having to spend a turn activating it) and the Furious Assault talent (if he already has Frenzy, the effects stack; those of

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Furious Assault obviously do not). So great is the rage of the bound daemon, however, that it will not be denied. As long as there are still living targets the character is aware of or knows exist nearby (remember: truth is subjective, making this quite dangerous for a delusional maniac to possess!), he must pass an opposed Willpower check against the blade to sheathe it. If he fails, he must attack them as fast as possible (he can retry the check anytime, though).

Deflection: Literally faster than hell, this weapon will throw itself in the way of any ranged attack targeted at the wielder. While holding it, the wielder benefits from the Deflect Shot talent, except it applies to all ranged weapons that are not especially blessed in some way.

Enfeeble: This insidious daemon drinks the life force of all it strikes. Everyone hit by it must make an opposed Willpower check against the weapon or lose D5 Toughness for the remainder until he is restored in a manner suitable to the GM (such as bathing in holy water).

Entrance: The supernatural, flickering light emanating from the weapon distracts those who would fight it. Every turn of combat, anyone wishing to attack the wielder must make a Willpower test opposed with the weapon or take a -10 penalty to Weapon Skill for the remainder of the turn.

Fiery Blast: Its connection to the Immaterium allows this daemon to spit multi-coloured bouts of warp-fire. The weapon may be used as a hand flamer a number of times per day equal to its Willpower modifier.

Flight: This weapon can be hurled, flying after its foes before returning to its wielder's hand. When thrown, it works just like a spear, except it inflicts its own damage. It automatically returns to its wielder at the end of the next turn (unless it also has the Bound property).

Gnawing: Hungering for the flesh of the living, this daemon bites his way deeply into its victims. Its damage is increased by one point.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Lashing: Circumventing all in its way, this blade writhes like a snake, defying all laws of structural integrity, to get to its target. When attacking, it counts as having the Flexible quality.

Magic Absorption: Like a miniature warp-storm, this blade draws all psychic power to itself; whenever a psychic power is used directly on the wielder (by a friend, a foe or even by the wielder himself!), the user must make an opposed Willpower test against the blade. If failed, the psychic power simply fails to manifest.

Magic Power: Akin to the hallowed force weapons of the Imperium, this blade manifests its thrall's psychic power whenever it hits. If the daemon succeeds on a Willpower test, the blade deals an additional D5 damage.

Mind Stealer: Doused in a thousand starving and tortured souls, this weapon leaves enemies disoriented and in the throes of ghostly screams. It gains the Shocking quality.

Resurrection: This unholy weapon feeds the wielder with vitality. As long as it is held, its wielder counts as having the Regeneration trait.

Screaming: Giving out long wails of pain, joy, rage, or ecstasy (or possibly all of them) when drawn, this weapon terrifies its foes. While held, it gives the wielder a Fear Rating of 2.

Warpflame: This burning sword can set enemies it hits on fire as a flamer.

Vampyre: The quintessential soul-drinking sword, this blade can reduce enemies to lifeless husks in a few blows. Everytime somebody is hit by it, he must make an opposed Willpower test against the blade or take a level of fatigue.

Level of Dominance

When it's all said and done, however, a daemon weapon is more than just a tool: it is a sentient and intelligent entity with highly nefarious goals. Of

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

course, since most weapons, however powerful, are incapable of acting on their own, they achieve these goals by coercing their wielders into doing it for them. This is where the Level of Dominance comes in. A daemon weapon's Level of Dominance is a gauge of how much power it exerts over its host. This depends on the two parties' respective Willpower:

The Daemon's Willpower is...	Level of Dominance
up to half as high as the host's	<i>Slave:</i> The daemon has no power whatsoever over the host. The host can enter telepathic contact at any time, and the daemon is forced to answer to the best of its ability. The host gains 1 Corruption point.
up to the host's	<i>Thrall:</i> Incapable of directly influencing the host, the blade nonetheless has constant telepathic contact with the host. No supernatural power comes with this, and neither of the two is bound to react in any way to the other's words. However, the host cannot break off the contact. The host gains 5 Corruption points*.
up to twice the host's	<i>Dangerous Ally:</i> As above, except the daemon also has access to the host's feelings and surface thoughts (but not the other way round!). Once per day, the daemon may make an opposed Willpower test against the wielder to force him to take a particular course of action. Also, he can propose (but not force upon) the host a dark pact of the GM's choosing. The host gains 5 Corruption and 5 Insanity points*.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

more than twice the host's

Your Lord and Master: The host is a thrall to the whims of the daemons. Should a particular action go against his strongest beliefs, he may make an opposed Willpower test to avoid taking it, but otherwise, he does as the daemon bids. The host gains 10 Corruption and 10 Insanity points*.

*: Points of the same type overlap (do not stack).

Now, characters in Dark Heresy are heroes, so they should be allowed at least a slim chance of prevailing against such artefacts of evil. Thus, they gain the following new uses for Fate Points:

- Using a Fate Point yields a character an automatic success (one degree) on an opposed Willpower test against a daemon weapon.
- If your weapon is Thrall or Dangerous Ally, using a Fate Point can cancel telepathic contact for d5 rounds, or force the daemon to answer truthfully for d5 rounds (choose one).
- Normally, as soon as a weapon is of a higher rank as Slave, it cannot simply be discarded; the emotional and psychic bond is too strong. Burning a Fate Point can allow for the separation from a daemon weapon.

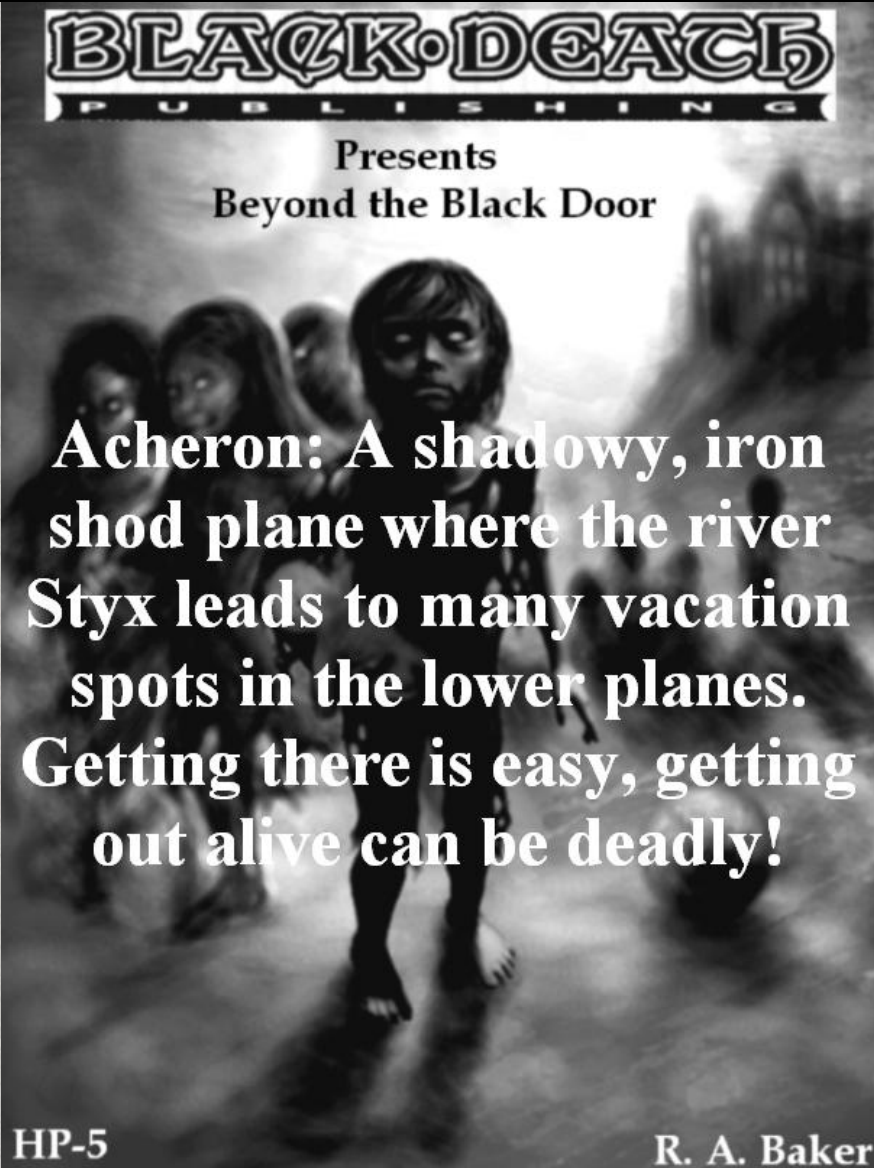
PS: These rules were never meant for game balance; that's why they don't have price/availability tags attached to them. The fall solely under the GM's purview, who is to use them at his discretion. Enjoy!

Credits go to the excellent Inquisitor game system from Fanatic Games, and the authors of the Daemonology article hosted on Dark Reign, Santiago and Thomas Torp.

BLACK DEATH

PUBLISHING

Presents
Beyond the Black Door



Acheron: A shadowy, iron shod plane where the river Styx leads to many vacation spots in the lower planes. Getting there is easy, getting out alive can be deadly!

HP-5

R. A. Baker

New Homeworld

Warzone

(Mercenary, character source, first appearance "Dark Heresy") Article by Philipp Kampmann

New Homeworld:

Warzone

So I was there the other day creating a character for an upcoming game. I decided I wanted a seen-it-all mercenary veteran who sells his customized guns to the highest bidder (actually, I just wanted a chance to use the Spectre). And what I realized was this: What world does a veteran come from? Now, assuming I want to keep it cliché, Noble, Forge World and Mind-scrubbed are right out. As is Schola Progenium. And the standard ones? Void-born is too frail to make a good soldier. Feral Worlds: a malus on tech-use? How am I supposed to customize my guns? Don't think so. On the other side of the spectrum, Hive Worlds give me a malus on survival. Not quite the commando vet I had in mind. So I ended up going Imperial World, thus having a gun-for-hire who speaks Latin and is blessed by the Emperor. Not the worst rule-wise, but definitely not what I was going for. So, for all the would-be veterans who have the same problems, I made the following new homeworld type:

Warzone

Fate Points: As Void-born.

Starting Wounds: d5 + 8

Stat modifiers:

WS	20
BS	25
S	20
T	25
Ag	20
Int	15

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Per	20
WP	20
Fel	15

Traits:

Mentally scarred: Call it war neurose, shell-shock, or just plain bitterness, the fact is that no human being survives the worst the galaxy can throw at them and emerge unscathed.

Starts play with d5 Insanity points.

Seen it all: There is simply no way of surviving planetary warfare without picking up some basic skills.

Starts play with the Tech-Use, Common Lore (War) and Survival skills.

Anti-social: Somebody who has seen his world burn cares little about the effete politicking of the noble class.

Takes a -10 penalty on all Fellowship-based skills except Command.

Fearless: No matter who or what burnt down your house, chances are it's a bit more scary than the thug facing you right now.

Gains a +10 bonus on all checks to resist fear and shock (only if naturally induced, though; not against psykers).

Careers:

Adept Maybe you were an administrator attached to the army. Maybe you were the chief strategist. Or maybe you were just a paper-pusher caught up in a Tyranid invasion. Whatever the case, you are likely to be brooding and withdrawn - even by the standards of your peers - and consecrate all of your time to the study to warfare and whatever enemy it was who brought you here.

Cleric Again, you might have been attached to the army, or have been the general's private confessor. Or you might have been a civilian. Now, you are probably warlike, caring little for the higher politics of the Ecclesiarchy, and more firmly grounded in your faith than many a cardinal.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

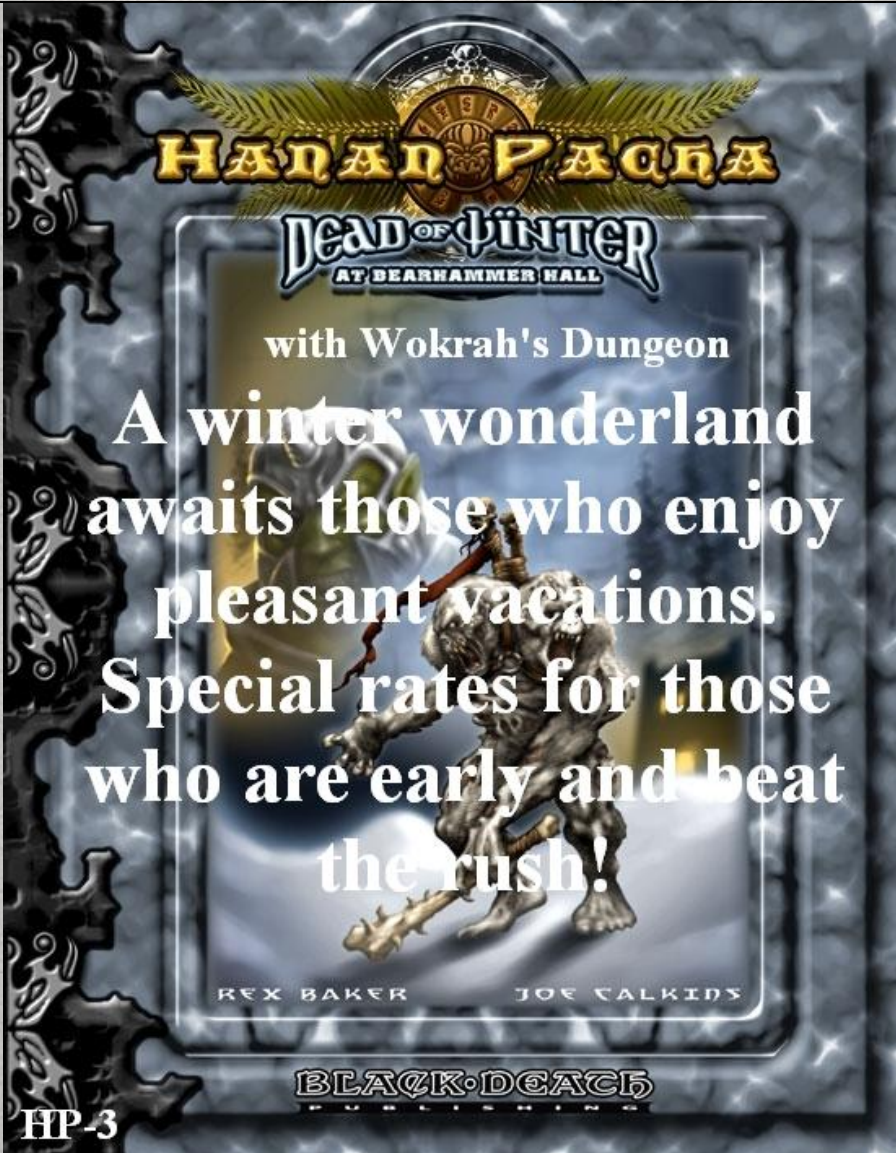
MOON OF PLAGUES

Guardsmen Whatever. Since this is a background for pretty much any guardsman, your character probably won't change much.

Imperial Psyker If you are of the warlike bent, you were a Guard sanctionite. Maybe the lone survivor of a unit slaughtered by a demon (which might mean slaughtered by *you* – and you have your dark-secret-metaplot right there!).

Scum There are no civilians in the battle for survival. There's only those who screw and those who get screwed. You were part of the latter group. Not always a happy existence. Hell, probably the worst existence there is. Why do you keep on living, anyway?

Techpriest Again, guard material. Been there, done that. You don't have emotions anyway, so war is like everything else: a chance to learn.



НАНД ПАНА

DEAD OF WINTER
AT BEARHAMMER HALL

with Wokrah's Dungeon

A winter wonderland
awaits those who enjoy
pleasant vacations.
Special rates for those
who are early and beat
the rush!

REX BAKER JOE TALKINS

BLACK DEATH

HP-3

Fascinating Locality

The Guild Town of Loen

(All systems, location) Article by Sean R. Meaney



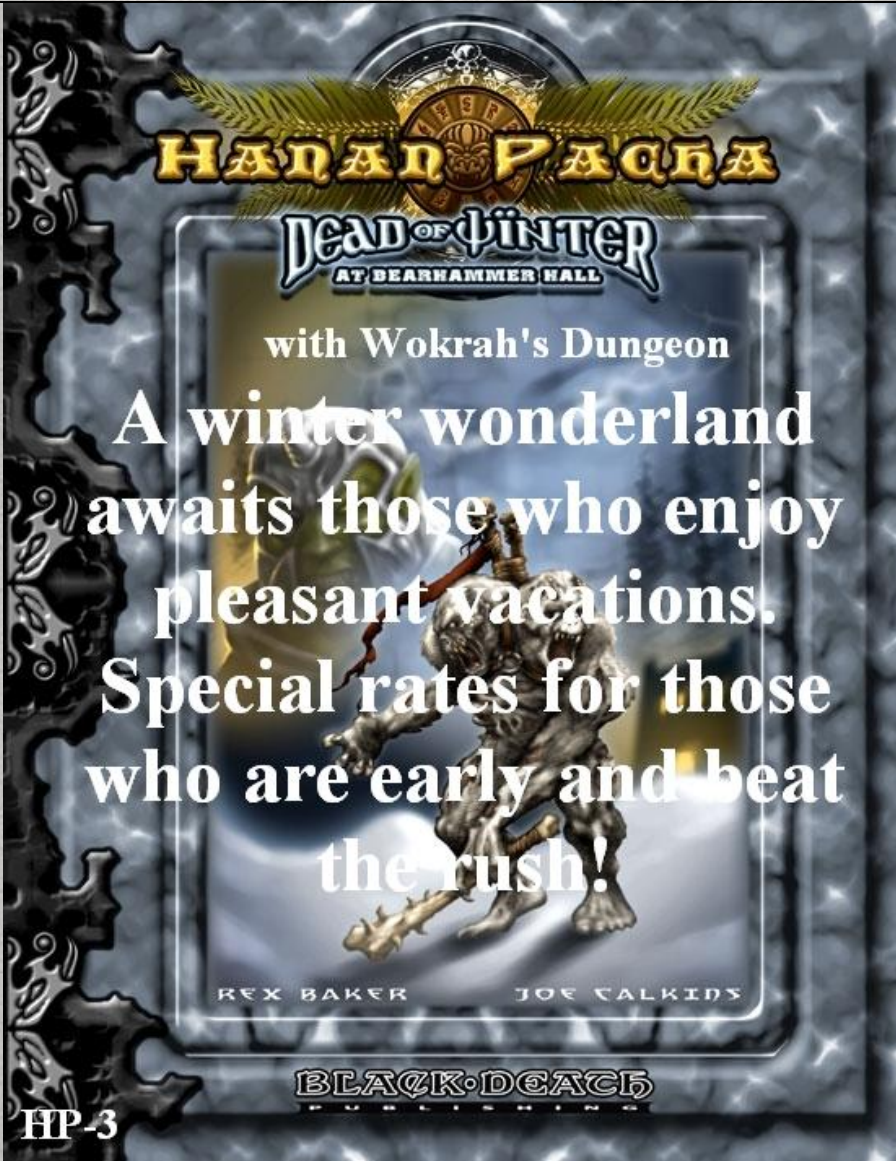
Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

This is a stone-walled hamlet of some two hundred citizens. They are mostly members of the Merchant guild and consist of such diverse Guild members as:

NAME	STATUS
Quintus Redhead	Guild Merchant, age 43, resides in the Guild Hall in an upper floor apartment. His Wife Sharn Astelsdottir died a few years ago while giving birth to a son. As both Mother and child perished during the difficult birth, Quintus was left to raise his daughter. Unfortunately he has had little time for this and has very much depended on Isolde's tutors to raise her. Quintus is currently fighting the adjacent estate for control of the profits to be had from the Guild town of Loen. He established the guild town and is damned if he is going to let the Abbot take control of the wealth of Loen.
Phillip Legune	Priest, age 38, resides in a small residence at the rear of the Church of Loen. Father Legune is currently seducing Isolde Sharnsdottir during religious instructions. He has a folio containing numerous sketches of her with and without clothes.
Isolde Sharnsdottir	Apprentice Weaver, age 16, Resides with her father in the guild hall. Although she finds the carnal desires of the Priest (Phillip Legune) entertaining and often poses naked for his sketching, it is certain that her entertainment will come to an end when Father Legune is replaced by order of the Abbot.



НАНД ПАНА

DEAD OF WINTER
AT BEARHAMMER HALL

with Wokrah's Dungeon

A winter wonderland awaits those who enjoy pleasant vacations. Special rates for those who are early and beat the rush!

REX BAKER JOE TALKINS

BLACK DEATH

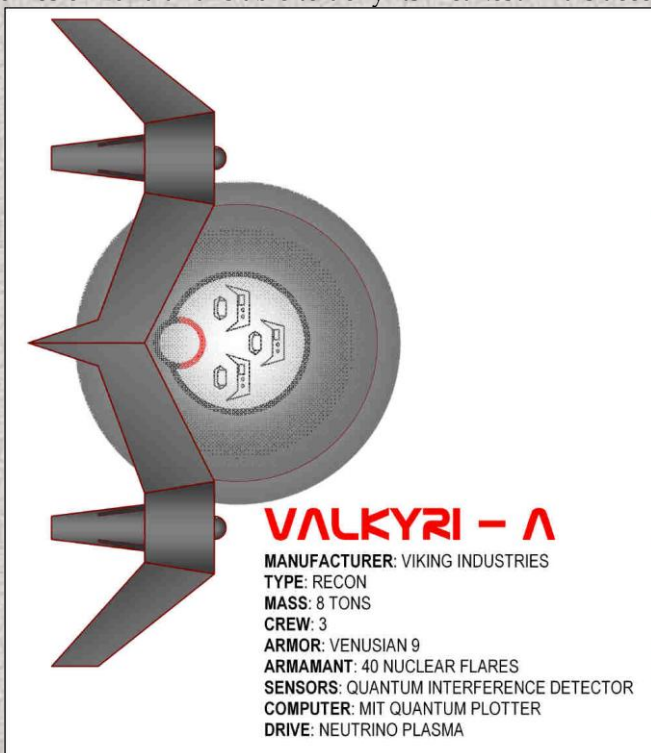
HP-3

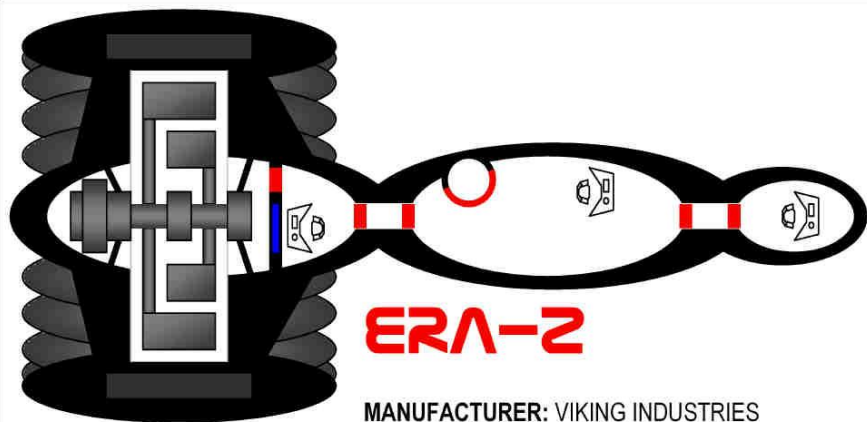
Space Odyssey

Viking Space 2100 A.D.

(Sci-fi) Article by Sean R. Meaney

In 2057 A.D. 'Bloodsword' (Billionaire Neo-Viking and Heavy Metal Band Rocker) is elected President of the newly founded North America Bloc. Outraged at the squandering of North American Bloc resources on occupying third world States for their resources he pours the entire Defence and Social Security budget into NASA and re-tasks them to invade Space. By 2100 A.D. the North American Bloc has control of the million population mining colonies of Luna and is able to deny its weakest rivals access to space.





ERA-2

MANUFACTURER: VIKING INDUSTRIES

TYPE: SLGD TEST VEHICLE

MASS: 100 TONS

CREW: 3

ARMOR: SYNTHETIC SAPPHIRE

ARMAMENT: CREW FIREARMS

SENSORS: QUANTUM INTERFERENCE DETECTOR

COMPUTER: MIT QUANTUM PLOTTER

DRIVE: EXPERIMENTAL

SAILBOUY

MANUFACTURER: BOEING RECREATIONAL INDUSTRIES

TYPE: CIVILIAN RECREATIONAL SOLAR SAIL

MASS: 5 TONS (INCLUDING SAIL)

CREW: 1

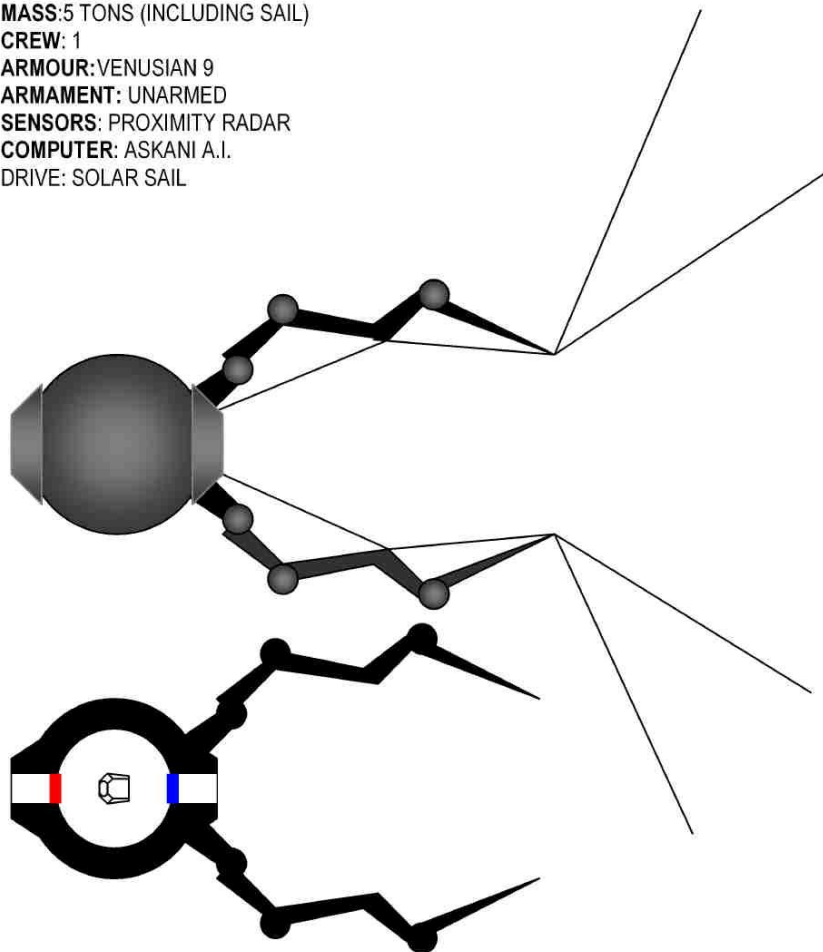
ARMOUR: VENUSIAN 9

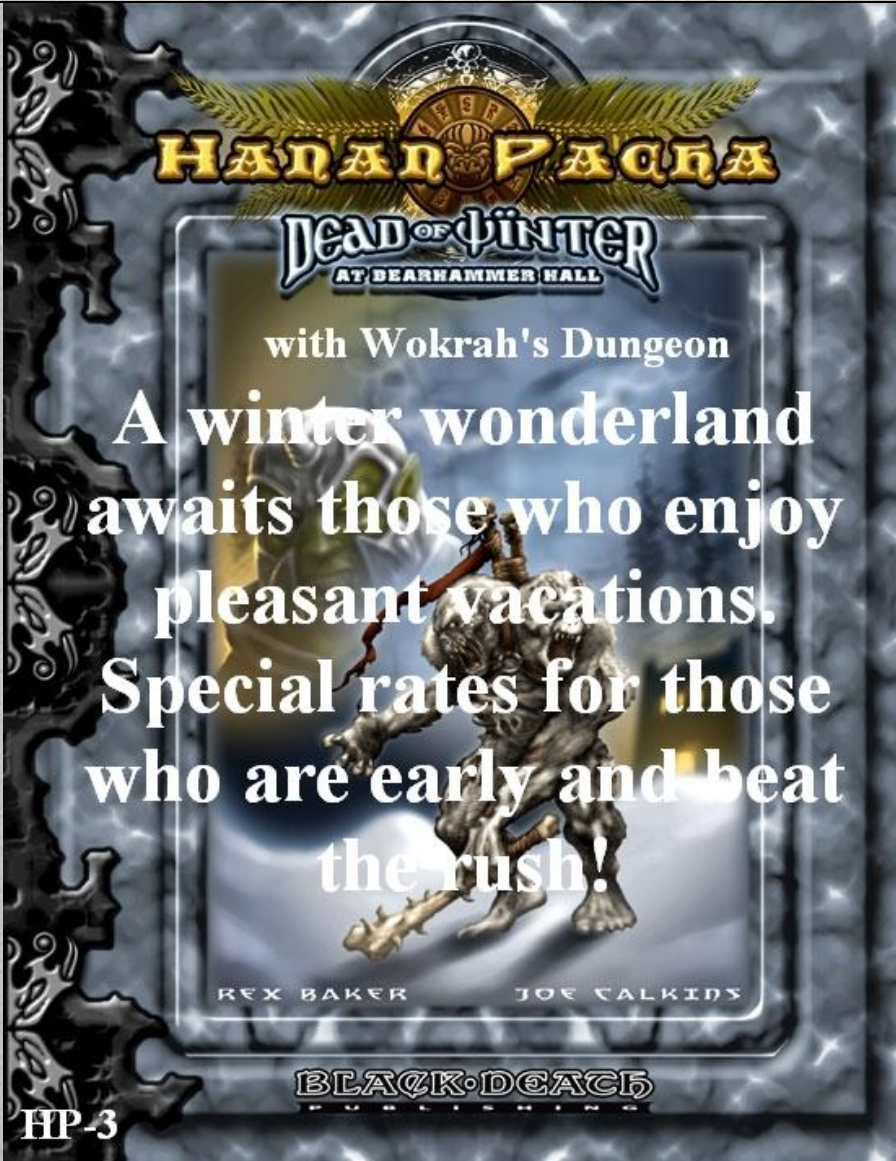
ARMAMENT: UNARMED

SENSORS: PROXIMITY RADAR

COMPUTER: ASKANI A.I.

DRIVE: SOLAR SAIL





НАНД ПАНА

DEAD OF WINTER
AT BEARHAMMER HALL

with Wokrah's Dungeon

A winter wonderland awaits those who enjoy pleasant vacations. Special rates for those who are early and beat the rush!

REX BAKER JOE TALKINS

BLACK DEATH

HP 3

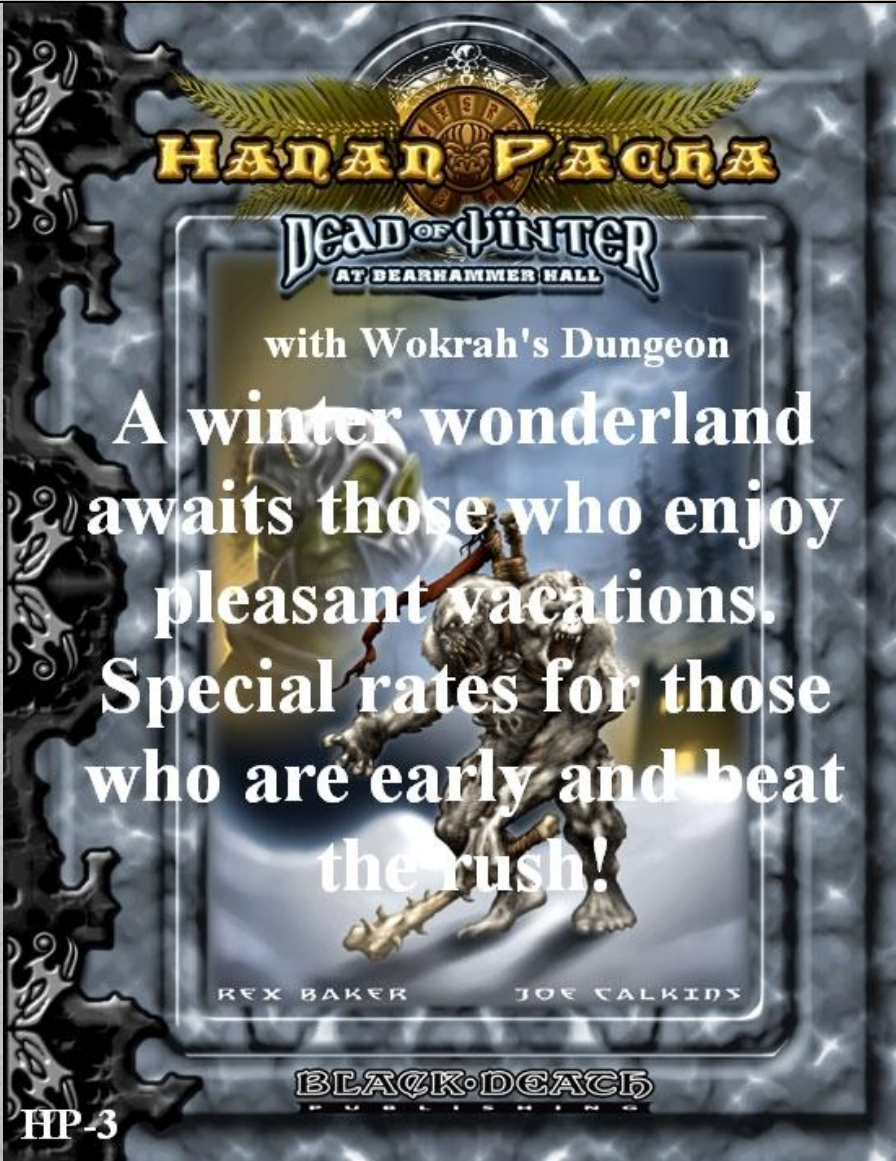
Quest for Inspiration

The Rising Dead!

(Adventure idea) Article by James Holloway

The reformed city of Velensika was built atop an ancient burial complex that was used to entrap the ancient army of necromancers that once ruled this kingdom. They were overthrown by the Shining Order, a conglomerate of many different temples and religions that despised the living dead at the time.

The strongest of the temples, The Temple of Everlasting Enlightenment, laid a magical ritual over the burial complex to ensure no one could enter or leave. After centuries of political strife and religious conflict The Temple of Everlasting Enlightenment has lost so much influence and power that they have just about ceased to exist. Because of this their ritual has begun to weaken and the hordes of the undead once trapped within the earth below the city are now beginning to break free.



НАНД ПАНА

DEAD OF WINTER
AT BEARHAMMER HALL

with Wokrah's Dungeon

A winter wonderland awaits those who enjoy pleasant vacations. Special rates for those who are early and beat the rush!

REX BAKER JOE TALKINS

BLACK DEATH

HP 3

Adventure Review Board

Rating system: (lowest) D4, D6, D8, D10, D12, D20 (highest)
Categories: Story, Complexity, Immersion, Cleverness, Balance

Hanan Pacha – Dead of Winder: At Bearhammer Hall
with Wokrah's Dungeon by Black Death Publishing
(D&D 3.5 Edition, Adventure Module, Review) Article by James Holloway

First Impression

D20 (Very well done)

I have to say at first glance I am intrigued and impressed by the amount of detail that went into the making of this adventure module. The cover art is very well done. It depicts someone with blue skin in the background with white smoke coming from the eyes. In the foreground there is some kind of creepy undead two headed monster. In the background is a green skinned creature wearing a helm. It is bordered by a wonderful marble stone frame. The adventure itself warns on the table of contents page that it is a horror adventure set in a cold mountain area. There are descriptions of legends with titans and giants that used to roam the area.

Prologue

D12 (for creepiness)

It opens with a disturbing note written by a recently deceased undead telling about what happened and how they were turned. It ends with how it wants its life to end.

The Town

D10 (Great Town, but too small)

Whitewater Falls is a small village with just a smattering of buildings. For the most part the town is described extremely well and you get a picture of a small frontier town just scraping by near a mountain range. The only real problem with the village is that for its size it would be difficult to sustain it. Other than that it works great for a small rural town. Each area is set out

very well with descriptions and even little details like the dinner special at the "Fall Inn".

NPCs are well described and seem to have personalities all their own. There is also that sense of a long history and tradition that is hard to capture in many games. Legends abound in Whitewater Falls.

Western Crag Trail

D12 (Great storytelling, few if any decisions for the players)

The journey to Bearhammer Hall is well written and draws you in. Though there is little interaction.

Bearhammer Hall

D20 (Great story, even details on what to reveal and not reveal at this point)

Bearhammer Hall has an interesting setup. There is hardly any combat involved. There are plenty of clues and a few creepy encounters as the party explores this area. The best part is that the adventure describes exactly what to reveal to the players and what not to reveal to build up the suspense. It also has a well illustrated map of Bearhammer Hall and the surrounding area.

March to the Monastery

D10 (The setup is nice, but the journey is a two day journey with little description or character interaction)

The journey to the monastery though uneventful is not described in much detail. There is a nice description of two new races, but these would have been better placed when the party meets the races as opposed to while they are travelling. Other than that, the included encounter is very well described and the players are given a few options on how to deal with it. There is an introduction to two of the factions that reside in the area and the way it is described leaves you guessing what each really is. There is a side trek built into this area that the PCs can explore if they want to take the time. Very good roleplaying opportunities are presented here.

The Mountain of Apu

D12 (The area is described very well, there is a piece of legend that can be read to the players as they approach)

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

The design of the monastery is absolute genius. The way the monks deal with intruders and attackers is very...monk like. Both of the new races are introduced here. Having to flip back and forth to read the descriptions of the races is annoying otherwise this section may have gotten a higher rating. The NPCs in this area are definitely unique and come off as slightly funny (which is the intention) the dialogue is well written and brings the story along nicely. The only real problem is that there are not many choices for the players to make. About the only choice they have is to continue the adventure or not. This is another reason this area did not get a D20 rating. However with that set aside it is a very well done story and brings the next part of the adventure into sharp focus.

I'll cut the review short at this point so as not to spoil the rest of the story. Because the story is very well developed and interesting I give it a rating of D20. The complexity of the module is not so much that it overwhelms, but there are enough twists and turns to keep everyone interested so I give it a D12. The module has a lot of back story and a good detailed world filled with legends, new races, and interesting NPCs for immersion I give it a D10. The module plays out straightforward and the number of choices the players make that actually affect the story are few and far between, but the author put a lot of clever conversation and well thought out encounter so I give a D10 for cleverness. The game seems to be very balanced so for balance I give it a D20.

The total rating for the game is D12 the second highest rating.

Electronic D&D

Rating system: (lowest) D4, D6, D8, D10, D12, D20 (highest)

Beta (or is it?): Wizards of the Coast: Community Site D8

(D&D 4th Edition, Community, WotC) article by James Holloway

Many of the Wizards of the Coast forum goers have had quite a shock happen to them recently. The Forums have been taken down for a week and a whole new shiny community site has been put back up in its place. WotC (Wizards of the Coast) is billing it as a beta of the new community site. Is it really a beta? Let's see what Wikipedia says a beta really is:

...Often this stage begins when the developers announce a feature freeze on the product, indicating that no more feature requirements will be accepted for this version of the product. Only software issues, or bugs and unimplemented features will be addressed....

Now with all of the bugs and annoyances I'm not sure that the WotC Community Site qualifies as a beta. Perhaps "work in progress" or "pre-alpha" would be a better description. Let's go over the features that are available.

- Forums
- Wiki
- Blogs
- Friends
- Private Messaging
- Calendar
- Profile
- Photo
- Video
- Chat

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Now let's take a look at what some of those features offer. The wiki offers community site goers the opportunity to build detailed guides to just about anything from character optimization to entire campaign settings. Of course there are bugs though. Some things can be deleted by anyone, other things can't be changed. If you go to their forums I'm sure you can find a complete list of bugs somewhere.

Blogs are a nice touch. They allow anyone to post a blurb about whatever they want. They even allow the blogger to host polls; of course the polls don't work properly. Once you vote, you can vote as many times as you want, and you are required to vote to see the results, so even if you don't want to skew the results you end up doing that just in order to see the results.

Friends are a great idea. You can contact them and send messages back and forth, except what's this? You can see their activity on the boards. Wow major invasion of privacy. Wait a minute that's not a friend feature. You can click on anyone's profile and see exactly what they've been doing from posting on specific forum threads to adding pictures and videos to their personal space. I'm not sure I'm comfortable with that kind of functionality. Ah now private messaging, here's a feature that seems to work. You click on a person profile then click send message. Type your message and send it off. The calendar would be a wonderful feature to tell your friends when you were available what you were doing and who you were going to be with. If it worked that is. The calendar lets you put an event on it in your personal area, but no one else can see the event on the calendar. The calendars in groups won't allow anyone to see what's going on and they won't allow anyone that is not the creator of the group to add anything.

Profiles would be a great way to make a first impression about other WoTC Community Site goers, except that it shows all of your personal information including what zip you live in. Cyber stalkers this one is for you! They also show every thread you've posted in and everything you've ever done on the site.

Photos seem to work. They allow you to upload a photo and then to insert them into your posts, messages, and blogs with little to no problems. People can even rate your photos and make comments on them. You can delete comments though if they hurt your pride. "That looks like my dog got a hold of a crayon." - delete.

I haven't really had an opportunity to try to upload a video. Mostly because it's a hundred times easier to link YouTube than to try to upload your own video.

Now after having the chat rooms removed for almost a year, they have decided to put it back up. The problem is that it is moderated. Anything you say that is negative about WotC will get you kicked out by the ORCs that reside there.

Then there are the forums. It opened the first day with cries of "ouch my eyes", "no the white", and "black on white is wrong". Then shortly after that "Why is there a sidebar that shows me threads that I don't care about taking up half my screen?", "Why is the sidebar bigger than the thread posts?", and "get rid of this !@#\$ sidebar now or I'm leaving". From there it gets much more entertaining, but we can't repeat most of what's been said. Suffice it to say that WotC pretty much failed on this one.

Because of the potential features and the fact that they billed it as a "work in progress" I'm willing to let it slide up to a rating of D8, otherwise it would get a resounding fail of D6.

Nation States

(Online Game Review) Article by Sean R. Meaney



The Commonwealth of Almagarde

"In Terra Non Rosus Sin Espinus"

Category: Corrupt Dictatorship		
Civil Rights: Below Average	Economy: Imploded	Political Freedoms: Unheard Of

Location: The North Pacific

Regional Influence: Minnow

The Commonwealth of Almagarde is a very large, safe nation, notable for its devotion to social welfare. Its compassionate, cynical population of 136 million are ruled with an iron fist by the dictatorship government, which ensures that no-one outside the party gets too rich. In their personal lives, however, citizens are relatively unoppressed; it remains to be seen whether this is because the government genuinely cares about its people, or if it hasn't gotten around to stamping out civil rights yet.

It is difficult to tell where the omnipresent, corrupt, socially-minded government stops and the rest of society begins, but it is mainly concerned with the Environment, although Education and Social Welfare are on the agenda. The average income tax rate is 76%, and even higher for the wealthy. The private sector is almost wholly made up of enterprising fourteen-year-old boys selling lemonade on the sidewalk, although the government is looking at stamping this out.

All weapon research has been banned, all footpaths have tollbooths, motorists' locations are constantly tracked by intelligence and law enforcement agencies, and a weakened police force struggles to maintain law and order. Crime is relatively low. Almagarde's national animal is the badger, which frolics freely in the nation's many lush forests, and its currency is the florin.

Almagarde is ranked 680th in the region and 23,271st in the world for Largest Defense Forces (per capita).

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

As you can probably see from the Screenshot, I have been doing terribly at it and all I had to do was vote on which laws to enact for Government – harder than it looks. If you get done with just your nation – having a population of 500 million means you can go off and draft issues for others to vote on, and even more entertaining you can join the World Assembly and impose rules on each other. That may seem boring but NATIONSTATES meets the two requirements of a successful online game (as defined by NEWS SCIENTIST magazine): (1) Its Free, and (2) It's all about Social Interaction. As the leader of your nation you can become heavily involved in whatever is going on in your area. *Currently of interest to Almagarde is the Pacific Nations Oil Platform Project which is sucking up oil reserves off the New Zealand Coast-despite the failure potential of Titanium due to low frequency vibration from continuous earthquakes.*

That environmental disaster is just around the corner.

Bugger! I've slipped to Corrupt Dictatorship!!!

Want to start your own country? <http://www.nationstates.net>



Character Development

How to Tweak Your Tyrant

(Any System, NPC, How-To) Article by Sean R. Meaney

Madesawa grovelled on the ground before his enthroned Monarch until his master spoke. The old voice of the Lord knelt beside him with the aid of his staff.

"You have displeased me greatly, Madesawa." The voice of the Lord echoed in his ear.

"When I instructed you to slay the Queen-Mother, I thought I had made myself clear." The old man leaning on the staff coughed, and Masedawa could feel the wet spray of blood against his ear.

"No more Insults Madesawa. Your failure makes me look foolish in the eyes of my Ministers." The Voice of the Lord withdrew and Madesawa was grappled by the Kings Guards.

"No! Wait! Please!" Madesaw screamed. The boy on the throne could only stare blankly as they dragged Madesawa away.

If you are looking for something to tweak your local cookie cutter Monarch into a realistic authority figure that Players will fear angering then add a few of the following points to your Monarch's Profile. Pretty soon, you will have them prostrating themselves before the King.

1. MONARCHICAL ABSOLUTISM. The King or independent Chief enjoys absolute power.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

2. EMINENT DOMAIN. All land, Livestock, and Game are the property of the monarch providing a right to income.
3. DIVINE AUTHORITY. The Ruler is a divine power or has access to divine Power.
4. RITUAL ISOLATION. The Monarch resides in physical isolation with a few attendants to do the Monarchs Bidding. Meetings involve acts of isolation by curtains, designated speakers,
5. INSIGNIA OF OFFICE. Royal status is displayed through symbolic regalia,
6. CAPITAL TOWNS. The Monarch resides in a capital and new rulers establish a new capital or residence.
7. ROYAL COURTS. The Monarch maintains a Court with assorted specialized staff. Pages, guards, chamberlains, etc.
8. PROTOCOL. Behaviour in the presence almost universally requires conformity to a process of behaviour. Indirect Interaction, Gifts, Abject Prostration, etc.
9. HAREMS. The ruler has a great many wives and or concubines.
10. QUEENS. At most royal courts a queen mother, a queen consort, a Queen Sister enjoy prestige sometimes outranking the Monarch. They will likely have their own estates and enjoy some political authority.
11. TERRITORIAL BUREACRACY. For Administrative purposes, the state is divided into administrative provinces with their own officials tasked with taxation and labour management. Such provinces will be subordinate to a central authority.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

12. **MINISTERS.** Located in the Capital they work as assistants to the Monarch in the central Bureaucracy.
13. **DUALITY OF ROLES.** Ministers function in an assortment of areas of the bureaucracy.
14. **TITLES.** Hereditary or Term of Service.
15. **SECURITY.** Rivals for the throne are killed, imprisoned, or deported to maintain stability.
16. **ELECTORAL SUCCESSION.** Though the Monarch designates an Heir, the final say is in the hands of ministers.
17. **PERIOD OF MOURNING.** After the death of the Monarch. A period of social disorder occurs when candidates vie for power.
18. **HECATOMB.** Funerary Rites for a Monarch include acts of sacrifice, sometimes large scale slaughter.

Example – A Kobold Chief named Topek suddenly has a style all his own: *Topek the Cunning expects a gift of blue stones when visitors come before him. His Advisors wear wooden Masks at court, and he had to hand-carve his own throne from a block of sandstone as a rite of Passage. Topek is all about courtly ceremony and ritual.*

- *Covered with a leather hide is an open stone box of blue stones next to a large piece of Sandstone carved with scratches and what could be a skull. When Topek the Cunning is present, his advisors stand behind him wearing wooden masks.*

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Want to learn more? [G. E. Lenski, 'Power and Privilege', 1966] discusses the progress of Society from Hunter-Gatherer to the Industrial Age.



Curious Expedition

Curious Goings on in the Small Hamlet of Visasil (Side Quest, D&D 4th Edition, Adventure) Article by James Holloway

Visasil

The small hamlet of Visasil is home to many curious people. The small town life of this village can be quite entertaining to an outsider. The hamlet of Visasil is tucked away in the valley formed by two large hills or small mountains that V off to the southwest and southeast. The area provides poor mining and farming so this village hasn't grown very much in the past several hundred years.

People of Note

Velavian Furlmaster – Velavian is the town constable, and ensures the peace is kept. Velavian likes to wear the color green and is usually wearing a faded green cloak over an aqua-green tunic and grass green baggy pants that are tucked neatly into his forest green boots, he is always seen with a smile and says hello anytime someone passes by. By nature Velavian is outgoing and talkative, but when problems crop up he has a very keen instinct on why people act the way they do. Velavian values the peace that he brings to the town of Visasil; his sole motivation is to keep everyone happy. When travelers visit Visasil, Velavian kindly inquires as to why they are visiting Visasil, he knows when to be soft to the villagers and when a heavier hand is needed to get things back on course. Velavian knows most of the townspeople's secrets, this is because he has to deal with the people every day and has observed many odd habits that they have. When talking, he uses flourishes and fancy turns of phrase to entertain while getting an idea across.

Ravilia Falarn – Ravilia is the owner of "The Fair Goose" the only tavern in the entire village. Ravilia is a thin Tiefling woman that wears a shawl over her head partially hiding her hornlike protrusions; she has a gleam in her eye when money is mentioned. Ravilia has a keen business sense, which has let her stay profitable even in this backwater village; she also seems to have a

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

sixth sense when someone is lying to her. Ravilia is running from a past. She used to be a powerful warlock until she ran afoul of the being she made a pact with, only after a long and grueling ritual and help from some friends was she able to escape, though she is powerless now. She still fears that her pact will claim her soul, so she occasionally does a kind act when it appears she wouldn't. She mainly keeps quiet and listens to what others have to say, she learns more this way.

Beren GoldWater – The town blacksmith a burly Eladrin exiled by his people for his love of metalwork.

That's it for this month. Next month we will take a look at some more of the inhabitants of Visasil.



Rowan's Weekend

An unlikely adventure

(Short Story, Fantasy, Mature Content) Sean R. Meaney

Rowan stalked the night-shrouded street with a new purpose. The black eye he had gained in a tavern brawl earlier in the evening was still causing him pain.

"Never again..." The hangover from his night of indulgence was entering one of the painful stages. Rowan crushed his eye as he moved to hold his aching head giving a yelp of the pain in the process. How many tankards had he put back? He couldn't remember. The pain was terrible. He remembered how many.

The assassin on the roof across the street fired his crossbow. Rowan stumbled drunkenly and fell to his Knees. The thug in the alleyway was not expecting to be struck in the heart by a crossbow bolt, the assassin, manoeuvring on the icy roof shingles for that second shot, slid at the worst possible moment taking a quarrel in the chest. As both corpses ate gravel, Rowan surged up and staggered onward in to the dark.

"Bloody drunks, Can't hold their liquor..."

Rowan stumbled into another tavern, stepping over the various unconscious patrons lying in the doorway. His cry for more of the stronger stuff and a quick accusation that the rest was watered dog piss revitalized a group of brawling tavern-goers. Rowan's tavern crawl ended in the early hours of the morning after extended visits to six more taverns and a number of fatally bungled mugging attempts. The locals were showing a severe lack of ability in holding their drink.

The Sun was just rising as Rowan stumbled in through the open doorway of an old wooden structure that seemed a bit different from the rest of this termite riddled shantytown. Mrs Ketlan's boarding house was a flyspeck of purity in the western quarter of a cesspool of a city. Mrs Ketlan was a stalwart, swarthy, raven-haired wench in her mid forties. So she wasn't one of the best looking women in the city let alone the cosmos. Actually she was close to demonically ugly however, in his pissed state Rowan felt like committing suicide and gave her behind a quick slap of approval. The meat

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

cleaver spun swiftly from her hand as Rowan dove for the safe side of the hallway. The thug hiding in the shadows across the street checked twice to be sure that his vitals were intact. The large cleaver had shaved hair from his inner thigh. Guthrie the knife dropped his crossbow and vowed to leave the city. He couldn't take this kind of stress any more. At the height of his reform a pair of muggers jumped him. They stole his crossbow.

Mrs Ketlan cornered Rowan in the stairway.

"Now where in the bloody hell have you been my boy? Out at some orgy no doubt, and you're drunk." She gave him a clip behind the ear.

"Bloody Sorcerers... never should be aloud in the city. Cause nothing but trouble." Rowan was a little hard of hearing as he stumbled up the stairs, fumbled with the lock and fell through the doorway into his room.

Rowan had no realistic idea of how long he had slept but the sun was casting the usual red pigment to the air so he assumed it was evening. Odd thing was that it made the room look cleaner.

"This isn't my bloody room!" He was right. The door slammed open and there, shrouded in a veil of light stood Janna Murell, light glistening of her raven hair and naked tattoo covered body. This defiantly complimented the blood dripping from her hands and mouth. How flamboyant of her.

"Rowan. You once said you loved me." Her hair cascaded across her shoulders with a life of its own.

"Rowan," her voice took a colder tone. Every chunk of ice within a hundred leagues felt a severe desire for a warm blanket and a cup of hot tea.

"If you truly love me, then join me and fight for the dark mage. If not, you can die." A sudden chill ran down Rowan's spine. He suddenly realized that he was as naked as the lady in front of him. He lifted the blanket from the bed and cloaked him self in it.

It's like this Janna. No chance. Rowan threw himself out the second storey window. The glass panes exploded into a thousand shards. Rowan fell to the street in a cloud of debris shattering his left arm as he hit ground.

As he struggled to his feet, Janna emerged onto the street.

"Thus you have made your choice Rowan, and thus you must die." Her hair swirled and waved with energy. She lifted her hands and the world around them fell apart. A shadow fiend stepped from the darkest recesses of the street. Deciding that he had one course of action, Rowan rushed Janna.

"Kill him!" Rowan struck with speed and strength. The swift blow to her

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

head and she collapsed to the ground. The shadow continued to advance. "Oh shit! I'm going to die." Rowan plunged down an insignificant lane only to find it was a dead end. He lost all grip on reality as the fiend advanced down the alleyway in pursuit. The only thought on this creature's mind was food. Rowan unleashed with a volley of magic.

The volley resulted in a flash of light and a loud bang.

For some reason Rowan was now sitting in a pool of muddy water covered in the incinerated remains of what had been a blanket.

Rowan struggled to his feet, only to notice that he was under the watchful scrutiny of two well-attired young ladies of the upper classes.

The first fainted while the second screamed.

"Guards!" Four tall professionals emerged from the house with their weapons drawn. The young lady on the ground roused momentarily by the summons glimpsed once again at the rag-covered form that was Rowan and fainted.

"Oh do stop that Elanora, we know you do it for the attention."

Elanora lifted her head from the ground and gave her sister a sour look of disappointment. She struggled to stand in her heavy dress, brushing furiously at a stain.

"If you ladies don't mind, I think it might be appropriate to acquire some clothing." Rowan was struggling to maintain his modesty behind a shrub of poor foliage. His arm was hurting again. The lady in authority nodded to a guard who quickly retreated to the house.

"Are you some rogue who ravages young maidens?" Elanora's line of enquiry earned the young woman a quick flick to her ear, which caused her to yelp in pain.

"Ouch! Cassandra, what did you do that for?" Cassandra pointed at the house and Elanora, after a last inspection of Rowan's partially concealed form, complied with instructions.

The guard returned with an off white robe which he handed to Cassandra. It took a while for Rowan to convince the lady present to look in another direction as he shed the rags he was covered in and pulled on the robe. Partially satisfied, Cassandra shifted into interrogation mode.

"All right, now just who are you and what were you doing on these premises in such an ill clad manor?" Rowan drew up a quick excuse of semi plausibility and then boldly lied.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

"Well there I was, just minding my own business when boom, the building explodes and wham, there I is sitting shocked by the experience and totally naked in the dirt as it were. It came as a complete surprise."

The shadow struggled to move as the light dissipated into the evening. The fiend looked about for its prey. Gone. It examined the wall and jerked back. The light from a burning torch gave it pain. Prey was there. Others were there too. The fiend focused on the wall and slowly pushed through the gaps in the mortar, exiting into the garden, Rowan cried a warning.

"Run for your lives!" The crowd broke for the house but the fiend was already upon them rending and tearing it the guards as though they had the consistency of smoke. Light and fire burst forth from Rowan's hands and the shadow fell away into the nothingness as light hammered at it. The sky, the very air had exploded with the fury of a sun, lighting up the city.

Cassandra's lily-white skin had emerged from the exchange with a full body tan that reached beyond the dense layers of her gown. She struggled to climb to her feet as Rowan moved to provide her with some assistance.

"My apologies, spur of the moment action. Hope you are not injured."

Cassandra fainted.

Cassandra woke with a sudden feeling of shock. She touched her singed hair. Then she noticed Rowan, his broken arm had been set and strapped.

"You! Wizard." Cassandra gritted her teeth and struck Rowan's arm with a forceful blow, which caused him to wail with pain.

"And stop whining you pathetic excuse for a magician. You have brought death and destruction to this

Household." Cassandra stumbled. The evening's combat had burnt the heels from her boots.

"My boots! You destroyed MY BOOTS! You wheezily little excuse for a man, no one stuffs about with the Winterdors. Do you understand me?" Her yell was a tyrannical screech. Elanora who had just entered the room, halted in stunned silence. Rowan revealed a face of twisted pain. Elanora fled the room before she was discovered.

It was a while before the noise of conflict vanished from the guest bedroom and Elanora, curious as to the reason behind the peace, penetrated the silent room. Cassandra was sitting on the bed, holding a glowing rose. She was smiling. The wizard was nowhere to be found.

"He's a wonderful wizard. Gave me this, kissed me, and flew away.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Wonderful. Did I tell you that?" Outside, the sound of something heavy falling from a great height followed by a flurry of harsh words echoed towards the window.

Cassandra sighed, got up from the bed and walked out the door with the rose. Elanora rushed to the window and looked out at the night-shrouded grounds. Rowan crawled out of a destroyed hedge and returned to owl form, flying on into the night.

"Aw, how come I miss out on the nice ones? And he's a wizard. It isn't fair." Greatly disappointed, Elanora slammed the shutters closed and left the room in a sulk.

Rowan shifted into human form as he reached the alleyway behind the Red Griffon tavern. This spooked a couple of muggers who ran out into the street. A squad of the city watch, a pack of thugs and murderers themselves, fell upon the duo. The skirmish finished quickly as the watch exited the dispute with a hand full of silver, several pair of boots and some above average clothing. The muggers didn't complain as a stray mongrel chose to believe itself upon their persons. The watch moved on. Rowan entered through the side door. The roof was low and the taproom was thick with a smoke that made Rowan's

eyes water with pain. As taverns went, this crowd was the vilest pack of vermin he had the misfortune to meet. A tall fellow in a corner was speaking. "Bernardo, Tonight's brew is the best I've tasted in months. What happened? You steal it from the rich quarter?" An ugly brute behind the bar spoke out across the gloom.

"No. Last night I got drunk and pissed in the barrel." A number of patrons moaned like sick drunks.

"Well, it certainly improved the flavour." The Fellow in the corner took another drink of his mug. Others laughed and drank up.

Rowan strolled to the bar and slapped a gold mark on the counter. That would get him the good stuff until he couldn't drink without it being poured down his throat by the pink rabbit that stalked the edge of every drunk's mind. The large mug of ale he was handed was busy going through some unknown chemical reaction. Unidentifiable chunks were surfacing and sticking to the edge. One chunk in particular had sprouted legs and was attempting to climb out. Rowan took a long hard drink and slipped off his bench seat. Strong Brew. He drank what was left, sifting fungus between his

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

teeth as he went.

"So Bernardo! How are you on this droll evening?" He quickly looked at the pink bunny that laughed at him from the corner of the room. Big Bastard. Someone will get you yet.

"Fine noble Sire." Bernardo dropped into a whisper. "Janna was in earlier. Looking for you, she was."

"Ah. Thought she might. I'd best be on the lookout for her and her associates." Rowan glanced about the taproom with suspicion. There in the haze filled corner a stranger in heavy black robes appeared to be looking in the direction of the bar.

"Yes. That one showed up just after Janna left. me thinks he is watching for you my friend.' Bernardo poured ale and passed it to Rowan.

"Take a look at his face." Rowan reached into his robe and touched the amulet about his neck. It

was warm to the touch. He concentrated on the stranger in the corner.

"Now, what did you see?" Rowan looked into Bernardo's face.

"A red star reflected back from his left eye." Bernardo had a look of concern on his face.

"Well, that's it then. I think he knows I'm here, time to spring the trap."

Rowan started to climb off his seat.

"His trap or yours, my friend? The stranger also moves." The stranger stood up from his table.

"Why Bernardo, Mine of course. Now you might want to take cover for this will get very messy, very quickly. And pass me that dagger of yours."

Rowan concealed the weapon against his wrist. He eyed Bernardo and turned to face the taproom.

"Are you ready my friend?" A quick gaze about the room was all it took. The patrons knew something was afoot. Hands edged towards weapons. Tension thickened as Rowan drew up to a full height. The cloaked one looked about the room. He too was aware of the danger of a wrong move. Warily he pulled a charred black staff from the shadows of his robes and headed for the tavern door.

The shadowy one paused at the door and hurled a ball of fire towards the bar. There was a disturbance as patrons in the path dived from their upturned tables. Rowan held out his left hand and gestured. The ball of fire never reached him. Instead it became a small marble of light, glowing as it

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

sailed the remaining distance to his open hand. The shadow mage paled. Things were not working, as they should have. Rowan smiled and the mage whacked out the tavern door and exited into the street. Rowan flicked the small sphere towards the door and it flew after the fleeing mage.

"Amateurs; they're sending amateurs after me. I feel insulted." Rowan snorted into his ale as the sound of a loud explosion and a scream of primal agony echoed in from the street. The patrons had righted their tables and the merriment continued into the night.

Rowan finished his second ale, bid his friends farewell, and staggered out into the street. He narrowly sidestepped the smouldering remains of the cloaked mage and his pink bunny companion.

"Told you so you pink bastard." He indecisively took a deep breath and felt sick from the foul stench in the air. Rowan hurried down the narrow street. It was difficult to pin down the sensation he was feeling. Rowan looked back up the road. Something was wrong.

Must have been too much water in the ale. Rowan did an about face to retrace his steps. The street he had walked down moments ago was now a small, dark curio shop. A nasty thought dropped into Rowan's mind. Oh shit! I've entered the shadow guild quarter. The Dark mage will get me for sure. A noise. Movement. I'm a dead man now. It was Janna. With her stood the Dark Mage. He was smiling, good.

"You were a fool to fall for such a simple illusion. For shame! I so expected more from you but then, the Talon have always proven easy to dominate." Shan grasped Janna by the throat and licked the side of her face.

"It took so little to turn her, to break her, to set her free. In the end she begged to be mine." Shan smiled at her nakedness. She smiled at Rowan. Rowan drew himself up.

"Even here I have the power to take you dark one. Arrogant are you to think that I should enter this place unprepared."

One bluff. Better make it a good one. The dark one ceased to smile. Wish I had Bernardo's blade with me. No matter.

"You were observed since you entered the tavern. You took no preparations." Shan felt surer of himself.

"Not all actions are observable. Now, when you feel up to it, let's get it on." Rowan spat at Shan's boots. The dirt exploded in fire as the gob of spittle landed slightly short. The dark mage took a step back and the shadows at the

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

edge of the street wavered.

"Illusions!" Janna laughed. "Such foolishness will not save you." Rowan stepped forward and Janna retreated behind Shan.

"The end has come for you, Rowan. Even now I weave the path of predators." Rowan could feel the magical energy around him, through him, twisting the fabric of reality, re-weaving all that is into that which must not be.

"You fool Shan! Not even old Thrain himself would weave this pattern into the fabric." There was much energy in the weaving. Shan had added his life force to the weave.

"Thrain is an old man and I choose to reach beyond his weaknesses." Shan continued the focusing of his spell. Shadows darkened the sky. Rowan watched in horror as the form of great wolves wove them selves from the nothingness.

Janna came at him with a knife. Rowan sidestepped the attack and snatched the weapon from her hand.

Janna was thrown off balance and landed face down in the dirt. Rowan struck her across the back of the head and she went limp. The weaving was almost complete.

One chance. The throw was good as the blade gouged the dark mage across the cheek. It had been enough. The pain broke his focus and he screamed. His body erupted in an inferno of energy. There was nothing left to hit the ground. The problem became obvious. The wolves were still forming. The city was alight. What to do? Janna woke.

"What has happened?" She spotted the wolves. Her mind went wild with the terror of the moment.

"There is no time to explain. I must form the barrier tree before the wolves are loosed upon this reality. You must complete the final weaving." A brew-house exploded somewhere on the far side of the city. He passed Janna his cloak.

"You might need this. Now we begin." Rowan focused on the necessary weaving of thought.

"Goodbye Rowan." Janna focused in on his way of thought and he was no more. In his place stood a young sapling of some wood that was more real than any tree known. The wolves howled in pain and began to dissipate, the shadows in the sky fell away to reveal the stars and the moon.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Janna looked at her naked, tattooed form and smiled. A group of peasants fleeing the inferno of the trader's quarter hurried past. Janna grabbed one by the throat.

"Where are you going?" Her inquiry was more of a threat than a question. The sub human struggled in her grasp.

"We're fleeing the city on account of the fire." Janna took stock of the situation.

"No you're not! You and you're little friends will Fill some buckets with water and go find some burning building to throw it on or I will feed you to my pet Fiend. Do we have an understanding?" The peasant struggled to say yes as the grip on his neck tightened and she lifted him off the ground. His friends trembled in fear at her strength.

The first volunteers departed to find as many buckets as possible. Janna stared at the tree that was once Rowan.

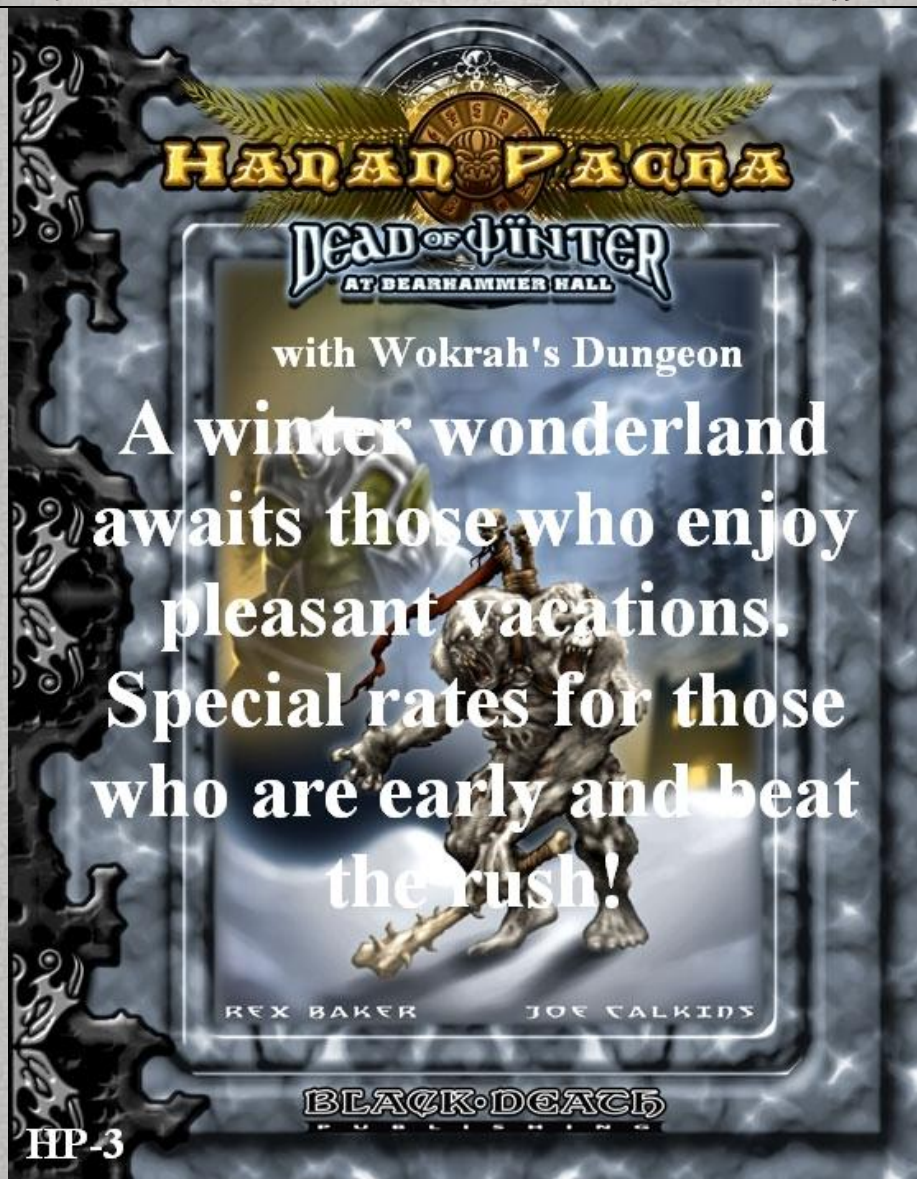
"You men! Always fighting to see who gets to be the big dog. Never realizing that the bitch in the den is the real ruler of the pack." Janna smiled at the memory of Shan.

I never begged for that which would be mine. Janna focused on the tree.

"And if you think that fool Thrain will oppose me, I had him by for lunch."

Janna whetted her bloodstained lips and kissed a leaf on the tree depositing a red mark.

The palace was probably a nice place to rest. Queen Janna. Has a nice ring to it. I can give it a try for a Few centuries to see how it feels. Queen Janna became an owl and flew towards the palace.



НАНД ПАОНА

DEAD OF WINTER
AT DEARHAMMER HALL

with Wokrah's Dungeon

A winter wonderland
awaits those who enjoy
pleasant vacations.
Special rates for those
who are early and beat
the rush!

REX BAKER JOE CALKINS

BLACK DEATH

HP-3

Skill Conduit Contest

Getting a Message to the King in the Middle of the Royal Ball

(Skill Conduit Contest, D&D 4th Edition)

Article by James Holloway

“The king sits upon his throne his queen whispering in his ear. Standing between them and you are a mass of dancing nobles and royalty. You must not let on that something is amiss or all your activities up to this point were for naught. How will you get past everyone and still get the message to his royalty in time?”

For information on how to run a Skill Conduit Contest see the supplement Skill Conduit Contest from Dark Spire©.

<i>Getting a Message to the King</i>	
Level 1	550xp
Skills – Diplomacy 18, Acrobatics 15, Stealth 20	
Situations	
Elven Grace	Elves, Eladrin, and half-elves get a +2 bonus to diplomacy checks because of their long training in etiquette
Formal Dress	Any character that is cleaned up and wearing clothing of an expensive nature gains a +2 to diplomacy checks
Royal Background	A character with a background that involves living in a royal or noble household gains a +2 to acrobatics checks.
Circumstances	
Conspiracy	A character whose alignment is good or better (or who appears to be good or better) is stopped by Lord Jermigian who begins to talk about a conspiracy plaguing the court. The player can succeed at a DC 14 streetwise check to see if they can keep up in the conversation. If they succeed Lord Jermigian escorts that character to the throne (automatically succeed at two checks). If they choose to ignore the conversation or excuse themselves from it, they get a -2 to

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

	diplomacy checks as Lord Jermigian begins to spread rumours' about them being part of the conspiracy.
Flirting	One character with a charisma of 16 or higher is cornered by either Lady Eowin, or Baron Vaginar who proceeds to inquire about romantic interests and who they currently fancy at the court. If they make a DC 15 insight check they can realize that they are being flirted with and can express a disinterest and get away increasing their total checks to succeed by one. If they try to get away, they will be cornered again shortly by all of either Lady Eowin's or Baron Vaginar's rivals and proceeded to be held up, increasing their total checks by two.
Suspicion	Any character concealing or carrying a weapon is stopped by one of the royal elite guards. They proceed to drag the character back to the beginning and won't let them in without removing their weapon. This causes the character to get a -6 to their next check.
Conduits	
Along the wall	A character may proceed along the wall and avoid most of the dancing participants. Their base checks are 6 to get to the King, and they get a +2 to acrobatic checks.
Weaving through the crowd	A character may proceed through the crowd of talking and dancing royalty, however their base checks are 5 and they get no penalties or bonuses.
Straight to the King	A character may choose to walk straight to the king. This is the most difficult thing to do and look ordinary and not suspicious while doing it. The characters base checks are 4. They however get a -4 to all checks.
Victory Conditions	
Failed checks	If a character makes three failed checks in a row, they are told they are making a disruption and are asked by the royal guards to leave.
Number of checks	If the characters make less than 8 checks without meeting the above condition they make their way to the king and are able to whisper the message in his ear. They Succeed

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

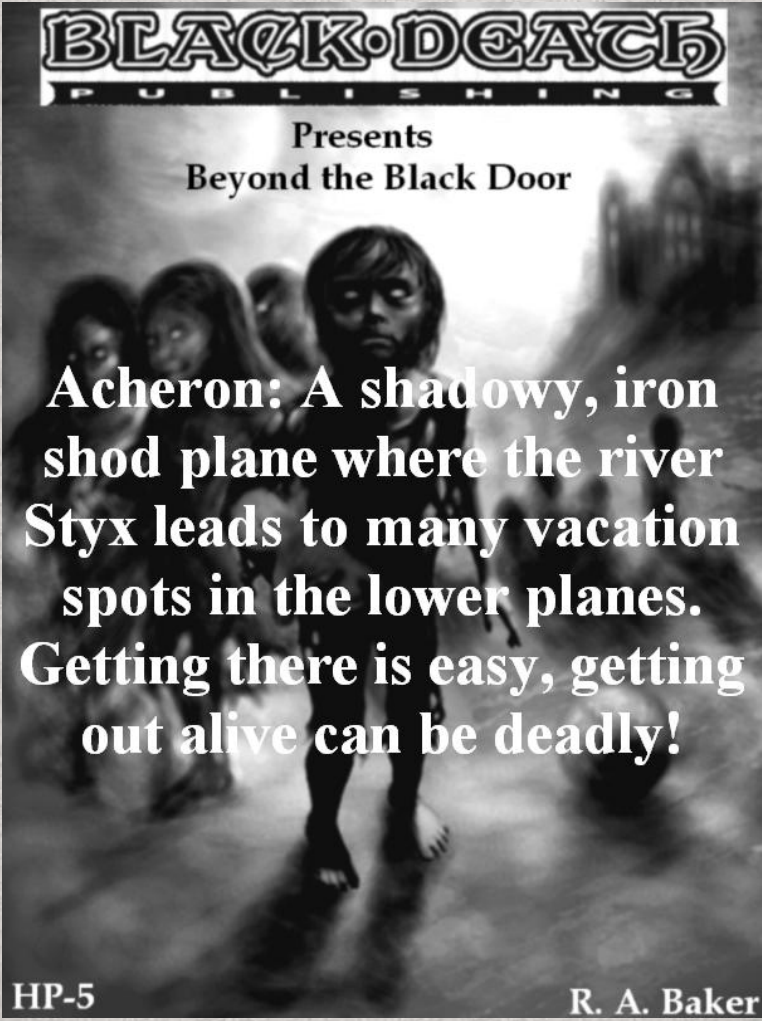
Otherwise

Otherwise they are unable to reach the king without making a scene. The King and Queen enjoy their formal ceremonies, so they will detain the party until the ball is over losing the party any advantage they would have had.

BLACK DEATH

PUBLISHING

Presents
Beyond the Black Door



Acheron: A shadowy, iron shod plane where the river Styx leads to many vacation spots in the lower planes. Getting there is easy, getting out alive can be deadly!

HP-5

R. A. Baker

Dark

103

Spire

Other Worlds than These

The Golden Age of Sci-Fi RPG Part II

(Any Sci-fi, Adventure Ideas) Article by Sean R. Meaney

Welcome back to part two of our Golden Age of Sci-fi RPG series revealing the joys of adventuring on the STARSHIP WARDEN.

-SPIDERWOOD CYCLE SEASON 2-

27. A CLOSE ENCOUNTER (part 1)

Turku watched the BOT take its alien prize through the hatch of an undesignated lab. Even from this distance, Turku and his companions could see the strange wonders concealed within.

"Turku?" Lydia Enwod spoke up.

"I dont know how but I know that we need to investigate that lab."

NEM001 nodded in agreement.

DM Briefing: The Warband encounter the Shadowlab during their travels. They are drawn to the alien tech within.

28. A CLOSE ENCOUNTER (part 2)

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Turku Enwood held his intestines in, struggling to remain concious. NEM001 had put his weapon to the head of Lydia Enwood/WEAPON OFFICER 147.

"Now I dont want to have to kill you. Turku here loves his mother so I am loath to burn your brains out for the simple fact that you share her body."

"So I'm going to give you a chance to live."

WO147 was developing a fondness for life. Lydia Enwood/WO147nodded in agreement.

NEM001 Didnt notice the Alien Nanoware infesting his ear canal.

"You still alive Turku?" NEM001 glanced in the direction of his only friend in the room.

"Yeah!"

DM Briefing: Trapped in the Shadowlab, the warband find a traitor in their midst. Unfortunately due to circumstances, they cannot kill them so an uneasy alliance must be formed if all are to survive.

Within the Shadowlab, there are strange and terrible things of alien splendour (the DM should go nuts).

29. A CLOSE ENCOUNTER (part 3)

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

"Is this thing on? ATTENTION! YOU ARE NOW THE MINIONS OF THE SHAKL!" The voice came from NEM001 but the words were unfamiliar to Turku.

"Nem?" Lydia/WO147 grabbed Turku's arm as he reached out to his Cyborg companion.

"I don't think so." WO147 had a sneaking suspicion that the Cyborg had unleashed Alien Nano machines during their earlier struggle. This simply confirmed her suspicions.

Before their Eyes the Cyborg NEM001 was transformed into a terrible half-machine predator. The human called Nem was devoured by his artificial systems.

"NEM!" Turku Screamed at the destruction of his friend.

"Run." WO147/Lydia Enwood snatched up a pair of Alien weapons and burned through the door revealing the vast transit framework that supported the movement of the Shadowlab and jumped out into the darkness. Turku, suffering and in pain, followed.

DM Briefing: Something terrible is unleashed in the Shadowlab. All Cyborgs (even partials with bionic systems) and robots are infected by an alien Nanomachine referred to as SHAKL. They are transformed into killing machines. The only way for rest of the party to survive this is to burn their way out of the lab and climb to safety through the ship superstructure.

30. HOLYWAR

NEM THE DESTRUCTOR, MINION OF SHAKL pursued the two faint scent trails down the Corridor. The trail ended at a hatchway.

Burning through the hatch he was confronted by something insane. The GAAL.

The GAAL was disturbed by the encounter. It absorbed the entity known as NEM THE DESTRUCTOR and reacted with aggression to the Alien NANO.

Every trace of this Alien would have to be destroyed. The Universe wasn't big enough for the both of them.

DM Briefing: The GAAL encounter the SHAKL and war for Universal dominance begins.

31. INTO THE HEAT

WEAPONS OFFICER 223 stepped into the rapidtransit with the others. She had been designated MC according to the DATAPACKET.

"Heads up to you new people. Let me see your eyes." The clones clutching their weapons looked in the MC's direction.

"We are up against some sort of nano that apparently transforms cyberenhanced and bots into potential troops." WO 223 breathed out.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

"Our mission is to recon habitat area 27, take out any of these MINION OF SHAKL that show up, and hold our position till the people up top can back us with foothold support." WO 217 checked his flamer.

The rapidtransit halted at the recreation deck and the doors slid back.

"OK people, this is it." WO 223 stepped out onto the platform.

SURI THE DESTROYER was on her immediatly. Her flesh ripped from her face and she fell back into the rapidtransit in one twitching moment. WO 181 opened with his chaingun, cutting through WO 223 and the MINION OF SHAKL in a wave of the weapon.

WO 217 stepped cautiously over the two corpses and spotted the next hostile. WO 181 staggered out behind him to provide support.

Slowly the squad moved into the infested urban megaplex.

DM Briefing: The CLONE unit is deployed to habitat area 27- an urban community that once was dominated by game arcades, and shops. There are currently a dozen MINION OF THE SHAKL through the area, and several uninfected bots in a storage/maintenance area which will if infected double their current numbers.

32. TUNNELRATS

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

WO 101 crawled through the sewer pipe.

The smell was beyond foul but he figured it would get him into the target area without a direct confrontation with the MINION OF SHAKL that controlled the ground between.

WO 101 struggled to keep the nuclear initiator above the biowaste. Get in, Set the nuke, get out. WO 101 pushed forward through the waste.

On the surface, HURN THE HUNTER noticed his radiological proximity alarm activate.

A single thought echoed amongst the MINION...WE-GOT-NUKES.

HURN moved to find it before it went off.

DM Briefing: CLONES are sent through the sewers to deploy a tactical nuke into the heart of a MINION OF SHAKL nest.

33. THE PACKET

OUR POSITION IS OVERRUN.
NEED SUPPORT.
OUR POSITION IS GRID ONE FIV...

The message ended abruptly.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

WO 121 looked up from the MPR (MISSIONPACKETREADER).

"Well They need help and we are going to give it to them. Lock and Load."

The unit powered up their armor and jumped from the top of Tower Six to an adjacent building.

DM Briefing: The unit receives a packet from another unit requesting support. The MINION of SHAKL presence consists of DURN THE DEVOURER and six Bots.

34. AFTERMATH

WO147/Lydia Enwood held her newborn to her. Nem Enwood, Son of Nem Wiltwood struggled to feed.

Turku was disgusted that the dark personality that had inhabited his Mother would seduce his friend.

Turku shook his head and pushed out through the hatch access to RECREATION AREA 36B.

Home at last.

Turku and his "mother" pushed through the darkness of Spiderwood and out into the open farmland of their Village.

"Well squish me!" A thriving community populated by strangers lay before them.

DM Briefing: Time has progressed. The Community they left behind has been restocked by others. These intruders have come from RECREATION AREA 36A on the other side of the ship. They were driven out by a small army of robots who are fortifying their hold on the starboard side of the Ship.

35. HOLYWAR (PART 2)

They met now on fields bloody and drowned. Mighty factions unleashed in a confusing and shifting maze-works.

The MINION OF THE SHAKL, deformed and transformed, the CYBORGS, the BOTS, all trapped in beastly servitude.

The GAAL, having lost none of its need to survive, engaged with its own forces. Having assimilated control of so much, it absorbed, learned, and Survived. But only barely as its opponent found its weaknesses and vulnerabilities. It deployed its own BOTS and CLONES to the battlefields.

DM Briefing: The Ship-wide WAR has escalated thanks to the expanding forces of the GAAL, and the SHAKL. The major corridors of movement have become conflict zones.

THE SHIP, struggling with its own problems, begins to deploy CLONE

personnel to the conflict regions not knowing why it had lost control of its BOTS.

36. MESSAGE FROM THE FRONT

The Powered Armour hummed with damage as its occupant struggled up the access and out into the deep of Spiderwood.

Manur, long from his home staggered into the field and laughed to himself at the sight of terrified farmers. Is that how he and the others had appeared to the CLONES who had come that fateful day?

He barely recognised Turku Enwood as the green young man who ran toward him with the Laser weapon.

Manur cracked the helmet.

"Greetings Farmer Enwood." Manur smiled.

"Greetings FIELD-SCOUT Manur." Turku lowered his pistol and smiled.

DM Briefing: One of the Farmers long lost since the very beginning of their adventures shows up in Powered Armour. He reports having been involved in the ongoing conflict against the GAAL and the SHAKL.

37. ZOOT SUIT

SALIS THE BLOODY moved quickly now. SHAKL compelled him forward toward the Armory.

It was guarded by a cluster of civilians with crude weapons but they were less than nothing.

SALIS consumed them and pushed past their remains into the vault.

The Powered Armor hung in their racks like puppets as SALIS moved amongst them. Slowly they awakened to a life that they could never have known without this moment.

The HOLLOWMEN struggled out of the armory and joined the ranks of the SHAKL.

DM Briefing: A MINION OF SHAKL is dispatched into unclaimed territory to find an armory and infect the several suits of powered armor that are stored there.

38. A BREAKTHROUGH

The MINION OF SHAKL came over the rise. WO 343 noticed they were somewhat different from the regular MINION Bot.

SABRE23 detected the GAAL marine unit instantly and raised the oversized weapon pod that had replaced its genetic sampler.

A fury of fire unleashed and closed the distance ripping into the CLONE troops.

DM Briefing: The SHAKL discovers a new weapon-tech in the SHADOWLAB and assimilates its engineering data. Bots now come with a heavy weapon pod rather than the bayonet mod of the medical sampling tool.

39. I AM NEM

His consciousness stirred. He built a wall between himself and the GAAL to protect that single surviving NANO machine of the SHAKL.

He accessed the NANO that had devoured his body and began to work.

It took forever - Centuries? Yet he found himself in a body built on the life of the GAAL and held together by the SHAKL.

He spoke now.

"I am Nem." His voice echoed as he focused on the thought of a weapon.

His hand changed shape becoming a weapon. Nem could feel the energy ready at his thought.

"I AM NEM!" He screamed the name and his voice was thunder.

DM Briefing: An opportunity arises for one or two lost in the GAAL/SHAKL conflict to return as NANOCONCIOUSNESS. These characters pull together control of their NANO infestation and achieve a new level of Life and Machine.

40. HOLLOWMEN

The suits of Powered Armour pushed through the tree-line and out into the agricultural heart of SPIDERWOOD village. They moved awkwardly over the fields.

Turku could feel that something was wrong.

A Suit twitched its weapons at a couple of surprised farmers killing them instantly.

WO 147/Lydia Enwoad and Turku Enwoad opened with their laser weapons, cutting into the SHAKL infested armour.

Manur Jaks emerged from his hut in full armour.

"We got some fore ya!" Manur opened with the full force of his heavy weapons.

DM Briefing: The SHAKL infest an armory containing powered armour. The NANO infest several suits and dispatch them into RECREATION AREA 36B to investigate something it learned from NEM THE DESTRUCTOR.

41. SEEDLINGS (PART 1)

WEAPONS OFFICER 147 ran with her child clutched to her chest. She could not understand why the Hollowmen would want her child.

Behind her in the grey distance, Turku screamed as a Suit of Powered Armour attempted to tear his arms and legs from their sockets.

Somewhere on the inside, Lydia Enwoad wept at the loss of her firstborn. He could still be restored, but first she would need to get herself and the child to safety.

DM Briefing: The attack of the Hollowmen (SHAKL infested power armour) has once again decimated the Village of SPIDERWOOD. A few survivors manage to flee RECREATION AREA 36B burdened with a single child and information on a lab containing the download information and clone templates for several of the original SPIDERWOOD population.

42. SEEDLINGS (PART 2)

MANUR THE BETRAYER moved slowly now through the superstructure of the hydroponics systems. His target had come this way. Perhaps it was at great risk. Much of the plant life was evolved far beyond its humble

beginnings as a food source.

The once-Lettuce reached out to crush his Powered Armour with its lower fronds.

The Flamer burned on and decimated the foliage.

DM Briefing: As the party flees the HOLLOWMEN currently in pursuit, they are forced to take a climb up through the framework on the hydroponic deck. The plants are toxic and hostile.

43. SEEDLINGS (PART 3)

Weapons Officer 147 felt Lydia Enwoad begin to reassert her dominance.

"No! Not now!" Lydia woke from one nightmare to find a child in her arms and several strange metal men closing on her.

She screamed.

A flash of heavy laser cut through the Hollowmen and they turned on their new enemy.

Clone troops poured into the lab.

WO 383 approached the civilian clutching the child and pulled off his helmet.

Lydia stared at Jermai.

DM Briefing: The party are rescued from the HOLLOWMEN by a number of Clone troops in service to the GAAL. Some of their numbers are clones of Spiderwood Villagers.

44. EMERGENCE

Turku Enwood woke inside the clonepod to a view of a strange room. Littered across the floor was the debris of metal men. Something not quite... Something not of his people. Turku shook off the distraction. What could he remember? There had been a wall of water and Nem had come for him. Nem? Was it Nem? He had killed everyone around Turku and carried him off.

Something had changed his friend. Destroyed his friend. Turku pushed the clonepod hatch back and emerged naked.

DM Briefing: Lost in the ship, the clone of a Spiderwood Villager emerges from clone development to an uncertain destiny. Conceivably this sort of thing will happen all the time once the party are sampled and uploaded.

45. RECRUITMENT DRIVE

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

GHAN THE SLAYER moved down on the GAAL Clone unit with all the stealth he could muster.

They were patching their wounded and the few on spot were not as experienced as they should have been.

As SABRE045 had reported, one of their unit was a CYBORG. He would do.

A small gob of NANO formed on a claw and found itself flicked the distance onto the CYBORG relaxing amongst the GAAL kill-team.

It would happen soon.

Penn screamed as the reality of the transformation kicked in. The others turned on their friend with little thought to anything but survival.

GHAN THE SLAYER jumped through the group slashing CLONE flesh in an effort to keep the new MINION OF SHAKL alive.

PENN THE SLAUGHTERER lashed out at the last of his once-companions.

DM Briefing: MINION OF SHAKL are dispatched to infect a CYBORG travelling amongst a GAAL CLONE unit. The idea is to infect and escape with the new MINION.

46. ALONE

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

The NANO finished repairing the damage to its BOT servitor and reached out to find a link with the rest of its kind.

Nothing.

SABRE67 activated and found itself berated by the voice in its brain...

"We must return to the others."

Diagnostic complete.

Odd. The explosive penetration ammunition in the weapon pod had been swapped out for less-destructive polymer rounds.

DM Briefing: A lone SABRE (a BOT MINION OF SHAKL) wakes to find itself cut off from the rest of the MINION OF SHAKL. It is in a large section of infrastructure alone with some green CLONE TROOPS of the GAAL faction. It has been abducted from the battlefield and is being used for training behind the lines. Escape is possible.

47. WHAT DO I DO FOR FOOD?

Turku was hungry now. It had been almost three days since he emerged from the strange sleep module to a room filled with broken machines and the best he had found was mould on a cooling-pipe.

His stomach churned.

Turku needed food and water.

DM Briefing: Some of the Surviving SPIDERWOOD Villagers find themselves in a region with little to no food and water. They are presented with food in a form that they won't recognise. A robot with a Brain that is edible if they kill and break it open. The alternative is to ask it to lead them to food and water (It knows where a food store is and has the security clearance to access the store).

The Food-store is a storage bin of moss and mould cleaned from the pipes. Something that will keep them alive long enough to escape the region.

48. WHATS A SHIP?

NEM001 searched the strange jumble of Ideas in his mind. He saw there an idea that what he was trapped in had limits. Dimensions outlined a shape. He could see it in his mind. It was a Ship.

He could see in that idea where he was and where he needed to be.

A reactor needed to be ejected and the GAAL had prevented that from happening. He had to save the ship.

"I need a Nuclear Ejection Initiator." Nem moved. That was six decks up.

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

DM Briefing: One of the Cyborg PCs exposed to the GAAL and the SHAKL become aware of the nature of their immediate universe. The Ship (whatever that is) needs one of its reactor cores ejected. They have now the information needed to prevent a disaster.

49. A BOX FULL OF WOOF?

The crates tumbled as the airlock sealed on the storage vault. A sound of movement in the darkness... Turku looked back into the vault.

Enwood watched now as three metal creatures waddled out of the darkness. "WHUFF! WHUFF!" came the voices.

"By the Farmer, what now?"

DM Briefing: The PCs encounter three robot dogs (CERBERUS-A's: Killer DogBots) except these have only the puppy programming and form an emotional attachment on the first person they encounter. They will follow and play with the lucky party member.

50. A MEAL PACK WITH THE PAST

Friar's Almanac

ISSUE TWO

MOON OF PLAGUES

Lydia Enwood continued to chew at the strange food that Jermai/Weapon Officer 383 had given her. She knew it wasn't her husband. He was returned to the soil.

"How you doing mam?" Weapon Officer 383 stared at the child in the Civilian's Arms. He only had vague memories of ever having seen one.

DM Briefing: The Marines begin a debriefing of the PCs in an attempt to gather intelligence on behalf of the GAAL faction.

51. SABRE67 (Prelude to the Vegetable that ate the City)

SABRE67 moved through the hydroponics framework with all the paranoia of a professional Marine. A Cabbage attacked from above, attempting to crush the Bots armour.

"Hostile Detected!" SABRE67 devoured the plant with Polymer rounds.

"Take a sample for gene-splice." The voice in his head seemed insistent.

DM Briefing: A SABRE from the SHAKAL FACTION collects a sentient killer vegetable for genetic experimentation.

52. The Vegetable that ate a City

WO 234 watched as the giant cabbage swatted the high-rise building aside and came toward the one on which he now rested. The Powered Armour was leaking Coolant.

“That sure as hell put me off Vegetables for a while.” WO234 opened with his shoulder mounted 50mm GATLING instantly drawing the plant’s attention.

DM Briefing: The SHAKAL faction deploys a Giant Killer Cabbage Clone in an Urban Habitat where it can unleash its fury on GAAL faction troopers.

-TERMINUS SEASON 2-

And unfortunately that is it for the SPIDERWOOD CYCLE. Woe the dangers of information terrorists.

