



Uncle Enzo's Cosa Nostra Pizza

Brett Slocum, proprietor

15th Delivery

April 2001

Menu		Appetizer	
Appetizer	1	<p>I thought I had submitted this Delivery for All of the Above #41. I was mistaken. In the interim, I've run a GURPS Tékumel adventure at two conventions. I'll write up the adventure for a future issue. One of those cons was UCon in Ann Arbor, MI. UCon has a Tékumel Track, with events in every timeslot, and a LARP event. It was fantastic. The best time I've ever had at a convention. In the LARP, I got to play an ancient Priest of Sarkú, the Worm Lord, who carried around a box with a friendly demon inside of it throughout an auction of unusual items held by Gidj and Sons, inter-dimensional merchants. What fun!</p>	
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Book Reviews

The Runelords by David Farland

(Also Known As *The Sum of All Men*, since *The Runelords* is really the name of the trilogy, not the novel.) Mr. Farland has taken a concept (Endowments from AOTA #40) and thoroughly thought out all the ramifications and possibilities. Then he created a captivating fantasy world with interesting characters to tell a story. I also like the elemental magic system he's created, where mages must specialize in Earth, Air, Fire or Water magic. I really want to know how the protagonists are going to defeat a man who can walk up to a castle wall during a siege and ask the defenders to throw down their weapons and they instantly comply.

This book combines good plot, characters, setting and well-thought out ideas into a very satisfying whole. **Highly Recommended.**

Character Corner

GURPS Tékumel

Here are two player-characters from a play-by-email adventure I ran in the early 90s. They make a nice pair of bookends for a sea-going campaign, and could easily be translated into other settings.

Oktán**103 points**

Ugly, tough-looking ex-pirate.

Description

5' 2", 150 lbs., 23 years old, black hair, partially bald on the top of his head. He usually shaves some to make himself mostly bald with hair over his ears and in back, pulled into a ponytail. His face is unhandsome, his nose too large, and his eyes fierce. He is clean-shaven when possible. He has a large tattoo of an Akhó, the Embracer of Ships, on his back. He often dresses only in a kilt and sandals. He keeps a pack of his gear wherever he is staying. At his side, he wears a purse and a scimitar when it is allowed. Also, under his kilt, he keeps an extra purse and a throwing knife strapped to one thigh.

Attributes

ST 12, DX 14, IQ 12, HT 12

Speed 6.5, Move 6
Dodge 7, Parry 8, Block -
Money: \$150

Advantages

Absolute Direction
Combat Reflexes
Rapid Healing
Toughness

Disadvantages

Appearance: Ugly
Bad Temper
Code of Honor (avenge insults)
OPH: Hedonist (-2)
Status: Clanless (-3)

Quirks

Chews hnéqu weed
Likes the outdoors
Makes chauvinist comments
Secretive about wealth
Swears a lot

Skills

Athletic
Swimming/13

Combat/Weapon
Brawling/15
Knife/13
Knife Throwing/13
Shortsword/15

Language
Language (Hijajái)/10
Language (Salarvyáni)/12
Language (Tsolyáni)/10

Outdoor
Boating/13
Navigation/13 *
Seamanship/12
Survival (Urban)/10

Scientific
Weather Sense/12

Social
Area Knowledge (Jakállá-to-Penóm
navigation lanes)/11 *
Gambling/10
Intimidation/10
Merchant/10

Thief/Spy
Streetwise/10

Vehicle
Sailor (TL)/10
Shiphandling (TL)/11

* = +3 from Absolute Direction

Equipment

2 throwing daggers (on belt, under
kilt)
scimitar
small pouch: hnéqu weed
small pouch under kilt: \$150
lower-class clothing
sandals
large sack:
wool travelling cloak
personal basics
flint and steel
personal toilet articles
blanket
small water bottle
Kévuk dice
soft leather armor

History

Oktán was born the son of a blacksmith in a coastal village in Salarvyá. When he was young, his training was very ordinary, and it was expected that he would follow in his father's footsteps as a smith. At age eight, his life was changed forever.

That year, pirates raided the town looking for slaves. Oktán was among those taken. While most of the prisoners were sold in slave markets, Oktán was kept around as a cabin boy/servant/mascot for the crew. When he grew into puberty, their treatment of him became harsher. He never reached the full height of a man, though he was stronger than most.

His servant status and small stature made him the butt of many jokes on the ship. When some of the crew tried to sexually abuse him, he finally couldn't take any more. He attacked them, and by surprise, managed to seriously wound one and hurt others before they beat him senseless. This was the first in a long series of fights he got into in his late teen years. Gradually over time, he rose to full status in the pirate band; at least no one would say he was not one of the toughest.

This increase in status was not made without acquiring enemies. Some of the men he beat held grudges against him, and many of the crew resented this former slave acting as their equal. In a battle with a Tsolyáni warship, he was "accidentally" pushed overboard when he was attempting to climb aboard the pirate ship. He got to shore safely, but that was the end of his pirate career.

Finding himself without money and without prospects in Penóm, Oktán scraped together a life as a bum, a street thug, a gang enforcer, a bouncer, and a dockworker. Finally, tired of such a life, he signed on as a mate on the merchant ship *Penóm Princess*.

As an experienced seaman, a fair hand at languages and navigation, he eventually made first mate. Because he was somewhat closed-mouthed about his past, and he is notably unusual in looks, the crew of the *Penóm Princess* never really took to him. After one particularly rich run, the crew was partying in a local dive. Over the general conversation, Oktán heard one of the men say "E'en that ugly runt o' a mate'll get laid on 'is share." Before anything more could be said, Oktán was out of his chair and had the crewman by the back of the neck. In the brief scuffle that followed, Oktán broke a couple of the crewman's ribs, and pulled a knife on the others who had tried to

drag them apart. The captain decided that enough was enough, and told Oktán to be gone.

So, Oktán is presently unemployed and roaming the docks of Jakállá in Tsolyánu.

Personality

His personality is shaped by his rough life. Raised by pirates, from a relatively early age, he is not a gentle man. Having started his adult life as a virtual slave, he places a high value on his self-image. Anyone who insults him is likely to get beaten, or even killed. He wouldn't have killed the seaman for example, just taught him a lesson. On the other hand, if someone insults him over a long period of time, or directly in front of a large/important audience, he could conceivably kill that man. He likes to fight, but doesn't fight for fun. For example, if a bar fight erupts around him, he wouldn't become involved just for the fun of it. On the other hand, if it disturbs him, say someone is thrown over his table or someone hits him with a beer, then he may react rather violently. In other things, he is very impulsive. Once he starts something, he likes to finish in the short term. But, long-term obligations don't mean so much to him. He's never lived with any long-term stability in his life.

Religion

As his father was a weapon smith, Oktán was raised to worship Chegárra. He does not put much faith in the gods' desire to help him. They don't seem to have cared so far, and they don't seem likely to in the future. He acknowledges their power, but he feels they don't watch out for most people. His opinion of priests is not terribly high either. Most of them seem very removed from reality to him. He does make the appropriate observances occasionally. Also, he curses in the name of the gods rather often. If they really don't care about him, it doesn't matter, but if they do, the least he can do is point out how they could help him.

Khórvus**100.5 points**

Former duelist, sailor-without-a-ship, sell-sword.

Description

5' 8", 140 lbs., 23 years old, curly black hair, green eyes, copper complexion.

Attributes

ST 11, DX 14, IQ 12, HT 12

Speed 6.5, Move 7
Dodge 6, Parry 8, Block -

Advantages

Ambidexterity
Appearance: Attractive
Charisma/+1
Status/+1
Toughness

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (keep word, avenge insults)
Compulsive Flirt (-2)
Enemy (Large Group, 6 or less)
Impulsiveness
Sense of Duty (all friends)

Quirks

Draws knives with Sleight of Hand
Enjoys gambling
Sharpens weapons when bored
Uses Salarvyáni when excited
Whim of Steel

Skills

Athletic

Acrobatics/13
Running/9
Swimming/13
Throwing/14

Combat/Weapon

Brawling/13
Fast-Draw (knife)/13
Fast-Draw (sword)/13

Fencing/15
Main-Gauche/14

Language

Language (Pecháni)/10
Language (Salarvyáni)/12
Language (Tsolyáni)/10

Outdoor

Climbing/13
Seamanship/12

Professional

Sailor/10

Social

Carousing/10
Diplomacy/10
Fast-Talk/12
Gambling/10
Savoir-Faire/14
Sex Appeal/11

Thief/Spy

Sleight of Hand/13
Streetwise/10

Equipment

broadsword
large knife
leather vambraces, greaves, kilt
leather helmet
scale mail shirt
middle-class clothes
personal basics
shoes
small pouch

Background

Khórvus was born the younger son in the ruling lineage of a merchant clan in Tsatsayágga in Salarvyá. Having several older brothers, he spent his early childhood idly. After one of his older brothers was killed in a foolish duel against a better swordsman, he jokingly suggested he should become a champion and fight duels for his family. He was quite surprised when his family shipped him off to study under Master Edlúchcho Suzhán at the Conservatory of Noble Dignity, the best Arruché instructor anywhere.

By the time he was sixteen, Khórvus was a skilled fencer, beginning to make a name for himself. Unfortunately, his flirtatious tendencies, and his act-first, think-later attitude got him in trouble. He flirted with a woman who was attached to a pirate captain, and who liked watching people carve each other up over her. There was a duel, with rule breaking by both parties involved. Khórvus killed the pirate, the woman refused to associate with him, and rumors started getting around. The empire began investigating, and his rather conservative older brothers, upset by the scandal, disowned him. About that time the crew of the pirate captain's ship showed up, looking for blood. Khórvus just barely got away on a merchant ship that happened to be leaving. He's a competent, although not extraordinary sailor, and he fights tolerably well, but he's remarkably lacking in anything resembling drive, ambition, or long-term goals. The primary thing that keeps him going is his strong sense of duty to everyone he knows.

Fanmail From Some Flounder

Volker Bach

Bentham 4 is a fantastic sourcebook for an Alternate Earth. Welcome to the ravenous pack of weasels.

Tom Cron

Iron Dixie works nicely, combining the age-old standard "Dixie Wins" with steampunk. Well-done.

Andrew Dawson

Your Voodoo treatment of Wolf and the Path of Wolf is outstanding, and will be the standard that I use when I create anything similar. Any chance of you running a PBEM Strange Days game?

Robert Gilson

Cool Castle Falkenstein characters.

Scott Paul Maykrantz

I like related sets of characters. The Khan Brothers is truly one of your most imaginative concepts. What happens if one brother dies?

Running the Reanimator Machine was funny, but it would work. I'm in need of some rules for reanimation, so these just got sucked into my fantasy campaign (with appropriate TL 3 mods).

Craig Roth

The Campaign description was interesting. I like the addition of mechanician magic. It reminds me of Chivalry and Sorcery, which has a similar magic specialization.

Brett Sanger

Your reasons for joining AOTA are exactly what mine were: to force myself to write this stuff up. Welcome to the Monkey House.

I've never heard of a Time Travel campaign turning into a Space campaign. Very interesting timeline.

Arthur Shipkowski

I liked your reversal of familiar powers to apply to the familiar. I'll combine these with Anthony Jackson's expansion of familiars from Pyramid (check it out, it's very nicely done).

Ambrosius and the speech quirks were interesting.

RYCTme: Witchcraft is similar to a Voodoo / Psionics / Martial Arts / Illuminati campaign. I don't think it's any more fantastic than Voodoo, just more elements. It's generally slightly more cinematic than GURPS.

Lisa J. Steele

Friends and Family lists: I agree that they usually interrupt play. It's better for the GM or player to just make them up when needed. Like a request for help that starts, "Your cousin Angela, whom you haven't seen for several years, calls about going out for coffee soon."