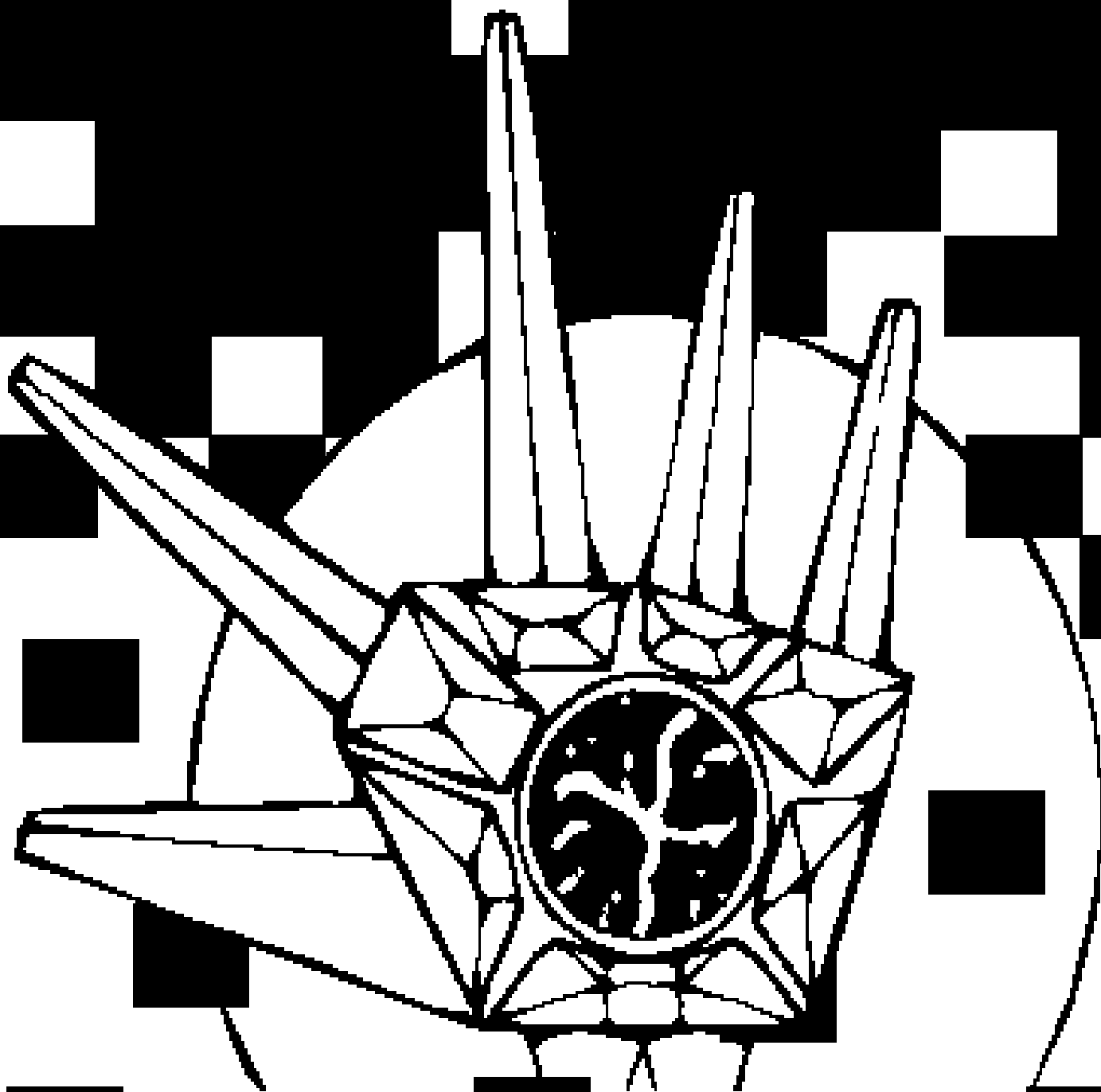


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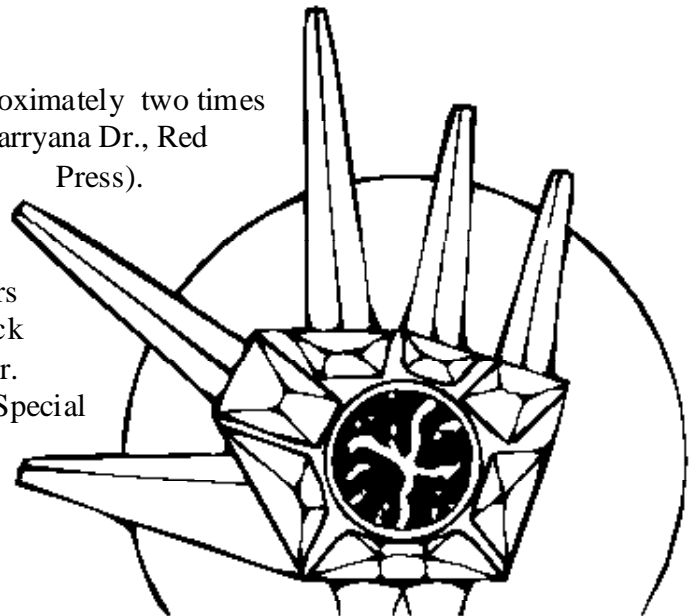
# *Sandman Sentinel*

The Journal Of The United Sandmen



A lot has happened in the world since our final issue, issue number ten, came out in 1986. Unfortunately not much has been happening in Logan's world since then. The biggest news was the short lived adaptation of the first two Logan novels into comic format. The writing was fantastic. The art was not. The movie soundtrack was finally released on compact disc (Sony Special Products/Bay Cities BCD 3024 (A22722)DIDP 077068) with a rather annoying liner message mentioning the only good thing about the movie was the music. The Logan's run television series was finally put back on the air thanks to Ted Turner. These two events prompted several die-hard LR fans to bring back Sandman Sentinel. Special Thanks to Greg Crawford for financial contributions, Tim Smith and Chris Wiedner for their support and a special thanks to Janelle Holmes for writing another SandLady story. It took over four years for me to get off my rear and finish this issue. I wanted it to be special. Our last issue featured a full color cover, a rather unique idea in fanzines back in 1986, so issue number 11 needed to be ever better. A holographic cover is still a bit out of the question here in 1994 so this issue contains a video tape supplement. I experimented with reading the stories onto tape but it did not sound all that good. This issue also comes in a special three ring binder to accommodate any further supplements to this issue that may periodically be published. Rather than put out another huge issue this will allow us to keep in touch on a more regular basis. If you bought this issue at a convention you are entitled to the updates as well. Just send us a postcard with your name and address on it and mention Sandman Sentinel and we will add you to the mailing list. If you are wondering "what happened to my digest sized issues" we did not get enough stories to merit printing several issues. In fact from the several hundred fliers that Chris Wiedner and myself put out at conventions we received a rather low response rate. Well actually two subscriptions... If you have a story you would like to contribute, or a piece or art please send them. If we get enough contributions issue #12 can not be far away! How about 1996 for the 20th anniversary of the movie? We except contributions on normal paper, photographic paper, and in digital format. If you want to contribute on computer disk please use either IBM or Mac formatted disks (high density preferred) Text should be in some major format. (Word Perfect, MSWord, Mac Write) and pictures should be in Mac Pict format or in TIFF format. You can also E-mail you contributions or questions to [virtviki@pacbell.net](mailto:virtviki@pacbell.net) or [rjhallock@snowcrest.net](mailto:rjhallock@snowcrest.net) either of these should be good until 2001. You can always snail mail us at the address below. Be sure and visit <http://www.snowcrest.net/fox/Logan.html>

**SANDMAN SENTINEL** Issue #11. Published approximately two times a year and ©1994 by Neo-Deep Sleep Press, 1440 Garryana Dr., Red Bluff CA 96080 (Originally published By Deep Sleep Press). Produced by the editorial staff Rick Hallock (Editor) and Erlinda Siller. All material is ©1994 by its respective authors, and all rights revert to their owners upon publication. Contributor credits this issue: Rick Hallock, Jackie Taylor, Greg Crawford, Erlinda Siller. Uncredited articles are written by the editorial staff. Special thanks to all the original members of the club who said let's do it again! And a special tanks to Chris Weidner wo actually made me get off my rear and finally put out an issue! Alright... so it took me four years to get it out the door....



# Prologue: Last Run

Logan 5 was once a respected and feared Sandman in one of the many City of Domes. He questioned the system at times, which set him up to carry out a great mission for Central Computer: destroy Sanctuary.

He strove to carry out his mission but found himself in love with a Runner, Jessica 6; who was a small segment of the Runner organization known as the Sanctuary Line. After a fantastic adventure he knew that what Central Computer had said about life outside was a lie. He fought and killed his old friend, Francis 7, and returned to the City.

Interrogation of him by Computer resulted in the destruction of the City of Domes. Chaos reigned for many months as factions fought each other to try to rebuild their lost luxury. In the end Logan 5 and Jessica 6 left and moved into an ancient house far from the ruins of the City.

Some still wanted a City life and went out in search of another City. These people became known as the Wanderers. Many Sandmen were part of this group and very much enjoyed the life of luxury they once lived, and now wanted back. Their search took them over the horizon, and out of the thoughts of the survivors of the destroyed City.

But the Wanderers finally found another City; this one run secretly by a council of Elders. Lucifer 7, a Sandman; and friend of both Logan 5 and Francis 7 was reinstated as a DS operative in this City.

Rumors of Logan coming to this City tore at the harmony of the City. As a last resort the Elders enticed Lucifer 7, by promising him added years on his Lifeclock, to search out and bring Logan 5 and Jessica 6 back for public execution.

Equipped with a five man squad and weapons he set out to do just that. His mission dragged on as Logan fought him and continually escaped with the help of Jessica and their android companion Rem; the friend that had helped them escape the Mountain City.

Logan later found an ancient military complex that was long ago forgotten. By accident he activated a program which transformed the airlock into a doorway into another dimension. He didn't have much time to ponder where his friends were, since Lucifer was close behind.

Logan commandeered a weird car and escaped his enemy. His path crossed with D'Irtha a Desert Ranger of this world. With her help he realized he was in another dimension.

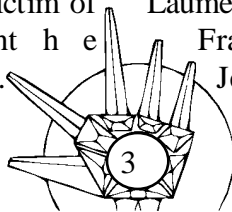
When both she and Lucifer are captured he risked his life to save both of them and return to his own dimension, where Jessica and Rem had things well in hand. They escaped.

The Elders though, devised a plan to outwit him by building an android duplicate of Francis 7. What they didn't count on was the spirit of the real Francis invading the android and taking it over. The Elders also built a scanner Booster Station to further the City scanners range. They gave it laser batteries, but very few short range scanners.

Laumer, a DS operative under Lucifer, built a super-flamegun that could blast through virtually anything, including Rem's otherwise impervious body.

In a pitched battle Logan escaped the Sandmen but was caught by Francis 7's android look alike. Rem was destroyed in the same battle, a victim of Laumer's super creation.

Something is assumed wrong when the Francis 7 android doesn't respond to their signals. Fontana is sent out to investigate. Jessica, meanwhile, uses her female charms to fool Laumer.



While Logan battled Francis' 'droid, Jessica found the military laserblasters that she and Logan had found. She made short work of the Booster Stations defenses, and destroyed it. She met with physical abuse from an angry Lucifer.

Logan found a way to get through to his former friend, and a truce was formed. They fought together and won, but at the cost of the android Francis. Logan was captured by Fontana shortly after.

Logan later escaped and freed Jessica.

Now, Lucifer's rage is compounded. He must win!..... so begins this chapter in the life of Logan 5: Last Run!

# LAST RUN

## By Greg Crawford

Lucifer 7 stood amidst the wreckage of the former Booster Station, glaring at his remaining Sandmen. His hair was in a tangle, his uniform burnt and torn; a fitting match for his scowling face.

"Do you men have anything to say for yourselves?" he asked finally, in a tone which was disturbingly calm; too calm.

"No, sir." Fontana replied, scared by the others' calmness.

"I will. We failed. Why?" he said, as he began to pace.

Nobody said a word.

"We were careless!" he exploded. "We underestimated Jessica 6! Beaten by a girl! The ultimate insult! Never underestimate her again!" he paused, his face a reflection of his rage. "I made that mistake, but not again, ever."

Lucifer turned away, his body tense with the anger that smoldered within. He stopped walking and simply stood with his back to them. Then, he said. "Fontana. Report."

"Caiden and I have gotten two Land-Racers operational. Craig has repaired some of the communications equipment, but it's still just local. All telemetry systems are gone."

"So we're cut off from the City," Lucifer murmured. Then, he turned to face them. "Then, my judgement is final. Craig, continue working on the communications."

"Yes, sir." Craig said, grateful to get away from him.

"Laumer, get to work on building as many super flamerguns as you can. Rig scanners for Logan and Jessica's flowercrystal patterns." he paused, gazing at his own crystallized lifelock. "Even though they're crystalli our Followers can still home in on them. Caiden, work on those cars. Fontana, you stay here."

After Caiden and Laumer left Fontana spoke out his fears. "What do you think Central Computer will say about all of this?"

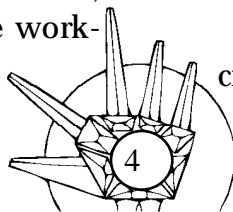
Lucifer almost laughed, for only he knew their City's Computer was controlled by the Council of Elders. But he grew grim as he wondered what they would think of the turn of events from the capture of Logan 5 and Jessica 6, to their eventual escape, and the destruction of his Booster Station at the hands of the girl; Jessica. Finally, he said. "I wouldn't even want to imagine it, my friend."

"But-"

Lucifer cut him off. "Help Caiden with those cars. I'd like to be alone for a while."

Fontana left, feeling sorry for his commander.

Meanwhile, back in their City of Domes: The main auditorium was filled with excited citizens for a major event; the unveil-



ing of a new elite Deep Sleep squad. But this squad was different from any other in that this one was made up entirely of women. A very shocking turn of events for a society used to only men as DS operatives.

The crowd quieted as six black clad women came out. Their uniforms were tight fitting black outfits similar to the Sandman regular uniform. But where the usual gray band came across the chest these uniforms' bands were cut short by the 'V' cut of their plunging necklines. Follower, flamgun, and technite charges finished the DS look.

Computer's voice spoke: "This is my new Deep Sleep squad. It is composed entirely of women to go where my Sandmen cannot. Meet the Sandgirls, led by Aurora 8."

A six foot blond stepped forward. "I am Aurora 8. My squad includes Diedra 9, Athena 4, Nadia 3, Allura 7, and Cherish. We have been trained in the same rigorous DS training as our male counterparts. We are the Sandgirls."

Computer spoke again: "They are to be looked on and treated as any other DS operative. Male Sandmen will be in charge where applicable. Feel safe that Central Computer is diversifying DS to fully protect you. Now join with others to celebrate Renewal in Carrousel. Aries 2-9, year of the City 2298."

So excitement of the ritual took over as people went to the Great Hall, and the Carrousel arena. Resentment against women having authority remained, though lessened by Computer's announcement. Now the Sandgirls would have to prove themselves.

Over the next few weeks the Sandgirls became known as they carried out mission after mission against the Runner movement. They improved their abilities with each assignment; making them a formidable team. The bond between the girls grew deeper with every patrol; and every wild party.

Allura 7 consulted her Follower as she slowed to a walk in a remote and dark section of the City. She brushed her long brown hair back as she searched for the Runner

she had been chasing. The signal no longer appeared on her screen, making her suspicious.

"Signal scattering deflector," she said softly, reading the data on the Follower. Then, she activated the Sandgirls private channel. "Allura to Aurora, come in."

"Aurora 8. Go ahead." came the reply.

"I've got a possible scanner deflector in Sector T, Quadrant 34. Could be a Runner stronghold; this location is remote enough."

"Alert the squad. I'm on my way."

Allura activated the Sandgirl Alert button. "Hurry, Aurora, I don't want to be alone if they detect me."

"Hide somewhere until we get there. Aurora 8 out."

Allura found an ancient concrete barrier and settled down behind it to wait. Within a half hour, though to her it seemed more like five hours, the other Sandgirls arrived.

Deidra 9 set up her laser scanner and began to take readings. She had reddish brown hair, a 36-24-34 figure, and was their scanner expert. She finished her readings and looked at Aurora. "This is a big operation, Aurora. I read a deflector grid that goes the length of this area. Hologram projectors pinpointed. Even a crude scanner in operation."

"Can it detect us?" asked their smallest member; Cherish.

"I doubt it," Deidra said.

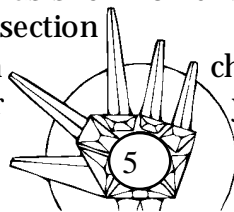
Within five seconds the Runner scanner detected them and set off their alarms. Particle beam weapons, of ancient design, fired. The Sandgirls barely had time to find cover as the guns obliterated everything in their path.

The Sandgirls fired back from their hiding places. Athena primed a technite charge and threw it. The other girls followed suite; raining destruction on the Runner stronghold.

Aurora fired, then hit a button on her Follower.

Central Control was a place of boredom on this quiet night...

Fulton 3 and Mead 5 sat at their control chairs scanning the boards, and talking. "Did you see that new Glassdancer in Arcade?"



Mead smiled. "Yeah, she's something isn't she? I-

He was cut off as an alert came in. Sandmen appeared out of nowhere. "Whose signal?"

"Aurora 8. The Sandgirls. Sector T, Quadrant 23."

"Anybody around?" another Sandman asked.

"Units 12, 7, and T patrol. Alerting."

Now Control was a place of hurried activity.

Explosions rocked the ground as Allura hurled another charge into the air. The hologram projectors and scanner deflectors were crippled by the fierce attack and soon failed; filling the Sandgirls Followers with possible targets.

Cherish, the black haired marksman, fired with eerie precision at the Runners, now in disarray as their defenses failed. Illegal weapons fired at the now approaching Sandgirls.

The girls scattered as a bomb exploded near them. Sandmen joined the fight as a vicious firefight erupted. Terminations were handed out left and right.

A Flamer fired, searing past Allura; dropping here with a painful scream. The Runner didn't have time to fire again as the downed Sandgirl blasted him.

Athena knelt by her as the fight wound down. They both smiled. Their team would get the credit for this; the biggest Runner termination score for a single mission in the City.

After the area was secured the girls rushed Allura to the nearest New You to get her arm mended. Declaring a DS emergency; the Sandgirls were the first to get in.

Later, they stood before Central Computer. "Sandgirls. Identify."

All six of the girls raised their hands for Computer to scan their Life Clocks. Four were Greens, the rest had recently turned Red.

"Sandgirls confirmed. Sit down." Computer's female voice said.

Six chairs rose up from the floor in front of them. They reluctantly sat.

This was very unusual; debriefing was usually a quick thing.

A screen came to life before them. On it appeared the name 'Lucifer 7'. Computer spoke: "Do you identify this name?"

"Lucifer 7," Aurora said. "he was a Sandman here. But I haven't seen him in a long time. I thought he must've reached Renewal."

Computer did not reply to this. Then, the screen showed the names 'Logan 5' and 'Jessica 6'. It again asked them to identify.

"We've heard rumors that they destroyed another City of Domes, and might come here." Aurora said. "Isn't it just a rumor?"

"Logan 5 is real. I sent Sandman Lucifer 7 to break City seals and search out and destroy them. If possible he was ordered to bring them back here for public execution. Communications with Lucifer 7 has been silent for two weeks. Logan 5's continued freedom threatens me."

"Why?" Athena said. "He's just a man."

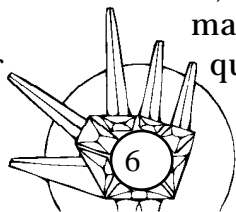
This brought smiles to her teammates faces, until Computer spoke again. "Logan 5 was a Sandman. The best. I have selected the Sandgirls to aid Lucifer 7 at the DS Booster Station. If he lives you will be under his command. If not you will carry out his mission. Assemble on Level 3 in ten hours. Information, vehicles, and weapons will be there."

"Computer. Question." Aurora said. "I'm a Red 2. Will I be given more time on my crystal after the mission's over?"

"Yes," Computer said, without hesitation. "That is all, Sandgirls."

The screen went dark. The very surprised Sandgirls slowly got up and left. They wondered why they were chosen. They were all very good looking and buxom. Nadia had black hair and was an expert in Omnite, Deidra had reddish brown hair and was the resident scanner expert, Allura had brown hair and was a good driver, Athena had brown hair as well, and was well practiced in technite throwing, Cherish was Aurora's right hand girl, and was an expert marksman, and Aurora was blond, and an expert in many fields. What made them any better qualified than any other team?

"Forget it!" Athena spoke out. "Let's



party!"

They agreed. Party now, wonder later. They went out, looking for fun....

Logan 5, in the meantime, was working on their new vehicle. He had just finished putting in a food scanner and processor to make their eating a little easier. He sat back, letting his mind wander. He thought back to his Run, shaking his head as he thought how he had been then; ruthless, bloodthirsty, and dedicated to terminating Runners. He remembered meeting the sweet and seemingly innocent Jessica 6, and how she'd risked her life for him.

"I was a fool," he murmured as he remembered turning on his alarm. He still could recall the leader's voice; "...Remember, the way is always down." But!

"Jessica!" he shouted, as the revelation hit home.

"What is it, Logan?" she asked, puzzled by his shout.

"I think there might be a Sanctuary!"

She smiled from the cockpit. "But, you said-

"Forget what I said!" he yelled excitedly, coming forward. "Think back to our Run. The Runner leader. What he said."

She remembered the attack, Francis 7, but not much else. "I can't remember."

Logan sat in the pilot's chair and held her hands. "He said to follow the corridor with the pipes overhead, and that the way was always down!"

Realization came to her. She smiled a dazzling smile and said. "But we went up! Sanctuary might exist!"

He pulled her to him and kissed her as they both felt the fire of hope rekindled in them. They held their excitement to just kissing as they thought of the fight to come.

"We'll have to cross paths with Lucifer again." Logan said. "You destroyed his Station with that laser blaster, but his men are expert mechanics. He'll give us trouble for sure."

She smiled, and pointed at their new vehicle's laser cannon and blast resistant bubble. "I'll study that thing, Lo-

gan. I'll give Lucifer a fight he'll never forget."

"I'll bet," he said, with a smile. "Okay, let's get to it."

They kissed a final time before they went to their respective duties. Jessica climbed the ladder to reach the cannon, as Logan studied the drive system and defensive capabilities. As he searched he found their vehicle's name; The Army Roadmaster.

Within hours they left behind their captured DS car and roared off for their inevitable conflict with Lucifer's men. But now hope was the motivator; not just survival.

Back at what was left of Lucifer's outpost: Lucifer stood alone, flamegun in his hand. Memories of his past played over and over in his mind. Sadness filled him.

"No!" he yelled, blasting a tree to smithereens.

"Lucifer!" a voice called.

He whirled, Gun ready, to see Fontana running toward him.

"What?"

"Short range scanners are picking up three signals, closing fast. By configuration, they're Land- Racers."

Lucifer uttered an oath and ran toward their makeshift scanner shack, Fontana close behind.

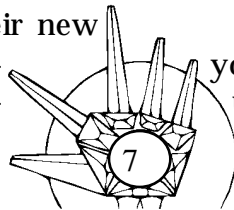
"We're nearing Computer's co-ordinates, Aurora." Deidra said, over the Racer's communications system.

The blond switched her comm system to another channel. "Aurora to all cars. We're nearing Lucifer's position. Slow to normal speed and open all comm frequencies."

Cherish, who shared the car with Aurora, switched frequencies to the ones Computer had given them. Almost immediately a male voice came over the air; "Land- Racers. State your business."

"Friendly, aren't they?" Allura commented.

"This is Task Force 2. We've come to aid you." Aurora said, then. "Hold your response until we park."



Cherish clicked the comm system off as the three Land-Racers came in to park next to the obliterated Booster Station. As the girls got out of the Racers, Lucifer and his men were there.

"Girls!" Lucifer exclaimed. "What kind of charade is this?!"

They were taken aback by his attitude. They were sent to help him and this is the reception they get? Aurora gave Lucifer an icy stare from her blue eyes as she said. "Computer thought you needed help."

"You? To help us?" he said, with a laugh. "Maybe in bed, but no place else!"

"We were sent by Central Computer to help you to capture Logan 5 and Jessica 6." Aurora said, her hand moving to her weapon. "Accept our aid or we will carry out your mission ourselves."

Lucifer knew their presence here meant that the Elders back at the City were having doubts about him. He saw that his men were standing with their arms crossed, but their eyes were on the Sandgirls bodies. He couldn't have them running around without guidance; they could possibly succeed.

Finally, he said. "If Computer orders it, I accept your help."

His men couldn't believe it. They showered him with questions and protests as he turned and left the area. He glanced back as he walked, giving the girls a look of hatred in his eyes.

When he was almost out of range, Aurora called. "Hey, Lucifer! Nice Station!"

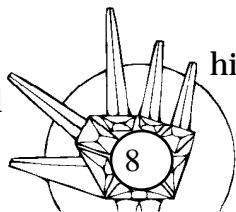
The Sandgirls laughed, with Aurora, as Lucifer replied with a venomous retort. Then, the girls were alone.

"We're supposed to help these bozos?" Allura said, surprised by their attitudes.

"They were reported to be the best," Cherish said. She looked at the remains of the Booster Station, then continued. "but they lost this battle. A mighty powerful weapon was used to do this."

Aurora looked around. "I'm not impressed."

Later, Aurora and her Sandgirls sat in one of the somewhat repaired



sections of the Station. DS insta-beds were erected in a circle around a pedestal that held their equipment.

"Lucifer is a chauvinistic jerk," Aurora said, surprising no one. "but his group has been out her for an unusually long time." she paused, thinking. "Keep on the safe side and always wear your weapons, including your ankle knives."

"Yeah," Nadia said. "I saw the way Laumer was looking at my breasts; like a hungry animal looking at a piece of meat."

"I can understand the sexual hunger," Aurora commented. "but Lucifer's different. He has the look of a man obsessed."

"Obsession's dangerous." the usually quiet Cherish said. "It effects judgement."

"They resent us because we're women doing what they think is a man's job. Only because Computer ordered it are they accepting our help."

"Then, we have to be on our guard all the time?" Deidra asked.

"Just be alert. Okay, light's out. Assemble at 0600."

They settled down for the night.

Lucifer sat in the burnt remains of the control room. His mind was ablaze with questions. Why had the Elders sent the Sandgirls? Had they lost faith in him? Five of us, six of them. If they were regular girls it'd be no contest; but these were DS operatives--

"Lucifer!"

His thoughts were shattered as he heard his name called. He jerked his head up to see the shapely Aurora coming toward him. He had to admit she was a looker.

"Kind of late isn't it?" he growled.

"We have to talk."

"So talk."

She crossed her hands across her chest. "We have to work together to capture Logan. Your men, and even you, resent us. We will succeed; at any cost."

He chuckled. "You're underestimating him. He's dangerous."

"I understand this. Accept us as equals or

you'll find us most formidable foes." she replied, her blue eyes cool. She turned and walked out without another word.

He upgraded his opinion of them. He then went to find his cot.

In the morning, Athena and Deidra were out on routine patrol, when the scanners started beeping. Logan's crystal pattern was coming their way!

"Patrol One to base. Come in."

"Base here. Go ahead One." Laumer's voice replied.

"We've got Logan's signal!" Athena said, excitedly. "Coming our way. He'll be in your range in five minutes."

"Get back to base. We'll attack as a group. Base out."

"We copy." she said, as she put the Racer into a tight curve.

Fontana 5 was thinking of the Sandgirls, but not as Laumer might. He was thinking how capable they seemed. He also found himself wondering if Lucifer was sane anymore. A lot had transpired since their arrival at the Alternate City: a return to the lives they enjoyed, then the mission to capture Logan and Jessica, Lucifer's single mindedness to get them, the destruction of Logan and Jessica's companion; the android Rem, and now the arrival of the Sandgirls. He could join forces if-

The alert interrupted his thoughts. He jumped to his feet and ran for the Land-Racers. Caiden was there already, since he was working on the, and moments later the Sandgirls got there, way ahead of his fellow Sandmen.

"Hi, Caiden." Aurora said. "Any progress on your repairs?"

He looked up at the four great looking women, then said. "Uh, well, these two I've got working. This third one," he motioned to the pile of junk he was working on. "is pretty bad off."

Athena's Racer came to a halt as Lucifer came with his men.

"Logan's coming back this way!" he said, his anger already evident. "This time he won't escape! Don't underestimate Jes-

sica this time! She almost destroyed us!" only after he said it did he notice the Sandgirls.

Aurora smiled. "You mean Jessica 6 destroyed your Booster Station?"

"Uh-oh," the Sandmen murmured. "she's gonna get it now."

The dark haired Sandman fixed his cold eyes on her, as he walked over. "Only because she had an ancient super laserblaster."

"Yeah, right." Aurora said, sarcastically.

He heard her sarcasm and pulled his arm back to hit her, then caught himself. "Yeah, right." he turned to Laumer. "How about those super flamerguns?"

"I was able to build four."

"Okay. Give one to me, you, Caiden, and Craig. Since there's only two operational Racers..." he paused glancing at Aurora. "how many passengers can fit in your Racers?"

"Up to four. But I don't think-

"I don't care what you think. Craig, you go with them."

The sandy haired Craig smiled. "Yes, sir."

"Sandmen will attack. Sandgirls will act as back up."

"I think we should hit as one." Aurora stated.

"I'm in charge here! We do it my way! Got it?"

Her eyes burned with rage as Lucifer turned away. But she said. "You're in charge."

The Sandgirls fumed silently as everyone went to their assigned Land-Racers. All in all, five Racers powered up.

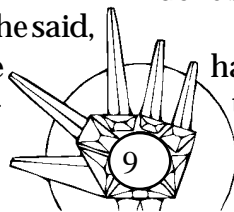
"I wonder what vehicle Logan dug up this time." Lucifer said, with a smile. "Probably another hovercar; just like last time."

He couldn't have been farther from the truth.

"Lucifer," Deidra said. "I've got a rather large target on my scanner. You copy?"

"Of course I do, girl!" he snarled. He then switched to another frequency. "Laumer, do an ident scan."

The five Racers roared down what once had been a superhighway, now a crumbling trail of concrete and grass. Up ahead was a



large clearing, with a large vehicle coming their way fast.

“Vehicle identified.” Laumer’s voice reported. “It’s broadcasting a ident signal. U.S. Army Roadmaster. Whatever a U.S Army is.”

Fontana studied the readout to the right of the speedometer, then said. “Scanner shows it has armor plating. Half a meter thick. Made out of detrilium: the hardest known metal.”

“Damn!” Lucifer said, hotly. “It’s some kind of military vehicle.” he then switched on the comm unit.”Lucifer to all units. Prepare for battle. Sandgirls hold back.”

Three Racers held their distance as Lucifer’s two went in for battle. The Roadmaster loomed before them: a tank like vehicle with treads, a wedge shape for less wind resistance. It was a monster.

Laumer and Caiden’s car came in and ran along side it as Caiden fired out the ‘T’ top. His super flamewgun blasted chunks from the armor with each hit. Then, Caiden saw the bubble on top turn toward him, and he knew what it was. “Evasive!” he yelled.

The Racer swerved, just as Jessica fired the gun. The laser bolt hit the side of it, flinging Caiden out as the Racer went into a half spin. Then, as Caiden watched in horror, it hit the ground upside down and blew to bits. No chance for the man inside.

“Laumer!” Lucifer screamed into the comm unit. No reply. He turned to his pilot.”Fontana, go to the other side! Sandgirls, attack!”

The sleek black Land-Racer swerved to the opposite side as Lucifer aimed his super flamewgun at the armored treads. He fired again and again as each explosion blew off more armor. “Steady!” he told Fontana as they gained speed.

Suddenly, three small doors opened in the side of the Roadmaster and small machineguns appeared, and fired. Small calibre bullets raked the Racer, and Lucifer’s gun arm. He screamed out in pain, as he dropped his flamewgun, as Fontana hit the brakes.

Aurora saw Lucifer’s Racer veer away from Logan’s ancient vehicle, as

her three Racers closed in. She saw Lucifer in pain, and smoke coming from the engine. They were out of it.

It was up to them.

Aurora took out a technite charge, primed it, then threw it. It exploded against the armor, doing more minor damage. “The armor’s too thick!” she yelled, in frustration.

Laser bolts streaked past the three Racers as they took evasive action. The mini guns in the front of the Sandgirls Racers opened up with explosive bullets.

Aurora aimed her flamewgun and fired. Then, a laser bolt blasted their right stabilizer, sending the Racer into an uncontrolled spin. As Cherish reduced power, they crashed into Athena’s car, damaging their vehicle as well.

Explosions rocked the landscape as the battle continued. But now there was but one Land-Racer to fight the Roadmaster. As Jessica continued to fire, the last Racer, it’s air intakes clogged, veered off.

Jessica could hardly believe it. They had defeated the combined Sandman/Sandgirl task force! She continued to fire, even as they went beyond their firing range.

Aurora crawled out of her damaged Racer to see Lucifer, his face betraying his pain, hobbling toward the destroyed Racer. He held a cloth to his badly bleeding arm, wincing with each step.

Caiden, whose leg was broken, was close to the wreckage. “Laumer!” he yelled, fear in his voice.

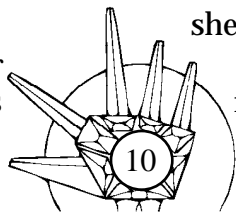
Fontana beat Lucifer to the wreckage. He looked inside, then whirled to face him.”Don’t look, Lucifer.” he told him.

“Move aside, mister.”

Aurora got to the crash site as Lucifer knelt beside the wreck and lost control of his emotions and began to cry. Blood was flowing freely as he teetered on passing out.

Deidra got a medkit and ran toward him, to be stopped by Aurora. “But I’ve got to help.” she argued.

The blond beauty shook her head.”He’d fight you. He’s too angry to think ratio-



nally.”

Craig helped Caiden to the undamaged Land-Racer where he shot Caiden’s leg with pain killers and antibiotics.” Laumer’s dead. Lucifer might really flip out.”

Fontana knelt beside Lucifer as he gestured him over. “Fontana. ...build me a flamecannon....we’ve got to blast through that.....armor....” Lucifer faded as the pain got to him, causing him to pass out.

Deidra was there in a flash, cleaning, bandaging, and injecting the ingredients of her medkit. She worked with the efficiency of someone who had done this before.

Aurora turned to Fontana and Craig.” Get to work on building a flamecannon.” she told them. When they hesitated, she said.” Remember, Lucifer ordered it.”

“C’mon,” the blondish Fontana said, grabbing Craig’s arm to get him to come with him.

After they’d gone, Aurora turned to her assembled Sandgirls.

“Okay, now I’m in charge of this operation. Deidra, keep track of Logan’s signal. Allura, you and Nadia repair the damage to your Land-Racer. Athena, you help Deidra take care of Lucifer and Caiden. Cherish, help me in repairing our Racer.”

Each acknowledged their orders and went off to complete them.

Logan’s Roadmaster drove through what 200 years ago was a parking lot for a shopping plaza. Only crumbling concrete and dilapidated buildings remained. The world that once was. He felt a strange fascination with it and once again felt sadness about the loss of their android companion Rem, destroyed by Lucifer’s superflamegun.

The Roadmaster was a marvel of technology in itself; laser blaster, scanners, machine guns, and many other things one would need to survive. This was a machine built to survive that last war, and it did.

“We’re close, Logan.” Jessica said, as she came into the cockpit with him. “Close to Sanctuary, I hope. Rem would be happy for us. I miss him.”

“Me too, Jess.” he said. “He’d probably have something to say about this vehicle too.”

“Distance from Lucifer’s people: 70 kilometers.” Jessica said, as she read a screen.

Suddenly, the Roadmaster slowed as an alarm came on. This snapped them out of their reverie. Then, the screen lit up with a message. Logan read it. “Land mines ahead. Manual removal needed.”

“Are they active?” she asked.

“Yes,” he read. “Mines twentieth century. Planted here circa 2269.” he paused, then. “We’re in trouble if whoever planted these is still around. Have computer detail removal of the mines for me.”

Logan got his flamegun, kissed Jess, then went to take care of the mines. Delayed. He hoped not for too long.

Lucifer awoke to find his arm, covered with bandages, in a sling. Then, he remembered the fight. He quickly found Aurora and said. “Situation report.”

“Laumer’s dead, Caiden has a broken leg, your arm is punctured to hell with small calibre bullets, and work is progressing on the Racers.” the blond said, in a matter of fact tone. “Oh, and Logan’s signal has stopped moving.”

He smiled. Maybe if Fontana could get a cannon working they could do some damage. “Good. Tell Craig and Fontana to hurry it up.”

“They’re doing just that. Why don’t you rest, Lucifer?” she said, with a smile.

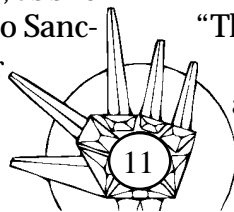
“I don’t trust you when you smile like that.” he said, as he turned and walked off.

Logan aimed his flamegun and fired. An explosion followed soon after as a land mine was destroyed. He looked back toward the Roadmaster and smiled at Jessica, who was watching out the viewport as she read off the co-ordinates of the mines.

He pulled out his Follower and said into it. “That’s another one, Jess. How many more?”

“A lot, Logan.” she said, sounding tired. “The next is two meters to your right.”

He smiled as he put back his Follower and aimed his flamegun. But as he fired he



couldn't help but think that this delay could be hazardous to their very lives.

Lucifer sat in a damaged Land-Racer, fiddling with one of the circuit boards. He cursed himself for rushing to meet Logan. "Stupid!" he said to himself.

"You all right, sir?" a voice asked.

He turned to see Caiden coming over. "Yes, I'm all right. How's the leg?"

Caiden sat in the other seat with a sigh. "As long as there are pain killers, I'll survive."

"Fine strike team we make: Booster Station and Land-Racers destroyed, two wounded, and a man dead."

"How were we to know he'd find ancient super weapons."

"Thanks, Caiden." Lucifer said, with a smile. He glanced over at the group of Sandgirls; who were repairing the other Land-Racers. He felt anger swell within him.

"Lucifer to Fontana. Report." he said, as he whipped out his Follower.

"Fontana here. The cannon's not ready."

Lucifer nearly dropped the Follower. "Why?" he snarled.

"Energy flux. I can't pin it down. If we fire it like this, it'll blow up in our faces. I need help."

He looked at Caiden, who shook his head. Craig was busy repairing a Racer's air jet. He slowly turned back to the Sandgirls.

"Hey!" he called. "Any of you Sandgirls know anything about energy fluxes?"

They stopped work, Aurora deciding. Then, she said. "Athena does. Why?"

"My man Fontana needs help with the cannon."

Aurora smiled. Lucifer needed their help. "Athena, go help Fontana."

The dark haired girl left, making a face at Lucifer's back on the way by. She kept her hand near her flamegun as she made her way to the makeshift garage on the far side of their encampment.

Fontana was busy at work when Athena approached. She stopped at the far end of the Racer and said. "Lucifer sent me

to help."

He nearly jumped out of his skin. "Don't sneak up on me like that!"

"Sorry," she said, failing to keep the smile from her face. She came around a stood in front of a portable scanner. "How'd you build a flamecannon?"

He smiled. "Read off the readings on that scanner and I'll tell you."

"Flux reading 4.132."

He began to work on the cannon and began his tale. "I took Aurora's command car back to the Booster Station and found one of our flamecannon field artillery units, brought it back. Cut a section out of the Racer; and used some of the components out of the other wrecked Racers. A little work hooking it up and fusing it in place and you have a Racer mounted cannon. Reading?"

She leaned over to study the screen, inadvertently drawing his eyes to her cleavage. "Flux at 3.221." she said. She glanced up and caught him shifting his eyes away. "Study the cannon, not my breasts."

"Uh, sorry." he said, going back to his adjustments.

Athena glanced down to make sure she was still in her uniform, then read the scanner. "Flux at 2.843"

He twisted a sonic driver. "How's that?"

"2.098." she said. "Sorry I got mad at you for staring at me. I should get used to it in this outfit."

"That's all right." he responded quickly.

"You're different from the others. Lucifer's crazy, Laumer was a pervert, and Caiden and Craig are just such jerks. You're a real man, Fontana 5."

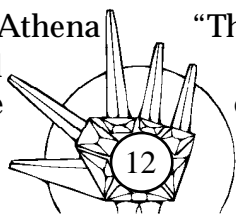
He noticed her change in tone and knew for certain she was coming on to him. "Uh...flux reading?"

She took her eyes off him and studied the screen. "Flux at 1.921. Get it below 1.0 and it'll be in safe limits."

He made one last adjustment and said.

"There! That should do it!"

"Reading 0.924. You did it." she said, coming around the side of the Racer to-



ward him.

He wasn't used to women making the first move. He backed up, his eyes growing wide as she stripped off her belt. "Sh-shouldn't we tell Lucifer we're finished?"

"But we're not." she said, as he backed into a wrecked Racer.

She pressed her lips to his as her hands felt his body. For a moment she felt him resist; then she felt his hands as he lost his control. She felt a thumb on her nipple as he caressed her breasts. Then, they slid to the ground where they went wild.

A Follower beeped. His Follower! Fontana jumped on it and breathlessly said. "Fontana here."

"What the hell's taking so long!" Lucifer's voice yelled.

"The cannon's ready." he said, as he began to put his clothes back on.

"Good work. Prepare to move out."

"Obnoxious isn't he?" she commented.

"He's in charge." he replied, straightening his uniform.

She had her uniform in place when she noticed the exo-frame on her uniform was bent. "You were wild. You bent my chest exo-frames to get to my-"

"Don't tell anyone!" he hissed. "Especially Lucifer. He'd kill me!"

"Not to worry. See you."

Lucifer was standing by a hovering Land-Racer arguing with the blond Aurora when Fontana brought the cannon Racer to a halt. He sighed with exasperation when he heard Lucifer yelling again.

"I'm in charge here, girl! We attack with the cannon car at point! Got it?!"

"Fontana's only built one flam cannon! Has that blown past you? Logan's craft withstood three super flameguns, our Racer's mini-guns, and shots from our regular flameguns! Now you think one weapon will destroy it? You'll lose, again!"

Fontana sensed Lucifer was about to explode and said. "Uh, sir? I think she

might have a point."

"You would!" he yelled. "Six whores show up and suddenly you're on their side!"

"If Logan can find ancient super weapons, why not us?" Fontana said reasonably. "Let's check our onboard computers and see if they can find any weapons depots within scanner range."

Lucifer exhaled. "Fine. Do it."

Aurora snapped her Follower back onto her belt and said. "Logan's signal has once again begun to move. On the same heading."

Lucifer nodded. "Toward the old City of Domes. What he hopes to accomplish there is beyond me."

"Almost anything is." Nadia muttered to Allura.

He pretended not to hear and said. "We'll find more weapons to use and blast Logan's craft to smithereens. Any questions?"

Several of the Sandgirls raised their hands.

"I thought not," he said, smiling at their angered looks. He got into the cannon car.

"You gonna let him push you around like that?" Allura asked Aurora. She said nothing, but stepped toward the Racer.

"Lucifer, that cannon's on my car." she said, her voice filled with acid.

"Get another." he said, without looking.

"I think not."

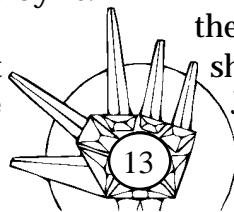
He noticed the change in her voice and glanced up to see the muzzle of a super flam gun pointed right at his face.

Logan settled in the cockpit seat with a sigh. The mines were destroyed and they were once again on their way. He smiled at Jessica as she brought him a drink. "Thanks."

"My pleasure." she said, getting into the seat to the right of him. "Long range sensors are picking up some of the first signs of our City. I can't believe how long it's been. I'm glad though that Computer choose you."

He smiled. "If it hadn't been for you, Jess, I don't know what might have happened."

Just then, the scanner buzzed an alert. On the main cockpit screen appeared an eerie shape. A shape out of the past. He heard Jessica gasp as he ordered. "Computer.



Magnify and enhance image.”

The screen shifted until a MTB (Mazecar Transfer Building) solidified. The MTB was covered with cobwebs, dirt, and rust. Ancient plasti-steel mazes stuck out of the dark building, but were broken off a short distance from it. It had been there a long time, a gaunt testimony to the far reaching effects of the City.

“This helps my theory that all Cities were connected at one time. Computer. Is there any power in the structure?”

“All power systems dead.”

“Disregard and continue to City of Domes.” he told it. Then, he sat down again and pulled Jessica toward him. They kissed.

“I said that cannon’s on my car.”

“Gonna shoot an injured man?” Lucifer asked.

“Don’t tempt me.” she said, her blue eyes cold. “Craig, Fontana. Out.”

Reluctantly the men got out. They thought about jumping her, but one look at the other Sandgirls changed their minds. They stood but the Racer and waited.

“Here’s how it will be. Cherish and I will accompany Lucifer in the cannon car. Fontana gets the other command car. Craig will go with Allura. Nadia and Athena get the last car. Deidra and Caiden will set up base and repair another Land-Racer. Got it?”

“Yeah,” Lucifer said. “but hurry it up. Let’s go.”

They got into their respective Racers and headed after Logan’s signal. Their onboard computers showed them to an ancient weapons cache; which they ransacked.

Fontana hefted a laser bazooka and smiled as he said. “At least we got this baby to work. Our charge took; it’s at full power.”

Allura smiled at him. “Good. It’ll help us blast through that armor. This mission’s gone on too long; I hate taking those anti-radiation pills.”

Fontana was about to reply when Lucifer’s voice came over the comm system: “Fontana. Set your bazooka to full power. I want Logan’s Run to end where it began!”

Logan stopped the Roadmaster at an ancient service entrance for the once great City of Domes. The domes still rose high into the sky; though now they were shattered.

“Computer,” Logan said. “is there any sea diving equipment on board?”

“Why do we need that, Logan?” Jessica wondered.

“Francis. Remember? He fired at me and hit the wall, flooding that area.”

“Yes, now I remember.”

The computer spoke: “Aqua-gill diving apparatus is at the rear airlock.”

“Clarify.”

“Aqua-gill fits over the mouth and takes air from the water. Small in size, it is ideal for Army operatives.”

“You get the aqua-gills, Jess, while I blast that entrance open. Oh, get a weapon or two as well. It’s still a dangerous journey.”

She smiled and went to the back as Logan activated his weapons console. He saw the blips on his scanner as he fired the gun. Enemies.

“Logan’s signal is moving again,” Aurora said. “he’s left his craft.”

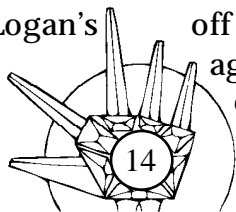
As if on cue a laser bolt exploded in front of her Racer, causing her to swerve to avoid the blast. The other Racers increased their distance as bolts started exploding everywhere.

“Attack! Fire, Lucifer! Fontana! Fire!” Aurora screamed as she swerved the craft again and again.

Lucifer, hampered by his broken arm, set the controls and fired. The cannon worked! Then, bolts from Fontana’s bazooka could be seen as Logan’s Roadmaster was bombarded by enemy fire.

Sweat poured off Aurora’s face as she fought the controls of the Racer and increased speed. Laser bolts lit the sky as the battle raged. Only her expert driving kept them from being vaporized.

A side of Athena’s Racer was scorched, shorting out a dozen circuits. The Racer veered off as the remaining two attacked the damaged Roadmaster. “Athena to Aurora. I’m okay, but breaking off attack.”



Seconds later Logan's craft was dealt a devastating blow. It exploded in a gigantic ball of flame, sending flaming debris everywhere. The concussion hit the Racers, sending them into barely controlled spins, to crash into the ground.

Logan and Jessica ran from the service hallway moments before their Roadmaster was hit. A ball of flame exploded outward, pushing them to the ground.

"You okay?" Logan asked, as he helped her up.

She checked her ancient sub-machinegun and assured him she was fine. Only then did Jess and Logan look out at the devastated City that sprawled before them. Wreckage was everywhere, now overgrown with wild weeds. Pieces of the Dome had crushed many buildings, and many people.

"C'mon, Jess." he urged, unholstering his flamegun as they began to run. "we've got to get to our destination before the Cubs and Scavengers find us."

She began to run faster.

Aurora put her hand to her forehead to try to quell the pounding in her head. For a moment the beautiful blond didn't know what had happened. Then, she remembered the fight and started reactivating her various controls.

"Lucifer, you all right?" she asked the slumped figure to her right.

"Fine," he said, as he sat back slowly. Pain was evident on his face as he took another pain killer.

Aurora frowned as the Racer's systems remained dead. She glanced back at Cherish and was relieved to see her friend was coming around. Then, she noticed her Sandgirls, and Fontana and Craig, were at their partially submerged Racer.

"How are your Racers?" Aurora asked.

Athena glanced over her shoulder as she said. "Mine's still functional, but damaged."

Aurora made her decision. She stood and said. "Okay. I'm taking your Racer. Lucifer, Craig, Cherish; you're with me. The rest of you repair the cannon car and

come in fast." she paused, then said. "I mean now, Lucifer."

Lucifer made his way out of the Racer and painfully followed his group to Athena's Racer. He was taking more pills as they piled in.

Athena and Allura stood with Nadia and Fontana as the team left. "Y'know they act like they're the A-team and we're the B-team. We're just as good as they are."

Fontana smiled at her. "Let's just repair this wreck so we can get in there."

Allura caught the looks the two were giving each other as they went to work and sighed. She looked at Nadia and said. "C'mon let's work on our own car. We'll leave the lovers alone."

Logan and Jessica ran down an old corridor, Logan's belt torch illuminating the way. They were now somewhere near the Grand Hall and wreckage was everywhere they looked.

"We're close, Jess," Logan told her as he took out his Follower. He slowed to a walk as he activated it. He frowned.

"Logan, what is it?" she asked, reading his expression.

"I'm reading above average power levels in sectors J,K,M, and this sector. I noticed it last time I was here. Sandman HQ had power." he pointed. "This way."

"Sandman!" a voice shouted.

He turned to see a pack of Scavengers coming out of the wreckage. In a fluid motion he put his Follower back and drew his flamegun. He fired.

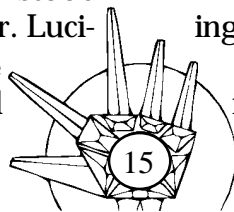
"Secondary energy emission," Cherish reported, reading her scanner. "Source: flamegun. Co-ordinates 018 mark 23."

Aurora nodded, intent on navigating the Racer through the twisted ruins. She swerved around another fallen mazecar as she increased speed.

"Fontana to Lucifer," the comm box called.

"Aurora here. Go ahead." she said, smiling at Lucifer's irritation.

"Uh, repairs are nearly complete. We'll be in there shortly."



“Good. Carry on. Aurora out.”

The Racer came to a stop outside of the main building. Aurora saw no visible entrance. She activated the scanner to find one.

Lucifer spoke up from the back. “There’s an entrance about 40 meters North. It’s big enough for people, but not the car. We’ll have to leave it for Fontana’s people.”

“We’ll do it your way, Lucifer. I sure wish we had that cannon though.” Aurora said, navigating to the entrance.

Lucifer smiled. He knew this City like the back of his hand. Logan would be his, at last. Broken arm or not Logan’s Run ended here.

Logan fired five shots. Five explosions followed as he cut down more Scavengers. He ducked down with Jessica behind an Arcade Patrol car. Knives bounced off the metal, giving Logan time to pop up and fire. As soon as the Scavengers lost ten men they broke off their attack and fled.

They got to their feet. He brought out his Follower again and they started off again. Then, the unmistakable sound of flamerguns came from behind them.

“Sandmen!” he exclaimed. “C’mon, Jess.” They ran.

Aurora and Cherish fired. Two Scavengers cried out as the charges hit. The others fled. Aurora fired again. “All clear.” she said. She glanced around, then. “Where’s Lucifer?”

Craig whirled around, but he was nowhere to be seen. “He was here a second ago! He used to live here, he knows it’s layout.”

“Logan’s signal is just ahead!” Cherish said. “I think we can surprise him.”

“Good.” Aurora said. “Forget Lucifer. We’ll co-ordinate a three way attack. Let’s go.”

They ran off to set up their trap.

Logan helped Jessica off an unmoving escalator. They were on an elevated walkway close to the New You #483. Logan looked around at the weed and vine infested walls and pointed.

“The Love Shop must be that

way,” he said, as they began to walk. Jessica pulled back the firing pin on her gun; a weapon she had just now figured out how to use.

“Hold it right there!” a voice bellowed.

Logan pushed Jessica aside and dove as a flamergun blast fired past them. Logan came up firing. His blasts caught Craig full in the chest, flinging him off the escalator he’d been on.

Jessica’s weapon was firing, he realized. Logan turned and saw a dark haired Sandgirl going down in a hail of bullets. Jessica raked the area with fire, then stopped. Smoke poured from her sub-machinegun.

Suddenly, a blond Sandgirl appeared, knocking Jessica’s gun from her hands with a kick. Another kick sent her tumbling down astairway, out of the action.

Logan brought his flamergun up, but it was kicked from his hands by the swift Sandgirl. He hesitated, because she was a woman, and she took advantage of it as she kicked him in the groin.

“Your Run’s over.” Aurora said.

He heard her voice as he went down in agonizing pain. He saw her pull her leg back to kick him again. Through sheer will power his arm shot out to catch her leg and use the momentum to send her to the ground. He got up as she did and kicked her Gun away as she drew it.

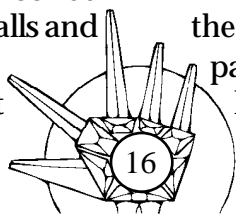
“Why’re you helping Lucifer?” he asked, through his pain clouded mind.

“I don’t answer Runners.” she replied.

They circled each other, seeking an opening. Fists flew as they engaged in an Omnite style fight. Punches and kicks landed and were deflected as they fought.

Logan knew he had to finish this fight fast. Then, she threw a punch toward his head. He jerked back and grabbed her arm and used her power to flip her. She scrambled to her feet to receive a brutal kick to the stomach. As she doubled over he hit her with a double handed punch that send her flying backward to crash into the debris strewn floor.

Only when he was sure she was out for the count did he sink to his knees and let the pain in. He then staggered over to the escalator, found Jessica, and a flamergun, and



helped her up. Then, they both walked away.

The cannon equipped Land-Racer led the way into the devastated City. Fontana sat at the controls with Athena at his side. The others rode in the Racer behind them.

“Fontana to Lucifer, come in.” he said, into the comm box.

Nothing.

Athena fired the cannon. The fallen mazed tube was blown apart, making way for the Racers. Sporadic weapons fired at them as they roared over the landscape.

“Fontana to Aurora, come in.” he said, on the Sandgirl frequency.

Nothing.

“There’s only one reason for them not to answer you.” Athena said. “Logan must have beaten them.”

They saw the vacated Land-Racer ahead. The cannon fired, gaining them entrance to the interior of the main building. They zeroed in on Aurora’s signal.

Seconds later they were at the fight scene. Fontana leaped out of the cannon car and rushed over to Cherish’s bloody body. He held her hand as he said. “Cherish? You okay?”

“Yeah,” she said weakly. She saw she was bleeding from a number of bullet holes and was glad to see Athena coming with a medkit. “I’m all right. Aurora was beaten up by Logan. Craig’s... dead. He’s over beyond the steps.”

Allura and Nadia were helping Aurora up as Fontana went to see where Craig was, hoping Cherish was wrong. She wasn’t.

“She’s right.” he told everyone. “Allura, you stay with Cherish. Aurora, you ready?”

The blond felt her face, knowing it was red with bruises which would soon turn black and blue. Her beauty would be marred until she could get to a New You. She snatched a flameweb from Athena and said. “Let’s get them.”

The two Land-Racers powered up and roared out of the area.

Logan and Jessica ran through the destroyed remains of the Runner stronghold until they finally came to the main

door, with the ankh lock obviously flamed. The door itself was still in place.

“Looks like the Sandmen tried to get through here.” Logan said, as he examined the remains of the lock. He chuckled as he took out an ankh and pressed it into the inner recesses. It flared, as the door opened. “Looks like our luck’s getting better.”

“It just ran out.”

They turned to see Lucifer; his face red, his arm in a sling, his breath short, and a superflameweb in his left hand. He smiled.

“You’re quiet, Lucifer.” Logan said, wondered why he hadn’t heard that labored breathing before.

Lucifer laughed. “Found a secret passage. It came in handy.” he paused, his voice becoming angry. “You’ve wasted years of my life! But now, your Run is over!”

Logan hoped Lucifer’s exhaustion had slowed him down. Jessica, sensing what he was planning, inched away from him to give him room. “What did they promise you? You know they’ll never let you live!”

Lucifer remained silent.

“Fontana to Lucifer,” the Follower blared. “wait for us!”

“Still need help, eh?” Logan taunted.

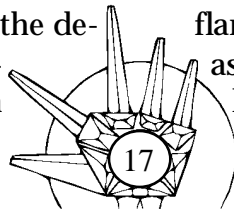
The other glanced at his Follower. He looked back to see Logan going for his flameweb. They both fired.

Fontana studied the screen’s information, then told Aurora to fire the cannon. It fired, blasting a huge hole in the wall. They drove through into the dim alley of the forgotten section of the City. Their headlights cut through the dimness as the Racers roared onward.

“Fontana to Athena. All flameweb out. We’re nearing Lucifer’s position.”

“Got it.” she replied.

They came around a blind corner as the two flameweb fired. They made it into the corridor to see Lucifer go down, his wounded arm now almost completely blown off. The flameweb fired again, destroying a pipe assembly that was in the middle of the pipeline hall as Logan and Jessica vanished



through the door at the far end.

In agony Lucifer crawled to the wall, giving Fontana the room he needed to fire. The cannon fired, vaporizing a section near the doorway. The Racer roared past Lucifer toward it.

“No room!” Aurora yelled.

Fontana hit the brakes. The Racer slowed, then crashed into the pipes that lined the catwalk beyond the door. Metal creaked as the Land-Racer nearly went over the edge. They scrambled out.

Athena stopped her Racer by Lucifer. Nadia got out and injected him with an anti-coagulant pain killer. As soon as he passed out the two went after their team mates. They climbed over the Racer just as somebody yelled: “Cover!”

They dove for cover as an intense firefight ensued.

Logan fired a multitude of blasts as he held off the attacking force. Then, he fired into some debris, creating a fire.

He pulled Jessica along as they ran up the stairs leading into a maze of catwalks and steps. He turned again as he threw a technite charge he'd picked up along the way. It exploded, slowing the Sandgirls' pursuit.

Flamegun blasts exploded everywhere as the two ran for their lives. Below them the water level had risen considerably, thanks to Francis 7's wild shot that had blown out the wall. Logan felt his pocket and was relieved to find the aqua-breathers were still there.

“Here, Jess!” he shouted, as he handed her one.

They ran as flamegun blasts exploded all around. Then, they came to a broken off end of the catwalk. Below them was the wall that had collapsed due to a flamegun charge. They put the aqua-breathers on and dove off into the murky depths of the water.

Aurora led the way as they scrambled over the catwalks and steps, all the while firing at a fast retreating Logan and Jessica. When the two stopped she thought they had them. All the flameguns fired, only to explode an empty catwalk; the two had already

jumped into the water.

Fontana and the Sandgirls fired into the water. Geysers of water shot into the air as their charges exploded. Aurora stopped them and said. “Set your technite charges for a delayed explosion of ten seconds!”

The charges were set, and thrown, as one. They hit the water and slowly sank. Seconds later more water was blown skyward. They set more charges, as Aurora located Logan's signal on her Follower.

Logan flipped his belt-torch on as they sank, thankful that the breathers worked like a charm. He held onto Jessica to keep her from getting separated from him. He held tighter as he felt the shockwaves from the intense DS attack.

His light illuminated the way. He saw the crumpled wall and started toward it. Fish swam in and out, startling the two, as they moved forward. Then, off to the left, Logan saw a recessed doorway.

“Hold your fire!” Aurora ordered.

The explosions subsided. They all looked at her expectantly. Fontana took the time to pull out his Follower and track Logan's signal, which was slowly moving away.

“Athena. You've got the best lungs-”

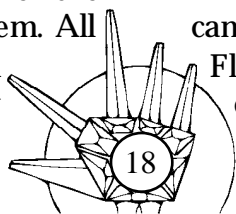
“A great pair of lungs.” Fontana said, under his breath. Only after Athena hit him, and the others began to laugh did he realize he'd said it aloud. “Uh.....I meant...”

Aurora laughed. “That's descriptive, but not what I meant. Okay. Athena and Nadia have the record on holding their breath. You two go in after them. Fontana and I will try to find another way. Our Guns will work underwater, but I'm unsure of our Followers. Any technite charges left?”

Athena had the last two. She gave one to the small Nadia. “We're set.”

“Then get to it! Move!”

Meanwhile, back at their impromptu base camp, Deidra consulted her Follower again. Flower crystal circuit patterns bleeped into existence at the furthest range of the de-



vice. At most there appeared to be about thirty coming their way. This worried her. She didn't want a horde of Runners to find a wounded Sandman and a lone Sandgirl. At best they'd kill him and rape her.

Caiden worked hard over a damaged Land-Racer. His uniform was tattered and dirty, showing the muscular body underneath. He was using his energy toward fixing the Racer, rather than face Laumer's death.

Deidra was over by the DS insta-shelter and had been working on a long range scanner when she decided to check the Follower. Now she was sorry she did. She sighed, then activated the Sandgirl frequency. "Deidra to Aurora, come in."

"Aurora here. What is it?" the voice said impatiently.

"You don't have to bite my head off, Aurora." she replied hotly.

"Sorry, Deidra. We've just lost Craig. Lucifer's been shot as well. What's your report?"

"I'm picking up a large number of signals moving our way. They could be aware of who we are the way they're moving in. If they continue to close in we'll have to evacuate."

"You're on your own. We're deep inside the old City. Do what you think is right. Aurora out."

Deidra made a face at her Follower, then went over to Caiden. He had his back to her, so she tapped him on the shoulder. "Caiden."

He just about jumped out of his skin. "Don't sneak up on me like that!" he shouted.

She couldn't keep a smile from her face as she said. "Sorry. How's it coming?"

He wiped his dirty forehead as he leaned against the Racer. "I've got it working. Top speed is eighty kilometers per hour." he said, feeling his broken leg.

"Kind of slow isn't it?"

"I'm not a magician, Deidra!" he replied defensively.

"Sorry, Caiden." she said, feeling for this man. "Aurora says that Craig is gone, too."

"It's getting worse by the second! This is the worst mission I've ever been involved with!"

"Everything will work out." she said. Then, she smiled at him as she continued. "You've done a great job. We're gonna break camp and join Aurora in the City." she paused. "Oh, and one more thing. I forgot to thank you for all your work."

He was about to reply when she gave him a kiss on the lips. She was all right, after all. "Uh...you're welcome."

Athena swam through the water. Then, she saw something green move, and fired. After the blast subsided she saw a dead fish floating to the surface. Unable to hold her breath longer she went up too.

Nadia came up close by, gasping for breath. Then, she smiled at Athena, and said. "Great shooting....that fish didn't stand a chance."

"Oh! Get outta here!" Athena replied, splashing water on the other Sandgirl. "Did you see anything?"

"Only fish."

Athena's Follower beeped. "Athena here. The Followers passed the water test."

"Aurora here. I can't find any other way down there. How'd it go?"

"It's impossible. We can't hold our breath long enough."

"But Athena did nail a fish!" Nadia yelled out, as she swam toward the catwalk.

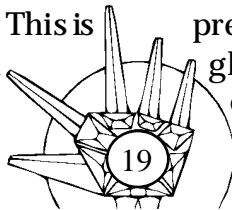
"That little-!"

"Cut it out you two." Aurora snapped, cutting her off. "Meet us back at the catwalk. Aurora out."

Athena snapped her Follower back onto her belt, then turned toward Nadia. "Nailed a fish! I'll get you for that!"

Logan and Jessica swam forward, their breathers working great. They came to another doorway. When Logan didn't see any working control board, he fired at the main locking apparatus. Then, he forced the doors open.

After a multitude of doorways and 'ank' locks they came to a huge double door. Jessica pressed her 'ank' to the ancient board. It glowed. Then, doors behind them began to close. Logan pulled her close as the water



swirled around them.

Ancient pumps began pumping the water out, once the doors had closed. It was obviously a failsafe to keep the area beyond devoid of water. Finally, they could take the breathers out.

"I'm glad to breath normally again," Jess said, a smile on her face.

"So am I." he replied, kissing her. "Maybe Sanctuary lies beyond those doors, Jessica."

The area was dry when the forward doors finally parted. They walked out, and were amazed by the technology before them. Two sub-shuttles stood before them, their silver surface dulled by little use. Computer consoles stood before the two machines. To their left and right the sidewalk stretched for about twenty meters.

"Identify." a male voice said.

Logan's first reaction was to go for his Gun. He stopped his arm and said. "Logan 5." and raised his crystallized lifelock in the air. Jessica did the same.

"Logan 5. Jessica 6. You are cleared. Go to Subshuttle #3."

Only then did Logan notice five laser cannons retracting into the walls. If they hadn't been cleared, they'd be vapors right now. Then, holographic generators activated, masking their presence.

Dripping wet, but happy beyond words, they walked to the subshuttle. It's door opened, bathing them in warm air; a welcome change from the cold water.

The interior had three rows of seats, all facing toward a viewscreen set into the forward wall. Beside it stood the door leading to the cockpit. But everything looked as if it hadn't been used in a long time.

They set their drenched bodies down in a couple of seats, finally able to relax. They had come so far it was like a dream. Then, Logan's Follower beeped for his attention.

He hesitantly brought it out and activated it. "Logan 5." he stated. "Over."

"This is Aurora 8: leader of the Sandgirls. And the woman you beat up earlier." the voice said.

"You stood in my way. Sorry. What do you want?" he said.

"You fought me and won. You're the first to do that. Computer was right; you are the best. I'm calling to tell you I'm breaking off pursuit. Good luck."

"Thank you. Logan 5 out." he said, then switched the unit off. He looked at Jess and smiled. "How do you like that? She called to congratulate me."

She smiled. "She's right, you are the best."

The hatch closed. The shuttle took off, increasing speed until it had reached it's cruising speed: three hundred kilometers per hour.

He held her close. "Next stop: Sanctuary."

Aurora felt her bruised face as Fontana and Allura loaded Lucifer onto an anti-grav platform. He was unconscious, which was lucky for him. His arm was pretty much gone, and he had lost a great deal of blood before the Sandgirls treated him.

They were now back in what was left of Arcade. The Land-Racers were parked close by. Athena and Nadia, their uniforms still plastered to their bodies by the water, helped Cherish to lie flat as they broke out another medkit. They caught Fontana looking at them and realized how tight their outfits were when they were wet.

"You'd better be looking just at me." Athena said to him.

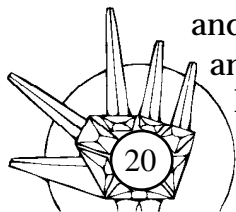
"Of course, Athena." he said, as he went back to the cannon car.

Aurora heard a whine coming from behind them and brought her Gun up. The labored whine showed itself as another Land-Racer; Deidra's. The Racer stopped and Deidra and Caiden got out.

Aurora stood in the middle of her assembled force and said. "Our mission doesn't have to end in failure."

Everyone grew quiet and looked at her, expectantly.

"I propose we catch a male and female and take them to a New You and surgically, as well as mentally, alter them into being Logan 5 and Jessica 6. Then, Computer will be happy and we'll have caught the most infamous Runners of all time." she paused. "What do



you think?"

"It could work," Fontana said, as he put his arms around Athena. "I'd hate to face Computer with a failure this big."

"We've lost so much," Deidra said sadly. "but I think it has a chance of working."

They all agreed. They would fool everyone and come out of this mess heroes. It would finally end Task Force #1's longest patrol ever.

The subshuttle came to a stop and the door opened. It had been hours now since they had boarded, so their clothes were just about dry. They got up and moved toward the door.

When they looked out they saw consoles and computer banks, but no people. They walked past the various blinking control boards until they reached a curved door set into the wall.

"Identify." the same male voice said.

They raised their crystallized lifelocks and waited. Once they were cleared Logan saw laser cannons retracting into the surrounding walls. He was amazed by the technology as they were once again masked by holographic projectors.

Jessica pressed an ankh to the panel by the door. It parted to reveal an elevator. She smiled at Logan as they went in. As soon as they were in the doors closed and the lift shot upward.

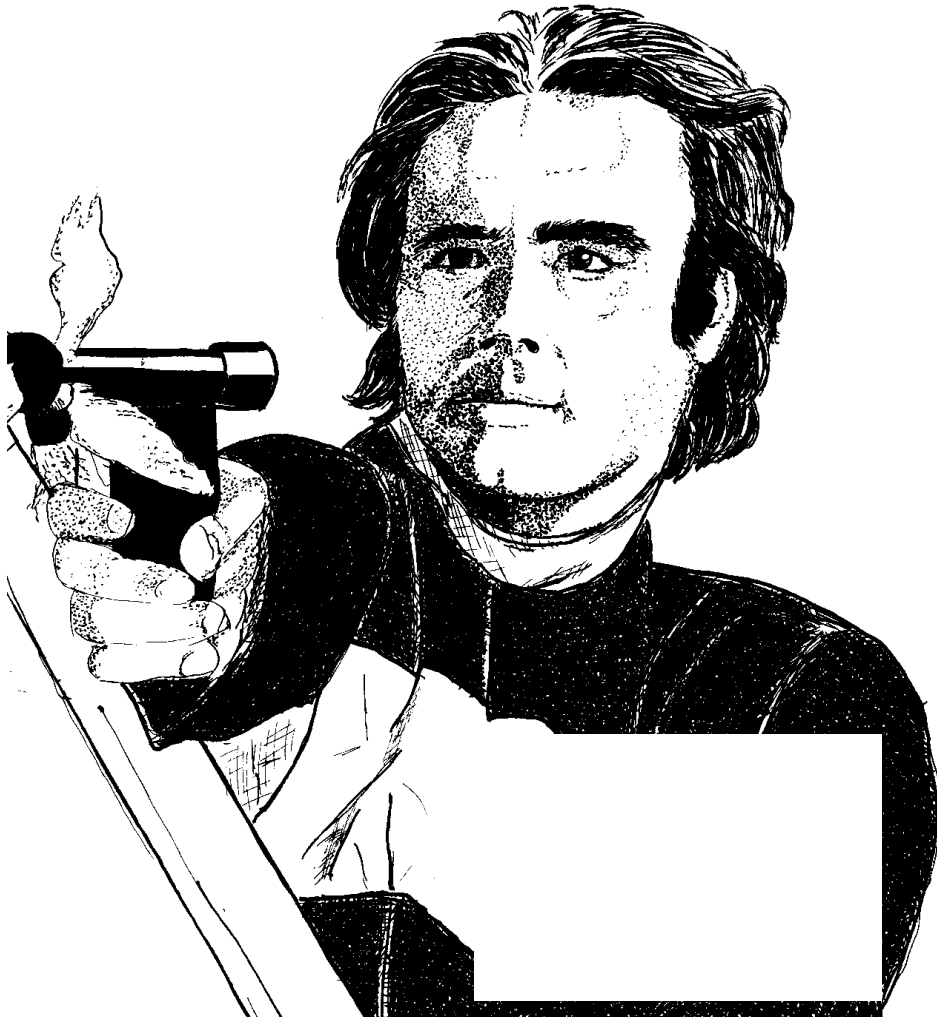
"I think this is it, Jessica!" Logan said, barely able to keep his excitement in check.

"Yes, Logan." she said, as she put her arms around him.

The lift came to a stop and the doors parted. They walked out into the light. Logan gazed around at various laser batteries, holographic projectors, and force field generators that stretched out and around Sanctuary.

Logan smiled as they saw people approaching them. Older people! This was Sanctuary at last! Logan hugged Jessica, then they walked through the force field doorway and joined the other Runners in the legendary land known as Sanctuary!

# THE END



# THE THINKER'S SANDLADY

## by Janelle Holmes

It had been difficult to persuade her parents she was ready to be on her own, difficult to convince them her decision had not been a simple whim but intensely thought out and mused over night after night over a period of several years. After all, it hadn't been her fault she had declared her intentions while they reminisced with the Sanctuary people. She'd tried to tell them before weeks before, but they'd get on another subject or leave the room the very moment she had just gathered her courage to speak out.

Couldn't let that happen again! The future was neither a time for shyness nor indecision.

"But you haven't had the preparation to enter the program," her father had said.

"So, I'll train for a few months in those specifics. I'm already strong enough, and my psych profile - -"

"You just don't realize what it's like down there!" her mother had pleaded. "The way men treat women, the things that go on in the populace. No psych profile can predict how you'll react to all that! I know!"

"Mother, it's the same profile used for the last 30 years for determining eligibility in the Earth program. You never took the psych tests. You were born into that culture. I wasn't."

"Jonathan, talk to her, will you?" her mother had said.

"She's right, Vera. I'm sorry, but she is right," he answered his wife. "What?"

"Let her take the rest of the tests and do some training. If she passes, then we'll see. She's an adult, Vera, we can't coddle her forever. Besides, Ballard's got things pretty much resolved down there.

Within a year, we'll be pulling all our people out." She'd finally won!

"Just promise me one thing, sweetheart," her mother had said, placing a protective arm about her daughter's shoulder, resigned at last, "Don't go to New City."

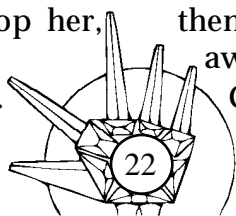
Six months later, she had found herself, packet in hand, on her way up the black steps of DS Headquarters at one of the largest domed cities still standing in the Western Hemisphere Dalworth.

As she had handed the packet over to the Senior Operative on the first floor he'd seemed less than enthusiastic, even bored with her arrival.

"Elyse 3, huh?"

"Yes, sir, I've just completed B-Level training at New City. I'm a transfer, just arrived a few minutes ago, in fact," she chatted on.

He held up a hand to stop her, then rose. "Just a minute." He left, went into another room. He was gone quite awhile before he came back. "Primary's busy. Can't see you 'til next week. Come back then," he said, handing back



the packet."But I had an appointment!"

"He's busy, I told you. Come back next week!" He was growing obviously impatient.

"But I don't even have a quadroom. I was supposed to "

"Third floor, room 32." He'd already gone back to whatever he'd been doing on his keyboard when she'd come in.

"You can't assign me a room from your terminal here? In New City - He looked at her pointedly. "This isn't New City, get that

straight right now! Upstairs you'll get your room assignment." "I'm sorry to have bothered you, I'm sure," she mumbled. "What was that remark, trainee?" "I'm sorry to have bothered you." "Sorry to have bothered you, sir!"

"Sorry to have bothered you, sir." Her hands clenched at her sides, the words came out reluctantly.

"You may leave, trainee."

Why couldn't they send her down as a full operative like most of the others? she wondered as she walked away searching for the corridor which led to the upstairs lift. Why did she have to put up with this subservient cow-towing?

Dalworth DS didn't have lifts, she was to discover, only stairs. Stairs were better for the physical condition of DS personnel, she'd assumed. And while she waited over an hour in a near-deserted Room 32 for her quadroore assignment, she'd reflected she'd not met with a single sympathetic human being in the entire city.

An uneventful week later, a week spent exploring a boring, cement-filled metropolis, she sat once more in an empty waiting room outside the Primary's office. Last time she'd checked the chronometer on the stark wall in front of her, it had been two hours since she'd announced her name.

A voice from the wallspeak

finally summoned her. "Tralnee Elyse 3, enter, please."

But in spite of the polite voice, the Primary, tall, bone-thin, blond, angled features and dark piercing eyes, seemed only superficially polite as he gestured her to sit. He'd already been through the papers which had accompanied her. They were spread everywhere on his large blue plasticene desk. He shuffled them, asking her question after question, glancing at the papers then back to her.

"Well, Elyse, your stars are very impressive. Can't imagine why New City even let you go with stats like these," he said tapping one sheet with his lean fingers.

"They were overloaded with A-levels, sir."

"Hm, well, I'm afraid that's our problem, too. Not enough Operatives to go around for the A-levels. I,ost a lot on Lastday in the last two months. These things go in cycles, you see." "Yes, sir, but "

"Tell me, dear, would you be agreeable to a transfer to some other city," he asked, stylus posed.

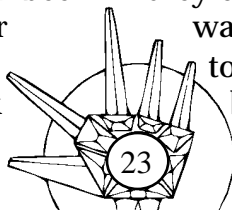
Dear, he'd called her dear! "Well, sir, I had't thought about it. I suppose " "Of course you wouldn't mind," he finished for her, already writing. "And I don't suppose you'd have any preferences, would you?"

"Well, sir, I - -"

"Of course not. We'll be in touch with any further developments."

The royal brush off, again! Already she despised Dalworth Dome and everyone in it.

She hadn't seen that many A-levels during her strolls through the city. But she had seen a lot of Operatives. No females, just males. She wasn't so stupid she couldn't put two and two together. One, they didn't like female DS; two, they didn't want to bother or spend the manpower to train an "inferior" sex; three, the best way to solve the problem was to



either ignore her and she'd give up; or four, send her off somewhere else where she'd be more "tolerated", but certainly Dalworth's problem.

The four gray walls of her cube-like quadroom were beginning to close in on her as three more weeks passed. All the furnishings were built into the walls, everything was definitely non-luxurious. She'd hate to see the B, C and D level quarters!

She'd been allowed to avail herself of the gym and library at HQ, for what good that was worth! The gym was deserted at the hours she was allotted, and what equipment they had was primitive and sparse. As for the library, its computer refused her access to most of the subjects she had briefly considered; and the ones she wasn't interested in were decidedly incomplete or inaccurate.

Still hadn't seen any female DS, but even so, her presence had seemed to be little cause for more than a casual, side-long glance. None of the males were extremely handsome, at least not by her standards. Maybe she wasn't that attractive by theirs, either. At any rate, no one seemed at all interested in her. Was she really that ugly? Everyone at Sanctuary had said she looked just like her grandmother, Vera 3; and, to hear her father talk, anyway, New City men and others had practically fallen on her like flies. Damn, she missed Sanctuary. And Him.

She'd not allowed herself to so much as even think His name since she'd left. If she didn't even think it, she had reasoned, she wouldn't miss him. But it wasn't working. She did miss him, missed him terribly.

Of course her parents had not even known of their relationship.

And if they had, would have altogether disapproved. He was older than her much older, chronologically. Physically, they were closer. Being of Meldanan blood and spending the

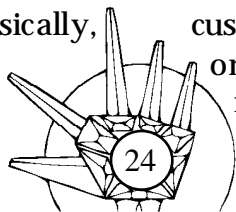
last six years of her life on Meldana, had accelerated her growth; and even though she was chronologically under a decade old, physically she was about 23.

She'd met him when they returned to Sanctuary II the year before, His charisma entrancing her almost immediately. The dark brown hair, the hazel eyes in a quiet, ever-calm face were not new to her, but there was simply something about him which drew her to him and him to her. In a short time, they had become lovers, meeting secretly in the unoccupied sections of Sanctuary. But things had gone too quickly.

He had wanted her to marry him, but she hadn't been ready to break the news to her parents. And she wasn't exactly sure she was in love with him. Wasn't sure, because she'd never been in love before, had never had a lover before. Had never felt this way before. How could she be sure it wasn't just plain, unbridled lust? How could she be sure it wasn't simply a strong physical attraction? It was then she had decided to go ahead with her childhood fantasy of volunteering for the Earth agent program to get away, give them both time to "cool down", apart. He had not been pleased.

She forced herself to erase that last scene between them from her consciousness. There had been such angry words, words they'd never said to one another before, words that hurt, cut, tore at the emotions. It had been hours after he had left, before her tears had dried sufficiently for her to appear outside their meeting place, in public, and seem her usual controlled self. And He hadn't even come to say good-bye when she had left for Earth. That had hurt the most.

She lay now on what she called "the slab" Actually, it was a very slightly cushioned shelf which pulled out from one of the four walls of her room to form a sleep platform, extremely



narrow and altogether totally uncondusive to sleep of any kind. She was actually more comfortable on the floor, which was where she usually ended up sleeping, anyway. Computer had just announced it was 07:00, Day of the City, Aquarius 20, Year 2302. She looked again at one of the few personal items she possessed holo-graphs of her mother and father in their DS uniforms. In Earth time they had been made a scant 7 years ago. Her uncle, Ballard 3, was still an active operative in New City, still working on replacing the cloned cells in the Regeneration Complex with the cells he had found stored generations earlier. She knew there were others, like herself, scattered over the globe, monitoring and interacting with the various domed cultures of the world. But to her knowledge, she'd yet to meet one.

The Senior Operative walked into the Primary's office that same morning with a smile on his face and handed his superior a single sheet of paper. "Think you'll like seeing this."

Primary Buchanan 5 looked up, took the paper, glanced briefly at it and smiled, also. "At last! Good. Last thing we needed here was another crazy from New City like that one eight years ago. Notify her. When will their operative be here, anyway?"

"Should be any day. Too bad she's got that New City blood in her. Quite a looker," Webb 6 said, taking back the sheet.

"Yeah, bad genes will always tell, though. We're better off rid of her, no matter how good or good-looking she is."

Heinrich 7 had been in this particular 'car for over ten hours on his way to Dalworth Dome. Most of this time he'd spent reviewing the dosjet on Elyse 3, the trainee he was to accompany back to his own dome.

He was very pleased with her qualifications, and with a twinkle in

his eyes, and a smile on his well-tanned face, he reflected on how long they had waited for such a trainee, this particular trainee. They were very fortunate, indeed!

Stuffing the papers back into his travel pouch, he punched up arrival time on the console of the mazecar. 20 MNS, jt blinked in neon-green.

Good, very good. He should be on his way back home in less than two hours, unless the girl held him up.

He pulled out her holo, looking at it once more. Gott in Himreel, she was beautiful! Perfect for their program.

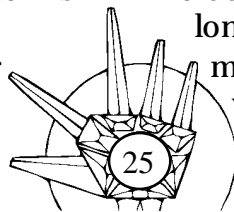
Upon his arrival at the station nearest her quad, where he put a security hold on the mazecar, he went straight to her room, noticing the absolute starkness of the area. It hadn't been that way 10 years before, he remembered. A few citz out at this early hour - 07:15 - most were still snug in their beds, he guessed. A few DS stared at him as he passed them. Bunch of runts, reminded him of the ones at Angelo Dome out west. Yes, the less time he spent here, the better.

He found the quadroom on the fifth floor of Quad R and pressed the buzzer.

Damn, who could be waking her at this hour? Who even cared to wake her, for that matter? She'd been virtually ignored for close to a month!

But when Elyse finally dragged herself to the door and opened it, she could hardly believe her eyes. She hadn't seen anything this impressive since she'd left Sanctuary!

The Operative standing before her was at least her father's height, if not taller two meters. His eyes were moon-blue set in a well-tanned, perfectly molded face. The pale brows matched his longish pale blond hair and his mouth made her ache to kiss it. His body wasn't too bad, either, she noticed, in



a uniform that fit him like the proverbial glove, totally black except for a thin piping of red along the military collar and a *red embroidered* city shield on his left breast. She was totally speechless.

The real woman was even more breathtaking than her holo, even though her dark hair was disheveled from sleep and the velverobe draped her less than perfectly on her too perfect body, its contours less than

adequately conforming to the curves of her more than adequate form.

One

ivory shoulder had been left exposed and she tugged at the garment,

self-consciously righting it. He'd seen eyes like hers only once

before. Yes, he'd definitely come to the right place.

"I'm Heinrich 7. I've come to take you to Heidelberg Dome," he finally said.

"Wha - -what?" she stammered.

"They didn't tell you?"

"Tell me ..." "About your transfer."

"Uh, no."

He brushed past her into the room.

"Get your personals together and yourself dressed. I'll contact Headquarters," he finished going to her computer terminal.

She'd been gone only a few minutes before she returned faultlessly outfitted in her black tunic and green leggings. He could see more plainly, he'd been right about her figure full breasts and rounded hips breeding hips they called them.

"Everything's taken care of except turning in your equipment. They just received notification from Computer this morning."

"I was never issued any equipment other than this belt," she said

pointing to the utility belt at her waist.

On it was a single pouch with her personals in it.

"No?"

"No."

"Strange. Just a moment." He fiddled at the console a bit longer. She was right. They were virtually free to go. He'd notified DW DS and they'd cleared her for travel.

He took a glance about the small room as they left. She'd seemed less than sorry to leave, and he couldn't blame her.

Back in the 'car and on their way, he pursued her more closely. Heidelberg, she thought. Well, if he was any example of the genetic engineering there, it would seem the Germans had come up with the perfect Aryan. She tingled just sitting next to him.

"Once we get to Heidelberg," he was saying, "you'll be integrated at Headquarters and reassessed, then possibly reassigned to full operative status."

"You really think there's a possibility?" she replied. She couldn't take her eyes off him, which was only his profile, but his eyes were occupied with the console readouts.

"It's lengthy ride. Ten hours in this car, then a 'vane flight across the - " He'd made the mistake of looking at her " - Atlantic," he finished after an imperceptible pause, he hoped. "You'll forgive my bluntness, Fraulein, but you look older than Green Six."

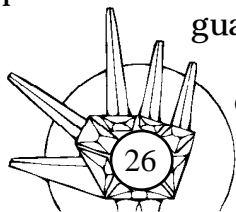
She blushed, then regained her composure. "And you look older than Red Six!"

"Oh, that," he replied, diverting his attention back to the console. "We don't terminate at 30." He opened a compartment and withdrew a large pouch, changing the subject. "Here, you'll need this later. It gets quite cold further out. You don't speak German, do you?"

She shook her head, still wondering at his earlier comment. "You said "

"Never mind, we'll get you a language transplant at HQ."

"You said," she tried again, "you don't terminate "



“Have you ever been Outside except for your trip to Dalworth?”

“No, but - - “

“Didn’t think you had, just becoming A-level. I think you’ll like Heidelberg,” he babbled on, “it’s quite old, really, but there’s a great deal of modern technology and modern architecture, as well .”

Elyse gave up; he was talking so quickly, there was no chance to get a word in edgewise. In fact., he’d often lapse into German, so she just relaxed back in the reclined seat and appraised him inch by inch, tuning out his constant chatter.

Better than anything at Sanctuary. Definitely much better! Ten hours and then a flight across the ocean; a lot could happen between two people in that amount of time. Quite a lot could happen. Unfortunately, she had no idea how true that was.

Elyse had finally fallen asleep, much to Heinrich’s relief. He was running out of things to talk about. If he only knew how true the information in her dossier had been, he might have been able to be more open with her. Would she have forgotten his comment about not terminating at 30 when she awoke? Not likely.

She lay like a young child curled up under the thermsheet only a few scant centimeters away. He could even feel her breath on his face if he turned toward her. If he dared. Her hair looked so soft, he longed to touch it, longed to caress her cheek with his rough hand, yearned to gently brush her lips with his own. But just then a blaring alarm sounded from the console, flashing red lights and voice proclaimed: TUNNEL INTEGRITY JEOPARDIZED. EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY. NEAREST STATION, AFT, 10 METERS.

The mazecar had already stopped, and the canopy was sliding back as he woke the trainee.]

“Elyse,” he said shaking her, “come, we have to get out at once!”

“Wha - -”

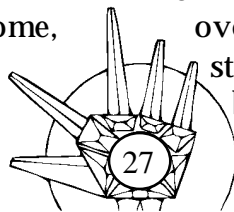
“Now! Come.”

They raced down the tunnel, Heinrich pulling her along by the hand until they reached the station stairs, where, suddenly it seemed as if the stairway lurched of it own accord.

“Earthquake! On the surface, quickly,” he ordered. The ground heaved all about them, making it nearly impossible to make much headway, the tremors flinging them back nearly as far as they had advanced. Trees vanished into gaping holes as the ground collapsed into itself, huge boulders seeming to walk across the terrain in supernatural abandon. But finally, they found shelter in what seemed to be a rather stable archway of a small granite cave. Instinctively, he drew Elyse to him, as rubble began pouring down from outside the cave in a suffocating cloud of dirt and dust. She sensed the sudden onslaught of his emotions, but fear was not among them. He was unusually calm, although impatient.

“Cover your nose and mouth with your tunic,” he shouted over the deafening roar of the earth rending itself, pulling up his collar. Her hands fumbled with the black neckline of her tunic, pulling it up over her lower face, just as the ground jolted beneath them, thrusting her into his arms.

He held her tighter, pulling her head to his chest with his free hand and bending over her to take the brunt of the falling pebbles, soil and rock debris. She’d never heard such a deafening cacophony, not even on the moon where they still had seasonal quakes. But they were nothing like this! Elyse shrunk even more against Heinrich’s hard body, trying to muffle the horrible sounds. Could he feel her shivering and trembling, the stifled whine she could scarce control, coming from her tightly compressed lips? Even over the earth’s roar, she could hear the steady, comforting throb of his heartbeat, as if this were all expected and



nothing out of the ordinary.

It seemed like hours had passed before the first tremor had ended not overlapped with other tremors of varying intensity. But still he did not release her, instead looking down at her and brushing a piece of crumbled granite off her cheek. She knew his words before he asked. "You all right?"

She looked down at her torn dusty tunic and hose and then at him. "I think so."

"You stay here while I go check the tunnel," he said, slowly relaxing his hold on her.

"No, I'm going with you." He was worried.

"But if there are aftershocks, you'll be safer here."

"No, I'm going."

Giving up, he allowed her to follow him across the jumbled landscape, gaping cracks and fallen trees to the debris-covered stairs of the mazestation. She did finally obey when he gestured her to stay back. Still within sight, she saw him check the call box, obviously non-operational, then disappear down the tunnel where she assumed he found the 'car, for he returned shortly with his bag and a larger one from which protruded an edge of thermsheet.

"Tunnel ahead's collapsed," he said, climbing the stairs. "We'll have to go on foot. There's enough water for two days, and we should be able to forage enough food."

"You think we'll be able to find another car?"

"Should be one 100 miles from here. Or at least a station we can call one from."

"That's a three-day hike!"

"No one ever said being DS was easy. Besides, you're young and strong! Here," he added, handing her the larger bag, "everyone carries his own weight."

She took it and slung it over her shoulder. Heinrich had already taken off and was nearly at the horizon, so she ran to catch up. His long strides were going to make her work twice as hard to keep up. It was going to be a long three days.

"You sent her to Dalworth?" Ballard threw his uniform tunic across the room of his Sanctuary quarters. He'd only come for a day or two, to check in for his yearly debriefing. "I can't believe it!" he continued, pacing across the living area. "She's too young for those spartans, and giving her the cover story of training in New City - - Did you forget Logan 6 was sent to Dalworth for a year, and they nearly lynched him! Dalworth's not going to accept anyone from New City, after that, much less a trainee!"

Jonathan raised his hand, trying to placate the former Primary of New City DS. "All right, so we fouled up. And she's not that young you forget time passes more quickly here and that the young mature more rapidly. She's 23, Stalas."

"So, have you heard from her?"

Jonathan ran a hand through his graying hair and turned away from his brother-in-law, muttering. "No, not yet."

"What? How long has she been gone?"

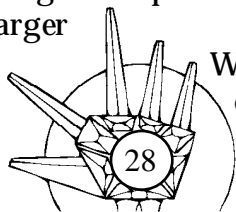
"About one Earth month," Jonathan said, turning.

"And Vera's not climbing the walls? What have you been doing,

lying to her? Or just not answering her? Don't tell me she's not suspicious."

"You know how she is; she's not aware of much reality, here or there. I don't even think she knows how much time has passed. Her condition just hasn't improved."

"That was bad business, all right. Well, the least I can do for her is track down Elyse from my end, maybe



from the House or through the Network. Someone's got to have heard something." But Jonathan had only nodded in reply.

"What's really bothering you?" Ballard said, seriously eyeing him.

"That she's fallen into the wrong hands not just Dalworth, but someone, somewhere else."

"You didn't put down her real pedigree, did you?"

"Not me, no, but someone in..."

"Great, just great! How much Vera 3 genetic factor does she have?"

"About 55% - some from my side."

"And 100% essence?" "Yeah."

"We're in trouble." "I know..."

"HOW much of Vera 3's personality?"

Jonathan blew his cheeks out. "You wouldn't believe it unless you saw it."

"Stubborn?"

"In spades."

"Independent!"

"Yep."

"Self-confident?"

"Uh ,huh."

"Oh, boy."

Heinrich finally slowed his pace about an hour before dusk. Elyse's legs were killing her! Pounding a treadmill for 30 miles and actually loping over craggy boulders - up, down - to the side - down down - up - crawl - down - over - was much more tiring, and they'd covered a good 35 miles that day, stopping only briefly. The sky was growing dark and not from just a setting sun. The clouds, pushed along by an unseen force, were rapidly gathering in thick, grey-black clumps of augury, an increasingly cold wind blowing out of them, bending the sparse grass and bushes.

Heinrich looked up. "Storm's coming maybe snow. We'd better camp for the night while we still can. Let me have that bag," he said, reaching

toward her.

She gratefully threw the thing toward him. From it he withdrew a vinyl package, unfolded it and pitched it back at her. "Set that up."

"What's this, some kind of tent?"

"Yeah. Better hurry, that storm'll be here soon."

Cautiously, she unfolded the thing further, turning it this way and that, trying to figure out just how to set it up. She didn't see Heinrich looking at her with mild amusement.

"Need help," he asked, "It's a TZ-138 model; you familiar with that?"

"Sure, I'll get it. No problem." There had to be a valve or something, somewhere. She finally found something that looked like a valve, under it scribblings in an ornate foreign language of which she could make out only a few letters.

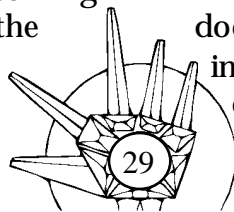
Heinrich craned his neck from where he squatted on the ground busily assembling a catalytic heater and lantern before him. "You haven't got that up yet?" he asked, noting the determined look on her face, as she shivered from the increasing cold and tried to decipher the German blackletters.

"I've got it, I've got it, just seems a little stiff." Push, pull, squeeze . . . which? Pull - - nothing. Push yes! At last a rush of air and the thing was inflating. She looked over to the operative with a triumphant grin. He wasn't watching.

When the tent reached full inflation, its baffles formed an A-framed, two-person shelter about a meter and a half high, wide and two long. It was going to be really cozy!

There were rings at each corner, and she pounded the alum stakes which had fallen out of the package into the ground at each to stabilize the shelter.

Heinrich walked up, zipped open the door and placed the lantern and heater inside. "If you need to relieve yourself or anything before we retire, you'd



best hurry. Temperature's dropping fast." Yes, she could tell. Her light city trimfits weren't exactly made for cold weather. She noticed his uniform was made from the warmer thermknit, whose fibers expanded or contracted, tightening or loosening the weave of the fabric depending on environmental temperatures. She'd been warm enough, albeit slightly cool, throughout the day as long as they were moving, but right now she was freezing! Hastily, she ran behind some bushes and moments later hurried into the tent on all fours, zipping it closed behind her. The travel bag and his pouch were already inside, along with the two thermsheets from the mazecar. Gratefully, the heater made it nice and warm inside. Outside, a few flakes were already beginning to fall, as she could see through the small rear window screen.

"Better close that up, too. Can't afford to lose any heat, but leave a small vent for the heater exhaust."

She did as told, then sat at the end of the tent on what she presumed was "her" side. He sat crosslegged within touching distance and handed her a wafer of food concentrate, which she slowly began to nibble, noticing he broke small pieces off his with his fingers to eat it. Somehow, she felt decidedly uncivilized.

"So," he began, his attention concentrated on the wafer, "I see both your parents were DS"

"Mm," she answered. "What about yours?"

Good parry, he thought. "Father" "Where?" Another parry.

"Amsterdam."

"So, you're not German?"

"Nor Dutch, either, if that's what you're thinking." His turn to parry .. and thrust. "So, why didn't New City want you?" He looked up, pointedly. "And don't tell me that nonsense about too many trainees. It doesn't wash not with your background."

"Well, it's the only explana-

tion I was given! What's so great about my background, anyway?"

"Your stats. Better than most full operatives. Your parentage and pedigree. Most cities would keep you for just one of those." "Obviously Dalworth didn't!"

"They're paranoid fools!" he snorted and took a drink from the canteen, then offered it to her. She refused. "Ever been in a paravane?" he asked. She shook her head.

"How'd you get from New City to Dalworth?" "Car."

"Alone?" His eyes had never left her.

"You expect me to believe they'd send a trainee with your background, alone, that far by 'car'?"

"Well, it's true!" she affirmed, jumping to her feet and remembering too late the tent's low height. She promptly sat back down.

The sides of the tent were beginning to buckle back and forth, in and out, from the gusting wind of the approaching storm, as pellets of sleet began to attack the shelter's vinyl walls and roof. "You sure this thing's strong enough?" she asked, looking about her.

"It's been in worse."

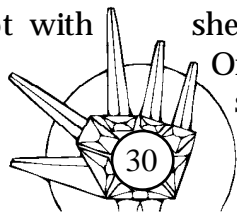
She didn't like the way he'd been staring at her. He lay down, wrapping one of the thermsheets around himself. "Better get some sleep," he said, turning away.

Elyse stretched out beside him, struggling with her own thermsheet, surprised to find the thin air baffle of the tent floor made it quite comfortable.

She actually slept well that night.

The next morning she awoke before Heinrich and unzipped the window flap to look out. There was snow everywhere, quite deep by the look of it. The wind still blew relentlessly. Rezipping the flap, she crawled to the door and opened it.

Once outside, she snugly wrapped the sheet about her, and trudged toward



the clump of bushes she'd visited the night before. Except now, only the tops of them were visible. She'd have to go farther into the trees for privacy. But before she could reach them, her left leg suddenly went out from under her, as she stepped, unknowingly, into a brush-covered hollow.

"Damn luck-," she cursed. But her leg wouldn't budge; and what was more unlucky, when she had fallen, her grip on the thermsheet had loosened and it was now blowing gaily across the meadow.

She lay stretched on the cold powdery snow, pulling her leg, then reached down to clear the snow from it so she could free it better. But it was no good. A branch had caught her boot; and with each furtive pull, her ankle screamed in pain.

Great, she thought. Thigh-deep in snow with a sprained ankle. She'd rest awhile then dig down and see if she could free it. Maybe Heinrich would come outside to see to his own needs. It was getting damn cold without that sheet.

Come on, you damn whatever-you-are, get outside! She wasn't about to yell for him. She'd die first! If she couldn't free her leg, she might anyway. She dug at the snow with her bare hands, now turning a lovely shade of pink-red. She finally was able to determine her foot was trapped by a cross-thread of three branches. Looking back toward the tent, she willed him to come out. Please! Heinrich had awoken at last and noticed her absence at once.. But he thought nothing of it until quite some time had passed. It was then, it occurred to him to look for her. His bladder could wait.

He saw the small black and green clump almost immediately and followed the nearly disappearing footsteps toward it. She wasn't moving. Reaching her, he lifted her head, and she opened her eyes. Her lips were turning blue, and her fingers and

hands were bright red. "Leg. Foot," she murmured and dropped into unconsciousness.

He let her down and dug furiously at the snow, at last reaching the trapped foot and breaking the limbs which captured it with the butt of his Gun. Then, he lifted her in his arms and carried her quickly back to the warmth of the tent.

Covering her with the last thermsheet and his own tunic, he tried to rewarm her chilled body. He'd already removed the wet, icy clothing, turned up the catalytic heater and poured hot liquids down her throat. He knew of nothing else to do.

Her ankle was swollen to twice its normal size and, because of it, it was impossible to tell if it was broken or merely sprained. It looked pretty bad, regardless.

He was muttering to himself as she regained consciousness. Her feet were against his bare torso, covered by his hands, slowly caressing and stroking them to regain the circulation.

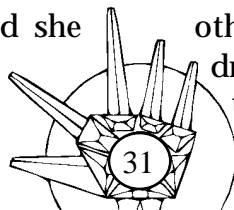
The first thing she noticed was his bare broad chest. The second thing was the mixed anger and concern he felt. Yes, she could actually feel it, just as she could his lack of fear during the earthquake, just as she sometimes knew what he would say before he said it. Like now.

"You stupid bitch! You could have died out there! Why didn't you call for me?"

She looked dumbly at him, then kicked him with her good leg, throwing him backward, jolting her bad ankle as he did so.

"Shit!" she screamed through clenched teeth, clutching her throbbing ankle. Then suddenly, she realized she was naked. "Where are my clothes?"

He gestured from his half-sprawled position on the floor to the other side of the tent where they hung dripping. He was laughing! She threw his tunic at him for it, and he



caught it in midair.

"Want to throw the sheet, too?" he smirked.

She started to, then thought better of it, pulling it higher.

"So, don't thank me for saving your life and possibly losing us another day or more to nursemaid you."

"I don't need nurse maiding. Bandage this up and fix me a crutch, and we can get going."

"Morning's nearly gone. We can't go anywhere, anyway. Storm's still raging."

"Ha, ha. Wasn't my fault, after all!" He pulled his tunic back on and curled up alongside her. "Better keep that leg elevated."

By next morning the ankle was hot and even more swollen with red streaks reaching up her calf muscle. Burning with fever, Elyse was in and out of consciousness most of the night before and now was totally unrousable. Heinrich was desperate. He fumbled in his travel pouch and pulled out a small radio, extending the antenna its full length and plugging in, the small earphone. He punched in a seven-number code, then waited for the acknowledging beep. Finally, it came, and he talked. "Emergency situation ....

"Yes, the trainee. Possibly broken leg, going bad .... "No, I can't elaborate! . . .

"Yes, I know ....

"Damn it, I need her lifted out of here, now .... "No, I can't wait. Now! . . . "10 Hell with regulations. NOW!

"And you'll have me to deal with if you don't. I mean NOW." The conversation was finally ended. They promised airlift in one, two hours at the outside. Even though they didn't like taking an outsider to their top secret medical facility, there was little choice. Either that or lose a very valuable member of their future gene pool.

"Jonathan, we've found her!" The ex-Sandman raced to a secure line to receive Ballard's transmission.

"Where?"

"Thinker Med Facility near old St Louis dome. Our double agent there saw her brought in this morning."

"Status?"

"Broken ankle, some frostbite."

"By herself? No, of course not! Who?"

"Operative/Thinker-agent name of Heinrich 7. They were on their way to Heidelberg Dome."

"A Thinker-agent. What have we got on him, Blair?" he said to the man at the next console, who'd already punched in the name.

"Aliases: Bjorn 6, Bertold 3, Mulich 4, Sigfried 2, Carthage 4, Reinhold 5, Sanders 2, Hauptman 2, Raunaulf 3 done time at Amsterdam, Berlin, Stockholm, Moscow domes in Europe, Montreal, Nome, BueDas Aires, Portland, Shreveport, Dalworth and Stockton domes in Western Hemisphere. Thinker-agent for 25 years, real age estimated 42 but possibly younger. Nothing known of actual background. Father, mother unknown. Dome of Origin, Unknown. First used name appears as Andera 2 in Amsterdam in 2264, Green Two."

"You said Shreveport? What year?" "2295."

"Visual?"

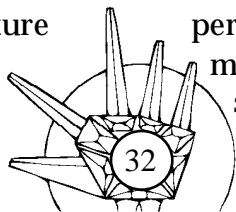
"Last known appearance."

"Yes," Jonathan said, slowly. "I know him! When does Elyse get released for travel, Ballard?"

"Three days to a week."

"I think its time for Darnell 7 to come out of retirement."

The Great Plains Medical Facility was probably the finest in what was left of the North American continent. Because it was run directly by the authority of the Thinker, the surgeons and other medical personnel were made up of over-30's med-techs, specially trained and screened for above average abilities.



Their operating and treatment rooms boasted the most sophisticated and most advanced machines to be found anywhere.

Elyse's ankle was mere child's play for their lasers and anodyne rays, incised, auctioned, bones aligned, knitted add incision closed all in only a matter of minutes. But the infection was more life-threatening than the state of the ankle itself, and it was for this reason she was confined at the facility while her body was bombarded with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. She lay in the autobed unconscious for two more days before she finally awoke with a semblance of normalcy. Heinrich had gone no farther than the corridor outside her room since their arrival, and even now he was beside her bed, her hand in his as he watched her finally open her amber eyes.

"Hey, there, sleepyhead."

She looked lazily in his direction and mumbled, "Go to Hell," then closed her eyes again. Her hand pulled away as she turned to her side and curled up more compactly.

"Enjoy it while you can. We leave in two more days." She groaned, covering her head with a pillow.

"You'll have to leave now, Sandman," a female! tech said, entering with her hand holding a scanner. With the other hand she held open the door. And as soon as he had left and she was sure he was out of

earshot, she went quickly to the bed and shook the patient. "Elyse, wake

"Don't wanna." "Elyse, look at me."

She lifted the corner of the pillow enough to expose one eye, then sat bolt upright. "Connie?"

The tech put a finger to her lips.

"Ssh, walls have ears." She sat down on the edge of the bed and they hugged quickly.

"So this is where you've been," Elyse whispered.

"And I see you finally won over your parents!"

Elyse nodded, then gestured with her head toward the door, a quizzical look on her face.

"Him?" Connie answered. "You don't know?" Elyse shook her head.

"Very special, very important. Top clearance. Gets whatever he Wants."

"What else do you know about him?"

"That's about it. He shows up once, twice a year. Stays a week and then he's gone. Spends most of his time in the underground rooms. That's where they keep all the top secret projects. I've been here two years, and I don't know anyone who's had clearance to go there, except him."

Connie quickly passed the scanner over Elyse's body. "Your temp's stable. That's good. Ankle looks good, too. Take some time for the discoloration to fade."

"Connie ..."

"Gotta go He'll be back any minute." And she was gone before she could blink.

Darnell 7, with his icy blue eyes and swarthy red skin, was a formidable-appearing ally. Shoulder length, straight jet hair swung as his muscular body guided a massive arm to push a sniveling trainee out of his way. He could also be a formidable enemy. Today, he was the later. Gun slung low on the hip of his sleek, shiny black' skinsuit, one couldn't help but notice this was a most unusual Sandman, one Heidelberg Dome DS had never seen the like of before. His German was flawless, although he only spoke when necessary.

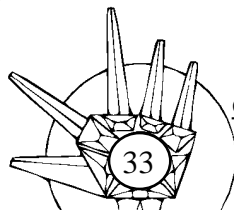
"Wo ist Heinrich?" he demanded, hands braced on the Primary's desk.

"Er ist nicht hier. Amerika." The Primary was not easily intimidated by large, muscle-types, even though he was much smaller in both size and mass.

"Wann erwarten Sie ihm?"

"Zwei tagen, Herr Sandman"

"Wann er zuruckeren, sagen Sie ihm dass Herr Darnell Sieben ist hier -



-aus Shreveport -- Amerika," he ended with a sneer.

"So," the Primary responded, calmly, in English, "you two know each other?"

Darnell answered, smirking, "You could say that."

"Sehr gut. Then you must be our guest in the meantime. Please to form your behavior as you would expect of us as a guest in your country. Wenn Heinrich kommen, erzablich es ihm."

The medfac 'vane had taken them directly to a small airport outside Providence, Rhode Island. Heinrich had decided to waste no further time in getting back to Heidelberg. His own paravane, a much larger one than that used by the Medfac, stood already fueled and waiting, as they transferred their equipment and belongings from one 'vane to the other.

Elyse noticed, as she climbed in, the larger cargo area at the rear and two fold down type benches, which were big enough to double as sleep platforms. Heinrich was already at the controls, warming up the engine and checking all the vitals prior to take off.

She got into the seat next to him, snapping the harness over herself and adjusting it.

"Thought you said you'd never been in a 'vane before?"

"I watched them on the one over here to see what they did, so you wouldn't have to waste your time teaching me."

"Hm," was 811 he said in reply. He pulled back on the control stick, and the aircraft reached into the air; another control was pushed away, and it began to move forward, slowly at first, then more and more rapidly, until the rippling waves of the Atlantic were beneath them in all directions. When they had reached cruising altitude, Heinrich switched to "on" a toggle marked, "Auto", unsnapped his harness and started toward the back, gesturing for Elyse to follow. He pulled down a bench and sat on it,

indicating her to do likewise.

"We need to talk. No more bullshit, no more lies. Just the truth."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, I took a big chance breaking security to take you to that medfac. I showed my trust in you, trust I think you should return, now. We can't go on lying to each other, Elyse. It's truth time."

"Truth time?"

"Yes, I ask you a question, you answer truthfully, then you ask me a question, and I answer truthfully. It's really quite simple."

"Any question? What if I'm not ready to tell you the truth?"

"Then we start with little truths and build up to the big ones any question you want."

"Who goes first?"

"Okay, little truth what is your real name?"

"Elyse."

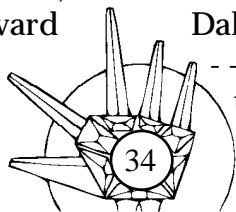
He nodded. "Your turn."

"What's your real name?"

He grinned. "The original one? Olsen. Now, my turn. Where are you from?"

"That's a big truth. Ask another question."

"All right, let me put it this way. I did some research at the Thinker terminal in Medfac. Thinker keeps lots of records, real ones, not the ones fancied up for the cities, full of lies and deceit, but records of what actually happened. For instance, I know your grandmother, Vera 3, was integrated into the City population by a Sandman named Francis 7, and that she was designated as Indefinite in 2274. There was no previous record of her anywhere. I ]<now your mother, Vera 4, was her clone, and that she was integrated as Indefinite by Francis 8, along with another Vera 3 offspring named Ballard 2, also a member of DS. I know, as well, there was no mazecar usage the day you arrived in Dalworth between Dalworth and New City -- on any route. And, strangely enough, there are no records of any Elyse 3 any-



where at anytime. In other words, everything you've told me, except perhaps your name, is a lie!"

Elyse had shrunk with every new bit of his evidence against her story. She was surprised he hadn't confronted her with more.

"So, where are you from?"

"Sanctuary." She spoke, head down, her voice barely above a whisper.

"Sanctuary?" he asked, mildly amused, as if he still didn't believe her. But she was nodding her head, slowly, in affirmation, and his look changed to one more serious. This certainly changed things. He had expected something interesting but not this, not ever this! He mumbled to himself, so low she could make out only a few words, something that sounded like, "did it."

Elyse watched him, his head down, hand and fingers rubbing his forehead in thought.

"My turn now?" she asked.

"Yeah, sure." Obviously he was still lost in his own thoughts. "What did you mean when you said, 'We don't terminate at 30?'"

Nope, she hadn't forgotten memory like a steel trap, that's what! He looked up, wearily.

"European DS get another 5 years that's automatic."

"That's not what-you meant, or you wouldn't have clammed up so quickly when I asked before. Truth time, remember?"

"All right, all right," he answered slowly. "Truth: guess you know by now I'm a Thinker-agent."

"Yes, so?"

"A Thinker-agent's clock never goes black that's why we get moved around so much, new cities, new identities, sometimes even new faces and bodies."

"You said 'we'."

"All Thinker-agents."

"No, that's not what you meant!"

He sighed. "You're right, I didn't." He leaned back against the 'vane hull. "I meant you, too. Thinker wants you as his next agent."

"Me, why?"

He shook his head slowly. "I thought you were so smart; you shouldn't have to ask. Can't you see?"

"My background?" He nodded, and Elyse began to search her mind.

"Just who or what is the Thinker?"

"A huge, all-knowing computer," he began, relaxed, eyes closed, "originally programmed by a man named Chaney Moon, they say." he sighed again and paused. "They also say additional modifications and programming was done by someone else around 2256 by a Sandman." He opened his eyes, looked at her. "I don't know about the first, but I do know about the second." His eyes held hers as he paused once more, searching that soft, innocent face for something familiar from long ago. He finally saw that something in the way she furrowed her brow, the way she listened, undistracted. "I was there, Elyse."

Her brows lifted slightly - - about the reaction he'd expected, considering. "Game time's over," he said, rising.

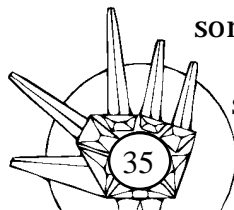
She jumped up and grabbed his arm as he started back to the console. "No, wait. You can't let it end like that!" He was in pain just thinking of the past. Why?

"You want a name, is that it?" He grinned, taking her hand. "Ballard 2, that was his name." He released her and started forward again, this time successfully reaching his chair.

She stood in the space behind him, and almost whispered, "But you said you were there."

"Of course," he replied. "I'm his son."

She sat heavily in the other chair, staring at him. "Fasten up," he or-



dered, buckling his own harness.

Almost in a daze she did as told, then, brow furrowed in thought, she looked back at him. "If you're Ballard 2's son, then why is your real name Olsen?"

"You don't miss a thing, do you? All right, I should have been Ballard 3, except I was born to an Outsider he met only briefly. He didn't know I existed for 6 years, until my mother died and her people found him at Crazy Horse."

"So, your mother was a gypsy?"

"No. She was a successful Runner. There was a small group of them who made it Outside with Ballard's help back when he was a new Operative. They set up a village of sorts and relied on him for the few supplies they needed. About two or three times a year, he'd bring them new members, too."

"The first Sanctuary?"

He nodded. "Of course, Father always had ideas of a safer Sanctuary, a place where no one could touch them once they were there. I lost touch with him once I was grown enough for my first city assignment, so I never knew if he succeeded or not.."

"So you don't know what happened to him."

He looked at her pointedly. "Oh, I know. Thinker kept me informed whenever I cared enough to check."

"Then why didn't you know about my Sanctuary? He looked back at the console and typed in a course correction.

"Maybe he didn't want Thinker to know everything."

"But you said Thinker knew everything

"

He grinned. "Not everything"! And remember this, Thinker can only know whatever is fed to Central Computer', by voice or modern. Thinker has Listeners everywhere quads, DSHQ, all the shops, all the malls, all the 'cars and 'vans. Without the Listeners, Thinker is deaf and blind."

"You mean it's listening now?"

He reached into his utility pouch and took out a handful of Listener bugs. "Nope!" He put them back and continued. "So, if you don't want Thinker to know something, hunt out the bugs and remove them or, barring that, turn on something loud to mask your words. And, as they say, don't put anything into or say anything to computer you don't want recorded for posterity. Understand?"

"Yes," she answered, somewhat overwhelmed.

He smiled and looked her over. "Yeah, you'll do all right. Get you 'quipped and blocked, and you'll fit right in with all the rest." "Blocked?"

"Yeah, you know, assigned. Of course, Comp want you 'pregged as soon as possible."

"Pregged?" She was still working on "blocked". "Mm. Impregnated."

"Impregnated!" Her eyes were like saucers. "They don't in vitro?"

"Nope, remove the embryo and put it in a growth medium at 14 weeks."

"Well, Comp will have to just wait for that! That's all I can say!"

Heinrich grinned. "Why?"

Elyse smiled broadly. "I was given a six month contraceptive injection before I came down. That's why!"

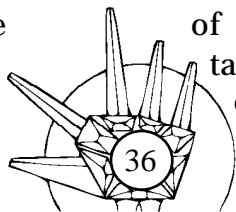
"Guess I'll just have to try harder, then," Heinrich laughed. "You?"

"Yeah. I was given the assignment. Does that disturb you?"

Elyse stared at him, mouth agape. Disturb her? "Do I have a choice?" she voiced at last.

"No more than you have a choice about anything Thinker wants," Heinrich answered more seriously. "You'd best get some sleep, we'll be arriving in another couple of hours."

Heidelberg was unlike anything Elyse had ever seen, with the possible exception of some drawings or paintings in history tapes. lying deep in a thick forest of evergreen trees on the Neckar River,



the old city-fortress' walls had been reconstructed and the ancient castle, itself, rebuilt and restored, now the central offices of DS Headquarters. Its red, sandstone walls dominated the city, standing high on a hill. Nearby, lay the equally old Reprecht-Karl University, the older part housing classroom for-DS, the newer for the citizens of Heidelberg.

It was almost like stepping into the past. The streets were still only a few meters wide, flanked by tall, narrow buildings bearing various guild signs. On the top floor of each, jutted a pulley gable once and probably still, the only means of moving large objects from outside to inside. Within the buildings, Heinrich assured her, were more modern accommodations. But the Germans were proud of their past, their roots, and could never totally let go of the old city. The entire old town was completely domed to further protect it. So valued was this 1000-year-old part of the city, that only the specially privileged were even allowed to live there.

She'd never seen so many colors of flowers bright reds, yellows, pinks, blues and white and they were in plenitude in shops on nearly every street, as were fresh vegetables and bread. And then there were the smoked meat shops, exuding their hypnotic aromas around every bend. It was as if the Little War had never touched this place. And, in fact, it barely had. Here, there were no food shortages, housing shortages, or any other lack of human need.

Heildeburg in its plenitude of basic needs was just as wonderful, if not better, than New City or some of the others in their plethora of hedonistic delights.

But as they made their way through the cobblestoned streets of this ancient city, there was another who followed at a distance in the shadows, slipping silently from one alcove to another, gradually creeping closer and closer to the couple, until he could nearly reach

out and touch them.

As they approached the old castle, on the steep Burgweg or Fortress Way, Elyse noticed its resemblance to the building outlined on the city shield of Heinrich's tunic. Just a block short of their destination, Heinrich whirled, reaching into the shadow of a doorway they had just passed, and drug out a Green, his arm now twisted behind him by the Sandman's massive hand.

"Why were you following us, mein Freund?"

"Sandman told me," the Green grunted, teeth clenched in pain.

Heinrich jerked the arm upward.

"What Sandman?"

"Dark-skinned, strange uniform. Didn't say his name."

"Why'd he want you to follow?"

"To look at Fraulein Sandman. See where you went."

"It's quite obvious where we're going, isn't it? As for the Fraulein, you've seen her, ja?"

"So, go and tell your Sandman. And if I ever see you again, you'll not live to see Lastday. Verstehen Sie?"

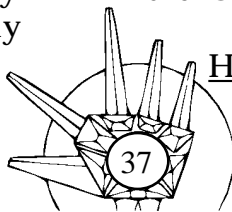
"Ja, ja, mein Herr."

Heinrich pushed the man away from him, watching as he stumbled and then ran off down Burgweg.

Taking Elyse's arm, they continued on to the castle wall, through the huge Gun Park and its terraced gardens, then across the bridge and water-filled moat to the castle courtyard. Heinrich pointed out some of the buildings within the courtyard, some dating back to the time of the great Charlemagne. Once inside, they took a left to the Primary's office on the top floor of the tower and its 25-foot thick walls. There was no waiting in the anteroom as at Dalworth. Heinrich merely nodded to the Operative out front and went in.

"Darf ich Fraulein Elyse Drei, mein Herr Primary?"

"Ja," he said, rising. "Ach du Leiber,



you were right about her.” The Primary extended his hand to Elyse, and brushed his lips to the back of her hand. “Welkommen, Fraulein, zu Heidelberg.”

Heinrich whispered the appropriate response in her ear, and she responded, “Danke, mein Herr Primary.”

“Sehr gut!” Heinrich, take her to CC for processing, then room assignment.”

The Operative leaned across the desk, whispering, “Didn’t Gottlieb 90 Lastday before I left?”

“Have his quarters been reassigned?”

“Nein. Wieso?” Are you thinking . her, there?” He smiled.

“Well, fast work, my friend. Very well. I’ll give CC my okay consider it done. Gutten tag!”

CC was located in the old cellars of Castle Heidelberg, the famous 55,000 gallon, wooden wine cask built in 1751 still sitting in its center. A single chair, much like the ones she’d been told about in her training, was at ode end of the room, facing a blue screen. Heinrich bade her sit in the chair, then activated CC by placing his palm on a scanner. But instead of being in German, as she’d expected, the voice of CC was in English. PURPOSE?

“Integration, Trainee, A-Level, Elyse 3, to City DS force.”

CLASSIFICATION?

“Red-One, Indefinite.”

PROCEED FOR IMPLANTATION.

Heinrich eased Elyse’s head back into the brackets and bent down to her ear, whispering, “Relax, it only takes a second.” A very painful second, as a searing blue laser penetrated the flesh of her tender temple.

## THE THINKER’S SANDLADY

### Part II

by Janelle Holmes

As they departed CO, a trainee ran up to Heinrich, handed

him a note and left. The Sandman unfolded it slowly, then read it. “From the Primary,” he told Elyse. “So!” He crumpled the paper in his hand, tossing it into a nearby receptacle.

“Bad news?”

“Nein, ist nichts. Mit kommen!”

Arriving at her new apartment, Heinrich bade her to relax after showing her the food dispenser, uniform and clothing dispenser and other amenities.

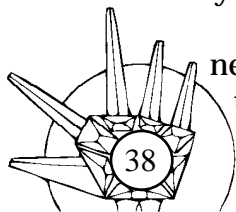
“I must be gone three, four hours.” “You’ll be back?”

On his way to the old Frauenzimmer which once housed the ladies of the court but now acted as a dorm for the Sandmen’s harems, as part of the Regeneration complex, Heinrich thought of other things besides his current assignment. The note had included two bits of information. One, report to RegCom for monthly duties, and two, Darnell 7 was in town and looking for him.

Darnell, here! But why? It had been nearly seven years since he’d last seen the operative in Shreveport. Darnell was another, like himself, a special agent of the Thinker, always moving from city to city, never dying, eternally Indefinite. His last identity in Shreveport had him down as part Chiricahua Apache, dome of origin, Scottsdale in old Arizona territory. His steely good looks had the femflesh in every city he visited quivering. But he’d no interest in them. He liked women, it was just that he had no time for them. There were more important things to occupy his attentions. Women were at the bottom of the list.

Definitely not ruled by his hormones, Heinrich thought as the techs injected him with massive doses of testosterone. “How many today?” he asked the tech.

“Only seven, all ripe. You’ll probably never see them again.” “How many is that now, anyway, if these take?”



“Twenty-five out of your harem. Six more next month, and that’s the lot before you go Lastday. Don’t know why you Sandmen complain so much. I wouldn’t mind having a harem of 30 women just waiting for me to pleasure them.”

“You would if Computer picked them, not you,” Heinrich said rubbing his arm.

“They look good to me!”

“If you like blonds.” He walked toward the huge double, wooden doors at the end of the room. “I hate blonds,” he finished, straightening and going into the next room, the doors banging resoundingly behind him. Darnell’s stoolie had reported back that the big Sandman and the Auslander had arrived in Heidelberg.

“Where are they now?”

The youth jerked his head back toward the castle. “The big one is there, the woman in apartment near the market.”

“Gut. Go now!” Darnell ordered, flipping the boy a gold ring. The youth scurried off, clutching his new prize, and the Sandman gazed up toward the red castle walls.

Hours later, the blond Sandman had passed the last of the castle’s gates and was on his way back to Elyse’s apartment. The testosterone had put every nerve in his body on edge. And the first person to so much as nod in his direction, he would most likely deck. So, it was all he could do to refrain from landing a haymaker on the Sandman who approached him from a dark alley. “Psst, here!”

Heinrich looked down the alley and was only able to make out the other’s eyes in the dimness, a few feet away. “Wo bist du?”

“Darnell, stupid.”

“Darnell, ja, they told me you were here. But why?”

The dark Sandman gestured him into the alley. “Good to see you, too!”

“Sorry, I’ve just come from RegCom. My hormones are literally shrieking.”

“Seven years”

“Ja, seems longer.” He nodded his head at the other’s uniform. “You’re still working, I see.”

“In a way, only when necessary. You know?”

“Hmm. Yes. What brings you here?”

“A certain Sandlady.”

“There are many Sandladies here. Which one?” “Elyse 3.”

Heinrich grew suddenly defensive at the name of his Sandlady. “Is impossible! No! You can have no interest in her. Thinker has assigned”

Darnell put his hand on the other’s shoulder. “I’m here to merely observe, my friend.”

“Ah, I see So, you want to see her?”

“She all right?”

“Yes, recovering quite well. Much better here than at Dalworth.”

“No, it would serve no purpose for me to see her. You’re going there now?”

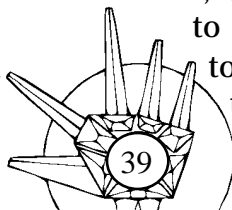
Heinrich nodded.

“Good. Guard her well.” “You know I will.”

“I’ll be watching to make sure.” “I’m sure you will.”

They clasped hands firmly, each sealing the unspoken bargain with a stern smile and a slight nod, before Darnell had disappeared soundlessly into the alley’s chill darkness.

The remainder of the way back, Heinrich’s overload of hormones caused him to fantasize one scheme after another of what he would do on his return to her rooms. He would demand she strip before him, then he would carry her, unprotesting, to the bed, where he would make love to her over and over again throughout the remaining day and night.



No, he would rip the clothes from her and take her on the carpeted floor!

But when he arrived, she lay curled up like a small child, asleep on the antique oaken bed. As he gently awoke her, she stirred, rolling over to look at him. Her arms reached out to him, and he took them, enfolding her soft body against his, stroking her hair. And then his lips met hers, softly, gently at first, then more urgently, his hands becoming roaming warlords of soft, curving places.

Suddenly, he released her, his breath ragged, mouth throbbing, heart racing, and pushed her back to the bed.

He regarded her questioning eyes, the lips slightly puffy and red from their embrace. "I'm sorry," he said, "My apartment is just next door." He motioned with his head to the adjoining doors. "I'll see you in the morning." And then he rose, striding quickly across the room. "No, please. Don't go!" she called after him.

"It's no good!" he hissed back over his shoulder. The doors slammed behind him, and then there was only silence.

Except for the rapid beating of her heart.

Elyse touched her still-tender lips.

What kind of man was this?

Darnell had always liked the feel of softly falling snow on his face and the way it crunched when you walked through it. Winter in the Neckar Valley was something the residents of Heidelberg ignored, snug in their dome-enclosed, temperature-regulated city. But there were still a few hardy souls who chose to remain Outside the domes, living a more normal life in one of the small medieval villages nearby, braving what forces Nature had to offer, just as their ancestors had done hundreds of years before. This is where the strange Sandman had gone as well.

He walked through the cobblestoned streets, snowflakes falling in silent splendor, highlighted only by the

yellow glow of the gas street lamps at each corner, as he made his way down to the market square. There was the sound of laughter and old-time music coming from the nearby Ratskeller, and it was here he headed, going down the steep steps to the cellar of the ancient town hall.

As he opened the door, the blast of cold air rushing in before him, every eye in the place turned as one, and, by the time the door had closed behind the stranger, the music had also died. It was as if each person held his breath in anticipation of a Runner kill. Darnell smirked, walking in utter silence to the bar, where he ordered a beer.

Only then, did the villagers turn back to each other, whispering, speculating. He was certainly not from Heidelberg! His strange clothing and Gun shouted Auslander foreigner! Why was he here? It was sometime more, after the Sandman had drunk nearly half the stein of foamy brew, before the music began again and a more jovial mood was evident. He turned to the bartender, placing 5 International Credits on the counter.

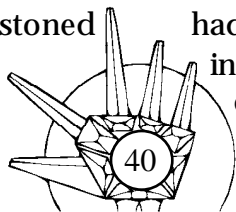
"Wo ist ein Hotel?"

"Nachst stadt, an links."

"Danke." He knew they were glad to see him go at last and chuckled as he closed the door, enveloping himself once more in the brisk air of Winter.

The Hotel was not far, and he found a room quite to his liking. Yes, there was the thick eiderdown comforter, the log blazing in the stone fireplace and wooden carvings on the walls. He paid the woman, latched the door behind her, pulled a thickly padded chair up closer to the fire, and waited.

Elyse hadn't been able to sleep. Heinrich's actions of a few hours earlier had plagued her every thought, keying her to a near fever of doubts and confusion. Was he able to sleep? she



wondered. She'd heard nothing from his apartment.

Slipping from bed, she tiptoed across the plush carpet to the door which adjoined their apartments. Putting an ear to it, she listened.

Nothing. Her hand poised indecisively over the handle, touched it, retreated, then more resolutely, dropped again, pushing it down and slowly opened the door.

A thunderous noise came from behind it - an animal noise more fearsome than any she'd ever known and the door slammed shut. But before she could latch it against the monster, it had opened again.

"What are you doing? Max, down. Quiet!" It was Heinrich, a very perturbed Heinrich, brow wrinkled.

The thing behind him was huge and black, coal dark eyes dancing devilishly in its gigantic head, now lying on saucer-sized brown paws beside its master.

Elyse approached the German, cautiously. "I, I couldn't sleep." The man's brow was still furrowed from the disturbance. "Come in." She looked at the monster beside him, hesitantly. He ordered it to a corner, and it went obediently, circled, then lay down once more, eyes rolled up apologetically.

Slowly, the woman entered, still eyeing the dark beast. "He won't hurt you except on my command. Sit down somewhere, you're making me nervous." She sat quickly on the closest piece of furniture his bed.

He stood before her, looking down, accusingly. "Well?"

"I couldn't sleep."

"You said that before."

"I guess I guess I'm no longer no longer ."

"Spit it out!"

She flinched at his harsh words and began weeping. "I

didn't want to be alone! I wanted to be close to someone."

"Someone?"

She looked up at him, eyes red and now angry that he made her spill her guts.

"Yes, someone. You, okay, is that what you wanted to hear?"

He walked away, then turned, regarding her, rubbing his chin in indecision.

Max had come up to the woman, whining, cocking his head back and forth in curiosity at the strange human sound. Then the

monstrous beast reached out and licked the tears from the back of her hand where it lay in her

"He likes you."

Elyse shuddered.

"My God, woman, he's only a dog. You act like you've never seen one before."

"I haven't."

"Say hi, Max"

The beast reached out a paw, mouth gaped and panting in a doggie smile.

"Go ahead, take it."

She reached out her hand, and Max put his paw in it. As she took it more firmly to shake it, laughing, the dog leaned to the side, head titled, nearly laughing, himself.

"A dog?"

"Mm," was Heinrich's only reply. Max had left Elyse and gone behind the Sandman, nudging him closer to his

new friend. He sat down on the bed beside her, holding her. "I'm sorry. For everything." "Sorry?"

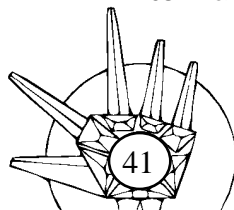
"Mm. Earlier." He kissed her briefly, almost shyly.

She looked at him. "Don't you want to have sex with me?"

He laughed. "Yes."

"Then why?"

He put his fingers to her lips. "Not



the right time.”

Max jumped up on the bed, pushing his head between them. Heinrich scratched his soft ears and laughed again. “He’s not used to sharing me.”

Elyse looked at the dog, stroking his thick fur. “I wouldn’t share you, either.”

The hour was early, two past midnight. Darnell took out his Follower and a small radio-devise which he plugged into one side of it.

“Location Elyse 3, Heinrich 7,” he requested. As he thought, they were together. Well, he’d have to take a chance. He pressed “Recall” on the radio.

Within seconds, a probe inside Elyse’s brain had awakened her, renewing her memory. She was being summoned! She crept as quietly as she could from the bed, shushing a warning to Max, who only raised his head from where he lay at the foot, then entered her own apartment. Inside, she plugged in her own radio to her Follower, watched the contact’s coordinates triangulate. She dressed quickly, taking the devise with her as she left.

She found the place easily enough, not encountering a single soul as she made her way from her apartment, then outside the domes and through the village. Climbing the narrow stone staircase, she arrived

outside the contact’s room and knocked softly. “Come,” came a gruff voice within.

Elyse turned the handle and entered cautiously, Gun drawn halfway. Inside, a dark figure sat in a chair facing her. But the room was pitch except for the faint glow of embers in the hearth. “Come closer!” the figure ordered. She took another step.

“The cock crows early in the morning,” the other said. “But only down on the farm,” Elyse countered.

“So, Elyse 3, we’ve had a

hard time finding you.”

She tucked her head, submissively. “Much has happened since Dalworth.”

“Speak freely. The room’s clean.”

She looked up. “Dalworth didn’t want me, Heidelberg did. That’s about the size of it.”

“And Heinrich?”

“He’s a Thinker-agent. Have we got anything on him?” “Some. What do you know about him?”

“That he’s Ballard 2’s son.”

“We didn’t know that. Anymore?”

“Not really. Can I ask you a question?”

“Depends.”

“Are you Meldanan?”

“Yes, wily?”

Elyse shifted her weight, fidgeting with her hand on her uniform. “I’ve been having some strange things happening. Feeling their emotions when I touch them. I know what they’re thinking, what they’re going to say. Is this true of all Meldanans? I’ve never experienced it before.”

“Yes, to some extent. It is why we seldom touch one another or else learn to block out such contacts or mask our own. Your grandmother was particularly sensitive to such things. Her control amounted to nothing less than phenomenal.”

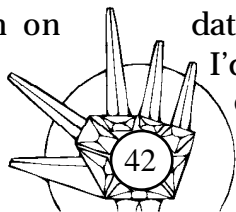
“But it’s so unnerving!”

“You’ll learn to control it, in time. Be patient. Is there anything else you’d care to discuss?”

“Yes, I’ve read the regulations governing ‘emotional attachments’ to subjects. Does it apply to other agents, as well?” “Thinker-agents, you mean?”

“Well, yes.”

“I don’t believe the problem has ever arisen. Our contact with Thinker-agents has been very scant to date. Without consulting the Council, I’d say to use your best judgment, consider the consequences and evalu-



ate the relationship in that context." He watched her staring at the cold wooden floor, uneasily. "Is there something else?"

"Yes," she murmured.

"Well, what is

"Thinker wants me as its next agent."

"Well, that's certainly unexpected."

He tried to feign calmness.

"I'll report this to Council, of course and get back to you. Are you being treated well?"

"Yes."

"Have you been on a Run yet, terminated anyone?"

"We'll be in touch with you in another 3 months."

"But what if I need to contact - -"

"That's impossible, Elyse 3. As you know, we're scaling down our Earth project and pulling out nearly all agents and relay stations. There are no longer any stations in Europe or any agents, until you were

transferred here by Dalworth DS. You're alone here. Off-hand, I'd say this Heinrich 7 is your best chance of survival until we can get you out."

"And how long will that be?"

"You signed up for a 6 year enlistment. Of course, if we lose track of you again, it could be longer."

The other jumped suddenly from the chair, brushing past her to stand against the wall behind the door, as it burst open seconds later. "Who were you talking to?" It was Heinrich. "No one. I just - -"

"No lies, Elyse! I warn you."

"There's no one. I . . . I was just talking to myself, wondering who lit the fire."

Heinrich started toward the chair. "Then we'll wait." But he never made it, the butt of a Gun knocking him senseless. Elyse knelt beside him, touched his head and felt the sticky ooze of blood.

"You should have done that instead of me!" the voice hissed. The door closed, and she was alone with the Sandman.

"Heinrich?"

He moaned in answer, gradually gaining consciousness.

"Thank the gods you're all right."

"You can thank God in the morning. Damn," he muttered, rubbing his head.

"That wasn't you, was it?"

"No," she answered, feebly. "I'm sorry. It was my contact."

"Should're known. Help me up." She braced his weight with her shoulder. "I'm really sorry."

"You said that."- He looked at her, as she put her arm around his waist to steady him.

"Should I send for a med-tech?" she asked, helping him to the bed.

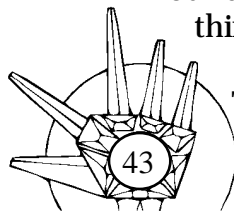
"No, they'll want to know why we were here and what happened. Just let me rest a minute, then I'll be fine." She eased him down, cradling his head with her hands, as he slowly lay back on the pillow. "Max was worried about you. He woke me shortly after you left. Would're been better off minding my own business." He rubbed his head. "Why didn't you tell me the truth when I first walked in

"I didn't want him to know how much I'd told you, and he would've hit you just the same, unless you left."

"Suppose you're right. Who is he?"

"Don't know. He didn't give me his name. And I never saw his face." He took her hand. "Enough of that. What's done is done. There's more important things. Remember me telling you how the Germans value the old ways, the old values?"

She nodded. Could she make herself not feel, not think what he was feeling, thinking. She had to try, starting now! "They also honor the old religion. The churches hold services every



Sunday, and they uphold all the old sacraments, like communion and marriage. People believe in not just pair bonding with another human but in going a step further, by committing everything they own, including their lives to another. They make vows to each other of faithfulness, honor, to love and cherish each other to the death."

"That's amazing." She didn't like the way this conversation was going.

"I believe in their God, Elyse, and I believe in the vows of marriage with the right person, someone I truly want to spend the rest of my life with a very long life, I hope, not just another year or two, but much longer."

What did he expect her to say? She looked away, instead, but his hand took her chin and guided her eyes back to his. "I want us to marry, if you're willing."

She exhaled the breath she'd been holding in anticipation of this very thing. "Heinrich, what what if I don't want to? Let's just say I don't see myself spending whatever years I have left with one man. I'm still young, there's..."

"You don't have to answer now. Just think about it. I'm ready to go."

He rose slowly, swinging his legs off the bed, waited a second, then stood. "Yes, think I'll make it." He walked slowly toward the door and out, Elyse bringing up the rear, lost in her thoughts.

They didn't make it to church that morning. Instead, they had a Runner. Elyse had finally used her new uniform card and pulled an all-black uniform with red piping from the processor. "Does this mean I'm a full operative?" she asked Heinrich.

He handed her a glass of juice and a white pill. "Looks like it to me."

"What's this?" she said, look-

ing at the pill.

"Vitamin to combat travel fatigue."

"Oh," she said, swallowing it and taking a drink of juice.

He watched her take the pill in silence. He should have been pleased, but in a way he wasn't. You're following orders, old boy, he thought. But I'm lying to her, he countered himself. I promised her, no more lies.

"We'd better get going," he said aloud. "Gun loaded?"

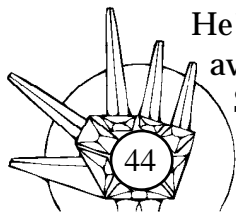
She checked the Gun's charges: two Gas, two Nerve Nets, two Spider charges. She nodded. Max joined them as they left the apartment. Max always went on Runs.

It was a male Runner, just gone Lastday. He'd lived in one of the villages most of his life, nearly forgetting the city. There were Sleep Shops in the village, although most preferred to return to the city itself for their last fantasy. But Gunther 4 was different.

He didn't want to go. He didn't really know what he wanted, not even before his lifeclock blackened. He'd had many friends who went Lastday one day there, the next day gone he missed them, but he didn't mourn them. It was their time. They were with God, weren't they? No worries, no cares. He'd decided he'd be ready when his time came. He even had his fantasy picked out.

He'd have the Sleptech program him back to 1385 when Heidelberg was a young town. He'd be a knight in the castle guard, and he'd ride across the countryside from village to village, collecting taxes, having love affairs with all the Burgemeisters' daughters. He'd end at another castle where there would be a huge feast of pheasant, suckling pig, fresh grapes, and wine plenty of wine.

He'd drink 'til he could no longer stay awake. And then then he would Sleep.



But there was no fantasy now. He'd changed his mind. He wasn't ready! He felt, rather than saw the dark figures come from the nearby alley - - a man and a woman.

"Runner," the man shouted rather calmly. "You know your rights! Surrender and go to the Sleep Shop. Run, and you face only Death." Sleep Death. Sleep, Death. The Runner giggled. They were the same. He wasn't stupid! They were the same! Death-Sleep, Deathsleeep. Nighty-night. Sleep, the little Death. Fear the Killer.

The woman had circled around behind him, the man still facing him from across the street. The Sandman nodded at his partner. It would be her Kill. Gunther swiveled and looked at her. She was only three or four meters away. She didn't look like a Sleepkiller, she looked like the Burgemeister's daughter, the fair maiden of his fantasy. He walked toward her, hand outstretched, a smile of seduction on his face.

"Run!" she hissed. "Run, you fool!"

She wanted him to Run So he did, bolting down the street, running as fast as his legs would carry him! He didn't dare look back. Because, as the last words had left her moist lips, she had changed. He saw the yellow eyes, devil eyes! Even now he could feel that Devil's hot breath on his neck. Just before the Spider's bite. He dropped, rolling face-up to see the Devilspawn straddling him, spittle dribbling from its huge teeth and snarling mouth. He saw the Sandlady-Devil come up, Gun pointed at him. The Dark One left at her approach. She was the Devil He stared at her, unable to speak, paralyzed by the Spider.

"I'm sorry," the Devil said lowly. "I'll make it as quick as possible." She opened his mouth and stuck the Gun's muzzle into it, twisting the dial to "gas", and fired.

"No, not the Devil, the Runner thought. An Angel! And then, he Slept.

The Sandman walked up as the Runner went terminally limp. He looked at the woman, patted the dog, and called in the Kill, still confused. He'd expected more somehow. She'd done nothing exceptional, nothing no other Sandlady operative couldn't have done equally well. She'd walked away from the Runner's body, Gun dangling in her hand, wearily. Slowly, her grip tightened, and she reholstered it, still walking, Max loping beside her. He followed her to an alley, where he found her slumped against the wall, head buried on her knees, arms wrapped around the dog's thick neck. His huge head was bent against hers, licking her ear. Heinrich entered the alley and stood against the wall beside her.

"Your first real Kill?" She nodded.

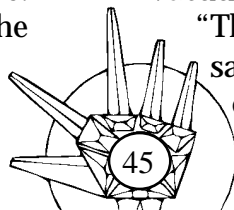
"It had to happen sooner or later. It's why you're here." "I know," she mumbled. "They're watching us, aren't they?"

He looked out to the street. "The cits? Yeah. You make them feel guilty. They just found out DS have feelings, too. Every one watching who has thoughts of Running, feels guilty, now. They'll give Sleep a very serious reconsideration." He bent down, offering her a hand up.

She took it, stood up, wiping her eyes with her free hand. Max whined, nudging her hand until she caressed his head. And so, Max on her one side and Heinrich on the other, they walked out of the alley to face the stares of the citizens of Heidelberg.

Elyse stopped in the middle of the crowd and pointed to the dead Runner's body, already being sprayed and vacuumed by the Streecleaners.

"That could have been one of you," she said, softly, so softly only the closest could hear, but her words



were soon spread to those who hadn't.

She looked at the citizens, stumbling to get out of her way, as she continued on, eyes red but resolute. "You," she said to one, whose eyes instantly panicked. She turned to another whose eyes had averted hers.

"And you, too," she said, her breath above a whisper, "Runner!"

She began laughing almost hysterically. Heinrich hurried her off, deciding she was pretty unusual after all. Never again would he question Thinker's decisions.

There wouldn't be a Runner in that neighborhood for a very long time.

To punctuate the woman's words, Max turned and stiffened at the crowd, hackles raised, lips curled, a deep reverberating growl scattering them in all directions. And then, quite pleased with himself, he began panting happily, then wheeled, bounding like a puppy to catch up with his master.

Five weeks after Darnell returned to Sanctuary and once more became Jonathan, the elderly Logan 5 and Jessica 6 found Vera 4, mother of

Elyse 3, dead in her room, sprawled face down upon her bed, an empty bottle beside her outstretched hand.

She and Jonathan had argued the night before nearly everyone in their quad had heard it. He wanted her to go back to Meldana, to see the physicians there. She flatly refused, saying she'd never be any better than she was, something he should already know. He argued she'd been better when they first married. She countered that she hadn't he just saw what he wanted to see. It had gone on for nearly an hour like that, until he finally asked her what she wanted of him. She answered, "I want you to leave me alone!"

In utter compliance, he had

left to spend the night in his father's unoccupied quarters. He'd had early duty the next morning; and when there'd been no answer at their rooms, he'd called Logan to check on her.

The door had been locked. Logan smashed the control panel with a bony elbow and forced the door with his shoulder. His middle-aged bones and muscles would feel the effect for weeks afterwards. Jessica had been the one to find Vera and the cryptic note beside the body. Logan had come into the bedroom seconds later.

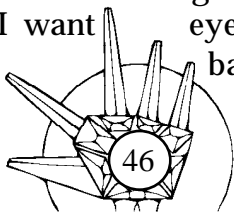
Seeing his friend's wife lying there, he suddenly felt very old. First Vera 3, then Francis, and now Vera's daughter-clone, Vera 4. One by one they were going. Which was better, he wondered, death at 30 or to live on and on, never knowing when Lastday would be?

Jess turned to him, eyes tearing. He put an arm about her shoulder and guided her out of the room. "I'll call Jonathan and wait for him. You go on."

After calling Jonathan, he sat there, staring at himself in a nearby mirror. His hairline had receded, and there were only a few streaks of blond still left in the predominately white hair. The skin underneath his eyes sagged a bit too much, as did his cheeks. There were even a few lines in his face that were deeper than a few years ago. Cracks.

Just like the Old Man, he thought. He'd been right. They didn't hurt. He sighed. If only he and Jess had had children of their own. But it was not to be. He'd taken Francis' place as Vera 4's father. He'd been there through her mental ups and downs, throughout the years, and whenever Jonathan had been gone.

He looked at the note in his thin hands. It was folded once a small piece of beige synthvellum. He opened it slowly, eyes blurred by tears. Blinking them back, he focused on the tiny scrawl.



I cannot be whole until there is only one.

Logan shook his head. Well, maybe Jonathan could make some sense of it. He came in then, the younger man, face drawn and haggard, the still melanin-enhanced face a bit pale. He'd rushed to the open bedroom door and stood there a few seconds before he went to Vera, turning the body over and cradling her in his arms, rocking back and forth, his head bowed over hers.

Logan walked to the doorway. "You want me to call the 'techs?" Jonathan shook his head. "I'll call them later."

"You know where to reach me if you need anything?"

The younger man nodded.

Logan left, body aching, wiping the tears from his own eyes.

Ballard 3 came as soon as he heard. "Someone should go down and tell Elyse," he said.

Jonathan walked slowly down the corridor of Sanctuary's Council office sector. "I need to go anyway."

"I'll go with you."

"No, you have too much to do in New City."

"Nearly all wrapped up. They'll never miss me, anyway." "Maybe she already knows."

"The note? Are you thinking what I am?"

"It makes sense. It's the only thing that does make sense." They walked on a bit farther in silence.

"I'm afraid she's falling for him."

"Heinrich?"

"Min. He's old enough to be her father!"

"Hm," Ballard answered.

"Did I tell you he's your half-brother?"

"Do you believe that, though? Have you checked it out?" "No, but

if you knew him as I do, you'd believe it."

"Should we offer him Sanctuary?"

"I'm not sure. I'm not sure I'm the one to say, since I'm definitely prejudiced."

"For?"

"No, against."

That night Elyse awoke, suddenly chilled, and then just as suddenly a growing warmth had begun in her chest and quickly enveloped her entire body. She felt muscles tense in new-found strength, her brain become more acutely aware of her surroundings: the dog snoring softly beside her; the silky feel of the sheets; the nearly silent hum of the room temperature regulator, the processors.

She looked at Heinrich, asleep on the other side of Max, with new eyes. She began to see flaws in what she had once regarded as the perfect Aryan male. His nose was a tad too large. He had virtually no earlobes, and his eyebrows and lashes were so pale you could barely see them. The more she looked at him, the more she saw. Finally, she stopped looking and began to stroke the dog's head.

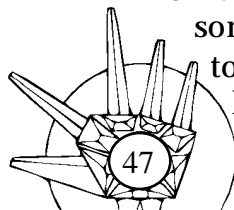
Her fingers jerked away.

My God, she could see his dreams! He was dreaming about playing with her and Heinrich, running across a grassy meadow, taking turns at chasing each other.

Elyse clutched herself, knees drawn to her chest. What was happening to her? It had never been like this before. And her brain seemed to be teeming with knowledge - - she couldn't begin to guess at what she knew.

She did know that Max was a clone.

She knew those vitamin pills were strong fertility drugs to counteract the contraceptives she'd been given. She knew this man in bed with her, was not whom he had said he was. And she knew that sometime in the future, she would have to kill him. Just as certainly as she knew that when she did, she would



be carrying his child inside of her a male child, whose name would be -

Her mind went suddenly askew, focusing on something new. She couldn't control this new power. Not yet, but she'd learn. She would learn. She knew that, too.

"Elyse."

Someone was calling her name.

"Elyse, what's wrong?"

It was Heinrich, suddenly awake. Or was it morning? How long had she been sitting there?

"My mother is dead," she answered, matter-of-factly. The words had just come. How had she known? But she did. She just knew. Vera 4 had become one with Elyse.

As he and Jonathan prepared to go to Heidelberg, Ballard suddenly remembered something.

"Francis' journal!"

"What?" Jonathan asked.

"His journal. Council asked him when he first came to Sanctuary to record everything, as far back as he could remember. I'll bet the tapes are still locked up with the rest of his personal possessions. If Heinrich is Ballard 2's son, that should tell us."

"We'll requisition and listen to them on the way down."

Agreed, they made straight for Storage.

The Run that day had nearly put Heinrich in shock. Elyse had climbed one of the ancient buildings when he sent her around to cover a Runner's potential escape route. He first spotted her nimbly scaling the stone walls and emerging seconds later atop the four-story structure, Gun already poised as the Runner came her direction.

"Runner!" she had shouted but more hissed at the confused female Red. The Runner looked up,

aghast, turned and saw Heinrich advancing on her. The woman turned back, looking up at Elyse, pleading with her as one of her own gender for mercy. But the new Elyse had no mercy.

"Die, Runner!" she hissed, then coolly pulled the trigger. The Nerve Net did the rest.

It made Heinrich's flesh crawl. And yet this was the Elyse he had expected when he first read her dossier this kind of huntress, cool and efficient just as Vera 3 had been.

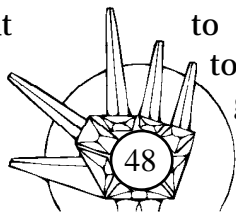
He called in the Streetcleaners, watching Elyse lithely jump down and land a few meters in front of him. She was smiling. "Come on," she said, taking his arm and steering him off to a nearby tavern, "buy you a beer."

But the next morning was different. She watched as he dressed, thinking to herself. He started fastening his waist-length tunic, walking toward her.

"You're not dressed? Are you feeling well?"

There'd been an Operative Ball the night before, all DS dressed in medieval costumes, the men in 15th-century padded jerkins, emphasizing their broad shoulders and narrow hips. Elyse had hardly been able to keep from giggling at the sight of the men in their elaborate codpieces. And the men had hardly been able to take their eyes off the low-cut bodice of the pink, silk courtgown she had worn, complete with elaborately embroidered roses and butterflies. Her dark hair had been ornately coiffed and curled atop her head with more roses real ones. She'd loved the live orchestra, the dancing, the exuberant feel of Heinrich's strong arms about her as they had floated across the ballroom floor to the strains of the "Blue Danube" She had never wanted it to end.

Her gown still hung on the wall next to Heinrich's costume. "No, I don't feel too good. Woman time coming, I guess."



“Hm. Well, why don’t you rest, then?”

She reached out to him, and he took her in his arms.

“What is it, Elyse?”

“I don’t know. I just don’t know.”

He stroked her cheek, then kissed her lightly. “You know you can tell me anything, don’t you? I love you, Elyse. Please, trust me, won’t you?”

“I do trust you.” How could she help it when all she could feel as they touched like this was his overwhelming affection for her. Yes, he did truly love her. So why did she instinctively know there was more to him than he had told her.

“Tell you what. Why don’t we take the paravane and get away this afternoon. Go somewhere sunny and warm. Maybe the Mediterranean. Sleep out on the beach, swim in the sea - - you’ll feel like a new woman by tomorrow morning.”

“Okay.” She was still depressed, though. “Want me to leave Max with you for company?”

“No, you take him. I’ll be fine. See you this afternoon.”

When the door had closed behind them, she looked around the room. There was the display of ancient swords and daggers opposite the bed. Some, he had told her, went back to before the Crusades. He carried one of the daggers in his boot, and she, herself, carried one as well. It had belonged to a lady in King Ludwig’s court, he had told her. She’d single-handedly killed four men with it when the castle had been attacked by Saxons. The handle was layered in gold and silver, emeralds embedded in the hilt and surrounded by pearls. The scabbard, which remained on the wall, was equally as ornate.

Rising from the bed, she went to the computer desk. The drawers held numerous tapes and discs. She wasn’t sure what she was looking for, but her new-found instinct told her she

would know when she found it. She could almost read each tape and disc as she held it in her hand. Regulations, History, Logistics, Language, Architecture Nothing here.

She spent the rest of the morning scouring the apartment and still found nothing. Finally, it was time for Heinrich to return. She straightened the apartment and made herself presentable, slipping into a red skinsuit for their afternoon trip.

She programmed the food processor for two meals and packed them away for travel. The ‘vane already held their camping supplies.

She looked at the door which connected to with former apartment, the one she’d given up weeks before. Even though he’d yet to have sex with her, Elyse still found it difficult to sleep anywhere except in the same

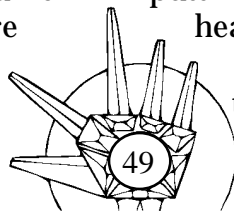
bed with him, even if they were always separated by the 150 pound Rottweiler.

Elyse did need to get away. She no longer knew who she was or what she wanted. The Sandlady who had terminated the Runner the day before had been a stranger to her someone who had suddenly possessed her body, then just as quickly had deserted her to face the emotional consequences.

The flight to the Mediterranean beaches had seemed short. The sky seemed bluer there, the air cleaner, the sea itself an unbelievable azure of deepest hues. They set up camp above the tideline, ate the meal she had packed, then lay back watching the clouds float by.

“Feel better?” Heinrich had asked, putting an arm around her and guiding her head to his shoulder.

“MID, much better.” She held him tighter, burrowing into his broad



chest. He raised her chin and kissed her, his hands caressing her back, her buttocks, her breasts. "Remember what I said about the right time?" he murmured in her ear.

"This is it."

That evening, she knew for certain she was pregnant. She watched him fiddling with a fire he was trying to get going.

"Now, are you going to tell me the truth?"

"What d'ya mean?" he asked, nonchalantly.

"Who you really are."

He looked at her, bent over, kissed her, then looked at her again. "I told you."

"No, you lied to me again. You're not Ballard 2's son. Your face hasn't seen a single face change, and you're no where near as old as you claim to be."

The smile he'd worn all afternoon, vanished. "What does it matter who I am? I'm a Thinker-agent, that's all you need to know, isn't it?"

"Is it? Don't I deserve to know what's going to happen to me when you go Lastday, don't I need to know what the future holds for me, then?"

"I told you, you're a Thinker-agent, too. Nothing will happen. Besides, I don't go Lastday according to DS records for nearly 6 months.

By then, I'll be long gone."

"And me?"

"You'll be with me! I thought you understood that. We're paired. Why do you think I want you to marry me, Elyse? You want to know the whole truth?"

"That would be nice."

"Then marry me, make that commitment to me, and I'll honestly tell you anything you want to know. Until then, you'll have to accept the half-truths."

He sat down before her, taking her hands in his. "Elyse, look at me."

Her eyes met his, pools of

amber liquid.

"Do you love me?"

"I guess so."

"I mean it, Elyse! Are you willing to go wherever I go, be with me, come right or wrong, good times or bad, until the only thing that separates us is death, itself?"

"I.. I don't know."

"You have to know, Elyse. Because if you don't, there is no future."

"But how can - - ?"

"No future, Elyse. None. Not for me, not for you, not for anyone." Without explanation, he got to his feet, called Max and walked

off down the beach away from her.

"What do you want me to say? What do you want from me?" she screamed after him.

"I want to know what you believe!" she heard him shout back from the darkness.

"What I.."

 She shook her head, trying to straighten her thoughts. Why did he have to make things so difficult?

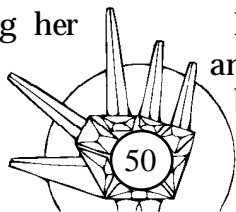
She wanted to be strong, but it was hard to call up the new-found energies she'd awakened to only a few days ago. She needed to think clearly. He needed, deserved an answer to his questions. She'd put him off for over a month and hadn't really given it any consideration, not even when they'd attended church together, heard the sermons, not even when they'd attended-the marriage of two other DS personnel - - greens - at least they'd have 10 years or so together.

Could such a commitment really make so much difference? Would it make their relationship any more viable or lasting than without it?

Logan and Jessica had married.

Her mother and father had married.

But Francis 7 and Vera 3 never had, and their's was a love legends were born of.



No, she couldn't keep thinking in this vein. She had to concentrate on her mission here, she had to think of what would ultimately be best for the good of this world, not herself as an individual. She had to consider the consequences and advantages of any decision she made. What would best serve the people of Earth, Sanctuary, the Program? Is that what Heinrich had meant about there being no future for anyone if she didn't know what she wanted?

Elyse watched him and the dog down the beach, their figures backlit by the enormous full moon, which had just risen. Heinrich was playing tag with Max, swatting the huge dog's muscular rump, then running away, Max chasing him, bouncing off the Sandman's back, then running away himself, Heinrich in hot pursuit.

She rose slowly and began walking down the white beach toward them. The sand under her bare feet was uncomfortable hard and yet yielding, something she found distinctly unpleasant. Even as she approached them, she still hadn't made up her mind. What was best for the world? She knew that answer. But it wasn't until she came close enough to see Heinrich's face that she knew what she wanted and what was right were one and the same.

He looked at her, light eyes calm and loving. His hands reached out, and she took them as he drew her to him, holding her close. She couldn't control the tears which came nor the emotions of need, safety, fulfillment, love, and yes, even commitment which swept over her. "Heinrich, I want to marry you."

He held her tighter, kissed her hair, murmuring, "You'll never be sorry you said that. With God as my witness, you'll never be sorry." But it, too, was a lie.

Landing their 'vane some distance down the beach, Ballard 3

and Darnell 7 found the couple as they returned back to their campsite. But the dog still spotted the Sandmen, his body becoming stiff, hackles raised, and a deep growl trembling his massive body. "What is it, boy?" Heinrich asked.

Max walked, stiff-legged, a few steps toward the approaching men in black. It was then Heinrich recognized Darnell. "It's all right, boy. Easy."

Darnell raised his hand in greeting, and Heinrich returned the gesture, walking toward them. Elyse was afraid to make any overtures of recognition toward Ballard. She didn't know his purpose here or why he was with this other Sandman.

When they had come close enough for introductions, Heinrich put his hand on Darnell's shoulder and turned him toward her smiling. "This is Darnell 7, you remember me telling you about him."

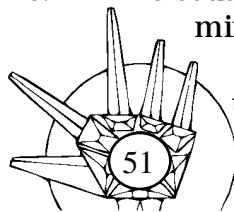
"Yes." She remembered all right; his best friend in Shreveport. "Pleased to meet you." She extended a hand to the man, and he took it, looking her directly in the eye as he spoke.

"Heinrich has told me much about you. It is a distinct pleasure, Elyse." That voice! She knew it! And it took only a nanosecond for her to place it. It was her contact! She looked at Ballard. He nodded slightly but wasn't smiling. Neither did she.

Heinrich was showing the two men back to their campsite, Max gamboling ahead to show the way. Darnell had introduced Ballard to Heinrich, but she hadn't heard what name he had used.

As they sat around the campfire, Ballard spoke up. "As Darnell has told you, I'm from new City, Heinrich, Elyse's dome of origin. There are matters I need to discuss with her privately, if you wouldn't mind."

Heinrich looked to Darnell and then to Elyse. She met his eyes, hoping



she really could trust him. "Heinrich is my pairmate and soon-to-be husband. There is nothing you can't discuss with me in his presence." She stroked the big dog beside her for reassurance she'd said the right thing.

Both Sandmen were visibly shaken by the news but quickly recovered. It was probably a reaction too brief for anyone except a Meldanan to notice. "Very well," Ballard began. "It's your mother, Elyse "

"Yes, I know. She's dead."

"She..." Elyse could see it all inside Ballard's thoughts. "Suicide!" Heinrich looked at her, then to the two other men. Darnell had turned away, rose, then slowly, watching Elyse suffering with her grief, walked toward her, then stopping beside her, stooped down.

"Elyse, look at me!" But she was shaking her head, Max looking up at her whining quietly in sympathy.

"I knew she had died," she was saying, "I knew it but couldn't accept it, not until now."

"Elyse," Darnell said again, "look at me, please!"

She looked up into the steely eyes, and suddenly she knew, saw he grieved as much as she. "Daddy?" She hadn't called him that since she'd been a small child.

He nodded, reaching out for her, and she fell into his waiting arms, tears streaming uncontrollably down her face. Heinrich touched her, then withdrew his hand. He looked at Ballard, who rose, taking him aside. They walked down the beach a short ways, where the other Sandman began to fill him in, but not without first exposing a few other truths.

"We know you're not Ballard 2's son, certainly not one born when you said. We have Ballard's records. He makes no mention of any offspring until many years later, the first being Francis 8, when he was in the City as Francis 7 in 2274. We know where Francis 8 is.

You're not him."

"No, I'm not"

"As you've just seen, Darnell is, in fact, Elyse's father, Jonathan

"Yes, I know."

"What you may not know is Jonathan is a Meldanan, a race from a very distant planet, which has taken an interest in the present-day culture of Earth and the ramifications of that culture. The Meldanans have been observing these Earth cities since 2274, when they sent in the first operative."

"Vera 3."

"Yes, Vera 3. My mother."

"I see."

"No, I don't think you do, 'Heinrich'! That makes Elyse my niece, and if anyone hurts her, retribution could be very exacting. She's of pure Meldanan blood, and like all Meldanans, she has certain abilities - empathic, mind-touch, precognition, to name a few. She might not have had full function of these abilities for years to come, but the recent death of her mother has released what Meldanans call 'the essence', the spirit, Earth humans call it. Jonathan and I believe this essence has joined with Elyse's own, which was originally Vera 3's. There are no recorded instances of such a joining, since this whole situation was rather unique. Have you noticed any unusual behavior in the last few days?"

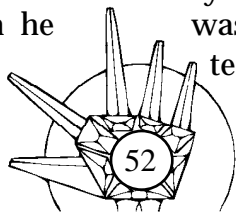
"Now that you mention it, yes. Odd mood swings, episodes of overt - 'toughness, ruthlessness' I can't think how better to describe it."

"Her mind must be trying to adjust to the new sensations. You do realize you can't lie to her, anymore. She'll know, or at least suspect."

"I don't intend to. There's no longer any reason."

They started back to the campfire. Max was still lying beside Elyse, head contentedly resting on his paws.

"There's one other thing," Ballard



started, "Jonathan and I feel the quickest and surest way to straighten all this out with you, is for you to undergo mind-touch by Elyse."

"Exactly what would that involve?"

"She would probe your mind, your latent as well as active memories, even your ancestral memories, if she's able. Vera 3 could have done it, but we're not certain of Elyse's mind-touch abilities at this time."

"Is there any chance of brain damage?"

"To you, no. To her, yes, it is possible - -if she loses control of her objectivity or disengages too quickly. But there would no longer be any question as to your honesty. You can't hide things or twist the truth during a mind-touch."

"I've nothing to hide, not anymore. It will all soon be out in the open anyway. Let's do it."

Ballard walked up to Jonathan. "He's agreed. Is she ready?"

"I think so. I've explained I'll guide her through the process and coach her during the contact phase. Are you ready, Heinrich?" He squatted beside the fire, regarding a very subdued Elyse, reached out to take her hand before Jonathan grabbed it.

"You must not touch her."

"Sorry, I just - -"

"We understand. But she needs time to prepare her mind, empty it of all thought and emotion. Please, sit there, make yourself comfortable and try to empty your mind, as well, then keep it that way throughout the process."

"Elyse, are you ready?" Ballard asked.

From where Max had been put on a stay, he watched the proceedings, mahogany-kissed eyebrows twitching up and down as he looked from one human to the other, head cocked, trying to figure it all out in typical canine curiosity.

Elyse nodded in affirmation to Ballard's question, and her father guided her to a kneeling position behind Heinrich, placing her fingertips on his temples.

"Slowly, sweetheart, allow yourself to enter. You're falling, slowly, very slowly." Her eyes closed. "There is darkness, but it's a friendly darkness, a warm darkness. You're falling faster now, but you're still in control, falling, falling. You see a light below you.

As you get closer you see people. You're among them now. Listen. Watch. Can you see them?"

She nodded.

"Do you hear them?"

Another nod. Then she gasped.

"Regain your objectivity, Elyse.

You're an observer. Nothing's happening to you."

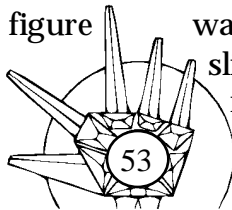
She relaxed, breathed more deeply, her head turning slowly one way and then another, then abruptly stopped, face rigid.

"Elyse, you're not breathing. Breathe Elyse, breathe" He put his hands on her diaphragm. "Breathe Elyse. You're an observer, nothing is happening to you. You must breathe."

Finally, she sucked her lungs full of air in a single long inhalation. Jonathan relaxed, checking her respiration. Slow but normal. "Good girl. Have you seen everything?" She nodded.

"Good, come back, slowly now, not too fast. Melt into the background, the crowds, ease yourself away and leave it all behind. You're coming back to the present, back to me, back to Ballard, back to Heinrich, slowly. The light below you is fading until there's the friendly darkness again. And now, above you, is the light of present. Swim up to it, reach for it. Good. Deep, slow breaths, inhale, exhale.

Your fingers are slipping from Heinrich's temples, slowly, so slowly." He watched while her hands crept every so slightly backwards away from the man's head, scant millimeters at a



time, until they were finally, totally off. “Slowly still, touch your eyes, now your own temples. Good. Open your eyes.”

She lifted her lids like someone just awakening from a deep sleep. Then she suddenly collapsed. Anticipating such a reaction, Jonathan was there to catch her. Seconds after she had come back to reality, Heinrich had slumped forward, caught by Ballard, who slowly eased him to the sand.

“Good,” Jonathan said. “We’ll let him sleep while we find out what happened. Elyse,” he said rousing her, helping her to sit. She rubbed her eyes, awakening again with less grogginess. She breathed deeply, then looked at Ballard and her father. “I never would have guessed in a thousand years!”

“What, Elyse? Who is he?”

“Thinker! He’s Thinker!”

“This is not a computer, Elyse,” Ballard said, pointing at the sleeping man.

“Neither is the Thinker. It’s constantly being reprogrammed, directed. By him!”

“We’ll work this part out later. What else did you find?”

“A thousand children, all over the world, different seed-mothers, different domes, all the same father. Him.”

Jonathan and Ballard looked at each other dumbfounded. “He has 50 Sanctuaries all over the world, with over-30s.

Intellectuals, scientists, engineers. He’s going to repopulate the domes and other cities and villages with them and the others, the children over the next 10 years.”

“Almost exactly what we had planned.”

“He will be sending out a directive to all cities within the next year. No more automatic Lastday, no more Lifelocks. DS police force only. Free trade.”

“Is there more?”

She nodded. “He has old memories, older than himself, older

than the Little War.”

“A clone?”

She nodded again. “Yes. His originator knew Vera 3, that’s why he chose me. To add to the gene pool for future generations. He tried before with Vera 4, Danine. But they were faulty. He wanted offspring from Ballard 3 and Danine for his plan..”

“That’s why she tried so hard to seduce me,” Ballard mused.

“Yes. He tried to detain Vera 4 in Shreveport, to use her. But she escaped.”

“I think I’m beginning to understand,” Jonathan said to himself.

“Who is he, Elyse? A name, he has to have a name. Who was his originator?” Ballard asked.

They’d nearly forgotten the sleeping man, but he made his presence known by moaning slightly as he began to stir. All three turned to look at him.

“Ballard was his originator,” Elyse answered. “Ballard 2.” She paused, rose and sat down next to her pairmate. “His name is Legion,” she said softly. Heinrich sat up, elbow braced on his knee, rubbing his head.

“Damn, feel like I’ve been sucked dry and tossed away.” He looked at Elyse. “So, now you know everything.”

She nodded, smoothing his hair into place.

“And you two goons,” he said, looking at Ballard and Jonathan, “are you satisfied I’m not the big bad bogeyman all set to spirit off this tasty, dark-haired morsel here and do all sorts of dastardly things to her?”

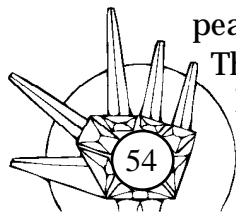
“Pretty much,” Ballard answered.

But Jonathan was still not satisfied. “Why isn’t there any mention of you in Ballard’s journal?”

“We agreed to keep it secret. The cities didn’t need to know there was more than one Ballard. Whenever he disappeared, I took over until he returned.

Then I started the Thinker agents.

None of them knew I was anything



except one of them and certainly not the Thinker, itself.”

He looked at the sky. “It’s getting late, we’d better return to Heidelberg, Elyse.” She started to get up, but Jonathan pushed her back as Heinrich stood. “She’s not going anywhere with you!”

“And why not? I’ve given you people what you wanted. Now that I’m just a lowly clone, do you think I’m not good enough for your daughter? Don’t forget her mother was a clone, and that was certainly good enough for you!”

“Heinrich, please, that was uncalled for!”

“No, Elyse,” he said, pushing her out of the way. “I want to know why you can’t go with me.”

“It’s too dangerous, that’s why!”

“Dangerous? She’s as safe with me as she’d be at your precious Sanctuary!”

“She’s pregnant. Did you know that?”

Heinrich grinned. “Well, it is a little too soon to tell!”

“Not for her. Do you want the child taken from her and raised in an artificial womb? Remember, this is one of the key links in your new plan, my friend. Do you want your child - -”

“Children,” Elyse corrected. “It’s twins.” She went to her father.

“Daddy, I want to be with him. And whatever he decides is what I want, too. He won’t do anything unless it’s for the good of the babies and me. I trust him. Why can’t you?”

Jonathan looked directly at Heinrich. “Can you promise me you’ll get her out of Heidelberg within the next four months?” “Yes, I can.”

“And that if you decide to let her have the babies naturally, you’ll bring her to us before her time is due.”

“Yes. I promise that, as well.”

The Meldanans recalled all

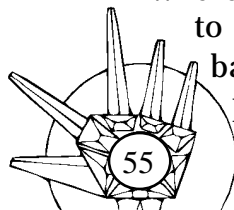
their Earth agents and told all Sanctuary inhabitants they were free to return. Death at 30 had been abolished. A few of the older ones decided to stay, but most went back to Earth. The Meldanans stayed another two years, monitoring for signs of unrest. There were none. A few people returned to Sanctuary, stayed awhile, then went back to live on Earth for good. The few remaining people were given the option of relocating to one of the other colonies or to Meldana itself.

Soon, Sanctuary II on the Earth’s moon was closed completely, shortly after Sanctuary I on Argus. In spite of many attempts at locating them since the night on the Mediterranean beach, Heinrich and Elyse were never heard from or found. The Thinker and his Sandlady had simply vanished.

*But is this the End?*

*Oh, No, Because this is what really happened back on Earth.*

A few months after their return to Heidelberg, Heinrich announced to Elyse that it was time for her trip to RegCom. He’d explained to her it was the only way to satisfy CC give it it’s pound of flesh, so to speak. But Elyse was not happy. She could see the logic of it. They could always have another child. And there was the possibility, as he had pointed out, that the hormones could have caused some developmental problems in the embryos. Better to let CC be responsible for those consequences than them. Finally, she agreed. Shortly, thereafter, they left Heidelberg, disappearing in their paravane for the Americas. They went from city to city, never staying more than a few nights in any one place. They went to Crazy Horse where Heinrich reprogrammed the Thinker to institute the new directives. He took back his original name of Legion, programmed the processor for new



clothes for them both, clothes the color no Citizen was ever allowed to wear purple, the color of royalty. They would become the new Rulers of the World, he explained to her. He would call himself the Patriarch and she would be known to all as the Matriarch. After all, they would be the parents of a practically new race. Their children would span the globe replacing the simple-minded citizens of all the domes. They had sex only once a month. When she ovulated. To have sex any other time, he had pointed out coldly, was counterproductive. When she became pregnant again, two months would pass before they visited another Regeneration Complex, Elyse undergoing another embryo transfer, recover, then leave with the Patriarch. This went on month after month, the time of gestation becoming shorter and shorter until, Legion insisted she undergo ovum donor surgery - - simply having her ripe ova removed, some at each city would be better for her health, instead of undergoing pregnancy for a limited time.

In a few years Elyse had produced 72 children - - none of whom she was ever allowed to see. This had all been done for her own good, he had told her. And she believed him, because it was what he believed. She loved him. She trusted him. "Till Death Do Us Part."

That was what the minister in the small Austrian village had had them repeat at the end of the ceremony which committed them to each other shortly after leaving the Mediterranean.

But now, as they returned once more to Crazy Horse Monument and the cave beneath it which housed the gigantic workings of Thinker, she remembered the things she "had known" the morning of her First Awakening.

"Please, Beloved," She was no longer allowed to call him Heinrich or even Legion any longer. "Please, let me keep this one. I need it. I need a child of ours to feel moving within me,

to nurture and raise."

He had looked at her, sympathetically, then said. "Do you really think that's wise, My Love?" He no longer called her by her name, but My Love, Beloved, or My Dear. "It would set him apart from the Others, make him superior to our other children. Do you want that? It could cause a rebellion sometime in the distant future - - ruin everything we've worked for."

She agreed - - again. He was right. He was always right. She was being selfish. She wasn't thinking of what was best for mankind.

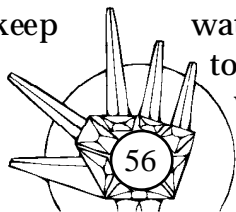
This child, too, would be surrendered, sometime before they ever reached their destination. That always happened when she questioned things. He made sure it wasn't around to complicate matters.

Still at Crazy Horse a month later, they had had sex again at the full moon. She could no longer call it making love. It had ceased being that many months before. Oh, he did still love her. But sex was sex, - - procreation, - - mechanical, unfraught with emotion.

She conceived again, being extremely fertile. But this time she did not tell her husband. It would be her secret. He had his secrets, ones he blocked from her probes. He'd learned that early on in their marriage. How, she wasn't sure.

She began to catch him in little lies, half-truths. Had he ever stopped lying to her, she wondered.

So, this would be her secret, this male child she carried in her womb, this child that would see the light of day beside her sometime in the future. She could escape, hide among the gypsies if she couldn't somehow contact the Meldanans. Surely, there had to be someone she could still contact. There was the House in the South. It would still be there. She'd watched him often enough to know how to operate the paravane. Somehow, she would get home.



Till death us do part? How could she desert him? She had made the vows, vows to commit, to honor, to obey! And she had been obedient, hadn't she?

She remembered her mother once saying that clones seemed to be genetically weak, especially mentally, emotionally. There was always a little streak of madness, waiting for something to happen to trigger that streak and let the devils out. It was hardly noticeable at first, she had said, speaking of her own streak, but then a little thing had happened, something any whole person could easily shrug off, but a clone couldn't. Couldn't cope. And that was ultimately fatal.

Was this what she was beginning to see in him? That streak of weakness? He was a genius. A mad genius? Perhaps. But he hadn't begun that way, had he?

Till Death us do part.  
It was the only way.

Another month had passed and the Moon was full. He mounted her as he had each unpregnant month since their marriage. But this time was different. She felt compassion, love flowing from his mind. But it was too late. Shortly after his climax, she pulled the encrusted medieval dagger from her boot and stabbed him in the back. He rolled off her, gasping, eyes wide and questioning.

"Why, My Love?" he sputtered through blood-flecked lips.

"For the children, Beloved. For the children." She plunged the jeweled dagger into him again and again, once for each child she had "lost" to the cities, to the RegComs without number.

Finally, he lay dead among the tousled sheets, blood flowing onto their stark whiteness - - death white.

She could hardly believe she had done this thing which only a few years ago she never would have considered. But he had been mad, hadn't

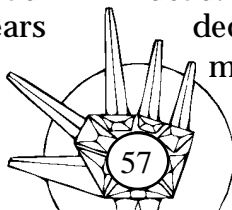
he? And she wasn't about to let him make her mad along with him! She was the Matriarch, just as her grandmother had been the First Matriarch of Meldana. She was the First Matriarch of Earth! There was no need for her to return, now. She would lead the people of Earth, she would set this one son above all others, train him to lead the citizens, judiciously evaluate and change Thinker's programs, for the good of all mankind!

Taking the paravane, Max, and what few belongings she could stow in the air vehicle, she left Crazy Horse, sealing the hidden entrance securely behind her. Yes, she would go to the gypsies. There she would find solitude, no one would question her, no one would tell her what to do or when to do it. She would be revered.

But the gypsies were too bizarre for her - - interested only in pleasure and sex - sex - sex! And she quickly discovered she was unwelcomed at Medfacs without the Patriarch. The Thinker-agent had so brainwashed them to do nothing without his authority, they were afraid to even admit her entrance to their facilities.

She tried a few cities, still yearning for human companionship. Max, was not enough. But the dog's formidable presence made city people keep their distance, not to mention they were much more in awe of the purple-garbed human than they were friendly. Her heightened sensitivities were assaulted by the emotions of adoration. When the citz did talk to her, it was to affirm their new-found values of procreation espoused by the Patriarch. They could see her ever-swelling belly and marveled that it held a new life. They questioned the absence of the Patriarch.

To the simple-minded citizens, they were gods. She couldn't tell them he was dead. Gods were immortal. "He and I decided to separate to spread the Word more rapidly," she would answer. "My friend in Shreveport saw him



there just last week,” one man had said at New City. But she dismissed the report to herself. He was dead. There’d been no heartbeat, no brain activity when she’d left Crazy Horse.

“Yes,” she had replied to the man’s news, “he is traveling in that part of the country.

The months passed and her pregnancy advanced closer and closer to term. Each RegCom sent representatives begging her to let them deliver the child. She refused them all. She knew where the child would be born, and it was not the cities or a medfac or a gypsy camp. It was the House. Would she find the House deserted? Even though it had been built by Sanctuary-agents, Thinker-agents had also used it. There would be power there it was fueled by solar energy. Would she be able to reach someone at Sanctuary? Or had they all gone?

Days later, in the midst of winter, she arrived at Victoria Station on the Gulf of Mexico, parked the paravane in a thick stand of oak trees, the only foliage still standing in an otherwise naked landscape of barren mesquite and ochre-colored grass; and, while Max nosed around, she carefully draped the camo-net over the ‘vane to hide its presence.

The House was empty. She walked to the labroom, touched the durasteel table and saw her mother there, restrained, tubes and monitors trailing from her unconscious body. Jonathan had left her there while he made a trip to Sanctuary II; but the Thinker had sent its agent, Dubonnet, to kidnap her and take her to Shreveport. What had followed had led her to madness.

While Max explored the few rooms, Elyse went to the computer console. It was still live, and she tapped in the Sanctuary call-code. But the screen remained blank in response. She left it, checking the food processor levels. There seemed to be enough chemicals within it to

process food for several months. Easing her bloated body into the soft cushioned chair near the console, she was soon asleep, dreaming the same visions as during all her pregnancy dreams of a living Heinrich, arisen from the dead, a Heinrich bent on revenge.

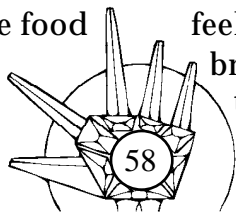
Days passed in loneliness, days of reading the ancient books in their original hardbound forms - - Quo Vadis, Tom Sawyer, Gone with the Wind, Ben Hur, The Ten Commandments. She’d brought them with her from the storage vaults of Crazy Horse, along with many others. She’d fallen asleep to be wakened by a strange noise just outside the House door. Max was alert, standing rigid, facing the opening which was invisible from Outside. Elyse drew the dagger from her boot; it was all she had, other than Max, as protection. The door slowly opened, and a male form nearly filled it completely.

He started toward her, in spite of Max’s warning growl. “Max, watch!” she commanded. It was not an attack command, but at the first threatening movement, the dog would attack. The man continued on, coming into the dim light of the living area.

“You!” Elyse whispered.

“Surprised? Thought I’d get more of a greeting than this, though.” Her eyes welled with tears, her hand on the dagger trembled, the fingers loosening their grip and letting the weapon fall to the tiled floor. Her lips formed his name, but no sound came. Finally, “I thought I’d never see you again! I’m sorry, so sorry. I should have -

But he never let her finish, wrapping his arms about her swollen form until she was clasped close to him, close enough to feel his heart beating strongly against her breast. Max eased into a down position, still watching for suspicious



activity.

Elyse reached up, touching the familiar features with her fingertips, as he stroked her hair, her cheek. "I should have listened to you," she said at last. "How did you ever find me?"

"Your console," he said, nodding at the terminal she had left on. "Just followed the signal. I knew you couldn't have just disappeared. I couldn't give up, not even when everyone else did."

Max was up and growling at the doorway once more, and they looked in that direction, to see a new figure, also male, enter.

"Well, well, isn't this a pretty picture! My wife, the whore, caught in the act."

They separated, each member of the three now standing almost equidistant from one another. "Didn't I tell you never to put into computer or say anything you didn't want Thinker to know? Looks like you never learned that simple little lesson, huh, slut."

"But you're dead," Elyse murmured.

Heinrich spread his arms. "Do I look dead? Stupid bitch! Did you really think you could kill me? Did you really think I wouldn't have some safeguards against my death? All I had to do was leave a directive with the Medfacs that if they didn't hear from me every 24 hours to come to my last known location. If I was dead, they were to remove my brain and implant it in one of my clones."

"What are you going to do to her?" the other man asked.

"The slut? Why, do you want her? You can have her. I don't need her anymore."

"You don't need --?"

"No cunt, I don't. I've got clones of you, too, clones who won't keep questioning my actions, clones who don't give a shit who I fuck or when, clones who can make babies just as good as you. You're just trouble, trouble I don't want or need. Not anymore."

He looked briefly at the other man, an odd expression on his face. "I know you, don't I? You're not just another - - agent, are you." An even stranger look of recognition came to Heinrich's face. "We were at New City together. I remember you now. Yes, your name is ... it's.."

His face dropped as he did remember, his pale eyes opening wide in both fear and realization. "Francis 8!" he whispered in awe.

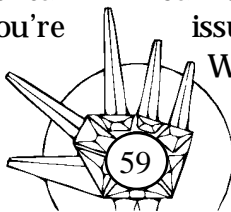
The other man smiled, "So, you do remember. I always wondered what happened to you; but then I was sent to Sanctuary and wasn't able to follow what was going on down here."

Elyse had backed into a corner behind Max, watching this strange reunion. Her old lover from Sanctuary and her Earth husband confronting each other. What would be the outcome? Why did Max eye Heinrich more suspiciously than Francis? Was there something he sensed just as he had nearly a year ago, when his allegiance had left Heinrich and gone over completely to her? It had made Heinrich livid. He'd nearly killed the dog over the defection. Was it because he had been going mad and Max no longer recognized him? Was Max trying to tell her now that this new Heinrich was just as mad?

She swept her eyes over Heinrich's form, looking for some kind of weapon. He no longer even carried the dagger in his own boot. The words between the two ex-Sandmen, the brothers, were becoming more and more heated. Heinrich's words were filthily insulting. Francis' were direct and accusing. Elyse saw Heinrich reach for something inside his vest, and in the scant second it took her to realize what it was, she had

issued Max the command he had been waiting for. But would he obey?

It all seemed to pass in slow-motion,



the dark, hair-covered form galloping past her in a direct line to the two men who were struggling, then pushing each other away, Heinrich aiming the weapon at the other man, his own brother, jealousy and hatred engulfing him beyond reason. The dog attacking his former master with his full weight on the armed hand, bringing the clone hard to the harder tiled floor.

The small gun fell from Heinrich's grasp and Francis reached for it.

But it was all quickly over. Max had torn out Heinrich's throat in one bloody shake of his strong jaws and was standing over his victim's limp body.

"Max, out!" Elyse commanded, and the dog returned to heel beside her.

"We'll have to destroy the body so the Medfac can't use the brain again," Francis was saying to a strangely calm Elyse.

She nodded, quietly. "We'll build a pyre. Burn him."

"I'll do it. You rest here." He left, dragging the body out into the clearing. There was plenty of fallwood and the pyre was quickly built under and around the dead Thinker. Francis lit the fire and backed away from the suddenly intense heat, as the bitter wind blew it toward him. Elyse came out of the house, Max beside her, and watched as the flames climbed higher and higher into the night sky. She hadn't even realized it was no longer day until that moment.

"I want to go home," she said softly.

"There is no more Sanctuary," Francis answered. "When they left, I volunteered to stay on Earth and look for you."

He saw the funeral flames reflected in her oddly dark eyes, eyes filled with sudden, intense pain, unlike any she had ever experienced before. She doubled over with it, clutching her

belly.

"The baby!"

"Now, here?"

She nodded, vigorously, and headed back into the house.

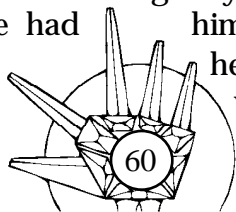
Just beyond the cover of liveoaks, another male figure waited, observing, calculating as he had been taught, the most opportune moment for his own entrance to the House. The thoughts in his newly awakened brain were ancient ones, going back nearly 100 years of Earth time. But his body was young and strong, corded with well-trained muscle and sinew. His face was a pale tan, his long hair, pale and flaxen like a legendary Viking warrior. His hand lightly touched the jeweled dagger on the sleeve scabbard of his purple trimfits, reassuring him of its presence in future time of need. Within his brain, an innate sense of timing told him this was the moment for which he had waited a lifetime. His feet led him out into the small clearing and toward the House.

Inside the House, Francis had laid Elyse on a couchlike piece of furniture up against one of the curved walls. Her contractions were strong but still several minutes apart. She was resting now, catching her breath before the next onslaught of pain.

"It's just like I read about," she was telling him, but more painful. The book said the amount of pain differed from woman to woman."

Francis brushed a strand of hair from her forehead. She could feel the affection he still had for her, but it wasn't the same intense love she assumed he felt two years before.

Elyse touched his hand, lightly, and he took it in his as he bent and kissed her gently. No, it wasn't the same. Not for him, not for her. She no longer felt the heat pulsing through her body with his very touch. That was gone.



He looked at her, almost sensing her thoughts. His gaze fell, guiltfully. Each said nothing, merely waiting, unknown, for what would happen next.

The newcomer chose that moment to make his presence known. Max was quiet, although watchful, the only sound in the House that of Elyse's heavier than normal breathing.

"Thank God, I've found you!"

The other two's heads turned as one to the doorway. "No!" Elyse gasped. "Not again, please, not again!" Was he bent upon her madness, too?

As if in denial, the Rottweiler joined the blond newcomer, leaning up against him to have his ear rubbed, which the man obliged him quite well. "I've missed you, old boy," he said looking down at the beast. "It's all right, Elyse," he said to the woman. "The other one was a mistake, but he got away before they could stop him. He got the Patriarch's brain, but I got all his thoughts, minus the ones that were defective."

"You're a clone, then, also?" Francis asked, seeing Elyse was still speechless.

"Of course. How else did you - - ?"

He looked at the woman, entering the throes of another contraction, face strained, body tense. "This is why, Elyse. This is why I never let you carry a fetus to term. So you wouldn't have to endure this pain. I loved you too much to let you be in pain like this, didn't you know that?" He went to her and hardly noticed Francis stepping aside.

The woman took her husband's hand, gripping it hard, while the contraction worked its way toward its culmination. Yes, it was him, yes, he did love her. There was no madness. He placed his other hand on her belly, and she felt the warmth penetrate to the child, their child. She felt the warmth of love spread through her entire body, engulfing her in a protective blanket of comfort and security.

"It's all right, My Love. I'm not angry with you for killing the other or the one before. It was time. You did what was right. The Old Legion had served his time, it was only just that he be terminated."

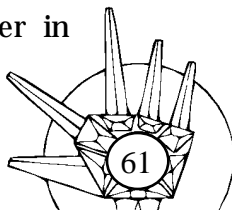
She regarded the unlined face as it searched her own for a single glimmer of returned love. This was her destiny. This man in whatever future forms he took, in whatever body her own thoughts would reside, as well. There would be no more lies. No more madness.

Neither noticed when Francis left, not even Max, his head insinuated between his master and mistress, resting on the edge of the couch as they awaited the birth of their true Firstborn.

And by the time the child entered the world of Earth in the year 2304 on the 3rd of Capricorn, the man known as Francis 8, was well on his way to his next assignment.

Within the small House, the infant who would be named Ballard 4, poked a tiny red fist into the air and howled in ineffective defiance, as his parents and a big black dog watched in affectionate amusement.

# The End

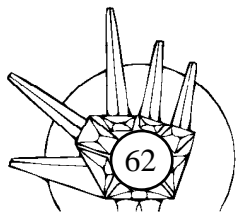


# United Sandmen

1977 - 1986 (sort of...)

In about 1977 The United Sandmen formed in New Mexico. The United Sandmen had a monthly mailing "Sentinel Informer" which had numerous issues each about 15 pages in length and a large fanzine sized annual publication "Sandman Sentinel" which produced 11 issues. The fanzine started out a biannual production but that schedule was dropped after issue #2. The United Sandmen was an official chapter of the LROF, I recall reading that in the Circuit at one point. The club did not advertise too much. I think it had one advert in Starlog, magazine, and another in their only once printed Starlog Communication handbook. There was also an advertisement in the Circuit at one point. The fanzine was a large format usually around 70+ pages. The first issue was offset print. The second and third were a more traditional mimeograph process. This makes them extremely hard to read today. Issues 2 (Vol. 1 #2) and 3 (Vol. 2 #1) are the hardest to find.

Around issue #5 or 6 the Janelle Holmes became too busy to continue the production so I volunteered to put out future issues. Before that Janelle and Dan Helmich had been the publishers. I knew nothing about publishing a fanzine, but over the course of the next several years I would learn quite a lot. I had been involved with the production of The Gorgon Chronicles (1980-1981) but Dan Murphy did most of the work, I just added in the picture pages and clip art and ran off the copies. But nothing prepared me for the huge task of word processing, printing, publishing and mailing all of these issues! Janelle Holmes remained as editor and contributed editorials to issues 7 and 8. Issue 7 was my first issue. It was made on an Atari 800 and printed on an Epson FX80 printer. My word processor did not even have a spell checker! Heck I was just a high school student back then. By the time issue #9 rolled around I was going to college and had access to some better production equipment, but my time was very limited. Issue nine and ten on were 'velobound' and had clear plastic protective covers. Issue 9 has a sepia-toned picture of Logan and Jessica in the swamp from the episode Stargate. The cover of issue #10 was one of, if not the first SF fanzines in the world to have a full color cover. The club dissolved in 1986 upon publication of Sandman Sentinel #10. On average one issue was produced each year, with the exception of issues 7 and 8 which were both produced in the same year so that the final issue could be printed in connection with the tenth anniversary of the movie's release. Inbetween issue 10 and issue 11 one fan kept the club alive.. His name is Tim Smith and he put out Sentinel Informer issues on a regular basis. Issue #11 was not produced until 1994 and received very limited distribution. Even though issue 11 was promoted at worldcons and regional conventions very few people ordered it as Logan fandom had sunk to an all time low of interest. Now, thanks mostly to the Internet, Logan fandom seems to be making a sort of comeback. Well maybe not a comeback but at least the interest is there.



**Richard Hallock May 2000**

**Vol 1 #1 September 1977** (commonly referred to as issue #1.) believe it or not there were a lot of copies of this issue made, so it is the easiest to find. The nice binding and offset printing makes it very readable today.

**Remember there is no such thing as a dumb Sandman... just dumb citizens!**

### **Sandman Focus**

Gym Graffiti

DS Training Manual

Sandlady Part I by Janelle Holmes

Sentinel Search (Word Maze)

### **Star Wars Focus**

Star Wars Review

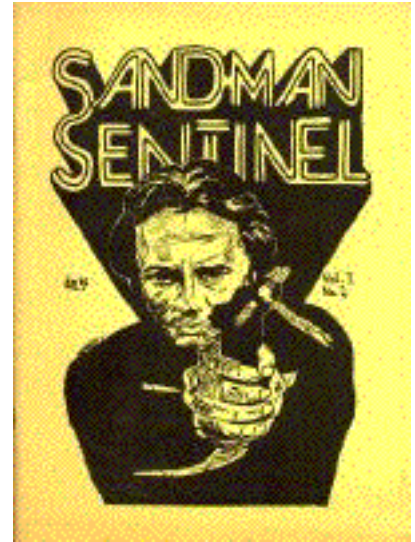
Mark Hamill aka Luke Skywalker

### **News and Notes**

Editor's Page

Logan's Run Update

Media Notes



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**Vol 1 #2 October 1978** (commonly referred to as issue #2.) Mimeographed and some pages were glued together so that they could have a picture on one side this is one of the harder issues to read. My copy has a lot of unreadable bits in it.

### **Articles**

Pages From The Deep Sleep Training Manual

Logan's Run Supertrivial Quiz

Sentinel Search (word maze)

Jenny! A Complete Biography by Michael Smith

Movie Review: Invasion of the body Snatchers

### **Fiction**

Fight For Life by Alfred F Turner

The Search by Pat Caillouett and J. L. Holmes

Sandlady Part II by Janelle Holmes

Death of a Sandman (poetry) by Jacquelyn Taylor

### **News and Notes**

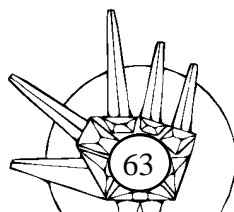
Editorial by Janelle Holmes

Accolades (letters section)

Tri-Dim Report

Sentinel Search #1 answers

Missing A Few Words ( reprinting blurred out words in the previous issue)



**Vol 2 #1 May 1979** (commonly referred to as issue #3 as this was the only issue published this year. Mimeographed with offset art. The art in this issue was exceptional. Some pages were printed on different color (yellow) paper.

### Articles

Logan's Run - - A Series Doomed To Failure  
D. C. Fontana on Logan's Run Exclusive Interview  
Logan's Run Episode Synopsis  
Logan's Run Stars' Biographies  
News and Notes

### Fiction

DS Training Manual (with illustrations)  
Terror Unto Death Part I by Jacquelyn Taylor  
And Gant Slew Ballard by Leigh Chapman  
Fight For Life by Alfred F. Turner  
(who also did some great art in this issue)  
The Search by Pat Caillouett and J. L. Holmes  
The Sandlady's Return By Janelle Holmes  
Carrousel by Gloria Colon ( a nice folk song)



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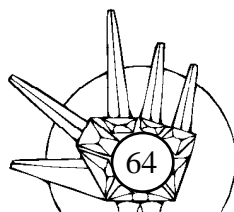
**Issue #4 December 1980** This issue and the ones following it all looked very sharp. Mimeographed with offset art. By the time this issue was printed the Logan's Run Organization Of Fans had already folded. 'Runs' at conventions were being banned because of accidents. It was a very bad year for Logan's Run fans and the third and 'final' Logan's book was published.

### Articles

Review of Logan's Run ( written back in 1976)  
Biography of Michael York  
Biography of Richard Jordan  
**Fiction**  
The Masquerade by Frank R. Wilson  
Their Souls and Spirits Prose by Frank R. Wilson  
Citizens Career Guide  
Sandgirls Part I by Carl Nicastro (a story too 'hot' for The Critic!)  
The Historian by Dan Helmick  
Terror Unto Death Part II by Jacquelyn Taylor  
Sandlady's Return Part II by Janelle Holmes

### News and Notes

Editorial by Janelle Holmes  
Accolades and Tirades (letters section)  
DS Exchange



**Issue #5 December 1981** Mimeographed with offset art.

**News and Notes**

Editorial by Janelle Holmes

Accolades and Tirades (letters section)

**Fiction**

Time Tripper Part 1 by Tony Doimadios

Sandgirls Part II by Carl Nicastro

A Sandlady By Any Other Name by Janelle Holmes

Terror Unto Death Part III by Jacquelyn Taylor

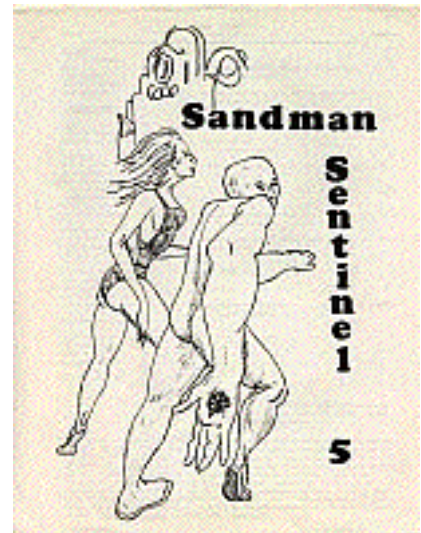
Reflections on a Crystal by Jessica 6 (as written by Gloria Colon)

Deep Sleep Training Manual Supplement by Gloria Colon

Death Chase by Greg Crawford

Adrian's Run by Dan Helmick

Logan's Discovery Part 1 by John Kennedy



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**Issue #6 December 1982** Mimeographed 2 sided printing. Cover based on the Corgi Books Logans Run Paperback.

**News and Notes**

Editorial by Janelle Holmes

Accolades and Tirades (letters section)

**Fiction**

Time Tripper Part 1 by Tony Doimadios

Odyssey of Santana 3 Part I by Greg Crawford

Sandgirls Part III by Carl Nicastro

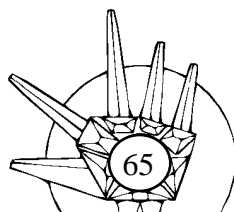
A Sandlady By Any Other Name: Part II by Janelle Holmes

Terror Unto Death Part IV by Jacquelyn Taylor

The Adventures of Sandgirl Mackenzie 19 by Marcy Dare

Pages From the DS Training Manual by Francine Bake

Logan's Run Word Maze by Tony D Doimadios



**Issue #7 December 1983** Mialled out much in the summer of 84! Originals of this issue were printed on dot matrix printer paper, so if you see an xerox copy of it it is not an original. Produced on an old Atari 800 computer!

**Non Fiction**

Michael Anderson Jr. on Logan's Run The Movie

George Clayton Johnosn on Jessica's Run

**Fiction**

Quest of the Spear Part 1 by Carl Nicastro

Odyssey of Santana 3 Part II by Greg Crawford

A Sandlady By Any Other Name: Part III by Janelle Holmes

Terror Unto Death Part V by Jacquelyn Taylor

The Adventures of Sandgirl Mackenzie 19 by Marcy Dare

**Articles**

Answer key to Issue 6 Word Maze

Accolades and Tirades Janelle Holmes

From the Typist by Rick Hallock



**Issue #8 June 1985** This issue was also printed on a dot matrix printer, but was xeroxed to make the print darker. Very thin paper made for a very thin issue. The end of the club is announced by Janelle. A few pages were lost but later recovered and put in issue #9 of part IV of Janelle's story.

**Non Fiction**

From The Editor Janelle Holmes

From the Typist by Rick Hallock

**Script**

The Playground Part 1

**Fiction**

A Sandlady By Any Other Name: Part IV By Janelle Holmes

Groso's Run Part II by Rick Hallock

The Adventures of Sandgirl Mackenzie 19 by Marcy Dare

**Articles**

City Demographics By Dan Helmick

The Philosophy of the 23rd Century by Carl Nicastro (Rainbird 6)

Religion In The Future By Carl Nicastro



**Issue #9 January 1986** First velobound cover. First use of spot color

**Non Fiction**

From the Typist by Rick Hallock

**Script**

The Playground Part 2

**Fiction**

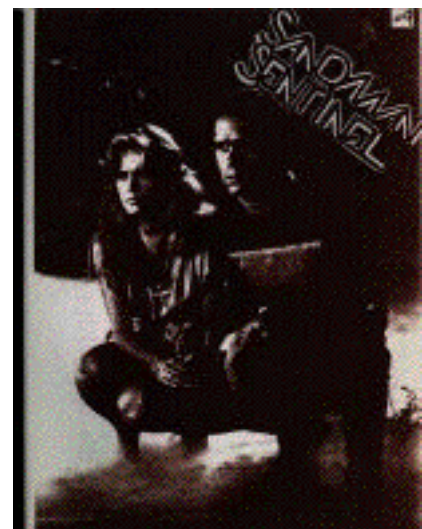
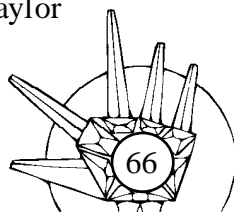
A Sandlady By Any Other Name: Part IV

(Missing pages from the issue 8) By Janelle Holmes

Terror Unto Death Part VI by Jacquelyn Taylor

Groso's Run Part II by Rick Hallock

Francis 7? By Greg Crawford



**Issue #10 November 1986** This issue was sent out to all the people still with valid addresses on our mailing list as a free thank you for supporting Logan Fandom for those many long years. Velobound full color cover. There are a bunch of these floating with fanzine dealers for a few years after publication at west coast cons. This issue also featured three wallet sized pictures courtesy of Tim Smith to go with his articles. George Clayton Johnson liked this issue and complimented me on it and Jacquelyn Taylor story!

**Non Fiction**

From the Typist by Rick Hallock  
Bios by Janelle Holmes, Greg Crawford, Tim Smith  
Ankh and A Scene Passed By Too Quick By Tim Smith  
A complete membership list both past and present

**Script**

The Playground part 3

**Fiction**

A Sandlady By Any Other Name: The Conclusion by Janelle Holmes  
Terror Unto Death Part VII by Jacquelyn Taylor  
Groso's Run Part III (conclusion) by Rick Hallock



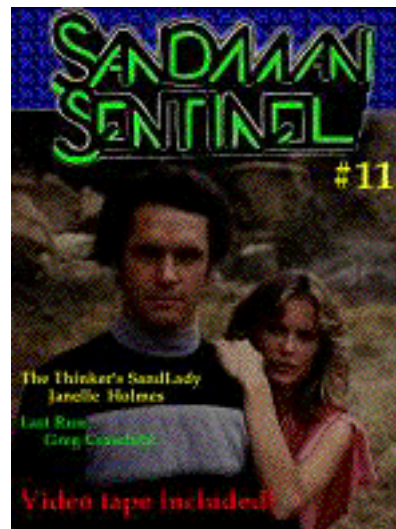
**Issue #11 1995** (extremely limited distribution) Originally had planned to include a videotape with this issue, but I never got enough subscriptions to support it. Most were shipped in a three ring binder with a transparent cover. The cover was full color printed on (at the time) state of the art HP 550c inkjet printer. The inside was a crisp original laserprinted copy. Not many stories.. but quite long ones!

**Non Fiction**

From the Typist by Rick Hallock

**Fiction**

The Thinker's Sandlady by Janelle Holmes (a complete story)  
Last Run by Greg Crawford (a complete story)



Special Thanks to Greg Crawford for financial contributions on this issue, Tim Smith and Chris Wiedner for their unending support and a special thanks to Janelle Holmes for writing another fantastic Sandlady story. Additional thanks to Jean Curly for her ending love of the United Sandmen.

Thanks to all the members of the United Sandmen over the years!

A huge thank you to William F. Nolan and George Clayton Johnson for making Logan run!

