CLAWS DEATHMATCH II

Round 2 (Fight!)

Guildenstern: Is it just me or does this episode of Deathmatch feel rushed?

Rosencrantz: Space constraints, damn editors. [I'll delete your ass! -

G: Oh, in any case, now for the main event: Brindley vs Norman. That poor bastard doesn't have a chance.

R (sarcastically): Yup, how can anyone beat Brindley?

G: At the ringside, Norman, accompanied by his friends and supporters, and Brindley, accompanied by the Brindley Idolising Tramp Club Harem, both the hetero women and gay men chapters.

R: Say, G, are those some brides of Cthulhu in the crowd?

G: You're seeing things, Rosie. Norm is in the ring but Ryan has had to drag Brindley

in.

Brindley: I was just getting her phone number...

R: Wasn't that your girlfriend?

G: That bastard! Oh god, I've been Uytenbogaardted!

R: At least she'll be happy. Now, let's run the stats...

norm*a*n

HT/WT 5'11"/65kg

REACH 61cm

STYLE Berserker Geek

QUOTE Um... can we settle this

without violence?

BRINDLEY

HT/WT 6'4"/80kg **REACH** Way out there

12 years of full contact karate; STYLE

being porno

QUOTE How was I supposed to know

that was your girlfriend, bru?



R: We can see Norm is totally outclassed. He can't possibly win!

G: But his strength is as ten because his heart is pure, while Brindley is a girlfriend stealing @#\$%!!

R: Calm down, he can't help it. Let's hear Ryan give the warm-up schpiel...

Ringmike Ryan: Well, Norm, been fun knowing ya. It's been real, biznatch. Let's get ready to rumble!!!

G: Norm jumps in, determined to overwhelm Brindley with his beserker rage. You can do it, Norm!

R: But to no avail, as Brindley effortlessly counters and drops Norm with a stun-

ning triple kick. He's faster than Neo! It's piñata time, baby!

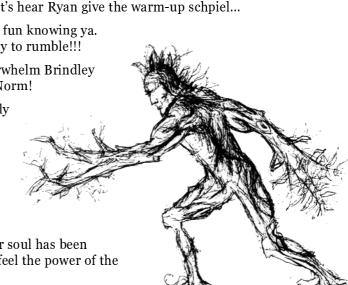
Norm: Now, Lord Austin...

G: What the hell?!?! Austin, high priest of Cthulhu, has appeared in a puff of brimstone!!!

> Austin (deep sepulchral tones): Your soul has been accepted, Acolyte Norm. Cast the magic, feel the power of the dark side!

Norm: Cthulhu fteeuurrgh ia shub niggywrath amelay okejay







emixray.

R: Holy @#\$%!! Norm just resurrected the Daves who pegged last Deathmatch. [yup, only Maclay and Michelle survived - ed] At Norm's command they're attacking Brindley... eating him alive!

Daves: Beeeeefcaaaaaaake...

G: You go Norm!! Karate kick that, biznatch!!!

R: Wait, the B.I.T.C.H. (both chapters) has come to the rescue, attacking the undead Daves and setting them alight with deodorant/lighter flame throwers!

G: But they've accidentally set Brindley alight as well, ha-ha! Norm wins!

(Austin, Norman and friends disappear in a puff of brimstone.)

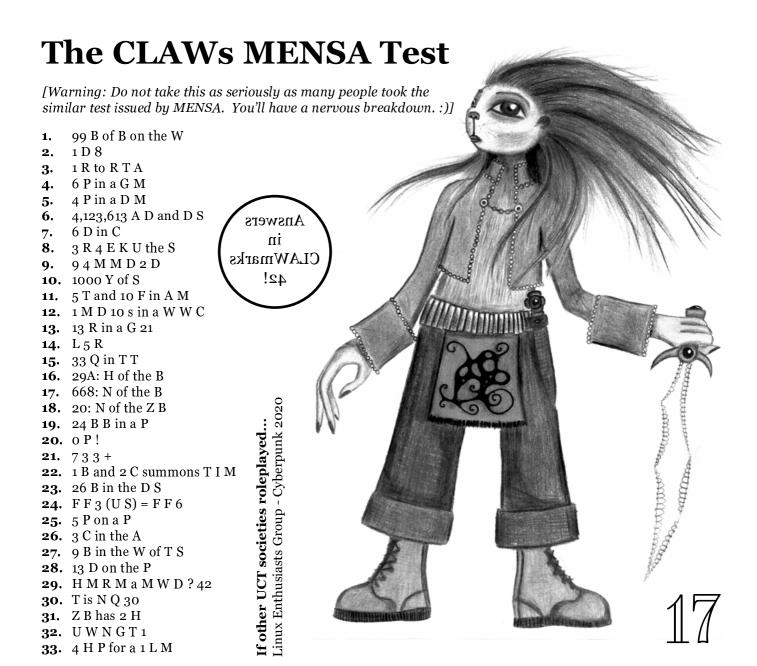
G: Just goes to show you never can tell.

R: Ryan is signalling that Brindley is still alive, but a complete mess. But that's okay. We can rebuild him, we have the technology: we can make him stronger, faster, better... We can't make him as good-looking, though.

G: Somehow, I think we can live with that.

R: And thus we come to the end of our episode. Good night and may the godfather smile on you all.

NEXT EPISODE: Adeeb (gets it) in the ring!



The Return to the L-Zone

If other UCT societies roleplayed... ROCSA/Kung Fu - Feng Shui

or

Sometimes We Go Back For More

by Jason Burke (with interjections by Waynne and SCHPAT)

It was 7:45 on a dark and stormy night (not actually stormy, but it was night, so it was definitely dark) when we finally picked Waynne up to complete our quartet for the trip to GenCon. We were in a jovial mood (that's what Patrick says, the rest of us say what the fuck?). Waynne says he was apprehensive and worried, but that's probably just because he knows how Pat drives. Pat was threatened that if he had an accident, Jo would kill him, if the accident didn't get him first.

I had shotgun and nav duties (geez, how difficult does it get? Go to the N1 and drive, boy! [SCHPAT: You were supposed to be planning rest stops and the like]), Waynne was in charge of the sandwiches Pat's mom had packed, and Philip was in charge of the cooldrinks. Pat's mom apparently thought that there were seventeen of us going for three weeks and had provided accordingly, with three 5 litre ice cream tubs full of assorted comestibles.

We all warned each other not to say the L-word at any point, but Pat still managed to say it twice before we even got there for the first time.

We drove through the L-place in silence and at speed. Pat seemed a bit worried, but we made it through okay. Things were still a bit tense until we had gone further and "outside the sphere of influence" as we called it; then we were all much relieved.

We stopped about 60km before Three Sisters, in the middle of the longest uninhabited stretch of the N1. This was a voluntary stop. The stars really seem to come alive in the middle of the Karoo. Most people can spot the Southern Cross or Orion at night, but there were just way too many stars out there. It was truly amazing and the best reason I can think to drive up to Jo'burg at night.

Just before Bloemfontein, we had our first [SCHPAT: and only mind you] near death experience (it wasn't nearly as erotic as *Crash* says it is). It was about 4 am, Philip and Waynne were fast asleep in the back, and I had just started to nod off for the first time (I don't sleep well while in transit).

Suddenly, Pat slammed on brakes and started skidding towards the middle of the road, but then corrected and went off the verge. I woke up very suddenly and this truck came barrelling past us, on our side of the road. Not the most pleasant thing to wake up to. Waynne and Philip woke up to the smell of burning rubber and a view of rolling grasslands out the front windscreen.

Pat said that he had been contemplating going around the truck on the other side of the road (beat it at its own

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game, so to speak), but then decided not to. We all stared at him wide eyed, especially me, and I proceeded to tell him about the car I think the truck had been overtaking (I was mostly asleep, I can't be sure) and that Pat had made the right choice to stop on the verge [SCHPAT: I didn't see any car, I think the driver had drifted off into sleep]. After we got moving again (with Waynne driving), Pat was very worried about not being able to find his beanie, and made us stop so he could look for it. A man with priorities, I say [SCHPAT: It was a gift, alright!].

The freeway system into Jo'burg is badly signposted and very confusing, especially in Friday traffic. Nevertheless, we made it to the convention centre with but a single wrong turn (but man, what a long wrong turn!). I for one was totally screwed from sleep deprivation (sleep total 10 min), so I slept for 3 hours in the car in the parking lot outside the Edenvale Centre. (sleep total 3h10).

That night, Philip went off to Grant's house and Waynne managed to wangle his way into staying there too. Pat and I cruised the backways of Edenvale until we found a suitably dark parking lot where we crashed for the night, Pat in the passenger seat and me (a bit squashed) in the back. Not the best night's sleep, but okay, and a lot more than I had had for a while. An experience, but never again (sleep total 9h10) [SCHPAT: At least you had 3 hours of practice earlier in the afternoon].

When we woke up, Patrick managed to break the driver's seat by leaning on it and stripping all the teeth off the ratchet that held it up [Waynne: Patrick's excuse was that it was worn away!]. Sigh. We went to McD's for breakfast, then on to the con centre, where I didn't do nearly as well at the Pokémon as I had hoped. At least we had a hotel room to look forward to that night. [SCHPAT: Jason had to deal with crying eight year olds. I think they should bring out an X-rated, or at least R-rated, version of Pokémon for mature players only.]

After a largely uneventful 20-minute navigation to Illovo, we checked in to the 5 star Protea Wanderers Hotel. Everything was really spanky, quite a step up from the night before. [SCHPAT: Jason surprised me by actually using the complimentary hand crème. Something about his needing to maintain his girlish good looks or something.] Pat and I stayed up until 4am playing Mage Knight (I whipped him like a little bitch).

We then got up again at 8am (sleep total 13h10) so I could make the second Pokémon tournament (went down like a bitch is all I can say - no more GenCon tournaments for me). Patrick went and bought some broom handles and a hacksaw so we could prop the seat up. It actually (surprisingly) worked quite well, but every time he lent forward it would slip and Waynne would desperately have to try to prop it back up before he was squashed.

After the party on Sunday night, we agreed to take some people back to one of the houses in Fourways. After much debate it was decided that we would take Duncan

and Janet with us. We were pretty tired and really wanted to get home so that we could get a good night's rest before setting out for Cape Town but we were assured that it was really close to our hotel [SCHPAT: It really wasn't!]. A fascinating conversation and 2 hours later we arrived back. It really was a very interesting conversation though, so it was sort of okay.

We met up with Waynne and Philip back at the con centre at 9am on Monday morning (sleep total 17h10) and left by 9:15. Grant had a lot of tidying up to do, we offered to help but he bid us farewell suggesting that an early start was more important. The trip down was a lot easier nav-wise, but we hadn't really considered Monday morning traffic in Jo'burg. The first (and only) wrong turn we took was onto the N9 just past Colesburg, which would have taken us onto the N2 and then to Cape Town via the south coast. In retrospect, perhaps it was a sign. Anyway, Pat spotted this [Waynne: thanks Pat!]

[SCHPAT: Was that sarcasm?] and we soon corrected, although it was quite hairy doing a three-point turn on a national road.

We recognised the site of our near-death experience and drove past on the lookout for skid marks, which we found in the form of double-wheeled truck prints on the wrong side of the road. A little later, we were talking about the L-Zone and Pat said we would be safe all the way to Beaufort West (hereafter BW) [cue dramatic music].

We decided that, instead of stopping at Three Sisters, we would push on to BW (dun dun dun) to save time. Just before Three Sisters, it started raining, and by now it was dusk, so we were in the worst possible driving conditions. There was some doubt as to wether we would have

enough fuel to push on to BW and we started talking about walking in the rain and how fast we could walk if we needed to (we all REALLY wanted to go home now). As we passed the halfway mark between Three Sisters and BW Pat said "Well, the furthest we'll have to walk now is 25km". Shortly thereafter, the car started going thunk thunk thunk. We nursed it into BW with a very sick feeling in the pit of our stomachs.

At BW, Pat finally decided to check the oil for the second time the entire trip and the first time on the way down. It had a greasy gelatinous layer at the bottom and needed 5 pints to refill (Later, Pat was to tell me that the car had blown a main oil valve, and that it had nothing to do with not checking the oil [SCHPAT: nor the oil leak that we had noticed earlier])

[SCHPAT: Actually this is how it was explained to me: "The main oil seal gave way and was blown out." Now, logically speaking, if the oil seal was blown out it would imply that it was under pressure. Having oil pressure required oil. Therefore there was more than enough oil in the engine. QED.].

Pat phoned his dad (who owns a BP garage in Diep

River) and got him to listen to the engine through the cell phone. He said it sounded like quite a bad bearing knock and that he would come pick us and the car up (BW is approximately 5 hours from CT). He didn't have the trailer for the car with him at the time, so he had to find out where it was and then go fetch it. Eventually, he phoned us back to say he could only get it in the morning. Thus started our 26 hours in BW.

There is absolutely nothing to do in BW. Apart from a handful of the garages which have 24-hour shops, the KFC is open the latest, closing at 2am. We managed to flatten 3 phonecards between us as well as all of Pat's free airtime phoning work and girlfriends to say "Sorry, we'll be even later than we thought".

Philip, who was quite tired, decided to go to sleep, so the rest of us went exploring, all in trenchcoats, and for some reason we each took a broomstick. We then proceeded to walk right past the police station. Some

cruisin' pigs gave us a serious hairy eyeball, so we decided to go back to the car.

We spent the night (well, until it closed) playing Mage Knight in the KFC, and then slept for a couple of hours in the car (sleep total 21h10). [SCHPAT: Jason and I were ahead of the game here, having had previous experience. I think my skill for sleeping in a car is now at level three!]

Apparently Waynne isn't much of a morning person. Not that I blame him, as these were very trying circumstances. Philip was also a bit testy, and Pat was trying hard to keep everyone in a good mood, but it was flopping majorly.

A while later, Pat phoned home and found out that his dad had left at 10am, 2 hours later than we had hoped. This was not welcome news.

There were lots of weird things around BW, but we're thinking of writing a Cthulhu module set in BW, so we can't tell you too much (you know how it goes). Anyway, Pat's dad eventually arrived, and we eventually left, and the rest of the trip was uneventful. Apart from a few tense moments as he drove past some abandoned cars in the L-place, with Pat's dad making jokes and slowing down. It wasn't funny.

Jason Burke

[SCHPAT: Well, even though it was only my second time driving to GenCon, and the third time a car had broken down on one of those two trips, I will be planning another expedition for next year. This time we should be travelling in my dad's Land Cruiser, it should seat six comfortably. Jason has tentatively agreed to be my navigation and was will be procline over experience.

igator and we will be pooling our experience to ensure that we get there and back uneventfully. If anybody is interested in going along with us just drop me a line.]



Dis Taun Ees An Avzauloot Sheethol.

- Das Hammerskjold in Octopus Invaders from 20,000 Leagues Below.

What?!? You didn't go?!

Eleven by train, a few by plane, and Philip, Patrick, Jason and Waynne by car, Patrick's car (see the article

"The L-Zone" by Jason for more on that experience).

Unbeknownst to the 10-strong CLAWs train rabble, I had arrived at the train station on that Wednesday morning

not knowing whether we actually had tickets for the train. But of course I chose to reveal this only *after* we were safely on our way past Belville. I certainly felt less organised this year - I trust it wasn't that evident.

The clacking wheels drove rhythmic pulses through the whole of the carriage and, like the ticking of a clock, marked the passing time. Through chilly countryside hugged by snow-capped peaks I drifted to sleep for a while...

My rest was interrupted though by the beginnings of Brindley's game of "Jeffrey Archer" (a version of Articulate). Although Brindley didn't know who E Gary Gygax was and Janet had trouble with Nyarlathotep, I made up for it by professing complete ignorance of anyone called Todd McLanefar (who?).

100% No Hippies

We had not one hippie on the train this year! Not a single bar of "How many Roads", nor even the first line of "House of the Rising Sun". No! We had a screaming infant instead. But once we'd done away with the baby (see Kobolds Ate My Baby below) we annexed enough quietspace to consider sleep.

During the remainder of the train journey Brindley took advantage of one of the small children with a length of yarn and a popsicle, Gareth shared his Vodka punch and

we recalled with fondness the phrase *Regret Not Available*

We arrived in Johannesburg (4 hours late) to discover that our

favourite Steers outlet had become "The Leopard Spot". Sounded like a bad excuse to have dodgy print furniture to me. We were met by Andy Moore and another of our Jo'burg hosts, Michael. Accommodation was organised with Laura, Grant, Michael and Ian Kitley's uncle, Robert Stein, and altogether they managed to take care of a lively (deadly?) bunch of almost 20 CLAWmembers.

That evening, Simon, Adrianna, Tim and I (all staying with Laura & Alan) went out to dinner at a nearby

Indian restaurant with a few of the other Convention-goers. What the other groups did I don't recall (DSTV was mentioned somewhere along the line).

Friday morning we rose for the traditional GenCon breakfast (coffee) and shortly thereafter arrived at the bustling Edenvale community centre to play in first of

the six sessions that weekend - a choice between *Goodfeathers* and *Dark Heart of the Wood*. The start of the first session was delayed by about two hours as the Registrars struggled with the overwhelming

number of gamers. There were already around 120 preregistrations for GenCon at doors this year. When you consider that last year saw 180 roleplayers **in total** you might get an inkling of how popular the gaming was this year.

"ALL HAIL KING TROG!"

Written by Chris Visser for the system "Kobolds Ate My Baby" (see Beer and Pretzels Roleplaying in CLAWmarks 23 for a review of the system), Goodfeathers saw us play a variety(a large variety) of

Kobolds (short-lived Kobolds) including Darkwing Kobolds, manic-leg-humping Kobolds, compulsive liarKobolds, mystic schizo were-chicken Kobolds, "don't-call-me-shorty" Kobolds (one of Lara's) and numerous others - all for the purpose of satisfying the baby cravings of our most esteemed leader, King Trog...

During the afternoon we played either Philip's *Dread Castle of Amber Isle* or Russell Goldman's L5R module, *A Simple Plan*.

Janet's LARP, "Deadline", hit a sudden Deadend, managing to run for just 60 minutes (apparently still exceeding the play-time of all previous runnings), but two (simultaneous) runnings of the Dune LARP *Point of Balance* were reported to be extremely successful.

A few of the CLAWbunch dared to go for All-You-Can-Eat Pizza, which seems to have become something of a masochistic tradition. We're suckers

for tradition. The SkankLord, Gareth, and Commander-in-Chief of his Legions of Skank, JD, attempted to slime their way to The Doors nightclub, the usual CLAWs hangout over GenCon, but were denied by the long queue for the Friday 13th Horror party. We weren't able to return to The Doors at all this GenCon (so no free Champagne this year).

Return to the Temple of Not-So-Elemental Evil

Saturday. A small town outside of central Johannesburg. An organiser carrying a bag of dice and leading 300 wasted gamers baying for coffee. The mist from the registration room betrays the rising temperature within.



"We get off on Judith"

- Andy taken completely out of

context





Another late start.

The Living Greyhawk module "Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil" had not arrived in time, so was replaced by "Dies Irae". The session concurrent to that, and played by the majority of CLAWmembers, was the Werewolf module "Road to Inverness". I decided to take some time off to recuperate from the previous night's excesses. (what excesses?)

In the meantime Warlord Brindley was presenting a forceful argument for the Warhammer 40K crown with his legion of Blood Angels and Jason was doing quite well in the Pokémon.

The morning sessions had run hopelessly late, so the costume competition had to be postponed. In fact the costume competition was not actually judged publically at all. Robyn had spent many hours working on the Witchblade outfit (including a rubber power-glove thingy which was darned cool) and deserved the attention, dammit.

Saturday afternoon brought us *Durin's Bane* (D&D) and *Countdown to Zero* (Cthulhu) which saw the players in Simon's game get rained on by progressively thicker and heavier lumps of ash but who persevered until it became lumps of molten lava.

Hurrah for the evening LARPs! Another auction LARP, Going, Going, Gone, played in by both Patrick (as the Burger King, ironically enough) and Judith. Neptune Project, contemporary sci-fi LARP set undersea included no fewer than nine CLAWmembers. Three of the characters were suffering from the effects of prolonged exposure to LSD, and only one

person died. Amazing.

One of the most talked about events must have been An Intimate Gathering (L5R) written by Russell Goldman. Fantastic food, incredible costumes and much bowing. Few

CLAWmembers got places in the LARP, but one life-groupie did.

Octobus Atheists want our Womyn

On Sunday while the D&D players wormed their way through Donald

Mullany's planescape, most of the CLAWmembers tackled *Octopus Aliens Want Our Women* in which a movie company decides to film a sci-fi epic starring a mechanical octopus in a sleepy New England coastal village. A member of the crew with any score in Cthulhu Mythos at all might have saved them from disaster. Alas.

And Duncan was destined to play the dodgy director.

Gareth was unfortunate enough to catch the GenCon flu and because of it missed the entire day.

The Sunday afternoon session was set aside for re-runs and classic modules and a running of the invitational game by Donald called *The Mummer's Fair*. When a game has such depth that you would choose to miss part

of the prizegiving and organise to complete it a week later and a thousand miles away, it's a significant g a m e . (Froth...froth...froth...)

Eet vos akshun. Eet vos adwentoor. Eet vos B=
Grade. Eet vos guvi. -

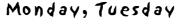
Burn, Baby, Burn!

The prizegiving at last. We sat through half-an-hour's worth of Magic prize handouts (occasionally catching a few stray boosters thrown in to the crowd which we would later attempt to burn). When we finally got to the Roleplaying prizes, the Magic players got up and left, making a hell of a noise in the process!

The South-Vietnamese Inquisition were distributing Apple-Sourz, Tequila and Vodka abundantly. We didn't expect this.

I don't think any of us expected to do as well as we did at GenCon this year. Adrianna took second place for Best Cthulhu Player. Brindley annihilated all before him to win the Warhammer 40K. Robyn won the **Costume Competition** for the Legend of the Five Rings Larp and Duncan took Best Cthulhu Player, hurrah!

The after party included a three course traditional chinese meal and the Dead Alewives D&D clip.



Half of the train group headed back to Cape Town leaving Adrianna, Tim, JD and me to help Grant with some of the GenCon aftermath.

Huge thankyou's to
Rob Stein, Andy (no cars written off this
year), Laura, Alan, Michael, Grant, Retha
and the rest of the GenCon team for your hospitality,
patience, pizza, cars and for organising an awesome
week of roleplaying.

I think we still had some of Gareth's punch when we got back to Cape Town.



The Campaign Inquirer

Dungeon Masters Reveal All in Startling Exposé!

L5R: Austin Chamberlain

Tracy - Asako Ahiko, Phoenix Shugenja **Simon** - Doji Etsushiro, Crane Bushi **Adrianna** - Shosuro Hatsuko, Scorpion Bushi **Robyn** - Doji Rei, Crane Bushi

This game revolves around a group of young samurai making a reputation for themselves in Rokugan. After impressing the Emperor himself, they were made magistrates of a lucrative but troublesome province, and must now prove themselves. Their current activities involve roaming the province terrifying peasants.

D&D Northern Group - The Savage North: Austin Chamberlain

Simon - Aglar Ni'muil Anglosmothrim, elven ranger **Lara** - Lia, drow fighter (we suspect)

Adrianna - Lady Zerlia Mondegreen, human rogue

David - Untarg, half-orc cleric **Jessica** - Thora, human barbarian

Vera - Dejan, drow wizard

A group of misfits, flung together by chance and held together by the hostility of outsiders, roams the northern forests. So far the game has revolved around the astonishing number of friends and enemies the group has managed to accumulate, from entire temples to extraplanar wizards.

D&D Southern Group - Chaos and Intrigue: Austin Chamberlain

Dylan - Baloc, human rogue
Mike - Elly, forest gnome druid
Naz - Lelienra, half-sea-elf sorcerer
Claire - Anketh, half-moon-elf sorcerer/fighter

Jean - Silver, moon elf ranger/wizard **Waynne** - Kerrick, human paladin

Set in a country torn apart by civil war, a group of heroes has tried to spread safety and justice - only to stumble on several large and powerful forces intent on maintaining the status quo. Faced with several powerful factions, the group is resorting to diplomacy in an attempt to make worthy and powerful allies.

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Ars Magica: Waynne Human

Philip - Agrippa of Tytalus; Balthazar the bard **Austin** - Vladimir of Bonisagus; Dusan the changeling **Simon** - Matheus of Björnaer; Thomas the blacksmith **Adrianna** - Sabina Ex Miscellanea; Clara the halfgoblin

Jessica - Gisela of Jerbiton; Valentin the young knight

The saga takes place in 1197 in the untamed forests of Bavaria, Southern Germany.

The Magi of the newly-formed covenant of Waldenstein have very few resources available to them and thus most of the problems they have had to face have been of a horribly mundane nature: how to rebuild an abandoned stone monastery in the middle of a forest, how to pay covenant folk with no funds...

Soon Waldenstein should be able to run itself and the Magi will be able to look to the more Magical environment around them. There is a group of Faeries in the North which have shown some interest in the Magi. There is the Tremere covenant of Finestra in Transylvania which has offered them their hand in friendship, but can they be trusted? And then there is the matter of a trapped item which nearly cost the covenant the life of one of the Magi - was it just a mistake or something more sinister?

Deadlands: Brendan Quinlivan

Sed - Dr. James McAndrew, British businessman and occultist

Andrew - Anthony Staples, Huckster (swapped into a Mexican cowgirl's body)

Piotr - Val Geerhorn, Mad Scientist **Verolin** - Talon, Injun warrior

The characters were killed quickly, each facing their personal Hell and torture at the hands of the Cowboy. All four then woke up: three in coffins, and the already undead Talon lying in someone's cellar. Throughout their adventures two figures stretched the posse's loyalities: the Cowboy, calling himself Jefferson Cole, and a man known only as the Prospector. On Cole's suggestion the four undead adventurers got out of Dodge and have set out into the fading Weird Western sun...

Aberrant: Brindley Uytenbogaardt

Ian - Thoth Rethwellen a.k.a.The ScabTai - Clancey Jones, a.k.a.