

**Newsletter of the SASRA
Roleplaying and Wargames Club**

Probably the least imaginatively named newsletter in the world..



**40
News
Club**



September 2000

CLUB NEWS

SASRA Roleplaying and Wargames Club

The Club holds regular meetings in the function room of the Falcon Club, Egremont starting at 7:30pm on Monday evenings.

Anyone is welcome to turn up and play. If you want to, you can just watch, but be warned: Roleplaying is a participation hobby and makes dull viewing.

The Club's activities include:

Table Top Roleplaying

Fantasy, Futuristic, Comic Book Superheroes, and Gothic Horror.

Live Roleplaying

Using the Club's own FADGES LRP rules... High Fantasy (KRYMSWORLD), Horror (HATCHET), Dark Future (CONCRETE DREAMING), Dark Fantasy.

Wargaming

Table-top battle enactments featuring Ancient Britons, Romans, Napoleonic, Wild West, Fantasy (WarHammer) to name but a few!

Play-By-Mail

The Club hopes to run a PBM game shortly. Some members play the infamous Quest game (and others) offered by KJC Games

You can contact the Club through and of these people:

Jacqui Hastewell

Tel: 01946-67611 (evenings)

Steve Proud

Tel: 01946-62312 (evenings)

Club News 41

Coming up in Club News 41, we hope to bring you the next part of Mark Regan's epic,

and anything else you care to submit!

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to all of this issue's contributors, who are:-

Steve Proud,
Colin Proud,
Jacqui Hastewell,
Mark Regan,

Contributions

To put your article in Club News, give it to Geoff Brown at the Club.

Alternatively, you can send it to:

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29 Scalegill Road
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Cumbria CA24 3JL

E-Mail it to:

ClubNews@Bigfoot.com
Mole@euphonium.freeserve.co.uk

Or even fax it to: 0870-164-0866
(Calls charges at national rates – so do it cheap rate.)

All submissions welcome... We support many different formats but prefer Microsoft Word. Artwork is especially appreciated. All materials will be returned if requested.

Your Editorial Team is:

Cursing his ego. After saying everything was running smoothly, this issue has come out a week late. Murphy must be enjoying himself. Oh well, maybe next time....

3. The Usual Blurp
4. The Chairbeing Speaks
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19. A Wandering Minstrel's Journal
22. Prologue to Act 3

Thought for the Issue:

**Cogito cogito ergo
cogito sum**

*(I think that I think
therefore I might be)*

ChairBeing's Report

The fact that you have heard very little from the committee this year means one of two things firstly that we haven't actually done anything at all, or that everything is running smoothly and you don't need us interrupting your role-playing to tell you that. I would like to assure you that it IS the latter reason and we figured that since you turned up to role-play, the best thing we could do **was** to let you all get on with it.

The Committee have met on a monthly basis since the AGM, and have some active shadows as well as the full members. If anyone else is interested about finding out more about any of the posts with a view to standing at the next AGM (who am I kidding?) please come and talk to the relevant person.

We have been working on improving the LRP equipment over the last few months, mainly buying set dressing items but a full check and inventory of the equipment and costumes is due to be carried out within the next fortnight. We are also consolidating the Club's FRP and wargaming equipment/books etc at Steve Proud's house, so if you have any Club books, please could you let Steve know so we don't have to resort to the hired goons!

Still on the topic of LRP, we are keen to encourage new refs to help with events, so if you have any ideas, please talk to Fudge about this. As a follow-up to one of the events last year, 15 points of XP were awarded to all those players who took part in the Druith Wedding event last September.

You may also have noticed that the Chair is now conspicuous by her absence from the Club on a Monday night although I can assure you I will still be actively involved with the committee and the running of the Club. This is due to getting a new job, which unfortunately means I'm working until at least 9pm on a Monday. I did offer my resignation, but the rest of the committee (swines!) refused to accept it so if you're not happy with this situation talk to one of them!!

The long awaited 24 hour event is now being organised as you may be aware, and we hope the time up until Christmas will be a busy one there are two LRP events planned, and I'm sure the usual Christmas revelry will also be happening. In the meantime please carry on doing what you joined the Club to do, and enjoy your role-playing!!

Jacqui Hastewell

24-hour Roleplay

This year sees the return of the 24 hour sponsored Roleplay.

**Saturday 24th October
At the Falcon Club**

There will be three 8 hour session, with a variety of games running. If you haven't seen the sign-up sheet, contact Steve Proud for details.

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Wanted

The following Tomes are still outstanding from the Black Library. Could you all please check your bookcases, and return any you can find.

Some

Cthulu Now
Cyberpunk 1st Ed
Cyberpunk 1st Ed Boxed Set
Nightsege
GURPS Auto Duel
GURPS 3rd Ed (2 copies)
GURPS 3rd Ed Rules Hardback
AD&D 1st Ed Tournament Scenarios
AD&D 2nd Ed Forgotten Realms Boxed Set
Death on the Reich
Vampire: The Masquerade 1st Ed HB
Vampire: the Masquerade 2nd Ed HB
Vampire Players Guide 2nd Ed HB
Werewolf the Apocalypse 2nd Ed HB
Cults of Prax
Champions Rules (2 copies)
Campaign Cartographer

Filing Area

Call of Cthulu
Cyberpunk
Cyberpunk
Cyberpunk
GURPS
GURPS
GURPS
AD&D
AD&D
Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay
Vampire: The Masquerade
Vampire: The Masquerade
Vampire: The Masquerade
Werewolf the Apocalypse
Runequest
Champions
N/A



Attention All GM's

The Committee would like to request that that any GM who is unable to attend Club makes sure that the Games Coordinator is informed as soon as possible so that the Games Coordinator can contact the players and make any other arrangements necessary.

Cancelled

The Krymsworld LRP (Caveat Abutor) planned for December has been cancelled. Anyone who has paid a deposit should contact the Refs.

A big

THANK YOU

is due to Liz for taking over a game at very short notice last session



The Keeper of the Black Library has acquired the following grimoires for your perusal. To borrow one of these tomes, contact the current Keeper, Steve₄.

Matrix

(Shadowrun 3rd Ed advanced rules for deckers)

D&D 3rd Edition Players Handbook

D&D 3rd Edition Dungeon Masters Guide

D&D 3rd Edition DMs Screen

(Not so much a new edition as a new game)

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Memoirs of a Mad Man Masquerading as a (Games) Master

Colin Proud

Well, who can we rant at this month? I know, halflings, those cute and cuddly small folk who Tolkien suggests as a whole are lazy, food friendly and very unlikely to be seen outside their small little burrows unless it is to restock on emergency provisions.

Whilst it can be challenging to play a reluctant hero who only wants home comforts ('Go down that dungeon, are you serious? Have you any idea how long it will take to clean my feet!) it does tire as a concept very quickly. Thank goodness role playing systems as a whole do not promote this image, of course they enjoy food and good living, are friendly and loved by all races they also make some very good heroes.

My first halfling character started in a campaign where there were only two of us, Erwin Roundfoot (Me) and a friend playing Chester Furfoot in the old D@D setting (re released in second edition as the Mystara campaign world). Both fighters set out from the Five shires exploring and fighting creatures as we went, typically earning a living as caravan guards. With this mainly travelling lifestyle we went into the Grand Duchy of Karamaikos where we met a mage and due to a mishap were transported to the Thyatin Prison isle, where there was no escape. Completely equipment less we overcame a Giant crab that guarded the beaches, hollowed it out and used the shell as a small boat to escape to the Empire of Thyatis mainland. Our

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journeys as we re-equipped saw us head into the deserts of Ylarum, over to the newly discovered Isle of Dawn and lastly to the other great power, the Empire of Alphatia to explore its lands. Alphatia being ruled by wizards we were treated as second class citizens at best, slaves at worst. On our travels we met up with the mage who started it all and in a massive fight underground I rolled a never to be equalled again double critical with thrown daggers at the escaping mage.

Eventually we travelled deep down into the underground and through the world shield to enter the hollow world where we were in the land of the Aztecs, who were only a foot higher than us, having reached the maximum level achievable as a halfling (8th I think it was) we were beginning to enter the fabled attack ranks (A-M). The campaign left off shortly after that for other things Two halfling warriors, one dwarven warrior (Dougal) and an elven mage (who was sacrificed by the Aztecs even as we were fighting our way up the pyramid to rescue her. Long live the capable magic she could cast, magic missiles and web).

Not bad for a first time Halfling from what used to be a primarily Dwarves only person, they almost stood up higher on the pedestal. Since then there have been many memorable halflings, Rolo Roundtree Halfling thief, Lord Samuel Furfoot (Sam the Man!) So stand up and take a bow if your vertically challenged. Every one should play a halfling, at least once.

Remember, think small for they have the largest hearts and;

DON'T CALL ME SHORTY!!

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Vampire 3rd Edition

The third Edition rules for Vampire: The Masquerade aren't so much an updated set of rules so much as they are a repackaging of the core material. And about time it was done too. The World of Darkness setting has been growing and adding background details for over a decade now and as a result it was becoming hard to remember where to find a particular ruling or creature grouping.

The Reorganisation

As anyone who played under the second edition rules knows, the core material needed for playing had become scattered over half a dozen books, if you didn't know precisely where to look in order to find something then it could be a long search to locate it. However this problem has now been rectified. The new edition places the information needed to play a member of each of the thirteen clans in one place.

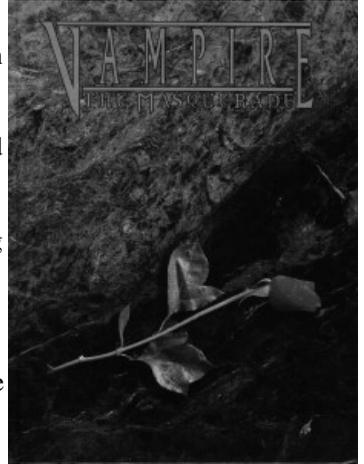
The book is roughly divided into two parts, a player's bit and a Storyteller's bit. But as each chapter covers a set topic there are generally no clear divisions between the two, apart from in one or two places. The majority of the material can be used by anyone.

The player's part of the book covers the Masquerade, vampiric society in general, the clans and character creation. This section also covers the first five levels of the different Disciplines used by the clans. The higher levels, those normally out of player character reach, are covered elsewhere (not in this book). The Storytellers section covers the rule systems used and how to construct a story. An appendix gives notes on the different belief systems employed by the more inhuman clans, and covers the merits and flaws optional rules.

The book only lightly touches on the two main political groupings of vampiric society – the Camerilla and the Sabbat, but separate books are available that cover each of these in more detail.

The Rules

There is very little change to be found in the rule mechanics them-



selves. Some abilities have been altered slightly or amalgamated, for example the performance skill replaces acting, singing and dancing skills, with these becoming specialities of the skill. Also each ability now has a brief story example of it's use to go with it. However most of the changes are small enough that you need to have an encyclopaedic memory to notice them.

The most noticeable set of changes is in the combat system. The first is in initiative. Under second edition rules this was decided by rolling a number of dice equal to your combined Wits & Alertness scores, counting the number of 4+'s rolled and subtracting any 1's. Now it is a roll of a single d10 added to your total Dexterity and Wits scores. Actions are declared from the lowest score up but are taken in descending order of scores. So the person with the highest score has a chance to listen to what other people are doing and plan their action according to what others do.

As is becoming standard across the range of Storyteller system games combat damage has been modified. Under the second edition rules there were two types of damage that could be taken, "lethal" and "aggravated". Lethal damage covered everything from fists to gunshot wounds while aggravated damage had a supernatural component to it that made it harder to heal and only by supernatural creatures. The change that has been put into place is to split lethal damage into two parts – bashing and lethal. Bashing damage covers fists and similar attacks and normal humans can attempt to soak it on their Stamina score to negate it while vampires take a reduced amount of damage from this type of attack. Lethal damage covers bullets, swords and other weapons and is unsoakable by normal humans but vampires can attempt to soak it.

The Setting

The biggest change in the new edition is in the setting itself. In all of their games White Wolf have given hints of a nightmare future where the protagonists have lost the fight. These are known by different names (in Vampire it's Gehenna) but are all similar in tone. Here the first steps are taken towards kick-starting the Storyteller line by indicating that Gehenna is approaching fast. As a result the tone of the background material is a lot darker. A lot of things have happened in the time gap between the release of the second and third editions and are reflected here.

The most obvious indicator of this is the list of "Signs of the End Times" from the Book of Nod (the vampiric equivalent of the Bible). But several other things are scattered throughout the book that indicates to players familiar with the setting how things have change. Examples are: the breaking of the Tremere blood curse upon them by the Assamites, the mysterious disappearance of every single Tremere antitribu on the same night, the defection of the Gangrel from the Camerilla, the change in leadership of the Inquisition. The final nights are at hand, and the world has become a more dangerous place.

- Steve Proud



The Truth About Elves (Part II)

Naked, unarmed, and pretty thoroughly humiliated by the past night's actions by the party, I wasn't entirely sure what to do. I was easy prey for the orcs stalking these woods, and my mind had been pretty thoroughly blasted by Sarra's death and the violent drama I'd just escaped. So it was that, when the glowing, shimmering form of a tall elven male appeared before me, bearing a familiar suit of mail and holding a familiar weapon, I evinced very little surprise.

"Raven, is it?" I asked. "I'm sorry, but I seem to have made a bit of a hash of things."

"Fear not, mortal," boomed the ghost, melodramatically. "Your destiny is set, and your path unchangeable. You shall take up this weapon, and wear this mail, and you shall be the avenger."

I sank to my knees, wearily.

"You," I said, "have got to be kidding, you pretentious, point-eared git."

I'd never seen a ghost do a double-take before (actually, I'd seen damned few ghosts, period, but that's as may be), but the spectre seemed to stop short and stare at me in perplexity.

"You're not supposed to say that," he said, plaintively.

"Oh, sorrrrry, elf-boy, I am so far beyond sticking to your stupid script it isn't even funny." I glared at him. "So I rogered your girlfriend and now she's dead, and I'm supposed to take up the Sword of Justice and avenge her, huh? Well find yourself another chump, buddy..."

As you can see, I was way too tired and disgusted to be especially fearful.

Raven didn't take it well.

"You ignore the call to vengeance, mortal?" he demanded. "Our shades shall haunt you forever, dogging your

every step, invading your dreams, filling your every waking hour with --"

"Oh, I'm shakin'," I said. "I so scared of the scary elf-ghost. Don't you think we have exorcists back home, numb-skull? The Lethandans would love to banish you to some nether dimension. So lay off, will you?"

Raven frowned.

"Are you saying you won't avenge me or Sarra?"

"You win a cookie," I said. "I just want to go home, get drunk and get laid, in that order. Get lost!."

He took a new tack. "What if I ask you nicely?"

"No dice," I said, but I think my expression gave me away.

Raven's ghost dropped the sword and mail, and fell to his knees, hands held out beseechingly. "Please?"

I glared. "No."

He spread his arms out, as if he was about to be nailed to a wall by a fanatical Kyborist witch-hunter. "Pleeeeeeease?"

"NO!" This was getting bloody annoying.

"PLEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEASE?????"

"Gods damn it!" I roared. "I'll avenge you, you pasty-faced git! Just shut up!"

Raven returned to his former, calm state. "Take up sword and mail," he intoned, all seriousness once more. "Avenge me. Avenger my land. Avenger my people."

"Dammit, I asked you to shut up!"

Not wanting to press his luck, Raven vanished, leaving me with both mail, which I donned, along with the arming coat which he had thoughtfully provided, and sword, which I buckled on. Okay, okay, I was the @#%&*!# avenger of everything that was right and good.

Now what?

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For those of you who like fairy tales, Mr Regan has submitted the next part of what

Jack Daniels & the Three...

It was a nasty night. Gale force winds were shoving a bank of water heavy clouds before them and rain lashed with the ferocity of hailstones. Apart from one or two buses, nothing moved in the town. Everyone was indoors trying to stay warm on this winter's night, even the usual number of stray dogs had ceased their eternal wanderings in an attempt to find shelter.

About fifteen miles away a lone machine sped along the road and seemingly oblivious to the weather the motorcycle was clocking near to ninety. Its exhaust note rose in challenge to the elements around it as if seeking to intimidate its way through the conditions. Its rider appeared to be tall, almost to tall for his mount, and wearing some heavy duty leathers, they would certainly keep the weather out but looked as if they had seen much better days. Clad all in black the rider didn't seem bothered by the weather and almost seemed to be ignoring it, his bike seemed to move in anticipation of each gust; moving very little as the winds assaulted it.

As the storm neared intensity a figure moved out of the shadows near the edge of town. The figure was certainly over six foot tall but seemed to blend into the

darkness as he moved. Another figure followed, slightly shorter than the first but with more apparent grace. As the second moved away a third appeared very similar in size to the second. The third figure moved stealthily away, stopping to cock an ear into the wind as if hearing something above the wind, then shaking its head it stepped after the others, disappearing into the darkness once more.

The rider moved through the town looking for a place to park his bike, he looked at ease with his surroundings, riding with an ease that suggested he knew the place well. The rider nodded to himself and pulled his machine to a halt outside a small pub and as he parked his bike he glanced at the pub and the corner of his eyes crinkled as if he was smiling inside the helmet. His gaze carried across to the sign outside the building, a simple sign with three barrels on it, proclaiming the pub is called The Tuns.

Across the other side of the small town centre three shadowy figures move towards a night-club, a sign outside proclaims it as ThePark, the figures glance at each other and nod. As they step towards the club they walk into the light and each figure is clearly defined, The tallest figure stands inches over six foot, his figure is

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broad hinting at strength but something in his step exudes confidence and a possibility of speed. The second figure steps out of the gloom, a tall lithe figure, she moves with all the grace of a stalking panther and her body language hints at a similar finale to this walk. The third figure appears to be about the same size as the second, and as he walks towards the club, his step measured and purposeful, not a graceful walk but somehow unstoppable. As the three walk into the entrance for the club, a bouncer steps forward, tall, broad, looking immovable as he says "Sorry, no jeans allowed!"

The last of the three to enter walks up to the bouncer and without warning drives his knee into the bouncer's nuts. As the bouncer starts to drop the knee again rises smashing his nose and rendering him unconscious. It has happened so fast that no-one has had a chance to register what is happening. The female grabs hold of the bouncer, stuffs him through the cloak-room hatch, then turns to address the other two. "Come on then. Men! Always keep you waiting!" The last is said with a tight grin, obviously a joke between them.

Three figures enter the club, no one has noticed the absence of a bouncer or that two of the new entries are wearing jeans. The tall figure forces his way to the bar, almost absentmindedly pushing people out of his way. As a barmaid walks past, obviously intent on another task, a voice rumbles "two double Jack and cokes and

a black Russian, please." The barmaid starts pouring the drinks without thinking and passes them over to a tall man with a long ponytail of brown hair hanging over one shoulder. He appeared to be wearing a black leather bike jacket, not the usual sort she considered after putting the drinks on the bar, "That's nine ninety, please" she said. The man looked around and spotting a bouncer. "He'll pay," he says pointing to the bouncer as he picked up the glasses and walked off.

The drinks are passed around. "Cheaz, Mark" says the woman, a hint of an accent in her voice. "No worries, they are on the house" comes the reply as Mark smiles to himself "admittedly the house doesn't know yet, but they'll find out soon".

"Not again," says the third figure over the strains of Shania Twain, "why the hell did we come in here anyway?"

"Don't worry, Dave" replies the woman as an evil glint appeared in her eyes, "it'll be a laugh."

Mark smiled, as if looking forward to what was to come.

"I'm not worried Vicky, but it takes ages to get the bits out of my hair!" Dave complained.

"That's 'cos you are a shortarse, and you get splattered more easily" Mark said grinning.

Dave smiled in return and solemnly raised his middle finger in salute.

On the other side of town a figure walked

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through the door of The Tuns, pulling his helmet off as he moved.

“Usual?” came the shout from behind the bar.

“Yeah, please” came the reply, “I’d kill for a coffee as well, if you wouldn’t mind?”

“On the hard stuff again?” joked the barman as he set down a shot glass and pulled a mug off the glasses shelf which bore the statement ‘Emergency Caffeine, Please add more’.

The barman moved away to make a brew as the figure seated himself and eyed the short in front of him briefly before downing it in a single movement. A brief sigh of satisfaction followed and he sat staring at the empty glass, lost somewhere in thought.

“Want another?” the barman broke him out of his reverie.

“Silly question” came the reply, “and stick us a double in that coffee.” Another glass arrived followed moments later by a mug of steaming black coffee,

“Nice night,” the barman stated in a slightly sarcastic tone.

“Bollocks!” came the reply, “although its only nasty when you crank up to over a ton, then it gets a little hairy!”

The barman smiled; anyone riding on a night like this had to be crazy and going over a ton was either complete loony or genius, and he considered Jack to be a combination of the two. As he thought this, he let his eyes roam over his friend, long black hair pulled back into a pony-

tail, grey eyes, a couple of days worth of stubble. Not a bad looking face he considered, shame about the scar that ran from just over his left eye down to his jawline, That scar had ruined Jacks face, giving it an almost demonic cast, but he knew well that if you gave Jack a chance and ignored his looks he was a genuine mate.

As Jack warmed, he took off his long leather coat and dumped it on the floor. Underneath was what appeared to be a cut off leather bike jacket was a heavy black shirt. With the long coat on Jack looked huge but once it was removed Jack wasn’t broad at all, just tall with a reasonable width to his shoulders. One of the other regulars had once stated that “there was more meat on a butchers pencil then on Jack”.

In the Park a bouncer is talking to a barmaid and shaking his head, “I don’t know him, never seen him before.”

“Well, he said that you’d pay”

“Did he really? Well, I’d better go and have a little chat with him then,” the bouncer replied in a cocky tone of voice, conveying a message of no problem.

Vicky nudged Mark in the ribs and nodded in the direction of the bouncer heading in their direction. Mark glanced once and smiled. There was no warmth in that smile, just an eagerness.

The bouncer walked up to Mark. Ignoring the other two he said, “What the #@\$* are you up to? Who do you think you are?”

Mark grinned again, “Thanks for the

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drinks," he said downing what was in his glass. He turned to put his glass on a table and suddenly the bouncer made a grab for his shoulder.

"Don't turn your back on me!" the bouncer snarled.

As Mark turned back he slammed his right hand into the bouncer's gut, his fingers extended like steel rods punching through the bouncer's shirt and stomach muscles. The bouncer's mouth opened in silent agony; the blow had winded him and he couldn't make a noise but both of his hands gripped Mark's wrist trying to stop him. With a heave of his shoulders Mark forced his arm inwards and upwards, lifting the bouncer off the floor while his hand ripped through internal organs. The diaphragm followed by gripping the bouncer's heart and ripping it back out of the bouncer's jerking body. He held the heart in front of the bouncer, then grinned and took a huge bite out of the still beating heart. As the bouncer slid to the floor, blood seeping from every orifice, Mark grinned at the other two. Gore and blood staining his clothing and his face was smeared in blood. He tossed the remains of the heart at a group near the door and started to move towards the dancefloor. Vicky smiled and moved towards stairs leading up to a balcony and Dave moved to cover the door.

Jack glanced up as a police siren rent the night with a scream. "Typical," he thought, every time something decent comes on the jukebox something spoils it.

He nodded to the barman and wandered off into the other side of the pub. As he passed the jukebox he stopped briefly, rested his hand on top of the machine and appeared to be checking the songs listed on it. Momentarily his eyes widened slightly and he nodded fractionally before moving on towards the pool table.

A police van screeched to a halt in front of the Park and two policemen got out. They noticed there was none of the usual muffled music coming out of the pub. Unconcerned, they walked up towards the front doors which suddenly burst open as a headless body came flying out. The body missed both of the coppers as they ducked into cover behind a collection of wheelie bins close by. One copper was overcome as he looked at the body, it looked like it had belonged to a young girl out for the night, probably in her late teens and dressed in very little for such a cold night. As his eyes came to rest on where the head had been, with long tendrils of flesh mingled with bits of bone and sinew above the breastbone, he realised the head had been ripped off. His partner began to vomit helplessly as he, a slightly more experienced man, knew he needed support and immediately started shouting into his radio.

Back in the Tuns Jack was happily playing pool. It appeared that he was one of the luckiest players alive, long plants, doubles and triples all missing their apparent targets only to drop into another

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pocket. As people were watching this display, Jack had the good grace to look embarrassed about some the shots he was pulling off, which just proved to those who regularly played against him that his acting was getting better. Jack had always played like this and constantly seemed to be confused about just how the shots were going in. He had been known to pot the most difficult shots possible and then miss a simple straight shot. He was good to watch though. Suddenly as the music faded towards the end of the song the night came alive with the sound of sirens. Police and ambulance as far as people could gather but there was a lot of them. Jack racked for the next game but looked a little distracted. As his opponent broke off Jack said, "Hold the fort, I'll be back in a mo," and headed towards the toilets.

In the Park only three figures moved. Bodies and parts of bodies lay everywhere, blood ran down walls and slowly congealed in puddles on the dance floor. Even the air in the place seemed to have a faint red tinge to it and the smell of blood and excrement filled the air. Vicky looked at Dave and said "Its Time." Dave's answering grin was vicious. He whistled shrilly and as Mark looked over he lifted his arm and tapped his watch. Mark nodded, all three reached for mobile phones and as one, dialled out. A few moments later a muffled explosion was heard, three grins appeared and Dave said "OK time to

roll." They headed towards the entrance and the massive amount of waiting armed police.

In the toilets Jack stepped into a cubicle and stared into the water contained in the bowl. After a few moments a faint picture began to form. As it became more solid Jack could make out the front of the Park, a night-club only a short distance away surrounded by police cars and officers; some appeared to be in riot gear and while others were from the Armed Response Unit. "What is going on?" he asked himself. "Something I may be able to help with? ... Well, why not." Slowly he straightened up from looking into the bowl and raised his left hand. A faint blue nimbus flickered briefly and a short sword appeared in his hand. When he repeated the process with his right hand, a long slightly curved blade appeared. Jack immediately fastened them onto his belt and walked out. Ignoring the pool room he stooped to pick up his long leather coat, settled it onto his shoulders and said to the barman "Shaun, a situation has come up, I'll be back soon. Could you call Kate and tell her they are needed in Whitehaven, thanks." Without waiting for a reply he walked out of the pub. Shaun sighed and reached for the 'phone.

STAY TUNED FOR THE NEXT THRILLING EPISODE OF JACK DANIELS AND THE THREE....(ERM, WHAT ARE THEY AGAIN?)

A Chance Encounter?

OK, I'll admit it. I was lost. I had left the town of Lakeside several days earlier and headed out into the so-called Forest of Virtue. Now I've heard it said that the forest got it's name because somewhere inside it is a group of paladins that got turned into trees by a wizard. I don't know if that's true or not but none of the trees I saw had anything in common with paladins that I could see, except for being made of wood.

You may be asking why I didn't stick to the road. Well the answer is because I didn't have much choice. I left town in somewhat of a hurry, a misunderstanding with a local merchant of some note that you don't need to know about here. But the outcome meant that I had to leave town quickly for a few days while he calmed down. Rather than go where he could send out runners to alert people to my destination I chose to strike out cross-country and hide out in the woods for a few days.

I had been camped out for a couple of days when fate decided to meddle in my affairs again. It had finally stopped snowing, for the first time since I had entered the woods, and I was starting to run short on supplies and thinking about relocating back to town. So I had packed my kit and was just sitting, trying to figure out which way to go, and singing quietly to myself while I enjoyed the sunshine when three hulking fur-covered masses walked out of the trees towards me.

I stopped singing when I saw them and quietly prepared a spell just in case, though I didn't fancy my chances if they were hostile. They advanced towards me as a group and then stopped a few feet away.

My first thought was that the merchant had hired hunters, and they had caught up with me. Especially when the lead one said that they had been looking for me. Then he took down his hood and one look at the revealed face dissuaded me of that notion.

He introduced himself as Yoshi, a humble servant (though he never said of what). Though he didn't look anything like any servant I had ever seen before. He was the strangest looking man I can remember setting eyes on. I think he was human but he had skin the colour of a jaundice victim and his eyes were such a deep brown that they were almost black and were peering at me from between slanted lids. His head was completely shaven, though stubble was starting to show, except for a ponytail of jet-black hair that arose out of the top of his head and went down to somewhere underneath his fur cloak.

He introduced the others as his comrades - Thomli, a dwarf, and Kriol, the giant barbarian. The pair of them made quite a sight, one barely reaching the waist of the other. Both of them appeared to be wearing armour, judging by the numerous metallic clinking sounds that they made when they moved. When I enquired further about Yoshi's

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claim he started going on about holy missions and chosen of the Gods. I thought (and still think) that he was one of those holy men who see the world through blinkered eyes, seeing only what they want and misinterpreting other things to fit their vision.

Throughout this entire speech, the giant barbarian had been looking me up and down like he couldn't decide what to do about me. But he seemed to be following this Yoshi's lead so I just ignored him. He looked like the typical barbarian you hear tavern tales about. Roughly seven feet tall, dark hair and eyes, every part of his body over-endowed with muscle, dressed in furs and carrying a sword strapped to his back so large that only he could wield it. His Dwarven companion was another tavern tale archetype, four foot tall and half as round. He was dressed in well-used armour, under his winter furs, but carried a wicked looking mace rather than the usual axe.

When Yoshi got me to admit that I was a minstrel he almost jumped for joy. He began calling me "The Teller of Tales" and insisted that I was one of his God-chosen companions on this quest, though he seemed very hazy about what this so-called quest was for when asked, giving me a long and rambling quote from some holy book as his justification.

Once he found out there was a town a few days travel away he seemed determined to be there before nightfall. I was going to ask how he planned to

travel so far when he unrolled a large carpet from the side of his backpack, sat on it and told it to rise. To my amazement it did, hovering about three feet off the ground. The others scrambled aboard it and pulled me up to sit next to the barbarian. While I was nervous about travelling on such a thing it was also offering me a way back to town so I thought it worth the risk.

The carpet had dipped about a foot once everyone got aboard. So I was startled when the barbarian muttered something about getting rid of some excess weight and opened his pack to throw over a dozen curved swords back down onto the snow. How many weapons was he carrying? And why was he carrying so many?

I didn't get a chance to ask as I felt a sudden pain in my leg and looked down to see a spear was embedded in my right thigh. As I pulled it free I saw about a dozen spear armed apemen were standing at the edge of the clearing and taking aim at us. Rather than become a pincushion I rolled off the carpet and fell several feet into the snow, not too far from the barbarian's sword collection.

A second spear grazed my arm as I scrambled to my feet to see the apeman that had thrown the spear charging towards me. I set the spear to receive his charge but he managed to swerve enough at the last second to avoid it. However this became irrelevant when the Dwarf's chanting behind me reached a crescendo and a small ball of flame

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arced over my head and exploded between me and him, sending us both flying. I was luckier than him. He was closer to the explosion than I was and it set his fur alight. Before I could take advantage of this I felt something enter my side and just managed to look down and see the spear that had pierced me before everything went black.

When I came to there were sounds of fighting still going on around me so I stayed where I was and palmed some darts into my hands. A couple of surreptitious glances showed me that the adventurers had all abandoned the carpet and were exchanging blows with the creatures. A sword-wielding stranger had also appeared from out of nowhere and had joined in the fight against the ape-men, although he appeared to be making a near disaster of his part in the melee.

It didn't take long for the adventurers to dispose of the creatures. Someone had removed the spear from my side while I was unconscious and healed the wound. I don't know who it was but I suspect either Yoshi or the Dwarf, though neither of them has said anything about it. When the fight was over I decided it was safe to let them know I was alive and stood up.

After that encounter they were in a mood to get out of there quick, before anything else happened. So they helped me onto the carpet and set off taking the stranger with them as well. It was a distinctly odd feeling, flying above the treetops on a carpet, but one that I

wouldn't mind repeating some day when I've some leisure. Following my directions we flew in the direction of Lakeside and landed about five miles outside the town as dusk fell. After we landed Yoshi gave me a salve for my leg wound, which worked wonders, and kept trying to persuade me to join them on their quest all the way back to town.

The barbarian and the dwarf chose to walk on either side of the stranger, like a pair of guards, all the way to town. I pity the man. Whatever he was doing out there he got pulled along in the confusion and now those two were watching him like hawks. He couldn't be having an easy time of it.

So I was heading back into Lakeside. A couple of days earlier than I had planned and in the company of the oddest looking bunch of adventurers I'd seen. I don't know where they came from, the explanation that Yoshi gave me wasn't particularly enlightening, something about being transported from the Hall of the Gods (Yeah right!) to where ever they needed to be next. He also seems to be trying to recruit me for his "God given" task. He keeps saying that they were sent to find me. The fact that they are apparently heading to where I am planning to go in the spring could be a co-incidence. I haven't mentioned my travel plans to them yet but I could do with the extra back up when I go. I think I'll see if I can find out why they're heading there and if it'll be worth getting them to help me out.

A chance encounter? Maybe not.

ACT 3 - A PROLOGUE

Steve Proud

With a start the thing snapped fully awake. Ignoring the hunger gnawing at it's breast it took a few seconds to spread it's awareness out through the caverns surrounding it. Nothing new registered. It was alone down here apart from the guardian. A few mental commands to the "vassals" it had gathered while waking caused them to scurry forward and one by one offer themselves to it.

With it's appetite sated by the weak blood for the moment, it lay back in the sculpted coffin and took a few minutes to sort through in it's mind what had caused this unscheduled occurrence. Something, some half-remembered dream, stirred in it's recollections. A battle between shifting figures - human one moment, something else the next. A battle of some import, tearing through the worlds as though they were paper. Ending with a keening call that had echoed through it's mind. The sheer hatred of that cry seemed to be what had set it's awaken-

ing in motion, tripping a fail safe in it's mind.

Yet how long had it been since it was last awake? To answer the question it sent it's mind out to roam through the city above it. Skimming the thoughts of the mortal herd it picked up the date. 1999 by the Christian calendar, a matter of mere decades. Could things be starting already? It put that question on one side for later examination and continued it's mental reconnaissance. Quartering the city it passed by the minds of several of it's kind and dismissed them all. Weaklings to a man. These fools didn't know how far into the shadows their strings went, let alone who the puppeteers were. It paused at half a dozen minds, recognising potential pawns and evaluating them for future use, and one or two surprised it by their presence. Kindred that had come to it's attention for one reason or another during it's last period of wakefulness.

Then it found the first of the blank

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spots. Places warded against the type of probing that it was using. The first couple it recognised as those of Willworkers, groupings that it had fought against in the past in other places. The next reeked with a mental odour of foulness and twisted things even to its inhuman perception. This was passed over as well. But the fourth. "Usurpers!" It wanted to cry and it was only with a supreme effort of will that it held itself back from levelling all its strength at the place. Even so the earth around it shook and it had to pull back in the claws that had automatically extruded at the thought. Later it promised itself. Once it had regained its full power.

Once the surge of hatred had receded it resumed the mental journey around the city, tracing the ebb and flow of the nightlife. Satisfied that nothing had detected its presence, it began to reach out to the mind of one of its chosen pawns when it heard a voice mentally trying to contact it. Acknowledging the call, and intrigued that it had not detected the other, it made contact and waited.

"Greetings, Arakan" the voice began "Welcome back from the grave. I

felt someone trigger the alarm on my wards and realised it had to be you. You're just in time as well. I've been looking for you for a long time now. You owe me a life and I mean to collect." A life? The fiend mused. Which one of the hundreds of Kindred it had harvested for its projects did this whelp mean? It listened amused as the other vampire blustered and then reached out and casually severed the contact. Did the whelp really think he was interested in what it had to say? It had been after one thing only, his location, and now he had it the Tremere and all his kind would suffer for his presumption.

Stepping into the wall the fiend flowed through it and then upwards. It was time for the next move, time to re-enter the long game. Outside the chantry the Tremere smiled. The creature was awake now, the amulet no longer protected it. Now he could finally move against it. Time to see if Argyle had located that sword. He moved off, back into his sanctuary, unaware of the being standing watching him. Once he was gone it stepped out of the shadows and vanished. The gambit was now in place; the next few moves would be crucial.

WHAT'S YOUR GAME?

Vampire

*"The Prince is dead.
Long Live the
Prince"*

Any bets on how long
with this lot in town?

GM: Steve P

Trevor, Colin, Kate,
Penny, Gary

Ark

"A little boring investi-
gation to start. But at
least it's a nice place
for a holdiy...
..honestly..."

GM: Steve H

Liz, John,
Andrew, Scoot

BattleTech

Attention all Mech-
Warriors! Combat
drop onto Marduk
commencing in 5...
4... 3... 2...

GM: Geoff

Chris, Steve T,
Reggs, Paul C

Cyberpunk

"You can have
everything you want,
but I'm not betting
you'll make it"

GM: Newton

Fedge, Reg,
Paul L, Barry

- Newton

If there's a game you want to see run, or even run,... see the FRP Games Coordinator (Steve Proud) and sign up. If you want to run, but are unsure of the in's and out's of running a game, there are GMs who can assist you in planning and running your campaign. See Steve for details, or to sign up to help for a particular system if you want to help out.

**Next Session begins:
2nd October 2000**