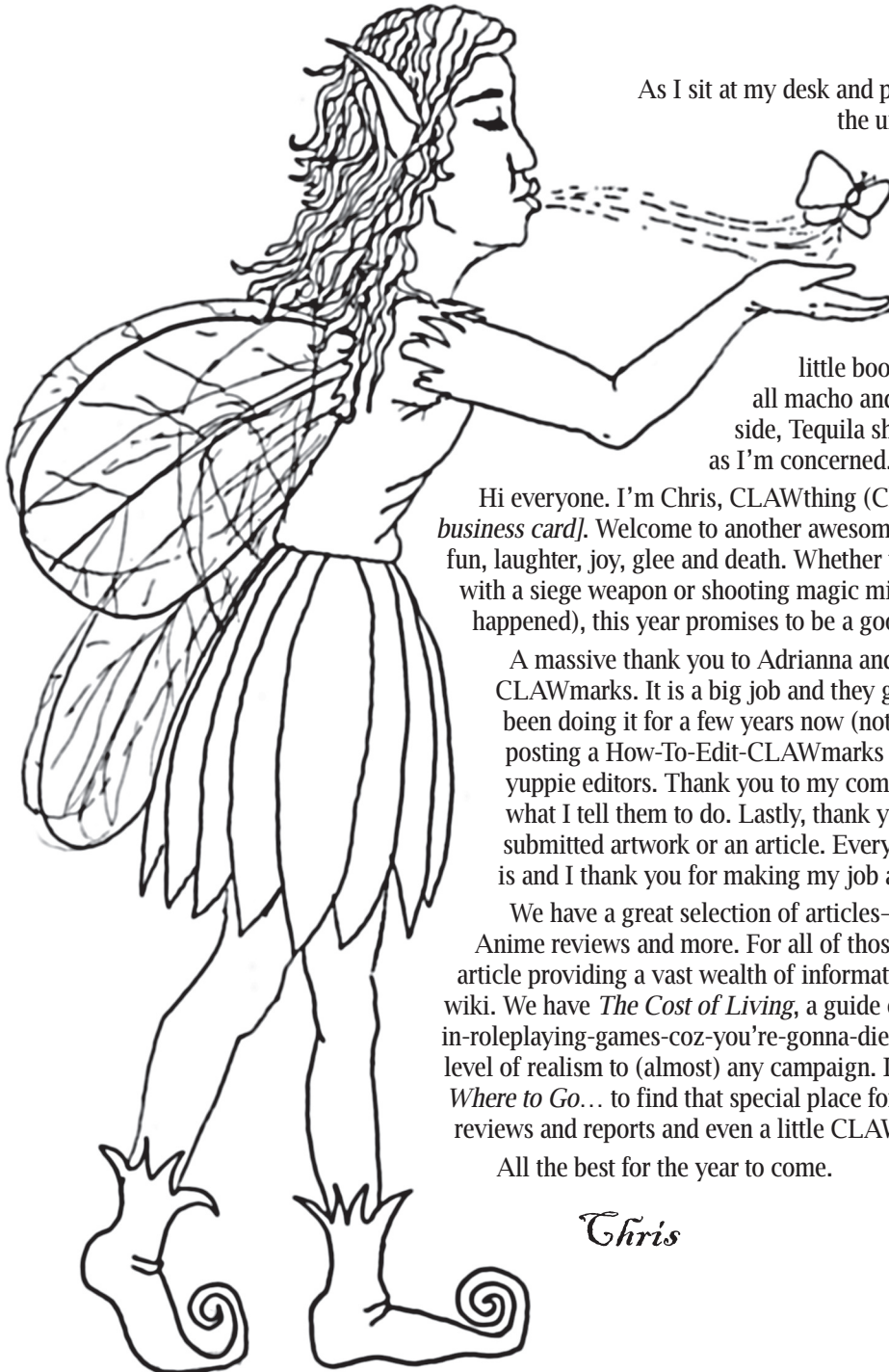


EDITORIAL

by Chris Cecchini



As I sit at my desk and ponder the wonders of the universe, a thought occurs to me: why the hell did I go to a teeny-bopper party last night?

Seriously, it annoys the crap outta me! You walk around and all you see is group after group of full-of-themselves little girls in little skirts trying to show off their little boobs. Then we get the “cool” guys acting all macho and “hardcore”. I hate PE. On the upside, Tequila shots were R6.50. A decent price as far as I’m concerned. I don’t hate PE so much now....

Hi everyone. I’m Chris, CLAWthing (Chairman of CLAWs) [*hands out business card*]. Welcome to another awesome year filled with life, unlfe, killing, fun, laughter, joy, glee and death. Whether you will be backstabbing your friend with a siege weapon or shooting magic missiles from your nipples (yes, it has happened), this year promises to be a good one.

A massive thank you to Adrianna and Simon for their editing of CLAWmarks. It is a big job and they gave of their time freely. They have been doing it for a few years now (not sure how many) and Adrianna will be posting a How-To-Edit-CLAWmarks page on the wiki for any budding yuppie editors. Thank you to my committee for being supportive and doing what I tell them to do. Lastly, thank you to everyone out there who submitted artwork or an article. Everyone knows what a pain getting articles is and I thank you for making my job a little easier.

We have a great selection of articles—from *The Evolution of Dragons* to Anime reviews and more. For all of those new to the CLAWwiki, there is an article providing a vast wealth of information on how to effectively utilize the wiki. We have *The Cost of Living*, a guide on Why not-getting-your-asses-kicked-in-roleplaying-games-coz-you’re-gonna-die-if-you-do is Good that’ll bring a new level of realism to (almost) any campaign. If you’re new to Cape Town check out *Where to Go...* to find that special place for you and your friend. There are many reviews and reports and even a little CLAWs toilet humour.

All the best for the year to come.

Chris

1

It is your third and last year at the University of Cape Town, a classic campus piled up against Table Mountain. The cold winter vacation is over and you are looking forward to your final semester. You drive your decaying car to the foot of one of the many steep roads and manoeuvre into a parking bay. The rain begins to pelt your windscreen.



Do you: brave the rain and head for your lecture (go to entry 4) or decide to ditch class and drive to your favourite coffee shop (go to entry 15)?

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2

The person next to you is a chubby young man with a matt of brown hair. He is busy drawing an artistic dragon on his notepad and you compliment him on it. He nods and then waves his pencil in the direction of the lecturer.

"Bloody Commerce lecturers are so boring!" he hisses. You agree, noting that this is your first Commerce course and you're glad you'll never have to take any more. He nods, then changes the subject.

"You really want to learn something at this university," he says with a light in his eye, "you should check out the Jammie Fountain after class! Ever since this morning it's been an interesting place..."

He chuckles in a way that makes you uneasy. You decide to this guy is a bit of a freak and ignore him. The lecturer drones on and sooner than expected, people begin packing their bags.

"Before you go," the lecturer shouts over the growing tide of voices, "I want to remind you all that you should donate blood in the Sports Centre this week! And those of you who have a problem with tutorial allocations, please come to my office now."

You cringe. Tutorials! You haven't even thought about that.



Do you: go to the lecturer's office to sign up for a tutorial (go to entry 26), head for your 9am lecture (go to entry 27) or go immediately to the Jammie Fountain (go to entry 29)?

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goodfonts.org, Divide By Zero

CLAWS FOR DUMMIES

by Warren "Wabbit" Russel

Welcome to *CLAWs for Dummies*. In this chapter, we will go through the basics of integrating yourself into the strange world that is known as CLAWs, and issue you with some safety precautions, tips and general guidelines.

Step 1

Join CLAWs. By doing this, you will get the amazing thing known as CLAWmarks... but as you're already reading this, on to step 2.

Step 2

This is an important one. Sign up for as many LARPs as you possibly can. If you have never heard of them before, LARP stands for Live Action Role Playing. You should participate in no fewer than two LARPs. Even if you think it's silly or stupid you should at least try it. It opens up about a thousand new ways to think as you immerse yourself in your character and become dislocated from reality. It's also highly entertaining to watch people's expressions as they overhear your conversations about how you shot someone last night or launched the missiles at America last week.

Another important thing to remember about a LARP is the after-party. Almost every LARP is followed by one.

They are an excellent way to meet the other LARPer (trust me when I say that playing with someone in a LARP does not constitute getting to know them), and also you get to get absolutely plastered should you so wish. Just try to remember people's actual names and not their LARP names.

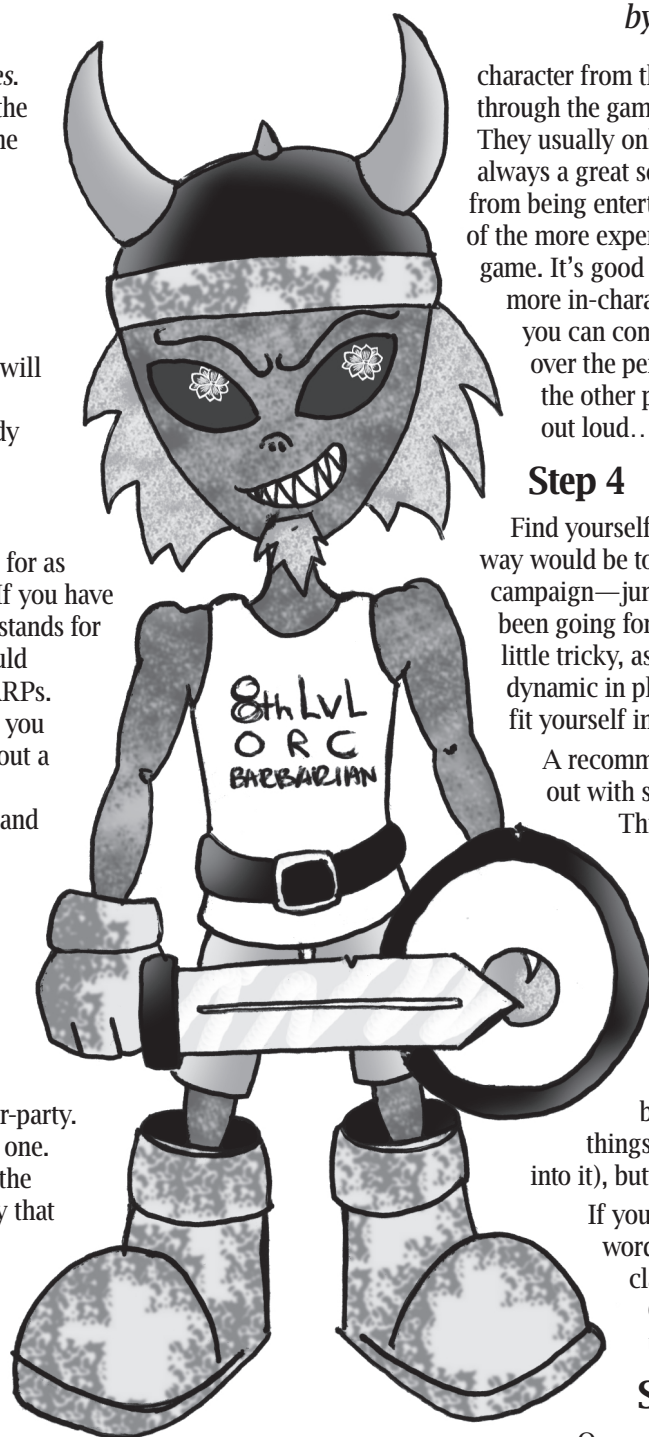
Step 3

This step is optional, but if you haven't roleplayed before I recommend that you follow this step before jumping to step 4.

Sign up for modules. A module is a once-off (although it can go on for a few sessions) roleplaying game—you choose a

1. *Dungeons & Dragons*

2. <http://claws.uct.ac.za>



character from those already set up, and work through the game from beginning to end. They usually only last a few hours and are always a great source of amusement. Aside from being entertained, you can see how some of the more experienced roleplayers get into a game. It's good practice, and remember, the more in-character you get, the more ways you can come up with to creatively screw over the person running the module and the other players.... Oh, did I say that out loud...?

Step 4

Find yourself a campaign or two. The best way would be to join a group starting a new campaign—jumping into a campaign that's been going for a while can sometimes be a little tricky, as the group has its own dynamic in place that you sort of have to fit yourself into.

A recommendation here is that you start out with something *other than D&D*¹.

This is because, while there are a few exceptions, in most cases there is very little roleplaying in D&D games. Of course, if you have a group of people willing to roleplay D&D well, it can be loads of fun. The aim of roleplaying isn't to have the best stuff and kill the most things (yes, I know that does come into it), but to actually roleplay.

If you don't hear of any games via word of mouth or in this issue's classifieds, then check out the CLAWs website² for some of the games listed there.

Step 5


Once you have yourself set up in

3

She nods gravely and you fork out the few Rands still clinging to your wallet. She sips her hot chocolate in silence, seeming preoccupied with something beyond your reach. You try to engage her in conversation, but she just smiles weakly and nods. Eventually, she gets up and hands you what looks like a perfume bottle.

"Thank you—I can only hope we both make it out of here alive."

You consider that perhaps other people take university more seriously than you do.

 Do you: inspect the perfume bottle (go to entry 19), relax and order another Latte (go to entry 14) or leave the perfume bottle and go back to UCT in time for your 9am lecture (go to entry 18)?


your various roleplaying endeavours, you should probably hit the social scene (yes, weird roleplaying people do have social lives despite what the freaks who don't roleplay will tell you). You can meet up with the various nut-jobs on and around campus, especially in the Nescafe on upper campus.


Meeting here is always a good way of finding out about the latest goings-on in the CLAWs crowd, and getting info on various game topics or news about upcoming events.

General Safety Tips

Yancke


Should you ever encounter this strange life-form you need to do several things:


 Check if you are female (there are various methods of doing this that you can choose from); if you are, then skip the Yancke section.


 Assuming that you are male, or at least not female, calculate your proximity to the Yancke. If its arms are within reach of your nipples, you are advised to guard them carefully.


Fridge quotes

Whenever you are speaking to people in CLAWs you should be very aware of the following:

 Anything you say can and will be used against you so long as it causes embarrassment.


 Anything remotely perverted will be twisted until it sounds utterly revolting.


 Anything not even remotely perverted will be twisted until it is at the very least sexual.


 Should the comment made by you provide sufficient entertainment for those around you, it will be entered into CLAWmarks in the Fridge Quotes section, so as to further embarrass you.

Religious Fanatics

These are a strange breed bent on CLAWs-destruction owing to our "occult" practices.

 There have been unconfirmed sightings of these strange creatures lurking around UCT campus. We advise caution and recommend that you do not approach these dangerous beings unless you are fully equipped to refute all their claims about your soul being in danger. Earplugs are definitely recommended.

 Should one of these creatures attempt to exorcise you, we advise you to start singing a Christian song to throw it off balance before escaping.

 For the thrill-seekers among you: it can be very entertaining if you start spurting off various ramblings that make it sound like you are cursing them.


Scissors

Running with these and falling can be hazardous to your health.


 This is incorrect.


Running with scissors in no way harms you, but can be funny if you impale someone else.


Roleplaying tips

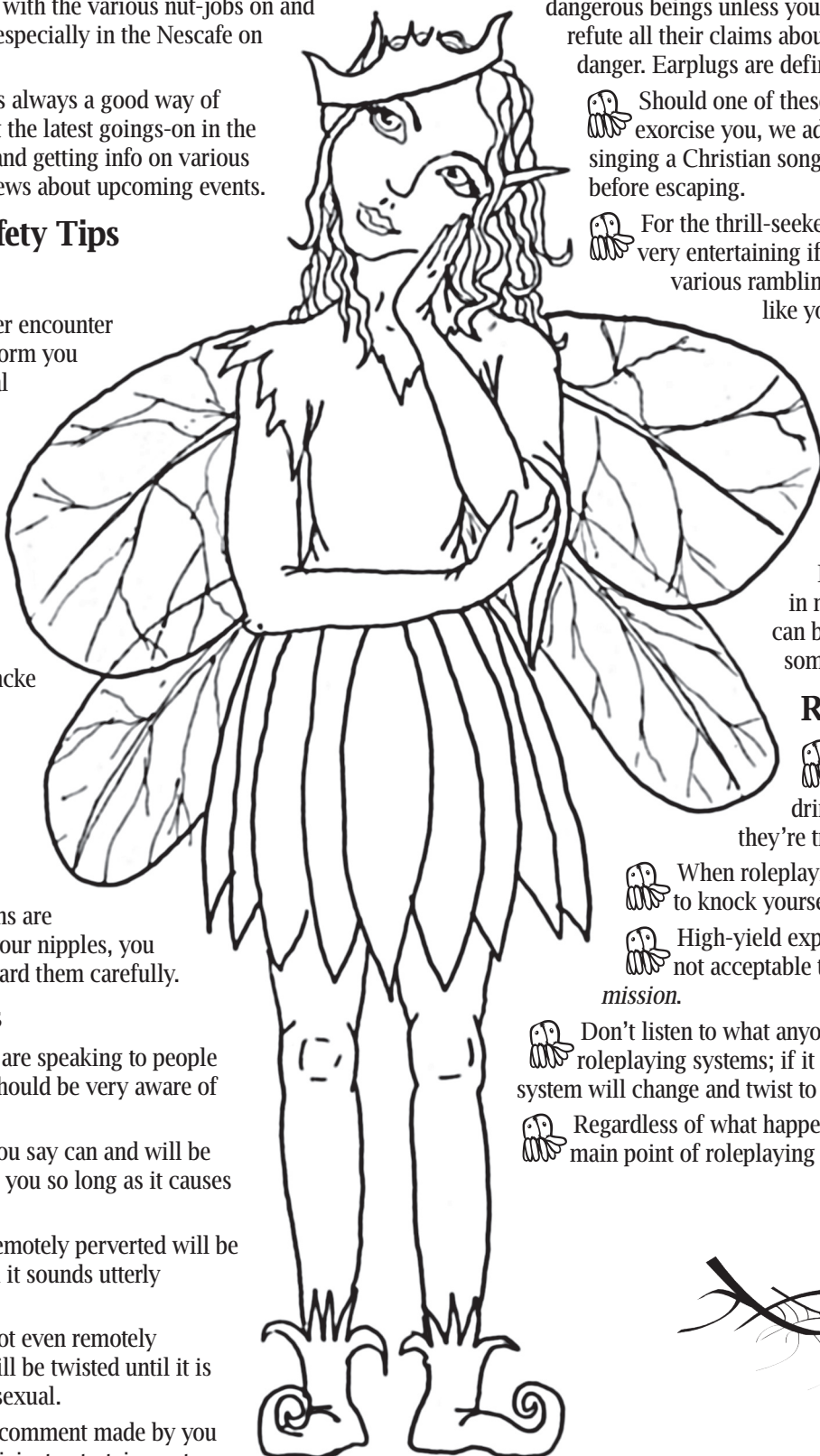
 When LARPing, never accept food or drink from another player; they're trying to poison you.

 When roleplaying, it is advisable not to knock yourself out... repeatedly....

 High-yield explosives and meteors are not acceptable tools to use on a *recon mission*.


 Don't listen to what anyone says about various roleplaying systems; if it isn't exactly right, the system will change and twist to suit the group.

 Regardless of what happens during the game, the main point of roleplaying is to have fun.



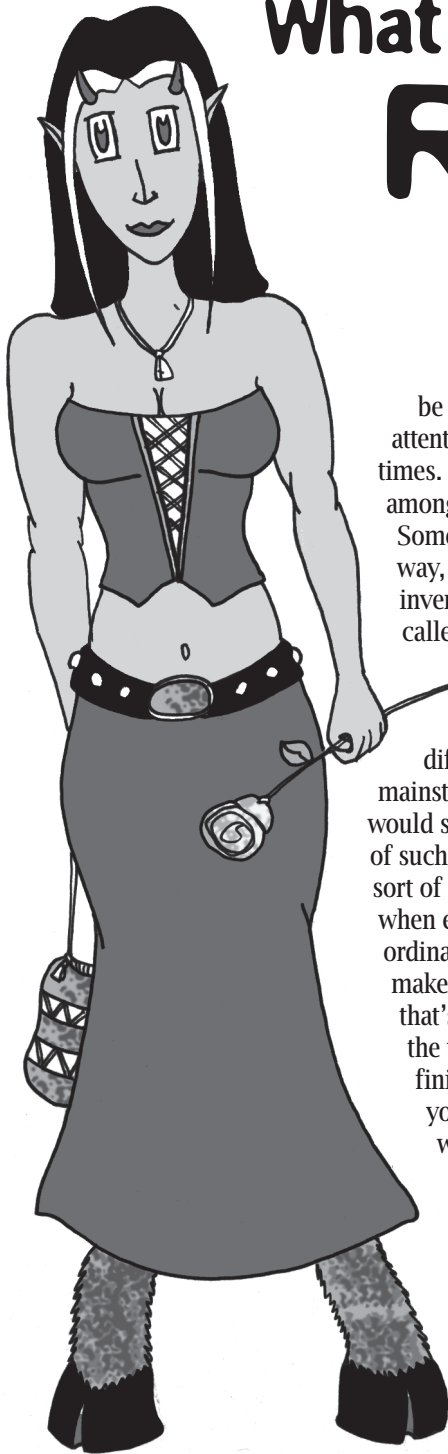
4

You slowly gain weight as the raindrops nest in your heavy clothing. Your jeans feel like ice and every time you blink, your eyelashes unload more cold rain onto your cheeks. Though you are familiar with the lazy student body, you still find it unsettling that the campus is so empty. You have not seen another soul.

 Do you: head for the nearest building and try to find a cafeteria (go to entry 9) or continue further up the hill to your first lecture venue (go to entry 8)?

What the Hell is Roleplaying?

by Bronwen Ellis



These people can really be melodramatic attention-seekers at times. This is common among humans. Somewhere along the way, someone invented this thing called roleplaying, which they knew was different from mainstream hobbies and would satisfy the needs of such people. It is the sort of thing which, when explained to ordinary individuals, makes them go “Dude, that’s weird...”. If by the time you have finished reading this, you go “Dude, when can I start?!” then congratulations—you are in the right place.

OK, there are two types of roleplaying that must be explained. The

first is LARPing (live-action roleplaying). This is, all in all, like putting on a pretend play. We all get given a character to play, and come along in the appropriate costumes. For the next two or three hours, we walk around in the room pretending to be those people. Yes, it is just like playing dress-up when you were a kid. And we are as carefree and as happy as kids at the time. We do it because it’s fun—not too hard to understand. We also try to make the game seem as much like the situation it’s set in as possible. That means that if we’re playing a load of wood elves, it should take place in a forest.

The second type of roleplaying is usually just called roleplaying. It is pretty much the same as LARPing, only we do it sitting round a table, and we’re not in costume. You pretend to be the character and act out the story as it goes

along.

In both cases there is a person called the DM. They are the person who leads the game. In table-top roleplaying they narrate the story to the players and describe where it’s set. In a LARP they just walk around and eavesdrop in on people’s conversations, and make sure that the game goes the way it’s intended to. I do not wish to talk about this too much, because I feel the best way to find out what it’s all about is to play a game and see for yourself.

The fact that we play games in which we go around pretending to be other people can cause great confusion. It has led others to believe that we do things like drink each others’ blood. Most people on campus have never heard of CLAWs, and those who have don’t really seem to understand what we are about.

For those who may have heard of us, let me settle a few things. This is what we are not: we are not all Goths. A good many of us are and spend their time being professionally depressed. I personally never got the “creatures of the night” thing. That makes me think of mosquitoes and stray cats. We do not worship the devil. I don’t know how such a conclusion can be drawn from the mere fact that we wear black. A great many anti-devil people wear black; Catholic priests and nuns, for example, are very fond of the colour.

We are simply a games society, made up of many different people. We are held together by this common hobby, which we assure you is lots of harmless fun. All you need to do is let loose and run away with your imagination. In our strange little games, that’s your only limitation.

5

This is your first Commerce course and you furiously scribble down a blur of numbers. Already, you feel like failure is being written into your future. The lecturer drones on and sooner than expected, people begin packing their bags.

“Before you go,” the lecturer shouts over the growing tide of voices, “I want to remind you all that you should donate blood in the Sports Centre this week! And those of you who have a problem with tutorial allocations, please come to my office now.”

You cringe. Tutorials! You haven’t even thought about that.



Do you: go to the lecturer’s office to sign up for a tutorial (go to entry 26), head for your 9am lecture (go to entry 27) or find the nearest cafeteria (go to entry 28)?

ANIME REVIEW

by Adam Jorgensen

Anime is surprisingly popular and a great deal of it is well worth watching. However, there is a large number of titles in existence and not all of them are good. In the following article I'll be reviewing a couple of titles worth watching.

On the subject of obtaining anime, there is much that can be said. From a student perspective, however, one major factor is having contacts in a large, network-connected residence such as Smuts Hall or Kopano. If you live in a residence you'll be pretty much set. Anime tends to drip into residences at a steady rate, although it follows that the most popular titles are easier to find on the residence network. UCT's network traffic policy has seen changes recently concerning residence network traffic. This could affect the rate at which anime arrives, so it also helps to have anime sources externally.

So, anyway, enough on that, on with the reviews.



Gunslinger Girl

Setting: Modern Italy with a touch of Science Fiction

Genre: Drama

Format: 1 series, 13 episodes

Gunslinger Girl deals with a secret branch of the Italian government called the Public Corporation for Social Welfare (PCSW). This organisation is essentially a black-ops arm of the law enforcement system and focuses, to a large extent, on terrorism. The Corporation makes extensive use of experimental child soldiers. These children, all girls, have been adopted by the Corporation and considerably altered, both physically and mentally, in order to function as elite assassins.

Gunslinger Girl's treatment of the subject matter is grim and, generally, somewhat depressing. In many ways, *Gunslinger Girl* is tragedy, dealing

intimately with the theme of innocence lost on a variety of levels. While the series does feature a moderate amount of action, this component never becomes an end unto itself.

If you're looking for something serious to watch, then *Gunslinger Girl* is a good place to start. Probably on the only bad side to this series is its relative shortness, which is somewhat emphasised by the rather anti-climatic ending. The reduced length of this series also means that some of the characters end up a little under-developed in the background department.

Overall, however, I would highly recommend this series to anyone with a taste for something a little more thoughtful than the usual *Naruto*-style fare.

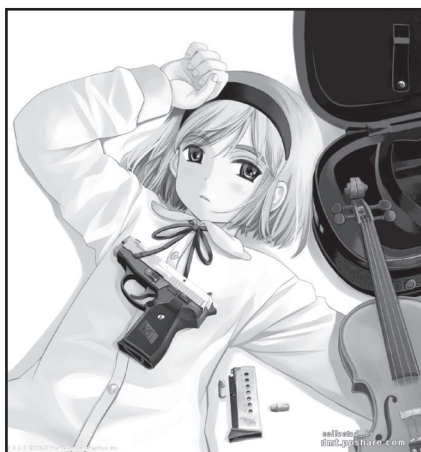
Shingetsutan Tsukihime (True Lunar Chronicle Tsukihime)

Setting: Modern Japan with a light dusting of the Supernatural

Genre: Drama/Romance

Format: 1 series, 12 episodes

Another relatively short series, *Shingetsutan Tsukihime* might be somewhat difficult to find, but is nevertheless well worth a watch. As with other series such as *Hellsing* and *Trinity*



6

Something has infused you with unnatural strength, and though you haven't attended Judo classes for months, you manage to fling the various cleaning staff zombies to the ground. You kick their heads brutally every time—that seems to do the trick.

Fifteen minutes later you are standing on a heap of blood and flesh, victorious and unscarred. Exhilarated. You see a primly dressed woman with a briefcase gingerly approaching outside the coffee shop. She shakes your hand.

"Agent Lucky," she says. "CPS paranormal investigation. We're very grateful for your work here."

A news team arrives shortly thereafter and, on Agent Lucky's instructions, you explain how the worker's protest got out of hand and became violent. The next day you find that your student account has been mysteriously credited with enough money to last you several years. Silently, you thank that shivering girl.



Blood, vampires and their associated mythology are a key feature of this anime series. In contrast to the aforementioned titles, however, *Shingetsutan*'s treatment of the subject matter involves less action and a great deal more plot and character development.

This is not to say that no action is involved. The series does feature a couple of pretty good action sequences, but overall they're not the focus of the series. Rather, the series tends to focus more on the characters and their histories.

In this respect the series only partially succeeds. Only the main character is given the necessary amount of personality and background to satisfy the viewer. While most of the other characters do receive an adequate amount of personality, they generally suffer from rather less well developed backgrounds.

This is possibly the only real problem with this series and could quite possibly have been solved by the production of more episode content. Nevertheless, the series does succeed in portraying the relationship between the two main characters, Shiki Tohno and Arcueid Brunestad, particularly well.

Shingetsutan Tsukihime is also the only



anime series I can recall watching that deals with the physical relationship between the lead characters in a mature, open and yet non-pornographic fashion.

Overall, despite its flaws, I heartily recommend this series. It differs from the majority of other vampire-oriented anime in numerous respects and is, overall, a quality production even despite the character history problems.

Scrapped Princess

Setting: Fantasy world/Far future

Genre: Fantasy/SF Drama with a touch of Comedy

Format: 1 series, 24 episodes

Scrapped Princess is an interesting series in that it is actually a work of Science Fiction masquerading as one of Fantasy. This only becomes apparent during the latter half of the series and only then over the course of a number of episodes. Thus, the genre switch that occurs during this series is not abrupt and is, from the perspective of the characters, largely non-existent.

The series deals, in the main, with the titular *Scrapped Princess*, a 15-year-old girl prophesied to destroy the world on her 16th birthday. The girl in question, Pacifica Kasull, is an unlikely candidate for this role and the series deals, in the main, with her experiences and those of her older foster siblings in the months leading up to the pivotal birthday.

Scrapped Princess contains a good amount of drama mixed with a little action and some slight touches of humour. In particular, Pacifica's interactions with her foster family tend to be somewhat comedic but, overall, the series is generally quite serious and even a little grim at times.

In this respect *Scrapped Princess* differs from the majority of anime fantasy series in that it is, overall, serious in tone and content. While not angsty by any means, *Scrapped Princess* is nevertheless a great deal less carefree and lightweight than other well known fantasy productions, such as *Slayers* or *The Vision of Escaflowne*.

Personally what I enjoyed most was the fashion in which the series dealt with the larger picture, a perspective generally hidden from most of the characters within the series. In its treatment of this overarching aspect of the story the series succeeds fairly well, giving the viewer a well-rounded look at the various attitudes and forces at play in the world at large.

In general *Scrapped Princess* is a competent piece and, on many levels, it succeeds. However, while very competent it remains largely unexceptional in many respects. It is by no means a bad series. In fact, it's overall a rather good series, just not amazing in any particular respect. The characters and plotline, while interesting and enjoyable, are not massively original and thus if there's one thing that the series lacks it would be the twists and turns found in various other works.

Overall, I would nevertheless recommend this series to anyone with a taste for fantasy productions. It's an enjoyable series and there are far worse ways you could pass your time... (examples include watching *Dragonball Z*, collecting *Pokemon* memorabilia and staring at a wall).

Voices of a Distant Star

Setting: Near future (2039 AD)

Genre: Drama/Romance/SF

Format: Original Animated Video (OAV), 25 minutes in length

Voices of a Distant Star is a very interesting piece of anime for a number of reasons. For one, it's a rather short work, considering that most OAVs tend to be well over an hour in length. *Voices'* length comes as little surprise when one learns that it was mostly the product of a



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You are about to say something when an icy stab courses up your arm. You feel the world spin around you until you are so nauseous you can hardly stand. That's when you notice that you are in fact not standing—you're hovering a few centimetres above the ground. And a horribly pale body that looks just like you is lying on the floor beneath your feet.

"It was the cleaning staff!" the girl protests. "They turned into Zombies and killed me!"

You would doubt her sanity if it weren't for the fact that you are now doomed to wander the halls of UCT moaning for coffee....

single person's hard work.

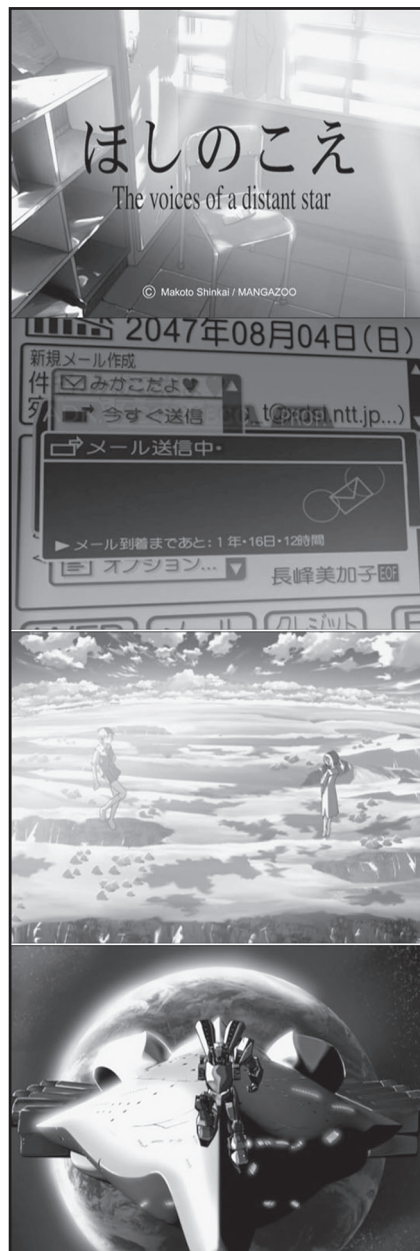
This brief anime deals with a relationship between two people separated by an ever increasing distance, one both literal and metaphorical. The two characters, Mikako and Noburo, are on the verge of entering high school when Mikako is drafted as a pilot by the UN. The UN is launching a deep-space mission as a retaliatory response to an unprovoked alien attack that destroyed the Mars Exploration Project. The mission will draw upon newly developed technologies to launch a space-craft with almost Faster-Than-Light (FTL) capabilities on a mission to find and, hopefully, destroy the alien home-world. *Voices of a Distant Star* deals mainly with the increasingly slow communications between Mikako and Noburo, separated as they increasingly are by both time and space.

For such a small and personal project *Voices of a Distant Star* is amazingly well done, both in terms of the audio-visual experience and the story and its characters. The artwork is generally of very high quality, although there is a general lack of large-scale motion, while the CG elements are not nearly as unpleasant as they appear in many more commercial works.

The audio is also extremely impressive considering that the majority of it was a single person's work. The music is subtly affecting while the sound effects are clear and professional. Thus, in terms of production *Voices of a Distant Star* is an amazing piece of work.

However, it's the story and characters that make *Voices* a truly brilliant work. While the essential background plot-line of *Voices* is not truly original, it is by no means an unworthy story. Where *Voices* succeeds in this respect is in the fashion in which it tells the story. By telling the story in the form of communications between the two main characters this anime provides a very personal window into the events that are occurring.

The fashion in which the characters are dealt with is also truly brilliant. *Voices of a Distant Star* only really features two characters, and thus it is able to focus on their interactions, limited as they are, in a truly deep and interesting manner. Although very little of Mikako and Noburo's background histories is revealed during the course of the OAV, this is not really a problem, as their personalities are brilliantly fleshed



out over the course of the 25 minutes that this piece runs.

By this point it should be obvious that I think this is one of the best anime productions I've ever watched. The story-telling and characters are poignant and real, while the audio-visual quality is appealing in its subtle, somewhat minimalist fashion. *Voices of a Distant Star* is a brilliant example of the best work produced by the independent anime community and will probably be remembered as a classic for many years to come. Do yourself a favour and watch this OAV. It's short, sweet and will leave you with a good after-taste....

Trinity Blood

Setting: Far future
Genre: Action/Drama/SF
Format: 1 series, 24 episodes

Trinity Blood is the second anime reviewed here that deals primarily with vampires. However, this series differs from *Shingetsutan Tsukihime* in a large number of ways. At 24 episodes it runs roughly twice as long as *Shingetsutan*, although in many ways it fails to fully utilise this advantage.

The focus of *Trinity Blood* is also rather different, being more action-oriented and fantastical in terms of visuals and story-telling. On the subject of visuals, *Trinity Blood* is a rather pretty series overall. This anime uses a mixture of hand-drawn artwork and generally well executed CG to portray a distant future that is subtly post-apocalyptic in nature. The audio in this series is also pretty good, although nothing really stands out in terms of voice acting and music.

In terms of story-telling and characters, *Trinity Blood* is both a success and a failure. At its core, the series is a Science-Fiction, with the various vampires and other supernatural creatures being extremely advanced manifestations of nano-technology. The plot focus of the series is a newly developing conflict between Western Europe, an area largely under human rule and Vatican guidance, and Eastern Europe and Russia, controlled by the vampire-dominated New Human Empire. This developing conflict is spurred on by the manoeuvres of a third-party group known as the Rosenkreutz Orden (Possibly a reference to the Rosicrucian Order...). The conflict is covered, in the main, from the perspective of a number of agents working for a special division of the Vatican's Department of Foreign Affairs. Key amongst these is Father Abel Nightroad, although the series also dwells on certain other characters to a fair extent.

The world of *Trinity Blood* develops rather nicely over the course of the

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You miserably trudge up the stairs. Then up the Jammie stairs. And up the stairs to the Arts block. You are exhausted and shivering by the time you reach your lecture theatre. Finally, you see more students—they are sitting comatose in their seats. The lecturer looks very pale and thin—perhaps she has AIDS.



Do you: take notes (go to entry 5) or strike up a conversation with the person next to you (go to entry 2)?

series. The plot introduces additional characters at a relatively good pace and does a good job of moving said characters about, allowing the viewer to establish a relatively clear picture of the world as it is. The characters introduced are also generally handled rather well, with even villains receiving enough screen-time to be less than completely two-dimensional, although only just....

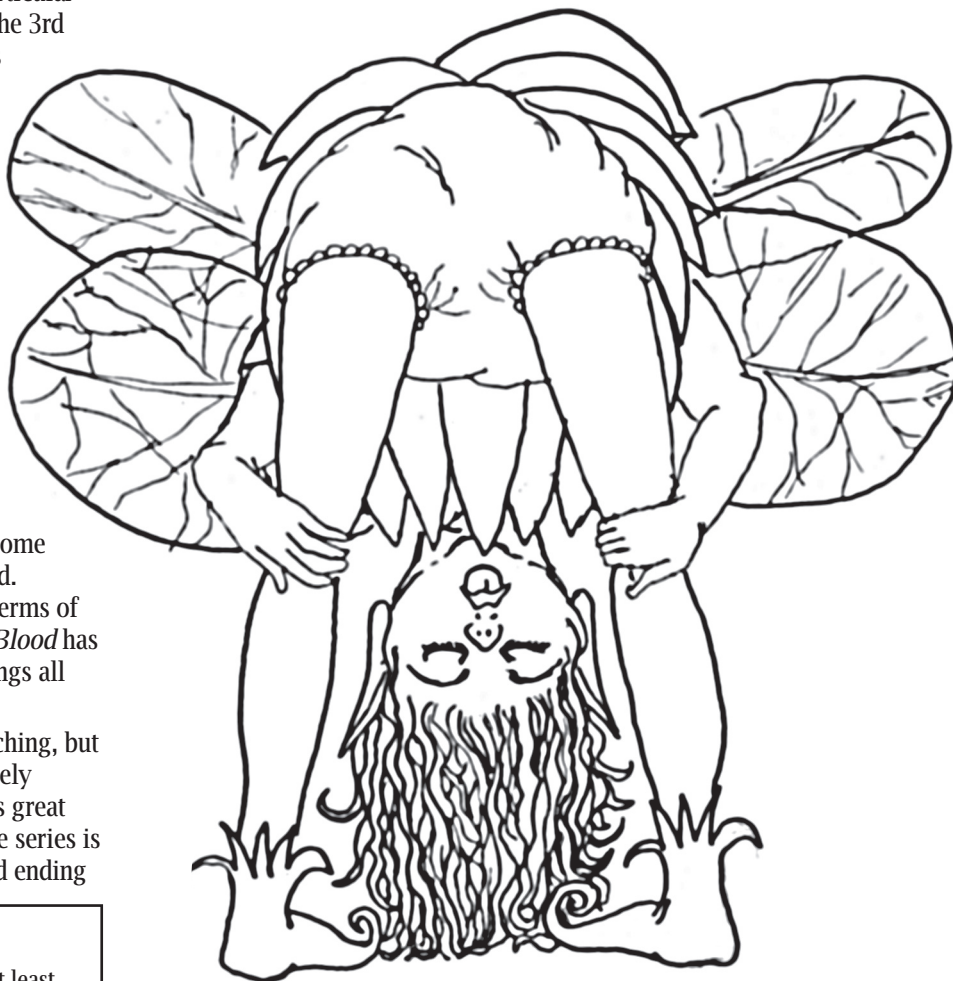
Where *Trinity Blood* fails, however, is in terms of pacing. Although initially well-handled in this respect, the series wastes episodes during the latter half and, as a result, ends entirely too abruptly and with far too many loose ends unresolved. In particular the series fails to fully explore Abel Nightroad's background as well as it could have. These failures are, in the main, a result of excessive time spent on a particular non-essential story arc during the 3rd quarter of the series. While this story arc is enjoyable to watch, it nevertheless fails to contribute enough to the overall story and is mostly disconnected from the final few episodes in terms of setting and story.

A final note on *Trinity Blood* is with respect to its action scenes. These are really well done for the most part, in particular the scenes featuring Father Nightroad. The series is worth watching if only to appreciate some of the truly epic battles involved. Although generally lacking in terms of city-destroying action, *Trinity Blood* has the personal combat side of things all zipped up.

The final verdict: Worth watching, but don't expect to emerge completely satisfied. Although the action is great and the plot develops nicely, the series is ultimately let down by a hurried ending



that fails to tie up all the loose ends. While another 12 episodes would have been nice, the series remains mostly enjoyable as is.



You enter the Law building. At least there is one person—a cleaning lady, mechanically dragging her broom across the floor. You spot a cafeteria down the stairs and rush towards it. Just as you get to the foot of the stairs, the cleaning lady thrusts out her broom and whacks you across the legs. You trip—and crash to the floor!



Do you: get up and run (go to entry 13) or start swearing at the cleaning lady (go to entry 14)?



overheard on IRC

<GoldenAngel> i should put you all on ignore :P
<Gnome> Hodgestar: I don't think that really gains you much in the way of security
<confluence> ...says the person who sends out chain letters! In DOC attachments! :P
<confluence> ;)
<GoldenAngel> pffft
<confluence> I stick my tongue out at you.
<Gnome> if you lose control of the private key it means only that one system can be accessed otoh, that means a separate passphrase for each key
<Gnome> what do you think?
<GoldenAngel> i think that the world wuld be much prettier if there wasnt light pollution
<GoldenAngel> s/wuld/would
<Gnome> keys should be host based. One for your home machine, one for your work machine
<GoldenAngel> one for your front door and one for your back door
<GoldenAngel> and if u are in digs 1 for your bedroom door
<GoldenAngel> one for the toilet is usefull too
<Gnome> that's dangerous if you really need to use the toilet in a hurry
<GoldenAngel> ya but u dont lock it from the outside unless you leave the toilet unlocked, but there's no security in that. *anyone* could steal your toilet paper
<GoldenAngel> only from the inside
<GoldenAngel> thats why u keep the toilet paper in your room
<confluence> Theyn you'd better not absent-mindedly drop it in the loo. Especially if you don't turn on the light when you use the loo at night.
<confluence> (The key, not the toilet paper.)
<Gnome> isn't that just another example of the "res-think" that we've been trying to get past for years?
<GoldenAngel> the other alternative is to do colelctive toilet paper shopping, that way its noy *your* toielt paper, so technically no 1 is stealing anything
<GoldenAngel> s/colelctive/collective
<confluence> What, like marking all your food with stickers saying "MINE"?
<Gnome> Commie RAT!
<GoldenAngel> heehee
<GoldenAngel> socialist actually
<confluence> Toilet paper of the People!
<Gnome> That's uncapitalist! There's no incentive to use less toilet-paper!
<Gnome> the system will get clogged and its downfall is inevitable
<Gnome> or overflow
<GoldenAngel> how about: whoever finishes the roll buys the next 1?
<confluence> Now that would just encourage poor hygiene.
<confluence> "No, it's not finished-see, I only used half the last square."
<GoldenAngel> or, economic use of toilet paper
<Gnome> this is a watershed moment in toilet politics, comrades!
<GoldenAngel> if only toilet paper worked that way
<GoldenAngel> assuming that there will be cheaptoilet paper bought
<GoldenAngel> the last few squares come off the roll at once
<GoldenAngel> if the more expensive variety is bought then a rule needs to made that the 4th or 3rd last square is the last one since 2 or 3 squares may still be glues to the roll
<confluence> You can put them back. Just balance them carefully.

<Gnome> ready to take the plunger into violent counter-clockwise (dependent on hemisphere) revolution
<confluence> Ooh, we can hunt down deviants who don't wipe the seat, and send them to labour camps in Siberia.
<GoldenAngel> oooo
<GoldenAngel> or boys who dont put the seat back down
* GoldenAngel looks at Klepht
<Gnome> or *girls* who don't put the toilet LID down!
<Gnome> s/girls/people/
<GoldenAngel> the natural state of the toilet seat is down! by leaving it up it disrupts the balance
<Gnome> to be fair..
<GoldenAngel> besides, toilet seats were made down
<GoldenAngel> if they were made to e up they wouldnt exist
<GoldenAngel> s/e/be
<Gnome> I think we need to express our toilet rights! come up with a constipation, for the people, by the people!
<GoldenAngel> you do that, i have an appointment to get to
* GoldenAngel has quit (Quit:)
<Gnome> GA: current toilet-political thought suggests that the normal state of the lid be dependent on the majority in the nation-digs-state
<Gnome> damn
<Gnome> I'll have to take this to Hyde Park
<Gnome> lol @ Siberia :)
<Gnome> the filthy corrupters who can't aim have to wear little urine-coloured patches
<Gnome> I though this was most entertaining.
<Princess_Anie> toilet seat up is bad feng shui
<Princess_Anie> luck go down bog
<Gnome> absolutely! Lid should be closed.
<Princess_Anie> and it just seems icky to have the lid up
<Gnome> I've tried telling people about the 10 foot jet of bacteria that ricochets off the roof when you flush and showers you thanks for that image
<Princess_Anie> Gnome: Mostly I was thinking about not mixing work keys and personal keys.
<Hodgestar> cheerz all
<Klepht> * Klepht has quit (Quit:)
<Princess_Anie> yay! my mom just got here to take over the spawn
<Hodgestar> Both the seat *and* the lid should be down unless the toilet should be in use.
<Hodgestar> And personally, I'm all for removing urinals and having fixed toilet seats.
<Hodgestar> Either that or requiring a urinating license before people are allowed to pee standing up.
<Princess_Anie> lol
<Princess_Anie> I second that
<confluence> Especially in locales which serve alcohol. Yeurgh. Do *not* drink and pee standing up.
<Hodgestar> At least neither of you have to use men's public bathrooms.
<Hodgestar> It's become rather a sore point since I started work at UWC.

10

The girl declines your offer of a sopping garment. She whispers in a hoarse voice: "Are you a UCT student?"



Do you: lie and pretend to be a professional photographer (go to entry 16) or tell her you are (go to entry 17)?

How to avoid

A GARRICK-SIZED HANGOVER

by Hila Gropper

Well, the inspiration for this one came on Sunday, Jan 1, when a very hung-over Garrick was at our house and later at Schpat's.

Now obviously the best way to avoid a hangover, as is the best way to avoid pregnancy, is to abstain. That's no fun, though. So here are some hints and tips that have helped me avoid all but one (red wine is the devil) hangover since I started drinking (at the bright old age of 14).

1

Before going to bed, drink two glasses of water and take a painkiller of your choice. Note: If you normally take two Nurofen, take one. This is a preventative measure, not a curing one. The bigger the glass, the better. Don't think that just because you have a really big glass, you can have only one; in fact, if you want, you could have a litre of water before bed... you won't sleep much, though.

2

If in fact you haven't managed to avoid the hangover: make sure you have a two-litre bottle of water for the rest of the day; try drinking eight glasses of water before taking any painkillers and absolutely avoid coffee and coke. If you feel you need an energy pick-me-up then have a glass of coke or an energy drink, but drink lots of water with it. Alcohol dehydrates you. So does caffeine. If the condition is dire, have a glass of orange

juice with five drops of rescue remedy. Rescue is a magical substance made up mostly of alcohol. So it's kind of like the hair of the dog, but only the bits that came off on the couch when the dog scratched its side on it. Also, having an afternoon nap (if possible) can help. Don't make it too long a nap, since it takes away from rehydration time.

3

I know a lot of you hate the following word: Exercise. Now, bear with me here. Exercise makes you sweat. Toxins leave your body through sweating. You could go to a Turkish bath or sauna instead, but not many of you have access to those unless you go to the gym... and since you're at the gym already...

4

This one is a bit of a gamble and only works sometimes. Going to bed sometimes means you wake up drunk (this doesn't work for Garrick). If you find that when you wake up you are in fact still drunk, start the rehydration immediately. Drink lots and lots of

water. That way you sober up and avoid a hangover.

Remember, nobody believes you if you say things like "I am never going to drink again" when you are hung-over, so to save the pain of speaking, and later smug looks, never use that phrase when you know, even if it's deep down under the sludge and haze, that you don't mean it.



11

You try not to look at the girl as she stumbles towards the coffee shop owner and whispers something in his ear. You are glad to be slowly drying off. A moment later, the girl leaves again and you feel a pang of guilt that you did not offer her some warmth.



Do you: head back to UCT for your 9am lecture (go to entry 21) or find someone to talk to (go to entry 22)?



The Cost of Living

Nasty house rules for magical healing by Adrianna Pinska

If you're a D&D character¹, you probably don't find injuries very worrying. It doesn't matter if the orcs which you are eagerly attempting to kill and divest of their treasure have just broken your arm, cut off your foot, shot you full of arrows and partially disembowelled you. Provided you manage to stay alive long enough to slaughter the rest of them, when everyone settles down to divide up the loot your friendly party cleric will hand you a potion, lay on hands for a bit and you'll be as good as new. Any leftover scratches and bruises will mysteriously heal overnight without any effort on your part.

In a campaign which is meant to be a frothy hack 'n' slash, that's OK—but in a campaign which is attempting to be reasonably realistic, or in which combat is a notable occurrence rather than all in a day's work, healing should not work like it does in computer games. For a start, that's just not very interesting.

Existing limitations

Ars Magica, which is known for its flexible and powerful magic system, imposes a very simple and very nasty limitation on magical healing: unless you go to special, expensive effort, it isn't permanent—because no magic is. The wizard who heals you must spend some of the elusive, costly magical essence known as *vis*, otherwise all your wounds will re-open come the next sunset or sunrise.

This works in Ars Magica, because it's a rule which applies to all kinds of magic, but I don't recommend copying it over to a system where magic is ordinarily permanent, or it's going to need a lot of stunt justification.

In general, I'm not a fan of all-or-nothing restrictions, or the kind of "special exceptions" that prevent you from taking a system feature to one particular logical conclusion. As far as I'm concerned, you should be able to use

magic for just about anything that makes sense—but each use should come with an associated *cost* and *risk*. You want that horrible gash to heal without a scar?

You want to re-grow your missing hand? You want to raise your deceased companion from the dead? Fine. You can do that. But it's going to cost you. And I don't mean money.

Cost and risk

The costs and risks of using magical healing shouldn't be bureaucratic inconveniences; they should be interesting, appropriate to the setting and the magic being used, and create opportunities for new in-character subplots and events. They should also have an actual system impact on the characters, and not just be flavour which can easily be ignored.

You don't need to look far for suitable house rules. Examine the available forms of healing magic, and determine what they can and cannot do. Decide where the healing power comes from, what the magic user has to do to get it to work, and what can possibly go wrong with it. There's always *a lot* that can go wrong with it.

Chicks dig scars

It's reasonable to assume that the cheapest and most easily available magical spells and potions simply accelerate the body's natural rate of healing. This means that they shouldn't be able to grow back missing body parts, and they should not remove the need for proper mundane medical care. If you take a potion when your broken arm hasn't been set properly, or your friends haven't removed all the arrows from your internal organs, you're going to have unpleasant problems.

Unless special care is taken to prevent them, wounds should leave scars. Your character should remember any notable scars he has collected, because they may become important later. A man with a giant scar running across his face

is a memorable character unlikely to be able to blend into a crowd, and a fugitive warrior's attempts to disguise himself as a peaceful monk will be met with heightened scepticism if it's possible for children to play noughts and crosses on his back².

Regeneration

More serious magic should be required to heal a chopped-off arm or massive internal injuries.

If the unfortunate patient still has the limb in question in her possession, it can presumably be reattached, but what if it's missing? Regrowing it from scratch should be more difficult. Can she attach an arm cut off a dead enemy instead?

Have the arm remember its previous owner, and occasionally (or frequently) give the character grief—perhaps in response to a particular trigger, like close encounters with the arm donor's friends.

Most settings which include vampires also feature ghouls—humans who temporarily gain some limited subset of a true vampire's strengths and disadvantages by drinking a vampire's blood. The obvious side effect of this *should* be that you can make a powerful healing potion out of vampire blood, and use it to treat people so badly injured that only the vampiric regeneration ability can save them. Of course, there would be serious disadvantages. Vampire blood is hardly easy to acquire, and thus would naturally be an extremely expensive ingredient. A vampire can usually exert some degree of mental control over his ghouls—if the potion is made from the blood of a living vampire who is still in the vicinity, the patient might fall under his thrall and

¹ Or, to be fair, a character in one of a number of popular fantasy games. But picking on D&D is so easy.

² If it's also possible for them to play chess, *go* or snakes and ladders, he'd better have prepared an elaborate and carefully constructed excuse involving a runaway combine harvester.

Café Nescafé is locked. You are just about to turn around when you hear a plaintive voice moan: "Coffeeeee!"

Typical student. Except for the transparency. The girl from the coffee shop is floating in front of you, definitely translucent. You have a bad feeling about this. She is crying and slowly reaches out a ghostly hand towards you.



Go to entry 7.

attack his friends unless he is restrained and observed. Even if all goes well, perhaps he will always be slightly more susceptible to vampiric domination—even months after the ghoul state has worn off.

I'm sure you can think of similar exciting side-effects for healing potions made from other magical critters. When all else fails, there's always the mundane risk of toxic shock or poisoning—is your character unfortunate enough to have a bad allergic reaction to dragonscale? Oh, dear.

Resurrection

To be quite honest, I don't like resurrection. I think that dead people should, as a general rule, stay dead, and that after dying and getting resurrected a player character has in some sense jumped the shark. If, however, you do want to have resurrection in your system, you might as well do it right.

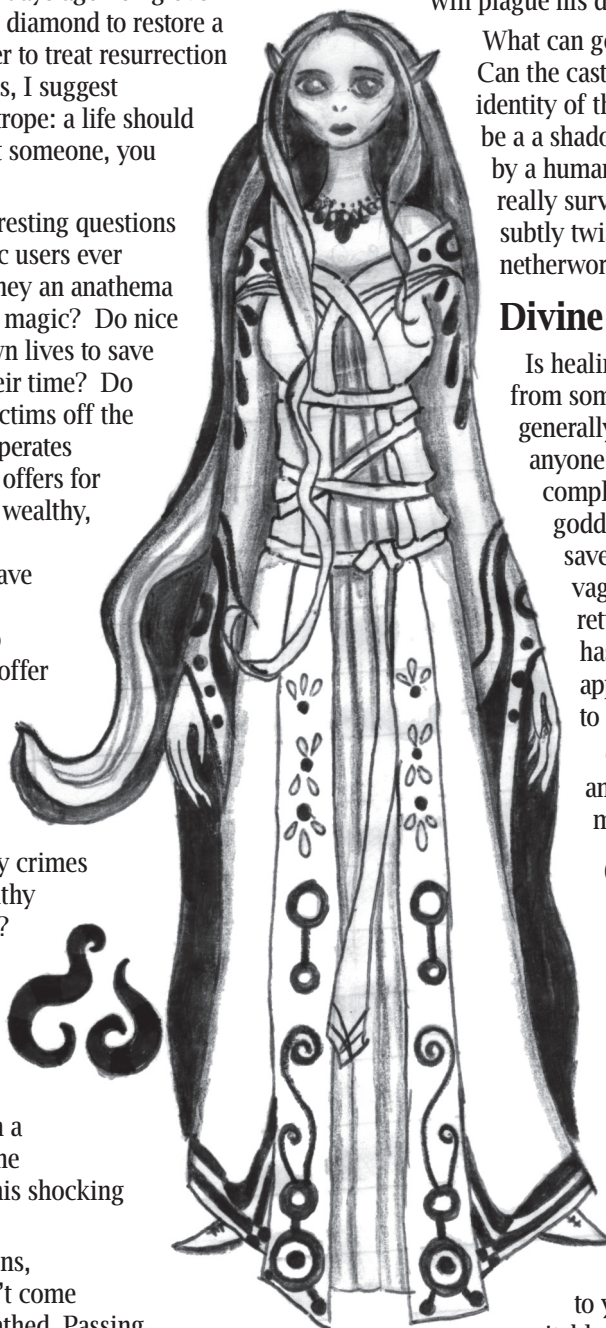
Resurrection in D&D costs a lot. Of money. This is very boring. Nobody has ever spent days agonising over whether to sacrifice their giant diamond to restore a fallen comrade to life³. In order to treat resurrection with the gravity that it deserves, I suggest embracing a common fantasy trope: a life should cost a life. In order to resurrect someone, you must sacrifice another person.

This creates all kinds of interesting questions and plot hooks. Do good magic users ever perform resurrections, or are they anathema relegated to the realm of black magic? Do nice old people nobly offer their own lives to save those who have died before their time? Do evil mages snatch unwilling victims off the street? Are some destitute desperates reduced to accepting generous offers for their lives from the fabulously wealthy, in order to provide for their families—and do those less brave sometimes sell off their least favourite children instead? Do morally dubious governments offer institutionalised resurrection, powered by the lives of condemned criminals? Does the demand exceed the supply, and are increasingly more petty crimes punishable by death? Do wealthy officials get to jump the queue?

What happens if the body has decayed beyond repair, or has been lost entirely?


Will the returning person's spirit have to take over the donor's body? Can it be put in a mechanical body? How will the resurrected person deal with this shocking transformation?

Even under optimal conditions, resurrected characters shouldn't come through their experience unscathed. Passing



13

You scramble to your feet and head straight for the nearest exit. Behind you, you hear the cleaning lady making strange noises—it doesn't sound like Xhosa. The rain whacks you in the face as you start running up the endless stairs towards Jameson Hall. You dare not look behind you.

 Do you: try to find a complex route back to your car (go to entry 23) or head for the safety of your lecture theatre (go to entry 24)?

through the realms of the dead is bound to leave some kind of lasting impression. Is the character more receptive to the spirits of the dead that linger in the mortal world? Is he constantly drawn back towards death, and more likely to give in to fatalism and despair if grievously wounded, when others would persevere? Perhaps he has promised to take care of someone else's unfinished business, and that restless ghost will plague his dreams until he completes this quest.

What can go wrong with a resurrection spell? Can the caster ever be completely certain of the identity of the returning spirit, or will there always be a shadow of a doubt that it has been replaced by a human or demonic impostor? Has the spirit really survived its ordeal intact, or has it been subtly twisted or tainted by its stay in the netherworld?

Divine intervention

Is healing magic only available as a boon from some powerful celestial being? Gods are generally fickle, and don't grant power to just anyone—and divine gifts can come with complicated terms and conditions. If a goddess of goodness and light deigns to save the life of an amoral, violent vagabond, she might demand a favour in return—placing him under a geas until he has repaid her by performing some appropriate service, or even forcing him to vow eternal loyalty to her order.

Conversely, what terrible price would an evil god or demon exact for *his* medical assistance?

Conclusion

While only the most evil DM makes a character roll a tetanus check every time he steps on a rusty nail, or a save versus gangrene whenever it gets a bit chilly, I think it makes a game more fun and less two-dimensional if serious injuries are actually taken seriously. It can also help to put the brakes on an overly gung-ho party more inclined to solve problems with violence than through alternative means. Where you draw the line is up to you—I hope I have given you enough suitably horrible ideas.

³ Oh, all right, I'm sure we all know at least one character who **would** spend days agonising over it.

Lexicon of the Rubble

a wiki game

Look on d@vid seaward, ye mighty, and despair!

In the wake of the Great Disaster, humankind has learnt to survive as best it can amongst the rubble of its former glory. Within the scattered tribes a new class is emerging, as knowledgeable as the shamans, but drawing their inspiration from the relics of the past. These fractitious academics are finally piecing their hoarded secrets together, and have promised the Overlord a complete lexicon of the new age within two moons.

With the new wiki up, running and always under construction, even those who migrated to other blogging environments¹ can visit <http://claws.uct.ac.za/> and click "Edit Page" once more. But, once everyone has recovered from the Orientation party, if you aren't blogging, making event announcements or recording the venerable history of CLAWs, what's there to do? Play games, of course.

What is Lexicon?

Lexicon is a turn-based writing game, ideally played on a wiki. It was written by Neel Krishnaswami, posted on a blog called *The 20' By 20' Room*. You do not need to be an experienced roleplayer, writer or wiki user to play.

The basic idea is that each player takes on the role of a scholar, from before scholarly pursuits became professionalized (or possibly after they ceased to be). You are cranky, opinionated, prejudiced and eccentric. You are also collaborating with a number of your peers—the other players—on the construction of an encyclopedia describing some historical period (possibly of a fantastic world). [Each encyclopedia entry is strictly 50-200 words.]

The game is played in 26 turns, one for each letter of the alphabet.

The rest of the rules outline how play progresses, and how you cite your fellow scholars' encyclopedia entries. They're available at

http://www.20by20room.com/2003/11/lexicon_an_rpg.html

(And I'll post the full game text—there isn't much of it—to the cthfuchsia mailing list before we begin. To sign up for the mailing list send an email to cthfuchsia-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Psst, what is a wiki?

A wiki is a website that anyone can edit, while browsing in a regular browser. The CLAWs website is a wiki. Visit any page, click "Edit Page", and you can add to or modify the text. Anarchism, not anarchy. Probably the most famous example of a wiki implementation is the Wikipedia—a good source of factoids for roleplaying games set in the real world, but to be taken with a pinch of vampire watermelon otherwise.

It's the future and I've just found my copy of CLAWmarks under the only notes I'll ever take my entire varsity career! Am I too late?





Because it's turn-based, as long as the game isn't over, you can still join in and catch up. (And it's never too late take more notes² and make your varsity career briefer³. Trust me.)

In previous incarnations of the wiki (and on the mailing lists), it has been evident that there is a usage and catch-up gap between those who happen to be online often, and those who don't suckle at the teat of Shub Internet, Goatse With A Googol Young. To account for this, Lexicon turns will be strictly time-based (I'm thinking two turns per week), limiting how *quickly* the game can progress. (It also means that if you start late or fall behind, you can progress at your own (faster) pace until you catch up with the current turn.)

Gentlethings, start your engines

The game will commence after the first week of lectures, to allow the Bobs to get their email addresses up and running (step 1: set your address to redirect to GMail, step 2: sign up for the mailing lists).

To play you need:

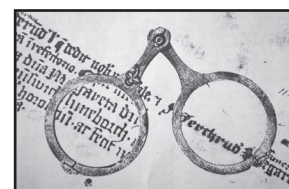
-  access to the CLAWsite (some engineering labs may give you hassles)
-  to read the Lexicon rules (if you have any questions, discuss 'em on cthfuchsia)
-  to read the setting (just the first paragraph of this article, that's all she wrote)
-  a description for your crusty academic character (50-200 word limit, just like an encyclopedia entry)

See you at <http://claws.uct.ac.za/TheTome/LexiconRubble>—we start at the letter "A".

Links

Wikipedia:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/>

CLAWs Mailing Lists:
<http://claws.uct.ac.za/TheTome/CLAWsMailingLists>



¹ Don't worry, we can aggregate you. It's very Web 2.0.

² Attend lectures. Hand in assignments. Whatever study method you've been avoiding.

³ I mean not longer than it has to be, rather than unfortunately brief.

The Evolution of Dragons

by The Scrivener

I have recently been studying some of the dragon artwork that can be found on the internet. A good website is:

<http://www.fortunecity.com/tatooine/delany/103/drcindex.html>

It has about 70 pages of dragon images. and after looking at most of them, I came to the conclusion that dragons did actually go through an evolution of their own.

They went through a few stages and produced other sidekicks before they became their magnificent, advanced selves. They then decided to leave the lands of men, and went far over the seas, with that whole "so long and thanks for all the sheep" thing. No, really, they did....

One of the first pictures that I looked at on the website really annoyed me. These two dragons are made to look like chickens. They are missing their two front legs and are covered in feathers, not scales. The perfected dragons were meant to be furious beasts of prey that would be sent by evil people—usually an elderly gentleman in a lot of black—to eat sheep and burn pretty women or small children. This looks more like something that should be sent to KFC. No adventure can be had with something that is going "cluck, cluck"

and is covered in feathers.

People should put money into a quest where the knight kills the dragon, and afterwards is a great hero, loved by the village people (meaning the peasants and common people, not the music band rumored to be gay). I hope no one supports a quest where the knight kills the dragon and afterwards finds it "finger-lickin' good".



After all my rantings were done, in the family computer room, I came to realise that I need not actually worry. This is a type of dragon that died out. What I had stumbled on was the "Draco Archaeopteryx".

For those of you who didn't take GEO106S, or were not dragged around natural history museums at age 12, this is a famous fossil. It is believed to be the missing link between birds and lizards. It is quite literally the feathered lizard. This is the missing link to birds evolving into flying lizards. It was an unfortunate, but necessary step to take.

It is a common belief that dragons lived in caves. Although I think this was true in most cases, there are some that ventured out and adapted to other environments. These are the green dragons. They evolved to be capable of camouflaging themselves, making it easier to catch prey. Now this, living among the plants, is all very well and good. The problem arose, however, with them spending too much time among the plants. This is where the legend of "Puff the Magic Dragon" comes from. They attracted too much attention to

14

You sit up gingerly and prepare a litany of insults, when a strange noise catches your ear. It's the cleaning lady. You look up into her face. Her eyes are rolling around in her head, her mouth hangs slack and her exposed arms and legs are covered in bleeding wounds.



Do you: run (go to entry 23) or stand up and fight (go to entry 20)?

themselves, as would any teenager crashing around the bushes in his baggy camouflage pants. I'm sorry, but a dragon does not live forever, and that little boy... I think he went off to knight school and returned with his sword, knowing the dragon's weakness. The breed of the green dragon is sadly extinct. They were simply too easy to kill. After this the rest of them heeded the warning and continued to live only in caves. They also stayed away from certain plants. Why the human race has not managed to do this is another story, for another day.

The last sort of dragon that I want to discuss here is the shoulder dragon. They are a breed on the side, a distant cousin, and the only ones that could be domesticated. It was told in the books of the great Terry Pratchett that these dragons pop when angry in order to protect the species as a whole. I do not question that this may have served them well in another universe. In this universe it did not. It has too many things that anger humans, let alone reptiles. They too died out and their space by the fire was taken up by the common tabby cat.



At the rate things were going it became clear to the dragon elders that they should leave this land until the age of men had passed. And so they left us and are still waiting for their time to return. They exist now only in the memories of those who spend too much time among the plants and in our stories. Let us marvel at them there.

15

You rev the car and steam hisses off your exhaust. In a few minutes, you have reached the warm safety of a local Rondebosch coffee shop. You settle onto a couch and treat yourself to a Chocmint Latte—after all, the first day of university is stressful. The shop's door swings open and another puddle of water is dragged into the room by a young woman. Her vicious trembling makes her seem unusually cold, even for this weather.



Do you: offer her your wet jacket (go to entry 10), ask if you can buy her a hot drink (go to entry 3) or ignore her (go to entry 11)?

'THE SCHPATDOPE

is there such a thing as genetic memory?

Zenstar Asks:

What exactly is "genetic memory" and how does it work exactly? And if a person were to eat a tapeworm could they find the food?

Well, after a long hiatus I have decided to finally answer your question, just in time for publication in CLAWmarks. It is rather complex question, so in time-honoured SchpatDope tradition I'm going to write an answer that deals with your topic, but might not answer the question exactly. The spirit of the question is more important than the letter of the question, or something.

First of all let's address "genetic memory". The idea of inheritance for physical traits was first introduced by French naturalist Jean Baptiste de Lamarck. His theory was twofold:

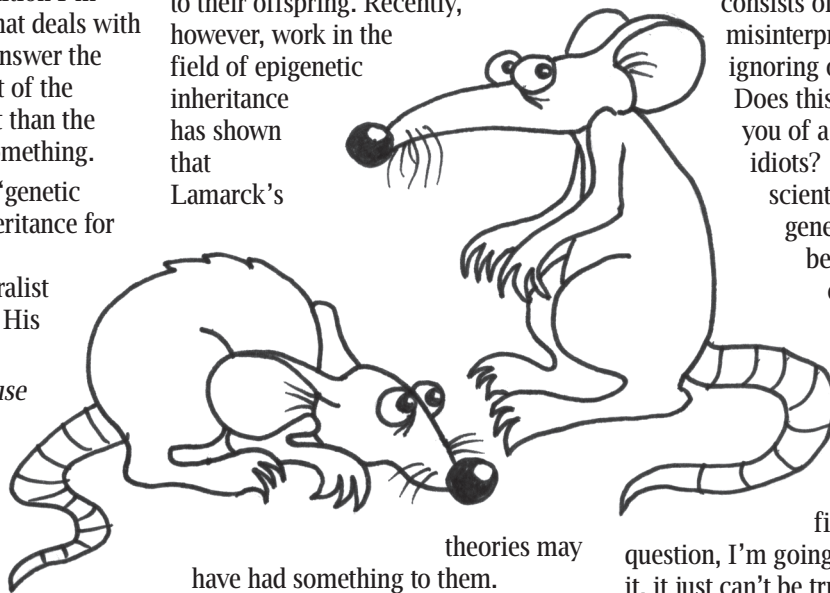
1. If an organism made use of a particular organ it would grow and become more functional. If an organ was disused it would shrink and become less functional.

and

2. The functional changes in the

organism would be passed on to its offspring.

At one point this theory was widely held as the mechanism for evolution, even being adopted by Darwin himself. His assertions were eventually discredited when it was shown that organisms that had organs removed, and survived, did not pass this absence on to their offspring. Recently, however, work in the field of epigenetic inheritance has shown that Lamarck's



theories may have had something to them.

Now I realise that you don't really care about the ability of genes to remember previous generations' physiology, but I thought I'd include it anyway. What you really want to know is: can memories and knowledge be transferred from generation to generation?

The nature of memories and how they are stored has been a hot topic debated by humanity's greatest minds since the middle ages. Inherited memories are often used as plot devices in fiction—as an example it's a major part of Frank Herbert's *Dune*—but no scientific evidence has been found to prove their existence in humans, or any other organisms for that matter. Instinctual behaviour has been put forward as a proof for the inheritance of memory, but it is far more likely that instinct is merely reaction to stimulus. Some scientists have stated that observations of primates using tools that their ancestors used, without any contact between them, is

proof of inherited memory. Again it's just more likely that a clever chimp is simply going to find out for himself that he can use a rock to crack a nut.

On the more alternate side of things, some whack-jobs out there believe that inherited memories are a scientamarrific way to prove that memories of past lives actually exist. Of course their arsenal consists of circular reasoning, misinterpretation and blatantly ignoring opposing evidence. Does this behaviour remind you of a different group of idiots? Yes, even the sciento(m)logists believe in genetic memory. They believe that space operas like Star Trek are genetic memories of humanity's past—before Xenu, obviously.

So to answer the first part of your question, I'm going with: If they believe it, it just can't be true.

Man, everything I investigate does lead back to Trek! Wow.

On to part the second.

Back in the Renaissance it was commonly held, by illuminated folk like Michaelangelo and Leonardo DaVinci, that memories were stored in cerebrospinal fluid. It was thought that the fluid was somehow altered by the process of learning. Theory had it that memories could be passed from one individual to another by the injection or, even worse, ingestion of the spinal fluid of the recently departed. This was even a major plot device in a movie starring Ray Liotta. Experiments, however, failed to prove these claims.

In the 50's the possibility that memories were stored biochemically raised its head again. However, this time the theories were that memories were encoded into DNA, RNA or other related molecules. These speculations were

16

You begin to explain how you just visit this coffee shop to scout for new faces, when the girl collapses in a faint. You call the coffee shop owner and he picks her up onto a nearby couch. One of the waitresses asks if she should call the ambulance, but the girl seems to be recovering. A moment later, the girl slowly gets up and hands the coffee shop owner what seems to be a perfume bottle.

"Thank you," she whispers, "I will pray for you."

She walks out of the shop with everyone staring at her. You reflect that there are many odd religions on campus.



Do you: relax and order another Latte (go to entry 20) or go back to UCT in time for your 9am lecture (go to entry 18)?

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" she cries vehemently.

"Err... it's not that bad," you respond.

She hands you a little bottle that looks like perfume and then turns to walk slowly out of the coffee shop again. You wonder if she was a Cape Tech student.



Do you: inspect the perfume bottle (go to entry 19), relax and order another Latte (go to entry 20) or leave the perfume bottle and go back to UCT in time for your 9am lecture (go to entry 18)?

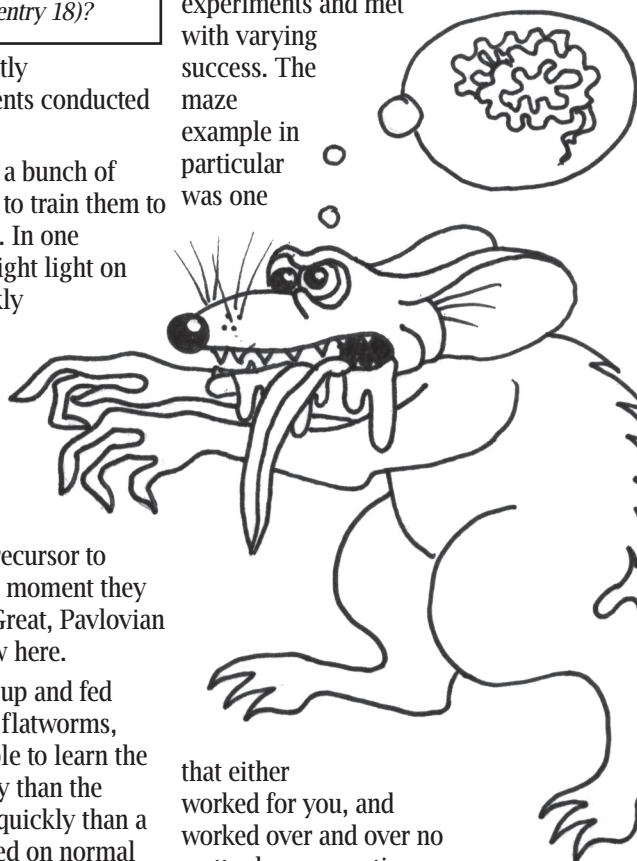
brought about by apparently groundbreaking experiments conducted by one J.V. McConnell.

McConnell got himself a bunch of flatworms and proceeded to train them to respond to certain stimuli. In one experiment he shone a bright light on the worms and then quickly proceeded to electrocute them. Now the natural reaction of a flatworm to light is to stretch out; their reaction to electricity is to curl up. He got his worms to recognise the light as a precursor to electricity and curl up the moment they were bathed in photons. Great, Pavlovian conditioning, nothing new here.

Then he cut the worms up and fed them to another bunch of flatworms, these new worms were able to learn the conditioning more quickly than the original bunch and more quickly than a control group of worms fed on normal worm food. He continued his experiments by teaching his worms to run a maze in search of food. The maze in question was rather simple, having only one decision; it was a basic T-

junction. Worms that turned right got snacks while worms that turned left got, yes you guessed it, electrocuted! They eventually learned that right was better than left. Again he embarked on his program of forced worm cannibalism and again the cannibal worms learned the route faster. Somehow his worms had learnt something by eating other worms; he claimed that memory was obviously biochemical in nature.

Others tried to replicate his experiments and met with varying success. The maze example in particular was one



that either worked for you, and worked over and over no matter how many times you conducted the experiment, or just yielded no results at all. The scientific community was polarised, however; his experiments were included in High School textbooks and millions of scholars performed them, even as late as the 80's. In the late 60's it was discovered why the experiment either worked or didn't: it all came down to cleaning. Labs that cleaned their mazes thoroughly with organic solvents invariably found that they could not replicate McConnell's results. Those that just cleaned them casually with inferior detergents, the kind used in most high school bio labs, had left scent trails which were being followed by cannibal worms; worms smelled like food!

McConnell defended his theories by pointing out that his experiments with light conditioning could not be explained by scent trails and were still

perfectly valid. Three scientists—Frank, Rosen and Stein—decided to prove him wrong.

They, however, chose to torture rats. They took three groups of the furry critters and submitted them to three different circumstances. One group was conditioned to associate the light side of a test box with electric shock; another group were put in the test box and allowed to go wherever they wanted without fear. The last group had themselves sealed in a jar and rolled around for hours on end. Then they ground up their livers and brains and fed them to three new groups of rats. The group that ate the conditioned rats learnt to avoid the white side of the box more quickly when electrocuted than the group that were fed the unconditioned rats. However, the group that ate the rats from the jars learnt quicker still. Their findings: rats that had been fed the livers and brains of rats that had been stressed learnt to avoid pain more quickly. This they found out was due to chemicals produced by the stressed rats—the higher the stress, the higher the levels of these chemicals and the quicker the learning rate. McConnell's theories and findings had been discredited.

Even rational people like Theodore Kaczynski hated McConnell. In 1985 Kaczynski, at this time known only as the Unabomber, sent dear old Prof McConnell a bomb disguised as a manuscript. Unfortunately McConnell's assistant opened the package and McConnell got off lightly with only a little hearing loss. Incidentally, Kaczynski had a PhD in advanced mathematics, but was not held as a child.

What have we learnt? Well, three things. Firstly, scientists love to torture poor defenceless critters; secondly, that if you eat a tapeworm all you're going to find is a parasite in your lower intestine; and thirdly, that if you want to do well in your exams you should seal your classmates in a barrel and roll them down Jammie Steps a couple of thousand times, then eat them.

Schpat

The SchpatDope is a Q & A blog inspired by Cecil Adams' *The Straight Dope*. However, it is often not as well-researched or funny. If you want to check out the archives and find out answers to burning questions like "What sound does the average teen make during sex?", "Meteorite or Plane Poop?" and "So was Melvin Dewey a Nazi?", then visit the site at www.schpatdope.blogspot.com. If you have any questions you'd like answered, submit them to schpat@gmail.com; My fictional assistant Mitsy and I will give it our best go.



The Moomin family perform a dark ritual...



...before settling down to hibernate for the long winter.

Dr Felt Gone



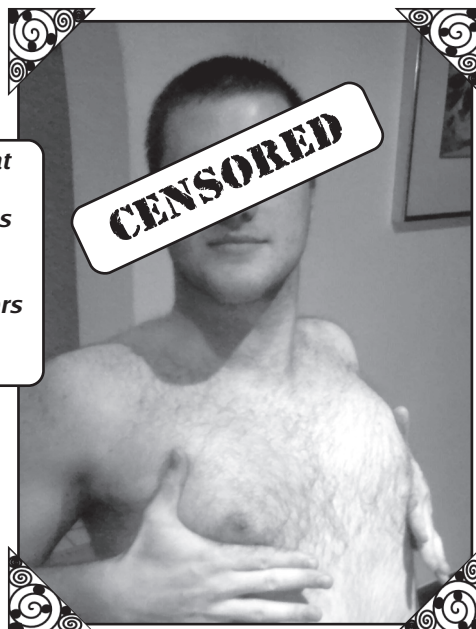
Das Boot

18

It is still raining. Your parking spot is even lower down the mountain this time, but you are determined to get to your lecture. You start walking.



Go to entry 8.



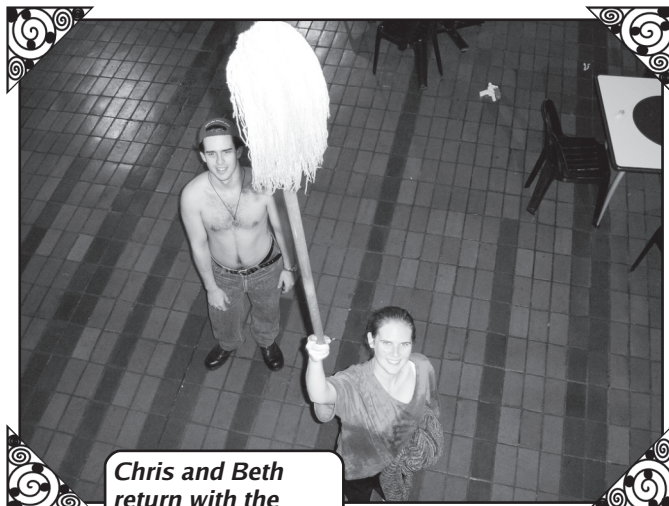
Please note that the following picture contains graphic nipple imagery which sensitive viewers may find disturbing.

Full-color glossy posters available on request for only \$1.95.



This image designed and directed by the lower left hand.

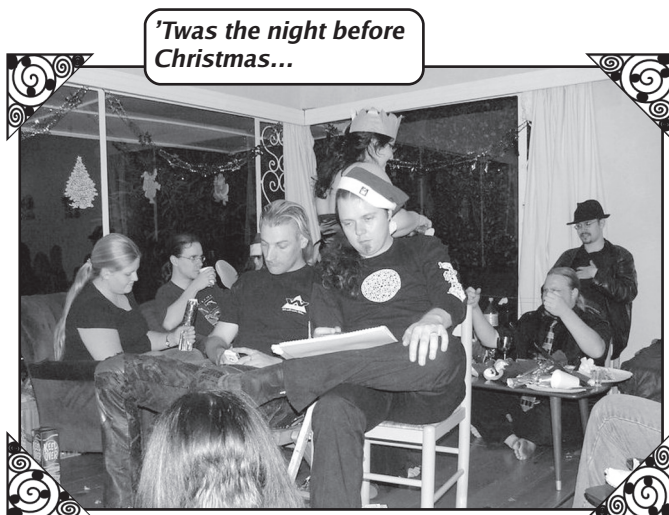




Chris and Beth return with the head of their foe mounted on a pike.



"Is this thing loaded?" were Garrick's last words.



'Twas the night before Christmas...



I don't suppose you'd be carryin' any ghost rock in that there sink?



Michelle's smile falters as she realises those aren't Ian's hands.



Barbara, a young innocent, is abducted by Erica and Hila of KISS.

19

You open the little glass bottle and sniff it. It has no smell. In fact... in a daring move, you dab a bit on your finger and taste it. It's water!



Do you: drink it (go to entry 30) or pocket it (go to entry 32)?

WHERE'S MY CLAWTHING?

by Beth Tolson

Where's my cow?
Is that my cow?
It goes, "Quack!"
It is a duck!
That's not my cow.

But Vimes liked
doing the "Quack!"
But he said to
himself: This is
getting daft! This
is no way to find
your CLAWthing!

Where's my
CLAWthing?
Is that my CLAWthing?
It goes, "Moopit!"
It is a Michelle!
That's not my CLAWthing.

Where's my CLAWthing?
Is that my CLAWthing?

It goes, "I put on my wizards
cloak and hat. I cast level 5
eroticism on you!"
It is a Matthew!
That's not my CLAWthing.

Where's my CLAWthing?
Is that my
CLAWthing?
It goes, "Greetz
greetz!"
It is a Garrick!
That's not my
CLAWthing.

Where's my CLAWthing?
Is that my CLAWthing?
It goes, "Today is a
cake day. Cake has many
good qualities!"
It is a Seanbob!
That's not my
CLAWthing.



20

You order another Latte and sip it in a leisurely fashion. About half way through, you glance outside the window and find yourself uncovering a campus secret. A whole bunch of people dressed in the uniforms of UCT cleaning staff are heading towards the coffee shop. So that's what they do in the mornings! You're surprised they can afford it.

They are approaching very quickly. In fact, they seem to be running. A moment later, the coffee shop door bursts open and you hear strange noises emanating from the horde of cleaning staff... a suspicion dawns on you. A middle-aged cleaning woman shuffles toward you and you see that her eyes are rolling in her head, her mouth drooling and her exposed limbs riddled with open wounds.



Do you: calmly ask them to quieten down (go to entry 33) or run, run, run! (go to entry 34).

Where's my
CLAWthing?
Is that my
CLAWthing?
It goes, "I
had this Ars
Magica
character...!"

It is a Roo!
That's not my CLAWthing.

Where's my CLAWthing?
Is that my CLAWthing?
It goes, "Well now... you see...
basically...!"

It is a Warren!
That's not my CLAWthing.

Where's my CLAWthing?
Is that my CLAWthing?
It goes, "I think of carrots... I
think how
carrots are my
one true love!"
It is a Raakesh!
That's not my
CLAWthing.

Where's my
CLAWthing?
Is that my
CLAWthing?
It goes, "This
is the sort of
situation...!"
It is an Ian!
That's not my
CLAWthing.

21

You are determined to find a good parking spot and cruise the campus for 20 minutes before finding the same one you had this morning. You are late for your lecture, but at least the rain seems to have calmed down. It strikes you as creepy that there are no students around—has campus lethargy reached this level? You walk slowly up the stairs towards Jameson Hall and breathe a sigh of relief when you reach the plaza. Your sigh is strangely magnified. In fact, you could swear it had been someone else sighing at full volume....



Do you: investigate the sound (35) or
continue walking to your lecture (36)?

Where's my CLAWthing?
Is that my
CLAWthing?
It goes, "Hey,
give my hat back!"
It is a Mike!
That's not my
CLAWthing.

Where's my CLAWthing?
Is that my CLAWthing?
It goes, "I had sex for breakfast!"
It is a Hila!
That's not my CLAWthing.

Where's my CLAWthing?
Is that my CLAWthing?
It goes, "Donkey!"
That's my CLAWthing!

But Vimes liked doing the "Donkey!"
But he said to
himself: This is
getting daft! This is
no way to end a
story!

Where's my daddy?
Is that my daddy?
It goes, "I arrest
you in the name of
the Law!"
That's my daddy!
"Law," yawned Young
Sam, falling asleep.
"That's my boy," said
Sam Vimes, as he
tucked him in.



WHERE TO GO

by Keightley Reynolds

Since you've got plenty of free bandwidth and time, go check out www.zazone.co.za for gigs and venues on a daily basis. But for those of you who are too busy partying to find out where to party, I enclose a brief synopsis of the club/pub/grub scene in Cape Town. I'm a bit biased in my areas of interest, so if your suburb of residence is amiss, sorry. I've tried to keep some sort of order along the main road (M4) and slotted in the outlying areas according to my mental map, but if you are new to Cape Town, take some breadcrumbs....

Kalk Bay

This has become the hangout of the nouveau riche that are hippies at heart. Although there are no sandy strips in the suburb, there are plenty of tidal pools and Fish Hoek is just around the corner. Great food abounds but the **Olympia Café** is particularly famed for breakfasts. The **Brass Bell** is great for sundowners, and has decent pizza. For a bit of class, try **Polana** by the harbour, which looks directly over the water. **Cape to Cuba** is a wee bit overpriced, but is sure to wow your date.

Muizenberg

Along with surfers and waterslides, Muizenberg also sports a live music club with a cat. The **Acoustic Café** is a homely place with Persian carpets, at least one pussy and plenty of rock. Prices are mid-range. The **Railway House** sits just above the station (no prizes there) and is very pretty but I'm not sure about the rest.

Plumstead

Along the road a way we arrive at Plumstead, home to many of the cross between Constantia housewives and Wynberg hookers—students! There are many dingy bars, few that I frequent, but

Pirates and **Hickory's** are well known. Pirates is a half steak restaurant half pub and the drinks are well-priced. Hickory's is a chilled pool joint. There's also a **bar in the parking lot** behind Ocean Basket, with yummy cocktails.

Kenilworth

Kenilworth, home to shrinks and some more hookers, offers us **Banana Jam**—the place for cheap cocktails, R13 special every day from 5–6. They always call for last rounds and the waitresses are pretty toit. The green iguana is *big*, and if you're feeling flush try a Banana Mudslide—mmm. I still want to run a competition to see who can get the furthest down the list in one evening. If you want the best thin-based pizza in town, try **Bardelli's**, in stumbling distance of Banana Jam.

Claremont

Right, if the girls at Gandies (see Salt River) are too old and uptight for you... I kid you not, this was a great hang out at 15. Clubs are **Fubar**, **Tin Roof**, **Cubana**, **Sobhar**, **Springboks** and **Stones**. Tin Roof plays old-school rock, which is great to dance to. All of the Stones have specials on Tuesday nights—R5 for a beer or brandy and coke. Cubana is a bit snooty but the cocktails are divine. Springboks was better when it was Springfield, but it's a typical newbie hangout. Unfortunately the alternative scene took one look at Claremont and ran with its tail between its legs....

Newlands

What is becoming more of an institution with every passing year is the 5:30 **Kirstenbosch Concert** every Sunday. R40 without a student card and R25 with one, this is a great deal. Lie on the lawns with a picnic and some wine. Crowds vary with the artists, so use your

kop and come early if you've heard of them before. **Forries** on Newlands Avenue is a *pub*, where you can start drinking beer early, and if you're lus for traditional food there is a Sunday carvery between 12 and 3 pm. It ain't as cheap as the UCT Pub. If you are nerdy enough to have made it through to honours, or be dating a post-grad, or just be daring, wander down to the **UCT Pub** in the Sports Centre to giggle at your lecturers in very human form.

Rondebosch

Rondebosch is dying, which is weird since it's infested with students. If you're desperate I hear that **Leo Marquard** has a bar, and there is that pool bar on top of Mr. Price called the **Pig and Swizzle**, I think.

Pinelands

Pinelands is as dry as Fishhoek, but there's the insane **The Madhouse** at the Oude Molen Village, just before the bridge into Pinelands. There is lots of live alternative music but quite a young crowd, and horses.

Mowbray

Mowbray has the **Fat Cactus**, with decent Mexican food and specials on jugs of Margaritas—5–6 every day, I think, but you'll have to check. After drinks you can wander on down to Obs.

Observatory (Obs)

Aah, one cannot begin to describe the brilliance of this place: interesting people, cheap booze (which makes them even more interesting), live music, great food. Venues are crammed like sardines along the lower main road; there's the ubiquitous **Stones**, with no dancing unfortunately. **One Ring** and **Gotham** are near each other and both CLAWhangouts. **One Ring** has R5 drinks on Saturdays, girls' night on Thursdays, pool tables, stalactites and cheap drinks. This is the place. **Gotham** is the local goth hang out, with fake bats and unfortunately cover charge. **Independent Armchair** often hosts bands and has movie and pizza nights on Tuesdays. **Cool Runnings** is chilled and

22

You see an elderly man reading Ulysses and decide to strike up a conversation. The man is very friendly and turns out to be doing the same course as you are. After some discussion which will surely improve your marks, he offers to buy you another Latte.



Do you: accept (go to entry 20) or decide it's time to go home (go to entry 37)?

sprawling, with sand, firethrowers, and pan galactic gargle blasters. **Touch of Madness** is a converted house where one can book a room complete with armchairs and tapestries. **Diva's** does awesome pizza and **Pancho's**, across the road, has cheap Margaritas.

Salt River

Gandalf's (Gandies) does do munchies from behind the mirror—but like everything else it's not too wholesome, but mysteriously cheaper than cost price. Drinks specials 9–11, and even without them it's one of the cheapest places around. Great place to pick up underage drunk kiddies. Monday night all night specials, and down-down competitions on Wednesdays. Fridays are normally the busiest nights. Wear shoes, because there's also loads of broken glass. **Mordor** is an upstairs continuance and open on the weekend. The music is heavy, the lights dimmer, and the toilets more broken. The drinks are as affordable.

Cape Town

Coming off De Waal drive (watch out for the f**king speed trap) lies the alternative/rock/live music lovers' paradise. **Mercury Live** always has gigs going down, and is supposedly Cape Town's biggest live music venue. **Mercury Lounge** plays oldies late into the night. Monday nights are student nights where the drinks are cheap and the queue is longer than at registration. **The Shack** is next door and is a multi-layered pool and dance plekkie. I think it's incomparable to its neighbour, but it's normally pumping. The music is blerrie good. **Hectic on Hope** is Kate Moss's hangout (I kid you not). The music is Brit rock/punk, the drinks are a bit pricey and the visitors a bit wannabe, but it's still fun. **Corner House**... aaah, Corner House. It's dark, it's dirty, it's derelict and it's divine—one of the few places still bouncing at 7 in the morning, but it only really gets going at 1. Try it after Mercury on a Friday night. It never has cover or specials or live music (as far as I can remember) but who needs that in a place where they play Revco? For food, try the all-night **Engen** on De Waal, but

be warned—parking at four in the morning is tough to find.

Long Street and Surrounds

Ok, I'm not to sure where to start... stacks of clubs, restaurants; some chilled and some with bouncers with pokers up their poopers. Parking requires patience, but there is a good reason for this. The alternative hangout is the **Purple Turtle**, which has seen busier days. It has an upstairs balcony that you can sit on and shout insults to the yuppies across the road. Sometimes has live music, but I haven't tested the waters for some time. **Hemisphere**, at the top of the Absa building, is free before 9 and has one of the best views, with reasonable prices. Dress smart.



Greenpoint

This is the gay yuppie hub of Cape Town; some of the highest prices in Cape Town, but usually packed. **Bronx** is a gay bar. I don't think I can describe it any better. Drinks are, well, R50 for 3 beers, and service is slow if you have tits (and not man- ones). Still, if you like rubbing up against half naked men who can dance, then it is perfect. **Bossa Nova** is meant to have Latin-American music but not always so, and at R50 cover is a bit steep for the student crowd. Also the minimum age is apparently 25. **Opium** is pretty, and pretty pricey. It often hosts model parties, and has free live gigs on Sundays. The **Buena Vista Social Club** is my favourite of the hangouts, and has an extensive cocktail list.

Clifton

As well as beautiful bodies, the occasional topless tanner and the most expensive real estate in SA, Clifton is blessed with **La Med**. A tolerable pizza place by day; in the evening the beauties come out to play. Sunday nights are big, as are the cocktails. But please, please, don't go there in winter!

Camps Bay

Mmm, for the best ice cream ever, yum, go to **Sinnful** ASAP. There are some other larny joints that the sugar high from the ice cream might help you tolerate. Try the cinnamon, apple strudel and peanut butter flavours and all of the others in time. Loads of cocktail joints; enjoy your pockets emptying.

Blouberg

If you want to see a postcard-perfect picture of Table Mountain, sundowners at Blouberg are a must. The prettiest is the **Blue Pieter** near Big Bay, where you can sprawl on the lawns or frolic on the beach. The commercial hub also has a **News Café** (great view), **Stones** (which has a dancefloor), **Cubana** and **Primi**. I am often dragged to **Buckley's**, a laid back pool joint with nightly specials, but without the bouncy music.

Durbanville/ Bellville

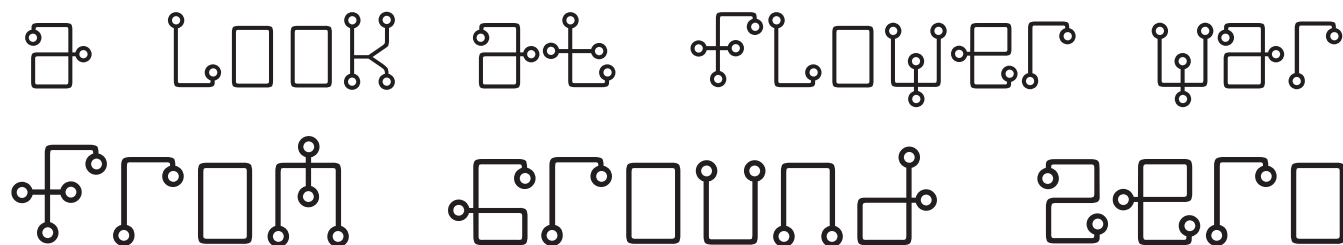
Try Durban Road, with a pumping **Stones**, larny **Vacca Matta** and the **Cock and Tail**, which has pigs' night on Wednesdays—R40 for chicks and R50 for dudes. There's a well-priced **sushi joint** on this strip as well, and **Primi** for pretty cocktails.

23

You weave up and down steps, through muddy paths and behind buildings slick with rain. Your lungs are burning, your heartbeat is all you can hear. Eventually, your left leg seizes up in a vicious cramp and you are forced to lie down in the mud behind a tree. You suspect you are somewhere near the Baxter Theatre. You hear heels clicking against tar and see what seems to be a young lecturer march past your hiding place.



Do you: approach her for help (go to entry 38) or keep hiding (go to entry 39)?



by Adam Jorgensen

There have been a number of Flower War-related articles in one or two previous issues of CLAWMarks, generally written by Tim and Dave, the LARP's creators. This piece aims to give the reader a slightly different view of Flower War—a player's-eye view, if you will.

If you're new to CLAWs then you may well be wondering what exactly Flower War is. Flower War is, or rather was, a campaign LARP run over the course of last year. It consisted of four sessions, roughly one each academic quarter of the year. If you're new to CLAWs then you may also be wondering what exactly a campaign LARP is. If you're really clueless as to what a LARP is, then the indoctrinators... um... people at the table during O-week obviously somehow missed out on explaining things to you. If this is the case, then simply read the next paragraph. Hopefully it'll clear up any confusion....

Simply put, a LARP is a Live Action Role-Playing game, similar in some ways to the classical pen-and-paper style, but different in a number of significant ways. Unlike a classic roleplaying game, a LARP is not played around a table. Rather, mostLARPs tend to occur in a moderately large room, one

large enough to comfortably hold 20-30 people with enough elbow room for them, their clothing and their army of slaves (if they should happen to own an army, that is). In terms of game experience, a LARP is somewhat similar to an impromptu play. Character interaction is handled by physically carrying out said interactions, although extremely physical actions (such as combat and similar feats) are usually resolved by the referees (usually referred to as Game Masters, or GMs). As in a theatrical piece, each player plays the role of a single character. However, while actors in a play make use of a fixed script, players in a LARP act as they see fit, based on a character premise. A character premise is usually laid out in the form of a character sheet consisting of personality and background information. Thus, in many ways, a LARP is like a dynamic play, very much more free-form and with more emphasis on actual roleplaying than script-reading.

Now that you have a better idea of what LARPing is, it's time to introduce Flower War. Flower War was conceived as a campaign LARP, meaning that it occurred over multiple inter-linked sessions. The LARP was also designed with the aim of placing the majority of the LARP management load on the players (mainly because it's really difficult for two people to manage 30 in real-time). This meant that the players were given the opportunity to completely design their own characters and much of the world background. The only constraints laid out consisted of a basic world and pre-game plot outline. This provided players with a very flexible framework within which to organise themselves and their characters.

The basic framework within which Flower War was laid out was that of an alternate history. Set in the early 17th century in a Europe conquered nearly a hundred years previously by the Mesoamerican Aztec Empire, Flower War presented a Europe altered greatly

from that of our own history. The LARP setting provided for a moderate level of magical power, with the Aztec Empire having invaded Europe with the aid of divine assistance and cunning sorcery. The player group was conceived as a group of regional representatives serving on an Imperial council of advisors to the Emperor. Thus the stage was set for the development of a truly unique and interesting LARP.

Character creation was a key process during Flower War. Players were organised into small groups of 4-5 people sharing a divine birthmark and special heritage. These groups, named Naevi, were named and organised around certain simple ideas. For example, the members of my Naevus, the Violet Foxes, were generally explorers of some sort, either in a scholarly fashion or, to a lesser extent, a worldly fashion. Members of the Green Spiders, on the other hand, tended to be merchants, traders and politicians of one sort or another.

Character creation also saw the creation, by the various players, of a number of secret societies, many with aims divergent from those of the Aztec Empire as a whole. Time would reveal these various groups to be of even greater importance than the Naevi. During this step of the process, the Violet Foxes conceived of a secret cult of sorts that would be an instrument of the Naevus' interests. This cult would, during the preparation phase of the LARP, be subtly altered by the GMs to form the dangerous cult known as The Hidden.

The final stage of character creation was the most personal, with each player seeing to the specifics of their own character. I conceived of my character as something of an explorer and a pirate of sorts.

After a fair amount of discussion with the GMs, Zale of Mythras emerged. Orphaned at a young age and put to work as a cabin boy, Zale spent much of his

24

You run until your legs are quivering and don't look back once. Eventually, you reach the lecture theatre and drag yourself through the door. Everyone present (and you are glad to see fellow students at last) watches you as you stagger to the lectern. The tall woman taking this course seems pale and thin, she looks down her nose at you. A shiver runs down your spine—you're going to take months to dry!

"Zom... bie... cleaners!" you gasp, and the entire room bursts into laughter. The lecturer, however, nods sagely and says: "Come with me to my office, we need to report this".



Do you: follow her to her office (go to entry 26) or find the nearest closet to hide in (go to entry 41)?

youth upon the high seas learning the trade of seamanship. He served on a number of ships during his youth, some which were involved in outright piracy, and others entirely legitimate in nature. Eventually Zale was discovered to be birthmarked and his days of carefree sailing came to something of an end. The next few years saw him gain greatly in terms of power and wealth as the representative of the city of Mythras, located on the Balkan Peninsula.

Expanding his interests, he became not only the owner of a merchant fleet, but also a mercenary captain of sorts, his troops soon earning renown across Europe for their fighting skills. It was also during this period that Zale was initiated into the dark cult known only as The Hidden. Finally, after some years of power-brokering and the like, Zale was assigned to the Cocone, one of the Emperor's many councils and the one of which all players were a part.

Once we had finally come up with characters, it was time for us to begin the actual LARP. The first session was something of a new experience in many ways, with the LARP's peculiar rules causing some amount of head-scratching in certain cases. In particular, the first LARP saw a number of problems with the voting system, an important in-game component of the Cocone, emerge. These mostly related to organisational problems and proved somewhat

wearisome. The first session also saw a small amount of combat. Given the formalised court-like setting, combat in Flower War was only possible in the form of

Council meeting to be a fairly interesting experience. It quickly became obvious that his fellow Violet Foxes were, as a rule, rather untrustworthy scheming sorts and thus he sought the company

of his Hidden cult companions. This proved to be somewhat problematic, as he only knew the Hidden equivalent of a secret handshake, not the actual identity of any of his fellow cultists. Eventually Zale managed to locate one, and then much later, two members of The Hidden, and soon various cult-related schemes were on the fly. Zale also interacted with a rather scary representative of the Emperor, a Jaguar Knight, as well as the sacrifice for the night, a captured resistance fighter of sorts. Possibly the highlight of Zale's night was the enactment of a Hidden ritual, although this did not perform its function due to some unknown problem. A duel was also fought by Zale; one his expert swordsman skills won him handily.

The second Flower War LARP followed fairly shortly after the first, although in terms of game-time a whole year had elapsed. The second LARP brought a number of improvements, most particularly in the form of a new voting system and slightly improved duelling rules. The improved voting system proved to be a godsend, one that would grace the

remaining Flower War LARPs, and did an incredible job of reducing the time spent voting. This had been a big problem in the first LARP.

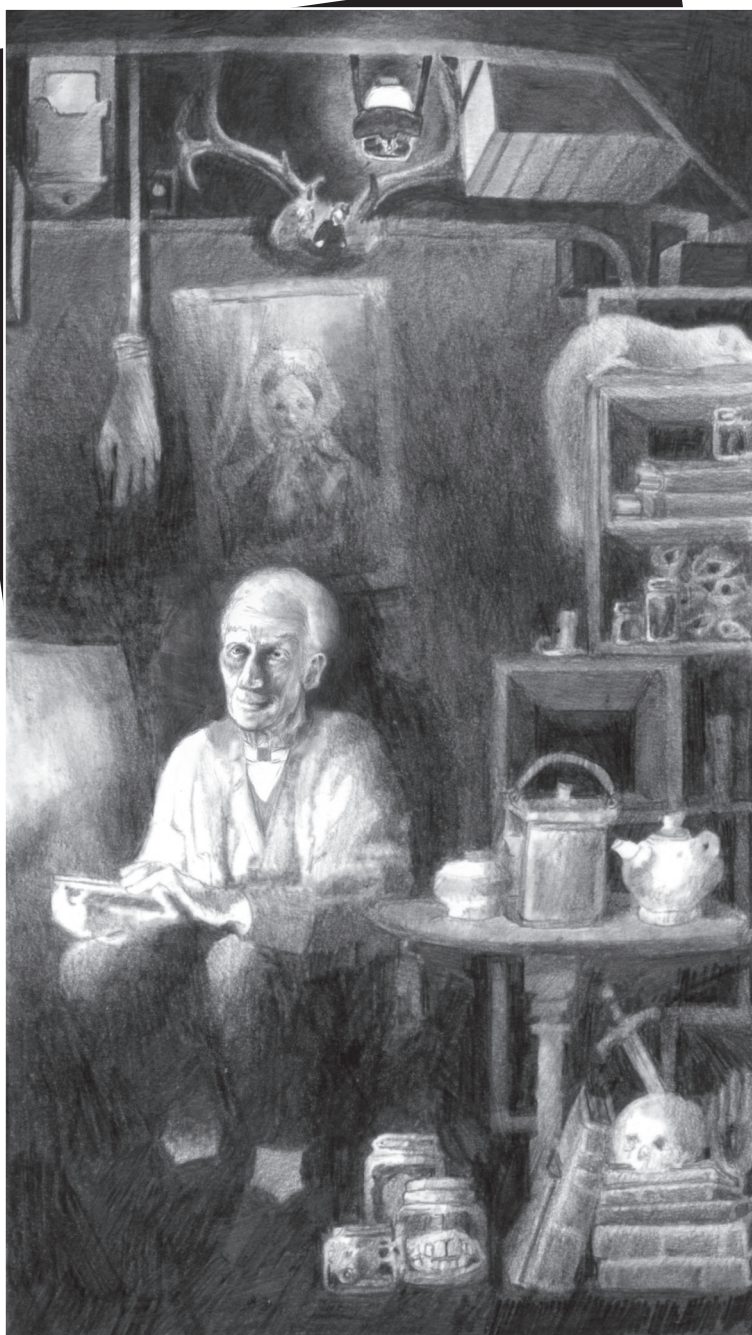
For Zale the second LARP proved to be most interesting. As a result of certain votes at the previous year's meeting an invasion of the Byzantine capital of

honour-related duels. Nevertheless, a number duels occurred, most relating to minor character slurs and the like. Happily, no one was severely wounded, although a few minor cuts and the like were sustained by those defeated.

Zale, for his part, found his first

25

You realise too late that you haven't seen enough Zombie films. The cleaning lady easily overpowers you, pushing you back to the ground with her mighty broom. You are torn apart by stubby teeth and ragged nails eating relentlessly into your soft flesh. As you draw your last breath, you hope fervently that reincarnation is more than just a theory....



Constantinople had been launched. The campaign ended with the surrender of Constantinople and the acquisition of new territories by the Empire. For his part, Zale contributed large numbers of soldiers and supplies to the conflict. Various other plans were also bearing fruition. Violet Fox research into the Aztec magic had borne fruit, resulting in a ritual able to mute the power of gunpowder. The Hidden discovered that, in many ways, the Violet Fox Naevus was a puppet to the cult, although the Violet Foxes believed the situation to be the reverse. However, given that half of the Naevus consisted of Hidden cult members it is possible the Foxes were suffering from some misconceptions. During the LARP the Hidden set about the task of recruiting more members, as it was believed the group would require about seven members to be truly functional (this was also due to the requirements of certain Hidden rituals). A number of duels also occurred, one of which involved Zale. During this duel the Violet Fox's powder-muting ritual was used to ensure that neither Zale nor his opponent suffered a fatal injury. Towards the end of the LARP Zale also concluded a deal with the aim of kidnapping a certain other character and delivering them to Constantinople.

The third LARP resumed a game-year on from where the previous one had left off. By this time the machinations of the Hidden were coming to term. New members were being inducted rapidly and the cult's grand plan was slowly becoming clear. A ritual had been unearthed that, when enacted, would set loose upon the world the various powers worshipped by the Hidden. All that was required were a few more members and

some time to prepare. Zale thus spent much of the third meeting moving about rapidly and attempting to find new potential converts. Zale's personal affairs also came to something of a head. His kidnapping deal from the previous LARP failed horribly, although Zale was able to avoid any lasting repercussions. A member of Zale's own Naevus also began to reveal himself as a problem figure, given that he seemed to know far too much about the backgrounds and purposes of the Hidden cult. In general, the Aztec Empire in Europe was also seen to be experiencing problems, in particular in the form of an enormous invasion from the Russian steppes.

The final Flower War LARP saw the culmination of many plans, although in the end many characters would prove to be disappointed. The Russian invasion of the previous year had, by now, managed to recapture much of Europe. The situation was so dire, in fact, that the meeting itself was under threat, with an army mere hours away. Internal conflict was also beginning to raise its head. An investigation had revealed the presence of the Hidden and the hunt to uncover the cult's leadership was on. For their part, the Hidden were not standing still. Having obtained the requisite number of members to perform their ritual, all that they required was the correct time and place. However, as the LARP progressed various things began to go horribly wrong. A member of the Hidden was revealed to be a spy and the opponents of the Hidden began to make their influence felt.

The revelation of a spy left the Hidden in something of a spot, as the group now lacked the requisite number of people to perform the Ritual of Desecration. There was, nevertheless, an attempt to execute the ritual, which succeeded only in revealing the leadership of the Hidden to the Council as a whole. These revelations proved somewhat surprising for many, as their closest allies were revealed to be cancerous in nature. Although Zale and other members of the Hidden were expecting the worst, they were quite surprised when the Council decided to hear out their speeches and the like. The Hidden thus sought to portray itself as a beneficial entity and the only one capable of preventing the impending invasion. The opponents of the Hidden, a group known as the Dicionis, sought to expose the Hidden for the cultists they were and, for a

while, things were looking somewhat grim for the cultists. However, a bizarre decision by the Council to allow the Hidden to enact their ritual sealed the fate of the LARP and the game-world in general. The resulting apocalypse certainly halted the Russian invasion of Europe, although its effects were a great deal more far-reaching in general. In the end, with the exception of those belonging to the cult (about 40 000 to 60 000 people across Europe), the world's population was decimated by the dark influence of the powers released by the ritual.

Thus, the Flower War LARP campaign came to a very loud end. The final results could not have left all of the players' characters totally satisfied, but the general feeling among the players themselves was that it was a suitably climactic ending to a popular series of LARPs.

Looking back, Flower War was, without a doubt, one of the most interesting LARPs I've participated in. The unique LARP mechanics placed the impetus of creation upon the players themselves. In this respect it succeeded wonderfully. It's amazing that such a large group of players, most with game interests fairly disparate to everyone else's, were able to create such a complex political situation. The actual game mechanics themselves also proved fairly robust and, in many ways, Flower War was a great deal more balanced, albeit in an unconscious fashion, than certain other LARPs of a more scripted nature. In essence, large parts of Flower War proved to be self-regulating, an effect that was no doubt enjoyed by many.

Hopefully the future will see new LARPs that draw upon the ideas tested during Flower War. Hopefully, I'll get a chance to play in some of them....

26

You follow the lecturer down a flight of stairs and along a creaky wooden corridor. You would have completely missed her door if she hadn't opened it in front of you. You notice the plaque next to it is bronze instead of paper. It says: "Assoc. Prof. Camilla Dolb, Commerce". She beckons you inside her dark office and you pick your way over heavy books.

As she smiles, you realise that this visit was probably a mistake. Even the goth tutors don't have teeth like that.



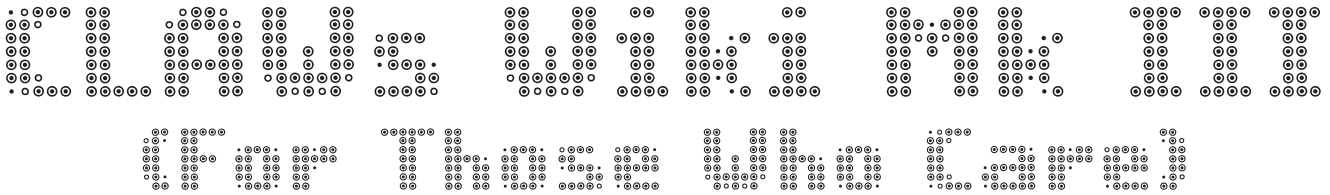
Do you: try to run your way off the campus (go to entry 23), find a secure hiding spot (go to entry 41) or attack the lecturer (go to entry 42)?

27

You wander across campus in what is now a drizzle. Few students seem to be braving this weather. You reach the Engineering building and, as usual, spend ten minutes getting lost in the corridors. You hear a scream echo somewhere nearby and assume that one of the mechanical engineers made a fatal mistake.



Do you: get freaked out and decide to go home (go to entry 37) or keep looking for your lecture theatre (go to entry 43)?



by Simon Cross

It's another new year for CLAWs and we're proud to take the wraps off a shiny new CLAWs website. The varsity break saw a lot of behind-the-scenes work by a few Great Old Ones. There was the old incarnation to dismember, a spidery crab-like entity to be called forth on distant shores, and, of course, a lot of cleaning up to do afterwards.

For those not learned in the forgotten ways, the previous CLAWs site consisted of two distinct parts: a small set of ordinary webpages and a giant sprawl of user-editable ones, called a wiki. In theory the ordinary pages contained important official information (dates, contact details and the like) which was regularly updated (by the committee). In practice the pages were outdated and full of cruft and the committee probably didn't know what was going on anyway. The wiki, on the other hand, was regularly updated by those in the know—that is, the general CLAWs populace.

With the above in mind, and following the general principle that official content is entirely overrated, the new approach taken is to rely entirely on the wiki. While detractors might suggest that to rely entirely on the wiki, and hence upon CLAWmembers, is foolish in the extreme we remind them that the alternative is to rely on the CLAWs committee¹.

Getting Started

First you'll need to visit `claws.uct.ac.za`. Next you'll need to read the small black squiggles. Yes, the text. I suggest at least glancing at all the pages linked to by the introduction, but to get to the meat, head straight for the contents page and blogs. If you're not subscribed to the CLAWs' mailing lists, follow the instructions for joining up—other than the occasional plea from committee members, they're

disappointingly low-traffic.

The wiki itself is filled mostly with the insane scribblings of past generations of CLAWmembers. Feel free to wobble around and leave scribblings of your own. Write stuff about the campaigns you're in, the campaigns you'd like to be in, your ideas for a new setting or the discussion you had last night at 4:35 in a dingy fast food restaurant². If you're particularly daring you could even contribute original fiction or essays on things roleplaying-related (and *everything* can be related to roleplaying).

Blogs, Diaries and a Touch of History

Diary pages kinda sidled their way into the first instantiation of the wiki. No one really expected them but suddenly they were there and everyone was writing one. At first, all seemed good. Then, inexorably, day after day, the sizes of the diary pages grew. Finally, weighed down by the bloated carcasses, Wiki Mk I crashed to its knees. Wails of anguish filled the night as the elephantine pages refused to save. This process spawned the diary archive pages—a sort of liposuction treatment.

The second wiki, also known as the ClawTiki, had built-in blog support (in fact, this was one of the features which drove its adoption). The current wiki is a return to a simpler system, more like Mk I. Consequently, the ClawTiki blogs have had to be reincorporated into the wiki itself. Each blog has become a group in the new wiki. Each post has become a page. Comments are placed at the bottom of a post's page. What makes a blog group special is two magical pages—the main page and the archive page. The main page displays the contents of the five latest pages (posts) in the group. The archive displays a list of all the pages, most recent first.

If you wish to create a new blog group,

just copy the contents of the main and archive pages from an existing blog group to a new group and start posting (making new pages).

Left To Do

There are still a few major tasks which need to be completed before the transitions to the new wiki can be considered complete.

Perhaps the biggest task outstanding is transferring the image galleries and polls from the previous wiki. Unfortunately this isn't something that'll be particularly easy for anyone but me to work on (although if anyone is particularly keen I can send them my scripts and a tiki data dump to work from). For this reason they're on top of my personal wiki todo list.

If you happen to be familiar with HTML, it'd be nice if we had some alternative skins (themes) for the wiki. The new system allows each page to potentially use its own skin. You can set a default skin for a group too.

In addition to skins, it'd be good to have a few different logo designs to go with them. The only things you'll need are a pencils, paper, access to someone with a scanner and a bit of artistic ability, and since I have a scanner and artistic ability is notoriously difficult to define, all you really need are the former two.

If you're more of a writer than a webmonkey or pencil pusher, there's the task of moving the old non-wiki pages³ across to the wiki. While there is obviously the potential for this to be a completely mindless task (and we in no way object if any zombies offer to perform it), there is also the potential for someone to really have fun with the process and, say, re-write the official pages into the wiki as B-grade horror scripts.

1. They are inevitably involved with minor matters such as organising Dragonfire, CLAWmarks and the trip to ICON and, of course, the eternal struggle against evil SDSD.

2. Classier establishments tend not to be open at this time.

3. <http://claws.uct.ac.za/static/>

CAMPAIGN REPORTS

A Soul of Steel

System: *Werewolf: The Forsaken*

DM: Garrick Van Onselen

Players: Mels, Dave, Roo, Hila, Ian and Bronwen

This short-lived game was run while I tried to sort out the massive mess my Sabbath game had turned into. Set in Downtown Detroit, this game followed the exploits of six newly-changed Werewolves pushed together into a pack by their elders and given a small patch of dirt to call their own. I tried running it like an ongoing TV series complete with ad breaks and comments from the two teenagers sitting on the couch watching. I did this with mixed success.

Having an up-and-coming Gang Lord (Dave) as pack leader pretty much put the players exactly where I wanted them: a story about Werewolves in the Inner city with their claws and their AK's. Having a half-wolf half-dodge challenger as a pack totem was pretty cool, although I don't think the players ever got the *Red Vs Blue* reference. Having the characters deal with conflicting problems between managing werewolf territory and gang territory also created some nice tension. I just wish the overall theme of dealing with the consequences of their actions had never come up. Although there was a great moment when half the pack wanted to help inner city kids and the other half wanted to recruit them.

Highlights of the game would have to include the two massive inter-party combats, both involving Roo, as well as the pilot episode finale of a totem/car-chase on the spiritual highways of Earth's shadow. A scene I would have liked to mirror for the season finale.

Unfortunately, the game was called after a month or two on account of

having bloodthirsty Divas as players baying for my Sunday Night Sabbath game. And this after I generate 3 Seasons of material. Now I know what Joss must have felt when Fox cancelled *Firefly*. Heathens.

Angels Deserve to Die

System: *Vampire: The Masquerade* 3e

DM: Garrick Van Onselen

Players: Mels, Dave, Roo, and Hila

I had one goal. Run a Dark and Twisted Sabbath game set in the wonderfully sick setting of Black Dog Publishing's Montreal By Night. That was nearly 3 years ago.

I can't believe I still haven't killed Wolfgang. Most of the original characters have either died, been replaced or have disappeared. Only Wolfgang remains... which is kinda funny when you consider Dave created him as a throw-away character who wasn't meant to last that long. Mad Malkavian with amnesia. Deaf. Thinks he used to be a bat before he was a Vampire. Musical prodigy. He actually started out only marginally insane. He has of course become full-bore bat-shit crazy by now and is in the middle of his grand epic adventure, when all the secrets will be revealed and all the tables will turn, and the fate of the world hangs in the balance.

I trusted the fate of the world to the actions of a Malkavian who would rather play the piano than leave his haven to feed. I have made him in charge. A Malkavian who literally sees the world in apples and oranges. (And will hide the oranges.)

What the hell was I thinking?!

Well... I wanted a game of *epic* proportions. One story spanning three races of the world of darkness. The characters would play as vampires until faced with the choice of absolute power or loyalty to the Sabbath. Their choices would set the stage for the characters to play werewolves. And the werewolf characters' sacrifice would pave the way for the last part where they would be playing demons. From the rubble of the City of Angels to the dark majesty of

The City of Black Miracles. From the sewers of New York to the Mountains of Romania. Large! Grand! Epic!

Futile.

The players managed to write themselves out of the plot two stories from the end. So close. So very very close. Although, the new cast of characters have made the last year fun and frustrating.

The party is currently stuck in a pocket dimension that is two thousand years more advanced than Earth and is being run by the evil church of an Earth-bound Demon with plans of escaping his prison and taking over the world. And somehow, this all seems to be Wolfgang's fault.

This game will be continuing into 2006, but I don't see it outlasting the year. The grand finale looms ever closer and it is time that Montreal was wiped clean by the Wrath of God.

Garrick's Upcoming Games:

The Quantum Age

It's a Watchmen meets Wild Cards Super Hero game using the Aberrant system. It will be part cheese, part drama and all bashing in a wonderful world where *real* Heroes wear their underwear on the outside.

Vertigo Rent Control

The party is a group of friends who all live in the same apartment complex in DC's Vertigo Universe. Every single tenant is magically inclined and shares the world with such wonderful characters as John Constantine, the Endless, Swamp Thing, and many more.

What Dreams May Come

An ongoing *Changeling: The Dreaming* campaign by Michelle Haward

Players

Garrick van Onselen:

Dazzle Eyesbright, a cat-girl styled Pooka

Warren Russel: Delvar, an Eshu

Beth Tolson: Duchess Stella, a Gwydion Sidhe noble

28

You head for Café Nescafe. On your way across the Jameson Plaza (unusually empty), you hear a strange gurgling sound... is that coming from the fountain?



Do you: investigate the sound (go to entry 29) or keep going towards coffee (go to entry 12)?

Hila Gropper: Kee, a Satyr

Chris Cecchini: Sir Duthane, a handsome troll knight

Events are afoot in the once quiet Duchy of Santa Cruz, California. Some new and some old residents of the Changeling society in the area have become involved in a series of unusual events.

Charged by the Satyr Hamal with a task to find a lost “wealth stone”, the group first teamed up for what seemed like a wild goose chase, ending with a near brush with cold iron.

Shortly after this, Sir Duthane arrived, bearing a message for the Duchess—which was shortly followed by an assassination attempt on her life. The efforts of the group ensured that the assassin was captured. A scandal in the press resulted, owing to photographs of the Duchess (a famous actress) and a young woman bound on a couch (the assassin), leaked by a certain Eshu private investigator. But this is not the end of that tale, for the once-assassin is now a vassal of the Duchess, through a lengthy process involving creative use of love potion.

Most recently, Kee encountered Hamal again—busy draining a Dreamer dry of all Glamour. Delvar was horrified to discover that the Dreamer was his, and—each in their own way—the party are chasing down Hamal.

Between all this, there have been trips into the Dreaming, meetings with dragons, old flames (or family) found, Battle of the Bands, pranking, lies, secret messages, deceit, identity crises and more. And that’s before you take into account the animosity many commoners seem to feel for the Sidhe.

Only time will tell where Dana will take these Changelings. Although in a month’s time they will encounter a boggan thief who will lead them to a dryad with a most interesting book, and the thorns to protect it!

Dave’s *Exalted* Campaign

Players are Melanie, Garrick, Hila and John Bromberger. I might consider a fifth if approached, but I’m happy with the party dynamic at the moment.

Exalted is a White Wolf system, set before the World of Darkness, and is a more medieval-type setting. Sort of like Dungeons and Dragons, but the inspiration and style root themselves in Anime rather than in an idealistic European Middle Ages with magic. PCs are generally heroes, larger-than-life characters who excel over any normal mortal.

So, the story starts in the tiny village of Dagvard, where our heroes come

29

Drizzle falls on your shoulders as you investigate Jammie Fountain. You notice that it does not deserve to be called a fountain. You also notice that the water is extremely murky today. It seems to have some sort of algae growing in it. Growing very fast.

The algae rises out of the water and stares you in the face. It has sulphurous eyes and webbed hands. It gives a gurgled sigh.



Do you: run (go to entry 23), try to talk to the creature (go to entry 40) or attack the creature (go to entry 44)?

from. At this stage, Errata, an apprentice Healer and a Type A personality, Rayne, an apprentice Lore Master and the shyest person ever, River, an apprentice Woodsman, whose love for his home village is unbounded, Zareth, an apprentice...

whatever it is his family does (woodsmanning as well, isn’t it?) and Haplo, a “layabout”, are all finishing their apprenticeships and becoming journeymen. They are sent to complete various tasks in the nearby town of Denhave, travelling with the merchant, who is taking the town’s crops in for the Harvest Festival.

In short, they accomplish their tasks, discover and kill a very dangerous man, Haplo goes missing, and they make it back to Dagvard about a day after it went up in flames (barbarian attack). The gods

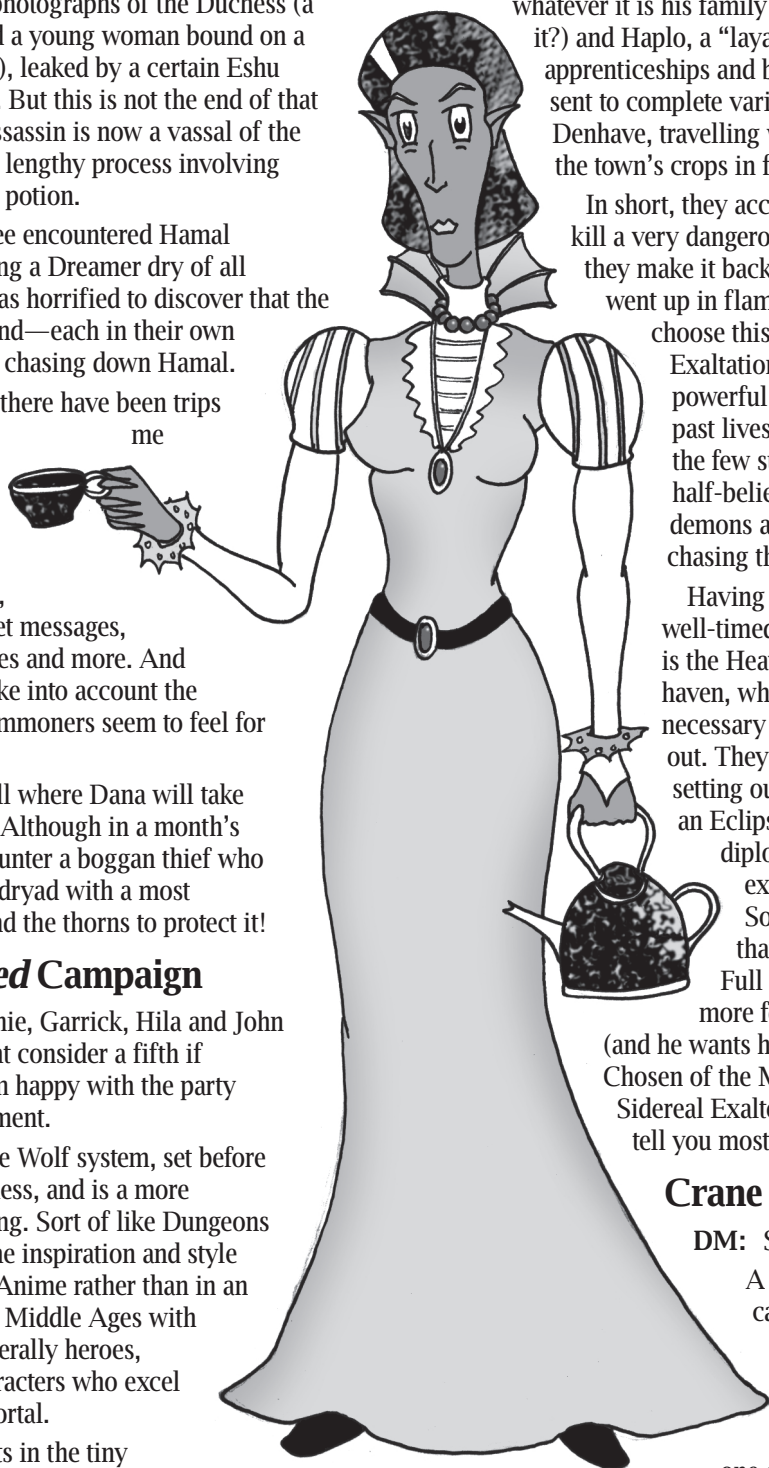
choose this moment to bless them with Exaltation, turning them into hugely powerful beings with vague memories of past lives, and they find themselves with the few surviving members of the village half-believing they’ve been trucking with demons and the dominant world order chasing them.

Having escaped their enemies (owing to a well-timed shortcut through Yu-Shan, which is the Heavenly plane), they arrived at a safe haven, where they have received the necessary training before they can be sent out. They have just completed this, and are setting out again to find a spy: Errata, now an Eclipse-caste Solar Exalted, the ultimate diplomatic nightmare and healer extraordinaire; Zareth, Night-caste Solar Exalted - watch your stuff, not that that will do any good; River, a Full Moon-caste Lunar Exalted, now more feral and in touch with the wild (and he wants his village back); and Rayne, a Chosen of the Maiden of Secrets, a Jupiter-caste Sidereal Exalted, who knows too much and will tell you most of it.

Crane Lands

DM: Simon Cross

A Legend of the Five Rings campaign set (for the moment) in the southernmost reaches of the Crane lands. Initially the player characters were part of a diverse group of young samurai attending one of the lesser Daidoji training schools. Their first spring patrol, however, saw



them drawn into the investigation of a small group of bandits found carrying a deadly poison. A tale of missing Daidoji scouts led them to scour the many small coves along the nearby coast and eventually confront a group of Mantis under the command of an unnamed maho-tsukai.

A few weeks after their return to the school, life was disrupted by the approach of armed forces owing allegiance to the Shogun. Late in the afternoon of a day filled with battle, Daidoji Yoshiko (Adrianna), was confronted by one of the opposing generals and invited to an audience with the Shogun. Overcome by curiosity and unaware that the Shogun was in Yasuki Yashiki, many weeks' travel away, Yoshiko forsook her duty to her clan and accepted.

A long journey south towards Earthquake Fish Bay, in the company of their gracious Lion hosts, eventually brought them to the gates of Kyuden Yashiki, but not before Kakita Katsumoto (Mike) had unleashed the terrible power of his ancestral sword—a power described by the Asahina as “an unspeakable horror”.

Life at Kyuden Yashiki was more relaxing, although not without its own special trials: Togashi Masu (Mark) was assaulted by an evil spirit and Hida Koshiro (Dave) found himself indebted to a Yasuki stone merchant and her son for their aid in securing a gift for the Shogun. The meeting with the Shogun has left the group uncertain. Do they honour his request and face whatever destiny awaits them, or would their duty to their lords be better served elsewhere? The two Crane have been given leave to travel to the Asahina lands and consult with members of their clan.

Deciding to delay their departure until after the end of the Chrysanthemum Festival, they spent its final night, a time of great evil, in the relative safety of Yasuki castle. There they witnessed the ominous return of Tsuruchi Tadashi (Yancke), seemingly brought back from the realm of the dead by one of the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang. All that is certain is that Tadashi is in over his head.



Living on a Prayer

DM: Mike Dewar

An *Unknown Armies* Game inspired by/stolen from Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*

Wood rots.

Stone cracks.

People die.

Nations fall.

Gods... go on.

They eke out an existence in the cracks of reality, in the backs of our minds, and in the local Quik-E-Mart and Motel 6.

They survive off scraps of prayer, half-remembered stories and minimum wage.

They deliver to us our fears and desires—often at the same time as our pizzas.

But they go on.

Some are content with their lot, living from moment to moment, devouring crumbs of belief while washing cars and waiting tables.

Some are not. Some are angry.

Hell hath no fury like a god scorned.

Prometheus, the Master Trickster of the Greek Pantheon, has pieced together an unlikely group of gods to play a crucial role in his elaborate schemes to re-write reality:

Cunning Hermes, the Messenger of the Skies, now an out-of-work Fed Ex employee and short con artist with an abrasive manner (played by Brendan Quinlivan)

Relentless Nemesis, the Righteous Vengeance of the Gods, now an IRS agent with a chip on her shoulder. (played by Lara Davison)

Subtle Morpheus, the Lord of Sleep, now a semi-retired professor and heroin junkie with a few nightmares of his own (played by Dave Sharpe)

Debauched Baron Samedi, Loa of Death and Revelry, now a successful nightclub owner to whom death is one big party (played by Steve Emslie)

Unpredictable Set, the King of Chaos and the Road, now a travel agent who'll take you anywhere... whether you want to go there or not (played by Sean Finnis)

And **Prometheus** himself, fire-stealer and mastermind, whose endgame remains locked in his labyrinthine mind. (played by Tai

Steyn)

The Norse and Greek pantheons march to war as Prometheus's schemes rebound in unexpected ways, leading to chaos in both the physical and metaphysical realms with many questions still unanswered: how much can these very different deities trust each other? Where the hell is Hermes? Will Nemesis betray them again? Why is Morpheus talking to cockroaches? How many times can Samedi rise from the grave before he's put down for good? Who will Set randomly kill today? And are they really Prometheus's allies... or just convenient pawns?

Power Corrupts

DM: Ian Kitley

System: *Aberrant*

In the middle of the Amazon, six lone novae contemplate their discoveries. Is Utopia really rotten? Why are they now wanted fugitives? And what is their next step? These six souls now have to make a choice as to what they plan to do. Who are they going to run to and what is the significance of the glowing red orb they carry with them? Is it the home of dozens of innocent souls, a weapon against the novae, or nothing? And why was it the only surviving object of the explosion at Dagon Industries?

As *Power Corrupts* enters its second story arc, the players are still reeling from their betrayal and the data they found. Two characters leave, including the enigmatic test subject they picked up last year, while two new ones enter the mix. What will happen, and when?

30

Refreshing. You toss aside the glass bottle and lean back into your couch. You realise that the a few people are staring out of the window and pointing. You look out of the window yourself and realise that a crowd of UCT cleaning staff are running towards the coffee shop. You wonder if it's a hurried protest march between shifts.

You turn your attention elsewhere until brutal screams near the doorway force you to look up. The cleaning staff seem to be dismembering coffee shop clients with an unnatural strength. Blood begins to wet everything around you. You realise that several middle-aged cleaning staff covered in blood are running towards you....



Do you: fight back (go to entry 6) or try to find some way out of your corner (go to entry 34)?

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF WHITE WOLF

by Adam Jorgensen

If you're new to CLAWs, and roleplaying in general, you may be wondering who exactly White Wolf are. Simply put, they are one of the best-known producers and publishers of pen-and-paper roleplaying games. In particular, they are famous for their World of Darkness campaign setting and the various games related to it.

Founded in 1991 by three people, White Wolf have published both roleplaying games and, to a much smaller extent, card games. The card gaming material is, on the whole, a great deal less well-known, but should not be discounted from notice because of this. Their roleplaying games, on the other hand, are extremely well-known and with good reason.

White Wolf have made a name for themselves in the world of roleplaying games primarily due to the quality of the settings they've created for their various games. Most famous among these settings is the World of Darkness (WoD). The WoD is a subtly altered version of our own reality, similar in many ways, but a great deal more pessimistic and gloomy in overall tone. The World of Darkness also differs from our own version of the world in that many of the most feared creatures of myth and legend are alive (or dead) and

kicking.

Probably the most well-known game set within the World of Darkness is *Vampire: The Masquerade* (V: TM). Players joining a V: TM game can expect to be embroiled in intricate plots involving conflicts and politics that span periods of decades, if not centuries. In many cases there is also a fair amount of arse-kicking involved, Vampires being anything but pussycats for the most part. Other well known games set in

WoD include *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* (W: TA) and *Mage: The Ascension* (M: TA). In case you haven't noticed already, White Wolf use a very simple computer program to generate the names of the games...).

The World of Darkness also plays host to a large number of rather less well-known games. Although these games generally share a largely similar game system to the more dominant games mentioned above, what they lack can be described simply as market share. Here lie the relics of White Wolf's various attempts to strike out and create something a little off the beaten track, games such as *Wraith: The Oblivion* (W: TO), *Changeling: The Dreaming*

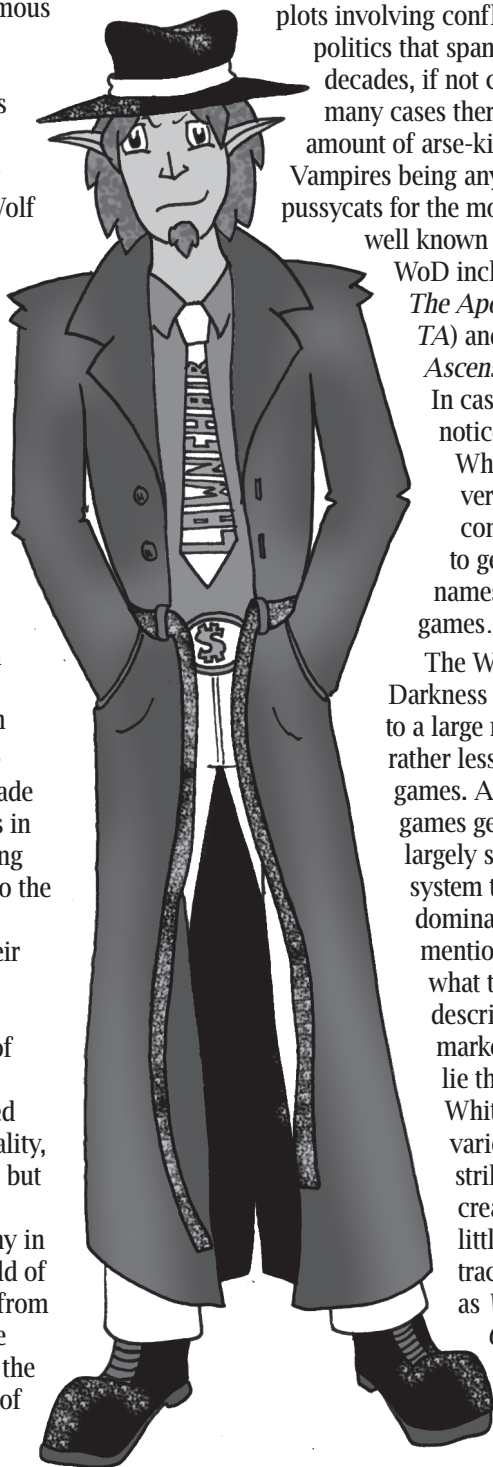
(C: TD) and *Kindred of the East* (No acronyms for this one, sorry...).

Another well-known feature of White Wolf's WoD products is the Storyteller roleplaying system that they all run off. Storyteller is a rather grand name for a system that, while competent, can be a bit of a pain to use in certain cases. Cases in particular include high-power character groups and rules-crazy player groups, not to mention a couple of other similar problem spots. Overall, Storyteller does its job fairly well and is generally a lot less trouble to play with than certain other systems (what rhymes with Truncheons & Flags? I wonder...).

Up to this point I've been dealing with the World of Darkness. Let's leave that for now, and move onto something else. Namely, New World of Darkness (NWoD). Wait, don't run away just yet! This is the part where things get better. Well, kind of....

White Wolf recently brought their old WoD (OWoD) product line to a close, quite literally by releasing the supplements necessary to run games set during the oft-mentioned Apocalypse. Following the close of the OWoD line, there was some question as to what White Wolf would do next. And answer finally emerged, and answer both good and, in some more subtle ways, bad. The release of the World of Darkness core rulebook along with the *Vampire: The Requiem* (V: TR) sourcebook was a clear indication of the new/old direction that White Wolf had decided to follow: A new World of Darkness to replace the old.

So far the NWoD has proved to be fairly popular, with the release of *Werewolf: The Forsaken* (W: TF) and *Mage: The Awakening* (M: TA) following that of V: TR in moderately short order (In the World of Publishing, moderately short order is a measure of time somewhere between 6 and 9 months). The New World of Darkness line introduces a number of new elements to the classic formula presented



so many years ago with the first release of *V: TM*, such as vampires, werewolves and a dark, moody world teetering on the brink of terminal decay. Oh, right, those things were already there in *OWoD*, sorry....

In truth, the new source material released in the *NWoD* line doesn't interest me a great deal. As with most of White Wolf's releases, the quality of the actual work is very good, with both the books themselves and their actual contents easily living up to the high standards White Wolf set for themselves as a company. That said, while the *New World of Darkness* is a *New World of Darkness*, in many ways its themes do not stray radically from the *Old World of Darkness* a great deal, and thus the *New* is, on a subtle level, largely the same as the *Old*.

What does interest me with respect to the *New World of Darkness* is the actual roleplaying system itself, not to mention the publishing scheme for the new line. White Wolf finally saw fit to take the old *Storyteller* system to task and what has emerged is a leaner system that greatly improves on the flaws of the old. What does this mean for you as a player? Well, in general, there's a little less dice-rolling to worry about and a decreased amount of head-scratching over peculiarly worded rules. This is, no doubt, a blow to all the rules-lawyers out there, but I'm sure they'll find something to fill the gaping void in their lives (maybe something a little more old school, possibly *Rolemaster*...). Meanwhile, the rest of us can get down to enjoying a generally less stressful game system.

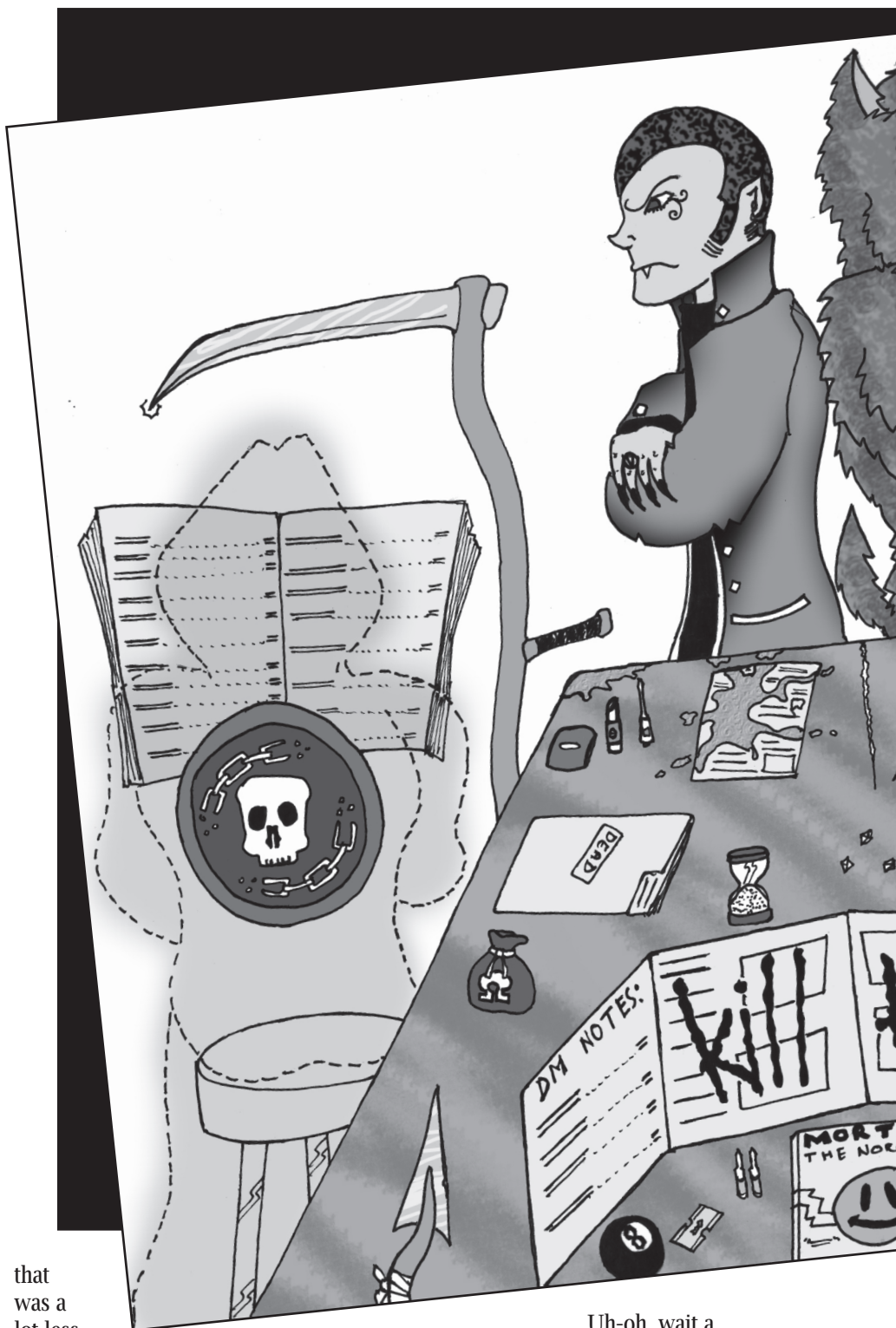
White Wolf's new publishing model is also of interest. The creation of a single core rulebook reveals that, as a company, they're not stuck in a complete time-warp and have realised that duplicating the rule-set within each primary source book published is a waste of paper. Never mind the fact that all the errata that followed in secondary source books resulted in an *Old World of Darkness*

that was a lot less unified, in terms of game system, than it first seemed. Anyway, at least White Wolf are finally getting with the times. Their new publishing scheme also means that there's more space in the new sourcebooks for actual source material, which is a good thing, considering White Wolf's source material is usually of very high quality. And that's about all there is to it. Let's see, *Old World of Darkness*, *New World of Darkness*... is there anything I've forgotten? Hmmmm, guess not. Okay, well, that's all for now.

Uh-oh, wait a second; I can hear some heckling. What's that I hear you say? "*Aeon-Trinity*... *Black Dog Games*... *Pimp: The Backhanding*".

Okay, well, it looks like there are one or two things I missed. Let's start with *Aeon-Trinity*. A completely separate game universe from the *World of Darkness*, *Aeon-Trinity* integrates three separate games in order to present a gaming experience that differs greatly from the somewhat more well known *WoD* formula.

The three games in question are:



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You carefully store the little bottle in your bag and decide it's time to leave the coffee shop.



Do you: drive back to UCT (go to entry 21) or consider your day stressful enough and go home (go to entry 37)?



who owns a copy or even photo-copy of some of their output. A key example is the pen-and-paper RPG *HoL* (*Human Occupied Landfill*), a work entirely bizarre and hilarious in terms of both concept and execution. It remains to be seen whether *HoL* is actually playable. But even if it's not, the main *HoL* sourcebook makes for hilarious reading and is indicative of the twisted talent at work in the kennels of Black Dog Games.

Speaking of subsidiaries, White Wolf also happens to own the moderately well known (among internet-savvy role-players at least) company Drive Thru RPG. This company was actually created by two of the White Wolf founders and makes its business the sale of roleplaying sourcebooks over the internet. Drive Thru RPG doesn't sell actual physical books, however. Rather, they provide buyers with access to downloadable e-book versions of the various materials they stock. Drive Thru RPG has proven fairly successful, publishing books from a variety of publishers, and it doesn't look like their line of business will be drying up anytime soon.

Enough already. I'm done talking about White Wolf. Yes, I know, there's stuff I forgot to mention. No doubt the White Wolf devotees out there are itching to get their hands on me and take me to task for some of the things I've said. But that'll have to wait for later. As of now, this article is officially over.

And yes, I know I didn't do anything more than simply mention *Pimp: The Backhanding*. It was entirely intentional on my part. Go and do some research of your own!



Adventure (Pulp 1920's Indiana Jones-style action), *Aberrant* (Modern Superheroes with a slightly SF twist) and *Trinity* (Near future SF). These games are all set in the same general universe, but separate in time to such an extent that each game is essentially singular in nature. The trio of *Aeon-Trinity* games use a subtly altered version of the old Storyteller system and thus feature many of the same game system problems. While rules-mongering is slightly less of a problem in the *Aeon-Trinity* games, the rolling of huge numbers of dice is usually even more intrusive, although this is mostly only true of *Aberrant*. The *Aeon-Trinity*

universe is vastly different from the World of Darkness in terms of general themes and is, as a whole, a lot brighter and more optimistic. Nevertheless, some of the dark and tragic themes associated with the World of Darkness are present, albeit in a muted and less obvious form.

Black Dog Games is a subsidiary of White Wolf, one with a tendency to work on products that make the unsuccessful OWoD products look like major market movers in their own right. They've released a number of products, some of which have been slightly successful, most having disappeared quickly. This is, overall, a very sad thing, as I'm sure anyone

33

You employ your most authoritative tone at maximum volume, but it seems you still have something to learn. The cleaning staff, driven by their zombie instincts, attack you in droves. Your voice serves you well as a tool for ever more gruelling screams as they tear your life out of you....

CLASSIFIED!

Campaigns

Beth is still looking for a player for her D&D campaign.

*"Hear the hounds of hades bay,
Thieves of Souls, they earn their pay.
Death will find you, fear you not,
You're just a victim of my plot."*

email: bethstarblue@yahoo.com



Lucas is running a D&D campaign. Newbies welcome but must be able to play and interact well with others.

Set in the modern day; a group of adventurers from a standard fantasy setting has been transported to Earth as we know it. They have been here for five years and have settled down in nine-to-fives. They have a basic understanding of how things work, but they would like to go home.

Number of players needed: has 2 possibilities but wants 4-5

email: lwheeler@openboxsoftware.com



Ian is looking for players for two new games.

Human Race

System: Adventure

Players: 4-6

Duration: 6 weeks

The world has changed much in the past 1000 years. Will it provide the type of resistance we expect, or will it go the way of the last two? The third element has been added to the mix and only the viewers will know the victor. Only then will we re-open.

A fast-paced game that takes place in

present day, involving people of all types and lifestyles. Do not expect a typical game; expect only the cliffhangers that colour *Adventure!*



Here's what happens when you type "random crap" into Google image search.

Serpentine Hills

System: Unknown Armies

Players: 4-6

Duration: Ongoing

Power courses through the praries and the hills. Only those below humanities dreams notice as the serpent begins to wake, restless and focused. Don't bother asking those who know, since some wish nothing to do with it and some want it all for themselves. The balance hangs with you and the feather begins to fall.

A global level unknown armies campaign investigating the inner workings of some of the undergrounds secrets and sifting through the myriad spanners of the statosphere.

Contact Ian at ikitley@gmail.com or 0723480313 if you're interested in either of these.

Almost-deaths

Master Wen. We will avenge your death! Even if you actually didn't die.

Deaths

Barbarians. Do not break your oath to an Exalted.

Master Wen! Now that you're dead we can avenge you *for real!*

Caxtiltecatl ...and indeed the world, or at least most of the human population thereof. All thanks to the few brave world-shakers who knowingly voted to allow an Old Dark Power onto this plane. (Congrats to Neil on convincing them. Iä iä!)

Flower War. A toast to the most megalomaniacal players ever. Each bent on domination in their own right. (And they say roleplaying is just wish fulfilment.)

The Baron Samedi, loa of death and... no, wait, he's back.

The Baron Samedi (again), loa of death, debauchery and... for god's sake, would the man install a revolving door in his coffin?

Odin, Lord of the Norse, caught in a three-way war he didn't particularly want to be part of. He wasn't much liked, but did he have to go and die and leave Loki in charge?

Tyrone, Priest of the New Gods and pimp with dreams of corporate splendour. Success can be hard on a man.

Ares, Greek God of War, cut up by the Norse thanks to Loki's trickery.

All those **nanite-infected security guards.** Please, let them not be reborn.

Wanted

Juan, 'coz if you find Juan you find Hamal.

8-foot horny troll looking for new **turkey baster.**

Private eye looking for new **private.**

Any and all sticks. Will be named, looked after and polished. Specifically looking for Merry and Pippin. Contact Chris.

Powerful anti-love potion for Sidhe assassin.

Eye of Autochthon. Please contact River, C/O what used to be the town of Dagvard. Don't worry, I can control it. How hard can it be?

Bunker, for use should River ever get The Eye of Autochthon. Please contact

34

You manage to manoeuvre your way out of the press of zombie cleaning staff and screaming coffee shop patrons. You start running like crazy towards campus.



Go to entry 23.

the surviving citizens of Dagvard.

A new mouse. Please contact Vanesa to replace her mechanical pet.

For Sale

Glowing red orb, unknown quantity. Retrieved from Dagon facilities. No questions asked.

Pets & Livestock

Free to a good home: **Horse**. Loyal companion worth Resources 3. Knows how to walk backwards on a narrow pass. Contact Errata, secret camp of Illoth.

Fridge Quotes

Chris to Hila: Is this the guy?

Hila to Michelle: Is this the guy?

Michelle to Hila: It's a much younger version of him.

Hila to Chris: It's a much younger version of him.

Chris: I barely trust you; you kissed my girlfriend.

Hila: I was haunted.

Hila: Oh god!

Warren: Hila's pole is floppy.

Brendan: If you taste something funny on my cheek, it's Hendri.

Simon: We do it in front of the altar because it seems appropriate.

Marc: I go upstairs to lighten my load and put my bags down.

Chris: Watch out or Beth will discharge all over you.

Beth: Oh yes, I forgot about that; I did that all over the bannister at res.

Hila to a waiter: How much for a cock?

Hila: Michelle, you're fluffing Chris.

Warren: You put things in water to make them bigger?

Garrick: That was an accident.

Warren: There is a difference between Hila and Rolf.

Rolf: Yes, it's a little one.

Warren: Chris, can you do me next?

Warren: I look at the end of my stick: "It's gone... it's all gone!"

Warren to Beth and Mike: Are you two still fucking at it?

Warren (in despair): She didn't want us. Nobody wants us.

(long pause)

Raakesh: I want you!

Beth: There is going to be a mass slaughtering of private dicks. Except his isn't so private.

Beth to Chris: You obviously came into yourself a lot quicker than I did.

Chris: Are there going to be any other girls there, other than me?

Chris: I really need essence of Ian.

Chris: You kicked the Duchess in the Balls?

Chris: When I come across a problem that penis cream cannot solve, I'll beat it with my stick.

Chris: I don't have enough Persuasion to persuade the pants off a hooker.

Chris: You come near my lap, Garrick, and I'll stick you with pencil.

Chris to Beth, handing her the mop: Here, put this in Garrick's hole.

Chris: Next time it's "no, no, no", it's actually yes.

Chris to Beth: I have no problem with you sharing your bed with me.

Amy: I need to have a word with Chris; as a married man I'm not impressed.

Karl: I don't know where Michelle stays.

Chris: Oh, she sleeps around.

Michelle: I don't have any new mails!

Michelle: For the rest of the year I'm easy.

Michelle: Don't kick the table, the sours is about to jump.

Michelle: It found its way into my mouth.

Michelle: I like having at least one mail

open in the background.

Michelle: It won't go in this way, will it?

Chris: It might, if you push it really hard, it might go in.

Garrick: This wood is wood, this glass is glass. You have a funny haircut; he went normal, damn it.

Garrick: No, crabs I can deal with.

Garrick: What time does Bronwen get off?

Garrick: He always looks out for the people beneath him.

Garrick: It's wet and drooping.

Andy: Not where I touch it.

Mark: After exploring myself, and feeling fairly drained....

Dave: It appears that you are able to shock and startle me by your... flashing.

Dave: How do you intend to take it? (...)

Mike: I'll try not to do it in public.

Jo: Ow, fuck, my face!

Simon: I just have a question... are you letting her hold your katana?

Yancke: I want them to know I'm coming.

Mindless Link Propagation

Roleplaying character graveyard:

<http://www.electricferret.com/mortuary>

70's Tommy Seebach cover of *Apache*:

<http://he.fi/video/apache.mpg>



A not-to-be-missed musical experience

35

You walk around Jammie Plaza and glance behind a few trees. No students in sight. You look up at the windows and see only grey reflections. You cunningly decide to sigh again—and your echo is definitely coming from Jammie Fountain!



Go to entry 29.



The other half of the emu

Choose your
own adventure!

Start on page 1!

Mapping the Limits

by Thembi Cochrane


36

You head for the Engineering Building and start deciphering the maze of stairways inside. You seem to have some help—a voice calls to you. You follow and eventually recognise it. It's the girl from the coffee shop!

You call out to her, and see a figure round the corner of the corridor. It's definitely the girl, but she seems to be a little weaker. Her grip on reality is so weak that she seems translucent. Floating. Dead.

"I'm sorry," she moans, "It was the cleaning staff..."

She is floating quickly towards you.

 *Do you: run and try to find the nearest hiding place (go to entry 41) or speak to the girl (go to entry 7)?*

37

You walk swiftly to your car, trying not to look at anything around you. Campus is deserted and you've decided to follow everyone else's example and go home. You feel infinitely more relaxed when you have started up your engine and are traversing the slick roads.

At home, you brew a thick hot chocolate and settle down in front of the TV. Going back to university is scary. After watching all original Star Wars episodes on DVD, you switch on the evening news to reflect on a day well spent.

The news informs you that UCT was in turmoil today thanks to a violent protest by cleaning staff, accusations of student harassment levied at one of the Commerce lecturers and a persistent case of algae in the Jammie Fountain. You switch off the TV and return to your vastly more interesting fantasy book.

38

You run up to the attractive young lecturer and tell her all about your terrifying experience. She believes you immediately and escorts you to a bunker under the Baxter Theatre.

"This is the CPS station for paranormal research," she explains. "I'm Secret Agent Lucky and I could sure use your help".

She explains that there are a few things students shouldn't know and that you could help keep these secrets by testifying to the news team that was sure to be attracted by all the blood.

"You see, several of the cleaning staff have been turned into Zombies," she explains, "and that is always the hardest paranormal activity to cover up—it spreads. The Creature in Jammie Fountain is a friendly type and should move if we ask it to. That poor girl who turned into a Ghost will have to be exorcised... and that leaves us with the usual: Assoc. Prof. Camilla Dolb, Vampire. But she's old news and co-operates as long as we let her eat a first-year every now and then..."

You stare at her wide-eyed.

39

You squeeze further into the bush and try not to breathe as the lecturer walks past. She looks safe, but you never know... and as she gets really close, you're pretty sure you recognise a gun strapped to her leg. You are completely freaked out and cower into the corner, waiting there for hours until you eventually fall asleep.

You wake up, grass-stained and stiff. The sun is setting and a gruff old man is staring at you.

"Bunking, eh?" he asks with a chuckle. You mumble something irrelevant and walk towards your car. Campus seems peaceful in the evening light.

The next day, you return to the university and everything seems normal. You are never quite as freaked out again, but those blood stains on the gym mats always make you shiver...

40

You try to speak gently to the creature—and to your surprise, it nods in response. Its gurgles are hard to interpret, but there seems to be no threat. You begin to

enjoy the exchange, treating the lifelike algae as though it were a pet.

Eventually, a lecturer walks up to you and firmly grabs your arm. You see her flip out a small shiny badge.

"Agent Lucky, CPS paranormal investigation," she states quietly, "please ask this creature to leave."

You are a little nervous in the presence of a secret agent, so you tentatively ask: "Err... can you please leave the fountain, green slime?"

The creature nods again and grabs a few handfuls of green plant from the water at its feet before marching off along university avenue.

"We had to clear out the students," Agent Lucky explains. "We really appreciate your help."

The next day you find that your student account has been mysteriously credited with enough money to let you study until you turn 40.

41

You gather as much energy as you have left and race aimlessly into the corridors. After twisting and turning in a few arbitrary directions, you eventually find a small loft in the basement of the Beattie building. You crouch in the darkness until your own breathing calms you down.

Eventually, you fall asleep. It must be hours later when somebody throws a shoe at you. Its one of your classmates on their way to the hidden computer labs. He is busy untying the shoelace of his second shoe and you uncoil yourself, springing to the floor. Your back is aching.

"Dude, please don't tell me you slept there!" your classmate demands.

You realise it is the next day and everything seems normal. You laugh and make some random joke, hoping that your whole experience was nothing more than a dream. From that day onward, you always make an effort to meet with your friends the minute you arrive on campus. And you never explore the dark corners.

42

You make a fist, trying not to tuck your thumb under your fingers, and launch at the lecturer. She hisses in and crouches down, suddenly disappearing from your view. You get the distinct impression that you may have seen too few Vampire movies in your life. Something immensely strong grips your neck from behind and stretches your throat to a painful limit. You feel the violent bite and helplessly whimper as your pulse gets slower and slower...

43

You eventually find the room you've been searching for. You're the last to arrive and yet the lecturer is still trying to figure out the video equipment. Fifteen minutes later, the lecture begins and you are entertained with clips from old horror films. Watching all those scary images unsettles you and you decide to go home after class.

You walk to your car, noting again how few students seem to be around.

Back at your small flat, you settle down with a hot chocolate and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. After a good day's work, you flick on the TV to check the news. It seems that without your noticing, UCT has had a bad day. Cleaning staff revolted violently, a strange algae clouded the Jammie Fountain and one of the Commerce lecturers was accused of harassment. You sigh and continue to sip your hot chocolate...

44

You practice your Tai Chi breathing technique and, after a moment's meditation, launch at the creature, fingers flying. A soggy webbed hand claps over your entire face and clings to you like a wet towel. But a wet towel you can't breathe through. You are completely thrown off-guard and flail around helplessly until the world goes black in front of your eyes...