

An Adventure for *TORG: ROLEPLAYING THE POSSIBILITY WARS*™

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TORG

THE TEMPLE OF REC STALEK



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GAMES**

The Ultimate Sensation

THE TEMPLE OF REC STALEK

By Shane Lacy Hensley

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Roleplaying the Possibility Wars™

The Temple of Rec Stalek

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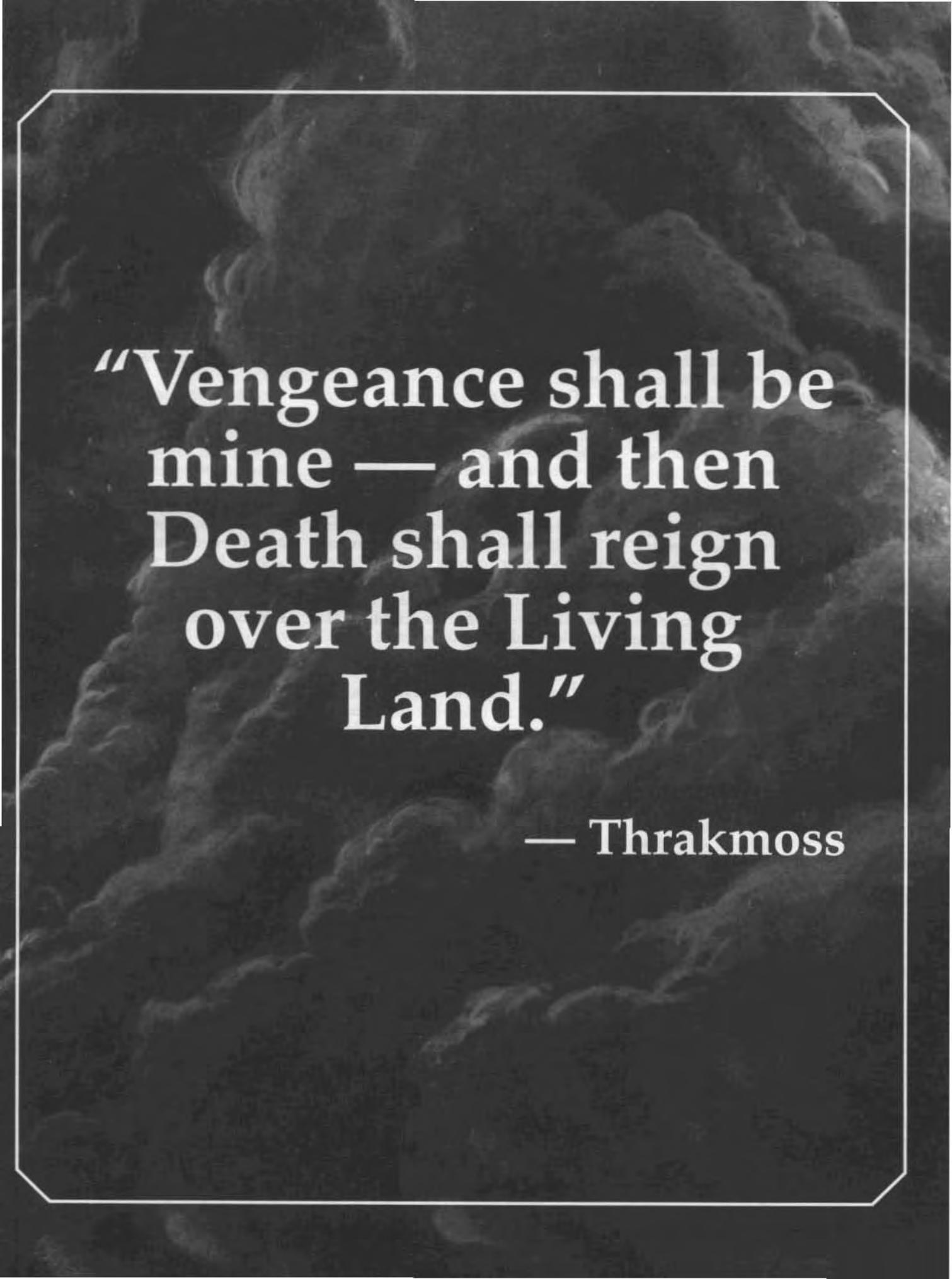


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**“Vengeance shall be
mine — and then
Death shall reign
over the Living
Land.”**

— Thrakmoss

Prologue

Takta Ker.

Days, months, years had he searched the mountains of Takta Ker for the ancient hive city of the Ustanah. Lanala was as much help in the quest as were the ceaseless ramblings of the simpletons who lived in the area. No one cared about the secrets of a lost race. All they wanted was to watch the trees sway or the birds fly. The fools had no idea what power the secrets of the insects might reveal.

But he did. Thrakmoss considered himself the greatest of the edeinos. Surely no other reptile could match his battle rage, or his keen wit. Thrakmoss also considered himself the voice of reason in a world of careless, carefree children who had nothing better to do than dance around the jungle and charge into combat without the slightest inkling of a plan.

The aging reptile sat on a large stone and rested his weary bones, propping up his crippled leg as he stared at the misty jungle. Soon, he began to sleep, and as he did he thought about the events that had led him to these stark mountains.

His father hadn't been like the others. He had been a veteran of one of the Saar's many wars "beyond Lanala," and had even brought back a skull rumored to belong to a great leader of the enemy Balian. They were a people much like the edeinos, but they worshipped the god the Jakatts knew in their mythos as Stalek, or Death. At first, Thrakmoss hadn't understood why his father would bring back a "dead thing," and neither had the tribe. Eventually however, Thrakmoss began to love and appreciate the artifact, unknowingly spending more and more time with a talisman of Death-worshippers. Finally, as had his father, the reality of the young edeinos was subtly altered by the talisman. Now he had insight and appreciation into things the tribe could not understand ... and would never approve of.

One day, the optant of the tribe

decided he could tolerate the blaspheming of Keta Kalles no longer, and had Thrakmoss' father staked before the others to repent his sins and renounce the worship of Death. But he was a proud being and clung tenaciously to his beliefs — thus he was put to death. The talisman was thrown into a ravine and the young Thrakmoss exiled.

The young edeinos wept for many days and prayed to Lanala for help, but he had long since fallen from her grace. Eventually realizing this, he crept back into the ravine where the optant had thrown the precious skull. After several hours of searching he found the thing, but would forever limp due to an unfortunate encounter with a hungry ropraj. Had the tribe not abandoned him, it would have been a simple matter to have healed the fractured limb. The crippling of his leg and the stubbornness of his tribe left Thrakmoss a bitter creature.

Thrakmoss awoke. Such reminiscing was not for him. He hobbled back onto his weary legs and began to look once again for an entrance to the Ustanah lairs. As he adjusted the tattered robes which set him apart from all others of his race, he noticed a strange and wondrous thing. Staring at him from above the rocky cliff, obscured by decades of jungle growth, was the scowling, stony face of an Ustanah. Startled at first, he quickly realized that it was only a rocky representation of the insectoid's features.

What a strange race to carve their images into the very surface of a rock! What wondrous tools they must have had to achieve such a monumental feat! Certain he had discovered a grand entrance into the city, Thrakmoss pushed aside the thick vegetation and found a large hole leading deep into the earth. His fears of the dreaded ropraj went with him, and he was at first reluctant to enter; but eventually he mastered this fear and ventured into the ruins of a forgotten race.

Strange moss seemed to grow ev-

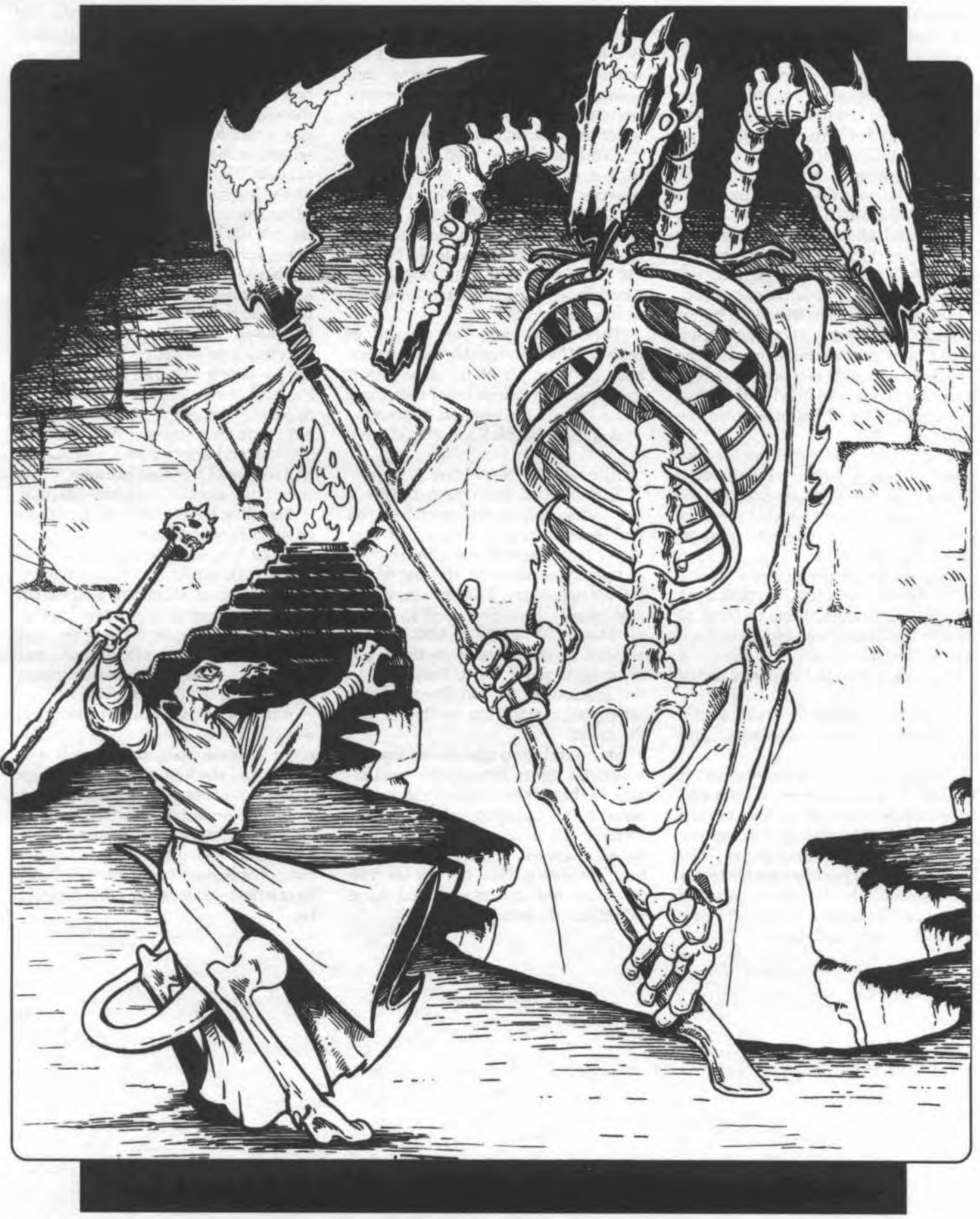
erywhere and illuminate the cavern with an eerie greenish glow. His foot hit something in the pale light and he reached down to pick it up. It felt similar to a freshly blessed hrockt shoot, but was much heavier. Thrakmoss' keen mind instantly deduced that this was a weapon and he began to swing it about, cackling ecstatically.

Suddenly the tentacles of the ropraj were everywhere, flailing about in an attempt to grasp the limbs of its intended prey. Thrakmoss swung the Ustanah weapon wildly and watched in amazement as it sliced neatly through the tentacles of the beast. His body raced with exhilaration and he danced about the muck-like creature, stabbing, hacking, and slicing it into a thousand bloody pieces. After an hour of taking revenge for his crippled leg, Thrakmoss passed out from exhaustion and slept in the cool dampness of the cavern.

When he finally awoke, he was filled with the confidence of a warrior-born anew and ventured deeper into the venerable necropolis. The wonders that Thrakmoss found in the Ustanah hives were numerous. Everywhere he looked, he saw the terrible savagery of the insects, never noticing the beauty of the defiant race. He examined their instruments of war, and ignored their crafts and artwork. He ripped off their armor, ignoring their adornments. Thrakmoss cared not for the proud accomplishments of an extinct culture, he wished only to exploit their methods of war to wreak revenge on those he blamed for his father's death and his own exile: the optants of his tribe, and the Saar himself — Baruk Kaah.

Weeks later, Thrakmoss ventured down from the mountains of the Ustanah and traveled to the area in which his old tribe had roamed. He found them miraculously nearby and used the weapons of the Ustanah to slay the elders in their sleep. The optants, some of them sons of the priest who had murdered his father, were





beheaded, their corpses thrown into the central area of the camp. A blooded warrior now, Thrakmoss stole into the night, completely unseen.

Now revenged on his tribe, he returned to the Ustanah lair and began to plot the end of Baruk Kaah, he whose devotion to Lanala kept the edeinos from achieving their true destiny. For months, he continued to explore the ruins in an attempt to find something that would allow him to extract his vengeance. Finally, while searching through an ancient burial pit, an event both horrible and wondrous occurred.

Something within the pit of bones stirred. Thrakmoss knew no ropraj could survive this far down in the caverns, nor could any other creature he knew of. He was filled with terror, but could not tear his eyes from the sight.

Suddenly the remains of the insectoids began to move as if directed by some dark will. As he gawked, the bones and carapaces swirled together and began to form some sort of monstrous figure!

In a matter of moments, a three-headed reptile wielding a terrible bone weapon had taken shape in front of the terrified Thrakmoss. He recognized it from the legends of Keta Kalles — it was Stalek, the Dark King, the Lord of Death.

The thing moved its skulls, as if it could see with its vacant sockets ... and spoke!

"Thrrraaakkkmmmmooossss!" it wailed. Its voice seemed to echo and boom while it literally rolled over the bones of the Ustanah and down the steep passages of the necropolis. "You have awakened me from my centuries of sleep caused by the unbelief of those who worship Lanala! You shall be rewarded ... for I am Death!"

Thrakmoss was filled with a violent confusion. Half of him wanted to flee just as fast as his one good leg would carry him, and the other half wanted to kneel before the awesome presence of a living god. It was to the latter impulse that he surrendered.

"You shall be awarded for awakening me, great warrior. I grant you the power to call upon the power of Death for the casting of miracles. In return, you must go forth and spread the word that Stalek has returned to the land of the edeinos, and that as long as my worshippers live, Lanala is powerless to stop my wrath!"

Thrakmoss spoke not a word in reply and Death's terrible form melted back into the pit of the dead. As it vanished, the edeinos knew that at last he had found the weapon he sought.

And now Baruk Kaah would pay.

Illinois. The Near Now

Tara stepped from the darkness of her hiding place and watched the flames devouring her village. Strange warriors screamed fierce battle cries as they swarmed over the last of the town's defenders. She saw one of her best friends, Tom, disappear in a blur of black and white motion. These edeinos ... there was something not quite right about them. Tara knelt in the shadow of an old Pontiac, and attempted to stare past the flames into the melee.

She found she could almost discern a skeletal figure among the combatants. Perhaps these new warriors were some sort of gospog; a particularly rotten batch if this was the case. She heard a scream, and knew Tom had been cut down. Had she not been so terrified, her screams would have mingled with his.

The cries, the clash of weapons, and the small pops of a firearm resounded through the still night air. Screams again! But this time it was the cacophony of triumph. Tara looked through the flames once more and saw a terrible sight. The warriors — whatever they were — held some sort of spear high above the fire. Mounted on the fearsome weapon was the head of her friend, a cry of terror still frozen on his darkening face. Tara would never forget the sparkling firelight in his bloody eyes, almost as if he had looked at her from across Death's cold void before the life finally slipped from his body.

It was now or never. The sounds of her passage smothered by the whooping and the yelling of these strange fighters, Tara crept from behind the old car in the direction of the jungle. She looked back to make sure no one had followed her, and ran smack into something dark ... dark and horrible.

Standing before her was the tallest edeinos Tara had ever seen. His scales were as black as the night and glistened with reflections of the flames. He wore armor, seemingly made all of bone, held together by pieces of leather. His helm was made of the upper and lower jaws of some great beast, and she could just make out a pair of crazed eyes behind the jagged teeth.

But the strangest thing of all was his weapon. It was a huge spear, made of some faceted substance much like stone. Had she known the word, Tara would have thought it looked like obsidian. It seemed to pulse with an unholy power, as if it celebrated the blood and death all around it — and in the moments before it tore into her flesh, Tara wondered how such things could be.



Introduction



The Temple of Rec Stalek is an adventure for *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*. You must have the roleplaying game to play this adventure. *The Living Land* sourcebook will also be extremely helpful. Adventures for *Torg* take place on Earth in the Near Now — an Earth that has been invaded by six powerful beings from other realities.

One of these invaders is Baruk Kaah, Saar of the Living Land and ruler of a reptilian race of creatures called edeinos. Their reality has been superimposed on North America and consists of a vast expanse of prehistoric jungle stretching from Hudson Bay in Canada to southern Illinois and Virginia, and from the eastern coast of Philadelphia and New York to parts of Iowa and Kansas. Another invasion zone reaches from southern California into Canada.

Within these zones of occupation, the Saar's reality rules. Technology tends to fail frequently, organized groups of men turn into chaotic mobs, and even the powerful magic of the new-found kingdom of Aysle falls short under the primitive reality. Here, dinosaurs once again stalk the jungles of North America and give new meaning to the term 'thunder lizard.' Fierce tribes consisting of hundreds of edeinos and the terrible creatures they use for war roam the borders, guarding against the ever-persistent forces of the Core Earth military.

Adventure Background

The edeinos worship Lanala, a female entity whose sole concern is the experience of new sensations. Love, beauty, joy, and even pain are all experienced with wide-eyed wonder by those who worship her, known as Jakatts. The more intense this sensation is, the more pleasure the Jakatt receives.

A typical Jakatt might stare for hours at the many shapes, colors and patterns produced by the leaves of a tree swaying in the wind. All Jakatts enjoy the sensation of living and of living things. Their only use for death is to produce more life and to end the miserable existence of those who cannot appreciate and enjoy the many benefits granted by the Keta Kalles religion.

Almost without exception, Keta Kalles is the faith of those who come from the edeinos' home cosm, Takta Ker. But it is not held in the hearts of all ...

Disciple of the Dead

Thrakmoss was a young edeinos who reveled in the legends of the Ustanah war of ages past. While on one of Baruk Kaah's campaigns to other cosms, Thrakmoss' father found a talisman of a Death-worshipping people, and had his reality subtly altered. He brought the talisman home with him and eventually Thrakmoss was transformed by it as well.

When the optants could stand their blasphemy no longer, they offered both father and son a choice: death or repentance. Both chose death, but Thrakmoss was spared, stripped of the talisman and sent into exile. His father was killed for being a "lover of dead things."

Thrakmoss managed to recover the talisman and began to wander about Takta Ker, burning for revenge against the optants of his tribe and Baruk Kaah. This thirst for vengeance led him to seek out those old enough to know of the ancient Ustanah wars and learn the secrets of that lost culture. He believed that the weapons of the insectoids could aid him in his plans, but countless prayers to Lanala for guidance to the city of the Ustanah availed him naught.

Eventually, Thrakmoss found the ruined necropolis that was once the Ustanah central hive. The aging edeinos spent several years here, un-

covering the bones and relics of the extinct race, all the while praying for the wisdom to understand the workings of their weapons. He was no longer certain just who he was praying to, as Lanala would have no use for such things as he had discovered. Using the things of war created by the insectoids, Thrakmoss took his revenge upon the optants of his tribe.

Death Ascendant

Finally, after 13 years of exploration and praying, Thrakmoss' devotion to destruction awoke a presence which had lain dormant since Lanala first showed the edeinos how to love life, the entity known as Stalek, or Death (see page 15 of *The Living Land* sourcebook).

Weakened but by no means defeated in its struggle with Lanala, Death listened to the distant prayers of its sole disciple on Takta Ker. For 13 days, Death listened and grew more powerful, gaining back some of the strength that centuries without worshippers had stolen from it.

Important Note

Aside from certain props, the contents of this adventure are for the gamemaster only. If anyone who is going to be a player in this adventure reads this book, he will be ruining the fun for himself and everyone else in the group.

The gamemaster should read the book completely before attempting to run the adventure. This allows the gamemaster to familiarize herself with the various events and encounters in this adventure and prepare herself for any unexpected behavior on the part of the players.



When Thrakmoss' explorations took him into an Ustanah burial cavern (preserved by the vestiges of Death's power), the husks and carcasses of the long-dead insects began to stir. Before the wondering eyes of the edeinos, Stalek assembled a physical form and a weapon out of the lifeless shells, bones and carapaces of the Ustanah and various predators of the cosm. The Dark God told Thrakmoss the power of Death was now his to use, providing he spread the bloody faith throughout the cosm.

For the next two years, Thrakmoss studied the technology of the Ustanah and adapted it to fit the image of Death more appropriately. Finally, in the third year after becoming Death's one and only worshipper, Thrakmoss went forth from the ancient hives and began to convert those he had reason to believe might join with him in rejecting Lanala. After much struggle and hardship, he succeeded in gathering a small flock of disciples and spreading a reign of terror throughout a small region of Takta Ker.

Some of the cult's new followers told Thrakmoss that Baruk Kaah was leading armies of edeinos off on a new campaign beyond Lanala. Thrakmoss believed that this was his opportunity to destroy Baruk Kaah once and for all, while converting an entirely new cosm to the worship of Stalek. But he knew that challenging the Saar would require more than his handful of warriors of Darkness and Death (Rec Stalek), and set about to add to his army.

He found some new followers among the Trandala Grathteen mountains, where those driven mad by sensation roamed until they expired. Others were acquired by kidnapping young edeinos from their tribes before they had been fully taught the ways of Lanala, and introducing them to the love of Death. Over 300 youths were added to the tribe in this manner.

The Black Spear

Still, Thrakmoss was not satisfied. He did not believe his young warriors had the power needed to challenge Kaah. Sacrificing one of the infants to gain Death's further favor, Thrakmoss

was granted the miracle of *Attala Cttt-c'chin*, the *Making of the Spear* through invocation (not a standard Living Land miracle; see page 127 of the *Torg Rulebook* for details on divine intervention).

Using Ustanah technology and the strange bone-carapace mixture of their skeletons, Thrakmoss constructed a terrible black spear from a long dead insect's spine. On the thirteenth day of the thirteenth cycle after Death's awakening, the great weapon named Tralysis Grath (Robber of Sensations) was bathed in the blood of thirteen innocents and passed through the praying hands of thirteen blooded Rec Stalek warriors.

When an edeinos tribe finally came to slay the foul cult, the Stalek warriors slaughtered them. The mountains have since been renamed Halta Rul (Place of Blood) by the frightened lovers of Lanala, who will venture no higher than the foothills.

Thirteen years after the creation of Tralysis Grath, the elders of the Rec Stalek cult finally left their mountain retreat and made their way to Earth. Death created a dimthread for them to use as a pathway to this new cosm, and the warriors emerged in the city of Chicago, now part of a Living Land dominant zone. There Stalek used its powers to transform the Oak Park Mall into a dark temple where the worship of dead things was welcomed.

Naturally, Baruk Kaah's Darkness Device, Rec Pakken, was aware of all this, as well as the murderous ambitions of Thrakmoss. However, disturbed by Kaah's recent reversals in the war, Rec Pakken chose to allow the renegade edeinos to proceed. If he failed, there was no great loss; if he succeeded, the Living Land would have a new, and more ruthless, High Lord.

The Revenge of Thrakmoss

It took little time for Thrakmoss to learn of the Possibility Wars (even Storm Knights can break under torture). He was fascinated by the story of Uthorion and his possession of Pella Ardinay's form, and decided that this

would be the perfect means to slay Kaah and acquire the power of the Darkness Device.

Invoking Stalek once again, Thrakmoss was told that if he were to sacrifice 13 humans in a special ritual, he would be able to exchange his spirit with that of Kaah. His warriors could then slay the former High Lord, and Death would reign over all.

A raid on the nearby settlement of Great Neck provided Thrakmoss with the humans he needed. Leaving behind a small force to guard his temple, the dark edeinos traveled back to Takta Ker via dimthread with his warriors and those he hoped to sacrifice. There he waits for the proper time to invoke his bloody miracle.

The Laws of Death

The area surrounding the Oak Park Mall and the Takta Ker's mountains of Halta Rul have been transformed by the power of Death (with Rec Pakken's silent assent). The axioms remain the same as those of the Living Land — the sole difference is in the world law which governs the speed with which dead things decay. Anything that dies within this area rots at a far slower rate than in the Living Land, typically taking three months to completely decay.

Food also rots at a slower rate. When in the mall/temple or in Thrakmoss' mountain retreat, apply the following version of the Corrosion Chart found on page 67 of *The Living Land* sourcebook:

Stalek Corrosion Chart

Killed	Will Decay In
That day	3 months
1 day ago	1 month
2 days ago	10 days
3 days ago	3 day
4 days ago	1 day
5 days ago	8 hrs.
6 days ago	2 hrs. 40 min.
1 week ago	53 min.

"Dead things" — such as the bone armor worn by the Stalek warriors — normally fall prey to the Deep Mist of the Living Land. Although the warriors are protected by Death's powers, should they disconnect, their equip-



ment will begin to decay as if it been killed that day in the realm. Thus, bone armor will completely rot within 24 hours of the disconnection, unless the warrior has returned to an area where Death holds sway.

Since even Death's power is limited, it was not able to change the fact that Lanala's is the dominant mythos of the Living Land. Use of Death miracles is a one-case contradiction.

Adventure Synopsis

Act One introduces the Storm Knights to the resistance community of Cicero, Illinois and gives them a chance to rest and recuperate after their previous travels. Even Evan Gore, storyteller, will be on hand to spread tales of glory.

The feast is interrupted by an attack by Stalek warriors and an undead carnol on a foraging expedition. Repelling the attack, the Knights are told by Gore that the village of Great Neck has been sacked and the people apparently kidnapped. He believes these strange armored edeinos to be responsible, and asks the Knights for help.

Act Two chronicles the journey from Cicero to the village of Great Neck. Along the way the party encounters a hostile group of poachers and a wounded edeinos who may provide them with a valuable gift.

Arriving at the ruined village, the heroes find the sole survivor of the Stalek raid, a human Jakatt named Tara. She tells the party what she knows of the armored edeinos, and they set out to trail the band back to their temple.

Along the way, they find themselves trapped in a dark and dismal swamp, at the mercy of one of Death's horrific creations.

In Act Three, the Knights penetrate the Stalek lair and attempt to explore its lower levels. Much of the cult's history and Thrakmoss' plans for the future are revealed in wall carvings. The act ends with the Knights under attack by a group of edeinos Jakatts sent to exterminate Thrakmoss, his cult, and any they may think have allied with him.

Act Four chronicles the team's perilous trip across Death's dimthread into the cosm of Takta Ker. After passing through a series of tests, they find their way into the would-be High Lord's stronghold.

There they find the imprisoned citizens of Great Neck and have their only opportunity to stop Thrakmoss—and save Baruk Kaah?

The Response Form

On page 64 of this adventure, you will find a special response form. Once you have completed this adventure, please fill it out and mail it to us. The outcome of this adventure is crucial to the future of the Possibility Wars and the survival of Earth's reality, so we want to know how every group makes out.

For instructions on filling out the form, please refer to page 13 of *Infiniverse Campaign Game*, Issue 1 (which is included in the *Torg* boxed set). Mail it to the address listed on the form.

The Cult of Rec Stalek

The cult founded by Thrakmoss worships Death, and the pain and suffering which are attendant to it. The latter two were added by Thrakmoss with Stalek's permission, to ease the transition from Keta Kalles (a religion based on the experiencing of sensations) to Death-worship.

The words "Rec Stalek" can be literally translated as "Darkness and Death." Stalek is a powerful being, though not nearly as great as it was before its defeat by Lanala. Although its greatest source of power is the love of worshippers, Death can also derive energy from sacrifices and destruction, and the number 13 is sacred to it. Why the latter is so is unknown, even to Death himself. Thrakmoss has theorized that the number grants Death power because it is a symbol of superstition and fear throughout the infiniverse—at least he has found it to

be so in the three cultures to which he has been exposed.

Lovers of Death

The followers of Thrakmoss have been transformed by Death, and the altered world law it created applies to them all.

The first group of edeinos Thrakmoss recruited have long since become his most trusted lieutenants and gotaks. These favored individuals maintain order, educate gifted students in the casting of miracles, and teach the entire assemblage how best to overcome the "weak followers of Lanala." There are 13 elders in the tribe, and an effort is made to keep that number constant.

Those adults more recently converted have become an elite squad of armored warriors. Their job is to train the Temple Guards in the ways of combat and spread the word of Rec Stalek. The warriors travel beyond the temple to recruit (by capture and torture) more followers for Death. Those who are alien to Takta Ker are slain outright or taken as prisoners to be used in large, elaborate rituals of sacrifice. There are no non-edeinos Stalek warriors.

Lacking massive amounts of manpower, Thrakmoss has raised the infants that he and his original retinue abducted over a decade ago into a fierce garrison for his temples. Most of these young are about 13-16 Earth-years old.

There are five groups of Rec Stalek cultists: Warriors, Guards, Elders (gotaks), Berserkers (Trandala Grathteens), and Those Who Bring Forth Death.

Elders (Gotaks)

The clerical caste of Rec Stalek is made up primarily of those most devoted to pain and suffering. They normally carry the skull of a murdered enemy as an emblem of their high station.

All of the priests currently under Thrakmoss' command were formally optants of Lanala and have considerable experience in the most effective ways to use their miracles.



There are currently 13 gotak Elders in the cult.

Elders (13)

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 10, dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 10

Find 12, tracking 11, trick 12

MIND 9

Survival 12, test 15

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 10

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Rec Stalek) 16, focus 18, intimidation 15, reality 16

Possibilities: 2

Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+3/12; teeth, damage value STR+2/11

Equipment: bone armor, TOU+4/15; Ustanah dagger, damage value STR+3/12

Description: The priests of Rec Stalek often cut long wounds from the corners of their eyes outwards towards their auditory canals, giving their faces a particularly menacing look. Their armor is frequently anointed with blood, mostly around the jaws of their helm. They carry a smaller version of the warrior's sword.

Stalek Warriors

The warrior caste of the Stalek cult are those that were recruited by Thrakmass many years ago on Takta Ker. They consist mostly of outcasts, veterans of other-cosm invasions, and those obsessed with the sensations of battle.

Typically, war parties of 10-12 will be led by an Elder who has proven himself adept at formulating battle strategy. Most of the foraging parties currently operating in the Living Land realm do not have the benefit of an Elder's services.

Warriors (50)

DEXTERITY 10

Beast riding 11, dodge 12, maneuver 13, melee weapons 14, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 11

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 10

Find 12, tracking 11, trick 12

MIND 9

Survival 13, test 13

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Rec Stalek) 15, intimidation 14

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (30)

Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+3/14; teeth, damage value STR+2/13

Equipment: bone armor, TOU+4/15; Ustanah sword, damage value STR+5/16

Description: The warrior caste inevitably paint strange and frightening symbols on their armor and helmets which serve to enhance their *intimidation* attacks by +1. A Stalek warrior ritual requires the burning of flesh, so their scales will often appear charred black.

Temple Guards

Those infants that were abducted by Thrakmass in their infancy have been formed into an effective guard unit for the two temples (one in the realm and one in Takta Ker). Their greatest advantage lies in their numbers.

Temple Guards (300)

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 11, dodge 11, maneuver 11, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 11

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 9

Find 11, tracking 10, trick 11

MIND 8

Survival 10, test 16

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Rec Stalek) 13, intimidation 12

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (20)

Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+3/12; teeth, damage value STR+2/11

Equipment: bone armor, STR+4/

15; Ustanah sword, damage value STR+5/16

Description: The young of the cult compete viciously with the full-blooded warriors. Having something to prove makes them extremely dangerous.

Retreat would prove that they are less than their elders and so they are less susceptible to *break* results. If the group has taken over 50 percent casualties, they will *break* as normal. In any other situation, treat a *break* as a *setback* result.

Berserkers

(Trandala Grathteens)

Once in a great while, a Jakatt will experience some sensation so overwhelming that his primitive mind cannot handle it. This occurs in some due to physical disorders which affect the brain, while others have been known to chew on a rare vine that grows only in the mountains now known as Trandala Grathteen.

This condition causes the individual's system to produce adrenalin at a greatly increased rate, and drives the afflicted edeinos insane.

Thrakmass has put these "berserkers" to good use as shock troops, their bloodlust in combat putting foes of weak heart to rout. Berserkers have stats identical to those of warriors, save that they behave in combat as if the miracle *animal rage* had been invoked upon them (see page 73 of the *Living Land* sourcebook). They are treated as if *up* whenever performing a *Dexterity* or *Strength*-based action.

If a *villain setback* should occur in a battle involving these troops, they will finish the combat they are currently involved in and then move to attack the nearest being (be he friend or enemy.)

Berserkers ignore all shock and KO damage and will fight on until destroyed. A berserker will often attempt to both *intimidate* and attack in his first round of combat, screaming terribly as he rushes into the fray. Treat this as a One-on-Many multi-action. This first *intimidation* attempt receives a +3 bonus. Subsequent attempts to *intimidate* receive no such modifier.



Berserker**DEXTERITY 11**

Dodge 12, maneuver 12, melee weapons 13, missile weapons 13, stealth 12, swimming 12, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 11

Climbing 13, lifting 13

TOUGHNESS 11**PERCEPTION 8**

Find 9, tracking 11, trick 9

MIND 7

Survival 12, test 10, willpower 9

CHARISMA 8

Charm (20), persuasion 12, taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Rec Stalek) 14, intimidation 14

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: claws, damage value

STR+3/14; teeth, damage value STR+2/13

Equipment: varies

Those Who Bring Forth Death

Ironically, one of Thrakmoss' plans to return Death to the edeinos is through the miracle of life. Deep within the temple on Takta Ker are chambers dedicated exclusively to the female edeinos who must give birth to more warriors. When not visibly pregnant, females fight alongside their male counterparts. Once a female warrior realizes her pregnancy however, she is immediately taken to the temple haven.

Stalek infants are raised as the true prodigies of Thrakmoss himself and he takes great pleasure in furthering their "education." Female Staleks have identical stats to the Warriors listed above.

Rec Stalek Miracles

The Rec Stalek gotaks have successfully duplicated most of Lanala's miracles, but invoke Death rather than that goddess when performing them (thus creating a contradiction).

The following Miracles of Faith remain essentially unchanged from Chapter 9 of *The Living Land* sourcebook: *animal rage*, *blind*, *cause pain*, *deaf-*



ness, *healing*, *heightened dexterity*, *heightened hearing*, *heightened sight*, *heightened taste*, *heightened touch*, *increased strength*, *increased toughness*, and *intense fear*.

The following new miracles have been granted to Thrakmoss and the Elders by Death:

Animate Dead

Spiritual Rating: 13
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 15

Range: touch

Duration: permanent

Effect: creates undead warriors

This is one of the most powerful miracles Death can grant in Lanala's realm, despite her overwhelming resistance to such abominations. The spell can cause any dead creature to rise in its present state to do the bidding of the cleric. The creature retains the attributes and skills it had while alive, but as a form of undead, is im-





The Temple of Rec Stalek: Map #1 Illinois

WISCONSIN

LAKE
MICHIGAN

IOWA

Mississippi River

Illinois River

MISSOURI

INDIANA

Lake Shelbyville

Carlyle Lake

1. Springfield
2. Chicago/Great Neck
3. Rockford
4. Peoria
5. Decatur
6. Aurora
7. Joliet
8. Waukegan
9. Elgin
10. Evanston
11. Arlington Heights
12. Naperville
13. Cicero
14. Schaumburg
15. Skokie

0 50 100 150 KM



immune to all shock and KO damage. Note that Ayslish spells which allow casters to control undead will have no effect, as the creatures were not animated by magic, but Death's unholy power.

Undead created in this manner will decay within three months when in a zone of Death's influence, and in 24 hours in other areas of Takta Ker and the Living Land.

The Sundering

Spiritual Rating: 24

Community Rating: 12

Difficulty: 35

Range: unlimited

Duration: permanent

Effect: exchanges the souls of the caster and the target

This is Death's version of the Ayslish spell used by Uthorion to sunder Pella Ardinay's spirit from her body over 500 years ago. Although this is actually a miracle and not a spell, it has certain advantages over its Ayslish equivalent. The range of the miracle can span miles, leagues, and even cosmos (but only between Takta Ker and the Living Land, where Death holds some sway). It also requires no personal item of the creature whose spirit is to be transferred.

The main disadvantage to the miracle is that there are several conditions which must be met for Death to draw upon the power needed for such a powerful effect. First, the caster must have *faith (Rec Stalek)* at a minimum

skill value of 20 to even attempt it (Death will pay no heed to a being with less belief in its power);

Secondly, 13 intelligent beings must be sacrificed;

Thirdly, there must be at least 13 other acolytes present at the sacrifice with *faith (Rec Stalek)* values of 13 or higher. Remember that because of principles similar to those involved in Nile Empire mathematical spells, the number 13 is key in Stalek rituals. If the above conditions are not all met, Death may still grant the miracle, but at a +5 difficulty for each one omitted. Should the caster fail at the miracle, Death will slay him as punishment.

Starting the Adventure

There are several ways the gamemaster may get the player characters involved in this adventure. One is to simply have the adventurers stumble upon the village of Cicero while trekking through the Living Land, or have them encounter Evan Gore somewhere else on their travels and receive information about the problems in Great Neck.

The characters could also receive a mysterious message from Tiresias, the renegade Delphi Council member introduced in *The Cassandra Files*. This would consist of a memo culled from Delphi Council files and sent out to Storm Knights through clandestine channels to gain their aid.

File # 101: Trouble in Chicago

TO: Delphi Council Inner Circle
FROM: Radio Transmission from Captain Samuel Frisbane, northern Illinois

"There are reports of villages burned to the ground and all the residents missing. Some of the damage looked like it was caused by edged weapons, probably swords. I'd blame it on those damned lizards, but we've never seen them use anything as sophisticated as swords.

"Resistance communities have started blaming Sweeping Crews for the destruction, and it's making it harder to operate out here. Please advise on course of action."

This might be an opportunity to help out the Chicago-area resistance villages and stop the Sweeping Crews we suspect are operating in the area. Proving the Delphi Council was responsible for such wholesale destruction would be a severe blow to their image.

— Tiresias



Act One

Food, Folks, and Fear

The Major Beat

The Storm Knights arrive in the resistance village of Cicero, IL and meet its inhabitants, along with renowned storyteller Evan Gore. They have their first encounter with Stalek warriors, and learn that the strange edeinos may have been responsible for an assault on a nearby village and the kidnapping of the inhabitants.

SCENE ONE: All Roads Lead to Cicero

The Situation

Standard. After surviving a number of harrowing adventures, the Knights find themselves in the resistance community of Cicero, Illinois. They meet and interact with the inhabitants and learn a little of what's been going on in the area.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

After trekking through the unforgiving jungle for days, you suddenly stumble upon a clearing. Even through the Deep Mist, you can see that it must be early in the day, for the sun shines brightly on a small village.

To your left is a modern, one-story brick house adjacent to a rather beaten mobile home. To the right is a ramshackle building made of scavenged wood and tin, a large tie-dyed 'peace' flag covering the entrance.

But what really captures your attention is the large pool of clear water directly ahead of you. The liquid

looks cool and inviting, much better than dew collected off leaves and the warm canteen water you've been living on for the past few days.

The Action

As soon as the Storm Knights enter the village, they will be spotted by one of the townspeople described below (gamemaster's discretion as to which one). Once the initial encounters have occurred, allow the knights to wander about town, meeting and talking with the inhabitants of Cicero.

Eventually, they should meet or be taken to the town's *de facto* leader Whitey Grant. Whitey will offer the Knights whatever help or information he can provide, and on a *charm* total of 12, will even offer them a place to stay while they're in town. He will gladly share food and water, but will not be able to part with ammunition or fuel, although he will certainly trade for it.

If shown the "Cassandra file," concerning the Chicago area, he has absolutely no information and is quite surprised and disturbed by the news.

Assuming that all goes well, the townsfolk will insist that the adventurers stay to meet Evan Gore, a local storyteller, who is due to arrive this very day around dusk. They may even ask them to help cook, hunt or otherwise prepare for the feast they plan in Gore's honor. (Whitey has declared Evan's infrequent visits to be a sort of holiday, to give the townspeople something to look forward to).

If the Knights are asked to join in a hunt, the gamemaster should feel free to improvise an expedition into the nearby environs to capture or kill some large beast. This should take place just prior to Evan's arrival so as to defeat





the corrosive effects of Lanala's mist. Typical game animals are deer, lokritosk, or grotuks.

While on such a hunt, a *Perception* or *find* total of 12 will reveal trampled vegetation, as if a small group of people (or edeinos) had been scouting around the outskirts of Cicero in the recent past.

Cicero Locations

The Knights can visit any of the following locations while in Cicero (see Map #2):

The Grant Home

'Whitey' Grant lives here with his wife and daughter. Whitey is the unofficial leader of the Cicero resistance community, and one of the few in town who had any real expertise in farming in an area where people must grow their own crops to have any chance of survival. This, plus the fact

that he is a combat veteran, has resulted in his becoming a respected figure in the town.

The Grants live in one of the three trailers that Whitey, Mr. Hopler and Herb Goldstein dragged over from a nearby trailer park after the Battle of Chicago. Within the home are three scavenged shotguns, 112 shells, two Colt .45s and 140 rounds of ammunition. Hidden nearby are a tractor and two Ford Pickups.

Whitey Grant

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 12, fire combat 15, maneuver 13, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 11

Find 13, land vehicles 13, scholar (agriculture) 16

MIND 10

Science (mechanic) 12, survival 13, test 11, willpower 13

CHARISMA 10

Persuasion 13

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 10, reality 12

Possibilities: 5

Equipment: Savage 77E shotguns (3), damage value 18, ammo 5, range 3-15/40/60; Colt .45 (2), damage value 16, ammo 7, range 3-10/15/40; tool chest

Description: Whitey's real name is Charley, but he acquired his nickname when his hair went prematurely gray. He is a capable commander, and cares a great deal about the citizenry of Cicero.

Julie Grant

DEXTERITY 7

Beast riding 8, dodge 8, fire combat 8, stealth 9

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 7

PERCEPTION 9

Find 11, land vehicles 11, language (Spanish) 11

MIND 9

Artist (chef) 12, test 12, willpower 11,



CHARISMA 9

Charm 12, persuasion 12

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Presbyterian) 9

Possibilities: none

Description: Julie is quite disturbed by the war and wishes she and the family could return to Core Earth. She frequently expresses this desire and is quite vehement when doing so, asserting that the Living Land is no place for a child to grow up.

Kristen Grant**DEXTERITY 11**

Beast riding 14, dodge 12, fire combat 13, maneuver 12, running 13, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 7**TOUGHNESS 9****PERCEPTION 11**

Find 12, tracking 12, trick 13

MIND 9

Survival 15, test 10, willpower 13

CHARISMA 12

Charm 13, persuasion 13, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Presbyterian) 12, reality 12

Possibilities: 1

Equipment: Horse named Duster which grazes around back.

Description: Kristen is a fourteen year old blonde beauty who loves horses, rock and roll, and secretly, Freddie "The Thang" Fortress. Kristen and her best friend Laura can often be found in the fields riding Duster. Within the past few days, she spotted figures moving on the outskirts of the jungle during a ride, but they were gone when she returned with help.

The Hoplers

The Hoplers are the typical American family. The father was a draftsman before the Possibility Wars, his son was a senior in high school, his daughter a sixteen year-old heart-breaker. Betty Hopler is a 42 year-old homemaker.

Robert Hopler**DEXTERITY 10**

Beast riding 11, fire combat 12, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 9

Lifting 10

TOUGHNESS 9**PERCEPTION 10**

Find 11, land vehicles 11, scholar (drafting) 14, tracking 12,

MIND 10

Science (architecture) 15, survival 15, willpower 13

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 10

SPIRIT 9

Reality 10

Possibilities: 2

Equipment: M1 Garand, damage value 20, ammo 8, range 3-40/40/600

Description: Hopler is tall and bearded, an avid hunter and sportsman who is responsible for leading most of the community's hunting and foraging parties. He is a close friend of Whitey Grant.

Hopler believes that the village is as safe as it can be from attack, and thinks that reports of lurkers in the jungle are the products of overactive imaginations.

Betty Hopler and the two children, Chris and Laura, have attributes of 8 and have no skills relevant to this adventure.

Boris Gultov

Boris is of German descent, and migrated to America in the late '60s. He gives the impression of being a grouchy old man who thrives on complaining about everything, but he actually cares a great deal for his neighbors. He lives alone and carries a shotgun named "Gertie." He is a tinkerer, and is often called upon to fix gadgets which break down.

Boris Gultov**DEXTERITY 8**

Fire combat 12, prestidigitation 10, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8**TOUGHNESS 8****PERCEPTION 10**

Evidence analysis 11, find 12, language (German) 13, trick 14

MIND 9

Science (mechanics) 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 7

Persuasion 9, taunt 11

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 10

Possibilities: none**Equipment:** "Gertie," Savage 77E

shotgun, damage value 18, ammo 5, range 3-15/40/60; ammunition; pictures of his grandchildren; rooms full of odds and ends, including gadgets he hasn't succeeded in fixing yet.

Description: Boris is the typical grouch. He normally wears brown pants, a brown vest and a white shirt with neon yellow Reeboks. He is inclined to believe stories about potential enemies watching the town, chiefly because Bob Hopler doesn't, and he thinks Bob is a self-important idiot.

Freddie "The Thang" Fortress

Fred Fortress was a reasonably popular rock singer who frequented the Chicago night scene before the war. He maintains a belt-length mop of hair which completely covers his eyes. A popular debate around Cicero is how Fortress manages to walk around linear obstacles. Freddie takes it all in stride and is extremely good-natured, though a bit shy.

Occasionally, the town rigs up his electric amps to the generator and allows Freddie to practice his guitar. Most of the town appreciates Freddie's music more so than they might have before the wars since he is their sole source of entertainment. Boris and Freddie have developed quite a friendship and can often be found tending the garden together. Gultov constantly complaining about the youngster's hair.

Freddie "The Thang" Fortress**DEXTERITY 8**

Dodge 9, running 9, stealth 9, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8**TOUGHNESS 8****PERCEPTION 9**

Find 10, first aid 10, land vehicles 10, trick 11

MIND 9

Artist (musician) 12

CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 10

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Catholic) 10

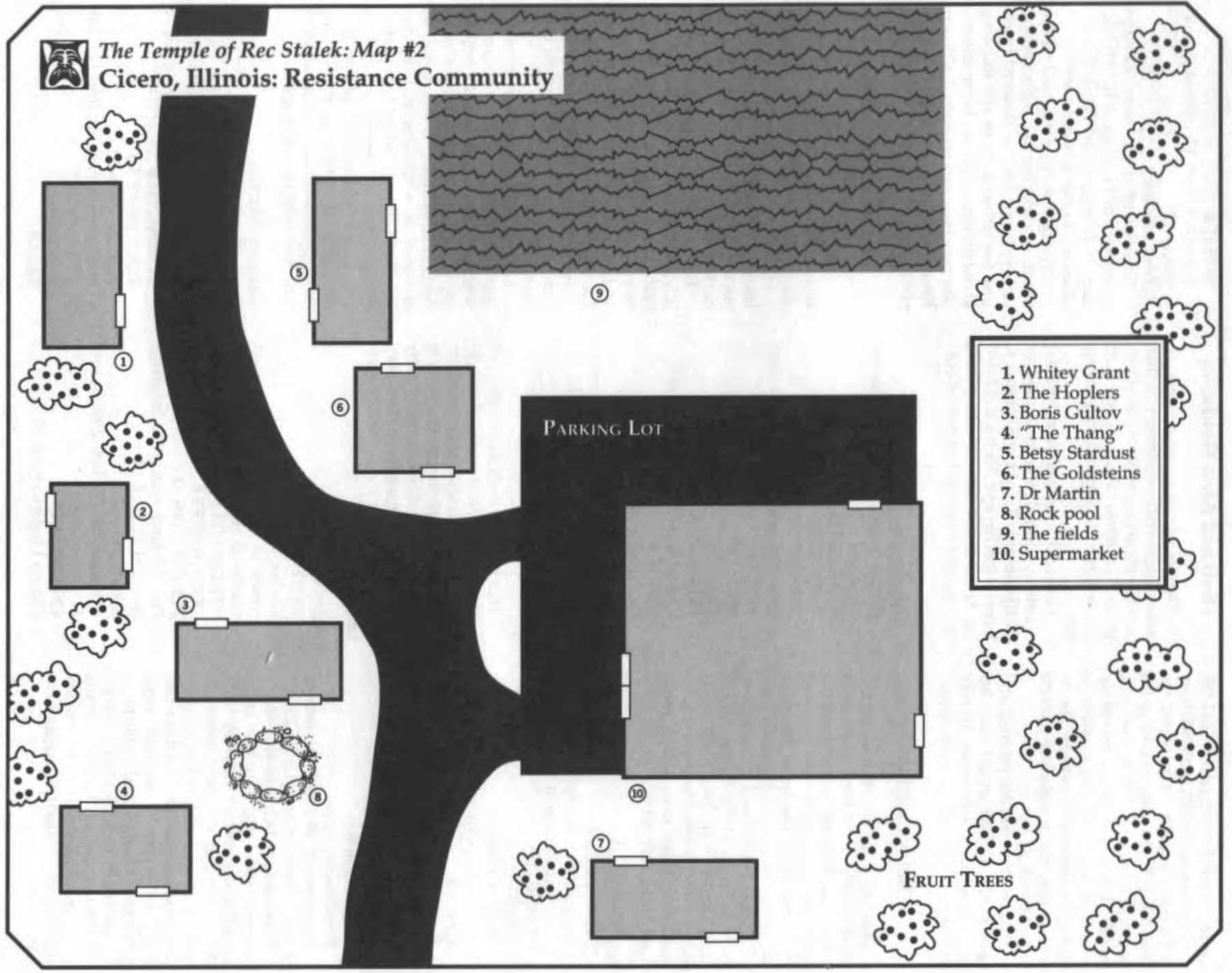
Possibilities: none

Equipment: Red and black electric guitar with "The Thang" written on it in red candle wax; amplifier; acoustic guitar; scarves/bandanna; steel-toed





The Temple of Rec Stalek: Map #2
Cicero, Illinois: Resistance Community



- | | |
|-----|----------------|
| 1. | Whitey Grant |
| 2. | The Hopters |
| 3. | Boris Gultov |
| 4. | "The Thang" |
| 5. | Betsy Stardust |
| 6. | The Goldsteins |
| 7. | Dr Martin |
| 8. | Rock pool |
| 9. | The fields |
| 10. | Supermarket |

cowboy boots, damage value STR+2/10

Description: Freddie prefers to keep to himself, writing songs about the Possibility Wars and enjoying his peaceful existence. Before the war, Freddie had begun to get mixed up with a rough crowd, and so while he misses the action of his former life, he doesn't miss the temptations success brought with it.

Freddie is an ardent pacifist, and believes the edeinos would cease being so warlike if anyone would take the time to communicate with them.

Betsy Stardust

Definitely not her real name, but some liberties have been taken since Baruk Kaah's reality washed over the land. Betsy is currently the center of attention, being the most attractive woman in the village. She often casts a flirting eye at the local men and is on more than one of the ladies' "lists." Alice Goldstein harbors a particular dislike towards Betsy because she believes that Herb is becoming interested in her. (He is.)

Betsy Stardust

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 9, fire combat 9, maneuver 10, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 9

Land vehicles 10, trick 10

MIND 8

Artist (dancer) 10

CHARISMA 12

Charm 15, persuasion 13

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 9

Possibilities: none

Equipment: .38 revolver, damage value 14, ammo 6, range 3-10/25/40

Description: Betsy is stunningly beautiful with long, dark hair and a perpetual tan even in the Deep Mist. She is not the tramp some people brand her, but is simply afraid of being alone in this strange land. Betsy is desperate to get out of Cicero, and will attach herself to any Storm Knight who might be able to get her back to Core Earth.

Betsy is unaware of anyone having been watching the village, but will say whatever she thinks the Knights want to hear.

Herb and Alice Goldstein

The Goldsteins are a young couple whose comfortable existence was shattered by the invasion. Since losing family to an edeinos raiding party, Herb has become ill-tempered with strangers.

Herb has become enamored of Betsy Stardust, and will take an immediate dislike to any Knight who seems to have caught her eye. Alice is saddened by Herb's lack of interest in her, but is determined to tough this period out.

Herb Goldstein

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 9, fire combat 9, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 8

Evidence analysis 9, find 10, land vehicles 9, trick 9

MIND 10

Business 12, test 11

CHARISMA 8

Charm 9, persuasion 11, taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Judaism) 11

Possibilities: none

Equipment: 9mm Beretta, damage value 15, ammo 9, range 3-10/25/40; pocket calculator; radio; Ford Taurus, speed value 160/100/13, pass. 5, TOU 14

Description: Herb was a calm, collected "yuppie," and was on the verge of becoming a certified public accountant when the war began. His parents were slain by an edeinos raiding party shortly thereafter, and he has harbored a deep hatred for the Takta Ker denizens ever since.

Alice Goldstein

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 11

Find 12, land vehicles 12, language (French) 12, trick 13

MIND 10

Artist (painter) 14, test 12, willpower 11

CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 10

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Judaism) 10, intimidation 9, reality 12

Possibilities: 9

Equipment: short bow, damage value STR+5/13, range 3-10/40/100; dagger, damage value STR+3/11; canvases; oil paints; brushes; easel

Description: Alice is actually quite beautiful under her round glasses and tied-back hair. She has thrown herself into her artwork to escape thinking about the dissolution of her marriage. She may become confused if a Storm Knight flirts with her, and decide to cheat on her solemn husband.

Dr. Gregory Martin

Ironically, the most beloved man in town is also potentially the most dangerous. Gregory Martin seems like a highly dedicated doctor who follows his Hippocratic Oath to the letter, but in truth he harbors a number of dark secrets.

First among these is the fact that he is not a doctor. He was a volunteer ambulance driver in a small community outside of Baltimore before the war, but found that he could not stand the sight of broken bodies. He suffered a nervous breakdown after a year on the job, and spent time in a mental institution.

When the war began, he went west, hoping to build a new life for himself. After setting Kristen Grant's broken leg using his extensive knowledge of first aid techniques, he found himself accepted as a medical man by the people of Cicero. He is highly respected in the resistance community, and no one would ever speak ill of him. But his mental state remains fragile, and the sight of a serious injury could drive him right over the edge again.

Gregory Martin

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee weapons 11, stealth 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 11

Evidence analysis 12, find 12, first aid 14, trick 15

MIND 9

Test 10



**CHARISMA 11**

Charm 13, persuasion 14

SPIRIT 9

Reality 13

Possibilities: 6

Equipment: scalpels (2), damage value STR+4/13; scissors, damage value STR+3/12; stethoscope; surgical tape; antiseptic spray; several bottles of wine

Description: Martin is clean-shaven and appears to be about 28-30. He is of shy and quiet demeanor, and usually attempts to avoid eye contact with anyone to whom he is speaking.

Whenever anyone is brought to Martin's "clinic" with an injury to be treated, there is the possibility that he will suffer a relapse of his mental condition. The gamemaster can feel free to cause this to happen if he feels it will help his individual campaign. If unsure how Martin will react in a given situation, generate a *Mind* total for the "doctor" when faced with an injured patient, subtracting -3 from the total for each wound level the patient has suffered. Find the results on the table below.

Martin's Madness Table

Total	Effect
3 or below	Martin goes insane. He attacks the patient with his scalpels for the next six rounds before collapsing into unconsciousness.
4-7	Martin lapses into a catatonic state from shock, which lasts for one hour. When he recovers, he refuses to treat the patient, claiming illness.
7-10	Martin faints. A <i>first aid</i> total of 8 is required to rouse him, otherwise he will remain unconscious for 15 minutes. When he awakens, he will ask to be excused from treating the patient.
11-15	Martin suffers a minor mental breakdown. He makes an effort to treat the wound, dropping instruments as he does so. Add +7 to the difficulty of his <i>first aid</i> attempts.
16-18	Martin has no idea how to treat this wound, but keeps his head. Add +5 to the difficulty number of his <i>first aid</i> attempts.
19 or above	Martin is able to treat the patient and keep his own fears in check. See the "First Aid Chart" on page 55 of the <i>Torg Rulebook</i> .



The Rock Pool

This small body of water is actually a transformed National Guard water tanker. The vehicle had been connected to a residential well to supply water to units engaged in the battle of Chicago. It was abandoned when Baruk Kaah's troops overcame the rear during the original invasion. The Living Land axiom wash turned the tanker into an ever-present source of fresh water, upon which the townspeople rely heavily. Were anything to happen to it (poisoning, contamination, etc.) the inhabitants of Cicero might well have to abandon the town.

The Fields

These are the source of most of the food consumed by the Cicero residents, and are considered to be community property. There are three "orchards" near the field which provide fresh fruit. The parking lot of the supermarket has also become a fertile area for crops.

The Supermarket

Part of a large chain before the invasion, this building has been transformed by the reality of the Living Land. Its exterior has changed to stone, and its interior now serves as living quarters for a dozen residents "gone primitive" and a friendly edeinos the villagers call "Eddie."

An edeinos tech prodigy, Eddie often helps Boris Gultov with his mechanical projects. Some residents, particularly Herb Goldstein, do not trust the edeinos and would prefer to see him driven out of town and killed.

Keep in mind that, though the primitives have transformed to Living Land reality, they are not followers of Baruk Kaah.

Primitives (12)

DEXTERITY 8

Beast riding 9, melee weapons 9, missile weapons 9, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 8

Direction sense 11, find 9, tracking 9

MIND 7

Test 8, willpower 8

CHARISMA 7

Persuasion 9, taunt 9

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Keta Kalles) 9, intimidation 9

Possibilities: none

Equipment: club, damage value STR+3/11; spear, damage value STR+4/12, range 3-5/6-25/26-40

Eddie

DEXTERITY 11

Beast riding 12, dodge 14, fire combat 13, maneuver 15, melee weapons 13, running 12, stealth 14, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 10

Find 11, tracking 12, trick 11

MIND 9

Survival 11, test 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 9

SPIRIT 11

Intimidation 14, reality 16

Possibilities: 10

Equipment: mace, damage value STR+4/14; .38 revolver, damage value 14, ammo 6, range 3-10/25/40

Description: Eddie transformed to Core Earth's reality some time ago, but retains enough knowledge of edeinos tactics as to serve as an effective guard for the village. He is very much aware of the fact that edeinos have been prowling around the village, and what's more, their scent is unfamiliar to him. He cannot elaborate on that, however.

Event

As the Storm Knights move about Cicero, Betsy will inevitably take notice of them and attempt to strike up a conversation with the male character possessing the highest *Charisma*. Betsy will attempt to *charm* him, trying to achieve a loyal result so that the Knight will agree to take her with him when he leaves town.

Flags

If a *Romance* card is played by a male Knight, a spark of attraction may

occur between him and Alice Goldstein. This could attract the attention of Herb, who will either respond angrily or take it as a go-ahead to pursue his relationship with Betsy.

If a *True Identity* card is played, a Knight may recognize Betsy Stardust as Betsy Wilkins, a nightclub singer from Chicago who disappeared shortly after the mysterious death of her lover. If Betsy becomes aware he possesses this knowledge, she will become *hostile* toward the entire party and want them all to leave Cicero as quickly as possible.

Variables

If the Knights should, for whatever reason, choose not to stay in Cicero to see Evan Gore, have them encounter him in the jungle. He can provide them with all the relevant information given in Scene Two, and will also add that he knows of a planned edeinos attack on Cicero and is on his way to warn them. This should induce the Knights to return for the initial battle with the Stalek warriors.

Cut To ...

Once the Knights have had some time to meet the residents of Cicero and it is getting close to the hour of Gore's arrival, cut to Scene Two: "A Fatal Feast."

SCENE TWO: A Fatal Feast

The Situation

Dramatic. Storyteller Evan Gore arrives, but his tales of glorious deeds are interrupted by a Stalek warrior raiding party.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Somewhere in the distance you hear the sound of an engine. The townspeople seem to come alive with excitement, as shouts of "It's Evan!" and "He's finally here!" fill the air.

Moments later, a lone rider



mounted on a large, black motorcycle emerges from the Deep Mist. The cycle pulls a trailer loaded with bottles, cans of food, and boxes of clothing. As you watch, the rider brakes to a stop in the center of the village and shouts a greeting to the people who are milling about him.

The Action

The Storm Knights may converse with Gore or any of the Cicero residents at the feast prior to the beginning of the storytelling. Gore will have heard of the party, and may ask if he can relate some stories of their deeds to the people of the town.

Feel free to add any incidents from your campaign you may wish to the tales listed below.

Evan Gore

See page 58 of *The Living Land* sourcebook.

Read or paraphrase the following stories:

"Baruk Kaah is on the run. The 157th infantry has put together some special units whose job is to infiltrate deep behind the lizard's lines. It's dangerous work, but the edeinos seem to be unfamiliar with this kind of tactic and it's been successful so far.

"Rumors are spreading that there may be a second Battle of Chicago in the works. If this happens, Cicero will probably become a haven for wounded soldiers. You can expect to see shipments of supplies fairly soon.

"There's also a report that several groups of Storm Knights have been traveling the area trying to stop the Spartans from 'evacuating' villages. So far, they haven't been too successful, but I've been told that if you see a big white 'X' on a tree, cover it over as quickly as possible."

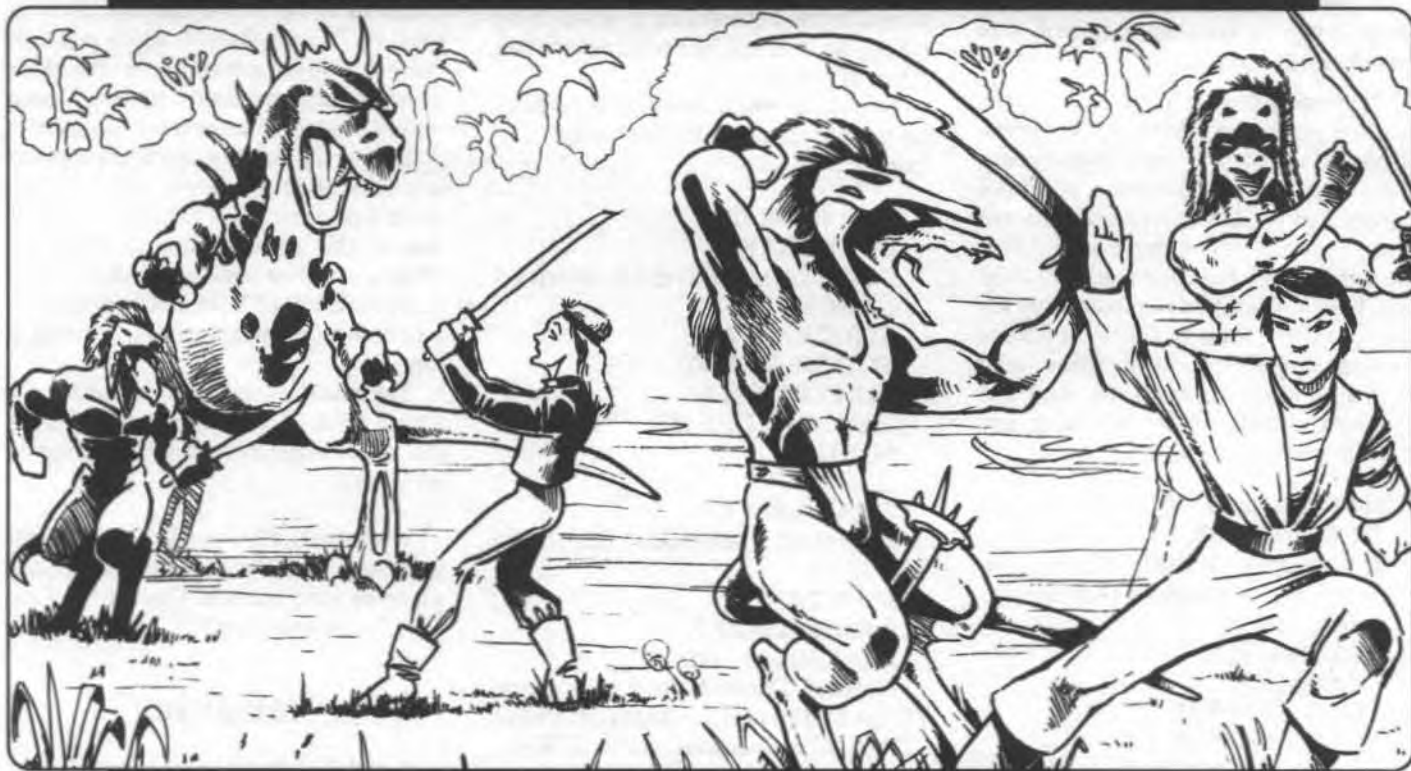
Gore then relates tales of the Storm Knights' deeds, then continues with the following:

"There's one other strange story circulating among the friendly tribes. Apparently, Baruk Kaah has a blood enemy, somebody who'll stop at nothing to see the Saar dead. They say there's a cult of edeinos back on Takta Ker who worship Death, and it's the head of that bunch who has it in for Kaah. He doesn't sound like much of a guy, but I guess any enemy of Kaah's is a friend of ours, in a way."

Gore will ask to hear any new stories the Knights might have to tell him. Once the conversation begins to wane, cut to "Party Crashers."

Party Crashers

Have the Knights generate *find* or *Perception* totals. On a 15, they hear a rustling in the brush near the jungle line. Whether or not they are successful, any primitives at the feast will hear something and begin to get restless. Eddie will also cock his head, as if sensing something is in the wind.



If the Knights ask the primitives what they are reacting to, they will be unable to put it into words. But Eddie will tell them he has picked up the scent of those who have been watching Cicero these past days. Now that he has had the chance to ponder it, he realizes it is not a human scent, but nor is it like that of any edeinos he has ever encountered.

If the Knights wish to, they may grab their weapons and go off to investigate (Whitey Grant and Robert Hople will volunteer to go with them, while Gore and Freddie Fortness begin shepherding the children toward the safety of the supermarket.

Once the Knights and their allies have left the site of the campfire, read aloud or paraphrase:

Suddenly, you hear a piercing shriek from the western edge of the village, followed by the sound of something impossibly huge crashing through the jungle. In the next moment, the village is a scene of chaos, as edeinos clad in bizarre bone armor charge through the streets toward the square. Behind them stalks a dreaded carnel, its tail smashing into the trailers that line the roadway. Atop it, waving a sword, sits another edeinos.

The edeinos are part of a Stalek raiding party, searching for weapons, food and sport. They had been eyeing the village for some time as a potential target, but were unaware that Storm Knights were present this evening. Not expecting such fierce opposition, they will fight without any real strategy for the first three rounds. Once they have assessed the situation, they will regroup and attempt to distract Cicero's defenders by torching any dwellings they are near.

Stalek Warriors (10)

DEXTERITY 10

Beast riding 11, dodge 12, maneuver 13, melee weapons 14, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 11

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 10

Find 12, tracking 11, trick 12

MIND 9

Survival 13, test 13

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Rec Stalek) 15, intimidation 14

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds
Possibility Potential: some (30)

Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+3/14; teeth, damage value STR+2/13

Equipment: bone armor, TOU+4/15; Ustanah sword, damage value STR+5/16

Skill Notes: painted symbols on their armor provides them with a +1 bonus to *intimidation* attacks

By the fourth round, Boris Gultov and Herb Goldstein will have grabbed their weapons and begun sniping at the edeinos. Along with Grant and Hople, they can provide covering fire if the Knights wish to try something.

Once the Stalek warriors' numbers have been reduced by 3-4, they will attempt to retreat, using the carnel to cover them. If they are still taking severe damage, they will simply scatter and flee into the jungle.

Above all else, the Stalek warriors will not allow themselves to be captured. If one believes he is about to be taken, he will kill himself rather than allow it to occur.

Should a Stalek warrior somehow be captured, consult "Variables" below.

Carnel (Zombie)

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 14, maneuver 14, unarmed combat 17

STRENGTH 26

TOUGHNESS 30

PERCEPTION 6

Tracking 8, Trick (15)

MIND 5

Test (15)

CHARISMA 4

Charm (25), persuasion (25), taunt (10)

SPIRIT 4

Intimidation 22

Possibilities: none

Natural Tools: hide, armor value TOU+2/32; teeth, damage value STR+6/32; tail, damage value STR+2/28

Skill Notes: immune to shock and KO conditions from physical attack

This carnel was slain by the Stalek warriors and then raised from the dead by Thrakmass, using the power of his god. It gives off a horrible stench, and an *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 10 will reveal exposed areas where the flesh has begun to rot from the bones.

If the carnel's rider is killed, the creature will wander away, eventually returning to the temple grounds. If the Knights do not discover for themselves that the creature has been zombified, the gamemaster should do nothing to let them suspect.

The Sign of Stalek

Once the warriors have been driven off, the Knights will be asked to help douse the fires they started before the whole town is ashes. Once that is done, any injuries suffered by the Knights can be tended by Dr. Martin.

If the Knights examine one of the dead edeinos, an *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 9 will reveal that its scales have been blackened, as if burned in a fire. The armor he wears is made of bone — an *evidence analysis* total of 12 will show it to be edeinos bone. His helm is made from the skull of some huge predator, its large teeth still providing a screen for his face.

Lining the bottom of the chest piece is a row of finger bones, and an *evidence analysis* total of 12 will show that one of the bones is longer than the others, and has several scratch marks on it, as if it had been rubbed against an abrasive substance (it is, in truth, a key).

The edeinos' weapon is made of a single piece of curved, chitinous material, somewhat resembling the leg of an insect.

With the battle over, Evan Gore will approach the Knights with a crucial piece of information. Cut to "A Tale Too Terrible to Tell."

Variables

If the Knights are unsuccessful in driving off the Stalek warriors, they will have to try and lead the Cicero residents to a place of safety. They can





then return to Cicero at the start of Act Two and pick up the trail of the raiding party.

If one of the Stalek warriors is captured and forced to talk, he will say only that Baruk Kaah's time draws near. If asked about his weapon and armor, he will say only that Stalek gave them to him. He will identify Stalek only as "Death." He cannot provide any details of Thrakmoss' plot, nor will he mention Thrakmoss by name — a fanatic, he is convinced Stalek speaks through Thrakmoss and that the two are one and the same. Thus, he refers only to Stalek.

If one of the Storm Knights is a denizen of the Living Land and makes a *scholar (realm lore)* total of 9, he knows that Stalek is the name of the Death god of the edeinos, who was supposedly defeated by Lanala ages ago. If none of the Storm Knights can access this information, Eddie can also provide it.

A Tale Too Terrible to Tell

As the residents of Cicero begin cleaning up after the Stalek raid, Evan Gore approaches the Knights. Read aloud or paraphrase:

The storyteller's face bears an expression of deep concern as he takes you aside. "Usually when I come upon a village, I try to only tell them the good news ... tempered with a few warnings of possible trouble on the horizon. Keeping their morale up is a big part of my job.

"But you're Storm Knights — you know what it's like out here. Anyway, yesterday, as I was heading for Cicero, I passed through another village I visit occasionally. Most of the people there are primitives, and at least half worship Lanala, but they're no friends of Kaah. I usually get a decent reception there — despite what they say about 'dead' things, they enjoy seeing me ride my motorcycle.

"But when I rode into Great Neck yesterday, the whole place had been burned to the ground.

"My first thought was that a 'Sweeping Crew' had been through, so I started looking for the big white 'X' that they leave to mark villages for clean-out. But I couldn't find it — and then it hit me: there weren't any bodies anywhere! Blood all over the place, but no corpses.

"I did notice one other thing. There was an old Pontiac in the street that had several large gashes in the hood, as if someone had hit it with a sword. I didn't make the connection until now, but I think Great Neck must have been attacked by the same edeinos who tried to kill us tonight."

Gore will ask the Knights to go to Great Neck and investigate, since these strange new edeinos might well be a threat to other resistance communities in the area. He will refuse to come, however, citing the fact that he is a storyteller and not a warrior.



The Knights may, if they wish, ask someone from the town to accompany them. Grant, Hopley, and Goldstein will be reluctant to go, feeling that Cicero will need defending in the days to come, but Dr. Martin will agree (he is beginning to think his lies will be exposed soon, and wants to get out of town).

Grant will offer to provide the Knights with what weapons, food and water the town can spare, and will tell the Knights they are always welcome in Cicero.

Variables

If the Knights refuse to go to Great Neck, Gore will disgustedly tell them that he has connections in Core Earth who will be willing to pay them for their services, if that's what they want.

If the Knights wish to track the edeinos who attacked Cicero, they must generate successful *tracking* totals of 14, and the trail will lead to Great Neck. Tracking Evan Gore's motorcycle path back to Great Neck requires *tracking* totals of 7.

Flags

If a *Romance* card has been played with regard to either Alice Goldstein or Betsy Stardust, the relevant woman will insist on accompanying the Knights. The Knight involved in the subplot will have to *persuade* her not to come. If he fails and she is killed during the events to come, that Knight receives no Possibilities at the end of the adventure.

If a *Personal Stake* card is played, one of the Knights knew someone in

Great Neck and will be determined to investigate, with or without his comrades.

Awards

For successfully completing this act (including defeating the attacking edeinos), award the Knights three Possibilities. If they failed to stop the Stalek warrior attack, award them only two Possibilities. If they discovered that the carnel was undead, award them an additional Possibility each.

Cut To ...

When the Knights are prepared to leave Cicero and begin their quest, cut to Act Two, "Land of Living Death."



Act Two

Land of Living Death

The Major Beat

The Storm Knights travel to Great Neck in an effort to learn the secret of the Stalek raiders. Along the way, they encounter a group of poachers who have slain a number of edeinos, and get an opportunity to acquire a valuable Living Land artifact.

In Great Neck, they learn more about the true horror of Thrakmoss' plans from the lone resident left behind. But as they make their way to the temple of Rec Stalek, they find themselves in a cat-and-mouse game with one of Death's most vile creations.

SCENE ONE: Poached Edeinos

The Situation

Standard. This scene should take place sometime during the first 12 hours of the Knight's journey to Great Neck. The Storm Knights come upon a new breed of villain, poachers who kill Living Land creatures — including edeinos — and sell the meat in Core Earth.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The omnipresent undergrowth of the Living Land rips and tears at your clothing. For every vine you hack, two more seem to take its place. You pause, taking a drink from your canteen, and suddenly hear the unmistakable sound of a chainsaw ripping into something softer than wood.

If the Knights do not wish to investigate, cut to Scene Three. If they do

wish to look into the origin of the sound, read or paraphrase the following:

As you move toward the sound, you see before you a large clearing. Scattered throughout it are the skinned carcasses of several large creatures, their limbs apparently carved off them.

Several Core Earth men are walking among the corpses, using chainsaws to cut away the skin of the dead animals. The hides are then attached to a small winch which rests on the back of one of the three pickup trucks. As you watch, another man takes a hide from the truck and dips into a vat of laquer which boils over the nearby campfire.

It is then that you see the bodies of several edeinos lying amidst the creature carcasses. The humans are cursing and spitting at them, and it is impossible to tell if any of them are still alive.

The edeinos are the remnants of a hunting party which stumbled upon the poachers at their bloody work. They attacked but were mowed down by the guns of the humans. Now all but one is dead, the edeinos responsible for inflicting a shoulder wound on one of the men that is being tended to as the Knights approach.

There are a total of nine poachers in the clearing, all of them armed: one doctoring another, one treating hides, and six sawing meat off dead creatures.

As the Knights watch, one of the men begins carving up an edeinos. The lone surviving edeinos shrinks away as the saw rips through meat and bone.

If the Knights decide to simply ignore the scene and leave, cut to Scene



Two. If they speak to the poachers, Ferral Graham, leader of the party, will order his men to open fire on the intruders (since what they are doing is highly illegal). The poachers automatically get initiative in the first round in this case.

If the Knights attack, the poachers will fight until they have lost half their force, and then attempt to retreat into the jungle.

Ferral Graham

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 12, fire combat 15, maneuver 13, melee weapons 12, missile weapons 12, stealth 14, swimming 11, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 10

Land vehicles 12, tracking 13, trick 14, water vehicles 11

MIND 10

Test 11

CHARISMA 10

Charm 11, persuasion 13, taunt 12

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 12, reality 15

Possibilities: 9

Equipment: streetsweeper (shotgun), damage value 18, ammo 20, range 3-10/20/40; knife, damage value STR+4/15; flak vest, armor value TOU+6/16; fragmentation grenades (2), damage value 19, explosive burst radius 0-3/8/15; pick-up truck, speed value 160/100/13, pass. 2, TOU 14

Description: Graham was a gun collector and an avid hunter prior to the war. After the invasion, he saw that there was a profit to be made in the meat of the Living Land's creatures.

Finding some like-minded individuals to join him, he "acquired" a small ferry and began making trips to Illinois. There he and his group would kill creatures and sell the meat to resistance communities, claiming it was fresh beef from Texas and charging exorbitant prices. The hides are then sold in Detroit as souvenirs.

Graham is aware that hunting in the Living Land without a license from the local Delphi Council office is ille-

gal, but he considers the money worth the risk.

Poachers (8)

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, fire combat 12, maneuver 10, missile weapons 11, stealth 10, swimming 10, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 8

Land vehicles 9, tracking 9, trick 10, water vehicles 9

MIND 8

Test 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 9

SPIRIT 7

Intimidation 9

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds

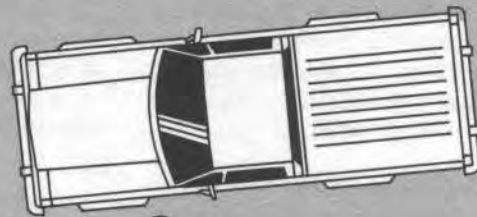
Possibility Potential: some (45)

Equipment: pump-shotgun w/ slugs, damage value 21, ammo 9, range 3-15/40/60; chainsaw, damage value STR+7/16; in addition, the poaching party has two pick-up trucks with stats identical to those of Graham's.

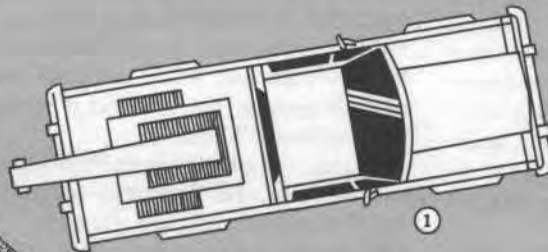




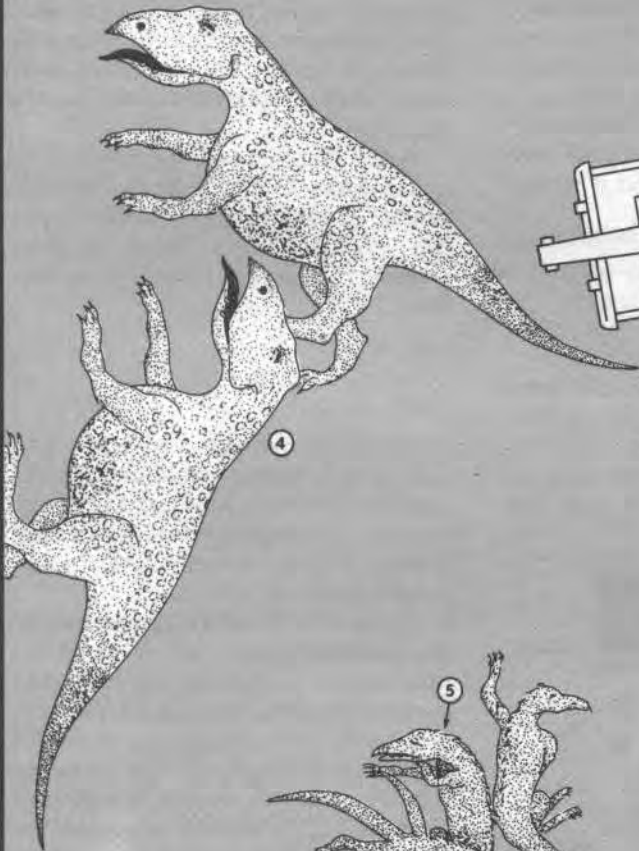
The Temple of Rec Stalek: Map #3 Poachers' Campsite



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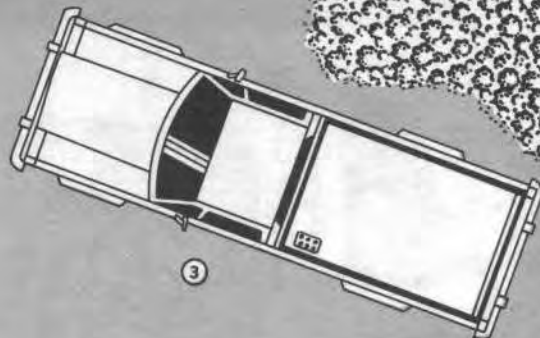


1



4

5



3

- 1. Pickup with winch
- 2. Pickup
- 3. Pickup with freezer
- 4. Dead tras
- 5. Wounded edeinos



Mounted on the back of one of the trucks is an M60 machine gun, damage value 23, ammo 15, range 3-100/600/1.5k

Note: One of the poachers sustained a wound in battle with the edeinos. One round after the combat starts, this person will man the machine gun on the truck and attack the Knights, using the One-on-Many rules.

If the Knights are driven off by the poachers, they can continue their journey to Great Neck or make a second attempt to rescue the edeinos. If they choose the former, cut to Scene Two.

If the Knights capture and interrogate one of the poachers, he will tell them about the whole operation, and add that this was to be the last run into Illinois for a while. The poachers have been seeing signs of increasing violence on the part of the edeinos, and one of the men claimed to have spotted an edeinos wearing armor. Naturally, no one believed him.

A victory also means the Knights have the option of looting the poachers' gear. In addition to their weaponry, there are the three pick-up trucks, ammunition for the shotguns and machine gun, \$335 in cash, and several gym bags filled with clothing.

Behind the seat of Graham's truck is a gym bag full of dynamite (10 sticks bundled together). If detonated together they would have a damage value of 24, with a blast radius of 0-5/15/30. The fuses are tied together, and a *prestidigitation* or *Dexterity* total of 13 is required to successfully pull each stick free of the others without breaking the brittle fuses.

A Friend in Need

If the Storm Knights check on the wounded edeinos, they will see he is conscious but has a severe chest wound. A *medicine* total of 7 will reveal that the wound was made by a shotgun blast, and the edeinos is mortally wounded, with roughly four rounds to live. The ground is soaked with edeinos' blood.

If any of the Knights attempts to aid the edeinos, he gestures toward a nearby wreath of pink flowers. The edeinos then gestures for the Knight to put the wreath upon his head.

If the Knight does so, he will immediately discover that he can understand the language of the edeinos. The wounded optant explains that the wreath has been blessed by him with

the *gain language* miracle, and will allow anyone who wears it to understand foreign languages for up to an hour at a time.

The optant goes on to explain that he is part of a tribe which is rebelling against the Saar, and he and his party had approached these humans with the wreath, intending to give it to them as a gift. They also hoped to seal an alliance against Kaah, but instead the men shot them down.

For purposes of miraculous healing, the optant has *faith* (*Lanala*) at 12. If the edeinos has been healed, he will ask the Knights to keep his gift as a sign of his gratitude and then he will depart. If healing attempts have been unsuccessful, the edeinos will quietly succumb.

If the Knights ask the edeinos to guide them to Great Neck, he will refuse, saying he fears encountering the "edeinos who don't do dead things to make war." He will elaborate no further.

Flags

Should a *Nemesis* card be played during this scene, Graham may escape and recruit a new band of thugs to track the Knights down. They may attempt to ambush the Knights at some point in a future adventure.

If a *Connection* card is played, one of the poachers turns out to be an acquaintance of one of the Knights named Franklin Bass, a former cop who has fallen on hard times. Bass will try to hold off the Knights to allow his fellow poachers to escape, but will not shoot to kill. If Bass is captured, the Knight will ask that he be given a gun and sent back to Cicero for safekeeping. When and if the Knights return there after this investigation, they can deliver him to the proper authorities then. (It is also possible that the Knight may simply insist that Bass be allowed to go free.)

Cut To ...

With the poachers disposed of and (hopefully) the edeinos' valuable gift in tow, the party can move on to the





site of the Stalek massacre. Cut to Scene Two, "Great Neck, Once Removed."

SCENE TWO: Great Neck, Once Removed

The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights arrive in the blood-soaked ruins of Great Neck, and learn more about the strange menace of the Rec Stalek cult from the lone survivor of the massacre.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Just ahead, staggered to either side of a vine-covered road, stand several ruined buildings. Scorch marks stretch from the windows to the roof, and dark stains cover the outer walls. As you move down the main avenue, you spot a blue Pontiac with several deep gashes in its hood. The same

dark stains visible on the houses are here also, covering the grill, the headlights and the ground in front of the automobile.

The Action

The Knights are free to investigate the ruins of Great Neck to try and learn more about the perpetrators of what was apparently a massacre. An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 6 will reveal that there are no signs of bodies anywhere. A *scholar (realm lore)* total of 8 will serve to remind the Knights that the absence of whole corpses is not unusual in the Living Land, where dead things rot rapidly. But here there seems to be nothing left even for the flies.

The village was named for an odd outcropping of rock that looks something like the neck of an ostrich when viewed from the proper angle. Fourteen buildings of various design dot this stretch of road. Some of the houses

are ranch-style homes with modern-looking porches and swings. Other abodes consist of scavenged tin, cinder block, road signs, and whatever else the people could find to build with.

A *find* or *Perception* total of 9 will allow the Knights to uncover some of the remnants of the people who had lived here: a stuffed doll, a broken .38 revolver, a weed-whacker, two jars of peanut butter (sealed), and several batteries. Numerous articles of clothing, quilts, blankets, and towels can also be found. Most of these items were kept as curiosities by those residents who had transformed to Living Land reality.

Large brownish stains cover parts of walls, doors and porches throughout the town. If the Knights examine them, an *evidence analysis* total of 13 shows the stains to probably be blood. A *science (biology)* total of 9 reveals the bloodstains to be less than a week old.

Should the Knights examine the Pontiac, an *evidence analysis* or *Percep-*



tion total of 11 reveals the following, depending upon the level of success achieved:

Minimal: The gash in the hood of the car was made by a bladed weapon, probably a sword or a spear.

Average: The gash was made in the car roughly 4-5 days ago. There are no bloodstains on the seats or anywhere in the interior.

Good: The damage done to the car by this weapon was too extensive to have been done by the swords the Stalek warriors were seen to be carrying.

Superior: The gash was most likely made by a spear being thrust into the car and then pulled down the length of the hood. The head of the spear had to be extremely large and sharp to have done as much damage as it did.

Spectacular: Tiny bits of rock around the deepest gashes reveal that the blade of the weapon was made from a stone made of obsidian or a similar substance.

Sole Survivor

During the party's search of the village, a *find* or *Perception* total of 8 will draw the Knights attention to the sight of three crosktrackts converging on a nearby thicket. The carrion-eating lizards have obviously picked up the scent of something.

Crosktrackts (3)

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 11, maneuver 12, running 10, stealth 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 12

Find 13, tracking 14, trick 13

MIND 7

Willpower (8)

CHARISMA 4

Taunt (7)

SPIRIT 4

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: teeth +3/11

If the Knights approach the thicket, a *find* or *Perception* total of 9 will allow them to make out the outline of a human in the brush. It is this the crosktrackts are hoping to make a meal out of, but the Knights may attempt to drive them off. The crosktrackts will

resist at first, but once one is killed, the others will scatter.

With the lizards gone, the Knights will find that the body in the bush belongs to a beautiful female primitive. She has suffered grievous wounds, and blood coats the side of her face. She is *heavily wounded*, and a *first aid* total of 12 will be required to revive her.

When she speaks, it is haltingly. She cannot tell the Knights exactly when the events she relates occurred — having transformed to Living Land reality, she has lost her understanding of time.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The girl awakens with a start. Her dark eyes dart from one to another of you, panic clearly written on her features. She reaches for her head, then her hand recoils from the sensation of the dried blood.

A *persuasion* or *Charisma* total of 8 is required to convince Tara the Knights are her friends. Once she has been made comfortable she will begin to speak.

"Terrible, black edeinos came into our village. They told us to come with them, but ... we said no. Then they began to kill and burn and the big one, the one with ... it ... became mad, like a trandala grathteen. He screamed "Death to Lanala! Death to Baruk Kaah!"

"I hid. I was afraid. They wore the bones of the dead — why would they do that?"

"Tom? Have you seen Tom? No ... no, I remember. They cut off his head on that great dead thing," she says, gesturing toward the Pontiac.

If asked about trandala grathteens, Tara will explain the Takta Ker legend of the edeinos driven mad by sensation. If asked about "it," she will explain that it was a great black spear that seemed to thrive on death. She had once heard tales of such a thing from some edeinos — they said Stalek would often gift his priests with such a weapon as a sign of his favor.

Tara

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 9, maneuver 9, melee weapons 9, running 9, stealth 9, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 7

PERCEPTION 9

Direction sense 10, find 10, language 11, trick 10

MIND 9

Survival 11, test 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Keta Kalles) 11

Possibilities: none

Equipment: none

Note: Tara is *heavily wounded* at the start of this scene.

Tara can tell the Knights in which direction the blackened edeinos exited the village. She knows that some of the villagers were taken alive by the raiders, while the corpses of the dead were carried along as well, for reasons she cannot guess.

If Tara has been healed sufficiently, she will offer to accompany the Knights on their journey. A *persuasion* total of 12 will be required to convince her of the danger of going.

If she has still too weak to travel on her own, the Knights can attempt to construct some kind of a litter out of nearby trees (*Dexterity* total of 8) and then leave her at the next village they pass for recuperation.

Variables

If the Knights do not encounter Tara, a *find* or *Perception* total of 13 will allow them to find the trail left by the Stalek warriors as they exited Great Neck. An *evidence analysis* or *Mind* total of 10 shows that some humans were being dragged along, and that the depth of the edeinos' footprints indicate that some of them were carrying heavy loads.

Flags

If a *Romance* card is played, a Knight finds himself attracted to Tara. He will be intent on protecting and avenging her, but will also realize that she would be safer out of harm's way. He will receive an additional Possibility at the end of each act of this adventure until Thrakmoss is destroyed.



Cut To ...

When the Knights have discovered the trail of the Stalek warriors, cut to Scene Three, "Swamp Things."

SCENE THREE: Swamp of Horror

The Situation

Dramatic. The Storm Knights follow the trail of the Stalek warriors into a dark and dangerous swamp, and encounter a deadly servant of Stalek.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

It's twilight. What little vision you did have in the Deep Mist is now halved, and every shadow seems to

conceal a new hazard. It is becoming far more difficult to follow the trail of the edeinosaurs raiders in the gathering darkness, and as your foot sinks into something soft and wet, you realize you've reached the edge of a swamp.

Up ahead you hear a strange sound — that of silence. No buzzing of insects, no chirping of night birds. The quiet is suddenly dispelled by a rush of wind, and a rustling of leaves which sounds very much like ... whispering.

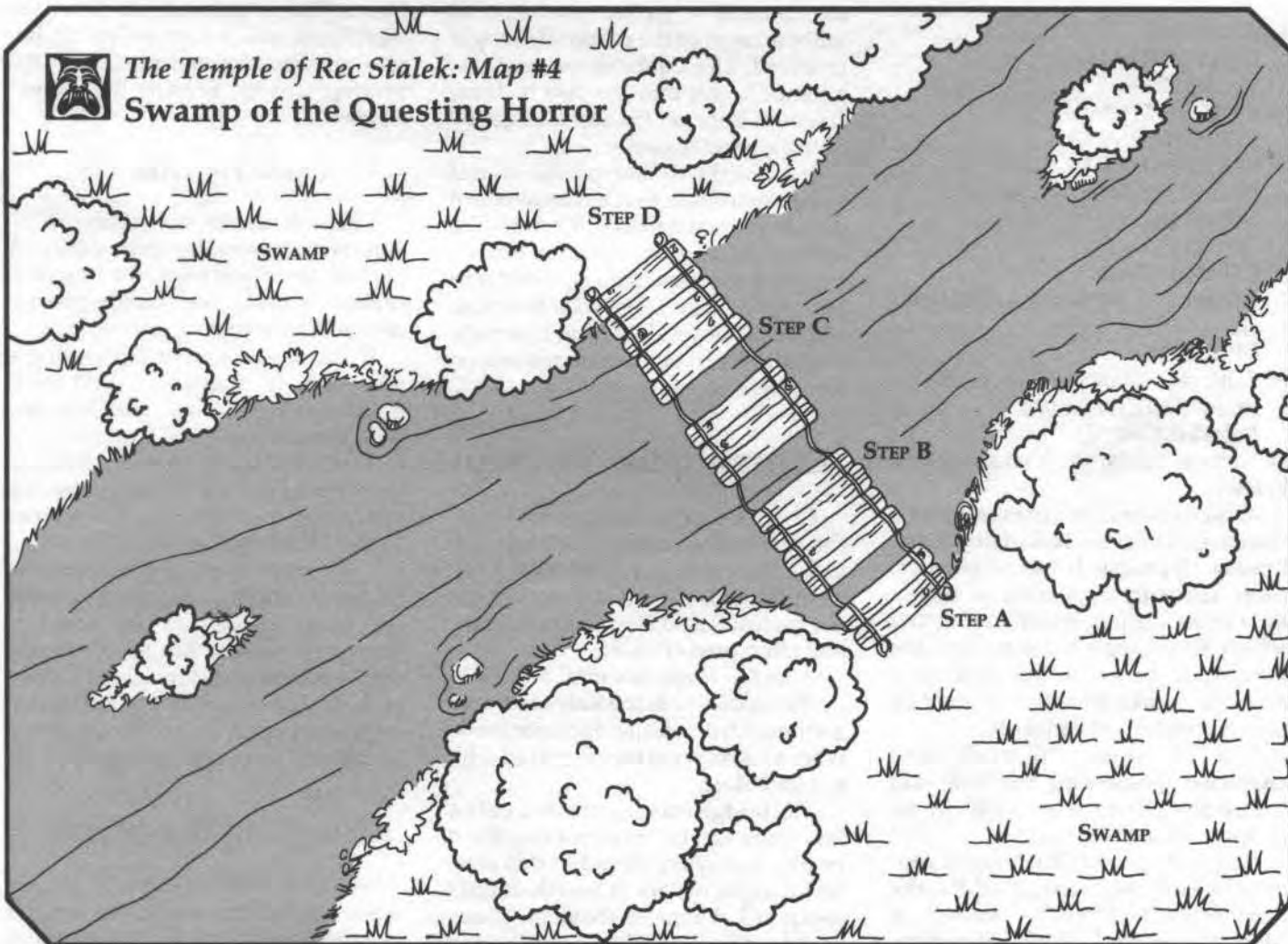
The Action

The Storm Knights may do whatever they wish at this point — stay put or go forward. The tracks of the edeinosaurs raiders lead farther into the swamp, but due to the darkness, *tracking* totals

of 16 are now needed to follow them. If the Knights do move ahead, the Darkweaver will attack them as they begin to cross the wooden bridge. Cut to "Darkweaver," below.

If the Knights should decide to make camp, allow them a few rounds of uninterrupted set-up before beginning to increase the tension. Have the Knights generate *Perception* totals — on 8s, they notice that the rustling sound behind them is growing louder, and if they listen closely, they can hear snatches of what seem to be words.

If the Knights wish to scout the area, they may — they will see that a rickety wooden bridge crosses the swamp up ahead, but no sign of any menace. Still, the ominous whispering grows louder and louder, threatening to drown out even the sound of their own thoughts.



If the Knights stand stock-still and try to concentrate on what the "whisperer" is saying, the sound stops. It begins again as soon as they begin moving. Periodically, a roar from a Living Land beast way off in the distance may echo across the jungle. Play up the dark, vaguely frightening nature of the swamp as the Darkweaver primes the Knights for its attack.

Darkweaver

The Darkweaver is a non-corporeal entity created through the spiritual power of Stalek. Its purpose is to keep intruder from entering Death's domain, and uses the fears of its enemies to accomplish this task. It is the guardian of this swamp, and as stated above, will attack the Knights whether they are merely camping for the night or are trying to cross the swamp.

Darkweaver

DEXTERITY 3

Stealth 20

STRENGTH 1

TOUGHNESS 13

PERCEPTION 18

Find 19, tracking 20, trick 19

MIND 16

Test 20

CHARISMA 3

Charm (21), persuasion (23), taunt (13)

SPIRIT 20

Faith (Rec Stalek) 23, focus 21, intimidation 21, reality 23

Possibilities: 10

Natural Tools: spiritual attack (see below).

Description: The Darkweaver is a manifestation of the fear of death that lives in all people. It has no physical form, normally appearing as only a light mist indistinguishable from that which fills Lanala's realm. But the miraculous power which created it allows it to take on a form shaped by the imagination of its target.

The Darkweaver will attack those characters possessing the *faith* skill before any others. Essentially, its attack occurs in three stages:

Stage One — The Darkweaver generates a *Mind* total against a difficulty number of its target's *willpower* or *Mind*. If it succeeds, it has pierced the veil of its target's thoughts and dis-

cerned what the prey most fears. If it fails in Stage One, it will move on to another target and return later for the present one.

Stage Two — The Darkweaver closes in, transforming into the semblance of the fearsome image it has absorbed. It will be visible only to its target in this shape, and then only out of the corner of the eye. The Darkweaver will then make an *intimidation* attack.

Stage Three — With its foe rattled, it will now attack with its faith against the *faith* or *Spirit* of its target. The result is read on the Combat Results Table as *stun damage*, with spiritual consequences (see pages 124-125 of the *Torg Rulebook*).

The Darkweaver may attempt a One-on-Many to read the minds of more than one character, but it cannot assume more than one shape at a time. The forms it mimics must be drawn from the memories and experiences of the character — gamemasters should tailor them to fit the particular Knight involved. The Darkweaver may also attempt to get through two or three stages at once on the same target by doing a multi-action.

If a Knight should prevail in this spiritual struggle, the Darkweaver will suffer spiritual damage. It can also be harmed by magic or miracles, but not by physical attack (nor can it initiate a physical attack). The Darkweaver can also be destroyed by luring it into the radius of effect of the uscranta tree on the other side of the swamp.

Crossing the Swamp

Crossing the the bridge built across the muck-filled swamp requires the use of Dramatic Skill Resolution. Keep in mind that, if the Darkweaver has not been defeated, it will attack during any attempted crossing.

A *find* or *Perception* total of 8 made on the shore allows the Knights to spot a strange tree on the opposite bank, whose leaves seem to be streaked with red and blue.

The bridge was constructed only a few years ago by children that lived nearby and often played in this area, and is eight meters in length. It rests about 1/3 of a meter above the slime, and since the tree which supplied the wood did not die within Lanala's sight,

it has resisted the corrosive effects of the Deep Mist. However, years of rain pounding the untreated wood has caused it to rot in many places, and the bridge is no longer as stable as the Knights might like.

Knights crossing the bridge or fording the swamp do so in DEX order. There are four major sections of the bridge, and steps A, B, C and D of the Dramatic Skill Resolution (see pages 62-63 of the *Torg Rulebook*) conform to attempts to cross each section in safety.

Crossing a section requires an *acrobatics* or *Dexterity* total of 11. Failing a roll means the character falls into the swamp — a *Dexterity* total of 8 is required for someone ahead of or behind him to catch his arm and prevent his falling in. A *lifting* or *Strength* total of 13 allows the Knight to pull his companion back on to the bridge.

If the bridge should collapse, the Storm Knight picks up the Dramatic Skill Resolution where he left off, but now must do it by wading through the swamp. Cut to "Fording the Slime," below.

Come Fly With Me

Characters with the ability to fly can cross the swamp more easily. A *flight* total of 9 will allow the Knight to make it across in four rounds, providing he is not carrying anyone else.

If the flying Knight is carrying a passenger, he must make *flight* totals of 10 and go through the Dramatic Skill Resolution (this simulates the difficulty of hauling someone through the air). Failure means the person being carried is dropped in the swamp. Cut to "Fording the Slime."

Another means of crossing the bridge is jumping. *Long jumping* totals of 9 allow a Knight to leap from one section to another. But failure means the Knight crashes through the section of the bridge upon which he has landed — he ends up in the swamp, and that section of the bridge collapses.

Fording the Slime

Anyone who attempts to simply wade through the water is facing a bit of a problem. There is at least a meter of soft mud beneath the surface water,





and this will slow progress to a crawl. The four-step Dramatic Skill Resolution still applies here, and *Strength* totals of 13 are needed to traverse. Failing a roll simply means the Knight cannot progress any farther this round.

Event

It is possible that, while wading through the swamp, the Knights may find themselves attacked by quarteks, Living Land leeches. Roughly eight centimeters long and reddish in color, the leech initially attacks by generating a *stealth* total against its target's *Perception*. If successful, the leech has attached itself to the target.

Find or *Perception* totals of 11 are required to spot a quartek once it is attached. Quarteks drain their prey of the will to live — once per hour, generate a *Charisma* total for the leech against the prey's *Spirit*. For each result point the quartek achieves on a successful roll, the Knight receives a -1 penalty to all action rolls. The player should not be informed of the penalty until he tries to make a roll, and then should not be told why the penalty is being assessed.

The leech can be removed with an *unarmed combat* or *Dexterity* total of 7, and all penalties will disappear within one hour.

Quartek

DEXTERITY 4

Stealth 9

STRENGTH 5

TOUGHNESS 6

PERCEPTION 7

Trick (11)

MIND 3

Willpower 5

CHARISMA 12

Taunt (12)

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation (12)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: see above

Safe on Shore

Once they are a few meters past the end of the bridge, the Knights will be free of the Darkweaver's attacks. They

will be protected by the presence of the uscranta tree, a Living Land eternity shard that this particular servant of Death finds repugnant. If the Knights get a *player's call* on a *trick* or *taunt*, they can lure the Darkweaver close to the tree and assure its destruction.

The Storm Knights can now take the time to examine the unusual plant they have found. An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 8 reveals that the tree has a trunk of pale white and broad, flat leaves colored red and blue. A *scholar (realm lore)* total of 8 will tell the Knights this is the famed uscranta tree, a Living Land eternity shard.

The Uscranta Tree

Cosm: Takta Ker

Possibilities: 25 (per tree)

Tapping Difficulty: 20

Purpose: To sustain life

Powers: Provides a +3 to the bonus of *medicine* totals used to heal a follower of Keta Kalles

Group Power: *Life Thread*

Restrictions: The bearer of the group power must have at least one add in *faith (Keta Kalles)*

Description: Uscranta trees are exceedingly rare and are usually found in isolated groves.

The Knights may, if they wish, break off a branch of the tree, but they will have to transplant it into soil immediately if they wish to carry it with them and make use of it (if the branch dies, it is useless). A branch of the tree only has three Possibilities which may be tapped.

Once the Knights are safely across the bridge, they can pick up the trail of the edeinos again (*tracking* or *Perception* totals of 9). Cut to Act Three.

Flags

Crossing the Bridge:

If a *possible setback* appears, the lead character must step back to the section of the bridge he just left. This means everyone behind him must also step back, or else risk the collapse of the bridge under the weight of the two Knights.

If a *complication* appears, the lead

character snaps off a railing, breaks through a choice plank, etc., increasing the difficulty each step by +1 for those behind him.

If a *critical problem* appears, the section of the bridge upon which the lead character is standing collapses, plunging him into the swamp. All of those behind him must enter the water at the point where the bridge has broken if they wish to cross to the other side of the muck. Cut to "Fording the Slime," above.

Fording the Swamp:

If a *possible setback* appears, the lead character's footing grows unsteady and he stumbles backward (i.e., from Step B to Step A). The Knight immediately behind him suffers a fatigue result as a consequence of being fallen back upon.

If a *complication* appears, one of the Knights loses a shoe or boot in the muck. Attempting to find it in all the mud requires a *find* or *Perception* total of 30, and then a *Strength* total of 12 is required to pull it free.

If the Knight proceeds onward without the footwear, he suffers a shock point every 15 minutes until some provision is made (wrapping his foot in thick cloth, etc.) This represents the general difficulty of navigating barefoot through the Living Land.

If a *critical problem* appears, the Knights are attacked by a gigantic portochk, which rises up out of the water and crashes down upon one of them. The portochk automatically receives initiative the first round.

Portochk

DEXTERITY 6

Stealth 12, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 14

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 6

Trick 9

MIND 5

Willpower 7

CHARISMA 8

Taunt (10)

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation (9)

Possibilities: none

Natural Tools: strangulation attack, damage value 16

Description: A portochk is a huge





plant coiled upon itself, with mud and slime filling the gaps. It is normally three meters in diameters and reaches heights of five meters.

The portochk attacks by rearing up out of the water and crashing down on its victim. It then attempts to entangle its prey in its vines and strangle him. If the portochk achieves three or more result points on its *unarmed combat* attack, use the the strangulation damage value of 16 as the base damage of the attack. A *Strength* total of 17 is required to escape the vines.

Physical attacks are less effective against this creature than most, as its body is capable of absorbing the force of the blows. Subtract -3 from the damage values of physical attacks.

Variables

The Storm Knights may wish to avoid the swamp altogether. They can attempt this if they so choose, although they will still be pursued by the Darkweaver. If they try to go around, it will mean venturing several miles out of their way and off the track of the edeinos. They may easily get lost (see pages 66-67 of *The Living Land* sourcebook) or encounter various monstrous creatures. In addition, this will cost them time — they may arrive at the temples (the one on Earth and the one on Takta Ker) significantly later than might be best for the success of their mission.

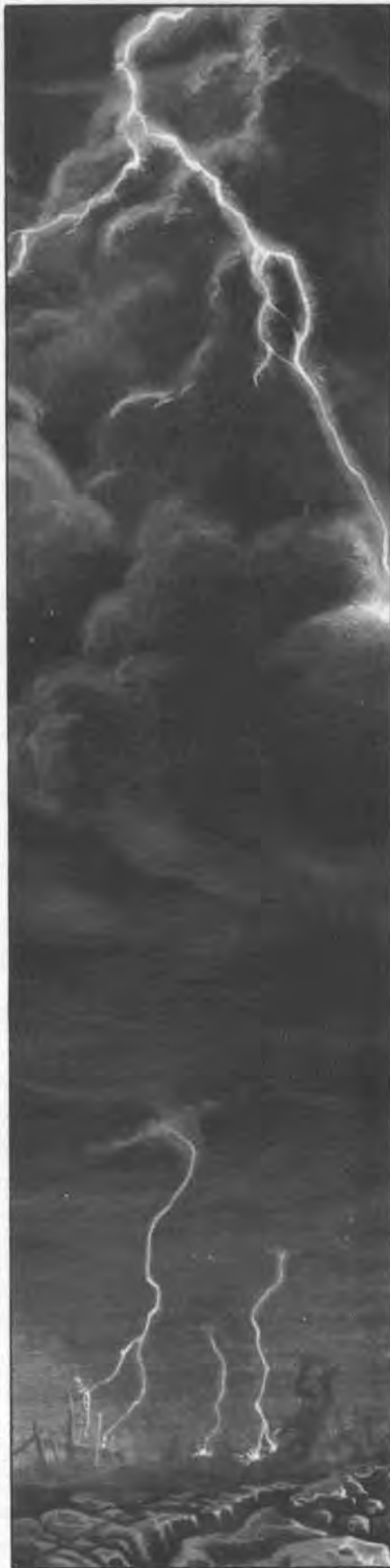
Awards

For surviving this act, award the Storm Knights three Possibilities. If they were able to save either the wounded edeinos or Tara, award each Knight an additional Possibility.

Cut To ...

Providing the Knights survive the attack of the Darkweaver and make it across the swamp, they will come upon the transformed mall that currently serves as Thrakmass' temple on Earth. Cut to Act Three, "The Temple of Rec Stalek."





Act Three

The Temple of Rek Stalek

The Major Beat

After their arduous trek through the Living Land, the Storm Knights finally arrive at the temple environs. Their exploration of the strange building leads them to uncover the dark and macabre history of the Rec Stalek cult.

SCENE ONE: Mall Madness

The Situation

Standard. A long and winding trail leads across the jungle floor. Like bloodhounds, the Knights follow the edeinos raider back to their lair, the transformed Oak Park shopping mall.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

After following the edeinos' trail for hours, you suddenly notice that the vegetation in this area seems considerably sparser. Fallen trees which should have rotted weeks or even months ago in Lanala's corrosive mist litter the ground, seemingly defying the surrounding environment. You feel a change in the atmosphere as well. The constant chirping of insects and the staccato calls of unseen birds seem to drown in the darker mist you now find yourself in. You are reminded of the swamp you recently passed through, the and terror you found there.

Pressing on, you spy a clearing on the other side of a bramble thicket. There is the sound of some sort of commotion just ahead.

A *find* or *Perception* total of 8 allows the party to peer through the morning

mist, spotting two Stalek warriors dumping an arm-load of assorted goods into a large pool in front of a long, low, black stone building.

A second *Perception* total of 9 (plus the ability to understand edeinos, either through possession of the *language* skill or the blessed wreath) allows the Knights to overhear the following:

Warrior #1: Not many stormers in this bunch.

Warrior #2: No, surely not, brother. The better for us, as their thunder weapons bring forth much Death.

Warrior #1: Yes, why do we not use them against the infidels, brother?

Warrior #2: How many times must you be told? He Who is Death Beyond Lanala says that it will make us too like the soft ones. Only cowards fight at a distance. He who is truly a lover of pain and suffering wishes to be near, to see the terror in his opponent's eyes.

As they speak, the warriors carry a small bundle of assorted spoils and dump them into the pool. They then turn and retire to the interior.

The Action

The Storm Knights can take this opportunity to explore the upper level of the transformed mall. The game-master is encouraged to make each chamber seem as foreboding as possible.

The Temple Grounds

Nippon, Cyberpapal or Core Earth characters who generate *evidence analysis* or *Perception* totals of 8 will be able to tell that the "temple" is in fact a transformed shopping mall. Other





characters will need to possess *scholar* (*realm lore*) for one of those three realms to know what a shopping mall is before they can determine the true nature of the temple.

The temple has either sunken into the swamp or been covered over by some great upheaval, for most of the building lies beneath a hill of swamp muck. (Death caused this to occur when he first chose the mall as his temple to hide its location from interlopers.)

Read aloud or paraphrase:

A building of ebon stone lies partially exposed under tons of thick, smelly muck. Jutting out at various angles on these slimy "hills" are specks of off-white that seem to be moving. Beyond the pond there is an ornate door through which the two edeinos warriors entered the building.

The Torada Pond

The pool before the Knights contains several items which might be of use to the party; knives, batteries, ammunition, ropes, chains, and whatever else the gamemaster feels like tossing in. Some of the equipment is brand new, some badly rusted and virtually worthless (have the Knights generate an *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total when they salvage something. On an 8, they can tell if the piece of equipment can still be used.)

The pond is used as a trash can for high-tech items, and is guarded by a monstrous torada. Although Thrakmoss does not fear "dead things," they feel that some types of equipment would act as a temptation to his warriors, turning them into lazy cowards. He keeps on hand only those objects he feels can be useful to him.

Some wooden boxes of shotgun shells are floating at the top of the pond, but much of the rest of the equipment has sunk to the bottom. Recovering the boxes is a simple action, but salvaging anything else will require a *find* or *Perception* total of 8 to spot it, and a swimming total of 10 to retrieve it.

The torada is able to blend in with the muck on the bottom of the pool, so a *find* total of 13 is required to spot him from the surface. The needed total decreases to 10 once a Knight is in the

water.

The torada will only attack if one of the Knights enters the water (which is about six meters deep). Four rounds of *swimming* are required for a Knight to reach the bottom and then return to the surface.

Torada

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, stealth 11, swimming 13, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 14

PERCEPTION 8

Trick 10

MIND 7

Test (8)

CHARISMA 5

Charm (25), persuasion (20), taunt (7)

SPIRIT 5

Intimidation 11

Possibilities: none

Natural Tools: tentacle razors, damage value STR+1/13

Description: Toradas live at the bottom of large bodies of water. Their central bulb ranges in size up to eight meters in diameter (this particular specimen is four meters in diameter), and they possess eight tentacles, four on either side of their bodies. Their scales are blue and green and change their shade to match the surrounding water.

Tentacles may be attacked separately from the body. Damage is computed as usual against the tentacle so that a *wound* result is applied against the tentacle and only the tentacle. The creature itself only takes overall damage if its body is attacked, or four of its arms suffer the same level of damage.

Oak Park Mall (Upper Level)

The upper level of the transformed building normally houses the Temple Guards, but most of these are currently on Takta Ker, assisting in the preparations for Thrakmoss' ritual.

Sparsely distributed about the slopes of the hill of muck are the bodies and bones of over 40 humans, edeinos, and other creatures. Those who live inside the temple often bring the bones from the Feasting Area and leave them on the hill to scare off any

Jakatts who might wander by.

In addition, some of the Elders occasionally create undead servants from the broken skeletons to further enhance the horror of the hill. As the party approaches, read or paraphrase the following:

Bones lie everywhere on the muddy slopes which extend to the roofs of the mall. One obviously human skeleton, separated somehow from its lower half, twitches in the muck, flipping over and attempting to support itself on its broken vertebrae. It begins to drag itself towards you through the slime.

Any Knight attempting to climb to the roof of the building must make three *climbing* totals of 13. Falling will send the Knights back to the bottom of the slope, but will do no damage, as the soft muck will absorb the impact.

While climbing, the Knights will find themselves attacked by partial skeletons which have been animated by Thrakmoss' priests. They will attempt to grab the Knights and bite them.

Skeletons (4)

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 9, stealth 9, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 6

Find 7, trick (11)

MIND 4

Test (9)

CHARISMA 4

Charm (20), persuasion (20), taunt (15)

SPIRIT 4

Intimidation 12

Possibilities: none

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/10

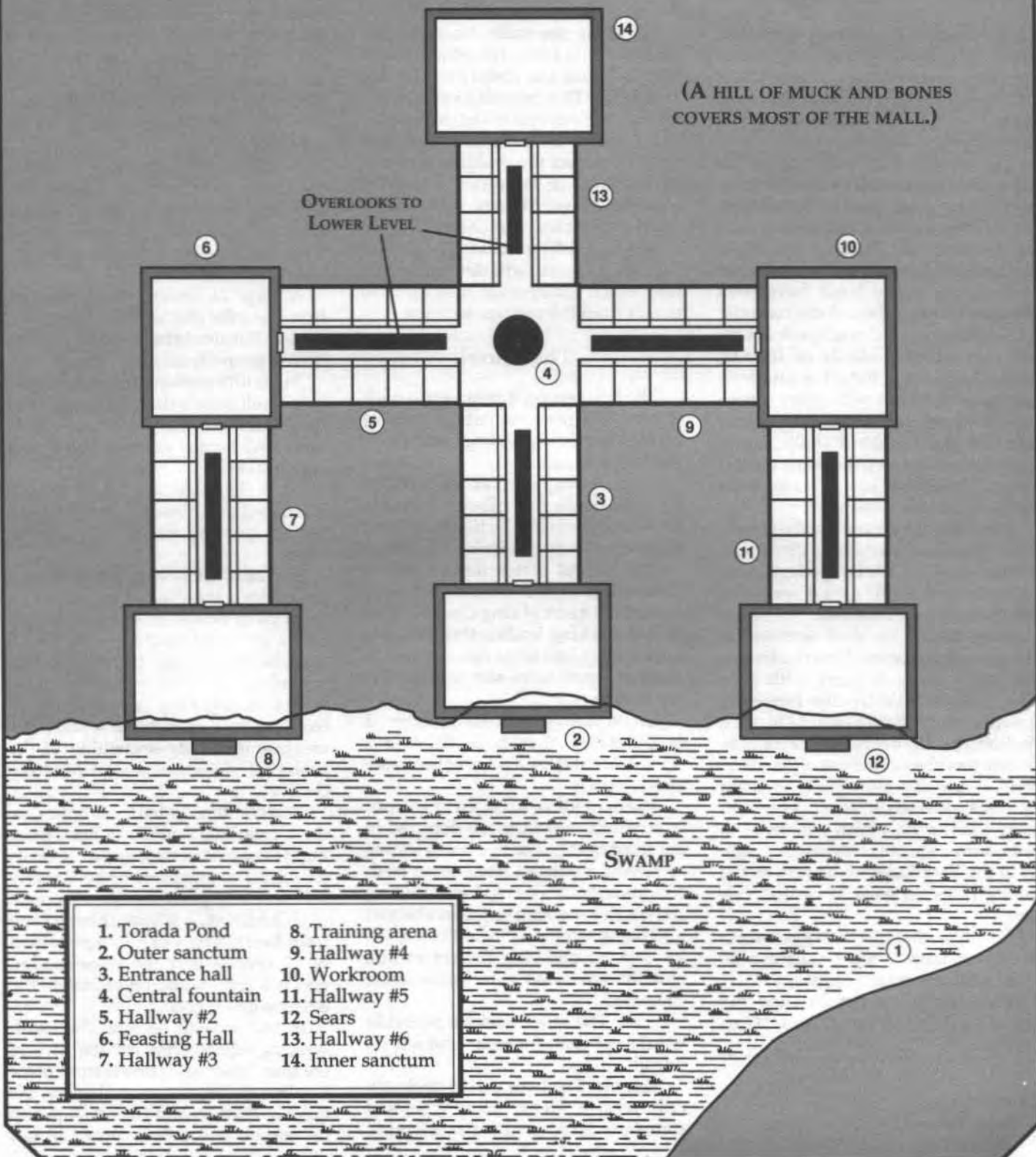
Note: Created through the miracles of the Elders, the skeletons are immune to shock and KO conditions brought on by physical attacks. They will fight until they are destroyed.

There is nothing of interest at the top of the mound, save for a small stone chimney jutting up out of the mud. Characters less than .5 meters in height would be able to crawl down





The Temple of Rec Stalek: Map #5
Oak Park Mall: Upper Level



the chimney (*climbing* totals of 9), but will find that the opening is blocked by more muck within a meter of the opening.

Into the Temple

The Storm Knights may attempt to enter the temple through any one of the three main entrances. The entrances to the Training Arena and Sears are locked (*lock picking* difficulty of 13; doors have a *Toughness* of 10).

The double-door entrance to the Outer Sanctum is unlocked. This gateway is frequently used by Stalek cultists to drag Living Land creatures to the feasting hall. *Evidence analysis* or *Perception* totals of 8 will reveal signs that several heavy loads have been dragged through these doors recently.

Adorning the sides of the doorway are the sculpted skulls of lizards, stacked one upon the other and leering madly at those who enter. Cresting the doors are three extremely malevolent looking lizard skulls, seemingly radiating out from some central point. These have also been expertly carved from the stone wall.

All of the interior walls of the temple are made of the same sort of black, red-veined stone. A *scholar (geology)* total of 9 reveals that this rock is similar to South American obsidian.

Once inside, the dark sections on the map depict several overlooks into the lower level. A party with rope should have little trouble rappelling down (three *climbing* totals of 7 to reach the bottom). The overlooks are roughly five meters above the floor of the lower level — anyone attempting to jump the distance needs an *acrobatics* or *Dexterity* total of 10, which will serve to reduce the damage of the fall (see page 49 of the *Torg Rulebook*, as well as the falling rules on page 52 of that volume).

The only other method of getting to the lower level is via a staircase located near the central fountain.

Once the party has reached the lower level, cut to Scene Two, "Crusade!"

Outer Sanctum

Inside the ornate entrance is a large room which was formerly one of the mall's larger department stores. Though there used to be an escalator to the lower level here, it has been sealed off by a large slab of rock.

All along the walls, starting from left to right, is a massive granite mural which details the history of the Rec Stalek cult. This provides valuable information for the party and the Knights should be given as much time as they need to inspect the designs. A *scholar (archaeology)* or *Perception* total of 8 will allow them to do so successfully (each total makes clear the meaning of two sections of the mural). The level of success achieved will determine just how much information they are able to cull from the various sections.

The Mural

The first section shows a great multitude of edeinos conquering some sort of giant, weapon-wielding insects with their bare hands.

On an *Average* success or above, the Knights notice a similarity between the weapons carried by the insects and those carried by the Stalek warriors.

The second series details how a descendant of the edeinos warriors came to be a sort of king (Saar). It then shows this king leading thousands of Jakatts from one large round object to another across some sort of huge, living bridge.

On an *Average* success or above, it becomes clear that the round objects are worlds and the bridge of the maelstrom variety.

The exploits of some great warrior in service to the king are depicted in the third mural. The warrior is shown removing the head from some bird-like humanoid. The next scene shows the warrior wearing a skull as a helmet and being wounded in battle. His fellows point damning fingers at him and the wounded hero limps home unhealed.

Good: The other edeinos probably would not heal someone who wore a "dead" thing.

Superior: The hero would probably only wear a "dead" thing if he had somehow fallen under the influence

of a different reality.

Spectacular: The skull pictured might well have been a talisman of the cosm from which the bird-creature came.

In the fourth carving, the warrior is shown returning to his tribe. There he is executed for refusing to relinquish the avian skull. A young edeinos is seen with him throughout the scene, and then he too is exiled from the tribe following the execution of the warrior. The skull is tossed into a nearby crevasse.

Returning when the moon has risen, the young edeinos enters the crevasse and retrieves the skull. Exiting the dark crag, he is attacked by some sort of tentacled creature and his leg is broken.

Average or above: Being an exile from the tribe and without access to a healer, it is doubtful the edeinos' leg healed properly after the injury.

In the fifth section, an edeinos wearing a skull travels the land in search of the ancient insect hives. He finally finds them and begins years of study and exploration.

Good: The edeinos seems mostly interested in the insects' weapons and armor, ignoring artistic and cultural relics.

The next set of engravings shows the edeinos standing at the edge of a great pit of bones. From out of the pit rises a great and terrible creature with three heads and a tail. Its entire body is assembled from bones and the chitinous remains of the insect-men. In its hands rests a great bone-scythe. The creature demands something of the cowering edeinos, and he rushes from the hives.

Average: Insects have no bones, so these creatures must have been more highly evolved versions of what exists on Earth; or creatures of an entirely different reality and evolutionary path.

In addition, a *scholar (Living Land realm lore)* total of 9 or a *Perception* total of 12 reveals that the three-headed god is a representation of Stalek, the edeinos death god).

In the seventh section, the skull-wearing edeinos has left the hive of the insect-men and travels from place to place trying to gain followers. He quickly does so and the small group he commands retires into the tall



mountains. After much planning, they sneak down the mountain and abduct the young of another tribe. These are later shown being raised by the edeinos and his followers as they carve a great home from the side of the mountain.

Good: Aspects of the carving would indicate that the construction of the strange tribe's home took well over 10 years.

The eighth engraving shows the skull-wearing edeinos and his warriors slaying the tribe that had exiled him so many years ago. It also depicts him vowing revenge on a large, undetailed edeinos.

The ninth engraving shows the skull-wearer and his band retreat to the mountains and pray to some dark god for assistance (a shard of the skull is now worn on a necklace). The three-headed thing from the earlier carving appears before the cult and creates a huge skeletal bridge. Across the bridge lies a great temple in which the cult may house itself.

Average: The temple is the Oak Park mall, the structure in which the Knights now stand.

Good: The large, undetailed edeinos is the king from the earlier engraving. (Baruk Kaah.)

The tenth carving depicts several diverse individuals being captured and hauled before the cult's leader. They are tortured for many days until they tell all that they know. Surrounding them as they speak are images drawn from the Possibility Wars: the Gaunt Man, a winged techno-demon, a malevolent Cyberpope, a smiling Asian, a hated lizard-king (the skull-bearer appears very angry here), a mad Pharaoh, and finally a regal human female wearing a black crown and a dark and evil human male watching her with envy. The latter two occupy several smaller sections of the engraving and occasionally seem to merge, with the female changing from good to evil and back again.

Good: The lizard-king in the carvings bears a striking resemblance to Baruk Kaah.

Superior: The diverse individuals could be Storm Knights, at least one of them from Aysle.

Spectacular: The skull-bearer seems extremely interested in the last set of pictographs, which may detail



Ardinay's possession by Angar Uthorion.

Entrance Hall

Most of the rooms here appear to have been used recently (they served as quarters for now-departed Temple Guards). Large blocks of stone act as seemingly random walls, tables, partitions and dividers. These are actually transformed racks and other common materials converted into quasi-usable benches, walls and tables of stone. The first time the Knights explore one of these rooms, the gamemaster should play up the bad lighting, blocked lines of sight and general confusion of the area.

Core Earth-produced nylon blankets lie in each room as well as several other useless odds and ends. An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 11 reveals that whoever has been living in these transformed stores has probably not been in residence very long.

The Central Fountain

From the low railing of this overlook, the party can make out the details of some sort of decorative pool.

Through the darkness can be seen a solitary slab of granite, carved to resemble the head of an edeinos, locked in a scream (Thrakmoss). There is no motion within the liquid, although a rat may be seen gnawing a bone on the rim of the pool.

A narrow canal runs the length of the corridor from the Feasting Hall, channeling the blood of the slain into the pool below.

Four staircases descend into the lower level here.

Hallway #5

The rooms along this hallway are essentially the same as those along the entrance hall. From one of these chambers emanates a terrible stench (have the Knights generate *Toughness* rolls against a difficulty number of 8 — failure means a character suffers one shock point as a result of nausea). If the Knights investigate, a *find* or *Perception* total of 7 reveals to them the remains of a pakotton (a humanoid Living Land amphibian creature) which was hideously tortured before being slain.



The Feasting Hall

This huge area smells absolutely horrible (have the Knights generate *Toughness* totals, as per Hallway #5).. Hundreds of tiny bones litter the area as well as rotting parts not considered edible by the Stalek cultists. A large stone table rests at the front of the room. Connected to it is a slanted, fan-like basin which empties into a semi-circular drainage canal. The canal ends at a heavily-stained baragon skull, through which the blood pours through the opening in the floor and into the central fountain.

Hallway #7

Again, the living quarters here resemble those in the Entrance Hall.

Training Area

While essentially barren, *evidence analysis* or *Perception* totals of 8 will reveal signs of fighting and bloodshed throughout the room. Broken sword blades, large bloodstains, and bits of tissue and bone litter the area.

This is where the Stalek warriors hone their skills in battles against each other, with the loser getting the opportunity to meet the god of Death.

Hallway #9

Living quarters abound again, although several rooms along this corridor are completely empty. This area also overlooks the lower level.

Workroom

Almost 200 stone tables adorn this room. Scattered atop them are the bones from which Stalek warrior armor is made, along with pieces of wire, synthetic rope, and metal cable. There are literally thousands of large and small bones here, along with modern tools used to cut and otherwise manipulate the binding material.

Against the far wall is what appears to be the beginnings of a large fireplace. Anyone searching this niche will see that an obvious smokehole leads from the lower level up the chimney, but it is blocked near the top by mud. It is possible, however, to climb down

the chimney to the lower level (two climbing totals of 11). They will emerge in the workroom on the lower level — cut to “Workroom” in Scene Two.

A *science (engineering)* total of 9 will allow a Knight to construct a make-shift suit of armor for himself from the materials available. It will take three hours to construct, and will provide TOU+4/21 protection.

In addition, two boneswords (damage value STR+5/19) can be spotted on *find* rolls of 10.

Hallway #11

This section is completely unused. An *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 10 will reveal that no one has ventured this way in several days.

Sears

Much of the Sears department store has been transformed and looted. There is little remaining of any great use to the Knights, but on a *find* or *Perception* roll of 8, they will notice that one section was apparently unaffected by the axiom wash. One check-out counter resisted turning to stone, and the battery-powered radio which rests upon it still works (picking up signals from Radio Free Detroit).

The explanation is a simple one: resting next to the radio is a stack of four Sears catalogs which have become talismans of Core Earth reality. Each talisman has a radius of 1.5 meters, with half that distance being a pure zone and the remainder a dominant zone of Core Earth reality.

The talismans had been created sub-consciously by Core Earth people who had taken refuge in the mall shortly before Thrakmoss arrived (they were, of course, slaughtered by the Stalek cultists). The talismans will continue to function for another two weeks, at which point six weeks will be required to recharge them.

The stairway to the lower level of the store has been blocked by a tremendous amount of rock.

Hallway #6

The only difference between this hallway and the others is in the quality of the odds and ends which lie about.

The blankets seem slightly newer and the garbage slightly choicer. The reason for this is that this is the hallway where the veteran Temple Guards reside.

The two rooms adjacent to the overlook above the Inner Sanctum are staircases to the lower level.

Inner Sanctum Overlook

From the perspective of the overlook, the Storm Knights can discern that the transformation of a store to chamber of dark deeds has nearly been completed. Crude stone tools, baskets of chipped rock and simple wood pulleys litter the floor.

The north wall is dominated by two stone staircases which lead to a raised platform. Atop the platform is an ornate ebon altar, which an *evidence analysis* or *Perception* total of 9 will reveal to have been unused as yet. atop it, as yet unused. Beneath a central “bridge” lies a short walkway leading to an intricately carved set of blackened double doors.

To either side of the dais are huge representations of Stalek, a three headed reptilian skeleton wielding a great bone scythe. Rows of benches arrayed in two columns fill the rest of the room.

When the cult completes its move to Earth, this will be the main area of worship. Lining the walls of this obscene church are statues made of the bones of both humans and edeinos.

The Knights must reach the lower level of the temple to truly explore the Inner Sanctum. This can be done by climbing down (see above) or taking one of the sets of staircases.

Event

After the party has had a chance to explore the upper level (and just about the time when they are becoming convinced the temple has been abandoned), they are attacked by the lone band of temple guards left behind. They will most likely be hiding in the living quarters off one of the corridors and will attempt to strike from ambush (*find* or *Perception* of 12 to sense their presence before they attack).



Temple Guards (8)

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 11, dodge 11, maneuver 11, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 11

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 9

Find 11, tracking 10, trick 11

MIND 8

Survival 10, test 16

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Rec Stalek) 13, intimidation 12

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (20)

Natural Tools: claws, damage value

STR+3/12; teeth, damage value

STR+2/11

Equipment: bone armor, TOU+4/14; Ustanah sword, damage value STR+5/14

Note: Will *break* only if they have sustained 50 percent or more casualties. Otherwise, treat *break* as *setback* result.

If the temple guards should break, they will make for the jungle rather than lead the Knights to the dimthread.

Flags

If an *Idea* card is played while the Knights are in Sears, they can immediately tell that the catalogs are the most likely candidates for talismans among the things on the counter. Experimentation will bear this out.

If a *True Identity* card is played, one of the Knights will recognize both the sculpture of the edeinos and the figure in the carving as Thrakmoss, having heard the legend of his dark deeds from an edeinos storyteller in the Living Land.

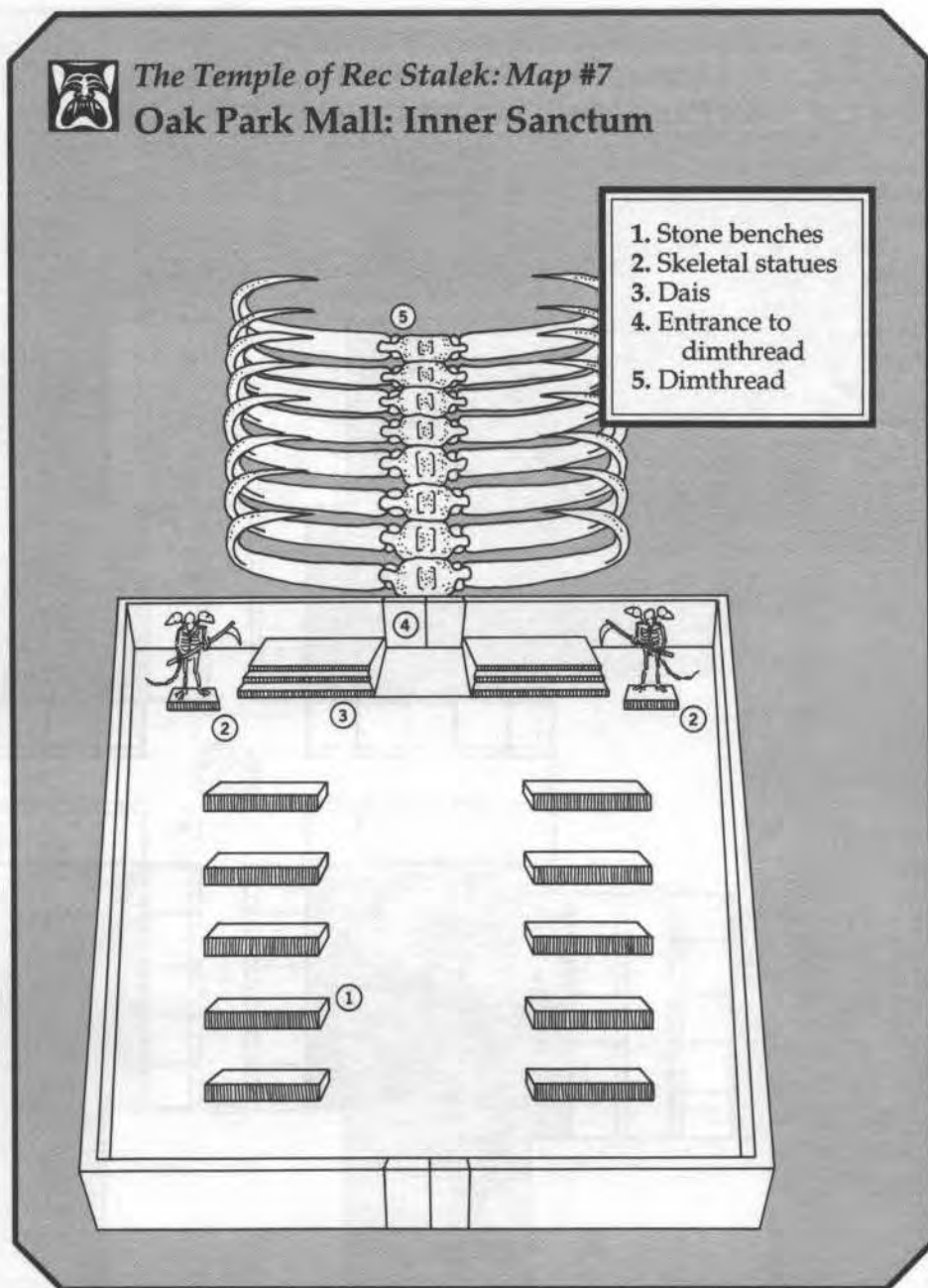
Variables

If the Knights are able to capture and *intimidate* one of the temple guards, he will be able to tell them about the location of the Inner Sanctum and the dimthread to Takta Ker.



The Temple of Rec Stalek: Map #7

Oak Park Mall: Inner Sanctum



Cut To ...

Once the Storm Knights have explored the upper level of the temple to their satisfaction, they should proceed to the lower level by whatever means they choose. When they reach this section, cut to Scene Two, "In the Belly of the Beast."

If the Knights drop right into the Inner Sanctum, cut to Scene Three, "Crusade!"

SCENE TWO: Into the Belly of the Beast

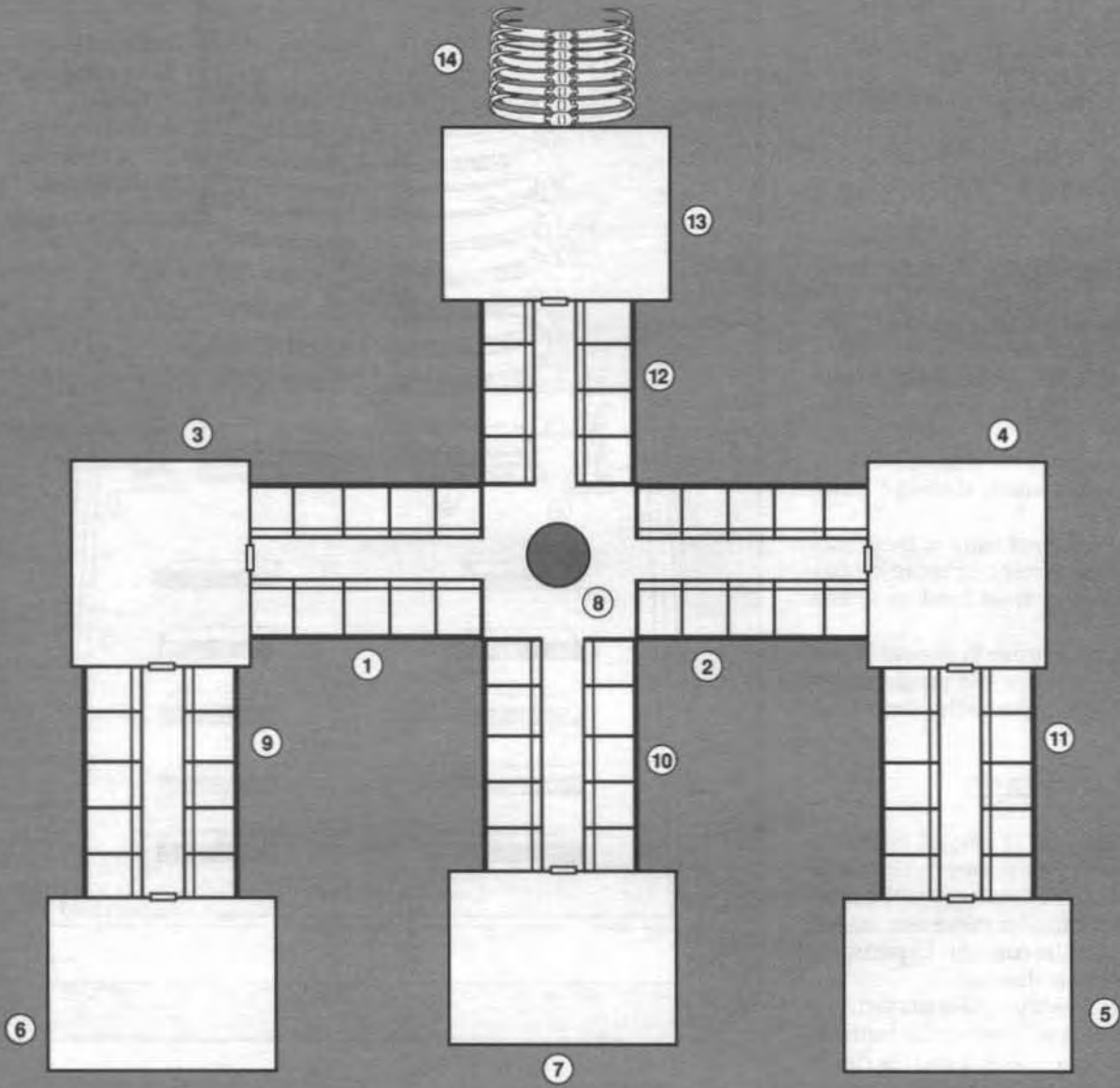
The Situation

Standard. The Storm Knights explore the lower level of the temple, stumbling upon a slightly more dangerous member of the welcoming committee than they had faced above.





The Temple of Rec Stalek: Map #6 Oak Park Mall: Lower Level



- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Hallway #1 | 8. Central fountain |
| 2. Hallway #2 | 9. Hallway #3 |
| 3. Feasting area | 10. Hallway #4 |
| 4. Workroom | 11. Hallway #5 |
| 5. Sears | 12. Hallway #6 |
| 6. Common room | 13. Inner sanctum |
| 7. Sculptuary | 14. Dimthread |



Read aloud or paraphrase:

This level appears no less grim than the one above. The same dark stone makes up the walls, floor and ceiling of this dreadful place. The smell here is even more pungent than it was above and virtually no light exists.

The Action

The Knights can begin their exploration of the lower level in any number of places, depending on how they reached this floor. Consult Map #6 and cut to the relevant section of this scene.

If the Knights begin their exploration at the central fountain, cut to "Blood Beast."

Hallways #1 and #2

The rooms off these corridors are slightly better furnished than those on the upper level, as they are the living quarters of the cult's Elders. Synthetic mattresses covered with ragged, smelly blankets can be found, along with odd collections of Core Earth items. In some rooms, books, record albums and bottles are visible, while in others, horribly mutilated (yet still living) animals serve as macabre shrines to pain.

The strangest of these is in a chamber near the central fountain, where a dirty aquarium plays host to 13 small lizards which have been burnt. Most are still living, though in obvious pain. (This room belongs to Kraksis, a berserker member of the cult.)

Also present in the room is an Uzi (damage value 17, ammo 11, range 3-15/40/100) with seven rounds in it (*find* or *Perception* of 10 to uncover). Kraksis keeps this as a trophy and a plaything, although he knows Thrakmoss would disapprove.

Feasting Area

Thrakmoss and the Elders commonly take their meals with the rest of the cult members in the Feasting Hall above. But when there are matters to be discussed to which the cultists cannot be privy, meals are taken down here in secret. There is no drainage

canal here as in the meal chamber above, so virtually the entire floor is stained with blood.

When the Knights are exploring this room, have them generate *Perception* totals — on a 9, they hear the sound of claws dragging across stone floors, in the general direction of the central fountain. If they look, they will see nothing. If they go to investigate the fountain, cut to "Blood Beast."

Workroom

As in the upper level chamber, this room contains tools, bones, complete skeletons and binding materials. There is a fireplace here as well, and it is here any Knight climbing down the chimney will arrive.

Also present is an aged edeinos, left behind by Thrakmoss to work on armor and weaponry until his return. He is bending over a stone table as the Knights enter, and partial deafness will prevent him from hearing them enter.

Raaltor the Armorer

DEXTERITY 7

Dodge 8, melee weapons 8, stealth 9, unarmed combat 8

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 8

Language 10, trick 9

MIND 9

Science (armorer) 12, test 10

CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Rec Stalek) 12, reality 12

Possibilities: 2

Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+3/10; teeth, damage value STR+2/9

Raaltor is elderly, infirm and more than a little senile. His memory cannot be trusted, nor can his perceptions. But because of this, he will believe the Knights to be old friends from the cult, and his attitude toward them will be *friendly*.

While he cannot reveal details of Thrakmoss' ultimate plan (save that it involves vengeance on Baruk Kaah in some way), he does remember (or thinks he does) warriors returning with dead humans and 13 live ones. The

survivors were taken into the Inner Sanctum and never emerged again. Raaltor knows he was once in that chamber, but cannot remember when or why.

Raaltor may ask the Knights to help him in his work, and if he is *persuaded*, he will consent to constructing a set of bone armor for the Knights. It will take him only 90 minutes per suit (armor value TOU+4/21).

Sears

The lower level of this store is essentially identical to the upper level — transformed, looted, and the stairway blocked by tons of stone. There are, however, no catalog/talismans on this level.

Common Room

The Elders sometimes gather the cultists here to plan a raid or preach the glory of Stalek. There is an inscription on the wall in edeinos — a *language (edeinos)* total of 8 or a *Perception* total of 12 reveals it to read, "Those Who Bring Forth Death." (This room is intended to be used by the female cultists to give birth once the cult is fully established on Earth.)

Sculptuary

In this room are created the obsidian and granite gargoyles, busts and gateway ornamentations which exist throughout the temple. *Evidence analysis* or *Perception* totals of 9 reveal that several large slabs of rock have been dragged into this chamber, and the floor is littered with stone debris.

Blood Beast

The central fountain is a low-walled rock pool which sits squarely in the middle of the atrium area. Bits of meat, gristle and organs have mixed with the blood to turn the fountain into a disgusting cesspool. There are almost always a few rats sitting on the edge of the fountain. The centerpiece is a bust of Thrakmoss, screaming in triumph and eyes wide with hatred.

Attempting to see into the water requires *find* or *Perception* totals of 20.





Failure means Kraksis will get the advantage of surprise when he appears (see below). Success will reveal what looks like the body of a dead bone-armored edeinos resting on the bottom, an automatic rifle at his side.

This is, in fact, Kraksis, an edeinos berserker, who is "playing dead" in an effort to lure the Knights to their doom. He is attempting a *One-on-Many* trick attempt. If he succeeds, he will have the advantage of surprise when he attacks.

Kraksis had spotted the Knights when they arrived on the lower level,

and decided to use the fountain as an ambush site. If the Knights reach into the filthy water or turn away from the fountain, Kraksis will suddenly rise from the murk, dripping with blood and attempt an *intimidation* on the entire party.

Kraksis (Berserker)

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 12, maneuver 12, melee weapons 13, missile weapons 13, stealth 12, swimming 12, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 11

Climbing 13, lifting 13

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 8

Find 9, tracking 11, trick 9

MIND 7

Survival 12, test 10, willpower 9

CHARISMA 8

Charm (20), persuasion 12, taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Rec Stalek) 14, intimidation 14

Possibilities: none

Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+3/14; teeth, damage value STR+2/13; tail, damage value STR+1/12

Equipment: bone armor, TOU+4/15; Ustanah sword, damage value STR+5/16; M-16 (auto), damage value 20, ammo 10, range 3-40/250/400

Note: Kraksis is a berserker, and so enjoys the up advantage for all *Dexterity* and *Strength*-related actions. All attacks against him receive a +3 to their acting values and a +3 to their damage values.

Kraksis carries an M-16. However, he is not skilled in its use (not having had very much time to practice), and it has been damaged by being underwater. If a *villain setback* occurs, the gun jams, and Kraksis will have to abandon it.

Kraksis will fight until killed. His strategy tends to revolve around all-out attacks, his addled brain unable to comprehend any more complicated strategy than that.

Hallways #3, #4, and #5

These living quarters are empty, set aside for the day some of the temple guards ascend to warrior status.

Hallway #6

The rooms off this hallway are used by the Elders as living quarters, and so are more comfortably furnished than any others. A great deal of furniture is present, including chairs, tables and televisions (the edeinos don't know what they do, but think they look interesting).

On a *find* or *Perception* total of 12, the Knights can find \$50-100 in cash and/or jewelry in each of the rooms.



The Inner Sanctum and the Dimthread

The key to uncovering Thrakmoss' plot and saving the citizens of Great Neck lies beyond the doors of the Inner Sanctum. When the Knights arrive at this spot, cut to Scene Three, "Crusade!"

Flags

If a *Mistaken Identity* card is played, Kraksis will mistake one of the Knights for a past victim who somehow escaped him. All of his attacks will be directed at that Knight.

If a *Nemesis* card is played, Kraksis will escape before he can be defeated and can return to plague the Knights in a future adventure.

Variables

If the Knights fall before Kraksis, he will refrain from killing them, instead dragging their battered bodies into the Inner Sanctum. Once there, cut to Scene Three, but have the edeinoss warriors attack Kraksis first, and then the Knights.

Cut To ...

When the Knights reach the Inner Sanctum, cut to Scene Three, "Crusade!"

SCENE THREE: Crusade!

The Situation

Dramatic. The Storm Knights enter the Inner Sanctum of the Temple of RecStalek and discover the dimthread to Takta Ker. But they also discover that the followers of Baruk Kaah are taking a hand in the defeat of Thrakmoss as well.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The huge chamber you have entered resembles a dark, twisted ver-

sion of a house of worship. Long stone benches line both sides of the room, while a sacrificial altar rests atop a raised platform against the far wall. Below the platform is a tunnel leading to an ornate set of double doors, flanked by grotesque skeletal statues. Each sculpture has three horrible heads, bristling with jagged teeth, and wields a bone scythe. Their long tails end in spikes the size of daggers.

Suddenly you hear a screeching sound behind you, like claws being dragged across stone. Wheeling, you see a band of edeinoss charging through the doors, hroctt spears pointed in your direction.

"Soooo, the humanssss have joined with Thrakmosssss," the lead warrior hisses. "If you pray to Death, Stormerssss, then prepare to meet your dark god."

The Action

Having heard rumors about the Rec Stalek cult and their unholy temple, a scouting party of edeinoss loyal to the Saar have come to investigate. They were able to force the truth about the location of the Inner Sanctum and the dimthread from one of the temple guards, and finding the Knights there, are convinced they must be allies of Thrakmoss.

The edeinoss are veterans of many battles, and will use the best tactics their Social axiom will allow to defeat the Knights. They regard the Knights as enemies, and the only hope the party has of avoiding combat is to convince the edeinoss' leader, Trassa Jahk, that they too oppose Thrakmoss (keep in mind, though, that their opposition to Baruk Kaah as well may make it difficult for Jahk to accept them as allies).

Prior to entering the temple, the optant, Frekka, cast the *heightened dexterity*, *increased strength* and *increased toughness* miracles on the scouting party. All of these miracles will be in effect for the duration of this scene, and the attribute increases are reflected in the parenthetical values listed below.

Early in the combat, Frekka will hang back and attempt to cast the in-

tense fear miracle upon one of the Knights.

Trassa Jahk

DEXTERITY 12 (14)

Dodge 15 (17), maneuver 14 (16), melee weapons 17 (19), unarmed combat 14 (16)

STRENGTH 13 (14)

TOUGHNESS 13 (14)

PERCEPTION 10

Find 12, language (English) 11, tracking 13, trick 14

MIND 10

Survival 13, test 15

CHARISMA 11

Persuasion 15, taunt 15

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Keta Kalles) 16, reality 17, intimidation 19

Possibilities: two per Storm Knight

Equipment: blossom spear, damage value STR+3/16 (17); hroctt spear, damage value STR+3/16 (17)

Description: Trassa is a veteran of many combats, and has one of the more strategic minds of any edeinoss. He will use *intimidations*, *taunts*, *maneuvers* and opportunity attacks whenever they can be of benefit to him.

If the Knights can convince him they have a common enemy in Thrakmoss, Trassa may agree to join with them. However, he will actively resist being persuaded, and may attempt to *trick* the Knights into thinking he is going along to give him an opening to attack again.

Frekka Gant (Optant)

DEXTERITY 11 (13)

Dodge 12 (14), maneuver 12 (14), melee weapons 13 (15), unarmed combat 13 (15)

STRENGTH 12 (13)

TOUGHNESS 12 (13)

PERCEPTION 13

Find 15, tracking 14, trick 16

MIND 13

Survival 14, test 17, willpower 15

CHARISMA 12

Taunt 15

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Keta Kalles) 18, focus 18, intimidation 17, reality 17

Possibilities: two per Storm Knight
Miracles: blossom spears, *heightened dexterity*, *increased strength*, *increased toughness*, *intense fear*, *simple spear*

Equipment: blossom spear, dam-





age value STR+3/15 (18); hrockt spear, damage value STR+3/15 (18)

Description: Frekka is a female optant who has accompanied Trassa through many battles. The two are mated to each other, and should she be downed in combat, he will fly into a rage and make all-out attacks on the Knight who caused her pain.

Edeinos Warriors (9)

DEXTERITY 11 (13)

Dodge 12 (14), maneuver 12 (14), melee weapons 13 (15), missile weapons 13 (15), stealth 13 (15), unarmed combat 13 (15)

STRENGTH 9 (10)

TOUGHNESS 10 (11)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 10, tracking 11, trick 11

MIND 9

Survival 11, test 12

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 10

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Keta Kalles) 13, intimidation 12

Possibility Potential: some (55)

Equipment: blossom spear, damage value STR+3/12 (13); hrockt spear, damage value STR+3/12 (13)

If combat ensues, Trassa and the warriors will engage the Knights in melee combat in the first round while Frekka attempts to cast intense fear on the character engaging her mate. (spellcasters.) In the second round, Trassa will attack whichever Knight seems to be the leader (any one who has been shouting orders, or failing that, the most physically powerful).

Should the Knights slay seven or more of the warriors, Trassa, Frekka and the remaining edeinos will attempt to stage a fighting retreat.

The Hand of Peace

If the Knights attempt to reason with the edeinos, they will need to get a *negotiated agreement* result on a *persuasion* attempt on Trassa (or whoever is acting as leader of the party if Trassa has been killed.)

If this occurs, Trassa will order the combat to halt and will gather his warriors to consult with them. Frekka will then announce that they feel it will be a sin against Lanala to work with "dead ones," even against Thrakmoss. But they are prepared to do the Knights the "honor" of allowing them to proceed up the dimthread to Takta Ker and attempt to rescue their fellow humans. Trassa will give until the sun has come and gone again (roughly 12 hours).

If the Knights have not returned by that point, the edeinos will go up the dimthread and slaughter anyone they find in Thrakmoss' refuge, including all humans.

If the Knights ask Frekka about Thrakmoss, she will tell them that the dark edeinos is a legend in some parts of Takta Ker, similar to the myths humans use to frighten their young. The name of Thrakmoss has been used to keep hatchlings from wandering too far from their village for as long as she can remember.

She will go on to explain that she and Trassa learned of his presence on this world when a dying edeinos, his skin flayed from his body, stumbled into their camp. He told them of a narrow escape from the temple, and his directions led them here. He also related that a group of humans had been taken to Takta Ker by Thrakmoss for sacrifice in his temple there.

Frekka knows that Thrakmoss is said to have vowed vengeance on Baruk Kaah, and wishes to be the new Saar of the Living Land. He has robbed the tombs of the Ustanah, the long-

dead insect race of Takta Ker, and is using their weapons to exact his revenge.

Flags

If a *True Identity* card is played, Frekka will recognize one of the Storm Knights as one who has saved the lives of edeinos in the past (perhaps by opposing the Spartans or some such thing). She will counsel Trassa to trust the party.

If a *Romance* card is played by an edeinos Knight, the attention of either Trassa or Frekka will be attracted (depending on the Knight's sex). They will attempt to protect the Knight from the warriors and will ask him/her to abandon the humans and join their tribe.

Variables

If the edeinos defeat the Knights, they will leave them for dead in the Inner Sanctum and proceed up the dimthread. The Knights can come across the corpses of the edeinos as they make their way through Death's tests in Act Four.

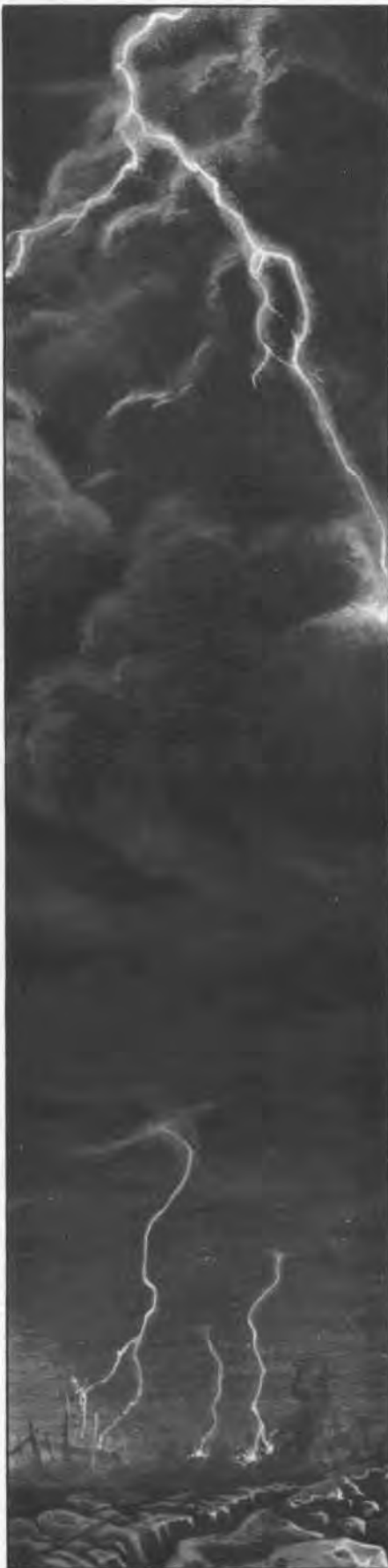
Awards

Award three Possibilities to each character who finishes this act. If the Knights successfully persuaded Trassa to cease fighting, award each Knight an additional Possibility.

Cut To ...

When the Storm Knights are ready to proceed up the dimthread to Thrakmoss' lair, cut to Act Four, "A Dimthread Too Far."





Act Four

A Dimthread Too Far

The Major Beat

The Storm Knights cross the dimthread to Takta Ker, and find themselves the playthings of a mad god. Maneuvering through Stalek's domain, they finally confront the Lovers of Death. Tired and outnumbered, the hard-pressed Knights must find a way to stop the ritual by which Thrakmoss hopes to make himself High Lord of Takta Ker and the Living Land.

SCENE ONE: Trudge Ever Onward, My Heavy Heart

The Situation

Standard. When the Storm Knights open the Inner Sanctum doors, they see the dimthread leading to Takta Ker, which resembles the spine of some colossal creature.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The pathway before you is a macabre and frightening one. The dimthread to Takta Ker is in the shape of a monster's spinal column, and great ribs stretch for hundreds of meters into the air, looming menacingly above you.

When you look down, you find there is nothing to see. Only a sky-blue void broken occasionally by wisps of mist or cloud formations. A fierce wind howls in your ears as you ponder your situation. You must make your decision.

The Action

Stalek has stretched his long-unused powers to their utmost to create this dimthread to Earth, which is anchored in the dominant zone of the Halta Rul mountains on Takta Ker.

Finding one's balance on the dimthread requires an *acrobatics* or *Dexterity* roll of 10. Failure means the Knight falls off the spine — a *Dexterity* total of 8 allows that Knight or another to catch him, and a *Strength* total equal to the falling Knight's weight value +1 is required to pull him back on to the bridge. If he does fall, he will plummet four kilometers to the surface of the Earth.

After they have been on the dimthread for about 10 minutes, they will be confronted by Death's Guardian. Blocking their path, this is a three-meter tall version of Stalek, wielding a bone scythe. As the party approaches, he will gesture toward them with his weapon and speak in a voice cold as the grave.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The bones of the creature's jaw begin to move in a horrible mockery of speech. "Know you now that those who pass this spot enter the domain of Stalek, and those who perish there forfeit their souls to his dark embrace. Life, though precious, is short ... Death is eternal. You have been warned."

If any of the Knights makes a move to proceed, the Guardian will step aside and let the party go by. If a Knight should attempt to attack the skeletal figure, it will deal with the threat swiftly and brutally, all the while laughing, "Pitiful fool — would you try to slay Death?" It will then offer the Knights a second chance to pass.



Death's Guardian**DEXTERITY 14**

Dodge 17, maneuver 15, melee weapons 16, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 20**TOUGHNESS 20****PERCEPTION 13**

Find 14, Trick 17

MIND 8

Test 16

CHARISMA 7

Charm (30), persuasion (25), taunt 14

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Rec Stalek) 15, intimidation 15

Possibilities: none

Equipment: bone scythe, damage value STR+5/25

The Gate

After the Knights have passed the Guardian and walked on for another 10 minutes, they come upon a massive wall of rock that seems to reach into the heavens. Set into the stone is a set of double doors, fashioned from the same obsidian as was Stalek's temple on Earth.

Mounted above the doors is an edeinus skull, which speaks to the Knights as they approach. Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Those who worship Death are the true leaders of this world ... the unworthy may not pass. Should you prove yourselves worthy, you shall find that which you seek."

As the skull's words trail off, the doors slowly rumble open, revealing a dark corridor beyond.

"Look into the very heart of Death, foolish mortals. And despair."

Have the Knights (and any gamemaster characters present) generate *willpower* totals. On a 13, they will not be cowed by the skull's words, but anyone who fails will be reluctant to pass through the gate. His companions will have to *persuade* him to get him to proceed.

Anyone who turns around and attempts to return to Earth via the dimthread is in for a nasty surprise. Having not passed the tests of Stalek, they will not be allowed to pass by the Guardian, who will chase them all the

way back to the gate in an effort to slay them.

Variables

If the Knights attempt to blow up the dimthread, they may do so, providing they have sufficient explosives (the dimthread has a *Toughness* of 45). If they destroy it while at the gate, they will be stranded in Takta Ker.

Destroying the dimthread, and nothing else, will do little more than delay things for a few days. *Idea* or *Alertness* cards will warn the Knights that destroying the dimthread prior to rescuing the Great Neck residents is not a wise course of action.

Flags

If a Mistaken Identity card is played, and one of the Knights is wearing bone armor fashioned for him at the transformed mall, Death's Guardian will mistake him for a follower of Stalek. The Guardian will give him an important clue to help him through the Test of Mercy: "Heed my words and remember: when you shatter the glass of a mirror, your image is destroyed as well."

Cut To ...

When the party passes through the gates and into the domain of Stalek, cut to Scene Two: "Gauntlet of Death."

SCENE TWO: Gauntlet of Death

The Situation

Standard. The "infidel" Storm Knights must pass through a series of tests created by Death before they can enter Takta Ker's Temple of Rec Stalek. Along the way, they discover that another Storm Knight party passed this way before them, with disastrous results.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

As you step across the threshold of the door, you feel a sudden chill go through you, an unusual occurrence in the normally stifling Living Land. Before you stretches a corridor of grey stone that resembles nothing so much as the interior of a tomb. It is not an analogy that brings much comfort as you begin your journey.

The Action

As the Knights move down the corridor, they will travel through a number of seemingly interconnected "dungeon" areas. These are actually extensions of the dimthread upon which they walk, rather than independent structures.

Each of these chambers is constructed of cold, grey cut stone. A strange illumination from no apparent source fills most rooms with a dim light, though a flashlight or torch may be needed to see details. The doors are mostly of a dark, faded wood and are protected by a miraculous ward created by Stalek. This protects the gateways from any attack, and overcoming the ward requires a *faith* total of 40. The doors will open automatically when the Knights have passed a test.

Death

If there is such an entity as a universal Death, the creature which calls itself "Stalek" is most definitely not that creature. Takta Ker's Grim Reaper is closer to what some Core Earth religions would call a "major demon," or Ayslish clerics would refer to as a "lesser devil."

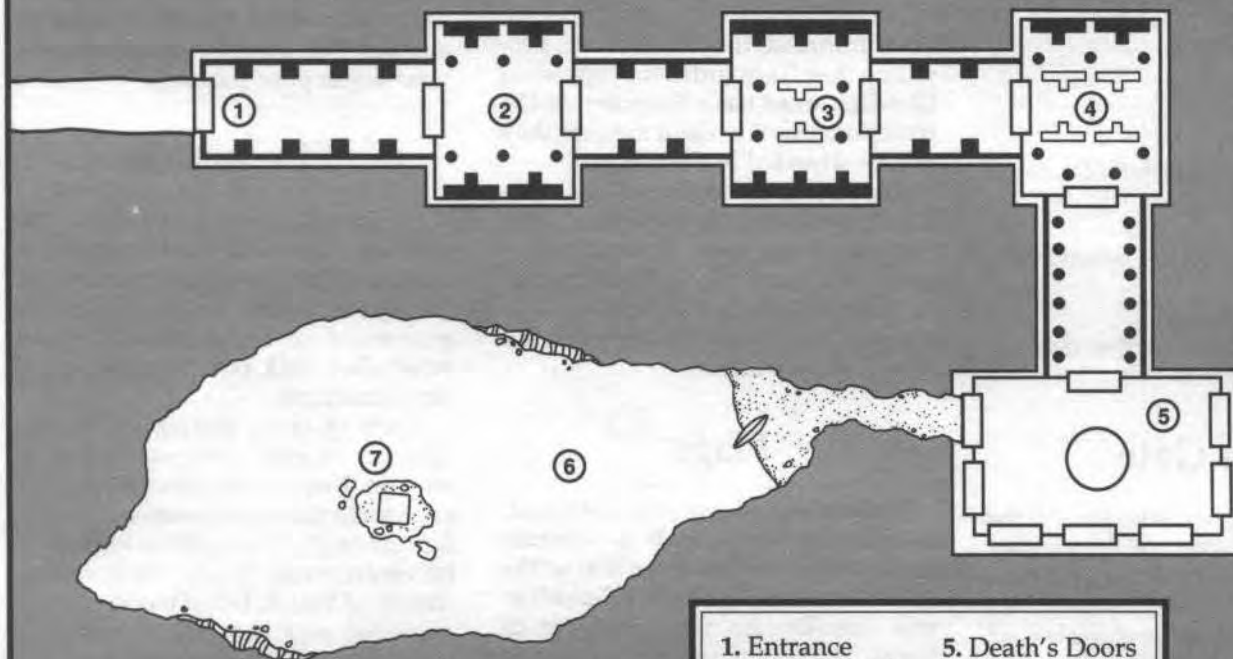
Most religions do not consider a personification of Death to be inherently evil, but rather a natural part of the cycle of Life. But by existing in a cosm where dead things are despised, Stalek came to be considered monstrously evil, and it is a role in the pantheon he accepted with relish.





The Temple of Rec Stalek: Map #8

Stalek's Domain



- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Entrance | 5. Death's Doors |
| 2. Leap of Faith | 6. Lake |
| 3. Test of Mercy | 7. Crypt |
| 4. Gift of Life | |

The Second Party

Only hours before the Knights' arrival, a party of their colleagues investigating raids by armored edeinos passed through the temple and up the dimthread. As the Knights travel through the test areas, they will see the corpses and scattered equipment of these unfortunate would-be heroes. This should serve as a warning to the Knights not to take the power of Death lightly.

The Leap of Faith

The Knights encounter the first of Stalek's tests. Read aloud or paraphrase:

You pass through an open gateway and into a chamber of stone. On the opposite side of the room, a

wooden doorway stands shut, two huge skulls mounted on either side of it. The center of the room is dominated by a deep pit, at the bottom of which are long, iron spikes. Even in the murky light of this room, you perceive a strange glare coming from the pit.

If the Knights look down into the pit, a *find* or *Perception* total of 7 will reveal the source of the glare: the bronze armor and spear of an Amazon. The woman herself lies dead, impaled on the pit's spikes. A *medicine* total of 11 reveals that she could not have been dead more than two to three days.

The baragon skulls by the exit now begin to speak:

"You have passed the Vicar of Death on your way to this chamber. Return to him now, and die — this will prove your devotion to Death.

"The path before you offers the opportunity to prove your love of Life is stronger than the power of Death. Only those who truly believe may pass this way unharmed. Choose, humans — now!"

The pit is four meters in diameter and 2.5 meters deep. The Storm Knights may use any means they wish to in an effort to cross the pit (leaping, flying, walking across the spikes, magic, etc.). Have them generate the appropriate action totals, but ignore all results save disconnection. Then, no matter what they are trying, have them generate *faith* or *Spirit* totals against a difficulty number of 25, for it is their belief in life which is truly being tested here, not their physical abilities. Any Knight who beats the difficulty of the *faith* roll sails over the pit and lands safely on the other side.

Failure brings a number of interest-



ing consequences. First, if the Knight has adds in *faith* or *focus*, take the number of result points by which the Knight missed the difficulty number and read them on the Combat Results chart as spiritual damage. This Knight will not suffer physical damage from a fall on the spikes for as long as he has adds in either skill.

If a Knight does not have any adds in *faith* or *focus*, read the number of result points by which she missed succeeding at the *faith* total as physical damage caused by the spikes. Keep in mind that the spikes themselves have no inherent damage value—the damage caused by a fall on to them is strictly governed by how badly a Knight blows his *faith* or *Spirit* roll. Any Knight who dies during this test has his soul forfeited to Stalek, and he cannot be resurrected.

Climbing into the pit to retrieve the armor and spear has a difficulty of 15. The armor and spear have both been blessed, providing TOU+9/30 protection and damage value of STR+7/21, respectively.

It is not, however, possible to climb out of the pit once inside. Again, it requires a test of *faith*, against a difficulty number of 18. (This is also the difficulty number for freeing one's self from the spikes.) Success means the Knight will return to the side of the pit from which he started; failure simply means he does not make it out of the pit. Anyone attempting to pull the Knight out will discover that his weight value feels as if it has increased to roughly 17 (this is a result of being held down by the power of Stalek). The armor does have a *fatigue penalty* (see page 132 of the *Torg Rulebook*).

If all the Knights have successfully made it over the pit, the door before them opens and they may move on to the Test of Mercy. If only some of the Knights have made it across, they may choose to go on and abandon their fellows. In that case, the door to the next chamber will open to admit them. Naturally, anyone who has not passed the test will not be able to get close enough to the door to get through at this point.

The Test of Mercy

As the Knights enter the next room, have them generate *find* or *Perception* totals. On an 8, they see an Ayslish elf lying dead in the middle of the floor. There is a wound in his chest, a sword having apparently pierced his heart.

If the Knights search the elf, they will find a longsword (damage value STR+8/23), two bags of various spell components, boots of stealth (enchanted; +2 to *stealth* skill when worn), and a thick grimoire. The book contains all the spells from the *Torg Rulebook* plus *sense life* and *eradicate fear* from *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire*.

Twin baragon skulls mounted on the far side of the room begin to speak. Read aloud or paraphrase:

With a horrible grinding of jawbones, the skulls begins to speak. "Still you refuse to acknowledge that Death is the master of all. Very well—if you truly believe in life, prove it to yourselves."

This message is actually a clue as to what the party must do to pass safely through this room. Immediately after the skulls stop speaking, all of the equipment carried by the Knights save for one weapon (melee or missile, if

possible) seems to vanish. In truth, this is an illusion created by Stalek—on a *willpower* or *Mind* total of 20, the Knights can disbelieve and their equipment will return.

At this point, the door opposite them opens, and a group of people, equal in number to the Knights, enter the room. All are dressed in white robes and wear hoods and masks. They carry equipment and weapons identical to any presently held by the Knights (if the Knights did not disbelieve Stalek's illusion, each opponent is armed with one weapon only).

These creatures are simulacrum of the Knights. Each one is an exact match for one of the characters, down to attribute and skill levels, magic skills, pulp powers, etc. but they are not possibility-rated. They are also incapable of communication. The doppelgangers are sustained by the power of Stalek, and each will move to attack his/her twin, but warily.

Each Knight can attack only his twin, and the simulacrum are under the same restriction. Any Knight who attempts to attack another's foe will find his weapon passing through the substance of the target's body. In addition, any Knight who casts a spell or a miracle upon himself to improve one



of his attributes or skills will find that his clone has enjoyed an identical enhancement.

This is intended to be a test of mercy. The Knights must stop their doubles without slaying them if they wish to leave this room. Physical damage suffered by the simulacrum will not be duplicated on the Knight — but if the clone is killed, the Knight will die also.

During combat, the Knights can make an *unarmed combat vital blow* attack to remove the masks of their foes and see that they are their doubles. Knights can spend Possibilities as usual to remove damage during combat, but can do nothing to avert death if they kill their opponent.

The best way to stop an opponent without killing him is to try for stun damage or simply go for a KO. Once the foe is unconscious, the Knight will be free from all attacks and any missing equipment will return. When all of the Knights have disposed of their foes (or been disposed of) they may pass through the door and on to the "the Gift of Life."

The Gift of Life

In the center of the next chamber is a clear crystal orb, one meter in diameter. Mounted on the far wall is a tiny ledge upon which a dagger rests.

If the Knights examine the orb, a *find* or *Perception* total of 8 reveals several dark shapes moving about inside. When they move to make a closer inspection, read or paraphrase the following:

As in an Ayslish crystal ball, you begin to see shapes coalescing into recognizable images. Within the orb, an edeinos steps cautiously through the thick flora of a transformed earth. Suddenly there is the crack of rifle fire, and the edeinos spins in a bloody dance. Though badly wounded, he picks himself up and runs through the overgrown forest.

Next you see the edeinos staggering, blood coating his claws as he holds them clamped over his wound. Ahead, he sees his tribesmen, riding on huge lizards. He struggles to climb an embankment to reach them, but trips and falls into a muddy ditch.

He claws at the slope, but hasn't the strength to pull himself up. A mixture of frustration and sorrow fills his eyes as they roll toward the heavens.

At this point, the skull begins to speak. "Life is hypocrisy. Death is truth," it says in a hoarse whisper. "The creature you see is dying — nothing can save him. To leave this room, one of you must volunteer to take on the wounds of that edeinos and face certain death. Be warned — no amount of possibility energy, no magic, no miracle will save you from Stalek's embrace if you make this choice.

"Speak now, humans, and prove your allegiance to life."

The Knights have a simple choice to make: one of them must volunteer to face certain death to save a creature they do not know. If one of them makes a sincere offer, the image in the crystal will fade and the door before them will open. No Knights will die — the test was exactly that, a test, of their belief that life is sacred in all creatures.

The Knights may, if they wish, attempt to *trick* the skull into believing they will exchange a life for that of the edeinos. The skull, animated by the power of Stalek, has a *trick* value of 28. Note that its speech to the Knights is not a trick — as far as the intelligence within the skull knows, Stalek does intend to slay a Knight as part of saving an edeinos.

If no Knight offers to sacrifice herself, the party has two options: sit in the chamber and do nothing until someone decides to take the risk, or go back. The previous chambers will be no challenge, as the tests only work on those entering the domain. However, the Guardian of the dimthread will attack them, as they did not pass all three tests.

If the Knights do make it out of this chamber, cut to "Death's Doors."

Death's Doors

The final test is one of intelligence, the demon's last attempt to discover why the Knights will not worship him. Should they fail this test, Death will feel well justified in letting them rot

within the dimthread chambers.

In the center of the room is a still pool. Rising from within it are two serpent heads chiseled from bone. In the front of the pool is a fixed "drawer," with a tube leading from it into the fountain. A stone cup rests on the ledge of the fountain.

Surrounding the party on three sides are seven identical doors. Above each door is a notch or notches numbering, from left to right, one through seven. Mounted above the door through which they entered is a baragon skull, which begins to speak the moment the party has entered.

"Mortality is fragile. Thirst, hunger, they are lies; love, hatred, lies; pain and pleasure, lies. Seven doors stand before you — only one is correct. Choose quickly, foolish ones, for the serpents thirst and the serpents hunger."

Again, this is a clue to the puzzle. If water is poured into the throat of the serpent head on the left, it will merely fill the drawer at the base of the fountain. This is useless but proves that the snake and the drawer are connected. If liquid is poured into the serpent head on the right, it will travel through the drawer into the crude tube, and cause a small wooden die to float to the surface.

If dropped between the fangs of the serpent on the right, the die will simply pop back up on the surface. If dropped between the fangs of the serpent on the left, it will roll into the drawer and a second wooden disc will rise to the surface, bearing a number between one and six.

The Knights may attempt this ritual as many times as they wish. Each time they will get a different number between one and six, until their seventh attempt, at which point no disc will appear. Doors #1 through #6 all lead to danger — door #7 is the correct exit. After all, as the skull said, all is a lie, not the least of which what the serpent heads might tell you.

The Knights may, of course, open all the doors they wish to. Run the following events in order regardless of which of the six "Death doors" are opened first. If the seventh door is opened, cut to "The Still Lake."



Event #1

A giant, green tentacle strikes from the darkness and makes an *unarmed combat* attack against the Knight who opened the door. If it is successful, the creature will use its *Strength* in an attempt to pull the Knight inside. If it succeeds, the door slams shut behind it. An instant later, it opens again and a bloody skeleton (of the same species as the Knight) is tossed out.

Anyone opening this door a second time will find no sign of Knight or creature. The door leads to a small bare room, and there is no other means of exit save the main door.

The bloody skeleton is, of course, a lie. The character who was pulled in was transported behind another door via a miracle of Stalek's, and the tentacle creature has ceased to exist. If the Knight is unconscious, he will remain there until he awakens, at which point he can attempt to exit. The door does not open easily from the inside — *lock picking* or *Dexterity* difficulty of 18, or *Strength* of 16.

A *medicine* total of 10 will reveal that though the skeleton is human (or elven, or whatever), it is not the missing Knight.

Tentacle Creature

DEXTERITY 14

Dodge 15, unarmed combat 18

STRENGTH 25

Lifting 26

TOUGHNESS 20

PERCEPTION 6

Find 8, trick (20)

MIND 5

Test (15)

CHARISMA 5

Charm (30), persuasion (25), taunt (20)

SPIRIT 5

Intimidation 20

Possibilities: none

Event #2

If no Knight was pulled behind a door by the tentacle creature, there is nothing behind this door but a shallow niche in the wall.

If a Knight did get captured by the tentacle creature, this is where the Knights will find him. If he attempts to

call out to the Knights before they open the door, this could be an opportunity for some interesting roleplaying. After all the times they have been tricked by Stalek since coming to Takta Ker, the Knights might very well be suspicious upon hearing the voice of their "dead" comrade coming from behind a door. The trapped Knight may have to *persuade* his friends that he is who he says he is, and the other Knights may wish to test him about past exploits before opening the door.

Releasing the Knight by opening the door from the outside is a simple action.

Event #3

Six undead edeinos burst forth into the room when this door is opened. Raised in a manner similar to that used on the carnol in Act One, these edeinos will battle the Knights until destroyed.

Again, if the Knights investigate the doorway, they will find it leads to a small, empty chamber.

Edeinos Undead (6)

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 10, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 15

Climbing 16 lifting 16

TOUGHNESS 15

PERCEPTION 1

Trick (20)

MIND 1

Test (20)

CHARISMA 3

SPIRIT 3

Faith (Rec Stalek) 10, intimidation

11

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+3/18; teeth, damage value STR+2/17

Note: Undead edeinos are immune to shock and KO damage from physical attack. It is impossible to *charm*, *persuade* or *taunt* an undead edeinos.

Event #4

An icy blast that stinks of the charnel house blows through this door, attacking the *Toughness* of the Storm Knight who opened the door with a damage value of 18. Read the result points on the Combat Results chart as

stun damage. The wind will continue to blow, attacking that particular Knight each round, until someone shuts the door (a *Strength* total of 10 to get the door shut against the force of the gale).

Event #5

A sickly sweet crimson fog floats into the room and attacks the *Mind* of the Knight who opened the door with damage value 20. Read the results as *mental damage*. It continues to do so until the door is shut, at which point the fog dissipates.

Event #6

When this door is opened, a huge, barbed bone spear shoots forward to impale the foolish Knight who swung wide the gate. The Knight has next to no time to react — an *active dodge* total of 16 is needed to avoid the spear. If the roll is failed, the Knight suffers damage value 23. The sword will then withdraw, with the Knight still impaled upon it, and the door will shut.

Opening the door again requires a *Strength* total of 11. If it is opened, the spear will shoot out again. Removing the wounded Knight from the spear requires a *Strength* total of 10.

If the Knight wishes to remove himself from the spear, a *Strength* total of 11 will enable to do so. He will suffer two shock points of damage as a result of this action. Opening the door from the inside is a simple action.

When the door on the far right (the seventh door) is opened, the party has passed the test and may proceed. Cut to "The Still Lake."

The Still Lake

The normally smooth-cut stone degrades into a meandering tunnel which descends for about 100 meters before ending at the shores of a still lake. A *find* or *Perception* total of 9 reveals there to be dried bloodstains running the length of the tunnel.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The air is cold here, and the cut stone hallways you've been used to have become a rough, cavernous, tunnel. The uneven floor seems to be



leading you down toward some frigid, silent place.

Turning the thirteenth corner since leaving the room of doors, you enter a large cave and are surprised to see a still lake stretching before you. In the center of the lake rests a tiny island, dotted with twisted trees.

A longboat lies beached on the shore of the lake, and beside it stands a man in tattered blue robe. He holds a staff in his hands, and his eyes seem to be searching the waters for something.

The image of the boatman has been drawn from the minds of humans the Rec Stalek warriors have encountered, and strongly resembles Charon of the River Styx. No matter which direction the Knights approach him from, it will always seem as if his back is to them. If they speak to him, he will acknowledge their presence with a nod, and beckon them to enter the boat.

A *willpower* or *Mind* total of 15 will allow the Knights to successfully disbelieve the existence of the boatman.

The Boatman

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 9, melee weapons 9, stealth 13

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 12

Find 15, language (English) 16, trick 18, water vehicles 15

MIND 11

Test 17, willpower 19

CHARISMA 12

Charm 19, persuasion 21, taunt 18

SPIRIT 13

Intimidation 20

Possibilities: none

Equipment: staff (blessed), damage value STR+5/23; boat, speed value 10/6/7, pass. 8, TOU 15

There are two ways for the Knight to cross the lake and reach the island: ride in the stranger's boat or swim. Three rounds of *swimming* totals of 8 will get the Knights across, as will three rounds of sailing in the boat. The Knights may also wish to overpower the boatman and steal the boat, but this will avail them nothing.

If the Knights choose to sail, the boatman will take them across the lake. If the Knights ask about the island, the

boatman will say only that it is the Isle of the Crypt. If asked whose crypt stands there, he will say a "crypt of the past, for the future is being born even as we speak." He will not elaborate beyond that. If asked about the bloodstains, he will not answer. (Note that there are no bloodstains in the boat — they end at the water).

When the Knights disembark on to the island, the boatman will turn to them and his skeletal face will break into a hideous smile. "I will be waiting to ferry you again ... someday." This is a One-on-Many *intimidation* attempt.

The Isle of the Crypt

Have the Knights generate *find* or *Perception* rolls when they reach the beach. On an 8, they spot the body of a young woman stretched out on the sand a few meters ahead of them.

Upon closer examination, she is found to be dead — a *medicine* total of 9 reveals she was killed as recently as the day before. It appears that she suffered a horrible spear wound. Her clothing and the J-jack she bears indicate she is a native of the Cyberpapacy.

A *find* or *Perception* total of 7 reveals that she apparently scrawled a message in the sand with her finger. The message reads:

"To any who follow,

My party has tried, and failed. I was the last. Go to the crypt and find the tunnel. The time is very near — if it is not already too late."

A *find* or *Perception* total of 8 allows the Knights to gather the woman's belongings. She carried a GodLight (damage value 24, ammo 50, range 3-10/25/40), an Angelbait cyberdeck with Attack-2, Defense-1, Defense-2, Shroud-1, Scan-1, Manipulate-1, Search-1, a Paris Liberte pass and 2400 francs. She also has a J-Jack, which the Knights can remove if they wish to (a *medicine* total of 11 is necessary to do this).

A House for the Dead

After the party has examined the body and read the note, read aloud or paraphrase:

A few meters away stands a solitary stone structure rising from the slimy mud of the island. Grim, gray gargoyles frown oppressively from above the door, which is ajar. You note that a trail of blood leads within.

If the Knights enter the building, *find* or *Perception* rolls of 8 reveal an ancient stone sepulchre with the image of a large insect carved into it. An *evidence analysis* or *Mind* total of 9 reveals that the lid of the tomb has been moved aside, and a tunnel stretches down into the darkness.

The slab had been pushed aside by the dead woman, and is covered with bloodstains. She had managed to get it open, but with her failing strength, she couldn't make it down the tunnel. She had stumbled back to the beach and died.

What Goes Down ...

The tunnel has no ladder and must be climbed by hand, but is wide enough for up to three characters to crawl abreast of each other. A *climbing* total of 10 is required to reach the "elbow" of the tunnel, and a second total of 11 to move up the slope. The tunnel's exit is blocked by a slab of rock which requires a *Strength* total of 15 to lift (*coordination difficulty* of 5 — see page 47 of the *Torg Rulebook*).

Flags

If a *Personal Stake* card is played, a player character recognizes one of the dead Storm Knights as a comrade from a former adventure. This will increase his determination to end the threat of Thrakmoss.

If a *Suspicion* card is played, one of the Knights begins to wonder if he and his party are being lured to the temple to be part of Thrakmoss' sacrifice. He will try to *persuade* the others to turn back, but if they refuse, he will reluctantly go along, complaining all the way.

Variables

If the Knights should try to avoid the tests by, say, making one of the





The Temple of Rec Stalek: Map #9 Temple of Takta Ker

1. Passage Up
2. Overlook
3. Rock Staircase
4. Bridge
5. Vicars of Death
6. Thrakkmoss' Throne
7. Chamber of the Young
8. Chamber of the Elders
9. Chamber of the Warriors
10. To Takta Ker



walls of a chamber disappear, they will find themselves looking out over Takta Ker from several kilometers in the sky. If someone has the power of flight, they will find it impossible to return to the dimthread further up — they would have to land on one of the sections connecting the test area to Earth.

If the Knights somehow make it safely to the surface of Takta Ker, they will have a long hike to Stalek's temple in the mountains. It is doubtful they would arrive there in time to stop the sacrifice.

Cut To ...

When the Storm Knights have managed to exit the tunnel, cut to Scene Three, "Thrakmoss Rex."

SCENE THREE: Thrakmoss Rex

The Situation

Dramatic. Emerging from Death's gauntlet into the temple of Rec Stalek on Takta Ker, the Knights must decide whether or not to stop Thrakmoss from destroying Baruk Kaah and assuming the station of High Lord of the Living Land.

When the heroes emerge from the tunnel, they will see the 13 survivors of the Great Neck massacre awaiting sacrifice.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

As you peer out of the darkness, you see ... feet! Somewhere between 10 and 15 primitive humans are huddled against a nearby wall, their eyes riveted to you. They are obviously frightened, but they do not speak.

The Action

Have the Knights generate *evidence analysis* or *Perception* totals. On an 8, they hear eerie chanting coming from somewhere beyond the chamber, obviously the voices of edeinos. A *language (edeinos)* total of 9 reveals that

they are chanting "Thrakmoss Saar! Thrakmoss Saar!"

There are no bars holding the primitives in, but if asked, they will tell the Knights that there are three temple guards just outside the entrance. It is possible to converse without their hearing, providing everyone keeps their voices low.

The primitives will identify themselves as residents of Great Neck who were dragged here by the edeinos who raided their village. One among them who speaks the language of the edeinos has been able to discover their plans: Thrakmoss, the leader of the Stalek cult, intends to sacrifice all 13 humans. When this is done, Stalek will grant him the power to exchange his spirit with that of Baruk Kaah. He will then become the new High Lord of the Living Land, while the cult's elders slay Baruk Kaah in Thrakmoss' body.

The primitives will gladly go down the tunnel in search of escape, but the oldest among them will remind the Knights that Thrakmoss will simply return to Earth and gather more victims. "The evil one must be destroyed," he will say.

Once the Knights have gathered all of this information, two of the temple guards will arrive to lead the humans to the sacrifice. The Knights have two options: hide in the tunnel while the humans are led away, and retain the advantage of surprise, or attack the two guards (and the third, who will surely come in to investigate) and risk alerting the temple to their presence.

It is also possible that the Knights might want to substitute themselves for some of the primitives as a way of being led into Thrakmoss' presence. It is highly doubtful the edeinos would notice — all humans look alike to them.

Whatever course of action the Knights take, cut to "Temple Interior" and familiarize yourself with the layout of the area. Then cut to "Mission: Inevitable."

Temple Guards

See the statistics on page 10

Temple Interior

Most of the rooms are natural caverns with only a few areas showing actual signs of tunneling. Many large

rock formations create ample hiding places throughout the cavern, as do the many twists and turns of its pathways.

Consult the map on page 57 while reading this section.

Vertical Entrance

The existence entrance is known to Thrakmoss and the Elders, and they planned to use it as an escape route if the armies of Baruk Kaah ever mustered up the nerve to attack. They did not believe the captured humans would ever discover it, nor did they believe any Storm Knight could survive Stalek's tests.

Standing at the mouth of the humans' chamber (atop the overlook) are three temple guards, whose assignment is to transfer the sacrifices down to the altar at the appropriate time. The passageway between the vertical entrance is lit by a single, slow-burning plant (Thrakmoss' answer to a torch). *Stealth* or *silence* spells might enable the Knights to take out the guards without rousing attention.

Overlook

From this stone overlook, the Knights can look down upon the temple floor, the throne and the altar (areas 3-6).

Stair Formation

A natural stair formation leads into the throne room. The area between the stairs and the crevasse is filled with Thrakmoss' acolytes. Among these are 300 temple guards and 50 warriors. All are fully armed and armored.

Temple Guards (300)

See statistics on page 10

Warriors (50)

DEXTERITY 10

Beast riding 11, dodge 12, maneuver 13, melee weapons 14, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 11

Climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 10

Find 12, tracking 11, trick 12

MIND 9

Survival 13, test 13



**CHARISMA 8**

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Rec Stalek) 15, intimidation 14

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds**Possibility Potential:** some (30)**Natural Tools:** claws, damage value STR+3/14; teeth, damage value STR+2/13**Equipment:** bone armor, TOU+4/15; Ustanah sword, damage value STR+5/16

Description: The warrior caste inevitably paint strange and frightening symbols on their armor and helmets which serve to enhance their *intimidation* attacks by +1. A Stalek warrior ritual requires the burning of flesh, so their scales will often appear charred black.

The Crevasse

This is a deep crack in the center of the chamber, in which five roprajs thrive, clinging to the sides of the rock.

The crevasse is six meters wide, and impossibly deep. Climbing its sides requires a skill total of 9.

A *scholar (geology)* total of 8 or *Perception* total of 10 reveals this to be a stress point in the cavern which, under the proper circumstances, could be used to destroy the temple.

Thrakmoss keeps the roprajs in the crevasse as a constant reminder of his crippled leg, for which he blames Baruk Kaah and the followers of Lanala. They are fed by the bodies of sacrifices.

Ropraj (5)**DEXTERITY 8**

Stealth 11, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 19**TOUGHNESS 15****PERCEPTION 9**

Trick 10

MIND 3

Test (9)

CHARISMA 5

Charm (25), persuasion (25), taunt (9)

SPIRIT 6

Intimidate 12

Possibility Potential: none**Natural Tools:** tentacles, damage value 19

Description: Roprajs are lair-dwellers, roughly three meters in diameter and a meter and a half tall. They have up to a dozen tentacles, which they can use as part of a Many-on-One attack.

Bridge

The bridge across the crevasse is made of petrified wood (*Toughness* 21). Short of leaping across, the bridge is the only way to get across the crevasse.

At the foot of the bridge, near Thrakmoss' throne, stand the 13 elders of the Rec Stalek cult. Their task is to ensure that Thrakmoss' body is utterly destroyed when the miracle is completed (they intend to hack him to death with their knives and then throw the pieces into the crevasse).

Thrakmoss will put the 13 primi-



tives to death as quickly as possible, once they are all assembled by the altar. Five rounds after the last is killed, the miracle will take place, and Thrakmoss' spirit will fly to Baruk Kaah's body in the Western Land.

Elders (13)

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 10, dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 10

Find 12, tracking 11, trick 12

MIND 9

Survival 12, test 15

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 10

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Rec Stalek) 16, focus 18, intimidation 15, reality 16

Possibilities: 2

Miracles: *animate dead*

Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+3/12; teeth, damage value STR+2/11

Equipment: bone armor, TOU+4/15; Ustanah dagger, damage value STR+3/12

Description: The priests of Rec Stalek often cut long wounds from the corners of their eyes outwards towards their auditory canals, giving their faces a particularly menacing look. Their armor is frequently anointed with blood, mostly around the jaws of their helm. They carry a smaller version of the warrior's sword.

Vicars of Death

The "Vicars of Death" are stone statues of Stalek, resembling the Guardian of the dimthread. Unbeknownst to everyone except Thrakmoss, these statues are capable of animation. If he is unsuccessfully attacked, these two entities will immediately move to attack the desecrators.

Vicars of Death (2)

DEXTERITY 13

Maneuver 13, melee weapons 16, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 25

TOUGHNESS 24

PERCEPTION 12

Trick (17)

MIND 8

Test (19)

CHARISMA 4

Taunt (10)

SPIRIT 13

Intimidate (25)

Possibility Potential: none

Equipment: bone scythe, damage value STR+5/30

Description: The Vicars are physical manifestations of the power of Stalek. They are under the control of Thrakmoss and will collapse into rubble if he is killed.

Vicars of Death cannot be *charmed* or *persuaded*.

The Throne of Bone

The vengeful Thrakmoss has sat upon this throne for close to a decade. At his right hand is a stone altar where sacrifices are put to death, their blood collecting in a reverse funnel and spilling into the crevasse.

He is visible from the overlook, standing before a great hand of bone, leading the cultists in their ominous chant. He is virtually aglow with power with his moment of triumph so near — for Death has chosen him to be the new leader of all edeinosaurs.

Thrakmoss

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 16, maneuver 14, melee weapons 17, stealth 14, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 10 (21)

Climbing 13

TOUGHNESS 13

PERCEPTION 13

Evidence analysis 18, find 16, language (edeinos) 16, language (Ustanah) 15, scholar (Archaeology) 15, trick 21

MIND 13

Survival 14, test 18, willpower 17

CHARISMA 12

Persuasion 16, taunt 18

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Rec Stalek) 24, focus 23, intimidation 18, reality 18

Possibilities: 6 per Storm Knight

Miracles: *animal rage, animate dead, cause pain, heightened toughness, intense fear, the making of the spear (note: this miracle was used in the creation of the Tralysis Grath, and cannot be used again),*

the sundering,

Equipment: Tralysis Grath (blessed), damage value STR+9/19(30) (no limit value)

Tralysis Grath means the "Robber of Sensations." It is called this because it not only slays its victims, but the spear also transfers the life energy of those it hits into Thrakmoss' body. For every shock point of damage done by the spear, Thrakmoss receives one point of *Strength*. The effects last for one week.

Thrakmoss frequently ventures into the jungles of Takta Ker to slay creatures and thus maintain his increased strength.

The weapon is made of an obsidian-like stone, veined with red streaks. It was designed for use solely by Thrakmoss, and will not work for anyone else.

Description: Thrakmoss is an ancient and powerful edeinosaurs, clad in tattered robes. His left leg is hideously crippled and bears the scars of a ropraj attack. Around his neck he wears the talisman first discovered by his father.

Chamber of the Young

This is the cavern in which Thrakmoss and his first followers raised the infants they stole from the tribes in the nearby lowlands. It is unguarded, and little of interest remains here now.

Chamber of the Elders

The most seasoned followers of Stalek have resided here for many years. Many personal artifacts, such as stone daggers, bone swords, and several suits of bone armor, can be found lying about.

In the rear of the chamber rest five comatose edeinosaurs females. Known as "Those Who Bring Forth Death," these females are pregnant and will give birth in four months. Thrakmoss has used certain herbs to put them in a state of dormancy until they have been transported to the temple on Earth.

Exquisite jewelry made of strange bones and minerals can be found on their persons, evidence of how highly they are thought of within the cult.

They will not respond to any interaction, and the medicines used on them



are so potent that they cannot be awakened.

Chamber of Warriors

One wounded edeinos lies in this chamber, amid scores of rotting furs and Core Earth blankets. If the party can sneak up and get the drop on him (*stealth* total of 7), he will be willing to talk to them.

A *language (edeinos)* total of 10 is required to understand him. His name is Grannis Trit, and he is a novice temple guard. He was *heavily wounded* in an encounter with a kayll, and no one in the cult has bothered to try and heal him.

This has caused him to become disillusioned with the cult of Stalek, and more and more he finds himself missing "sweet Lanala." He will volunteer to the Knights that at the far end of the chamber there is an exit from the temple which would place the Knights on a mountain path. From there, they could easily lose pursuers on the slopes and make their way to a village where Lanala is worshipped.

Mission: Inevitable

Once they are inside the temple on Takta Ker, the Storm Knights are faced with a dangerous task: stopping Thrakmoss and saving his intended sacrifices, without getting overwhelmed by temple guards and Stalek warriors.

There are a number of courses of action open to them. If the Knights shepherd the primitives through the tunnel and escape with them, without going after Thrakmoss, cut to "Freedom!"

If the Knights decide to mount an all-out attack — either as a result of noisily taking out the first three guards and attracting attention, or just because they lack subtlety — cut to "Frontal Assault."

If the Knights decide to attack Thrakmoss from the relative safety of the overlook, cut to "Bird's Eye View."

If the Knights, by posing either as primitive sacrifices or Stalek warriors (the latter an infinitely harder disguise to adopt), manage to get to Thrakmoss' throne, cut to "To Catch a Saar."

Freedom!

If the Knight simply make an escape with the primitives through the tunnel, leaving Thrakmoss to his own devices, they will most likely be successful at the attempt. The primitives will probably be challenged by Death's Guardian on the dimthread, but if the Knights passed all the tests, they will not be. They would be well advised to get away from the Earth temple as quickly as possible, as some Stalek warriors may pursue them.

This is a hollow victory, however — with his temple on Takta Ker intact, Thrakmoss will simply find other sacrifices and be able to complete his ritual in a matter of a few months. He will then become the new High Lord of the Living Land. Cut to "Saar of All the Realm."

Frontal Assault

If the Knights have attracted the attention of the warriors on the temple floor, or are mounting a major assault on the temple, they have their work

D estroying the Temple

If the Knights have figured out that the crevasse is an earthquake fault, they may wish to make use of it to destroy the temple. An explosion of damage value 20 or greater within the fissure will set off a quake. If the Knights are using dynamite or grenades to cause this, keep in mind that a long-range contradiction is required, and the character must survive and remain conscious for the explosion to work. (It is, of course, also possible that a character might martyr himself by grabbing the explosives and leaping into the crevasse, thus removing the need for a long-range contradiction. Whatever works for you.)

The earthquake will start the round after the explosion, with

the first casualty being the wooden bridge over the crack. The crevasse will begin to widen by a meter a round after that, while stone begins to rain down from the ceiling (maneuver or *Dexterity* of 10 to avoid the stones — a roll should be made every round the Knights are in the temple after the quake starts, and if they wish to say "I'm avoiding the debris while moving toward the stairs," this need not be considered a multi-action.)

Four rounds after the quake starts, debris will have blocked the staircase. Four rounds later, the tunnel back to the isle of the crypt will have collapsed. The next round, the overlook will collapse, crushing anyone underneath it.

Once the quake starts, the edeinos will panic, running in all directions. Most will pour toward the stairs, although some may blindly rush ahead and fall into the crevasse. The Knights will be ignored by all but Thrakmoss (if he's still alive), who will rush after them and try to prevent their escape, with the aid of the Vicars of Death.

By the twelfth round after the start of the earthquake, the temple will collapse upon itself — anyone still inside is out of luck. Note that the dimthread will not fall with the temple, so if the Knight's are making their way back through the gauntlet area, they will be relatively safe.



cut out for him. Initially, the Vicars of Death will be sent to dispatch the Knights, followed closely by the 50 warriors. The temple guards will only become involved in the battle if the Knights reach the temple floor, or if all the warriors are killed.

The Knights do have one strategic advantage: there is only one staircase to the second floor of the temple, through which all the warriors must come. If the stairs can be blocked or destroyed, the edeinos will have to try to climb the walls of the temple to reach the Knights on the overlook (*climbing* difficulty of 12).

If the primitives are arrayed on the altar, Thrakmoss will continue with the ritual as long as he can. If not, he will take his spear and move to lead the attack on the Knights.

If Thrakmoss is killed, Stalek will withdraw his power from the temple, and the bone armor and weapons of the edeinos will begin to rot. Many of them will rebel at the thought of using dead things, and desert the temple.

If the Knights make it to the temple floor, they run a serious risk of being overwhelmed. If the Knights should fall, cut to "Saar of All the Realm."

If the Knights make it to the throne and are doing their fighting from there, cut to "To Catch a Saar."

Bird's Eye View

Perhaps the safest way to stop Thrakmoss is to mount an assault from the overlook. This is a particularly good idea if a) the stairs have been blocked and b) the primitives are still on the upper level and not in Thrakmoss' hands.

The distance between the edge of the overlook and the throne is roughly 60 meters. If the temple guards are not aware of their presence, the Knights will have the advantage of surprise in the first round. However, if Thrakmoss survives their initial assault, he will take cover behind the altar (*hard cover*) and continue the ritual, if at all possible. This will make it far harder to bring him down.

Once the Knights' presence is known, the Vicars of Death and the warriors will go after them. If the stairway is blocked, they will have to try and climb the walls (*climbing* total of 12) to reach the Knights. Once the Knights are locked in combat with the warriors, Thrakmoss will move from cover to resume the ritual. Some of the warriors will try to get past the Knights to search for the primitives, if they are not on the altar.

If Thrakmoss is killed, cut to "Knights Victorious." If the Knights fall, or escape without killing Thrakmoss, cut to "Saar of All the Realm."

To Catch a Saar

If the Knights can reach the area of the throne, either by frontal assault or through duplicity, they have a good chance to slay Thrakmoss and end his reign of terror.

If the Knights have been wise enough to destroy the wooden bridge after they crossed it, they will only have to battle the Vicars of Death and the Elders to reach Thrakmoss. Note that Thrakmoss will not attempt to jump across the crevasse to safety, as he fears the ropajs. It is possible that, if the Elders are defeated, some of the warriors or temple guards may try to make the leap.

Thrakmoss will rely on his obsidian spear in combat. But a *vital blow* attack which separates him from his talisman necklace (and the subsequent destruction of said talisman) will cause Stalek to withdraw his power from the area. The cultists will desert Thrakmoss, as will any chance of performing the miracle. Short of killing him, this is one of the best ways of stopping his threat.

Once Thrakmoss has been dealt with, the Knights face the problem of escaping the temple. If the cultists have been abandoned by Stalek, they will not molest the Knights as they try to leave — likewise, if there is an earthquake, as they'll be more occupied with survival. But if neither of these two things has occurred and Thrakmoss has been slain, expect the warriors and temple guards to want the Knights' blood.

There are a couple of ways the Knights can escape from the throne area: start an earthquake (see above); somehow distract the edeinos long enough to make it to the stairs (using illusions or flares or something of that nature); fight their way through the 350 maddened monsters (not recommended); or make use of a *flight* skill, power or spell to soar over the edeinos to the overlook and make an escape either through the tunnel or out the exit.

If the Knight succeed at stopping Thrakmoss, cut to "Knights Victorious." If they fail, cut to "Saar of All the Realm."

Reality — What a Concept

Another way of stopping Thrakmoss' ritual is to invoke a reality storm against him. The remainder of the Knights can make a run for the outside while the invoking Knight struggles with Thrakmoss, or they can try to *trick* the edeinos into thinking the reality storm is a manifestation of Lanala's power (this might cause them to desert Stalek).

If Thrakmoss loses the storm, Stalek will desert him, and he will no longer be able to perform the miracle. His cultists will wan-

der off, and the threat ended.

It is also possible to stop Thrakmoss by making a vital blow attack to tear off the talisman he wears about his neck. If the talisman can be destroyed (tossing it in the crevasse, for instance), Stalek will decide Thrakmoss is unworthy of being his priest and will desert him. See the results of that above.

If the Knights triumph, cut to "Knights Victorious." If the Knights fail, cut to "Saar of All the Realm."





Flags

If an *Escape* card is played, the Knights should be able to make it out of the temple in one piece. However, if they have not killed Thrakmoss and/or ended the threat of the cult, they really haven't won anything but their lives, and maybe those of the citizens of Great Neck. Thrakmoss will try again, and this time he will probably succeed.

If a *Martyr* card is played, a Knight can kill Thrakmoss and/or buy time for his comrades to escape at the cost of his own life. Perhaps he grabs the would-be Saar and falls with him into the crevasse, or fights a valiant "Horatio at the Bridge" holding action on the stairs while his friends escape.

If a *Romance* card is played, one of the Knights becomes attracted to one of the primitives, and will resist any suggestion that she be allowed to go to the altar while a trap is laid.

Variables

If things are looking particularly grim for the Knights, Trassa Jahk's edeinos war party from Act Three, perhaps backed by reinforcements, could mount an attack on the temple. This would make for a good diversion for the Knights, allowing them to complete their mission and escape.

Saar of All the Realm

There are two possible ways Thrakmoss' plan could succeed: the Storm Knights are defeated in their effort to stop him, or the Storm Knights content themselves with saving the primitives and don't attempt to smash the twisted edeinos and his cult. If the latter occurs, Thrakmoss will go out and gather more sacrifices (either in the same manner as before, or by raiding an edeinos camp on Earth and stealing their human captives) and will

complete the ritual within three months. The Storm Knights will have to go back and kill Thrakmoss after rescuing the Great Neck captives to prevent this from happening.

Should Thrakmoss be allowed to complete the sundering, North America is in for a great deal of trouble. Within weeks of the ritual's completion, the Living Land will be filled with stories of edeinos wielding bone swords and wearing armor. Jakatts begin to focus more on the sensations of pain and suffering, and their tactics in combat improve slightly. Restan groups are inexplicably dispatched to pull up stelae, as Thrakmoss moves to bump up the *Technological* and *Social* axioms of the realm (initially by one notch apiece).

The Deep Mist remains in some places and fades in others, as the power of Lanala struggles once again with that of Stalek. Thrakmoss allows the mist to remain in many areas so that Lanala's faithful do not immediately



realize a change has taken place.

Despite this, scores of edeinos rebel against the new "Baruk Kaah's" practices, sparking a bloody civil war in the Living Land and on Takta Ker. Entire villages are torched, the flames spreading to the surrounding jungle as the Living Land burns. Panicked creatures stampede through reality storm fronts, only to disconnect and transform in Core Earth areas.

Jezrael, liking what she sees in this new Saar, cements a firmer alliance with him, while 3327 pours even greater resources into protecting his California investments. Meanwhile, the Cyberpope takes advantage of the confusion to extend his realm in Canada.

Storm Knights can be expected to quickly grow nostalgic for the old Lanala-loving edeinos.

Knights Victorious!

If the Knights have killed Thrakmoss and/or destroyed the cult, they will find things somewhat different when they return to the Living Land. In gratitude for their actions, Lanala allowed her many optants to see a vision of the last moments of Thrakmoss' wasted life. They, in turn, shared the story with their tribes. In future, Knights will be attacked by edeinos loyal to Lanala only if they are interfering with their missions — few edeinos, save those who care little for the goddess, will attack these Knights without good reason.

When the Delphi Council hears the story through their sources in resistance communities, they will dispatch

a Spartan team to raze the mall so no remnant of Thrakmoss' efforts will remain.

Adventure Awards

If the Knights successfully prevented Thrakmoss from possessing the body of Baruk Kaah and becoming the new High Lord of the Living Land, award them 12 Possibilities. If they were also able to save the citizens of Great Neck, award each Knight an additional Possibility.

If they saved the people of Great Neck, but were unable to stop Thrakmoss, award them six Possibilities for this temporary victory.

The Temple of Rec Stalek — Response Form

1. Were any Cicero residents killed? _____
2. If so, who? _____
3. Did the Knights get the edeinos' wreath? _____
4. Was Tara saved? _____
5. Were the Great Neck primitives saved? _____
6. Was the Takta Ker temple destroyed? _____
7. Was Thrakmoss killed? _____
8. Did the Rec Stalek cult disband? _____
9. Did Thrakmoss' miracle succeed? _____



THE TEMPLE OF REC STALEK

By Shane Lacy Hensley

The Near Now. While the Possibility Wars continue to spread, a twisted edeinon bent on revenge hatches a plot that could change the face of the Living Land forever. Calling upon the power of a dark god, he threatens the life of Baruk Kaah and the very future of the realm.

Bizarre edeinon clad in bone armor and wielding swords have been raiding resistance communities throughout Illinois. Backed by undead Living Land creatures, these war parties have kidnapped a small group of humans and carried them to Takta Ker.

Their goal is a dark and bloody one: having resurrected the edeinon god of Death, they plan to use its power to slay Baruk Kaah and make their leader the new High Lord. The Storm Knights must survive a nightmarish trek through Death's gauntlet and an explosive battle in a Takta Ker temple if they wish to save the humans and stop the creation of a far more deadly Living Land.



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