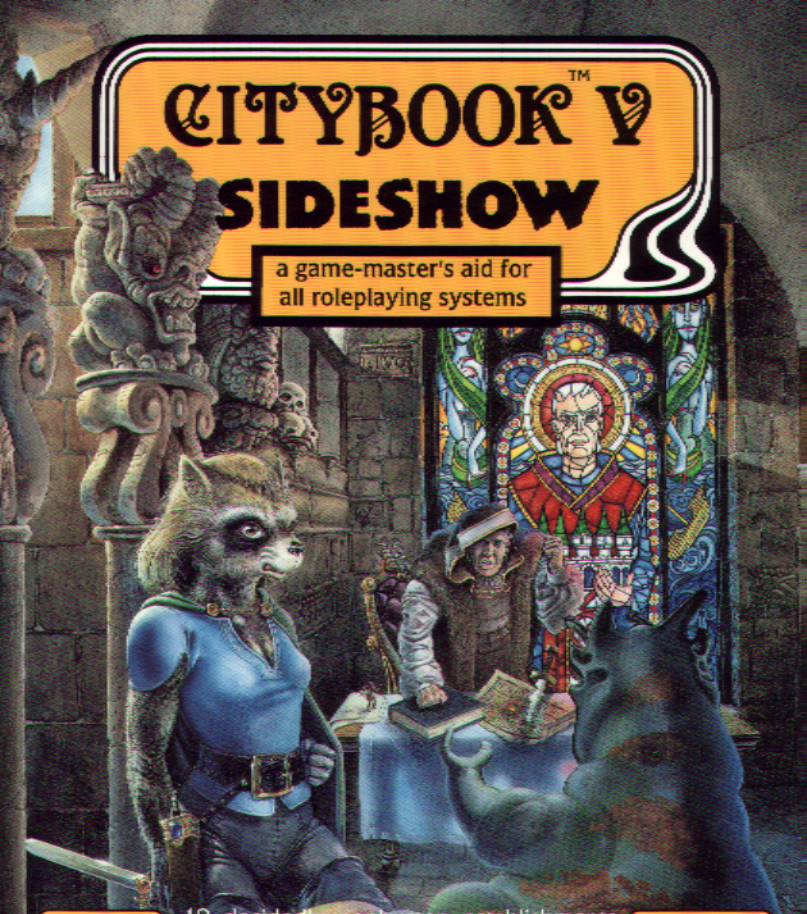
CITYBOOK™ V

SIDESHOW

a game-master's aid for all roleplaying systems



19 decidedly nonhuman establishments and over 50 fully-developed non-player personalities, with scenario suggestions for use with any role-playing system.

All-System
Catalyst Series

#8515

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All-System Catalyst Series

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A Catalyst Product

— a catalyst to spark your Imagination —

On the cover: Leona and the slug-like Slorrup, leaders of The Sliming Path confront the mysterious Old Man of the City within the shrine of his official residence, Thrupp House.

Introduction

Once again, it becomes my distinct privilege to welcome you back to the City. Perhaps it may be that *you* never left, but in *CityBook IV: On the Road*, we traveled far from our wondrous metropolis, taking carriages, caravans slug-powered riverboats, delivery dragons and even a long ship from beyond the grave to visit exotic places (even other dimensions). And now, as we return with our senses attuned to the mysterious and the exotic, we find such wondrous places here in our own City.

Come wipe the dust from your boots, take a dipper of cold refreshing water from the fountain, and settle back. For if you have a taste for the unusual, be prepared to find it here.

As with other metropolitan areas, the City has it's unique, ethnic quarters where expressions of cultures from around the world are to found. One of these neighborhoods goes beyond simple human cultures. More than just elves, dwarves and hairfooted halflings (hairfeeted?), this neighborhood is home to creatures not usually found or accepted among humans. In the City, this neighborhood has a name ...

Sideshow.

It's a terrible name, a human name — an unkind, unloving human name for a part of the City that overflows with unusual, unhuman and undeniably exciting establishments and characters. And yet, to the denizens of Sideshow, the name is a badge worn proudly. For here, amidst persecution and segregation — they thrive.

For the adventurous, Sideshow offers alluring attraction. Where else can one find creatures of myth walking the streets, monsters shopping the markets, sleek-furred half-animals serving the hungry and weary in public houses, and private eating establishments, and gelatinous blue blobs selling snack foods to titillate the palates of nearly every sentient species?

Sideshow literally demands investigation by the heroes of your world. And that world doesn't necessarily need to be one of medieval fantasy. In a blink of an eye, the fantasy denizens of Sideshow become the aliens residents of a some future universe. Blink again, and the residents become the exotic human proprietors of some very weird shops in your 20th century campaign — imagine a horror campaign built around Elizabeth Danforth's gargoyles ...

If you have been a frequent visitor to the City, you will find that little has changed here. Peruse the book for those places that most attract your attention.

If you are a newcomer to the world of the City, then let me talk a bit about what you will find here. As with all Catalyst books, everything is described in "generic" terms. That means that no game-specific numbers and statistics are given. CityBooks are written to provide a variety of people, places and things for your games. It is up to you as Game Master (GM) to add the numbers (if you need to) that will fit them into your preferred game system and world. The coding system explained in the section entitled "GM Guidelines" should make this easy, and please, do feel free to modify, edit, expand and otherwise change things to fit your game system. After all we write these things to encourage your creativity, not stifle it.

In the past two CityBooks, we've experimented with creating crosslinks between establishments within the book. In laymen's terms, it means that you'll find that personalities from one establishment know and interact with personalities from other establishments. Brumar the dwarf of *Brumar's Workshop* orders take-out dwarven cuisine from *The Bottomless Keg* and teaches craftsmanship to the restaurant owner's son, constructs and maintains an internal plumbing and boiler system for *The Panther Club* and sells his mouse-traps-from-hell through the strange shop, *Enefene*. An unpleasant fellow known as The Old Man of the City seems to have something to do with almost everybody, yet almost nobody has anything to do with him.

Despite being linked, the establishments of Sideshow can be used separately. None of them depreciate in play value if pulled free of their linkages.

These places are yours to play with, to change, to warp, reform, deform, defame and kill. You can do anything you desire with them, and we won't cry that you've ruined our little piece of "art." This CityBook is yours, make our ideas and imaginings a part of your world.

As to the CityBook itself, once again we've sourced material from talented authors both inside and out of the gaming industry. True CityBook afficianodoes (those with all the CityBooks) will recognize names like Michael A. Stackpole, Elizabeth T. Danforth, and Bear Peters. We've also secured entries from some talented new names in the industry like Thomas Kane, John Nephew, Mark O'Green and John Terra, whose names appear on game products across the industy. And of course, we are quite excited to present a piece by an award-winning fantasy and science fiction author whose roots are planted in fantasy gaming, Lawrence Watt-Evans.

The multiple-artist format we began in CityBook IV seemed to work, both for us and you the users (read that as: we received no complaints), so we've continued it again this year. Among our talents this year are nominees for and winners of some of the major peer and juried awards in science fiction and fantasy art, including Hugos, Chesley's and Illustrators of the Future.

You know that we like feedback on the City. We want you to tell us what we're missing or doing wrong. We may not agree with you, but we'll listen politely. Don't forget to ell us what we're doing right. We're human (at least it says so on my birth certificate). We need our ego's stroked just like everyone else.

As ever, the epic saga of the City continues. As I write this page in early June, there are are three more CityBooks underway. The themes for those books have been selected and writers of past, present and future renown are hard at work to fill the streets and byways of *your* City.

We are are always on the lookout for talented writers with innovative and creative ideas for the CityBook line of products. If you think you have the skill and professionalism it takes to be a contributor to CityBook, send a 9" x 12" envelope with enough postages to cover two ounces mailing weight to: CityBook Authors' Guides, c/o Flying Buffalo, Inc., P.O. Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252-1467. Address specific comments or questions to CityBook Editor, care of the same address. A self-addressed, stamped envelope ensures a reply.

Enjoy ...



GM Guidelines

Since *CityBook IV* is a generic role-playing aid, no game-specific statistics for NPC's or monsters have been given. However, as an aid to the GM who must convert our descriptions into game mechanics, we have provided the following guidelines to help you in adapting *CityBook IV* to your favorite game system. Keep in mind, however, that this is now *your* book; if you wish to change anything, go ahead!

General Attributes

It isn't necessary to give each non-player character (NPC) in *CityBook IV* complete attributes such as Power, Luck, Wisdom and so forth. However, should you choose to do so, you will note in the character descriptions such phrases as "very strong," "quick," "stupid," "beautiful," etc. By noting these phrases and reflecting them in the NPC's attributes, you should come out with a fairly accurate set of statistics for the person in question.

Fighting Prowess

At times, player adventurers will probably get into fights with non-player characters. We have provided a seven-level coding system to describe how well a particular *CityBook IV* NPC can fight. In some cases, the combat ability of an NPC is given in terms of a specific weapon or weapons (e.g.,. Augustine is Excellent with a thrown knife, and Very Good with a sword, but Poor otherwise). In other cases, the fighting prowess is overall (e.g., Stinya Shortfur of **Riversent** is Poor overall).

There are two ways to randomize for the fighting prowess of an NPC. You can roll 1d6 for the attribute (6 means the character is an Excellent fighter) or you can roll 1d100 and use the percentages given after the ratings to determine the NPC's skill level. Remember, the percentages refer to how well that NPC stacks up in relation to all other fighters in your average world. Therefore, a "poor" fighting prowess would account for about 40% of all fighters met, and an "excellent" prowess would only fit about 4% of the fighters. If you put a "poor" fighter into your campaign, we expect that 60% of the rest of the fighters in your world can soundly thrash him.

These are the codes for fighting prowess:

❑ **Poor.** Unfamiliar with combat arts; can be easily wounded or killed. *(01 - 40%)*

❑ **Average.** A run-of-the-mill type, but certainly no mistaking him for a hero. *(41 - 59%)*

❑ **Fair.** Better than average and will acquit himself adequately. *(60 - 74%)*

❑ **Good.** Can go one-on-one with seasoned veteran fighters. *(75 - 84%)*

❑ **Very Good.** This person can cause a lot of trouble in combat. *(85 - 95%)*

❑ **Excellent.** If blood is spilled, it's not likely to come from this character... *(96 - 100%)*

❑ **Legendary.** This character's skill with weapons goes beyond mortal limits. Bards will sing tales of his or her fighting prowess for generations to come. *(101%+)*

Magic Ability

To determine the expertise with which an NPC uses magic power, *CityBook IV* employs a seven-level system similar to the one for fighting prowess. This is listed in the NPC descriptions as "Magic Ability," and will be followed by a listing of the particular areas the magic-user might be competent in (see "The Eight C's of Magic" below). If an NPC has no Magic Ability listed, then none exists.

The codes for Magic Ability are:

❑ **Poor.** A hedge wizard or apprentice. Might very well turn himself into a frog. *(01 - 40%)*

❑ **Average.** Competent, but hardly a world-shaker. Only a few spells at his command. *(41 - 59%)*

❑ **Fair.** Possesses a wider range of spells. Effective, but not powerful. *(60 - 74%)*

❑ **Good.** Knows numerous spells in many categories, and is versatile in their use. *(75 - 84%)*

❑ **Very Good.** Knows powerful spells in most of the Eight C's. Formidable. *(85 - 95%)*

❑ **Excellent.** Not a person to cross. Can easily command almost all the known spells, and might be able to turn the party into anchovy paste with a single gesture. *(96 - 100%)*

❑ **Legendary.** Skills may exceed mortal limits. Found only in god-like beings or heroes out of Mythology. Spells, who needs mere spells with power like this? *(101%+)*

Given the diversity of magic systems in fantasy gaming, it is impossible to assign specific spells or powers to any magic-using NPC in *CityBook*. However, spells or powers can be broken down into categories of magic, regardless of what game system you use. Thanks to Mike Stackpole, *CityBook* has the "Eight C's System" to give some idea of what type of magic a particular NPC might wield.

❑ **C1. Combat Magic.** Any spell used primarily in an offensive/defensive manner in combat.

❑ **C2. Curative Magic.** Any spell used to heal wounds, cure diseases, stop poison damage, etc.

❑ **C3. Clairvoyant Magic.** Any spell used to detect things: secret doors, magic, hidden or trapped items, etc.

❑ **C4. Conveyance Magic.** Teleportation, levitation, flying, telekinesis spells, etc.

❑ **C5. Communication Magic.** Any spell used to communicate: telepathy, translation, hypnosis, magic reading spells, etc.

❑ **C6. Construction Magic.** Any spell which uses matter or energy to "build,": wall spells, protective fields, stone-shaping spells, etc.

❑ **C7. Concealment Magic.** Any spell which serves to hide or misdirect: invisibility, illusion, shape-shifting spells, etc.

❑ **C8. Conjuration Magic.** Any spell which produces a condition or entity: light spells, weather control, demon-summoning spells, etc.

Keep in mind that a character with Magic Ability need not always be a sorcerer. An NPC could possess certain magic abilities as a result of owning some device or from some form of supernatural intervention. You can also use the Magic Ability Chart randomly by rolling either 1d6 or 1d100 (as was suggested for the fighting prowess chart) to judge the level of a magic-using character, and 1d8 to determine what areas on the "Eight C's" list the character is competent in.

Locks

Light-fingered thieves and pilfering rogues are ever-present in the world of fantasy, and run rather thick in this *CityBook*. To help the GM deal with these types, *CityBook* uses a system to code the difficulty of any locks encountered. These codes appear in the text when a reference is made to a chest, door or similar locked item (e. g., "locked^3," which means the lock is "fair"), and usually on the maps themselves in reference to doors.

The codes for locks are as follows:

❑ **1. Poor.** An orphan with a hat-pin could open this lock. *(01 - 40%)*

❑ **2. Average.** A little tougher to jimmy this open; just adequate. *(41 - 59%)*

❑ **3. Fair.** Takes some effort to open. *(60 - 74%)*

❑ **4. Good.** Particularly tough. Probably will require special tools to open. *(75 - 84%)*

❑ **5. Very Good.** Will take even a master thief a long time to open. *(85 - 95%)*

❑ **6. Excellent.** Could require magic or a howitzer to open easily—unless you have the key. *(96 - 100%).*

❑ **7. Legendary.** Assume that a god or someone with like powers wanted this thing locked up. Definitely has some kind of magical component or defenses built in. *(101% +)*

Again, the percentages here refer to what percentage of such locks exist in an average cross-section. Many locks fall into the "poor" category, and there are only a few truly "excellent" locks, and "legendary" locks are found only in legendary situations. Indeed, most doors are not locked at all.

You could also use the percentages to indicate how many thieves could jimmy the lock. For example, at least 60% of all thieves could jimmy a "poor" lock, while 4% or less could undo an "excellent" lock. The GM will have to determine how well a particular thief character does when confronted with a certain level of lock (i. e., a very poor thief would have lots of trouble with even a "fair" lock). Once again, a GM can randomize on this lock system to learn the nature of any lock.

Monetary Guidelines

Prices in *CityBook* are usually given in overall terms (i. e., "low," "reasonable," and "expensive"). You should use common sense regarding these terms; a reasonable price for a broadsword would be outrageous when applied to a single arrow. Where prices are actually listed, *CityBook* assumes this standard: 10 copper pieces = 1 silver piece; 10 silver pieces = 1 gold piece; a gold piece represents approximately $1 in U.S. Currency. This currency system obviously must be altered to fit your own economic system.

Time Frame

CityBook uses a standard 24-hour day as its time frame. If your world operates under a different system, alter the times given to fit it.

Non-Human Races

Sideshow is an atypical CityBook. Most CityBooks deal with human establishments and have human (or near human) proprietors. For the most part, the races to be found in Sideshow are not human (and many no where near it). Many of these races are unique to this book and will not be found as stock races in your typical roleplay game system. Simply use game statistics for creatures that best match the ones found here. If a particular race doesn't work for a GM's world, he or she should feel free to adapt it to a more human equivalent.

World History

Several of the establishments in this *CityBook* mention events that took place long ago, far away or some combination thereof. While most of the details are hazy enough to slip them into any campaign as rumors, some of the events might conflict with established campaign history. In this case the GM should change the historical events to something parallel in his own world or slowly let the players "discover" these new facts as needed.

Explanation of Maps

The multitude of symbols on this and the opposite page shouldn't panic you. You will find most to be self-explanatory in conjunction with the text.

The maps are intended to both show what the room would look like, and what the room contains. The views are taken as though you were looking down on the building with the roof removed; if there is more than one floor, each is provided on a separate map.

The key will provide you with the meanings for the various symbols used to indicate a room's contents and furnishings. Most objects are shown by reasonable facsimile of their actual shape. However, certain items have been stylized for easy recognition. For instance, a bed in a fantasy world does not necessarily look like the symbol used to represent a bed on the map—but when you look at the symbol, you *know* it's a bed.

In simplest terms: read the text and look at the map which accompanies it. You should find it reasonably clear and easy to understand. If you still have trouble figuring out part of it, check back here for the key.

Note that *most* of the maps in this book are oriented so that, when read normally, North is at the top of the page (exceptions to this are noted on the maps). An explanation of symbols unique to a particular establishment is provided with each map. Different scales have been used, and each map has its scale noted on it for easy reference.

Basics

plain wall

barred wall


ruined stone wall


brick fence, unroofed wall

railing, rail fence


dirt path


single, plain door


double door

locked door


barred door


secret door


swinging door


trapdoor

stairs


spiral stairs


ramp


ladder


post, pole, support beam


counter


tree


garden


fireplace, hearth, or forge


baking oven

debris


hay and straw

parapet

stone-edged path

Key to All Maps

Other Common Objects


table


chair


table and chair


sofa or divan


armchair


bench


stool


single bed


double bed


four-poster bed


bunk bed


ordinary candle


freestanding candle


candle attached to wall


wood pile


target


bellows


anvil


vat (bubbling)


podium

coffin


statue


armor mannikin


shelves (# of lines is relative to # of shelves)

Containers


crate


cask or barrel


chest


gunny sacks


cupboard, cabinet, or dresser table


display case


pigeonhole cabinet


bin


lockbox


water bucket or barrel


bathing tub

throw pillows


bucket and mops


water pump


rugs


privies

troughs

Wall Fixtures and Axccessories

normal curtains (also tapestries)

beaded curtains

ordinary windows

barred windows

shuttered windows

barred AND shuttered windows

wall pegs

hooks

weapons rack

archer ports

Sideshow Themes

Like any living, breathing quarter of the City, Sideshow is rife with undercurrents of activity — some that dominate daily life, others that lurk shadow-like just below the surface of everyday awareness. A Game Master who chooses to use the idea of a nonhuman quarter in the City may wish to weave these undercurrents into a campaign. With them, the GM can draw the adventurers into the life of the City, even make them pivotal in the survival of the City ... and possibly their world.

The following are potential recurring themes to be woven into the fabric of Sideshow. These are a general feeling of what the adventurers might come across as rumors, legends and talk on the street — not to mention more than a little intrigue and action.

The Old Man of the City. No one ever actually talks about the Old Man in Sideshow. He's the family secret, the skeleton in the closet. Even in the City proper, those who pay homage to one of his many names are few, though the three buildings that form the Old Man's compound are acknowledged to be some of the oldest structures in the City. They have always been a bit of a tourist attraction (much to the joy of Smilin' Al Crum).

In Sideshow, there are rumors of someone who seeks the City's destruction and of a great plot to bring a demon of fire from another plane. What if this demon were not of the horns and pitchfork variety, but say, a destructive technological device of hideous proportions that could be obtained by a time or dimension traveler (there are a few of them about in the City). Here's that opportunity to send heroes on a cross-dimensional quest, either to obtain an atomic bomb or chase after and stop another team of "demon-summoners."

The Gaggle. Let's consider what might happen if the Old Man's "demon of fire" were to detonate (even if not in the City) and explode. What would the effects of atomic radiation be in a fantasy world? What could happen to the energy-loving gargoyles of the Gaggle if they absorbed that much energy all at once? What might the psychic horror of that much mass destruction do to their mutations, appearance choices and psyches? One shudders even to think.

Want to build a subtle horror theme into a campaign? Use these insidious fiends of faux architectural decoration. Few alive now in the City, suspect the truth about the patient gargoyles of the Gaggle, so none would suspect them of instigating madness, murder and mayhem. They lurk about, watching, waiting and absorbing. Wherever they are, there is a sense of ominous, brooding heaviness.

In the background of an ongoing campaign, ease in a story line of madness and horror, more as unsuppressed news than adventure hooks. Begin driving folks who are already a bit edgy into violent madness. Jack-the-Ripper types start showing up all over the City. Some slay secretly, others in public quantity. All do it in particularly gruesome fashions. Bring the characters in as witnesses, then detectives, and finally as vigilantes. Let them discover that every killing occurs in the presence of grotesque statues; that every killer lived near or with similar ones. Have at least one gargoyle be the instigator and let the adventurers ultimately destroy it. The crimes stop, the City becomes quiet again ... for now.

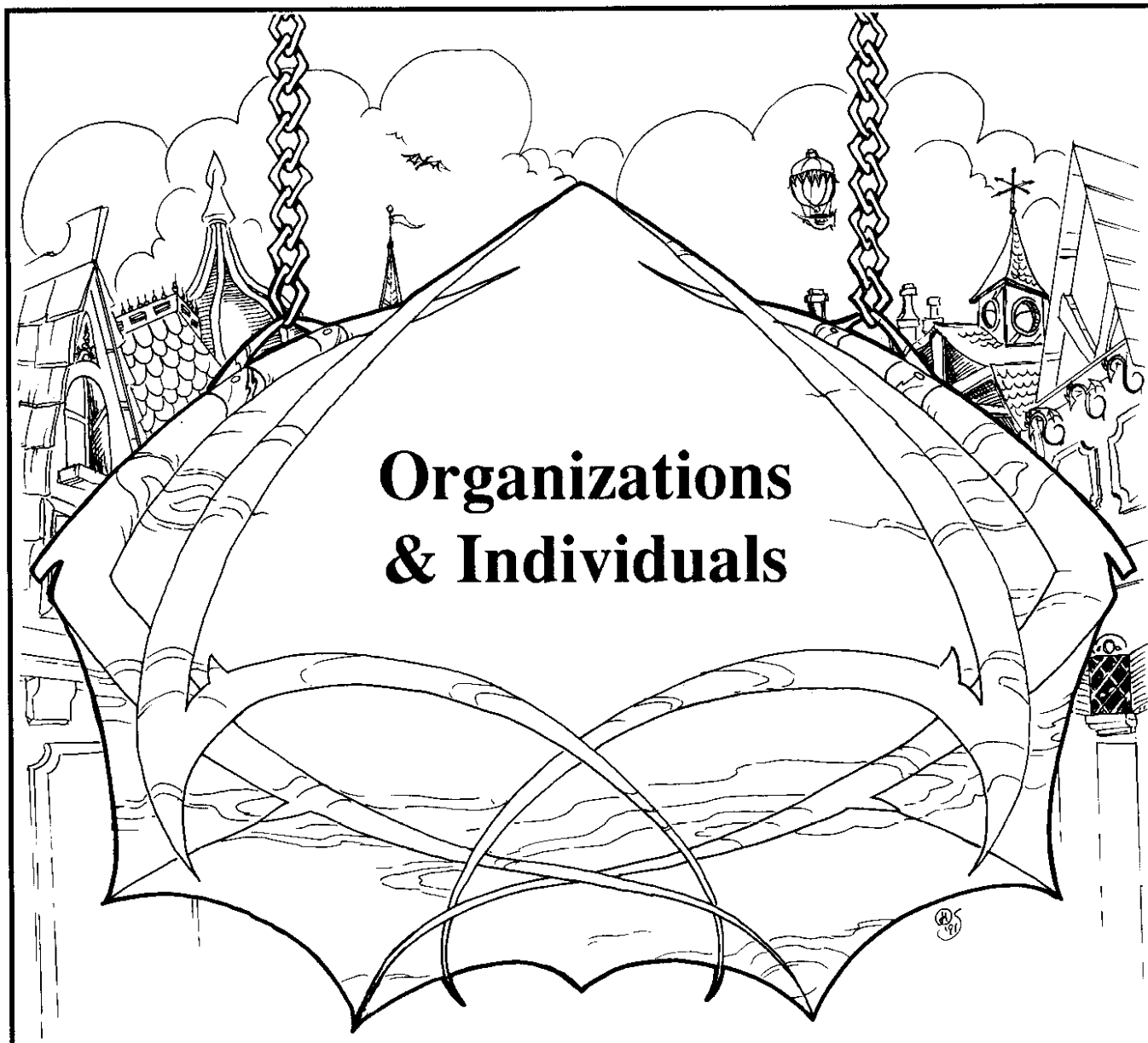
Tears of the Sun. These are gemstones desperately sought (though in a covert sort of way) by the enthade merfolk (c.f. The Blue Maid). They want these crystals for religious purposes and will do just about anything to obtain them. Now, gemstones in general are a popular commodity. Like everything fashionable, occasionally, some stones become more popular than others. What might happen if the Tears became quite faddish in the City? Everybody would want one. People might do the most outrageous things to get them (remember a certain homely little cloth doll a few years back?). Magical spells could be created to locate them. Adventurers would be in high demand, especially since most are likely to be in dangerous places.

Of course, the Old Man of the City, who hates merfolk, will also being doing his best to confound his ancient foes. In fact, chances are, his agents began the Tears of the Sun fad!

Turf Wars. What if the Ruffiri suddenly decided that the Chervka of the Pack were an unnecessary complication? While the rat-like Chervka are powerful within Sideshow, their numbers are far from equal to those of the lesser Ruffiri types. Such a battle could easily be fought beneath the streets of the City. Either side might find it useful to bring in some human muscle. Complicate matters by bringing in elements of a human crime organization that wants to expand its domain.

Unhealthy Competition. Several establishments seek to expand their business into the human sectors of the City, notably Komtoi's Cartage & Caravansary and The Face Place. Humans are an unpleasant bunch. They don't like it when the "not-like-us's" of the world move into their territory. Consider having less-principled humans in the City attempt to put the upwardly mobile of Sideshow out of business. All of Sideshow would take on the mentality of an armed camp. Obviously, the Sliming Path will take up the battle banner, but it could easily affect the adventurers, nonhuman or not. This could readily escalate into a full-scale civil war within the City's Walls. You can bet that somehow, somewhere ... the Old Man has a finger in this mess.

PAUL JAQUAYS dons the mantle of editor a second time with this CityBook. While aggrieved that other commitments kept him from being a CityBook establishment writer this time around, he did find time to paint the cover. As either or both game designer and illustrator, Paul's work has appeared in numerous places over the years, including THE SPACE GAMER, THE DUNGEONEER, WYRM'S FOOTNOTES, JUDGES GUILD JOURNAL, DRAGON, DUNGEON, DIFFERENT WORLDS and SORCEROR'S APPRENTICE magazines and game products from Judges Guild, Chaosium, Flying Buffalo, GDW, TSR, and West End Games. Mostly now, he designs and scripts computer games.



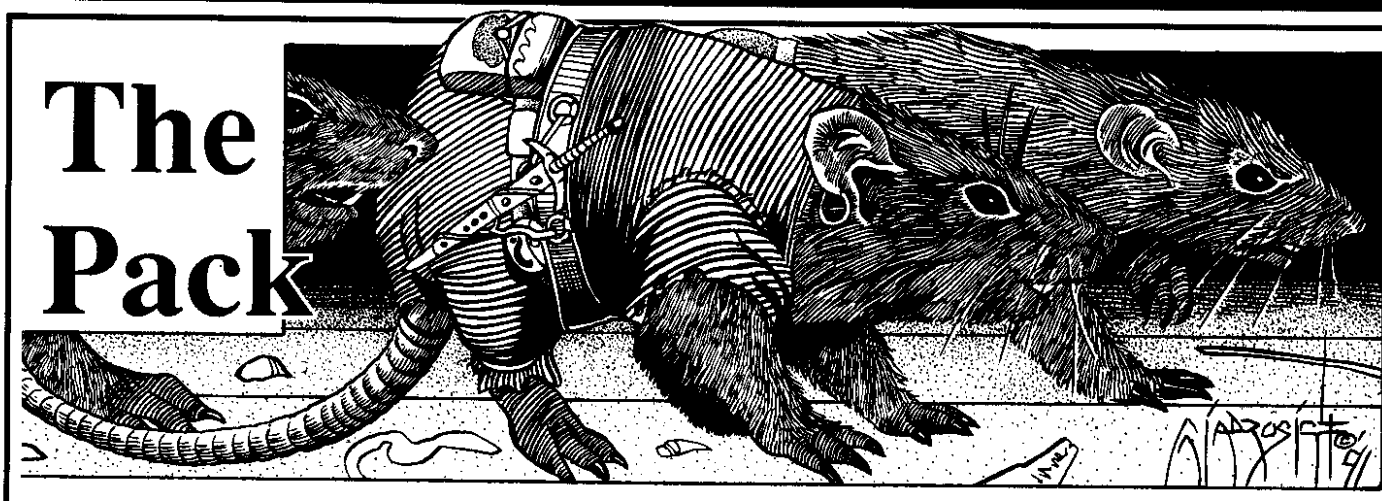
Organizations & Individuals

Wherever men and women gather, they are bound to subdivide into groups, each with their own interests, plans and agendas. Some merely share a common interest, others seek personal power, and still others work for the good, or ill, of their fellows. The creatures of Sideshow are no different in this regard—save that their organizations tend toward the more unusual.

Law and Order are rare commodities, even amongst the wealthier neighborhoods of the City—yet Sideshow seems to have more than it's share, courtesy of the notorious Pack. Of course, like any commodities, they have their price. And while one group works to keep the peace, others seek its disruption: the Old Man of the City has no love for the City or its inhabitants and seeks their destruction, offering the same to those who would make the City prosper; the militant, anit-human Sliming Path seeks fair treatment for nonhumans, but often with extreme predjudice; and the secretive creatures of the Gaggle lurk amidst the rooftops and gutters of the City, causing what mischief they may. And then, who can say exactly what agenda the diminuative Terrkot's People may pursue?

For the bold and daring, an encounter, an allegiance, or an enmity with one of these groups has the potential for continuing adventure.

The Pack



The back streets of every city breed crime. Some must choose between theft and hunger while others see outlawry as their only path to glory in a world that rejects their kind. The people of Sideshow, branded as freaks by humanity, have a particular grudge against society, and a powerful reason to rob and maim. Therefore, many are surprised to learn that Sideshow has some of the safest streets in the City. The reason has nothing to do with the sluggish City Guard.

Sideshow contains a society of master criminals, who call themselves "The Pack." Within Sideshow, they enforce an iron monopoly on theft, racketeering and muggery. The Pack commissions such activities, but it also moderates them, keeping its predations within bounds that people can tolerate. And it knows exactly how to command every criminal's respect. The Pack's famed death sentences, always executed in the victim's sleep, give their foes both literal and figurative sleepless nights.

The Pack acts as a shadow government for Sideshow. True, its leaders demand their due, but every ruler imposes taxation and decrees. The Pack protects its people and cares for them. It finds work for the needy and punishes those who wrong its people. The Pack also insulates the rest of the City from the rogues of non-humankind. Therefore, an unspoken agreement exists between this gang and the established rulers of the City. If the Pack remains discreet, if it remembers its duty to maintain order, its thugs and crime lords need never fear arrest.

Society will always need them.

Origins of the Chervka

The Pack recruits its members from the Chervka, a people bred exclusively for crime. Legends trace both the Chervka and the Pack to the union of a prostitute with a minor god. The tale begins five centuries ago when Ninette, a loose woman of the Ruffiri people, "entertained" a stranger. After their romp, the customer found himself unable to pay. He tried to slink away, but Ninette caught him and spat in his face, wailing about the miseries of a woman forced into harlotry. Her customer turned out to be Cherv, a spirit representing burglars, rats and stealth. As a patron god of the downtrodden, Cherv felt moved by Ninette's complaint. He still had no money to offer her, but instead, he promised that she would bear children who would rule the City.

Ninette gave birth to the first infant Chervka, near-human beings who were distinctly different than the animal-like Ruffiri whelps. Shortly afterward, other Ruffiri prostitutes bore similar children, leading to the conclusion that Cherv found himself short of cash quite often. Whatever the case, the Chervka inherited their mother's animal-like features and their father's prowess at larceny. Yet, unlike either of their progenitors, they were distinctly mortal. Few Chervka live beyond the age of 50 (far more die much, much younger from violence and disease). They quickly organized, and by now, do indeed rule Sideshow.

Most humans call the Chervka "ratties." Anyone who uses this slur in Sideshow risks a broken jaw, yet the term describes the Chervka quite aptly. Chervka have mousy hair, rodent teeth, and dwarfed, crouched postures. A few may grow short, hairless tails.

Chervka eat three times as much as humans of their weight. They especially like cheese and grain. This food fuels a super-metabolism. A healthy Chervka's body temperature hovers around 120 degrees F. This energy gives the ratties blinding reflexes. (When calculating game statistics, assume that the typical Chervka has a Dexterity/Reaction statistic comparable to an extremely quick human.) A Chervka can also sprint at triple human speed for up to one minute. This same metabolism causes the Chervka to mature more quickly than humans, and to die of old age much sooner. They literally burn out after about five decades.

Chervka also enjoy powers of transformation. Whenever they choose, they may reduce their size to that of a large rat. A shrunken Chervka may return to human size at will. The transformation reduces their strength proportionately, but does not affect their intelligence, reflexes or their ability to withstand wounds. A Chervka's possessions and clothing change along with it.

The Chervka shape-changing ability obviously comes from the metamorphic life cycle of the Ruffiri. However, unlike their ancestors, Chervka do not metamorphose as they mature. They are born as small versions of their adult form and grow up in much the same way as humans.

Friends & Enemies

While the Pack lords it over the full-sized residents of Sideshow, they get little or no respect from the tiny Terrkota or the early growth stages of the Ruffiri folk. Since their beginnings, the Terrkota hero Grimwolf has waged a constant struggle

Author, THOMAS KANE dwells in a wilderness fasting deep within the Maine Woods. He emerges upon occasion to attend the local UMF-CON and to send manuscripts to the numerous game companies for which he writes—including his recent full length adventure, *The Sorceror's Slave*, for Atlas Games.

BOB GIADROSICH lives and works out of Atlanta, Georgia. A proficient artist in the gaming industry, Bob also spends his time illustrating books and magazines. Thru Sharāyah Press, his work appears as limited-edition prints and cards. His current project includes a series of posters depicting the seasons and times of the day.

against them (Grimwolf is the enemy of all tyrants and loves such heroic causes) normally striking when the Chervka are in rat form. The young Ruffiri, who have dog-like or cat-like forms, prey on all rats in the City—including hapless Chervka.

Layout

The Pack makes its headquarters in and around the home of its leader, the lady Abet Noir. She lives in an aging two-story house of gray stone. Dim lights burn behind its shutters, giving the place a stuffy look. Unbeknownst to all but the Chervka, Abet Noir's chambers extend throughout the walls of the house, in tiny passages accessible only by Chervka in reduced form. Ten bodyguards circulate through these passages, from which they can detect people anywhere in the house.

Abet Noir's guards can swiftly respond to intruders. They warn Morasso and Abet Noir of intrusion by chewing loudly on the walls. Then they follow the invaders about, harassing them by triggering the traps in each room. When they consider the intruders weak enough, the Pack use the internal tunnels to surround their foe and attack. Naturally, they launch the main assault by surprise from behind.

The "rat doors" of this household are actually holes in the wall about three inches wide. Chervka can scurry through them in rat form. Abet Noir takes care to conceal portals behind furniture.

First Floor

A. Cloakroom (13' x 19') The front door is locked[5] and can be barred from within. This dim room has a cloak-rack, a stocky bench and several rough felt mats. Cloaks and boots hang from the pegs. They belong to Noir's Chervka bodyguards. Anyone who searches the pockets finds purses with a total of 500 gold coins and a few mysterious wires and implements, probably used for lock-picking or garottes. The stair here leads to the second floor.

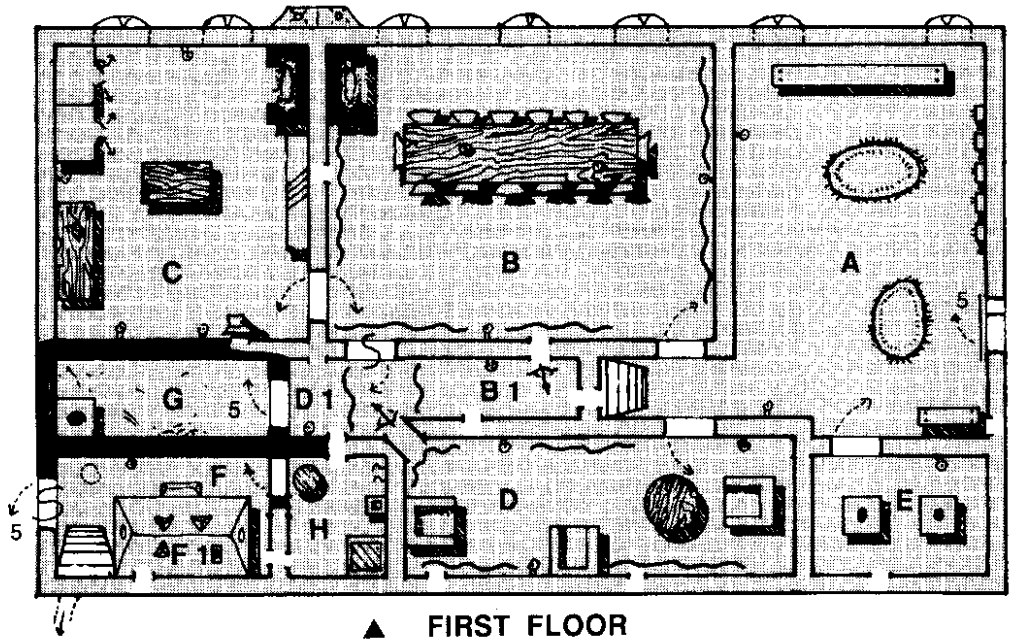
B. Dining Hall (15' x 20') This room contains a polished table, with a ring of starched napkins at the center. Several tapestries hang on the walls, One depicts a breathtakingly realistic dragon, executed in crimson silk. It would sell for over 1,000 gold pieces. The other tapestries are made of linen and show different views of the same wooded hill.

Abet Noir has an automatic-crossbow mechanism (**B1**) behind the cheaper tapestry on the south wall. One can fire it by pulling a wire in the rat passage in the walls. This device can spray the room with two bolts per combat period of fire. The device holds 10 bolts, all coated with a mild paralytic poison.

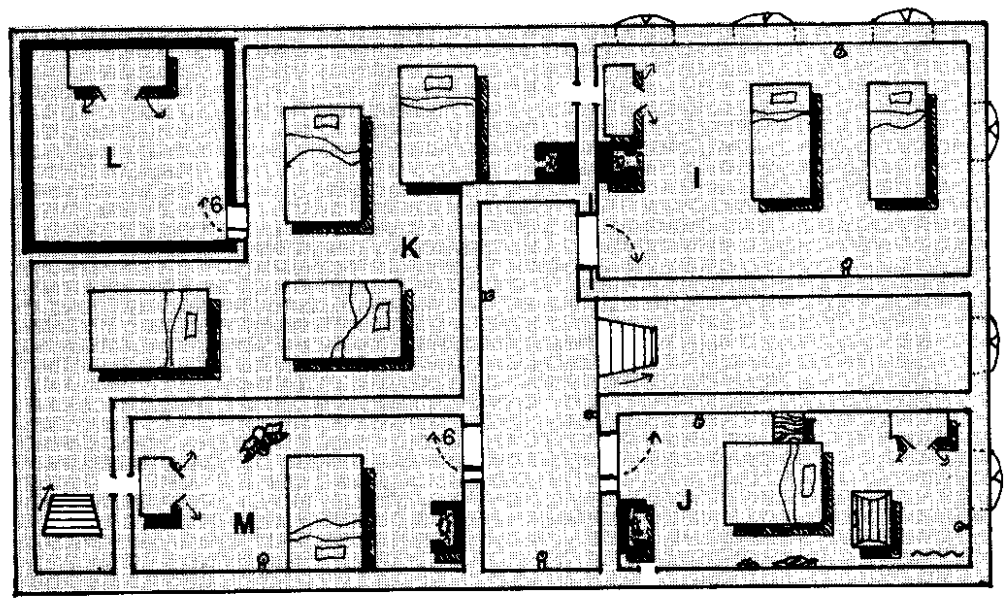
C. Kitchen (15' x 13') An aroma of Roquefort cheese and baking bread suffuses this room. Spices and vegetables stand in neat rows by the chopping boards, and a cupboard holds a variety of pots and pans. The wide fireplace always has several simmering pots hanging in it. An iron oven box sits in the coals.

D. Parlor (7' x 20') This room contains several overstuffed couches and a card table of burgundy-stained wood. A brass chandelier hangs from the ceiling.

By releasing a trigger in the adjacent rat-corridor, one can detonate a flash-bomb in the chandelier. This device contains a mixture of magnesium and alchemical powders. Its burst creates



▲ FIRST FLOOR



▲ SECOND FLOOR

SCALE: one square = 1 foot

little heat, but blinds everyone in the room who fails to resist magic. This blindness lasts for one day. There is also a crossbow (**D1**) behind the tapestry in the northwest corner identical to the one in the Dining Hall (**B**).

E. Privy (6' x 9') Despite pungent herbs strung from the ceiling, this room smells exactly the way one might expect. Normally, it is simply a latrine. However, the floor rests on a locked pivot. If someone in the rat-corridor releases a catch, the privy becomes a pit trap, which drops its victim 20 feet into a sludge-pit of wet, jagged stone shards. Privy seats remain bolted to the floor. The materials in this pit can easily infect wounds. After the victim falls, a spring mechanism returns the floor to its original position.

An overflow pipe (with a corroded grating covering it) leads to the City's *Sewers* (**CB3**).

F. Bodyguard Chamber (16' x 19') Rafters and floorboards stand exposed in this room. The chamber contains no furniture but a huge doll house (**F1**), actually a miniature palace equipped with beds, kitchens and a miniature armory—all stolen from the finest homes and museums in the City. The scale is about 1/6th normal size. Abet Noir's ten bodyguards live here, in rat form. They spend their time patrolling the rat-corridors and resting in their house. To run an adventure here, simply use the floor plan for a typical mansion or small palace. Numerous six-inch-tall terracotta figures adorn the doll house, the remnants of forgotten Terrkota (see *Terrkot's People*).

Two human-sized locked[5] secret doors open into this room, one coming from outside, the other from the main house. Both have steel reinforcements and resemble the ordinary wall. Stairs lead from this room to the second floor (**K**).

A rat-sized bolt-hole (**F2**) leads out of the Bodyguard Chamber to an escape point in an alley three blocks away.

G. Cell (12' x 4') Abet Noir keeps prisoners in this stone room.

H. Empty Room (5' x 7') The Chervka keep all manner of supplies in here, both criminal and household. Rat doors connect with the secret passage and the Kitchen (**C**).

Second Floor

I. Guest Chambers (19' x 12') A thick brown carpet covers the floor here. The room contains two beds and a dresser covered with carvings of trees. Anyone in the rat-corridors outside may insert a bolt into the door, making it impossible to open and thereby sealing guests into this room.

J. Abet Noir's Chambers (8' x 18') The door to this room is locked[6]. Furthermore, the floor-boards are flexible and connect to a noisemaker, which screeches whenever anyone weighing over 40 pounds enters the room. Therefore, it is very difficult to enter the chamber undetected. Abet Noir sleeps in a large feather-bed with numerous cushions. Beside her bed is a stand holding a zoo of miniature glass animals. Several of these glass statuettes have hidden stoppers in their mouths and hold supplies of poison. She has a wide selection of chemicals, from sleeping-drugs to potent acids. These chambers also contain a full-length mirror, a similar mirror scaled for a rat, and two chests of clothes. The tapestry in the southeast corner hides a painting of a dark-haired, beardless dwarf (Crube Collie, proprietor of the *Bottomless Keg*).

K. Inner Hideout (17' x 19') This room provides a secret place where unlucky Chervka can hide from the City Guard or rival gangs. The Hideout has little furniture except for its beds and a wood stove. Several glass oil lamps hang from the ceiling. The stair here descends to room **F**.



—Abet Noir—

L. Vault (10' x 10') This locked[6], dank chamber has walls of stone, lined by oiled steel. The room itself contains neatly-stacked coins totalling 20,000 gold pieces. A chest of glass tubes holds a collection of poisons. The vault also contains documents and contracts, listing most of the prominent businesses in Side-show and their obligations to the Pack.

M. Morasso's Chambers (8' x 17') This room's door closes with an Excellent lock[6]. As with Abet Noir's chambers, the floor shrieks whenever anyone puts a weight over 40 pounds on it. Morasso has no furniture but a chest of clothes and a stand for armor and weapons. The armor stand holds a vest of fine layered chainmail which one could easily wear under clothing.

Personalities

Abet Noir, Lady of the Pack. ❑ *Chervka female, Ht.: 4' 2", Wt.: 65#, Age: 27.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with teeth and claws in rat form. Fair otherwise.*

Beauty is not a trait of the Chervka, but Abet Noir's warm brown eyes and perky laugh make her welcome in any company. Her manner is demure but extremely ingratiating, and despite the prejudice against a rat woman, she appears in social circles both high and low. People throughout the City count her as their friend. Her popularity has allowed her to become the most powerful gangster ever to lead the Pack.

Abet Noir has reached understandings with every group which might oppose her organization, from City constables to other gangs (though the Pack remains at war with the diminuative Terrkota). She has obtained through courtesy what might otherwise have required street warfare. Chervka sometimes chafe at her bargains, since these bargains prevent them from working on the turf of any other gang.

Abet Noir often seems almost harmless. She may be moody, but seldom loses her temper, and never indulges in threats. When a topic becomes too sensitive, she drops it. Nevertheless, bad things happen to those who annoy her. She knows influential

people throughout Sideshow, ranging from government officials to businessmen to murderous punks. Anyone who opposes her can expect his protection prices inflated, his friends intimidated and his own misdeeds reported. If such warnings do not persuade him to make amends, he may simply disappear.

Even so, the powerful crime lord has a chink in her armor. Through her information channels, Abet Noir learned that a dwarf whom she had thought to be a stuffy little tavern-keeper in Sideshow, was in actuality an infamous dwarven Wizard who had nearly brought his land to the brink of utter destruction in a racial war, then simply walked away. Hidden power of that magnitude intrigued her to no end. Her interest in Crube Collie, alias Crucible the Fox (*The Bottomless Keg*), quickly changed to attraction and now borders on obsession. Despite the potential risk to his family and business, Crube Collie does not return her affections.

Morasso. ❑ *Chervka male, Ht.: 4' 8", Wt.: 100#, Age: 30.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with sword, Excellent with teeth. Excellent with daggers from behind. Good otherwise.*

Morasso serves as a lieutenant and constant companion to Abet Noir. He is a taciturn, grim-faced Chervka, with broad shoulders and a chilly stare. One can usually find him somewhere near Abet, standing quietly by himself, as if awaiting orders. Despite his visage, Abet considers him one of the only people she can genuinely confide in. She uses him as a bodyguard, a secretary and something of a mascot.

Morasso also wields power of his own. He commands the largest and most violent faction of the Pack, the Red Eyes. His agents correct those gangsters who try to cheat the Pack leadership. For this reason, the legitimate government of Sideshow maintains close contact with Morasso, since he has the responsibility to prevent renegade Chervka (and most other criminals) from pillaging without Pack approval.

Morasso is a member of the Sliming Path and often uses Pack resources for its missions, in violation of Chervka tradition. If his rivals in the Pack could prove his loyalties to the 'Path, they would have grounds to destroy both him and his mistress.

Of course, complicating matters, is the degree of Morasso's devotion to Abet Noir. He loves her despite her obsession with Crube Collie. He doubly hates Crube, both because the dwarf is the object of Abet Noir's attraction and because he refuses to return it. Morasso is unaware of the truth about Crube and has concocted a thousand "accidents" that could rid the world of him.

Bodyguards (10). ❑ *Typical Chervka, Ht.: 4' 6", Wt.: 85#.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good.*

Abet Noir's 10 bodyguards are master thieves, whose skill on Pack missions earned them the honor of protecting this household. No burglar's trick can outfox them. They call themselves by street-aliases: Broken Arm, Chinkin, Blade, Blackwolf, Sewer Rat, Granary Rat, Shadows, Viper, Blackwing and Little Dovie.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: The Enemy of My Enemy is My Friend. Whether through foolish deeds or ill luck, the adventurers infuriate a powerful figure in Sideshow (like the merman, Wysilenthade of *The Blue Maid*). This foe launches a dedicated campaign to assassinate the adventurers, using thugs, poison and arranged "accidents." Unfortunately for him, he is acting without sanction in the territory of the Pack. Chervka informers save the adventurers' lives with some valuable tips. In the adventure climax, a crack hit team comes for the adventurers, wielding both blades and sorcery. At this point, Abet Noir shelters the adventurers in her own home and helps them make a final stand there. Those who survive owe Abet Noir their lives. She never forgets it.

Scenario 2: Stolen Fruits. This adventure begins when the Chervka steal an enchanted bloodstone from the vaults of a powerful enchanter. Soon thereafter, the Pack recognizes its mistake. The wizard wields more power than they care to challenge and can mobilize both City Guard and supernatural beings to find his property. Therefore, the Pack hurries to fence its booty—by selling it to an unwitting adventurer.

Those who played in Scenario One can hardly refuse to buy the jewel. Others may succumb to the temptation of purchasing an item of sorcery for a pittance. The bloodstone does indeed magnify a wizard's powers, making sorcery many times more powerful. However, whoever owns it must escape a City-wide manhunt for the thieves.

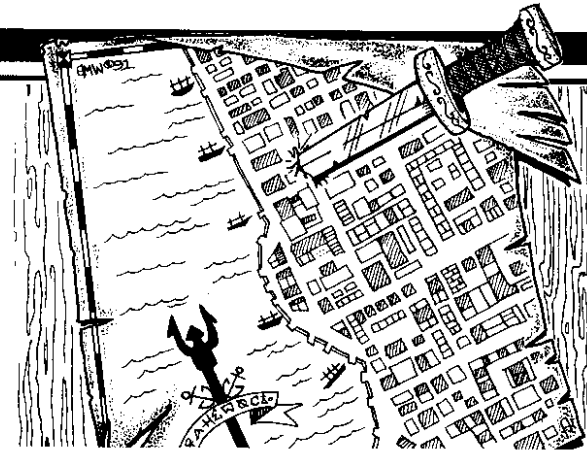
After days of dodging pursuit, the party discovers the true reason why the sorcerer pursued his gem with such zeal. The bloodstone contains a malevolent spirit, which gradually comes to possess those who use the jewel. By now, an adventurer may well be under the gem's power. Only the wizard who enchanted this jewel may free the victim—but to ask for his aid is to admit complicity in the theft. And to name the original thief is to face the Pack's sentence of death.

Scenario 3: Of Mice and Men. This adventure begins when one of the adventurers' friends, a Chervka, turns renegade. He performs an unauthorized burglary, perhaps with the adventurers' assistance. Unfortunately, his victims have friends throughout the City. The City Guard conduct a full investigation, and gangs of human vigilantes pour into Sideshow. Self-appointed "peacekeepers" rage through the streets, beating exotics. At this point, the party can enter the scene in any of three ways. The Pack might request the adventurers' aid in calming the affair by capturing the renegade and turning him over. The City Guard might hire adventurers as detectives. Or, perhaps, the thief himself seeks aid from the party. He would share his booty in return for help escaping from Sideshow.

Scenario 4: Honey! I Shrunk the Adventurers. A wizard needs something removed from the Chervka's doll house—something important enough to shrink the entire adventuring team to the size of dolls (or Terrkota). Full size heroes might accidently destroy the delicate goal of the quest in their search. All they need to do is bring out one particular terra-cotta statue of a wizard (Chisan Black-hair, the founder of High Haven, *Tsalini's Stopover Station*, **CB4**). Of course, Chervka hate Terrkota with a passion and will go to great lengths to destroy the tiny things. What the wizard wants with a miniature statue of another wizard who can create pocket dimensions can be the source of yet another adventure.

Both Abet Noir and her henchman, Morasso can be powerful friends or deadly enemies or both to an adventuring party. Consider what might happen if the adventurers aid her, or cross her? What might happen if Abet Noir were to be removed from power in the Pack, could the adventurers help her regain it? Remember, Civilization can be so complicated. It can take days just to learn who to bribe. The Pack makes life so much easier. Just remember, when in Sideshow, leave crime to the professionals!

The Old Man of the City



Not everyone who dwells in the City is there by choice. Not everyone loves it. Here is one whose desire to see the City destroyed has gone frustrated for a VERY long time.

Those who live in the City for any length of time eventually learn of its most elusive and reticent inhabitant, the "Old Man." He is called by many names: Shan-ru, "the honored one;" Shanu-re, "He who honors us;" even Shanare-ta, "He who is of highest honor." However, he is usually just called Char-hnu, or "The Ancient one" for he is as he is named—ancient.

His origins fade in the mists of history. The Old Man himself sometimes seems to have forgotten who he once was.

Legend/Common Knowledge

Once, long ago, a great traveller happened upon the rich, fertile valley and natural harbor. Weary of wandering, he settled in the pleasant place he had found. As the years wore on, he invited others to join him. This they did, and the City came into being. In his travels, he had won the favor of the Queen of the Sea, and she had bestowed her blessing upon him and granted his wish for the City's prosperity. Yet, wishes being so full of catches as they are, the life and prosperity of the City were eternally linked with those of the Old Man. Most folk in the City believe that on the day the Old Man dies, the City will perish!

The Truth

The truth, however, tells a different tale:

Gale-force winds had blown the ship before them for eight days and nights. By the ninth, the masts were tatters of splinters and rags and several of the crew had been lost. Jak, a youth, just lately come to manhood, huddled behind the rudder, lashed to the port-side rigging. Though in terror of his life on deck, the closeness and the smell of death below were far worse.

Ahead he could hear waves crashing against mighty rocks. The ship, it seemed, was doomed. Fighting down fear, Jak grasped the tiller and pulled, desperately trying to turn the ship away from the rocks. Through the storm, he thought he heard laughter.

Suddenly, it seemed the waves were horses, ridden by blue, softly luminescent beings. The Mer! Jak knew that the ship was indeed doomed, chosen as an offering to the sleeping sea-god by his dread Queen, whom the merfolk knew as Ssyahthay. Anyone who knew the sea in those days knew of and feared the merfolk and their dread goddess.

Jak and his family were wise and crafty sea traders who knew the risks of sea trade. Not all ships returned home to port every season. Each year the Mer chose several as prizes, calling forth great storms to wreck the hapless merchants and plunder the ships' goods for themselves. This was to be the fate of his ship—unless Jak could wrestle the ship past the rocks.

The fight was strenuous, but short. As the ship turned starboard a mighty wave carried it past the rocks and reefs into a small natural harbor, yet ripped the hull open on the shore rocks. Jak unlashed himself and went below to rescue his father, a cousin and a few remaining crewmen.

In the bright sun of the clear warm day that followed, Jak awoke amidst the flotsam to learn that of 28 who had sailed with them, only he and six others had survived. In the days that followed, as they recovered from the disaster, they explored the valley, learning of its abundant food, timber and fresh water. When all were fit enough to travel, they set out for home.

For three weeks they traveled north, but encountered no one and so returned to the valley. Again they tried, traveling south, only to turn back; but not before the two seamen left to continue on their own. Jak's family discussed matters and determined to try north again. Jak, however, refused, and decided to remain behind. He never saw his family again.

Jak lived a hermit's life, taking only what he needed from the valley, fishing when necessary. Time provided revelations.

Striving for wealth, as his family did, was useless. The valley could have provided for their basic needs, yet they chose to go back—not for the sake of family, but to continue business. Jak would have none of it.

Second, he hated the sea—the source of great woe for those of the land. It made possible the trade which fueled his father's greed. And it claimed the lives—by the actions of the Mer—of otherwise good husbands and fathers who abandoned their families to gain wealth.

And most of all, Jak hated the Mer! Driving ships to destruction, so they could claim goods earned in honest trade (so Jak thought); murdering innocent seamen and traders to slake their own desires for wealth—and human flesh; and offering their prey to the sleeping sea-god and his vile queen

Wealth! The sea! The Mer! Such things brought men to despair and destruction.

And so some 30 years passed and Jak remained alone. And once again, the winter season of storms gripped the sea. And on a night like that one so long ago, there came a ship, storm driven and Mer-cursed. Jak watched in horror as it hove into view above the glowing horizon. As before, laughter danced on the waves and riders on the storm herded the ship towards the deadly rocks.

After a seven-year hiatus on the sunny west coast, spent in a fruitless search for Nirvana, author J. D. KIRKLAND-REVELS once again turns his hand to writing fantasy.

Illustrator GARY M. WILLIAMS hopes that his first child will not be born while he and his wife are overseeing the art show which they run for that very large gaming convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin each year. "I don't want any Yankee babies in this family," he joked (We Yankee editors, being such a thin-skinned, sensitive lot, don't find such humor particularly amusing).

Then, something inside him snapped. He threw himself onto his small fishing raft and struck out for the rocks and the ship beyond. Whetehr by fate or fortune, he rode the crest of a wave over the rocks to the open sea.

The ship loomed before him and immediately bore down upon the tiny raft, unguided by human hand. Jak threw himself onto the side-rigging as the ship rolled to port and crushed his raft. He made his way to the tiller and, as before, attempted to steer a dying ship away from the jagged rocks. Perhaps the over-eager Mer drove the ship too hard and fast, for once again, a great swell lifted the ship and sent her past danger and into the harbor beyond. Too late did the angered wave riders call upon their goddess for help. The Storm Petrel (as the ship was called), though battered and listing, had been taken by a second wave and set gently on the sandy shore, safe from the sea and its terrible children.

The dawn which came was brighter than the one Jak had known years before. Most of the crew and trades had survived. Though badly damaged, hard work through the winter would make the 'Petrel seaworthy once more. Through the normally dreary winter, Jak relished the company of the crew, but come spring, he enjoyed their departure even more. The Storm Petrel sailed away on a kinder sea and he returned to his hermit life.

So it was with a glad heart, after a good meal and a last bottle of fine wine, that Jak walked the empty beach alone at moonrise. A vision came to him out of the sea. A woman of greater beauty than he had ever seen before: Ssyahthay, Queen of the Mer.

"Landsman," she said, *"you have twice deprived me of my due. Now tis time to pay. Until the City which stands in this place is laid waste and 10 years deserted you shall be forced to live amongst these men and their descendants, traveling no more than 200 paces beyond your hut in any direction."* So saying, she raised her trident and circled it in the air three times. *"By my lord who sleeps in the deep, let it be so."*

And as she turned back into the water Jak called after her, "What City? What City?!!" But she only laughed.

Jak wondered on her words for days, but eventually forgot them—until the spring two years later. He awoke one balmy, breezy day to see not one, but 10 sails on the horizon, all tacking into the shore. The crew of the Storm Petrel had told great tales of a wondrous harbor and fertile valley.

Within a week, much to Jak's disbelief, the plans for a town had been laid out and the work begun on building homes for the traders and their families. Jak wanted neither them, nor their City, anywhere near his beloved valley, so he set fire to several unfinished homes. The traders beat Jak nearly to death, and began to rebuild. Again he set fire to their work. As the angry traders sought to drown Jak in the harbor, the Queen of the Sea manifested herself before them, speaking, *"This man is my chosen one, upon whom I have bestowed my favor. The fate of your City is bound to his own. Harm him at your peril, for I will not be unavenged on those who thwart my will. Though he may curse you, know that his cursings are as blessings from a god."* So it is that the people of the City continually seek him out, begging for him to curse them. The irony was not lost on the Ancient One, but he failed to see the humor of the situation

From that day onward, no man would touch Jak to do him harm (and those that tried were cast out). Nevertheless, Jak did what he could to destroy the growing community.

The traders built the City away from Jak's hut (they swiftly learned of his restrictions). For centuries, he dwelled outside it. Though he could not enter the City, it soon grew to encompass his hilltop home. Now, Jak resides almost squarely in the middle of Sideshow, the City's exotic quarter. As the cycle of years came and went the origins of the cursing were forgotten, but the residents came to believe that they would prosper in direct proportion to the amount of cursing Jak directed at them—for prosper they did, much to the anger and despair of the man who defied the Queen of the Sea.

Deep Hates and Past Plots

The Ancient One's hatred of the City is as undying as his cursed existence, ever feeding on and being fed by his hatred of the Mer. Short indeed is the life, and miserably cruel is the end of a Mer caught unawares by the Old Man. His schemes against the City, however, more often occupy his mind than his ancient foes.

Some centuries back, the Old Man exchanged certain favors and dearly-extracted promises to supply the captains of a pirate fleet with sounding maps to the harbor and nearby coastal waters. Somehow the Mer learned of it and caught the fleet within sight of the City. All 75 ships were lost (and 4,000 pirates became "seafood"). The citizens rejoiced while the Old Man raged.

The Old Man was also responsible for the creation of the Effigies, the importation of the gargoyles (inside the stone used to build one of his early homes), the unearthing of the god-stone Terrkot, the early demise of an uncounted number of City rulers, one or two plagues, the Great Fire, several anti-social cults, and more than a few major wars around and against the City.

Present Plans and Perpetrations

The Old Man has innumerable plots afoot to end the City. Some may not come to fruition for years, even centuries. Currently, he funds the Sliming Path, creates dissention in the Wizard's Guild, sells secrets to foreign powers, assassinates the rich and powerful, persecutes the merfolk and does what he can to ruin overland trade. Often, he requires the services of mercenaries and adventurers, to either obtain things, act as couriers, and just plain do his dirty work. On the other hand, if the Old Man thinks that an adventurer's actions benefit the City, he may arrange for accidents and disasters to occur.

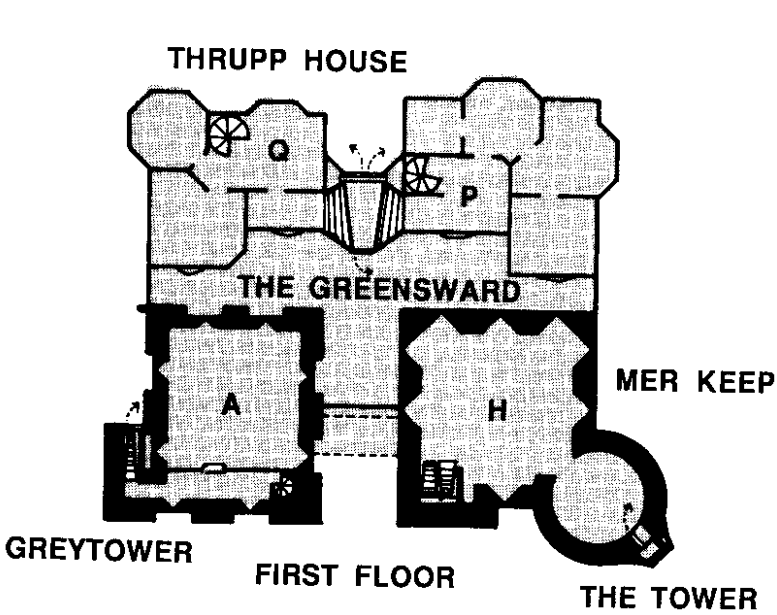
One thing is certain ... few, if any, of the Old Man's activities will involve the sea. He has learned that lesson too well.

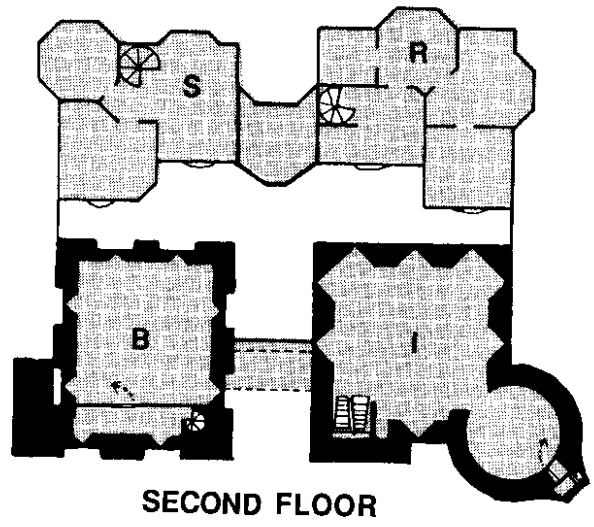
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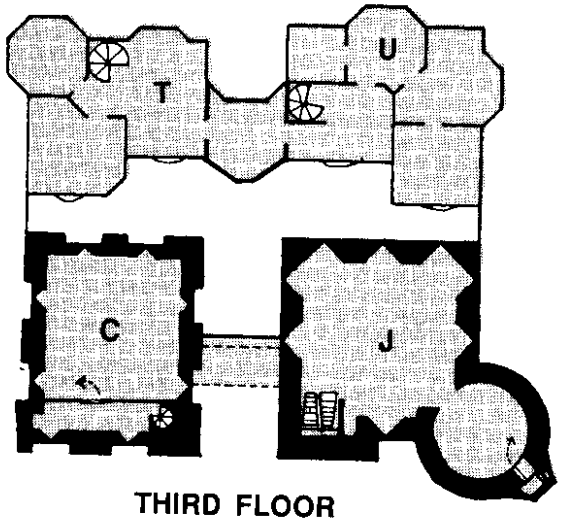
The Old Man's house actually consists of three buildings—two stone towers, fortress-type buildings connected by an enclosed, arched bridge and a half-timbered great house next to them which is connected by a series of underground tunnels. Those same tunnels also branch off and connect to several locations within the Exotic quarter, as well as the City itself.

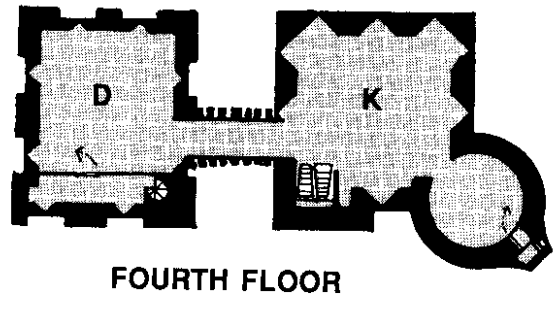
Mer Keep is the oldest building in the exotic quarter, but is, in fact, the fourth building to stand on the site (the previous three having been burned). Originally consisting of a round tower built on the grassy knoll where the old man's original hut stood, it now has a block-style "fortress" added on. Its walls and those of Greytower are quite thick and of large-stone masonry.

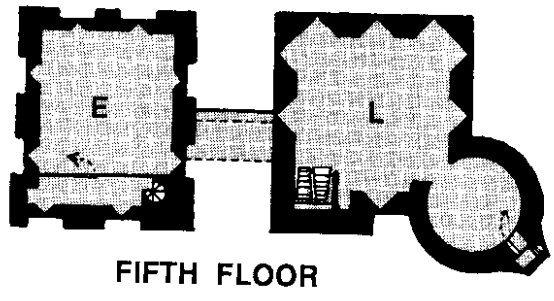
Thrupp House, however, is expensive, decorative patterned brick on the lower half, with large, exposed oak timbers framing the upper half, filled in with cheap bricks covered by plaster and paint.

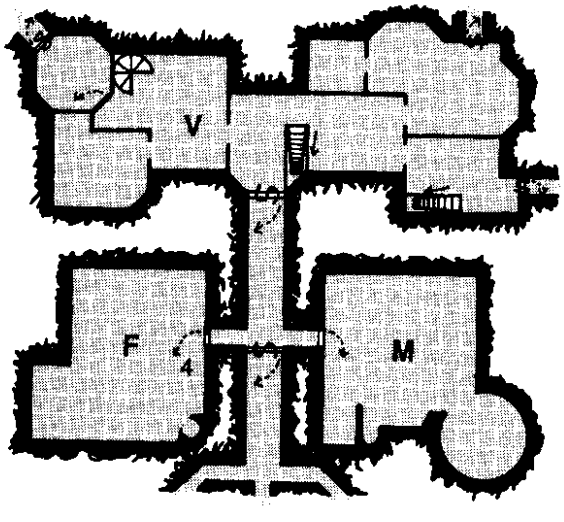


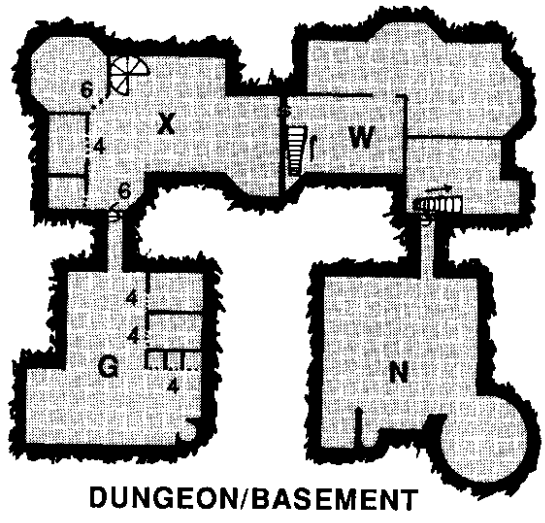












SCALE: one square = 3 feet

Greytower

A. & B. First & Second Floors. These floors are for storage: military storage at that. Both are given over to Jak's personal arsenal. Weapons of every description, size and use abound in these rooms. Weapons both ancient and exotic, large and small—yet all very deadly—lay in readiness for the appointed hour of apocalypse (though the hour has actually come and gone several times, but without the dramatic ending of which the Old Man fervently dreams).

C. Third Floor. This floor is reserved for meetings between Jak and his agents. It is impressive to the uninitiated, especially after passing through the first two floors. Here Jak keeps his extremely detailed maps of the City—including the floor plans to every major family manor, and all important businesses, as well as the tunnels, sewers and their connecting points with his own private system of passageways (some of which may connect with the abandoned chambers mentioned in *The Gaggle* (c.f.)).

D. & E. Fourth & Fifth Floors. The top two floors of Greytower are Sendor's private place of residence set about in the style and opulence befitting a dethroned demigod. Few know of his existence here (Jak and probably some other slumming demigods). This is his "retreat" away from it all—except for the bottle—which Jak keeps an abundance of (and the very best at that). A crenellated bridge connects the fourth floors of both Greytower and Mer Keep.

F. The Cellar. This locked[4] area contains the overflow of Jak's private wine stock (for Sendor's personal use), some 9,000 bottles at present, but the number is in a state of continual flux. The Cellar connects to the tunnels leading throughout the City and is used as a planning room.

G. The Dungeon. This secret area connects only to the torture area beneath Thrupp house. This is where the Old Man keeps people he really doesn't like!

Mer Keep

This is Jak's private place. He lives on the top two floors in quiet comfort. If he does receive visitors or guests (very rarely), he does so in his more elaborate rooms in Thrupp House (**U**). The first and second floor windows are mere arrow-slits—the Old Man lost too many windows to attack in the early days and eventually had the windows filled in.

H. & I. First & Second Floors. These are for storage.

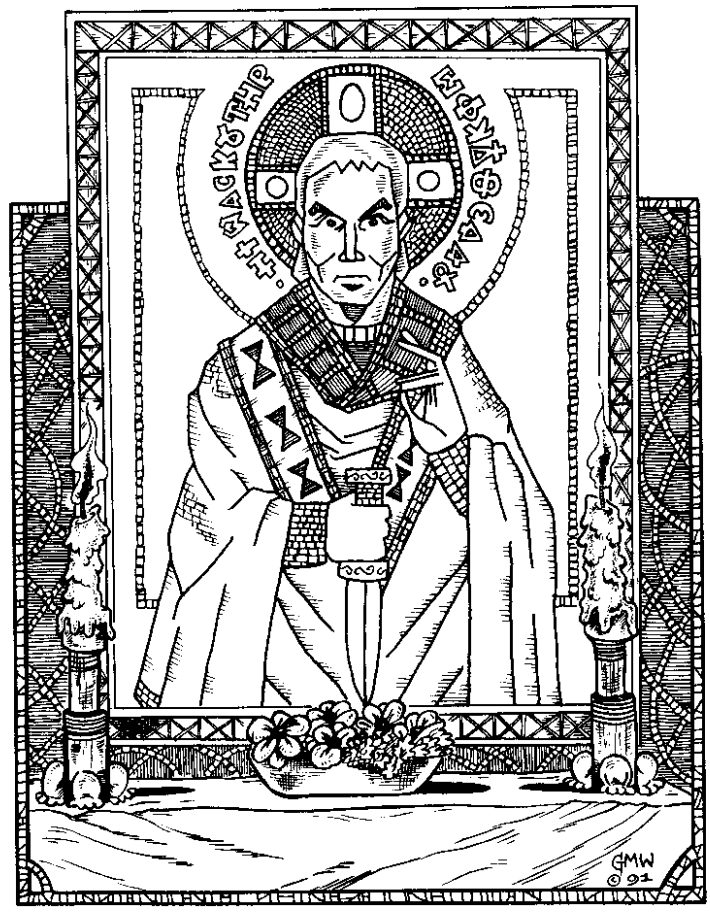
J. Third Floor. This contains the rooms of his personal servant Vreskikki, an iron-thewed barbaric bodyguard named Dragho, Dragho's son and a kitchen.

K. & L. Fourth & Fifth Floors. The Old Man's apartments.

M. Cellar. The cellar holds his private stock—undoubtably the finest wine cellar in the City. Here are the entrances to the tunnels leading to his other buildings and throughout the quarter, extending as far as the City proper.

N. Basement. This is filled with the debris of countless centuries, mostly furnishings, rotting clothes, even great treasures that the Old Man has tired of and that his followers cannot bear to throw out or destroy.

The Tower. Though fully seven stories tall, it is seldom used below the fourth floor. The second, third and fourth floors are used for storage, mostly things that have long since become antiques. The fifth floor is Jak's well-filled treasury (while he personally dislikes wealth, he needs it to bring about the destruction of the City). The sixth floor is empty, and the seventh floor is his "sanctum sanctorum" or private place to get away from everyone and everything. It is from here that he can occasionally be seen staring out to sea, and cursing its inhabitants, as well as those of the City.



— Shanu-re, "He-who-honors-us" —
(official portrait hanging in Thrupp House shrine)

Thrupp House

This elegant mansion is the "official residence" of the Old Man. His seldom-used apartments are on the third floor (**U**). Here his followers (who revere him as a great philosopher and man of unsurpassed wisdom) come to seek his knowledge and guidance. He in turn uses them as his unwitting agents (he has others scattered throughout the City). Between eight and 12 of them live in monkish austerity in area **R**.

His three assistants live here (areas **S** & **T**), taking care of the day-to-day operations (in area **Q**) of what is, in effect, a local shrine. They manage his accounts (which are vast) and teach his "disciples" in area **P**.

The **Cellar** (**V**) contains the supplies and service areas necessary to run the residence (laundry, kitchen, pantry, scullery, carpentry, lumber room and so on).

The **Basement** appears to be much smaller than the rest of the house and contain records stretching back at least to the construction of Greytower and Mer Keep. It also contains several secret

areas and an infrequently used torture chamber (X) which more than a few Mer have known, to their regret.

The Greensward

This shadowed little lawn is the private domain of the Old Man. Here he is most at peace, tending the bright flowers, trimming the grass and drying out the occasional merman's hide on stakes pounded into the ground.

Personalities

Jak, a.k.a. "The Old Man." ❑ *Human male; Ht.: 5'4"; Wt.: 135#; Age: Unknown, incredibly ancient, appears to be a well-preserved 51.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Legendary in C2 (uncontrollable self-healing and regeneration only, due to his curse).*

Few people know the Old Man's true appearance. While he doesn't have the mutability of the Effigies, he has excellent skills at looking like someone else. Though he always appears as someone of mature years, one day he may be a rich merchant, another a hobbling beggar, and another a frumpy matron on her way to market. His personality changes to match the new guise, but in general, he is always irritable and quick to curse.

The Old Man cannot be killed—though over the ages, many have tried, succeeding only in maiming and crippling him. Eventually, he heals, even regenerating body parts and major internal organs (he once suffered for over a year while regenerating all the organs in his chest and abdomen). In fact, he may have been the original inspiration for the beggar god Ysrai, having spent a few centuries as a horribly deformed and crippled beggar while he regenerated limbs that had been torn from him.

While Sendor is his only friend, once every century or so, the Old Man falls in love. Recently, and to his own dismay and self-disgust, he has fallen in love with a mermaid.

The Old Man is a frequent visitor to oddity shops in Sideshow, like Hilkin's. Out of perversity, he once visited *The Blue Maid* (the shop run by the merfolk). Despite his hatred of the Mer, he was quite taken with the shop's proprietor, the lovely Hwaysenthade. He has even considered having her abducted (something done with many merfolk in the past, but for other reasons). He knows from past experience that the addiction to enthade women does not affect him.

Sendor. ❑ *Demigod without portfolio; Ht.: 6'5"; Wt.: 200#; Age: unknown, looks to be about 45.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Legendary, (he is a god), but he avoids fighting.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Very Good, but rarely used.*

Life for the Old Man would be truly miserable, except for one being: Sendor, a creature no less miserable than himself. Sendor is a demigod, stripped of power by an unpredictable, arrogant, usurping half-brother, Izzelmar the Capricious. Exiled to the realm of the mundane, Sendor is but a shadow of his former self (though he is still more than a match for any 10 mortals, but that doesn't mean much when you've lost your place among the heavenlies). Sendor and Jak met one night at the legendary "Lost Inn" (a place where folk who die in tavern fights go to spend eternity) and tied one on (as they say), becoming fast friends by the third keg (he's a demigod, remember?). Now, whenever he's about, Sendor stays with Jak.

Sendor is a huge, muscular brooding man, with a close-cropped beard and short curly hair. His favorite past time is drinking. To him, life is one colossal tragic joke—and he is its eternal victim

Scenario Suggestions

The following scenarios can be played in sequence, as a mini-campaign.

Scenario 1: Dessert of Desolation. The sign offers employment to willing heroes, asking them to make application to the acolytes at Thrupp House, home of Shanu-re "He who honors us." The acolytes are preparing a surprise feast and celebration in honor of the City's eldest inhabitant, and require many exotic items for the ceremonies. Acquiring each item requires that a mini-quest be performed. Some items must be purchased from shops in the City. Others are found in lost treasure troves far from it. For each item gained, the heroes are rewarded more amply than the last. Should the adventurers research their prizes, they will find that each has some kind of deadly, poisonous, or accursed power that is directed specifically against water or creatures living in water.

Scenario 2: An Old Man's Fancy. The Ancient One decides to have the merwoman, Hwaysenthade become his paramour. At a feast honoring the Old Man, to which the adventurers have been invited, the Ancient One hires the adventurers to kidnap Hways from *The Blue Maid*, explaining in detail the merfolk's plan to destroy the world, and that if the merman Wysilienthade had to choose between destroying the dry world and saving his love by turning over his cache of Tears of the Sun, he would choose the latter. Confuse the adventurers by having Hways go willingly, until Wysilienthade shows up. Her attitude suddenly changes and she eggs the easily enraged merman to her defense (she wants the arrogant merman dead).

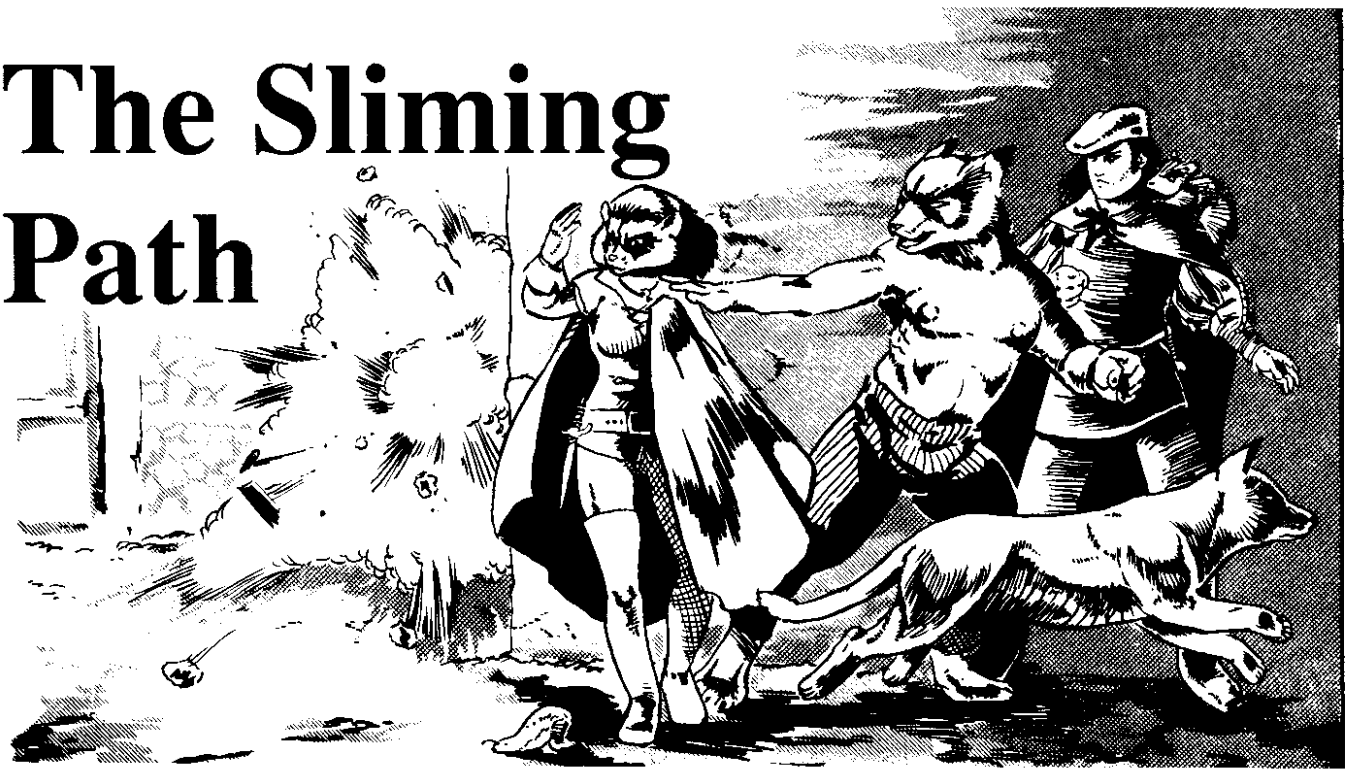
Of course, Thasilenthade, who secretly loves Hways, will pursue her kidnappers to the ends (or The End) of the world to "save" his beloved.

Scenario 3: Cargo of Doom. A nobleman (the Old Man) is going by sea to woo the hand of princess in a far exotic land. Much publicity is given to his cargo and departure of his "love offering." Just as secretly, the Old Man's agents arrange for the merfolk of *The Blue Maid* to sink the ship and take it's cargo. Of course the treasures on board are deadly to sea dwellers and may kill hundreds, possibly thousands of merfolk. Everything about the treasure makes it look like a concerted attack against the seafolk by the City itself, hopefully enraging them and their goddess to attack and destroy the City.

The nobleman offers the adventurers lucrative jobs as guards aboard the ship. If the adventurers have already done some of the Old Man's dirty work, this is convenient for him, since they should die when the ship sinks. Assume that Thasilenthade is in charge of the ship's sinking and may have a special axe to grind against adventurers who "stole" his love.

The Old Man is full of plots and bile directed against the City. Any plot against the City is more than likely to have him as a sponsor. He always needs willing and unwitting hands to do his dirty work. If a GM wants to get adventurers into hot water quickly, dream up a new plot by the Old Man against the City and involve them in it.

The Sliming Path



Relations between normal humans and the bizarre denizens of Sideshow are not always cordial. "Proper" humans and demi-humans are often open in their contempt for the "monstrosities" of Sideshow. This prejudice seeps through even to the City's government and law-enforcement agencies, to the frustration of the minorities. But Sideshow has spawned a response...

The Sideshow Municipal Landfill (affectionately known to the locals as "the Dump") is the meeting place of one of Sideshow's most notorious, and secretive, groups: The Sliming Path.

Few people know precisely who are the members of the Sliming Path, or how they came together. They have become infamous in the City, however, from their calling card left at the site of each appearance they make: a magicalactive slug, which radiates magic and leaves a path of dimly luminescent slime.

What does the Sliming Path stand for? Different people will give different answers. "A bunch of uppity freaks who won't accept their place," sneers one proper matron from a bourgeois human quarter of the City—"Dangerous terrorists!" charges a constable—while more than one downtrodden denizen of Sideshow has called them heroes and secret defenders of justice.

The Sliming Path first appeared 12 years ago, when the warehouse of a wealthy human merchant went up in flames. A widely-distributed written message, accompanied by the trademark slug, claimed responsibility for the act. It further denounced the merchant as a bigot and oppressor whose activities victimized many of the City's poor, and most especially those of Sideshow. The message went on to document the merchant's specific offenses, such as refusing to employ "freaks" and charging more for goods and services in Sideshow than other quarters of the City. Even more crucially, the message implicated the merchant in the murder of Hally Murgo, a human advocate who was an outspoken supporter of the City's poor and downtrodden. The message concluded, "You may regard us as the lowest of the low, the slime of the City; even so we will follow this sliming path until justice is won!" The name, "Sliming Path," took.

Authorities were trapped. On the one hand, they (and the merchant) wanted to "bring to justice" the arsonists; on the other, the public outcry over the revelations about the merchant forced their hand. As matters turned out, it was possible to prosecute the merchant with success. The investigation even revealed other highly-placed accomplices in the crime. But the Sliming Path remained untouchable, a mystery.

To most people it's still a mystery, but in Sideshow it's a less threatening one. The Path's continuing activities over the years have consistently bettered the lot of Sideshow's residents—exacting retribution for crimes that "slip through" the normal channels of justice, bringing attention to the needs and sufferings of the City's least popular inhabitants. Perhaps the most important effect has been psychological, however. The gruesome deaths of a few loud-mouthed human hoodlums and vandals has gone a long way toward keeping others of their kind from molesting Sideshow's populace.

Activities

What began as a one-creature operation has grown in the dozen years since the 'Path's first appearance. Slorrup, the founder of the 'Path, first added two were-creatures—beings

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In making his second CityBook appearance with the nasty activists of the Sliming Path, author JOHN NEPHEW takes time out from both the completion of his graduate studies and work for his own game company, Atlas Games. In his spare time, John has been known to freelance to other gaming companies and even ... sleep.

SUSAN VAN CAMP spent fourth grade drawing strange pictures when she should have been studying her spelling words. She has since learned to spell and now draws strange pictures for a living (Hey, somebody's gotta do it). However, she never did figure out "new math." I hope you like her strange pictures as much as I do.

who had functioned in "normal" society, with their "freakishness" hidden for reasonable fear of ill treatment. Slorrup found them, and gave them new pride in their unusual natures. They became his lieutenants, recruiting more members, and combing the talk of the streets for word of wrongs to be righted and crimes to be avenged.

The Sliming Path's activities can be divided into three categories: Protection, Revenge, and Sabotage.

Protection is a day-to-day activity. The Path-people (a gender-inclusive term, at the insistence of Leona the were-raccoon) keep a close eye on everything that happens in Sideshow, and do small things (often under guises other than that of the 'Path) to prevent harm to Sideshow and its residents. There is an implicit understanding, and sometimes even planned cooperation, between the the Sliming Path and the Pack (Sideshow's crime syndicate and true government) in these matters. Slorrup is on favorable terms with Abet Noir, the Chervka leader of the Pack; and while their ultimate goals differ, they have much common ground. If there has to be racketeering in Sideshow, Slorrup reasons pragmatically, better it be Chervka than human; their shared understanding of human oppression will lead to community consciousness and solidarity. A good example of protection was when *Komptoi's Cartage & Drayage* was being threatened by ruffians (probably hired by the insidious Forge Company, see *Forgeway Inn #46*, **CB4**). The Lurkkan Leal and a few Ruffiri took to hanging around the business's offices. After a some sharp confrontations, the ruffians were never again seen in Sideshow.

Revenge is what must happen when protection fails. Again there is some cooperation with the Chervka, but less so than in the case of protection. The Chervka are chiefly concerned with their "criminal jurisdiction;" they will avenge the infringement of their monopoly over Sideshow crime by human and demi-human guilds. The Sliming Path, on the other hand, is interested in avenging actions taken against Sideshow residents because they are Sideshow residents. The first public act of the 'Path was an example of this revenge. Such would not have fallen within the Pack's sphere of interest.

Finally, there is Sabotage. While similar to revenge, this is often preemptive rather than retributive; and it strikes at more subtle forms of abuse. Once a human "hate society," preaching the loathsomeness and inferiority of the "freaks," was attacked by masked band as they were plotting to burn down the shop of a successful Sideshow merchant. Their own headquarters was reduced to ashes instead! In several other instances, human and demi-human merchants who operated outlets in Sideshow but never hired any "freak" employees were subject to harassment that threatened their profitability. They had to either hire "freaks" or move out.

At the scene of each terrorist act, the 'Path-people leave their calling card, the magicalactive slug. Sometimes they leave polemics, declarations, or manifestos as well; but more typically such missives are sent anonymously to town criers and aldermen.

What is the ultimate goal of the 'Path? Path-people tend to spend a lot of time debating this issue. They can be divided into three camps, each identifiable with one of the 'Path's leaders. In Slorrup's eyes, the 'Path does not have a final goal—because the battle for justice will never end. That the task is ultimately impossible must not deter the Path-people, but instead harden their resolve. Josef, on the other hand, hopes to establish rapport with humankind; he looks toward a utopia of integration, in which differences of form will be of no consequence. Leona, finally, exults in difference; her ultimate goal is to shape, by violent revolution or any other necessary means, a Sideshow that is separate community from the City, politically independent.

Although members may quibble over the ultimate destination of the 'Path, all agree on one point: The absolute bond of silence among members. There are many humans who would like nothing more than to destroy the 'Path. Path-people will kill if it is necessary to maintain the secrecy of their organization—or in retribution if that secrecy is betrayed.

Funding

A political party requires money to operate. The 'Path is no different. Supplies must be bought, informants and government official paid off, social programs funded and "office" space rented. All this takes money. And since the 'Path is a political organization, not a criminal one, their money comes from legitimate sources. The smallest part comes from the pockets of members; more from sympathetic Sideshow businesses; but by the far the greatest share is given as a gift by that mysterious Sideshow resident known only as "The Old Man." The goals of the 'Path and particularly those of the violent Leona fit well within the scope of his own plans for the City ... and its eventual destruction.

Layout

It's not necessary to provide a very detailed description, or even a map, of the Sideshow Municipal Landfill. It is a noxious corner of the quarter, heaped high with decades of trash, and surrounded by a wooden stockade to keep the noisesome mounds from overflowing into the yards and gardens of the unfortunate neighbors. It is an ever-changing place, as heaps of garbage are sculpted by the elements of wind and rain, and new loads are carted in each day from throughout the City. Slorrup makes his "bed" anew each day, it consisting of a pile of trash under which he burrows to rest each night.

One corner of the dump radiates magic faintly. There, under a long-undisturbed mound of trash, is an oozing mass of magical waste, the refuse of decades of wizards' and alchemists' laboratories. It is here that the 'Path finds its magicalactive slugs. The creatures are mutated by the magic radiations so that they, too, radiate magic. They often have other properties as well, such as glowing in the dark; some are poisonous, while others, if consumed alive, will affect the eater as a random magical potion.

Personalities

Slorrup. ❑ *A gender-less, highly-evolved garbage-thing, Ht.: 5'10", Wt.: 188#, Age: 27.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with his own limbs (damage comparable to that of a club), otherwise Average.*

After a particularly noxious batch of magical waste was dumped in the Sideshow Municipal Landfill ("Is this it? Can't tell it from the rest of the dang place," remarked the City engineer



— Slorrup —

overseeing the disposal), bizarre permutations of the local flora and fauna resulted. Among them was Slorrup. What is Slorrup? "He" might be best described as an intelligent, vaguely humanoid slug. No one is quite sure precisely from which form(s) of life Slorrup, shall we say, evolved (slug, maggot, worm and fungus are the top guesses to date), but here he is. Although Slorrup is asexual, he usually goes by masculine pronouns, finding constructions like "s/he" awkward, and the term "it" to be degrading.

Slorrup is a "natural philosopher," or "landfill intellectual," as he styles himself. His knowledge is really nothing extraordinary—but he has a way of expressing himself that transforms the most banal truism into earth-shattering revelation. Slorrup takes great pride this philosophical expertise, which he uses like a concert virtuoso to persuade denizens of Sideshow of the importance of their struggle against oppression. From his observations on life, he has concluded that struggle will never cease, perhaps even beyond death. This must not discourage, however; instead, people must struggle in the most noble, dignified manner, even if their cause is doomed.

Slorrup plays a delicate game, maintaining the secrecy and efficiency of his organization. Fortunately, he has cultivated an overwhelmingly positive reputation in Sideshow, which has helped maintain tight lips and shrugging shoulders when human authorities come inquiring. The humans' latest effort is marginally more subtle: the were-mole Slid (cf. *Nadorix's Necropolis*), who has been looking to gain membership in the 'Path. Thanks to a tip from Nadorix himself, and the testimony of Slid's incompetence, the spy was easily noted. Rather than make an example of him, however, the Slorrup has been feeding misinformation through Slid, to placate the authorities and make them believe they have an investigation in progress. All of Slid's contacts are with Effies, who use the same appearance (a stooped, drooling, slimy, humanoid figure), so that if Slid's employers come looking themselves, they'll find a dead end.

As a unique being, Slorrup's relative age is indeterminate. Who knows how long a mutant slug lives? Some suspect he is nearing the end, as his health seems to be deteriorating.

Josef. ❑ *Were-bear male, human form: Ht.: 5'11", Wt.: 188#, Age 35.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Good with paws (in bear shape); Fair with sword, spear, and crossbow, otherwise Average.*

A foot soldier in the wars, Josef was once separated from his unit in the woods. He encountered a hostile were-bear (it took offense at the humans' brutalization of its habitat) and though Josef was the encounter's survivor, he contracted the shape-changer's disease.

Returning to the City, Josef found himself with a modest pension but very few friends. The war had not been popular, and there was not the heroes' welcome that many soldiers had expected. Josef's lycanthropy progressed, further isolating him from human culture.

Josef took to wandering the fringes of the City, including Sideshow. He met Slorrup when he came to snuffle after tasty discarded scraps of food in the Dump. Tired of living his closeted were-life, Josef was convinced by a long philosophical discussion with Slorrup that organized resistance must be mounted against human hegemony.

Of all the Sliming Path's vital members, Josef remains the closest to humankind. He uses his human identity to study the City outside of Sideshow, and to promote peaceful avenues toward the 'Path's goals. In many ways Josef regards himself as primarily a human who, through the isolating tragedy of his disease, has come to personally understand the effects of human tribalism. He is not a passionate believer in violence like Leona, but as a good soldier acknowledges its occasional necessity. His ultimate goal is a society where all are equal and share in the nation's bounty. Those who oppose this goal must, unfortunately, be removed.

Leona. ❑ *Were-raccoon female, bipedal raccoon form: Ht.: 5'2", Wt.: 106#, Age 34.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with dagger and short sword, Good with sling, otherwise Average.*

Leona is a living study in radicalism. She is a militant revolutionary, believing that only a violent overthrow of the human regime will bring freedom and equality for Sideshow's people. Out of disgust for her human side, she stays in raccoon shape all month long, not just at full moons. Knowing that most of the 'Path's income is derived from a human does not improve her general disposition.

Leona is the brilliant strategist of the 'Path; she has planned (and often personally directed) almost all of the 'Path's most infamous schemes. An especially valuable asset is her ability to stay cool "under fire"; even in the most impossible, stressful situations imaginable, she keeps her head, and if there's any way out of the situation at all, she'll probably find it. Perhaps she is able to operate like this because she has become accustomed to living in a state of constant angry passion—so in battle or on operations she is even more collected than usual because she is



— Leona —

in fact venting her anger.

Small of stature, but big of mouth, Leona is a mesmerizing speaker. She complement's Slorrup's calm, philosophical pronouncements with her fire and fervor.

Leona thinks Josef, the were-bear, is a great, passive oaf, just looking for a chance to compromise with the oppressors. He even has the gall to attend meetings in human shape (claiming that it's difficult to speak clearly with his bear's mouth). Still, he is sometimes useful. Slorrup, on the other hand, is her idol, not the least because he is so inhuman, and asexual to boot. She just wishes he would be more enthusiastic about spreading the revolution.

Other Members

Quite a few Sideshow residents besides these have joined the path, although none of them have the authority or knowledge of the central "troika." Most members of the path will have a few comrades and a single contact/leader, who in turn is in contact with Leona, Slorrup, or Josef.

While the troika of leaders almost exclusively meets at the Dump, meetings with subordinates are sometimes held at the Panther Club. Among the notable members from other Sideshow establishments are the following (not an exhaustive list):

❑ Several "Effies" (from *Spitting Images* and *The Face Place*) are members of the path, including the dangerous Semb the Lance, working as agents, infiltrators, and saboteurs under Josef's command.

❑ The troll, Tandrean Kenne, bartender at *The Bottomless Keg*, works with Josef, overseeing some of the 'Path's more humanitarian project.

❑ Leona makes use of some Level 2 and Level 3 Ruffiri for her nefarious Path activities, though she acts without the approval of the infamous Krista Rose.

❑ Leal, the Lurkkan warrior of the *Knight's Cranial Hospitaler*. A powerful warrior, Leal is valuable muscle for Leona—especially since his "cover" job, finding limbs for the Knight's Cranial Hospitaler's customers, can obscure his relationship with the 'Path.

❑ Morasso, chief lieutenant of Abet Noir and commander of the Red Eyes, a powerful, violent faction within the Pack. He uses Red Eye Chervka to conduct Path business, a practice that would not sit well with more conservative Chervka, were it to be known. The Path also has a certain level of understanding with Abet Noir of the Pack, as discussed under "Activities," above.

❑ Stinya, the young rivergyne who delivers potions and herbal packets throughout the City for Riversent, also works as a courier for the 'Path (just don't tell her mother!).

❑ A gargoyle named Cuimin is not a member the 'Path, but he secretly provides information to them and uses them to spread the kind of disorder and calamity that gargoyles love. Occasionally, his secret messages bring members of the 'Path to grief.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: We're Looking for a Few Good Creatures. The adventurers join the 'Path, and are sent on a mission. When it fails disastrously, the adventurers are led to believe they were set up—a spy must have infiltrated the path.

While the unwitting double-agent Slid is used to distract the City authorities, there are other, more dangerous enemies of the 'Path—persons with whom Leona has had the misfortune of contact. To preserve the 'Path—and the hope of a politically independent Sideshow—Leona has bent her principles so far as to deal with these humans. In exchange for key information, she minimizes the damage that these humans' endeavors suffer from Path activities. They, in turn, curtail their own impulses to flatten Sideshow (these unscrupulous humans might be leaders of organized crime, political leaders, powerful nobles, or even wealthy merchants). Dealing with humans bothers Leona, but she expects ultimately to use them to create a separate Sideshow, and after Slorrup is gone to ensure that she becomes the ruler of the 'Path.

A long and dangerous investigation leads the adventurers to discover Leona's doings. How do they respond? Do they confront her, reveal her to the rest of the ruling troika, or agree with her practical logic and admit collaborationism as a sordid aspect of maintaining a resistance movement?

Scenario 2: Is there a Slug-Drover in the House? Slorrup isn't getting old—his home is being polluted, and that's why his health is going downhill! Someone needs to get the City to stop dumping such highly saline trash in the Dump—or convince Slorrup to move elsewhere, for his health's sake. In the meantime, someone who knows something about the health of slimy creatures needs to be brought in. Someone suggests that the *River Drake* **(CB4)** a river boat operated by the mysterious riverfolk is powered by giant slugs. Possibly they can help. Of course the River Drake could be anywhere on the Great River right now.

Long live the glorious, slimy revolution!

Terrkot's People



"'Tis a queer thing, they say, the rock post called Terrkot. You've seen it before, of course, when traveling through this section of town that other right-thinking folks tend to shun. A pagan thing they call it, a shrine from a time before men recognized the true gods. No one with a half an ounce of brains believes the legends about offerings left in its heart. Fodder for thieves and wastrels, and it's fools that feed them." — so goes Smilin' Al's patter on his daily tours ... yet ... One can't be sure. If it is true, if Terrkot will present offerings to the dead in the next world, dropping a memento for a fallen comrade can't be a bad thing, can it?

Terrkot is a thick cylindrical stone that, were it excavated, would prove to be 18 feet long. It has a circumference of three feet and is made of the rough, bubbly stone that most anyone can recognize as cooled lava. A third of its length sticks up out of the ground right in the middle of a dirt street in the Sideshow district near the Old Man's compound and appears unworked except for a hole bored through it near the top. The hole, which intersects another cylindrical hole extending down through the center of the stone, makes Terrkot look like a giant sewing needle thrust into the earth. The hole is also why it is known as Needlerock or Needlestone.

No one really knows how, when or why the stone was placed there and it is generally believed the City grew up around it (though there are rumors that link the stone and the Old Man). Several well known attempts have been made to move it, but none have been successful. The stone always appears back in place within a week of its removal and whoever sponsored the removal attempt invariably suffers a spectacular run of bad luck. Occasionally some clown will hitch his horse to it to show he's not afraid of it, but animals left in its proximity for an extended period of time tend to get a bit skittish.

Terrkot *does* radiate a low grade magical aura that nearly any magic user can detect. It's particularly intense, if not all that strong. Sensing it would be much akin to someone hearing a high-pitched squeal just above the City's background magical "noise" level. It does not fade, and becomes stronger the closer the magicker approaches the stone—yet the nature of the magic defies efforts to categorize it.

MICHAEL A. STACKPOLE puts in CityBook appearance number five here. Mike now spends an inordinate amount of time writing expansive tales for the likes of F.A.S.A.'s Battletech® universe, Game Designers Workshop's Dark Conspiracy™ game and R.O.C. Books.

Illustrator SANDY SCHREIBER is a graduate of the Center for Creative Studies, College of Art and Design in Detroit. For the last five years, she's been working in the comics field, inking and coloring for THE REALM fromArrow Comics', painting covers for BROID, an Eternity Comics mini-series and occasional free-lance work for both DC and Now Comics.

The Legend

It is common knowledge that Terrkot is linked with the spiritual underworld. It is roundly believed that offerings placed in the hole are transported to join the dead in whatever realm they now exist. Grieving widows and parents often brave the exotics quarter to leave food offerings in the stone's eye, while warriors and adventurers have made it a habit to slip a fallen comrade's favorite dagger, sword or other item of power in there for translation to the next world.

The suspicion that thieves just come and take the offerings has lead more than one person to watch the stone for as long as his offering is there. At some point in the night, when his eyes close just for a second, the offering vanishes. Elaborate plans that include spreading flour around the post or otherwise preventing access to it have shown no signs of external intervention, so most folks believe the legend about where sacrifices are said to go.

Occasionally someone will determine Terrkot is really a shrine to this god or that goddess and will present it an offering in the name of that deity. Terrkot appears to be quite ecumenical in accepting offerings and has never been known to reject one.

The Truth Behind the Legend

Terrkot's history extends well beyond the beginning of the world, and then some. In the world's myriad mythologies, similar tales are told about an ancient race of titanic beings who became the fathers and mothers of the current crop of gods. Invariably, the King of the Titans devours all of their offspring, killing all the gods but the one who managed to trick his father into ingesting a stone in his stead. That god manages to destroy the Titan tyrant and become the King of the gods.

Well, Terrkot is that stone. Mixing around in a Titan's tummy, along with god-juice and anything else the Titan had eaten recently did little for the rock's smooth complexion. Terrkot realized this and that brought to his (yes, *his*—shaped like that and you expect him to think of himself as a her?) awareness the fact that he was self-aware. About this time the King of the gods slit open the Titan's belly and freed the surviving gods and Terrkot.

Terrkot thought the King of the Gods should reward him for acting as his double and saving his life, but the King of Gods had gone from infancy to adulthood all alone and he had lots of lost time to make up for with the various goddesses who were disgustingly grateful for their rescue. So Terrkot lingered forgotten in the world, but did a lot of thinking while he was lying about collecting layers of sediment. Now rocks tend to think with a

speed that we can measure in geological time, but Terrkot's brush with divinity made him a bit faster than that and he decided he resented being snubbed by the King of the Gods.

By the time he had reached that conclusion, the various gods had set about creating all the different races that populate the world. Terrkot, seeing this, decided that he would make his own race as well. Exercising what little divine power he had gathered (both from in the stomach of the Titan and through wide-beam prayers of desperation from folks who felt abandoned—Terrkot is the prayer equivalent of a Dead Letter Office) he gathered up the dust of the earth and fashioned humonculoids who were to him what "real" people are to the gods.

To us "normal folk", that means the Terrkota people are about six inches tall.

Terrkot was greatly pleased with his sculpting effort. To him the Terrkota were beautiful, but in reality they were the mud equivalent of gingerbread men. He wanted them to do everything the other gods' creations did, but he found himself having trouble with this "breathing life into" his creations. His powers were insufficient to produce a spark of life, but he discovered that he could *transfer* that spark from the colony of ants beneath him into his simulacrum of an ant. To make his creatures live, all he needed was to "borrow" some life force and they lived!

Terrkot might have been a rock, but he was not a stupid rock. He realized that if he could give these superstitious creatures roaming the planet the idea to link giving life samples to him with prosperity or pleasure, he would get them to leave him all sorts of good stuff. He found he did not need a direct flesh transfer of the life spark, but that he could draw it from items a person had worn or created (which, by association now shared a teensy bit of life force with their creator). Depending upon how strong the connection between the former owner and the item, Terrkot could use the life force in it to empower one or multiple Terrkota people.

The use of borrowed life force has an interesting side effect. A Terrkota takes on the physical characteristics of the person whose life force the stone is using. The Terrkota can also take on the person's personality, though it tends to be skewed toward the aspects manifested when the item was in use. For example, if a Terrkota is powered by the life force taken from a weapon, he is likely to be belligerent and war-like. On the other hand, if the item is a ring the person always wore, the impression Terrkot uses to make a Terrkota live will be more well-rounded and lifelike.

Back to the stone again—Terrkot had always lain in and around the area that would become Sideshow. Early settlers had discovered him jutting out of the river mud and placed him in a plaza, revering him as a work of the gods. As the centuries passed, though Terrkot did not move, the debris of time gathered about him and he became little more than a hitching post in front of a public house.

The rumor that things left in the stone would go to the dead came about when a con man bilked some drunken warriors by cheating at gambling through the use of loaded dice. The warriors killed him and stuffed the loaded dice into the rock's hole. Terrkot used that person's life force to imbue a dozen little Terrkota who took to playing phantoms and evangelizing about the power of the stone. One would appear to folks who had recently lost kin and lament their neglect in the next life. An offering would be made and a Terrkota of the deceased would visit his kin to reassure them and thank them for the offering.

The Terrkota appear to be, for all intents and purposes, living and breathing, flesh and blood miniatures of the people after whom they have been formed. Cut them and they will bleed. Break them and they will die. More than one has fallen victim to a yappy little dog, vengeful cat, playful ruffiri or nasty rat ... and they regularly war with rats and the rat-like Chervka to contest the use of tunnels, crawl-spaces and warrens within the City.

The Terrkota have a vast network of tunnels throughout the City. To anyone cutting across one while digging a foundation or plowing a field the hole would look no different than a rat hole. There are those in the City who know "little people" live in the tunnels, but they're the strange sort to leave a bowl of milk out when they don't have cats, if you know what we mean (they're also the sort that report chores done by "helpers" in the middle of the night, but that's a different story altogether).

There are significant limits to the Terrkota. The first is that they lose their identity and ability to move and think in direct proportion to their distance from Terrkot. When a Terrkota is taken, by accident or design, from the City he will appear to be an exquisitely detailed terra cotta figure of whatever sort of the original creature once was. It is possible that were a small piece of Terrkot chipped off and hung around a Terrkota's neck on a thread that the creature could continue to be mobile and functional at great distances from the City, but that experiment has never been tried because Terrkot has never had any desire to piece himself out.

Terrkot also has a problem remembering all the creatures he has created. Out there, and probably discovered by children or collectors of antiquities, there are Terrkota individuals who have become frozen because their god forgot them. Of note are the ones from a *long* time ago that would appear to be wonderful sculptures dating from the period of their creation. Magic used to ascertain their age would report them back as being aged appropriately for their appearance and the length of time since Terrkot created them. Of course, all Terrkot appear to be made by the same artisan, so anyone collecting a series of them would have works spanning centuries by the same artist.

Several places around the City have collections of these lost Terrkota, including the headquarters of the Chervka (who keep them out of spite), the Old Man's compound (he knows what they are, and he personally knew many of the "originals"), Hilkin's Specialties and Esoterica and of course the Blue Maid.

Were a Terrkota taken away from the City, then returned later, it would become alive again. Moreover, it would remember all the things that occurred in its proximity. If it was on a shelf during a murder, it would be aware of who did what to whom. If it was once a magic user, it would remember spells cast in its presence, though its ability to work that spell would be very dependant upon its distance from Terrkot. Terrkota in terra cotta form will die if broken and cannot be mended.

Lastly, if the item given to Terrkot was with the owner during a time of trauma (i.e., his murder) the Terrkota will not only be aware of what ocurred, but will seek vengeance for himself. This is a reflection of Terrkot's long term plan to overthrow the King of the Gods. It is unlikely Terrkot will ever succeed, but he has been brooding about it, which is reflected in the sometimes savage retribution his Terrkota take out on folks who move the stone.

It is not vital that a person have died for Terrkot to make a Terrkota of them. In hedging bets, more than one warrior has tossed gold or an old weapon into the hole so it can we waiting for him on the other side. The Terrkota are formed out of the impressions left on these things, so it is possible for someone to run into little simulations of himself at some point.

The Terrkota tend to be very secretive and only reveal themselves to people who are sleeping (and can be convinced the

visitation is a dream), people who are drunk, or those few kindly folks who leave food out for them. While mobile, the Terrkota *do* need food and water to continue to function. They will perform tasks for those who are kind to them and those who are truly wise (but thought foolish), know there are worse things than having a colony of "wee folk" living in the house.

Items placed in Terrkot, once they have been stripped of their life essence, are also divided down into miniature copies of themselves and are used to equip the Terrkot. Magical weapons and items do retain some of their abilities, but often in trivial forms. For example, a great sword that bursts into flame in combat may still do that, but it will be as dangerous as a lit match.

Personalities

King Grondar. ❑ *Terrkota male, Ht.: 5", Wt.: 1 lb, 9 ozs., Age: 325 yrs (at an approximate age of 60).* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: None, though his bodyguards are all rated Good or Very Good with their various weapons.*

Grondar was a particularly boorish and brutal Commerce Minister installed in the City a number of centuries back. Because he cut taxes (but took bribes) he remained in power far longer than he should have. A consortium of merchants backed him because of the open trade policy he supported. While the merchants *did* have to pay bribes to him, they still paid less than the taxes they had suffered beneath in the past, and were able to enlarge their profit margin by gouging customers while giving them substandard goods.

Grondar had a fairly solid lock on the City, and was looking to overthrow the rightful Ruler, when a popular revolt began to stir against him. The revolt was led by someone who had adopted the identity of a hero from the city's past: a mysterious figure known to all as Grimwolf. Grimwolf's growing band of followers—collectively known as The Pack—bedeviled Grondar and his people until the Merchants withdrew their support and turned around to arrange for Grondar's execution on trumped up charges of murder (Grondar *had* murdered people, but the merchants had to manufacture evidence to prove it).

Grondar had been possessed of one overwhelmingly annoying habit. He wore a little bell on a chain around his neck and was given to ringing it loudly in irritation when he started hearing something he did not like. This bell was tossed into Terrkot after Grondar's death so, as his detractors said, "He can ring it in hell and see if he gets better there than he did here."

Grondar immediately set himself up as a leader among the Terrkota. He has organized them into an effective if somewhat peculiar information-gathering body. He concentrates on political and economic data, while ignoring religion, politics and love. He would be cruel to the Terrkota as he was to others in life, but Terrkot curbs that part of his personality. When Grondar now rings his bell, his bodyguard (consisting of Terrkota best described as Terrmicidal maniacs) come running.

Grimwolf. ❑ *A dashing and handsome male humanoid with wolfish traits, Ht.: 6.3", Wt.: 1 lb, 2 oz, Age: 537 yrs (at an approximate age of 36).* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Excellent with a rapier or any other dueling sword. Excellent with sling and thrown knives. Fair otherwise.*

Long before Grondar there had been another tyrant in the City. Grimwolf adopted his terrifying identity to get rid of that monster and when that task was successfully accomplished, he gave up being a hero. He stuffed the wolf's-head cowled cloak and sword he had used as Grimwolf into Terrkot, muttering, "And if you see this in hell, tyrant, you'll be constantly reminded why you are there." Because he had only worn those items *as* Grimwolf, the only identity impression they had were *of* Grimwolf. Thus, Terrkot made a Terrkota Grimwolf so his own people could have a legendary hero.



— Grimwolf —

Grimwolf is a dashing and handsome Terrkota figure, though his cowl is now part of him, so the upper half of his head is that of a wolf, while his lower jaw is human. In addition to this strange aspect to his appearance, he is somewhat limited in his range of emotions. He is constantly looking for a crusade and were it not for his wit and the funny ways he manages to annoy Grondar, he would be more than a little insufferable. He is always on the lookout for wrongs that need to be righted and will often be the instrument of revenge for those who have been murdered in the City and become Terrkota.

When Grondar became a problem in the City, Grimwolf naturally decided to depose him. He appeared "in dreams" to those individuals he thought he could build into another Pack and was quite successful in his effort. Grondar's unsuccessful attempts to kill him came because Grimwolf *was* a Terrkot. That made him very difficult to capture or kill with man-size ambushes.



— Daniella —

In the centuries since Grondar, Grimwolf has championed many causes, but few so enduring as the Terrkota feud with the "tyranny" of the Chervka Pack, the upstart creatures who dared to name themselves after Grimwolf's own legendary band (the Chervka, who appeared in the City during Grimwolf's real life exploits were indeed inspired by the hero and adopted the name).

Daniella. ❑ *A beautiful Terrkota female, Ht.: 5.75", Wt.: 14.5 oz, Age: 537 yrs (at an apparent age of 29).* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* ❑ *Screaming for Help: Excellent.* ❑ *Magic Ability: None, unless you consider what she can do with castoff cosmetics, in which case she is Excellent in Concealment Magics.*

Daniella was a popular actress and the wife of an indolent nobleman in the City during the original tyrant/Grimwolf battles. She had a bad habit of falling madly and passionately in love about once a week—something her husband tolerated only because he became the target of her affections every third or fourth time she did this (Proximity had a great deal to do with her choice of lovers, and living in his house upped his chances considerably).

This all stopped when the mysterious and handsome Grimwolf came into the City. She fell head over heels, hot-enough-to-melt-glass, in love with him. She composed poems to him and read them in the middle of performances she was giving. She let everyone in the City know that she greatly desired a liaison with Grimwolf, but her love remained unrequited (Grimwolf was tempted, but the tyrant had her watched, so it would have been suicide and he decided there *are* certain things that it's not worth dying for).

When Grimwolf stopped being Grimwolf, he spread the story that in the final taking of the tyrant (which was really accomplished peacefully by the City Guard as the tyrant tried to flee in his wife's clothing) he had been mortally wounded and had died. Daniella, silly twit that she was, bought poison and prepared to kill herself with it, but refrained when a new love entered her life (It was actually Grimwolf in his normal guise, and they lived happily ever after, though he never revealed his secret to her.)

Daniella discarded the poison in Terrkot and he used what of her essence that clung to it to create a Terrkota of her. This Terrkota is forever falling in love with all sorts of beings—her choice is restricted in two things: they must be male and they almost always are *not* Terrkota. The exception to this is Grimwolf when he invariably saves her from whatever stupidity she gets herself into.

Daniella is *not* all frivolity, though. She has become something of a "fairy godmother" to any number of ugly duckling girls who figure they will never find a man or marry. She tutors any number of them in the ways of winning a man, and the women she has helped now form generation upon generation of the wives and mistresses of the City elite.

Scenario Suggestions

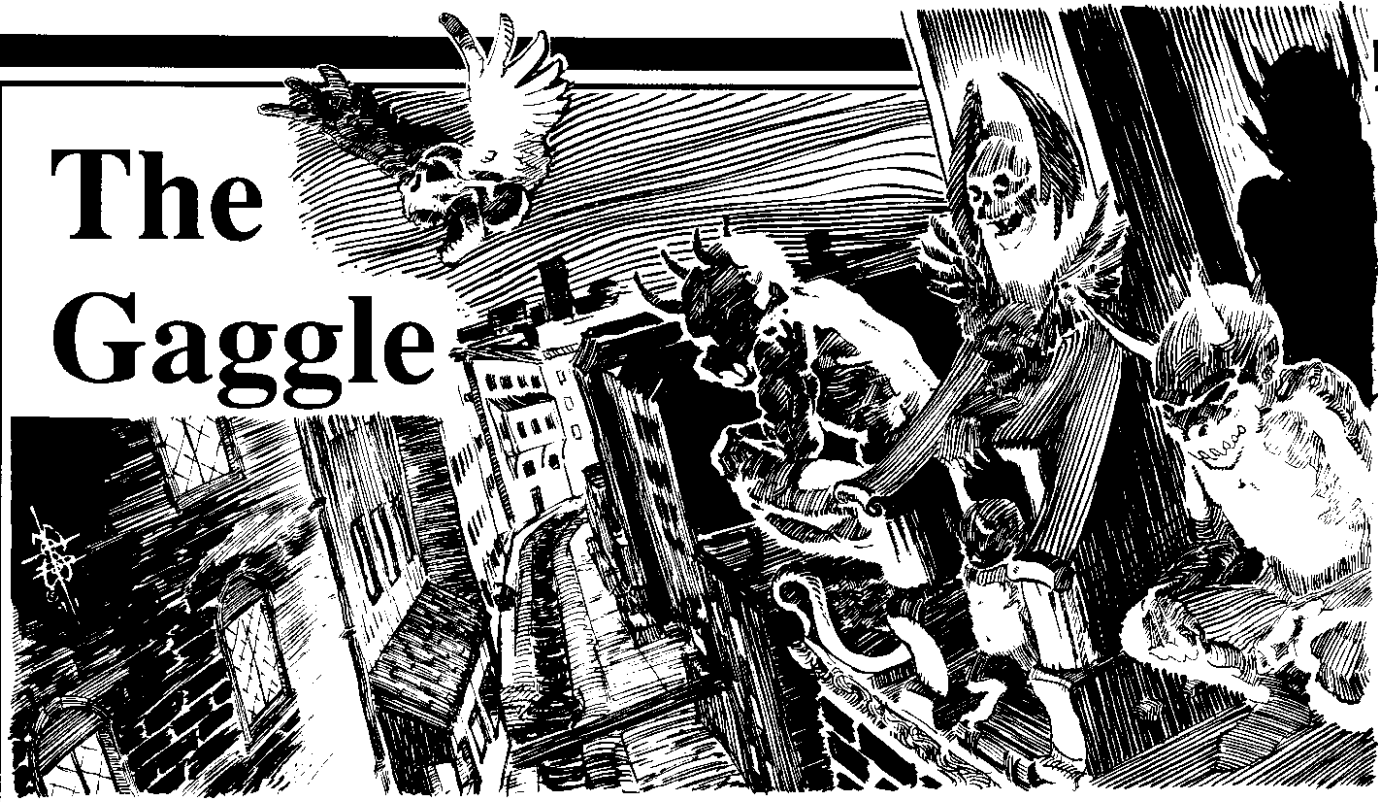
Scenario 1: Minikin Mania. Someone has gone and done a *very* stupid thing: After capturing a notorious bandit that had been preying on caravans going to and from the city, the captors (perhaps the adventurers) stuffed the head bandit into Terrkot to "expedite his journey to hell." Terrkot uses the body and the life spark to create a little legion of Terrkota bandits that go throughout the city causing all sorts of hideous problems, the least of which is stealing anything they can carry. With the singlemindedness and coordination of a swarm of army ants, they wreak havoc (Imagine screams coming from an alley and when witnesses reach the spot, some poor fool has died the death of a thousand cuts, with no assailant in sight). Well, the Terrkota need exterminating, and the adventurers (by their choice or popular election) are given the job.

Scenario 2: All Good Things Come to Those who Wait in Small Packages. After an adventurer in your campaign has died (the more well-loved the better) the adventurers dump something of his or hers into Terrkot. Within a week they are visited by a Terrkota of their friend and he has startling news: He's not dead, but being held in a dungeon by an enemy your group thinks they have slain. This can be even more fun if the adventurer has since undergone a resurrection, with the Terrkota maintaining the renewed individual is really an evil doppleganger sent to cause problems when the group can least afford it.

Scenario 3: Let's Get Small. The Grimwolf approaches one of the adventurers. He desperately needs their help. All they have to do is deposit something of a personal nature in the Needlerock. From these items, Terrkot creates an adventuring army (multiple duplicates of each character—kind of like the clones in a well known SF game) to go on a "fantastic voyage" type mission, boldly going where only the small can go. Let the players play the miniaturized versions of their own character (or one of multiple duplicates of another character).

Nearly every mythology has tales of "little people" running about, causing mischief or helping folk with big hearts. The People of the Stone can be the wee folk who dwell in the City.

The Gaggle



Hanging precariously above the streets—overhead where no one looks—the leering gargoyles wait, seeing all. You generally don't look at them, and you blush when you do. Mostly you just don't notice. Yet, like the purloined letter, they hang in plain sight of every person in the City.

The gargoyles and grotesques of the City live a nearly invisible existence, consistently mistaken for unliving architectural ornamentation. The creatures find it hilarious that sculptors create their own statuary to "carry on the traditions" of earlier artisans. The sentient gargoyles can be found inside or out, roosting along eaves, railings, roofs, and in many other locations, hidden among the dead works of men.

Unless they desire it, the creatures are rarely seen to move. Like the legendary *hide-behind*, one might sense movement—but when one turns to look, nothing moves. The creatures are temporally and psychically prescient, with unerring warning before anything looks, whether with mirror, magic, or whatever.

The tribe of gargoyles living in the City call themselves "The Blue Marble Folk," referring to the quarry stone in which they were first brought to the City, centuries ago. Those who know of their existence call them *the Gaggle*.

Life Out of Stone

The biology and development of gargoyle-kind is unlike any other species known. Foremost, gargoyles have a stony weight and essence, but are more than living stone. Chameleon-like, they can match their texture and color to their roosting place, whether granite, brick, or stucco. They can merge, slightly, into stone; in fact, their eggs are typically laid several inches below a stone surface, indistinguishable from the surrounding rock (which explains how gargoyles get introduced to towns—builders utilizing egg-infested quarry stone). Gargoyles prefer sunlit places, for sunlight provides the most suitable source of their life energies, although any source of photons will do—as will the "pre-processed" energy of flesh and blood! (But we'll get into that in a moment....)

When an egg has acquired enough energy, it hatches, taking on its first shape all at once. The creature immediately emerges to the surface and moves to the best location it can reach, in a limited range. Should that location be occupied by another of its kind, the two (or more) creatures create some joint tableau.

Example: a human head (one creature) grasped in the jaws of a devilish dog (the other).

A gargoyle's form is dependent on two things, and no gargoyle is exactly like any other. First, the creature itself can will its form toward a general shape. Second, the thoughts, dreams, and psychic emanations of life forms nearby create the morphologic details. The second effect is, ultimately, the greater. The gargoyle's efforts are like a clumsy child making a clay figure—but (to continue the analogy), the other effects are as a skilled sculptor "correcting" the child's attempt, then adding entirely new details to "improve" the overall result! Thus, a gargoyle hatched near the sheep pen might pick a human shape, but come out as a head equipped with ram's horns and horizontal pupils. The more living creatures found nearby, including plant life, the more outré the gargoyle is likely to be, as all have some effect. The more intellectually-sophisticated the nearby life, the greater will be its effect (which is why gargoyles don't all look like roundworms, beetles and flies...).

A gargoyle's passage to first form is not the only occasion for this form-change. Gargoyle-kind grow in abrupt stages, a kind of individualized "punctuated equilibrium;" they are modified at every stage. Over time, the gargoyle slowly acquires enough energy to change, which often takes years or decades. A gargoyle initiates change on its own timetable, but only very minor changes are possible without sufficient energy. Since movement also requires energy, gargoyles collect and hoard all they can.

Author, ELIZABETH T. DANFORTH is no stranger to CityBooks, as either illustrator or writer, this being her fifth appearancein both capacities (though at this point we only see her writing skills). Elizabeth is the game designer for the Tunnels & Trolls computer gamefrom New Work Computing and Dragon Wars II, eventually to come out of Interplay Productions.

Ilustrator TOM DOW again proved his true heroic mettle by picking up this assignment when it became apparent to the the editor that the assigned artist (the editor himself, no less) would not be able to produce the art in time for publication. I think you will agree, that Tom does a nice job with ugly. Look for his cover painting on Fringeworthy from Tri Tac Systems.

Between changes, the psychic effects accrue, but minimally. When the time comes, the gargoyle enters a soporific state which usually lasts 12-24 hours, during which it is *particularly* susceptible to the psychic impositions of others, including other gargoyles (dreams or nightmares can profoundly affect the gargoyle at this time—and often do!). The gargoyle then undergoes an abrupt change, taking on his new form between one blink and the next. Gargoyles tend to support each other's desires, which is why they often roost together.

A hatchling usually takes the form of a solitary head or, if energy-poor, just a face. It may be animal, human or other humanoid race, or something between. Life or death may be represented, and goggling skulls and death's-heads are not uncommon, reflecting the fears of the living.

In subsequent changes, gargoyles often opt for a torso if there is not enough energy for torso *and* limbs. Changes are never a complete remake, but a revision of previous forms. Snake-like and fishy torsos are popular, and provide some mobility. Others expand their size or surface area to catch more light: a massive beard, or features such as nose, ears, eyebrows and lips made long and leafy. Many gargoyles tend to the grotesque, choosing limbs without regard for esthetics. These creatures sprout arms or legs, even wings, directly from their temples or ears. These are called "No-Bodies" because they have ... no body.

As changes progress, the possible variations become so numerous as to defy easy categorization (Game Masters are encouraged to mix and match to their hearts' content). Creatures great and small, fantastic and common, living and dead, all lend their various parts to gargoyle-kind. Bats, birds, and boars; apes, lions, horses, sheep, fish, cats, dogs, drakes and lizards—whole or in bits—are all represented in the Gaggle. Things unnamed are woven out of dreamstuff and nightmare. Because the gargoyles scorn humankind and kin, they are only too pleased to take on shapes that shock and terrify.

Interactions

The Gaggle doesn't think much of humans—or elves and dwarves, or Ruffiri, or Chervka, or ... well ... anybody. Roosting above the heads of the City's inhabitants, they think of themselves as superior, having seen folk both noble and common stripped of their pretensions, in all their worst moments. They see high ideals come and go, that people are as flighty as mayflies and as short-lived. They see much hypocrisy, and are adversely affected by the outrageous thoughts of otherwise model citizens.

This psychic effect is at the core of the Gaggle's disenchantment. A gargoyle is utterly at the mercy of all who unwittingly and carelessly think, talk, and dream, thus warping nearby gargoyle-kind. Small wonder that many gargoyles, perching on sunny ledges, take on poses that can only be called exhibitionist or obscene, taunting the population to acknowledge their own hidden thoughts.

However, neither are gargoyles sterling citizens either. Far from it. Most are somewhat less intelligent than the average human, and they tend to be petty, bickering, shallow, and thoughtless. No better than the folk they denigrate, they pay most attention to what they can mock. They love to gather and trade information about those they watch but, like back-fence gossips who revel in *having* knowledge, they are indifferent to its uses. The geniuses among gargoyle-kind are those who actually think about the knowledge they acquire, and interpret, judge, and synthesize new ideas based on those thoughts. A few older, smarter gargoyles overcome their innate prejudices to treat with humans and their kin, recognizing that city life is far better than the life of a country gargoyle, looking like a leaf impression in shale or a snail shell in chalk!

The inhabitants of the City and of Sideshow do have something to exchange with individual gargoyles, when both sides are so inclined.Runi, a worn head and torso in the Philosophers' House, sharpened the wits of the First Scholar Eckehart in lengthy Socratic debates.

Magnus is one of the few gargoyles in the City whose form is—almost—entirely human-shaped. A friend of the little Terrkot people, he protects their secrets, as they do his, and the human-like gargoyle has spread word among his people that the little folk are not to be hurt (Magnus warns the Terrkot away from those gargoyles most likely to ignore or defy such advice).

Not all interactions between gargoyles and other folk are pacific; mischief-making is common. For example, the nightmare gargoyle Cuimin has incited some of his kin to take an interest in the Sliming Path, Sideshow's terrorist society. Slorrup, Josef and Leona, the leadership troika of the 'Path occasionally receive highly relevant suggestions and comments, seemingly from thin air. Acting on these comments occasionally leads to disaster, but sometimes a great blow for the 'Path is possible only because of the information. The gargoyles create mischief for *somebody*—and their "suggestions" aren't always in *anyone's* best interest!

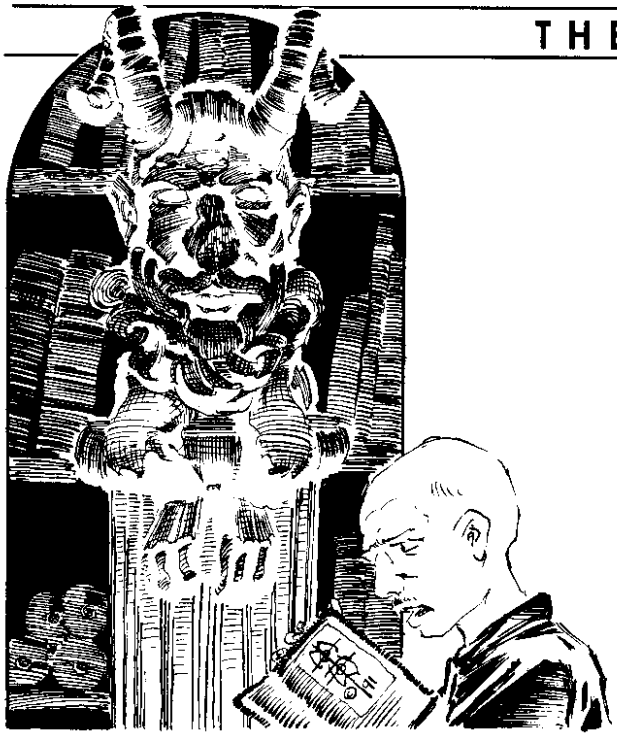
Furthermore, gargoyles welcome an occasional fleshy snack to augment the slow accrual of light energy. They can't consume or digest anything large, but a stray cat, a nesting pigeon, or a nosy young Ruffiri makes a fine meal. Slow as their digestion is, gargoyles pose only an infrequent threat, but it does happen: a group can easily dispose of inconvenient snoops (by the way, lack of any apparent stomach in a grotesque head or a no-body is no impediment to its carnivorous habits—that aspect of gargoyle physiology remains a deep and mysterious secret).

Last Words

A word is in order about gargoyle magic. All the creatures are highly sensitive to the psychic activity of all life, of all types. This is not, however, the same as mind-reading, although specific visions *can* reach the gargoyle's consciousness (highly informative!). Primarily, this ability is protective, enabling a gargoyle to hide, or emulate a true statue whenever necessary. Their stillness and prescience extends to all planes, magical or otherwise, and even puissant elder wizards can have difficulty sensing life or magic from the gargoyles who would retain their anonymity.

Conversely, gargoyles largely lack the intelligence, ability, and skill to learn even the most commonly-known spells. Still, aspects of their nature seem inherently magical: their affinity with stone and its derivations like brick or plaster (and the ability to move shallowly through and across it); their ability to masquerade successfully and at length as statuary; and their individualized and abrupt changes from one life stage to another. Although heavy as clay, they can move swiftly and even fly if equipped appropriately. It defies physics, but for whatever reason, a gargoyle is free to move like any ordinary creature of its size (whatever size that might be!), depending on what limbs the creature possesses.

Gargoyles rarely use weapons. Although nightmares have bestowed swords and giant mallets on some gargoyles, most rely on "natural" weapons: fangs, claws, and a heavy hand. As dense



— Runi —

as a sockful of wet sand, a gargoyle's fist can easily smash a skull. Conversely, if an opponent lands a blow, the gargoyle won't be seriously inconvenienced until literally pulverized.

A gargoyle's life span is as long as it wishes to live. Undisturbed, gargoyles can survive until their substance is worn to dust. This is one reason they scorn the "Mayfly" races, including those capable of living beyond four score and ten. Even erosion damage requires energy to repair, and few gargoyles make the effort since it doesn't hurt them—oddity of form being no imperilment to them!

Boredom is the great destroyer: sitting in the same place every day, for decades at a time, can lead any creature to boredom! Starting with stupor, and ending in unbroken sleep, bored gargoyles drift out of touch until they become exactly what they appear to be: statues. Many gargoyles perish when buildings are destroyed. Avoiding boredom is the great motivation behind acquiring limbs with which to move.

Layout

There *is* no layout, since the Gaggle roosts almost anywhere: indoors or out, on beam ends or along eaves, perched at the apex of roofs, arrayed across arches, centered above doorways, on garden walls or posts. They can be found in the City, in Sideshow, and beyond the City proper, adorning the walls of country villas and manors in surrounding estates. Wooden shacks with thatch roofs are free of gargoyle-kind, although a tile roof may be enough to attract a pair or more.

Small private buildings are mostly shunned—a hulking shadow suddenly appearing in a corner could not go unnoticed. However, solitary heads can appear in high corners and escape notice simply by virtue of being above eye-level in a thoroughly familiar place. Light from windows and hearth fires (plus the occasional house mouse) will enable the creature, with enough time, to grow and move to a better location.

In general, the larger and more public the edifice, the more likely a gargoyle is to take up residence. This is especially true when a place is renovated or changes hands: a new resident won't know what wasn't there before. As a tribe, they consider balance and appearance, and position themselves in visually-balanced groups least likely to attract unwanted attention.

Personalities

Magnus. ❑ *Gargoyle male, largely human-shaped. Ht.: 4'8", Wt.: 1000# (approximate), Age: 833.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Good.* ❑ *Magic Ability: those abilities natural to gargoyle-kind.*

Magnus' home roost is on a column to the right of the stage inside the City's main theatre. Centuries ago (538 years ago, in fact), the highly emotional Daniella was a frequent actress on stage (see *Terrkot's People*). While the living Daniella was in her worst throes of desire for Grimwolf, Magnus was on the verge of a form-change. In such proximity, he was massively influenced by her thoughts—and wishes! When the change was over, Magnus was the very image of Grimwolf, with certain ... exaggerations. (In fact, superstitious young folk desiring happy love-lives "touch stone" on the column whereon he perches. Active as he is, Magnus hasn't the energy to change—nor is he eager to see what shape he takes on after so many centuries as an emblem of manly virtue!)

In time, the gargoyle's similarity to Grimwolf drew the interest of the Terrkot Daniella. Given their disparity of size, the relationship quickly settled into friendship. Daniella's passion had been so pure and unhypocritical, that Magnus actually admired the beautiful woman; the appearance of her Terrkota double was a pleasant surprise. Now, he is in position to overhear the woes of the lovelorn, and points out good-hearted ugly ducklings to Daniella, who can then work her cosmetic magics.

Runi. ❑ *No-body gargoyle. A rather dwarvish face with exaggerated ram-like features including horns, and a broad, braided beard curling all around his head. Muscular leonine legs depend from below the beard. Ht.: 3'6", Wt: 700# (approximate), Age: 708.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Fair.* ❑ *Magic Ability: those abilities natural to gargoyle-kind, but also a smattering of purely academic knowledge in all eight C's.*

Other gargoyles say Runi is "runny," which accurately describes his heavily worn appearance. A philosopher among gargoyles, he is unusually intelligent, an effect produced by many years of serious-minded scholars studying in the Philosophers' House. Runi has never left his perch in the 130 years since the House was renovated and expanded, enclosing his perch when additions were made along the north wall. Now, Runi remains virtually immobile in an interior corner of the library.

In the library, the ambitious young scholar Eckehart carried on lengthy arguments—with himself, if others proved unwilling—on subjects natural, supernatural, and philosophical. One night, Runi rose out of his stupor to argue back (out of mockery, not conviction). Eckehart engaged Runi's interest by adeptly turning the argument on its head, and Runi was surprised to discover how keen his own intellect had grown since he'd last been aware. Since then a grudging mutual respect has grown between them, and Eckehart's skill in logic and debate (honed by long nights arguing with the gargoyle) has obtained for him the title of First Scholar.

Cuimin. ❑ *Beast-form scaled gargoyle, a true nightmare beast. Ht.: 1' 11" at the shoulder, Wt.: 550# (approximate), Age: 214.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good.* ❑ *Magic Ability: those abilities natural to gargoyle-kind.*



— Cuimin —

Cuimin is somewhat chipped up after a pack of young nobles used him for target-practice. His perches were close to the dungeon cells of a depraved noble family, and the nightmares and terrors that shaped his body have equally warped his mind. His current roost can be found amongst the sepulchres of Nadorix's Necropolis, where he lords it over the other grotesques who reside therein. One of the most malicious gargoyles in the City, he engages in anything which causes grief and pain. He masterminds gargoyle-created problems for the Sliming Path, manipulating his fellows into creating problems everywhere he can.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: A Thief in the Night. One night, a Chervka thief newly-come from burglarizing the homes of several nobles, sought escape across the rooftops. He made the mistake of climbing over Cuimin's back to reach a roof adjoining the cemetery. The stony creature shifted, snagged a leg, and the Chervka fell awkwardly to die in the graveyard below (one of the few folk to actually die in the Necropolis). Abet Noir claimed the body, but Cuimin kept the booty—not for its monetary value, but with an eye to using items to sow suspicion and anger.

The adventurers are among Cuimin's targets when he plants a bracelet of considerable value among their belongings (working through the Gaggle's grapevine, he chose them for lacking an alibi for when the burglary took place). Should the adventurers wear or try to sell the "lucky find," the City Guard will take a keen interest. Protestations of innocence might suffice once, but when a second item shows up among their things—and "reliable informants" lead the Guard back to them—the adventurers could find themselves facing rough justice! If the nobles choose not to leave things in the hands of the law, or Abet Noir of the Pack decides that the stolen property rightly belongs to the Pack as weregild for killing a Chervka, even more blood might be shed before events come to a conclusion. This situation could be further complicated if some item in the stolen boodle were an object which the adventurers desired for their own reasons!

Scenario 2: The Terrors from Below. The City has never lacked for awful things terrorizing its citizens, but lately there have been some particularly gruesome murders, animal mutilations, and cannibalism. Veteran bodyguards haven't stopped the attackers, nor has urgent wizardry been able to find their lair.

The adventurers come into harm's way either as altruistic citizens, conscripted muscle for the City Guard, or as talented help on the City payroll ... it probably depends on just how tough and well-known they are! Good people are frightened and demanding results.

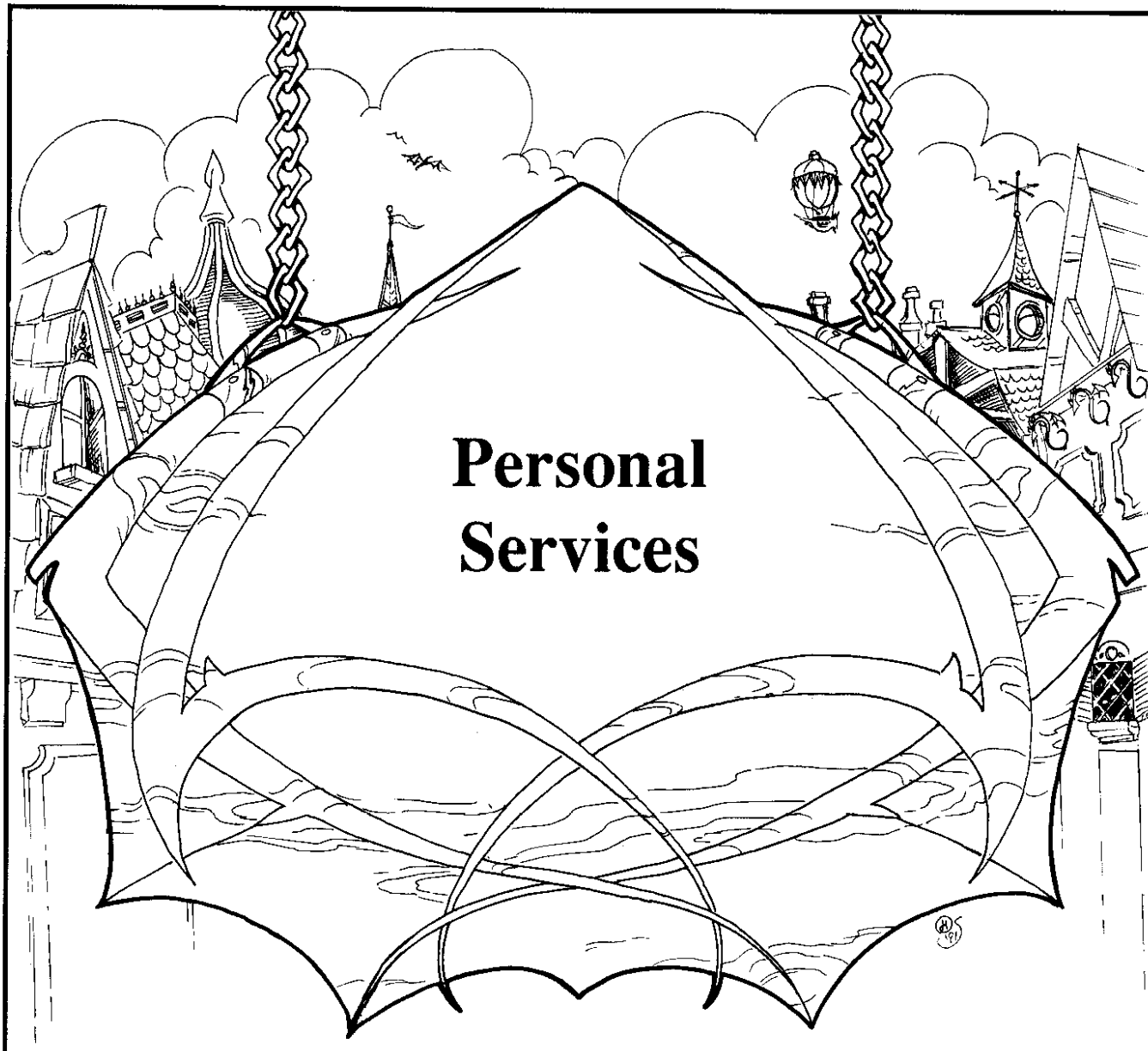
Recent excavations by the beggars of the Undercity (**CB3**) broke into a sealed labyrinth in the fourth city-below (one level above the temple of Ysrai, and nearly as old). The excavators found thick, elaborate carvings of creatures exceptionally deformed and horrifying. Taking this as a sign that the place was blessed by the beggars' twisted god, the labyrinth was left an empty sanctuary with an "eternal" flame burning to honor those long dead.

The builders were dead, but the carvings—gargoyles—were not. In everdark, they had slept the last thousand years or more. The meagre flame bestirred the strongest, and they woke starving—for blood. The traditional maliciousness of gargoyle-kind was amplified by the strange minds that molded their growth a hundred centuries ago when the labyrinth was home to a vicious blood cult that literally washed the creatures in sacrificial blood. Now, that is the food they prefer. Every day, the beggars' flame brings another gargoyle closer to life... Moreover, such an extended entombment, surrounded by little minds (cave crickets, glow worms), has done nothing for the intelligence of the Gargoyles Below, but a great deal for their voraciousness and their messy eating habits!

The beggars are little affected so far, since the gargoyles wake a few at a time and make a beeline for daylight and the world above (a few laggards disappeared, but not enough to alarm the beggars in the way that the City is alarmed). There, they wreak havoc, eating their way through everything they can lay tooth on, to make up for a millennium of fasting.

The adventurers will have many obstacles to overcome. There's virtually a non-stop supply of these fiends (a few at a time), which will only end once the labyrinth is destroyed or at least re-sealed in darkness. The beggars will not welcome any intrusion into their warrens, even if the adventurers can show why some beggars have disappeared. Because the labyrinth is deemed sanctified, there could be even greater resistance—certainly a great deal of resistance to destroying the labyrinth and potentially causing a whole section of the City to subside (affecting, among other things, the sewer system!). Finally, even if the labyrinth is sealed, the adventurers will need to hunt down every rogue gargoyle ... preferably without having to take on the entire "normal" gargoyle population of the City (who would, should that draconian effort be carried out, protect the rogues and learn how to consume such large quantities of flesh and blood themselves!).

The Gothic figure a gargoyle can set a mood faster than a ghost can say "Boo" and a grotesque can be twice as invisible as any spook. The Gaggle takes a new, and terrifying look at a "stock" monster. No adventurer (or player for that matter) will be able to walk past a sculpture-encrusted building without wondering, if one of those faces is looking back. Add the Gaggle's love of mischief, and you have the makings of an hot time in the old town tonight!



Personal Services

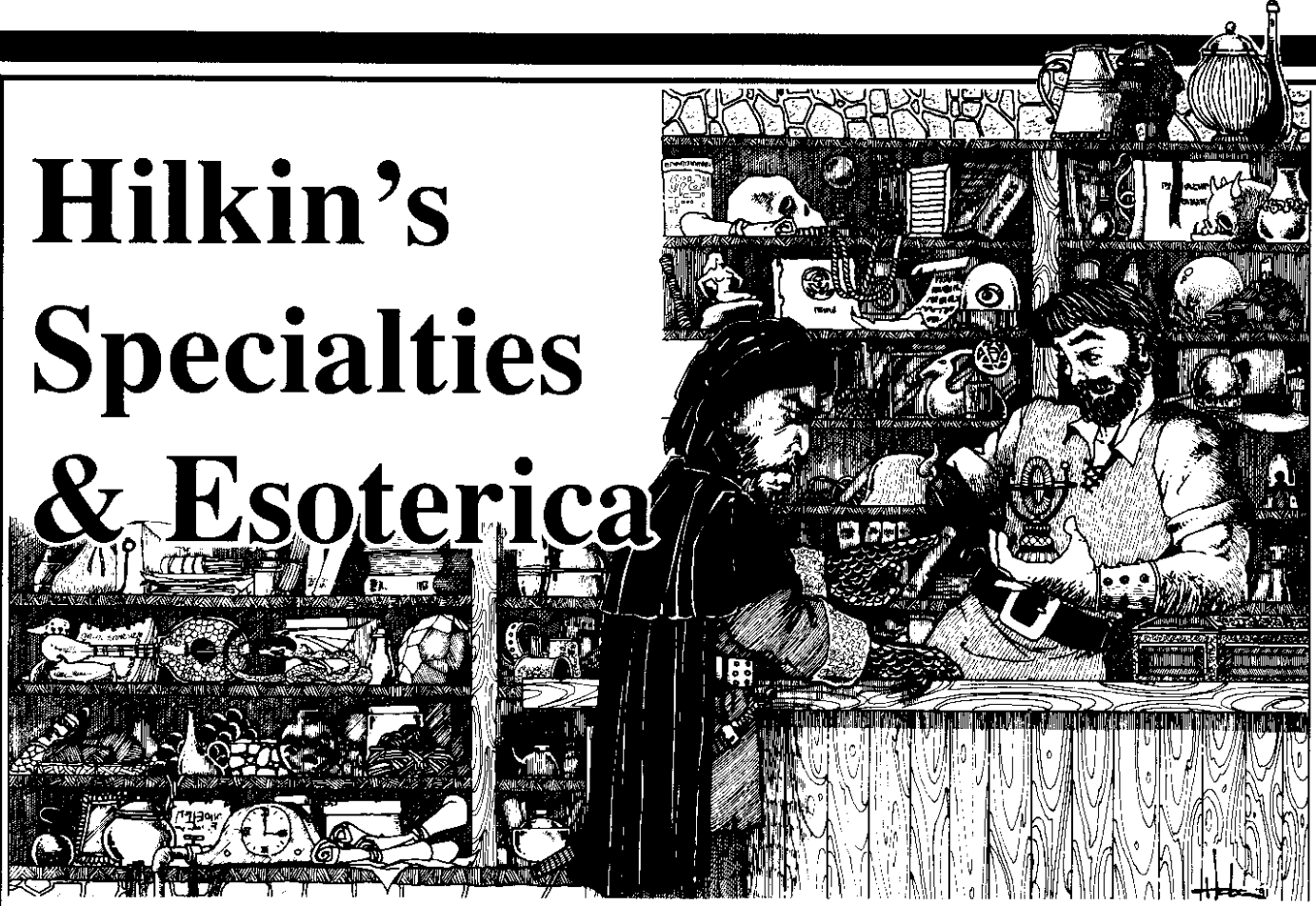
All creatures have basic needs, food, shelter, clothing, places to spend their money. The streets and bustling markets of Sideshow offer even the casual shopper more than a few chances to be parted from her hard-won gold. Most welcome all customers — even humans.

Need something, but aren't sure what to buy? Try a curiosity or convenience shop. Some, like The Blue Maid and Hilkin's Specialties & Esoterica purvey unusual oddities — though at Hilkin's some walk out with things other than what they came for. Others, like Enefene have everything an inhuman could want, from snacks to stockings (if they are not one and the same). Need to heal a wound, season a stew, or hide an embarrassing odor? Try the herbs and perfumes of Riversent. For the warrior, Brumar's Workshop, if it can be found, sells custom made armor — if its proprietor considers the project a challenge.

Then there are the services. Ease anger at The Spittin' Image. Smooth a business deal at The Face Place. See the sights of Sideshow with Smilin' Al's Tours. Lost an arm? Have it sewn back on ... or replaced at the Knight's Cranial Hospitaler. Planning to pass on? Find eternal rest in a culturally-appropriate style at Nadorix's Necropolis. Need to move a household, or a treasure troves? Contact Komtoi's Cartage & Caravansary.

Just remember, to a merchant in Sideshow, gold is gold ... even if spent by a human.

Hilkin's Specialties & Esoterica



Want something a little out of the ordinary? Looking for a gift for a man who has everything? Need a part to fit some ancient, long-obsolete machine? Does a magic spell call for some bizarre item you can't find anywhere? Whatever it is, chances are one can find what one is after at Hilkin's.

When one first discovers the shop, it doesn't look like much; a battered iron-bound wooden door between two other shops, with a small gold plaque reading "Hilkin's Specialties & Esoterica." Hilkin's is one of those shops that seems larger inside than out,though, and seems to go on forever—in fact, some people say it does go on forever, once one gets down into the basement storerooms and corridors.

Hilkin's is officially open around the clock, but there's a chance—say, 5%—that at any given time the cashier will have stepped out for a moment and locked the door. A wait of 4d6 minutes will bring an apologetic employee to open it.

Upon entering, customers only see a narrow passageway; at the end of the corridor is a counter manned by a cheerful young centaur, a surly one-armed man, or an insufferable elf; and beyond that is a maze of shelves jammed with crystal vases, articulated bat skeletons, weird skulls, unrecognizable little machines, and other bizarre items, all covered in a thick layer of dust.

Customers won't see Hilkin, the rather reclusive proprietor, as a rule—not unless they get back into the depths of the place. In general, they'll deal with his employees, who will usually try to sell a customer whatever junk is closest, instead of what they came in looking for. If one perseveres, though, Hilkin's seems to have virtually anything one could ever want, somewhere in there—dusty, maybe broken, but there somewhere. Powerful magical items are stacked next to old political pamphlets and hundred-year-old preserved oranges. The Holy Grail is probably on a shelf in one of the cellars.

If a buyer asks for it, though, they'll try to sell him a left exhaust manifold off a '57 DeSoto, instead. Or a bottled imp. Or an almost-working tricorder, just needs to have the contacts cleaned. Or somebody's soul that they took in trade last week.

For the most part the locals are on good terms with the people at Hilkin's (though nobody is really on good terms with Hilkin himself), and will often take something that the centaur night clerk's suggests rather than what they came in for, because it often turns out to be just what they'll need later on. Maybe old lady D'nib didn't know why she'd need a frayed bit of red string, when she came in to buy a new crystal for her experiments, but chances are she'll find a use for it that'll make it worth the absurdly high price she paid.

In general, magical items and very valuable goods of all sorts are cheap at Hilkin's—but they're sold without warranty, and may be less than perfectly reliable. More ordinary goods—carvings, statuettes, baubles, and trinkets—are priced reasonably. The bizarre, the unrecognizable, and the outright junk are all *very* expensive—a broken bottle might cost almost as much as a fine gold ring. That the centaur Merindia demands a hundred gold pieces for a stick of charcoal does not mean that it's rare or

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LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS is the author of over a dozen novels of science fiction and fantasy, including the forthcoming *The Blood of a Dragon*, fourth in the "Legends of Ethshar" series. He has won a Hugo for short fiction, and edited the recent anthology *Newer York*, from R.O.C. Books. He discovered role-play games in college, with the original *D&D*® game and the *Metamorphosis Alpha*™ game, and has had short stories in DRAGON® magazine and THE SPACE GAMER.

While he has over 16 years experience in commercial illustration and design, Illustrator BOB E. HOBBS is a relative newcomer to the genre of fantasy art. Yet, since entering the field in 1986, he has exhibited in several major group shows in New England and New York City. His work has also appeared in the Encyclopedia of Living Artists (3rd ed.).

valuable—only that the staff at Hilkin's are all a little odd.

Selection & Pricing

A typical selection that a browser might find on one shelf would include a small gold statuette of a nymph, with rubies for eyes; a piece of driftwood set with shells to make a crude representation of a kraken; a bottle with something unidentifiable moving around inside it; a reddish coin with an indecipherable inscription on it; a metal tube with numbers stamped on one side in black ink; an inlaid ivory and rosewood box; a chunk of granite; a cardboard cut-out of a woman in a white gown; a bent silver candlestick; and a box of matches.

The statuette and the box would go for high, but reasonable prices, being fine work and precious materials. The bottle, being magic, could be worth a fortune—and could be had at a bargain, perhaps a tenth what a bottled genie is ordinarily worth, because no one in the shop is sure just what that is inside it. The matches, being useful but not magic, would be inexpensive, but not a great bargain. The granite, the candlestick, and most of the rest, being useless, would cost ridiculous sums, from 100 gold up. Hilkin's operating assumption seems to be that if one is fool enough to want such things, one is fool enough to pay far too much.

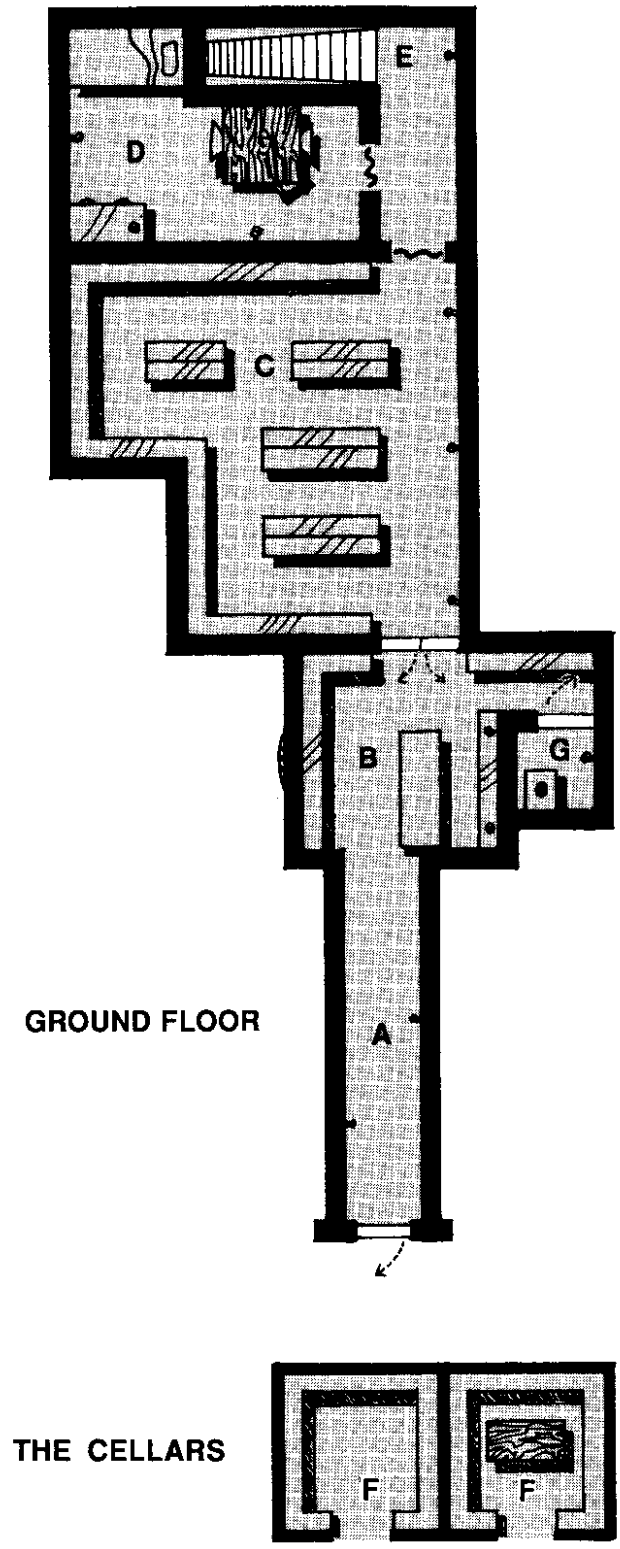
Acquisitions

Nearly 90% of the shop's contents seem to have come from no place at all. A message on the front counter will inform the clerk to bring up the contents of a particular room in the cellar. Until then, no one in the shop will have seen the goods before. The other 10% are purchased from folks seeking quick cash. The would-be seller can take what a clerk offers then, usually about 25% of an item's *apparent* worth, or wait overnight (or longer) for Hilkin to evaluate and price the item (though Hilkin offers even less about 25% of the time). Customers may buy back their own goods, but at twice what they received for it.

Construction and Protection

The only entrance to the shop is through the one door, and the only windows are small, high clerestories with heavy iron bars. The walls are not only solid stone, but separate Hilkin's from neighboring shops, not the open air. A would-be thief entering by the door will need to either break a very good lock or tackle whichever employee is at the counter—not insuperable obstacles, though Borgrim is a better fighter than a one-armed man has any right to be, and anything as big and strong as a centaur is not to be dismissed lightly.

Perhaps Hilkin's best protection, though, is the curses rumored to fall upon any who would rob the place—or perhaps it's the difficulty of telling treasures from junk!



Layout

A. Passage (4' x 20') Gloomy, poorly lit, bare stone walls, the corridor behind the front door serves no purpose except connecting the shop to the street.

B. Front Room (irregular, 10' x 10') A barred window, nine feet

up on the north wall, provides a little natural light, but the oil lamps on the shelves behind the counter do help. The goods displayed here are not as dusty as elsewhere, and hold a higher proportion of fine jewelry, sculpture, etc.—but fewer magical items. The stone walls and floors are black with age and grime, adding to the gloom and making the sparkle of gold and gems stand out more. By day, Borgrim will usually be found leaning against the counter; by night, Merindia is behind it, often chatting with a customer or neighbor. Frequent customers include Leal, the huge Lurrkhan warrior from *The Knight's Cranial Hospitaler* (who sells more than he buys), a young dwelf (half elf/dwarf) named Gregin Collie, whose family runs the *Bottomless Keg* restaurant, and some blue-skinned, damp-smelling humanoids (merfolk) who ask to see anything made with crystals.

C. Main Room (irregular, 20' x 19') Dusty and ill-kept, the room holds no furniture except shelving, and the shelves are strewn haphazardly with goods. Merindia dreads having to fetch anything from the alcove in the northeast corner.

D. Back Room (L-shaped, 11' x 15') This is where Hilkin eats and sleeps, when he remembers to do so; a chamberpot is under the bed,clothes are stuffed in the bureau drawers at random, and the table has a short leg propped up with the empty binding of a destroyed book of spells.

E. Passageway & Stairs The route to the cellars, entirely of bare stone. A steady flow of cool air from the cellars can be disconcerting for strangers.

F. The Cellars (infinite, sample cell shown) The cellars consist of endless 8' x 8' stone cells, shelves on every wall and a doorway in each wall connecting to the four adjoining cells. There are three differences between the contents of the cellars and the shop itself: Some cellar rooms have tables in the center with things piled on them; the cellar shelves are more heavily loaded; and in the cellars, many smaller items are in boxes, rather than out on display.

Chances are, the cellar may even extend to touch other dimensions and planes of existence. The next cell door might just lead to the pastoral realm of High Haven (see *Tsalini's Stopover Station* in CB4) or even open up onto the weird maze of Two-Scratch Dickens (see *Domdaniel's Gate* in CB3).

G. Privy (4' x 4') A necessity for the employees—but too small for Merindia's use, forcing her to leave the shop locked and unmanned every so often while she goes elsewhere.

Personalities

Adegar Hilkin. ❑ *Demi-human, Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 195#, Age: 55 (apparent—actual age is 3,300 or so).* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Average,* ❑ *Magic Ability: Legendary in C3, Good in C7, Average in C6, poor in other C's.*

Long ago, the sorceress Fallei Tso inexplicably found herself to be pregnant. She suspected an incubus to be responsible, and had high hopes for her son.

However, young Adegar showed no demonic tendencies nor talent for magic, and in disgust Fallei Tso turned him out to fend for himself.

Adegar had seen this coming, and had pocketed a few curiosities from his mother's laboratory. He was able to sell these, thereby starting his business as a dealer in oddities, magical or otherwise—a business that has flourished ever since, though the location has varied with time.

Never entirely comfortable around ordinary humans, Hilkin set up the most recent version of his millenia-old business in Sideshow, where the shop has thrived. He makes a habit of hiring misfits of various sorts as his help.

Hilkin is unaware that his father was Izzelmar the Capricious, a god so unpredictable that he (sometimes she) was kicked out of every respectable pantheon in the business. By rights, Hilkin should have been a minor god himself, probably the god of lost and found treasures, but somehow he has never discovered his divinity. As a result, he has deity-level power, but is unaware of it and makes use of it only unconsciously, in operating, stocking, and enlarging his business. He's rather absent-minded and easily distracted. After three millenia, it still hasn't sunk in that most people don't find their cellars extending indefinitely in various directions, or that he has things he never bought and can't explain.

For a good many years now, he's been obsessed with finding something he left down in the cellars. He no longer remembers exactly what it was, but he's sure he'll know it when he sees it, and he spends as much time as possible looking for it, leaving the running of the shop to his employees.

Hilkin never leaves the shop—he falsely believes that it's the shop's cumulative magic aura that prevents him from aging.

Details of his appearance will vary, depending on who's seeing him—a characteristic of gods, though no one has ever made the connection.

He's soft in the belly and getting softer, with white or greying hair, but his eye color and other details may vary from one observer to the next. That is, if one person sees him with green eyes, his eyes will always be green when seen by that person—but a companion might see them as brown, blue, or even cat-yellow.

Even whether he looks entirely human may vary; there are people who swear he has feathers or scales, rather than hair. His clothing is always sloppy and comfortable.

Borgrim, son of Borgrim, son of Borgrim. ❑ *Mostly human, Ht. 6' 0", Wt. 185#, Age: 42.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good.*

At one time, Borgrim was the finest swordsman in all Pethshir,and proud of it. In fact, he made a habit of picking fights in order to show off his swordsmanship. He found it particularly amusing to get into a duel, and then reveal his identity in the midst of the fight, totally unnerving his opponent and providing him with the chance to inflict some particularly clever injury.

He came from an ordinary farm family, but his father noted an aptitude for the blade early, and encouraged it, so that Borgrim really never had any other interests or talents beyond fighting, drinking, and wenching.

His years of triumph came to an end when the surviving relatives of one of his victims got him very, very drunk one night

and removed his right hand and arm at the elbow. Why they didn't kill him outright is a mystery, but the fact is they did not. Possibly they feared undead vengeance.

Thus ruined as a swordsman, Borgrim fled Pethshir in disgrace,and in time drifted into the fringes of Sideshow, where Hilkin found and hired him as door guard and general handyman.

When asked why he never learned to use a sword with his left hand, he replies, "What, and get that one hacked off, too?"

Nevertheless, a suggestion by one of the regular clients, a huge, six-limbed lizard-like creature named Leal and both intrigued and unnerved him. "What would you give for a new arm?" the creature hissed and clicked at him. For a better-than-usual purchase price on a strikingly exotic sword that he wished to sell, Leal the Lurrkan revealed the details of the Knight's Cranial Hospitaler's limb replacement surgeries to Borgrim, further hinting that he, Leal, could find a particularly fine specimen of arm should the clerk be willing to deal now.

Shen ti Q'orinn. ❑ *Elf, Ht. 6' 1", Wt. 145#, Age: 29.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess:Average,* ❑ *Magic Ability: Excellent in C3, poor in all other C's.*

Shen ti Q'orinn would have been killed in infancy, as unfit to live, but her mother, in a fit of weakness, gave her to a lizard-woman bound for Sideshow.

Shen, you see, is a forest elf—and she's allergic to trees. Not all trees, but most of them.

The lizard-woman, Fthsss Ssfth, raised Shen as her own—in the city, where trees are few and far between. When she came of age, Shen was unable to take up her foster-mother's trade of tail decoration and massage—what lizard-man would trust someone who has no tail to perform such a refined art?

However, Hilkin came to her rescue and gave her a job in his shop. Some of his magical ability seems to have rubbed off on her—she's second only to Hilkin himself in finding what a customer wants in the cluttered mazes of the shop.

Her survival and success has made Shen cocky; she takes constant delight in harassing Borgrim, and is the one female of any humanoid species who seems utterly immune to his charms. Shen bubbles over with grandiose plans and schemes, but does nothing to pursue any of them. She dreams constantly of the day when some handsome young elf is going to happen into the shop, be smitten with her, and abandon the greenwood forever in order to marry her and establish a tribe of City elves. For now, she sleeps in a rented room three blocks away, and eats most her meals in the back room, sometimes with Hilkin, sometimes alone. Occasionally, she dines at the *Bottomless Keg*, having developed a fondness for roast brickle nuts and Crube Collie's special mushrooms.

She's tall and thin, in the elvish manner, with pointed ears, black hair, dark eyes, and a long, thin nose. She prefers loose,simple clothing in greens and yellows.

Merindia. ❑ *Centaur, Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 650#, Age: 14.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Fair with hooves or thrown objects, poor otherwise.* ❑ *Magic Ability: has certain special talents in C3, otherwise poor in all other C's.*



— Shen ti Q' orinn —

Merindia had a childhood habit that made the other centaurs nervous—she made uncannily accurate guesses that unnerved them. By adolescence she was a very lonely young creature, and she did what anyone would do in those circumstances—she ran away from home.

After drifting for a time, she wound up in Sideshow, where Borgrim, one drunken evening about a year ago, found her and brought her to Hilkin's.

Hilkin immediately hired her and put her on the night shift. She liked it, and stayed. She works the cash box from mid-evening until dawn.

She enjoys chatting with customers, and takes great pleasure in the variety of people who come in, and the fact that most of them accept her quite calmly. However, to a casual observer, she isn't very good at the work—there isn't room for a centaur to maneuver comfortably in the narrow aisles and corridors, and she doesn't have the knack for finding the requested item that Hilkin and Shen do. Instead, she'll often find a very rough approximation, or even something completely different that she thinks the customer might like, that happens to be close at hand, and will try to convince the customer to buy that instead, to save her the trouble of searching through the shop.

The regulars have learned to take Merindia's suggestions; they've discovered that while she may not be able to find what a customer wants, she will instead sell you what you need—the cotter pin to fix a wagon wheel that hasn't broken yet, the missing gem from a tiara that will turn up next week, a dagger narrow enough to poke through the keyhole when you'll need to do



— *Merindia* —

exactly that to save yourself from an attacker in a few days.

Merindia has a wild talent—probably enhanced by hanging around Hilkin and his clutter—that allows her to do this sort of thing. She isn't really aware of it, as such; she just thinks she's been lucky. And in fact, she isn't 100% reliable; sometimes a customer isn't going to need anything in particular in the range Merindia can sense (usually up to about 10 days), and sometimes she's just wrong.

Merindia admires Hilkin, and is fiercely loyal to him for saving her from the gutter, but she doesn't actually like him all that much—he makes her nervous, just as she made her neighbors nervous as a child.

She respects Borgrim, and relies on him to protect and teach her, but she's also scared of him. And she can't stand Shen; the two ignore each other completely.

Merindia is only in the shop when she's working; she has a small room—a converted stable, really—a block or so up the street, and she roams about, chatting with neighbors, in the mornings. Like most centaurs, she's a vegetarian, so she eats her meals at the green grocer's.

Merindia doesn't like weapons; if she has to fight, she uses her hooves, or throws things. Given a choice, she prefers not to wear clothing, but in a concession to urban habits wears a simple white blouse when working or strolling the streets. She's a chestnut filly—reddish-brown, with hair and tail that could be called auburn in a human. Her complexion is rather pale.

Notice that Merindia can be a great resource for adventurers—if a GM wants the adventurers to have a particular key, coin, gem, sword, or other item with them during an upcoming adventure, Merindia could sell it to them.

Scenario Suggestions:

Scenario 1: "Now Where Did I Put That?" A particularly obnoxious local lordling has been told that a particular object he seeks can be found at Hilkin's. He's demands its delivery, with dire consequences if it isn't produced by noon tomorrow.

Unfortunately, the employees can't find either the desired object, nor can they find Hilkin himself, who was last seen in the cellars somewhere. In desperation, they ask the adventurers to help locate the item in question, promising them their choice of the other treasures in payment—one item only, of course.

The opportunity to roam freely through a storehouse of wonders, meddling with things best not meddled with, could be irresistible.

Scenario 2: Bull in A Curio Shop. Merindia's worst fear has come true; turning around in one of the narrow aisles, she's knocked a very expensive ceramic something-or-other off the shelf and shattered it to smithereens on the floor.

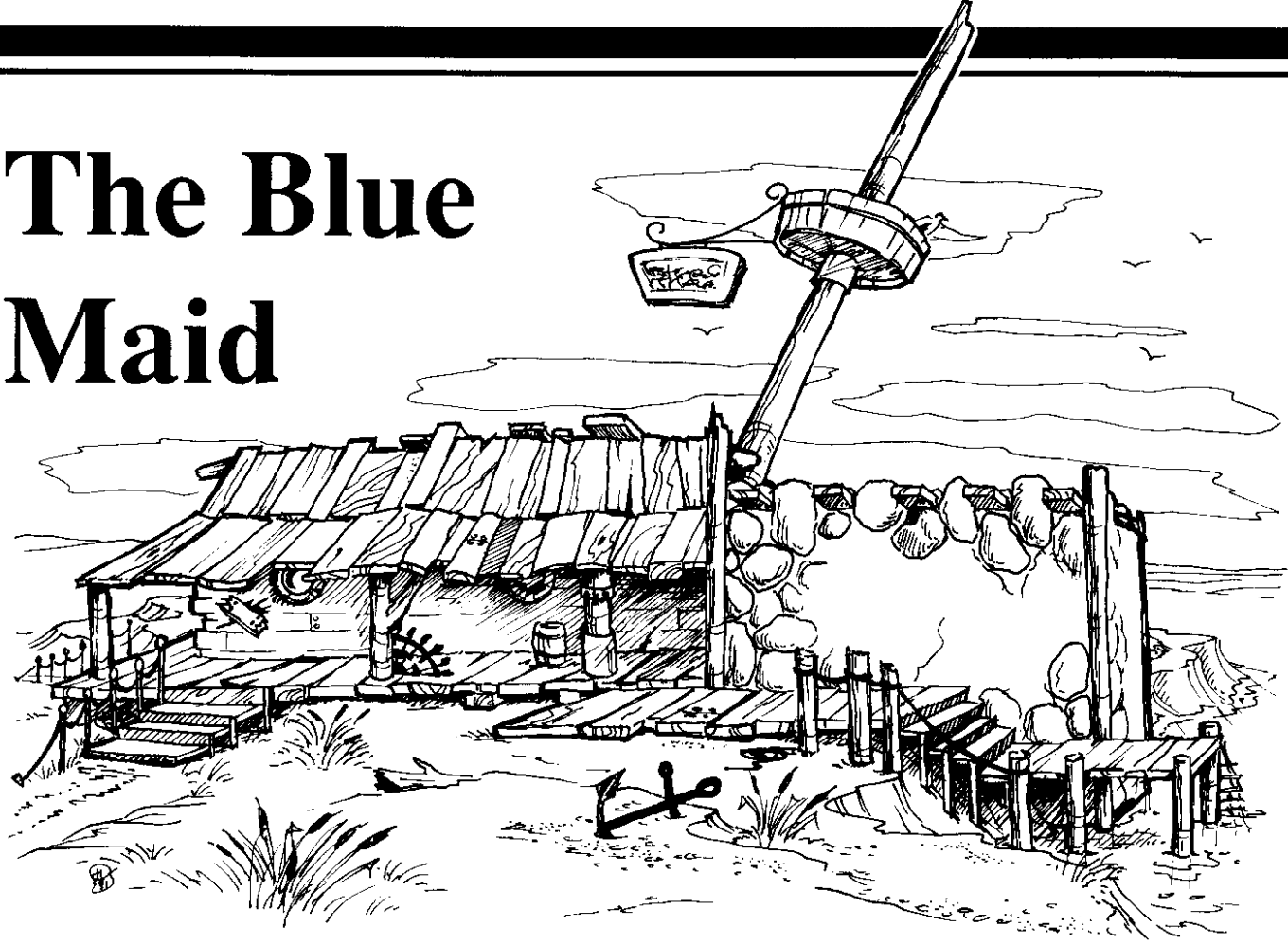
Can a good-hearted group of adventurers find some way for her to replace it, before Hilkin finds out? Or to raise the money to pay for it, at least?

Scenario 3: "What Is This Thing, Anyway?" Like any shop that has valuable merchandise lying around, Hilkin's makes a tempting target for thieves. Should the adventurers decide to rob the place, they may find it more difficult than expected—not only will Borgrim and Merindia put up a fight, but if they get away with any of the merchandise, Hilkin will do everything in his power to hunt them down, retrieve the goods, and punish them for the theft. He won't leave the shop himself, but he has three very loyal employees and virtually limitless wealth. Alerting the city guard would be the first step, and hiring wizards—paying them not with gold, but with devices from his cellars—would be next.

But the plunder might be worth it.

Hilkin's is an inexhaustible resource for an astute Game Master. Any object that needs to be introduced can come from Hilkin's shelves; anything that needs to be hidden or disposed of can be left there.

The Blue Maid



Of all beings placed upon the world by the gods, the denizens of the sea are often the least known and the most feared. In Sideshow the focus for interchange with the world beneath the waves is the Wysilihenthade Center of the Unusual and Unique—more commonly known as the "Blue Maid," a dark and damp curio shop situated on the river bank. Here, adventurers can buy, sell and exchange unusual items taken from the sea and if they seek deeper force the sea to give up its dark and frightening secrets.

The Enthade

The Enthade (pronounced En-thahd'-day) are a race of merfolk, humanoid in appearance, who possess both lungs and gills. Enthade have slightly scaled, greenish-blue skin and coarse hair in shades of yellow-green that smells of sea salt or seaweed—usually worn long.

Enthadean eyes are commonly green but can be amber or black. They see well in dim light, but must wear eye protection in bright sunlight. Though their stature is close to human norms, the Enthade generally weigh 25-45% less than their human counterparts. Like reptiles and fish, they are cold blooded. Like frogs and salamanders, they must periodically soak in water (preferably fresh sea water), otherwise they dry up and die.

The Enthade have a normal life span of 95 years. Young are hatched from clutches of 10 to 20 hens'-egg sized eggs and females usually begin laying in their late thirties. Typically, 50 to 75% of merfolk fry (as the newly hatched are called) do not survive the eight months needed to reach the "child" stage (roughly comparable to a human infant through about 10 years of age). The children go through two subsequent stages of growth: adolescent and adulthood with adulthood being reached when they are able to reproduce. Despite this large mortality rate, merfolk families can number in the hundreds, with the children often forming a private army for aggressive sires. Extended clan groups of 1,000 or more are uncommon but not rare.

The Blue Happy Death

Enthadean females emit a musk when sexually aroused which is highly addictive to air-breathing humans races. Needless to say, many air-breathing males have had or sought relations with sea women. Unfortunately, the musk is also a mind poison, and after prolonged exposure, the victim may be driven insane or commit suicide. Enthadean males are not typically jealous, yet "incidents" do happen.

Some benevolent temples and social groups may try to break addicted males of their Enthade habits. Conception is not possible between air breathers and Enthade.

Author, SHAWN MOORE tells us that he is married to a lovely enthadean lass (and hopefully, like the Old Man of the City, the addiction will not be fatal) and has a pair of lively young guppies. After discussing the manner in which I might have to edit an author's overlong manuscript, Shawn politely imformed me that it was impolitic to use the words "Sherman" and "Georgia" in the same sentence in the presence of a true Southerner.

Illustrators, SANDY SCHREIBER (the merfolk) and DIANA HARLAN STEIN (the shop) can often be found at Michigan SF conventions, in or near the art shows. In case anyone gets confused, Diana is the one in the hat with horns. Diana has been nominated for a best Fan Artist Hugo award, and is proud that illustrator, Robin Wood has recently declared her to be of journeywoman artist status.

Enthadean Religion

The enthade are a devoutly religious race. They worship Ssyahthay (Sih-see-yah-thay), their Sea Mother. They believe that when the world was created, water covered all and the merfolk ruled. However, due to their wickedness and pride, Ssyahthay raised the ocean floors, killing the unfaithful.

From the survivors sprang two lines of descent: air-breathers and sea-dwellers who now can breathe both in and out of water. After the initial destruction, the Sea Mother told her children that in the End Times, a child of the air-breathers would be born who bore the mark of the prophecy. Ssyahthay would also provide smooth, clear yellow stones called "Tears of the Sun".

When the Child and the "Tears of the Sun" are united in blood over the polar ice caps, the caps will melt and the waters would again cover the surface. Of course, details regarding where the blood is to come from and what it truly means are vague (as is the case with all good prophecy). This aspect alone has caused numerous merfolk sub-cults; some who feel that the End Times will come because all merfolk live good, devoted lives; others who believe that preliminary destruction of the land dwellers is the key. The enthade of The Blue Maid adhere to this latter belief.

Regardless as to how it comes about, the sea-dwellers would once again rule the entirety of the world. The faithful who bring about the end of the dry lands will be given the rule of the new world. It should go without saying that this belief in racial superiority has led to a strained relationship between the enthade and *everybody* else.

A Living Legend

The enthade are aware of a being in the City referred to as "The Old Man." Long ago, so the tales go, the goddess of the sea folk cursed an air-breather to live forever in the City. If local tales hold true, then this ancient being is literally one of the "bogey-men" used to frighten mer children, singing,

"Watch out little mer-fry,
When a-landing ye are gone,
Or the Old Man'll get you,
And dry you on his lawn."

Of course, such drivel is nonsense, childish doggerel to frighten small fry. Wysilihenthade doesn't believe in bogeymen.

On the other hand, the Old Man believes in merfolk and keeps a close watch on Wysilihenthade's efforts to collect the Sun Tears. He tolerates the enthade presence in the City only so long as they actively seek its destruction. To this end, he does what he can to heighten tensions between the merfolk and the other City dwellers. It's been quite some time since The Old Man has had the pleasure of drying an enthade on his lawn. Chances are, he won't wait much longer.

The Shop

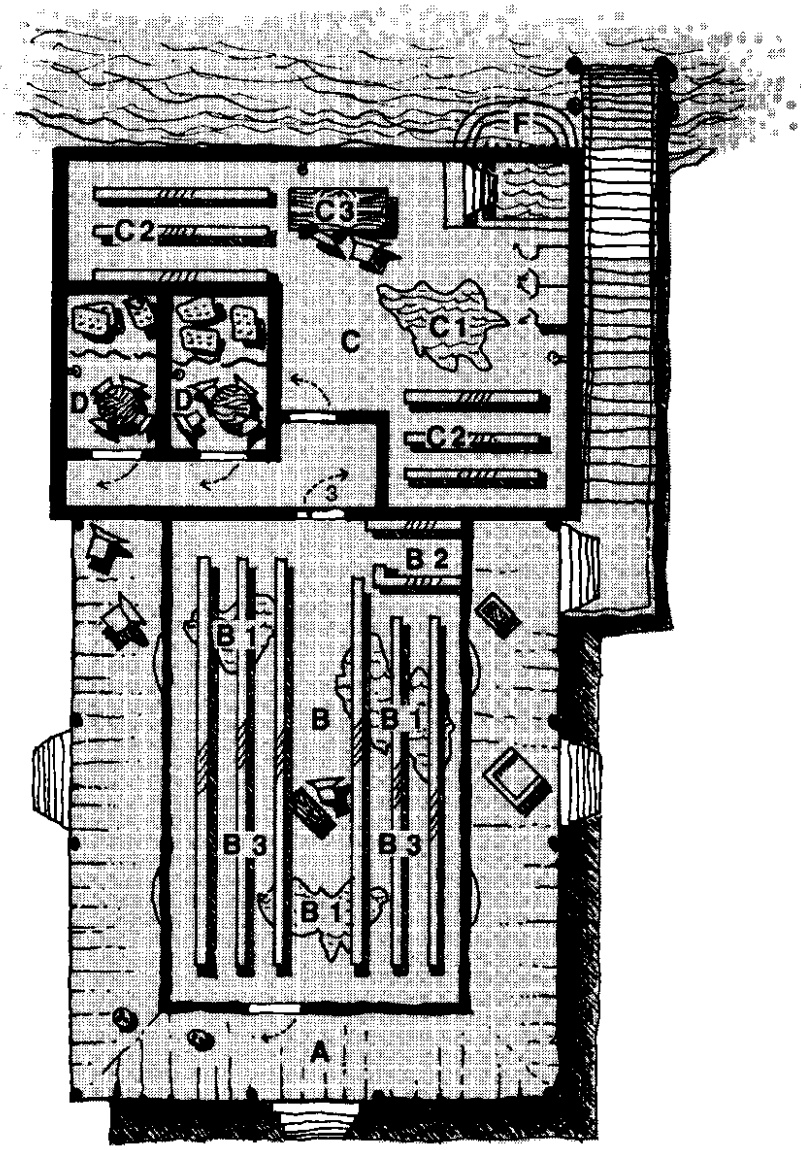
The Blue Maid is owned and operated by the family of Wysilihenthade (whistle-hen'thahday), a male enthade of his clan's noble bloodline. The shop provides the needy and the adventurous with a place where they can sell "unwanted" booty or pick up some rare item required for an adventure or ritual.

Prices paid for items brought into the store for sale are generally 30 to 50% of the item's *apparent* value. The shop does not purchase *extremely* expensive goods and will direct the customer Uptown, to one of the City's wealthier establishments.

At any rate, there is at least one (and usually two or three) customers in the store at all hours (they are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to compete against Hilkin's). Along with buying and selling goods, there are other services provided by the enthadean proprietors though none are advertised.

Wares: Bounty of the Seas

There is a 30% chance that any item desired will be in the store. It is generally, and quite correctly presumed that the goods sold in the shop are "sea salvage" — that is, cargoes taken from sunken ships. Some of the special items which can be purchased from the enthade are products of the sea, such as coral jewelry, paralytic jelly fish poison, deadly blow-fish venom, sea-shell



SCALE: one square = 1 foot

armor (like scale-mail), wind conches, tridents of the sea, and magical air-breather's cure (helps people to breathe in water).

Sea Salvage

Air-breathers may hire the enthade to find and salvage the cargoes of sunken ships. Adventurers can often pay to accompany the enthade on these missions. Note that this is an extremely expensive service, since the merfolk object strongly to air-breathers trespassing or "thieving" from their domain. Thasilenthade supervises and accompanies all such missions.

Unadvertised Services

Though not advertised, it is possible to pay the merfolk to have a ship sunk after it is in open water. A freak accident will befall the helpless ship and all hands will be lost. Understandably, such "accidents" are kept to a minimum and the cost can be substantial. Wysilihenthade personally handles all such transactions in one of the back rooms. The Cargos of the stricken ships are usually part of the payment for their services. The merfolk may keep 20% of any cargo that survives the sinking—claiming *any* part of the cargo as their share, unless it has already been vouched for by the client. In such cases, they get 25% of what remains. Knowledge of this service is generally restricted to the criminal element of Sideshow (though the Sliming Path occasionally hires the service for a show of force).

Blue Companions

Air-breathers may also purchase "mating times" with enthadean females. There never seems to be an end to the customers. These meetings take place in the small rooms in the back.

Tears of the Sun

The Shop also operates on the hope of finding the "Tears of the Sun." The merfolk don't know how many exist, or how many they require to enact the End Time ritual. Nevertheless, they have gathered many over the years (they are kept in a nearby underwater treasure trove).

These stones are of various sizes. They will magnify heat or light (or similar magics) focussed through them, with the power potential being related to the stone's size. The bigger the stone, the greater the power. Any stones brought into the store will be purchased outright, and if the character will not sell the item, a duplicate will be made and substituted for the original.

Layout

The shop is centered in an enthadean neighborhood along the Sideshow side of the river or seashore (it backs up onto water).

Since most enthade believe the end of the surface world to be imminent, the few surface structures they construct are not made to last very long. This gives them the appearance of shacks or huts. Constructed of driftwood or scrap lumber and built in or near water, enthade dwellings tend to rot quickly and have a musty, clammy atmosphere. The Blue Maid is no exception.

It is dark in here. Light comes from the door and two small windows. Additional lighting, if desired, comes in the form of lanterns. The shelves sag under the weight of the articles they contain. The roof leaks and puddles of water cover the floor. If one were to be slammed up against the wall, he or she might go through the moisture-damaged wood.

A. Porch (5' wide) The porch surrounds the show room (**B**). On cloudy or damp days, enthade from the community can be found lounging here.

B. Show Room (25' x 15' and 10' height) The room is cluttered with shelving units which are in turn cluttered with various items. Weapons, books, garments, armors, maps, globes, rings, you name it and it is probably here. The place gives the impression of being a warehouse. Since most of the items came from beneath the sea, there is unavoidable moisture damage to most items. Items that are completely damaged by moisture are not sold.

B1. Puddles. Although not deep, some of these are actually quite large. The shop is built over an artesian well and the water occasionally builds up enough pressure to come to the surface. The enthade don't mind it though. They find it to be quite homey.

B2. Counter. An enthade is always on duty here. Either Wysilihenthade, his mate, Hwaysenthade, or his brother, Thasilenthade will be keeping the counter. They don't mind haggling over prices. A persistent character might get a great deal (the merfolk don't want it anyway). Magical items found here will be rare and no better than low power. Anything or real quality is offered to the Sea Mother or traded to the Pack to ensure their good will.

B3. Shelves. Standing eight feet tall, each stack of shelves is made of five levels, each one and one-half feet high. Step-ladders are provided for short folk.

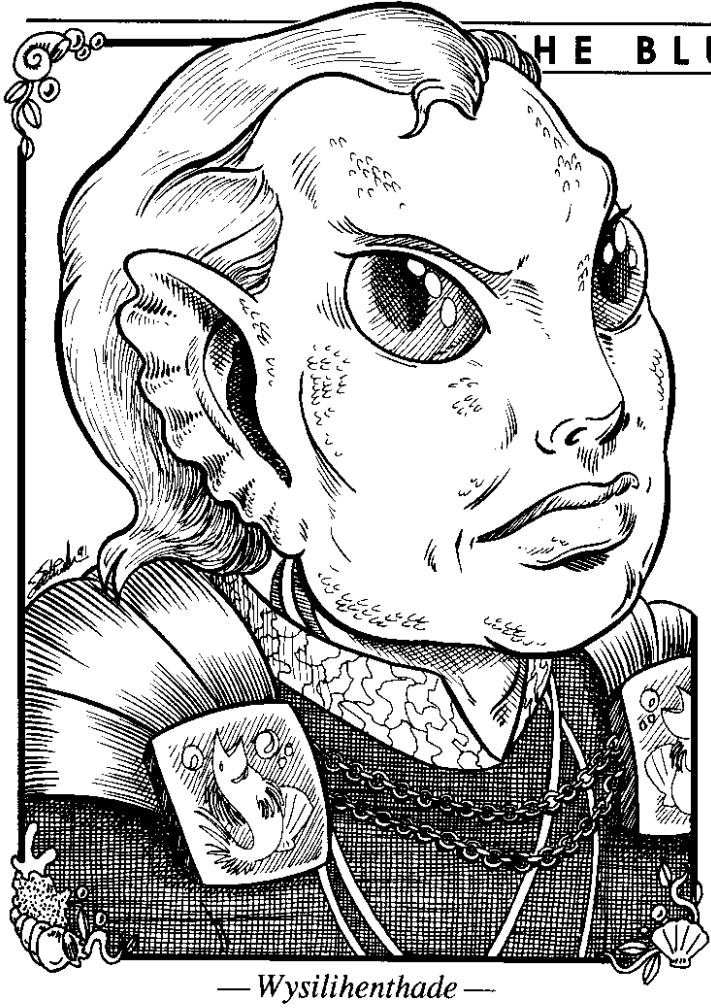
C. Back Room (18' x 20' and 8' high) The back room is where all the better magical items are kept as well as the more valuable mundane items. Odd for an enthadean structure, the back room is built of rough stone, shingled inside with lead plates and quite secure (you just can't trust air-breathers!). The door is always locked and no one is allowed back here except for employees and Wysili's family. If trouble erupts, a conch shell will be blown to bring MANY enthade to the rescue. There is a washing stall near the river entrance so that the enthade may wash the river filth off before entering the outer shop.

C1. Another Puddle.

C2. Shelves. Same shape and size as the ones in the show room, but more valuable items are stored here. Two enthade are always on guard and keep the shelves more organized than they are out front.

C3. Work Table. Damaged items which do not work are polished and made to look as though they do. The enthade will try to sell the item as is but, if pressed, they will not lie about it working (bad for business). Damaged items which still work are cleaned here up and made ready for resale.

C4. Steps into the River. Each step descends another three feet into the water. Secretly stored in holes dug into the stairs are items which can stand storage in water. The sea-dwellers enter and exit the store by this route. The steps lead directly into the river. A portcullis guards the river entrance and can be operated from the back room only.



— Wysilihenthade —

D. "Workrooms" (5' x 8') These two small rooms are where air breathers are taken care of and where "business" deals are made with the seedier elements of the City. Each room contains sleeping mats, a table and four chairs.

Personalities

Wysilihenthade. ❑ *Enthade, male. Ht.: 5' 7", Wt.: 130#, Age: 60.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Good with Trident and crossbow.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Fair in C3.*

Wysili has not been in the City long. He came when he heard of a possible cache of Tears. His mate, Hways established the shop and has been here for over five years. It is she who has built up the current clientele. He is intensely jealous of his mate (as he is of all his possessions), but other than that, he only uses her to further his own goals of power and domination.

Wysili is a noble among the enthade and acts accordingly. He is quite rude to the customers and does not allow Hways to associate with any air-breather, male or female. He believes in the destiny of his race and uses his energies to promote conflict between the hated air-breathers. He often plays one side against the other in any argument between air-breathers and will betray his "friends" if he can profit thereby. Though his attitudes are extremes, he is fairly typical of enthade males in general.

He is aware of the *Sliming Path* and knows of his brother's involvement. Since it serves his own goals, he allows it.

He has frequent dealings with the criminal element of the City, including the *Blue Light Gang* (**CB2**), the *Big Fish Gang* (**CB3**) and *Forge* (**CB4**). It is they who often pay for ship "accidents."

Wysili pays the Pack to keep him informed of any moves against his store and he has a working agreement with "Oozer" Perebedzik (*The Sewers*, **CB3**) to store the cargoes of wrecked ships in the sewers.

Understandably, Wysili does have some enemies. He has heard of the Old Man, even seen him once in a tavern, but has no special fear of a childish myth. The Old Man, on the other hand sees in Wysili an eventual chance to score points against the Sea-Mother. Most of the powerful crimelords in the City are biding their time until they can no longer profit from the "His Majesty, King of the Sea" as they are wont to call the unpleasant merman.

Hwaysenthade. *Enthade, female. Ht.: 5' 2", Wt.: 90#, Age: 30.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with daggers.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Good with C3, C6.*

Hways is a typical merwoman, exotically beautiful, unexpectedly competent and intelligent, and married to a self-centered, domineering petty "emperor." She was given in marriage to Wysili when Hways was born, but they have only been together for about five years.

Too young to bear offspring, Hways is already sick of Wysili. His dominance and arrogance have virtually reduced her to a *"liyasenthos,"* or slave. Since enthade mate for life, she is wondering how she can shorten his without being caught or angering the Sea Mother (whom she already hates fo inflicting Wysili on her).

Hways is well-loved by the enthade in the neighborhood, and even by other folk in Sideshow. She has built the Blue Maid into what it is today because she likes air breathers and living in the City. Yet since Wysili has come to stay, customers have slowly been driven off by his fiery temperament. What worries her most is the kind of humans who now come to the store. They look especially wicked, even for air-breathers. She does not know of Wysili's dealings with the gangs, sunken ships, nor of Thasil's involvement with the Sliming Path.

Hways suspects that a mature air-breather male who has been showing up at the 'Maid in all manner of guises, might be the infamous 'Old Man of the City.' They have conversed at length on seemingly trivial matters and despite his infamy and humaness (or perhaps because of them), she has become romantically attracted to him. She suspects that hemay return those feelings.

Given the choice, she would dump Wysili's precious Tears down a volcanic sea crevasse (and Wysili along with them) and let the Sea Mother work out her own nasty prophecies.

Thasilenthade. ❑ *Enthade, male. Ht.: 6' 1", Wt.: 175#, Age: 45.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Good with crossbow and spear and/or dagger.*

Thasil the Salvage Master is one of Wysili's numerous younger brothers. He has worked at the store since Hways started it and is responsible for the shop's salvage and recovery operation. He personally accompanies all salvage missions. Thasil also loves Hways and desperately wants to mate her.

An enthade oddity, Thasil is an agnostic who does not believe in the Sea Mother or the Prophecy of the Tears. He despises air-

breathers nonetheless and as a member of the Sliming Path, he works to destroy them (though he is careful not to reveal the enthade racial goal to fellow 'Path people). Even so, he will not knowingly allow harm to come to those who accompany him on salvage missions. After all, it would hurt Hways' business.

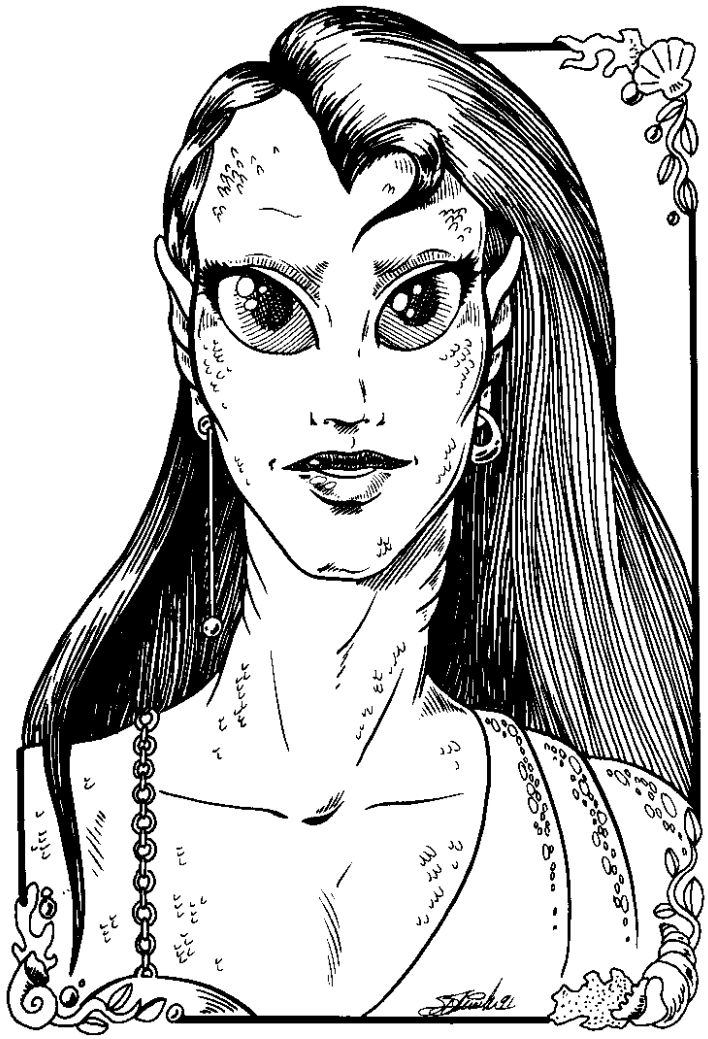
When not on missions, or drinking with his terrorist friends, or at the Mariners Hall researching possible locations for lost ships, he works at the store. He would not be sad to see his brother go away—by whatever the means.

Yhanisenthade. ❑ *Enthade, female. Ht.: 5'4", Wt.: 140#, Age: 40.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Very Good in all C's. Excellent with magic involving the sea.*

Yhanis is sister (though not a clutch-sister from the same egg cluster) to Hways and a High Priestess of Ssyahthay. She performs the ritual magic which sinks the ships.

Her magic is weakened when away from the sea, so she usually abides in a submerged temple on the undersea slopes of the same island that holds *Van Iverson's Lite* (**CB2**). She hates Wysili because he mistreats her sister, but it is death to take the life of a fellow Enthade. On the other hand, she desires Thasil as her mate (but is unaware of his feelings for Hways).

She helps Wysili because he works towards the goal of her goddess. She believes that she will be the priestess who brings about The End. Her visions have told her so.



— Hwaysenthade —

Guards: The typical enthade guard is about the same size as an average human. There will be two in the back room and two more in the front at all times. Most will be Good fighters and be armed with spears and/or daggers. Most will wear sea shell armor (similar to scale armor).

Companion Females: There may be as many as nine females in the store (often lounging on the porch) at any time. The cost of their company varies, depending on the addiction of the customer. If the addiction is high, then the cost will be also. The men will be taken to the small rooms (**D**) at the back of the store.

Scenario Suggestions

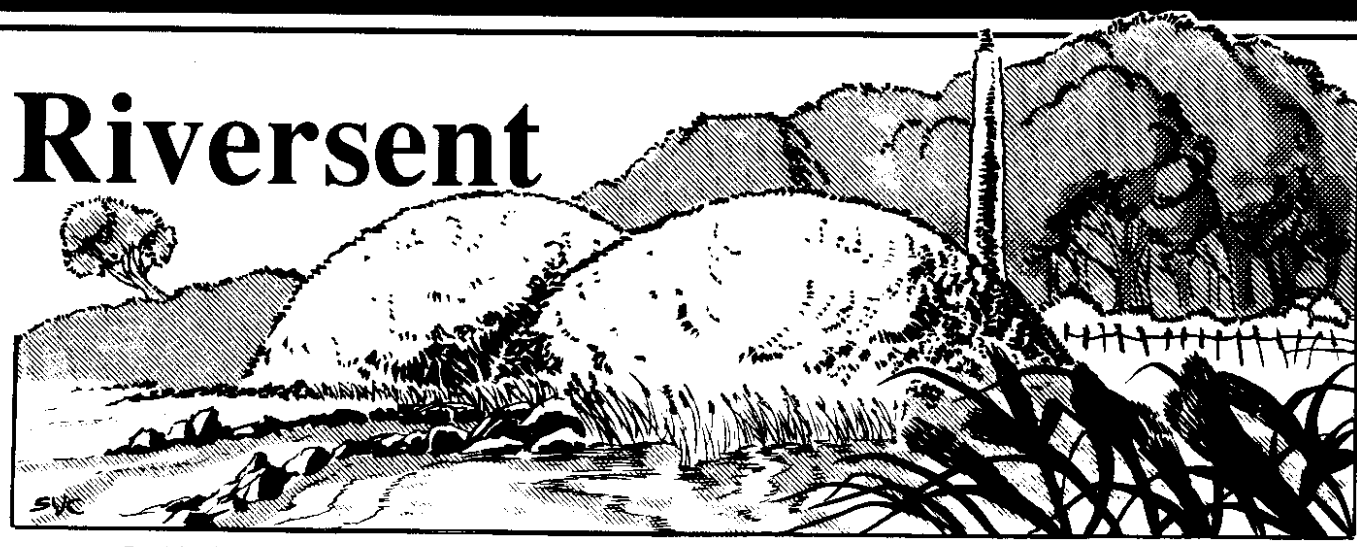
Scenario 1: Teardrops Keep Falling from My Nose! Wysili suspects that those dastardly air-breathers at Hilkin's, the competing curio shop in Sideshow, have a store of Tears in their basement. Every time Wysili goes in there to buy them, he comes out with something else! He hires the adventurers to retrieve his rightful property!

Scenario 2: The Undersea World of Jake Koostoe. Jake Koostoe, the halfling who owns one of the biggest tailor shops in Sideshow lost a fortune in imported sewing machinery when the good ship Merrydrake went down on a calm sea. He wants the adventurers to find a way to salvage his goods. He's heard about this "Blue Girl" shop near the river that's supposed to be able to handle jobs like this, but wants his own "people" on the job too. Of course, what he wants is actually rusting a bit in the back room of the Blue Maid, but nobody has to know about that until the adventurers have found and explored the ship ... or know why the Merrydrake sank, or who caused it, or who paid for it.

Scenario 3: For Unto Us a Child is Giv'n! The Child of Prophecy comes into the shop to find a book that might explain her unusual sunburst birthmark. Wysili quickly decides to take what Tears he has and hire some adventurers to escort her, Yhanis, and himself to the ice caps (explaining about some ritual to save the world). When they arrive, he intends to kill the Child at the rising of the sun. To spice it up even more, have the Child be a formidable heroine (one of the adventurers?) or have the Tears begin to really work—to protect the Child! Come up with a *true* explanation of the prophecy, one that the merfolk have misconstrued all these ages.

Our world has been lured to the sea by countless stories of mermaids and other exotic encounters reported by half-crazed sailors returning from long voyages. Here the sea-people have come ashore. Here the adventurers can find treasures thought lost to the sea forever. Here they can begin an adventure that may open the doorway to a vast and exciting world hiding just beneath the green-blue horizon.

Riversent



Beside the river, an enclosed garden grows a wide variety of herbs for a shop called Riversent. The exotic, oft-maligned riverfolk who run the shop, compound and sell not only popular potions and herbal preparations, but also potent perfumes. If one seeks a potion, a poultice, a purgative, or even a poison, this is the first place to look —if it can be found at all.

Riversent has gained a reputation for being an excellent source of all types of herbs and herbal potions—usually at very reasonable prices. A young girl named Stinya is often seen delivering packages of herbs to patrons throughout the City. Riversent is also the sole outlet for the "Limex" brand of designer perfumes, but these potent scents do not come cheaply. Unknown to the general public, the riverfolk have learned how to mix pheromones with their perfumes. The powerful compulsions triggered by these pheromones can by used to manipulate emotions and behavior.

People of River

The riverfolk who tend the fragrant garden and sell its wares are members of a furry, water-loving, nonhuman race. Though both their features and figures have a faintly human cast to them, their appearance reminds many of anthropomorphic otters. Most riverfolk live in isolated communities along the Great River, its tributaries and sources; their dealings with humans kept few and far between. In the past, it was not uncommon for rivermen (male riverfolk) and rivergynes (female riverfolk) to be robbed, beaten, and even enslaved by humans. Such incidents are fewer now, since most riverfolk wisely stay near their settlements in the marshes and distant reaches of the rivers and lakes.

Some, like Ristya Darkbrow and her family (see *The River Drake*, **CB4**) have made names for themselves along the Great River and earned the respect of other races, prompting others among the riverfolk to seek commerce with the unpredictable human race.

Author, B. Dennis Sustare reprises his CityBook IV entry with yet another look at his curious riverfolk — yet there are no slugs this time. Dennis's design credits include several roleplay game systems, several SF board games, and a number of games for the ColecoVision game system and the the ADAM computer.

Comic book fans might recognize a little bit of the worlds of the "Aniverse" in illustrator Susan Van Camp's anthropomorphic characters, like the oh-so serious Leona, and almost human, doe-eyed Stinya. Susan has worked on several stories in the comic book "Tales from the Aniverse," and her own comic mini-series "Varcel's Vixens."

History

Bregya and Stinya, two rivergynes, came to this location six and a half years ago aboard the River Drake to start Riversent with nothing more than a wooden crate filled with carefully gathered and sorted seeds. In the heart of the City, the pair built a vernacular riverfolk lodge on a spit of land below the river front bluffs that border a small bit of parkland (where once a nobleman's palace had stood before it burned to the ground long ago). Bregya began a small business in herbs, using Stinya to make deliveries. As the demand for her herbs grew, she realized she needed help to expand the gardens, and sent out a call for a riverman gardener.

They were quickly joined by Limnos and Nauplion, who built a second lodge and immediately set about the arduous task of planting new gardens in the rich river soil. Ever wary of thieves and scoundrels, Limnos convinced Bregya to surround Riversent with formidable natural defense works.

Herbalism

Perfumes and Pheromones.

Although Bregya makes and sells simple perfumes, her most desired (and expensive) scents are those which contain pheromones. These are sold under the name "Limex," with a veiled reference to the limexus used as a base for the perfume. Limexus is extracted from giant slugs. Bregya obtains this rare stuff from a riverboat crewman named Furth (see *The River Drake* in **CB4**).

Pheromones are chemicals that induce an emotion such as fear or love. The knowledge to prepare such chemicals is a carefully guarded secret. Among the riverfolk of Riversent, only Bregya knows these secrets, though as a Fifth-Degree Pheromone-Master she has great knowledge indeed. Pheromones are normally specific to a single species, so that dwarf-fear pheromone would have no effect on humans or elves. Bregya's ability allows her to make general pheromones, affecting a wide range of targets, and thus being exceedingly powerful. She reserves these primarily for the uses of herself and the other three riverfolk at Riversent. Those pheromones she sells to villagers are of the specific type; therefore customers must be careful in placing their orders. Inadvertently wearing a troll-love perfume could be hazardous to your health!

Pheromones are volatile and ephemeral; in simple terms, this

means they don't last a long time. One should apply them just before one intends to use it (for example, put on the love pheromone just before a date, not the day before!). Bregya has produced some long-lasting limited-use formulations, for use in traps. These do not release the pheromone until triggered, and then they spray onto the individual who triggered the trap.

The most common pheromones that Bregya makes are the following:

❑ **Love.** This causes one to be lovesick over the wearer of the perfume, and to give presents to this object of love. It has a flowery scent.

❑ **Lust.** This musky potion causes one to have an overwhelming urge to mate with the wearer. Popular with courtesans as well as with folk whose spouses think they are too old to be aroused.

❑ **Fear.** This causes one to flee in terror from the wearer. It has a sharp, acrid scent.

❑ **Guilt**. This causes one to confess wrongs to those who have been wronged. A popular scent for certain clerics, it smells vaguely musty.

❑ **Shame**. causes intense embarrassment. Dog-shame pheromone is sometimes used to housebreak pets. This pheromone is naturally released by parents when they take their adolescent children into public places. It smells faintly like diapers.

❑ **Rage**. This causes one to attack enemies in a berserk manner, without regard for safety or pain. It has a salty tang.

❑ **Hunger**. Often sprayed into the air at the entrances to grocery stores and restaurants. It has a scent reminiscent of freshly baked pastries or bread.

Potions and Herbs

By far the most common potion Bregya makes is an herbal poultice used for healing wounds. With proper binding to stabilize the preparation, this potion can last for a month or more. One mixture usually has the potency for two or three doses, though for a single wound they would have to be applied at one-day intervals for best effectiveness.

Potions for neutralizing poisons and curing diseases are available, though they must be compounded to treat the specific poison or disease. Potions for rare diseases and poisons are correspondingly expensive, and may not be kept in stock. Of course, a customer may order potions in anticipation of future needs.

Bregya also sells herbs and spices for use in cooking. By far, this is the greatest volume of business, and the least expensive. She sells aromatic herbs to other riverfolk for their beds.

Layout

The herb gardens and lodges of Riversent nestle snugly inside their thorny walls on the sand and mud flats between the bluffs and the river. Passersby receive a good view of the gardens from the path atop the bluffs. Often, lovers stroll that path in the evening, to gaze down upon the pastel flowers of the herb plantings, and to breathe in the delicate fragrances that waft upwards (in marked contrast to the River's aroma elsewhere).

To reach the shop, customers descend the steps to the narrow river bank next to the City's Long Dock, then pass through the deep shadows beneath the dock. Following the path (and several encouraging signs) they reach an always-locked gate in a sturdy fence built of driftwood bound together by living ironvine. The vines have been trained by Limnos to form such a tightly woven web about the posts that the casual viewer may not realize that this is a fence, and not a natural tangle of vegetation. The fence passes into the dense reeds the line the bank here, effectively preventing anyone from going around it. A similar fence (but with no gate) guards the far end of the gardens.

The fence has been liberally trapped with Commotion pheromone. Someone trying to climb it will begin yelling and waving their hands about. This is likely to attract attention very quickly! Incidentally, there are milkglow vines growing on the back of the fence. Contact with these will coat the intruder with a sticky sap that glows pale yellow in darkness. This sap cannot be easily washed off, and will glow for about 50 hours.

The gate lock is trapped with Awkwardness pheromone. A thief trying to pick this lock will drop lock picks, stumble into other members of the party, and generally act like a bumbling oaf.

Along the bluffs is a tangle of potent bramble and thorn bushes, which on two occasions has been the death of a person deliberately or accidently sliding down from the bluffs, and then becoming so trapped and punctured that escape was impossible. Many thorns have been trapped with a general Bewilderment pheromone as well as a blood toxin. An intruder punctured by one thorn becomes totally lost, and begins randomly thrashing about, and thus likely to get thoroughly entangled, receiving many new wounds. The toxin will soon cause death.

The river side of the gardens seems the least well protected, with a growth of reeds half again the height of a man. Yet the reeds are so dense, that one cannot see into them an arm's-length, nor can even a strong boatman pole his boat into them. One can only speculate as to what imported terrors might lurk amongst those reeds (for each 10 feet of movement through the reeds there is a 25% chance to trigger large animal traps).

Parchment envelopes with menus of seasonal herbs, poultices, compounds and common potions are placed in a basket outside the gate. The name of each mixture is written beside its price. Customers can order herbs by marking their choices on the menu, giving an address, and sealing the appropriate amount of money into the envelope, and tossing it over the gate. When the order is filled, Stinya will deliver it to the customer. There is no need for the customer to sign the order, for the riverfolk can apparently identify others by their smells. Customers that cannot read may still be able to use the menu, since moistening a selection causes a faint aroma of that herb or potion to be released. If the customer can recognize a desired potion by its smell, choices can be made without a need to read the menu.

For special orders, or if customers do not know what they want, people simply stand at the gate and shout. One of the riverfolk may respond, or perhaps no one will come and the customer will eventually leave.

The Lodges

The two lodges are at right angles to each other, making contact at the rear, with a front opening into each lodge. These are "vernacular" riverfolk lodges, that is, they are typical of traditional riverfolk construction and design. Each lodge is made of driftwood timbers, stone and planking, over which a plaster of mud and crushed reeds has been slathered repeatedly. Like most "mature" riverfolk lodges, these two resemble oblong grassy mounds, about 10 feet tall and 30 to 40 feet long. The front entrances can be tightly sealed. A tall, brush-filled chimney rises above the river's annual flood-height. A series of dikes and breakwaters channel the force of flood water away from the lodges. Nevertheless, a serious flood would most likely wash the buildings away.

Lodge One

The lodge closest to the gate (lodge one) is where Bregya and Limnos stay. This lodge has three compartments.

A. Storage Chamber. (7' x 14', irregular) Limnos keeps his tools and gardening supplies here in this outer compartment, including materials that should not be exposed to rain or dew. A doorless opening connects to the central sleeping compartment.

B. Sleeping Compartment. (12' x 17') The two low bed frames here are filled with aromatic herbs and rushes—traditional riverfolk sleeping accommodations. To humans they look like messy, smelly piles of crushed weeds. Several mesh bags hang from the wall, filled with an assortment of fresh fruits and vegetables. Another doorless opening connects to the laboratory.

C. Herbal Laboratory. (10' x 16', irregular) This room is Bregya's work space, where she keeps her notebooks, compounds and chemicals, and prepares potions. There are three concealed panels in this room. The first (**C1**) hides a vault in which Bregya keeps her pheromone preparations, including two small casks of limexus. This panel is trapped with a Guilt pheromone. The second (**C2**) hides an underground, water-filled passage, a swimway that connects to the river so that the riverfolk can enter and leave unobserved. This panel is trapped with a Fear pheromone. The third hides a secret passage between the two lodges. This panel is not trapped, but it is locked[5] on this side. Bregya unlocks and opens it when she is working in the lab, so that she and Stinya may cooperate, and so she might better train her daughter.

Lodge Two

Nauplion and Stinya stay here. This lodge also has three compartments.

D. Storage Chamber. (15' x 9', irregular) The outer storeroom is where Nauplion keeps his forager's gear, including a backpack with adventurer's equipment and supplies. This is also where Stinya stores orders to be delivered, and maintains her logbook of orders and deliveries.

E. Sleeping Compartment. (17' x 11') The central sleeping compartment has two piles of aromatic rushes (not in bed frames). Stinya has a locked[4], heavy storage chest, trapped with a Shame pheromone. In it, she keeps clothing as well as some small sentimental items of Nauplion's (but without his knowledge).

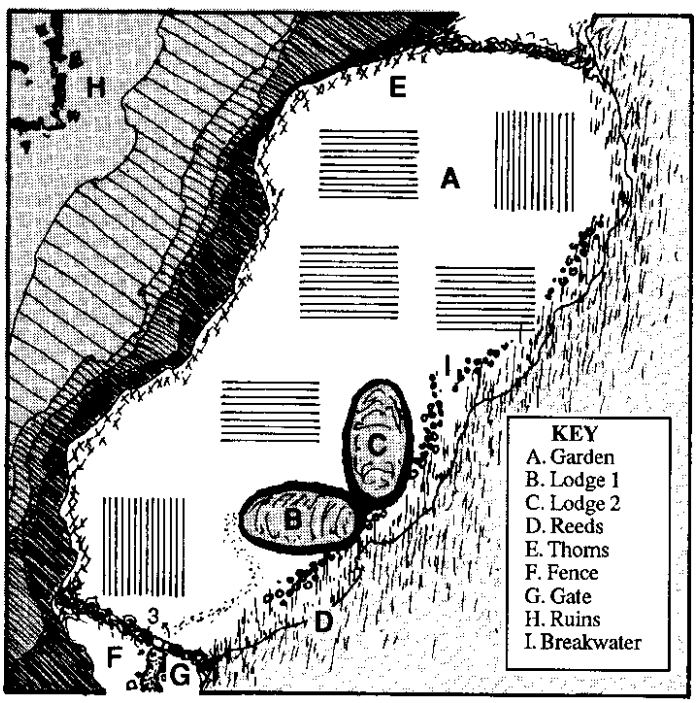
F. Binding Room. (15' x 6', irregular) This rear compartment is Stinya's binding room, where she stabilizes and packages Bregya's herbal mixtures. As in lodge one, there are three concealed panels in this room. The first (**F1**) hides a small vault, with the panel trapped with a Guilt pheromone. The only item in this vault is Stinya's diary; she would simply die (well, not literally) if anyone else were to read it, especially Nauplion! The second panel (**F2**, trapped with Fear) hides another underground water-filled passage to the river (not connected to the one from lodge one). The third panel is the other side of the opening into lodge one.

G. Basket Shelves. On a small shelf beside the opening to lodge two rests the tiny living baskets Limnos has made for Stinya. Sometimes she waters them, but usually Limnos cares for them, to be sure they don't die.

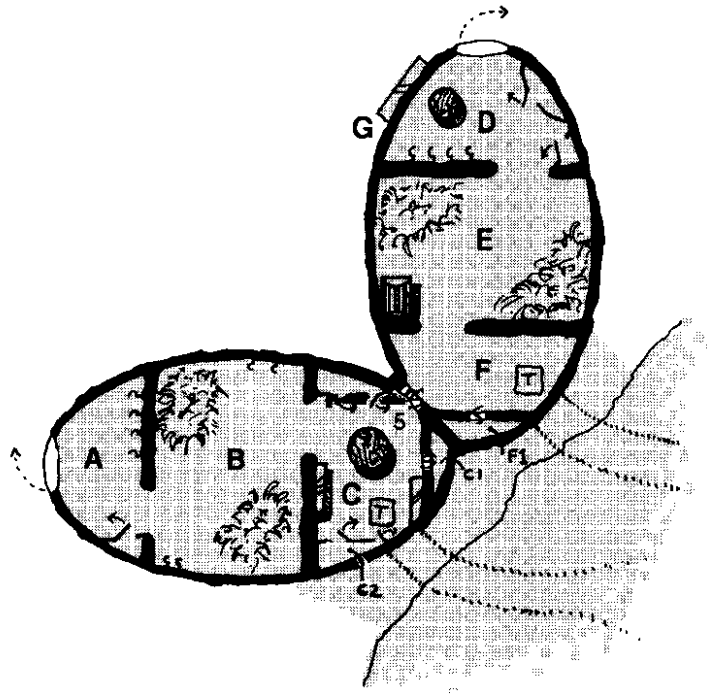
Personalities

Limnos Wideback. ❑*Riverman, Ht.: 5'9", Wt.: 174, Age: 39.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Good; Excellent with gardener's pick.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Fair at C7.*

He is the Gardener at Riversent. Limnos plants and cares for all the herbs, as well as maintaining the reeds, living fences and thorns as a defensive wall around Riversent. He has an exceptionally stocky build for a riverman, which has led some riverfolk to joke (but not to his face) about his possible mixed parentage. He



SCALE: one square = 5 feet



SCALE: one square = 1 1/2 feet



—Limnos Wideback—

has powerful arms, shoulders and back, and can dig in the gardens for hours at a time with little sign of fatigue. His principal tools are a small trowel, a short-bladed plant trimmer (with a very sharp edge), and his own modification of the traditional riverfolk pick, into what he calls a gardener's pick. He has lived with Bregya for six years, but they are not lovers, possibly because of clan barriers. Nevertheless, he would readily fight to the death to protect her.

Nauplion is his moon-nephew (that is, Nauplion's mother is Limnos' sister). As is typical of a moon-uncle, he is usually harsh and demanding of Nauplion, driving him to work hard and gain proficiency with his skills. Limnos is very fond of Stinya, and sometimes directs the growth of plants to form miniature living baskets which he then presents to her as gifts, with tiny presents (such as flowers or sweets) concealed inside.

Limnos' Gardener's Pick. He has modified the traditional riverman's pick, which is basically a fish-catching tool (used both underwater and on the shore), into a tool more useful for his gardening needs. The principal changes are a broadening of the rear leaf-point into a more trowel-like shape, and a strengthening of the handle. He sometimes wraps the twin barbs with a strip of tigya-vine to prevent snagging, though he leaves the barbs exposed for combat. The edge of the leaf-point is kept quite sharp. When fighting, Limnos uses both thrusting and slashing techniques. He has enough upper body strength to readily disembowel an enemy whom he has pierced with the barbs. This is indeed a dreadful combat weapon.

Bregya Goldeneye. ❑ *Rivergyne, Ht.: 5'6", Wt.: 165#, Age: 39.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Excellent with herbal magic; otherwise, Fair (C2,C3,C6)*

She is the Chemist at Riversent, and has remarkable abilities with herbal magic, including being a 5th-degree Pheromone-Master. Bregya has most unusual eyes for her race, with the whites speckled with golden flecks. Actually, she was born with normal eyes. Her training in herbal magic was illegally started in childhood, contrary to the rules designed to prevent damage during early development. Certain chemical fumes caused this discoloration in her eyes. This discovery outraged the priestess examining Bregya prior to her name-day ceremony. The enraged village punished the chemist who had been secretly training her. A public fur-shearing caused great humiliation, and that night the chemist took her own life with an herbal poison. Three days after her name-day, an anguished Bregya (now Bregya Goldeneye) left her village forever. Before leaving, Bregya stole the notes and certain herbal materials left in the sealed lodge of the dead chemist. She vowed she would become the most powerful chemist of them all, and has devoted the past 29 years trying to attain that goal.

Bregya is Stinya's mother, having borne her late in life (for a rivergyne). As a result, Bregya seems determined to treat Stinya as a baby forever, even though Stinya is typical for rivergynes, having reached her own birthing-age at 12.

Nauplion Sharpchin. ❑ *Riverman, Ht.: 5'8", Wt.: 147#, Age: 16.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with pointed and pronged weapons; Average at brawling.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Average, C1,C2,C3,C7.*

He is the Forager for Riversent. As such, he takes many trips along the river and into isolated marshes and forests, searching for rare herbal materials and dietary supplements. When Bregya gave a call for a gardener at the time she was starting Riversent, Limnos accepted and was prepared to go down river. Since it was only three months before Nauplion's name-day ceremony, Limnos was persuaded by his sister to stay in the village, so that he could take his moon-nephew with him to learn a trade. Nauplion possesses a strong spirit of adventure, excited by any prospect for seeing new lands. This nature, along with his advanced perceptual abilities, has made Nauplion into a very skillful forager. Even at his relatively young age, he has contributed greatly to the



—Bregya Goldeneye—



— Stinya Shortfur —

success of Riversent.

Nauplion seems to be late-maturing. He has given no indication of reaching fathering-age yet, with none of the exuberant mating-play of youthful rivermen. Rather, his explorations for herbs appear to satisfy his drives adequately.

Since Nauplion makes many excursions as Forager for Riversent, it is easy to devise a mechanism to have him travel with an adventurer's party. Perhaps he is going into a dangerous area and will offer potions and herbs if they will accompany him. Maybe they're already planning a trip and he'd like to go along to gather herbs. Possibly the adventurers are already in the wilderness and it is convenient for the game master's purposes to have them "accidentally" run into Nauplion.

In any case, the emergency use of any potions he carries—he would be an asset to an adventuring team. He might even appear on the scene in a "deus ex machina" role to save a group that has managed to get themselves into some "hopeless" situation.

Another use for Nauplion is to "guide" the adventurers to an encounter planned by the game master.

Stinya Shortfur. ❑ *Rivergyne, Ht.: 5'5", Wt.: 121#, Age: 15.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Good with herbal magic; Fair in C2, C5, C6.*

She is the Binder at Riversent. As such, she stabilizes Bregya's herbal preparations, so they do not quickly lose their potency. She also seals and packages the herbs for sale. In addition, she performs many errands for Bregya; going to the market, posting advertisements outside inns and taverns, delivering purchases to their customers.

Stinya's appearance is partly a result of Bregya's smoldering resentment towards the riverfolk society. Soon after Stinya's birth, Bregya began treating her with an herbal poultice to reduce the growth of her fur, so as to make Stinya look much more human-like. Thus, with carefully applied cosmetics, the young rivergyne can readily pass as a human. In fact, most of the people in town view her as a young local girl with a job at Riversent.

Stinya still has the feelings and drives of a rivergyne, and has fallen desperately in love with Nauplion. He seems to take little notice of her, and of course spends much time away in his foraging duties. Stinya believes this is because of her appearance. She continually talks back to Bregya, with much sarcasm and a sharp tone. Bregya views this as a sign of immaturity, not understanding Stinya's true bitterness. Stinya also has an attitude problem with Limnos, falsely interpreting his affection as pity.

It should come as no surprise that Stinya has parleyed her anger into action as a courier for the radicals of the Sliming Path.

Roleplaying Riverfolk

No matter how they are used, play Bregya, Limnos, Stinya, and Nauplion as decidedly nonhuman characters. Remember that riverfolk are likely to interact with the world in very different ways. For example, they are comfortable when wet and muddy. They rely strongly on their sense of smell. They prefer water routes to land routes. They're not afraid of the dark, and in fact, enjoy nocturnal adventures. And ... they like the taste of raw frogs!

Scenario Suggestions

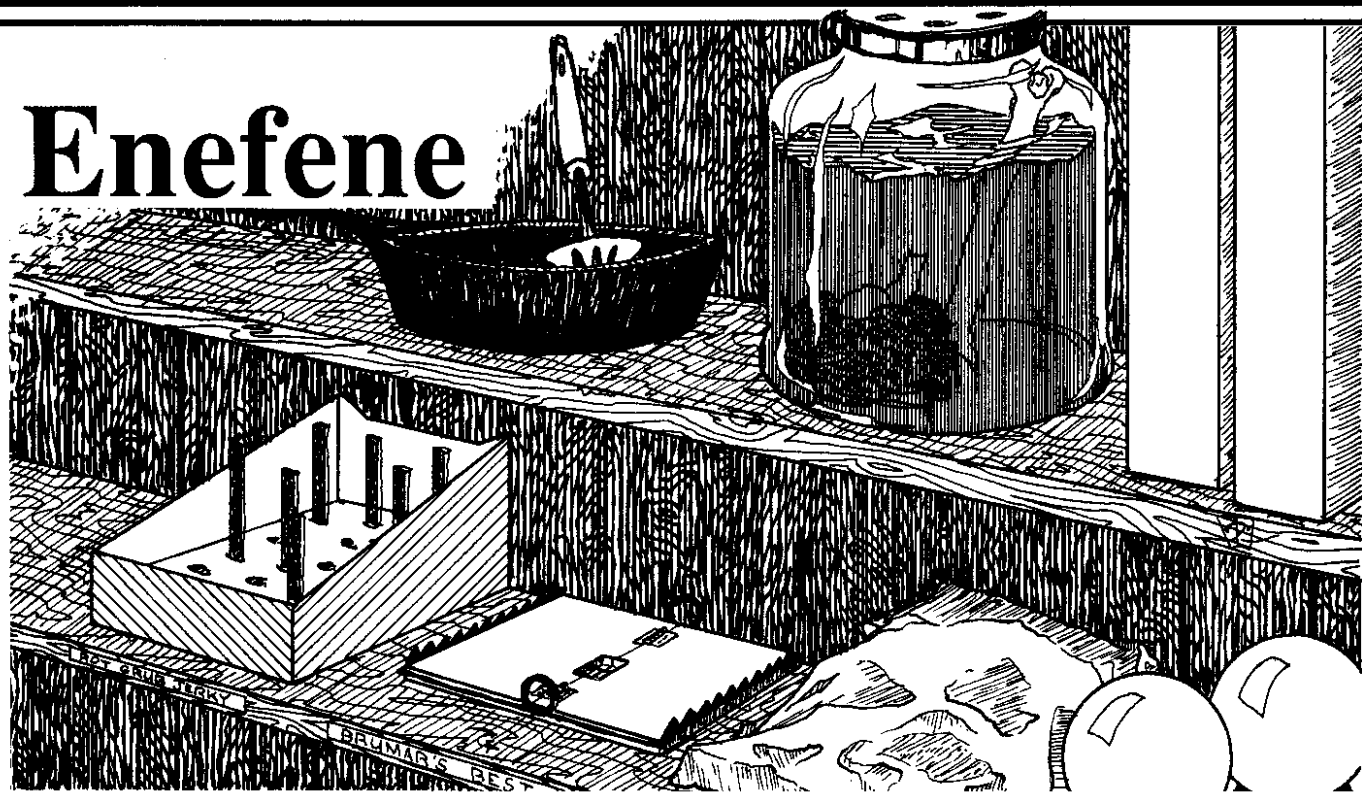
Scenario 1: Traitor's Redemption. Stinya is arrested by the City Guard, the charge: High Treason. Someone within the Sliming Path apparently betrayed her to the authorities. Her trial was swift, though not necessarily just, since other charges implied that she actually led the Sliming Path. Her execution is but days away. Bregya pleads with the adventurers to rescue her daughter, realizing that even saving her, means losing her to exile. She also seeks to meet with the real leaders of the 'Path, to seek true justice for this treachery.

Scenario 2: My Travels with Nauplion. Brave though he may be, Nauplion is not equal to the perils of his next journey into the wilds. Riversent hires the adventurers to accompany the Forager into a particularly dangerous swamp to discover a rare herb, "daemon's quatrefoil," possibly even bring cuttings or seeds back intact. The herb is required by the Knight's Cranial Hospitaler for compounding a new surgical anesthetic. However, it also has highly narcotic effects when not compounded properly, making it an attractive commodity for drug traffickers (such as *The Big Fish Gang*, **CB3**; or Keir Collis, **CB4**). Consider that these criminals will learn of the mission, and will follow the adventurers to their goal, but not let them accomplish it.

Scenario 3: On the Scent of Trouble. The secret of the Limex perfumes and potent pheromone unguents is far too tempting for master perfumer Vidal Neksus to leave unknown. He claims that the unscrupulous riverfolk had agreed to manufacture *his* perfumes, then stole *his* formulas. He needs the adventurers to "accompany" him on a mission to catch them red handed.

Every adventurer always seems to need just one more potion for an adventure. Never mind that all those little bottles and packages would fill any encumbrance limit. And as for what happens when a troll's club strikes the backpack, shattering all the containers at once.... Yet if an adventurer insists that he or she simply must obtain such-and-such an herb or potion, then what better source than Riversent?

Enefene



Many are the strange creatures inhabiting the city, and many are their needs. To serve those needs, they must seek out Enefene. Regardless of the race or taste or taste for races, this most general store in the City guarantees satisfaction for the persistent, if not what they came for.

Common Knowledge

Some 13 years ago, residents of Sideshow barely paid heed to the opening of a bland, adobe-walled, windowless shop. Proclaiming itself "Enefene" (En-ef'-en-ee) the shop offered to the inhabitants of Sideshow the items and morsels of their respective lands and palates. Since then, it's been open, day or night

The proprietor used to be a curiosity, but that lasted only a few years. Friendly and courteous (perhaps overly so), Blu seems nonetheless to be stiff and devoid of personality. Some say he reacts appropriately to them, but never really listens. His prices are fair. His stock is of the common variety if one takes into consideration the different peoples in the quarter. From another's point of view, however, the goods may be unlike anything else ever seen—as is the owner—he's made out of water.

History

Despite popular consensus, Blu is not exactly water. He's a "llalythan" (lih-lah'-lih-than), a race of large, intelligent amoeba, one of four created by a mage who had need of something to serve him and to hold information, to keep things clean and to storing his many notes, formulas, and spells. These assistants were supposed to have a very low intellect, but thanks to some educated guessing (on the part of the llalythan), the four developed intelligence rivaling that of their master.

The mage designed each creature to be adept in one of four broad areas of knowledge, with Blu's being sentient (intelligent) species. The remaining categories of plants, minerals, and animals were divided between the three remaining servants.

After the old master's natural death some 20 years ago (that's right—a powerful wizard and a natural death. weird, isn't it?), the four departed, having no one to serve. They now seek a mage of similar stature or potential, so that they may serve again. To this end, Blu settled in the City, in the section of town where he'd be most accepted and able to carry out both his search and his research without impedance. Enefene's "general" merchandise allows him access to a variety of customers, fulfilling both the continuous consumption of racial knowledge and the screening of possible masters.

Goods

Assume that if a basic, utilitarian item is integral to a nonhuman adventurers' home culture, it will be available at Enefene—but no weapons or garments. Human or near-human adventurers should not be able to identify more than 10%—15% of the merchandise. Blu will advise customers regarding the uselessness, potential dangers or harmful consequences that a piece of merchandise will pose to them. The use to which a customer may put a purchase does not concern Blu—only the duty he holds to his customers.

As the races indigenous to a given game world will vary, it

RANDALL G. KUIPERS has the sole pleasure in this book of being both author and illustrator for Enefene and the aqueous Blu. While this is Randy's first appearance in a CityBook as an author, he has contributed to past CityBooks, as map renderer and production artist for *CityBook IV: On the Road* and remapper for the second edition of *CityBook III: Deadly Nightside*. Randy is also a contributing author and illustrator to *Central Casting: Heroes NOW!*, to be published by Task Force Games (yet another fine product of Jaquays Design Studio).

will be left to individual GMs to determine the regular items for their world's unique culture's. The items suggest the range and weirdness of Enefene's common merchandise.

- Jars of jellies and puddings. These are not fruit preserves or confections. These are non-intelligent—the bane of ill prepared dungeon crawlers. And Blu has all the varieties. If the adventurers have had a really BAD recent encounter, their reactions should be interesting. Although potentially lethal to many life forms, jellies and puddings are merely snacks to others.
- Low-powered "magic" conveniences, such as sweeping brooms, ever-lit candles or continual light sources, and pans that heat on command. Just as electricity took another backward culture ahead a few steps, so do these "gadgets" represent the cutting edge of domestic life.
- Blu has one special item that never leaves Enefene: a thick, two-gallon glass jar with a sealable top and a bung. The jar contains three things: a bone, a heart, and blood. The blood is thick, rich, and red. The heart is beating. True to his customers, Blu has secured an item for those few races that absolutely require fresh blood to survive. The key word here is "fresh." Currently the jar holds some obscure racial sample retained for study, but any specimen could be used. All Blu needs is an appropriate heart, a marrow sample (usually a bone), and about two gallons of decent water. The blood is ready in two hours. The jar is locked up in the Record's Room (**D**).

Layout

Enefene is an unassuming, light brown, one-story shop apparently constructed of reinforced mud (actually a "natural" form of concrete). The rock-hard, foot-thick walls keep moisture and humidity in. The roof is constructed of a light mud/concrete coating over a sloping timber and lath support.

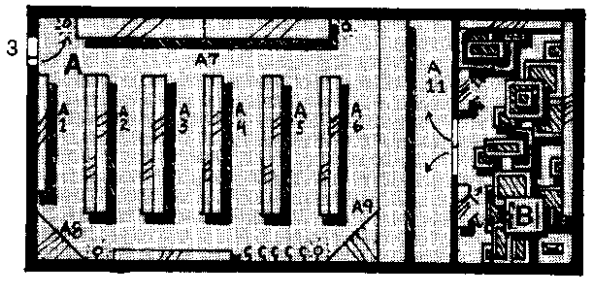
Ground Floor

A. Front room (42.5' x 25') The front door is heavy cured oak, and if shut, can be locked[3]. No light enters the store front, for no windows exist to let it in. Generous interior lighting (nearly equal to mid-day sun) is provided by four glowing glass balls set into rings in the walls. Shoplifting has not been a problem, since most people have no idea what 80% of Enefene's merchandise is, or does, ... or eats. They can't use it, pawn it, or give it away, so why take it? Besides, Blu doesn't seem to sleep, and he's BIG.

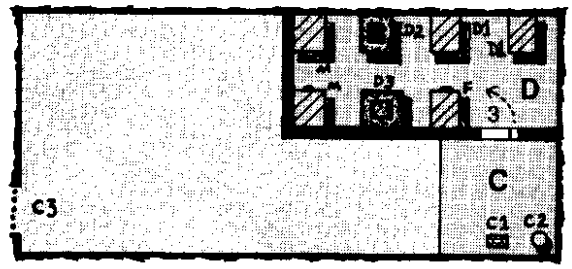
The sales counter area (**A11**) has no door or gate, Blu flows up into it from below. Blu keeps about 15% of the current days take in a small box[1] under the counter. The rest of the money is "engulfed" and excreted into the records room downstairs. The large double doors (3' x 8' apiece) behind the counter lead to the storage room (**B**).

The southeast (**A9**) and southwest (**A8**) corners each have enclosed, locked[2] glass display cases for the items (food or otherwise) not considered hospitable to all species—the jellies and puddings are kept in the case nearest the counter (**A9**).

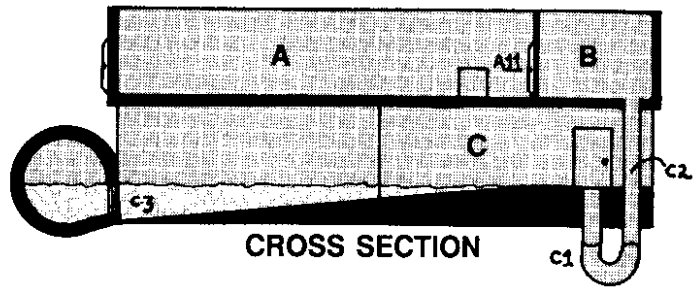
The shelves (**A1-A10**) are 14' x 2', both sides used (unless otherwise noted).



▲ First Floor



▲ Basement



SCALE: one square = 2 feet

A1. Common goods (12' x 1') These shelves hold everyday items for humans and near human creatures like elves, dwarves, centaurs, and dwelves; including personal care items like bandages, combs and soap, table wares, basic cleaning supplies, and minor bits of clothing.

A2. Packaged foods. Here are dried fruits and meats and trail rations in parchment pouches, envelopes of herbs for cooking and steeping in hot drinks, juices and cooking oils in stoppered ceramic flasks, and small wooden crates of crackers and hard biscuits. Remember that while one race loves sun-dried tomato slices, another may prefer that cannister of dill pickled grubs.

A3. Snack items. If the munchies are following you around, check out the third aisle—snack items to sate the choosiest "alien" appetite. This is all junk food, and is consequently the aisle that Blu restocks the most. Lots of crunchy, sweet, sour, squishy items—anything with no real nutritional value for any one race, but with interesting side effects for the others.

A4. Souvenirs. "It's mostly tourist junk," say the regulars. They're right. Aisle four contains trinkets and useless items with engraved names of popular places near the city. Six-foot message scarfs jokingly proclaim "I swam Crumbling Skull Rapids!," as colorful tunics declare "I'm not drunk, I din't hit 'er, and no, 'e's not wif my party!" (an adventurer favorite).

A5. Odd. That's the best way to describe the these items,

which are often rare, sometimes one of a kind. They're here though, because no one quite knows what they are, what to do with them, or the market for them fell out. They are the exotic unknowns, possible luxury items in the wrong place at the wrong time. Just last week a woodcrafter of questionable stability traded for some adventuring supplies, leaving Blu with several sets of carved, interlocking puzzles and toys. He seemed reluctant to sell the strangely positioned figures himself, preferring to let Blu handle them. Here are chains of braided grasses, a silver set of signed and numbered horseshoes (of so-so quality—apparently rejected from an Uptown gallery), and some too-frilly, satin-like pillows that would look out of place in even a queen's bedroom.

A6. Minor magics and conveniences. This is where the women of Sideshow go to make gift lists, since many of the items are labor saving devices. Including the devices mentioned earlier, Blu also has a few bulbs of light for sale, the same kind that he's using to light up his store. Here too can be purchased hideously-deadly looking rat traps, the kind that might make quick work of a meddlesome Chervka or Ruffiri, courtesy of *Brumar's Workshop* (c.f.).

A7. Perishables (26' x 2') If checked, this quite-cold container also radiates moderate magic (the "coolant" spell was pretty low-level, but the one used to keep it going all the time has a little more meat). The variety is similar to aisle two. Frozen foods occupy the west chamber, merely cold foods, the east.

A8 & A9. Dangerous Dietary Delights (5' x 5', triangular) The two cabinets in two northern corners of the room are locked[3]. They contain very race-specific dietary implements. These snacks are harmful to many, if not all races other than the intended. No one gets into these without Blu's knowledge. They are divided alphabetically (in the common language of the City), with "A-M" items in the east cabinet and "N-Z" in the one nearer the counter. Besides the puddings mentioned, the glass containers hold things like little white pieces of apparently living popcorn and clusters of toadstools in odd circular configurations.

A10. Adventure Supply Depot (1' x 20') The final section of the store stocks typical adventuring supplies (ropes, tinderboxes, packs, etc.), but no "hardware" like armor and weapons.

B. Storage Boom (12' x 25') An incredible array of crates, boxes, and sealed containers, all in assorted sizes, crowd the floor and wall shelves. Blu obviously has his own organizational system. Merchandise is stacked wall to wall, up to about six feet off the floor. The largest space between the columns of boxes rarely exceeds six inches.

To either side of the door are locked[4] cabinets, in which Blu keeps the replacement goods for shelves **A8** and **A9.**

Should enterprising adventurers (thieves) attempt for discount bargains, and if they manage to distract Blu, they will still be faced with two store room problems:

1. the room is so cluttered that moving quietly or gracefully is nearly impossible;

2. none of the boxes are marked in a language the adventurers can understand.

B1. Water Trap. In the far SW corner, under the shelves, is an opening in the floor. At 1' x 2', it is the "door" to the second level, and opens into a 2' x 2' tube that drops straight down for 16 feet before curving and going up eight feet to the basement. The lower three feet is filled with stagnant water and a bit of sludge. The tube is seamless and quite slippery, and anyone managing to get in without a means of support will drop the full distance to the yuckky water, staying there until rescued or found.

Basement

C. Living Quarters (55' x 25', "L"-shaped) Stink, stank, stunk. This place smells so bad that any race with an olfactory sense must continually resist the urge to puke. Note that this smell cannot be detected from the outside or above due to the water trap (**B1**). The basement opens directly on the sewers (**C3**). The floor slopes down toward the sewer entrance and is usually filled (as shown) with stagnant, sewage-filled water.

C1. Water Trap's Other End. This 2' x 1' opening connects to the Pipe (**C2**) and the water trap (**B1**).

C2. The pipe from the upper floor passes through the room in the southwest corner and down into the water trap below.

C3. Sewer Entrance. This is the completely submerged entrance to the sewers. Although Blu has no trouble getting in and out, the grill keeps all but the smallest animals in the sewer system and out of his basement. The grill is built solidly into the building foundation. Its half-inch-diameter steel bars will not open.

D. Records Room (27' x 12') The walls of this room are a full foot thick—thicker than the interior walls upstairs. Its door is locked[3]. This room contains the things that Blu treasures most. His master's notes (one-fourth of them anyway) fill the two file cabinets along the north wall (**D1**). These include parts of formulas, spells, and an annotated diary (one of four) that describes the third phase of his development of the llalythan.

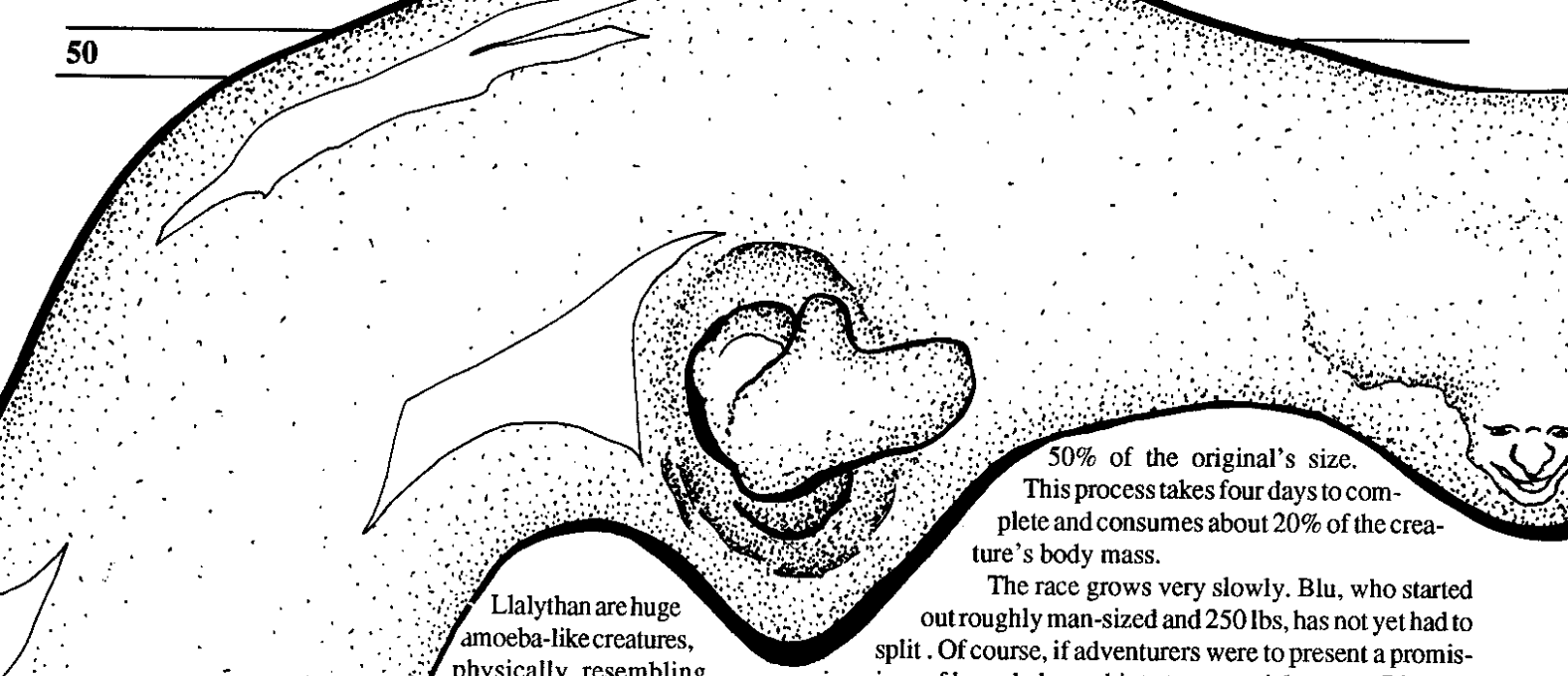
Next to the southwest corner magic file (**M**) is the lockbox[4] (**D3**) with no more than a weeks worth of money at a time. Blu deposits his earnings, via courier, in Ironshield's an Uptown bank at the beginning of every week.

Next to the magic file (**M**) in the northwest corner is another lockbox[5] (**D2**) with holes punched in the tough outer casing. The box will open if Blu touches it, and no other way (unless the adventurer has an appropriate magic spell of sufficient level—GM decides). Of course, this is where Blu keeps the blood jar.

The other three cabinets in the room are filled with paperwork detailing transactions and contacts and financial records. These, too, could be very valuable to the wrong people, since Blu has spent years cultivating strange and even unique contacts.

Personalities

Blu. ❑ *Llalythan. Ht.: Variable: 1" to a wobbly 15'; Wt.: roughly 25,000#; Age: 25.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Fair with all melee weapons, None with missile and thrown weapons. Special attacks and Special defenses outlined below.* ❑ *Magical Ability: Very Good knowledge of C2 and C5, rest at Fair. Blu has* ***No*** *casting ability.*



Llalythan are huge amoeba-like creatures, physically resembling their tiny cousins in all aspects except size. Most people never see an entire llalythan, as each would nearly fill a pool 7' deep by 12' across. They are transparent, and one can see clearly see light and dark through them. Specific objects are less discernable due to distortion caused by body fluids. The mass of body fluids give llalythan a blue tinge, hence Sideshow's name for Enefene's sleepless proprietor.

Llalythan can have up to 10 pseudopods active at a time, whether they are organizing shelves, fighting, or recording business entries. However, only one pseudopod is able to "speak" at a time. The sound is made by the manipulation of water molecules, and the voice is deep and throaty, not unlike the result one gets from playing a 45 r.p.m. record at 33 r.p.m.s. The only difference is that the pace of the words is normal. In Blu's case, the watery limb will mimic the visage of the group's leader or primary speaker, sculpting in water, an often disconcerting mirror image.

The llalythan diet consists of microbes and bacteria, the kind found in decaying, composting material, hence the sewer access and the stink in the basement.

A llalythan who becomes too cumbersome or outgrows its living quarters can, at will, split into two smaller versions of itself. The new one will have all the memories and abilities of the original, but will be less than 50% of the original's size. This process takes four days to complete and consumes about 20% of the creature's body mass.

The race grows very slowly. Blu, who started out roughly man-sized and 250 lbs, has not yet had to split . Of course, if adventurers were to present a promising piece of knowledge or hint at a potential master, Blu may offer to split and join their team in the search—"Blu 2" would make a handy encyclopaedia/translator to have along, as would any of the other llalythan.

Due to the relative size and mass of the llalythan, all their attacks do massive amounts of damage. They are immune to impact attacks of all types, take normal damage from most magical attacks, and take 2x damage from heat/fire and cold/ice base attacks. For all practical purposes, treat them as intelligent water. These physical characteristics are common to all four of the llalythan. Their separate fields of study set the original four apart.

Blu has the knowledge of, and the ability to use any melee weapon—it's just a part of his cultural studies. And he can use up to 10 weapons at a time with equal proficiency, although the affront required to raise Blu to arms is almost beyond the adventurers' capabilities. Blu wishes to learn about and serve intelligent species, not hack them into Lurkkan munchies. If given the chance, Blu will grapple and hold an opponent, preventing either of them from hurting the other.

Llalythan are amoral and do not recognize good or evil. Blu would just as easily serve an evil sorcerer as a good wizard, as long as he was accorded respect and allowed to pursue his goals.

Blu's knowledge of intelligent species is phenomenal, as is his command of their languages. He knows over 30 languages fluently, and many others conversationally. He knows the anthropological histories of the races, and exactly what items in the store adventurers can eat and how they will be affected.

He is also acutely aware of developments within the City. Blu charges no money for information, but neither will he just give it away—it holds too much power to just toss around and is too sacred to sell for money. So Blu trades information for information, even up. No matter how trivial the fact the adventurers may have, if Blu doesn't know it, he'll tell the adventurers *anything* they want to know in return.

Blu's deceased master was aware of these creatures' potential, even before they attained intelligence, and chose his experimental subjects carefully—no hands and fingers, no mouths or vocal chords, and no centralized nerve center. This effectively eliminated the llalythan's ability to cast any kind of magic, and

prevented a hostile mutiny should the experiment produce an aberration. Even low level spells were beyond the graceful but simplified movements of the inhuman pseudopods. But Blu and his siblings were good learners, and the master imparted to each of his servants some of his magical knowledge.

As a final safeguard, the master gave each of his servants a name at their "birth" that would allow him to control them absolutely should anything develop wrongly. Only he knew the names—the llalythan are aware that such things exist, but they don't know what they are. The names are in fact spread through out through the notes of the master in an extremely difficult magical code, and the notes are spread out between the four llalythan.

The code is such that only after the clues have been found in the separated papers and the clue words spoken in a manner relevant to the llalythan formula, will the directions for the next step in the hunt become clear. They will seem to spell themselves out of the other words on the page. And so it goes on, until someone finally figures out the names. If things go according to goals, that someone will have been selected as their new master many years before—as it should take him or her that long to figure it out.

Llalythan do have one annoying cultural quirk. Whether the master merely goofed or perhaps made an uncalculated interaction with the components in the spell, whatever the cause, the llalythans became the living embodiment of servitude and storage with a rabid desire to be extreme. Although their words and social references (especially in Blu's case) are correct, they couch them in such long-winded, lofty towers of nicety that even the gentlest adventurers may find themselves itching to get on with business.

A piece of merchandise with a minor flaw will be bewailed in a way that would make Dante smile. And, should the etiquette of the proprietor be mocked, laughed at, chided, or incorrectly responded to, the offending party will find that purchasing much needed food and supplies will take place *elsewhere*. Blu expects extremes, and WILL NOT deal with anyone who attempts otherwise. For example, if a party entered Enefene, they might be greeted with: "Welcome weary avengers, fighters for the right, followers of the hard and dangerous way, compadres of interdependency, already the tales of your deeds, the songs of your travels, and the stories of your heroic conquests have reached this, a humble store, a mere spot on the tapestry of your lives, a bit of dust on your long life's road, and I, it's proprietor, the keeper of it's meager goods, do so desire to serve it's brave customers." OK heroes, respond to that. *In kind.*

If it doesn't get on the players nerves every time that Blu talks, the GM is not doing it right. The players must come to grips with the different cultural perspective of "no such thing as overkill." If they refuse to overkill their language, Blu will become offended and refuse to serve them. Should they attempt thievery, Blu will act accordingly (and in the extreme!), using his knowledge of nifty deadly food items in the store (and how they react to the adventurer's biological system) and his respectable fighting ability.

Blu is also polite enough to move from person to person, inquiring if he may help them find anything, thereby giving each player a chance to either be publicly ridiculous or trash the entire party's hopes of doing business in Enefene.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: It's in the Blood. While the adventurers are shopping, they hear a deep muffled cry and the building jumps a little. One of Blu's pseudopods "leaps" over the counter and slides to the adventurers. Blu explains that despite all his precautions, someone has just stolen an extremely rare blood sample that he was studying, and that while others may pay well for its return, he will pay more. He knows that greed motivates most humans and all adventurers. Although it's true the blood sample was rare, it is the special jar that he wants returned. He is also aware of who may want the blood, and while there are many options, none of them are nice. Perhaps it's an evil wizard, or a twisted cult, or even one of those vampire things. So he doesn't mention the powers of the jar and the fact that whoever has it probably won't give it up. The adventurers must figure who, why, where, and how, for which Blu will be most gracious with his many rare supplies.

Scenario 2: A Brand New Thing. Blu has heard rumors about a newly discovered race, and being aware of the adventurers' abilities, offers to pay them to investigate. As added incentive, he is sending part of himself along to better collect the information that he seeks. GMs, this would be a good opportunity to drop a new, non-standard intelligent race on your players (and into your campaign). The race could be alien, pre-historic, newly evolved, or like Blu, created. This can be as tough as you want to make it.

Scenario 3: On the Road Again! Blu receives a message from one of his siblings that a worthy successor has been found. Blu hires the adventurer's to help him move and guard his things to the new location. This is the perfect opportunity for a "road trip from Hell" campaign. Everyone that ever wanted the master's spells and formulas, or the blood jar, or the multitude of rare items Blu normally carries, will be lying in wait for them.

Use the store as a role-playing challenge for players. Chances are, this is the only store in the City that offers consumable merchandise that is both this weird and often quite necessary. Exotic nonhuman characters can find food and sundries typical to their cultures. If they can communicate with Blu, they open up opportunities to buy some of the City's more unusual merchandise.

Brumar's Workshop



"Hey you ! Yeah, you in the cheap suit of armor. I can see from your looks that you could use some fine dwarven armor made by a true dwarven craftsman, just for you. Don't even think about the price until you have seen the quality of this armor. You say you don't have the coin? Fear not! My master has many payment plans for even the poorest of souls. Not interested in armor, how about those special dwarven hand-crafted magical weapons, the kind thatlegends are made of?

"My friend, nowhere but at Brumar's can you, who are obviously not a dwarf, get the kind of quality workmanship that dwarven armorers have been giving only to their own people for thousands of years.

"Now, to get there safely you must follow me as you'll never find it on your own or get in anyway. Aaaahhhhh.... just one quick question my friend, you're not an assassin or anything like that are you?"

Brumar's Workshop is the present refuge of Brumar, a dwarven armorer and inventor, an exile cast out of his dwarven community. He is skilled in secret metal-shaping arts known only to dwarves, and kept from the rest of the world for millennia. Needless to say, Brumar's activities here seriously, even dangerously violate dwarven tradition.

It should come as no surprise that no bright sign marks this shop. No posted bills advertise its wares. Few folk even know of it. In fact, the shop's location is mostly secret.

Brumar has enemies who were unsatisfied with his mere banishment. They would like to see his punishment increased dramatically and permanently. Brumar chose Sideshow for his haven. It's easy to get lost in the winding alleys here—and Brumar likes it that way.

Nevertheless, Brumar needs to eat and his only source of income is his skills at metalworking and inventing.

Advertising

To advertise his craft, Brumar uses trusted locals to provide a steady source of customers. Brumar pays a percentage of the job to the guide, so there is often competition to bring in customers. The only restriction: "NO DWARVES!" Also, anyone who brings in a "stiff"— someone who defaults on payment or who brings in too many window shoppers (people who look, but don't buy) can expect to be out of the guide business.

Hours of Business

The workshop is, for all purposes, open around the clock. Brumar needs the work and won't turn a paying customer, particularly one whose order involves a real challenge to the dwarf's skill, just because the hour may be late.

Services

Brumar can produce any type of common metal armor that an adventurer may need within a reasonable time, the high quality work has that special dwarven craftsman look. Due to the high quality of the work, it has the equivalent protection of minor magical armor.

Brumar's true pride and joy, and the way he hopes to be reinstated into his former community are his "toys"—as he calls his specially designed dwarven devices. His toys range from modified exploding hand missiles to magically-powered animal traps. He has also worked on modifications to dwarven crossbows and other weapons. Though these toys are his prime concern in life, he is not as accomplished in their construction as he would be, had not been banished before finishing his studies in their making and enchanting.

Though author Bruce Jaquays has since changed careers, he was once a professional video game tester (nice work if you can get it!). The difficulty level for many a ColecoVision game cartridge was based on his hair-trigger reflexes. Bruce requested that Lee Miracle should at least receive a note of thanks here for his brainstorming assistance (and helping us move that heavy sofa bed!).

Illustrator Gary M. Williams has been the art director for PULSAR!, aSF quarterly, and was the creator of *Bloodmoose and Company* for Polyhedron magazine, but he says the thing for which he is most proud, is that he and his wife Liz are living historians—reenactors of Revolutionary War and American Civil War period history. He marches and dies in mock battles while she demonstrates life on the new frontier.

Prices

Prices are low, to medium priced, especially considering the high quality. For payment, Brumar will take coins, gems, barter (primarily food, clothing, wood and coal, old armor and weapons), letters of credit from respected moneylenders and vaults (such as *Ironshield Financial Services* in **CB6**).

Layout

The entrance to Brumar's Workshop is located on a dead-end alley off a side street from the main street in the same ancient, crumbling neighbor that houses Nadorix's Necropolis. In fact, it is likely that Brumar's is one of the buildings that form the walls of the cemetery. Brumar's building and the ones flush against it are of a half-timber/wattle style construction with tile roofs. Except for Brumar's, the other buildings appear to be vacant. The outside of Brumar's is not much better, but the new reinforced door with a lock[5] on it clearly gives away that someone lives there. The front of the building has a boarded-up window that probably was used for retail purposes in better days. On the second floor, both front and back of the building have sturdy-looking shuttered windows.

The door to Brumar's has no sign proclaiming that one has found Brumar's. Instead, at roughly dwarf eye level, a message branded into the door is a metal plaque inscribe with dwarven symbols unique to Brumar's former home. Guides will say that it's Brumar's name and list of services. Dwarves not of Brumar's clan will say it is some sort of warning, but that it's hard to read—and suggests that they leave him alone or face some sort of horrible death inside.

Gaining Access to the Shop

A knock on the door will bring a loud, but muffled response from the window above it. Brumar never opens the window to talk to those below. After briefly questioning those below about their business there,Brumar will let in those he wishes to do business further with into his showroom. Though there is a lock[3] the door seems unlocked but barred from the other side. A slight rustling noise may be heard from the other side before Brumar tells the customer that it is safe to enter. Though Brumar pays them well, most guides expect to be tipped by the customer.

Brumar's Building: First Floor

A. The Showroom (12' x 10') This rectangular room is poorly lit by three bulbs of light (magical lights from *Enefene*) whose light is reflected downward on to a display of armor. The walls are covered with shields and weapons of various types and qualities.

The door in the north wall is of less stature than the entrance door and is securely locked[3]. The door also has a string triggered crossbow trap. The crossbow is aimed so as to shoot a dwarf sized character in the thigh as he enters the storage room (**B**).

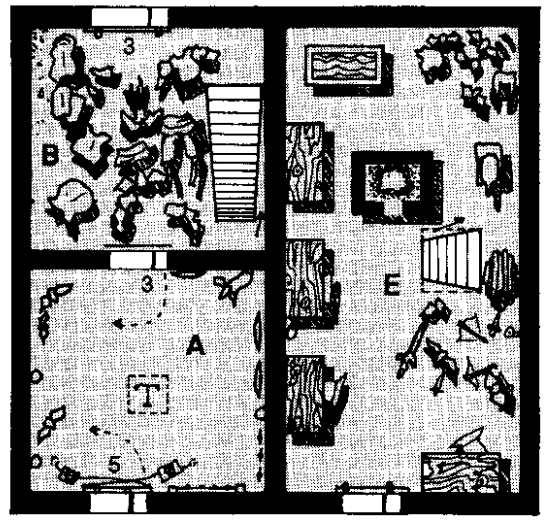
The outline of a trap door can be seen roughly in the middle of the ceiling.

The displays change regularly but there will usually be a set of plate armor for a good-sized man, one for a woman and one for some four-legged creature. All of the displays are securely attached to the wall by fine wires.

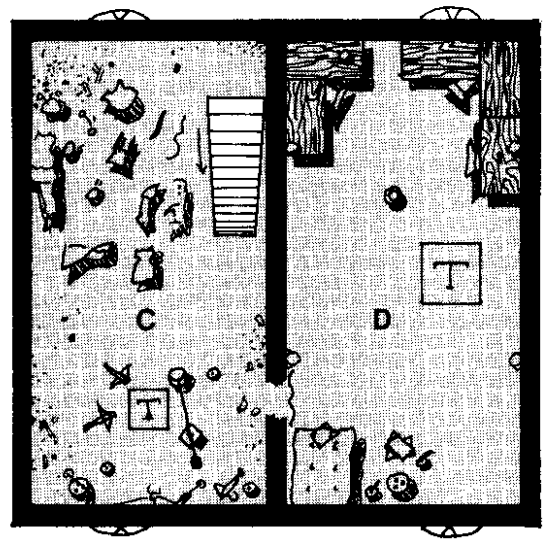
An examination of the ceiling above the door will reveal a heavy cross bar, with an ornate metal box with the common symbol for danger plainly printed on them at each end, held up by ropes that lead to the floor above. The boxes, unknown to the customer, contain dwarven explosives which are not volatile until mixed (which happens if Brumar decides to drop the cross bar quickly instead of slowly down to the bar holders). The resulting explosion may kill lesser persons close to the boxes, but are not powerful enough to guarantee death to everything in the room.

Brumar will deal with customers through the trap door in the ceiling, using a speaking tube to communicate and a basket to deliver and receive. The space above the hole is deliberately kept dark to prevent easy shots from below.

Brumar is blunt and to the point when it comes to customers who solely want a suit of armor or weapon. "What do you want" he will say quite brusquely, "and how do you plan on paying for it?" He throws sizing ropes and sample patterns down for



▲ FIRST FLOOR



▲ SECOND FLOOR

SCALE: one square = 1 foot

measurement purposes and asks styling questions until he knows enough to do the job.

However, should the customer be interested in something special, like a toy or a complicated engineering project (like the boilers at the *Panther Club*), Brumar is a bit more patient and probing into the customer's actual needs and desires. Brumar feels that if he can visualize it, he can make it, or at least try.

All other rooms are off limits to all except for those few trusted friends like the dwelf boy, Gregin from *The Bottomless Keg*, Smilin' Al, and the werebear Josef of the *Sliming Path*. He has come to respect the Pack and the other gangs in Sideshow, but he does not trust them the slightest.

B. Storage Room (12' x 14') This room has piles of armor on the floor. With a concentrated search, one could find a piece of armor to fit among these piles. Intermixed with the armor are piles of unreturned plates and cups from *The Bottomless Keg*. There is basically a path from the door to the showroom to the base of wooden stairs which run from front to back along the right wall. There are no light sources in this room.

Second Floor

C. Clutter Room (12' x 24') The second floor is illuminated by one shaded oil lamp located in the northeast corner. Without additional light, there are no definite images to be seen. The floor is littered with armor parts, crockery and other garbage. There doesn't seem to be a path through the mess.

There is a stool by the window and a shadouf (a counter-weighted, balanced pole and basket) to receive and deliver goods near where the trap door to the showroom should be.

A dwarf-size hole in the east wall looks like it was chopped out with a pickaxe. It is big enough for Brumar to pass through, but require more time for a normal size person to maneuver through it. A heavy blanket covers the other side of the hole, preventing light from passing through.

With more light, one can see the crude rope and pulley assembly to raise and lower the bar on the entrance door by the window. There are quick-cocking crossbows (2-3) by the trap door and the window. There are unlit lamps, one by the window and one by the trap door. There is a speaking tube by the window. There also seem to be dung pots by the hole in the wall.

Brumar has hidden smoke pots and other diversionary devices near the window, trap door and the lamp in the corner. He will use these to delay pursuit in an escape attempt. He would rather run than fight. In no organized fashion, Brumar has put his version of the mousetrap (see Brumar's Toys) and other small creature-killing devices in and under his mess.

The Other Building, Second Floor

D. Brumar's Workshop (12' x 24') There is an abundance of light here, bulbs of light (from *Enefene*) on the tables to provide more than enough.

Next to the entrance hole is a lumpy looking mattress and a plain, but warm looking blanket. Next to the window is a stool, a lumpy-looking mattress and plain, but warm-looking blanket, an unlit lamp and writing material. There's a good chance that an unfinished letter is here. The room is quite clean and organized. There are five tables placed against the wall—all covered with bits and pieces of metal, strange tools, pieces of paper, and jars of unknown substances. There does not appear to be anything of worth. There are some items under construction but their purpose is questionable (see Brumar's Toys). Brumar seems to be working on the mouse trap from hell, a collection of springs, wires and hooks. A number of these curious looking units are set casually on the tables (any character who picks up a trap will have that appendage trapped painfully).

The second floor is very warm. The heat comes from below and from a metal pipe that runs from the floor below and out through the roof.

Lower Floor

E. The Armory (12' x 24') As one walks down the stairs to the lower floor the source of the heat becomes apparent as a miniature forge is in the center of the floor. Using field stones, damaged mortuary markers (from *Nadorix's Necropolis*) and other materials Brumar has been able to build a smithy with which he can soften and then reshape previously forged armor and weapons.

Because he uses special dwarven metal shaping magics, Brumar does not need the intense heat otherwise required. The forge area takes up the back half of the floor with the fire, cooling trough and anvil. A pile of fuel is stacked under the stairs.

The pile of old and excess armor in the upper right corner is his stock. On the tables in the left corner are jobs waiting for finishing touches. Brumar tools (similar to those that potters and even glassblowers use) lie on the table here, along with jars of unknown substances. Fuel for the fireplace/forge is stacked and piled under the staircase. A trap door covers the top of the stairs.

The front half of the room is used for finishing touches. There is a polishing table and a table with tools that look like those that a potter might use, but which Brumar uses in combination with his metal shaping magic.

The door on the ground floor has the same bar and boxes that the shop has on it. There are crossbows and a number of weapons at hand on the lower floor. There are also a wide selection of armor in various stages of finishing.

Brumar's Toys

Brumar has parts on hand to make a number of minor explosive devices and spring-loaded spike balls which can be throw like a rock, but release when they hit a target adding additional damage to the target. Due to past problems with small furry creatures stealing his projects, Brumar has taken precautions not to leave fully assembled "toys" lying around. He can finish assembly very quickly. Other gadgets that look like they may peel a potato or apple, some are little motion toys, like the clacker balls in a row. There often will be multiple copies of items each slightly different from the other. Basically, most are useless items that seem important to Brumar and his goals.

One popular piece, the "mouse trap from hell" can be found for sale in the Enefene (Sideshow's general store) as it can safely immobilize a level one ruffiri sized creature.



—Brumar—

Personalities

Brumar. ❑ *Dwarf male, Ht.: 4' 2", Wt.: 180#, Age: 35.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Fair, uses a war hammer which he can turn into a thrown explosive device by pulling a pin and allowing the chemicals to mix in the head, Good with his "toys."* ❑ *Magic Ability: Good C6, Poor C7.*

Brumar is a chubby blonde dwarf with a short, roughly-trimmed red beard. He dresses in casual, comfortable blue tunics, wears the leather apron of a smith and talks with a thick "Germanic" accent. His manner of speaking is blunt and to the point. He never seems to have time for chit-chat. He loves giant mushrooms, distrusts other dwarves, and fears assassination. He is suspicious of everyone, and may refuse to complete a project if he believes the customer to be in league with his enemies.

As a young dwarf, Brumar excelled in metal-working studies. Based upon a recommendation by his teacher, the Armorers Guild accepted Brumar as a "postulate" apprentice—full membership being reserved for relatives of guild members.

Unfortunately for Brumar, the guild had a set of complex seniority rules and more than a little favoritism toward dwarves from hereditary "guild" families. These rules and attitudes denied Brumar access to the secret lore and advanced teachings. Not one to be thus denied, Brumar covertly listened in on classes and studied "borrowed" codices of metal-working secrets. As he learned more and more, he realized that many applications and techniques that seemed obvious to him were not being taught or practiced. Tradition took precedence over experimentation and innovation.

A fellow apprentice cut Brumar's covert studies short when he caught Brumar sneaking into a forbidden class. The apprentice "grieved" to the Guild Council that Brumar had broken guild law (the grieving apprentice, a member of a guild family, had long been jealous of Brumar and his ability). The Council was not amused by an upstart "Free Toiler" in the ranks and summarily demoted Brumar to Metal Polisher junior grade.

Brumar felt his cause to be just, and appealed to the king. The king, not wanting to cause dissent and having more pressing matters, supported the guild's position.

The "grieved" apprentice felt that he could now do as he wished and entered Brumar's personal quarters, looking for more incriminating evidence, which he found, but never had the chance to steal or reveal. Brumar had trapped his projects with a combination of explosives and spring traps. Brumar was soon dragged before the High Council, who weighed the evidence and decided that branding, dehammering and banishment would be the proper penalty.

Upon reaching the City, Brumar learned from his family that the guild had placed a price upon his head. Despite this, he seeks a return to his former homeland.

Scenarios

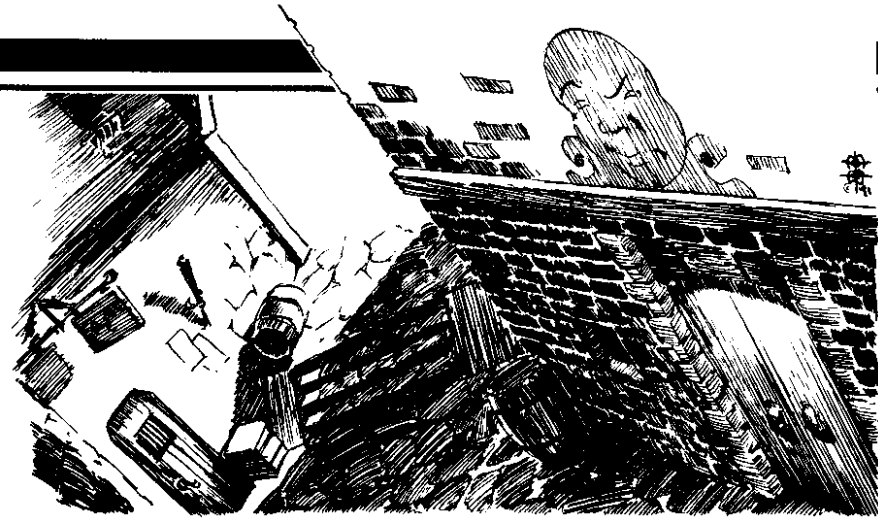
Scenario 1: Dinner Time. Brumar prefers the food from The Bottomless Keg as the mess in the shop and living quarters will attest. However herarely goes to places where dwarves might congregate (and look for other dwarves). Thus, he needs someone to make a run for food. Pizza drivers may think they have a rough time, but any number of persons or groups may be interested in poisoning or drugging Brumar's food to earn the bounty for his death.

Scenario 2: ACME Co. Brumar has finished his latest invention, but is uncertain if it will work properly or not. Sooo, he needs someone to put it to use. Create some outrageous weapon, or defensive device. Have it work, but not quite as Brumar expects.

Scenario 3: A Friend in Need. Gregin, the young dwelf who has befriended Brumar went to bring dinner to his friend and received no response at the door. Gregin asks the adventurers to investigate, and if need be, either rescue or avenge the dwarf. Should the adventurers survive to find their way to Brumar's Workshop, they discover a journal notation on the dwarf's work table (dated several days past) that suggests that he has gone to visit the mysterious Old Man. This is indeed the truth and he is indeed still at the Old Man's compound. However, the Old Man doesn't want the world to know that he is having complicated bombs made (which he will in turn supply to Leona of the The Sliming Path), and will not welcome nosy intruders.

In addition to providing adventurers with custom made armor, Brumar's Workshop could easily be used as the source for all those weird contraptions that players invariably dream up. The weirder the idea, the better the chance that the dwarf will be excited about creating it.

Spittin' Image



If the man you work for shows you no respect, where can you go to vent your frustrations? If you were cheated on a business deal, but there's no way to prove it, where do you go for revenge? If life's treated you cruelly, and you just have to let your anger out, where can you go for release?
The one place where it's alright to be so mad you could just spit—the Spittin' Image.

There's a small building on the edge of Sideshow, shabby, like many others. The exterior windows are partially boarded over; the single front door is pitted and weathered. Once a brothel that failed for some unknown reason, there is no name on the outside to let the customer know he's arrived at the proper place. The only clue is a faded painting of a face above the door. One side of the face wears a smile, the other a frown.

This dirty gray structure now houses a most unique establishment, one devoted to the principle that not only is the customer always right, he can prove it in any manner he sees fit. This is the place for those who don't know who caused their problems but still want revenge. It's also the place for those who do know the cause but don't or can't confront the guilty.

This is a place where the customer—depending on the price paid—can yell, beat, or even break body parts of a creature who changes shape to look like someone the customer truly hates. The look-alikes will do all the appropriate begging and make pitiful noises—even though they won't feel nearly the pain the intended target would (Group rates available! Bring the whole household staff down and get back at the Master without fear of retribution. Equipment supplied at extra charge).

Prices

Prices for 15 minutes of verbal abuse are about the same as a couple of ales at a moderate tavern (See *Trade Secrets & Other Truths* for more information). Prices escalate rapidly from there. Physical contact adds a considerable amount, and true abuse is *very* expensive, higher than any other service in Sideshow.

After settling on services to be rendered and paying the appropriate price—including a refundable deposit in case of overexuberance—the customer is lead into a room with one of the shape-changers. The customer then describes the wished-for victim to the creature, who changes into as near a perfect copy as possible. Since there is a charge for time as well as for type of abuse, these victims-for-hire are quite willing to take as much time as the customer wishes to get the features just right.

Effigies

"Don't want to live like an Effigy."

—An old City saying

The compliant shape-changing creatures are a members of a rarely-encountered race of humanoids called Effigies, or Effies or just "FE's." Once, long ago, they had a racial identity and a name for themselves. Their numbers were never large and they were nearly hunted to extinction in foggy past of the City. Those early Effigies were small, furry, intelligent hominids imported by The Old Man of the City to use against the City. Over the course of many generations of cross-breeding, better diet, and magical enhancement ; they reached their current state of being.

The Old Man used the Effigies to impersonate important citizens of the early City and hopefully bring about its downfall. While they might *look* like someone else, the Effies could not *be* someone else. They were discovered and the Effie paranoia (called "The Hunt") began, uniting several powers in the City against them. Like the classic witch-hunt, the Hunt was bloody and indiscriminate. If hunters weren't sure an individual was the original or a posing Effie, they killed him or her. Even masquerading as one of the influential didn't help a clever Effie (some tales from those days suggest that there was little doubt as to which was the Effie and which the nobleman—many noble families eliminated rival in their "righteous furor").

The Effies were saved from total annihilation by the very nobles who hunted them. It was not hard to notice that torturing an Effie for information was a significantly difficult task. Effies could take more punishment than a human and felt less pain along the way. This same resiliency that made them fearsome opponents in the Hunt, also struck some sadistic chord in the souls of a few of the powerful who sorted through the remaining Effies.

Any belligerent Effie was put to death. Only the meek survived.

Surprised and disappointed at not receiving his fifth star in five years, author MARK O'GREEN, left the Air Force and fighters. Some few years later he got totally lost and wound up in the gaming industry. Presently Mark is finishing the "MeanTime" computer game for fall release by Interplay Productions. This is his second appearance in a CityBook.

Illustrator TOM DOW spends his time hunting down illustrations assignments, reading science fiction and photographing various aspects of mundania. As a hobby, he collects high artistic ideals, which he keeps in a shoebox in his closet. One recently escaped and caused Tom to recieve his first professional award at a science fiction convention.

Effigy Characteristics

Effies in their true form look like smallish humans with extremely corded musculature, including their faces. Many humans find the bulgy features distasteful, both at first glance and upon subsequent looks.

Their extreme control of these muscles, combined with an unusual segmented bone structure, gives the Effies their ability to change shape. They can flex and twist their underlying structures fairly easily but not particularly quickly. This shape-change can go to the extent of increased or decreased heights although, since this is accomplished by spreading the space or withdrawing the cushioning in their spine, it's uncomfortable for even the pain-resistant Effies. Although they can make some radical structural changes, the changed shape will generally be roughly humanoid. A 150 pound chair is pretty much beyond any Effie's capability.

The more different the shape, the more time it takes to change to it. However, it is not difficult for an Effie to maintain a new shape. Changing back is fairly quick. The Effie simply relaxes.

There is no chameleon-like ability to change coloring. However, Effies can squeeze extra blood too and from their skin surface, which can change skin tone drastically.

Effie's possess very thick hair, much of it under the surface of their heavy skin. The apparent density and length is controllable to a certain extent. While they have a variety of natural hair colors, Effie's can not change their own hue without the same aids humans use.

Although they can look like another person, they don't automatically have the other's mannerisms. And they have no special mimicry skills.

The high pain tolerance and ability to withstand higher-than-human amounts of physical damage, would make Effies a force to reckon with in combat.

However, they have some major weaknesses. The first is a combination of nature and nurture. They are subservient. Aggression was not a survival trait for Effies and only the meek members of the family tree survived the Hunt. They are also raised in a manner where they are constantly reminded that showing any aggression is tantamount to a death sentence.

The second weakness is occasionally a blessing also. They are very susceptible to magic in any form. A spell that put a human to sleep for a day might give an Effie a two-day rest. By the same token, magic that eases a human's pain might cure an Effie entirely. There is a racial phobia against magic in general and specifically that being cast on them by people they don't know (Even if it is supposed to be beneficial).

The Present Situation

Some powerful families still have Effie servants, descendants of the Hunt survivors. Frequently, they will be used as bodyguards. They are quite willing and able to take an arrow for their master—just don't ask them for much in the way of initiative. These living shields have been taught some skill at arms, but are generally not the only bodyguard and certainly never in charge of the others.

Most Effies live in the same area of Sideshow, yet few know them to be other than human. Their own properties, though poor, are quite clean. Even though they are rarely seen outside their homes, the general neighborhood around the Effie area is cleaner, too. Whether the Effies do this on their own or are brow-beaten by their more slovenly neighbors is a matter of conjecture.

In any case, the general distrust remains. The rare times Effigies do go out, they mostly keep with their own. They also tend to go in small groups, correctly assuming that a lone Effie would present a target for those who would gladly prey on them. Even though Effies are very quiet and polite, this banding behavior further fuels the fires of those who would see them all eliminated.

Other than the very rich and powerful, most people do not employ Effies.

Trade Secrets & Other Truths

There is no sign on the door of the shop and no written price list anywhere inside for two reasons. One, the master of the house, an old man named Videant Case, felt a large percentage of the clientele probably couldn't read. Two, even though he carries what appears to be a menu that he refers to frequently during the pricing process, he changes the prices depending on his personal feelings about each client.

Although he controls the money at the Spittin' Image, Case never removes it. His boss comes in personally for that and information. Case knows his boss is an Effie and even has a good idea of who it is. However, he fears and respects the man to such a degree that it would be impossible to break that information free (Although the boss comes in shifted to look like different humans, he has a sign that's hard to fake. He'll shake hands tightly and grow an "X" in his palm. Tough to see and impossible for anyone other than another Effie to duplicate).

The information the boss requests from Case and the other Effies is that of who hates who and how much. He wants the names of both client and 'target' and how aggressive the interplay was. Also, any odd comments that might be helpful later.

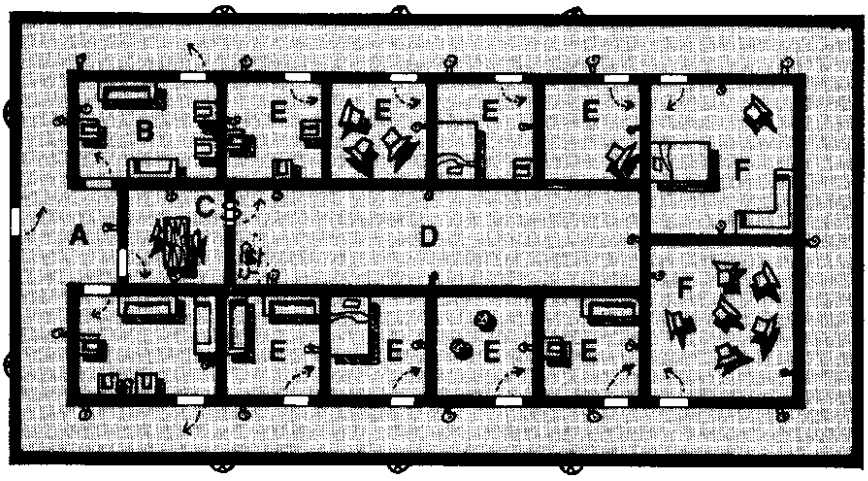
Layout

The building was constructed as a double shell. A walkway runs completely around the inside of the outer wall. It's easy to peek in through the windows since the boards only cover enough of the windows to keep people from climbing out or in. At night, patrons are lead to their appointed rooms by an Effie with a torch.

A. Entry (10' x 10') The entry area is barren except for the constant presence of Uncum Pulsive, the huge mostly-troll bouncer, who stands to one side of the door at all times unless there's trouble. He will direct newcomers to either of the waiting rooms until Case sends for them.

B. Waiting Rooms (15' x 10') Similar in their odd and old furnishings, these rooms are rarely occupied for long. There are bells of slightly different pitch on both the front and back door to each room. The wait for an Effie escort to the appropriate room is generally not a long one.

C. Case's Office (10' x 10') As cheaply furnished as the rest of



SCALE: one square = 2 feet

the place, the office only contains a desk and two chairs. Case generally sits while the client (or spokesman for a group) makes his requests and completes his transactions. The old man takes the money and puts it in an old wooden box in the desk. Frequently, there is an Effie in the room with him to carry out instructions. If not, and Case has to leave for any reason, Uncum makes sure no client enters. After each client is taken to his Effie encounter, Case slips though the secret door—the one well-crafted thing in the entire place—and will take all but a single silver coin from the money box and hide it under a loose floorboard. The door is of "hide-in-plain-sight" construction. Some of the cracks in the filthy wall are the edges of the irregularly shaped opening.

D. Viewing Area (40' x 10') Originally built to allow viewing of some of the activities in the brothel, the viewing area has small, closable peepholes into each of the other rooms with the exception of the waiting rooms. Case keeps the money hidden under loose boards next to the secret door, which can be barred from the inside. This is the only door into the viewing area, but there is a special break-away panel at the far end. Case makes sure clients who partake in verbal abuse only are brought to use this room.

E. Encounter Rooms (10' x 10') Still furnished with much of the furniture and equipment from the brothel days, these rooms are for clients alone or in groups of two or three. Where there is furniture, it has been carefully smoothed so there are no sharp corners to fall on.

F. Party Rooms (15' x 15') Groups of four or more and activities of any extraordinary nature are brought to these rooms. Again, the furnishing is strictly "Olde Brothel."

There are no privies on the premises.

Personalities

Videant Case. ❑ *Effigy male. Ht: 5'2"; Wt: 115#; Age: 53.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Average defensive hand-to-hand due to C5 magics, poor otherwise.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Excellent in C2, fair in C5.*

Videant is an Effie on the edge of completely breaking free of the subservient nature. A masterful healer, he truly has the magic touch. Not only can he cure a wound quickly, but he seems to find it quickly and with unerring surety. And not just the body—most of his patients feel better mentally. He's just that good.

He runs the Spittin' Image and is constantly there from before it opens until the last Effie's healed and ready to go home. He meets with each client or at least with a representative, sets the price according to both client and services desired, and decides on the appropriate Effie substitute. Case is as protective of his employees as he can manage considering their jobs.

More than happy to help out just about anyone in pain, he's particularly pleased to help those that really deserve it—a feeling due mostly to remnants of the Effie mind-set. But he's also more than happy to receive payment, a sign that his well-being is not as low a priority as it is with most Effies. He does not advertise his prowess, since he spends most of his time down at the Spittin' Image keeping the employees healthy.

However, it's not his healing that's had the most effect on his life and it's not the 'normal' parts of his Effie heritage. He has an extremely subtle empathetic ability. It's something of a mutation, a mental version of his shape-shifting—so innate that he doesn't realize he uses it. Nor will even most magic users.

Not only can he find out just where it hurts both physically and mentally, he can also reverse the effects somewhat and imbue his feelings into other people.



— Videant Case —



— Uncum Pulsive —

Uncum Pulsive. ❑ *Troll-Effie half-breed; Ht.: 7'7"; Wt.: 475#; Age: 29.* ❑ *Fighting prowess: Good, mainly fist or club, but his great strength and incredible ability to withstand damage makes him a one-on-one threat to anyone.*

It is probably a good thing for everyone that Uncum inherited a bit of the subservience of the Effies and some of the single-mindedness (due to brain capacity?) of trolls. The result is a quiet, non-aggressive monster with absolute loyalty—in this case, to Videant, who helped Uncum and his Effie mother survive "child"-birth and the traumas of growing up unhuman.

Uncum is incredibly gruesome—ugly for a troll—and intimidating. Were one to be able to tell trolls apart, one might recognize some of the attributes of the late troll chieftain, Blugluk the Blasphemous in this, his unknown (and only male) offspring. But he never starts trouble. He's barely able to decide when it's time to defend himself, something that's almost unnecessary anyway. A giant-sized package of troll-tough hide combined with the Effie ability to shrug off damage makes Uncum one of the few things living that might actually laugh off a great-sword attack ... if Uncum ever laughed (an attack on Case or order from the same is an entirely different matter and is carried out with deceptive speed).

Uncum carries a large club, but the chance of him using it are small. He forgets and with his strength, a weapon is nearly superfluous anyway. His style is direct, his accuracy suspect, but only those with a death-wish would anger him on purpose.

The Effies are the only ones who treat him kindly and consider him one of them—even though he has no shape-changing ability. Though a troll on the outside, he is an Effie at heart.

Case gives him simple orders at the Spittin' Image—let no one into the office without Case's permission, break up fights or cool off overly-exuberant patrons without hurting them too much, open the door for people during business hours, and escort the Effies (including Case) home after closing down, and be nice.

The escort order was added when Case learned that some low-lifes were picking up freebies by waiting around for Effies after closing. Case, with his knowledge of what causes the most pain as well as what it takes to heal it, carefully instructed Uncum on what the monster should do to the after-hours crowd. Word got around *very* quickly and there haven't been any attacks on Effies when Uncum is around since.

Effies. Many Effies work at the Spittin' Image, although it would be hard to tell just how many without Case's help since they rarely wear the same face twice. They don't mind working here for three reasons. One, it's in their nature. Two, most of the clients are too wimpy to do anything really damaging anyway. Three, they make more money from salary than most in Sideshow—and guilt-driven tips are amazingly good.

Scenario Suggestions

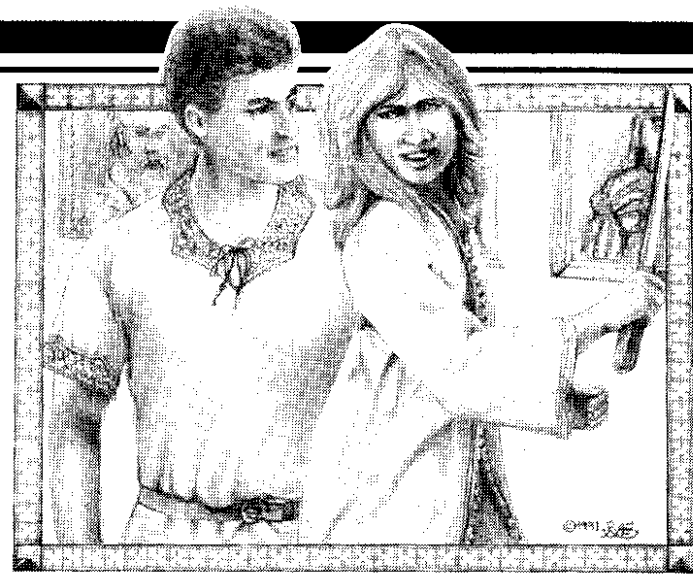
Scenario 1: Who's the Boss? One of the players is hurt and Case heals him or her. In return, he asks for a favor: He's been threatened both at home and on the street for information on his boss, when Uncum is not around, of course. Some of the threats are aimed at his employees and he knows Uncum can't protect them all. Case would like the adventurers to find out who was asking and make them stop.

Scenario 2: A Dish Best Served Cold. One of the Effies has overheard comments about a plot against Smilin' Al Crumb. Case, without telling the adventurers, is unable to get word to his boss and feels obligated to have someone to look into the problem. It seems that the original brothel owner was The Old Man of the City (all the girls and boys had diseases that they passed onto customers) and was forced out of business by Case's boss because the building was perfect for the information-gathering Spittin' Image. Now in a position of power, The Old Man is taking care of some old revenge business.

Scenario 3: Hail to the Chief. Uncum, the bouncer, disappears. Days later, a message comes to the Spittin' Image. One of the trolls who guards Blugluk's tomb in Nadorix's Necropolis saw Uncum and recognized him to be the son of the late troll chieftain. These loyal followers of the dead chief kidnapped Uncum and now expect him to lead them to victory over Blugluk's successor—only Uncum, being mostly passive, hasn't the heart for it. Since Effies are particularly unsuited for a rescue endeavor, Case offers the job to the adventurers.

Admittedly, the average adventurer doesn't require an abuse shop—after all she can vent most of her frustrations on vile monsters and evil overlords. Yet, like the secretive owner of the Spittin' Image, one can find it valuable to know who dislikes whom. And then, there are those in Sideshow, like the gelatinous Blu, who trade information as a commodity. Of course, for that adventurer whose soul has suffered as well as his body, the hands of Videant Case can provide a surcease of from the inner, as well as the outer injuries.

The Face Place



To the world at large, the Effigies epitomize subservience, nonviolence and nonaggression. Yet within any race there must be those who defy the norm. Not every Effie will calmly smile while some human lowlife kicks his teeth in. They're out there; the angry ones; the ones who can't wait to kick back. Of course, someone who can channel that aggression and make use of the unique Effie abilities is bound to be successful.

Posted in several places around Sideshow are the following signs:

> Do your looks hurt your business? Worried you don't have the right appearance for 'polite' society? Can't straighten out minor problems because others react to the outer you instead of the inner you?
>
> Is all of this unfair?
>
> You bet it is. That's why we've formed:
>
> **THE FACE PLACE**
>
> It's tough enough working things out with humans. We ought to know, we're humans ourselves. And we think it's really unfair that certain folk in Sideshow lose out just because of the way they look. So we provide a go-between service. We'll be your representative in any dealing, business or personal. We've got a large variety of part-time employees so we can find one with the skills and looks to suit your needs. Reasonable rates.
>
> If you need a face, we're it!

The ad for this establishment pretty much says it all. Customers enter the front room of the small shop and talk to Nabout or Rea Semb. If there's business to be conducted, the client will be taken into a private room to take care of the details. Occasionally, a client may see through the door into the scheduling room and catch a glimpse a chart which lists the names of employees with their pending activities.

Some of the jobs they've done include: taking trod-upons into the human areas, providing a 'face' for business deals downtown if the individual is totally unpresentable in 'polite' society, acting as intermediaries to help call off a personal vendetta, helping a client ditch someone following them, and simple bodyguard and escort work.

Prices are negotiable.

Author MARK O'GREEN married another author, Jennifer Roberson, in 1985. He informs us that in order to ensure the security of the free world, every reader of CityBook (and all their friends and family and pets should go out and purchase her books (especially the romance novels).

Illustrator, RANDY ASPLUND-FAITH, is equally at ease wielding a pencil, paintbrush or medieval halberd. He began his professional career with a cover for C. J. Cherryh's Cuckoo's Egg, the hardback edition. Since then, he worked for ANALOG, AMAZING STORIES, DRAGON, and FATE magazines and for also several books by Llewellyn publishing.

Company Secrets

There's one minor detail wrong about the ad—the part about a large number of humans. Actually, no humans work at the Face Place. Everyone involved is an Effie.

There's an obvious and fairly successful advantage for Effies in this job, the right look for the job. If someone in Sideshow wants to make a business deal with a noble family, the Effie proxy will wear an aristocratic face. Taking care of a misunderstanding with a mercenary is just a matter of shifting visages to that of a grizzled warrior. And they can do a great job of confusing someone tailing a client.

Generally, the Effies come and go with the same face. They are very careful with when and where they change. They know several places around town where it's safe to change clothes and faces. However, they will also come in, change face and leave with the thought that anyone watching will still think there's someone inside.

Business is good. In fact, they need more help, hopefully another Effie; but if they found someone else trustworthy...

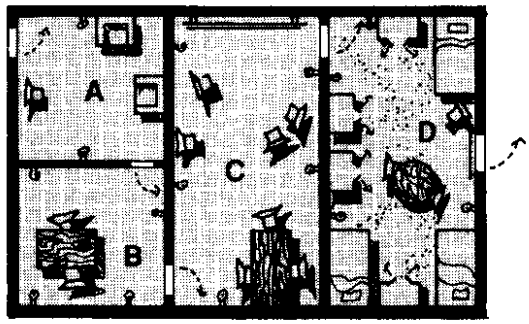
Layout

The Face Place is a small, one-story wooded building sharing a wall with another shop. It's nothing special to look at, but seems to be just a touch cleaner and better kept up than others in the area.

A. Waiting Room. (10' x 10') The front door opens directly into the waiting room. It's small, with a few comfy chairs and an open space for those who can't use furniture.

B. Private Office. (10' x 10') Clients are brought in here to go over the details of their business, make payments, etc.

C. Schedule Room. (20' x 10') There are lists of jobs posted on the wall. However, the ones posted are bogus, fake names with fake jobs. These are put up to aid the illusion that there are more people involved. Also, some of Nabout and Rea's alter-egos have names. Their jobs are listed separately. If someone clever got into



SCALE: one square = 1 1/2 feet

the room, they could notice that the two Effies and several of the alter-ego names never had jobs at the same time. Of course, they'd have to research the totally fictitious names to wipe that red herring out.

D. Changing Room (20' x 10') This aptly-named room holds a couple cots and some extra clothes. Unless someone knew for certain that the Effies were working out of here, the different-sized clothes would give the impression that there were more employees around. Just as a bit of confusion, there's a little trail on the floor of dirt that's much darker than what would be found outside. It's to mislead anyone checking up on them into thinking there's a trapdoor somewhere around (there isn't.)

The heavily barred back door opens to the alley.

A New Race?

There are those who believe that aggressive Effigies represent a new race, distinct and different from the weak-and-meek norms. Luckily for all Effigies, those who harbor the suspicion are Effies themselves. If paranoid humans were ever to suspect that Effies could be lions instead of lambs, the days of the "Hunt" might return.

Personalities

Nabout Semb, a.k.a. Semb the Lance. ❑ Effigy male. Ht.: 5'8" (usually); Wt.: 155#; Age: 25. ❑ Fighting Prowess: very good with spears, lances, and the like, others good.

Nabout's former "employer" used to call the Effie's job "arrowcatcher." Born a servant (or slave) in one of the finer households in the City, Nabout was trained to step in front of his master whenever danger threatened.

Danger suited Nabout just fine, only not for someone else. Severe beatings taught him early to hide his aggressiveness, but at the not-so-tender age of 15, he ran away after he badly beat up one of the master's human guards.

He went "human" and joined up with a cavalry unit where his skill with the lance was cultivated. One day, while taking time off in the city, he and his buddies took a ride on Smilin' Al's Sideshow Tours. It changed his life when he saw the way many of the different races were treated. Old memories surfaced and he quit his job to come to Sideshow.

He wandered for days, trying to decide what he could do. Then he heard about the Spittin' Image. While in with another Effie for a "session," he tried to talk that Effie into running away. The less-aggressive Effigy refused in his own subservient way and Nabout stormed out.

The next day, in the Panther Club, a human sat down and bought him a drink. At first Nabout didn't want the company, but when no one else was watching, the stranger shape-shifted enough to let Nabout know he was with a kinsman.

A few days later, the stranger bankrolled The Face Place.

Rea Semb. ❑ *Effigy female. Ht.: 5'3" (usually); Wt.: 110#; Age: 24.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: good with a dagger, otherwise fair.*

Rea grew up in Sideshow. While still quite young, she figured out she wasn't like all the other Effies. Her grandmother, although not aggressive herself, told stories of other days, then cautioned Rea on how she had to behave around others.

Yet she just couldn't maintain that reserved Effie manner. So she used to change into human form and run off to play with children in other parts of the City. Fear of discovery kept her from making long-term friendships, but gave her a very wide range of City knowledge and a healthy dose of street-sense.

Her father worked at the Spittin' Image and, when she was 21, took Rea down to get her a job there. She tolerated her first client yelling at her, but when he hit her, she became enraged and tried to shape-change *his* face. If Uncum, the bouncer, hadn't pulled her away, she would have killed him.

The next day, a stranger came to her house. When her father let him in, the man immediately announced he was taking Rea away and the family would never see her again. The father agreed, Rea didn't. But then the man changed his face and showed Rea a whole new existence.

The stranger introduced her to Nabout and gave her part interest in The Face Place. A year later, she and Nabout assumed the mantle of husband and wife.

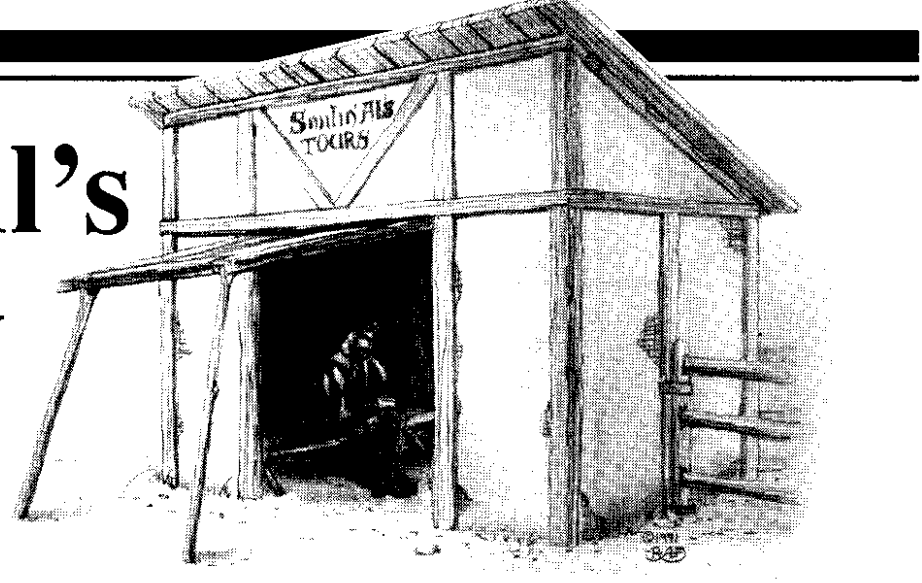
Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Face from the Past. Whether rumor or magic, Nabout's former master has the inkling that his ex-bodyguard is around again. He saw the young Effie go after the bodyguard in an extremely aggressive fashion and has since held the suspicion that there's something up. He hires the adventurers to find Nabout, a tough job in itself. Will the information gathered on the search lead the adventurers to side with the Effies against the powers of the City or will the adventurers take on some very tough warriors with the ability to change faces?

Scenario 2: Face for Hire. The clientele is expanding faster than the Sembs can handle. They need to hire some new faces for the place. Chances are the adventurers might fit the bill. Think up a situation that might need a human go-between for an inhuman client, then complicate the matter with some underhanded conniving going on.

If the adventurers are mostly nonhuman, then the folks at the Face Place could be their representatives in places only a human could go. For the typical human adventurer, the most likely use for the Face Place is as an employer.

Smilin' Al's Sideshow Tours



Come one, come all. See the geeks, freaks, and the meeks. Smilin' Al will personally—and safely—take you through the seamiest side of Sideshow.

Posted on the street corner near a cartage and caravansary run by centaurs is a large wooden sign with "Smilin' Al's Tours" written across the top. In smaller letters below it reads, "Safety Guaranteed." On the bottom half, written in chalk, is a list of open dates for the day-long tour into Sideshow.

While most days are first-come, first-served, there are a reasonable number of days reserved in advance for groups wishing to tour through Sideshow together. Business has a tendency to ebb and flow as word-of-mouth creates a wave of interest or slumming through the odd section of town again becomes chic.

Smilin' Al picks up payment, then customers in his large, comfortable carriage and carts them through the streets of Sideshow to see how the weirder half lives. He has his little schpiel and comes off as condescending-to-downright-bigoted against the inhabitants of Sideshow. It's amazing—and a testament to his magic and cunning—that he doesn't get attacked while passing through on a tour. And he does hit some sleazy bits.

Layout

Smilin' Al's place of business consists of the Office and rented space in the adjacent stables.

A. The "Office." (15' x 10') A large section of wall opens out like an awning from this converted stall next to a stable. There's no doorway, but none's really needed since Al never invites anyone in anyway. The only furniture consists of a small cot, a comfortable-looking chair, and a keg serving as a table.

Al doesn't keep any records, so there's no ledger around. The only thing remotely resembling a hiding place is the keg, so Al filled it with tar in case anyone broke in and smashed it open to search.

B. Stables. (30' x 20') The horses and carriage are kept here overnight. The carriage is an open air rig with a bright canvas roof to keep the sun and rain out. It seats eight on its padded benches. About a half dozen miscellaneous first and second stage Ruffiri lair here, so Al simply pays them to tend to the animals and keep the carriage clean and spook off prowlers.

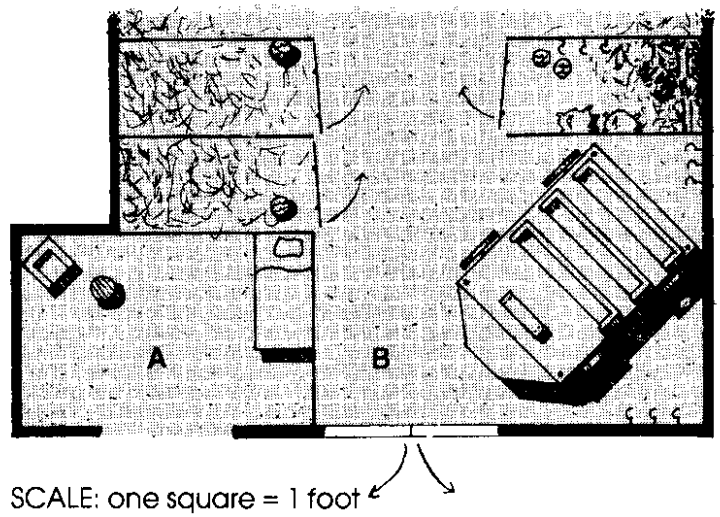
Personality

Smilin' Al Crum. ❑ *Effigy male. Ht.: 5'5"; Wt.: 165#, Age: 39.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Good hand-to-hand, with daggers, and with any small thrown weapon. Fair otherwise.*

Smilin' Al always wanders around as a human. Only the Sembs from The Face Place know there's an aggressive Effie under that smarmy exterior. But it's only fitting since he's their silent partner. Not that all his business associates know who he is. Videant Case from the Spittin' Image knows the boss of the place is an Effie, but he doesn't know which one and doesn't have a clue that Smilin' Al of touring fame is an Effigy.

Where as Rea from The Face Place knew she was different from other Effies but stayed with them until she was grown, Al ran away when he was six. He passed himself off as an orphan and would even convince families to take him in for a time. His fear of discovery meant he wouldn't stay too long though. The continual game of hide-and-seek taught Al how to be *very* charming and his ability to talk himself out of difficult situations is exceptional, even legendary.

Even while he lived mainly in the human areas of the City, he'd still occasionally come back to Sideshow and mingle with



While DMing his games (run in the *Sword-Dancer* world, by JenniferRoberson), MARK O'GREEN frequently uses his half-Great Dane, half Irish Wolfhound monster dog, Baskerville, as a method of motivating indecisive parties (and keeping the floor clean of fallen munchies).

Illustrator RANDY ASPLUND-FAITH is a Master of the Laurel in the Society for Creative Anachronism, where he is recognized for calligraphy and illumination. Randy's living room contains an attractive collection of bright-hued rocks and minerals—which he grinds to powder to make pigments for his illuminated manuscripts.

the other Effies, hoping he could find others like him. Over the years he has and there is now a small but growing network of aggressive Effies around. Al has hopes of gathering enough power over time to gain respectable status for the aggressive Effies. He's pretty much given up on getting the majority of Effies to come out of their shells and really considers the more aggressive ones to be almost a different race.

He feels the way to elevate their status is through money and information. He funded and started The Face Place, Spittin' Image, and Smilin' Al's Tours to do both things. Through the latter two, he gets a lot of information on what people feel about other people and Al puts this to use when developing contacts for The Face Place.

One of the big aids to this is his near-perfect memory. If he hears something once, it's generally his forever. By combining his memory with his street-trained sense of attitudes he can put together information from many sources and make it work for him. His ability also means he doesn't have to keep any records which makes it more difficult to find out what he's up to. (It also means that if something were to happen to Al, The Face Place would be dealt a severe—though probably not fatal—blow).

All types take his tours—the curious, the gawkers, even the do-gooders wishing to improve conditions in Sideshow (just because they want to make it better down there doesn't mean they don't worry about their own safety.)

Part of the reason Al has such a good safety record is his reputation. Early on, he hired some rather physical types to go as his passengers. When trouble struck, so did Al and his crew. Also, Al is something of a walking arsenal. He carries little odd gadgets, weapons, poisons, blinding dust, purchased magic bits, and so on. He's got a soft spot for odd little gizmos and collects them for fun and use on his tours. And he's not the least bit hesitant to use them. (He feels everyone should learn to "take it like an Effie.")

Another part is the fact that Al always carries something magical with him. He figures those riding with him that wonder how he gets away with heading through Sideshow like he does may think it's magic and those possible attackers in Sideshow with a nose for such things also will think it's some sort of defense. Occasionally it actually is.

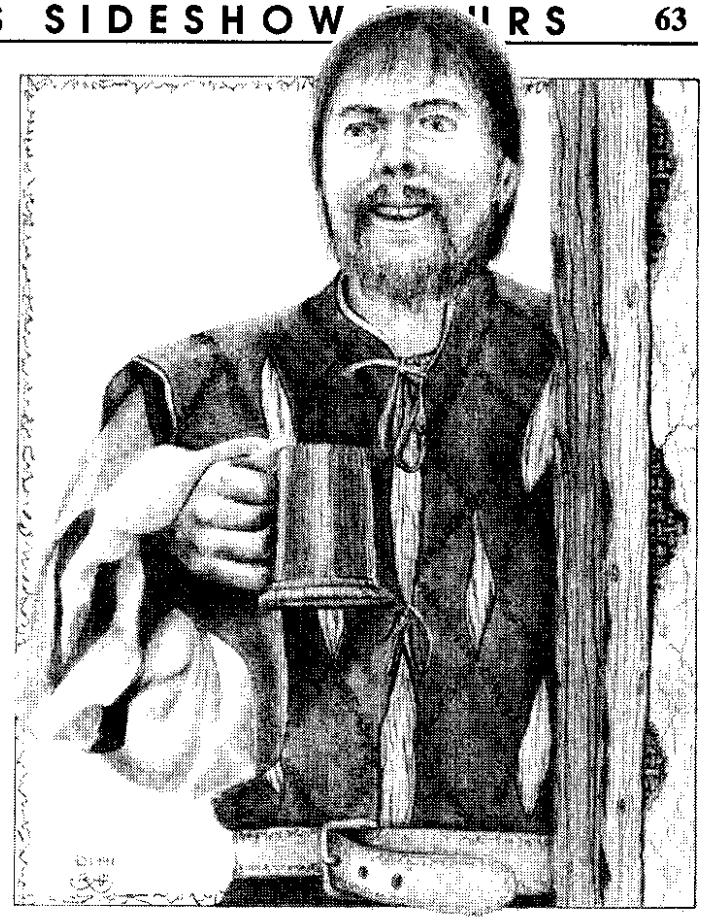
The final reason he doesn't run into too much trouble is his use and distribution of information. Some people in Sideshow know that he's actually doing some good. Others who might not be so generous toward his tours have had potentially damaging information dangled in front of them to back them off. There still is some posturing and threats when he takes a tour through. (Although some of it is set up in advance for the tourists.)

The rumor that Al is a friend of Sideshow actually does float around occasionally in the main parts of the City. However, anyone who's actually been on a tour gets such a different impression that the rumor usually gets squelched in a hurry.

Al also is something of a community watchdog in that he will start bringing the tour through an area he feels is getting a bit scummy. So some of his grousing comments during the tour are not completely a put-on.

Al helped the amorphous being, Blu, set up Enefene (cf.) some years back. The two share information (though Al doesn't give the amoeba secrets until they cease to have strategic value).

He is not on particularly good relations with her highness Abet Noir of the Pack. It seems that the Pack has decided that Effies, being subservient types should be easy marks for increased protection fees. Thus he pays a fairly hefty sum to the Pack to keep the Spittin' Image "safe."



— Smilin' Al Crum —

Al is also a member of the Sliming Path, though in a different guise and mostly to collect information. Again, he is not necessarily their friend. Effies are too human appearing for creatures like Leona the wereraccoon to accept their inhumanity.

Scenario Suggestions

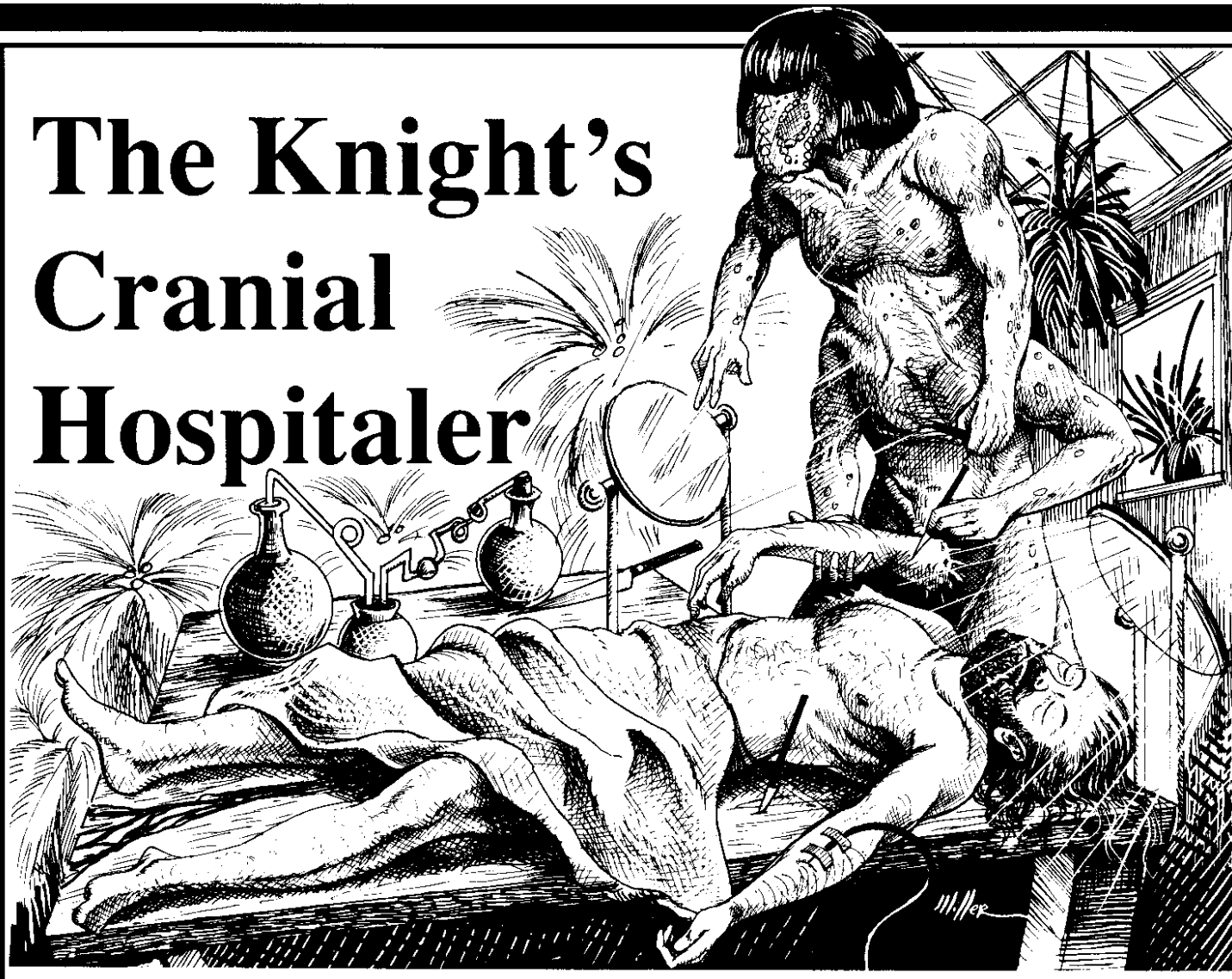
Scenario 1: Take my Boss. Al is found out. While the adventurers are taking his tour, a small army of liveried thugs, henchmen for one the most powerful families in the City take him captive. The Sembs from The Face Place want to try to get him out but know if they start using their contacts to help someone discovered to be an Effie it will ruin the operation and may trigger another "Hunt" so they hire the adventurers to grab their kidnapped boss from the noble's well-guarded home.

Scenario 2: To Hunt the Enigma. The mystery of the Old Man plagues Al. He feels he should know more about this enigmatic being. He hires the adventurers to break into the Old Man's compound, explore and bring back information. The closer to the secret that they come, the more he will pay.

Scenario 3: Let this be an Example to You All. The Sliming Path (with Leona's strong urging) decide to make an example of the exploitive, bigoted Al Crum. Though it is of little value, they intend to destroy his office. Al is present at the meeting, but can do little to change the decision. Instead, he hires the adventurers to conveniently be at the storefront and present a show of force.

What better way to introduce adventurers to the sights, sounds, smells, and denizens of Sideshow than by way of a guided tour?

The Knight's Cranial Hospitaler



With all of the sword-slashing and fisticuffs fracas that goes on in the City, surgeon's sutures are plentiful. But for those willing to risk experimental surgery—the decidedly inhuman Lurkkan doctor offers MORE. A re-attached limb, and implanted head armor are among the wonders to be found at the Knight's Cranial Hospitaler.

The Lurkkan house (sometimes called the *Lizard's Chop Shop*) is not receptive to everyone. There is far too much of value here to safely let just *any* bleeding rogue pass their door. One must have both something the Lurkkans value, AND a referral from someone the Lurkkan's trust before gaining admittance to this mysterious clinic.

Born into the lofty "Kkurjeon" (surgeon) caste, Lukkas, the Hospitaler's owner, served his internship in Hakkon, the capital city of the distant and exotic jungle lands of Lurkka. In Lurkka, he would have been just another kkurjeon, repairing damage incurred by valuable warriors and the high-caste who foolishly injured themselves in exotic sporting events.

Instead he chose a form of exile and together with his wife Kafkka, a member of the lower "Defender" caste, they operate the Knight's Cranial Hospitaler as both a self-supporting business and a research hospital, delving into the challenges of cross-species surgical experimentation.

The Lurkkans

The tall, reptile-like Lurkkans are an imposing sight when they stand erect on the hindmost pair of their six limbs. Despite their size and reptilian appearance, they are warm-blooded and move with astonishing speed. Retractable claws in all appendages give added dimension to their martial skills.

Their topmost limbs are usually heavily muscled. Their middle limbs are used for deadly precision strikes with light weapons, or fine stitch work in surgery. When down on four limbs (mid and hindmost), Lurkkans move with sensual slowness, like flowing water.

Lurkkan faces are flat and reptilian, with large, widely spaced eyes. Their pale body hair is restricted to the head. The texture of

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NORMA BLAIR is a 50-year-old grandma who usually writes short horror and/or science fiction. She lives with seven cats and one husband of 20 years. She never would have co-authored this piece without Panda's assistance and prodding.

PANDA ENGLAND created "Vrigelian's Roadside Shrine" for *CityBook IV*. When she's not honing her skills as a novelist, Panda splits her time between being a manager of interloan for a library, manager of two cats, two kids, two dogs, two rock bands and a wild man. Though she dislikes aerobics, she gets her exercise training service dogs for the blind and physically handicapped.

Illustrator, DAVID O. MILLER's work has appeared in Dungeon, Dragon and White Wolf magazines in the last few years, but he also informs us that in real life he is a free-lance graphic designer and was formerly the art director for the Space Camp in Huntsvile, Alabama.

their shiny skin varies with birth caste. Lukkas' skin is fine, like soft leather, while Kafkka's is like snake-skin. Low caste warriors like Leal have thick, knobby hide and some armadillo-like plates on parts of their bodies. The skin of all casts can be polished to a shimmering luster. Their sparkling grey blood congeals easily and rapidly.

The Lurkkans' fighting prowess is enhanced by their indigenous bony armor face-shield. Hidden within folds of skin, the tough, dark gray shield snaps down from the hairline of their foreheads, instantly covering their faces when they sense danger (shields implanted in other species must be lowered manually, like helmet visors). The near-indestructible eye lens in the shield provide variable magnification vision as needed. When in place, the shield covers the entire face, excpet for the ear hoods.

All Lurkkans have hollow fangs through which they can inject a mind-altering poison. A warrior's poison is deadly. Kkurjeons inject anesthetic-like narcotics. A capable Lurkkan kkurjeon can transplant glands between castes.

Lurkkans are egg layers, but they suckle their young like the terrestrial platypus. The Kkurjeon caste are only able to fertilize one egg in their lifetime.

Incapable of making music themselves, Lurkkans are momentarily transfixed when they hear singing or other musical sounds. Clients who engage in such activity are warned to desist, without explanation.

Surgical Services

The Hospitaler provides surgery for a fee, from simple stitching of wounds to complicated limb reattachments. Some emergency surgeries are performed, but most work is performed on an "elective" basis.

The Lurkkans do not operate a charity—preserving non-Lurkkan life is not a high priority. Save for the most extreme cases, they will not treat total strangers. Those seeking surgery require references, either from a respected City healer (professionals will know of each other), or from someone of prominence within Sideshow, such as Smilin' Al, Crube Collie (*The Bottomless Keg*), the necromancer Nadorix, the ruffiri witch Krysta Rose (*Panther Club*), or Abet Noir (*The Pack*).

Nevertheless, one thing guaranteed to grant an audience with the Kkurjeon is *akkolade*, a precious crystal found only within the towering cliffs in the jungles of Lurkka. Akkolade is universally admired because of the pinpricks of bright, pure colors transfixed within swirling veins throughout the otherwise transparent gem stone. A set of akkolade goblets would bring a king to his knees (or from Lukkas, the guerdon of a Lurkkan face shield!). Next in value to Lurkkans is platinum, and diamonds are always of interest. Lesser metals and stones are accepted, since the Lurrkans do need to deal with local merchants and are loathe to part with their precious platinum.

Lukkas will consider *foregoing* a fee if a client is willing to undergo experimental and quite often dangerous surgical procedures (usually involving interspecies transplantations or modifications of existing limbs or organs). He accepts one charity case per year as an offering to the gods. There is a 5% chance per game year that an adventurer might become the charity case.

Sample Surgery Costs

Prices given in platinum pieces (pp)

1 pp	Wound closure	20 pp	Tumor excision
2 pp	Digit reattachment	40 pp	Organ repair
10 pp	Limb reattachment **	100 pp	New limb **
10 pp	Simple regeneration ***	200 pp	Lurkkan face shield *
20 pp	Reconstructive surgery ****		

* **Face shields:** For an awesome price, an adventurer could have a Lurkkan face shield implanted, giving the permanent equivalent of a plate armor helmet, without the bulk and inconvenience. A thick thatch of hair easily disguises the slight distortion of the head.

** **Lost limbs:** For a more moderate cost, the Kkurjeon will re-attach severed limbs. If the original is missing, a suitable replacement can be had (the necromancer, Nadorix, often supplies the Hospitaler with parts no longer required by his own clients at the necropolis).

*** **Regeneration:** A regeneration bath will reproduce lesser body parts, such as fingers and toes. Facial features can be regrown with the strict understanding they may not match the original—in effect, an identity change. The Kkurjeon will perform this kind of operation, but finds it distasteful.

**** **Restoration:** He can surgically restore many deformities and physical abnormalities caused by curses and magic.

Layout

The building is constructed of blocks of sertainite, a mineral indigenous to the cliffs above Lurkka's peacock green wetlands. A cloudy translucent stone, polishing sertainite brings out its opalesque colors. Sertainite absorbs solar energy readily and disperses the heat evenly, keeping the interior of the Hospitaler at 80° (F). The roof is crafted of thin tiles of quartzite mortared in a wood framework.

The front door is covered with hammered silver, as is the bizarre human-skull-shaped door knocker. The skull is four feet from the porch floor, and the transparent slat behind the skull eyes permits two-way viewing through the door. When one manipulates the jaw to knock, it "chatters," shocking the guest and amusing the Lurkkans.

The interior of the Hospitaler is like a hot-house—hot and quite humid—a condition preferred by the Lurkkans. Every room is equipped with tiny nozzles near the top of the walls. Periodically the room is sprayed with an ultra-fine mist of water that comes through channels in the upper blocks from a roof-top water tank (supplied by rain water and buckets from the fountain in the waiting room).

Most rooms contain a profusion of exotic Lurkkan plants. Many seem merely decorative reminders of distant Lurrka, but most, even all are either medicinal, edible and some few dangerously poisonous when eaten raw.

A. Waiting Room Courtyard (20' x 29') This room is replete with plants and potted trees illumed by the sunlight that comes through the transluscent roof. A single oil lamp chandelier hangs from the ceiling gridwork, along with more plants, trailing wispy

vines like beards of Spanish moss.

To the west of the entrance are two stone chairs. To the east is a low, wide stone bench, which is gently warm to the touch. In the northeast corner of the room is a locked[5] wall display of pairs of beautifully-crafted goblets. Opposite the entrance, double doors lead into the interior. Immediately to the west of the interior doors is a lovely, polished sertainite drinking fountain. The Hospitaler is built on a natural spring, which supplies their copious use of water.

B. Sword and Exercise Room (15' x 17') A locked[5] weapons display case curves around the northwest corner of the room, containing Kafkka's exotic collection of swords.

B1. Privy (5' x 8') The holes are on a wide, raised bench, and have tight-fitting, decorative lids. There are access doors in the front of the bench. Leal cleans the receptacles daily.

C. Leal's Room (10' x 20') The 4' x 8' bed cushion is in the center of the room. The warm household climate precludes the need for bed linens. The entire south wall is a case for hunting gear and weapons, with locked[4] wood-panel doors. An armor stand next to the clothing trunk displays Leal's armor when he's not wearing it. At each end of his bed cushion is a low nightstand and oil lamp. Though carefully hidden on the waiting room side, the secret door is easily seen on this side.

D. Supply Room (37' x 10') The narrow southern portion of this room is lined with shelves of medical supplies such as bandages, scalpels, instruments, soap cakes, and bobbins of suturing materials. Lukkas' scrolls of medical notes are kept here in corked jars, and he values them second only to akkolade.

There are also 3-5 skeletal Lurkkan face shields, wrapped in clean cloths. Shields come from departed Lurkkans, and are in limited supply. About 70% of the time, Lukkas has a shield in stock that will fit the customer. They might be valuable to a collector of the bizarre, as only Lukkas can implant them.

There are three gurneys (wheeled cots) here. They are three feet tall, with large spoked wheels on one end and smaller swivel wheels on the other. Handles protrude from each corner. A 2' x 3' wheeled supply cart is draped with clean cloths next to them.

The peculiar bathtub is contoured to support a person in a comfortable reclined position, knees raised, arms on rests and head supported. An injured patient is immersed in a plant-poultice stew for an hour, then wrapped in a gooey plant pack and bandages and strapped to a table. Patients are fed a high-nutrition healing broth. Patients are then released into the custody of friends or family—with orders to sleep another day before being totally healed of their hurts.

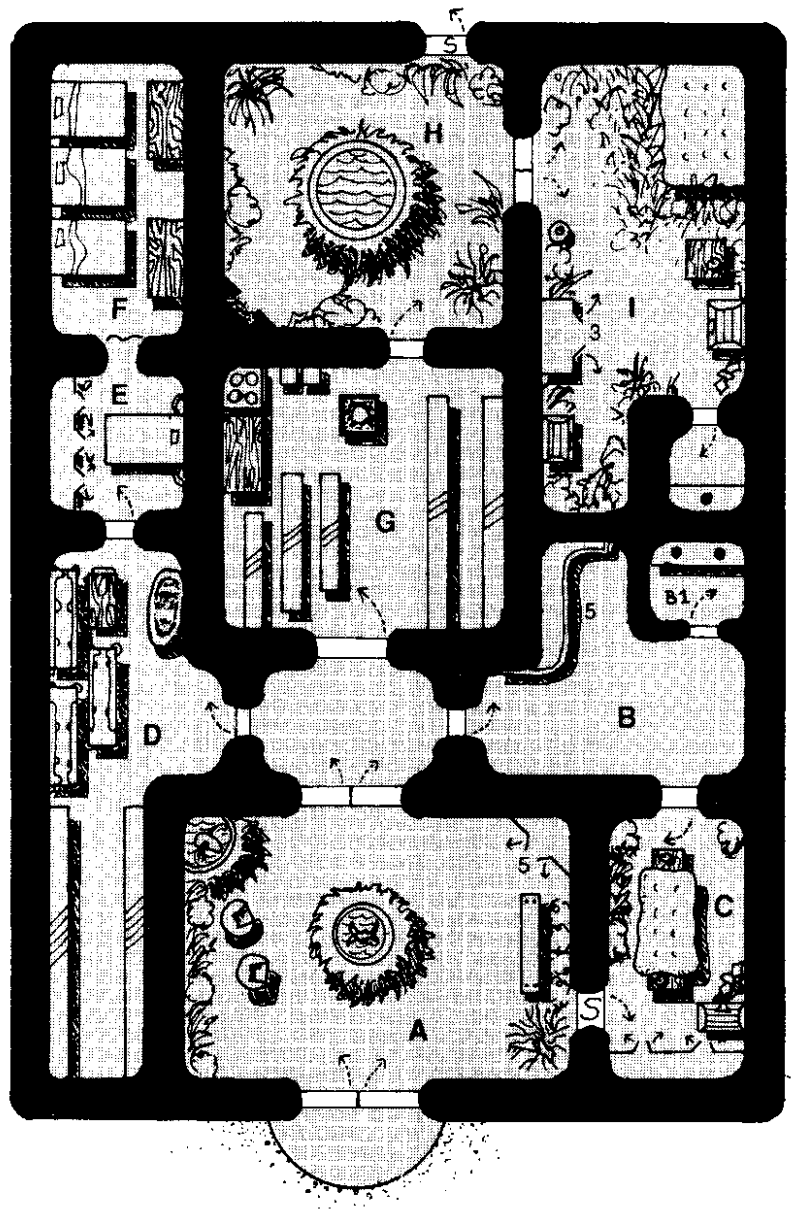
E. Surgery (10' x 10') The surgery has an operating table which pulls down from the wall. There are polished silver basins on either side of the head of the table along with a cylinder and tube apparatus that no one but Lukkas could hope to understand. The west wall contains a large, unlocked cabinet with glass doors and narrow shelves full of on-hand surgical supplies.

Mirrors suspended from the gridwork in the ceiling direct and intensify the sunlight. Lukkas performs the most delicate surgeries only on sunny days. He works with his face shield down to magnify his vision.

F. Recovery (21' x 10') This room has space for four beds and a storage stand at either end of the room. It is separated from the Surgery by a curtain. Patients are usually strapped securely to their beds.

G. Kitchen (20' x 20') This large room is lined with units three shelves high, holding all manner of culinary and medicinal plants, including rare cinnamon grapes, an essential ingredient in healing elixirs. Kafkka and the Riverfolk trade herbs extensively.

Lurkkans eat *very* ripe fruit (making them quite popular with



SCALE: one square = 1 1/2 feet

local green grocers), grubs (found in the potting soil), insects, carrion as well as fresh meat, and ... parts no longer being used by non-Lurkkan patients.

There is a low table in the northwest corner of the room, and a cooking stove arrangement in that corner for brewing poultices and medicines. The table has two broad, shallow drawers, one for kitchen linens, and one of utensils. There are two boxes of dishes near the stove. An iron cauldron is suspended over the fire, and another rests in one of the two wheeled carts specially crafted to hold them.

H. Family Courtyard (20' x 20') Using the opposite side of the fireplace for a social hearth, this room has a floor of polished sertainite, and a great, splashy fountain of the same material. The secret door allows access to a back alley and is quite often by Leal—often enough for others in Sideshow to know of its existence.

The room is lined with large and small plants and potted trees which are inhabited by "snack birds." Lurkkans enjoy plucking these delicacies out of the air and snacking on them raw. The birds are transparent—one can see their tiny skeletons and shadows of organs. They are sweetly gelatinous inside.

I. Lukkas and Kafkka's Room (15' x 30') A lamp stand lights the way into this plant-lined room. The 6' x 8' bed cushion nestles in a cove of greenery. A lamp table sits at the foot of the bed. Kafkka's trunk and armor stand are against the east wall. A locked[3], backlit case on the west wall displays the most valuable pieces of Lukkas' goblet collection, and two exceedingly valuable swords. A pair of goblets, each inset with one *tear of the sun*, will be found here. Lukkas' clothing trunk is nearby. Under one of the flagstones in the privy is a small, locked[3] chest filled with 400 platinum coins.

Personalities

Lukkas. ❑ *Lurkkan male, Kkurjeon caste. Ht. 7', Wt. 189#, Age: 86 (human equivalent: 43).* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Average with a sword,* ❑ *Magic Ability: Poor C5.*

Lukkas' greatest passion is to experiment with new methods of surgery. Genetically predisposed to his craft, some of his surgical knowledge is in-born. He is the only being on the planet who can implant face shields in non-Lurkkans. Lukkas spends a great deal of his time studying Lurkkan medical scrolls and furthering his research. Here in the City he is at the hub of incredible cross-species surgical opportunities, and his life dream is being realized.

A rounded scalloped platinum collar, decorated with platinum tassels, is the emblem of his supreme rank amongst the Lurkkans. He is unaware of his habit of thoughtfully fingering it when reading or conversing.

His straight silvery hair is worn in a "pageboy" style, and is always immaculate. He wears a cream colored linen tunic embroidered with platinum threads unless working in the surgery, where he dons only a simple loincloth. He does not wear mail, nor does he consider himself a warrior—though he has tough shiny skin and retractable claws.



—Lukkas—

Kafkka. *Lurkkan female, Defender caste.* ❑ *Ht. 7', Wt. 196#, Age: Lurkkan 54, Human equivalent 27.* ❑ *Fighting prowess: Excellent with sword, Very Good with stiletto.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Average C1 and C8, Very Good C5.*

Thin folds of skin drape from the corners of her saffron eyes, giving them a cloaked look. Her silver hair is silky fine and falls in gentle waves to her waist. Though she rarely speaks, her voice is quietly authoritative. Her hide is tough and glitters in silvery splendor. When she is excited, the sheen heightens to a brilliance that is painful to behold. Kafkka wears a pair of jeweled stilettos.

She earned the diagonal scar on her chin in a training duel as a youth. She wears her black chain mail during most of her waking hours. It includes a breast plate with one shoulder strap (leaving one shoulder bare), and a kilt. Her status collar is a silver sunburst. She wears greaves on her calves, and open-toed sandals.

By concentrating, she can plant suggestions in a human's mind through as much as two feet of stone. If the victim stares into her eyes, she is able to charm them readily. Complete control of individuals is gained by biting them and injecting them with a chemical mind-fixation solution through her canine teeth. This effect wears off in about two hours. Kafkka normally uses her mindsnare abilities as a mental anesthetic to prepare the patient for surgery, where she also acts as Lukkas' assistant.

A fiercely loyal mate, Kafkka is utterly devoted to the Kkurjeon and his calling. Although she has a carefully groomed attitude of gently submissive mate, nurse and housefrau, she has

attained the pinnacle of her career by way of her outstanding military service and her mating with Lukkas.

Kafkka's remaining life goal is to bear the only egg she and Lukkas will ever have, and produce another Kkurjeon.

Leal. *Lurkkan male, warrior caste. ❑ Ht. 7'4". Wt. 275, Age: 54, human equivalent, 27. ❑ Fighting prowess: Good with pole-axe, Very Good with long sword.*

This servant and hatchet man for the Kkurjeon is also a secret member of the Sliming Path, the Sideshow terrorist society.

Leal's dull gray eyes match his soiled sunburst nickel collar. His yellowish, longer-than-shoulder-length hair shines with grease. Scars in various stages of healing abound on the thick, gnarled hide of this surly fellow. His oily grey face shield has seen many assaults and is mapped with battle marks. All of his limbs are heavily muscled and are of greater length than either of his fellow Lurkkans.

In battle his favorite and most effective tactic is to come in low and fast on four of six limbs. Ripping upwards with explosive strength, he has made short work of more than one opponent with the razor hooks embedded in his long sword. Leal gives no quarter and asks for none.

When a client needs a new limb, Leal is more than happy to go out into the City to harvest a replacement from either the cemetery owner, Nadorix, or from some unfortunate on the streets.

He is a frequent customer at *The Panther Club*. Although gambling is strictly forbidden in his society, his dealings in the City found him ready prey to the addiction. He is desperately in debt. If found out, he would be executed by his people.

Although he goes bare-chested in the Hospitaler, Leal wears his pitted armor when there are guests, and when he goes out into the City. He uses his retractable claws only as a last resort.

The daily two-hour sword practice sessions with Kafkka are the highlight of his life. While he has yet to best her three times in succession, he secretly believes he will some day. His ultimate plan is to gain mastery of her—he has the edge in weight, and brute strength.

Only by demonstrating his superior skills can he hope to earn the coveted Defender status. Elevation to the higher caste would allow Leal the freedom to mate for life—something he sorely desires. As the lowest status resident, he tends to the housekeeping chores, however demeaning and unpleasant.



— Kafkka —

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Knight's Pawn. Leal pawned one of Kafkka's swords to Hilkin's to cover a gambling debt. He just received his wages for the month, but the price of the sword has now doubled, and he can't afford to buy it back. Maybe he can get the adventurers to help him regain it before Kafkka finds out.

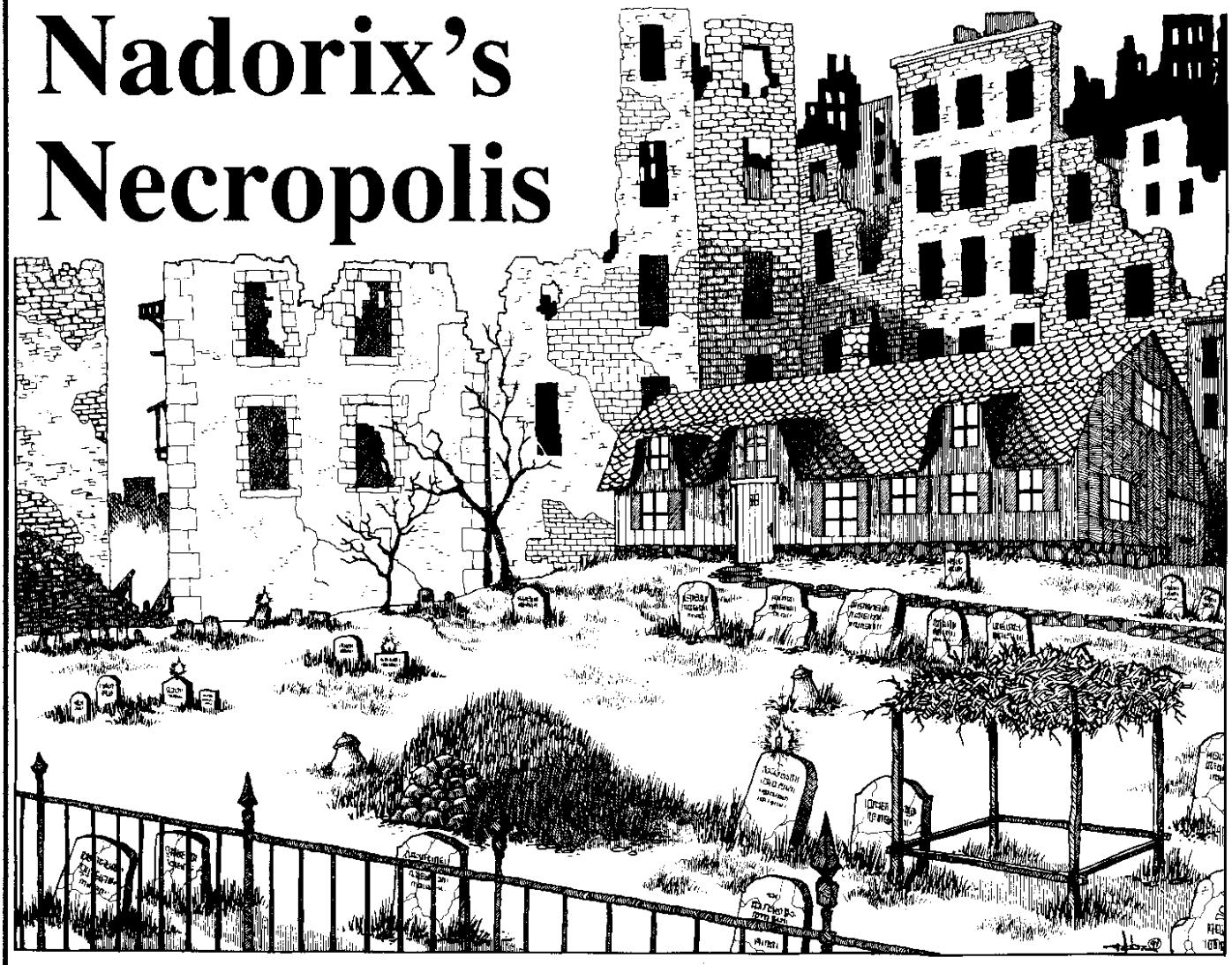
Scenario 2: Let This Cup Pass from Me. Wysilenthade, the merman owner of the *Blue Maid* curio shop suspects that the Lurkkans possess goblets decorated with *tears of the sun* and hires the adventurers to "obtain" the goblets. During the course of this mission, they discover the Lurkkan passion for akkolade. Lukkas owns one akkolade goblet. The other can be found in *The Blue Maid*. An adventurer who obtains that goblet might write her own ticket with Lukkas for future surgeries.

Scenario 3: Disarm that Fiend! A well-known, but down-on-his-luck swordsman stumbles drunkenly out of a dark alley, clutching the bandaged, bleeding stump of his right arm. He needs serious medical attention. He moans about the big lizard that "bit" his hand off. Leal has taken the man's sword arm for a client at the Hospitaler. Can the adventurers regain the man's arm before it becomes another's, or convince the Kkurjeon to give the man a new one?

Scenario 4: Egg Hunt. A trio of rascally ruffiri raided the Hospitaler while Leal was supposed to be on duty and stole Lukkas and Kafkka's newly laid egg (Leal was gambling at the *Panther Club*). They, in turn, were waylaid by a gang of Chervka (the *Pack*), members of the vile "redeyes," who had long sought a lever with the Lurkkans. Their victory was equally short-lived, as they fell victim to a band of vengeful, diminutive Terrkota warriors. The Terrkota, not knowing what they possess, only that it's valuable, have stashed the egg in one of their subterranean treasure troves. If the adventurers can return the egg safely (if they can only find who has it!), it's free face shields, surgeries or healing potions for everybody! But the egg must be restored to its parents quickly, for if not fed Kafkka's nourishing milk within 10 hours of hatching, it will die.

Healers who can perform real, lasting and useful surgeries are few and far between. An adventurer who has lost fingers or a limb no longer need retire, so long as he or she has the right connections.

Nadorix's Necropolis



One constant fact of life, wherever one goes, whatever one's race or species, is the universal presence of death. Just as humans live and die, so do the inhuman residents of Sideshow. In the midst of a very human City, this little cemetery provides a "correct" burial and a dignified memorial for those who are decidedly not.

A necropolis is just a fancy word for graveyard. It literally means "city of the dead." This one is the most accepted burying ground for the nonhuman population the City, specifically those who dwell in Sideshow. The owner of the necropolis has decided that if the nonhumans cannot have dignity in life, that they should at least have it in death—by means of a proper burial. Nonhumans, convinced of his altruism, give Nadorix Mortiphilous their trust, friendship, protection, and most importantly, their business. The establishment features the burial ground, funeral parlor and crematorium.

The necropolis is open 24 hours a day, and the yard's gates are never locked. As a rule, Slid, Nadorix's lackey, totes a cart through the streets of Sideshow twice a night: beginning at sundown, and ending at 10 p.m; then again at 4 a.m. until 8 a.m. His orders are to pick up any bodies found in gutters and alleys, as well as accepting any corpses given to him for a nominal fee—a few silvers or a few coppers, depending on the financial means of the "donor". These bodies are usually buried in one of two massive ditches, the Paupers' Graves.

Those who wish to give the dead a regular funeral service and embalming and/or burial rites must see Nadorix Mortiphilous, the mortician and owner of the necropolis personally and make arrangements. Nadorix will see customers at any time. His extensive knowledge of nonhuman burial customs and rites lets Nadorix prepare a body for burial, give it the proper rites, and inter it according to the racial culture. He does not hire professional mourners, considering such things to be undignified.

Nadorix is a fair man, and he has no set rate for burials. The cheapest funeral and burial costs a half dozen silver coins (no coffin, but a private grave, marker, and burial shroud is provided). A full-blown funeral with heavy cultural trappings, a complete embalming, coffin, and headstone (or mound, or whatever) goes for no more than 100 gold coins. If the buyer wishes to build a crypt, the price is tripled (at the very least).

Author, JOHN TERRA desperately juggles his time between creating material for the RPGA™ Network, writing material for DUNGEON™ and WHITE WOLF magazines, producing adventures and sourcebooks for TSR, and scripting portions of the computer game, *The Lord of the Rings: Volume Two, the Two Towers* (due out in the fall of 1991 from Interplay Productions). He is also a contributing author to *Central Casting*.™ *Heroes NOW!* from Task Force Games.

Illustrator BOB E. HOBBS informed us just ahead of press-time that he is a prizewinning artist in L. Ron Hubbard's Illustrators of the Future contest, the first artist from Rhode Island to be so honored. Congratulations are in order!

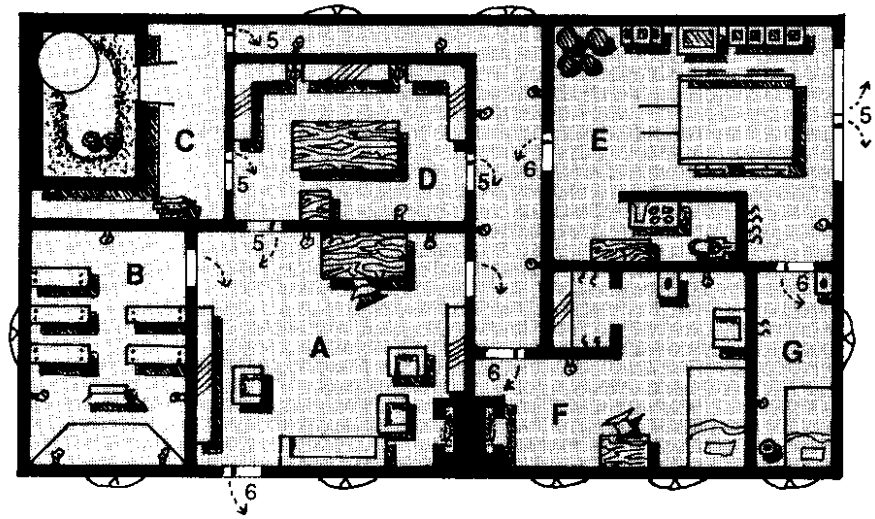
Layout

Ancient, crumbling buildings crowd together in this section of Sideshow, towering over the passersby. On one particularly dark byway, however, a conspicuous gap lies surrounded on three sides by buildings so decrepit that it is impossible to determine for what purpose they were once built. The fourth side of this roughly rectangular gap is sealed off with a rusted, wrought-iron fence, five feet high. Set into its lone gate is a bronze plate covered in verdigris. The plaque contains but a single word: *"Necropolis"*.

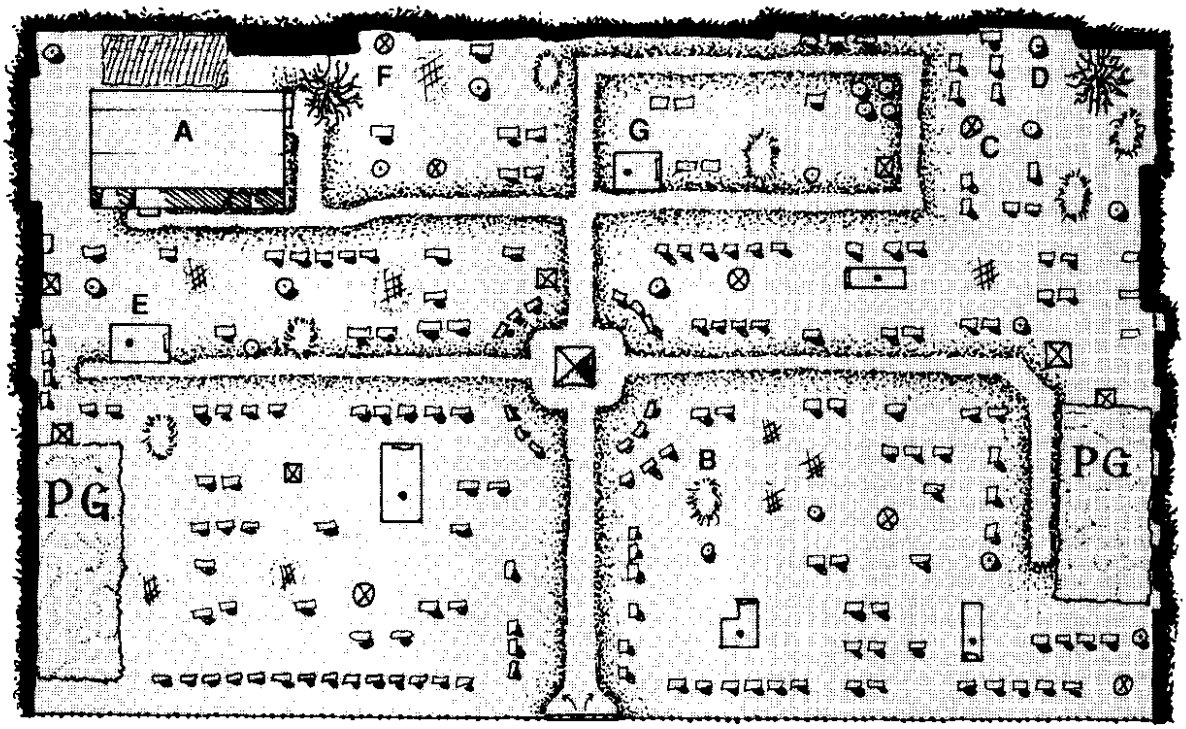
Peering beyond the fence, one sees a collection of grassy mounds, slate stones, statues, obelisks, small stone buildings, and a few skeletal trees, devoid of leaves (regardless of the season). Tiny points of light flicker here and there among the stones and statuary. The strongest light, perhaps a lit window, burns brightly in the northwest corner. Chances are, if the viewers wait long enough, they will hear a low rumbling noise come up from behind them. Turning, they see a hunched man pulling a cart. He walks up to the gate and stops. Many pairs of feet stick out from under the dirty canvas covering his cart. He stares at them, his dark beady eyes glinting from under his dirty cowl. "Scuze me, nohble peepul," he wheezes in a reedy, whiny voice, "Bizniz haz bin gud tonyte." Hacking out coughs, he wipes his nose on his sleeve, then pulls the cart into the yard, shuffling towards the lit house.

The Necropolis

In general the graveyard is overrun with brown weeds. Even the trees have no leaves, but stand like gnarled brown skeletons. Bear in mind that this is *not* a field full of treasure. Most of the dead were impoverished or middle class. Treasure-filled coffins and the like should be kept to a minimum. Besides, Nadorix



FUNERAL PARLOR AND RESIDENCE SCALE: one square = 1 1/2 feet



NECROPOLIS SCALE: one square = 5 feet

Gravestone · Burial Bier · Statue · PG Pauper Grave · /// Garden

Burial Mound · Cremation Urn · Obelisk · Mortuary Crypt

firmly believes that wealth has no business being buried in dirt.

Gravestones. Most (80%) are crude slate with painted names, the rest are of varying qualities of marble. About 25%of them have corpse candles (permanent, magical lights to guide the dead into the afterlife—made by Nadorix). These lights resemble a burning candle that burns with a reddish hue. They look downright eerie, and if one stares long enough, one would swear that the points of light are moving....

Burial mounds. The mounds here are seven-foot-high piles of earth, mostly overgrown with weeds. Small cairns of stones seal their openings. Inside, lie their resident corpses, usually with a few possessions of little value (despite his apparent altruism, Nadorix firmly believes that dead have no use for things of value and takes such items for his own use or later resale). Most mounds have some form of identification, such as runes or a symbol on a rock atop the mound.

Burial Biers. The biers are wooden structures eight feet high and covered with tree branches. The bodies in these are heavily embalmed since they are in effect exposed to the elements.

Cremation Urns. A typical cremation urn stands about two feet high. Most have name plates or carved inscriptions. They contain only ashes.

Mortuary Crypts. Crypts are made of stone, and have a regular locked[3] door of heavy wood, with the family name carved overhead. Crypts hold from 1-12 bodies, most (99%) in coffins. If riches any are to be found, they are most likely here.

Obelisks and Statuary. Some of the dead are remembered with a statue or an obelisk. The person may or may not actually be buried at the marker's site. Many of the markers are decorated with grotesque statues. Nadorix does not remember placing them. He assumes that relatives brought them in later. In reality, they are gargoyles, members of the Gaggle who are subservient to the nightmare gargoyle, Cuimin.

A. Nadorix's Funeral Parlor and Residence. The house is sturdy in the extreme. Its foundation is built of stone, and the walls and front door are solid oak. Each window has stout oak shudders reinforced with iron, and decorated with every holy symbol imaginable. Nadorix keeps a garden out of sight behind the house—the only patch of green in the whole cemetery. One might wonder what Nadorix uses as fertilizer. The gargoyle, Cuimin, perches on the building north of the garden.

B. Blugluk's Burial Mound. This grassy mound is the final resting place of Blugluk the Blasphemous, a troll chief who befriended Nadorix. Besides the mummified body, the mound is said to hold a massive sword, longbow, and club, all magical, plus 20,000 gold coins worth of gems and coins. Local legend maintains that an "honor guard" of four trolls watches the mound from an establishment across the street.

The truth is that Nadorix removed all valuables from the grave shortly after the funeral. The weapons are now part of the armory of a distant lord and the coins are long spent on research and upkeep costs.

Nevertheless, the trolls are there. If anyone invades the mound, three trolls engage the violator, while the fourth goes off to find more trolls (which may take as long as several days, trolls are not common in the City). Of course, the commotion will alert a *very* displeased Nadorix. And one can imagine how distraught the trolls will be if they find an empty tomb.

C. Screaming Statue. A life-sized statue of an ogre princess, with the following poem carved on the pedestal: "If answer you seek, look beyond da shriek, pucker up yer face, give da princess yer embrace."

Any non-ogre who passes within two feet of the statue causes it to emit a piercing scream which lasts for 2-5 (1d4) minutes. If anyone kisses the statue, the screaming stops, and the statue whispers: "Ask a question, and it shall be answered." The statue will give the petitioner advice on future actions or answer a question. The answer is right 50% of the time (notice that the poem never said anything about the answers being RIGHT!!). This works only once in each person's life.

D. Urn Ash Ghost. A murderer's ashes lie in this black urn. Opening the urn causes the ashes to fly out and form into a human shape, a ghost, which attacks the offender until the victim is dead. If the ghost is "killed", it merely goes back into the urn and awaits another opening.

E. Crypt of Nohman. This beautiful, black marble crypt has a brazier with coals, a supply of wine, an expensive, velvet-lined coffin which sheds light, a music box, and a set of fine books by popular and scholarly authors. This is Nadorix's secret hideaway when he wishes some true peace. No man is buried here (hence the name on the outside of the crypt: Nohman!).

F. The Bleeding Statue. This is a statue of a werebear, slaughtered by ignorant humans. Whenever a human comes with 10 feet of it, the statue bleeds from many chest wounds until the person leaves. Josef, the werebear officer of the Sliming Path, spends much time here in contemplation.

G. Sewer Entrance. This grating located behind a crypt opens into a 14-foot-deep shaft which leads to the *Sewers* (**CB3**). It is locked[2].

Nadorix's Funeral Parlor and Residence

A. Living Room (18' x 21') This room is protected by a lock[6]. Nadorix relaxes and meets with customers here. Though physically comfortable, with deeply tufted carpet and many good plush chairs for visitors to sit upon, the air weighs heavily with the cloying smells of burning wood, frankincense, myrrh, flowers, and chemicals. Furthermore, a huge oak desk and several looming bookcases dominate the room. And few folk are unaffected by the strange curios which seem to be everywhere, including a mummified humanoid hand with candles mounted on each fingertip, a humanoid skull covered with jewels, a huge parchment with several anatomical drawings of humans and nonhumans (in living color, no less), a real skull and crossbones mounted over the fireplace, and a human skeleton standing in an open, upright coffin.

The desk contains books, documents, account ledgers and the like, all necessary for the running of a funeral home.

B. Chapel (12' x 18') The chapel is always unlocked. There are no holy symbols in here, yet it is used to conduct wakes, funeral services, and the like. The floor is polished pink marble, and the walls are black marble veined with gold. The wall candlesticks are solid gold. Five solid oak benches and an oak podium are the only permanent furnishings. The raised dais to the south is used for displaying the coffin. The south window is a stained-glass rendition of the Grim Reaper. The room is not heated—it's very dry and very cold.

C. Crematorium (15' x 15') Both doors in this room are made of

iron and are locked[5]. The doors are almost air-tight and the air is stifling hot in here, with a lingering smell of burnt wood and flesh. A huge black iron furnace dominates the eastern half of the room. The furnace has a hatch which accepts wood fuel. Bodies are placed on a chute which angles downward into the furnace. A large double chimney rises from the furnace and goes through the roof, dispelling exhaust and providing ventilation.

D. Laboratory and Embalming Room (12' x 18') This room is the source of the chemical and herbal odors that drift into the living room. The steel doors to the lab are locked[5]. The large metal table set in the middle of the room has indentations which allow the easy drainage of body fluids. A smaller wooden table near it holds a bewildering array of dissection, drainage, and mummification tools (knives, tubes, hooks, saws, wires).
The rest of the room is surrounded by shelves filled with every imaginable chemical, acid, and herb necessary for any sort of funeral preparation. Assume there to be about.10 gallons of each liquid and five pounds of each dry material. There is even a supply of mummification bandages. Hundreds of labeled jars contain the preserved body parts of numerous races.

Leal, the Lurkkan "parts procurer" for the *Knight's Cranial Hospitaler* is a frequent visitor, buying "used" body parts that will not be missed by their owners.

E. Cart Shed and Storage (18' x 21') The outer doors to this room are made of wood and locked[5]. All other doors are locked[6]. This room is used to store the body cart. Barrels and crates filled with extra supplies for the lab line the north wall. Numerous tools used for building coffins hang from hooks in the southeast corner. This room is unheated.

The southern portion of the room has been converted into a small kitchen with shelves for provisions, utensils and crockery, a stove/oven on the north wall, a table, and a water pump.

F. Nadorix's Room (15' x 21', irregular) It is always locked[6]. The room is quite comfortable, thanks to the fireplace on the west wall and the thick black carpet. Nadorix keeps a few skulls, mummified hands, a preserved heart, and a beautiful painting of the Grim Reaper atop the mantelpiece. Nadorix keeps a locked[6] chest (also trapped with at least one death-dealing spell) under his bed, containing all of his spellbooks, major spell components, several thousand gold coins' worth of small gems, and several hundred gold and silver coins.

Nadorix's clothing hangs on hooks in the walk-in closet. The closet's shelves hold shoes, clothes, and his wine collection. The top shelf has six scrolls, each with two spells. These spells are usually for emergencies, and feature two each of C1, C2, C4, and C8, with the remainder being Necromantic (Corpsewise?).

G. Slid's Room. (6' x 15') This dark little room with its floor of rough wooden boards smells like spoiled food, sweat, and dirty socks. A few dirty, ragged garments hang on the wall hooks. The rickety bed lies under crumpled gray linens (not their original color). A metal brazier with coals hangs from the ceiling, a few feet west of the head of the bed, providing both heat and dim light. A sloppy privy sits askew in the northeast corner.

A loose floor board under the bed holds his cash collection, a few dozen each of copper and silver, plus a journal written in poor scrawl. The journal is encoded in a cipher so infantile, so simple, that a person of average intelligence could decipher it in 10 minutes. Its particularly uninteresting contents detail Slid's spy activities for the human government of the City.



— Nadorix Mortiphilous —

Personalities

Nadorix Mortiphilous. ❑ *Human male, Ht.: 6' 4", Wt.: 160#, Age: 52 (looks to be about 22).* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Very Good with Necromantic magics, Average at C1, C2, C4, C8 magics.*

Nadorix is a man in his early 50s who appears to be in his late 20s. He is tall, thin and handsome, with cold, pale skin, piercing black eyes, and jet black hair greased back. Possessing average physical strength and toughness, he is nonetheless an extremely intelligent, wise, and charming man, well versed in etiquette and social grace.

Besides being fluent in over a dozen humanoid languages, Nadorix is an expert on burial customs of the majority of human and nonhuman races.

He founded the necropolis 25 years ago on the site where a dozen buildings had collapsed in an explosion. He felt that the residents of Sideshow deserved respect in death that they may not have gotten in life. He is apparently unselfish in his motives, though he has gained much knowledge of death, which has helped his studies. However, some of the funding for the necropolis comes from the tombs of the wealthier dead and from the "spare parts" he sells to the Lurkkan surgery.

Nadorix is not a violent man. He does not fear death, but believes that every being should live a full life, then die a natural death, not a death brought on by "undignified weapons of war or destructive spells." Death should be savored and experienced fully, for it is but a part of life. Nadorix is a connoisseur of death, and looks forward to his own—but in its own good time of course.

The Sliming Path have a cordial relationship with Nadorix. Though he is apolitical and against violence, he supports their cause of freedom and dignity for nonhumans. Nadorix has been known to cure wounded Sliming Pathers and lets them use the graveyard as an emergency meeting place (they normally meet at The Panther Club).

Nadorix is aware that Slid is a spy, but has chosen to let Slid play his charade. According to Nadorix's reasoning, better to allow an incompetent to skulk around, than to have Slid replaced by someone capable. Every so often, Nadorix lets slip some minor bit of news, so that Slid will appear to be doing his job.

Nadorix has a keen, though morbid, sense of humor. He loves watching people's ill-at-ease references to death. Nadorix dislikes bright sunlight and either stays inside during the day or wears a face-shading, broad brim hat and dark cloak when he must go out on sunny days (no, he's not undead, but has a nasty allergy to sunshine—a side effect of necromancy).

Though he is a wizard, Nadorix eschews things like Wizard Guilds, or dressing up in a pointy hat and symbol-decorated flowing robes. Instead, he usually wears loose black pants and shirt, with a flowing black cloak. He wears many magical protection items about his person, most crafted with an ornate death's head motif.

Slid. ❑ *Male weremole. Ht.: 5' 4" (but stoops and appears shorter), Wt.: 159#, Age: 37.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Good in mole form, Average in human form.*

Slid is Nadorix's assistant and a government spy. The City's human government believed that Slid's ability to walk freely throughout Sideshow collecting bodies put him in a unique position to gather information. Thus far, Slid has gathered little of any use.

Slid is short and balding with a sharp nose (which is always running), beady little brown eyes (nearsighted), and a stooped posture. His clothing, though once well made, is soiled, patched and smells strongly of dead flesh and preservative spices. At first glance he seems to be little more than another street person.

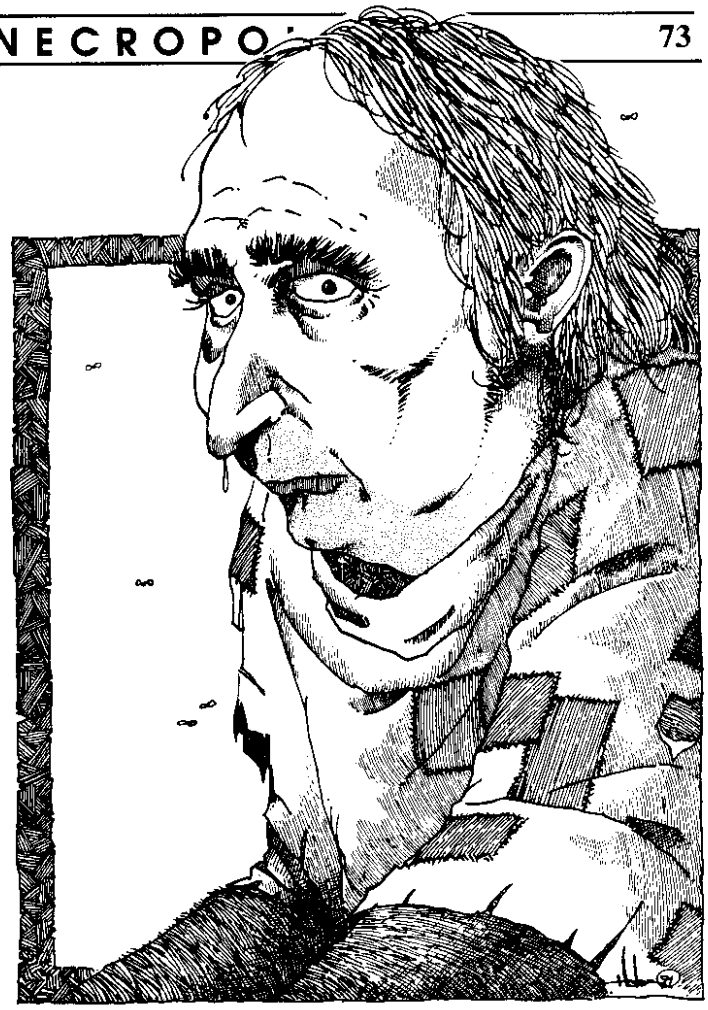
Slid is able to transform into a weremole at will, but usually keeps to human form. He is extremely strong in both forms, but has no grace, no agility, no charm, no brains, and is susceptible to every little cold or disease that passes by.

Slid talks in a wheezy whiny voice, acting obsequious and fawning when faced with people who can clearly take care of themselves.

When encountered on his rounds, Slid carries a highly enchanted dagger, some trinkets which offer limited magical protection and stop decay of some of the better corpses that he collects, and a purse with a dozen or so copper and silver coins.

Slid reports to the City once a month. He has gained very little information, and is convinced that the Sliming Path is merely a popular rumor.

As for Nadorix, Slid truly likes him (and vice versa), but is under orders by the City not to reveal his occupation. Like Nadorix, Slid dislikes sunlight, and usually sleeps during the day. At night, when not doing his rounds, Slid frequents the taverns to drink ale and collect information. He manages to ingest great amounts of the former, and hardly any of the latter.



— Slid —

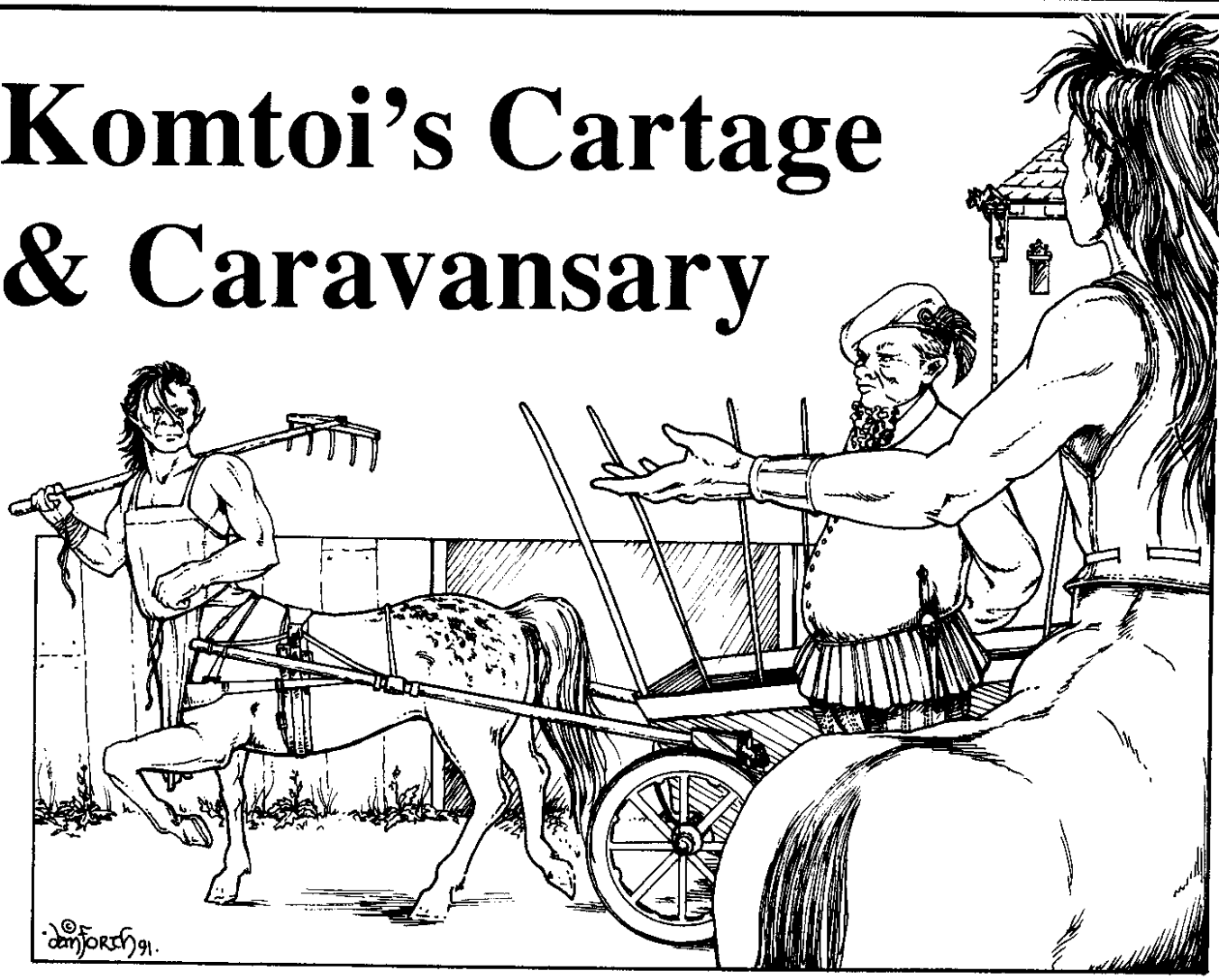
Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Why, Spy? The word on the street is that Slid will be replaced as the government's spy in Sideshow unless he proves his worth with some particularly valuable information. Rather than risk someone competent being sent to replace the little weremole, a representative of the Sliming Path hires the adventurers to investigate the home of a certain noble who has been hiring and then torturing nonhumans. Of course, information about this "Sliming Path assassination squad" is also being passed onto Slid to help him keep his job. Slid hires the adventurers to guard him while he takes a very important message to his contact elsewhere in the City.

Scenario 2: Bequest. The adventurers help bury a dear, nonhuman friend who has passed on. At the reading of her will, the deceased bequeaths a distinctive magical ring to one of the adventurers. At this point, reveal that the deceased was wearing just such a ring when she was interred. Contacts with Nadorix are fruitless. Disinterring the dead is disrespectful. Only one alternative seems left—break into the tomb. Of course, when they open the crypt, the ring and anything else of value is gone.

Very few adventurers pay much attention to what happens to them after their departure from this mortal coil. Whether they are human or not, maybe they can have Nadorix make their preparations for them.

Komtoi's Cartage & Caravansary



"You want something moved, heavy or light, in the City, or to the ends of the earth? Komtoi Shire is your..."man." Komtoi's freight haulers can be seen anywhere in the City, pulling carts, covered with the very stuff of commerce. This enterprising centaur is driven by his desire to rise above his "Sideshow" origins, and enter the world of man dominated industry. It is here, he reasons, that the real money is to be made."

On any given day, the great barn that serves as the headquarters for Komtoi's Cartage is a beehive of activity. In the morning, dozens of young centaurs wait to fill the temporary delivery, or hauling assignments. These tasks arise from many local merchants in the City, as well as those in the "Sideshow" who are looking for transport help. The jobs can be as physical as moving a load of rocks on a construction site, or as delicate as delivering pastries from a bakery to the kitchens of local taverns.

The Cartage opens with the rising sun and closes about two hours after it sets—though these hours are flexible. To outfit a caravan, Komtoi's crew will work throughout the night. Prior to festival weeks, the haulers work as late as needed to meet the demands of taverns that require extra carting and hauling to keep their stocks up. To sum it up if the door is open, and one of the partners is present, then Komtoi's Cartage is doing business.

The interior of the barn contains all manners of carts, drays, and wagons, as well as space to stabling of horses prior to a caravan's departure. Treckenner Hucul oversees Komtoi's out-of-town operations. He is the caravan master, and is responsible for the hiring of crews that undertake deliveries outside the City.

Komtoi will hire human, or other "exotics" as drivers and caravan hands, but he has a genuine prejudice in favor of fellow centaurs. For reasons that follow, he feels compelled to help even inept young centaurs "get a break" in this business. He has been surprisingly successful.

His faultless honesty, and hard driving work ethic have earned him three things. The first is a substantial part of the City's transport trade (at least that of those humans who can over come their prejudices.) The second is a thinly veiled hostility on the part of human based transport operators who feel he is unfairly cutting his overhead by employing workers who double as their own transport animals. The last is the hostility of some of "Side-

Author, BEAR PETERS should be no stranger to faithful followers of CityBook. In his last visit to the City (*CityBook III: Deadly Nightside*), he left us with both the Cock and Bull Gaming Club and the Big Fish Gang. More recently, he's been writing fiction for inclusion in a collection of tales based upon the legendary *Tunnels & Trolls*® game.

Illustrator, ELIZABETH T. DANFORTH, Makes a gracious appearance here, despite being overburdened with a thousand-and-one other writing and illustration and computer game design projects. Elizabeth's work has appeared in numerous books from Iron Crown Enterprises, particularly those depicting J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth. She recently completed illustrations for Dark Conspiracy, a Horror RPG to be released in 1991 by Game Designers' Workshop.

show's" population (particularly certain members of the Sliming Path) who feel he has "sold out" to human society by attempting to move out of the quarter, and into the human main stream.

Adjacent to the barn is a smithy, operated by Komtoi's other partner in the business, Sorraia Connemara, a young centaur mare. She is a blacksmith and can be found in the area during most business hours.

The cost of Komtoi's services will be dictated by many factors; if one is just hiring the driver, if one needs a driver, and a cart, if one needs a driver, a cart, and livestock, and lastly if one needs a specialized cart. Another variable is the duration of the rental in hours, days, or months. The last significant variable is distance, especially in the case of caravans. The most important note is the fact that Komtoi will generally place the value of his services at 10-20% less, at any task, than his competition (He is cutting overhead by eliminating horses when he can, and the centaurs will work for less since other work is often hard for centaurs to come by).

Layout

The Barn

The facilities here are proportioned larger, the doors are taller and wider, ceilings higher, in order to accommodate the greater size of the centaurs. Nevertheless, even the cleaner living areas have that "barn" look, feel, and ... smell.

A. Company Offices. This room is generally kept locked[3] as Komtoi will most often be found in the barn proper, directing "traffic." Keys for the door can be found with any of the three partners. It contains a safe (A1) which is holds the day's receipts. At the close of business Komtoi will open the office and take what cash has been received by his crews and lock it in the safe[4]. In the morning either he Treckenner, or Sorraia take the monies elsewhere for safe-keeping (a bank, vault or some such, usually in the better part of the City, commonly referred to as "Uptown").

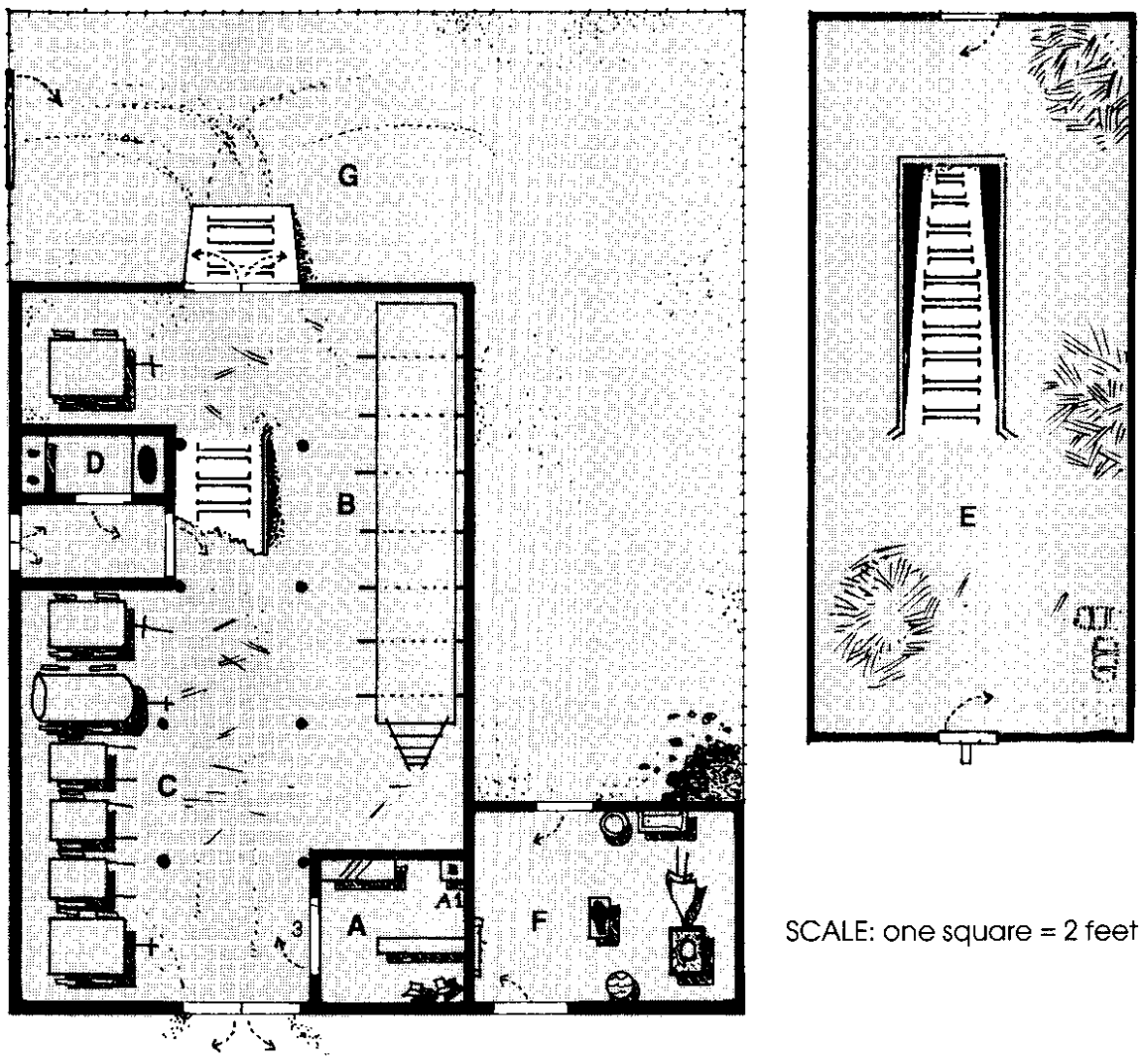
Also in the office are a rack of shelves which hold the company's records. These consist of parchment scrolls, that outline the terms of the company's employment, and payments. Komtoi usually stands at the counter here when conducting business—he finds that with his horse half covered by the counter, human businessmen are more at ease.

Three comfy "human" chairs provide seating for bipedal business guests.

B. Horse Stalls. These are for the caravan horses, or those to be used for real tough hauling jobs.

C. Cart Bays. This area houses the heart and soul of the company—its carts and wagons. Here too, can be found a huge cart for hauling water, and a number of smaller specialized carts. There is even one designed to be "refrigerated," but the expense of ice makes this a curiosity usually relegated to the dusty back of the barn.

It is in this room that most of the activity takes place and here that Komtoi will be found most often. The barn's spaciousness is more comfortable for the centaurs. A human who knows Komtoi well will discuss business out here, sitting on a hay bale, and often



SCALE: one square = 2 feet



—*Komtoi Shire*—

gain a slight advantage on fees. A ramp in the back of the barn leads to the loft.

D. Privy. This is the "john." Centaurs are civilized people, and as such are lazy. The less they contribute to the debris on the barn floor, the less they have to clean up themselves. Large ceramic conduit connects the privy to the City's Sewers (**CB3**).

E. The Hay Loft. Hay is kept here, as well as infrequently used gear.

The Smithy

F. Sorraia's Smithy. This side building off the barn contains a bellows and forge (**F1**), an anvil (**F2**), a tub of water (**F3**), and boxes and barrels of metal scrap (**F4**). Out in the stable yard/corral is a heap of coal (or charcoal in those cultures that can't handle coal). A rack (**F5**) holds the mare's equipment: hammers, tongs, and similar tools of smith craft as well as her personal weapons. There is no direct door between the smithy and the barn.

Outside

G. Stable Yard/Corral. It is here that most caravans will be prepared for departure, and the last inspection of tack will take place before the beasts and wagons move out.

Personalities

Komtoi Shire. ❑ *Centaur, stallion. Ht.: 6'8", Wt.: 689#, Age: 30.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Average with most weapons, Very Good with a whip.*

Komtoi is buckskin with prominent eel striping. What this means, is that his coat and skin are a rich butterscotch color and that his hair, trailing down his spine clear to the tail is black—in short a black stripe down his back. He is clean-shaven, and his dark brown eyes have the haunted look of a man driven to succeed at nearly any cost.

When he was a foal, Komtoi's parents worked for a small-time circus as roustabouts and animal trainers. When an unfortunate accident involving a new act killed both of them, their orphan child found himself in the clutches of show's owner. This unscrupulous man treated the young centaur as a part of the show's livestock, working him long hours, with his only reward a place in the stable cart.

As soon as Komtoi reached a size, if not the age of an adult, he fled the show (most of the injuries he caused healed quite nicely in a few months). He found himself in the City. At first he scrambled for odd jobs—sleeping in the back of stables, or in extremes, in an alley. Though there was much prejudice against this scruffy young "exotic" who would appear begging for work, soon some of the less affluent merchants found they could count on the youth for *more* than their money's worth of effort. Before long, he was running a regular delivery route, that ran through Sideshow, and the poorer side of the City. From this rude beginning he has built a growing trade. He has expanded to the point where his service is known and used City wide, rich or poor.

Komtoi has never forgotten his rude beginnings, and as a result he will go out of his way to help any centaur in distress, to the point of giving them work, and a place to sleep. All he asks in return is that they work hard, and are honest, both with him, and with any client. This insistence on honesty has been the cornerstone of his business. He is one of the few carters who will give an unconditional guaranty of safe delivery.

Komtoi handles most of the bookkeeping himself, although he will occasionally hire a young centaur filly to help him out during very busy periods. He learned his accounting skills from a kindly old jeweler, for whom he will still make free deliveries.

In keeping with his nature, he wants to be "in control" at all times, as a result he seldom goes out on deliveries, and can usually be found in the barn, taking care of details, supervising maintenance, hiring new day worker, or training new hirees.

At the end of the day, or a particular worker's task for the day he will collect their receipts and put them in the safe, then hand out the payment. Komtoi Shire is fair and friendly, but often preoccupied with his own goal. He wants to build a business respected in all parts of the City, he wants to be so good at what he does that "humans" will think he is the best one for the job, not just the best "centaur" for the job. As such, he is decidedly at odds with the goals of the Sliming Path (as defined by Leona) and neither sponsors their activities nor condones their actions.

Komtoi has no mate. Like many entrepreneurs, he is married to his work. Successful or not, few centaur mares are foolish

enough to seek the favors of such a stallion.

Treckenner "Treker" Hucul. ❑ *Centaur, stallion. Ht.: 6'6", Wt.: 737#, Age: 34.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Fair with most weapons. Good with the heavy crossbow (a human would require a winch to draw this bow, Treker draws it without mechanical assistance).* ❑ *Magic Ability: Average Curative (C2), and Very Good with a kind of Conveyance magic (he never becomes lost and has an infallible memory for any and all maps he sees).*

Treckenner is a gray centaur, whose coat is starting to shade to white. This does not imply age, merely the color of his hair, and coat.

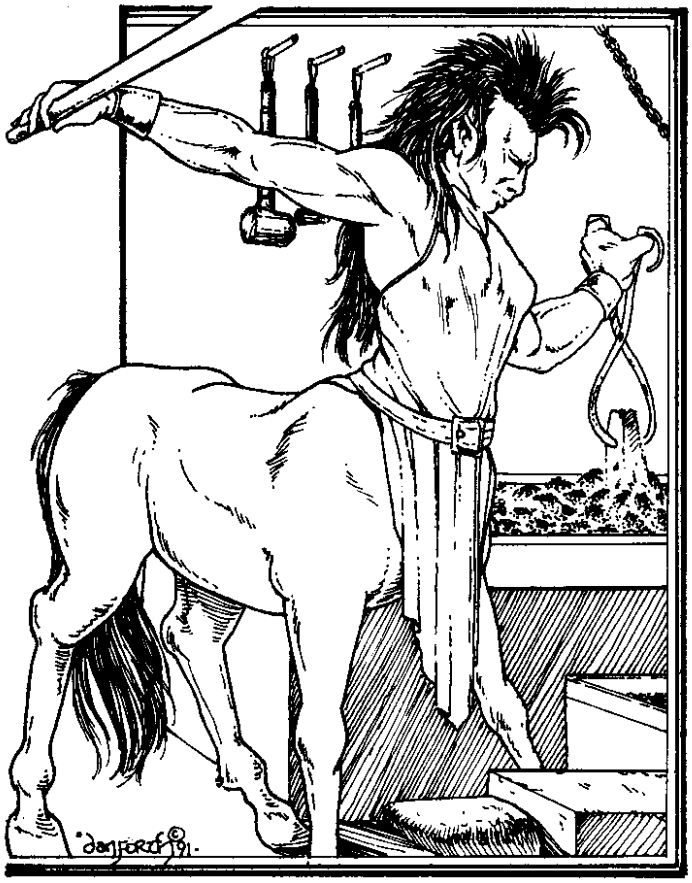
"Treker" handles most of the field work undertaken by Komtoi's. He was a redoubtable guide, and caravan leader when he walked into Komtoi's business (having served an apprenticeship under the ponderous Mikal del Brionfal Tobrannon—see *Freehold Municipal Caravanserai*, **CB4**). Despite his abilities, he was always at someone else's beck and call, and they were reaping all the benefits of his labors. When Komtoi offered him an equal partnership if he would undertake the "field" operations of the business, "Treker" jumped at the chance.

This centaur has lived in the wilds, hunting, and guiding for most of his life and has a reputation of being able to get the goods through to their destination. His years as a guide and leader have given him the skills to handle work crews on big jobs in town also. He does not share Komtoi's desire to move up in the "human" world of the City and prefers the company of centaurs to other two-legged folk.

"Treker" is a tough brawler, as well as a seasoned traveler, and strong even for a centaur (who are at least two to three times as strong as a man). He likes to go out drinking with some of the crews after work in any bar that will have them (a centaur will consume a goodly quantity of potables which is good for business, but they take up three times the space, and when "in their cups" they are capable of doing incredible amounts of damage to the furnishings).

Treckenner is Komtoi's good right hand, but he has no real head for figures. While he can quote prices, and is unlikely to be duped out of the business' share of any pay due, when Komtoi is not around, he has a tendency to dump any into the safe and let Komtoi sort them out later.

Like Komtoi, Treker is unmarried—a confirmed bachelor. He enjoys the company of centaur mares, but establishes no lasting relationships. Like other red-blooded stallions, he finds Sorraia attractive, but has decided that any mare who can beat him two falls out of three at arm-wrestling deserves his respect, not his lust.



— Sorraia Connemara —

Sorraia Connemara. ❑ *Centaur mare. Ht.: 6'3", Wt.: 654#, Age: 26.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Average with most hand weapons. Poor with missile weapons and projectiles. Very Good with the war hammer.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Good with Construction spells (C6) as they regard metal working.*

Sorraia Connemara is a pale strawberry roan (a coat of light brown colored hairs mixed with white that yields a pinkish red overall cast) with piercing hazel eyes. She has the intense, distracted look of an artist dedicated to her skills in metal working.

She learned smithcraft and finer metal-working skills from her sire, who passed on a family tradition to his only offspring. Her father was also a distracted artistic soul, the last in a long line of centaur metal workers who, it was said, learned their trade in the early days from the dwarves themselves. He proved not to be much of a husband to Sorraia's dam, and fathered only the one child. In keeping with family tradition, he refused to pass on his skills to anyone not a member of the immediate family. In his later years he was prevailed upon by his intense foal to pass the treasured knowledge on to her.

It is as rare for a mare to be a blacksmith as it is for human females, but no one at Komtoi's complains. The work she does is beyond excellent. Her shoes last far longer than those made by others, and when a metal object is crafted, or repaired by her, it works better, or stays fixed longer.

Sorraia's home is a small room, a converted stable really, a block or so from the curiosity shop, *Hilkin's Specialties & Esoterica*. Though she is rarely home, she shares the space with another young centaur filly, Merindia, one of the clerks at the curiosity shop.

Sorraia is by nature a solitary person, who is irascible when interrupted while working—which is most of the time. This may explain why she has not taken a mate or a lover—she is in love

with her craft. She will, however grudgingly stop to take orders if Komtoi is not there, and can put receipts in the safe as well, especially after hours.

If anyone is to be found at Komtoi's in the wee hours of the night, it is Sorraia. She will stay after regular hours working on a new method of tempering or finishing her metals, often past the point of exhaustion. Komtoi has had to order her to take time off and literally chase her home on more than one occasion.

Sorraia learned a second skill from her father, about which she has revealed little. She can wield the long handled war hammer with deadly skill, this too was a family tradition. She is seldom called upon to use this ability, but night thieves have found to their regret her strength and prowess are a deadly combination.

In the early dawn light, when the rest of the crew of Komtoi's are still asleep, a red-gold phantom can be found stoking the fires of her forge. Sorraia Connemara is already at work.

The Rest of the Crew

A word about the rest of the crew, and centaurs in general: centaurs vary from 6'1" to 7'0" and from 600 to 850 lbs.(except among the rare "pony" breeds). They live an average, in stallions, of 45-55 years, and in mares from from 55 to 60 years. They come in all the ranges of colors that horses can manifest, which can lead to some fairly exotic skin tones on their "human" upper portions (a pinto has black and white patched skin to correspond with that coat pattern, so it is with a pinto centaur). In all cases they have broad faces with high cheek bones and wide mouths. They, as a race, are fond of high energy grains, and complex sugars—particularly if fermented.

They are stronger than a human by a factor of three, and this extends to their upper body as well as their equine pulling ability. While they have a superficial resemblance to the horse they are generally about one third the weight, and smaller over all. They are more nearly quad-legged men, than human horses.

The crew of Komtoi's on any given day will consist of young centaurs of both sexes (80% of those present), who need occasional work. At the end of the day, they are paid for each job in cash. While in many cases this would not create any real employer/employee loyalty—if any one centaur is in particular need of cash, Komtoi will find a job (even if he has to dream one up.) and thus there will be a payday. Komtoi will not lend money, but it is there for those willing to work hard. As a result there can usually be found an handful (2d6 - 2 + 1) of young centaurs waiting around or killing time "horsing" about in the barn.

Typical Young Centaur. ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Poor (20%) to Average (80%) with a variety of weapons.* ❑ *Magic Ability: little or none.*

These youths can be counted upon for work, and in a fight they will come to Komtoi's aid against any foe, excepting seasoned troops, or Fair to Excellent level Magic Users. (Although if it was Sorraia being threatened they just might stick around even in the face of greater odds, notwithstanding her personality she is worthy of a show of bravado by a young stallion.)

The remaining 20% of the crew are veterans who have made cartage, and more likely, caravaneering their trade. They will be in greater number if a caravan is outfitting (as much as 50% of the total crew) and have the following vital statistics.

Veteran Centaur. ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Average (40%), to Fair (40%) to Good (20%) with a variety of weapons, weighted towards projectiles, or long arms.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Sparse (15%) usually limited to Curative (C2) or some kind of travel lore.*

These centaurs' names and whereabouts are kept on a list in Komtoi's office, and a runner is dispatched to fetch them when there is work to be done. They are the foremen for large jobs, and the preferred choice for caravans. As trusted and proven friends, they could be counted upon to side with Komtoi, Treker, or Sorraia in a scuffle.

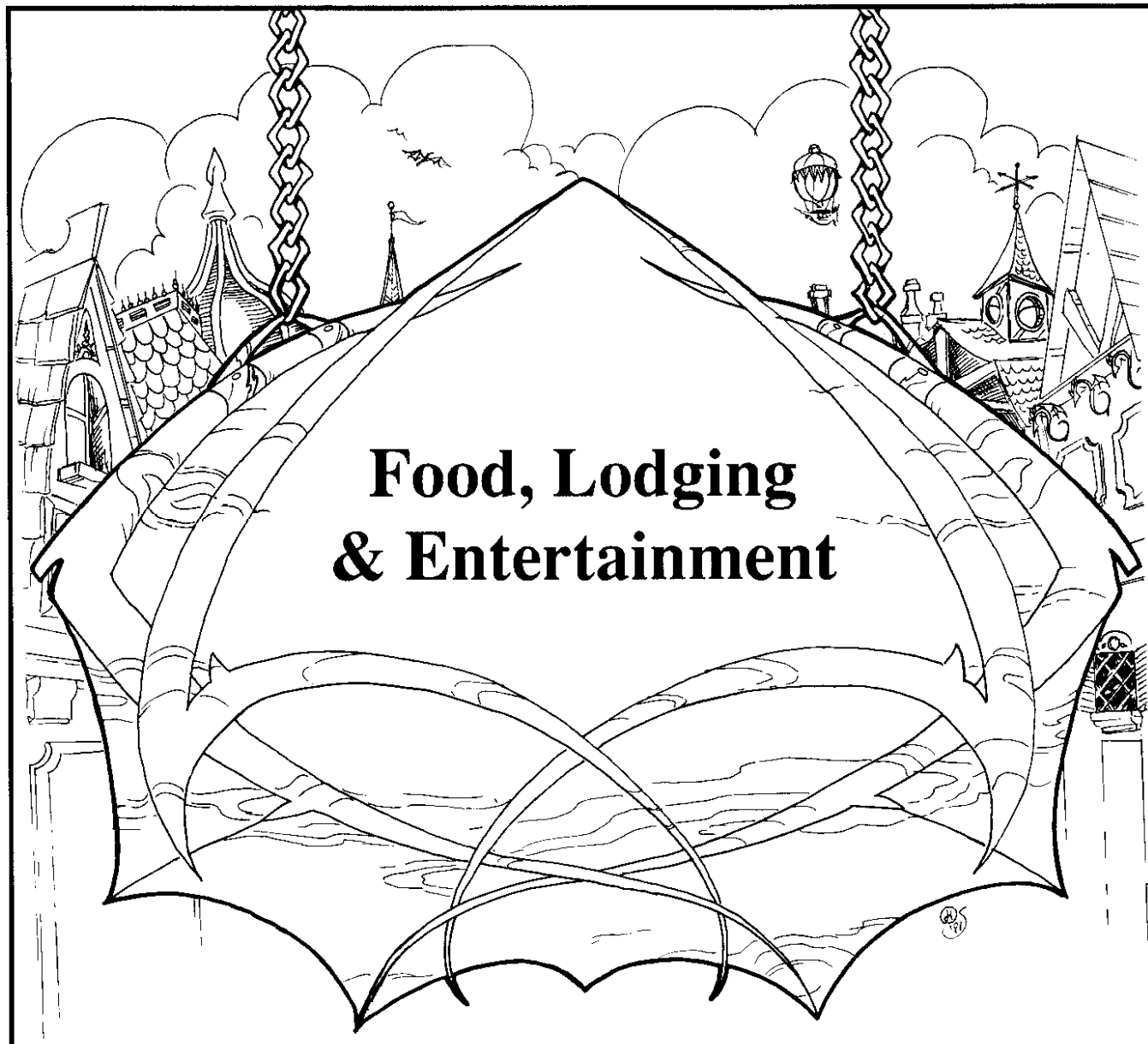
Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Centaurpower. Komtoi is hiring drivers and guard types to meet a big, long-term demand for long-hauling. The trick is, the competition (who didn't get even a piece of the contract) is some mean, nasty company like Forge (**CB4**), who will stop at nothing to put Komtoi out of business. This means WAR! Despite Komtoi's dislike of the Sliming Path, it may take adventurers with contacts there to save his hide.

Scenario 2: Where Did You Get This! A weapon that an adventurer has bought in the City needs repair. Whether the adventurer realizes it or not, it was crafted by the dwarf, Brumar, using his dwarven metal-shaping magics. Sorraia recognizes the process as one she has heard about, but never seen for herself. She immediately demands to know everything about the weapon (things which the adventurer may or may not know) and dragoons the poor soul into a wild goose chase across the City seeking the merchant and the maker of the weapon. This of course draws the attention of assassins and a few dwarven bounty hunters who also seek Brumar. Assume that some type of excitement and confusion will occur once Sorraia, the adventurers and Brumar's foes all find the unwitting dwarf at home.

Scenario 3: Let This Be an Example to You All. The Sliming Path decides to make an example of Komtoi for his flagrant "humanocentricism." Several terrible accidents befall his equipment, destroying the carts and their contents. The accidents seem to be the fault of improper maintenance and carelessness. No one is injured, but customers are angry. Only Komtoi knows that a magicalactive slug was left at each location and crude propaganda notes were found inside the locked and guarded barn at night (it's no problem for a Chervka rat to crawl up a sewer pipe). Komtoi hires the adventurers to take his own message back to the 'Path, his goal is to put the leaders of the group behind bars.

Not every resident in Sideshow has a chip on his furry shoulder. Many welcome contact with humans, even preferring them as customers and friends. Komtoi, Treker and Sorraia could all prove to be solid friends for worthy adventurers giving and requesting support and aid as it is needed.



Food, Lodging & Entertainment

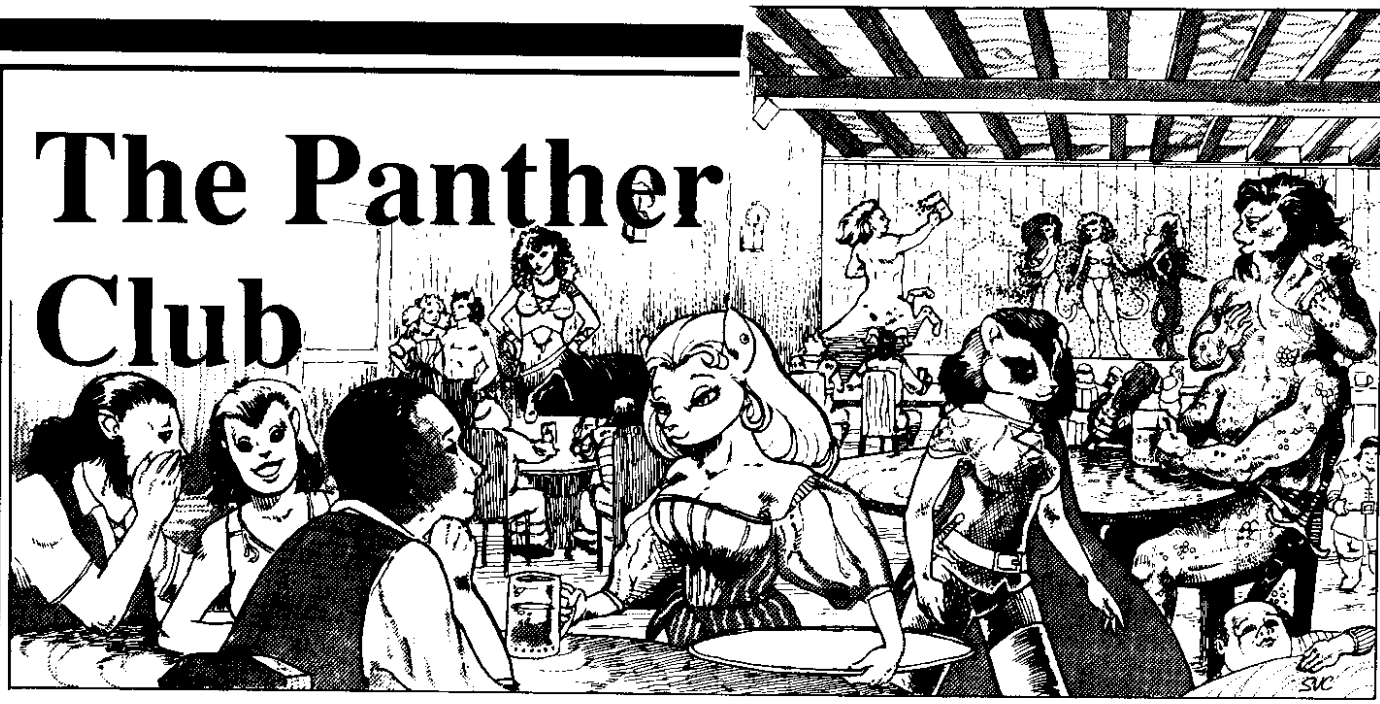
Not every tavern, inn or restaurant in the City will open its arms (and doors) to the unusual creatures who populate Sideshow. Inhumans want to have fun too. Thus, the folk of Sideshow cater to their own.

In Sideshow, there is but one place to be seen — and that's the Panther Club. Here, weary adventurers can have *all* their needs met, so long as they don't mind a little fur. In one sense, the animal-like Ruffiri halflings who run the club form a power group within Sideshow. Their influence is pervasive. Nevertheless, the more developed Ruffiri gravitate towards serving the mistress of The Panther Club, while the lesser forms infiltrate the City — though to most eyes, they seem little more than dogs and cats.

The Bottomless Keg, an open-air Beer Garden, welcomes all comers and serves a homey menu that satisfies most palates — and most thirsts with the tavern's legendary keg-with-no-bottom.

Of course, there are those in Sideshow (and elsewhere in the City) who cannot abide an omnivorous diet. For them, only meat will do. In this neighborhood, meat is synonymous with Silver ... Eric and Denise Silver, the proprietors of The Silver Pelt . Have an urge to eat something (or perhaps *someone*) unusual? Follow the crowds to the 'Pelt — just don't become an appetizer on the way.

The Panther Club



Whether human or nonhuman; whether furred, feathered or fanged; sentient beings the world over enjoy the comforts of a warm bed, a thirst-quenching drink and the hearty companionship of others like themselves. Though Sideshow has many a tavern and a several good inns, few are the establishments that stand out in the minds of resident and visitor alike. The Panther Club is one. Welcome stranger, you're home now.

Deep in the heart of the exotics quarter, in an area avoided by all but the bravest or most foolhardy human visitors, lies a nondescript building surrounded by a high wall where many of the quarter's denizens make their way at the end of the day for an evening of relaxation and entertainment. Unhuman travelers from outside the City make their way thither in search of the private services offered here. Whatever form a weary adventurer's perception of comfort takes, he will find it readily available in The Panther Club for the right price.

From the street, the Club might be the estate of some powerful halfling noble. It is a large, sturdy structure surrounded by a practical wall high enough to give pause to the pensive thief and send him looking for easier pickings. Regular patrols by alert guards accompanied by large apparent canines also lend to the air of security for the guests within.

The Club's name derives from a spectral felinoid creature which appears sporadically, when a client's face and frame appear to briefly alter into the aspect of a dark, intelligent carnivore. Most of the regulars have seen it, many have themselves provided its focal point. The experience is said to leave one pleasantly breathless.

Though it may quiet down in the early morning hours, the Panther Club never closes. Its services are available around the clock, seven days a week, at reasonable rates. What the Club lacks in steep prices, it more than makes up in the volume of customers passing through its public and private portals.

Members of rival, even hostile groups within Sideshow can relax in the Club's surroundings. From the least member of these groups to their often unknown leaders, all are glad for the chance to unwind and share a friendly glass. It has happened that a few bottles of "Panther Pee"— a finely wrought house wine whose nickname is undeserved—has smoothed over tempers and resolved problems that might otherwise have called for drawn swords and large quantities of blood.

Subdued lighting in the main hall offers patrons all the privacy they require. A client who chances to recognize an inhuman face from depictions on wanted posters in the quarter, will understand the futility of seeking to summon the guard. Not only would the wanted guest be quickly gone, the complainant would be politely refused any further entry to the Club. And the wanted person in question might find some traditional manner in which to personally demonstrate his or her feelings about having his evening interrupted.

Outer cloaks and weapons are checked near the doors. For those who cannot control flaring tempers, enthusiastic "waiters" who are well-trained in the use of their stout cudgels will arrive to mediate an immediate cessation of hostilities—to the detriment of all participants.

History

Realizing the precarious positions of nonhumans in the human-dominated City, Krista Rose long ago approached the leaders of the various nonhuman societies extant with the concept of a place where even groups currently at odds with each other should be able to get together without fear of attack to sort out their grievances. Vastly outnumbered by the larger, more powerful human residents of the City, she argued, the best chance nonhumans had for survival, let alone expansion, was to cease their hostilities and direct their energies against the humans.

Sideshow solidified from this initial meeting, changing slowly from a slum for outcasts into a thriving community. Though unable to unite the various secret societies, the Ruffiri manage to prevent them from openly battling each other through the peaceful settlement of such differences before they escalate to combat.

While new to the exciting world of adventure gaming, JOHN MERKEL has been writing fantasy and science fiction since he learned which was the business end of a pencil. He has collected rejection letters from numerous publishers, with the featured item in his collection—a personal letter of rejection from the late Donald Wollheim.

Given the amount of creative input generated for this book by Michigan artists like SUSAN VAN CAMP and authors like John, we may have to scrounge up one of those "Made in Michigan" stickers for it. Sue's work can also be found on the cover of *Central Casting™ Heroes NOW!* from Task ForceGames (another fine production by Jaquays Design Studio).

Services

Currency Exchange. Just back from an adventure? Even before the weary traveler seeks a place to down a few drinks and find companionship, he/she needs a place to convert treasure and/or loot into negotiable currency. A visit to the office of Siberius Scrapeskin will give any nonhuman party as fair a deal on their merchandise as they're going to find outside the legal custom houses, minus the official City tax, of course. Siberius, the manager, can afford to be generous with his purchase prices, secure in the knowledge that more often than not, the weary group will also partake of the inn's many (and quite lucrative) services.

Hot baths, followed by a detailed combing in the client's room for furred races. Bath: 1 silver piece. Combing: 1 silver piece (includes parasite removal for fur-bearing species who may need to remove those uninvited "passengers" who have made a home in their hide.

Guided Escape. Someone hot on the party's or individual's heels? For a price, a knowledgeable Guide will lead the group in through the front door of the club and out miles away from the City, with bewildered pursuers still waiting for them to come out the front or rear entrance. For the right fee, Krista Rose can use her special magics to transport the escapee to one of the many secret exits hidden in the cellar of the club. Just be ready to vanish when the panther appears.

Board. The Club's menu features the tastiest dishes of many nonhuman races, exquisitely prepared by talented chefs. Bowl of stew: 1 copper piece, for the economic-minded. Biscuits and choice of available meat sufficient for the hearty appetite: 1 silver piece for those of average appetite.

Beverages. If it can't be had at The Panther Club, it can't be had. House ale by the mug or house wine by the glass: 1 copper piece. By the pitcher or the bottle, 1 silver piece. Champagne (to entertain the lovely dancers from the stage): 1 gold piece, which also includes the lady's companionship while she helps the customer drain the magnum.

Rooms. Custom designed for nonhuman and half-breed races, both with and without a bed companion. Room: 1 silver piece (which includes security). Companionship: House companions: 5 silver pieces. Special requests vary, beginning at 1 gold piece.

Private meeting rooms. These rooms assure the customers' privacy for that important meeting. Additional security is available, along with escort service via the Quarter's sewers. Meeting room: 1 gold piece, plus the cost of the meal. Security: Various, depending on the degree of security the client desires, ranging from 1 gold piece to 20 gold pieces. Escort service: 1 silver piece per Guide required.

Information. This commodity is bought and sold, over a friendly glass of the client's favorite beverage with Siberius, the club's jolly manager. Price varies according to the value of the information.

Entertainment. These are primarily exotic dancers, jugglers, and anything special the client would care to arrange in advance, is included in the price of meals and drinks, unless someone wants one or more of the entertainers to join them or their party at their table.

Personal Services. Boot polishing, laundry, weapon sharpening, armor repair, etc., are provided, all on as short a notice as the client can afford. Routine services (boot polishing, sword sharpening, etc.): 1 copper piece. Routine armor service, laundry, etc.: 1 silver piece. Major repair priced according to the extent of damage.

Procurement Services. For the right price, the club will secure that new pair of boots in the client's peculiar style, clothing, bed mate, or other specialized acquisition, for the cost of the product plus a small commission.

The Ruffiri

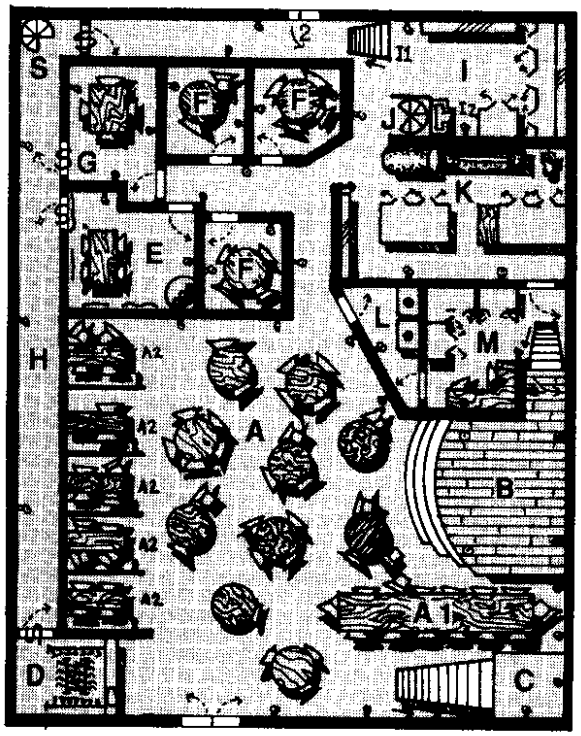
Every resident of and every traveler to the City has seen one of the Ruffiri at one time or another though they may not have known it. That watchful mongrel trotting obediently at the heel of a wealthy noble's pony or that odd, large cat who appeared in time to scare away a prowler. Both might have been secured by a visit to the Panther Club. The purchaser might even believe he was acquiring the services of an especially well-trained animal if he were not extremely familiar with the inner workings of The Exotics Quarter.

The Ruffiri are essentially a type of fairy race, particularly suited for life amongst the crowded streets of the City. They are a metamorph race. As they mature, grow and develop, they pass through distinct stages of development. Most have some kind of innate magical power. Like fairies, they are also immortal, they will never die of old age—though few enough survive the rigors of street life long enough to benefit from it.

First Stage: Kenalir or "Fourloper." These are your basic sprite/larva critters, much like dogs and cats. They appear as anything from small cat-like beings to apparent wolves with prominent canine fangs. Coloring ranges from a single color to tabby, calico and wild tortoise-shell. They are about as intelligent as a small child, depending on their age. They serve as eyes and ears for the third stage Ruffiri in addition to other functions they may have been assigned. Travelling on all fours gives them enough speed to keep them ahead of most foes, but their mortality rate is quite high. Most Kenalir mature into second levels after 10 years, but 90% perish at this stage.

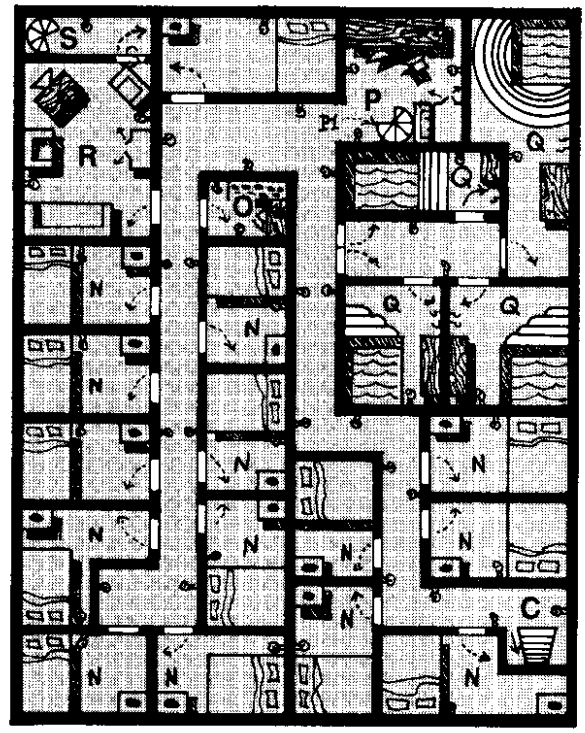
Second stage: Ruffir or "Halfling." One in 10 Ruffiri survive to develop beyond first stage. They appear as small hominids with animal-like features, prominent muzzles, and canine teeth. They rarely top four feet, females slightly less, with feline claws that can be extended over fingers and toes when aroused. They are more olfactory-oriented and faster than most halflings or humans. Their weapon of preference would invariably be claws or teeth, which they can bring into play faster than the average opponent could draw a weapon. Feylir intelligence would be at about the level of the caricature thug who moves his lips when reading elementary texts. Development beyond this level almost always requires the guidance of a third level. The brightest and most promising of the Ruffir are provided such guidance. The average life expectancy of a Ruffir is about another forty years. Occasionally, a determined Ruffir will succeed in bringing about his own transformation into a third stage Feylir Seeker.

Third Stage: Feylir or " Seeker." One in a hundred Ruffiri might reach this level. The primary change here is mental development. Very subtle physical changes. Only an extremely knowledgeable outsider could tell the difference, though it is readily apparent to the Ruffiri themselves. The Ruffiri limit the number of Feylir and control their development. For example, they generally have a Feylir develop as a fighter/leader to protect each of their "operations" in the City, while another would develop as a business manager. A few might be developed as

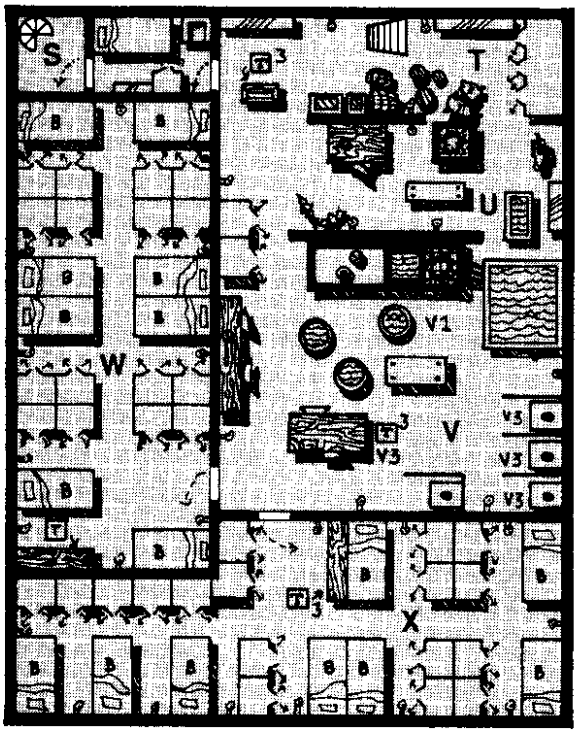


▲ First Floor

SCALE: one square = 1 1/2 feet



▲ Second Floor



▲ Cellar

thieves. Feylir intelligence equals that of very sharp humans. Feylir have a life expectancy of another seventy to ninety years. If they do not advance into fourth stage Hafir within that time their bodies tend to wear out.

Fourth Level: Hafir, "Masters." One in 100 Feylir might metamorphose to this stage, though never more than five or six at any one time, maximum in any community. Hafir faces become more human-like, but still feline or canine characteristics. However, the Hafir have the power to convince others to see them as a member of their own kind. To a human, they appear human, to an elf, they are elves, and so on. The immortal Hafir are typically masters of whatever craft was chosen for them at the Feylir stage. The Witch Krista Rose is one of the most noted and most powerful Hafir in the city.

Layout

The current Panther Club is not the original structure first built on the site (the Old Man particularly dislikes establishments that promote harmony and unity. He put several earlier structures to the torch. Krista Rose always rebuilt).

Ground Floor

A. The Main Hall. (31' x 39', irregular) The main hall accommodates large public parties as well as small private ones. All but the secluded dining rooms offer a splendid view of the wide variety of entertainment afforded on the main stage.

A1. Long table. Singles and couples not interested in privacy seek chairs here for the best view of the entertainment and communal singing. House ale is specially priced at three coppers the pitcher at this table only. On a busy night twice as many chairs may be found crowded around the table.

A2. Private booths. Reservations suggested. A small surcharge of one copper piece per person is added to the tab. Eight to 10 people may be squeezed into a booth, depending on their size and willingness to assume close quarters.

B. The Stage. (9' x 12') Jugglers, dancers, acrobats, singers and the like perform every evening for the entertainment of the clientele. The majority of the entertainers are scantily-clad young females of many races.

C. Public Stairway to Second Floor. (Landing 5' x 5')

D. Cloak Room. (10' x 6') Cloaks and weapons are left here under the watchful eyes of trained attendants who also control access to the secret passage behind the private booths and dining rooms.

the secret passage behind the private booths and dining rooms.

E. The Ruff (Elite Dining Room). (10' x 9') The finest craftsmen in Sideshow have lent their talents to providing sculpted woodwork, paintings, furniture and wall-hangings for this room, the showplace of the Club. Reserved for use by the elite of Sideshow only. Here meet the leaders of the special societies and, from time to time, the leaders of different groups, to iron out their differences. Siberius Scrapeskin is invariably on hand to see to the guests' comfort and service when this room is occupied. Traskit Fastclaw will visit briefly to discuss security requirements. Each guest will have their personal waitress. When tempers between powerful individuals are likely to flare, one may even find Krista Rose on hand to help avoid unpleasantness. Lesser organizations may be placed on a waiting list by request subject to cancellation on short notice should a special group require the room. The secret door provides a private entrance or emergency exit for anyone in the party requiring such.

If one has to ask what this room costs, one can't afford it.

F. Small Private Dining Rooms. (7' x 6') Reservations required. A halfling seeking to impress a client or a lady is assured of success after a private dinner in one of these tastefully decorated rooms. Siberius is available to lend his personal touch to the party's meal for a mere gold piece, chatting with the host as it they were old friends about subjects carefully prearranged when the reservation was made for an additional fee in proportion to the amount of his time desired. Traskit will make a brief visit for a silver piece and tell a small anecdote for a gold piece. These services must be arranged and paid for in advance. No coins would actually trade hands in a private dining room.

G. The Den (Large Private Dining Room). (7' x 9') Almost as exquisitely decorated as The Ruff, the expensive Den is available by reservation. Its reservation includes a brief visit by Siberius and/or Traskit (and possibly even Krista Rose herself), with other services available as indicated above. The secret door is often used for clandestine meetings in the room.

H. Secret Passage. (3' x 48') Individuals wishing to eavesdrop on a booth or dining room may make arrangements with Siberius, so long as the occupants have not arranged security against such intrusions. A guard insures that prying eyes peer only at what they've paid for. Coat check attendants handle passage arrangements under the watchful eye of Traskit Fastclaw.

I. Pantry. (14' x 9') Items needed to feed the evening's guests are stored here, readily available to the chef and staff.

I1. Basement Stairs. Stairway to basement. Staff only.

I2. Dumbwaiter. Raises meals and other things to provide for overnight guests.

J. Service Staircase. (3' x 3') Back stairway to second floor—for use by staff only.

K. Kitchen. (18' x 11') Staff only. The chef and his talented assistants prepare everything from meat and potatoes in great quantities for the masses to that special dwarven stew requested by Brumar the dwarf.

L. Privies. (7' x 10') Guests who can't make their way out back to relieve themselves discreetly may use this attended facility for one copper bit.

M. Entertainer's Dressing Room. (11' x 10') Several silvered mirrors line the walls here.

Second Floor

N. Private Rooms. (Various, ranging from 6-1/2' x 10' to 7' x 14') All rooms come with double beds and individual chamberpots. Food and drink is available at a price normally one copper bit per item higher than in the main hall. The server will also expect a tip.

O. Bootpolish Booth. (7' x 4') Dented armor, soiled garments and food requests delivered to the attendant here will be promptly taken care of and delivered to the room when the guest desires. Stopping by or sticking one's head out the door and shouting will bring quick service.

P. Room Service. (10' x 9') Food items delivered by dumbwaiter will be tastefully arranged here prior to delivery to the room.

P1. Stair from Kitchen. Staff only, except by prior arrangement. Rear exit/entrance from the Club is available for two copper pieces for guests who desire to avoid the main hall for whatever reason.

Q. Hot Tubs. (Various, from 6' x 12' to 7 x 20') Reservations suggested. Water is pumped to this level through the clever inventions of Brumar the Dwarf.

R. Siberius' Office. (10-1/2' x 14') Siberius is always available to make special arrangements for Sideshow's elite, or to convert some special item into coin of the realm. Comfortable seats and a private drink for clients helps establish a congenial bargaining atmosphere. The indefatigable manager catches catnaps is the adjacent bedroom when conditions permit.

S. Secret Staircase to First Floor and Cellar. (3' x 10-1/2') This is one of the means by which the manager appears to be many places at the same time. Rarely, one or more senior armed guards may be obliged to use their crossbows to deal with guests demented enough to believe they can rob the Club. The remains of such receive a complimentary one-way trip to the City's sewers.

Cellar

T. Storage Area. (7' x 27') Non-perishable supplies for the Kitchen are stored here, insuring a week's supply of food and drink in the event of delivery difficulties.

T1. Trap door. Most arriving guests will arrive through the trap located at the top of the back stairs.

U. Smithy. (8' x 21') Nicked weapons and dented armor are skillfully repaired while the adventurer dines or sleeps above. A small selection of emergency replacements is available.

V. Boiler Room. (22' x 27') Brumar the dwarf (cf. *Brumar's Workshop*) earned the Ruffiri's respect and friendship by designing the boiler and plumbing which provide hot water to the Kitchen (**K**) and Hot Baths (**Q**).

V1. Laundry. Energetic Ruffir see to guests' laundry here, utilizing the heat from the boiler to dry damp garments swiftly and thoroughly.

V2. Trap door. A slightly less popular locked[3] entrance to the sewers.

V3. Staff Privies.

W. Staff Quarters - Male. (15' x 37') Beds and lockers[2] are provided for male staff working long shifts in the Club. There is a locked[3] entrance to the sewers beneath a table here.

X. Staff Quarters - Female. (9'-15' x 42') Beds and lockers[2] are provided for female staff working long shifts in the Club. There is a locked[3] entrance to the sewers beneath a table here.



— Siberius Scrapeskin —

Y. Tailor. (16' x 6') Damaged garments expertly mended after the laundresses have cleaned them.

Z. Krista Rose's room. (9' x 6') A small getaway for the leader of the Club's Ruffiri, this room is one of the many nooks she uses around the City and elsewhere.

Personalities

The Witch, Krista Rose. ❑ *Fourth stage Hafir Ruffiri Female. Ht.: 4'2"; Wt.: 100#, Age: appears 30, Actually 300+.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Negligible, but she has any number of Ruffir and Feylir bodyguards close at hand.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Very Good C4, C5, C8: Fair to Good in the rest.*

Krista seems to be an attractive, adult female of the same race as whomever sees her. Few have seen her real guise as stocky, well-endowed, gray-furred woman with a face that reminds one of a young black panther, but with fox-like ears. Krista is the brains behind the local Ruffiri as well as a primary power within the Exotics Quarter. She personally chooses the likeliest third stage Feylir Ruffiri to serve as manager of the Club and helps the selectee develop by intensive training and a few magic spells. She has established wards to protect the Club from magical attack (or physical attack, i.e., the Old Man) or hostile forces seeking to learn secrets the Ruffiri would prefer to keep to themselves. A very powerful witch, she changes her own name and identity every few years to prevent anyone from suspecting her role. Her specialty is a teleportation spell that whisks one to several clients from anywhere in the Club to that sewer exit most propitious for their speedy arrival at their next destination.

She is also the spectral panther apparition which visits the club. The "apparition's" appearance is a signal for clients awaiting a special exit to gather up their possessions and make ready, although this is known only to clients who have availed themself of this special service. All of the other patrons—and much of the staff—consider her a ghost.

Siberius Scrapeskin. ❑ *Third stage Feylir Ruffiri male; Ht.: 4'; Wt.: 150#; Age: 50.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Fair with edged weapons, Good with his claws, which he's much more likely to use before an opponent can get a weapon out.*

Siberius looks rather like an overfed cocker spaniel might if he had sharp, catlike ears.

The Master of Ceremonies and manager of the Club is the individual most residents of Sideshow envision when they think about Ruffiri. His high profile and numerous appearances serve to deflect attention from the fact that few other Ruffiri are ever seen outside the Club. When he is out visiting other establishments in the City or the Exotics Quarter, the corpulent Siberius is most often seen wearing green hooded robes, accompanied by half a dozen lesser associates/bodyguards. Under their robes, it's hard to tell. Unlike most Ruffiri, the chubby High Priest actually enjoys the combinations of smells brought to his chambers by those seeking information. The compleat diplomat, he is the Ruffiri most visitors will talk with in the Inn, personally negotiating the exchange of captured treasures for gold and silver coins.

Siberius is often to be found exchanging ribald stories with large groups in the main hall, leading sing-alongs and downing beer or wine with the champion drinkers. He is also popular as a mediator in the private dining rooms, helping both sides in a dispute find some third perspective palatable to everyone involved. The conclusion of such meetings often involve large quantities of drink and several pretty ladies celebrating the good sense of both parties.

Traskit Fastclaw. ❑ *Third stage Ruffiri Feylir male. Ht.: 4' 1"; Wt.: 180#; Age: 47.* ❑ *Fighting prowess: Very good with blunt and edged weapons; Legendary with claws and teeth.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Good C5. Fair C3.*

Traskit's fur is dark, mottled gray and he resembles a cross between a black panther and a wolf. The commander of The Panther Club's security forces is one of the few Ruffiri with a reputation outside the Club. Even if the club were not a declared neutral zone, Traskit's well-deserved reputation as a warrior would suffice to maintain the peace. Backed by a cadre of second stage Ruffir guards, the situation has yet to arise that he has not been able to handle swiftly and silently, frequently without alarming the guests.

Traskit is literally a self-made Feylir. Not "selected" to be developed into a third stage by his superiors, he left the City for a time, returning in his advanced state with a reputation the local Ruffiri couldn't ignore. Any suspicions about his loyalties among the Ruffiri were laid aside when Krista appointed him her chief of security.

Laresha. ❑ *Second stage Ruffiri Ruffir female. Ht.: 3'6"; Wt.: 90#; Age: 22.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Fair with teeth and claws,*

though more likely to appeal to the most convenient guard in situations where such are needed. ❑ *Magic Ability: Fair C3, C5.*

Laresha, with her calico coat and feline face to match is charming coatcheck lass who makes a hearty warrior feel that it is an honor to be charged with the task of protecting the garment of such an august personage. Her motions in carefully arranging a cloak on a hanger or hook is sure to capture the visitor's eye. While purring out a greeting certain to ensure any male's frequent return, she is subtly probing them for hidden weapons, messages, poison vials, etc. Her mastery of Communications Magic is limited to summoning the handiest bouncer without blinking an eye when she detects anything—such as malevolent charms—banned from admission to the Club.

Shriftor. ❑ *Second stage Ruffiri Ruffir male. Ht.: 3' 4". Wt.: 70#. Age: 30.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Poor with teeth and claws; non-existent with weapons.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Very Good C3, C5.*

To the clients, mousey gray Shriftor appears to spend most of his time at the bootpolish booth on the second floor, tending their leather, running errands and assisting the maids. He seems to always know where any other member of a guest's party might be found on short notice.

The apparent shoeshine boy is really one of the foremost Ruffiri in the art of mental telepathy, serving as concierge to guests enjoying the second floor of the Club's hospitality. His speed in running errands comes from being able to communicate with any Ruffiri in the vicinity of a desired object and meet them upon their return with whatever the client desired.

Frissa. ❑ *First stage Ruffiri Kenalir female. Ht.: 2' 1"; Wt.: 45#; Age: 6* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Good with teeth and claws.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Poor, C3.*

Frissa is one of half a dozen First Level Ruffiri who serve in the ranks of the City Guard's canine corps. When not being used for such duties as crowd control and tracking felons, she serves as the companion of a senior Guard officer. Having the run of the City Guard headquarters and other buildings enables her to keep Krista apprised of any plan the Guard might be making that involve the occupants of the Quarter.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: The Pursuers. The party is hired to catch an elusive creature who always manages to elude his pursuers by ducking into The Panther Club and out through any of the various sewer entrances. To complete their mission, they will need to set up in the club—before the quarry arrives. This will involve one or more of the adventurers making friends with some of the Ruffiri, most certainly including Siberius Scrapeskin, and persuading them to help with their assignment.

Scenario 2: Face the Challenge. Set up a situation in which one of the adventurers kills or maims one of the Kenalir Ruffiri, whether on purpose or accidentally (it looked just like a cat or dog). Days later, a dark-furred Feylir Ruffiri male interposes himself in front of the slayer. With lightning-like moves, he slaps the adventurer in the face (drawing blood) and challenges him or her to a ritual duel for killing one of his children, on stage, at the Club. Be there or die from a death unseen, the panther-like Ruffiri snarls. Of course, the Kenalir Ruffiri's death was set up by the Old Man of the City, who approaches the adventurers and offers to "help" them against this legendary fighter (he offers magics that temporarily improve a fighter's speed and skill). All the adventurers need to do is pick up a box of metal jars from a dwarven fellow named Brumar (actually dwarven explosives, but he NEVER says or implies that), and get them inside the Club. If they can get the bombs in, then when the fight starts, they find that they have been duped by the Old Man. The explosions may be the only thing that saves the adventurer duelist.

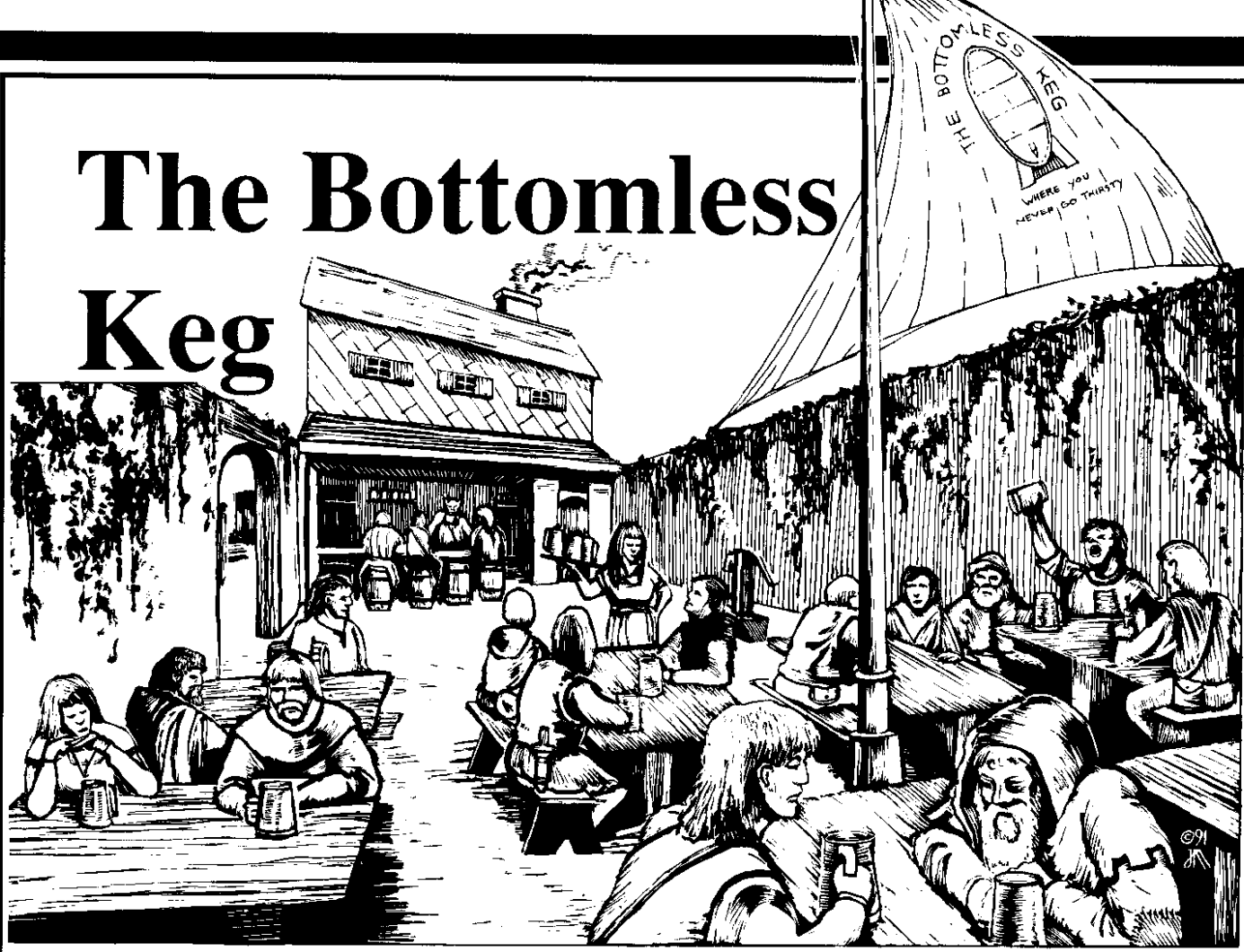
Scenario 3: The Rival of Krista Rose. There are more Ruffiri in the City than those running The Club. One of these other Hafir Ruffiri wants to supplant Krista Rose and hires the adventurers to assist him/her in this endeavor. This could involve a major, costly assault on the Club or, more likely, the party discovering the evil intentions of the would-be employer and shifting sides to warn the Witch of what's coming.

Admittedly, the Panther Club focuses on service to nonhumans. Yet even human adventurers can partake of the services of the Panther Club as a place for them to meet with the mysterious and powerful figures of Sideshow on more or less neutral ground.



— Traskit Fastclaw —

The Bottomless Keg



On the outskirts of the Exotics Quarter there is a place where people of all ages, races, and religions can gather to quench their thirst and satisfy their hunger. The stories you have heard are true—the beer never runs out and the dwarvish-elvish cuisine is delicious. The Bottomless Keg is known far and wide as a friendly, safe place where people can relax and share good times in a wonderful setting. Just look for the outdoor beer garden with the ship's mast in the center—with the Bottomless Keg, you'll never go thirsty!

The Bottomless Keg is found in an area of the City sheltered from the elements, and consists of a main building with outdoor seating in the adjoining beer garden. Crube Collie, the dwarven proprietor, his elven wife Thessi, and their two twin *dwelf* sons Ronno and Gregin live in the restaurant. The building also serves as kitchen, warehouse, and privy area for the tavern. Tables fill the garden area, which is surrounded by a fifteen-foot-tall wood fence covered with aromatic flowers and dense vines. In the middle of the garden is a forty-foot-tall ship's mast which is topped with an intricate carving of a member of the dog family. Attached to the mast are three large sails, each of which can be dropped and spread out to cover the garden, providing shade on hot days and shelter for rainy ones. In the winter and on truly cold, nasty days, the restaurant is open, but replaces the usual fare with piping hot drinks and spicy, hot cuisine.

The sails all have the design of a keg, along with the words "The Bottomless Keg—Where You'll Never Go Thirsty." In addition to the troll Tandrean Kenne, the crew supervisor and bartender, two other waitresses and one cook are employed.

Business Hours

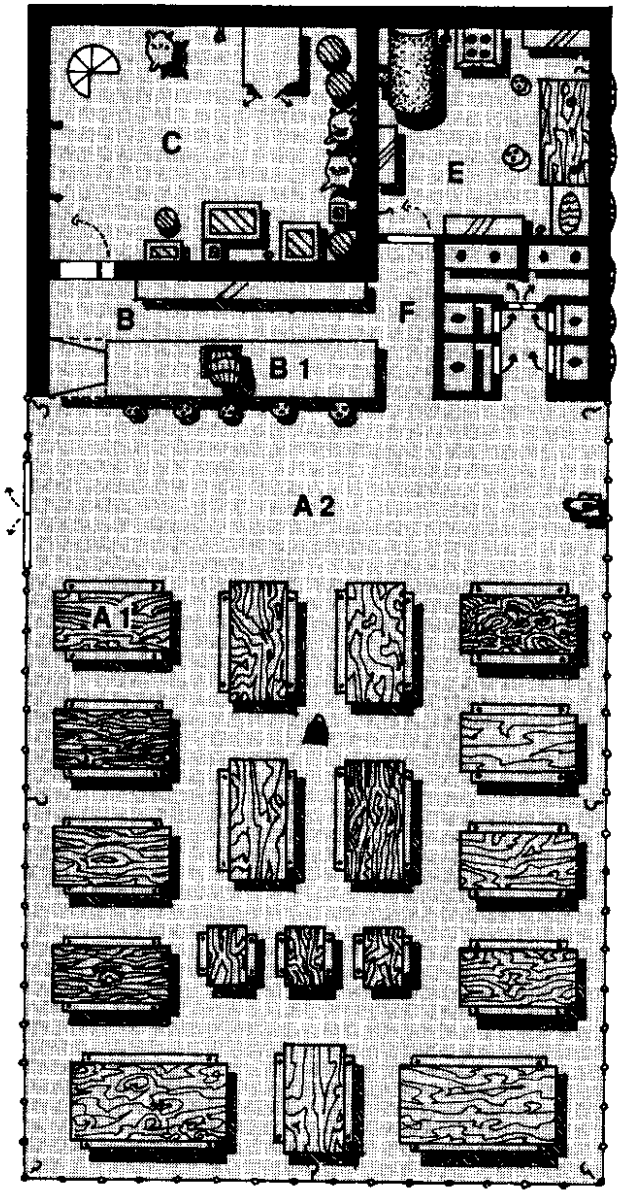
The establishment is open six days a week, from 10 in the morning to sundown.

A Keg With No Bottom

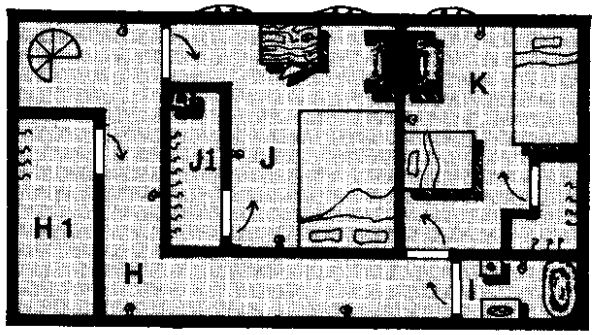
The Bottomless Keg is named after the foot-tall keg from which most of the beer is served. Small and portable, it can be carried around the garden to fill the goblets of thirsty customers with tasty brew. The keg never fails to amaze the patrons—when there's a capacity crowd, even those in their cups realize that more beer has been poured than could possibly be held in that small keg. The keg is unmistakably magical, but when asked about this particular item, Crube just says in a good-natured voice "I don't know how it's done. I'm just a simple dwarf..."

A long-time fan of the CityBooks, author KEVIN CROSSMAN was thrilled to take time out from his questing after a Master's Degree in Library Science and make an appearance here in this CityBook. Kevin puts out a gaming fanzine called IMPROV. He also extends his thanks to Greg Becker for the gaming convention scenario that became the inspiration for *The Bottomless Keg*.

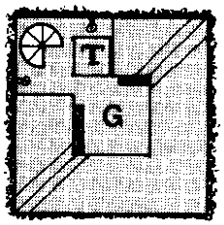
JEFF MENGES has illustrated for the likes of TSR, West End Games, I.C.E., Lion Rampant, DUNGEON®, DRAGON®, and WHITE WOLF magazines. When not drawing game art, he and his wife Lynne sell prints and originals as SKAIRCROW GRAPHICS. Jeff also thought it to be an amusing side note for the *Bottomless Keg* that he brews his own beer as a hobby.



MAIN BUILDING AND BEER GARDEN



SECOND FLOOR



CELLAR

SCALE: one square = 1 foot

A Varied Menu

In addition to the finest beer in the City (so they claim!), the Bottomless Keg serves rare imported ales and lagers, spring water, tea, and a small selection of white wines. In keeping with the Collies' mixed marriage, the Bottomless Keg also offers a mixed menu of dwarven and elven delicacies—including Crube's dwarven special, giant mushrooms, a foot wide and served scalloped, stuffed with sausage, or marinated in wine vinegar and imported spices. Thessi's elven delicacies include roasted brickle nuts served as appetizers on all tables as well as in delicious cranberry-brickle nut bread loaves. Her dessert menu includes the sweet-tasting and tender bark of the roti tree.

And Don't Forget Those Low Prices!

In keeping with the family atmosphere, all prices at the Bottomless Keg are quite modest, and certainly low when considering the high quality of the food and drink.

Regular Customers

A number of Sideshow residents eat and relax here regularly. Among them are Josef the werebear (co-leader of the Sliming Path), Shen ti Q'orinn of Hilkin's Specialities & Esoterica and even Abet Noir, leader of the Pack.

Layout

The Beer Garden

A. The Beer Garden (30' x 40') There are 18 tables with benches in the beer garden—two of these are much larger and three much smaller. The table marked **A1** is the Collie family table, where Crube can be found during hours of operation. This is an excellent spot for Crube to welcome customers or to make sure they have paid before leaving. **A2** is an open area where people tend to stand and mingle. A water pump is located at the eastern end of this area for a free drink washing up. The fox carving on the mast faces north, keeping a watchful eye on the main building. Three hooks atop of the 15-foot-tall wooden fence serve as tie-downs for the sails that provide shade and shelter on rainy or hot days.

Main Building

This building is well maintained and constructed of sturdy stone. Except for the stone warehouse, all interior walls are made of wood and the southern outer wall on the second floor are built of wood.

B. Bar Area (18' x 6') Tandrean Kenne, the troll barman usually mans this area, although Crube will also pour the occasional drink. The Bottomless Keg is usually kept on display in the middle of the bar at **B1**. Secured only by shutters, the bar supplies are taken into the warehouse by Tandrean at night. Five stools provide seating here and the western-most section of the bar folds up to allow passage. The cash box (normally under the bar) is stored in Crube's desk (**J**) during off hours.

C. Warehouse (16' x 12') Beer and other supplies are stored here and are delivered from *Doc and Sardin's Warehouse* (**CB2**) every other week on the day when the tavern is closed. The iron door locks[5] at night. The spiral stair leads down to the cellar (**G**).

D. Privies (8' x 8') Six private privies, which range in size, are provided. They drain through ceramic conduit into the sewers (**CB3**). Windows on the east wall help with ventilation.

E. Kitchen (11' x 12') A pleasant aroma always fills the kitchen, which has an oven, preparation table, sink, tall shelves, meat hooks, and a small stove. Thessi can usually be found here. The oven here and the hearth in room **K** share the same chimney structure, but do not connect. The door locks[4] at night.

F. Hallway (3' x 8') Open and doorless during business hours, shutters cover it when the tavern closes.

G. Cellar (10' x 10') The spiral staircase in the warehouse leads to the musty, dank cellar, where Crube's special dwarven mushrooms grow. Three shelves of soil, spaced two feet apart, hold the mushrooms. These special mushrooms are unknown in this part of the world, since they were brought here by Crube from his distant homeland. Candles near the stair provide light when needed. A small secret trap door (**G1**) known only to Crube, Thessi and Tandrean leads to the sewers. Normally used as a garbage disposal, it can serve as an escape route during an emergency.

H. Hallway (22' x 14') The large closet (**H1**) overflows with Collie family possessions.

I. Family Bathroom (6' x 3') This small bathroom contains a small tub, a sink, and a privy. Water and waste drains through ceramic conduits into the Sewers (**CB3**).

J. Master Bedroom (12' x 12') This is Crube and Thessi's bedroom. Included in the room are a hearth, large bed, desk (locks[3]) and lamp, and a closet. The closet hides a small magically locked[6] strong box (**J1**) which contains Crube's magical paraphernalia.

K. Bedroom (9' x 11') This is Ronno and Gregin's bedroom with its elf and dwarf-sized beds, generous closet space, two lamps, and a small play area near the hearth.

Personalities

Crube Collie (Alias Crucible the Fox). ❑ *Dwarf male. Ht.: 4' 1", Wt.: 160#, Age: 102 (appears middle aged).* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Fair with Staff, Poor otherwise.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Excellent C1, C2, C4, C6, C7, Otherwise Fair.*

Common Knowledge/Legend

Though he lives and works in the Sideshow district, Crube has become a leading merchant in the City. He arrived 25 years ago aboard a small ship with unfamiliar markings. He was obviously wealthy, as he was immediately able to buy a parcel of land in the nonhuman district and start building the Bottomless Keg.

Crube is slender for a dwarf and keeps his face clean shaven. His black hair has recently begun graying at the temples. Generally slow moving and often found seated when at the Bottomless



— Crube Collie —

Keg, Crube is quick to smile and laugh heartily with patrons, guests, and family.

Through the years, the Bottomless Keg has prospered very well, as it attracts people of all types and persuasions. Smilin' Al (*Smilin' Al's Sideshow Tours*) often brings by his tour groups here and Crube often joins interested parties in song or conversation. To his distaste, Crube pays a small amount to the Pack to keep things from getting "messy" in the establishment. In Rankem, he would never have tolerated such insolence. However, Tandrean has bounced more than one of the Chervka out of the beer garden, after paying them first of course. He is well liked by his employees, since he treats them fair and pays them well.

He claims not to know how the magical keg works, saying that he found it on a shipwreck in his homeland. If pressed, Crube will admit that he is from the city of Rankem—over a year's journey distant from the City. He will usually deflect such inquiries by saying "but enough about my past... It is the present, and presently it looks like your glass needs refilling..."

The Truth

Crube Collie is better known in his own distant land as Crucible the Fox, a ruthless and powerfully cunning sorcerer who led the dwarves of Rankem into war against the elves of that city. Trained since birth to be a wizard, Crucible was falsely told by other sorcerers that his parents were slaughtered by elves. His hatred of the elves grew over the years and culminated in the vicious Rankem War. The nickname "Fox" came during the first battle, when he magically incinerated the elves' religious leader

in his own palace, gaining entry under the pretense of treaty negotiations. The resulting hate war lasted 30 years before Crucible learned a soul-shaking truth.

Young Crucible possessed more innate magical power than had ever been seen in any Rankem dwarf. Separated from his family by the rigors of cloistered magical study, the young dwarf was unaware that his own teachers had lied to him. They lied to him and wielded him like a hammer of seething hate.

The truth, that his parents died, not tortured by vicious, scheming, lying elven scum; but crushed in the collapse of refugee tenement five years into the war, sobered him with guilt so strong that even a quarter-century later, he can no longer use magic without dealing with self-anger, anger at dwarven society and often, deep depression.

Crucible changed. He took a small crew of loyal followers on his own private ship and sailed off to freedom in the City. The mast from this ship is the same mast used in the garden of the Bottomless Keg. He adopted the surname Collie because he felt they were among the friendliest of dogs, and because the fox carving on the mast resembled the dog.

Crube first encountered his wife Thessi when she was just reaching maturity. Two weeks into his journey from Rankem, his crew spotted a small elven ship adrift. Crube boarded in hopes of healing any injured elves, but he was too late; the entire crew had been slaughtered, except for the young woman who had hidden under the bodies of the dead. Though she was badly dehydrated and suffering from malnutrition, Crube nursed her back to health, and in so doing, fell in love with the young elf. Though she knew him to be the destroyer of her own people, Thessi returned his love, and the ship's captain married them during their voyage to the City.

Crube's magical keg works because he has cast a spell that teleports beer from the barrels in the warehouse to the small keg. A concealment spell to masks the teleportation spell from other wizards. On busy days, keeping these magics active drains a great deal out of the dwarf.

The Pack, in particular, Abet Noir, present a special concern to him. Somehow, the leader of the Pack has learned just enough about the dwarf's past to be dangerous to him. The rat lady (don't say that to her face and expect to live) has also developed a dangerous attraction to the dwarf, showing up at the tavern and flirting brazenly with him in front of his wife and customers. It may not be long before she demands he return her affections.

Crucible's guilt about his past motivates him to do good in his new life. The Fox personality lies buried deep within Crube, and would only come out under dire circumstances—such as threats to his family or close friends.

Thessi Collie. ❑ *Elf female, Ht.: 6' 3", Wt.: 140#, Age: 65 (young for an elf)* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Average with knives or thrown dishes, Poor otherwise.*

Thessi is strong and thin with brown hair and green eyes and typical elven features.

She grew up in the sheltered environment of an elven forest village near Rankem. When the battle fronts of the Rankem War neared her home, the elves tried to flee by sailing to more hospitable lands. Her boat was attacked by dwarven troops.



— Tandrean Kenne —

Thessi alone survived. Naturally afraid of her dwarven rescuer, Thessi was soon impressed with Crube's gentle nature as he was nursed her back to health. She soon grew to love him.

A kind and open-minded elf, Thessi has forgiven her husband for his past. She enjoys being a mother, and is proud of her intelligent and friendly "twin" sons.

She supervises the 'Keg's food preparation and selection. A very good cook herself, she is always open to menu suggestions from patrons and the staff.

Thessi helps out other women in the community when she can, but often gets upset by people (elves, dwarves and others) who take offense at her mixed marriage. When Crube grows angry at these people, Thessi comforts and reminds him that their love is stronger than the ignorance of a few. A strong-willed woman when she needs to be, Thessi will defend her family with conviction and volition seldom seen by elven women.

Ronno Collie. ❑ *Dwelf male Ht.: 4' 7", Wt.: 80#, Age: 25 (adolescent for a dwelf).* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* ❑ *Magic Ability: Poor C4, C7 otherwise none as yet.*

Brown-haired Ronno takes after after his mother in terms of appearance, but he shows signs of taking after his father in terms of magical ability. With his elf-like build, he fits in well with human children, although he prefers the company of other dwelves or elves. In addition to some of his father's compact brawn, Ronno has begun to discover latent magical abilities. With training, he could develop into an excellent magician.

Ronno has recently begun fancying himself to be a ladies' man. He often strikes up conversations with young women who patronize the 'Keg. Ronno could easily develop a crush on a female adventurer.

Gregin Collie. ❑ *Dwelf male Ht.: 3'1", Wt.: 65#, Age: 25 (adolescent for a dwelf).* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Average with Bare Hands, Poor otherwise.*

Gregin is a curious and mischievous black-haired child who has just begun to see whiskers growing from his chin. Although he looks more like his father than his mother, Gregin has shown no signs of developing any magic abilities. He does have a large interest in weaponry, and has recently struck up a friendship with the secretive dwarven craftsman Brumar (*Brumar's Shop*). Gregin often brings the dwarven cuisine Brumar craves, in return for learning more about Brumar's "toys."

Gregin uses his generous allowance to purchase odd items from *Hilkin's Specialties & Esoterica* and often entertains Shen ti Q'orinn when she comes to dine on Thessi's elvish cuisine (when Ronno isn't mooning over her). With disciplined training, Gregin could become an excellent fighter.

Tandrean Kenne. ❑ *Troll male Ht.: 8'4", Wt.: 410 lbs, Age: 44.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Fair with Bare Hands, Average otherwise.*

A hairless, dark-skinned and muscular troll, Tandrean is friendly and jovial. Usually dressed in human-like clothes, Tandrean has integrated well into human society, despite a few frightened faces. As the crew supervisor, he oversees the other waiters, deals with the rare unruly patron, and tends bar.

Tandrean came to the City 10 years ago as a part of the funerary honor guard for the deceased troll chieftain, Blugluk the Blasphemous (see *Nadorix's Necropolis*). He watched the grave for a few dismal weeks, then disappeared into the City, leaving his comrades and oppressive troll society behind. His name is a pronounceable variation on his troll monicker, which translates to "Eater of Butterflies," a particularly demeaning trollish slur.

He abhors physical violence and uses skillful intimidation to keep the peace. He is also concerned about fair treatment for all beings. As such he works part time on the behalf of the Sliming Path's occasional humanitarian projects. Josef, the werebear who co-leads the path is Tandrean's closest friend outside the Collie family. He and Crube try to shelter the rest of the Crube family from contact with the Pack.

Aside from Thessi, Tandrean is the only other person who knows how themagical keg really works. Grateful to the Collies for their hospitality and employment, Tandrean considers himself part of the family and is unswervingly loyal. Tandrean rents a room at the *Panther Club* and loves the cuisine at the *Silver Pelt*. He currently seeks a wife interested in starting a family.

Tavern Workers

The servers hired at the Bottomless Keg are chosen for their friendliness, cleanliness and ability to work hard. Servers are modestly paid, but do make good tip money.

The tavern cook is hired for his or her ability to work with the varied menu and ability to get along with Thessi. Like the servers, the cook is paid modestly, but does get to dine freely after the tavern closes.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Rankem's Most Wanted. Elven warriors from Rankem have traced Crube to the City, vowing revenge. They recognize the fox on the mast but do not recognize Crube...yet. At the same time, some of Crucible's followers have arrived looking for the "traitor" and his followers. Crube is worried about his cover being blown, and does not want to draw attention to himself or those of his followers who still reside in the City. He could possibly hire the adventurers to act as body guards, or as guides to lead the groups away from the City. He might want the characters to just "eliminate" those looking for him.

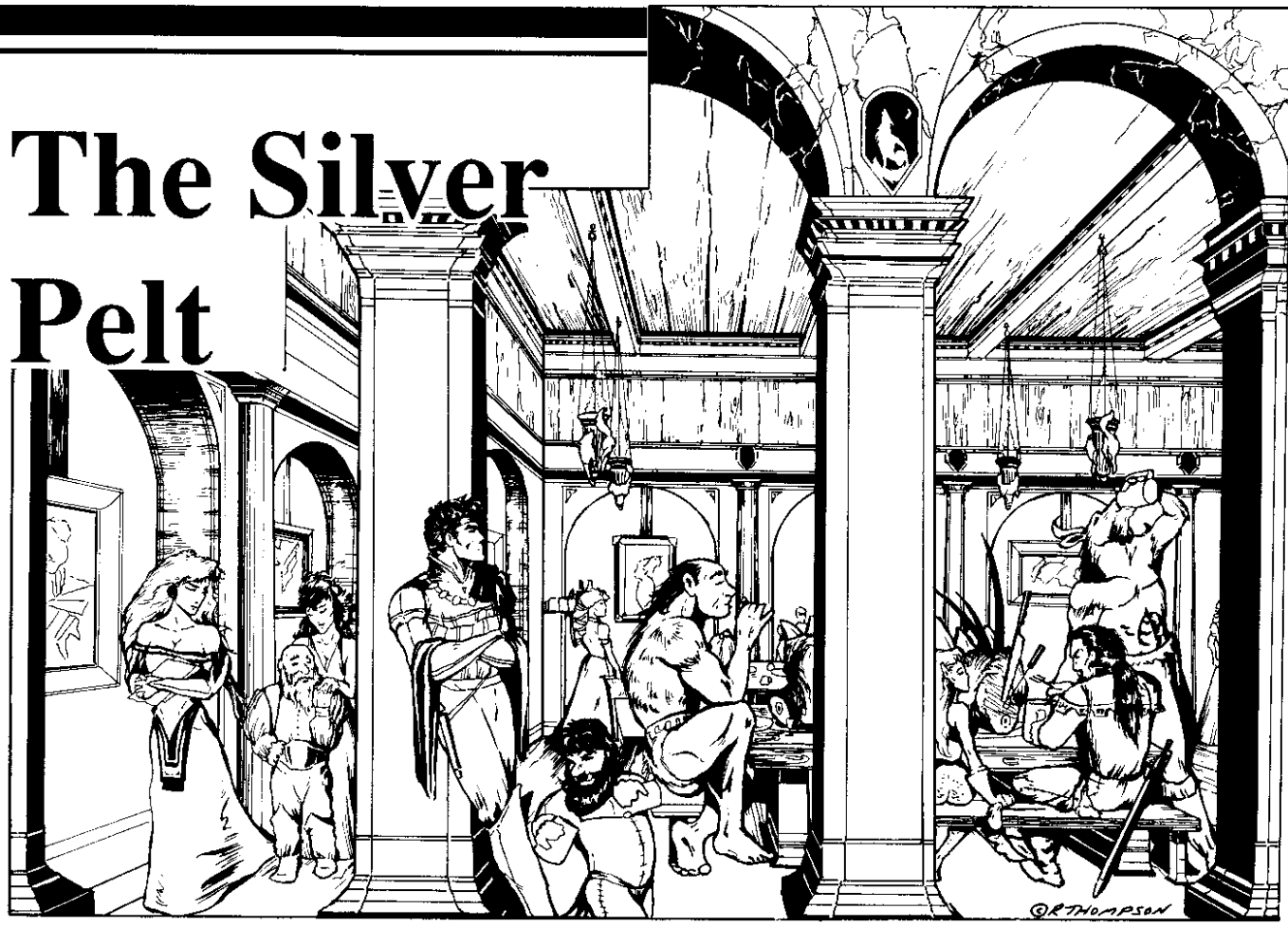
Scenario 2: Waiter, There's a Troll Near My Drink! Dungeon delvers, with blood lust still fresh in their mind, attack the monstrous Tandrean. The adventurers could be the delvers in question, or they might be regular customers at the 'Keg who find themselves in the middle of the fight and try to protect their friendly neighborhood troll. It is likely that the Sliming Path would become involved, mistaking the adventurers for the trouble-causers (whether true or not!).

Scenario 3: Sewer Hide and Seek. Gregin finds the passage to the *Sewers* (**CB3**) and does not return home. To keep Thessi from worrying, they hire the adventurers to find the boy. Meanwhile, Gregin has discovered that several businesses have access-ways to the sewers and has become trapped inside one of them, possibly discovering some secrets that outsiders were not meant to know (this might be a good lead in to an encounter with the *Pack* or the equally bad Enthade merfolk of *The Blue Maid*).

Scenario 4. Streets Afire. Amidst a sweltering hot summer, the dark secret of Crube's past and marriage becomes public (thanks to Abet Noir making good on a threat). Dwarves and elves alike (who have never even heard of Rankem) take sides and demand justice, vengeance or both. It looks like rioting may break out in the streets of Sideshow. Unable to show his face, Crube prepares his rusty magics for the worst. Thessi and the boys escape through the sewers (but unknown to Crube, they have been captured by the Pack and held within its headquarters). Tandrean Kenne hires the adventurers to aid in the tavern's defense, to negotiate for the aid of the power groups and eventually, to rescue the captive Collie family, and possibly to single-handedly put down a mass uprising of hate-crazed dwarves and elves.

This isn't your typical adventurers' dive. In this family-style tavern, one is likely to meet anyone and everyone. People come here to meet people, not turn their brains to alcoholic mush—when was the last time an adventurer found a tavern where she could take her mother to lunch without a brawl breaking out? The Bottomless Keg's outdoor "beer garden" atmosphere provides a refreshing "al fresco" alternative to starting or ending an adventure in the traditional indoor tavern.

The Silver Pelt



There are many in Sideshow who cannot tolerate the human penchant for eating vegetable matter. The Silver Pelt caters exclusively to those who prefer their food to have been formerly ambulatory.

"If it screams, we serve it..."

Raoul Silver, founder.

History

Some 52 years ago, Raoul Silver, a chubby young fellow, new in town, lost himself in the back streets of the City. Raoul had come to the City to make his fortune in the world. The third son of a master silversmith, he grew up with more of a knack in the kitchen than with a jeweler's loupe. Unable to compete with his elder brothers in the family business, Raoul "borrowed" several pouches of silver metal from his eldest brother, intending to open his own place of business, one that would allow him to pursue the culinary arts.

As luck would have it, that night he was savaged by a lone werewolf, sick and further maddened by a lack of nutrition for the previous several days. The wolf attacked even though Raoul reeked of deadly silver. Thinking quickly, the young man jammed a silver ingot into the monster's eye—forcing it further and further, causing it to die horribly and revert to human form.

Raoul recognized the danger in the gaping wounds inflicted by the claws and jaws of the beast, but the local hospitalry was unable (or possibly unwilling) to carry out the necessary incantations to relieve his curse. Soon thereafter, Raoul divested himself of all things silver and developed a taste for "exotic" meats and moonlight strolls. He purchased the site of The Silver Pelt, just off the main thoroughfare through Sideshow, and converted it to his use.

Realizing that getting and keeping good help is always a problem for restaurants, Raoul proceeded to recruit his staff in a most unusual fashion. Anyone skilled in cooking, butchery, or waiting table who struck his fancy (and usually female) would find themselves faced one night with a raving werewolf. If they survived, they would soon be found taking a post at The Silver Pelt, the only place that would have them.

Since then, there have been two other "owners" of The Silver Pelt (folks in the City don't seem too interested in the internal affairs of the wolf pack, and so the names of the alpha females are not generally known). Yakoob was the first after causing Raoul's demise, and he was the collector of the various art objects on display. Eric is the latest, having won the post of alpha male only a few months ago from Yakoob. He is still getting settled into the position.

Bill Paley's career as a game author began back in the protozoic era of gaming (as did this editor's), writing material for the ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS APAzine and for Judges Guild's products and magazines. I have fond memories of my first Gen Con, exploring his dungeon while sitting in the hallway of the Lake Geneva Playboy Club some 14 years ago).

Illustrator Ruth Thompson's career as a fantasy artist began when her sister pushed her into entering the art show of the inaugural *Continuity* convention in 1988. Of the eight pencil sketches that she entered, five went home with happy buyers. Since then, she has displayed her art in over 80 shows, selling all works on display in half of them. Fine reproductions of her work are available through *Tarnished Images*, P.O. Box 4455, Univ. of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL 35486.

Services

The sign outside the sturdy, ornately carved oaken door simple states:

> **The Silver Pelt**
> Serving fine meats, domestic and game
> to discerning carnivores

As is clear to any discerning carnivore in the vicinity whose olfactory sense is intact, The Silver Pelt serves various meats and meat products, including such delicate dishes as raw beef, pork sausage, grouse pie, or elf au jus. A *real* carnivore doesn't require the slate board which stands at the entrance with the day's "catch" listed on it. They can choose what meat they want just by standing downwind and taking a deep breath. Prices vary based on three key factors. First, how hard was it to catch? This includes how much trouble it is to hide the hunt and the quarry from the City guard. Second, how much work goes into serving it? A live rabbit takes little preparation, but a lamb sausage with dressing and gravy takes quite a bit more. Thirdly, how much does the customer want? The larger the platter, the higher the price.

Examples:

Raw beefsteak, 1 gold piece
Cooked beefsteak, 2 gold pieces
Pigeon pie, 4 gold pieces
Whole roast lamb, 10 gold pieces
Minotaur head soup, 50 gold pieces

The cost for meat from any sentient being is a minimum of 50 gold pieces, and such a dish would only be for sale to those persons well-known to the management. Sentient fare is never listed on the slate, but the canny carnivore can find out what's up by asking to speak to Eric Silver. For any person not well-known, or not vouched-for by a regular customer, the minimum bribe for that sort of speciality of the house is 500 gold pieces. Specific individuals are never offed or offered for the dinner table, and if asked to do so, Eric will refer the person to the nearest assassin (and sell the information to one or more of the power groups in Sideshow).

Butcher Shop

The butchers of the Silver Pelt know their way around meat. Though they do not sell to the general public, the butchers of the Silver Pelt provide much of the meat eaten in other restaurants, taverns and inns around Sideshow. Great care is taken to only fill orders with domestic fare—beef, pork, lamb, chicken, etc.

Werewolf Society

The werewolves tend to be isolationists—they have very little to do with other folk, even those of Sideshow. As such there are no werewolves in organizations like The Sliming Path.

As in the wild wolves, werewolves prefer to roam in packs. The unfortunate individual werewolf is almost always diseased or outcast for some "political" reason. This organized social strata of werewolfdom is headed by the dominant "alphas," both male and female.

The alpha male is the strongest, or wiliest, or nastiest male wolf in the pack. He is the only pack male permitted to breed, and he regularly beats and subdues all the other males, either physically or mentally. In game terms he will constantly browbeat or even strike other males around him, and they will cower meekly in his presence. He will compliment or make playful suggestions when speaking to the female werewolves, and they will tend to respond coquettishly. The alpha is chosen when a young male challenges the present alpha, and kills him in single combat.

The alpha female will be the queen of the group, and the toughest and most tenacious of the ladies. She is the first to eat, and she is the first to breed with the alpha male, although not necessarily the only one. She will generally be with the young of the pack, and will defend them to the death. Alpha females are chosen by fighting, but not to the death. Losing females are outcast, however.

Hunts are generally done by all the males, and any females who are not burdened by young. Occasionally, young males may hunt alone, but if so, they generally are less successful than group hunts. The alpha male will choose a victim, and the werewolves will chase the target down, usually forcing the creature to run until exhausted. Then the prey is overwhelmed by snapping jaws and rending claws.

The werewolves of this pack are all unable to tolerate silver in any form, and so they will not accept it as coin.

Layout

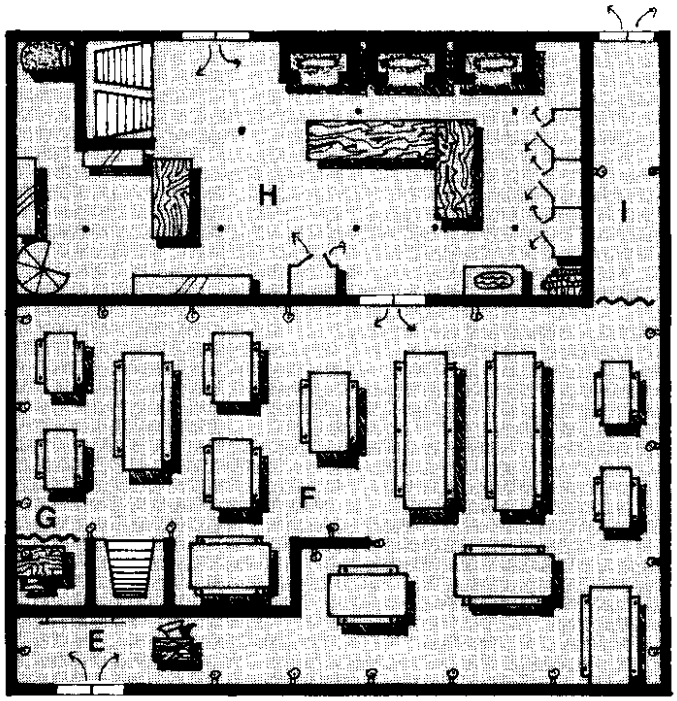
The Silver Pelt is a three-story building with a basement, found along Dim Street (just of Sideshow's main thoroughfare).. The exterior of the building is dirt-encrusted, but the construction and repairs on it are in good shape. There are no windows on the first and third floors, and only one on the second story overlooking a next-door, one-story building. The roof is gently peaked, and there is no attic.

Scattered on all of the walls of the restaurant are a number of paintings. To those of normal vision, they seem to be a meaningless mishmash of garish colors jarringly gashed by various shades of black and gray. To those whose vision includes infravision, they depict very realistic scenes of hunting a variety of prey (thepaints absorb and reflect varying amounts of heat).

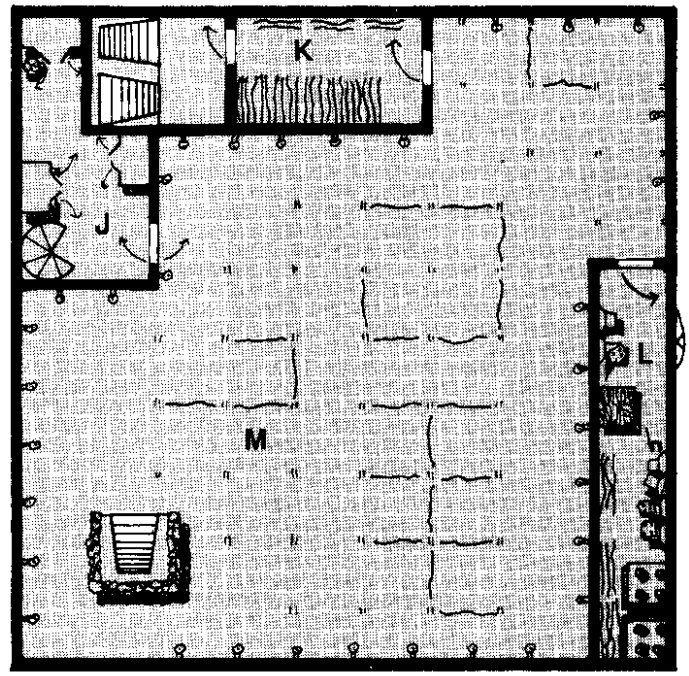
Basement

The basement of the Silver Pelt is kept dark. The workers here generally use infra-vision to do their work. The hearth in the smoke room does give off some light, however.

A. Smoke Room. (19' x 15') The hearth in here is kept only partially open to allow the smoke to rise out of the room. A multitude of hooks on the walls and ceiling can and do hold slabs of various meats. Unprepared persons entering here will break

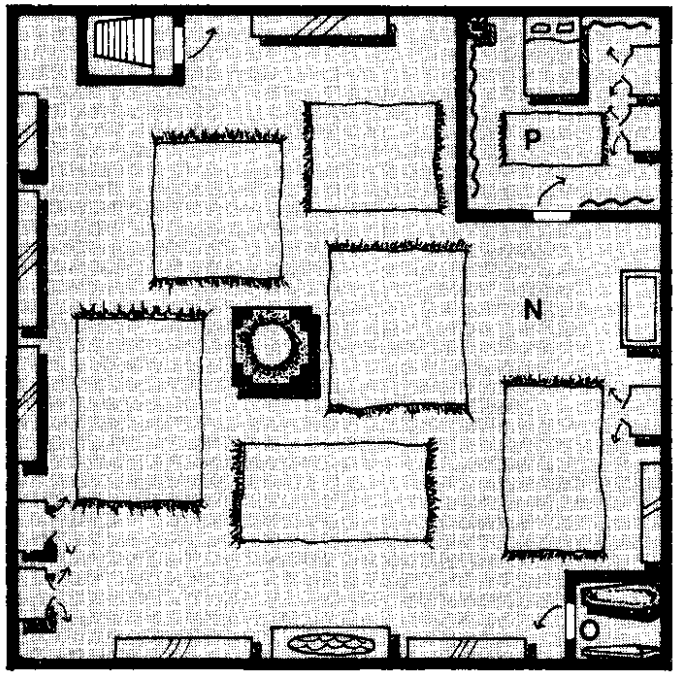


First Floor

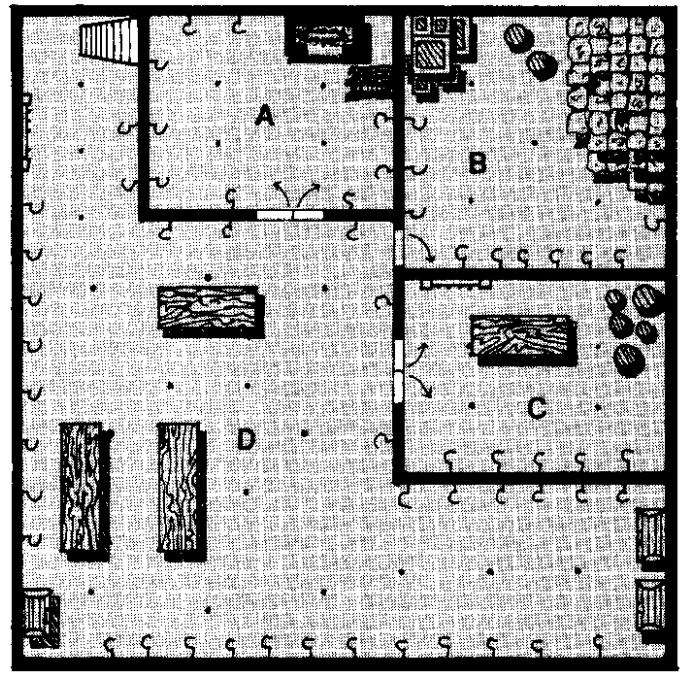


Second Floor

SCALE: one square = 1 1/2 feet



Third Floor



Basement

out in coughing fits. Anyone who stays in the area for more than six rounds must save versus slipping into unconsciousness every round, each round after the first at a -1, cumulatively.

B. Cold Storage. (20' x 19') There are chests of butter and other animal fats in the corner. There is an enormous pile of ice in another corner. Several hooks hold slabs of raw meats of a number of lineages. Staying in this room for more than 15 rounds will require that unprotected characters save versus falling asleep and slowly freezing.

C. Sausage Maker's Room. (20' x 15') Various casks of brine, vinegar, and other fluids sit in the corner, while under the counter are drawers with pouches of spices. Many meats and some bales of drying herbs hang from the wall and ceiling hooks. There is a rack that holds butchering knives on the wall.

D. Abattoir (slaughterhouse). (50' x 50', irregular) The three counters are discolored brown from blood. The walls and ceiling are covered in hooks, many of which hold various sizes and types of meat slabs.

First Floor

E. Entryway. (22' x 5') On a slate across from the opening is a list of the freshest meat on hand, and the prices for dishes made with same, served in the main hall. Generally, Eric Silver will be found behind the counter here, and he will behave in a genial manner with customers.

F. Main Hall. (50' x 30', irregular) The main eatery is found here, with long tables and benches. The prices are standard for the food served here. A variety of table wines and light ales are served with meals, but no breads, or vegetable matter.

G. Accounting Room. (5' x 5') There is a locked[3] cash box under the table. Usually, Denise can be found in or near here in her delightful to-look-upon human form.

H. Kitchen. (44' x 20') Counters here are cluttered with cooking and serving paraphernalia, including hundreds of carved wooden plates. There are three hearths, and an oven next to the basement stairs. The circular stairs lead to the Upper Pantry (**J**) serve as the waiters' access to the second floor dining area (**M**).

I. Back Corridor. (5' x 20') This is the corridor out the back to the privies. The back yard is famous for face-offs between various ill-mannered toughs of many species.

Second Floor

J. Upper Pantry. (10' x 20') This is a storage area for cutlery, table cloths, and such. The spiral stairs lead down to the kitchen (**H**). In the back are clean-up supplies.

K. Storage. (20' x 8') This is storage for the panels to divide up the private dining rooms. The staircase in the back leads to the third floor lair (**N**).

L. Storage. (5' x 30') Tables, chairs and additional panels are stored here for the private dining rooms (**M**). The window overlooks the lower building next door and permits access to the roof of same.

M. The Private Dining Area. (50' x 50', irregular) The room can be divided into 5' x 5' areas or 10' x 10' areas may be created with walkways between by clips on the ceiling and floor, allowing individuals and small groups to have their meals away from the noise and the bustle downstairs. Prices up here are double those below, and *special* dishes (like roast orc knuckles) *must* be served in this private area.

Third Floor

N. The Wolf's Lair. (50' x 50', irregular) This floor contains one very large common room with thick rugs, and shelves and cupboards around the walls. There is a hearth, lit only at night.

O. Bath. (7' x 6') This room contains a great marble tub (once a wealthy man's carved sarcophagus).

P. Birthing Chamber. (15' x 15') This is reserved for any pregnant werewolf. Usually, however, it is used by Denise. The birthing room contains a lockbox for large denomination coins and gems, and important papers, such as the deed and receipts from the tax collectors.



— Eric Silver —

Personalities

Eric Silver. ❑ *Werewolf male. Ht.: 5'9"; Wt.: 158#, Age:27.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Excellent with teeth and claws, fair with dagger or butcher's blades.*

Eric is a very self-assured fellow, an attitude which is only enhanced by striking good looks, short curly brown hair and perfect smilé. Only the heavy, dark brows, which are joined together mar the clean lines of his almost beautiful face. Like most typical lycanthropes, the hair on both his body and head is thicker and coarser than one of the "prey-kin." When in the restaurant, he dresses impeccably, suggesting that possibly one has found a place that might better belong amidst the hoi-polloi of Uptown.

He is a descendant of one of Raoul's first female converts. Recently, he overthrew Yakoob as alpha male and he has been enjoying the fun that goes with his new position. Tough-minded, he will take no advice from any other member of his pack.

Denise Silver. ❑ *Werewolf female. Ht.: 5'3"; Wt:122#; Age:19.* ❑ *Fighting Prowess: Excellent with teeth and claws, poor with dagger.*

Denise is a stunningly beautiful, athletic woman with long thick blonde hair. Like other lycanthropes, she has the trademark thick, heavy eyebrows. When she must dress, she wears exquisite



—Denise Silver—

gowns, that while somewhat faded and out of style, could have once graced the figure of an imperial princess.

She is the alpha female of the pack, and she acts accordingly. Denise is haughty, and very self-assured. She is Eric's primary love interest, although there is no exclusivity in the pack. She is responsible for the 'Pelt's frequent offerings of exotic meats—since her own tastes tend heavily towards the bipedal kind. With the possible exceptions of Lurkkan and gargoyle, she claims to have tried every meat in the City.

Denise is a triple-direct descendent of Raoul Silver. The founder was both her father, her grandfather and her great-grandfather. Though she is a stunning figure of a woman, in many ways, Denise is more wolf than human and often lapses into lupine behavior while in human form. None dare correct her, not even Eric.

The Wolf Pack. Other pack members automatically take the surname Silver when they "join." Gino and Tina are both servers (and grandchildren of Raoul). Eagle, Edward, Deirdre, Delores, and Eggbert are young, approximately five years old (they are maturing more quickly than humans—a comparative human age would be about 13), and offspring of Yakoob. Waldo and Wilma are butchers, and Hannibal is a sausage-maker. Lastly, Annie acts as the scullery maid (though she is quite pregnant).

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Mad Dog! The adventurers' mule (horse, dog, falcon, dromedary, best friend...) is savaged by a young wolf (Eggbert). They interrupt the attack and pursue the beast until he disappears down one of the sewers where they lose him. (The Silvers love the scent of the sewers in lupine form.) This should lead them to start to inquire into werewolf activities in City, and would lead them to The Silver Pelt. If Eric demands it, Eggbert will apologize, but the adventurers will have made an enemy in the were-wolf child.

Scenario 2: The Lost Guardsman. When the torn and bloody clothes of an older but well-beloved City guardsman is found near his beat, the adventurers are: A) asked by the City's mayor to investigate in exchange for payment; B) asked by Eric to investigate because of rumblings of anti-lycanthropic riots. In either case, it is being pinned on The Silver Pelt by other underworld denizens of Sideshow to camouflage their activities.

Scenario 3: Late for Dinner. While dining at the 'Pelt, the adventurers hear a bloodcurdling scream from deep beneath them. The voice should sound familiar to one of the adventurers, perhaps a friend or acquaintance. If the heroes investigate (despite interference by restaurant staff), they find what is left of the person (Wilma and Waldo work fast). Of course, now they are faced with an angry wolf pack who do not want their little secret to get out.

Scenario 4: My Dinner with Andrea. A beautiful woman, approaches the adventurers and promises a reward if they will be her companions at dinner. Dinner is served at the 'Pelt (on the second floor, the woman apparently has some connections) and during the course of the meal (much of it raw, at least on her plates) the woman reveals that she is Andrea Silver, half sister to the "wife" of the restaurant's owner. Not long thereafter, Denise Silver appears, her eyes ablaze with anger and lips twisted in a snarl. Words are exchanged. Apparently Andrea was once the pack's alpha female and lost a battle of challenge to Denise. Andrea has learned a few tricks in her exile and now seeks return to the pack and control as its queen.

Snarling, "Watch my back!"Andrea shapeshifts into wolf form, as does Denise. A battle ensues. The adventurers must keep the other werewolves and patrons out of the melee. Should Andrea win, they will have a new and unusual ally. Should Denise win, it is an enemy they have earned—if they survive the night's adventure.

Most restaurants are quite similar in the fare they offer—they cater to your average omnivore, a little meat, some vegetables, maybe some fruit and cheese. The Silver Pelt is that different exotic "ethnic" restaurant that the adventurers may have been meaning to try. Of course, with the Silver Plet one never knows just who *may be on the menu.*

All-System Catalyst Books

Many of you have been asking us "Just which books can I get in the Catalyst line?" So in anwer to your pleas for help, here is a list of the available Catalyst books you can order from your local store or distributor. Many of these are in short supply, so get your orders in.

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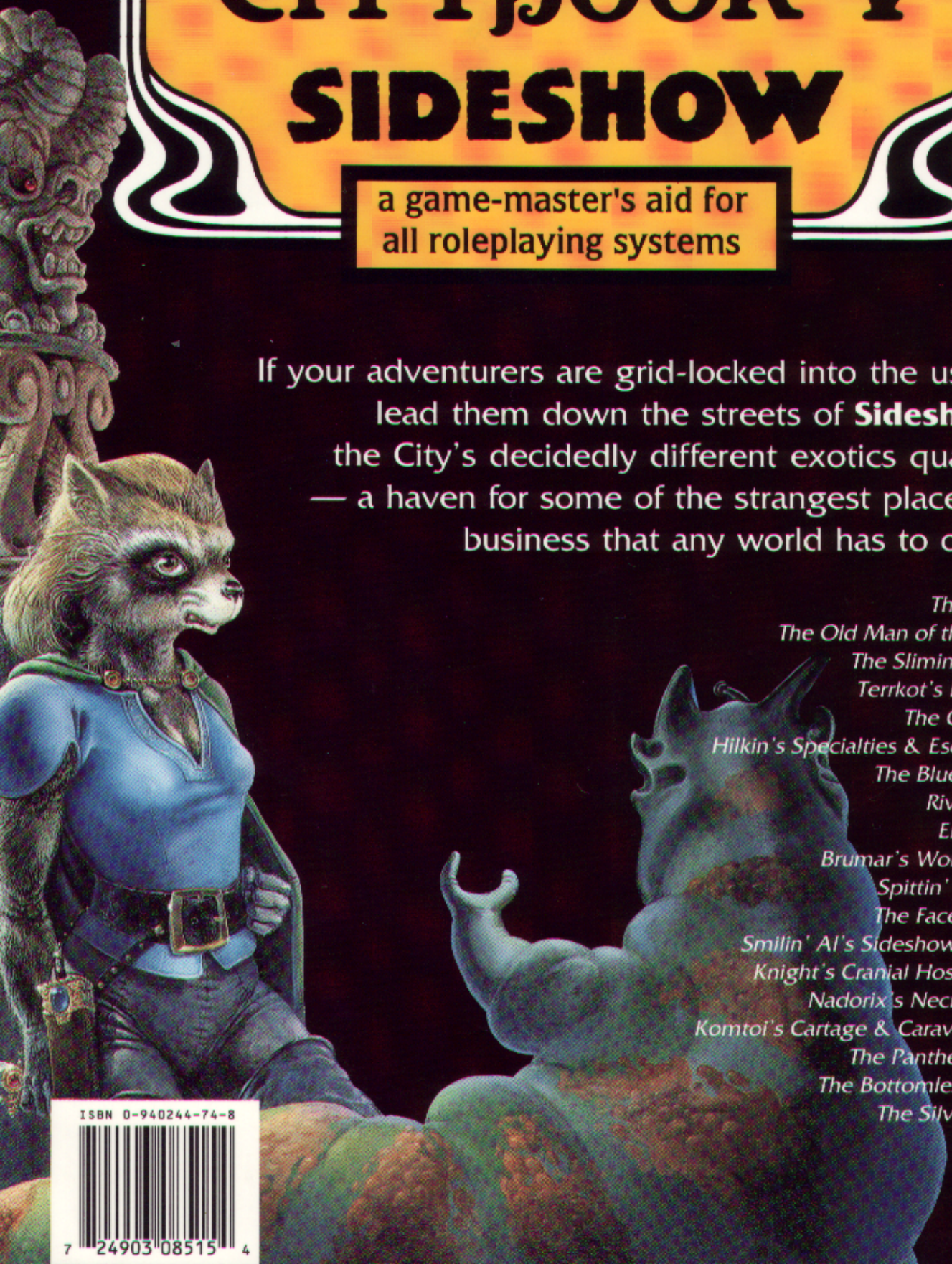
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