

clearerther!

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ILLUMINATI STRIKE IN LONG BEACH!

[For various in-jokes reference, see *Illuminatus!* by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson.]

Background

Our story begins in an alternate time-line where the witch-daughter of a Wizard is dabbling in her father's spell book. She is a resident of Acheron, in the pre-Hyborian world, and is named Amera.

In her attempt to cast a summoning of legendary Atlanteans, her "fumble" crosses the uchronic barrier and she summons Atlanteans from the universe of *Illuminatus!* **Grudad**, the budding young anti-cleric and son of the founder of the Illuminati, has his own peculiar religious and philosophical ideas. With him is the Courtesan **Lilith**, who is a mistress of psychological manipulation, and ally of Grudad. Since Atlantis (I) will soon fall, they have no wish to return, so they try to find out what potential is in Acheron.

They find none. Furthermore, more surreptitious use of the Wizard's lab convinces them that Acheron itself is soon to fall. Grudad speculates that another version of Illuminism may have evolved in yet another time-line, and he and Lilith assist Amera in detecting one in a line close to our medieval Omayyad Caliphate.

Discovered by Amera's father, the group cast a teleportation spell on themselves to the one place he cannot know to look for them because he cannot conceive of it existing. Thus do they end up in the world of Hassan I Saban.

Hassan senior has control of the area locked up, and this is anathema to the vision of the three (Tricycle). They recruit Hassan's son, a fighter skilled in the Malayan kris and the scimitar, and is large and powerful enough to enjoy carrying a heavy crossbow, to ram through the armor of annoying Crusaders. He adds information to Grudad's theoretical research and Amera's experiments by explaining how illuminism is considered a variant of gnosticism by the Christians (whom none of the other had ever heard of).

Hassan's father got up tight with these conspirators around, and during a dope trip of theirs, raided their quarters. The has had a strange effect on the uchronauts, and they made cross-line communication with a relative of Bavarian Illuminist Adam Weishaupt, also their age, who was "transcendentally illuminating" some righteous stuff himself.

Under the influence, Amera recalled the teleportation spell, and casting it on them as the Arab guards broke in, joined young Weishaupt.

Weishaupt was training to be a Bavarian bureaucrat and sleight-of-hand artist, and complemented the party beautifully. The addition of two more (Bicycle) completed the mystic "Five" of Illuminism, and they plotted and conspired.

First, they defined their aims: Transcendental Illumination and World Domination. Each could be acquired with the other. Grudad, as anti-cleric, would lead the work on Immanentizing the Eschaton, with Amera executing any rituals needed. Weishaupt would eventually run the world bureaucracy, with Lilith as manipulator by guile and psychology, and Hassan leading the fanatical warrior caste to enforce whatever the more subtle means could not.

Grudad and Amera then discovered the D&D universe, and realized the potential here. Unlike everywhere else they had been, no one dominated here. They made one last teleport, as the

Bavarian police began their raids on suspected Illuminists, and popped into D&D land. Here, they became the following characters:

Amera Witch (magic-user), human female, first spell: *sleep*. Amera is sexually frigid, aloof, studious. She is the most mistrusted and feared by the other Illuminati Primi because she is potentially the most powerful. But she is loyal to the Illuminati because she has nothing else to believe in or fight for or care about. She considers Hassan a glorified slave (Shemite, in her terms), and though she has considerable respect for Grudad, she has the repulsion associated with the priest-class of Acheron to keep her at a distance otherwise. Lilith is the opposite of Amera, though Lilith can manipulate her easily enough to keep her friendly. Amera, of course, senses this control and resents and fears it. Weishaupt fascinates and even attracts her a little—but he's gay.

Grudad Anti-cleric, man. Grudad is the theoretician of the group, the one looked to when something new or unexpected comes up. His mind is full of symbols and abstractions, gods, near-gods, and abominations. His religion is basically Gnosticism, and he seeks Knowing and Illumination. He is intellectually curious, and will be in the forefront of interrogating any captured enemies, especially if they are clerical or anti-magic users. He will even restrain the rest of the Party's inclination to execute lawful clerics because of his need for "information"—actually he enjoys the stimulation of arguing with them.

Although Grudad is aligned with Chaos, he is opposed to explicit Satanism, having the Illuminate fondness for the indirect, devious, and evasive, and feels he believes in a "God" not the (Christian) devil. He is protected by other members of the Illuminati Primi because he will eventually reach the Commune "spell." [Note: Clerical "spells" are called *miracles* in Long Beach since they are not magical.] With the Commune, he can discuss with God the Knowable how to Immanentize the Eschaton.

He has an intimate relationship with Lilith, but has little interest in her relative to his all-consuming lust for Knowledge—preferably forbidden.

Hassan Fighter, man. Hassan is the third most powerful Illuminist in the long run, but presently is the backbone and protector of the Party. He enjoys fighting now, but knows that he only has a few prime years. He looks forward to commanding armies of hashishin, fanatical warriors, and running a High Command Joint Chiefs of Staff, in true Illuminati love for Byzantine bureaucracy. His childhood hobby was playing with the kris of Malaysia, which he can throw with fiendish accuracy, and he learned the Scimitar like a good Arab. In order to deal with the armored Crusaders, he acquired a Heavy Crossbow and carries it around cocked to deal with armor, as a "first-strike capacity." Should he need missiles after discharging, he will drop the crossbow (which takes inordinately long to crank up) and go for his kris, throwing them two on the next melee. When closed, he slashes with his scimitar.

Like most military men, Hassan is bi-sexual, making it with either Lilith or Weishaupt, but preferring to rape attractive captives.

Hassan is not stupid, though his main interests lie away from the abstract, except when he's stoned. Then he gets off listening to Grudad going through his arcane lore and mental gymnastics. He respects Grudad, almost liking him, has a typical Arab view of women relative to Lilith, though is wary of her wiles. He considers Weishaupt a pasty-faced little sneak, though a good doping and occasional sex partner, and fears and dislikes Amera, though he becomes accustomed to her with familiarity.

Weishaupt Thief, male. Weishaupt is a typical decadent offspring of 18th Century Upper Middle Class Europeans. He is far more skilled in techniques of intrigue, manipulation, and clandestine operations than his peer group, though, and these are

his assets to the Illuminati Primi. He is Expedition Leader in Dungeons, but turns over command when something comes up.

Weishaupt is catty and jealous of Lilith, turned on by Hassan physically—though wary of his strength, fearful and distrusting of Gruad's intellect, though finding the Gnostic "sermons" diverting to his jaded taste, and almost fond of Amera—whose decadent background and manners make Weishaupt look like a barbarian in contrast.

Lilith Courtesan, human. Lilith is the weakest of the group, and hence most trusted. She is therefore the leader, or Chairman of the Board. She is the mistress of psychological manipulation, and greases the friction arising from the four others. Although first of the Illuminati Primi, she is nothing without the group, and keeping it together is everything to her. She pulls Gruad down to earth when needed, raises Hassan's sights, and gives Amera a feminine shoulder to lean on and person to confide in. Her will is the strongest of all, though she will conceal it until moments of crises. She is closest to Gruad, but mainly because he symbolises the theoretical power of the Illuminati. To her the Conspiracy itself is her lover and mate.

Playing the Illuminati On an expedition, Weishaupt will lead the group, followed by Hassan, Amera, Lilith, and Gruad. Gruad wears plate armor, and is defended in preference to others (except themselves). Upon discovering a group of Lawfuls, Hassan takes over, and commands the melee. If Neutrals or intelligent Chaotics are discovered, Lilith attempts to negotiate and buy off the Neutrals, or enlist the Chaotics into lower rings of the Conspiracy. When negotiations break down, Hassan takes over—with Amera if magic must be used or countered.

If the situation requires deciphering or original thought, Gruad is appealed to for a decision, unless it is a purely magical area of concern, in which case Amera handles it.

Gruad loves to play with graphs and maps; Lilith holds the lantern, though Weishaupt also has one.

The Illuminati have an inordinate loyalty for the Primi, though they consider those beneath them expendable and they are the only Chaotics who will neither attempt to kill or capture other chaotics first, but rather "enlist" them in their "cause." In exchange for this advantage they have over other Chaotics, they will be particularly hated and hunted by Satanic types.

First Expedition Dungeon: Zarbel. The Party walked from a village along a river, and followed it into a cave. After finding a corridor, they entered a room with jeweled walls. Weishaupt checked out the jewels and was promptly teleported. The others followed (Gruad leading a mule). They checked out another corridor, going through the rooms, and again were teleported, this time as the sounds of another Party were approaching, so it may have been fortunate.

Weishaupt led them into an empty room and discovered a secret door. The corridor behind it led in two directions, one of which promised to be a way around the double doors they could not penetrate a bit earlier. As they went into the passage, they came to a T, and then a dead-end in the direction wished. As they backed up to go the other way (5' corridor), a magic-user and fighter appeared. The mage gestured and an iron wall appeared.

Hassan's crossbolt bounced off the iron, proving it real. Forced to back into the original corridor, the Party found a wall open on them and the floor drop into a ramp.

Gruad was dragged down with the mule, and the rest of the Illuminati followed. The mule broke his legs from the fall, but the rest were unharmed. Gruad sacrificed the mule, and the entrails fell into an arrow pointing northwest (in this large cavern they were in).

Then they heard voices calling from that very direction. They hurried over to find a fifth-level chaotic fighter and a second-level neutral cleric. Both were frantic with fear and made no threatening gestures, entreating the Party to lead them out.

Ironjaw, the fighter (these are now Sandy McIntosh's characters) and **Brother Aubrey** were under the domination of the mage, **Black Colin**. He had been temporarily killed, but since he had made a deal with a 200th level near-demonic wizard in the dungeon, he would revive and restore control.

Lilith then tried to get them to join the Illuminati (on a lower level), puffing up the Party's level and status. But Ironjaw was illiterate, unable to read the Illuminist literature, and Aubrey would agree to anything.



Hassan kept Ironjaw covered, and ordered the two Dominated Chaotics to lead. Coming upon a room, they found the remnants of a black Mass, gold, and five rings. Amera tried them on, finding out that the first, which she thought to be a Protection from Good, refused to leave her finger.

Meanwhile the two other chaotics acted strangely, as if they were receiving telepathic messages. Suddenly, a corpse at the black Mass scene rose, animated into a zombie, and attacked them. Hassan zapped him at point blank with the heavy crossbow, and the party left.

As they finally approached an exit, Aubrey and Ironjaw whirled and ran behind some rocks, unable to leave the Dungeon.

At the store of Sterngelders, high-level neutral wizards, the ring was found to be a controlling device for a powerful chaotic demonic wizard. Fortunately, the Sterngelder there was strong enough to remove it, substituting another ring. This one would remain only until the Illuminati's debt was paid, but allowed Sterngelder to summon the debtor as she was about to perish, to claim any treasure on her body.

Amera was berated by the rest of the group as they left for having compromised the Conspiracy. Amera took it quietly, inwardly noting what she could do to whom and when.

Second Expedition Ring Dungeon.

The Illuminated Seers of D&D World entered this new "ring-world" seeking the wealth, power, and knowledge—gnosis—they needed. They found a broken porticulis and entered into the courtyard.

Through an open door they saw a great hall, and they entered. Through a door left of the extinct fireplace, they entered a kitchen, and found a well sunk into the great stone table.

Weishaupt attached a pot to rope, and lowered it in. He found it contained stale beer. Another try hit bottom with no reward. Again they began searching for a way down.

From behind the curtain, a light crossbow fired. Weishaupt fell, Amera threw her Sleep, and they investigated, finding a second-level lawful fighter.

The four remaining Illuminists packed Weishaupt's body on a mule, and ritually sacrificed the sleeping fighter. Then they ran into three orcs, who listened to Lilith's negotiations. They were serving a high-level chaotic, but refused to summon him for possible revivification of the Thief.

Entering a secret door, with stairs leading down, they entered in order. Hassan, Amera, . . . Zap! The doors closed in front of Lilith. Furiously Gruad and Lilith worked on opening the doors, as Hassan and Amera sank rapidly in what appeared to be an elevator. At the bottom, they elected to wait to see if it would return.

Several turns later electrical creatures floating in the air like jellyfish attacked. Hassan took a blow and swung back. Amara swung a dagger, also missing, but prepared to torch the next. The chance never came. Both fell on the next blows of the creatures.

Gruad and Lilith succeeded in prying open the doors, and saw the hole where the elevator had descended. Lilith climbed down two lengths of rope, then a third, coming within 20' of the roof. She backed up, tore up her working nightgown into an additional rope, and prepared to climb down again.

Just before, they had given the mule with Weishaupt's body to the orcs for safe-keeping for 50 gp each, and promise of more.

Lilith climbed down with mallet and iron spikes, and chipped away at the walls. Giving up, she climbed back halfway when the elevator suddenly came at her at 2g. Wham! Right into the ceiling.

Gruad, horrified, saw a pulsating diamond in the elevator, and Lilith's remains dripping from above. Carefully he pulled the gem out, then weighted to elevator to cause it to drop again, and scraped up Lilith's remains.

He returned to the orcs, and offered them the jewel to summon their master. Instead, one chaotically fired a crossbow at him and killed him on the first blow.

So ended the Conspiracy, nipped in the bud. But wait! In another world, deep, deep, in the Dungeon of the God Thornton, a 152nd level anti-patriarch has witnessed their demise, his attention attracted by the peculiar nature of a human sacrifice to an unknown god.

Admiring the teamwork, loyalty, and high morale of this group, for evil cause, and noting their lack of protection from higher Chaotics—and hence allegiance—he decided that this was exactly what his section of the dungeon needed to guard treasures—and more importantly, find him live, captive humans.

What other Chaotic band would attempt to live up to an agreement?

And so the souls of the Illuminati were captured and reincarnated into bodies. The Evil High Priest put them under a Quest to capture 250 live humans—for unknown purpose—to buy their freedom.



[This was common in LBD&D during the last days of the First Generation Dungeons. For example, Sandy McIntosh's chaotics are dominated by a 200th level Demonic Wizard in Craig Vaughn's Dungeon. An exciting melee occurred when several of our Lawfuls took her Chaotics on to free and absolve three Tarnished Damsels.]

EN GARDE AT THE RIPOSTE OFFICE

Alarums & Excursions 7

Jack Harness An ook-ful cover.

Sherna Burley Can't say I go along with your free hit points to low-levelers. As for the "zero" being unconsciousness, *Warlock* rules already provide for that, and if you have the character betrothed to a damsel (or is a damsel who is betrothed), the *Will to Live* care of that. [Also, *Terra Supra* has institutionalized the unconsciousness-at-zero state.] ¶ Magic users have not the time in their magic-besotted life to *train*, or use in other than daggers. Fighters, by the way, should have this weapon knowledge stated before hand, and have lowered probability if circumstances make the use an unfamiliar weapons. Geases are not necessary, just common sense.

Philip M. Cohen We've established (in L.B. that Clerics do not learn "spells" but perform miracles. Hence they are not subject to spell limits but other limitations.

Jim Cooper After I've completed de-bugging Wilderness Playing on *Terra Supra*, I'll test *The Competitive Quest* out and pub the results. Write me then and let me know if you're still interested in turning it into an incredibly complicated board game. [Since I wrote that, I've seen *Empire of the Petal Throne*. Now if something that complex can sell, I should have no problem...]

Mark Swanson A "lawful" priest summoning a monster that devours other members of the lawful party? Forget it!

Lee Gold Agree on Bombadil, but see a neutral as someone more like Saruman, one who switches sides. ¶ Eney made the Courtesan female to stay in tune with the Mythopeia that D&D is based on. Moreover, he would *really* be an MCP if he put forward the proposition that a female fighter would be Fascinated by some foppy male strutting his stuff? After all, would you? ¶ I prefer the argument that elves have to take off armor to crank out spells (requiring lot of hand-waving). Do *not* buy "de-guassing." ¶ Do you play *any* critical hits? They are surprising and add thrills to melee when they occasionally come up.

Dick Eney Well-written and enjoyable as usual. Have you thought of writing children's books? ¶ Since when does "Hold Person" work on Undeads? And skeletons talking?!

Wayne Shaw Five players, not characters. Two or three characters/player is usual.

Harry Andruschak Already commented in APA-L.

Hilda Hannifen Ditto.

Arnie Katz I just sent Rich Friedman (in Brooklyn) a *Greyhawk*. [This was written end of December.] Phone him at New York University, Dept. of Chemistry.

Me Note that illo was by Steve and Sandy McIntosh, about what Cheery will look like when she makes Princess.

SUBDUING THE SEVEN HIT-DIE FAFIA!

The above contents were supposed to be in A&E 8. Since then I've been battling FAFIA, and **clear ether!** was knocked out for the duration. To catch up, let me run through a quick summary of the past couple of months in Long Beach D&D.

Second Generation Soon after I boasted in these pages about how restrained LBD&D was with wishes, they appeared. And meanwhile a "Treasure War" (analogous to a Price War) erupted between a couple of DMs. Finally, Steve McIntosh wanted to cut off all characters he felt had won inflated treasures and powers. I counter-suggested that he simply start another series of dungeons and overlands, but with a "deflationary" policy understood and brand new characters. Thus was born the split of LBD&D into First Generation and Second Generation.

Only one First Generation dungeon remains, so my old characters (including the Illuminati) are losing their playing field, and will either fade out, or become Castle Lords in my Overland for Expeditions to run into.

[Sorry to cut off here but better to publish in haste than not to publish at all! (And you may quote me...correctly.) Will continue next ish with narrative and catch-up on rest of comments to missed A&E issues. D&DIWOL! —SEK3 ■]