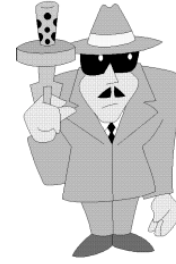


Uncle Enzo's
CosaNostra Pizza
Brett Slocum, proprietor
3rd Delivery



Appetizer

Due to various spikes on the time commitment waveform, I could only get this small issue out. Expect more *GURPS Tékumel* material next time.

Alternate Earth

Oz II

Buddy Ebsen was the original actor playing the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*. He became severely ill from the silver makeup used in the production and was replaced by Jack Haley. In the world of Oz II, Buddy Ebsen never got sick, and played in the released version. Because of this, Buddy's movie career took off, instead of him going into TV (*Beverly Hillbillies*, and *Barnaby Jones*). He played roles in several westerns, including Doc Holiday in *Gunfight at the OK Corral*. Few other changes of any impact occurred on this alternate. This world might be most useful for that first dimensional jump to a close parallel, where the players think that nothing is different.

Randomness

Well, with all the random tables in the last issue, I decided to use them all in generating a plotline. Here it is:

My apartment was broken into by a distant family member (second cousin once removed) who stole all my underwear. They also unscrewed all the lightbulbs, leaving them in a pile in the middle of the living room. While rummaging through my drawers, a clock fell off the dresser, pinpointing the time of the crime. While within my abode, they ate a ham, mayo, mustard and lettuce on raisin bread sandwich with a side of rice and cole slaw from the fridge. The person left the apartment complex on a violent beast with an incurable disease that left a huge pile of obnoxious smelling dung in the parking lot. They returned to their lair which consists of a bomb shelter housed in an abandoned, hermetically sealed military base guarded by barracuda and inhabited by filthy multitudes and a single can opener.

Next issue, I'll make my own Challenge Randomizer based on David Carter's Random Generator Generator.

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Brett Slocum
816 Old Settlers Trail, #3
Hopkins MN 55343
(612) 945-0163 (home)
slocum@io.com
<http://www.io.com/~slocum>

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Uncle Enzo and CosaNostra Pizza appear in the novel *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson.

This issue was written using Word for Windows 95 (7.0) from Office 95. Images were scanned using an HP ScanJet 4P, PaintShopPro, Corel Photo-Paint, and Visioneer Paperport software.

Past issues can be found at my Web site - <http://www.io.com/~slocum/apa.html>

Empire of the Petal Throne

A couple characters to get you started.

Kálti hiHlutu'ún 100 points

Female guard at the Temple of Kárákan in Jakállá, the City Half as Old as the World.
Age: 18, 5'8", 150 lbs.
Clan: Red Mountain, Low Lineage

ST: 12
DX: 14
IQ: 10
HT: 11

Advantages: Eidetic Memory/1, Alertness/+1, Literacy, Combat Reflexes.

Disadvantages: Fanatic: Vimúhla worshipper, Bad Temper, Impulsive, Secret: Agent for temple of Vimúhla.

Quirks: Sexually aggressive, Screams in battle and in bed, Longs to travel to foreign lands, Hates the ocean, Adores flowers.

Skills: Broadsword/16, Fast Draw (Broadsword)/13, Shortsword/14, Knife/13, Knife Throwing/14, Brawling/15, Shield/14, Tsolyáni language/10, Savoir Faire/12, Dancing/12, Sex Appeal/12, Theology (Kárákan)/8, Theology (Vimúhla)/9, Shadowing/11, Stealth/14, Sleight of Hand/13, Holdout/11, Cipher (Vimúhla)/10, Pickpocket/12, Lockpicking/10.

Equipment: Broadsword, Khá (shortsword spike, see Pyramid #11), large knife, medium shield, small pouch with 71 káitars, small backpack with the following: personal basics, toilet articles, tinderbox (flint, steel, tinder), rope (10 yds.), grapnel, mallet, 5 Chlén spikes, bedmat, rations (2 days).

History: Kálti has always wanted to be a warrior. Nothing interested her as child more than the tales of the ancient warriors of legend. The mythology of Vimúhla. Lord of Flame and Destruction was also filled with great battles and warriors, and Kálti's devotion burned hot as well. As a teen, her teachers recognized the fire in her eyes and her unique memory talent as important assets, and began training her for a special duty to the temple.

She is now acting as a low-level agent in the Temple of Kárákan. Though Kárákan is one of the Stability Gods and Vimúhla one of the Change Gods, they are both military-oriented deities and have a lot in common, both theologically and politically. Many situations have seen these two temples on the same side of an issue, as is the case with the war with Yán Kór. These alliances aside, though, they still keep a close eye on each other, and that's where Kálti fits in.

She has held her present position as temple guard for a year. She reports to another agent within the Kárákan temple, and is also sent on various minor errands occasionally. She was recently sent by the temple of Kárákan as a supplemental warrior on an expedition into the Underworld for which the Temple of Thúmis needed some extra muscle.

Tensor 100 points

Scholar-priest of Thúmis in Jakállá.
Age: 23, 5'7", 135 lbs.
Clan: none.

ST: 9
DX: 10
IQ: 14
HT: 12

Advantages: Magery/3, Animal Empathy, Clerical Investment (Second Circle)/1, Literacy, Language/+3.

Disadvantages: Clanless (-15 points), Delusion: Heir to the Throne (-10 points), Accident Prone (-10 points), Sense of Duty: Companions, Duty to Temple of Thúmis (-5 points).

Quirks: Whistles unconsciously, Apologizes for everything, Tends toward circumlocution, Repeats things to himself under his breath in various languages, Loves beer.

Skills: Calligraphy/8, Sculpting/8, Writing/12, Running/10, Brawling/9, Staff/7, Judo/7, Law/11, Archaeology/11, Economics/11, History (Llyáni)/11, Linguistics/13, Literature/13, Research/12, Theology (Thúmis)/11.

Languages: Tsolyáni/18, Livyáni/16, Mu'ugalavyáni/16, Salarvyáni/16, Ancient N'lüssa/16, Bednálljan Salarvyáni/16, Classic Tsolyáni/16, Classic Mu'ugalavyáni/16, Engsvanyáli/16, Llyáni/16.

Spells (all at 15): Lend HT, Lend ST, Recover ST, Minor Healing, Major Healing, Simple Illusion, Complex Illusion, Perfect Illusion, Illusion Shell, Detect Magic, Aura, Sound, Voices.

Equipment: Quarterstaff, small knife, middle-class robes, sandals, priestly vestments (\$400), small backpack containing: personal basics, toilet articles, blanket, boots, small water bottle, tinderbox (flint, steel, tinder), 2 candles, rations (2 days), note paper.

History: Tensor has been raised almost from birth by the temple of Thúmis. His parents and clan are unknown. Tensor has concentrated more on his language talent and less on his magical ability. His persistent claims of being an Imperial heir didn't go over well among the other orphaned charges of the temple, nor among his teachers and caregivers. Many times he has borne the bruises of beatings from his peers and scoldings from his elders. By being more careful about what he says, Tensor has risen to Second Circle in the Temple hierarchy. He has recently been sent into the Underworld on an expedition led by his temple. His knowledge of languages will be extremely valuable in the ancient, buried ruins of civilizations past.

Character Corner

Kybor Stoutheart

Dwarven miner cum freedom fighter, 150 pts.

ST: 16/18
DX: 13
IQ: 13
HT: 12

Advantages: Extra Fatigue/+2, DR 1, Extended Lifespan, Extra Encumbrance, Hard to Kill/+1, Longevity, Combat Reflexes, Semi-Literate.

Disadvantages: Greed, Miserliness, Reduced Move/-1, Sense of Duty: all Dwarves, Obsession: free Dwarven slaves, Overconfidence, Enemy: slave master and press gang.

Quirks: Suspicious of Elves and Goblins, Never Shaves Beard, Dislikes Orcs, Makes Elaborate Plans, Battle Cry: "Freedom Forever!", Braids His Beard, Mumbles and Twitches While Sleeping, Feels Naked Without a Weapon.

Skills: Axe/Mace/14, Axe Throwing/13, Shield/12, Brawling/14, Leadership/13, Tactics/12, Running/9, First Aid/13, Survival: mountain/13, Geology/10, Engineer: mining/12, Professional: mining/13, Prospecting/13, Merchant/13, Armoury (weapons)/14, Distilling/14, Masonry/15, Area Knowledge: Broken Lands/12, AK: Rankan Empire/12, Human language/12.

Possessions: none.

History: Kybor was prospecting in the Broken Lands when he was captured by a press gang and enslaved. He saw firsthand the plight of his fellow Dwarves in captivity. He and two other Dwarves managed to escape, only to return later to free their brethren. For three months, Kybor and his band evaded pursuit and freed a dozen enslaved Dwarves. On their last mission, Kybor was captured and thrown into prison, both for freeing the Dwarves and for escaping in the first place. He has been in prison for two months. The slave mines were more comfortable.

Dan Chalmers, Former pirate gone good
5' 10" 150 lbs. Black curly hair, brown skin, age: 21

ST: 11
DX: 14
IQ: 13
HT: 11

Advantages: Charisma/+2, Toughness, Absolute Direction.

Disadvantages: Enemy: Gang of pirates (10), Honesty, Laziness.

Quirks: Drinks wine, Mildly Curious, Softhearted, Boastful, Always telling stories.

Skills: Broadsword/15, Crossbow/15, Fast Draw (bolts)/14, Knife/13, Knife Throwing/15, Brawling/15, Tactics/12, Leadership/13, Carousing/11, Gambling/13, Streetwise/13, Seamanship/13, Boating/12, Swimming/14, Navigation/13, Fishing/12.

Possessions: Cheap broadsword (1d+2 cut), Large knife (1d-1 cut), Crossbow (1d+3), Quiver + 10 bolts, Leather Helm, Chainmail torso, leather arms/legs, leather gloves, shoes, \$50 cash.

History: Dan has loved the sea for as long as he can remember, so at 17 years of age, he signed on as a deck hand on a merchant vessel. Dan's judgment was not the best, though, and this ship was actually a privateer, marauding the sea lanes, smuggling arms and contraband, and other assorted mayhem. Being basically honest, Dan hated the work, and after a year, finally escaped from them and lost himself in the capitol city. Dan, fearing to go back to the wharf, hired himself out as a mercenary inland. Now, two years later, he feels confident enough to return to the port capitol.

Movie Reviews

(Maximum rating: *****)

Samurai Movies

Yojimbo

This is the Akira Kurosawa movie which was remade most recently as *Last Man Standing* (which I haven't seen), and previous as *A Fistful of Dollars* (which I have). It is a delightful film about a ronin samurai gets hired by each of two yakuza gangs fighting over a town. Toshiro Mifune plays the Nameless Samurai to perfection. It is beautifully photographed and contains much humor. I especially like the funky characters, such as the innkeeper. Violent, but not excessively bloody. It's sequel is *Sanjuro*. This is the quintessential Samurai flick. A must-see.

Hidden Fortress

This movie inspired George Lucas when writing *Star Wars*, in terms of characters and some plot elements. A couple of hard-luck peasants who've lost everything in a war come across what appears to be a lordless warrior, who leads them to a hidden fortress to look for gold. The warrior is actually a Samurai general protecting the princess of a clan nearly wiped out by its enemies. The peasants bicker with each other like C3PO and R2D2

throughout the movie, though also show friendship. The haughty princess certainly smacks of Leia. The comedy is great, and many memorable scenes are woven into this fine picture. Much more situation-oriented than violent. Another Kurosawa classic. Beware of very low contrast prints. * * * *

Lightning Swords of Death

(aka *Lone Wolf and Cub*, aka *Lupine Wolf*)

This film is based on the Lone Wolf and Cub manga comics from Japan (7,000 pages published to date). This is a very faithful rendition of this classic comic book. The former Shogun's Executioner roams the countryside with his young son (this is sometimes called the baby-cart assassin), righting wrongs and killing those sent to kill him. This movie shocked me by being one of the most graphically bloody Samurai films I've seen. It has three graphic rapes, one of which has the woman biting her attacker's tongue off and spitting the bloody thing on the floor, and lots of spurting blood; kind of the Sam Peckinpah style. Not that I'm offended by this kind of thing, it's just that the Samurai films I've seen (a lot) are rarely this overt. Other than this fact, this is a good solid film. The swordplay is exciting, the plot episodes well-paced, and the integrity to the comic book very firm. My version was dubbed, which ends up being rather unintentionally funny at times, reminiscent of *What's Up, Tiger Lily?* (Woody Allen's spoof of a Japanese spy movie). Rent it. The American sequel, *Shogun Assassin*, is the second and third Japanese movies in the series edited together. * * * ½

Assassin Movies

I realized before sitting down to type today that over the last three weeks, I've seen nothing but assassin films. Other than the above-mentioned movie (*Lone Wolf and Cub*) and *Manchurian Candidate* (reviewed last issue), here are a few assassin films I've seen recently.

Long Kiss Goodnight

This recent film could be described as an action-comedy, similar to some of Schwarzenegger's stuff, but you never find acting in that genre as good as Geena Davis' is in this. She portrays an amnesiac who is attacked when someone in prison recognizes her on TV as an assassin he thought he'd killed. Her previous personality begins to emerge and she isn't very pretty. The tension between the personalities is fantastic to watch on her face. Samuel L. Jackson is excellent as her sleazy gumshoe, trying to find out who she was. Similar to his role in *Pulp Fiction*. This is a funny and violent picture. * * * ½

Black Cat

This is the Hong Kong version of *La Femme Nikita*, the French film also remade into *Point of No Return* in the US with Brigitte Fonda. It follows the life of a street woman recruited by an intelligence agency as an assassin after being arrested for killing a cop. A quirky ending doesn't ruin this flick. HK and action film buffs will like this one, and it's better than *PoNR*. It also is the only one of these three movies to have a sequel, called *Black Cat II*. * * *

Black Cat 2

This sequel to the above reviewed movie is one of those rarities: a sequel as good or better than the original. *Black Cat* has a new brain chip implant that gives her outstanding acrobatic abilities, but makes her more of a mental drone. Watch for the HK favorite, the belt sword, in the fantastic finale, where her opponent cuts a piece of aircraft debris in half. The fights are wonderful with the usual amount of Suspension of Disbelief for a HK flick (in other words, heavy *SoD*). * * *

Fan Mail from Some Flounder

Mikel Featherston

Arda looks like an interesting "Magic Returns" world. I like the *Compulsive Devil's Advocate*; I know people like that. My present adventure in my Illuminati campaign was generated by the following cards: *Cyborg Soldiers*, *Templars*, *Talisman of Ahrimanes*, *Gordo Remora* and *Sniper!* I'll tell you folks more next time. Welcome aboard!

Jeff Pfaffmann

I adore the vehicle maneuvers. Very useful for autoduels.

Lisa Steele

Your Traveller translations are nice. I love Traveller, and have just borrowed a copy of 4th edition from Imperium Games. Looks nice.

Scott Paul Maykrantz

The Orb is gruesome and sick. Diseases in GURPS is also very sick. In other words, I loved them both. I'll put some diseases in my next issue.

Sorry, but that's all I have time for....