

THE NEWSLETTER OF ELRIC® ROLEPLAYING

FALL 1994

Welcome to Your Wyrd

Advice on creating a Doom of your own

By Richard Watts

There came a time when there was great movement upon the Earth and above it, when the destiny of Men and Gods was hammered out upon the forge of Fate, when monstrous wars were brewed and mighty deeds were designed. And there rose up in this time, which was called the Age of the Young Kingdoms, heroes. Greatest of these heroes was a doom-driven adventurer who bore a crooning rune blade that he loathed..." - *Stormbringer, Prologue*

AS A GAME, *Stormbringer* never quite satisfied me. Although it was one of the first roleplaying games I played, it jarred with my concepts of the Elric saga. *Stormbringer* was a garish game of violent reds and ugly purples when compared to the saga's varied palettes. *Stormbringer* focused on the magic of Moorcock's original stories, distorting sorcery to suit the high-powered game its designer desired.

The first *Stormbringer* supplement I wrote, *Sorcerers of Pan Tang* was an exercise in tone I felt the game needed, a darkness previously absent. My concept of atmosphere was first struck upon the iron streets of Hwamgaarl, and has, I hope, since been refined. When I heard that the rumored 5th edition of *Stormbringer* was in fact to be a whole new game, the game this newsletter honors, I was delighted. Here was the chance to embark upon a new

direction for roleplaying in the worlds of Michael Moorcock. After rereading the saga prior to beginning work, I came away with the memories that I think we all carry with us. We do not dwell upon the demons summoned and slain, I believe, nor the treasures found, after reading the saga. The central motif we carry with us is the doomed tragedy of Elric himself. It is this aspect of fate and wyrd that I have attempted to portray in *Elric*.

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FORUM

Snowball of Doom

It all happened so fast. I mean relatively speaking, of course. One day I'm offering my comments on the *Elric!* game to head cheese Lynn Willis (I had never written such a letter in my life), the next he's sending me writer's guidelines (Cool!). Pretty soon I'm volunteering to field this humble publication (Yikes!), and I'm making new friends all over this great planet (Very cool!). Before I can catch my breath, I'm actually helping out with the editing chores on a new *Elric!* supplement and art directing and handling production on another! All this from my big platinum machine on my little black desk. Is this a great Age or what?

As I watch my e-mail make the jump into cyberspace, bound for all corners of the globe, I contemplate the wonders of Law. Someone once said if a technology advances far enough, it effectively becomes magic. I wonder what the Priests of Arkyn would say to that? What would they think of the new chaos theory in quantum physics? About MTV?

But I digress. Counting laurels would definitely be premature at this point. My little enterprise will be short lived indeed, if I don't find more contributors (and subscribers!). That's where you come in.

I need material—interesting articles and compelling artwork. And I need it now. Here's an outline of planned features:

- Cover/lead feature. Major commentary or rules expansion. Under 3,000 words, preferably.
- Four columns, each one devoted to new spells, demon breeds, enchantments, and new creatures, respectively. Around 500-700 words.
- Game errata and questions; *Elric!* Editor-in-Chief Willis will support with official answers. Send in your questions.
- A letters/forum column. Discuss all matters Elrician. Keep those cards and letters coming, but keep 'em short!
- A character capsule, featuring a unique non-player character and ideas for campaign use. Again, 500-700 words.
- A column of rumors in the Young Kingdoms—to generate campaign ideas. Ditto on the word count.
- A mini-adventure. 3,000 words or less.

This list is probably not exhaustive, though I suspect these features will cover most subjects. I'll certainly entertain additional ideas; if you have any, send 'em in. Of course, if I use your idea (or article, or art), I will send you a complimentary copy of the issue it appears in, and gladly, as tradition demands.

Special thanks to Lynn, Mark, Richard, Lawrence, Stephan, Geoff, Ross and Mike for all the encouragement. It's a pleasure working with all of you and a doom I gladly embrace.

Blood and souls!

Malcolm Wolter



A BREEO APART

Wherein the discovery of new demons is revealed as well as reports of their nefarious activities in the Young Kingdoms.

Creepy, Crawly, Deadly

Long after humans have perished from the Earth, the Glaurax will live on

By Nick Hagger



A DEMON OF THE GLAURAX BREED resembles a large, upright cockroach. Its thick carapace is an oily black, with a polychromatic sheen visible in the weakest light. A short stinger depends from its abdomen, extended to its full 3-yard length when the demon is hunting. The demon's face is surmounted by two large multi-faceted eyes which peer over a fearsome set of mandibles. It stands on four legs, and has two arms which it uses to clutch its prey. It has gossamer-thin membranous wings folded beneath its carapace. The Glaurax lives to feed and reproduce. Two new abilities are presented below.

IMPLANT—The demon punches with its ovipositor, which does 1D10 hit points of damage. If this penetrates armor, larvae is injected into the body of the victim. Each week it consumes 2 points of CON and 2 points of POW, until on the eighth week it chews itself free, killing the host in the process. The larval demon is one-eighth of the size of the adult (use normal statistics, treating each ID8 characteristic roll as a '1', and prorate abilities).

The newborn demon fully matures in eight months, when it gains the Implant ability, and is ready to breed. MP cost for this ability is fixed: ten magic points for 50 percent chance and a three-yard range.

The only cure is to be purged at a Temple of Law, or through higher intervention. Lawful agencies might decide that the victim must be killed; unbound demons breaking free and breeding in the Young Kingdoms must be prevented at all costs.

TAINT—The demon projectile vomits a noxious syrup. With a successful ability roll, the target is tainted with a powerful musky odor, much like the smell of wet cattle. It is moderately offensive to humans, causing a temporary loss of 1D3 points of APP. Animals panic when they scent the unearthly taint; tainted humans cannot ride horses, creep past guard dogs, etc. The demon is able to track a tainted target anywhere on the Young Kingdoms plane. The taint fades away after eight weeks. MP cost for this ability is fixed: three magic points for 60 percent chance and a three-yard range.

AVERAGE GLAURAX, lesser demon, insectoid

characteristics	rolls	averages
STR	6D8	27
CON	3D8	13-14
SIZ	3D8	13-14
INT	1D8	4-5
POW	3D8	13-14
DEX	6D8	27

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D8.

Abilities: *Bite*, at 50% damage is 1D10
Carapace, 2D10 glistening brown chitin
Implant, at 50% damage is 1D10 + larvae (see above)
Taint, at 60% range: 3 yards
Wings, fly at 50 mph.

Skills: Own Plane 15%, Summoner's Language INT x2%, Wrestle 50% (success allows automatic Implant on round following).

Need: implant larvae in a sentient host every week

Magic Points to Summon: 50

O F D O O M

RANNART FINN



LAWRENCE WHITAKER herein provides ancient tales of tragedy and triumph through the voice of his besotted bard.

I'D SPENT THE EVENING in the "Four Sheets to the Wind", a tavern in Raschil's harbor district, watching the old, morose-looking sailor all night, sitting there alone in one corner, nursing a huge flask of rough wine and occasionally sobbing into his tankard. There were other sailors in the tavern, and it's strange to see a seafarer drinking on his own, so, curiosity being my second biggest failing, I had to go and talk with him.

He was an ancient old soul; skin washed to the color of old weather by exposure to the sun, lines as deep as glacial valleys scarring his face. When I pulled up a stool at his table he glanced up from his tankard and scowled.

"Get thee away. You don't want to talk to me."

I told him that I wanted nothing more, since everyone else had company, and only he seemed to be drinking alone. Still he protested. I countered by buying a bottle of the really good wine and filling both our tankards. He was in my debt then and had to talk to me. Old seafaring lore dictates it: never turn away a free drink, and always pay for it in the currency dictated the host. I asked what troubled him.

"Memories" he snapped.

"We all have bad memories" said I.

He laughed, not with humor, but with sardonic remorse. "Not *my* memories," he said. "Yours".

A furtive glance at my face must have revealed that my curiosity was piqued. Poor fellow. He'd not be rid of me now. And he knew it.

"I'll tell ye then, since you're so interested. And let it be a lesson to ye!" he barked. Then, looking around nervously, as if to make sure no one else was listening, he began.

"Two years since I was a mate on the *Woman Trap*, a trading frigate taking cargo to Imryyr. We lost our bearings on the Straits of Melniboné, a treacherous piece of the Oldest Ocean but one I'd sailed many times before. Two days it was before we sighted land, and so grateful were we that we couldn't have cared less if it had been Pan Tang itself. We sailed in close but found our way blocked by reefs, so we sent out skiff with the Captain, and me at the helm, to see what lay on the island's shore.

We moored the skiff on a beach of black sand, close to the ruins of some once fabulous harbor. I'd heard of this place in legends: Sorcerer's Isle, a schooling place for wizards in the days of the Bright Empire."

The old sailor described how he and the captain travelled for many days, through strange forests of trees that had flesh instead of bark and oozed a gray slime that exploded when it contacted the ground. Eventu-

ally they came across more ruins, this time of a citadel of some kind, and its strange inhabitants—subhumans calling themselves Kretti.

"The Kretti worshipped one they called Kranlyret, who dwelt beneath their ruined citadel," the old sailor said, his mouth curled into a snarl. "And although we'd come all peaceful-like, the bastards bound us, stripped us naked, and dragged us into the caves where this Kranlyret was meant to live.

And live he did all right, but not like thee and me storyteller, oh no! He was a fluid morass held in tubes, black gases streaming between funnels and a huge gray globe where his face, big as a mammoth's arse, appeared all grinning and evil-eyed. I knew then who he was. Melnibonéan stories tell of Cran Lyret, the Spell Thief, and I told him I knew all about what he'd done and how dragons had destroyed his castle when he challenged Melniboné.

Cran Lyret laughed then, a sickening sound that jarred my bones, and declared that since I remembered so much about him, no reason why I shouldn't share in everyone's memories. A black finger reached out from those tubes holding him in, and pierced my forehead, causing my ears, nose and eyes to bleed. And when he was finished, my mind was different! I could remember everything—not just things I'd forgotten—but *everything that had ever happened to everyone in sight*. The weight of their memories crushed me down, deafened me as they clamored for my attention."

The sailor fell silent then and closed his eyes. After a minute of this silence he told me that he escaped only because these new memories had revealed that the caves holding Cran Lyret in his strange, liquid state, had secret tunnels leading down to the beach where the skiff was moored. Leaving his captain behind, he fled, pursued by the Kretti, who soon became lost in the maze of tunnels running through the island. But his memory was perfect, drawing as it did upon the remembrances of the architects of Sorcerer's Isle, even though they were long dead.

"When I reached the ship, I told the crew that the captain was dead, because he might as well have been. I could feel his memory calling out and then ceasing abruptly as Cran Lyret did something horrible to his soul. The crew cast me in irons for daring to return without the captain, and delivered me back to Raschil as a prisoner. I served a year in the slave galleys. And paid in full for leaving behind my captain. Since then I've learned how to keep the memories at bay."

"And how is that, good friend?" I asked.

He smiled for the first time and reached for the wine bottle. "With this, storyteller," he said, "Wine to drown my sorrows and the memories that keep me in exile."

Now, I'm no stranger to weird tales, especially from sailors, who seem to experience more than their fair share of them, but I have to say I was skeptical of the old dog's claim. My face, unusually mutinous against the better part of valor, betrayed me again. He scowled at me, took another slug of wine and slammed his eyes tightly shut.

"Remember how you cried," his voice strangely choked, "when your sister died of cholera? That was the first time you seriously hit the bottle. That vintage saramath tasted good didn't it, and took away the pain. Remember how you were sure you'd never be able to rely upon anyone ever again, that the gods had snatched away the last of your family? I do. I can sense all of it now: the loneliness and despair, and how the drink removed all traces of pain, glass by glass. It was as though with the loss of your sister you'd found a new friend—a liquid ally that

Continued on page 11



WYRD TALES

Hoard of Amber

Bad guys sink to new lows on the High Seas

By Mark Morrison

IN THE MARKET square of Menii, a peddler sits on a blanket strewn with pathetic trinkets. His name is Hord, an honest trader fallen on hard times. He borrowed at high interest to purchase amber from Dharijor. The shipment was loaded aboard the *Striking Hammer*. The *Hammer* sailed from Gro-moorva to Ilmar, and on to Jadmar. Three months ago it left Vilmir bound for Menii. It never arrived.

The Code of the Sealords guarantees compensation for goods lost from Purple Towns shipping. Hord was paid the purchase price of 2,500 bronzes, not the 10,000 he stood to make. He was unable to cover his debts, and was ruined.

Strong penalties exist for those who defraud the Code. If the adventurers can find such proof, Hord offers them half of any profit or reward.

Hord's Secret

Hord lives in a hovel in Straasha's Spoke, the fisher district. He is in truth a Champion of Chaos, serving Vezhan, Lord of Wings. The missing shipment included a powerful insect-demon trapped in amber. Hord cannot enter the Temple of Law to research the case; he needs the adventurers.

An insect buzzes nearby whenever Hord is around, perhaps a fly, mosquito, or wasp. Introduce this subtly, and let the players make the connection. Hord also has a demon of the Glaurax breed

bound into his cloak, granting him the power of flight.

The Temple of Law

Goldar's temple holds records of all ships, voyages, cargo, and more. The clerks of each department feud with each other.

► The Loss of Vessel Report states that the *Striking Hammer* sailed from Jadmar in fine weather, but ship, crew, captain and cargo were never seen again. Vilmirian Privateers are blamed. Young Kingdoms rolls reveal that privateers usually set captured crew ashore unharmed.

► *The Striking Hammer's* cargo manifest lists iron, amber, ivory, grain, lumber, and furs.

► *The Striking Hammer's* owner was Skeggen Goodluck. The shipbuilder was Banbow Stoutkeel, at the Fortress of Evening.

► Skeggen was paid in gold to the value of his ship. The investors were paid for the cargo.

► Skeggen lives in Kariss, and owns workshops and warehouses in Menii and Utkel.

► Skeggen has a fleet of six ships: the *Golden Lady*, the *Pride of Karisan*, the *Salt Spray*, the *Silent Victory*, the *Speed of Commerce*, and the *Swift Messenger*. All were built by Banbow, save for the *Victory*, which was construct-

ed by Grolph Mainmast of Utkel, and launched one month ago.

The Harbor Master

The port authorities monitor all Purple Towns shipping. The *Golden Lady* has sailed for Dhoz-Kam; the *Pride of Karisan* is due back from Tarkesh; the *Salt Spray* is dry-docked at the Fortress of Evening; the *Silent Victory* is moored at Utkel; the *Speed of Commerce* is bound for Imrryr; and the *Swift Messenger* is off seeking the Eastern Passage.

Banbow Stoutkeel

Banbow's shipyard is at the Fortress of Evening. Five ships are underway, and no hands are idle. The *Salt Spray* is here having its hull scraped.

Banbow is short and shrewd. He vows that no ship of his would go down in anything short of a hurricane. He despises Grolph Mainmast, who "couldn't build a waterproof piss-pot". Banbow describes the *Hammer* as a carvel-built brig, with red and gold sails, and a figurehead of a muscled blacksmith with hammer raised.

Skeggen Goodluck

Skeggen has a beautiful three-tiered villa overlooking Kariss. He is stout, with watery-blue eyes, and several chins. He speaks frankly about the *Hammer*, and is near tears when he remembers his friend Abnor, lost at sea. He

offers a reward for news of his missing ship.

Skeggen knows full well that the *Striking Hammer* is now the *Silent Victory*, after a quick facelift in an anonymous East Vilmirian port. He instructs his three burly sons and six burly servants to arrange an accident for the adventurers. He also sends warning to Abnor.

Old Salts

Sailors know which timber is best for wooden legs, and which tobacco makes your teeth go orange. They also know:

- Banbow Stoutkeel is the finest shipbuilder in the world.
- Grolph Mainmast is a drunkard and a fool.
- Abnor Hardtack was tall, with red hair and a liking for corporal punishment. Sailors called him Red Whip. Mutiny most like, say the old salts, drawing thoughtfully on their pipes.

Grolph Mainmast

Grolph's shipyards at Utkel are a mess. The workers are drunk, or sleeping it off. Only one ship is under construction, but the ribs have been weathered so long they have rotted.

Grolph is small and dark, with a curling lip. He sits in his office, consulting a flask of rum. He is initially nervous about the *Silent Victory*, but soon boasts of his craftsmanship. He didn't build it of course, but forged documents to say he had.

The Silent Victory

The *Victory* is docked at Utkel. Swearing sailors lug huge bolts of colored cloth aboard, bound for Lormyr. A tall bald man with a ginger moustache berates them, and cracks a whip about their ears. He gives his name as Maron Neversunk, the captain. He is really Abnor Hardtack.



Michael Kirkbride

HORD'S SECRET

The *Victory's* figurehead is a slim woman holding a sword outstretched. Search rolls discern that the ship's paint is newer than the timber, and that the design is reminiscent of the *Salt Spray*.

The Arm of Law

On the filthy docks of Utkel, a beggar holds out his left hand for alms. His right arm ends in a leather-wrapped stump. Young Kingdoms rolls speculate that the man has been guilty of theft. In fact he is White Mendain, a disguised Champion of Law. He arrests anyone who gives him coin, as it is forbidden in the Purple Towns to show a thief charity.

Mendain may be an obstacle or an ally. The adventurers might prove their worth by informing him of their investigations. Mendain suspects that a powerful warrior dedicated to Chaos is abroad on the Isle; is it one of the adventurers?

The Warehouse

The cloth being loaded on to the *Victory* comes from a large wooden warehouse. It stands on a jetty in a stinking canal. Maron Neversunk (Abnor) can be fol-

lowed here. The warehouse is locked and guarded by six men during the day, two men at night. Inside are tall bolts of cloth, stacked in rows. Behind are hidden crates of iron, amber, ivory, grain, lumber, and furs—the *Hammer's* cargo.

The adventurers might break in and fight the guards, or contact Mendain and the Utkel harbor-master. Given convincing testimony, the authorities inspect the warehouse.

Skeggen's Bad Luck

The Temple of Goldar acts decisively. Skeggen, Grolph, and Abnor are put aboard the *Victory* and scuttled alive in the Bay of Menii. Skeggen's fleet and holdings are forfeit, but his sons are cleared. The adventurers are awarded 1,000 bronzes apiece.

Hord's Reward

Hord gets his amber. He promises the adventurers half of the sale value, and arranges a meeting. He does not keep the appointment. He never returns to his hovel, but the amber is inside. The adventurers can sell it for 7,500 bronzes, or 10,000 with a Bargain roll. Search rolls note that one piece has been

split down the middle. Each half has the imprint of a winged eight-legged insect.

The amber contained an ancient greater demon, now Hord's to command. The following day, a vast plague of locusts strips the fields around Menii. Tracking down Hord might form a future scenario.

STATISTICS

Consult the *Y.K. Digest* in the *Elric* rulebook:

Skeggen Goodluck: Decadent Noble
 Skeggen's sons: Marine
 Skeggen's servants: Sailor/Pirates
 Grolph Mainmast: Merchant
 Abnor Hardtack: Ship's Captain
 Warehouse guards: City Guard
 White Mendain: Agent of Law
 Hord: Agent of Chaos
 Hord's demon cloak:
 Glaurax breed (see p.4)

MARK MORRISON edited *Sorcerers of Pan Tang*, *Perils of the Young Kingdoms*, *Sea Kings of the Purple Towns*, and *Melniboné*. He is currently playtesting his group through 'Corum'.

He thinks that dice are good, a somewhat controversial opinion in this new age of sensitive empathic roleplaying.



The Vessels of Eternal Elan

Be careful—ancient warriors of the Bright Empire are still out there!

By Ross Isaacs

Among the most exotic and sought-after enchantments found in the Young Kingdoms are the Vessels of Eternal Elan. Created by long-forgotten magics, these objects contain the souls of the greatest warriors in Melnibonéan history, known as War Saints. Those adventurers able to unlock the item's secret, and daring enough to face the danger, can call forth the inhabiting spirit. Once bidden, the War Saint will perform one task on the invoker's behalf.

History

In the early days of the Dragon Empire, a small number of Melnibonéan warriors would, on rare occasions, become obsessed with battle. These warriors channelled their energies to the study of the art of war, devoting their lives to the mastery one weapon. Legends tell of Kyr Tavel, the Dragon Lord who focussed solely on the short spear; and D'oran, an Eagle Knight of the 212th Emperor, whose specialty was the great sword; and others. Pursuing martial skill with a fervor commonly associated with painting or sculpture, these Melnibonéan warriors were seen as artists in their own right. These single-minded warriors came to be called *Sha'ariit*, or War Saints.

Embodying years of hard-won and rare knowledge, it seemed a waste to allow such artists, who themselves became works of art through

their efforts, to die.

Upon death, the souls of these warrior-artists were, through the use of powerful necromantic magics such as Spirit Vessel and Soul Transfer (see the *Bronze Grimoire—ed.*), placed in ornate receptacles, which would come to be called the Vessels of Eternal Elan. Most of these warriors embraced this highest of honors, though a few refused to have their immortal souls consigned to what they termed eternal slavery. Their souls were imprisoned against their will, in the name of the Emperor. Interestingly, the Lords of Chaos have never attempted to reclaim any of these soul objects. The reason for this remains a mystery; perhaps the Vessels are in fact game pieces in the eternal struggle between Law and Chaos.

These soul receptacles, along with the chosen weapons of their occupants, were originally kept in the Imperial Palace in Imrryr. In times of great need, the Emperor would call upon these ancient heroes to serve the empire. A willing subject would volunteer to act as host for the War Saint. Taking up the ancient hero's weapon, armor, and soul, the possessed noble marched off to battle for the glory of Melniboné. Many did not survive the ordeal. Upon the host's death, the War Saint would return to its Vessel, to await the next summoning. Eventually however, the Vessels came to be moved about the Empire, manifesting terrible warleaders that quashed rebellion wherever they found it, from the outlying provinces to the far-flung colonies scattered throughout the Multiverse.

Over the centuries, the War Saints came to be revered as the embodiment of Melniboné's martial prowess and power. Shrines were built in their honor. Assuming a quasi-religious importance, some Melnibonéans came to associate individual *sha'ariit* with a particular aspect of fighting, such as guardianship or vengeance. Some would come to be viewed as local protectors, to be summoned during times of strife. A few shrines would become centers for the study of martial arts, with the War Saint occasionally being summoned to instruct worthy students. (This would occur rarely, as none could ever approach the skill and dedication to warrant such an occurrence.)

After the War with the Dharzi, no new Vessels were enchanted. Fewer and fewer Melnibonéans dedicated themselves to rigorous study, as they slipped deeper into introspection and ennui. The creation of Vessels became impossible with the erection of the Barrier of Law by Myshellia. Only 23 Vessels were created before it became impossible to do so.

As the empire crumbled and Melnibonéans retreated back to the Dragon Isle, a few of the Vessels were brought back to Imrryr. In some cases, however, there was not enough time. As the humans advanced and razed Melnibonéan cities, the citizens fled in panic and the *sha'ariit* were abandoned. Fearing these places of dark worship and darker magic, the humans often left the War Saints undisturbed. There they sit to this day, among the ruins of their once-proud temples, abandoned and forgotten. There they sit, awaiting discovery. A few of these enchantments remain, likewise forgotten, within the walls of the Imperial Palace.

Gamemaster Guidelines

Some players, on reading this article, will want their characters to follow the path of the War Saint, to achieve their special abilities. This is no longer possible, though adventurers are welcome to try; such a goal would make an interesting motivation. Generally, Melnibonéans are no longer interested in devoting their lives to one venture; they prefer their dreams and debauchery too much. No adventurer could ever approach the level of skill needed to achieve the War Saint's powers. Nor would

any Melnibonéan think of pursuing such a course in time of Sadric or Elric.

War Saints are Melnibonéan warriors who dedicated their lives to the mastery of a particular weapon. To create the War Saint's soul, the gamemaster assigns skill points like any other character. However, the War Saint must always have at least 200 skill points in his or her specialty weapon. Additionally, he or she must have at least a hundred more skill points in this weapon than any other. For example, Siem Tellir, the War Saint of the bone bow, has 234% in its use, while he has a 130% short sword skill. Assign points to other skills, such as Evaluate, Trap, and Hide, as normal. The War Saint may also possess spell knowledge to enhance its style and abilities.

What distinguishes War Saints from other, highly skilled characters are the special abilities and attacks possible when the former employ their favored weapon. It is not possible to list all the special uses that can be imagined for a War Saint. The gamemaster should devise new and unique abilities for the War Saint's chosen weapon. Throwing a rapier, using a two-handed weapon one-handed, or using two hand-to-hand weapons without penalty are just some examples. Use of a special attack must be declared during the Statement Phase of the combat round. Only one special attack may be used per round.

The potential for abuse is great. The War Saint's abilities and spells should be generated ahead of time, as well as its personality and history. This will prevent the urge to add more skills and abilities to the War Saint during play. If the War Saint is to take over one of the adventurers, take his or her player aside and discuss the situation. The player should be able to play a powerful personality, strange and inhuman, which has been isolated for millennia. The player should be willing to give up playing his or her character and substituting it with the gamemaster's creation. The discussion should also focus on the role the gamemaster intends the War Saint to play. Many players will find playing a War Saint challenging and interesting.

The Vessels and their inhabiting War Saints are unique and powerful magical items. They should be the goal of an extended campaign, and not included casually. Exotic and rare, such an enchantment makes a wonderful addition to any campaign. The adventurers might stumble upon a Vessel in the ruins of a Melnibonéan city, or could find a Vessel in an antique shop. Or perhaps the adventurers meet an adversary possessed by one of these malevolent souls. Finding a Vessel of Eternal Elan, many more adventures and years of research would be required to learn the identity of the occupant, and the ritual to call it forth.

Personality

The personality of the War Saint is completely alien. Because it has spent many years in isolation, it will have no understanding of current events. To them, humans are little more than animals. The Young Kingdoms were upstarts. Melniboné was the preeminent power on several planes. It would want to know about the current state of the empire: who rules? What happened to the Dharzi or Quarzhasaat? Was the battle of 10,000 Pennants won or lost? Those traits exhibited by Melnibonéans are heightened in the *sha'ariit*, for they have little knowledge of current affairs.

Finally, most War Saints owned a favorite weapon and armor.

These were works of art in their own right, being engraved and ornamented over many centuries. They commonly have an unnatural attachment to their martial equipment. However, because most Vessels encountered will be in the Young Kingdoms, these items may not be present. War Saints, upon possessing a victim, will want to locate their equipment if not on hand. Luckily, it is bound by the rules of its imprisonment to complete its task first (see below).

The Enchantment

These items appear as many different objects, each one unique. Any object can be used as a Vessel, such as an intricately carved box, gems of unusual size or even the War Saint's weapon of choice. The one feature common to all Vessels are their extraordinary workmanship. Viewed with Witch Sight, the object glows with an unnatural aura; given a day of study and receiving a successful roll of POWx1% or less, the adventurer can communicate with the imprisoned soul, if the War Saint is willing.



Each War Saint has a different invocation to which it responds. The ritual for each War Saint is different, sometimes simple, sometimes elaborate. Knowledge of one ritual provides no clues to determine another. Research, both mundane and magical, is needed to discover the correct phrases and motions for proper invocation. Upon completion of the ritual, the summoner sacrifices one point of POW to the Vessel. No other roll is necessary.

Once bidden, the War Saint inhabits the body of the invoker, or the body of a victim if one is provided. If the host is willing, no roll need be made; the War Saint simply takes over the host. If the host is unwilling, the War Saint must make a successful POW:POW roll on the Resistance Table to inhabit the body. Failing this roll, the War Saint can either continue trying, or move on to a different victim. If the War Saint rolls a 00, or all possession attempts fail, the War Saint is thrust out of the Vessel and becomes a wandering ghost. It is up to the gamemaster to determine what happens next (See 'ghosts' in the Necromancy section of *The Bronze Grimoire*).

The possession successful, the host's consciousness is transferred to the Vessel for 1D8 days. The skills and knowledge of the War Saint are used in place of the host's. During the time of possession, the host may do nothing to expel the possessing soul.

As part of the enchantment, the War Saint is required to perform one task, usually martial in nature. Once this task is completed, the War Saint is free to pursue its own ambitions; if the War Saint's weapons are missing, for example, it will search for them for as long as it remains incarnate. If the task is contrary to its nature, or frivolous in the Saint's opinion, it may also attack the offending summoner.

Even though the Saint uses its own skills, INT and POW, it is bound by the host's hit points and other characteristics. This can be an annoyance to the War Saint, unused to the new body. If the host's hit points are reduced to zero, the War Saint returns to its Vessel automatically; distance does not matter, so long as the soul is still on the Young Kingdom's Plane. The host's soul, however, is destroyed, perhaps journeying on to Limbo.

It is impossible, save through the will of a Lord of Chaos, to destroy a War Saint. Speculation remains as to the effect of destroying the Vessel.



SAMPLE WAR SAINT, Inhuman, exotic and disdainful

A'lyssa, She of the Stinging Delight, Mistress of the Whip

Chaos 134, Balance 53, Law 13

INT: 27 POW: 21

Weapons: Drayer's Whip 240%, 1D6/entangle*
Great Sword 120%, 2D8+db
Dagger 60%, 1D4+2+db
Bone Bow 60%, 2D6+1+1/2 db

*Indicates War Saint's chosen weapon of expertise

Special Uses: Because of her skill with the whip, A'lyssa may add her host's damage bonus to the damage for the whip. With a successful Whip skill roll, she may also disarm opponents, choke a target from a distance (use strangle rules, see Elric rulebook), or grip and pull items and people towards her (with a successful STR:STR Resistance Table roll). Such an attack must be declared in advance, and only one special attack may be used per combat round.

Skills: Art (Courtly Manners) 80%, Bargain 80%, Climb 85%, Dodge 70%, Evaluate 50%, Fast Talk 45%, Hide 52%, High Speech 34%, Insight 65%, Jump 40%, Listen 64%, Melnibonéan 140%, Million Spheres 23%, Move Quietly 78%, Natural World 46%, Oratory 73%, Physik 67%, Ride 150%, Search 85%, Track 54%, Witch Sight 55%

Spells: *Affliction, Agony, Bonds Unbreakable, Buzzard Eyes, Cloak of Cran Liret, Clumsiness from Xiombarg, Demon's Ear, Demon's Eye, Fury, Hell's Armor, Hell's Sharp Flame, Horns of Hionhurn, Moonrise, Portent, Sinew of Mabelode, Terror, Undo Magic, Weakness from Mabelode.*

(Spells in italics are from *The Bronze Grimoire*.)

A'lyssa is cold and inhuman after many centuries of isolation. She is the epitome of Melnibonéan arrogance and callousness. She took up the drayer's whip against a recalcitrant slave and found her true devotion. She would devote her life to the mastery of this weapon. Every day, for many years, she perfected her style on the flesh of slaves. Those living near her tower said the screams of pain emanating from her home were exquisite to hear. Most suited of perfection.

Eventually, she attracted the notice of Emperor Torvil the 253rd. Asked to perform before the royal court during the Feast of Unquenchable Desire, she garnered much appreciation. A'lyssa joined the Eagle Knights soon afterwards. Her favorite whip was made of stiff leather, with a sculpted silver handle. She served in several important, though now forgotten, campaigns against races from other Spheres. She died in battle against a personal rival, a sorcerer known as Talador.

Upon her death, she surrendered her soul into a finely worked ebony box. This remained in the Imperial Palace until moved to Lormyr. When the Lormyrians rose up against Melniboné, her shrine was abandoned. Her Vessel is now thought to be located in a vault below the Church of Law in Iosaz, along with her original whip.

ROSS A. ISAACS, (The Bronze Grimoire), lives and works in Washington, D.C., with his wife, Alessandra, and his cats, Tobi and Max.

Michael Kirbride

WYRD ▼

(*cont. from 1*) Dooms should be subtle things. Like an ambush, or a symphony, the planning and execution of a doom requires imagination, time and delicacy. Do not throw an adventurer immediately into an unavoidable fate. Not all adventurers need have a doom, but a doom-laden adventurer becomes more rewarding for the player, and enriches a campaign.

Dooms are unavoidable, but not invariably fatal. True, the death of an adventurer after an agonized, neurotic existence can seem the crowning culmination of their portrayal, but players always mourn the loss of a well-loved adventurer, no matter how fitting their demise. Better that the adventurer lives on, twisted, ravaged, bitter, after his or her doom has been played out. To take a case from real life, Oscar Wilde's spectacular triumph and ghastly downfall was made complete by the last few miserable, penniless and infamous years of his life in Paris, a horribly fitting epilogue to the personal tragedy of his existence. A doom that destroys a great love, and destroys a village, a nation, an entire civilization, only gets better if it leaves a single, agonized survivor to tell the unhappy tale.

Dooms are often evoked by the players during character generation, often unknowingly, so game masters should take care to guide them through the process, and take notes. Ask players to develop an adventurer's history before beginning play; an adventurer in an *Elric* campaign is no different from a character in a novel, and should be developed with an equal eye to detail. Explore the character's life before they became an adventurer; ask the player to create a family, a history, for the character they are about to play. *Chaosium's Pendragon* gives a superb example of such an exercise: fatal amors, grand betrayals, schisms, births and deaths extrapolated from the roll of the dice. Roleplaying an adventurer becomes much easier when both player and game master are aware of the experiences which have shaped the character's life.

Dooms might be connected to an adventurer's background in many ways: have they a merchant family, whose collapse they might accidentally engineer through a poorly-planned expedition or venture? A family driven disowned out into the night? A childhood foe who grows up to become the adventurer's nemesis, who they spend their entire life in destroying, tossing aside lovers and friends in order to secure that person's ruin? An inheritance in a noble family, with all the intrigue and betrayal that entails? The best backgrounds of all are those created by players who chose adventurers who are amnesiac wanderers. In these cases, the game master is given a completely free hand in creating an epic past. Is the adventurer an exile from another world? Has she killed her own family, and expunged the memory from her own mind? Careful planning in such situations can provide weeks of entertaining, not to mention shocking revelations for all the players in your campaign, which they are sure to talk about long after the game is over.

Dooms may also lie in the distant future, or be engineered during the course of the campaign. For example, my own campaign features one Vaserik, an escaped Melnibonéan slave seeking the Balance, who has turned his back upon Chaos magic and all things Chaotic. His doom has been heralded firstly by his possession by a Spell Which Lives, courtesy of the late Thief of Spells Cran Liret, and secondly by the near-death of a companion. Vaserik cast Heal to restore his friend to life, and in so doing was forced to declare an allegiance to Chaos in order for the spell to work. His doom then, it is clear, will drag him down towards Entropy even as he struggles towards

Tanelorn. Not fatal, certainly, but definitely terrible.

Fate foreshadows the destiny to follow, as should the gamemaster. Once you have hit upon an adventurer's individual doom, carefully hint at what is to come through omens, soothsaying and dreams. But allow the character to build up a life before you bring it crashing down. They more they have to lose, the more tragic their loss will be.

It is not the adventurers' dooms that are the ultimate stories of *Elric*, although they are the major themes. The doom of the world, and *Elric's* part in it, should be the true plot of any *Elric* campaign. It is this tale that the adventurers must ultimately play out. Finally, remember that *Elric* was doomed, but he also had a life, and brief though they were, some pleasant times along the way.

RICHARD WATTS was a confirmed *Moorcock* junkie even before he started gaming. As well as free-lancing for *Chaosium* and *White Wolf*, he writes poetry and fiction. Other interests include live bands, and industrial and alternative music.

He works Saturday nights as a DJ at *Apocalypse*, an alternative nightclub in Melbourne, Australia, to which all readers of *Herald of Doom* are invited if they are ever passing through.

FINN ▼

(*cont. from 5*) sought to ease all your unhappiness and asked for nothing in return save for the next day's hangover. How I pity thee, storyteller, for in trying to escape your memories, you've lost much more..."

I felt the color drain from my face as he trotted out that most painful of memories — a time of my life I did indeed blot out with alcohol and a drinking spree that had lasted close to three months. The sailor opened his eyes and smiled a grim smile at me.

"And we've never met before, have we storyteller? And don't you just wish we'd never met now?"

He spoke the truth, and without saying another word I staggered from the tavern and down to the seafront, where I stayed all night, watching the ships rocking gently at the quay, thinking about Anathaym, my sister, and what I'd lost when she left this world.

I've hunted for the old sailor on a few occasions since, but have never found him. I hope he's found a peace somewhere, away from people and what they remember, because even though the memories he senses are not his own, I can well appreciate the endless torment he must suffer.

★ MEMORY OF CRAN LYRET — NEW SPELL

This spell, devised by the Spell Thief, Cran Lyret, and known to only a few sorcerers, allows the caster to experience the memories of a selected target by overcoming the target's INT in a POW:INT struggle. If successful, the caster can penetrate the target's mind, and experience that person's memories first hand, even searching for a particular memory if so desired.

Hunting for a specific memory is not guaranteed of success. To find it, the caster must make a successful Search roll as he she hunts through the target's subconscious. Failure indicates that the particular memory is lodged deep in the subconscious, far away from the sorcerer's prying mind. The further back in time the memory occurred, the more inaccurate or hazy it is likely to be. Recent memories — those within a year say — will be relatively clear, but the further back the caster delves, the less accurate the memory is, and gamemasters should judge what parts of the experience are accurate, or fabricated by the target's mind, using the age of the memory as a guide.

BRIGHT UMPIRE

Wherein Lynn Willis
lays down the Law

Q: Each of the archetypes in step five of character creation in the *Elric!* rulebook lists thirteen skills except the fourth, which lists only twelve. Which skill should be added to maintain a balance with the other options?

LW: Hmmm. I never noticed that the leader archetype has only twelve skills.

There are four archetypes—the athlete, the technician, the proteus, and the leader. The leader is often the most interesting, because his or her skills are often most suited to making decisions and then following them up with action.

I suggest adding the choice either of the Young Kingdoms or of the Natural World skill. A leader who is more than a crude bandit or pirate always has a world view. Depending on the childhood and youth of the adventurer, choose one or the other. Then the adventurer also comes equipped with urban or rural knowledge, and has a way of fitting incidents and motives into a context. Out of this knowledge and experience, passions can rise that others find convincing and worthy. It is in his or her definition of truth that a leader's ultimate worth is found. Like Odysseus, all heroes eventually come home to familiar firesides. Only when we see them side by side, as they were and as they are, does the heroic leader become human in our eyes. And then we never forget him.

Q: Can more than one demon or demon breed share the same focus item for purposes of recalling them from their home plane? If so, what is the limit on this, if any?

LW: More than one demon or demon breed may share the same focus; the question the sorcerer must ask is how many eggs he or she wants to put in one basket. Otherwise, I see no potential limit for a focus.

Q: Is the *Wrestle* base chance (35%) listed for Melnibonéan characters (*Elric!* pg. 109) a misprint? It doesn't reason that the "erudite" inhabitants of the *Dragon Isle* would have a better base chance to wrestle than their human counterparts (25%).

LW: I know there was a good reason for this and for *Brawl*; maybe because of *Elric's* performance or perhaps in consideration of the Melnibonéans' relatively high *Strength* and *Dexterity*. I really don't remember now why we gave those percentiles, but if you want to change them that seems reasonable to me.

Q: The description of *allegiance to Law* (*Elric!* rulebook, pg. 36) states that *Law* points do not change if used as *skill* points. Is this also true for *Chaos* and *Balance* points used for extra magic and for extra hit points, respectively?

LW: Yes. All three cases demonstrate that the behavior of the individual relates directly to the greatest forces of the Million Spheres. With such significance also goes great responsibility, but only *Elric* seems much to feel this.

Q: How proximate to a demon does a sorcerer have to be to break its binding or dismiss it? For example, say a sorcerer's demon armor sinks to the bottom of an ocean during a rather unfortunate shipwreck—is the demon bound forever to the sorcerer, counting against his intelligence, etc.? Or can it be dismissed from afar?

LW: A sorcerer can always dismiss a demon, no matter where it is.

(Although this is the official line, you purists might refer to *VT II, 4*, where, in the *Hall of King Urish*, *Elric* confronts the beggar-lord's demon: "...May your master not return to release you and thus insure you squat in this filth forever!" —*ed.*)