
Kublacon 2008 (Continued)

Against The Night Things

After braving the perils of the Inner Sea, the group entered the land of The Free Men, a widespread tribe of peoples known for their volatile politics and cannibalizing their enemies. After a short while, they were stopped by a patrol. They were then met by Captain Niles and I handed the reins over to John.¹ I privately explained to John that Niles wanted to overthrow the current Free Men leader, a powerful woman named Alvara, one of the touched (a mutant). He saw the PCs as an ace he could play if he could get them to help.

And so the negotiations started. The PCs wanted to pass through peacefully. Niles wanted to recruit them into his coup. I gave Olger, who had traveled through the land years before, a brief rundown about how the Free Men chose their chieftain—basically anyone who is strong enough to unseat the last chieftain and hand onto the position. Unfortunately, the discussions went on much too long.

Eventually, Ulti took matters into his own hands and sneaked off. He went to the seat of power, sneaked in, and tried to assassinate Alvara. Unfortunately, he failed to take her down with one shot. After a brief discussion (for he was on the ceiling and she had no ranged weapons), he inadvertently² insulted her. The two fought one-on-one until finally Ulti was forced to retreat. He returned to where the PCs had camped out after negotiations were suspended for the night. It was a bold attempt, but Alvara was specifically designed to excel at duels, getting three melee attacks per round to his one.

The next morning turned into a clusterfuck as the PCs attacked Niles and his men retaliated. The PCs were surprised by snipers armed with crossbows, but managed to kill Niles and fight their way past the remaining patrol troops. They left the area and made their way to The Complex.

It was midnight and there was two hours of game time left, so I skipped over the next two encounters. They were designed to be scary, but were not essential to the story, so it was easy to exclude them.

The Complex was a square mile of chain link fence guarded by patrols who wore body armor, carried guns unlike those the PCs had seen, and some had vicious-looking dogs.³ The guards were mostly human, but many showed signs of the taint.

At first, they tried to sneak in via a sewer tunnel, but were blocked by welded grate and a swarm of biting spiders. They eventually gained access through the main gate by using Eve's power to create darkness

and once they were inside, skulked through the shadows toward a sub-compound that was fenced off from the rest of The Complex. Yahir found a truck that seemed to be in working order, something he had never seen before (he had seen shells, of course, but never a working gasoline engine with fuel). He got it started and was going to use it to crash through the inner-compound's fence, but couldn't figure out how to drive it.⁴ That plan abandoned, they instead cut through the fence and sneaked past the security guards.⁵

By now, I had lost 2 players due to (I think) fatigue. Fortunately, I had John and another lurker take over for their PCs (Olger and Ulti).

The path through the building was as described, except there were no snakes.⁶ What happened when they reached the final room can be best described as glorious, bloody chaos. This is a result of PCs who had partial information (not knowing exactly what the darkness was), different motivations (all the character conflicts came to a head), and the GM prodding the PCs who were already tainted (namely, Eve, Woolly, and Astra). Actions came so fast and furious that I have not been able to straighten them out in my mind to recreate a linear narrative.

The door was opened, over some objections. Darkness flowed out, at one point merging with Eve. Ulti managed to pull it out by drawing it to him.⁷ He did this over Iona's objections, who finally revealed that she was pregnant with their child.

Woolly leaped into the darkness. He was followed shortly by Astra, both of them consumed never to be seen again.

Yahir's was robbed of his heroic death when he was stabbed, I think by Olger. Yahir had gotten the device working and wanted to destroy the darkness, which naturally required keeping the door open. Olger wanted to keep it locked away.

The door was left open and darkness rolled out, gaining territory, and consuming everyone in its path. Iona retreated, as did Olger. The darkness followed and was stopped (for now...) at one of the inner security doors. The game ended with Iona surrendering to security forces which had become aware of the breach down below, saving herself and her unborn baby. So while the quest failed (as foretold by the thing that spoke to Eve), the future of the Tribe of the Half Moon (Iona's child) survived.⁸

4 With no ranks in Drive, he couldn't get it into gear.

5 This was the first deviation from the prophetic dream, since they didn't have security chasing after them (as they certainly would have had Yahir made his Driving roll).

6 I forgot about them, perhaps subconsciously realizing they weren't really necessary at this point.

7 Winning an opposed Spirit roll.

8 As did the weasel, Olger, appropriately enough.

1 My crasher turned co-GM.

2 Unaware as he was of her Arrogance hindrance.

3 Imagine a rotweiller crossed with a dire wolf.

Comments on Issue #394

Myles Corcoran

I would never attempt to translate any character from D&D 3E to 4E; there are simply too many things that work differently. I could start with the same personality, background, etc. and make the same character under the two different systems, but then that's true of most systems.

I would also (voluntarily) never do the whole mass/public nudity thing. Even for art. :)

The keyboard cover takes some getting used to, but it isn't that bad. I don't think it increases my rate of typing errors. It does make the touch pad harder to use, but I use an external trackball, so I don't mind.

Rob Heinsoo

RAE the Second Anniversary or Color. Very cool (and colorful) story.

Spike Y Jones

A superhero's nemesis can be exempt from the "don't overshadow the PC's shtick" rule.

Joshua Kronengold

I recently read Lair of the White Worm. It was awful, with scenes and characters that didn't make any sense. As I read it, I imagined it as a film that would be featured on Mystery Science Theater.

Louis L Mancusa

It is **insulting** to assume that an rpg publisher will either stop releasing products and kill their revenue stream for 2 years while they work on their next edition or not ever produce a new edition. You certainly can argue about the content, aesthetics, and quality of the new edition. You can gripe about how different or incompatible 4E is from 3E. And you can even lament no longer being able to buy new official, WotC supplements for your favorite version of the game. But I see nothing insulting about WotC's release of D&D 4th Edition, which we've known has been coming for at least a year. As has been pointed out by many others, it's not as if WotC is going to break into your house and stop you from playing your game. In the end, you just end up sounding like all the whining gamers who pissed and moaned about how 3rd edition sucked, wasn't needed, ruined D&D, obsoleted all their 2nd edition

books, and was just a tactical miniatures hack-and-slash game.

Brian Misiaszek

RAE the WFRP write-up. If you simply loop the rope around the tree and tie it to the iron gate, all it does is translate the inward pulling to outward pulling (this only provides an advantage if the iron gate opened more easily outward than inward). After looping around the tree, you'd want to loop the rope through the gate and then tie it to the tree. You can gain further mechanical advantage each time you loop the rope from tree to gate before tying it. But you also have to worry about friction, especially around the tree.

Lisa Padol

Do PCs ignore police barricades because they are flaunting authority or because they are thinking *this is where the plot must be*? Did the GM mention it because it was colorful scenery or because it is a hook? How are the players supposed to tell the difference? But I'm also sure that a lot of them are just being anti-authoritarian jerks because rpgs are escapist entertainment and you can do things you'd never do in real life.

Brian Rogers

Sexuality and gender identity includes what your chromosomes say you are, who you feel you are (affected by hormones and brain chemistry), as well as who you are attracted to (which overlaps with good old fashion kinks). I have a friend who is transgender male (FTM) and dates gay guys. I have gamed with a trans woman (MTF) who dated a straight guy for a while but is now living with another trans woman. So someone who was "corrected" in the womb may still not find social acceptance and romantic happiness. In utero hormone-based gender assignments may just end up being a disaster like today's surgical and social gender assignments made to genitalial-ambiguous newborns.

Personally, I'd be more interested in treatments to prevent Antisocial Personality Disorder or other conditions which are truly dangerous and harmful.

Steven D Warble

I read A&E with a pen in hand. I make a quick mark (typically an arrow or vertical line) next to an item I wanted to comment on and put an ex in the bottom corner of the page. Sometime later, I flip through looking for exes. Sometimes I decide that I no longer want to make a comment or forget what I was going to say.

GenCon

Terri and I will be at GenCon Indianapolis this year as the first leg of a trip that will include visiting her family in Kentucky and her online friend in Charlotte, NC. We're staying at the Courtyard and will probably be hanging around the New Hampshire Mob. I won't be running any official games as I did two years ago when I ran four Savage Worlds fantasy games. I didn't have any inspiration to run a game this year (at least, not in time to submit an event). I forgot to sign up for official events when event registration opened and so was only able to get a couple of tickets to games by the time I remembered. Between these two factors, I'll definitely have more time this year for socializing and doing sundry non-gaming activities (art show, seminars, etc.).