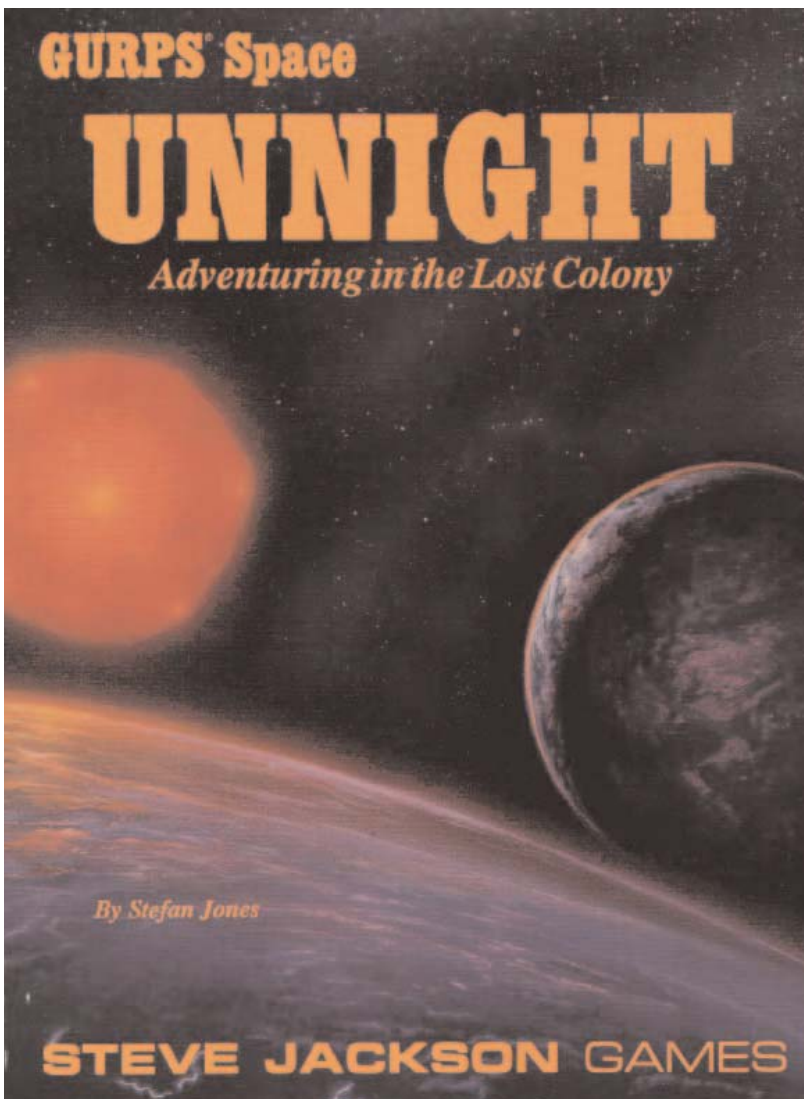


GURPS®



WIZARDS OF THE LOST COLONY

500 years ago, a half-million people vanished in space. Now their descendants have been found. What cultures have evolved in half a millenium? What alien works and ways have been discovered? What will the lost children of Earth think of the Universe that is now open for them?

Unnigh is a *GURPS Space* supplement for 3 to 6 players. It includes:

- A planetary record sheet for the world of Unnigh, and information on its strange animals and plants.
- Data on Unnigh's sun Stuzak, its anomalous satellite Orb, and the rest of the Stuzak system.
- The nations and cultures man has built on this new world . . . including the flying Hawk Lords and the secretive "Wizards."
- "First Contact," an *Unnigh* adventure.

This PDF is a scanned copy of the last printed edition of *GURPS Space: Unnigh*. No changes or updates from that edition were made, but we have appended all known errata to the end of the document.

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GURPS® Space

UNNIGHT

Adventuring in the Lost Colony

By Stefan Jones

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

GURPS® Space

UNNIGHT

Adventuring in the Lost Colony

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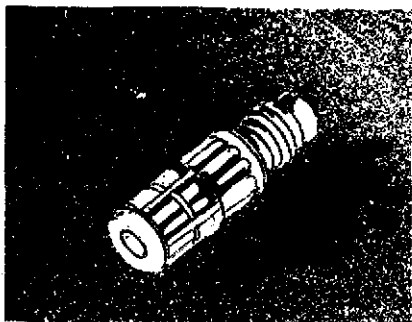
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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

INTRODUCTION



About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957-A, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly newsletter includes questions & answers, new races, rules, beasts, information on upcoming releases, and more. Please write for current subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Nobody's perfect — but when we make a mistake, we admit it. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used to represent *GURPS* worldbooks:

- A = Autoduel
- B = Basic Set
- BY = Bestiary
- F = Fantasy
- H = Horror
- HC = Horseclans
- HX = Humanx
- S = Space
- SA = Space Atlas

So, for instance, p. B93 means *Basic Set* p. 93.

Player's Introduction

Welcome to Unnigh. This mysterious world could be considered an unspoiled paradise, a pit of savagery or a pigeon ripe for the plucking, depending on the point of view. Unnigh is a lost colony. 21st-century Earth, with the carelessness common to societies at that level of development, left its population to develop on their own for half a millennium. Now, for better or worse, this world is about to reenter the mainstream of human society.

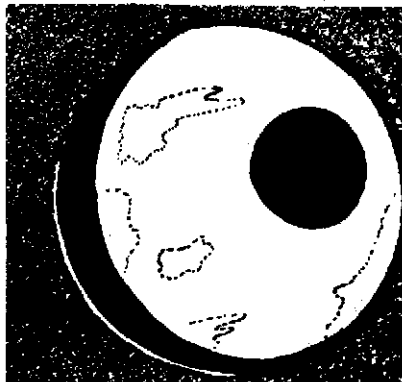
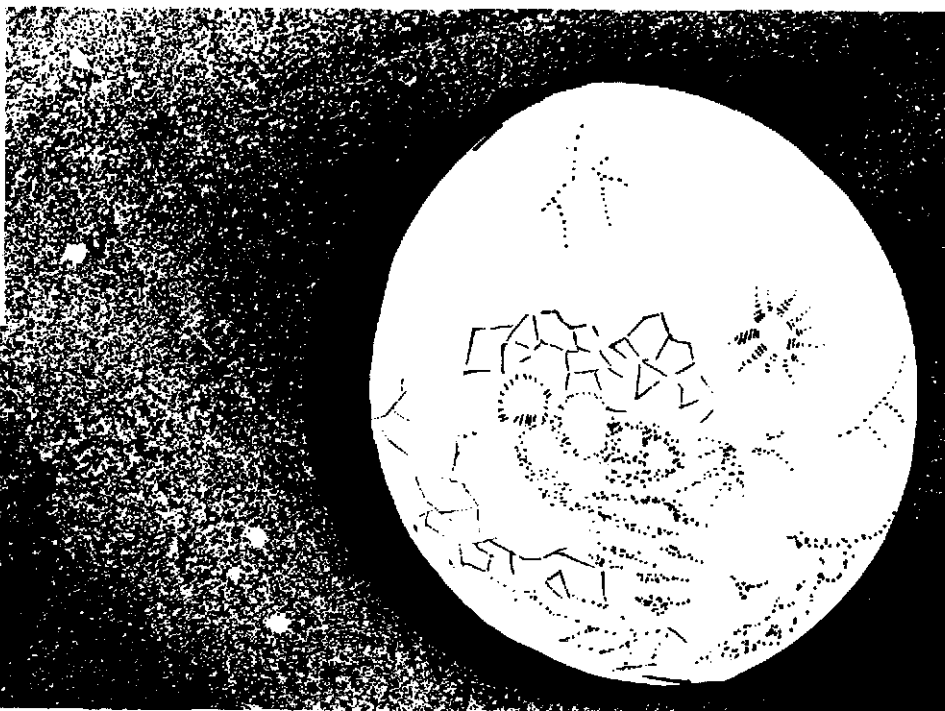
Unnigh lies deep in the heart of the Meschuan nebula. With its sibling planets, it circles Stuzak, a red star. Driven into the wilderness by a disaster shortly after the initial landing, the natives created a host of exotic cultures. Besides the usual threats of war and brigandage, the people of Unnigh must deal with the capricious climate, bizarre wildlife, and phenomena like the mind-bending Night Dance. While most folk muddle along with tools and technology out of the Dark Ages, a few men — the Wizards — wield mysterious forces for power and profit.

Unnigh is a planet ripe for exploration and adventure. Space travelers are trying to recontact the lost tribe of humanity on this strange new world. Native adventurers trade, explore and fight for the glory of their nation, or perhaps simply to make their fortune. Adventure is in the air.

If you intend to be a player in an Unnigh campaign, read no further. The rest of the book is for the GM's eyes only.

GM's Introduction

Unnigh can be a brand-new world to your players, or the only world they have ever known. You must ration information to the characters based on their background and the way in which they are introduced to the situation. A visitor from space will know nothing but the physical facts that his sensors can measure; a native peasant might know little but the few miles around his birthplace. Photocopies, notes or a view of selected pages are all that the players can have until their own investigations have uncovered the mysteries of Unnigh!



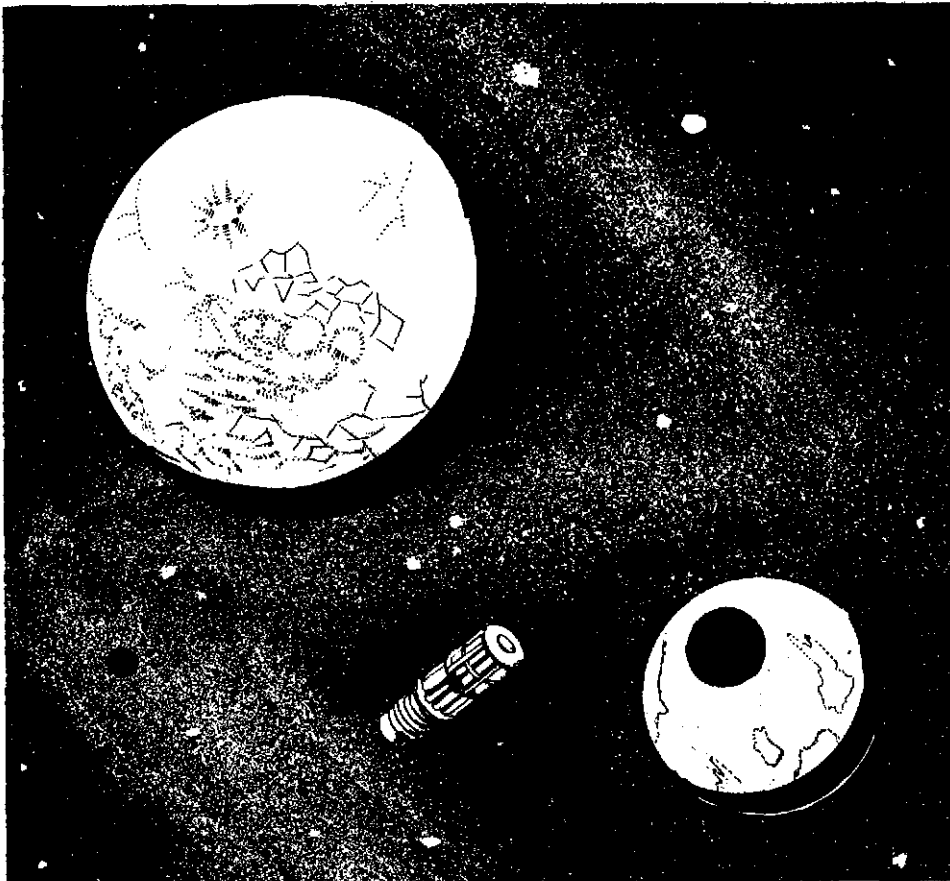
STUZAK: THE SYSTEM

1

Stuzak, a main-sequence red dwarf star, lies nestled in the heart of the Meschuan nebula, hard by the edge of the stellar wilderness. Lit by two A3 giants and a baker's dozen young stars, the nebula is a fantastic sight. In the skies of Stuzak's five planets, the nebula appears as an overall mottled haze ranging in color from a subtle pink to bright white and orange. A brilliant white and green 'Z' shape stretches from system zenith to the ecliptic vertically, and a third of the way around the sky horizontally.

System Gazetteer

Most of Stuzak's planets and their moons are rather ordinary; two are rather extraordinary, Unnigh and Orb. Most of the other worlds have little adventure potential, but for completeness's sake they and Stuzak are described in the sidebars.



The Unnigh/Orb Binary planet

Unnigh and Orb are a binary planet system; two large bodies circling each other in a close orbit. A mere 126,880 miles separate the two worlds, a bit more than half of the distance between Earth and Luna. The *barycenter* of the Unnigh/Orb system, the center of mass about which the two circle, is located within Unnigh. It is therefore correct to say that Orb is a moon of Unnigh.

The mighty moon, which is *larger* than its primary, Unnigh, completes an orbit every 243 hours, seven minutes, eleven seconds (10.13 standard days).

Stuzak

Stuzak is a red star, spectral class MV. Like Earth's Sol, it is a main sequence star. Stuzak is a late-middle-aged dwarf, burning plain hydrogen, and far from the violent throes of birth or death. Stuzak is on the large side for its class, with a mass of .3 Solar masses. It is only .9% as bright as Sol.

From the surface of Unnigh, Stuzak appears slightly dimmer and ruddier than Sol does to an observer on Earth . . . very much like the sun in late afternoon. The total *insolation* (incoming energy) Unnigh gets from its sun is a little lower than that received by Earth. A greater proportion of it is infrared and much less is ultraviolet. The sun of Unnigh warms, but seldom burns or even tans. The majority of Unnighers are descended from dark-skinned peoples of Earth. After 500 years, the average is notably lighter-skinned than among those of similar genetic background from more Sol-like conditions.

Peculiarities

Observation and study of Stuzak will reveal a few puzzles. Characters with Astronomy skill and access to shipboard sensors may make a skill roll during each week of study to reveal these oddities. (Allow a bonus of +1 for each of Stuzak's worlds that have been surveyed; study of rock and ice core samples helps determine the star's history.) The first peculiarity is in Stuzak's *composition*; it is subtly *wrong* for a star of its age. There are too many heavy elements, both in the star and its planets. Second, Stuzak is *too stable*. Most stars periodically flare up, emitting bursts of particles and UV light. Scientists studying the star and system will find that Stuzak *does not flare* — which is simply impossible!

Perrito-Sol

Perrito-Sol is the innermost of Stuzak's five planets. It circles Stuzak in an orbit 6.71 million miles in radius. Its year is but 12 Earth-days, 8 hours long. It is a large terrestrial rockball world. Perrito-Sol is larger than Earth or Unnight (8,967 miles in diameter), but because of a lower overall density (4.2) it has a surface gravity of only .86 G. Perrito-Sol is cloaked in a dense atmosphere of carbon dioxide and nitrogen. The atmospheric pressure at the surface is more than four times that of Earth. Average surface temperature ranges from 248° F to 590° F.

Though tame compared to Venus, Perrito-Sol is a nasty place. Special armored suits and climate controlled shelters are *de rigueur* for visitors. There is little reason to visit this lifeless furnace-world. It has few mineral resources and little in the way of scenic beauty.

On Unnight, Perrito-Sol appears as a brilliant evening and morning star. Near superior conjunction (closest apparent approach to the sun) Perrito-Sol presents a visible disk, and is *very* bright.

Unnight/Orb

The Unnight/Orb binary planet orbits Stuzak at 16 million miles. The year is 46 Earth days long. This strange couple are described in more detail in the main text.

Seismographic Readings

A nuclear satchel charge is a low-yield nuclear explosive. The ones used in construction and seismography each weigh 50 lbs., cost \$25,000 and have the same yield as a Medium Atomic Missile (see p. S86). They can be set on time-delay of up to 100 hours and have a fuse-time accuracy of $\pm .0001$ seconds.

A Medium Atomic Missile can be used for seismography.

Seismographic readings can be taken with a radscanner (sound waves are a form of energy).

Orb and Unnight are mutually *face locked*; that is, each keeps the same face to the other. (Luna is face locked to Earth, but unlike Unnight, Terra revolves freely.) Orb never moves, much less sets, from the perspective of an observer on Unnight's "orbiside" hemisphere. A moment's thought will show you Unnight's second peculiarity; its day is over ten Earth-days long! There are slightly more than four and a half Unnight days in an Unnight year.

Binary planets such as this are rare, but not totally unknown. There are other reasons why the Orb/Unnight system is a little peculiar. Their orbits are nearly circular and very stable. By theory, perturbations caused by the passing of Perrito-Sol and Ulronch (see sidebars pp. 4-5) should have doomed the binary relationship to a very short life. Both worlds *should* be wracked with earthquakes and covered with volcanoes . . . but while both have more tremors and vulcanism than usual, there is not enough to satisfy theory.

If the arrangement of the worlds is unusual, the worlds themselves are a planetologist's nightmare. What is Orb really made of? How does it hold together despite fearsome tidal stress?

Unnight is an Earthlike world with a rich and diverse ecosphere. It is biochemically compatible with Earth life. According to planetologists' rules and assumptions an oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere and the evolution of life require stable conditions over a long period of time. The Stuzak system and the Unnight/Orb binary planet should not have the necessary stability.

Orb

Orb is a rockball world at first sight. The rough surface is covered with patches of water ice and frozen carbon dioxide.

Orb is a *big* planet, 11,455 miles in diameter. It is also a *light* one. Its mass is only about $\frac{1}{4}$ that of Unnight (.27 Earth Masses). This gives it a density of .47, less than half the density of water! Despite having about half again the diameter of Earth, its gravity (.13 G) is less than that of Earth's moon (.17 G)! Visual observation and surface sampling will show a surface of low-density silicate rock with a smattering of iron and nickel, quite similar in composition to Sol system's Mars or Mercury. This material has a typical density of 3.7. If *all* of Orb were made of the surface material, it would have an enormously greater mass and a gravity of 1.02 G.

Atmosphere

Orb's atmosphere is about 10% as dense as Earth's. It is primarily (80%) composed of nitrogen; the remainder is methane, carbon dioxide, and inert gases such as xenon and argon. The only peculiarity is the high percentage of helium, which composes .01% of the atmosphere. Except for its unusual thickness, Orb's atmosphere is not unusual for a world of its temperature and apparent composition.

Surface Conditions

Orb's surface is a barren waste. For the most part it is an endless sheet of basaltic rock. Atmospheric movement, ice and occasional flows of water have combined to break up some of the stony surface into dust, pebbles, gravel and boulders. Most of the world is a rolling plain but occasional ancient mountains and hills dot the landscape.

Orb is a cool world. The atmosphere is thick enough to increase the planet's *albedo* (reflectivity), but not thick enough to initiate a greenhouse effect that would warm the world. Enough ice exists on Orb for a small ocean, but most of it stays frozen all year and all day. A few deep valleys get warm enough and have an atmosphere thick enough to support liquid water for brief periods. The fluid acts as does alcohol in Terrestrial conditions, quickly evaporating into vapor at the slightest touch of warmth. Temperatures range from 40° F on a very warm day to -150° F at night. Average temperature hovers around 5° F.

An unprotected human could stay alive for a few minutes in Orb's cold, foul-smelling atmosphere. He would probably not enjoy the experience. An air mask and warm-weather clothing are the *minimum* needed for an extended stay; a vacc suit is recommended!

Orb weather is fierce but predictable. Monstrous winds blow from the day side to the night side. They carry water vapor and carbon dioxide which precipitates as frost and snow in the chill of night. Thick fogs and mists form at dawn as the rising sun evaporates the frost and dry ice film. These quickly blow off and head for the night side, making the dawn terminator an area of constant, violent storms.

Planetology

Orb is something between a nightmare and a dream for a planetologist (see p. S37 for Planetology skill). Nothing about it fits accepted theory. Proper roleplaying will require any planetologist to be frantically anxious to get to Orb and make observations.

Seismography

Seismography consists, basically, of hitting the crust of a planet with something and listening to the "ring" as the planet resonates. The "blow" can be supplied by a crashing meteor, nuclear explosion, or earthquake. The "ear" that listens to the ringing is a seismograph, a sensitive instrument that can measure crust movements with great precision. By analyzing the intensity and arrival time of pressure waves through a planet, the interior structure of a world can be plotted out. A well-equipped survey expedition will be supplied with both seismography gear and a few nuclear satchel charges (see *Seismographic Readings*, p. 4). An initial sounding will take three successful detonations or impacts (that is, successful Geology or Planetology rolls.) Each sounding takes at least half a day, and requires travel to several widely separated sites.

Analysis of Orb's seismological profiles will show that it is *hollow*, with a crust of rock and metals a touch over 116 miles thick. There are three problems with this. A hollow sphere of planetary size should be impossible. A shell of this thickness of the material involved is not strong enough to hold itself together. The mass of the shell is not enough to equal the mass of the planet.

If the characters doing the analysis managed to roll a critical success, or if they double-check the data and make more soundings, they will find that what seem like glitches and shadows in the data point to something real. Pressure waves seem to *damp out* and lose part of their strength when they hit the inner surface of the rock shell. *Something* besides vacuum is inside, but the something is still not dense enough to account for the missing mass!

Gravitational Perturbation Analysis

Skilled planetologists will realize that much could be learned of Orb's inner structure by studying the path of an object in orbit. This sort of experiment takes about a day, and requires the involved characters to make a Physics and an Astronomy skill roll. Allow a bonus of +1 to skill levels for each extra day of observation. Give a bonus of +4 if the study takes place when Orb, Unnigh, and Stuzak are in *conjunction* (in a line).

A successful roll will show that a dense gas or fluid surges around the interior of Orb in response to tidal forces. This fluid actually rises above the level of the surface at conjunction, when tidal forces are greatest. Nothing unusual will be visible on or above the surface at these times. Sensitive gravimeters located on the surface will point out the presence of some huge mass soaring overhead! A critical success on a Planetology roll points out a further peculiarity in the behavior of this mystery fluid; when it surges back into place, it slows down too fast. A massive amount of tidal energy is being expended *somewhere*.

Ulronch

Ulronch, Stuzak's third planet, orbits at 34.41 million miles from its sun. Its year is 150 Earth-days long. It is a terrestrial Icy Rockball world, an almost airless ball of rock and metals lightly frosted with ice and frozen gas. Ulronch is 5,978 miles in diameter, and has a density of 6.7, resulting in a surface gravity of .92 G. The atmosphere is a chill mixture of carbon dioxide and nitrogen with a surface pressure of .02 atmospheres. During the long day, when *sunlight evaporates some of the ice*, fierce storms scour the surface.

Ulronch is chilly and inhospitable, redeemed only by mineral wealth somewhat greater than Earth's. It is plainly visible from Unnigh as a bright greyish-blue celestial body.

Peculiarities

At first glance, Ulronch seems a dull, cold place. A closer look will confirm this. A *very* close look, involving chemical analysis of rocks and ice cores (and a successful Geology skill roll at -4), will reveal that Ulronch once had a dense atmosphere of nitrogen and methane and that this atmosphere was lost . . . *suddenly*. Another successful roll after a week of research will show that the catastrophe happened seven million years ago.

Snazsoo

Snazsoo, fourth planet from Stuzak, is a large gas giant. Like Sol's Jupiter, it is a system within a system. Snazsoo is smaller and less massive than Jove (86,404 miles in diameter with a density of 1.1 and a gravity of 2.18 G), but its complement of moons and orbiting junk is impressive. Besides a thick and colorful ring system, there are five major moons with diameters over 1,800 miles, seventeen moons between 1,800 and 100 miles, and twenty-four identified moonlets with diameters less than 100 miles.

Peculiarities

Analysis of the orbits of Snazsoo's rings and moons will give characters skilled in Astronomy or Planetology an odd feeling. Further research (number crunching to roll back the clock and determine changes in the moons' orbits through the millennia — a day's work) will show that a disaster of some sort disturbed the system about seven million years in the past. Possibilities for the catastrophe include the close passage of another star or the sudden removal of a moon.

Unnight

Unnight is an Earthlike planet with a near-terrestrial atmosphere and ecosystem. It has a diameter of 7,991 miles and a density of 5.6. This makes it both larger and more massive than Earth, with a surface gravity of 1.05 G.

Unnight's axial tilt is 14°, a bit more than half of Earth's tilt of 23.5°. This gives the world rather dull seasons and more pronounced climatic zones compared to Earth. The tropics are rarely anything other than hot during the day, and the arctic areas are cool even at noon. The day and night cycle are far more important in determining weather on Unnight than the axial tilt.

Surface Conditions

About 60% of the surface of Unnight is covered with water (compared to about 70% for Earth). The polar caps are both covered by dense and deep ice caps. Terrain varies from rolling grasslands to jungles to steep young mountains. Except for the difference in vegetation (see *Settling In*, p. 10) none of it would seem particularly alien to an Earther.

The globe of Unnight is divided into the Orbside and Farside hemispheres. The names, of course, come from the placement of Orb in the sky. The folk on Farside *never* see Orb in the sky. In Orbside lands, it hangs in the same place in the sky, night and day. The edges of the Orbside hemisphere are called the Horizon Zones; Orb is more or less visible here, peeking over the edge of the horizon or perhaps hidden by mountains.

Unnight has two large continents and numerous scattered islands. Carkip, the smaller continent, lies in the eastern Horizon Zone and stretches to the Farside horizon. To the east of Carkip is Far Ocean, a calm sea in the middle of Far Hemisphere. Crassant is a huge landmass circling more than half of Unnight's circumference. It is roughly arc-shaped, and surrounds the Dawn-To-Dark Ocean. The Incald Ocean lies east, Far Ocean to the west. Unnight's poles are covered with large, stable ice caps; the northern cap rests on Crioc sea and northern Crassant. The southern cap floats on the south polar sea, which is unnamed and uncharted by the natives of Unnight.

Atmosphere

Unnight has a dense nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere. It has a sea-level pressure of 1.44 atmospheres, 44% greater than Earth's. (Because of the tidal pull of Orb, which pulls the atmosphere into an egg-shape, this figure is slightly higher on the central part of the Orbside hemisphere and the Farside hemisphere, slightly lower in the Horizon Zones.) 17% of the atmosphere is oxygen, giving Unnight's atmosphere an overall oxygen content higher than that of Earth. The remainder of the atmosphere is composed of nitrogen (82.5%) and trace gasses. Though the CO₂ content is almost double that of Earth, it is not in a high enough concentration to cause permanent breathing problems. Newcomers are liable to yawn more frequently and more deeply for 50 to 100 hours before they adapt. The thick atmosphere makes breathing more difficult for those adapted to Terran pressure, but the higher oxygen content balances any fatigue effect.

Unnight's thick atmosphere and slow rotation result in relatively dull standing weather patterns. The atmospheric circulation cells are large and the prevailing winds move at a leisurely rate. The atmosphere acts both as a heat trap and buffer, making Unnight livable and leveling what would otherwise be a sharp drop in temperature at nightfall. The cooled air of night makes the early part of day more tolerable, too.

Fans of bad weather should not despair, however. Dawn and, even more, dusk are marked by fogs, fierce winds and precipitation as water vapor is cooled or heated. The oceans and seashores are especially bad places to be during dusk and early evening. The folk of Unnight see these storms as rainy seasons. They can be a crop-destroying curse or a blessing. They are the *only* time certain desert regions get rain.

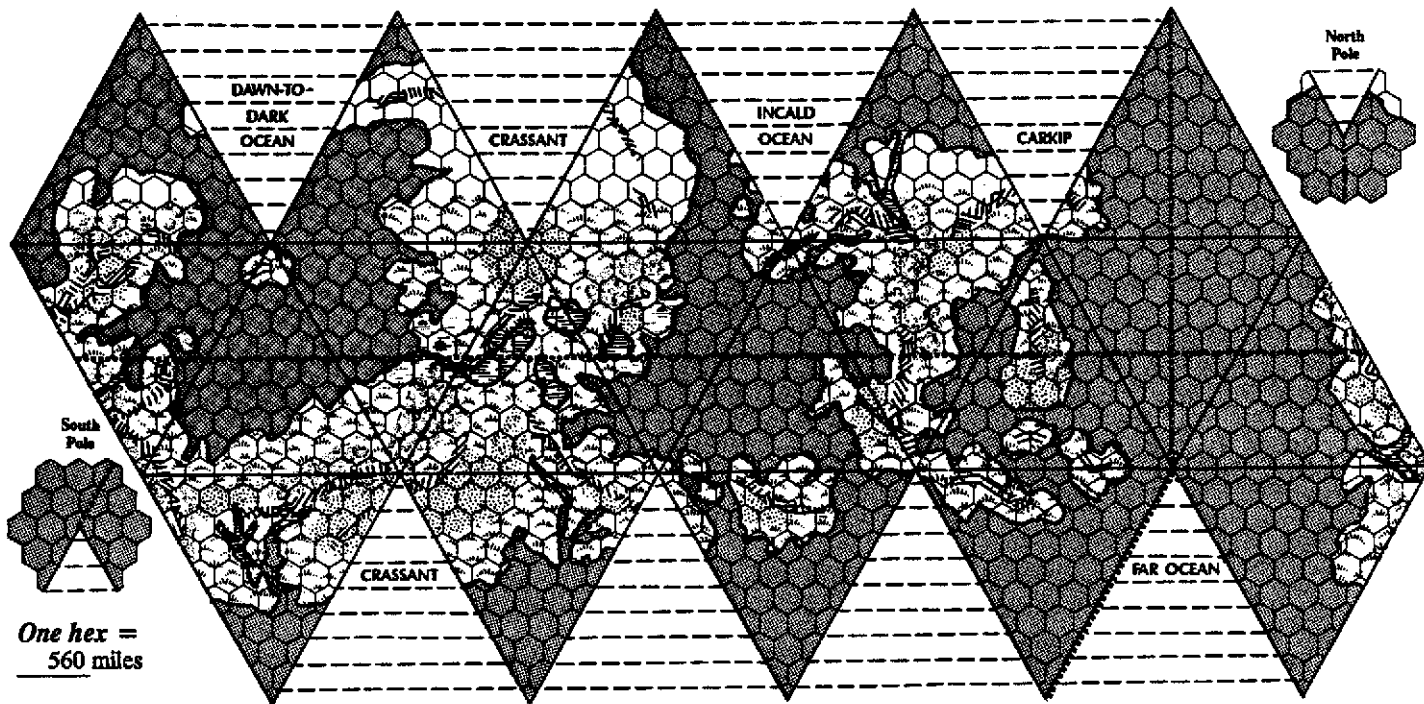
Duringabi

Stuzak's outermost planet is Duringabi. It circles between 1.5 billion and 1.2 billion miles from the primary. The orbit is highly inclined, 25° from the ecliptic. Duringabi is a small gas giant (29,985 miles in diameter with a density of 1.5 and a gravity of 1.03 G), slightly smaller than Neptune. It has three icy, airless moons (all under 500 miles) and a scanty set of rings.

Peculiarities

Analysis of its orbit will show that Duringabi is either a captured interstellar rogue, or a normal planet that was wrested from its original orbit by the passage of a massive body. Neither of these occurrences is particularly rare. If researchers look into the matter further, they will be able to determine that Duringabi is a captured rogue.

PLANETARY RECORD: Unnight



Planet type Earthlike Diameter 7,991 mi. Gravity 1.05 G Density 5.6 Composition Medium-Iron
 Axial Tilt 14° Seasonal Variation Small Length of Day 243.1 hrs. Length of Year 4.5 days/ .13 Earth years
 Atmosphere: Pressure 1.44 (Dense) Type and Composition 17% Oxygen, 82.5 Nitrogen, trace gasses
 Climate Cool Temperatures at 30° latitude: Low -10° Average 40° High 60°
 Surface Water 60% Humidity 50% Primary Terrain Plains, Forest, Mountain mix
 Mineral Resources: Gems/Crystals Ample Rare Minerals Unknown Radioactives Unknown
 Heavy Metals Plentiful Industrial Metals Unknown Light Metals Ample Organics Unknown
 Moons Ark (Artificial Satellite), Orb (Binary Companion) dia. 11, 445 mi., density .47, .13G

Biosphere: Dominant life form Humans, imported and native mammals
 Other significant life forms Active, carnivorous plants

Civilization: Population(s) 36 million (estimated) Tech Level(s) 3* Control Rating 0/3

Society Fragmented, no central authority. Most cultures are feudal or primitive democracies.

Starports None

Installations None

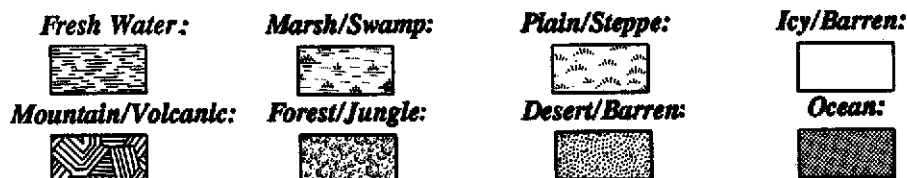
Economic/Production Pre-machine agriculture and industry

Other notes: * The "Wizards" retain scattered bits of the colonist's technology, up to TL9 in a few cases.

Operational but mysterious/useless Precursor artifacts are common. No significant structures have been found. Temperature average 30-50 degrees colder during the 120-hour nights. "Night Dance," a peculiar mental malady, affects both residents and visitors.

System Information:

Star Name	Suzak		Type	MV			Location	Meschuan Nebula
Biozone	0.1-0.2		Inner Limit	0.0			Number of Planets	6
Planet	Orbit	Distance	Type	Diameter	Density	Gravity	Atmosphere	Notes
Perrito-Sol	1	0.07	Hostile Greenhouse	8967	4.2	.86	Nitrogen-Carbon Dioxide	Lifeless Furnace
Unnight	2	0.17	Earthlike	7,991	5.6	1.05	Oxygen-Nitrogen	Binary with Orb
Orb	2b	0.17	Rockball	11,445	.47	.13	—	Highly anomalous
Ulronch	3	0.37	Icy Rockball	5,978	6.7	.92	Very Thin	
Snazzoo	4	1.3	Gas Giant	86,404	1.1	2.18	Hydrogen	Extensive moon system
Duringabi	5	14.5	Small Gas Giant	29,985	1.5	1.03	Hydrogen	Orbit inclined 25°



This record sheet represents the information that might be generally available 2 to 10 years after Unnight is first rediscovered, before any of its mysteries are solved. The first visitors to Unnight, of course, will know *nothing* except what they can learn by the ship's instruments or personal investigation.

2

UNNIGHT LOST: THE COLONY

Prehistory

Space travelers surveying Unnigh and Orb will quickly reach the conclusion that the system is *unnatural*. No theories of planetary formation allow for such a close binary planet; no stretch of the imagination could explain the existence of an apparently *hollow* world; and the barycenter of the binary system is in the wrong place. Worse, long observation will show that *something* is keeping the nearly circular orbit of this exotic pair stable. Somebody capable of playing around with planetary masses and bending physical laws on a titanic scale had a field day in the Stuzak system.

The idea of Precursor races should not startle star-traveling PCs. Most will be familiar with stories about the ancient and powerful "elder races" that once ruled the galaxy. Those of a scholarly bent may have read papers in academic journals brimming with speculation and a smattering of hard facts. Those from an interplanetary society who are skilled in History or Archeology, or who have access to a large database, might even come up with candidates for the Orb builders.

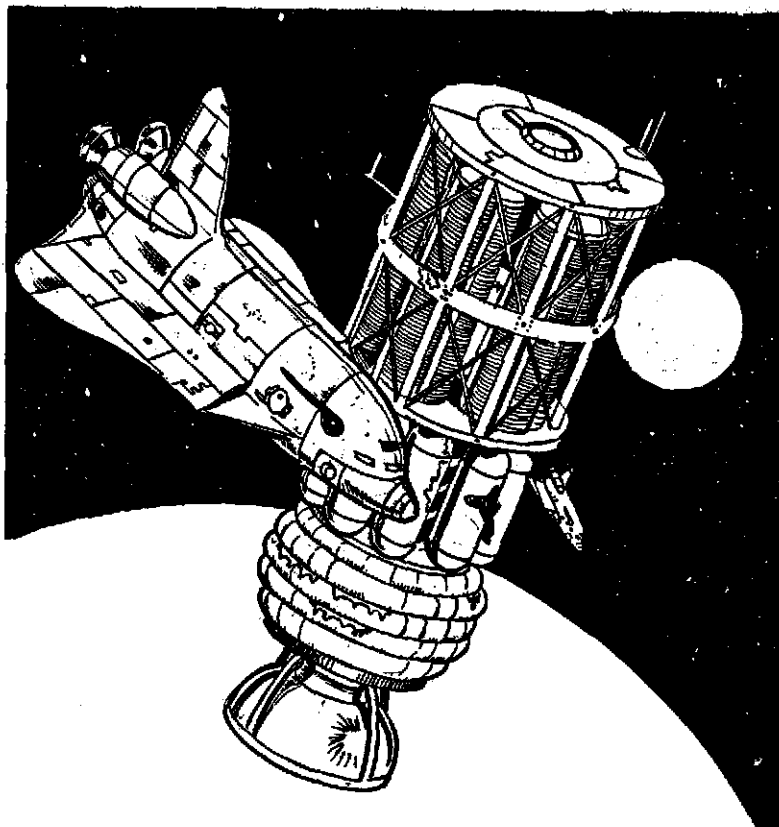
The Colonists

Unnigh's human settlers were a varied and unusual lot. Most were gathered from the backwaters of late 21st-century Earth. The United Nations Cultural Preservation Organization had been charged to "preserve the natural and traditional life-style of the indigenous inhabitants of all the nations of Earth." This was easier to command than to perform. Hunting-and-gathering tribes, slash-and-burn agriculturalists and nomad herders could neither compete with nor ignore the bustling, high-technology world around them. The corrosive effects of progress on traditional societies were easier to see than to prevent. Desperate and perhaps slightly dotty bureaucrats decided that the problem was just big enough to run away from. A fleet of three interplanetary bulk transports was purchased from an ailing corporation and converted to the new and still somewhat experimental hyperspace drive for FTL travel. The ships were commissioned as UNCPO Star Ships under the organization's general authority "to take such measures not forbidden by specific treaty provisions or customary international practices as are necessary to the accomplishment of this directive." This meant that the ships were required to meet no certification standards except those set by UNCPO and were inspected only by UNCPO staffers. The flagship was christened UNCPOSS *Ark*.

The *Ark* and its sister ships were gloriously ugly but ingenious vessels. In later years they were favorite illustration subjects in nostalgic histories of the "golden age of space travel." The ships were assembled in orbit and had no capacity for a planetary landing. They were powered (in Newtonian space) by an Orion drive. This was a reaction drive consisting of a simple shell of titanium

alloy in which small fusion bombs were detonated for thrust. Plutonium-fission reactors salvaged from obsolete anti-missile laser satellites provided power for life support, instruments and communication. Around the unstreamlined shell were strapped a dozen modules for people and livestock. Three nuclear-powered shuttles, donated by AustroChina Pacific Ltd., were taken along for cargo hauling and exploration. Even at the time there was some comment about the haste of construction, the lack of independent inspection and the very slender margin of safety in the life-support system. The critics were not paid much attention. Perhaps most of the 21st century was not reluctant to part with these anachronisms.

Political pressures forced UNCPO to take people from all the seventeen official Endangered Ethnic Groups on the fleet's maiden voyage. This totalled some 500,000 persons, from infants to the extremely aged. No physical or psychological testing was permitted; it was declared more important to preserve the totality of the society than to maximize the chance of individual survival. Mountaineers from the Himalayas and the Andes, jungle hunters from the Congo and the Amazon,



herdsmen from the Sahel and the Gobi were packed into the ships' passenger pods. A random and far from comprehensive selection of animal and plant species was added to the manifests.

The people and animals were shipped as cargo; the already-living went frozen, in an experimental version of mass cryo-sleep. Much of the non-human life went as frozen germ-plasm.

The crews were as unique as the passengers. Their only common denominator was that they were not regularly employed space-crew. The experienced people were retirees, both for age and disability, eager for one last chance at the high frontier. Young theoreticians and interns, trying to flesh out their resumes, filled the mid-level positions. The lower-ranks were a mixture of the idealistic, the desperate and the simply foolish. Of three ship's captains, two had FTL experience. One was a retired Naval Officer with an Engineering (Propulsion Systems) specialization. The other (Captain of the *Ark*) was a former civilian test-pilot grounded for untreated alcoholism. The fleet's Chief Astrogator had been retired rather than court-martialled only because his careless mathematics had never actually caused the loss of a ship.

Lost in Space

The fleet's destination of choice was the newly discovered planet Aegir, where land had been allotted for the refugees. It didn't even get close. Flying on identical courses, the ships one by one entered the field of hyperspatial influence of an uncharted Dark Nebula. The *Ark* and its sister ships emerged from hyperspace in the middle of the Meschuan Nebula. Though the ships were in good shape, the situation was grave. The nebula didn't allow the astrogators to get a fix and determine their location. Not even the UNCPPO crews were reckless enough to try a hyperspace voyage from an unknown location for an unknown distance in an unknown direction. Worse, the ships had a restrictive time limit. The life-support systems sustaining the crew largely depended on stored air, food and water. The stores had been computed for little more than enough to reach Aegir and disembark. The cryo-sleep system for the colonists was not performing as anticipated. Within a few hundred hours, they would have to be awakened or life functions would not be restorable. Already the very young and the very old were beginning to die.

For lack of any better idea the fleet dispersed from the break-out point, each surveying a nearby system. A time and place were established for a rendezvous in deep-space.

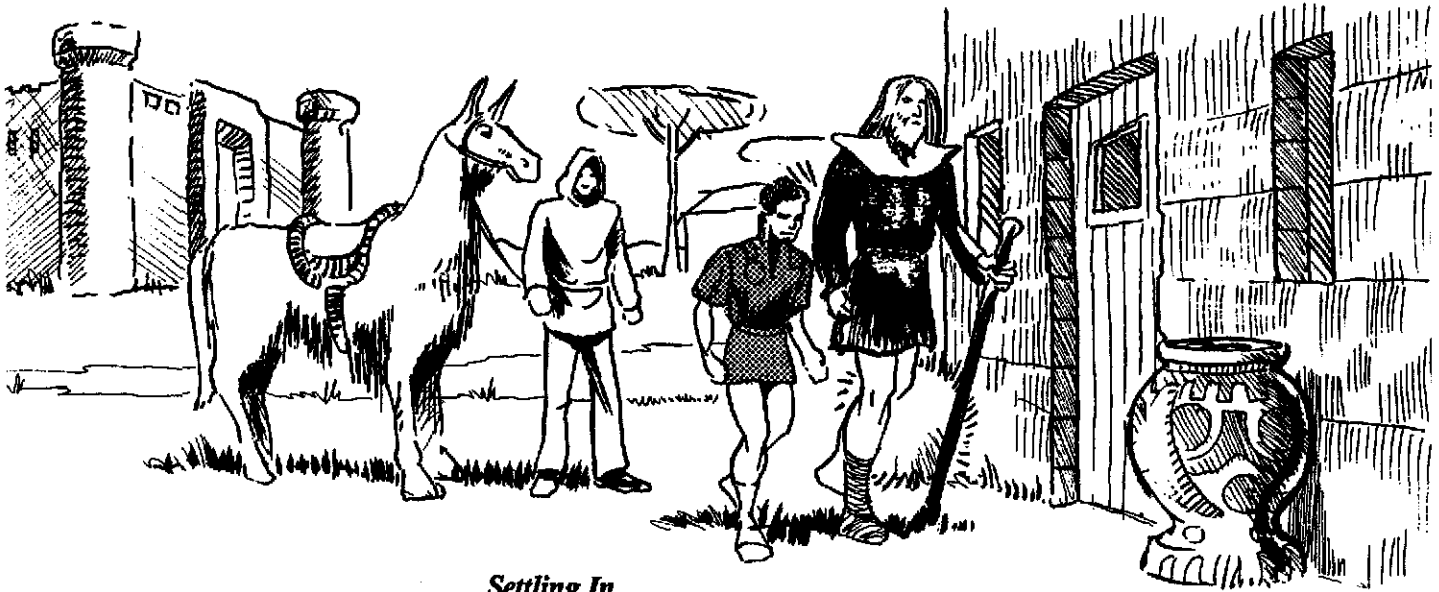
The *Ark* went first to a K class star, which proved to be planetless. Next they tried a nearby red dwarf system. The scientists among the crew managed to make a decent survey of *S-2s Ark* (Star-2nd surveyed Ark). The most important discovery was a terrestrial world. They christened it Unnight because a good part of the world never experiences full darkness. The *Ark* orbited Unnight and dispatched scouting parties. Against all odds, the world turned out to be habitable. Deciding that the dangers of disease, weather and hungry animals were preferable to certain death aboard the *Ark*, the crew began shuttling people to the surface. Two sites, one Orbside and one Farside, were picked for the initial settlement.

The *Ark* went back to the rendezvous and announced the discovery to the other vessels of the fleet. One of the vessels (UNCPPOSS *Deucalion*) had found a corridor out of the nebula. Its crew urged the fleet to head out to clear space on the chance that they could take sights and proceed to Aegir. A more pragmatic faction, led by the crew of the *Ark*, put its hopes on Unnight. A compromise was reached. Each ship went to *S-2s Ark* and set down its passengers. The *Ark* was stripped of spacing equipment except for a minimum, but left with all three shuttles. The other ships then headed for open space, promising to return with fuel and supplies once the path to Aegir was safely plotted. What happened to them is unknown. Certainly none of the ships returned to Unnight. The *Ark* and its crew were on their own.

Weights & Measures

The inhabitants of Unnight use a personalized, casual form of the metric system to measure things. The names of the old, scientifically derived units are still used, but the units are now based on guesswork, body parts, and natural objects. A *gram*, for example, is now the weight of five Tensalady seeds (except in the northern parts of Kiroon, where it's the weight of three Delden eggs). A *mitter* is the length between your nose and the end of your outstretched arm. Gamotch has a normal "field and house mitter" used in construction and surveying, and a "trade mitter" that is about two and a half feet long . . . the distance between a Konger's nose and outstretched arm (see sidebar p. 37). The trade mitter is used to measure cloth and other consumer goods. No one mentions the origins of the trade mitter, especially in front of a Konger merchant! The usual measure of road distance is the *klik* or *kyomitter*. It is theoretically 1,000 mitters but actually 1,000 paces, which is significantly less. Directions are more likely to be in terms of a day's march or a day's ride.

These "guesstimated" units are fine for day-to-day use. A local mitter is about equal to a yard; a *kyogram* (1,000 grams) is a little over two pounds. If exact measurements are called for, the wizards can provide accurate mitter sticks and fine scales. They are often called on to settle disputes over rigged scales, improperly surveyed land, and other "measurement feuds."



Time

Time on Unnight is measured by the motions of heavenly bodies, hourglasses, water clocks, specially marked candles, and a host of other devices. The local artificial units of time are based upon the supposedly unchangeable orbit of the *Ark* in the sky overhead. This unit of time, supposedly equal to one old-Earth day, is called an *Ark*. There are *about* ten *Arks* in an Unnight day. There are four Unnight days and six *Arks* in an Unnight year.

The people of Unnight are surprisingly time-conscious for a pretechnological society, perhaps to make up for the lack of a reasonable day-night cycle. Each *Ark* is divided into "seasons" of varying length: There's "Earthnight", "Brefas", "Trabjo-ay", "Sestia", "Trabjo-bee", "Dinnah" and "Evenen." These curious names came from work schedules distributed during the first days of the colony. Gongs, semaphores and smoke signals are used to mark the passing of the "seasons."

Hours, minutes and seconds are not standardized, and when they are used are not synchronized to the "seasons"; you can tell a man to meet you when his hourglass runs out, but not at "3 o'clock." The wizards, and clever craftsmen from Gamotch and Iquazor, have built spring-driven clocks. The concept of the hour and minute as parts of the day has been restored in some Gamotch cities and Conference outposts; others muddle along with the "seasons."

Settling In

After adjusting to the long days and nights, the settlers did well enough. The scientists, who had hoped to explore the galaxy, kept themselves busy by exploring Orb and dabbling in genetic engineering. They managed to adapt amaranth, maize, sweet potatoes, clover, barley, rice, spinach and okra to survive the long nights. They also identified dozens of native plants that were at least partially nutritious to terrestrial life forms.

The settlers and crew worked together to build permanent shelters for themselves and for storage. Most of the local trees produced *junkwood* (see p. 15) which was not suitable for construction. Instead, planks, sheeting, pipes, ropes and the like were made from an artificial composite material. The fiber and binder came from local vegetation that had been broken down and modified in vats of genetically engineered microbes. Materials produced by the process were light, strong and cheap. Dams and windmills built of it supplied power for the crew's surface installations. Strong and easily-erected buildings protected people and material from the weather.

The *Ark* was put into a 24-hour orbit as a combination relay satellite and clock. The settlers were still attached to Earth's cycles, and used the "Ark star" passing overhead to mark the passage of a standard day. A skeleton crew was kept on the ship, for maintenance and to strip it of useful items for the colonists.

Disaster

Disaster struck the Orbside colony a few weeks before the second harvest was due. It happened at night, during a spectacular passage of Unnight's shadow across Orb. The scientists had predicted quakes at the time of conjunction, so for safety's sake, and to better enjoy the view, the populace bundled up and watched the pseudo-eclipse. It was spectacular, and the mild quakes were exciting, but when the settlers and crew went back to their homes they found ruins. Earlier quakes had tumbled their lightweight structures into easily-repaired heaps; this time the buildings had been reduced to mounds of goo and bundles of wilting fiber. A local microbe had taken a liking to the binder material. Plumbing, power supplies, barns, corrals and the granaries containing the remnants of the poor first harvest disappeared within hours. The Farside base was warned, but too late. Shuttle flights between settlements had carried the microbe there too. Stuzak was setting and the dusk storms made things even worse.

If hunger, cold and uncertainty over the future were not bad enough, the *Night Dance* (see p. 19) made its first appearance at this time. People went literally crazy, frightening the initially unaffected into the bizarre seizure. The horrid spectacle lasted until daybreak.

What followed is not clear. The only written records date from much later. The colonists already had reason to doubt the competence of their scientist leaders. They were, after all, on the wrong planet. Mortality among the colonists in frozen sleep had been over 10%; almost every family had lost someone. Now all that they had built under this regime was gone. Most of the settlers melted away into the hills to make do in their own way.

The crew lasted through the night and began planning for the future. Without the labor of the colonists, their plan to rebuild with a binder less appetizing to the local fauna was frustrated. Disputes over the best course led to open fighting between factions. In the chaos, one shuttle crashed in what is now a wilderness south of Iquazor. Another was blown up by a bomb, stranding the vast majority of the crew on Unnight and marooning a handful of fanatics on the *Ark*. The third shuttle simply disappeared.

The Dark Ages

Isolation from the ship ruined all chances of setting up a technological society. Still, the crew people tried to preserve their way of life. They used the few machines they had left to make metal tools for the settlers. Though the settlers welcomed the goods, they were doing quite well on their own. After a few years, the primitive folk realized that the crew people were more dependent on them than vice-versa. The frustrated technologists were laughed at, even attacked. Avoiding the larger settlements and caravans, the desperate crewmen became mere entertainers. They made their own settlements in caves deep in the woods, where they raised families and preserved their tools and precious books and records. In a historic conclave held by shortwave radio, the elderly leaders founded a secret society which was later to form the national guilds and the Unnight-wide Conference.

The settlers quickly lost their knowledge of 21st-century life. The memories of Earth and technology survived in distorted form, as ballads, ritual plays and stories. Their cherished folkways disappeared almost as completely, to be replaced by new ways more appropriate to Unnight. After ten years, villages of stone and wood appeared across the continent as the scattered refugees settled down. A few decided to stay nomadic, riding horses or specially bred llamas and living out of tents or portable huts. Technology was strictly neolithic, though stories kept memories of metal alive. Occasionally, hunters or lost children met mysterious strangers deep in the woods, strangers who passed on marvels that hinted of a better life.

After two generations, the adaptable folk had become comfortable enough in their new homes to think about exploration and conquest. It was a bloody time of harvest raids and pitched battles over fertile land, herds of cattle and even stands of good timber. Battles were fought with spears, slings, obsidian daggers and crude bows. A distinctive organized religion appeared at this time, when the monks of the Chezuddiv order left their monastery in Iquazor to spread the Word as found in their two holy books, the *Biblo Esperanto* and *Many People, Many Faiths*, vol. III. Rumors have it that the books were found in a crashed sky-chariot by a holy man, Hagra, wandering in the bleak southern wilderness. Besides giving fanatics another thing to kill each other over, the Faith brought literacy back to the people. Books, preserved as curiosities and talismans, were haltingly translated into dozens of new tongues.

It was at this time that the wizards appeared. They didn't call *themselves* wizards, but their own name for themselves was silly . . .

Languages

The original colonists spoke languages from groups as diverse as Ural-Altaic and Uto-Aztecan. The most common mutually understood tongue was English. 500 years have allowed massive changes and the rise of whole new and unintelligible written and spoken forms. A great many common words and old names can still be traced to English forms: *klik*, *kyogram*, *Dontadok*, *Crassant*, *Konger*.

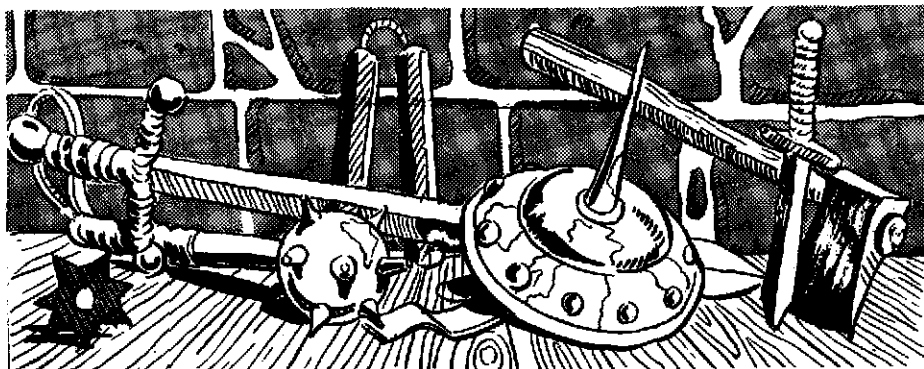
As an added complication, one of the pressure groups active in UNCPO was the International Society for the Encouragement of Esperanto. They managed a requirement that all the books in the UNCPO fleet be available in Esperanto translation. They also managed to put an inordinately high percentage of Esperanto speakers in the crew. The wizards preserved the tongue as a handy mystery language; its regularity in endings makes it convenient for constructing *rhyming incantations*.

The Church also uses Esperanto, as a liturgical language. By happenstance, the two books which form the prime gospel of the Church are only known in Esperanto translation. If the artificial language has survived on Earth, a space traveler who knows it would be at -2 to understand an Unnight Esperanto speaker. Both pronunciation and syntax have changed in five centuries.

Writing

Unnight uses almost exclusively the 28-letter Esperanto alphabet. It does not do a particularly good job of recording the actual sounds of the languages of Unnight, but it is traditional among the two most highly literate groups, Church and wizards. It does mean that written communications in Church or wizard Esperanto will be much more understandable to a classical Esperantist than spoken ones.

The wizards also use several alternative alphabets for secret messages; all are simple substitution ciphers. If the base language is known, or even just a frequency count of letters, they will present no problem to a cryptographer.



The Church

The most widespread religion on Unnigh is a much-changed version of Roman Catholicism. The teachings and traditions survived in part through oral tradition, but the biggest part of the revival was the discovery by Hagran, a wandering Iquazoran holy man, of a treasure-trove of books in a crashed shuttle. Among the books was a simplified Esperanto bible and a volume from a children's picture book about the cultures of Earth. The holy man founded a monastic order that translated the books and adapted the teachings to fit life on Unnigh. The result *looks* like Roman Catholicism, down to cathedrals, monks' tonsures and the archbishops' headgear (copies of the illustrations from the influential picture book have circulated far and wide). It includes elements of Buddhism, Islam and Caribbean and Latin-American hybrid religions ("voodoo"). The frosting on the cake is a whole host of mystical elements invented on Unnigh itself.

It might be misleading to put the various national religious hierarchies under one label, but the folk of Unnigh see it that way. Major differences in interpretation, rituals and organization are glossed over and rationalized by clergy traveling from one region to another. This adaptability and tolerance prevented religious wars in the past and lets the Church expand its range to pagan territories with their own ideas of worship. Still, the power of the Church varies from region to region and nation to nation.

Church positions range from deacon to archbishop; there is no pope. (Depending on who you ask, the head of the church is either on Earth, or in a mysterious city on Carkip that will reveal itself when enough people are converted to the faith.) Duties and requirements for entrance vary widely from nation to nation. In general, clergy must either be literate or have Eidetic Memory (to memorize all of the rituals and teachings). Clergy are expected to learn the official language of the Church, Esperanto. Aside from these elements, anything goes. Priests may or may not be celibate, may or may not be women, and may or may not bear arms, depending on the region.

In some nations, particularly Iquazor, many people choose to live the harsh monastic life. Again, western and eastern traditions have been mixed. Humble, tonsured men in hair shirts are often masters of the martial arts. Most of the military of Iquazor is composed of orders of fighting monks.

and what else do you call someone who can throw balls of fire, cure diseases, summon demonic beasts, and kill with invisible forces? The strangely dressed folk wandered into towns to tell odd stories, heal the sick (for a price!), and sell mysterious talismans. Occasionally they lent their powers to a threatened city . . . or an attacking tyrant. Sometimes they hired out to the highest bidder; other times they remained neutral, simply watching battles progress in stony silence.



The Rise of Nations

After a hundred years, Unnigh's modern nations existed as city-states or powerful tribes. Technology had advanced to TL2. Swords, axes, spears and bows were common, but the bog iron and raw copper vital to making them were growing rare. The wizards demonstrated how to take metal from the earth, and the infant nations battled each other over the mines. The written history of Unnigh begins at this time. Even educated people (except wizards) will know nothing about the events before the Mine Wars except as heroic ballads, whispered rumors and poorly translated records from the Durabooks (see p. 43).

After the Mine Wars came two hundred years of slow recovery and relative peace. The Unnighers needed it; the wars had killed a lot of people and put a lot of land out of use. The nations were isolated at this time; people on the borders traded (and raided) with each other, but the folk of the cities and heartland were busy enough at home, thank you. The wizards of this era were both more hostile and more mysterious than they had been during the Mine Wars; they increased the isolation by preventing people from intruding on their lands. (Conveniently, wizard-holdings tended to be in the wildernesses between populated lands.)

This verged on a dark age at times, but it allowed the countries to develop their own languages, cultures and ways of government. The clans of Xinguth gradually formed a council system to settle disputes. In Iquazor, the monastics set up a benign theocracy. Huge Irwundanch, a land of thousands of tiny hamlets, was ruled at first by dozens of roaming bandit lords. Eventually, a series of ritual combats was held to determine which of the brigands would rule the land. The descendants of the winner and his band became the insouciant *wandering lords* that govern Irwundanch to this day.

The countries of the East — Mensod, Loosyick, Gamotch and Kiroon — developed into more conventional states. All had a king at one time or other; confederations of city-states were the norm for awhile. Mensod eventually acquired a benign monarchy and council of lords. The feuding cities of Gamotch hired mercenaries and strongman leaders . . . who put an end to the fighting and ruled the country for their own benefit. Loosyick's mountain-dwelling Hawk Lords built a series of mighty forts from which to rule the peasants of their land. In wealthy Kiroon, a Tyrant was put into power to lead the nation.

Recent History

The end of the age of isolation was marked by a battle between Loosyick, Mensod and Gamotch over the Lake Country. The incident led to more wars, increased trade, and much intrigue and subterfuge. In the end, the fertile alpine region became a buffer area roamed by shepherds and their flocks. A pattern of conflict was set for the next two centuries.

The century before the present saw the establishment of trade between the civilized lands "under Orb" and the nations of the exotic West. Iquazor became the Holy Land and the destination of many brave pilgrims. Xinguth, source of exotic goods, gold and jewelry, was seen as a land of sinister, inscrutable folk. Irwundanch was both trade route and barrier to commerce, depending on the whim of the capricious wandering lords.

Current Events

Complicating the politics of the East are the Dark Stalkers, mysterious men clothed in black who seem to be on hand whenever trouble is afoot. Are they a league of assassins, or merely dour cultists unlucky enough to be on hand whenever disaster strikes? Some whisper they are in the pay of the wizards' guilds, others that they are agents of far Xinguth.

A recent entry in the roster of nations is Byilikin. Perched on the Orbward coast of Carkip, this primitive land draws adventurers and treasure hunters seeking lost glories of the past: the fabled emerald palaces of Oz, Hernans' Sky Chariot, the lost cities Manhattan and Singapore among others. Trade with the new continent is hampered by the dread Western Pirates, believed to be based on an island in Far Ocean, or perhaps on Orb.

The Wizards' Conference, and its national guilds and chapter houses, have grown in strength along with the increase in trade. Virtually every village has a town wizard, who sells (usually) or gives away (in times of disaster) talismans, medicines, advice and entertainment. Bright village children are occasionally selected as apprentices, and are sent away to distant guild strongholds for training. It is whispered that the nobles and officials of many lands are in the pay of the guilds . . . though some rumors insist that just the opposite is true!



The Church has grown in power too. Monasteries can be found in every land, and the folk of some nations pay tithes to support the local clergy. There is no overall church hierarchy, but the regional organizations do correspond and hold congresses on matters that concern them.

Unnight today stands on the brink of great changes. Kiroon and Mensod, both vying for control of trade, are becoming increasingly impatient with the feud between Irwundanch and Xinguth. Will they cooperate or compete to stamp out this menace to commerce? The wizards' façade of mystery and power is on the verge of crumbling as the folk of the cities become educated enough to see through the smoke and dazzle. Officials high in the Conference, debating the introduction of the printing press, wonder whether the invention will do them more harm than good. What will they decide? Or will the Dark Stalkers decide for them? The churches of the East are steadily forming a parallel government. Will the sovereign nations stand for it? Loosyick, Gamotch and Byilikin are exploring the mysterious islands of Far Ocean, bringing rich new lands into the picture. Could beleaguered Loosyick become a sea power of the new world to the East? Time, and the actions of heroic adventurers, will answer these questions.

Time of the Thirtieth Between

The Quahs of northwestern Irwundanch believe the passage of Duringabi across the heavens determines the fate of Unnight's people and nations. At the moment, the outer planet is nearing the "Great Sky Canal", the brilliant zig-zagging core of the Meschuan nebula. In a few Unnight-years it will pass in front of the band, ushering in (according to the Quahs) an age of war and chaos. As a consequence, an apocalyptic fervor has gripped the people of the countryside. Peasants and townfolk are (to the displeasure and alarm of the noble bands) arming themselves and making halfhearted attempts to form a holy army; though the new soldiers are pretty pitiful warriors they have plenty of spirit. Merchants and pilgrims have been detained and interrogated by the fanatics to determine their side in the coming holy war; visitors believed to be Xinguthy spies have been burned at the stake on several occasions.

Dawn-To-Dark Ocean

Mighty Crassant curls around a large, roughly circular ocean. It was named by one of the first astronauts to see it from orbit; the sea was brilliantly lit in the east (under Orb) but dark and gloomy in its western extreme. The original name and its meaning have been preserved by scholars and the wizards, but popular myth has the ocean getting its name from the fact that sailors travelling from east to west see Orb move from almost overhead (off the shores of Kiroon) to below the horizon. Local dialects distort the pronunciation of Dawn-To-Dark in many ways: in Mensod it's the Donnadak; the Xinguthy call it the Dontadog.

The Dawn-to-Dark stretches from below the equator to Unnight's arctic. The northern reaches of the sea are bound in ice day and night. A passage over the wastes of Teulsa west to Far Ocean is open in the latter part of most northern summer days; at night it freezes solid. Icebergs and floes are a common sight and a deadly danger day and night, even in the Dawn-to-Dark's southern reaches.

In the center of the Dawn-to-Dark is Big Dot Island. This chilly patch of steppes and swamps has played a peculiar role in recent history. Formerly the haunt of pirates, it has become a neutral zone between east and west. Ships sailing between Xinguth and the nations of the east often stop here to pick up water and supplies, to eject stowaways and refugees, and to keep abreast of rumors. Though the island produces little more than dried fish and bog iron, it has become a point of contention (and the object of several sea battles) between Xinguth and Irwundanch.

3

UNNIGHT: THE WORLD

Unnight Bestiary

A sampling of Unnight's creatures is provided below.

* means *special* — see the text for details.

means there are exceptions — see the text for details.

Under *Habitats*:

D = Desert

F = Forest

J = Jungle

P = Plains

S = Swamp

SW = Salt-Water Aquatic

Brok

ST: 25-100

Speed/Dodge: 4/5

DX: 10

PD/DR: 1/4-3/12#

IQ: 6

Damage: *

HT: 18/25-100

Reach: C, 1-6#

Size: 2-12

Weight: 300-10,000 lbs.

Habitats: SW

The brok is a solitary carnivorous sea creature which, from the surface, appears as a large, flat disk — the top of the creature's shell. Spikes and saw-like teeth ring the edge of the shell. The size of the disk varies with age: Young broks are about two yards across while adult specimens may be twelve yards in diameter. 24 long tentacles hang from the bottom side of the disk; reach is ½ of shell diameter. Broks can be very hostile when approached. They can easily drag swimmers and small ships under and occasionally ram larger vessels, tearing great gashes in their hulls. Broks can bring (1-1) tentacles against a foe each turn; tentacles can either strike to damage or try to grapple. Broks grapple victims to drag them underwater to drown; tentacles are tough and hard to hack through. Damage depends on type of attack and size of the brok.



Unnight is a diverse world. Vast areas lie unsettled, thanks to low population pressure and barriers of mountain, desert and sea. These wildernesses are places of mystery and dread to the folk living in the villages scattered across the land. Many people never venture more than a few *kliks* (see p. 9) from their native hamlet. Regions smaller than a county can have their own dialect, myths, folkways and economy. Unnight is Earthlike in many ways, but there are more than enough differences to make it interesting . . . and dangerous.

The World of Nature

Unnight is a largely untamed world, with huge tracts of wilderness. Most of the life is native to the binary planet system, but many Terran species were imported. About half of the imported animal species and most of the plant varieties couldn't adapt to their new world, but a visitor from Earth will run into quite a few that are familiar.

Animals

Many animals are valued for hides or other body parts and products (poisons, oils, musk, bones and so on). Some beasts are hunted for their meat. Some return the favor by stalking and eating people.

Mammals are the dominant animal form on Unnight, at least on the continents. Except for insects, worms and imported Earth creatures, all of the world's land life is warm-blooded. A high percentage of the ocean life is mammalian, too. Research will indicate that the ecosystem is *engineered*, with every niche neatly filled. Some very peculiar creatures are possibly the result of genetic manipulation. For instance, about fifty individual species — ranging from a burrower under the Kiroonian tundra to a fish-eating flyer on the shores of Far Ocean — seem to be directly descended from a *single* common ancestor. It's as if laboratory rats had been altered to replace gophers, sea gulls, otters, foxes and wolves! There are no fossils older than seven million years and no traces of earlier forms of current species.

Unnight's animals have adapted (or *been* adapted) to the world's long days and nights in many ways. Some hole up at night, either by literally crawling into a hole or by growing a shell. Others are *only* active at night, and prey on sleeping dayworkers. Examples of Unnight's fauna are in the sidebars.

Among the Terran species are cats, dogs, horses (which are rare), camels, llamas (which have been genetically engineered into riding beasts), sheep, cattle, bats, rats, a score of birds and numerous insect and invertebrate species.

Plants

Because leaves and branches are more liability than

asset in the dark, plants undergo radical changes at sunset. Most grasses lose their leaf (or leaves) entirely, leaving a root and a small, hard bud at the surface. At the first touch of sunlight the bud bursts and a new leaf emerges. Larger plants and bushes *wind up* at night, curling into tight bundles with leaves and blossoms well-protected inside. Some have thorns or burrs for additional protection. Other plants hollow out burrows (often lined with tough roots and/or a cement-hard secretion) for themselves. Before the dusk-storms ravage the countryside, these species withdraw into their holes, plugging the gap with a crown of spikes.

Large trees come in two types: *junkwoods* and *goodwoods*. Junkwoods are giant grasses akin to bamboo and palm trees. They survive through fast growth and flexibility. Their pulpy, fibrous trunks bend with the wind. Their leaves are individually almost identical to Unnight grasses; they live in a kind of symbiosis with the tree as a whole, rooting in the trunk and contributing sap. One type of junkwood, the Colony tree, takes symbiosis a step further (see sidebar).

Goodwood trees are very similar to Earth's conifers. Their tall, smooth trunks hold a disk-shaped leaf canopy far above the ground. Certain types of grass have become symbiotic partners with *goodwoods*. They trade part of their sap production for a safe spot on the tree's trunk, far from nibbling herbivores.

Climate: What You Expect

Unnight's slow rotation and mild seasonal variations make for a predictable weather cycle. There is one major uncertainty. Since there are less than five days in an Unnight year, part of the planet "misses" summer each year because it's *night* there during that season! Hundreds of terms have been invented by the natives to describe each type of weather; there are words for winter dusk storms, others for the semi-drought of a summer day and the sultry heat of winter noon. Some backwards regions keep track of the years by these cycles. Civilized regions use an entire year cycle (from one summerless year to the next) as a kind of historical marker.

Temperature Table

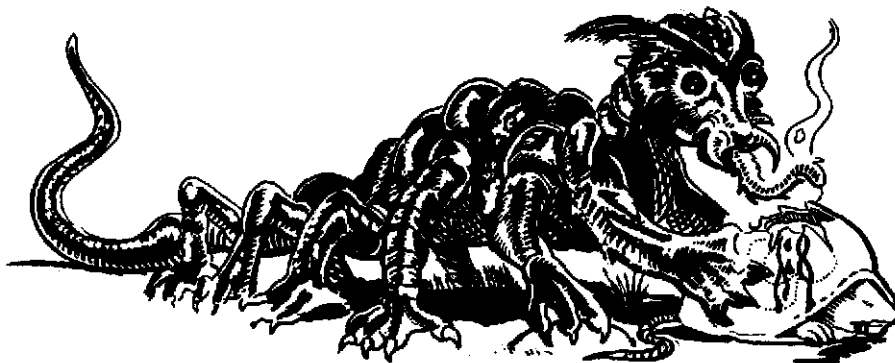
While Unnight is *overall* a chillier world than Earth, it is far from being an ice planet. *Indeed*, most regions get quite warm during daylight. The following table should give the typical temperature changes over the course of a day. Temperatures are given in degrees Fahrenheit.

Latitude	Dawn	Morning	Noon	Afternoon	Evening	Night	Late
Arctic	-10	0	5	32	20*	0	-40
Cool Temperate	-5	10	32	40	32*	10	-15
Hot Temperate	-5	15	40	60	40*	32*	-10
Torrid	-1	20	60	90	40	32*	-5
Equatorial	5	32	70	101	60	40*	0

The actual temperature will vary; roll 2 dice, subtract 7 and add to the number above. Temperatures marked by an asterisk indicate that storms are likely. *Winter* reduces the day temperatures by about 10°; *summer* increases them by about 15°. Neither season affects night temperatures much! Areas bordering the seas have more moderate temperatures; *average* the temperature shown above with 40° to find the true temperature. *Deserts* will be 10° warmer in the day and 15° cooler by night.

Chint

ST: 10	Speed/Dodge: 10/7
DX: 14	PD/DR: 1/2
IQ: 5	Damage: 1-1 imp#
HT: 12/8	Reach: C
Size: 1	Weight: 30 lbs.
Habitats: F, P, D	



The chint looks like a cross between an armadillo and a centipede. It sleeps in burrows during the day and hunts for sleeping animals at night. Its retractable proboscis exudes a powerful enzyme that dissolves Unnight animal shell at a rate of (1 die) damage per second. Some chint species suck blood; others pick away at the flesh of the sleeping victim with a nasty, barbed tongue.

Chints are captured for their shells, which make good armor, and their shell-boring enzyme, which is used by wizards for a number of interesting concoctions. Chints prefer running away, curling up to play dead or burrowing to fighting; if cornered they will claw and bite. Chints sell for about \$1 per pound. Wizards will pay twice that for a prime adult male; these have the best enzymes.

Colony Tree

ST: 20	Speed/Dodge: 0/0
DX: 12	PD/DR: 2/6
IQ: 1	Damage: 2-1 cr#
HT: 17/50+	Reach: C, 1-4
Size: 7	Weight: 1 ton +
Habitats: F, P	

Colony trees are a rather nasty type of junkwood. Living by photosynthesis during the day, at night the tree's limbs wrap around the trunk and small ports open up. Inside these holes live nocturnal rodents and insects; droppings and dead bodies left in the trunk nourish the tree. A colony tree can be dangerous; if a living creature brushes against it, one of the limbs shoots out and smashes the intruder. Tree-limb bashes do (2-1) crushing damage; two to four limbs will strike with a skill of 12. A critical hit means the victim is entangled in the branches and is dragged into the air. The tree's symbionts feed on such carrion. The symbionts may be treated as rats or swarms of insects.

Curier

ST: 18 Speed/Dodge: 4/5
 DX: 11 PD/DR: 2/3
 IQ: 5 Damage: *
 HT: 18/18-22 Reach: C
 Size: 2 Weight: 200-500 lbs.
 Habitats: F, P

Curlers are squat bipeds that sleep in burrows during the day and forage for shelled creatures at night. They look like obese, hairless bears with tough skin and oversized hands. Curlers use sharpened rocks to stun their sleeping prey and break open shells. If threatened, they drop their weapons and charge. Curlers have been known to sneak into well-guarded camps, crush a sleeper's head, and sneak out undetected dragging the kill. Curier rocks do (2+1) crushing damage; they are only used on passive prey. Their hands do 1 die crushing damage in normal combat; in close combat they do (2-1) crushing damage. Curlers have a Stealth of 12.

Pebb

ST: 4 Speed/Dodge: 2/12
 DX: 10 PD/DR: 2/2
 IQ: 4 Damage: 1-5 imp
 HT: 12/2 Reach: C
 Size: <1 Weight: 1-2 lbs.
 Habitats: F, P, D

A pebb is a small insectivore which weaves a shell of calcium-rich fibers about itself; to the casual observer the shell looks like a small rock. When in its shell, it moves quite slowly by shifting its weight around inside; occasionally it pauses to poke out its head and survey the situation. Trapped pebbs can abandon their shell and run, if seriously threatened. Pebb shells are used as vials by wizards and herbalists. Pebbs rely on camouflage and speed for protection, but they will nip people who pick them up.

Porolimot

ST: 48-58 Speed/Dodge: 8/6
 DX: 13 PD/DR: 3/4
 IQ: 3 Damage: 3-2 cut#
 HT: 14/40-50 Reach: C#
 Size: 14-17 Weight: 1-2 tons
 Habitats: S

This bog-dweller feasts on unsuspecting waders. It is physically similar to a large crocodile, but injects a paralyzing venom into creatures it bites. Venom reduces HT 1 die per second. At 0 HT, the victim is conscious but unable to move or speak. Recovery is 1 point every 5 minutes; paralysis remains until the victim is at ½ HT. The porolimot devours most victims on the spot, but may drag one to its nest (a cave above the water line), and inject its eggs into the victim's flesh. Porolimot eggs are easy to spot and remove from the victim, but the nerve-damaging toxin permanently reduces HT by 2 and DX and IQ by 1.

Weather: What You Get

Unnight's weather is rather dull. For each 23-hour Ark of the 243-hour day, roll a die and consult the table below.

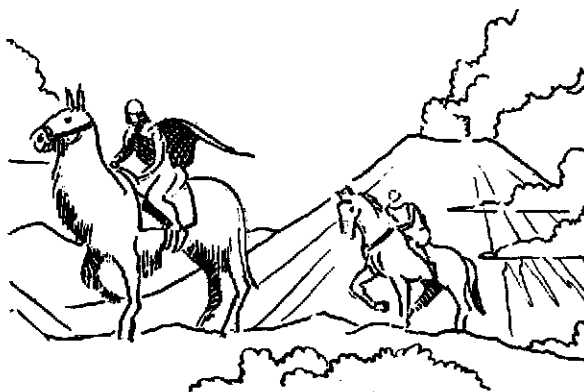
Die Roll	Weather
Under 0	Hot and dry; 50% drought conditions
0-1	Hot and muggy
2	Warmer than average; 50% chance of a rain shower
3-5	Dull weather
6	Cooler than normal; 50% chance of thunderstorms if day
7-8	Hail, rain and snow
9+	Terrible storm

Modifiers

Near the sea +1	Noon-1	Nightfall +3
Predawn +2	Afternoon-2	Late night +2
Morning 0	Late afternoon-1	Desert -1

Tremors and Worse

Unnight is subject to quakes and tremors like any planet. Indeed, the tidal



pull of Orb gives the world more than its fair share of jarring events. Slight tremors can be felt four or five times an Ark; make a *tens-and-ones* roll (roll 1 die for the tens digit, and another for the unit digit) to determine the number of hours until the next tremor occurs. One in 36 tremors (a roll of 2 on 2 dice) is large enough to be considered an Unnightquake. Roll *tens-and-ones* *divided by ten* to determine the Richter-scale rating (11 = a rating of 1.1, 56 = a rating of 5.6). If the roll comes up

doubles, add (2 dice divided by ten) to the rating. High ratings (5 and above) make buildings sway, objects tumble off shelves and creates landslides. Long experience has taught the architects of Unnight to build sturdily; only temporary or damaged structures are liable to tumble down.

Eclipses, Conjunctions, Transits and Time

The skies of Unnight are very busy; eclipses, conjunctions and transits occur almost every night.

Eclipses

The plane of Orb's orbit about Unnight is tilted about 3° from the plane of the ecliptic (the plane formed by Unnight's orbit around Stuzak). Every 25 days or so Orb intersects the plane of the ecliptic at a point between Unnight and its sun causing an eclipse. Most eclipses are partial (but still spectacular); about one in 50 is total. Eclipses last about an hour. From Orb's point of view, Unnight eclipses Stuzak on a similar schedule.

Eclipses have a direct effect on the daily life on Unnight. Temperatures drop

from 1 to 5 degrees (roll 1-1 to determine the drop, and roll for a change in the weather as described above), animals panic and quakes may occur (roll 7 or less on 3 dice for a quake to occur; subtract the same roll from ten to find the Richter-scale rating of the quake.)

Many cultures perform rituals and ceremonies before or after eclipses, but these are designed more to prevent panic and organize repair efforts than to appease the skies. People have come to accept the eclipses as nuisances of nature, and few attach mystical significance to them.

The Planets

Stuzak's other planets are clearly visible in Unnigh's night sky, especially in the Farside hemisphere, where Orb-shine doesn't ruin night vision. Unlike eclipses, the planetary motions have no appreciable *physical* effect on Unnigh. As on Earth, the motions of the worlds in the sky have been given supernatural meanings by the natives. Tribes, cities and whole nations may give a particular event (say, the passage of Ulronch behind Orb) religious significance or use it to mark an important historical event. Some possible planetary events include: *Conjunctions*, where two bodies seem to approach each other; *Oppositions*, where two bodies are as far apart as they can be (Orb is in Opposition in relation to the sun when it is eclipsed by Unnigh); and *Transits*, where one body crosses the other (an eclipse is a transit).

The derelict UNCPASS *Ark* is a planet of sorts; the ship is clearly visible in all but the highest and lowest latitudes. It orbits Unnigh every 23-odd hours, and defines the "Ark," a local unit of time. Note that the ship's orbit was originally 24 hours . . . one Earth-day. Most Unnighers assume that this is still so and have wildly inaccurate calendars.

Constellations and Sky-Pictures

Because relatively few stars shine in Unnigh's nebula-shrouded skies, constellations are sparse . . . only about a dozen are recognized. This lack is more than compensated for by the rich colors and textures of the Meschuan nebula. Each country interprets the shadowy patterns differently, breaking up the nebula into scores of images. The nebula's bright "Z" pattern is usually seen as a river, dividing the sky images into competing camps.

Astrology and Astronomy

The Wizards, the Iquazoran clergy and many eastern scholars have worked out eclipse calendars and have compiled tables of data on the other planets' orbits. The most observant have noticed the change to the orbit of *Ark* and have built compensating factors into their tables. Others have to constantly recompute their predictions.

At the moment, there is little distinction between Astrology and Astronomy; people interested in the sky do both. Even the wizards of the Conference dabble in the fortune-telling aspects of sky watching; they think it's bunk but appreciate the extra money!

Characters with Astronomy or Astrology skill can compute the date of the next eclipse, conjunction or transit by making a roll versus skill -2. Having good instruments (of Gamotchan or off-world manufacture) gives a bonus of +2; having a set of tables allows an additional bonus of +2.

Strange Happenings

As if strange weather and peculiar beasts were not enough, Unnigh is plagued with inexplicable phenomena that appear to be supernatural in origin. To superstitious natives (and, perhaps, to gullible visitors), they are truly supernatural, the results of evil or troubled spirits at work on the defenseless living.



Sith

ST: 30	Speed/Dodge: 6/5
DX: 11	PD/DR: 2/3
IQ: 3	Damage: *
HT: 14/20	Reach: C
Size: 2	Weight: 200-500 lbs.
Habitats: P	

The sith is a placid beast native to the plains of Irwundanch. It is squat and thick-limbed with thick hide and a heavy shell. It is an inoffensive herbivore that relies on its shell for protection. At night or when threatened it tucks head and limbs under its body and hunkers down. When available, the Sith settles in thick mud for the night and breathes through spiracles on its back. Siths with young may charge, ram and trample attackers. A butt does 1 die crushing damage; a trample does (1+2) crushing damage.

Spiker

ST: 11	Speed/Dodge: 12/6
DX: 12	PD/DR: 0/0#
IQ: 5	Damage: 1+1 imp
HT: 12/10	Reach: C
Size: 1	Weight: 50 lbs.
Habitats: F, P, D	

Spikers are about the size of a dog and have long, thin, muscular legs. They are fast but frail, with no protective shell. Spikers find and occupy abandoned shells, spraying an attractive musk about the area. Once in the shell they lie on their backs and wait for a predator to snuffle at the seams of their new home. When the time is right, the spiker thrusts its claw-tipped legs out of the shell's natural openings, skewering the inquisitive animal outside. Spikers are active both day and night.



Image Generator

Use the following table to generate any images (see *Things That Go By in the Night*, p. 19, and *The Night Dance*, p. 50) the PCs run into.

Roll — Manifestation

- 1 — Creature (Unnight animal)
- 2 — Sentient creature (Probably totally unknown to PCs)
- 3 — Vague, abstract shape
- 4 — Vehicle or traffic signal
- 5 — Strange, mechanical device
- 6 — Combination (roll twice on the above)

Roll — Action

- 1 — None, image is perfectly still
- 2 — Image oscillates in place
- 3 — Image acts like the object pictured
- 4 — Image is a static "snapshot", but drifts slowly across the landscape for an hour or so.
- 5 — The image *follows* a nearby animal or person, drifting after him no matter what evasive action is taken.
- 6 — As 5 above, but the image seems to *want* something; if of a creature, it will try to communicate; if a vehicle, it will stop and open its doors.

The Night Dance

The most common eerie phenomenon on Unnight is the *Night Dance*. It *justifies* a fear of the dark; phobias associated with the dark only count at half value for natives of Unnight. The Night Dance strikes at night, almost always outdoors, and when the victim is alone, with a few friends or with many strangers.

The effects vary wildly (see below), but never last longer than two hours. The Dancer, if he survives, wakes up with no memory of the incident except a vague feeling that he has accomplished some agreeable task.

Different cultures have different treatments for the Dance. These range from ignoring the victim, to restraining him in a padded cell, to ritual purification by burning alive. The wizards advise staying indoors after dark, but there are rumors that they know more than they will say. Some wizards are rumored to actually control the Dance.

Catching the Dance

The GM rolls every 12 hours during the 120-hour night for each intelligent creature (IQ 8+). The base roll to Dance is 19 or more — so, without modifiers, nobody is affected. Roll 3 dice and modify the result as

follows: +2 if outdoors; +2 if alone, or +1 if among strangers. +2 if lost, frightened, or otherwise upset. +1 if you *want* to make contact, or if you are obsessively frightened and thinking about it.

Unnighters do *not* know exactly what causes the Dance, and the GM should *not* tell them what is affecting the die rolls! The Dance is more common in some areas, and certain Wizard drugs increase susceptibility greatly. Anyone with psi powers has a +1 to his roll; +2 for any power of 12+. But any mind shield at all will prevent the Dance.

Therefore, people who are happy at home (except psis) don't even roll, but the Dance becomes a menace for people who travel or are in trouble.

Roll 2 dice on the following table for each affected person; the effect lasts for (2 dice x 10) minutes. Recovery does not reduce susceptibility.

- 2-5 — He stares at Orb and occasionally speaks in an unknown language.
- 6-9 — He stares at Orb for 1 die minutes then begins to run, jump and climb frenziedly (+2 to ST and DX for these activities). He continues this behavior unless restrained. He will not resist restraint.
- 10-11 — He immediately begins to lecture an unseen audience in an unknown language; he walks around pointing at invisible things; if *Things That Go By* (see below) are present, he may coordinate his activities with them.
- 12 — He reacts violently. If he has no combat skill above 11, he makes an All Out Attack with bare hands or whatever weapon he is carrying on the nearest person. He continues All Out Attack on anyone in sight, until he is dead or unconscious or the fit is over. If he has any combat skill of 12 or more, he will instead try for up to 15 minutes to achieve a superior tactical position, then attack with his best combat skill. This will not be a berserk attack, but a fully skilled and conscious operation; however, he will not surrender. He will continue fighting until the fit is over, unless he is killed or restrained.

Things That Go By in the Night

Occasionally, ghostly images of machines and strange creatures pass through remote villages or travelers' camps. The pale, impalpable phantoms occur by night and day, but are most visible in the dark. The images, which come in an astonishing number of varieties, are by now a familiar sight to the folk of Unnight; a person can expect to see one every other year. Academics have compiled catalogues of the images, and given the odd beings and objects names and classifications. Some regions have a fortune-telling technique based on the images. The wizards seem to be able to control the appearance of some sorts of the images, but refuse to give the people of the villages or cities any clue as to their nature.

The Nations of Unnight

Ambitious men and the dynasties they founded have carved out kingdoms and sovereign nations on Unnight. As can be seen on the political map, seven major powers have staked out large territories on the major continents, Crassant and Carkip. What they claim and what they really rule are frequently far different. Hundreds of smaller nations, independent baronies, city-states and island kingdoms exist as well. If you need a quick villain or far-off quest destination, feel free to create minor powers or whole lost empires.

Xinguth

Xinguth straddles the equator on the western limb of Crassant, between Far Ocean and Dawn-to-Dark Ocean. Beyond the dense woods that form the northern border is Teulsa, a chilly wilderness of steppes, pine forests and tundra. To the south lie Iquazor and Irwundanch, behind barriers of forest and mountain.

The Lay of the Land

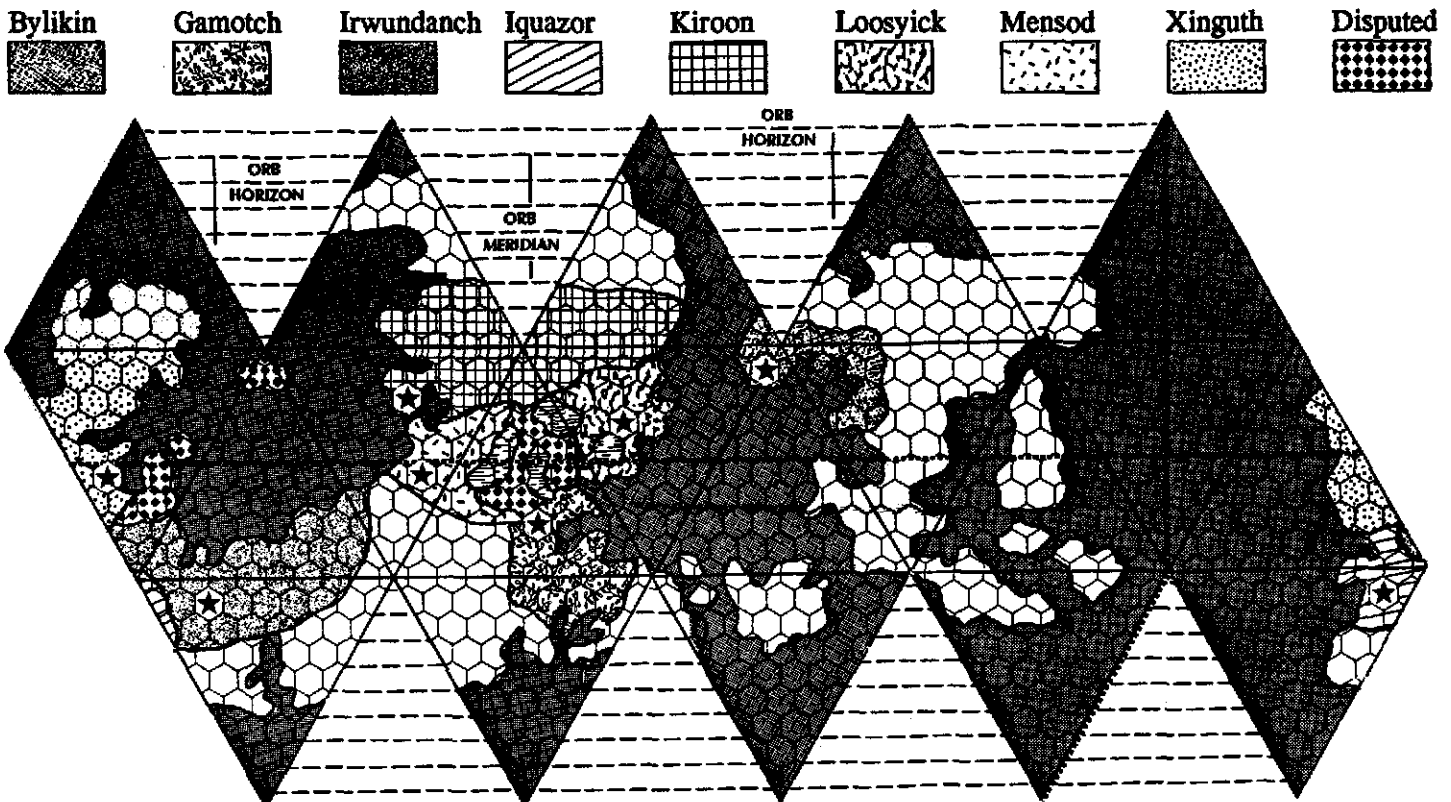
Xinguth is a mountainous land. The mighty Thyhim range cuts the country

The Country of the Night

By necessity, the folk of Unnight spend a lot of time outdoors, tending their crops and herds; this work must continue even at night. People in most countries take a break from work at sunset to avoid the dusk storms, which last about 20 hours; when they leave their homes they emerge into the strange "season" that gives Unnight its name. The night is rarely totally dark. Orb illuminates half the globe with light more than 30 times brighter than Earth's moon, and the eerie glow of the Meschuan nebula creates strange shadows and hampers night vision. The sight of unfriendly hills and forests darkly outlined against the glowing sky strikes terror into the folk of Unnight. Even the plants and animals of Unnight often undergo strange metamorphoses at night.

People work in groups at night, bearing torches and singing cheerful songs to ward off beasts, spirits and the Night Dance. All but travelers and the foolhardy stay close to the light and warmth of home; as soon as the work at hand is completed all good people bar their doors and huddle by the fire. Visitors are usually not welcome at night; many people firmly believe in the existence of vampires, demons, possessing spirits and ghosts.

Political Map of Unnight



Languages in Xinguth

Xinguth's official language is *Sohai*. The tongue has roots in Spanish and Esperanto, with large contributions from South American Indian languages. The literacy rate in Xinguth is very low and books are relatively rare.

Trade in Xinguth

Xinguth is rich in some resources (minerals, metals, and fierce fur-bearing animals) but lacks decent timber and arable land. The Xinguthy seem most interested in baubles, steel weapons, tools and luxury goods. Much-needed grain is sold to buy these nonessentials. Traders dealing with the Yalf clans can do especially well if their product strikes the fancy of the clan women. Steadier but less spectacular profits can be made from selling lumber cut in the hardwood forests of Kiroon and Mensod.

Bazilino is the main port of entry into Xinguth, but the streets of the city proper are forbidden to outsiders. A traders' quarter has grown around the docks; travelers can find lodging, sustenance and entertainment there. A large bazaar is situated just outside the gates for the convenience of traders.

Caravans into the interior must hire guides and local bearers, and are limited to only a few approved trading routes. Aliens on the road must stay in one of the rather dirty, overpriced inns provided by the government. (Native Xinguthy travelers can count on the hospitality of a clan, trading stories or gifts to the elderwomen for a meal and a mat in the courtyard.) All sorts of manufactured goods sell well in the Xinguth outback. Trinkets, rugs, combs, scrolls, jewelry and the like from the nations of the east can be exchanged for gold ore, gems and furs.

There is a trickle of overland trade with Iquazor, but this is strictly one-way. Clans from the mountains occasionally send expeditions on lamaback to trade gold, copper, iron, fur and gems for Iquazor bread and noodles. The border is patrolled by fierce mounted archers who will arrest or kill intruders.

roughly in half from north to south. Rugged hills and butte-sprouting badlands mar the northeast and southwest, respectively. Due to the arrangement of mountain ranges that catch the moisture-laden sea winds, much of Xinguth is arid near-desert. One area, nestled between the Thyhims and a spur of rough new peaks in the north of the country, is a blazing hell by day and a nightmarish, beast-haunted wilderness after dark.

The largest area of arable land is the Yalf River delta, on the Dawn-to-Dark coast. Like the Netherlands, many of the fields of Yalf have been reclaimed from the sea. More fertile land lies along the sparsely settled Far Ocean coast. Great, dense forests of junkwood trees can be found in the highlands.

Xinguth's climate is fairly stable, which is unfortunate because the weather is *terrible*. The winds and rain of the dusk and dawn storms are especially fierce in Xinguth, which gets it from both east and west. Flash floods scour the hills and badlands, drowning the unwary yet leaving behind little water; the rain merely runs off the hard-packed soil into gullies and ravines and thence back to the sea.

Making a Living

The folk of Xinguth are primarily herdsmen and subsistence farmers. Many tribes live a nomadic life on the edges of the southeastern desert, grazing their herds on the sparse grasses of the hills. Others subsist on primitive slash-and-burn agriculture, hunting small animals to supplement their diet. The fertile Yalf delta is held by a handful of powerful clans, who trade the grain they produce to the nations of the East. Small fishing villages can be found on sheltered bays and up-river from both coasts; because of the storms, few care to build on the sea shore proper. Considerable mining, both hard-rock and placer, produces gold, copper and tin. Xinguth's population is a bit over two million. Because of the storms and the poor land, nearly everybody but the Yalf clans go hungry much of the time. The infant mortality rate is high, and life expectancy is in the 30s (Earth years).

Society

Xinguth society is centered around the clans. Powerful traditions guide people through life, administer justice, and provide for the distribution of food and goods. Clan folk are expected to get along, protect each other from danger, and do an appropriate share of the work (be it farming, herding, weaving, or the like.) Men generally have the upper hand in Xinguth clan society. Women who can manage to survive a life of childbearing and hard labor become elderwomen, treated with respect and reputed to have strange powers. Women generally accept their lot with stoicism. They know that if luck is with them they can get even with the men when they are clan elderwomen.

The Xinguthy view theirs as a harsh but virtuous life. Clannish traditions are time-tested and all-powerful; Xinguth society is conservative and bound by superstition, machismo, a code of honor and (often silly) rules of conduct. It is the most regimented and one of the most militaristic societies on Unnight. Only in the larger cities do the rules break down and concepts like individuality and personal property rear their ugly heads.

Organized religion, including the Church, is not very powerful in Xinguth. Everybody gives lip service to church doctrine and keeps the saints' days. The few priests and monastics are treated with indifference rather than hostility or disrespect. For the most part the Xinguthy are religiously demonstrative only at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Their code of right and wrong is based on traditional observances rather than theological principles.

Government

Xinguth is governed by a council of powerful clan hetmen from the Yalf River delta. The number varies with politics, but is usually about five. They are

mostly harsh, uncompromising leaders, who intend to keep Xinguth lands out of foreign hands and preserve the status quo at home. The council was created when the Yalf clans became alarmed at the prospect of outsiders taking over their trade monopoly with the Eastern nations. Their *Hall* is located in *Bazilino*, a walled city located on the *Osarb* peninsula. The *Most Disinterested*, as the council is called, taxes the clans, maintains roads and dikes in the lowlands, and controls the army and navy.

In each region, some clan hetmen are given *Disinterested* status and act as representatives of the *Most Disinterested*. These hetmen collect taxes, hear grievances, and keep order with contingents of armed *llamamen*. The *Most Disinterested* encourages its representatives to spy on each other and report disloyalty, especially tax cheating. Grumblers, especially in the far northwest, say that this is not the way it was done in the good old days. It is getting hard to tell the *Most Disinterested* from the governments of those non-clansmen across the border. Missing tax-collectors are becoming a frequent problem.

Law and Order

Each clan has its own legal code for dealing with miscreants. Punishments for clansmen often involve ritual debasement, or chastisement by the elderwomen. The worst punishment (reserved for those who murder clan elders or betray the tribe) is to be sold to another tribe as a slave, usually after emasculation. The punishment of convicted women is always a monopoly of the elderwomen; Xinguthy do not like to talk about what is done.

Outsiders who commit a crime within the jurisdiction of a clan are in *deep* trouble. Unless the accused can turn the matter into an inter-tribal dispute (by, for instance, claiming the crime was part of an established feud) the injured clan can do pretty much what it wants with the victim. To be fair, some of the oldest clans, and those near cities, have agreed to stick to a harsh but equitable code of justice.

In the past, disputes between tribes were settled by combat. This could be either real wars or ritual battles between the clans' elderwomen. Such conflicts still happen, especially in the conservative northwest, but most disputes today are resolved without battle.

The procedure of negotiation is fixed by custom. Besides the *hetmen* of the clans at dispute, at least three other clan hetmen must be present to act as mediators. One of the non-involved hetmen is elected to be the *Disinterested*. He chairs the meeting and casts the deciding vote if the other two cannot agree on a judgement. The disputing clans are represented by their elderwomen, who carry on all the active debate. The disputant hetmen can only speak to agree to a decision of the mediators, or to declare a state of feud if one clan or the other will not accept the settlement. Successful mediators have great prestige in Xinguth; unsuccessful ones tend to die shortly after a visit by a deputation of elderwomen. Halls for housing these meetings are traditionally located on territory claimed by no clan. Over the years, trading posts, churches and cottage industries have sprung up around these halls. These large and prosperous villages in oddly out-of-the-way places are the centers of non-clan life in Xinguth.

Foreign Relations

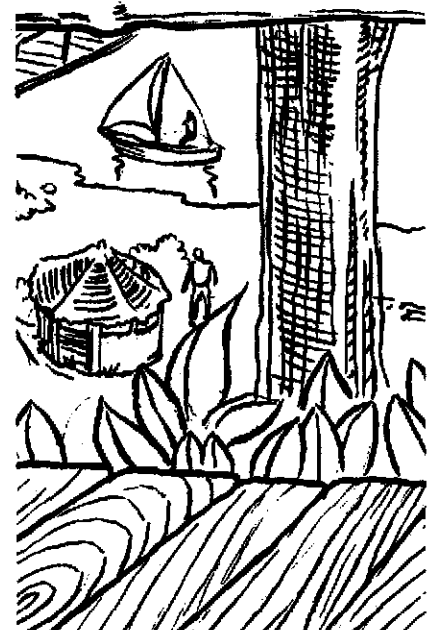
The Xinguthy pride themselves on being a suspicious, scheming people. They call it being canny and realistic. This shows in their diplomacy. They are officially on good terms with everybody but *Irwindanch*, but no nation truly trusts them. Assassinations, piracies and raids are commonly blamed on the Xinguthy.

The *Most Disinterested* is currently eyeing the *Powerlach* peninsula and a number of islands in the *Dawn-to-Dark* ocean. *Irwindanch* claims these lands, resulting in much bad (and spilled) blood between the two nations. Numerous

Adventures in Xinguth

Border Guards: Bountiful *Iquazor* has long been a target of Xinguthy raiders. Xinguthy characters and foreign mercenaries could find themselves summoned to serve on a raiding party. The fanatical *fighting orders* (see p. 24) of *Iquazor* should prove interesting foes!

Trader in a Strange Land: The Xinguthy are a suspicious folk, and do their best to make life interesting for visiting merchants (see *Trade in Xinguth* sidebar, p. 20). In an attempt to "open up" the nation to eastern trade, an eccentric and overly confident merchant prince from *Gamotch* journeys to Xinguth with a caravan-load of tempting goods. The adventurers are hired to guard and assist the merchant as he bumbles his way across the countryside.

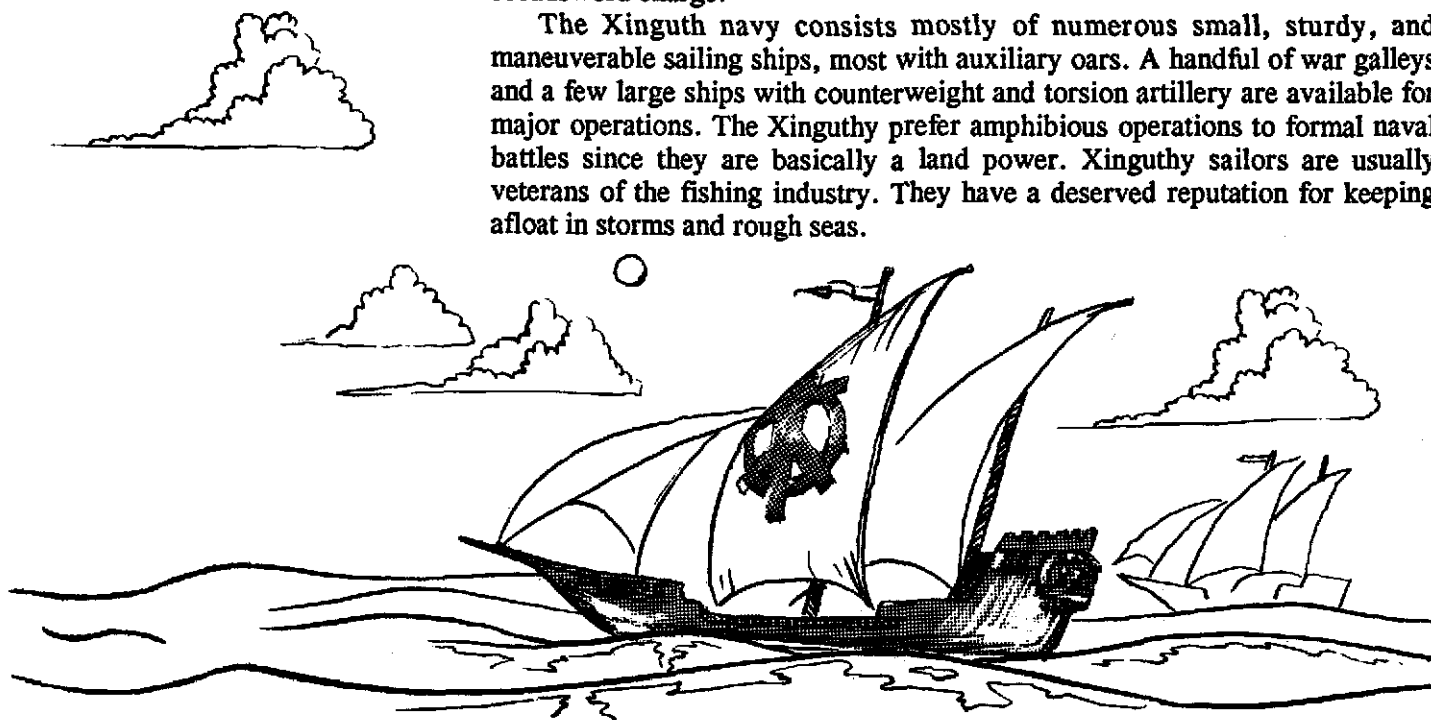


raids and a seesaw naval battle for control of Big Dot island have made life interesting for the fighters of Irwundanch and Xinguth.

The Wizard's Conference is deeply troubled over Xinguth. The clanspeople are fierce, and sophisticated enough to be unimpressed by wizard tricks. The Most Disinterested is virtually unapproachable to the local guild, which in any case is disorganized and dispirited. Many conservatives in the Conference fear that the wily Xinguthy could overthrow their reign of trickery.

Xinguth maintains a small but well-trained standing army, and can count on large levies from the clans in times of crisis. Xinguth's military specializes in cavalry. The preferred mounts are huge llamas, more agile in broken terrain, faster on the level and able to carry more weight than either camels or horses. The Xinguthy llama archers are feared throughout Irwundanch and Iquazor. The Xinguthy military are not notable as strategists, but are excellent at minor tactics. They are especially good at coordinating archery support with a lance and broadsword charge.

The Xinguth navy consists mostly of numerous small, sturdy, and maneuverable sailing ships, most with auxiliary oars. A handful of war galleys and a few large ships with counterweight and torsion artillery are available for major operations. The Xinguthy prefer amphibious operations to formal naval battles since they are basically a land power. Xinguthy sailors are usually veterans of the fishing industry. They have a deserved reputation for keeping afloat in storms and rough seas.



Iquazor

Iquazor lies on the western shore of Crassant. In its heart is the mighty Kanan River, which winds through hills and forested plains to the Far Ocean. Though the dusk storms make life on the coast a trial, Iquazor's climate is favorable and the land fertile and well watered. The hills and mountains of southern Xinguth border the country to the north. Irwundanch lies east and northeast, beyond a range of arid hills and steep mountains.

Iquazor is home to about three and a half million people. Most live in the vicinity of small villages in the northern and central regions of the nation; more people are moving south as the older lands become crowded and depleted.

Lay of the Land

Iquazor is split into three regions by the Kanan and Ulop rivers. North of the Kanan is an area of forests. Some sparse, hilly grasslands and a patch of desert lie in the western-most part of this region. Between the two rivers is a wedge of arid, hilly country; it extends past the vague border to the Saoppo mountains of Irwundanch. South and east of the Kanan is the Iquazor heartland, a region of gently rolling hills, ridges of stone, and fertile valleys.

Languages of Iquazor

Iquazor has two major languages: Sohal (which it shares with Xinguth) and a dialect of Esperanto. The latter is the language of the monastic orders and Church intellectuals. It has picked up many new words and lost much of its simplicity over the centuries. A visitor who has studied this stillborn universal language *should* be able to follow a conversation (roll versus Esperanto skill-2).

Making a Living

The inhabitants of Iquazor are primarily farmers, though some villages near the coast harvest fish and crustaceans. Such industry as exists is on the cottage level. Iquazor has little mineral wealth, and must trade with Xinguth for many metals. A large portion of Iquazor's population (upwards of a third of all men and a quarter of women) live the monastic life. Numerous monasteries housing strictly disciplined religious orders dot the countryside. Some of these retreats are self-sufficient; others support themselves from the sale of an exotic cash crop or product. Other orders roam the countryside in bands, supported by alms and in return performing harsh work such as road repair, flood control or swamp drainage. About 10% of the monastics do scholarly work, giving Iquazor one of the highest literacy rates on Unnigh.

Society

Iquazor is the holy land of Unnigh, and this is reflected in the lives of its people. For the most part, they are almost embarrassingly virtuous and hard-working. Men work their farms or fish; women raise children and do housework and crafts; monastics provide spiritual guidance and specialized products. The towns are places of trade, light manufacture and worship. Except for a few disreputable border settlements, they are not places to find illicit fun, exotic goods and excitement.

Secular authority in Iquazor is limited to the towns. There are town councils, mayors, constabulary and fire brigades in most. Border towns have custom houses, foreign consulates and similar establishments. The clergy perform most other functions, such as running schools, conducting diplomacy and regulating trade between the towns. The *Good Folk* of Iquazor seem satisfied with this. Only a few wild youngsters and ambitious merchants chafe at the rule of the religious.

Government

In some ways, Iquazor is hardly a nation at all. It might be best described as a loose confederation of monastic orders and towns. Powerful clerics lead their regions, but there is no strong central authority. The capital, Amossto, is merely the place where the Archbishop of Iquazor presides and the major orders maintain offices. The secular power of councils and mayors ends at the city limits. The monastics and church authorities provide a postal system, repair roads, and maintain bands of fighting monks to discourage raiders and bandits. Some religious orders are more powerful than others, and some have nationwide interests, but none is truly in charge.

The Iquazor military consists of town militia and the martial religious orders. Were it not for the prowess of the latter, Iquazor would be a pushover for invading Xinguthy or ambitious soldiers of fortune. Iquazoran response to an invasion is to garrison the towns with militia and harass the invader with the troops of the fighting orders. The militia are principally pike and shortsword infantry, strong on defense (especially against cavalry) but not very mobile. The fighting orders are the despair of orthodox military officers. They are composed of masters of both familiar and exotic weapons, individually formidable, but constitutionally incapable of operating in any group larger than a company. No invasion yet has lasted long enough to starve out the towns and sweep the country clear of guerrilla clerics. Theorists wonder how long that would take the first regular force to try it.

Those dealing with the authorities of Iquazor would first deal with the abbot of the nearest monastery. He would refer the heroes to another clergyman, who would send a messenger for advice from another, who would call a meeting with the local mayor and council, and so on. Power is decentralized in Iquazor. The best bet for adventurers seeking help or bearing messages is to find the most

Trade in Iquazor

Iquazor is self-sufficient in food, and indeed exports some of its harvest north and east. While farmers regularly find deposits of bog iron in their fields, valuable metals and leather goods from Xinguth are in demand here. Exotic crafts made by the forest dwellers of the northeast find their way to the nations east via pilgrim and caravan.

The secret of making noodles (the hardtack of Unnigh) is unique to Iquazor; the amaranth flour pasta is highly prized because it is a compact and durable way of storing food.

Those entering Iquazor have a choice of two paths. *Pilgrim Pass* crosses into the forests of northeastern Iquazor through a treacherous pass in the eastern mountains, where the Poweriach Spur and the Saoppo Range meet. It is the older and busier of the two routes, and the more dangerous; pilgrims surviving the storms that blow through the pass are often set upon by border-hopping Xinguthy bandits. In recent years, the Irwundanch have gotten into the act, providing roadside shelters, guides and protection . . . for a price. A favorite guides' scam of late is to take tired, near-broke pilgrims to a phony shrine a few miles into the mountains, bilk them of their last savings, and send them home convinced they've been to the holy land.

The poorly named *Desert Route* opened but a decade ago. It enters dense forests in southwestern Irwundanch, skirts the lower reaches of the Saoppo, and crosses a tract of semi-desert before joining up with the Utop, a short ferry ride from civilization. Though far safer than Pilgrim Pass, the Desert Route is controversial; some die-hard monastics believe it goes too close to the forbidden sacred wilderness to the south.

Adventures in Iquazor

A benign and peaceful land, Iquazor is not the best place to look for adventure. Characters could find some action defending Iquazor from Xinguthy raiders or taking on dangerous missions for one of the monastic orders.

powerful order around, do them a favor, and hope for an audience with the abbot or ruling council.

Law and Order

Iquazor is relatively tolerant for a theocracy. Victimless crimes are viewed by the Good Folk and clergy merely as signs of human weakness. The few establishments of sin are allowed to operate as long as they are discreet. Those caught gambling, patronizing a brothel or drinking to excess *might* be locked up for a night, but only to keep them on hand for a lengthy lecture on the virtues of abstinence.

Crimes of violence or property crimes are punished by compensation (a cash fine or stint of labor to reimburse the victim) and penance. Penance is the treadmill or the road gang. The labor is hard, and mixed with bouts of mandatory prayer and lectures on theology, self-discipline and the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. Hardened criminals have been heard to yearn for the mines or the galleys. Capital punishment and mutilation are not the style of the clergy, but if an especially heinous villain is lynched by townsmen, the authorities will look the other way. Some religious orders encourage criminals in their charge to mutilate themselves, in exchange for a shortened sentence and relief from chastisement.

Law in Iquazor is church business. The local monastery usually has two or three lawyers (distinguished by their habit: coat, pants and vest of gray homespun). These investigate any civil or criminal complaint and present the evidence to the abbot, who rules on the case. It is difficult, but not impossible, to bribe or threaten lawyers or the ruling abbot. Cash bribes are not solicited; the acceptable form is a service for the church. Anyone who promises a service and does not deliver has acquired a powerful and persistent enemy. The monks have been known to hunt a defaulter across many years and miles; prominent and powerful men have ended their lives shoveling muck because they jumped a debt in Iquazor.

Foreign Relations

Iquazor is viewed by the nations of the far East as a mysterious Holy Land, ruled by saints. It was in Iquazor that the wandering pilgrim Hagan founded the Chezuddiv order and first preached the Gospel as recorded in the Biblo Esperanto. Its gentle and virtuous people are used as examples by sermonizing clergy across Crassant. In most places, it is also pictured (unfairly) as a land besieged by the heretical Xinguthy. Stories of giant monasteries, miracles, jeweled streets and healing springs proliferate in the East. Pilgrims who make the journey are often disappointed by the drab life-style of the Good Folk.

Each of the eastern lands claims not only to be on good terms with Iquazor, but to be on better terms than all the others. Because of the intervening stretches of wilderness and the vast bulk of Irwundanch, this is a safe but worthless claim. Iquazor is too far away to pose a threat, provide help or dispute any tale. The myth is furthered by the way Iquazor deals with visitors. Foreign emissaries entering the country are treated grandly by whatever town or abbey they enter. The ambassadors are feasted and gifted; the abbot or mayor listens politely and agrees to almost anything that is vaguely worded. The ambassadors go home with a treaty and the Iquazorans return to normal life.

Xinguth and Iquazor are not on the best of terms. Xinguth was settled by tribes driven from Iquazor about 100 years after Unnight's settlement. Later, the Chezuddiv order drove out heretics who also fled north. The descendants of the exiles still carry grudges. Xinguthy see Iquazor as a rich land of pompous weaklings and bickering monastic orders. Clan hetmen toast the eventual conquest of Iquazor at festival time, but any invasion more than a big raid has yet to happen. The Iquazorans, for their part, view the Xinguthy as boorish people, more of a danger to each other than to the Good Folk. Despite Eastern propaganda there is

The Dark Stalkers

About a decade ago, a plague of assassination, arson and disappearances struck the east. At first, the crimes seemed merely an ugly turn in the war of words and intrigue between the eastern nations. Cooler heads examined clues left behind at the scenes of the crimes, and set up tempting traps for the miscreants. Though no one was caught in the traps, interrogation of witnesses turned up a clue — each of the crimes was preceded or followed by the sighting of mysterious figures clothed in black robes and hoods. The eerie, silent creatures, quickly labeled the Dark Stalkers, were never seen to *do* anything but stare intently at the scene for a few moments before slipping away.

The Wizards

The Wizards (who rarely, if ever, call *themselves* wizards) are members of an organization which wields subtle power across the planet. Almost every village has a wizard-in-residence who provides entertainment and a variety of services. Most large cities have chapter houses, where wizards are trained and the wizards in the field come to hobnob and take on fresh supplies of tricks. The wizards of each nation have their own guild, which are in turn represented at the Conference, a shadowy worldwide conspiracy. Besides the guild halls and chapter houses, the Conference maintains forbidding deep-woods and mountaintop laboratories.

See Chapter 4 for more about wizards.

no religious war between the two. Still, Xinguth maintains a border patrol and a half-dozen fortified monasteries line the Iquazor side of the frontier.

Iquazor's relations with Irwundanch are polite but restrained. Neither nation sees the other as prize or threat. A no-man's land separates Irwundanch and Iquazor in the east; mountains form the border in the north and forests to the south. Potential for conflict exists over control of the wilderness lands south of the nations. Iquazor considers the area a holy region; the Irwundanchers see it as real estate.

The Church is, of course, quite powerful in Iquazor. It is, however, not quite the *same* Church as the one in the east. Iquazor preserves the pure classical Esperanto and the literal words of the Holy Books. The east has evolved in somewhat different directions. A slow but steady stream of letters and writings between the Holy Land orders and the more organized churches of the east links the two spiritually and intellectually. Neither commands the other or establishes dogma for the other. Foreign clerics visiting Iquazor will seem nearly as exotic as any other visitor. The eastern churches don't advertise the fact that their relationship with the Holy Land is that of pen pals.

The Conference has shown little interest in thinly-populated, backwards Iquazor. The Wizards do maintain a few chapter houses in eastern Iquazor, and there are rumors that a guild may be set up in the capitol in the next few years.

Irwundanch

Irwundanch is a large country running along the southern coast of the Dawn-to-Dark ocean. Recent annexations have pushed the borders southward past the Shyrimski Mountains, and westward to the forests of eastern Iquazor. Irwundanch is bordered on the east by a forested wilderness, on the northwest by the mountainous Powerlach peninsula; ownership of the peninsula is a point of contention between Xinguth and Irwundanch.

Irwundanch is Unnigh's most populous nation. Its nine million people live in the thousands of villages that dot the land.

The Lay of the Land

Irwundanch is a big country. Most of the land, in a wide strip following the shoreline, is a rolling plain dotted with woods and an occasional bog. Further inland are large forests, arid foothills, and finally, towering mountains. Two mountain ranges define the traditional southern and western borders of Irwundanch; between them is a patch of cool desert.

While the coasts are scoured daily by the Dusk Storms, Irwundanch has a relatively stable and salubrious climate.

Making a Living

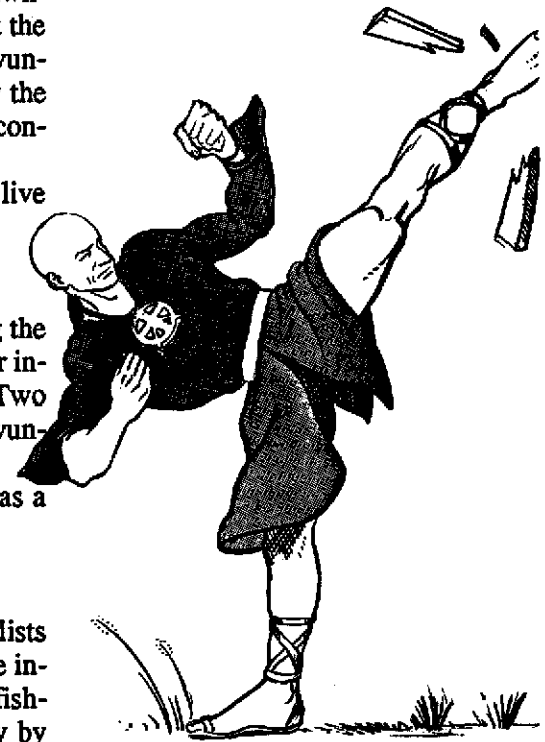
The people of Irwundanch are primarily farmers, though some pastoralists in the hills and forests tend herds of goats and native animals. Except for the inhabitants of a few towns located near the base of the Powerlach peninsula, fishing is not an important industry. Manufacturing is done almost exclusively by local craftsmen and housewives. There is little foreign commerce; imported goods are common only in the towns of the far east and west.

The coastal plains are fertile and spacious. There are thousands of small villages scattered across the region, traditionally located in and around copses of trees. Many of the older villages are surrounded by ritual stockades — walls of junkwood decorated with skulls and fetish bundles. The fields are always a good distance from the village. These odd arrangements date from the early history of Irwundanch, when ferocious bandits roamed the land exacting tribute from the farmers. Similar arrangements can be found in the deep-woods settlements. The houses are built high in the trees, an hour or more's walk from the fields and goat pens.

Pirates of the West

For hundreds of Earth years, human settlement on Unnigh was limited to Crasant. Only in the last century have men braved the seas to venture beyond the huge continent. East of Loosyick and Gamotch, adventurers found Incaid Ocean and Carkip. Seamen following schools of fish in the seas west of Iquazor traced the boundaries of the mysterious Far Ocean; it is these hardy souls who first encountered the Western Pirates. Merciless and grim, the pirates totally destroyed the far-roaming Iquazor fishing fleets. Twenty Unnigh-years later, they attacked shipping off the coast of Loosyick! Fishing boats plying the seas off Carkip were the next victims; after several years the pirates' attention turned to Gamotch, where the raiders actually attacked and sacked coastal villages.

Currently, the pirates' favorite target seems to be ships of exiles and explorers heading for Carkip. Byilikin has approached Gamotch and Loosyick for help in fighting the pirates, but neither of the old-world nations seems interested.



Languages of Irwundanch

The folk of Irwundanch speak a number of tongues descended from obscure languages of the Himalayan regions of Earth. Most of these are Hard languages, utter gibberish to foreigners and totally unrelated to Unnigh's other tongues. One tongue, Hammurri, is of Average difficulty and is used as a trade tongue in the west.

Society

Irwundanch was settled by people from Tibet, Mongolia and the fringes of Terra's Gobi desert. An exclusive bunch, they migrated from the original settlements far to the east and set up temples and villages patterned on what they hoped were authentic lines. Their re-creation of life in Central Asia lasted only a generation. The demands of survival on Unnight were too great for sentiment to overcome. People scattered across the plains and into the woods to set up tiny villages. Some became bandits, and it was these folk that became the rulers of Irwundanch.

Able to travel wherever the living was best and plagues were least, they stayed well-fed and healthy. Their fighting skills were sharpened by combat with stubborn villagers, raiders from outside Irwundanch and each other.

Eventually, a kind of consensus arose between the farmers and the bandits. In exchange for protection from foreign invaders, the bandits became wandering feudal lords. The stealthy llama- and horse-mounted bandit troops became caravans. Women, children, servants and slaves rode on beast-back or in wheeled houses. The territory covered by a troop was vast, and often impinged on the lands of another troop. When the intrusion became inconvenient, the bands clashed. Both nobles and villagers died in these bloody battles. As the surviving noble caravans came to control larger and larger areas, the conflicts became nastier and on a larger scale.

After a century of this chaos, a frustrated missionary from Iquazor sarcastically suggested that the haughty bandit-nobles hold duels to settle their conflicts. The Irwundanchers took the idea to heart. A century-long contest (12 Earth years) was decreed to determine which band would rule the others.

The contests were formal events, not vulgar brawls. Usually, only selected nobles fought. Sometimes the warriors of the competing bands fought melees or vied with each other in athletic contests. This was a romantic time. It is remembered in epics of battle, tales of trickery and deceit, and ballads of the quest for magic weapons, supernatural allies and prophesied champions. Those great days are a constant reproach to the dull and decadent modern times. The ultimate winners became the Royal Bandits, with the whole country as their territory. Vassal troops kept order and provided leadership in their own regions.

The villagers see themselves as stable, hard working, and virtuous . . . but also as dull and unambitious. They look to the wandering lords for leadership, entertainment and inspiration. There are no village councils or chiefs; the only local authorities are the *petitioners*, a kind of travel agency in reverse that books or petitions a band noble to visit and try a criminal or settle a dispute. Petitioners are selected by the villagers, but exactly how they are selected baffles outside observers. It doesn't seem to be by election, since no one counts votes. On the other hand it is definitely not hereditary; it is very unusual for the son of a petitioner to become a petitioner. Perhaps the best description is selection by self-assertion. Anyone who claims to be a petitioner, and can actually deliver a noble troop when wanted, is a petitioner.

The Irwundanchers are very caste-conscious. Within a caste they are rather egalitarian; each noble or each peasant feels socially equal to his fellows. Between castes, barriers to social intercourse are strict; status within a caste is partially determined by how frequently one must have contact with inferiors and how often one can manage contact with superiors. A wealthy artisan has assistants who do all his business with peasants; he himself exerts his efforts to be seen speaking to nobles. Elaborate honorifics delineate the exact shades of relationship. It is a matter of boast that a noble has addressed an artisan as a familiar-inferior (personal name followed by *tov*), and a mortal insult for a peasant to address an artisan as a near-equal (family name preceded by *kha*).

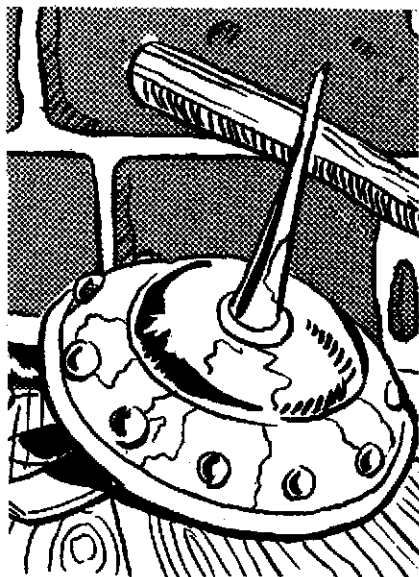
Lowest on the social totem pole are the camp followers and servants who travel with the wandering nobles. The merchants who attach themselves to the caravans are of a much higher caste and would resent to the death being ad-

Trade in Irwundanch

Irwundanch has the potential to be a great market for goods from the east, but the villagers are quite pleased with what they can make themselves or buy from local merchants. Villagers will gladly sell their goods for gold, gems, or silver, but most the local wares are of mediocre quality.

A few areas of the deep south, on the edges of the deserts, do produce a remarkable product — intricately woven and embroidered funeral tapestries. These breathtakingly beautiful hangings are rigged up around the funeral pyres of important persons. They are hung with meticulously cut and painted gold-leaf ornaments, and doused with exquisite perfumes, only to perish in the blaze. Stolen funeral tapestries bring a high price in Xinguth and the eastern nations.

Merchants seeking their fortune in Irwundanch will not be hindered in their travels, but unless they are willing and able to Fast-Talk they will be quickly frustrated by the villagers' polite shrugs and puzzled smiles.



dressed as servants. Peasants outrank merchants socially. Village artisans are the highest of the non-noble castes. A village petitioner ranks above all other non-nobles, whatever his original caste. Nobles address him as very-familiar-slightly-inferior-and-favored (personal name preceded by *sa* and followed by *tovi*).

It is the dream of every peasant that his daughter be snatched up by a noble, or his son be taken as a soldier. A noble's concubines and fighting men are ranked with petitioners. The children of a concubine are nobles, and the children of a soldier can be ennobled if the parent wins favor. These things happen seldom, but the possibility helps quiet the resentment of the lower classes.

Irwundanch has many faiths, none of them related to the much-changed Roman Catholicism of the Unnigh Church. Village and caravan life is full of religious events. There are rituals for planting and harvest time, rites of passage and lavish ceremonies for birth, marriage and death. Houses have family and individual shrines; most villages have a holy site or two. Religion is casual and noninstitutional. There is no priest-class. The closest thing to a priest is a *kojja*, or scholar, who is the repository for religious knowledge. The *kojja* is often the only literate man in the village; a lot of his time is spent reading or writing letters for the peasants and the village petitioners. Each family head serves as family priest at rituals; each family's religion is a bit different from that of other families. Irwundanchers tolerate other faiths, and have been known to adopt practices from them from time to time. Outright proselytizing and conversion is frowned upon. Missionaries usually leave in frustration; martyrdom is perhaps easier to bear than simply being ignored.

Irwundanch women enjoy a peculiar kind of second-class citizenship. Daughters are carefully trained in a variety of skills as children. The marriage contract, arranged between families, stresses their value as workers and craftswomen. Though highly respected as such, they cannot become petitioners or *kojja*. All extra-family relations are the domain of men. The usual Irwundanch family, of any caste, will contain members of several generations. Polygamy is common; the only limitation is how many wives or concubines can be supported. The distinction between wife and concubine is one of inheritance rights; both are lawful positions in society. Noblewomen are often highly educated. They have a real position of power because of their near monopoly of accounting and record-keeping in noble society.

Government

Irwundanch is ruled by its traveling nobility. The troops move constantly, varying the route through their territories and making side trips to visit areas with a crisis of some sort. A vanguard of lesser nobles and soldiers rides a day ahead of their home troop. They act as advertisers and an advance party. They announce the imminent presence of the main troop, gather petitions and settle minor cases themselves. Noble bands stay on the road day and night. Each troop collects taxes for its own maintenance. Taxes for the national government are collected in gold and precious objects every five years.

Every Unnigh year or so, troops from neighboring territories meet to mediate disputes between the villages under their control. Every twenty years, a national meeting is held. The territorial bands select a regional representative troop that travels to a meeting place selected by lot. There they meet with the Royal Bandits to give tribute and discuss national problems. This *Assembly of All Bandits* is a grand occasion. The village chosen for the convocation holds a huge fair and festival.

The Irwundanchers have a peculiar military philosophy. True to their origins, the noble bands and vanguards favor guerilla warfare and hit-and-run tactics. They vary their tours of the countryside, making them hard to pin down even in peacetime. When war or revolt threatens, they abandon their carts and rolling houses and melt into the countryside. Even the women and children are on horse or llama. No bandit troop owns anything that they cannot either carry

Adventures in Irwundanch

They're Entertainment: The adventurers are snatched up by a small caravan to entertain the chief bandit's visiting mother-in-law, an immense, taciturn old woman who has become fascinated with foreign tales. She will listen for hours to the lamest jokes and most pointless anecdotes. At first, they will be treated grandly and showered with wine, companions, and exotic foods. After a day, those not on duty in the old lady's wagon will be asked to pitch in around camp; after another day the storytellers will find themselves treated virtually as slaves! The chief's feelings will be hurt if the characters ask to leave (they keep his mother-in-law so happy) but he will let them go if they can convince another band of foreigners to become storytellers.

A Solemn Ceremony: A plague has killed most of the richest and most powerful noble troop of a district deep in southern Irwundanch, and a grand ceremony is planned to send the deceased into the after-life. The ritual has political as well as religious significance; the troop making the most spectacular contribution to the ceremony will take over the leaderless district.

A few tenth-days before the ceremony, the adventurers are approached by an agent wishing to hire them to ruin one of the attending troop's pageants; soon afterward an agent from the target troop comes forward offering a chest of jewels to ruin yet another troop's show! To top things off, a shady merchant offers the adventurers a small fortune to steal the funeral tapestries from atop the sacred pyres. If the adventurers accept this last offer, they will find hiding within the tapestries a group of murderous thieves intent on robbing the dead — and maybe the living!

The Games

A major part of any Irwundanch festival is the games. The games are staged by temples, philanthropic merchants, or noble bands. Platforms, towers and tracks are the first visible signs of a gaming site. Boxes and bleachers (for the wealthy) and reed-covered sitting areas surround the makeshift stadiums. Wagering, official and unofficial, is intense. The crowds are boisterous, enthusiastic and thick.

Humble Fights

Irwundanchers enjoy watching people beat each other up, but staged battles take an unusual form — *humble fights*. Only amateur fighters, limited to fists and perhaps padded clubs, are allowed in the arenas; most are grudge matches. A few fights may be staged comedy events.

Volunteers to the arena receive a flat fee of \$50, free medical care and a share of the coins thrown in the arena: (3 dice x 10) \$1 coins tossed; the winner gets 2/3. PCs who wish to fight must meet strict criteria — ST, DX and HT must all be under 13, and two 12s will also disqualify. Those skilled in martial arts, or with Brawling-14 or more are banned. They may attempt to Fast-Talk the examiners (at -2) into ignoring one disqualifier, but the price for failure is entry into the Drunk Throw.

The Drunk Throw

This event is based on Irwundanchers' supposed hatred of drunks. When the Ark's festivities are declared over, the constables search the streets for passed out or troublesome drunks. The unlucky inebriates are carted away to a pen where they are dressed in the costumes of comic characters from traditional dramas.

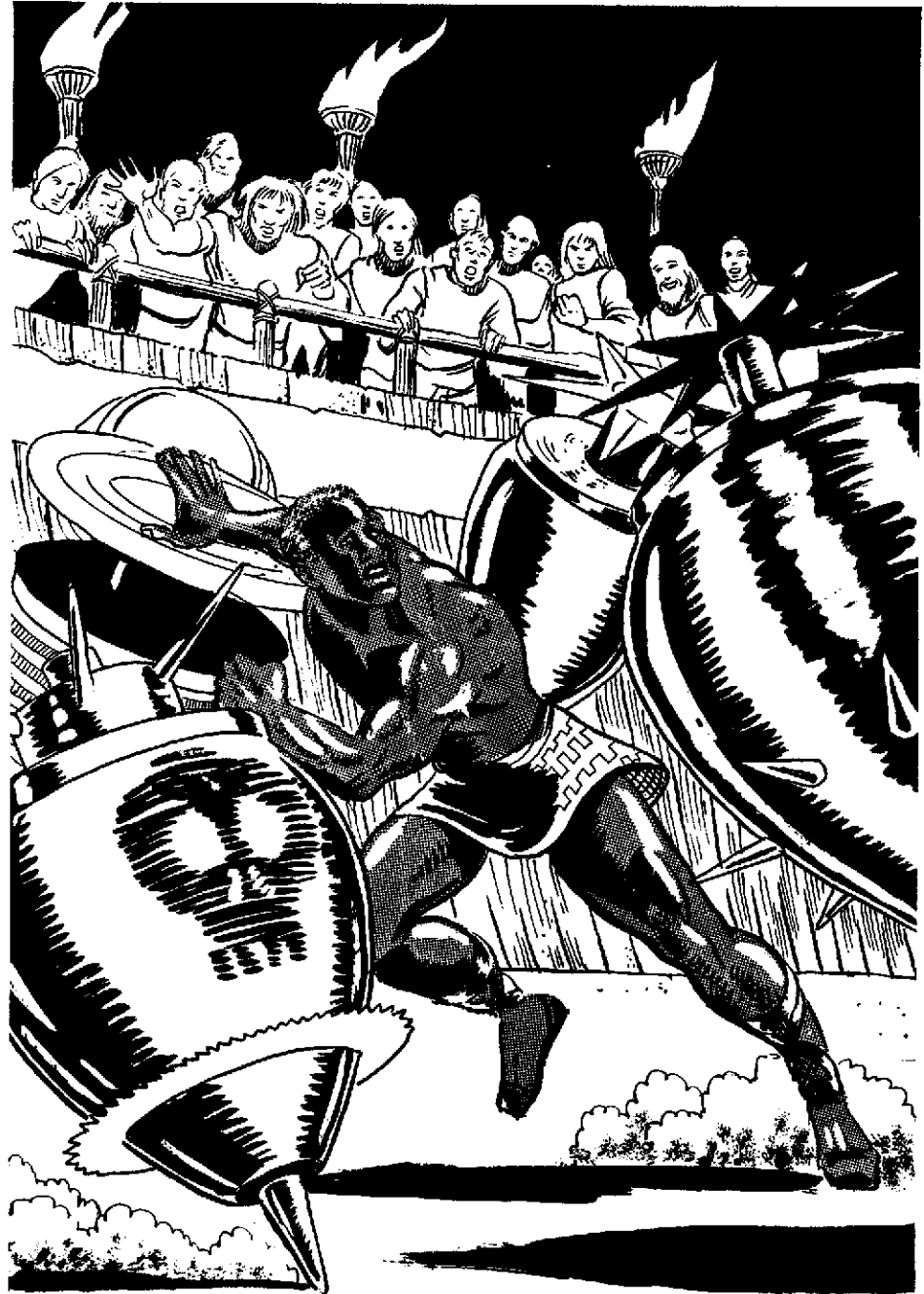
The Drunk Throw takes place at the second gong (the beginning of Trabjo-ay) of the next Ark. A team of four seizes the drunks one at a time and gives them a great heave over a trench full of muck. The length of the drunks' flight is said to be a measure of their contriteness. As they are pulled from the muck they are charged a fine of \$10 minus the number of yards they flew. The drunk-throwers each receive \$10 x the throw in yards in appreciation for reforming the sot. If the throwers can hurl the drunk entirely over the trench (11 yards) the drunk and drunk-throwers each receive \$100.

The distance a drunk is thrown is determined by the Throwing Things rules (see p. B30); ST used is the total of the four throwers. A drunk who falls in the muck is unhurt. If he is thrown all the way over the pit, he takes (2-8) damage.

or abandon. Their tradition is that a bandit can always get more wealth, but it is hard to get another life. If the villagers revolt or supply lines are cut, the nobles become foragers; skilled bands can live off the land for a long time.

Rumor, tall tales, and the testimony of would-be conquerors have given Irwundanch the reputation of being unconquerable. Unnigh has preserved or recreated the classic phrase, "Big armies starve and small ones are defeated." Actually, most of the invaders have been brash, sloppily organized eastern warlords. Whether Irwundanch tactics would work against organized armies has yet to be seen.

Irwundanch is not a sea power. They do issue letters of marque rather freely; almost any corsair on the Dawn-to-Dark will claim to be an Irwundanch



privateer if caught. Other nations recognize or disregard the claim as their desire for good relations with Irwundanch (or its enemies) dictate.

Law and Order

Theoretically, all law in Irwundanch is a matter of noble whim. There are no written codes or constitutions. No noble judge is bound by the decisions of his predecessors. In fact, decisions are usually based on custom, departing from it only in extreme cases. Noble troops who do not show a regard for equity are not petitioned; petitioners who cannot produce an equitable judge lose recognition. Most noble judges love a good argument, and tend to find in favor of those who can score debating points. Almost all Irwundanchers love a court-case; it is a major excuse for a holiday. Skillful arguers have great status within their own caste. They must have a profound knowledge of custom, great skill at debate (Fast-Talk) and a perfect understanding of the forms of courtesy (Savoir-Faire); not even the heat of argument can excuse the use of the wrong honorific. Strangers involved with the justice of Irwundanch are well advised to retain the best arguer they can afford.

Foreign Relations

Irwundanch is isolated from the nations of the East by a stretch of wilderness and from Xinguth and Iquazor by mountains. Still, she is a thorn in the side of all the nations because of her position along the land route across central Crassant. Travelers are taxed, tolled and diverted; pilgrims are made to pay for their food and shelter. Treaties are hard to make and even harder to enforce, since each noble troop makes its own tax and customs regulations (and changes them at whim). There are few ports along the great coastline, and those that exist (mainly in the far west) are suspicious of tricks by the Xinguthy.

The cold war between Xinguth and Irwundanch occasionally warms up. Usually this means skirmishes in the Powerlach range. Mensod and Gamotch quietly support Irwundanch in this battle (they have more to lose if the land route closes) while Kiroon has made overtures to Xinguth. None fully understands or trusts the inscrutable western nations.

The Church is a minor factor in Irwundanch. The few monasteries and churches are subject to two different hierarchies (those in the east to Mensod and the west to Iquazor). Vast areas in south and central Irwundanch have never seen a priest. This nation of unbelievers is a great frustration to the Church.

The wizards of Irwundanch are powerful and well organized. The wizards find the villagers satisfyingly gullible, and have made deals with the wandering nobles to insure themselves a permanent place in Irwundanch society. Almost every large village and caravan has a wizard in residence; the forests and mountains of the south are home to several of the Conference's mysterious strongholds.

Mensod

Mensod sits on the Equator, on the eastern limb of Crassant. Kiroon borders the country on the north; the much-disputed Lake Country that nestles between Loosyick, Gamotch, and Mensod lies to the east. Irwundanch lies to the west, beyond a hinterland of veldt and thorn forests.

About three million people call Mensod home. Most live along the Soltodrach and in forest villages of the west.

Lay of the Land

Mensod is a diverse land. The Dawn-To-Dark ocean coast is a morass of swamps and mud flats; east of this is a band of dense rain forest. The forests end as the land rises to the Tredi Plateau, a rich grassland. Lake Tredi and two mountain ranges, the Shran in the north east and the Fonsans in the east, form the

Battling the Big Top

Irwundanchers love tops. Children play with small wooden and clay tops; larger ornamented specimens are used for fortune telling and religious ritual.

In the *top dance*, the *skipper* is put in a smooth-floored pit swarming with large tops equipped with razor-edged metal disks and spikes. The skipper must accomplish some task in the pit (sing a ballad, untie a bag from around his head, open up a puzzle-box, shoot arrows at a target, etc.) while dodging the tops. Points are scored for completing the task and deflecting tops; points are lost for poor performance of the task, knocking over tops and getting cut.

Top fights occur when honor is offended or cheating charged. Two or more fighters are lowered into the top pit to fight each other while the tops spin. Weaponry is limited to a "toppy stick" (a baton made of goodwood) which can be used to hit the opponent or deflect tops toward the enemy.

Top Dancing Rules

Top pits are hexagonal, seven yards across and surrounded by three-yard-high walls. Tops move 4 yards on the turn of their launch, (1-3) yards a turn thereafter; roll randomly for direction.

If a top hits a wall, roll a die: On a 1-3 the top stops and falls. On a 4-5 the top stays put for a turn; roll again for direction next turn. A roll of 6 indicates that the top rebounds and shoots 1-6 yards in a random direction. If a top enters a hex with one or more tops, roll a die for each top present. On a 6 there is a collision; roll once for each top involved in the collision as per the rules for wall hits, above.

If a top enters a hex with a person, it will hit the person on a 10 or less on three dice, 12 if the target is kneeling, 15 if the target is prone. A DX roll suffices to avoid a top. The skipper can avoid (DX/3) tops in a turn (round down), but the decision (and roll) to avoid must be made before the top's roll-to-hit is made! A critical success means the jump doesn't count against the total jumps this turn. An ordinary failure means the top grazes the skipper, doing (1-2) cutting damage. A critical failure means the top gouges full into the skipper doing 1 die cutting damage.

Tripping a top is tricky. It can be done in the skipper's own hex by rolling DX-3, or in a front hex by rolling DX-5. On a critical success the skipper may redirect the top, sending it 1-3 hexes (roll a die, halve it and round up) in a chosen direction! On a critical failure the top gouges the skipper, as described above. The "toppy stick" used in some matches gives the user a +3 and negates the painful effect of a critical failure.

traditional eastern border of Mensod. The Soltodrach river runs from Lake Tredi to the ocean.

Making a Living

The folk of lower Mensod, from the Tredi plateau to the sea, are primarily farmers. Those on the Tredi Plateau are sedentary agriculturalists; they work the same fields for generations. The forest folk are slash-and-burn farmers. They clear a plot of forest by girdling the trees and burning off the cover. When the yield on an old field drops, they move on and clear another, planting clover and native legumes in the abandoned fields to create grazing land. Centuries of this process have pushed back the eastern edge of the forest, leaving behind prairies and swampy land suitable for rice fields. The people of eastern Mensod are primarily goat and sheep herders, though the folk of the villages on the coast of Lake Tredi make a good living as fishermen. Mining is a major occupation in the hill country.

Languages of Mensod

The people of Mensod speak Irka or one of its dialects. Irka is descended from a number of long-lost African tongues. The contributions Spanish, English, and Esperanto have made to the language are minimal; offworlders will be totally baffled by Irka. It may be learned as a Mental/Average skill.

Mensod's literacy rate is the second highest on Unnight, and shows every sign of increasing.

Trade in Mensod

Mensod is the hub of trade for eastern Crassant. The Soltodrach River, Lake Tredi, and a series of roads through the Lake Country form a highway for commerce between coasts. Meddyfice on the ocean coast marks the eastern terminus of this highway, and is the busiest port on Unnight. The roads and river passages are well kept and patrolled by the nobles whose land they pass through. The tolls are high, but not as exorbitant as a bandit's.

Mensod has more going for it than strategic location; it produces most of the iron ore used in eastern Crassant. Though it could make do with the food it grows, Mensod buys a good portion of Kiroon's grain harvest and imports exotic foods from Gamotch and even Irwundanch.

Merchants will find things much to their liking in Mensod. Meddyfice is awash in exotic goods; cheap commodities like iron and grain pour in from the heartland for shipment across the sea to ready markets, and overland commerce is well protected.

Craftswomen and other professionals can be found in the *keep towns* found around major fortifications. Others work in the households of rural aristocrats. Shipbuilding is a major industry along the banks of the mighty Soltodrach river and on Lake Tredi. Some vessels are built on the lake and sailed all the way to the ocean. They must be portaged around two cataracts, which requires that the larger vessels be twice disassembled and reassembled.

Finally, a fair number of people in Mensod live off the massive commerce between the countries of the east and its ports on the Dawn-To-Dark; there are dozens of towns along the Tredi River and along the roads through the Fonsans which exist merely to house caravans. The capital, Meddyfice, is a bustling, booming, glamorous city full of intrigue and scheming merchants. A banking and insurance-underwriting business is beginning in that marvelous port. Bills and drafts on Meddyfice banks are as good as gold in most of the ports of the Dawn-to-Dark.

Society

Circumstance and something akin to parallel evolution have conspired to give Mensod a society similar to those found in Europe just before the Renaissance. Though many of the trappings of feudalism (such as serfdom and a warrior aristocracy) remain, the life of the country is increasingly centered in the cities. About 20% of the populace live near or in the big towns. The rest are rural dwellers making their living from the land or sea.

Definite social classes exist in Mensod. At the bottom are a small minority of slaves, primarily foreigners owned by the aristocracy. Serfs, legally bound to the land, are next. They make up about half the total population. Land-owning peasants are about equal in rank to the growing number of artisans in the towns. Most peasant freeholders are found near the towns, where they can join their military and economic power to that of the townsmen. The merchants and strongmen of the towns rank high at home, but like the humbler townfolk, they have little power outside the city limits. At the top is the hereditary aristocracy, who rule over rural estates. Some nobles have both country estates and positions of power in the towns.

Among the nations of Unnight, Mensod's society is the most similar to that of a typical medieval/fantasy world. It *does* have some quirks, however. Though all of the high offices in the aristocracy are held by men, many of the powerful merchants and townfolk are women. Men are considered poor at precision work and tasks such as bookkeeping and accounting, giving women a path to wealth and power. *Peasant* women are treated as little more than property.

Mensodee prize honesty, hard work, and pride. The towns are clean and generally safe places; the fields are well kept and productive. Mensod insults usually impugn the target's honesty, the appearance of his home or quality of his work. An interesting double standard allows bribery and treachery as long as the

ill-doer does it with a degree of style and has a noble end in mind; Robin Hood would fit right in here.

Government

The rise of the cities and pressures from foreign enemies have shaped Mensod's ancient feudal system into a monarchy with an unwritten constitution. A collection of solemn agreements and legal precedents keep the king from abusing his vassals, and *them* from abusing the commoners and townsfolk. A growing bureaucracy, and informal but increasingly frequent assemblies of the aristocracy, are the beginnings of a true national state. Of course, notions of democracy, equal protection under the law and civil rights are far away.

Until recently, the king lived in an austere palace nestled in a range of mountains near Mensod's southern border. About five years ago, the seat of power was moved to Meddyfice by a newly crowned king. Though located on the coast, the mighty port is *closer* to the interior of the country in terms of travel time (thanks to the Soltodrach) and is the true center of Mensod's power. The old capital is kept as a religious center.

Characters will have a hard time dealing with the bureaucracy and officials unless they have high status or contacts in high places. Bribery of the royal officials is expensive. Officials in the cities are *much* easier to deal with (and *make* deals with!); they are both greedy and on the look-out for interesting opportunities. Unfortunately, the power of city officials is limited to their own city; at most they can provide an introduction to some possible friend out-of-town.

Law and Order

One of the blessings of civilization in Mensod is written law, and professionals to interpret and administer it. Unfortunately there are five different kinds of law: *town law* (different for each town), *royal law*, *feudal law*, *customary law* and *church law*. Determining what court has jurisdiction is the first step to any case; bribery frequently affects the determination. Town law is usually the fairest, but applies only within the walls of the town. Royal law has the highest standards of professional conduct, but is available only by appeal or in cases of treason. Feudal law is both created and judged by the local lord, and tends to be decided in his favor. Customary law is all case law, a collection of past decisions. It has only recently been committed to writing, and most peasant communities still have a *law-speaker*, who has memorized it all. Church law is theoretically limited to ordained priests and monastics, but the church claims jurisdiction over all its servants and over all non-baptized souls. Whatever jurisdiction, the highest bribe has a good chance for a favorable judgement.

Foreign Relations

Mensod is a civilized nation; it has skilled diplomats, many spies, and a levelheaded view of the world. However, it has its share of grudges and rivalries like any other nation. Ancient feuds dating back to the Mine Wars (and problems with raiders to this day) have made Kiroon and Mensod arch enemies. At the moment, the conflict is a cold one, but this could change any day.

Mensod's army and navy are small, too small to adequately protect it. The core of the traditional army is the aristocracy, who fight on foot with sword and shield. Most are enormously skilled at this, but refuse to learn anything else or combine their traditional regiments with other kinds of fighters. The town militia use spear and bow, but are trained only to fight from behind walls. The standing royal forces are mercenaries and court nobles, also mostly sword and shield fighters, with a few bowmen. A faction in the bureaucracy is urging the king to build a larger fleet and add the town militias to the royal army. The traditional aristocrats are determined to retain their monopoly on armed force. Most of the great merchants prefer to keep taxes low and put their money into increased trade and manufacturing.

Movers and Shakers in Mensod

The king of Mensod is Pochitolu ("Sly Trickster"), a resourceful young leader. He is on good terms with the bureaucracy and has managed to keep the increasingly powerful aristocrats content. Pochitolu dreams of making Mensod as modern as Gamotch; his grand strategy calls for increasing trade ties with the western nations.

Bardoo Heng is an immensely wealthy merchant prince and minor noble who lives on a private island near Meddyfice. The Heng family made its fortune on trade up the Soltodrach, and Bardoo is concerned that Pochitolu's schemes will threaten his economic base. Heng has many investments in Gamotch, and some question his patriotism and loyalty to his king.

Adventures in Mensod

Intrigue along the Soltodrach: Glamorous tales set on the trade route along the Soltodrach river are favorites throughout Unnight; it is the Nile and the Orient Express wrapped in one. Spies from Gamotch and Kiroon, refugees and wizards traveling incognito can make the trip through the hills of the Lake Country and down the Soltodrach more than a mere travelogue.

Behind the Lines: Bandits from Kiroon pose a constant menace to the industrious folk of Mensod's northern tier. The Tyrant of Tyrnington has presented convincing evidence that the raiders are free-lancers, but King Pochitolu is not satisfied. The adventurers are contacted by the King's chamberlain and hired to track a group of raiders back into Kiroon and find some kind of evidence that will tie the bandits to the Tyrant's army.

The Lake Country

Nestled between all of the eastern nations is a high plateau sporting four huge freshwater lakes. The people of each country have their own name and historical claim for the land; polite travelers refer to it as the "Lake Country." Well-placed mountain ranges, elevation, and plentiful water make the country ideal for farming and herding.

Though the propaganda of Kiroon and Mensod describes the Lake Country as an uninhabited paradise waiting for the right people to work it properly, the land has a native population. The humble Lakesiders herd sheep and goats, mine gold, and fish the lakes. The Lakesiders speak Irka, but have no written language or historical records. As far as they know, they've lived in Lake Country since creation and don't care who rules them.

Languages of Kiroon

The Jourday of southwest Kiroon speak a variant of Irka (see *Languages of Mensod*, p. 30). The rest of the country speaks in dialects of Chochogin (Mental/Average), which might have its roots in Swahili. The current Tyrant has decreed that all children in Kiroon be taught to speak proper Irka, and schools for this purpose are going up in every village. Literacy is fairly high among the Jourday. The outback regions have a 98% illiteracy rate but this is dropping rapidly.

Trade in Kiroon

Kiroon is emerging as an important trade and manufacturing power. The cities of the southwest churn out textiles, glassware, pottery and other consumer goods which are sold as far away as Xinguth. The port cities of the Dawn-To-Dark coast, particularly Tyrnington, are bustling, colorful places, though the volume of trade is less than in the ports of Mensod.

While Tyrnington and the other coastal cities are brimming with bargains, opportunities, and intrigue, the merchant characters will find the Kiroon outback has little going for it. The villages are poor, the people dour and unhelpful, and the Jourday administrators suspicious and greedy. Some action can be found in the far north, where fur trapping and gold mining have created a modest boom economy.

Loosyick and Gamotch are on good terms with Mensod at the moment. The Hawk Lords (see pp. 35-37) despise and are threatened by the Kiroonians. Gamotch has been bought with a promise to let them reclaim territory in the disputed Lake Country.

The nations of the far west are seldom a consideration in everyday politics. The king and high nobles consider Irwundanch merely as a puzzle, useful perhaps for keeping the dread Xinguth hordes at bay. The merchants consider Irwundanch an impediment to travel and free trade, and are trying to convince their leaders to do something about it. Iquazor is seen as the holy land; Xinguth as a land of aggressive heretics.

The Church is strong in Mensod. The hierarchy and monastic orders are well organized and wealthy. Clergy are respected and form the intelligentsia of the nation. Many find employment in noble households or as advisors to the strong men of the towns.

The Wizard's Conference is a great power in Mensod. The national Wizard's Guild is old, respected and represented by local chapter houses in many towns. The wizards have become very interested in Mensod of late. They fear that Kiroon and Gamotch may someday endanger their master plan for Unnight by invading the country, and will intervene in case of a war. The regional headquarters of the Conference is located on an island surrounded by swamp near Meddyfice.

Kiroon

Kiroon occupies the northern tip of Crassant's eastern limb. It is bordered on the south by Loosyick and Mensod. A barren tundra and the ice cap lie to the north. Kiroon has access to both the Dawn-To-Dark and Incald oceans.

About a third of Kiroon's five million people live in the warm southwest; the remainder are scattered thinly over the bleak outback regions.

Lay of the Land

Most of Kiroon is a vast steppe, broken here and there by rolling hills and swampy lowlands. The border with Mensod is marked by a range of mountains, hills, and the northern reaches of the great Mensod forest. Forest, desert and more mountains separate Kiroon from Loosyick. Most of Kiroon is at least marginally arable. The west coast, warmed by currents in the Dawn-To-Dark, is quite fertile.

Making a Living

Kiroon is really two nations. The vast majority of the large population live in the outback, on subsistence-level farms scattered across the countryside. In the arid lands north of the Lake Country and Loosyick are nomadic herdsmen and reindeer hunters. Gold and copper are mined from the Koojid Mountains in northeast Kiroon. Tools, cloth, tack, weapons and other goods are produced by cottage industry. The outback folk are poor, dour and suspicious of strangers.

Southeastern Kiroon is very different. It is a warm, rainy land of rice paddies, cotton fields, rich pastures and prosperous villages. The towns here are larger, with flourishing textile, ceramics and leatherworking industries. Trade, fishing and shipbuilding are major industries in the port cities.

Society

Kiroon is a large nation with many races, dialects and regional folkways, but the culture and laws of the paternalistic, patriarchal and hot-blooded *Jourday* people of the southwest have come to dominate the country. The Jourday see society as a collection of groups — families, towns, regions, etc. — each led by a strong, charismatic leader. Tradition suggests that this leader be selected by popular demand . . . but practicality usually limits the choices to respectable

people who have the interests of Kiroon at heart. Neighbors, priests, local military leaders and village chiefs make sure no unstable rabble-rousers are chosen to lead a group. The Jourday help the backwards villages of the outback by supplying competent leaders — loyal to the Jourday.

Leaders are supposed to be brave and inspiring, their underlings cooperative, enthusiastic and hard-working. Kiroonian ballads and epics are about small groups that survive because all loyally subordinate themselves to the leader. In actual fact, most people pay their taxes, give lip service to tradition, then do as they please.

Other Jourday traditions have led to a history of uprisings, raids on internal rivals and other nations, treachery and assassination. About a hundred years ago, the strife became so great that a Tyrant was chosen by the military to unify Kiroon. The measure worked fairly well. Kiroonians have a much stronger sense of national identity than most Unnighers. They think of themselves as people of their nation first, their region (or town, or tribe) second.

Government

Kiroon is an autocracy, ruled by the Tyrant of Tyrnington. The Tyrant, who rules for life, is supposedly selected from the military by merit . . . but bribery, blackmail, duels and assassination play an important part in the process. On two occasions, the Tyrant bought his army rank shortly before selection. To date, all the five Tyrants have been shrewd, resourceful and popular leaders.

Under the Tyrant is the Council of Five, representing Church, Army, Aristocracy, Wizards and Peasants. The council members are selected by the tyrant, not by the constituencies they represent. They are an advisory body, not a legislature, and have no power over the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is well-run and effective, but corrupt in small matters. Officials are expected to supplement their pay by judicious corruption. As long as they steal discreetly, it is winked at. The line is drawn at treason, murder and talking too freely. Since everyone has done something wrong, the official reasons for punishment are not necessarily the actual offenses committed. The power of the bureaucracy is pervasive, exercised through thousands of appointed officials. Most influential are the ubiquitous Inspectors at every level of administration. A bad inspection report is the dread of every bureaucrat.

The army and navy are well-organized, equipped and trained. The basis is infantry, organized into much larger permanent formations (4,000 to 6,000 men) than are usual in other Unnigh armies. Each division of this size has archers, pikemen, skirmishers and trained engineers. The weakness of the army is its dependence on good lines of communication; it is not good at living off the land. The navy is composed mostly of light, fast war galleys. They cannot operate very far from a land base, but their disciplined formations make them formidable in a coastal battle or in support of an army.

Dealing with the government of Kiroon can be difficult. Almost everyone will take a bribe, and promise great things. Almost none will actually cross the Tyrant or the senior bureaucrats. It is also difficult to tell who is really in charge; a gaudily uniformed aristocrat with an impressive title may be the front for a humble little man who is ostensibly just the clerk.

Law and Order

Kiroon does not have laws, it has regulations. The Tyrant is supreme executive, but he rules through the permanent civil service. There is no legislature; each department makes what rules it thinks are necessary. These have the force of law unless some other department's regulations directly conflict in an actual case. If this cannot be settled by negotiation, the Tyrant has the last word. Courts are not a separate part of government; any bureaucrat may be told off to settle a rules question. Bribery is usually possible, and not even very expensive.

Movers and Shakers in Kiroon

The current Tyrant is Mareeban Kongor, a brilliant but melancholy man who almost refused the post and threatens to resign daily. His achievements over the last ten years (Earth years) have been great and he is unexpectedly popular; women feel protective toward him and men look on him as a tragic hero sacrificing freedom to serve his country. Kongor's occasional depression does not keep him from having grand plans and running a successful trade-war with Mensod.

Adventures in Kiroon

The Mother Lode: The miners of far northern Kiroon have found a virtual mountain of gold, silver and copper. Alas, most of the locals regard the mountain with a superstitious dread so great that the worst threats the Jourday leaders could make failed to sway them. Undeterred, the resourceful Tyrant developed a brilliant scheme to bring in outside labor: a limited number of foreigners brought in and allowed to stuff their pockets with all the nuggets they can carry. The pleased miners were shipped back to Tyrnington and allowed to spread their tales of unlimited wealth.

If the adventurers catch "gold fever" (Greedy characters should be penalized if they fail to go for this one!) they will be faced with a long, dull journey through the Kiroonian outback. Food and shelter will be in short supply along the way, but each town will have a helpful Jourday family who will put up and feed the travelers. The kindly folk will keep a careful bill which will be given to the mining authorities up north. By the time the adventurers arrive at the golden mountain they will owe several hundred to a thousand *platas* (one plata = \$1)! Shirkers will be beaten and fined double their bill! Industrious miners can pick up a fortune, but high prices, tempting gambling opportunities, and fines will make keeping the windfall very hard.

Languages of Loosyick

The peasants and townfolk of Loosyick speak Chochogin, the language of eastern Kiroon. The Hawk Lords and their families speak classical Esperanto as a way of separating themselves from the rabble. Anyone who knows that tongue will have no trouble understanding the aris-tocrat's "secret language," but they'd best keep their knowledge of Esperanto to themselves.

The literacy rate is very low. The Hawk Lords are suspicious of learned subjects and do their best to keep the peasants ignorant. Literate townfolk are tolerated as a necessary evil.

Trade in Loosyick

Loosyick has few resources and poor soil. Merchants visiting the nation will find serfs eager to buy foreign goods, but generally too poor to do so. The townfolk are a little better off, and a skilled merchant might make modest profits selling to them. The wandering fisher-folk of the southern coasts and the Prandoi miners usually have some excess wealth in the form of gold, gems and *poils*, lustrous gem-like objects that grow on underwater plants. Prime poils are worth \$300-10,000, depending on size and fineness.

The Hawk Lords, though wealthy, are ascetics and do not go for foreign doodads and luxury goods. Fine weapons, sturdy and utilitarian clothing, and "respectable" cultural objects are prized, however. Some nobles levy a special tax (sometimes called "highway robbery") on foreign traders.

Loosyick has grudgingly made accommodations for visitors. Most towns have an austere inn or two, and translators can be hired from the Mayor's staff. The Hawk Lords and their village underlings will keep an eye on all visitors; those who act suspiciously are apt to be snatched up on the road and taken into the hills for questioning. Questioning is under torture; regardless of the answer, the victims are unlikely to survive. Those who confess to crimes or treasons are executed; those who convince the Hawk Lords of their innocence are killed so that the aristocrats will not be embarrassed.

Relations

Kiroon is one of the largest and most powerful of the eastern nations, and does not refrain from bragging about the fact. Fortunately for its neighbors, its bark is worse than its bite. Mensod and Loosyick are occasionally raided from Kiroon, but the Tyrant's claim that the marauders are unsanctioned seems well founded. Official hostility is limited to the economic front; Mensod and Kiroon are both vying for control of trade with the West.

Kiroon is on good terms with Gamotch, though the latter is not interested in committing itself to a military alliance. Irwundanch is seen as a nation of conceited, trouble-making fools in need of effective leadership (which the Kiroonians would be all too glad to supply). At the moment the Tyrant is making rather heavy-handed offers for trade and mutual-defense pacts. Like most of the nations of the East, Kiroon treats Xinguth as the ogre over the seas . . . though it does not hesitate to trade gold for Yalf Delta grain. Far-off Iquazor is seen as the holy land, an island of civilization in the chaos of the far West.

The Church in Kiroon is powerful and well organized, but it does not play as much a part in everyday life as it does in other nations. Because the army and bureaucracy maintain their own training schools, few church-trained scholars are in secular posts. Church law is held to be subordinate to administrative regulations, which the hierarchy vehemently, but so far ineffectively, denies.

The Wizards' Conference is a powerful force in Kiroon, though not in the way the Tyrant and his minions believe! The Kiroonians have gone to great pains to make the Wizards feel welcome in their nation. They are even included on the Council of Five. The technologist-tricksters are attempting to undermine the Tyrant; they see Kiroon as a danger to political stability and to their long-range plans. An organized state that is not run by the wizards is not in the best interests of the Conference. So far the opposition has been subtle and covert, but the tyrant is not a fool. If he does not already suspect, he will soon.

Loosyick

Loosyick, the smallest of Unnigh's nations, is situated on the eastern coast of Crassant. Kiroon lies to the north, Incald Ocean to the south and east, and the Lake Country to the west and southwest.

Loosyick supports about one and a half million people.

Lay of the Land

Eastern Loosyick is an arid prairie. Swamps and mud flats line the Incald coast, only a few areas of coast in the north and south are fit for harborage. Western and northern Loosyick is mountainous and arid; a broad belt of land east of the Kuluchtuck range is true desert. The southeast is a plateau region. Lake Grong is located here, nestled between the Kuluchtucks and the Prandoi Mountains. Lake Grong is part of the disputed Lake Country, but is used almost exclusively by Loosyick fishers.

Making a Living

Most of Loosyick's people are farmers and goat herders, eking out a marginal existence from the country's poor soil. Both the Incald Ocean and Lake Grong are fished. Some fishermen alternate between the two. Their boats are easily disassembled for the portage over the Prandoi Mountains. Only a small fraction of the populace live in towns. Manufacturing is strictly a cottage-industry. Some iron and tin mines are located in the Prandoi Mountains, on the Incald coast, but most of the ore is exported to Gamotch and Loosyick.

Society

Loosyick society is paternalistic, repressive and austere. People live in extended families, and are bound by strict rules of conduct and propriety. Public

humiliation and the lash are normal punishments for any violation of custom. On the positive side, Loosyick families have a tradition of hospitality. Travelers who ask for food and shelter will get it, and will find that the Loosyick tolerate violations of etiquette from ignorant strangers.

Most people live their whole life in their family villa. The residences are sprawling structures of mud and wattle divided into dormitories (one for young men, one for unmarried women, one for pregnant women, one for young childless couples, one for widowers, one for elderly married women, etc.). Store-rooms, barns and one or two large meeting halls complete the structure. Most villas are large but shoddy. They are built for economy of scale and little attention is paid to comfort or aesthetic concerns. Visitors are expected to sleep in the appropriate dorm. If space is tight, the lowest-ranking family members will sleep on the floor.

Towns in Loosyick are small, gloomy and dingy. Typically they consist of a few villas, public buildings and houses for transients and tribal exiles. A very few specialized industries — glass making and iron working for example — can be found in the towns.

Government

Loosyick is governed by a hereditary aristocracy, the Hawk Lords, who are in turn subject to a hereditary monarch. Unlike the bandit nobles of Irwundanch, the Hawk Lords offer no services in exchange for their privileges. The lower classes are expected to bow and scrape in the presence of the nobility. Death or at least a beating is the penalty for those who don't abase themselves enthusiastically enough. The towns are governed by mayors and councils appointed by the nobles; the only criterion seems to be the ability to grovel.

The king lives in *The Scarps*, a gigantic fortress/palace high in the Kuluch-tucks. Young nobles are sent to this stronghold as children for training. This is a lengthy process devoted to personal combat skills, hang-gliding and indoctrination in the duties and ideals of the Hawk Lords. These can be simply expressed as, "all who don't fly are sheep," and "sheep are meant to be shorn."

The ultimate test of nobility is hang-gliding. Status within the nobility is based almost entirely on height and distance attained in the gliding competitions. Producing gliders is dependent on fabric and frameworks supplied by the wizards, who thus have a solid lock on the Hawk Lords.

Commoner discontent might have been expressed forcibly before now, but most of Loosyick actually has little contact with the nobles. The extended families are the whole life of most of the people; only the appointed officials and the tribal heads have to deal with the Hawk Lords on a regular basis. Even so, the situation is unstable and any incident may be enough to touch off a revolt.

Law and Order

Loosyick has two kinds of law. Tribal law is administered by the elders. It is an unwritten code, modified by the common sense and prejudices of the elders involved. Normally, for good or ill, foreigners are not considered to come under the jurisdiction of the tribal code. Foreigners who offend custom without causing actual harm are politely corrected and asked to conform as long as they are guests in the country. Repeat offenders and rogue foreigners are treated as dangerous animals; they are killed or driven off.

Noble law is the province of the ruling nobility, the Hawk Lords. It is also an unwritten code, but is applied in its full ferocity to all who transgress. Its provisions have never been explained to outsiders, but a few points are known. Murder is a civil offense, punishable by a fine or term of service. Falsifying the distance covered by hang-glider is punished by death, by torture, of the offender and all his identified children. No foreigner is allowed to speak at a Hawk Lord court; an appointed defender speaks for the defendant without any consultation with him.

Adventures in Loosyick

Command Performance: The Hawk Lords' "party line" denounces foreign culture as decadent and weak. The ascetic cultists' usually relax by watching ritualistic athletic contests, listening to recitals of dissonant harp music, and reverently taking in readings from the Book of Undiminishing Glory, their chief philosophical tract.

For unknown reasons, Hawk Lord Byzin Kraah (currently based near the Kiroon border) has taken a liking to the ribald ballads of an eccentric Gamotcher poet, M'tuk. An aide traveling in disguise contacts the adventurers and hires them to (with utmost discretion) bring the poet to Kraah. They will have to put up with suspicious Hawk Lord overseers, an agent of one of Kraah's rivals, and the antics of the contrary, carousing, bumblingly lecherous poet.

Rebellion: The miners and nomadic fishermen of the Prandois have a history of quietly resisting the Hawk Lords' harsh rule. The secret society which organizes the resistance has been taken over by a messianic leader who preaches open rebellion.

The adventurers are hired by a shady merchant who asks them to smuggle arms and stolen wizards' gear to the rebels. The situation is more treacherous than it at first seems. A hasty remark made by one of the merchant's servants makes it clear that he is a Kiroonian agent intent on weakening the Hawk Lords, thus clearing the way for a bloody invasion. Moreover, the adventurers soon discover that they are being tailed by fanatical enforcers assigned to make sure that they deliver the goods!

Flightpath

The Hawk Lords follow a quasi-religious code of conduct that brings to mind the way of the Samurai and medieval chivalry. The name for the code translates as "virtuous migration route" or "righteous flightpath." It is an austere, harsh faith that encourages stoicism and self-reliance. The most disciplined and faithful Hawk Lords can enter an ecstatic state when flying or fighting that gives them unusual powers — High Pain Threshold, Combat Reflexes and Alertness +2.

Foreign Relations

Flying to Glory

The Hawk Lords built all the myths of their culture around hang-gliding. Their mountain castles are located as much for access to good take-off points and reliable thermals as for defense. The great events of noble life are the hang-gliding competitions, held in the middle Ark of every Un-night day at The Scarps, the seat of Loosyick's king. The best flying demonstrations bring enormous status to the fliers involved.

The King of Loosyick is the Leader of the Hawk Lords. He is first among equals, not a supreme being. Election is by voice vote; any noble who can fly up the sheer north face (3,000 feet from the plowed fields at the base of the cliff) of The Scarps can vote. The term of office is for life. Any male of the royal clan (currently about 40 are living) is eligible for the succession.

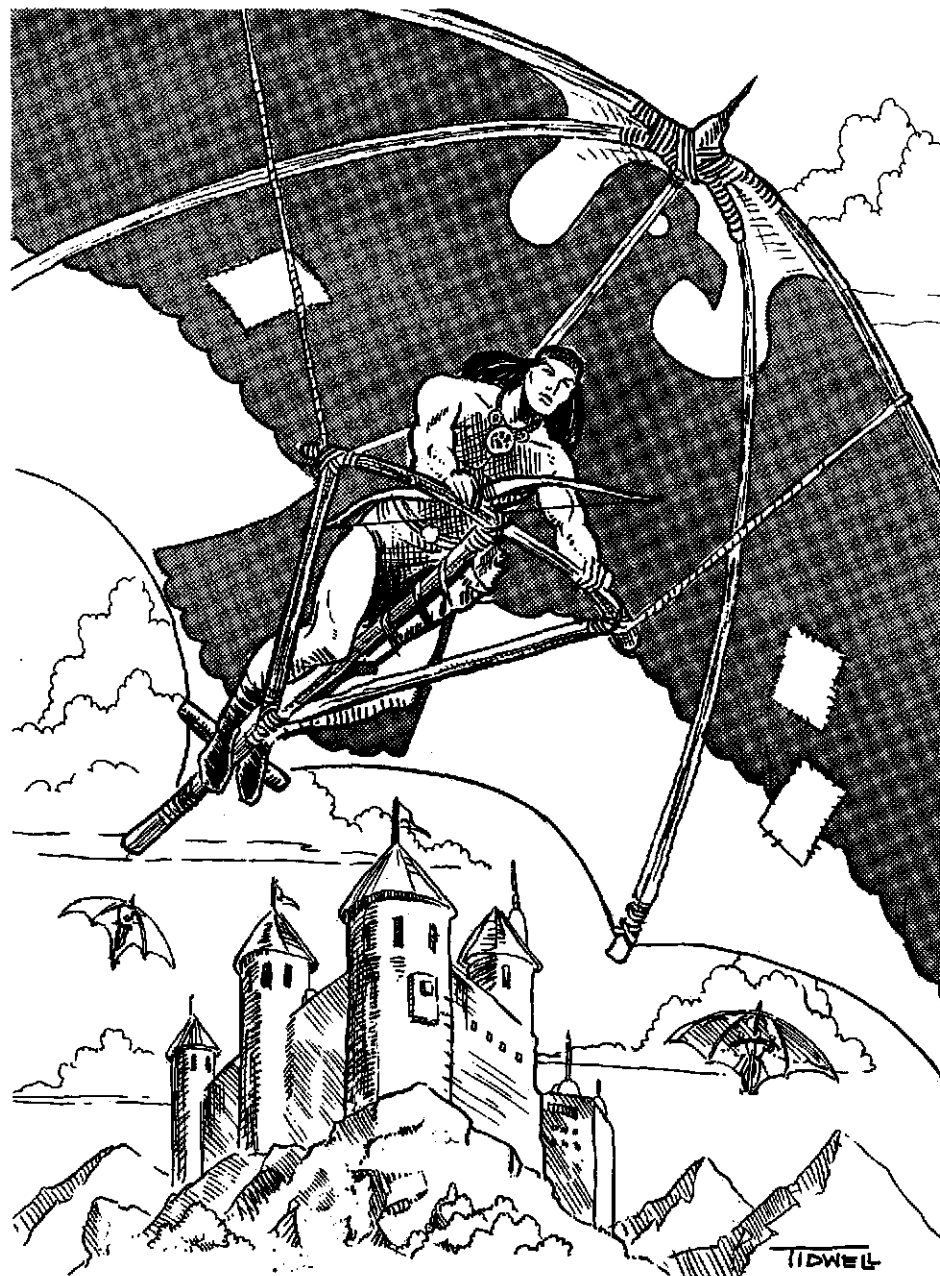
Hawk Lord gliders are made with a light-alloy framework and a skin of synthetic cloth, supplied by the wizards. Each glider, called a *hawk*, is the personal creation of its pilot. Fighting and building hawks are theoretically the only work that a noble does with his own hands. Actually, of course, some of the nobles have to work at administration, or their regime would have long since collapsed. Administrators pretend that they do no work; they prize obsequious assistants who will follow orders blindly while pretending it is all their own idea.

The ambition of every Hawk Lord is to find a combat use for his glider. Occasionally an opportunity will come up; a raid, boarding a ship, carrying a message into a besieged castle. Unfortunately, it is usually a fatal opportunity; a glider is a large, slow target for any competent marksman with bow or crossbow.

Reaction to Offworlders

The Hawk Lords will have enormously mixed reactions to the arrival of space-travelers. A space-ship flies, but is it really what Hawk Lords mean by flight? If the aliens can fly gliders, does that make them nobles, or impudent sheep? If alien weapons can be used effectively while gliding, does that count as combat flying? The Loosyick nobility will explode in dissension over these and other issues. Roll reactions separately for each Hawk Lord, at no bonus or penalty. Until the King expresses an opinion, no Lord will pay much attention to the opinions of other Lords; after he states his opinion, no matter what it is, those who disagree will immediately rebel violently, and Loosyick will fragment into a land of squabbling castles. Some lords will want to slaughter the offworlders who profane their skies; others will welcome them as elder brothers. And many will simply resent the interruption. Loosyick will never be the same.

The Hawk Lords are a haughty lot; they can be on good terms, but never *friends*, with another nation. Currently, they have allied with Mensod in hopes of forestalling an invasion by Kiroon or Gamotch. Though skilled at personal combat and up to destroying bandits and raiders, the Loosyick military is not strong enough to defend the nation against a determined foe. The Hawk Lords resolutely refuse to arm any commoner. It is a capital offense for one of their subjects to bear any arms except staff and knife.



Irwundanch and the other nations of the far West are names on a map to the people of Loosyick; they are too far away to be of any importance. Byilikin has made friendly overtures to the Hawk Lords, but has met with little success. Carkip was settled originally by refugees from Loosyick. They are despised by the aristocracy and considered a bad example for the commoners.

The Church has little power in Loosyick. It is popular among the tribes, and numerous chapels and monasteries can be found. The clergy has learned to be humble and unassuming around the nobility. The Hawk Lords are officially part of the Church, but in fact have a mystic creed based on ancestor worship and a conviction that man was meant to fly.

Wizards can be found in almost every town in Loosyick, in every noble entourage and in the king's court. The Loosyick guild appears humble, well-behaved and squarely under the thumb of the aristocracy. In fact, the Hawk Lords are indebted to the guild and Conference for help in keeping Gamotch, and lately Kiroon, at bay. Recent raids by the latter were driven off by blasts of fire and wafts of deadly smoke.

Gamotch

Gamotch lies to the southeast of Mensod. The Lake Country and Squooha Bay form the nation's northern border. The Incald lies to the northeast and the mountainous Fode Peninsula to the east. Gamotch's southern and western borders are vague. Gamotch claims J'lamka Bay and the forbidding Dead Cow Steps, but exerts no real control there. A bandit-ridden desert lies to the west.

Gamotch wins second prize in Unnigh's Most Populace Land derby. Seven and a half million people call the nation home.

Lay of the Land

Gamotch is one of the most pleasant lands on Unnigh. The warm, well-watered plains surrounding Chogue bay produce bumper crops of rice and amaranth. The mighty Fonsan Mountains surround the plain to the west and south; rain caught by the mountains runs off into uncounted small streams and rivers. The flood-scoured foothills are covered with thick junkwood forests. The northwest border is a warm, dry plateau.

Making a Living

Most Gamotchers live on the land. There is a high proportion of wealthy farmers; the land is fertile and the climate kind. Loosyick, Kiroon and even Irwundanch buy Gamotchan grains and produce. Several tribes live on the Fonsan foothills, tending herds of goats. These hearty folk live in tree houses as a precaution against flash-floods; during the worst storms even the goats are hauled up among the branches. A few villages on the plateau harvest fish from the waters of the Lake Country.

Gamotch's abundant harvests have allowed the population and industry to boom. Coastal cities, like the capital Byreville, are growing furiously. Cheap consumer goods (pots, knives, combs, and the like) are churned out by the thousands for sale throughout the East and over the seas in Byilikin. The ocean trade has recently spawned a precision-instruments industry. Gamotchan sextants, drafting equipment and compasses are works of art as well as efficient tools. Treat all such equipment as TL4.

Society

Gamotch was founded by a dozen or so tribes that settled in the region after the disaster. Each tribe had a unique culture and language, descended from one of the ethnic groups brought to Unnigh by the wayward colony fleet. The tribes founded city-states, each with a different set of strictly enforced laws and customs. Centuries of feuding, raids, and war were ended when, one by one, the city-states were taken over by mercenary leaders. The warlords occasionally have their own feuds, but not as lasting or passionate as the old tribal ones.

Country people live in extended families led by a hereditary patriarch. Men and women are strictly segregated except at mealtimes, religious ceremonies, emergencies (fire, flood, bandit raids, etc.) and during conjugal visits. In some areas, old tribal custom dictates that men wear masks to protect them from the gazes of wanton women; in others the women wear the veils. In some, neither sex goes covered but both hold each other in contempt, taunting and pelting with stones members of the opposite sex unlucky enough to be sighted outside of the meal hall.

Hang-Gliding

Hang-gliding is an enormously complicated balancing of air-currents, the lift of the glider and the effect of gravity on the combined mass of pilot and craft. In still air the glider sinks steadily, at the terminal velocity of the combined pilot-glider mass. By varying the area and shape of the wing the pilot can control direction and speed of descent; he can even climb, if the air currents are with him. Finding favorable air currents is dependent on weather and terrain; proper judgement of weather and terrain is part of the skill of hang-gliding. As a general rule, the most favorable conditions are in a light wind on a hot day at the juncture of a plowed field and a sheer cliff. There is an updraft along the face of the cliff that makes it easy to climb. Taking off and climbing are easier around mountains; long flights are easier over flat land. The higher the takeoff point compared to the landing point, the longer the flight.

The thick air and prolonged daylight of Unnigh make for excellent gliding conditions. Unnigh distance records approach 300 miles and height achieved exceeds 20,000 feet.

The GM makes the final decision as to whether conditions are such that some hang-gliding attempt is possible, given the physical limitations of the equipment. The player rolls against the Piloting (Hang-Gliding) skill of his character to see if it was accomplished.

A failure means that the attempt failed; it normally means that the pilot is on the ground somewhere other than his target. The worse the failure, the worse the result that the GM should assess.

A critical failure means damage to both the pilot and the equipment. Again, the GM must assess the damage. On a long-distance flight, the pilot might be stranded with a broken leg. On a high-altitude attempt, he might risk too strong an updraft, collapse the glider and free-fall all the way to the ground. Attempting to maneuver in mountains could slam him into a cliff.

A success means the pilot did what was attempted; a critical success is accompanied by some bonus. Not only did the pilot reach the ship; he landed directly on the quarterdeck. Not only did he soar high enough, but the altitude reached set a new record.

The GM can assign penalties to skill for unfavorable conditions or for attempts that stretch the limits of man and equipment. As a guide: Unfavorable Weather, -3 to -6 (up to -10 for actual storms); Night, -1 to -4; Long Flights, -1 for each 10 miles over 100; High Flights, -1 for each increase of 1,000 feet; Precision Landing, -1 for each 10 yards of diameter less than 100.

Loosyick "hawks" are effectively TL7, due to the wizard material used. If visitors supply TL10 materials, the improved hawks would give +3 to all rolls.

Languages in Gamotch

The people of each city state of Gamotch speak a different language or dialect. There are variants of Irka, Chochogin, and even Esperanto. When the warlords took over, they made Espanch (a pidgin of Spanish and South American Indian languages) the official "trade tongue." Enriched with vocabulary and curses from each of the civic dialects, the argot is rich and poetic. Some of the best writing Unnigh has produced comes from Gamotch.

Gamotch has one of the highest literacy rates on Unnigh. Books, scribes, accountants, and the like are easy to find.



Don't Laugh

About 40% of Gamotch's population are *Kongers*, descendants of the African tribe Europeans called pygmies. They are very short (under 5'). Visitors to Gamotch will soon notice that the Konger's short stature is *never* acknowledged, much less joked about. Those who do more than ask innocent questions about the diminutive folk will soon learn why the matter is never discussed in public — smirks and subtle innuendoes are punished by the loss of a toe, comparisons of Konger to children by loss of a foot, and outright insults by shortening the offender to the height of his victim. In the latter case the offender is provided a wheeled cart or peg-legs free of charge.

Trade in Gamotch

Gamotch is a wealthy, prosperous land. Food, hardware and knickknacks are cheap and easy to find. Unfortunately, only gold, gems, sturdy textiles and exotic items are acceptable in trade; there's little else that Gamotch needs.

Most of the tribal cultural differences and bizarre laws remain. Foreign travelers who flaunt their ignorance of local customs risk public humiliation (for an example, see *Don't Laugh*, above), lashings or even death. Fortunately, the larger cities have outsiders' quarters (read: ghettos) and guides who will accompany visitors and intervene when danger threatens.

Ties to the land are strong and affectionate. Great efforts are made to beautify family farms with goodwood trees, rock gardens, and flower beds, giving the countryside an unearthly beauty. Travelers are advised *not* to pause to admire the sights, however; country folk are ferociously territorial.

Urban dwellers are more cosmopolitan than their rural cousins. Only lip service is paid to separation of the sexes; many live in nuclear families, with only one or two elderly relatives in residence. Gamotchers are hard workers and wily negotiators. Many have formed guilds and have made deals with local warlords to keep the remnants of customary law from interfering with their work. City dwellers entertain themselves with elaborate pageants, religious spectacle plays and raucous, participatory sporting events held in municipal parks.

The Church is a widespread but not especially powerful influence in Gamotch. There are few monasteries and no large tracts of church-owned land. The Gamotchers manage to neatly blend their tribal traditions with church teachings.

Government

Gamotch is ruled by a dozen or so warlords (the number is subject to change). Prosperity has made them fat, lazy and amicable. Except for an occasional raid or contest over a deceased colleague's holdings, hostility has been limited to ceremony. A yearly (an Old Earth Year of 35 Unnigh days) council is held to settle internal disputes and discuss foreign relations. The lords vote among themselves to choose a First Speaker (head of council), Admiral and Foreign Minister.

Most of the warlords have delegated the day-by-day tasks of leadership to bureaucracies. Many important posts are filled with hired foreigners, who are believed to be aloof from tribal bickering and less corruptible. The trend toward delegating authority is best seen in the cities, where the powerful guilds and merchant families handle many municipal functions.

Because the warlords are on amicable terms, the armies they control are presently quite small. Because they don't trust each other, there is no national army that could compete with their forces. A small force with contingents from each of the warlords is permanently stationed at the border of the Lake Country in case trouble (or an irresistible opportunity) presents itself. All the warlord armies are a mix of spear-and-bow infantry to defend the cities and mounted archers, often mercenaries from Xinguth, for mobile operations. The armies are well-paid, trained and equipped. If the warlords could cooperate, they would have the most formidable force on Crassant. The Navy has a few big sailing ships to escort merchants and a lot of small, fast ships for pirate chasing.

Law and Order

Gamotch has no law; instead it has a bewildering variety of laws. Some are written codes, some are traditional bodies of custom and some are the decrees of warlords, tribal chiefs and guild heads. Gamotchers have no particular difficulty with the confusion. Everyone is subject to the law of his own principal group, and the group negotiates differences with other groups. Strangers, however, may find themselves with problems up to and including death for the violation of laws they did not know existed (see *Don't Laugh* sidebar). The safest thing is to do nothing without a native advisor. Major cities have a regular corps of professionals. One of the functions of a diplomat in Gamotch is to keep a file of reliable guides.

Relations

Gamotch is wealthy and potentially a first-class power, but internal problems have kept it from being an actor on the world stage in the past. The reign of the warlords may see an end to this isolation. Potential exists for a war between Gamotch and Loosyick over the Lake Country and islands in the Incald

Ocean, but the latter's friendship with Mensod prevents any moves in the near future. Gamotch would *like* to be on good terms with Kiroon, but that northern nation is too interested in developing its own manufacturing capabilities to be tempted into a risky alliance.

The Conference is very active in Gamotch. Besides being their testing ground for industrialization and civilian governments, the country has required lots of *adjustment* (political meddling) to prevent bloody wars between the city states or the appearance of a dangerous empire. Wizards are respected individuals, even in the conservative countryside, and their guilds and chapter houses are welcome additions to the growing towns. The more paranoid warlords blame their failures on the wizards, but no one takes the claims seriously.

The Church of Gamotch is contented and unambitious. It is so heavily infiltrated by the wizards that it is in many respects just their tool.

Byilikin

The most eastern of the nations occupies the western coast of Carkip. It is quite alone on the continent. There are no clearly defined political borders, but a range of mountains to the north and northeast, dense forests to the east, and a desert to the south form convenient natural boundaries.

Byilikin is home to only about a million people, but the population is growing fast.

Lay of the Land

Byilikin fills a large, roughly arc-shaped coastal plain. Three large river systems wind through the plains, bringing water and silt from the forests and mountains to the east. Ocean currents give the northern plains a warm, moist climate. The southern coast is warmer and drier, thanks to winds from the equatorial deserts.

Making a Living

Though settlements can be found hundreds of kilometers from the coast, Byilikin is at heart a seafaring nation. Dozens of towns and villages dot the seaboard. The capital, also called Byilikin, is built on pilings up-river from the mighty Tonzna delta. Using salt mined from the southern deserts, the huge fish catches are preserved, sealed in lead-lined barrels, and shipped to Loosyick, Gamotch and Kiroon.

The inland settlements produce grain, poultry and cattle for consumption in the cities and towns. A few mines, located on the northern slopes of the mountains that seal Byilikin off from the rest of the continent, yield a meager supply of iron, lead and copper.

In the last few decades, a sort of tourist industry has arisen in southern Byilikin. Treasure hunters, pilgrims and soldiers of fortune have been daring the dangerous sea crossing, the Night Dance and dim, almost Orb-less skies to search for lost cities in southern Carkip. Rumors of gold in the Pogue Range (southeast of Byilikin) are bound to increase traffic across the Incald.

Society

Byilikin has a frontier society, settled by outcasts and adventurers from Loosyick and Gamotch. As in colonial Australia and America, society has an egalitarian bent. There is an aristocracy, but differences between the other levels of society are slight and informal. People who don't like the way things work are always free to pull up stakes and move inland; property is free for the taking.

Byilikin families are usually small. All but the youngest son are expected to move out, join the crew of a boat and eventually start a new household. Inheritance of property is vested in the youngest son, but provisions for other children are common in wills. Men are expected to be the breadwinners of a

Languages of Byilikin

Like the folk of their homelands, the people of Byilikin speak a number of languages. Currently, Espanch seems likely to become the official tongue.

Many people in Byilikin's cities can read and write, but the literacy rate in the seaside villages and backwoods farms is very low.

Trade in Byilikin

Byilikin's main export is preserved fish, which it ships to Gamotch, Kiroon, and Loosyick. Other products include gold, silver, and bog iron. There is great potential in the goodwood trade; when the Incald shipping lanes become safer Byilikin could become the timber producer of the east.

Because it is a new nation with few native industries, Byilikin must import all sorts of manufactured goods: glass, fine metal ware, spices, textiles, and so on. Merchants could make their fortune with a few trips through backwoods Byilikin . . . if they survive the trip! Bandits, strange beasts, predatory inn keepers and backwoods yokels with intriguing notions on property rights all conspire to make travelers' lives interesting.

Adventures in Byilikin

Byilikin proper is a rather sedate place compared to the nations of the west. However, it is a stepping off place to the largely unexplored continent of Carkip. Tales of lost tribes, ancient ruins and fabulous civilizations draw adventurers from as far as Irwundanch. Byilikin is also a land of refugees and exiles. Renegade wizards, disgraced noblemen and clergy, villains and bounty hunters can be found living in humble circumstances in many of the coastal villages. Travelers might also come to this new land in search of information or lost heirs.

A Plague of Madness: The Wizards' Guild of Byreville, Gamotch, is concerned about a growing plague of madness among the city's workers. Diligent effort has traced the cause to fish imported from Byilikin; obviously some malign new-world noble, or perhaps rebel wizards, are lacing the food with a subtle poison! The adventurers are hired to seek the source of the mischief.

The real culprit is lead poisoning; the salted fillets leach the deadly metal from the barrel linings. Careful investigation will lead the adventurers to a mining town full of sickly, but dangerously insane, lead miners.

Other Faiths

The Church is not the only religion on Unnight. About 40% of the population of a typical eastern country follow its teachings; another third are members of splinter churches. The remainder worship nature spirits or follow the hybrid religions of Irwundanch. Examples of the smaller religions follow.

The Spirit Mockers

This creed originated in southern Irwundanch. Though it acknowledges many gods and nature spirits, it puts an archetypal fool-deity on the top of the divine hierarchy. Mocker devotees, who dress in stylized, rather sinister jester costumes, think shame motivates supernatural beings more effectively than worship. They cultivate a sardonic attitude toward life in general and the gods and spirits in particular. Public ceremonies include extravagant (and often hilarious) dramatic presentations and priests exhorting the gathered masses to bust a gut laughing at whatever deity or spirit seems to be causing the most trouble at the moment. Spirit Mockers can be found throughout Irwundanch, in southern Xinguth, and in parts of Mensod and Gamotch. The Mockers are not very popular with the Church (or any other organized faith!).

Orb Seers

This movement was born in a region of Mensod during the dark ages. Orb Seers have originated a strange cosmology based on the workings of the Orb-Unnight system and mysterious phenomena like the Night Dance. After the dusk storms die down, practicing Seers retire to meditation platforms (often roof-mounted) and go into a trance that often lasts for half the night. Seers emerging from a trance occasionally find themselves in possession of peculiar pieces of knowledge or solutions to problems that perplexed them the previous day. Wizards observing Seers have determined that the trance-state is a controlled form of the Night Dance! Many Seers are immune to *accidental* Night Dance attacks as well.

We Who Eat

We Who Eat, a sophisticated cannibal cult, is found in the large cities of Gamotch, Kiroon, and everywhere in Byilikin. The cultists believe that the flesh of each animal and plant imbues the eater with a unique power. We Who Eat are the bogey-men of Unnight, and are prosecuted in all nations save Byilikin. To be fair, most of the cult's victims are exotic animals (few can afford the price of a clean, healthy, properly killed human).

family, and women the home managers. Traditionally women are educated in bookkeeping and mathematics, men in mechanics, agriculture and seafaring. Members of either sex who step outside the normal pattern are seen as both comic and sinister. They are subject to a great deal of ridicule, but are also felt to be vaguely dangerous to cross. Recently there have been more *unwomanly women* and *unmanly men*, especially in the capital. Some think it is a plot — by the wizards, or the Gamotchers or maybe some more sinister force.

Byilikinsters are a bluff, genial and hospitable folk, but they expect people to pull their own weight. They are cool to newcomers until they prove themselves. Foreign notables who pull rank or seem overly proud of their eastern origins may find themselves the target of practical jokes.

Government

Byilikin has a king and a small noble class, but their functions are mostly advisory. Most decisions are made by the Council of Mayors. Similar bodies manage Byilikin's five counties. Because Byilikin has no neighbors, a small population and a fair amount of wealth, the council jobs are easy. Most councilors look upon it as a part-time, mostly honorary position. The mayors are chosen by a variety of means. Some are appointed by local nobility. Others are simply the local with the most armed force. It is rumored that some from lands in the far north are *elected* by the commoners.

Byilikin has a small national army and a dozen or so private armies controlled by powerful nobles, merchants or mayors. Spear and axe are the most common weapons, but there is a large force of archers raised from the backwoods hunters. The navy is small, but the ships are well-found and the crews skilled. To date, the only enemy Byilikin has faced on sea or land is the Western Pirates.

Law and Order

Law in Byilikin tends toward a frontier informality; Roy Bean would be more at home than Sir Francis Bacon. The most common judge in the small towns and villages is the village boss, whether he is clan chief, appointed mayor or elected leader. The capital and the larger towns are a bit more formal, but law is still more a matter of personal judgement than of conformity with code. This can be help or harm to the person caught up in it, depending entirely on the character of the court. Byilikin is one of the few places where a defendant may well be advised to act as his own advocate. Most Byilikin courts appreciate a good argument, especially if it is entertaining and caters to their prejudices. They are wary of *lawyer's tricks*. Many came to Byilikin to escape the law at home; they are naturally antagonistic toward its customary forms. A good opening to any defense is an eloquent salute to the brave, free men of Byilikin, especially if that has nothing to do with the case.

Foreign Relations

Byilikin, a relatively new nation, has yet to find a place in Unnight politics. It has no long-standing quarrels or friendships among the nations of eastern Crassant. The countries of the West are so far away as to be mythological. A nation of exiles and runaways, Byilikin's trading partners either patronize its ambassadors or reject their overtures as ludicrous familiarities.

The Byilikinsters have little patience with the traditional Church. Many of the most prominent citizens moved to Carkip as a result of religious dissidence. A dozen or so heretical sects exist side by side in relative peace.

The wizard's guild of Byilikin is in fact little more than an overworked chapter house. The shrewd locals resent the trickery that wizards use to disguise the true nature of their art. The Conference has had to proceed very cautiously. Only the largest towns are blessed with a wizard-in-residence, who is treated as merely another professional.

4

ADVENTURING

NPCs

The following NPCs are provided for use as swordfodder, chance encounters and casual acquaintances. The adventure at the back of the book will occasionally refer to these typical NPC types.

Thug

This fellow is representative of thugs, bandits, household guards and leaders of enraged mobs of any nationality. A better fighter than the average man, but probably not dangerous to a competent PC.

ST 11, DX 11, IQ 10, HT 11.

Basic speed: 5.5.

Advantages: High Pain Threshold.

Disadvantages: Fanaticism or Greed.

Skills: *Brawling-13; Knife-11; Short-sword-12; Streetwise-9.*

Weapons: Knife or Baton.

Equipment: At night, heavy clothing equal to padded cloth armor.

Guard

A professional fighter of middling competence, the Guard may be used as the leader of a bandit gang, an Iquazoran fighting monk, or a typical foot soldier of the eastern nations.

ST 12, DX 12, IQ 10, HT 11.

Basic speed: 5.75.

Advantages: Toughness (DR 1), Alertness +2.

Disadvantages: Bully; Honesty.

Skills: *Brawling-12; Broadsword-13; Crossbow or Spear-throwing-12; Knife-12; Shield-13.*

Weapons: Broadsword and Medium Shield, or Crossbow and Large Knife, or Spear.

Equipment: Heavy leather armor.

Officer

A competent professional soldier. Not as well-rounded as a typical PC, but a match for one on the battlefield.

ST 12, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 11.

Basic Speed 5.75.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Toughness (DR 1).

Disadvantages: Duty (Army, on 15 or less); Impulsiveness.

Skills: *Brawling-12; Broadsword-13; Knife-12; Leadership-12; Shield-14; Tactics-12.*

Weapons: Broadsword, large knife

Equipment: Heavy leather armor; Small shield, Telescope.

continued on next page . . .

Characters

PCs adventuring on Unnigh may be natives of Unnigh or visitors from space. In a space-travel campaign, established PCs may happen across Unnigh in their travels, have some adventures and leave. A purely Unnigh campaign will be a medieval/fantasy campaign in which all the magic is technological fakery.

Natives

Character Generation

Unnighers come from a medieval society. Therefore, advantages, disadvantages and skills, will be typically medieval. *Literacy* is an advantage costing 10 points, even in the most literate countries. Crippling injuries count for their full value. Social advantages and obligations are not unlike those of a European medieval society. Starting wealth is \$1,000; prices and equipment are those of the *GURPS Basic Set*.

Wizards

Wizards are a special case. They are people of Unnigh, but they have access to advanced technology. Their own secrets are at about TL9, concentrating on organic rather than mechanical techniques. They have some limited knowledge of a technology that may be as high as TL16. See pp. 46-49 for detailed information on wizards.

PCs can have a wizard, his chapter house, the national guild or the whole Wizards' Conference as a *patron*.

Visitors From Space

PCs from other worlds, created using *GURPS Space*, may find themselves on Unnigh by accident, on orders from the Space Patrol, to write their doctoral thesis or perhaps simply to make their fortune. They have a beginning wealth of \$15,000 and access to the appropriate equipment for their TL.

Equipment

Space travelers *potentially* have access to whole catalogues of equipment, ranging from camping gear to medical supplies to weaponry. What they actually have in their pockets when they land on Unnigh depends a lot on *how* they got there and *why* they are there. If the PCs are part of a recon team, they can pick what they want from ship's stores. Shipwrecked tourists may have only a few survival kits from their lifeboat and the poker hand they were examining when their liner's emergency siren started.

Note that high-tech gadgetry requires a high-tech society to provide spare parts, ammo and repairs. If PCs are not careful with their equipment they may find themselves using clubs, spears and bows . . . weapons that Unnigh natives have been using for generations. The Wizards will do their best to relieve off-worlders of their high-tech gear. Unlike most natives, they will know how to use some advanced equipment, or can safely learn its operation. Remember that there are no credcard terminals on Unnigh, and no Gamotchan merchant will recognize a draft on the Bank of Spica.

Native Tools and Weapons

The people of Unnigh use tools and weapons similar to those of Earth's middle ages. Some of this is parallel evolution, some due to memories of the

ways things used to be done. The overall variety of tools and weaponry is less, as the more exotic creations have been lost or were too complicated to reproduce.

Unnight is TL3, but varies from place to place. Many villages on the wilderness borders of the great nations muddle along at TL2. Metallurgy and metal crafting is well developed. Sturdy alloys and advanced casting and shaping techniques not generally seen until TL4 are in common use in Xinguth, Gamotch and Loosyick.

Materials

Metals such as copper, iron and bronze are used in many everyday items, including some that on Earth were made of wood. Where needed, steel and other alloys are used. *Goodwood* is a rare commodity. Most of Unnight's trees produce pulpy, fibrous timber that is hardly worth the effort of cutting. The few native goodwood trees, and Earth trees that survived importation, are prized crops. Timber and forests are often the target of raids. At least one major war, between Kiroon and Mensod, was over control of timber lands. In the last few decades, a quick-growing mutant bamboo has helped fill the wood gap. It is rumored that the wizards of Xinguth created the plant themselves; devout people in the east refuse to use the new material.

Arms and Armor

Unnight weaponry is limited to spears, bows, daggers and knives, short swords, broadswords, slings, and small maces and axes. A few fighting monks and isolated clans use exotic weapons like bolas, flails and shuriken, but these are not common and will totally mystify those not raised using them!

Prices for weapons will be much as listed in the *GURPS Basic Set*. However, weapons that require lots of wood (staves, bows, pole arms) will cost 50% more due to the shortage of sturdy timber. While Unnighters use lots of metal, excellent weapons will cost no less and cheap weapons will break just as often.

Armor has a peculiar status on Unnight. Warriors in most nations prefer speed and unrestricted movement to bulky armor. Combat techniques emphasize shield use. Leather and cloth armor are widely available and standard issue for most armies. The heaviest metal armor available is a good-quality chainmail; it is used by soldiers in some eastern nations. Shields are cheap (80% of listed cost) and very well made; decrease weight by 20% and increase HT by 20%.

The *hoofel*, an iron buckler with a sharp iron spike in the center, can be found strapped to the back of nearly every woman and noncombatant man in Irwundanch and western Mensod. Though used for everything from cooking soup to picking fruit, the shield's primary job is as a defense against wild animals (*Hoofel* translates as *snoot sticker*). The hoofel has a single grip in the center of the back. It can be transferred from slung to ready position in one second; Fast Draw is available for hoofel. Used as a weapon, the spike does impaling damage or the buckler itself does crushing damage. An attempt to thrust with the spike that misses by 1 is a hit with the buckler. The hoofel can also be swung to strike with the edge; used this way it is an unbalanced weapon and takes a turn to ready after striking. Minimum ST below is to use the hoofel as a weapon, there is no minimum ST to use it as a shield. As a shield it is PD 1, DR 6, HT 8/32. As a cooking pot its capacity is three quarts.



NPCs (Continued)

Wizard

Not the best fighter around, but still an opponent not to be taken lightly! Described below is a "field wizard." Those based in chapter houses or guild halls will have fewer social and performing skills and high levels in three or four specialized sciences.

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 13, HT 10.

Basic Speed 5.

Advantages: Literacy.

Disadvantages: Duty (Conference and its goals, on 15 or less).

Skills: Acting-11; Animal Handling-11; Bard-13; Blowgun-13; Fast-Talk-16; First Aid/3-13; Interrogation-12; Knife-12; Naturalist-15; Poison-11; Sleight of hand-13; Stealth-11; six hard scientific skills to skill-11.

Weapons: Blowgun with special darts, Dagger, Itching dust.

Equipment: Pouches, pockets, and bags full of tricky stuff. *Very* dangerous to the unskilled user!

Llamaman

A Xinguthy llama rider is described below. (True cavalry is rare on Unnight; most mounted units dismount before battle. Add animal handling and riding to one of the soldier-types described above to create a dragon.)

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 11.

Basic Speed 5.5.

Advantages: None.

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (Clan and nation)

Skills: Animal Handling-9, Bow-14; Knife-12; Lasso-12 (*GURPS Basic Set 3rd Edition*); Riding (Llama)-13; Shield-13; Spear-12; Survival (Woodlands and Plains)-10; Tracking-10. Officers have IQ-12; Leadership-12; Tactics-12.

Weapons: Short composite bow; Spear; Dagger. Lasses are often carried, but only used to control animals or capture fleeing prisoners.

Equipment: Cavalry llama; Heavy leather armor (actually a partial suit with no coverage on "seat", inner thighs, or lower back); Small shield; Camp gear.

Tactics: Llama riders harass the enemy with their bows and insults, switching to shield and spear in close combat.

continued on next page . . .

NPCs (Continued)

Kid

A tavern pot boy, the innkeeper's daughter who mends the characters' clothing, and other innocent waifs who may get in the way of a battle.

ST 9, DX 10, IQ 9, HT 10.

Basic Speed 4.75.

Advantages: Patron (parents, master; on 15 or less).

Disadvantages: Youth.

Skills: Brawling-9 if a boy or tom-boy; Professional skill-8; Running-10 or Climbing-12 or Swimming-14 (depending on local environment); Streetwise-10 or Survival-10 (for city and country kids, respectively).

Weapons: Possibly a small dagger or sling.

Old Geezer

Though physically weak, and getting a bit senile, this character can provide vital clues and sage advice.

ST 8, DX 10, IQ 12, HT 9.

Basic Speed 4.25.

Advantages: Status +2, Common Sense, Strong Will +2.

Disadvantage: Age, Bad Sight, Absentmindedness.

Skills: History-12; social skill-13; Three Professional or Craft skills-16; Teaching-12.

Bows

When Unnight wood is good, it's *very* good, but when it's used for bows it's *rotten*. Unnight's timber is either useless, fibrous mush or fine-grained wood of extreme hardness. Neither is good for bows. The hunters and warriors of Unnight use weapons of horn, bone and the shells of exotic creatures. An aquatic animal, the *brok* (see p. 14), that lives off the coast of Loosyick produces especially good raw material; its shell is large enough to produce a composite long bow.

Weapon	Damage		Reach	Cost	Weight	ST
	Type	Amount				
Hoofel	impaling	thrust	C, 1	\$35	4 lbs.	12
	crush	thrust +2				
	crush	swing +2				

Leftovers

Five hundred years is a *long* time, but some of the artifacts brought by the first settlers have survived. These objects are so rare they've acquired the mystic aura of religious relics; even those still usable are kept locked away or are used only on ceremonial occasions.

Weapons

Few firearms have survived in usable condition. Indeed, the Conference has done its best to destroy or acquire old guns, lest a bright mundane deduce their secrets. Less sophisticated artifact arms, ranging from blowguns (*GURPS Basic Set 3rd Edition*) to knives, are *relatively* common, but most people still never see one other than on an altar or in the possession of a nobleman. The most common sort of artifact weapon is a sturdy titanium "Swiss army knife" (UNCPO issue). All the churches in Loosyick have one of these wonders, and use each one of the 34 little tools in turn during the hours-long sunrise service. In other eastern nations, and the countries of the far west, these knives can be purchased for about \$2,500 . . . if a seller can be found!

Armor from the star ships is even rarer than weapons. A few score titanium helmets and a dozen-odd sets of Kevlar body armor are all that survive planetside.



Books

Realizing that conditions on a new colony might not be kind to paper or magnetic media, the expedition's organizers saw fit to include several hundred thousand *Durabooks*. These volumes, originally targeted toward 21st-century connoisseurs who demanded *real* books, had pages of *Tyvek* (the untearable stuff of which floppy disk envelopes are made) and were bound in locking, airtight durameld covers. Subjects included in the colony's manifest ranged from religious works to romance novels to medicine. Most were printed in English, though a large number of Esperanto translations were included.

Had the task of distributing the books gone as planned, nearly every settler would have had a few; unfortunately, many were lost on crashing shuttles or remain on board the *Ark*. Even so, *Durabooks* are fairly common. A wealthy or lucky commoner could possess one; the average wizard or intellectual churchman has several. Even though most people can't read them, *Durabooks* have become a status symbol.

Wizard Equipment

Descriptions and details of wizard-ware are given on pp. 46-49. Here it is sufficient to say that the weapons and gadgets the techno-tricksters produce are quite effective but highly treacherous . . . wizard items which fall into the wrong hands tend to blow those hands off!

Ancient Technology

The creatures who terraformed Unnight and created Orb were master technologists. Their elegant, powerful tools and weapons survive to this day.

Unfortunately, weather, erosion and continental drift have buried most of the artifacts under layers of silt, miles of rock, lakes or oceans. The devices that are accessible are usually found in ancient deserts and young mountain ranges.

Ancient artifacts vary tremendously in size, shape, materials and purpose. The largest object found so far (unless you count Orb) is a featureless dome of impervious metal about ten yards in diameter, set in a granite crag in northern Kiroon. Most artifacts are smaller (usually pocket-sized or at least easily handled by one person) and made of a glossy ceramic-like substance. Most of the objects are totally useless rods, blocks and blobs. A few have psychic effects (e.g. one bowl-like object prevents the wearer from contracting the Night Dance). One common piece generates electricity if exposed to direct sunlight; unfortunately it delivers only three volts. Its principal use is as a joy buzzer, very popular in certain circles in Byilikin.

Unnight natives who find ancient artifacts usually assume them to be ordinary (but still priceless) ancestral creations. The wizards know better; the Conference has an insatiable appetite for alien gadgetry. People who find items are quickly offered a reward by the local wizard; those who refuse may be robbed if the artifact seems promising enough. Prices range from \$100 for a ceramic blob of no discernible function through \$500 for a joy buzzer to untold thousands for a gadget that really does something (no matter what). The trouble is not over once the gadget is in the hands of a wizard; chapter houses and guilds compete for the honor of delivering an ancient artifact to the Conference. The competition has of late turned bloody, as the Aegirians and the Order of Orb (see p. 49) vie for control of newly discovered artifacts.

Traveling on Unnight

Unnight can be a tough place for travelers; the roads are often atrocious, inns rare, and bandits distressingly avaricious and ruthless. In some areas, the villagers are as bad as the bandits. Incomprehensible dialects, prejudices, and religious differences may also hinder adventurers.

Pride and Prejudice

Unnight's settlers were racially and culturally diverse. The roster included pygmies, Eskimos, Indians from Peru and central America, Mongolian tribesmen and more. The rigors of survival on Unnight have twisted their ancient folkways beyond recognition.

Except in the largest towns and along trade routes, people will have their own ideas as to what qualifies as a person. Inhabitants from neighboring areas may be well enough known to be feared or held in contempt (-1 reaction); offworlders or Unnighters from very far away will be unknown quantities. Depending on local tradition, they may be treated as beasts or gods.

Players have full reign over their character's actions, but they may wish to roleplay various national prejudices. PCs may also have the disadvantage of Intolerance.

The Conference (see p. 48) works around (or with!) local prejudices as best it can, and avoids identifying itself with any particular ethnic type.

The Church is less sensitive about such matters. Many a missionary has been stoned, ignored or laughed out of town because he was *one of them*.

Non-humans (and genetically or mechanically modified humans) will be seen as monsters, demons or deities depending on the visitor's exact form and local mythology.

Town and Country

Except for rare places like Gamotch, settlement on Unnight has been *extensive* (spreading out) rather than *intensive* (building up). Unnight's countryside consists of thousands and thousands of small villages and towns separated by wilderness. In densely settled areas, the "wilderness" between two villages'

Apothecaries and Alternative Medicine

Much to their chagrin, wizards do not have a total monopoly on natural lore and knowledge of herbal medicine. Many villages have an old, eccentric woman who is a combination midwife and herbalist. She can provide painkillers, fever-reducers and herb-packs to reduce swelling and prevent infection of open wounds. This counts as medical care TL3 (see p. B112).

Most large cities have apothecary shops where people can buy herbs, roots, and animals parts for traditional cures. In the past few years several apothecaries have been firebombed — ostensibly by jealous wizards. Most Unnighters are capable of First Aid at TL3; equipment from an apothecary is +1 to a First Aid roll. The usual cost of First Aid supplies is \$30, but apothecaries are notorious gougers; they will raise the price on anyone who is obviously desperate.

Publishing on Unnight

The printing press *has* been rediscovered on Unnight . . . by the wizards. They are sitting on the invention until a decision is made on how to release it to the public. Currently, all books are copied and bound by hand. In some areas (Gamotch, for instance) books are fairly inexpensive and available on a wide variety of subjects. In Loosyick, Xinguth and northern Kiroon books of any sort are rare and the selection is limited to books on law and religion. Unnight has yet to have a Shakespeare or Kipling. Most books are strictly practical; treatises on farm management, llama-breeding and law are staples. Current bestsellers include heavily glossed editions of the *Bible*, *Many People, Many Faiths, Vol. III*, the *Trip of Marvern* (a fascinating but wholly inaccurate allegorical comedy about the first settlers' trip to Unnight) and *The Testament of Tendring Eight-Fingers*, a tract on crime and punishment.

The Voonogga of Grimgrim

A typical ancient artifact is the Voonogga, discovered 210 Unnight-years ago by miners in northern Kiroon. This yard-long rod seems to be made of terra cotta, but it is unbelievably durable. For nearly a decade it was used as a support for a tunnel roof. One end emits a soft yellowish-white light whenever Orb eclipses Suzak; the glow lasts for about three hours each day. The rod is now in the custody of the Tyrant's Museum in Tyrnington where, on the Ark it glows, it is put on public display.

lands may be a copse of trees, a ridge, or a patch of depleted no-man's land. On the edges of civilization, villages are scattered here and there through trackless wastes.

The layout and character of the villages themselves vary a good deal from country to country. The larger towns and cities are usually newer, more utilitarian and have less local color than the villages.

Grenades

Wizard grenades come in many shapes and sizes. The explosive charge is usually the equivalent of .25 pounds of TNT or less, but the elaborate shell may weigh up to five pounds. They are basically concussion grenades, rather than fragmentation; the shell is usually soft material that is blown to dust by the explosion. Most are simply tossed, (see p. B80 for throwing). Some can be swung like a throwing hammer for additional range (double the distance for a given weight).

The explosive effect ranges from a mere pop (1 point of damage to the person in the hex the bomb lands in) to a mighty blow (3 dice to unfortunates in the target hex, halve the damage for each 3 hexes from the explosion, round down).

Some grenades spray jellied burning oil as they explode. This does (1 die) of burn damage up to five hexes away in addition to concussion damage.

Most are far tamer devices, designed to scare rather than maim. They do 1 die damage in the hex of the explosion and leave a cloud of colored smoke 5 hexes across that persists for 30 seconds (in still air, the GM must decide if it disperses faster in a wind).

In times of dire need a wizard can use the terrible *wallop of doom*, a fragmentation bomb mounted on a cart that is rolled or pushed to its target. The bomb contains the equivalent of one pound of TNT and is packed with fragments and smoke chemicals. The bomb does 12 dice of crushing damage in the hex of the explosion, damage is halved for every three yards from the explosion. Fragments do cutting damage. Anyone exposed up to 120 yards from the explosion can take up to 12 dice of cutting damage. PD of potential targets is increased by one for each hex from the explosion. The smoke cloud is 11 hexes across and persists for 60 seconds; it is green and smells like rotten-pork mixed with sulfur dioxide.

On the Road

In most parts of the far west (and in backwoods regions everywhere) there are no roads, only trails for foot and animal traffic. Even the best trails would give carts and wagons trouble. In mountain areas many trails are incredibly treacherous; llamas and hired guides are necessary.

The villagers of Irwundanch maintain wide, well-drained roads for the nation's wandering nobles. Commercial users are heavily taxed, ostensibly to support repairs, but the charges sometimes amount to highway robbery. Each major road is paralleled by a far cruder secondary path. This "service road" is provided for movement of herds.

The roads of Loosyick and the Kiroon outback are passable in dry weather and when they freeze at night; when it rains they become seas of mud. Mensod and Kiroon's heartland boast highways with good drainage and well-gravelled surfaces, but local nobles charge travelers for each mile they spend on the roads.

Gamotch's excellent roads are maintained by a cult of wandering mendicants; among the innovations the sect has introduced is a sort of asphalt made from boiled junkwood roots.

Languages

Ten major languages, each with dozens of dialects, are spoken on Unnigh. Seven of the languages are descended from unrelated and obscure African, Asian and Amerindian tongues. Five centuries have altered them just about beyond recognition. A linguist familiar with the root language, or a very sophisticated computer with banks of obscure knowledge, might be able to puzzle out the meaning of a sentence. To the average space traveler, even an educated one, the language of most Unnigh natives will be an incomprehensible babble. If the traveler is from a culture that still uses English or Spanish he might recognize an occasional place name or word.

The wizards and mundane scholars have preserved three ancient tongues (21st-century English, Spanish and Esperanto) fairly intact as written languages. Many of the crewmen of the colony ships spoke English and the ships' tech manuals were in that language. (There were more desperate and unemployed technicians in the English-speaking countries than anywhere else on Earth when the UNCPO fleet spaced out.)

Spanish was the second most common language in the fleet, and was the liturgical language of the Church before the Chezzudiv Revelation (see p. 11). The sect called Old Churchers or Sponguls, found mostly in Byilikin, still conduct their services in a derivative of Spanish.

The UNCPO fleet was the last desperate attempt of the Esperantists to establish their artificial language. Esperanto speakers were favored for crew positions; most spoke at least a few phrases. Most of the books sent along with the colony were available in Esperanto translation. The Church, the wizards and the Hawk Lords all use a descendant of Esperanto as a spoken language for their various purposes.

The difficulty of translating these languages will depend on how far the visitors' version of the language has diverged from the Unnigh version. The best spoken attempts at any language except Esperanto are at no more than -4; written communication will be at -3 or worse. Esperanto is at -2 spoken and no penalty written.

In the east, a pidgin of Irka (the language of Mensod) has become the trade

tongue. In Irwundanch, a corrupt mixture of Esperanto and Hammburri (a common language in western Irwundanch) serves a similar purpose. Pilgrims, travelling scholars and merchants can pick up these Mental/Easy tongues by hanging around a busy market for a few months.

Wizards

Besides the tinkers, tailors, soldiers, spies, peasants, fishermen and other professionals found on worlds of medieval technology, Unnigh has something else . . . a class of men and women whose keen intellect and knowledge of the laws of nature allow them to wield tremendous powers! They can throw balls of fire, command fierce animals, stop (or start!) horrible plagues and lay curses on those unwise enough to annoy them. Their chapter houses can be found in almost every land; their mysterious strongholds are hidden in Unnigh's wilderness. The Unnighers call them the *wizards*, and regard them with a mixture of fear and respect. An observer from a technological civilization will quickly see the wizards for what they are — brilliant, talented and highly organized charlatans conning the ignorant for power and profit!

History

The Wizards' Conference was founded about 450 years ago, when the last of the colony's scientists and technicians held a colloquy via shortwave radio. They swore to preserve the old knowledge and guide the colonists on the road back to technological civilization. The crewmen's children and promising youngsters recruited from the villages and wandering bands were trained to read and write, to work with herbs, chemicals and minerals and (perhaps most importantly) to *entertain*.

Working from bases hidden deep in the wilderness, this new generation made a grand survey of Unnigh's peoples, flora, fauna and resources. They traded their skills as healers and magicians (the conjuring kind) for food, shelter and information. In the first years, the wizards referred to their organization as the Aegir Society and themselves as technologists. These appellations quickly fell out of use. Although they refuse to call *themselves* wizards, they don't discourage others from using the name. The wizards call ordinary folk *mundanes*, or simply *them*.

At first, the Conference used brute-force methods to help mundane allies win wars and expand their influence. Poor planning and arrogance resulted in the disaster of the Mine Wars. The wizards found that the health of their organization — and their individual prosperity — depended on the welfare of the general population. By the end of the dark age (about 200 years ago), the Conference had learned its lesson; the wizards still intervened in politics and wars, but they were subtle and judicious in their manipulations.

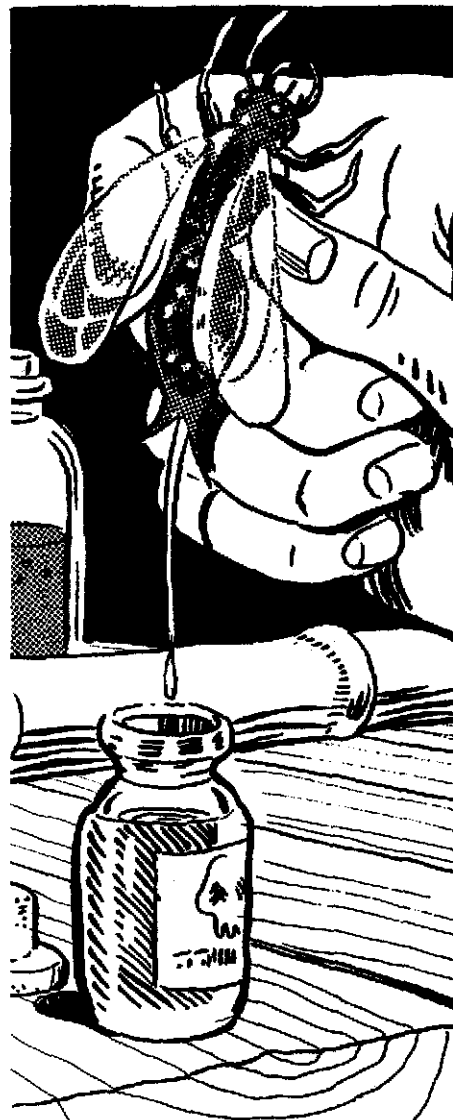
The Conference has grown in range and power in the last century; wizards can be found in almost every town, and every large city has a chapter house. Alas, increased visibility has also diminished the wizards' aura of mystery and respect. A score of wizards have been *murdered* in the last decade — more than in the last two centuries! The pragmatic merchants and politicians of the growing cities have come to regard the local chapter houses as a faction to be wooed or controlled.

Wizardly Technology

The wizards are combination technologists and conjurers, professions both known for their gadgetry. Though far from being as reliable, safe and effective as the consumer goods and military equipment of an industrial society, Conference technology is impressive. Their biological engineering and much of their medicine is TL9, their communications and alarm systems are TL8 and most of their conjuring equipment is TL5. What they lack is mass production and the power resources of industrialization. By happenstance, the founding wizards

The Dread Bee

When a wizard needs to curse someone, he often uses the Dread Bee. This is an actual live insect, a two-inch long fuzzy pink monster with an enormous stinger. Each wizard keeps several in a pouch full of soporific herbs; when needed the trickster dips the stinger in a pot full of poison or microbe culture, pops the insect into a fancy blowgun, and shoots it toward the unsuspecting target before the creature can wake up. The sight of a giant bug extracting its barbed spike from a shoulder or leg is alone enough to drive many a recalcitrant villager to repent his ways. Even if the living missile misses the intended victim, the now-awakened bee-thing often takes the initiative and finishes the job on its own.



Zombie Drugs

Wizards have the ability to turn people into zombies — hapless beings who live in a semiconscious state, subject to the whim of their maker. The technique is a highly refined version of the Caribbean zombie ritual practiced as late as the early 21st century. Because its effects are devastating and only partially reversible, zombification is reserved for the worst sort of criminals and the most dangerous enemies of the Conference.

Zombie drugs are subtle. The victim is first prepped with a tasty herb which has no noticeable effect by itself; often everyone the victim is acquainted with ends up getting dosed with the stuff. Next, a toxin is administered by way of the Dread Bee (see sidebar p. 46), or a snake or spider with doped fangs. This makes the future zombie break out in spots and suffer itching and nausea; it also interacts with the herb in a way that paralyzes the victim after a few Arks, sending him or her into a deathlike slumber. At this time the poor soul is quickly buried, on the advice of the local wizard. In nations where cremation is the norm, the wizard gets into protective clothing and burns the corpse at a safe distance so the toxic fumes can harm no one, and no one can tell that the corpse is a dummy. After being buried or lying in state on a funeral pyre for a few hours, the terrified victim is exhumed and given two more drugs which paralyze the frontal lobes and suppress memories. After some hypnotic drills the new zombie is sent away to serve a wizard in a foreign village or to toil for the Conference.

Zombified characters have their ST, HT, and DX decreased by 2, while IQ drops by 3. Zombies will obey the person with the strongest will around them (IQ + Charisma + Strong Will) but are especially susceptible to their makers (+4 bonus to control). They cannot initiate a conversation, but zombies will answer questions directed to them if they can make an IQ roll. Zombies usually have a vague idea of who they were and who brain-blasted them. Zombies are generally abused and overworked. They usually die within five Earth-years; drop Health by one per seven Unnigh years.

Zombies must be continually dosed with drugs to maintain them in the controllable state. If the dosage is stopped, victims will begin to recover as below after 10 Arks (one Unnigh day).

continued on next page . . .

were mostly biologists; by tradition their descendants are mystifiers, not engineers.

Much of the credit for wizard technology goes to the genetic engineers of the 21st century, who saw fit to equip the colony ships with cultures of microbes tailored to produce drugs and other useful chemicals. Dedicated biologists maintain many of these cultures to this day, and regularly harvest vitamins, antibiotics, polymers and explosives. Centuries of hard work by Unnigh's wizards can't be discounted, either. The craftsmanship of their gear is phenomenal, comparable to the clockwork automata of Renaissance France, Chinese puzzle boxes and the ships-in-a-bottle made by detail-crazed hobbyists of every generation.

Wizard props are horrifically complex, baroque devices, designed as much to mislead as to fulfill their true function. Mundanes (or even untrained wizards) who fiddle with "magical" paraphernalia stand a good chance of being poisoned, "cursed" with a disease, dyed a bright green or blown up. To prevent overly perceptive mundanes from becoming familiar with the types of props used for particular jobs, chapter houses change the designs regularly. A little grinning doll that is an insecticide sprayer one year might be a grenade the next. Some devices have misleading labels and riddles as well. Only young children and extremely stupid adults meddle with wizard props. Most villages have strict laws to prevent curious fools from endangering the community with such tampering.

An example of this sort of trickery can be seen in the design of a wizard's incendiary grenade. At the core of the grenade is a bundle of magnesium wire and explosive, a simple five-second fuse and a pull-string. This core is surrounded by a hardball-sized terra-cotta statuette decorated with bits of miniature clothing, armor and weaponry. If the proper two bits of clothing are pulled, and the statuette's right ear pressed just so, the fuse will ignite. In the likely case that the wrong combination of pulls and pushes is made, the grenade could blow up in the thrower's hand, or perhaps squirt a sticky contact poison from several of the statuette's orifices.

Simple wizard props are made in the field. Others, particularly those that require the use of microbe-bred chemicals or extra-fine craftsmanship, are manufactured in chapter and guild workshops. Deliveries are made at night, or by wizards traveling in disguise.

Some wizard props are born, not made. Ferocious animals and intelligent pets are reared and trained in secret wilderness zoos and given to wizards for various purposes. Remember that few Unnigh natives travel more than a few miles from home in their lifetime. An unfamiliar animal, shaved, painted and equipped with poison-dripping spurs makes a convincing demon to terrorize bandits or rebellious villagers. Examples of these animals, and other sorts of wizard props, can be found in the sidebars.

The Education and Duties of a Wizard

Only cloistered wizards and retired field wizards can marry, and child-bearing and -rearing are heavily restricted as interferences with the cause. The Conference prefers to replace and expand by recruitment. Wizards are recruited young — no more than five or six (Earth years, 40 or 50 Unnigh) — from the populace at large. About half the recruits are girls and most are from poor or rural backgrounds . . . the Conference wishes its members to have no ties to aristocracy or wealth. Recruits are sent to the regional chapter house to learn reading, writing, arithmetic and a smattering of history and astronomy. This schooling takes about three Earth years. When completed the recruit is rigorously tested. About seven out of ten are rejected, though they can hardly be called failures. Most pick up enough of an education to be considered learned; many a prominent Unnigher began as a wizard reject. These former students are the source of some of the loss of awe towards the wizards — they have seen them at too close a range.

After basic schooling, the successful recruits learn the dogma and discipline

of their profession. They undergo a ruthless hazing to eliminate the weak, sloppy and overly talkative. Some recruits die during this period. Others who Know Too Much are given zombie drugs (see sidebar) and sent to work at isolated mines and plantations maintained by the Conference. Those who survive the hazing are officially inducted into the guild, and are assigned to a mentor to study acting, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, herbalism and dozens of other subjects. The teachers and older students tease, taunt and baffle newcomers, creating an eerie atmosphere that encourages resourcefulness, weeds out the unpromising and creates solidarity; imagine a military academy run by stage magicians!

About three out of four wizards have the necessary personality to become field wizards, fit to practice their trade in front of audiences. These young tricksters are assigned to an elderly wizard for their final training; when the elder is satisfied, he retires, leaving his territory to the trainee. In a solemn ceremony performed just before the elder wizard starts his journey home, the new wizard is told the ancient history of the Conference and its mighty plans for the future.

Field wizards are *busy* people. Each works a territory (ranging from one village to an entire county) providing the services of medicine man, veterinarian, scribe, record keeper and civil engineer. To preserve their secrets and baffle the curious, wizards surround their work with a fog of weird rituals, arcane philosophical mumbo-jumbo and carefully cultivated superstitious awe. They exact a price for their efforts, taking payment in services and goods from the poor, gold and gems from the wealthy. Most wizards have a network of spies and informers who keep an eye out for trouble and interesting opportunities.

Trainees who can't get the knack of public performance, or who earn the ire of their elders, are sent back to the chapter house to teach, create wizard tools or do research. Some with a scholarly bent *choose* to remain in the cloistered setting of the chapter house. Traditionally this is the career of most female wizards . . . only about one field wizard in seven is a woman. Though responsible for most of the Conference's technical and medical achievements, the cloistered wizards do not rise high in the hierarchy of chapter house, guild or Conference; the most exalted offices are strictly reserved for retired field wizards.

Organization

The Conference is a sort of confederacy. The nations of Unnigh are too large and the cities too far apart to allow for strict central control. Each nation has a *guild* which oversees the civic and regional chapter houses, runs the area's special facilities and sends representatives to the Conference. The chapter houses and guilds usually have a council or board of directors who dictate internal policy; the fellows in these bodies are chosen by retiring members to maintain the traditions and values of the wizards.

The Conference has no permanent seat. Meetings, which take place every eight or nine Unnigh years, are held at a guild headquarters or one of the mysterious wilderness installations. Between meetings the high officials stay with a guild or chapter house.

Relations with the Mundanes

The wizards have made themselves indispensable to the folk of Unnigh. Only fanatics would suggest life would be better without them. Though the village wizard is considered a vital and familiar (if a tad bizarre) member of the community, the national guilds and the Conference are regarded with suspicion and fear.

The churches and aristocrats of many nations are aware of the Conference's manipulations, and some have declared a crusade against the conspiracy. Byilikin and Gamotch are the nations least tolerant of wizardly conspiracies. Others, hoping to get in the good graces of the Conference, ignore or even assist the local guild in its plans. Kiroon and Irwundanch have declared themselves allies of the wizards.

Zombie Drugs (Continued)

Back From The Dead

Those subjected to zombification can try to avoid their fate. A HT roll can be made to resist the effects of the toxin; bonuses may be given if First Aid or herbal cures are successfully applied.

Another roll may be made to avoid mind-destroying panic when the victim is buried; roll versus IQ-2, plus or minus modifiers for Will, fears and phobias. If the character *makes* the roll, he preserves a kernel of rationality and is better equipped to withstand the next battle, the brain-curdling zombie drugs.

To resist the first potion, a roll versus HT-6 is required; a successful roll to resist insanity in the grave earns the character a +2 bonus on this roll. Resisting the drug allows the character a chance to flee, assuming the wizard hasn't tied the victim up! The second drug, which suppresses memories, requires a roll versus IQ-2 to resist; a successful roll in the grave allows a +4 bonus against the roll. *Failure* sends the character to zombie-land and *permanently* erases a number of points worth of skills equal to a roll of two dice. Successfully resisting the drug gives the character a chance to escape, but for the next ten Arks (one Unnigh day) he or she will suffer a penalty (1-1 die) when using any mental skills!

Those who fail both rolls, but have retained a kernel of rationality, may try to break the zombie spell. Each Unnigh-day, the character may roll versus his new IQ to *raise* his IQ a point. Bonuses for Will count. When the character's IQ has returned to normal he may roll to break free from the bondage. The character's attributes and memories will return to normal after a few Unnigh-days of rest, good food, and association with friends. Zombies who didn't make the roll to resist panic in the grave can try to break free by rolling as above every *seven* Unnigh-days.



Demon Beasts

The *horned nasher* of Carkip is a squat, clever, fearsome beast similar to the Ter-ran badger. Its best-known characteristics are a ridge of colorful spines and a curling tail. Descriptions of the creature that make it to the nations of Crassant tend to leave out everything else. Wizards have added the nasher to their stable of "famillars".

After taming, the creature's tail and spines are removed. It is then shaved, fitted with a fancy carapace and dyed a color appropriate to the region's mythology.

Nasher Demon:

ST: 9	Speed: 6
DX: 14	PD/DR: 1/2
IQ: 5	Damage: special
HT: 13	Reach: C
Size: 1	Weight: 40-80
Habitat: M, F	

The nasher's bite does (1-1) cutting damage; in addition there is a 50% chance that the creature will lock its jaws and hang on until killed. On each turn that the jaws remain locked, the victim will suffer (1-2) damage, *doubled* if the character struggles to get away. Struggling allows the character to roll versus ST to dislodge the beast.

Some wizards put steel spurs on their pet's claws. These allow the nasher to strike twice in close combat: once with a bite as above, once with spurs at DX-2. The spurs do (1-2) cutting damage; they may be poisoned. The nasher's PD/DR with fake shell is 2/3.

Wizardly Politics

The Conference and the national guilds run a tight ship. Most chapter houses and wilderness installations are run like monasteries, with authoritarian rule, few comforts and strict discipline. Chapter house representatives to the national guild (and guild representatives to the Conference) are reliable conservatives chosen by even more conservative elders. Some of the more liberal chapter houses and guilds allow the rank and file to petition the governing council. A few houses in the large cities let the members vote to veto minor measures. These houses are in the minority and highly controversial.

Even authoritarian regimes have intrigue and internal conflict. The Conference is no exception. Currently, two factions are fighting for control of the guilds and the Conference itself. The *Aegirians* (who get their name from the original — and they hope ultimate — destination of the settlers) are traditionalists who seek a return to a technological society and the stars. They are the tinkerers and plumbers of the Conference, who wish to keep the old sciences alive and see the prime duty of the wizards as service to the people of Unnigh. The Aegirian party is strongest among the cloistered wizards, and is to an extent the feminist party among the wizards (a majority of the cloistered researchers and technicians are women). The Aegirians are strongest in the nations of the East.

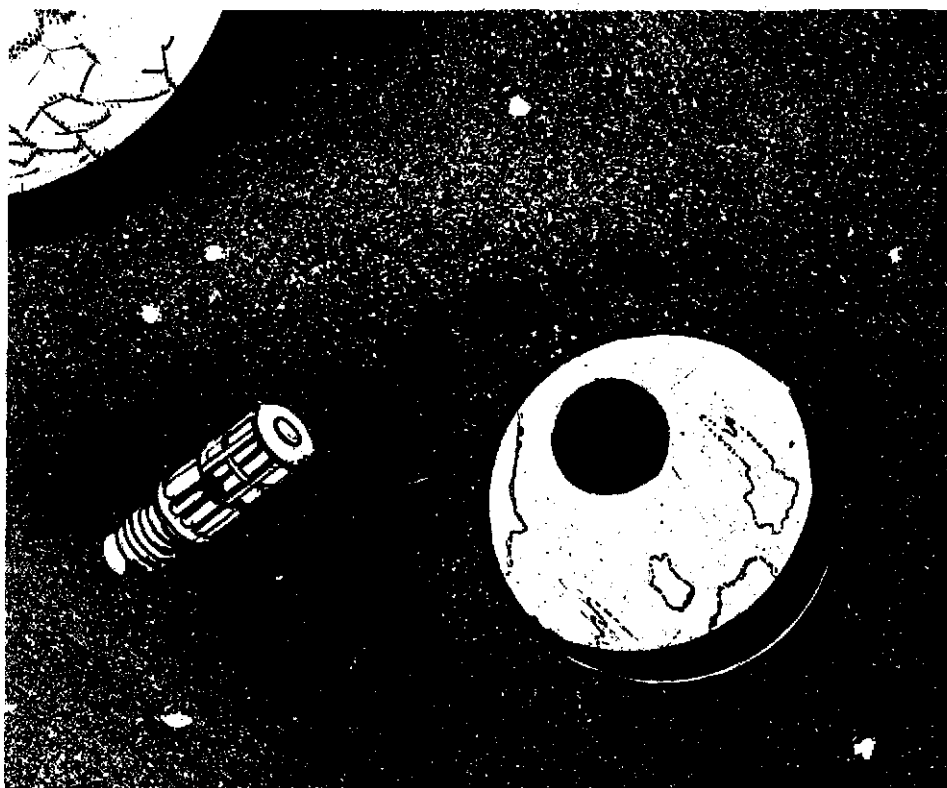
The *Order of Orb* originated in the last century, when plagues and famine isolated a province of Irwundanch. The local chapter houses were badly hit. Many of the elder wizards died, leaving impressionable youths and politically untested specialists — apothecaries and astronomers — to run things. The nominal leader of the region, a crazed naturalist, received a revelation one night while experimenting with a new herbal tea. He convinced his followers that great powers could be had from tapping mystical energy currents flowing from Orb. Moreover, he suggested that exploration of these mysteries took precedence over serving the public or regaining the stars. This new philosophy intrigued many, who started researching the mental discipline of psionics. The mystical, somewhat sinister, doctrine of the Order is tolerated by the Aegirians, though the conservatives are becoming increasingly suspicious of the Order's true motives. The Order is strongest in Irwundanch and Xinguth, though members can be found in almost every chapter house and Conference installation.

Mysteries Unveiled

Presented below are the answers to the unanswered questions about Unnigh and Orb, the wizards, and mysterious phenomena like the Night Dance. Note that the GM can change these explanations to suit his tastes and needs of his campaign!

Unnigh and Orb

Unnigh was once a dreary, airless rockball world. Then the Ornon got their hands (sort of) on it. The Ornon (who were active on the galactic scene about seven million years ago) were *worldsmiths*, artisans who terraformed gas giants for fun and taught their young engineering by giving them asteroids to play with. The Unnigh/Orb system is a masterpiece, a match in technique — if not sheer scale



— to the globular cluster they surrounded with a Dyson sphere.

The terraforming of Unnight was done by a combination of brute force and hairsplitting detail work. Iceteroids from the outer worlds and nanotech machines were used to make a dense, stable atmosphere and oceans. Creatures from another slow-turning world were imported and genetically engineered to fit perfectly in the newly created ecosystem.

When everything was running smoothly on Unnight, the Ornon turned their attention to Orb, then a small, icy moon. The world was inflated like a balloon and the interior filled with a rigid foam. The material of the bubbles was a matrix of subatomic particles bound by nuclear forces, a sort of artificial matter. The mass of the world was increased by adding gigatons of “shadow matter,” neutrino-like particles that interact with ordinary matter only via gravity. The shadow matter, while free to slosh and flow like a dense gas through the rocky surface of Orb, is impeded slightly by the artificial stuff that forms the interior matrix; the kinetic energy stolen from the particles is used to power various mechanisms hidden under the surface of the moon. Among these devices are force-field generators that damp out flares on Stuzak and correct imperfections in Orb’s path around Unnight.

The technology that created Orb and terraformed Unnight rates about TL15 on the *GURPS* scale. With careful study, characters from a TL10 or 11 interstellar civilization might puzzle out the basic workings of the system . . . but knowledge enough to duplicate or manipulate the “works” of Unnight and Orb will be beyond them. Outright vandalism could damage things enough to wreak havoc with Unnight’s ecosystem, or even destroy Orb.

The Night Dance (and other peculiarities)

The Ornon artifacts were subtle and powerful. One such creation was a vast information storage and distribution system that used a sort of mechanical telepathy to deliver its wares. A properly trained Ornon could “wish” for a piece of information, or a telepathic connection to another person, and have the request fulfilled. The network was worldwide, self-repairing and powered by abundant tidal energy. Other, more localized networks were created to project holographic displays, herd animals and direct traffic.

The Ornon went on to greater things long ago, but their creations have survived the millennia in excellent shape . . . to the wonder and detriment of the folk of Unnight. The telepathic information network is responsible for the Night Dance; the mental energy produced by a lonely, frightened human is close enough to the thought patterns of a curious Ornon to kick the information-dispensing machinery into gear. The unfortunate human is provided with what data the machines think was requested. Because it is in a foreign language, and in any case was designed for the super-intelligent, decidedly non-human Ornon, the information flow is misinterpreted.

Similarly, the images that haunt Unnight to this day are created by hologram projectors. The projectors were used to direct traffic, entertain children, illustrate “encyclopedia entries” provided by the Night-Dance machine and hide ugly construction work.

The ancient machinery is located in Orb, on the surfaces of the honeycomb-like interior supports. It is, like the support structure, virtually indestructible. The workings of the machine *can* be studied, though, simply by requesting the data . . . If the PCs come up with a program of study and research aimed at discovering the proper use of the network, they will have access to the “safe” parts of its store of knowledge. This sort of study program will take several months, with many successful rolls in almost every science. Safe knowledge accessed includes Ornon history, broad outlines of how Unnight and Orb were constructed, cultural and philosophical information, and details on how to tailor the output of the network to prevent further harm to the people of Unnight. The machine is smart enough to deny more to the “children” tapping its databases.

Inside Orb

Digging a hole through Orb’s shell is a staggeringly difficult, tedious, and ultimately thankless task. Engineers will have to deal with a hostile environment of the surface, increasingly dense and hot layers of rock, veins of icy slush, gas pockets and “orbquakes”. TL9 construction and excavation techniques have only a fair chance of working; TL10 engineering could do it at great expense; TL11 wizards will have no trouble with the feat.

At the bottom of the outer shell of rock and ice is an unbroken plain of a mysterious substance. It is reddish-brown in color and perfectly smooth; the stuff looks *fake*, unearthly, too-perfect, like a computer-generated picture. An *extremely* powerful energy blast (100 points of damage in a single blow) will knock a small (½”) hole in the stuff. A probe stuck in the hole will see nought but a small (fist-sized) dodecahedral cavity. The *entire* interior is filled with a dodecahedron-celled foam of the mystery material. Repeated blasts *could* be used to isolate and remove a sample but for the fact that the stuff instantly evaporates when separated from the rest of the matrix. (If recorders are going at the time a piece is separated, a flux of subatomic particles will be detected.)

Intense study involving Physics, Nuclear Physics and Chemistry will reveal that the mystery material is a sort of artificial matter; subatomic particles bound together in a crystalline pattern by the strong nuclear force. Severe abuse can sever the bonds in isolated areas, but the entire matrix automatically toughens when under attack. Long, careful study will reveal all of the matrix’s functions (as described in the text) and the existence of subtle, self-repairing, molecularly-based circuitry on the walls of the cells.

Out-and-out vandalism of the matrix (e.g., use of nukes to blow holes in the foam) will reveal that the stuff can regenerate. A concerted attack with nukes or antimatter will show that even the Ornon had their limits. The matrix’s artificially strengthened bonds will give way, releasing a flood of gamma radiation in a spectacular explosion that will vaporize the outer shell and sterilize the Orside hemisphere of Unnight. Characters responsible for this will acquire a Reputation that will be hard to overcome . . .

The Dark Stalkers

The mysterious Dark Stalkers are a band of fanatical assassins and conspirators from a settlement hidden deep in the wilds of eastern Carkip. They are descendants of crewmen who stole a shuttle and considerable amounts of the colony's stores just after the disaster. The shuttle was eventually lost, stranding the faction on the surface. Unlike the wizards of Crassant the crew had no population of hard-working farmers to wheedle meals and shelter from; unprepared for life in the wild, most of the settlers died within a few Earth-years. The survivors (who called themselves the Croomin) were a harsh and resolute group who swore vengeance on the "savages" who stranded them — the crew of a *starship* — on a godforsaken dustball.

Eventually, a small city (Arkton) and a half-dozen towns were established in a fertile equatorial valley. The Croomins' militaristic, ascetic culture encouraged the development of martial arts and the re-invention of many weapons. Ritual battles between competing factions kept the warriors busy and polished the leaders' paranoia to a fine edge.

The Stalkers first contacted the west a century ago, when a fishing boat from Iquazor washed up on Carkip's lonely east coast. Delighted at the thought of having victims for their long-delayed vengeance, the most powerful factions sent expeditions east to Iquazor and west to Gamotch. What they found disturbed them greatly; whole nations of sophisticated, prosperous people who had done a whole lot more starting (in the Croomins' view of things) with a whole lot less. The power and trickery of the Conference scared them more; obviously a faction of *their own people* were behind the "wizards!" Highly skilled assassins armed with sophisticated weapons (similar to the exaggerated claims made for ninja accessories) were dispatched to find the perpetrators of the supposed conspiracy.

The Stalkers are stealthy, paranoid, skillful, megalomaniacal and single-minded man-hunters . . . but when stripped of their weapons, cloak and "mystique" they become apathetic, withdrawn and even suicidal. They are willfully ignorant of the cultures in which they stalk their prey and greatly underestimate the danger Crassant's nations pose to their realm.

The Western Pirates

The pirates operate from Torhaggys, a nation of a few fishing villages on the eastern shore of Shanow Isle, a large island off the coast of Carkip. The villages are dirt-poor, with little agriculture and few craft industries. This poverty — plus sheer ruthlessness and a stand of excellent goodwood trees — prompted the men of Torhaggys to take to the sea in ships. Slaves and swag have made the pirate colony prosper.

There are no wizards in Torhaggys, but the pirate leaders are secretly in contact with the Conference. The wizards let the pirates continue their rampage in hopes that a common enemy might unify the nations of eastern Crassant.

The Wizards and the Night Dance

The Order of Orb, the Conference's mystical faction, has partially solved the mystery of the Night Dance. They are able to safely "listen" to the information being piped to them via the mechanical telepathy device, and can select the subject being reviewed. A few can call up holographic images related to the information they are receiving. Unfortunately, they don't fully understand the information of the Ornon and have not been able to apply the vast store of knowledge to practical problems. Indeed, the members of the order look on the experience as a sort of mystical communion and keep their new skills a closely-guarded secret.

Typical Dark Stalker

ST 12, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 12.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes, High Pain Threshold, Toughness (DR 1), Patron (Powerful organization, on 6 or less).

Disadvantages: Delusion (10 points; non-Croomin are puppets, conspiracies are everywhere), Duty (Croomin cause, on 15 or less); Megalomania.

Quirks: Wears black cloak whenever possible; Dislikes wizards; Covered with scars from ritual branding.

Skills: Acting-11; Bow-12; Climbing-12; Disguise-11; Fencing-14; Jumping-12; Escape-12; Knife-14; Knife-Throwing-16; Poisons-14; Running-12; Stealth-13; Shadowing-11; Shortsword-13; Swimming-12; Throwing-16; Two Average Languages-11.

Think of a Stalker as a kind of ninja — dedicated, implacable and resourceful, but vulnerable to trickery and accidents. Captured or cornered stalkers may (failed roll versus IQ) "flip out" to protect their delusory world. Some will squat in a corner, rock back and forth, and suck their thumbs; others will fly into a murderous rage and attack everything in reach until killed or incapacitated.



5

UNNIGHT FOUND: FIRST CONTACT

About This Adventure

This is not a "straight-line" adventure. Rather, it presents the party with a hazardous but lucrative opportunity. To run "Unnight Found" successfully, the GM must first be familiar enough with the world-background — especially for the land of Gamotch — to deal with the various things the PCs are likely to attempt.

The adventure itself can proceed in two very different ways, depending on the personalities of the *players*. If they enjoy cooperating, they will work together to achieve the adventure's goal — a signed trade contract. In that case, the GM should play the captain, Mordritte, as a person whose leadership they can accept. The ship's crew (an odd lot indeed) can be cast as the villains, scheming to steal the prize from Mordritte and the PCs. Of course, the natural and unnatural hazards of Unnight threaten everyone equally, adding to the tension, and the GM should be ready to make maximum use of the background.

However, if the players enjoy competing against each other, the GM can let the adventure become a contest to get back to civilization with the precious trade contract. Since Unnight is a mysterious and dangerous world, they can't just stage a shootout before the ship lands; they will have to try to work together while looking for secret advantages, making covert deals with the natives, and so on. And it's possible that several contracts might be signed. Perhaps more than one of them will be valid; perhaps only one will.

Played this way, Unnight becomes thoroughly illuminated. The captain, of course, is the chief menace to the PCs' plans. The crew may be opponents, or potential henchmen. Or, if the GM likes, he can assign the crew characters as PCs, and create a few NPC passengers with interesting and useful skills.

Each of the five crewmembers of the *Spirit of Penneys* has a motive to double-cross the others. Mordritte wants a ship, Turgenov wants revenge, von McDi-Nazzio wants a comfortable retirement, Mel wants back in the graces of the Collective, and Ng just wants money. A share of the prize might be enough, but a bigger share would be better.

However it's run, this is an adventure which will reward the careful, creative GM — and the ingenious player who enjoys puzzling out a whole new world. Just beware the Night Dance . . .

First Contact is an adventure for spacefaring characters. It deals with the rediscovery of Unnight, and the struggle to acquire a contract for trade privileges with some Unnight government and return to civilization with that document.

The PCs begin the adventure (by choice or luck) as crew and/or passengers on the tramp freighter *Spirit of Penneys*. *First Contact* could be modified for any sort of party, but it is best suited to free-lancers: independent locators, untenured scholars, merchant-pioneers, soldiers of fortune and so on. Characters belonging to a corporate or government agency would be boxed in by rank and duties, and would have less freedom of action. PCs could have many motives for a voyage on this tramp ship: thesis research, a leisurely vacation, a cheap ride to the next job or an urgent need to stay ahead of the police.

The Journey Begins

The adventure may start anywhere — preferably, but not necessarily, a relatively unimportant world. The *Spirit of Penneys* was supposed to be in port only long enough to drop off some contract laborers and pick up a load of chemicals — but Captain Kalveen Mordritte's last-minute visit to the port commissary stretched to hours. Night was falling when the skipper finally returned. After calming the passengers with a rambling apology, Mordritte headed for his cabin and stayed there until liftoff, missing the evening meal. The crew knows this is unusual behavior!

Then the captain announced that the ship's drive was malfunctioning and that, while he would do his best to keep schedule, he could make no promises. Four passengers left at this point, but the crew did not seem at all worried. A Detect Lies roll would indicate that the captain was lying; a good roll would indicate that he *wanted* to find a plausible way to get rid of his passengers. Any passengers with especially useful backgrounds would get private assurances from the captain that nothing was really wrong!

The ship takes off on schedule, and the captain calls the crew (see sidebars in this chapter) together for a meeting, at which they get the information in the next section. When the meeting breaks up, the Captain, First Mate and Astrogator go to the bridge to lay a course. If one of the PCs is on the bridge, he or she learns that the planned course has been changed. A few minutes at the Nav console will show the new destination is at the edge of a nebula off in the border regions. The captain is jumpy, alert and armed (with a laser pistol in a power holster); the crewmen are behind the captain and very loyal (for now).

Over the next few days, the *Spirit* suffers a series of minor glitches. The lights dim and flash, ventilators blow foul odors, and loud clanking noises emanate from the lower deck. The captain gathers the crew and passengers together and announces that the ship must make a small course change for repairs, thus avoiding further unpleasantness. Experienced space travelers will know that this explanation is nonsense. Mordritte and his crew are up to something! If any passengers confront him now, perhaps threatening to tell the other passengers that they are being shanghaied, make a reaction roll. On a good reaction, they will be taken into the captain's confidence and invited to further ship's meetings. On a poor reaction, they will be confined to their cabin!

Message In A Bottle

After the *Spirit* is well on its way, the captain calls another meeting. Mordritte is smiling. "Please partake, if your whistle needs wetting!" A cart bearing glasses and a large punch bowl wheels itself into the room at this point; the bowl contains an awful drink of the Captain's own creation. (For the morbid, it's an egg cream with actual eggs, and ginger beer rather than seltzer.) PCs who drink the stuff and make it stay down receive a reaction bonus (+2) when dealing with the captain for the whole trip.

When everyone who can stomach it has had their dose, Mordritte will tell all. In exchange for release from a gambling debt, a former shipmate gave him the coordinates of a lost colony. (NPCs "oooooh" and "ahhh" at this revelation; it could mean fortunes. See sidebar.) The course data came from the records of an ancient, battered craft that drifted into an inhabited system near the nebula several weeks earlier. Mordritte's informant has the course data but no other details on the find. An official expedition is being prepared, but bureaucratic delays mean that it won't start for perhaps a month.

The bad news is that his old friend is loose of tongue, especially when lubricated. Competing private expeditions may show up at any time. Mordritte took off as soon as he could, after divesting himself of those passengers who didn't seem as though they would be useful.

Mordritte continues his pitch. Scouting a new planet is tricky work, and his ship is neither built nor equipped for it. Worse (though he won't admit this until he knows the PCs well) he doesn't entirely trust his crew. But he's doing the best he can with what he has. He asks that the party assist him in his operations. If they help him secure the trade contract, they will receive part of his profits. He offers them a total of 2% each, but will go as high as 3.5%. Mordritte will also promise up to \$15,000 for the party to split even if the attempt fails, if they are loyal throughout.

Bargaining should consist of more than simple Fast-Talk. Mordritte is a shrewd old negotiator and wants skilled and loyal assistants, not just hired thugs. He will be willing to pay higher for Language, Computer, Diplomacy and Law than for combat skills.

The Spirit of Penneys

The *Spirit of Penneys* is a standard TL10 passenger/freighter massing 2,000 tons (see the Ship Record, p. 63). She is a lifting body with two small wings tipped by vertical stabilizers to assist in atmospheric flight control. In shape, she is a blunt wedge 35 yards long by 18 yards across the widest point of the body by 6 yards thick. Instead of landing legs or skids, she has multiple unpowered continuous tracks, giving a ground pressure comparable to that of a heavy tank. And, though she has no armor by starship standards, her skin is as tough as that of a 20th-century tank.

The *Spirit* can land in liquid or on a solid surface, or move between them. Sitting on her treads on land, the belly is one yard above the ground. Floating in water on a 1G world, draft is six yards to the bottom of the treads, with only one yard of freeboard. She is very stable, even in rough water.

Thrust is .1G, enough for a loaded takeoff from a thin-atmosphere 1G world. Her thrusters will move her at 20 mph on the water or 10 mph over land.

The *Spirit* is laid out rather like a 20th-century cargo plane. The bridge and captain's quarters are at the front and the crew's living spaces are immediately behind; this takes up the first ten yards of the ship. Behind the crew space is one large cargo bay, a trapezoidal box 20 yards long. The front is 8 yards by 5 yards and the rear 16 by 5. At the aft end is a 16 by 5 yard cargo ramp. Passenger quarters are container modules that can be loaded into the cargo bay; corridors are the leftover spaces between the modules. The *Spirit* is rated for a maximum of 16 human passengers as she is currently configured. Crew have access to the

The Prize

Law in this part of space allows spacers to sign exclusive trade contracts with the natives of such worlds. These contracts only run ten years — but that's enough time to make a fortune.

When there is a world government, the contract must be with that government. Where there is none, contracts may be signed by any leader or ruler, from a king to a witch doctor; all that is required is that he, she, it or they have the ability to record the date and time of the meeting in a manner that will allow the interstellar trade authorities to check on the claim. However, no leader can bind more area than he/she/it legitimately controls, and a contract with a greater authority takes precedence over one with a lesser ruler included therein . . . usually, depending on dates, circumstances, and the whims of the judge.

Since this can lead to dozens of conflicting contract claims, the courts prefer to find a world government, even where the locals might say none exists. The most technically advanced culture on a planet has the best claim to be the planetary representative. The definition of "most advanced" can be tricky (claims lawyers are never out of work). The working spacehand only knows that ignoring any group with high technology is dangerous.

Those with trade monopolies can sell the rights, collect tariffs or even handle the trade on their own. If the monopoly is abused or the rights not used, a hearing may be held to transfer the rights to a more responsible party.

Claims may be recorded only by delivery of the physical document; often, the winner is the first one to the courthouse, regardless of FTL messages. In this case, it doesn't matter; the Meschuan Nebula blocks the Stuzak system from FTL radio contact.

What This Means to Mordritte

So Kalveen Mordritte, and everyone else on his ship, has a great opportunity and a great challenge. A trade contract signed by the *right people* on Unnight is worth billions. But who are the right people? If there is a world government, only they can sign. If there is no world government (and a lost colony rarely has one), then any local king can bind (at least) his own kingdom, which is still worth a great deal if the kingdom is a good market or has worthwhile goods. And there's a chance that a contract with a very powerful or advanced nation might be held to bind the whole world.

But whatever Mordritte does, he must do it quickly. Because if another ship lands on Unnight, and gets back to civilization first, there's a chance that a court might rule that *they* had negotiated with the world government . . .

Kalveen Mordritte

Light skin, shaggy red hair *all over*, heavy build. Age about 55.

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 13.

Advantages: Charisma +2; Strong Will +2; Voice +2.

Disadvantages: Reputation (-1 reaction from space merchants on 10 or less); Greedy; Stubborn.

Quirks: Likes weird beverages; Collects books; Talks like a pirate; Frightens children; Dislikes large bodies of water.

Skills: Accounting-10; Astrogation-12; Boating-15; Computer Programmer /TL10-12; Fast-Talk-12; Free Fall-12; Guns/TL10-12; Law-10; Leadership-12; Merchant-14; Piloting/TL10 (Shuttle)-13; (Starship)-13; Swimming-12; Vacc Suit-11.

Languages: Interlingua-12; Trade Lingo-12.

Mordritte, a native of New Sweden, was born into the shipping business; his parents owned a ferryboat. He swam away from home on his fourteenth birthday, when his father announced that young Kalveen would inherit the family business. After a year of doing odd jobs around the local spaceport, he got a merchant-ship berth as a "gofer." Kalveen studied hard during his off hours and managed to acquire the rudiments of astrogation, piloting and command. His mentor managed to get him into the New Sweden space academy, where he completed his education. Mordritte became captain of the *Spirit of Penneys* five years ago. He hopes to save enough money to build his own ship, a goal that constantly eludes him.



Unnight Found: First Contact

entire ship via a network of 2-foot tubes that run through the space between the skin of the hull and the pressurized cargo and living spaces. The machinery of the ship is built into this space between hull and pressure hull; none of it will be harmed by vacuum. The *Spirit* has one standard airlock. It is located on the bridge and exits from the port side two yards back from the nose.

The *Spirit* is lightly armed and unarmored. She mounts two medium lasers in polarized firing blisters. One is at the nose and one on the port wing tip. By angling their mirrors, they can cover the ship completely except for one blind spot. This is off the starboard wing tip, behind the vertical stabilizer. It extends only a few yards out from the ship. Her sensors can view this space, but neither laser can reach it. She also mounts three medium missile launchers located in the skin around the cargo bay. Two are dorsal, and one is ventral, between the landing treads.

The *Spirit* has an exceptional stealth and sensor suite for a civilian ship. Given her equipment, background and crew, it is likely that she is a well-connected smuggler rather than the tramp merchant she claims to be. This may become a complication later in the adventure.

The adventure can work with radically different ships or TLs, though the GM must make allowances. For instance, a ship that cannot land or take off from Unnight will require shuttles. A hydrogen-burning ship might need to visit the gas giant worlds for fuel. A warp-drive ship would have to steer through the Nebula instead of skipping past its hazards.

Crew and Passengers

The captain and crew are described in the sidebars. The passengers may all be PCs, or some may be innocent bystanders. The GM can create human or alien NPCs to fill out the passenger roll if he wishes.

Arrival at Stuzak

The ship's sensors detect Stuzak's planets soon after they enter the system. A scan for power sources or other ships will find that they are still alone.

A scan of the system turns up no signs of human life; this will upset Mordritte greatly! But the routine scan is programmed to look for what interstellar civilization thinks of as human traces: electronic emissions, concentrated energy sources and huge population concentrations over large areas. Unnight's most crowded slums and busiest industries are below the sensitivity threshold of the instruments. A *thorough* survey (successful Sensor rolls on three successive days or one critical success) will show traces of primitive sentience on Unnight. Cities and large-scale agriculture in eastern Xinguth, Mensod, and Gamotch will be detectable. Or, once the ship orbits Unnight (an obviously habitable world), the above information will be apparent.

The Wreck of the UNCPOSS Ark

At some point, the ship's scanners will detect the hulk of the United Nations Cultural Preservation Organization Space Ship *Ark* in a wobbly 23-hour orbit around Unnight. Other than a slight trace of radioactivity, the massive, ungainly vessel is inert, and cold — totally dead.

The discovery of the *Ark* will delay any landing on the planet, since Mordritte will send a party to investigate first. If the ship is a derelict, it might be worth salvaging. If it is manned, it is a potential danger.

Identification

There are no obvious ID markings on the ship (micrometeors have scoured the paint away). A search of the *Spirit of Penneys* ship's registry will turn up nothing . . . the *Ark* is simply too old and its mission too obscure to be in the

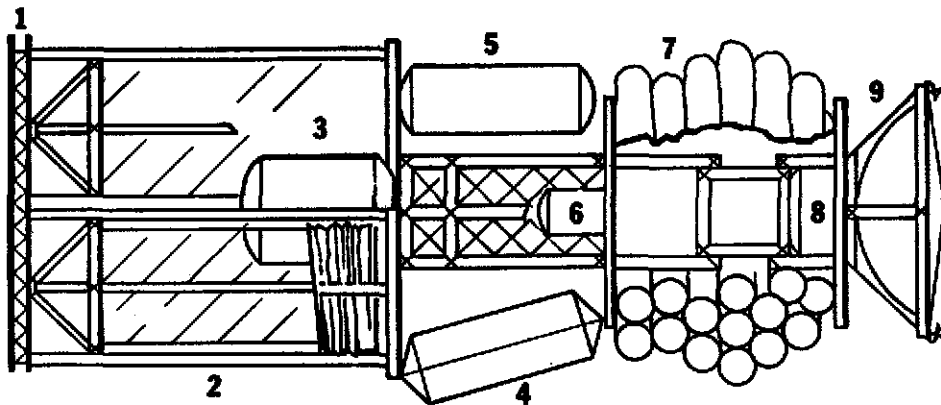
regular records. Fanciers of space history *might* recognize the ship (roll versus History-7) as a 21st-century bulk carrier, but will be unlikely (roll versus History-10!) to know of the U.N. Cultural Preservation Organization (UNCPO) or the refugee fleet.

Anyone bothering to search the *Penneys'* real-book library will quickly find a thick, oversized picture book of old space ships. The frontispiece to the chapter on late-21st-century craft features a glorious shot of the *Blatt Flaben Orbitte Industrie Valkyrie* — a ship of the same class as the *Ark*, sans FTL modifications — in orbit around Mars. The book is big on pictures and small on description, but an easy (+2) roll versus Research skill will give a cross-reference that can pull full information on the *Ark's* mission (pp. 8-9) out of the *Spirit's* computer. The bottom line is that the fleet was lost and presumed destroyed.

The book's *Where You Can See Them* chapter says that none of the class survives. An IQ+3 roll, or an IQ roll for anyone with *any* spacefaring background, would let a PC realize that this ship is a relic that would bring a good price from the Museum of Spaceflight on Luna, or any comparable institute.

The Ark

The following key gives the layout of the ship, and indicates what characters are liable to find in a particular section.



1. Meteorite Shield

This is merely a disk of metal and graphite. A good deal of the structure is missing, stripped for use on the surface.

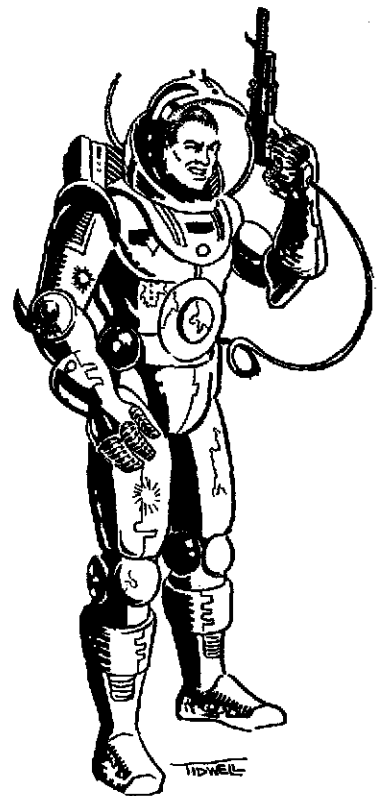
2. Fuel Tank Scaffold

This structure supported the meteorite shield and a half-dozen collapsible tanks of light metal. The fuel pellets were stored in these tanks. A few tons of pellets were left when the *Ark* was abandoned, but these have long since evaporated. Chemical analysis of the tanks' plastic parts will reveal the nature of the former contents.

3. Bridge, Crew Quarters and Labs

An armored cylinder containing the vital control centers is tucked away inside the tank clusters, safe from meteors and radiation. The cylinder is 50 yards long and 50 wide. A large water tank caps either end (more radiation protection) leaving room for ten decks, each four yards high. A central core (about eight yards in diameter) running through the cylinder contains a life support system.

The bridge, a sickbay and labs are located on the center four decks and are surrounded by more water tanks. Sometime in the *Ark's* long vigil the tanks



**Macon B. Turgenov,
First Mate**

ST 11, DX 11, IQ 12, HT 11.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; G-Experience; Toughness (+2).

Disadvantages: Enemy (The Patrol, appears 6 or less); Major Vow (to ruin the people responsible for his court-martial); Overconfidence.

Skills: Administration-15; Carousing-12; Detect Lies-13; Diplomacy-13; Driving (Armored Fighting Vehicles)-11; Free Fall-10; Guns/TL10-13; Karate-14; Interrogation-14; Politics-13; Running-12; Strategy-15; Survival (all)-11; Tactics-15; Vacc Suit/TL10-10.

Turgenov is efficient, brilliant and obsessed. Under another name he was once the youngest major in the Marines. He executed a covert dirty job, and was too successful at it. The press didn't believe that a friendly government just happened to take over a strategic mining asteroid. Turgenov was sacrificed as a cover; false charges of corruption and a rigged court sent him to prison. He escaped and now lives as a mercenary. The *Spirit of Penneys* is only the latest of many berths. His specialties are ground-side action and labor relations with difficult crews. He wants money and power so he can break the men who broke him. He doesn't want them dead; he wants them disgraced and sent out to live as he was, without uniform and rank. He is an honorable man, but the chance of wealth enough to get his revenge might be an overwhelming temptation. Turgenov owns a set of Pressurized Superheavy Combat Armor, and wears it if he has the slightest suspicion of trouble.

Mel 0010, Astrogator

Bald, squat, pasty white skin, brown eyes.

ST 9, DX 11, IQ 12, HT 10.

Advantages: Eidetic Memory; Mathematical Genius.

Disadvantages: Delusion ("Blutor is watching," -5); Sense of Duty (to Blutor).

Quirks: Constant, unnerving smile; Constantly boosts the Collective ("Become one with Blutor!"); Loves ratoon yeast; Talks in a nasal monotone; Wears reflective glasses.

Skills: Administration-12; Astrogation-16; Computer Programming/TL10-17; Diplomacy-12; Electronics (computers) 17; Linguistics-11; Physician/TL10-12; Piloting/TL10 (Shuttle)-12, (Star ship)-12; Psychology-12; Research-18.

Languages: Interlingua-14; Trade Lingo-12.

Mel was until recently part of the Pan-sentient Mind Collective (see sidebar, p. 57). He was ejected from the gestalt for willful unmutuality and grade II egotism after an ontological rephrasing experiment went awry. For the past few years Mel has been wandering the sector looking for a chance to show the PMC that he is worthy of returning. Since he has no life outside of Blutor, he will do anything to attain this.

Mel's personality is a cross between that of an advertising robot and a fanatical cultist. He is enthusiastic, jovial and even considerate when it will help him. If treachery is necessary he will use it.

Mel is usually accompanied by his three utility robots (see p. 57). He thinks of them not as separate entities but as extensions of himself. Mel controls them with oral commands. He has a built-in larynx radio, and can give them orders sub-vocally. Range of the radio is two miles. The transmissions can be jammed or blocked by large amounts of metal. The robots will obey the commands of others if Mel directs them to, but any subsequent command from Mel will take priority. Despite their pseudo-personalities, they are in no way sentient; they are sophisticated machines without consciousness.



burst, flooding the areas they were supposed to protect. More damage took place when a meteor strike led to explosive decompression. The computers, records and instruments are badly damaged but not irrecoverable; a determined archeologist could piece together the mess.

The remainder of the cylinder's decks are crew quarters. Posters, holoslabs, T-shirts and similar paraphernalia of 21st-century popular culture are strewn about the cabins.

4. Cargo Lattices

The *Ark* and her sister ships were originally interplanetary bulk freighters, hauling ice from Jupiter and Saturn, ore to Earth and manufactured goods and luxuries to the colonies. The cargo was put in cylinders and tied to the plastic webbing stretched along the *Ark's* spine. A dozen of the 24 original lattices were removed when the ship was turned into a passenger vessel.

The *Ark's* cargo area consists of plastic webs stretched over lattices on her spine. Dozens of cylinders and boxes still hang on the webs; they contain carefully mothballed goods. Art books, snorkels, instruments for a 112-piece orchestra, flower seeds, bowling balls, toys and the like . . . little that could help the colonists survive was left behind. At the GM's discretion, some of these goods may be quite valuable as antiques.

5. Passenger Pods

While the Orion-drive *Ark* was never meant to haul passengers, frozen passengers could be treated as cargo. The passenger pods are 30 yards wide by 75 yards long. They were originally each one huge freezer tank with the equipment and plumbing needed to keep it cold. The frozen bodies floated in super-cooled liquid, tethered to hooks on the walls. Only the hooks remain. A cursory search of the holed pods will turn up a horrible tableau. The bodies of 25 people are heaped in one pod. Some are in vacuum suits, others wear crew jump suits, but the majority are dressed in colorful ethnic clothing. All are armed, with weapons ranging from null-G assault rifles to crude knives. Investigation will show that several died of gunshot wounds.

6. FTL Drive Pod

The FTL drive is in excellent shape; a hundred or so man-hours of repair work — Engineer/TL9 (Hyperdrive) or Mechanic/TL9 (Hyperdrive)-2) — would have it running.

7. Shock Absorbers

These balloon-like structures helped smooth out the jolting thrusts created by blasts that propelled the *Ark*. The tubes are now limp and airless, but they are *not* empty. A search will reveal five vacc-suited bodies. Three died of gunshot wounds (inflicted before they suited up; the suits are not holed). The others died of suffocation. If the suits are opened, the shoes will show traces of dried mud and shreds of vegetation.

8. Engineering

This section is a tribute to the ingenious, brute-force technology of the 21st century. The ship's reactors, power handling and fuel-pellet ejection/detonation systems are located here. Everything is solidly built and in good shape. 500 man-hours of work and a ton or so of custom-built repair parts will get the drives in working shape; another 200 man-hours plus a set of replacement fuel rods is required to restart the reactors. *Fuel* for the drives is a taller order. Fusion pellets have been obsolete for at least 300 years.

9. Detonation Bell

This massive dome accounts for a good portion of the *Ark's* mass. It is about

100 yards in diameter and 30 yards high. Traces of radiation linger on the bell (less than 10 rads/hour). A quick look at the outer surface will show that it is not solid, but is built of hundreds of rigid tungsten-steel plates mounted on springy metal hoops and stringers.

The rim of the bowl is studded with what look like weapon emplacements; they are in fact the "guns" that fired the fusion pellets into the bowl, and the lasers that detonated the pellets.

A quick look at the *inner* surface of the bell is not possible; a metallized plastic sheet is drawn across its mouth. The cover is a micrometeor shield — official equipment, not a jury-rigged tarp. Radar sounding through the sheet will detect a large metal object in the bell, but not its shape. If a character dons a vacc suit and goes out to remove the sheet, the bell's mystery cargo will be revealed as a large atmospheric shuttle.

10. Shuttle

The shuttle is a big (56 yards long by 42 yards wide) wedge-shaped ship with stubby wings and three huge exhaust nozzles. It is old, battered, and well used. Like the detonation bell it is hidden in, the shuttle is slightly radioactive (less than 5 rads/hour). Its rear section is highly radioactive (100 rads/hour) from the fissionables still decaying there. Explorers will have to wear heavily-shielded suits or risk radiation sickness.

Characters giving the shuttle's outer hull a look-over will discover gouges from bullets in the quartz windows, great smears of blood baked onto the upper wing surfaces, and laser-torch cuts near the hatches.

The shuttle has three personnel airlocks and two large cargo hatches. The outer door of an airlock on the shuttle's spine is open; more blood traces can be found on the walls and inner door. The ship's electronics are, of course, long dead, but the door to this lock can be opened by manually turning a crank located behind an unlocked pressure panel.

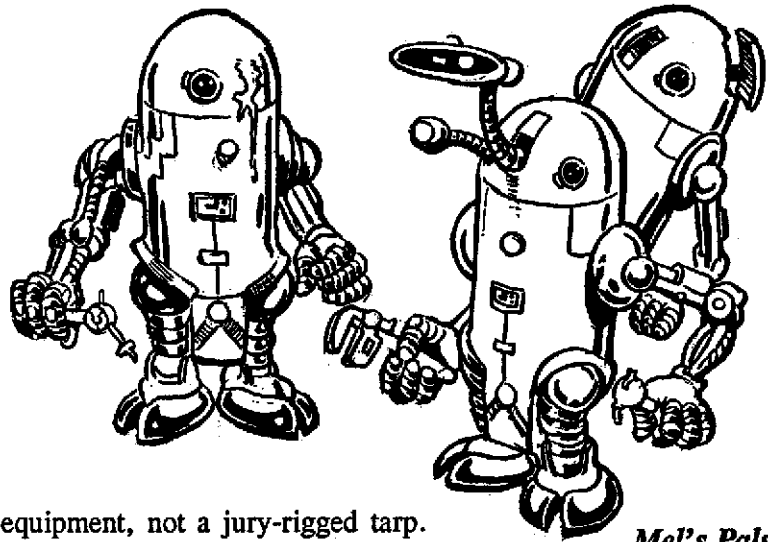
The shuttle's interior is a *mess*. The cabin still holds cold, thin, bad-smelling air; a person could survive perhaps ten minutes before asphyxiating. Everything is covered with black grit (dead mildew), corrosion and dust from crumbling plastics. Objects made of ordinary paper and cloth are long gone; leather, wood and most plastic items are in various states of decomposition.

Characters searching the control cabin will find several items of interest. Strapped into an acceleration couch is a human skeleton in the remains of a pair of denim overalls. Someone making an easy (+2) Forensics roll or a hard (-4) Diagnosis roll will notice holes in the clothing and breaks in the bones that indicate that the unfortunate was badly shot up before being strapped into the couch. Aluminum dog tags chained to the skeleton's neck read:

MELVIN, HORACE G.
b2087 Mar10
375-40-5601
TECHNICIAN
UNCPOSS ARK

Two laser-read computer data disks (containing navigation and engineering data for the *Ark*), a durabook edition of *The Boy Scout Handbook*, and a handheld computer terminal may also be found on the bridge (see *Data Disk*, p. 59).

The instrument cabins are loaded with rusty, crumbling electronic components and cabinets full of tools in equally poor condition. Three data disks



Mel's Pals

The fireplug-shaped robots are short (3' tall), heavy (300 lbs.) and slow (speed 4) but are quite durable (HT 18, PD 4, DR 4). They have a DX of 8 for combat purposes (14 for purposes of fine manipulation) and a ST of 10. If their grippers get hold of someone, get out the first-aid kit: they do (2+1) dice of crushing damage! They speak in squeaky, cute voices and are distressingly polite and agreeable. They have an IQ of 7, but high skills in Mechanics, Electronics, and certain Craft skills. They have no programmed prohibition against harming humans, and no programmed requirement to obey human commands. They are programmed to obey what they recognize as Mel's voice. He has a recognition code to use if his voice is so altered that they cannot recognize it.

The PMC

The Pan-sentient Mind Collective started as a think-tank devoted to investigating the powers of the mind. Several decades ago a bold experiment was started. The institute established a self-sufficient base on a remote world and began research to weave the minds of the staff into a *gestalt* or mass-mind. The aim of the project was to combine the flexibility and inventiveness of an individual human mind with the solidarity and efficiency of a pure hive-mind. The brains of the gestalt-members were laced with pseudo-organic, molecular-level circuitry to coordinate thoughts and improve some cognitive functions.

Whether the PMC is a success is debatable. While the brain-altered subjects *do* have some remarkable powers, most of the gestalt's efforts go toward keeping itself running. Wags have likened the Collective to a computer with an operating system that takes up 99% of its RAM; there's nothing left to run a useful program! Worse, the gestalt has formed a pseudo-personality: a mildly crazy prophet that calls itself Blutor. The PMC, now in its third generation, is desperately trying to raise money to terraform Trelchibu (its homeworld) and finance further research.



Julius Von McDiNazzio, Purser

ST 9, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 9.

Advantages: Charisma (+2); G-Experience.

Disadvantages: Miser; Old; Reputation (what he won't steal he'll liberate, -3 to space merchants on 6 or less).

Quirks: Hates carbonated drinks; Loves to talk about big cons pulled "by a fella I knew;" Nervous around sharp blades; Never wears a uniform; Prefers low G (below .5).

Skills: Accounting-12; Cooking-14; Fast Talk-13; Guns/TL10-12; Law-13; Merchant-13; Pilot (Starship)-12.

Languages: Interlingua-12; Trade Lingo-12; Legal Speak-13; Thieves Cant-12.

Julius Von McDiNazzio is a worn-out, crusty old trader and con artist who is spending his last years tramping around the galaxy on any ship that will have him. Julius spent many years in jail and has been through personality modification at least a half-dozen times, but something ingrained in his very DNA keeps leading him astray.

Julius is skinny and of slightly below-average height. He once had an open, honest, boyish countenance, but age and hard work have turned him into a cranky-grandfather type. He is bitter and miserly, but he will turn on the old charm and bring out his bag of tricks if he thinks it will get him enough money to retire.

Julius isn't very confident about this enterprise, but he will give it one good try. He is shifty, sneaky, greedy and unreliable, but he will only resort to violence to protect himself.

containing trivial information (shuttle diagnostic and repair procedures) can be extracted from the mess.

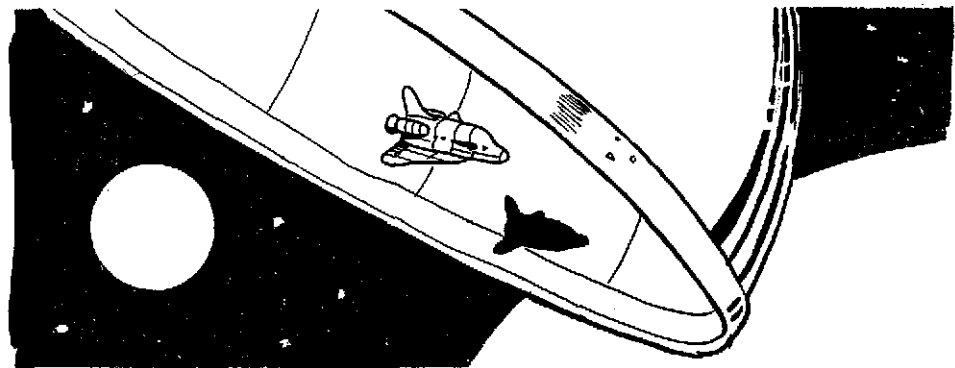
The upper cargo bay is full of supplies. There is food, clothing, tools, camping gear, books, medical supplies and more. Fluids from bursting bottles and decomposing plastics have sealed the mass together like a giant congealed casserole. Going through the mess will take hours; a methodical forensic analysis or archeological dig will take *days*. A search will turn up three objects of note: a personal log written on a blank durabook (see *The Diary*, p. 59); a data disk; and a cage containing the skeleton of a very strange animal (a *Spiker* — see sidebar, p. 17).

The huge lower cargo bay contains the battered wreck of a sealed-environment ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle). The sturdy six-wheeler looks as though it were thoroughly shot up before being hauled into the shuttle. The ATV is empty, but a thorough search will turn up traces of blood on the seats.

What Happened

The *Ark* was the scene of a dramatic battle a few weeks after disaster struck the Unnight colony. The remnants of the crew (who wanted to set up a colony of their own in Carkip) battled a force of colonists and resettlement advisors for control of the ship and the supplies remaining aboard. Things didn't go at all well for either side. A shuttle used by the colonists crashed, stranding a gang of scavengers on board. A shuttle controlled by crewmen docked with the ship shortly afterward, but barely escaped capture by the scavengers.

The badly injured crewmen secretly docked the shuttle in the *Ark's* "hot" detonation bell and hid in the shock-absorbing cylinders. The colonists never found the hidden shuttle, and soon died as the *Ark's* life-support systems failed, but the crewmen also died in their own refuge.



Loot

The flashy consumer goods and knickknacks found in the *Ark's* crew quarters are in so-so shape; vacuum and drifting vapors have damaged most of them. Paper products (posters and cheap books) are readable and probably salable as curiosities; the music and recreational program disks are in better shape and could fetch a high price from collectors.

The Pocket Computer

The small computer terminal on the shuttle's bridge contains a bubble memory chip which has stayed intact through the centuries. It contains notes and correspondence of one John Barbelone, hydrological engineer. Adventurers going through the appointment log and message files will learn a lot about the *Ark's* voyage. Time required to properly scan the chip's information is 500 hours divided by the Research skill of the reader.

Barbelone apparently spent a lot of time on ship. From the time the *Ark* reached Unnight, he was kept busy stripping the ship of plumbing for use on the surface. He and the other techs became more and more irate as more and more of the ship went down and they stayed up. When disaster hit the colony, the

technicians rebelled; they interfered with the delivery of relief supplies (keeping much for themselves), tried to organize an army of colonists in what is now Iquazor and, in general, took out their frustrations on the ecologists and sociologists whom they saw as being responsible for the disaster.

Barbelone's record ends just before a flight to the surface to deliver supplies to a hidden settlement of crewmen, in a valley in Carkip. (See *The Dark Stalkers*, p. 51.)

The Data Disk

The disk found in the shuttle's cargo bay contains a wealth of information on Unnigh's flora and fauna, and alludes to the world's strange climatic conditions. Offworlders who study the disk will have a +2 bonus when rolling to identify dangerous (or edible) plants and animals. Universities will pay \$10,000 times (1 die) for the information, and might offer the finder a position, honorary degree or research grant if he is qualified. Private firms who might want to exploit the world will pay \$20,000 times (1 die) for the disk.

The Diary

The personal log was written by Loretta Matushita, UNCPO field operative. Written in Esperanto with passages in English and Japanese Katakana, the durabook contains about a hundred entries written at intervals of an hour to several weeks, starting when the colony fleet left Earth. Most of the entries are trivial, but things get interesting once the action moves to Unnigh. Loretta's turgid verse describes the eerie sight of Orb in the sky over Mensod, the smells and sounds of a new world and the problems the colonists faced. Also included is an account of the debate over the naming of the world; readers will learn that about fifty different people came up with the name Unnigh "on their own, in a dream." The diarist also describes weird seizures among the colonists and resettlement staff — the then-unnamed Night Dance. The log ends a few (Earth) days after the disaster. The last entry describes the Night Dance, the frantic attempts to keep things under control, and the first hints of the crews' rebellion.

If the adventurers hang on to the log and later publicize it, they will be approached by a number of book and holo publishers for publication rights.

Someone's Calling

Two (Earth) days after arrival in the system, the ship's alarm system will sound. The sensors are picking up very strong radio-frequency emissions. The pulses, which come at intervals of about 15 minutes, cover a wide range of frequencies. Cryptographic or Mathematical analysis (three successful rolls at quarter-hour or longer intervals or one critical success) reveal that they contain no information content; they are random bursts of energy. Tracing the bursts to their source is easy. A visible-spectrum scan of the source (or just a magnified look at night) will show a flash of light with each pulse. If the spacers made a map survey of Unnigh they will notice that the site of the bursts corresponds with a large city surrounded by intensively farmed land.

The bursts are the result of a giant Tesla coil built by the wizards' guild of Gamotch. The generator was set into action to celebrate the accession of Jhamjhil-Suo, Byreville's new warlord, who thought his coming to power deserved more than mere fireworks. This is clearly technology of a high enough level that it will impress the claims court. Mordritte will order a landing at Byreville. The GM should review the section on Gamotch (pp. 37-39) before the PCs leave the ship.

Byreville

Gamotch has no capital as such (*every* warlord claims his city-state is the largest, grandest and most central to Unnigh's culture and history) but Byreville

Calloway Ng, Maintenance

ST 11, DX 11, IQ 10, HT 11.

Advantages: High Pain Threshold.

Disadvantages: Bully; Greed; Poverty (Struggling).

Quirks: Dislikes teachers; Keeps his back to walls; Muttering to himself; Detests do-gooders; Twitches if he cannot immediately think of the answer to a question.

Skills: Brawling-13; Electronics/TL10 (Sensors)-13; (Security Systems)-13; Guns/TL10-12; Mechanic/TL10 (Starship Drives)-11; (Life Support Systems)-12; Streetwise-9.

Languages: Esperanto-11; Interlingua-10; Trade Lingo-10.

Ng (pronounced "Ing") would be just another Startown thug except for The Society for Peace and Brotherhood Among All Humans. This peculiar philanthropic sect believes that all who trace their ancestry to Earth are one flesh and spirit, and that even the most depraved can be redeemed. Ng was rescued by them from a lynch mob just as the noose tightened. In gratitude, he tried to rob their treasury. The Society decided that he needed a trade, and over the next several Earth years, they taught him Mechanics and Electronics. Despite native lack of talent, Ng became very good at his limited repertoire of skills; Society teaching methods are efficient but often painful.

The society's official language is Esperanto. Ng mutters to himself in Esperanto because no one he has met in years understands it. Therefore, it is convenient for expressing his real thoughts about passengers, superiors and attractive women. If Ng hears or sees an Unnigher use Esperanto, he will recognize it as a distorted form of a language he knows (-2 to understand speech, no penalty to understand writing). A very observant PC might notice that things heard on the planet sound like things muttered by the surly maintenance man.

Ng likes money, women and complex machine toys. He dreams of moving back to his home city and having his own repair shop, with a sideline in burglary . . . and blowing up the Society headquarters.

Daruppi Anogakongo-Mi: Native Translator

Dark skin with “indoor” pallor, black hair, brown eyes.

ST 9, DX 11, IQ 13, HT 8.

Advantages: Eidetic Memory; Literate

Disadvantages: Kleptomaniac; Reputation (-2, Respectable folk of Byreville, on 10 or less); Skinny.

Skills: Anthropology-14; English-12; Esperanto-15; Linguistics-15; History-14; Naturalist-16; Sleight of Hand-12; Spanish-12; Streetwise-16; Theology-15; Writing-14.

Daruppi Anogakongo-Mi is the daughter of a wealthy mine-owner from Gamotch’s western frontiers. She was thrown out of home for spending too much time fiddling with books instead of hunting as a good woman should. Daruppi’s habit of stealing interesting artifacts from neighbors didn’t help any either. Cut off from family and her inheritance, she made her way to Byreville where she spends her time reading, writing letters for illiterate townfolk, and stealing things to study.

Daruppi is a slight, homely woman with a distracted air about her. She dresses in colorful robes (unusual for Gamotch) that look like discarded wall hangings. She is highly respected (and a little feared) by the common folk of Byreville. Scholars who aren’t afraid or embarrassed to be associated with the eccentric sage also consult her.

When rumors of visitors from outer space reach her, Daruppi Anogakongo-Mi will make a beeline for the offworlders’ location and attempt to contact them. She will earnestly try to make friends, offer her services as a translator and attempt to relieve them of their belongings.

Daruppi’s language skills are, of course, the Unnigh versions of Esperanto, English and Spanish. She and spacefarers will be at a -4 in English and Spanish, and a -2 in Esperanto, to communicate by speech. Her written Esperanto will be at no penalty to understand. Daruppi may intentionally mistranslate if she thinks it will help her acquire offworld goods.



is the nation’s most wealthy and cosmopolitan city . . . Unnigh’s New York. It is divided by the river and the channels of the delta into four districts. The highest and driest of these is a rich neighborhood of walled villas, malls and public gardens. The mammoth Tesla coil is set in one of the gardens. There are acres of tents, platforms for dancing, corrals of livestock and banquet tables.

How the locals react to the adventurers depends on where they land. The best approach is to land the ship or shuttle far out in the bay and cruise into port; the folk of Byreville *expect* strangers to arrive by sea! Landing in the hinterland could endanger property and would panic the rural dwellers, who would send for soldiers. Landing in the city, perhaps at the party gardens, would greatly impress — and terrify — the citizenry, but might be taken as a hostile gesture, especially if property is damaged.

The Council

Byreville’s civil administration is headed by the *quints*, five bureaucrats selected by the city’s strongman to carry out his policies. They are a corrupt but efficient bunch. When not busy stamping decrees and regulations, they can be found at civic ceremonies, greeting visitors, and witnessing religious rituals.

Of late, the council folk have become used to dealing with visitors from strange lands. Unless the adventurers go out of their way to appear unusual (e.g. blasting a statue of the warlord to prove their might), the quints will treat the offworlders as they would a delegation of foreign businessmen. Quints hold office at the pleasure of the warlord. If the PCs spend a lot of time with the quints, the GM should create them as individual NPCs; all will be intelligent and greedy.

The Legion

When the warlords took over Gamotch from the squabbling clans and city states, the Legion was created as a kind of parallel bureaucracy. It is composed of “old boys” from the military, foreign mercenary captains and adventurers. The Legion provides a pool of reliable (and supposedly disinterested) talent for the military overlords from which to choose successors and assistants. And the Legion is increasingly becoming a sort of parliament that elects leaders from its ranks. The Legion holds sway in about half of Gamotch’s city states; the rest have similar bodies or are nonaligned.

The Legion will view offworlders with alarm. They are practical men as well as soldiers, and fear for the safety and pride of Byreville and Gamotch.

The Warlord

Jhamjhil-Suo, Byreville’s new warlord, is a fair warrior, a competent general and an excellent administrator. He was picked for the job by his peers, the generals of the Legion. Jhamjhil has at his command the city’s militia, a private guard of about fifty men and the Legion. The Legion also has great influence on *him*. The appearance of the offworld adventurers will upset the warlord and put him on the defensive. He will fear that the wrong move could topple him from the power he so recently attained.

The Guilds

Civilian power is returning to Gamotch via commerce and industry. Unions and guilds of skilled craftsmen are becoming more organized and vocal as trade with less urban nations flourishes. Though there are no official representatives of labor and industry in Byreville’s government, the guilds pull a lot of strings in the Council, Legion and bureaucracy.

The more “intellectual” guilds will, like the Council, view all but the most outlandish offworlders as merely another group of foreigners coming to town to make a deal. Some lesser guilds and labor unions, the “voices of the people,” will see visitors as a threat, or even an apocalyptic event.

The Chapter House

The Byreville Chapter House of the Gamotch wizard's guild is located on the outskirts of town, in a walled estate. There are a half-dozen buildings, including stables, a bakery and mess hall, a library and several workshops. Three dozen wizards, 20 servants and 15 guards live on the premises; a dozen or so "neighborhood" wizards live around town.

The Byreville House has tremendous power and responsibilities. It has been charged with maintaining Gamotch's political stability, introducing bits of technology, and keeping the mundanes from learning too much on their own. If they think they can get away with it, they will kidnap the PCs outright, interrogate them, and try to work out a deal that will let the Wizards retain power!

Get That Contract!

The goal, of course, is to get a signed trade contract. But nobody of any importance will sign right away. At best, they will want to know the offworlders a little better. If they realize that many more offworlders will be arriving soon, it will become harder to sign a contract on any terms whatsoever! The Unnighthers must not be allowed to understand just what a commercial plum they represent.

On the other hand, time is of the essence. If the PCs need a little pressure, just let those aboard ship call with word that an emergence from hyperspace has been detected. Competition is on the way!

If the PCs are willing to travel, any nation on the planet might be a source of a contract. But there are really only two entities in this area who could sign a worthwhile contract: the city of Byreville, and the Wizards' Guild.

Byreville

This town would be recognized, by an offworld court, as capital of Gamotch. And Gamotch might be recognized as the leading kingdom, on the strength of the obvious Wizard technology there. Even if the party lands elsewhere, they will know that they have to accommodate, explain away, or control the "Tesla coil people" to make any contract stick. Of course, a medium nuke would destroy both coil and witnesses. The Patrol, however, takes a dim view of such tactics, and the evidence would be hard to hide.

Getting a contract in Byreville requires the approval of the Council (at least three of the five quintus must OK the resolution), or an order from the warlord.

The Council

Each of the "quintus" requires buttering up to be convinced to vote yes. Fast-talk or Diplomacy Skill rolls are made at -1, but gifts, threats, blackmail or special deals may modify this. Three "yes" votes will result in the speedy execution of a trade agreement. Critical failures made during this task result in the Council throwing the offworlders out of their chambers, with a warning not to return.

Jhamjhil-Suo

The warlord requires much convincing before he will arrange for the offworlders' unusual request to be fulfilled. Diplomacy rolls are made at -4. Once his favor is gained, the contactees will become "guests of the city" and treated very well indeed. Failed rolls indicate that the warlord has been insulted; the offworlders will be jailed. On critical failures, they will be executed.

The Legion

The Legion is unlikely to be recognized as a valid representative by the court, but they can influence the Warlord if they are convinced that the offworlders mean no harm. Swaying the Legion takes both Diplomacy and Public Speaking/Bard skill. The rolls are made at -5; if the players think to offer modern weapons, the roll becomes +1. But threatening demonstrations of firepower will

Random Events

To keep the PCs on their toes, roll 2 dice for a random event on the table below for each Ark that they are aground.

2 — *Quake*. A series of minor earthquakes strikes. If the populace knows that offworlders are about, rumors will spread that they're responsible.

3 — *Plague*. A ship from Byilikin limps into port with a desperately ill crew. Within a few Arks, people in the unsanitary waterfront borough begin collapsing in the streets. The Orange Plague has struck! The disease may be blamed on the offworlders and/or give them a chance to show the wonders of modern medicine.

4-5 — *Blackmail Opportunity*. A PC (pick randomly) gets information that could embarrass one of the quintus. On a roll of 4, the rumor is false; investigation or a Detect Lies roll will determine this. On a 5, it is true. The blackmailer will get a +5 reaction dealing with that person.

6-8 — *Nothing special happens*.

9 — *Mad Wizard*. Faced with the threat to his beliefs by the offworlders, a wizard of the Order of Orb goes mad. He and two non-wizard assistants (one typical tough, one typical guard) stalk an NPC offworlder. The victim may be killed, or turned into a zombie and set free. Thus emboldened, he will attack some or all of the PCs. He will fight to the death, hurling grenades and poison sprays wildly. Defeating him will impress the Chapter.

10 — *Invitation*. A man in livery, claiming to be an aide of an important official, asks two PCs (those with the best diplomacy skills or reaction-roll modifiers) to attend "an important and enjoyable social event." If they accept, they are taken in a grand coach (driven by another liveried servant) past the outskirts of town, to a bog near the shore, and dumped via trap doors. They are left to walk home, if they can survive the night. The servants are typical guards, each with a dagger, crossbow and cloth armor. They fight only if provoked.

11 — *Traitor*. The master of a local instrument-makers guild wishes to trade gold and silver for secrets that will let him better his products. If the PCs agree, he will show them his shop and ask for their comments. The tour is conducted in great secrecy, with the offworlders in local clothing and makeup. If other guilds learn of the tour, the master will be assassinated and the spacers shadowed and threatened.

12 — *Tribute*. The Dark Stalkers hear that offworlders are in town. The PCs return to their room to find three men and two women grovelling on the floor. They are totally naked, except for intricate networks of lines (primitive printed circuitry) branded into their flesh. After praising and thanking the adventurers for returning to rescue the Croomin from their exile, the supplicants present a gift . . . the head of one of Byreville's councilmen!

result in a further penalty of -4! If the favor of the Legion is gained, a +2 reaction bonus applies with the warlord or others in Gamotch's military. Contacting the Legion will alienate the wizards and their organizations (-2 reaction).

Critical failures made while dealing with the Legion result in that body becoming intensely paranoid and xenophobic. They will oppose further efforts to deal with the offworlders, but being lawful folk will not lynch them.

Guilds and Unions

The craftsmen and laborers of the guilds and unions will not be too pleased about the idea of strangers selling superior goods in their market. They will not *help* offworlders at all; indeed, tricky diplomacy may be needed to convince them not to lynch the star-strangers! Pacifying the guilds requires Diplomacy, Politics, and Public Speaking/Bard. Rolls are made at -4; these people are mad!

Critical failures or foolish blunders when dealing with the guilds and unions will result in torch-bearing mobs rampaging through the streets.

The Wizards

The alternative contact, at least locally, is to deal with the Wizards. And, though it may not be obvious to the PCs, this is the better move.

First, the Byreville Chapter House must be approached and its officials pacified; this requires Diplomacy and Politics. However, these officials will not feel they have the authority to sign on their own. The extent of their cooperation will be a favorable report to their superiors. The adventurers must then wait several Arks for the recommendations of the Chapter officials to reach the Gamotch Wizard's Guild headquarters in Tumush. (The round trip takes five Arks; by spaceship or aircraft, Tumush is about an hour away.) The Guild officials who return to speak with the offworlders will be as suspicious, opinionated and sinister as medieval inquisitors; once they are involved, the fate of civilization on Unnight is in the balance.

A *successful* deal with the Conference results in more than a mere trade pact. The wizards will become the offworlders' guides, protectors and translators. In exchange, the visitors will be expected to limit importation of high-tech goods and to respect local traditions. If diplomacy with the wizards is "blown" by bad rolls, the offworlders will be imprisoned and interrogated about conditions out among the stars. If the wizards do not like the answers, or if the prisoners fail in an escape attempt, they will be given zombie drugs.

Note that offworlders won't really understand the Wizards, to start with. It is easy to consider them mere tricksters, but they are in fact the best claimants to the title of planetary representative. They control the most advanced technology and are spread throughout the planet. They may not be a planetary government, but they *are* a true planetary organization — the only one on Unnight.

A contract with the Wizards would probably, in the long run, take precedence over any contract with a kingdom. It would certainly not be *superseded* by someone else's kingdom contract.

Endgame

Even after the ship leaves Unnight with a signed contract (or several) the adventure is not over. In fact, it's not over until a contract is registered in the courts of a civilized planet . . . which means the double-dealing will get hotter and heavier as the ship nears civilization, and yesterday's valued comrade may be today's bitter foe.

It's even possible that competing contracts could wind up in court. In that case, the disputants may have to look for help or patrons, and the campaign can continue with Unnight in the background . . . a disputed market worth billions.

Even when the contract is finally settled, there's still a world to explore. Stay tuned for *Return to Unnight* . . .



SHIP RECORD

Spirit of Penneys

Class: Entrepreneur Class Tramp

Size: 2,000 tons

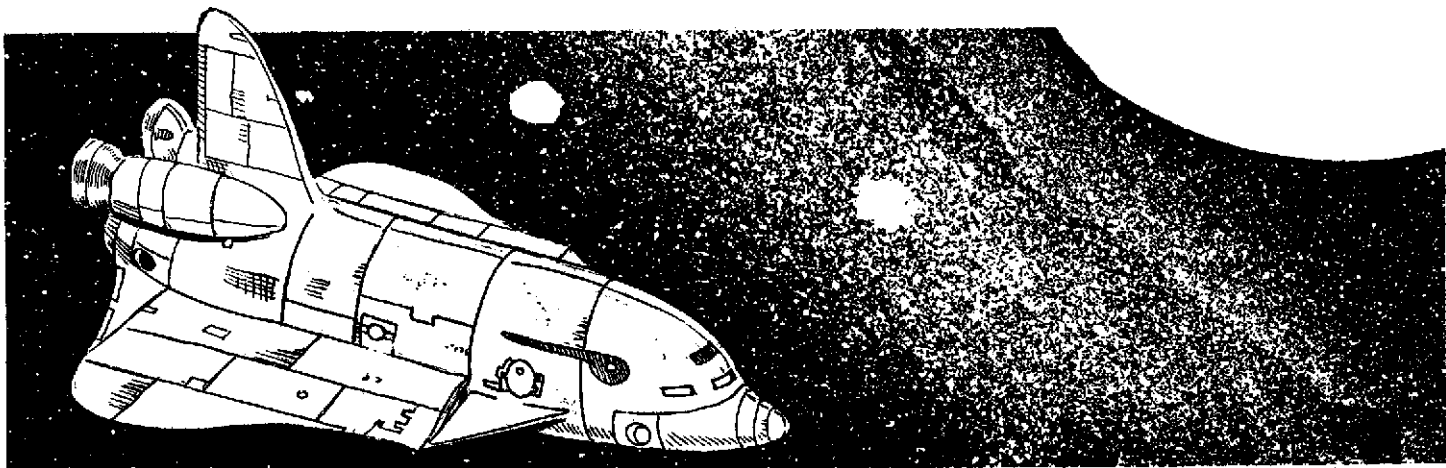
TL: 10

Registration: Luna

Owner: First Bank of Luna

Captain: Kalveen Mordritte

						Total Cost	Mass (Tons)	Cubic Yards	Power (MW)		
Hull: Size	<u>2,000</u>	cy	<u>\$/cy</u>	<u>200</u>	mass/cy	<u>.01</u>	400,000	20	2,000		
Armor: DF	<u>None</u>	cy	<u>\$/cy</u>		mass/cy						
Force Field: DF	<u>None</u>										
Streamlining:	<u>Winged</u>					400,000	20				
Compartmentalization:	<u>Heavy</u>					200,000	10				
Stress rating:	<u>2.00G</u>					200,000	10				
Power plant:	<u>TL10 Fusion</u>				Base:	<u>1,067,500</u>	<u>18.4</u>	<u>17.9</u>	<u>173.5</u>		
Output:	<u>173.5</u>	MW	<u>\$/MW</u>	<u>5,000</u>	cy/MW	<u>.1</u>	mass/MW	<u>.1</u>			
Fuel:											
Capacitors: MW-h	<u>200MW</u>					2,000,000	100	20			
Maneuver Drive:	<u>TL10 Thrusters</u>				Thrust	<u>100</u>	tons	2,000,000	50	200	100
Reaction Mass:											
FTL Drive:	<u>Hyperdrive</u>					800,000	20	60	20		
Crew:	<u>5</u>					20,000	5	125			
Passengers:	<u>16 in steerage</u>					16,000	8	192			
Lifesystem:	<u>Full - 21</u>					15,500	12.5	46	10.5		
Weapons:	<u>2 Medium Lasers (20 each)</u>				Total FP:	<u>40</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>40</u>	
	<u>3 Medium Missile Launchers</u>				Total FP:		<u>30,000</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>		
	<u>4 Medium Atomic Missiles (50 each)</u>				Total FP:	<u>200</u>	<u>20,000</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>20</u>		
	<u>50 Medium Explosive Missiles (2 each)</u>				Total FP:	<u>100</u>	<u>20,000</u>	<u>5.0</u>	<u>25.0</u>		
					Total FP:						
Sensors:						50,000	5	5	1		
Computer:	<u>2 complexity 5 Mainframes & Standard software</u>					30,000	.2	.2			
Airlocks:	<u>1 standard</u>					10,000	1	8			
Accessories:	<u>Artificial gravity</u>					200,000	16	10	2		
	<u>Stealth</u>					400,000	40	120			
	<u>Treaded landing gear</u>					2,000	20				
Notes: <u>Amphibious lander.</u>					Totals	<u>7,931,000</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>863</u>	<u>173.5</u>		
					Cargo Capacity		<u>1,630</u>	<u>1,137</u>			
					Loaded Mass		<u>2,000</u>				



GLOSSARY

Aegirians — A political faction within the Conference (qv).

Ark — (1) The ship that took the original colonists to Unnight, now an artificial satellite of Unnight (2) a measure of time on Unnight, about 23 hours.

binary planet — Two large worlds in the same orbit that rotate around a common center.

brok — A large, shelled carnivorous sea creature.

Byllikin — The only nation on Carkip (qv), Unnight's frontier of settlement.

Carkip — The smaller of Unnight's two major continents.

colony tree — A plant that lives in symbiosis with swarms of insects or rodents.

Conference — The Unnight-wide association of wizards (qv).

Crassant — The larger of Unnight's two major continents.

Croomin — Descendants of an isolated party of "crewmen" who settled involuntarily; they retain a memory of technology and a superior attitude.

curler — A bipedal carnivore that uses rocks to break the shells of its prey.

Dark Stalkers — Mysterious, black-cloaked figures who have been spotted in Crassant (qv) for the last century, may be dangerous.

Dawn-to-Dark Ocean — An ocean almost surrounded by Crassant (qv); the Unnight names include Dontadok and Donnadog.

Duringabl — The outermost planet of Stuzak (qv), a small gas giant.

Esperanto — An artificial language invented on Earth in the 19th century, it is spoken by some groups on Unnight.

Far Ocean — The ocean on the Farside (qv) of Unnight.

Farside — The face of Unnight where Orb (qv) is not visible.

Gamotch — A major nation in southeast Crassant (qv), a society of city-states ruled by warlords.

goodwood — The hard native wood of Unnight, too hard for bows.

gram — A measure of weight on Unnight, approximately 1/28th of an ounce.

hawk — A hang glider, as used by the Hawk Lords (qv).

Hawk Lords — The feudal rulers of Loosyick hoofel — A small buckler with a sharp spike, a common weapon on parts of Unnight.

Incold Ocean — The ocean between the east coast of Crassant (qv) and the west coast of Carkip (qv).

Iquazor — A major nation of western Crassant (qv); Unnight's Holy Land.

Irwundanch — A major nation of central Crassant (qv), ruled by nomadic noble bandits.

junkwood — The most common native wood on Unnight, too pulpy and fibrous for most construction uses.

Kiroon — A major country in north Crassant (qv), governed by a military tyrant.

kyogram — A measure of weight on Unnight, approximately two pounds.

Loosyick — A nation of eastern Crassant, ruled by the feudal Hawk Lords.

Mensod — An equatorial nation of Crassant (qv), with a society much like that of Renaissance Earth.

mitter — A measure of length on Unnight, approximately one yard.

Night Dance — A strange madness that affects intelligent life on Unnight.

Orb — Unnight's binary (see binary planet) companion, a very strange world.

Orb side — The side of Unnight that continually faces Orb.

Order of Orb — A political faction within the Conference (qv).

peb — A small, shelled insectivore.

Perrito-Sol — Stuzak's innermost planet, a hostile greenhouse world.

porolimit — A bog-dwelling, venomous carnivore.

sith — An herbivorous quadruped.

Snazsoo — Stuzak's fourth planet, a gas giant.

spiker — A frail, speedy carnivore that uses the abandoned shells of other animals as traps.

Stuzak — The sun of Unnight.

Ulronch — Stuzak's third planet, an icy rockball.

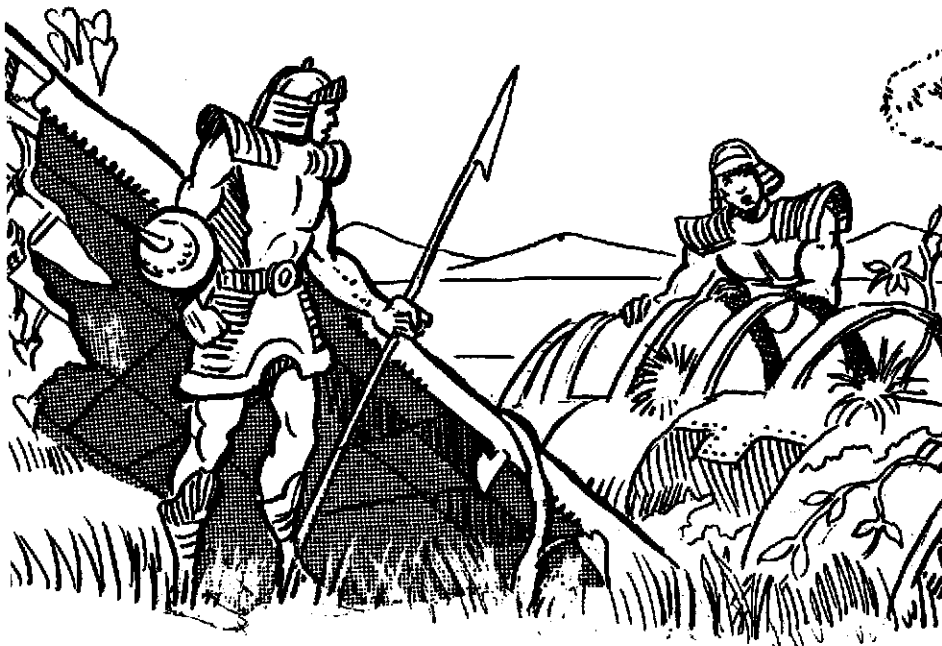
UNCPO — The United Nations Cultural Preservation Organization. Unnight was first settled under its aegis.

Unnight — Stuzak's second planet, Earthlike and the binary companion of Orb.

Western Pirates — Mysterious corsairs of the Incald Ocean (qv).

wizards — Powerful figures who use their mastery of arcane secrets for power and profit.

Xinguth — The westernmost nation of Crassant (qv), with a society centered on tradition-bound clans.



Suggested Reading

Unnight has many literary antecedents. Books you may want to read for inspiration include:

Aldiss, Brian, *Helliconia Spring* and other Helliconia stories.

Bischoff, David, *Nightworld*
de Camp, L. Sprague, *The Continent Makers*, *Rogue Queen*, *The Bones of Zora*, and other stories of Krishna and the Viagens Interplanetarias.

Farmer, Philip Jose, *The Green Odyssey*.

Gerrold, David and Niven, Larry, *The Flying Sorcerers*.

Longyear, Barry B., *Circus World*, *The City of Baraboo*, *Elephant Song*.

ERRATA

This is the known errata for the print version of *GURPS Space: Unnigh* when this PDF was created:

Page 56: Mel 0010 has Eidetic Memory at level 2. Mathematical Genius should be changed to Mathematical Ability.

Page 63: The ship has two Complexity 6 (not 5) Mainframes. Its stealth gear gives -2 to detection and draws 40 MW. The atomic missiles take up only 2 cubic yards.



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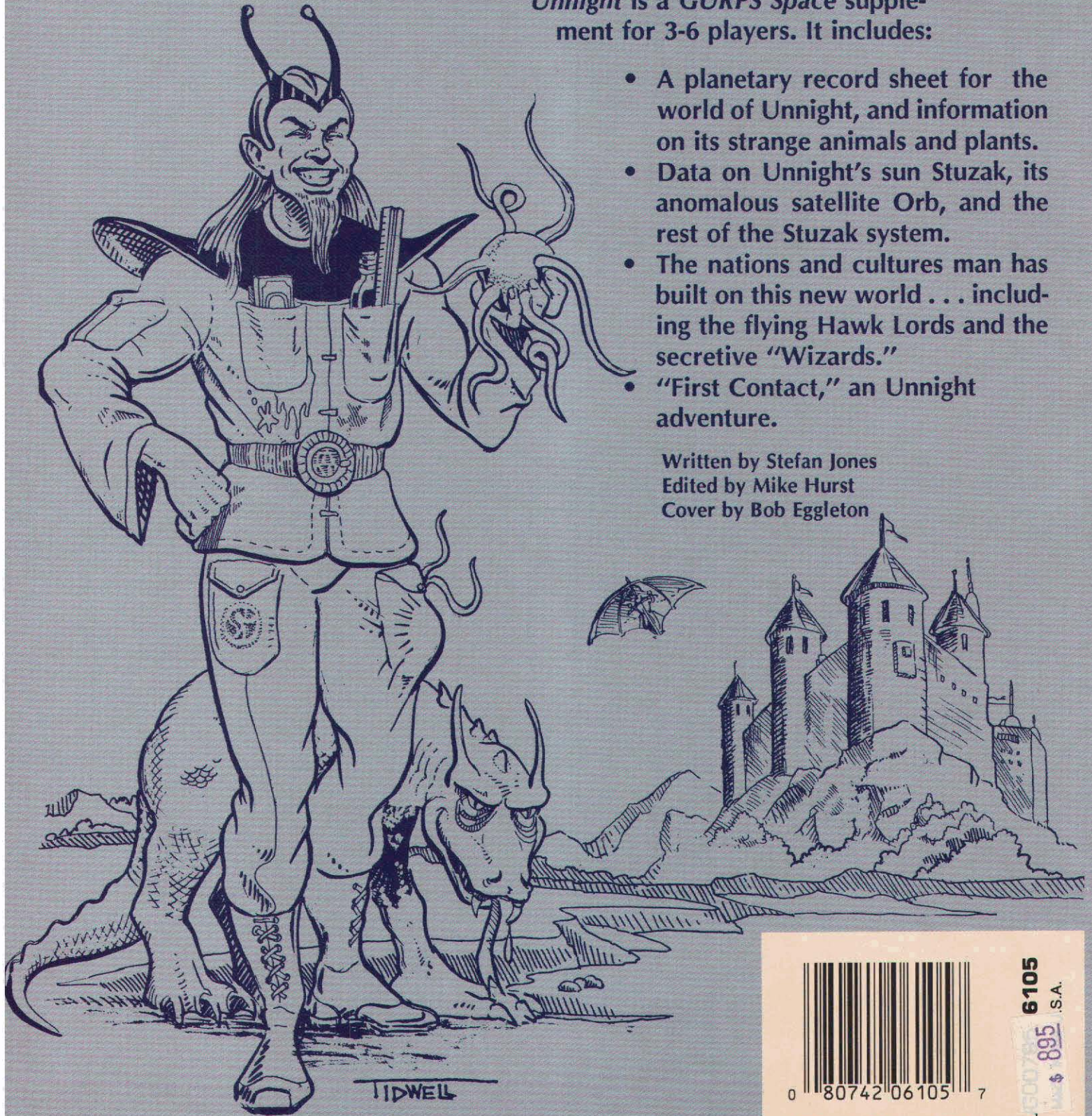
Unnight is a *GURPS Space* supplement for 3-6 players. It includes:

- A planetary record sheet for the world of *Unnight*, and information on its strange animals and plants.
- Data on *Unnight's* sun *Stuzak*, its anomalous satellite *Orb*, and the rest of the *Stuzak* system.
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Written by Stefan Jones

Edited by Mike Hurst

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