



BLOOD™

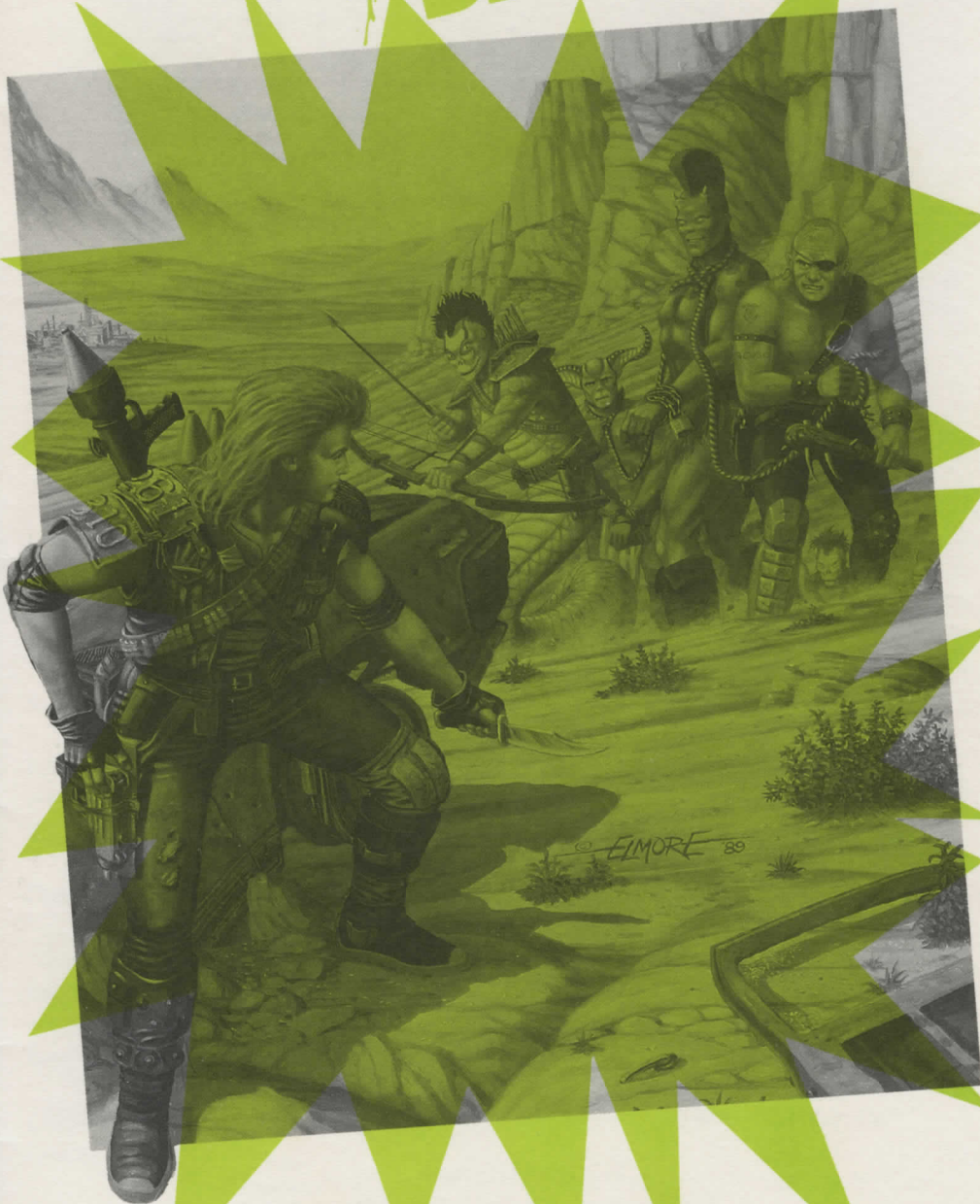


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Bad Blood was created in loving memory of
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INTRODUCTION



"I feel my time drawing to a close, my young friend. We must begin preparations for my passing."

The Oracle's voice was thin and reedy, much weaker than it had been during Tellek's last visit to the venerable mutant's remote hermitage. Tellek peered into the shadowy recesses of the Oracle's hood, but he could see only the eerie glow of the Oracle's ancient green eyes.

"Go on, pops," Tellek protested. "Buzz is, you been kick'n since 'fore the Great Fires. Why you shiv you gonna drop now?"

Within his rough burlap robe, the Oracle rocked slightly in silent laughter. "The way you youngsters speak . . . I can barely understand you anymore. Even you, honored Tellek, Shaman of Nivvik, speak in Chat so thick your own grandfather couldn't follow you! For all the humans' shortcomings, at least they've preserved the language."

Tellek shifted uncomfortably under the Oracle's benevolent but critical gaze. Despite his own forty-odd years, Tellek always felt like an ignorant child in the Oracle's presence.

"I've lived hundreds of years," the old mutant continued, "but lately, I've felt myself slowing down. My joints ache, and the dust of the Plains seems to clog

my lungs. I don't think I'll 'drop' tomorrow, as you so delicately put it, but I'm finally discovering that I am, in fact, mortal.

"Because I no longer expect to last forever, I feel the need to pass on my experiences. Some day, men and mutants again will build the sort of cities that the Ancients did. If my memories are lost, then we are all doomed to repeat the errors of the Ancients, and unleash the Next Fire upon the world."

The Oracle leaned toward Tellek, his green eyes burning with seriousness. The Shaman felt himself shrink before the Oracle, his antennae quivering with his nerves.

"I have chosen you, Tellek, to receive my knowledge. When I have passed, you will come to live here, and you will serve the mutants of the Plains as their Oracle."

"I can't . . .," Tellek sputtered in surprise. "I'm not shivvy —"

"You must," the Oracle interrupted firmly. "The Spirits of the Ancients tell me that you will live longer than any other mutant alive. I still have a few years left to teach you what you need to know."

The Oracle leaned forward to poke the dying fire back to life. "So," he began, settling back into his seat. "Let's begin with the Great Fires . . ."

Before the Fires, the Ancients — whom the humans call the Pure Fathers — lived in a green and fertile world. Food was plentiful, and fresh water fell from the sky. The Ancients built vast cities, far greater than those of the humans of today. These cities allied to form nations, which controlled areas vaster than all the Plains you know.

Yet even in this paradise, some of the Ancients were not happy. They lusted after the land and the wealth of their neighbors, even though they already had plenty themselves. This greed grew and festered, and soon the Ancients began to struggle over their riches. Their struggles grew into wars as their armies grew larger and their weapons more deadly.

In the end, one nation realized that its strength was gone, and it had only one weapon left — the Fire. Carried in a metal shell that dropped from the sky, the Fire would consume everything for miles around in clouds of flame. In its wake, it left only barren, blasted land and a lingering sickness that slowly killed most of those not destroyed in the Fire itself.

When that one, defeated nation released its Fire upon its enemies, all the other nations loosed their own. In minutes, the world was swallowed by a cloud of flame, and all that was good and pure and healthy was banished forever. All that remained was barren, dry, and contaminated.

But some of the Ancients survived the Fires, young Tellek, and struggled to survive in the blasted world they had made. Sadly, their genes had been tainted by the sickness of the Great Fire. Within a generation, mutations began to appear among the children of the survivors — albinism,

dwarfism, cyclopism. Soon, more than half the children born were mutants of some sort, and the mutations they bore were increasingly bizarre. Some children had skin of green, blue, or red, while others were born with horns, or scales, or armor plates. Fearing for the survival of their species, the pure humans cast out their most hideously tainted children to perish on the parched desert. Those with minor mutations were allowed to remain among the pure humans, but were made slaves.

A few of those abandoned children survived, forming nomadic tribes for common defense against the dangerous predators that stalked the plains. For a while, these tribes fought amongst themselves, but they soon realized the safety afforded by settling into small villages. Yet each village remained a tribe unto itself, forming alliances and rivalries with its neighbors.

Meanwhile, the pure humans had begun to build towns on the ruins of the ancient cities, using their mutant children as slave laborers. Soon, however, their demand for labor became too great for their own genetically faltering blood. Human hunters took to the Plains, capturing the village mutants as slaves. This outside threat soon cemented the mutant villages together into a united, if diverse, society, allied against a common foe.

For several generations now, the balance of power between humans and mutants has remained relatively stable. The human cities are fewer than mutant villages, but they are larger, better fortified, and more technically advanced than the mutant villages. The mutants are hardier and more prolific than the humans, but the dangers of human and animal predators upon the Plains, as well as limited food and water, have kept them from overwhelming their human rivals.

THE PLAINS TODAY



"Not the buzzar wings, you stupid taint!" cried Lord Dominix, cuffing the cringing mutant slave on the ear. "I asked for bushbug! Drag your scaly tail back in there and get me some bushbug, NOW!"

The little mutant struggled to balance his stop-sign tray of fried buzzar as he dodged Lord Dominix's wild kick. Trying at once to bow, apologize, and run, the slave quickly retreated to the sanctuary of the kitchen.

"What are you laughing at?" the dark-eyed lord snarled, turning on his dining companion, Captain Theodus.

"Not you, Lord!" the burly guard captain explained. "The little blue fellow. His toe-claws caught in the carpet when you kicked at him, and he just about fell headfirst into the buzzar! He may not be as graceful as your last fetchit, but he's lots more entertaining!"

The anger faded from Dominix's face as his thin, cruel lips drew back in a sadistic curl. "Oh, I don't know about that, Theodus. I recall being very entertained, watching the lupusses tear that last one limb from limb."

"Me, too, Lord," Theodus chuckled fondly. "Me, too."

"Which reminds me, Captain," Dominix said, popping the top off a centuries-old beer bottle. "What do we have to look forward to at the next Mutant Games?"

"Well, sir, there's that big Blarg we caught near Okkarn village last week. I was thinking of putting him up against six lupusses . . . properly starved, of course. And I'm holding three bushbugs for that hairy red runaway we nabbed going over the wall two days ago. He's a wiry devil, you know."

"I've heard that," said Dominix. "But I was hoping for something a little more . . . personal."

"Baso's donated a water-stealing slave for the Games," Theodus replied thoughtfully. "I figured I'd let one of my men do her in, but if you'd like to do the honors —"

"Is that the small green one, with just one arm?"

"Yes, lord, that's the one."

Dominix smiled broadly, his eyes bright with anticipation. "What wonderful sport! Have one of your taints sharpen a sword for me, Theodus — I'm going to be the main event on Saturday!"

Ever since mutants were first born to the humans surviving the Great Fires, they have been oppressed and enslaved. Those early humans began this oppression when they chose the least deformed of their mutant children to serve them as slaves, and turned their more hideously mutated offspring out into the desert. The mutants who were allowed to remain spent their lives digging wells and building shelters that they were seldom allowed to use. But most of their brothers and sisters out on the Plains were even less fortunate; those who escaped the mutated predators usually died of starvation and dehydration.

For the first few generations after the Fires, the humans were able to meet their need for manual labor by enslaving their own mutant children. As the mutations of their children grew more severe, however, the humans became less selective about which children they kept to serve them. And as human towns grew larger, the demand for slaves exceeded the supply of mutant children, forcing the humans to look for new sources.

Though most of the mutant children the humans had abandoned on the Plains perished, a few of the strongest did survive. While the mutant slaves erected cities for their human masters, these free mutants of the Plains built villages of their own. Better adapted to the new world than the pure humans, these Plains mutants began to flourish — relatively speaking, of course.

It was to the mutant villages that the humans looked when they needed more slaves. Small hunting parties set out to capture lone mutants, while large bands were organized to raid the villages. The Plains mutants defended themselves as best they could, but the occasional raids by human slavers became a part of their lives. One mutant tribe, the serpentine Kejeks, even struck a bargain with the humans — they would capture mutants from other villages for sale to the humans, if they themselves were protected from the slave trade.

Over generations of slavery, the mutants in the human cities became a broken, dispirited lot, offering their masters little if any resistance. The new slaves, captured on the Plains, were entirely different. Fiercely proud and independent, these warriors and hunters struggled against their human captors. Yet it did not take the humans long to find a use for this trait. Soon after the city of Yvrium began to bring in captured slaves, it created the Mutant Games — gladiatorial exhibitions pitting the most dangerous of the new captives against wild animals and one another. The Games were tremendously popular with the humans, eventually spreading to Xantium and other human cities.

In the majority of Games events, mutant combatants face beasts or other mutants. Slaves who present problems for their masters are often sold to the Games for a very low price. Occasionally, human soldiers enter the arena to face mutant gladiators, but the humans are invariably better armed and armored than their foes. Snipers with rifles stand watch to prevent any mutant from finishing a human opponent. Mutant warriors do not enjoy the same protection — a mutant who fights well simply faces larger numbers of more dangerous foes, until he is finally slain.

The hunger among humans for the barbaric entertainment of the Games, as well as the continuing need for slaves to rebuild ancient towns for their human masters, continues to drive human slavers out onto the Plains. In order to combat this threat, many mutant villages have, upon occasion, organized their hunters into war parties. These bands deliberately seek out human slaving expeditions, attacking openly or from ambush. The mutant village of Okkarn is especially warlike and aggressive, having launched several small but successful missions against humans travelling the Plains. Yet Okkarn's success has only isolated the village from its neighbors, as the humans look elsewhere for their slaves.

Despite the efforts of Okkarn and the other mutant villages, however, slaving raids by humans remain common. Lone travellers are especially vulnerable to the well-armed slavers and their mutant accomplices, the Kejek.

CONVERSATION



"These are sad times, Equitus," Lady Cassia told her son solemnly, "but these are also times of great opportunity." She placed one graceful hand on the young man's strong shoulder.

"My father is dead," Equitus replied bitterly. "What opportunity is there in that?" Equitus stood proud and tall, his frame and bearing reminding Cassia of her husband, the dead lord Belligus. Yet in Equitus' handsome and intelligent face, she saw the wisdom of her own father. Others would have attributed these qualities in the son to his mother, but Cassia's humility kept her from taking credit for her son's strengths.

"You have grown up in your father's house, Equitus, and you see the world with your father's eyes." Cassia sat, motioning for her son to do likewise. "Belligus was a good father, a good man, in his own fashion, and a loving husband as well, but his love for the past prevented him from seeing change in the present.

"Our race is failing, Equitus. To every generation, fewer babies are born, yet the percentage of mutants among our children continues to climb. We must learn to regard the mutants as our friends and equals, not as our slaves, if we are to survive. We must forget the hunts and Games of the past, and bring about a new era of brotherhood between our peoples.

"Before I wed your father and came to live in his palace, I lived in the city with my father. My best friend as a child was the daughter of our mutant housekeeper. When my father died and my mother was forced to sell our housekeeper, my friend went with her. I never saw her again."

As Cassia paused, a tear rolled down her soft cheek. "That's why we must end the slavery, Equitus," Cassia said, looking back up at her son. "The ways of your father and his brother, Dominix of Yorium, must end."

"But mother, what can I do?" Equitus asked desperately. "How can I change the beliefs of all our people?"

Cassia smiled at her son. "First, you must change your own thinking. Go among the people — humans and mutants. Talk to them, get to know them. Learn the mutants' special way of speaking. Some day you will rule a city, Equitus. The most important skill a leader can have is the ability to communicate — to speak well, and to listen better. If you can do these things, then you will be more than a great Lord — you will be a good man, as well."

Everyone on the Plains and in the villages and towns has something to say. Whenever you meet someone new, be sure to speak to them for at least a moment, to learn if they have knowledge that might be useful to you. To speak to a human or a mutant, select **Talk** (see your *Bad Blood* Reference Card for selecting commands and menu options). If there is more than one person nearby, you'll be asked whom you wish to speak to — select the one you want to address from the menu.

Once you've decided to whom you'll speak, a menu will appear, listing the available conversation options. On the Plains, most folks begin a chat with small talk about the local water or hunting conditions before getting down to business, so start by selecting **Start Chitchat** from the menu. In the next windows, you'll enjoy casual conversation for a while. This informal talk will often prove invaluable, as a friendly inquiry about the weather can bring information that could save your life!

After pleasantries have been exchanged, it's time for the meat of the conversation. The second choice on the conversation menu is **Talk About...**, which lets you steer the discussion toward subjects you're interested in learning more about. When you select this option, you'll be offered a menu of topics you already know a little bit about. For example, you can always ask a person for the **Latest News**, though not everyone will be up enough on current events to help you. The other items on the menu are "keywords" for topics other people have already mentioned to you. You can ask anyone you meet about any topic on your list, though here again, most people can only help you with topics they are themselves familiar with.

From time to time, people will mention something or someone you may not have heard about before. When this happens, a bell will sound, and

a new keyword will be added to your **Talk About...** menu. It's a good idea to follow up any new topics immediately, since the person who first mentions something will usually have more information about it, or can direct you to someone who does. And, when you've learned all there is to know about a topic, its keyword is automatically removed from your menu. Thus, your menu is always being updated, retaining only those topics you have more to learn about.

Of course, some people will call out to you, or ask you questions. When someone hails you, their comment will appear in a window. If you don't want to talk to that person at the moment, just press **Escape** to clear the window and go on about your business. If you *would* like to chat with them, however, selecting **Talk** will clear their comment and take you straight into the conversation, just as if you'd started it.

When you're asked a question, you'll be offered a menu listing possible replies. Answer to the best of your ability — if you lie, you may miss important information. Your response to the question will usually elicit further conversation from the other person.

After you've finished a conversation, and you're ready to move on, select the final option, **Say Bye**. This option simply drops you out of conversation mode, so that you can continue your adventure.

A typical conversation in a mutant village might run something like this:

You begin a conversation with the village firetender by selecting **Talk**. To greet him politely, you select **Start Chitchat**. Clearing your throat, you ask the firetender, "How's the hunting been lately?"

The firetender shrugs and answers, "Fair enough. I'm keep'n the family fed. You know, I heard a pack of lupusses outside the village last night."

A bell sounded with the firetender's reply, indicating that a keyword was added to your menu. Eager to learn more, you select **Talk About...** from the conversation menu. There, you find the keywords **Latest news** and **Lupusses**. You select **Lupusses**.

Gesturing, you ask the firetender, "What do you know about lupusses?"

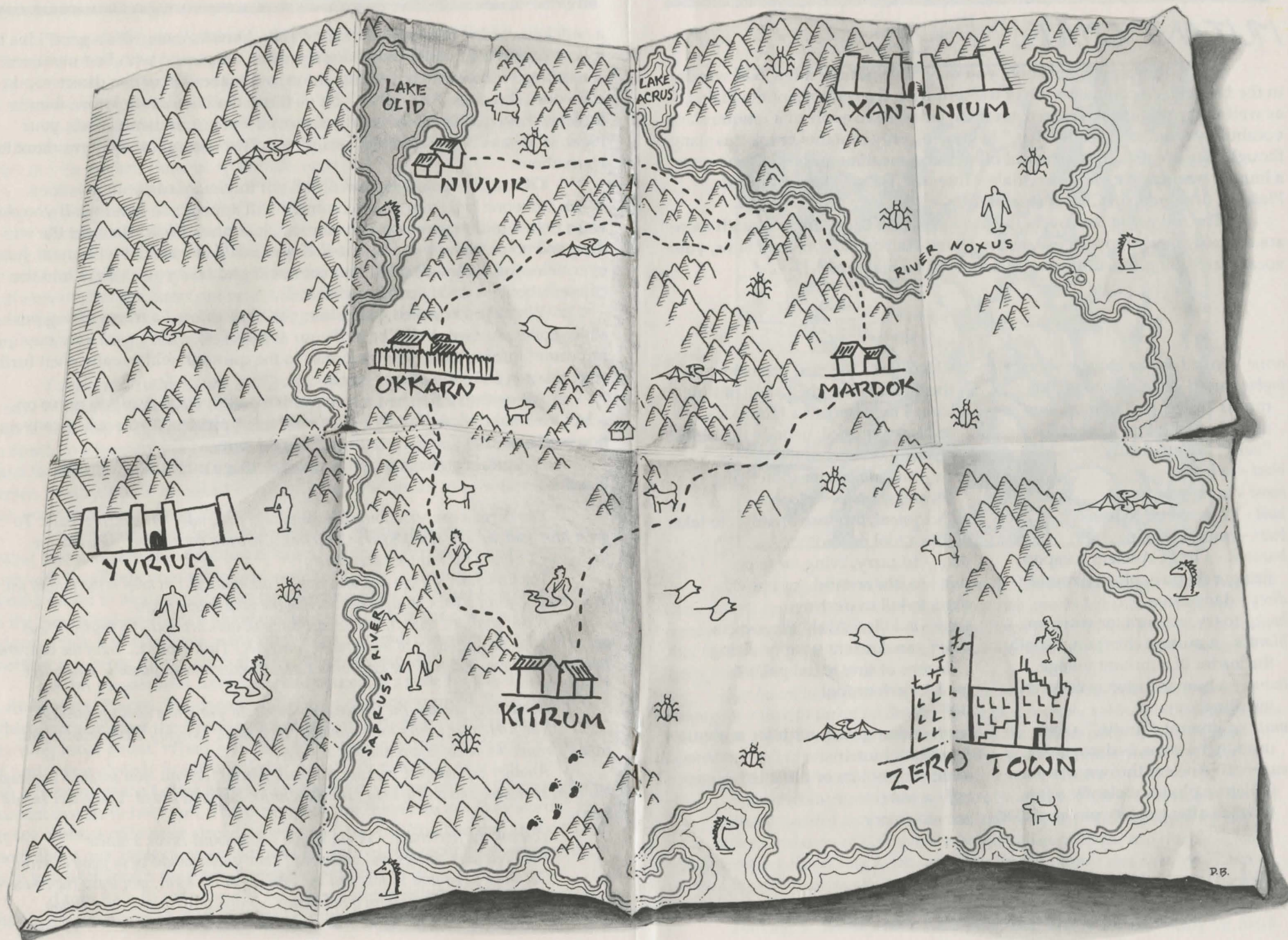
The firetender thinks for a moment, then says, "Mighty dicey beasts, bud. Innok's gonna hunt 'em down tonight, he says."

Another bell rings. Checking the **Talk About...** menu, you see that **Lupusses** has been removed, and a new topic, **Innok's hunt**, has been added. You select **Innok's hunt**.

You ask the firetender, "What do you know about Innok's hunt?"

The firetender shrugs and answers, "Your guess would be as good as mine."

Deciding to go find Innok, and ask him about his hunt, you leave the conversation by selecting **Say Bye**. With a polite nod, you head off in search of Innok.



MUTANT CHAT

In the sample conversation, you may have noticed a few odd words in the firetender's comments. Over the centuries, the mutants of the Plains, as well as the mutant slaves in the human cities, have evolved a unique slang vocabulary which they call "Chat." In general, only mutants speak this slang; though they are usually distrustful of humans, most mutants welcome even a human who speaks their own dialect fluently. Thus, to survive on the Plains, a firm grasp of Chat is essential.

The following list covers the most common Chat terms, though there are certainly many more in use on the Plains. As you explore the Plains, your vocabulary will grow, until you're chatt'n like a real mute!

arnie - to sell out or change sides.
bigbig - used as an adjective, this means "huge" or "tremendous"; used as an adverb, it means "very" or "especially."
blast - to leave.
boost - to help or assist.
bust - to escape or to free.
buzz - rumor, gossip.
buzzook - a huge Ancient weapon, firing a single explosive round.
dicey - dangerous.
hack - to try, attempt, or work on.
himukk - a mutant chieftain, usually the leader of a mutant village.
hume - a human; often used in an insulting way.
mute - a mutant; "mutie," a term used by humans, is derogatory.
nade - an Ancient thrown weapon which explodes violently a few seconds after a safety pin is pulled.

the Next Fire - the next occurrence of the Great Fires; the "end" of time.
Olduns - members of a Himukk's advisory council; usually the oldest, wisest members of the village.
oozee - an Ancient weapon firing several shots per second.
pilf - to steal, or more broadly, to take.
plokk - a fool or idiot.
shag - to carry, bring, or fetch.
shiv - to understand, or know.
slag - to kill or destroy.
slicer - a killer. Also "slicer-dicer."
sodoff - an Ancient weapon firing dozens of tiny metal pellets.
spud - a jerk or fool.
stiff - dead.
taint - a derogatory term for mutants used by humans.
trubb - a problem or difficulty.
tuff - a warrior or soldier.
vex - to worry.

SURVIVAL



Three days out from Kitrum, Bessek the Hunter had bigbig trubbs. With his water all but gone, his arrows spent, and just two rounds left in his sodoff, the mutant knew only his wits and his powerful horns protected him from certain death. And the band of Kejek slavers on his tail was just the thing to knock his chances down from slim to none at all.

For hours now, Bessek had been winding his way up into this canyon, looking for a cave to turkel up in. But the Kejek were right behind him, and there was no cover in sight. Ducking around a corner in the narrow canyon, Bessek leaned against the wall to catch his breath. Carefully, he slid the sodoff from its holster, listening closely and waiting for the battle he couldn't escape.

Several minutes passed in interminable silence. Then — a cascade of stones!

Bessek wheeled around the corner, taking the approaching Kejeks by surprise. Before the slavers could react, the hunter squeezed off the two rounds in his sodoff, dropping the leading Kejeks instantly. In the seconds that followed, Bessek rammed the gun back into its holster, drew his combat knife, and leapt over the fallen slavers at the next member of their band.

The knife in Bessek's hand cut deadly silver arcs in the air, slicing the Kejek

before him twice before the slaver's club struck him in the chest. As Bessek reeled with that blow, another Kejek's arrow took him in the leg. Stabbing desperately, the hunter landed a third, fatal blow to his immediate opponent.

Standing feebly over the downed Kejeks, Bessek glanced about for his next foe. Suddenly, the world exploded in white, then faded slowly to black as the brave hunter slumped to the ground.

The slaver who had crept up behind Bessek let out a piercing cry of victory, thrusting his club toward the sky. His band had paid dearly for this dicey hunter, but the humes would pay even more for a hunk of Games — meat like Bessek. This one capture alone would make the entire slave hunt profitable . . .

COMBAT

Combat on the Plains is always fast, and often fatal. Only heroes and fools risk travelling alone — but then it's heroes and fools that dominate the tales of the firetenders.

Every tuff begins his mission with one weapon. In Jakka's case, it's her dangerous eye blast; for Dekker, it's an Ancient steel combat knife; Varigg relies on his own mutant strength. You'll be able to finish most foes with a couple or three blows with these attacks, but as you travel across the Plains, you'll build an arsenal of Ancient and primitive weapons for all occasions. To ready a new weapon, select **Use**. This will call up a complete menu of the items you carry. Draw a weapon by selecting it on this menu — the weapon is now in your hand and ready to attack.

To strike your foe, just move into position and hit the **Attack** button (check the *Bad Blood* Reference Card for the **Attack** buttons on your system). For a hand-to-hand weapon, like Dekker's knife or Varigg's bare fist, you'll need to move right up next to your target. With a missile weapon, like Jakka's blast or an Ancient gun, all you need to do is line up a clear shot due north, south, east or west, then face your opponent and fire.

If you hit your foe and injure him, you'll see a blood splat from the wound. If your blow glances off his armor, you'll see sparks fly. Keep attacking until your opponent falls down dead — he wouldn't offer you mercy, so there's no reason to grant it to him. And once you've attacked someone, they're not likely to forget the insult . . .

Of course, if you've found one of the Ancients' guns or nades, you won't be able to fire it indefinitely — sooner or later you'll empty your clip. When this happens, you'll need to reload your weapon, or ready a new one. To do either of these, select **Use**. If you're carrying more ammo for your ready weapon, you can reload by selecting the ammo from the list. If ammo for your weapon in hand doesn't appear on the menu, then you've run out. You'll need to select another weapon from the menu to continue the fight, at least until you find more ammo.

THE WATER OF LIFE

On the dry, barren Plains, one substance is the measure of life — water. With an ample supply of water, your survival is almost assured; without it, you will soon perish.

On the right-hand side of your screen, you'll see an Ancient soda bottle, filled with water. Keep a close eye on the level of the water in the bottle — this is the measure of your life force in *Bad Blood*. When the bottle is full, you're healthy and at the peak of your strength. As your water supply drops, you move closer and closer to death.

Several factors affect the rate at which the water in your bottle is lost. The most obvious is combat — whenever your opponent lands a blow that wounds you, the injury is represented by a loss of water in the bottle. Exposure to certain hazards in the environment, especially among Ancient ruins, can also injure, thus lowering your water level. And if you go too long without eating, you'll begin to starve to death — the effects of which are also recorded in the water bottle.

If you can avoid injury and starvation, you will gradually regain strength as time passes. This recovery is naturally represented by a slow rise in the level of water in the bottle. But sometimes, you'll want a quicker recovery. This can be accomplished in two ways — by resting, or by eating the heart of a turkel.

To rest, select **Save Game** from the **Options** menu. You'll automatically sleep for as much as six hours, as well as saving your current position so that your game can be reloaded at a later time. Resting a full six hours will restore as much as half the capacity of your water bottle. But be careful when and where you save — resting in a dangerous area is especially risky, as the mutated beasts of the Plains have rather rude methods of awakening unwary travellers. If you don't get a full six hours' sleep, your game won't be saved, though you will regain some of the water in your bottle.

The most potent and immediate healing available to the denizens of the Plain comes from the heart of the turkel. Taken from a freshly killed beast, a turkel heart will often restore all damage taken from injury and starvation, filling the water bottle to capacity. Dried and treated hearts, carried as a precaution by many travellers, offer similar if less spectacular results.

The loss of water caused by starvation is somewhat different than that due to injury. Once you begin to starve, you will lose water at regular — and frequent — intervals, until you have starved to death. If you find some food, go ahead and eat it by selecting **Food** from the **Use** menu. This will immediately halt the starvation process. Of course, if you have no food when mealtime rolls around, hunger will begin to set in again . . .

RIGHT OF CONQUEST

When you overcome a foe, be sure to stand nearby for a moment — he'll often drop an item that may be of use to you. Most humans and mutants carry weapons and ammunition, both of which can prove invaluable as you cross the Plains. Other items are occasionally found on vanquished enemies as well, including food, dogfood, bugspray, and even more bizarre artifacts. And of course, there are also lost and forgotten relics and ammo stashes scattered throughout the Plains and its towns and villages. Always keep your eyes open for new items to add to your inventory.

To pick up an object you've found, simply move across it. If it can be removed, it will automatically be transferred from the ground to your own inventory, where you can **Examine** or **Use** it at will.

Whenever you find a new object, try using it, to get a feel for what it can do. Don't worry about conserving items such as food or bugspray — they are readily replaced, and there is little to be gained by hoarding them. On the other hand, you'll want to use your ammunition wisely — the proper shells for your favorite weapon can often be hard to find.

THE SETTLEMENTS



The village fire crackled in the center of the circle as Mardok's young mutes gathered round. The wise and venerable Shaman sat among the children, ready to teach them of the Plains and to answer their questions, while the Himukk, Ressok, looked on from outside the circle. As the young ones settled down for their lesson, the Shaman raised his hand to silence them.

"Now then," he began patiently, "what'll we chat tonight? Is there anything you wanna shiv?"

From the shadows, Ressok cleared his throat. "They need to shiv the Plains, Shaman. Chat'em about the villages, the towns, and the ruins."

"I shivvit, Ressok," the older mutant replied to his Himukk respectfully. "The Plains it is, then . . ."

The Plains form a barren, blasted wilderness bordered on the north and west by high, craggy mountains, and on the south and east by a stagnant, oily sea. Breaking up the terrain are several smaller, irregular chains of mountains, as well as two slow-moving, brackish rivers. Dotted across the Plains are four mutant villages, two human towns, and one ruined city built by the Ancients before the Great Fires.

Mardok, not far inland from the east coast and just south of the east-flowing River Noxus, is typical of the mutant villages. Peopled by a few dozen mutant villagers, Mardok supports itself by hunting, and to a lesser degree by scavenging and trading. **Kitrum**, a day's march to the southwest of Mardok, is a similar but slightly smaller village. It's inhabitants live as much by scavenging from the nearby ruins of Zero Town as by hunting the beasts of the Plains.

Nivvik, almost a day's march west of Mardok, can be reached by following the Noxus to its source, continuing west overland until you hit Olid Lake, then following the shoreline to the south. On the shore of the Plains' largest and most malodorous body of water, Nivvik is primarily a fishing village. Its defensible position against the lake, along with the plentiful if uninviting supply of food and water, has made Nivvik the second largest of the mutant villages.

The largest village is **Okkarn**, a half-day's march due south of Nivvik and Lake Olid. Located uncomfortably close to the hostile human town of Yvrium, Okkarn has risen to primacy among the villages through the aggressive, militaristic mindset of its people. Distrustful of outsiders and fond of conflict, the Okkarners have set themselves apart from the rest of mutantkind. If any mutant village were to turn back a human raid, this would be the one.

The human towns on the Plains are **Xantinium**, north across the Noxus from Mardok, and **Yvrium**, backed up against the western mountains. Both towns make use of reconstructed buildings dating back before the Fires. Yvrium's lord, Dominix, is known for his hardline anti-mutant sentiments, though his brother's widow, Lady Cassia of Xantinium, is gaining a reputation as a taint-lover. Human slaving parties near Yvrium are common and aggressive, but slavers have not been seen in the Xantinium area since the death of Cassia's husband, Lord Belligus.

The most remarkable structures on the Plains are the Ancient towers of **Zero Town**, in the southeast corner of the region. These ruins are shunned by most humans, who are affected by the unusually high radayshun which persists in the area. Mutants, however, appear unaffected by the radayshun, and many have used the old buildings as a refuge from human slavers. There is also reputed to be an especially fierce population of mutated beasts in and around Zero Town.

Plains mutants can find shelter and aid in any of the four mutant villages — even Okkarn tolerates visitors from the Plains. The dangerous beasts of the Plains rarely stray within the village walls, and those that do are usually swiftly dispatched by the local hunters, so you can count on a safe night's rest in any of the empty beds in Mardok, Nivvik, Kitrum, or Okkarn. Predators are not uncommon, however, in Zero Town. It's usually wiser to head west to Kitrum for a bed, even at night, than to make camp among these Ancient ruins.

The human towns, however, offer no comfort to hunters on the Plains. Yvrium still aggressively hunts slaves, so avoid the region surrounding that town whenever possible. Xantinium rarely, if ever, takes free mutants as slaves, but its gates usually remain locked against travellers on the Plains. Human townsmen occasionally venture beyond their tall cement walls, but they have the protection of the well-armed and armored guards and officers. These soldiers often carry guns, so the wise mutant steers clear of all humans.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS...



A young tuff from the village of Mardok, you've only just passed the rites of adulthood and assumed the duties of a hunter and warrior. But you may not be able to enjoy these new privileges for long — the scent of war has blown across the Plains, carrying with it the smell of gunpowder, humes, and death.

Hume tuffs and Olduns have been seen crossing the Plains between Xantinium and Yvrium, no doubt forging a deadly alliance against all the free mutes. Buzz is, the humes have stockpiled Ancient weapons and supplies for their assault. Even though the combined tuffs of the villages might outnumber the hume warriors almost four men to one, the mute arsenal of bows, knives and a few scrounged guns can't compete with the humes' hardware. As it did hundreds of years ago, tech once again threatens an entire people with quick and bloody extinction.

But some of the Mardokkers are buzz'n that the Himukk has a plan to stop this war before it happens. No one shivs much about it, but Resso has called a village council for tonight after sundown. There, he'll chat the trubbs with his own Olduns, and decide for good how to hack at the prob. And you've got this plokky feeling that you're a bigbig chunk of the Himukk's plan...

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