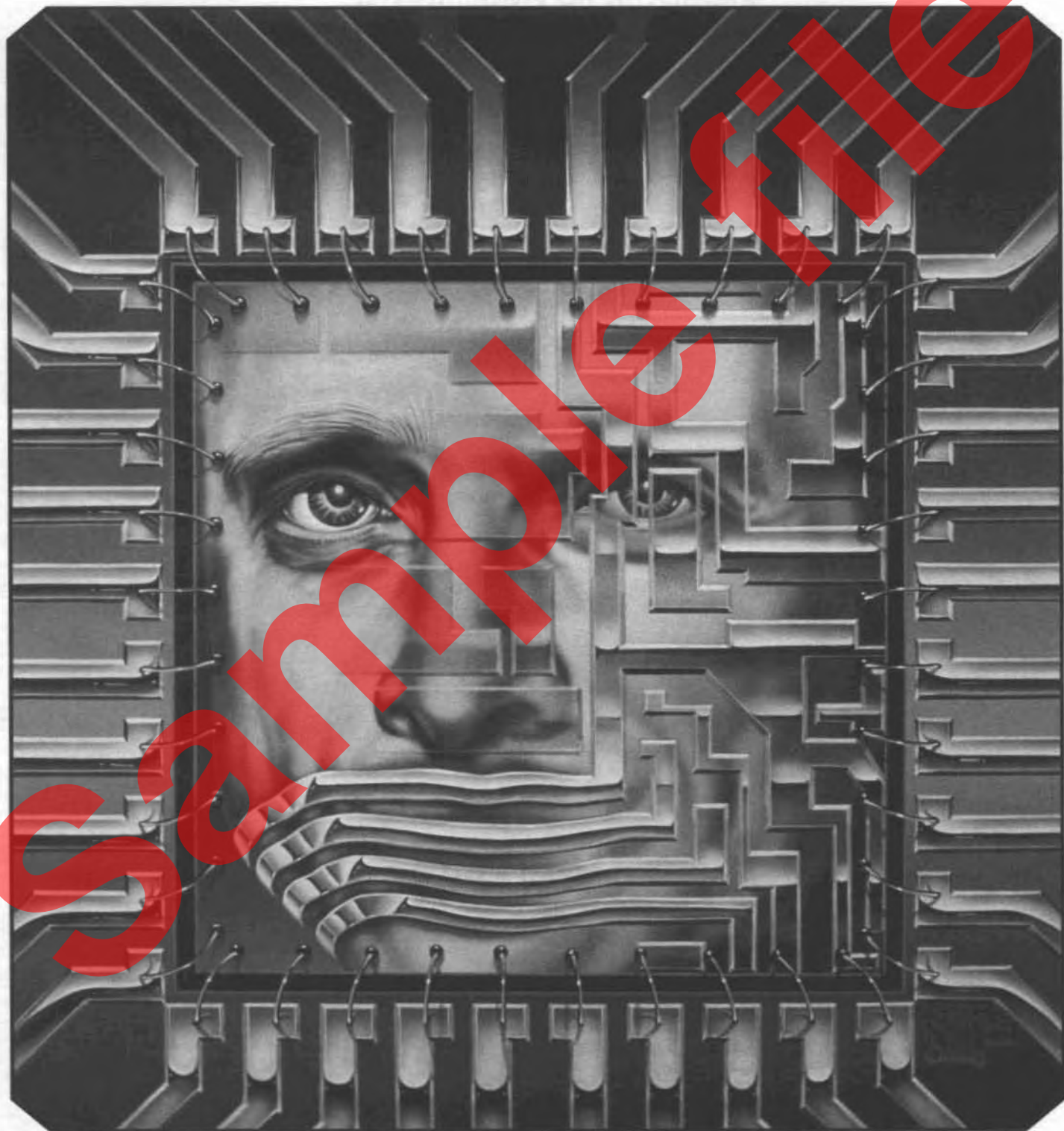


WHEN AXIOMS COLLIDE

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The Outcome Is Murder





TORG - When Axioms Collide

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Prologue



Somewhere near Borneo, the Near Now ...

Geoffrey signalled to the battalion commander that his regiment was in position. A single bead of sweat broke from his forehead and raced down his aquiline nose, plunging silently into the dark, blood-soaked ground below.

The other regimental commanders signalled their readiness and relayed the message to their anxious men. How many of the Queen's soldiers would die tonight? Best not to think about it, Geoffrey decided.

The battalion commander raised his Colt revolver, its polished barrel glinting in the moonlight. Geoffrey saw the hammer pull back, as if in slow motion, he saw the commander's eyes squint in anticipation, and finally, with a devastating crack in the still night

air, the pistol fired. The attack had begun!

Shells blessed by the company chaplain flew through the darkness, the artillery thundered across the field. Hundreds of First Planting gospog were falling in droves! Even the terrifying things known as "the Others" were beginning to wither beneath the barrage.

The startled Caretakers were just beginning to return fire when Geoffrey heard the shrill whistle which signalled his regiment to charge. He turned to face his veterans, raised his polished sabre, and gave the command!

Hundreds of the Queen's finest surged across the soggy ground, stomping, hacking, and shooting anything not wearing the red finery of the Victorian army. Geoffrey, as usual, was fast in the lead. He quickly emp-

ted his pistol into one of the "Others," and as it fell, realized he had made a terrible mistake. Directly behind it were the ominous forms of the Caretakers, their loaded blunderbusses levelled at the silver badges which decorated his chest and shone so brightly in the moonlight ...

When the sun finally rose on the bloody field, the few survivors of the "Fightin' 5th" found the blasted body of Major Geoffrey Winthrop sprawled across the mangled forms of two Caretakers, surprise and alarm frozen into their hideous features.

Meanwhile ...

Talamous struggled to put on his robes. Oh, what had happened now? He had heard the distant cries of the Caretakers, but he had been lost in his latest conquest. The girl had been so young, so ... unspoiled. How strange



to find one of her ilk walking the streets.

He paused for a moment and admired the beauty of her face, unstained to the necromancer despite the crimson liquid which still spilled from her eyes.

Tightening his robe, the creature known as Talamous Scratch rose and moved across the basement laboratory. Deep within his mind he heard the distant telepathic groaning of the Caretakers. They had been trying to warn him of an attack upon the fields! Oh, Gods! If the fields were damaged, Thratchen would surely rip out his wrinkled throat!

Scratch collected his favorite revolver and a worn grimoire before heading for the stairs. Just before leaving his hidden laboratory, he turned and blew a kiss to the still form of the girl below.

He looked out his dirty window, drumming his bony finger upon the pane. Scores of Victorian buffoons, clad in their bright red uniforms and brandishing all manner of weapons, covered the fields entrusted to him by the Gaunt Man's lieutenant, Thratchen. It was a total loss.

There was only one option: escape. But where to? he pondered. Casually walking toward his antique globe and giving it a spin, the necromancer stabbed a scrawny finger at the swirling sphere.

The Victorian police were thorough in their investigation the following day. They found the hidden wall safe (empty, of course). They found the secret passage into the cellar (deserted save for the body of a young woman). They even found the 17 and a half corpses buried underneath its earthen floor.

The only thing of importance they missed was a single scratch. A scratch made as if by a long fingernail on an antique globe, ending ominously on the European nation now called CyberFrance.

Near Langres, France. One Month Later

Bishop Paulo nervously signalled the Inquisitors to remain in place while he advanced to the bonfire. He could just make out the forms of several creatures cowering in the shadow of a ruined wall, seemingly more afraid of him than he was of their master.

"M-Malraux has ordered you into our service, caretaker," he stammered.

From out of shadows deeper than those made by ordinary night came a powerful, red-scaled hand. Jet-black nails glimmered in the firelight and Paulo failed to hide the raw terror in his expression.

"You ... order me?" the thing grumbled slowly.

"No. I am h-here on orders of the Cyberpope."

"And what does he request of me?"

"You will lead the other gospog into ..."

"You dare lump me in with these shambling creatures!" it bellowed.

Paulo wanted to shrink down inside himself, but to do so would only give the demon more power. He gathered his courage.

"Yes. That is what you are, a gospog of the Fourth Planting, are you not?" he managed.

"So I am, brother," it tested. "So I am."

"Then Malraux would have you perform a service for us."

"And what shall I get in return?"

"More corpses for your field."

"You promise me one task for another? This is no bargain!"

Paulo summoned his courage once again. "No. It is an order ... Nefastario."

There was an awkward moment of silence, and then the thing in the shadows leaned forward slightly, revealing its reptilian, hate-filled eyes. But the demon Nefastario only chuckled when he saw the sweat break like floodwaters from the bishop's brow. "My children and I are yours to command, Bishop. What would you have us do?"

Paulo sighed with relief. He had won.

For now.



Introduction



hen *Axioms Collide* is an adventure for *Torg: Role-playing the Possibility Wars*. You must have the basic set to play this adventure. The *Cyberpapacy* and *Orrorsh* sourcebooks and *The GodNet* supplement are also required for maximum enjoyment of this product.

Adventures for *Torg* take place on Earth in the Near Now. Earth has been invaded by several powerful beings from other realities. The High Lords, the leaders of the invaders, have the power to conquer other cosms and impose their reality upon their victims.

One of these beings is Thratchen, the High Lord regent of Orrorsh, a realm of monstrous horror. Of the many weapons employed by Thratchen to terrorize his subjects, the gospog are among the most terrible. Gospog are undead creatures which rise from specially prepared fields filled with the corpses of those who have opposed the High Lords. The weakness of the gospog fields is that they must be protected by servants whose power does not approach that of their master.

This is the story of one such servant ...

Adventure Background

When an Orrorshan gospog field was destroyed, the Nightmare assigned to protect it, an evil sorcerer/scientist named Talamous Scratch, fled the realm and the vengeful wrath of Thratchen.

Choosing CyberFrance by pure chance, Scratch arrived near the town of New Culmont and resumed his old habits of debauchery and murder. Several young women have already met their deaths at his gnarled hands. He has made a practice of choosing his victims (with the aid of an ethereal coachman) from the lower levels of society. But while crimes against such

people might not attract the attention of most Victorians, the people of New Culmont search desperately for the villain. Eventually, they turn to the Storm Knights for aid.

Meanwhile, Scratch has delved into the GodNet and hatched a monstrous plan: the creation of a living computer

virus designed to slay thousands of Net users. Only by braving a horrifying section of the Net can the Knights stop the slaughter.

Unfortunately for the villagers, New Culmont is plagued by more than just the mad Scratch. Cyberpapal gospog have twice descended upon it to claim



new corpses for their unholy harvest, and now threaten to return in force.

Adventure Synopsis

When *Axioms Collide* begins when the Knights are asked by Le Resistance to help ambush a MindBody convoy near Paris. Shortly thereafter, one of their allies receives a note informing him that his daughter has been branded a witch and is about to be burned at the stake. Quickly securing a hover-car, the heroes race from Paris to the man's home town of New Culmont.

A stop at the Last Supper Cafe brings news of a mass-murderer known only as the "Night Slasher," as well as an example of the power of Scratch's virus.

The team finally makes it to new Culmont just as the "witch" undergoes and fails an Ordeal by Fire. As the Knights move to the rescue, a horde of gosgop falls upon the village.

Act One ends as a Cyberpapal cleric asks the Knights to aid the village against the threat of the serial killer.

Act Two begins with the Knights on the trail of the murderer, a treacherous path that leads them to a massive Cyberpapal gosgop field. The village of New Culmont is full of intrigue, cyberleggers, and one physician with more than the ills of the body on his mind. Drawn to the investigation of a cyberlegger who swore he saw a ghost

in the GodNet, the Knights meet with his band and learn that his body was dumped in a gosgop field. The Knights must raid the field to retrieve a MemChip with the VX address of their true foe on it.

In Act Three, the Knights must fight a two-front war against Scratch, both in his manor house and his VX construct. The Net contains clues to the true deaths of the sorcerer's servants, but deadly perils as well. The manor is home to a spectral killer, a weretiger, and a creation more horrific than both.

Failure to stop Scratch will result in the deaths of thousands — and perhaps serve as the prelude for an invasion of the Cyberpapacy by the horrors of Orrorsh.

Playing Without a Decker

Deckers are special characters who possess the *cyberdeck operations* skill. This skill allows the character to manipulate the GodNet, the virtual reality created by Jean Malraux's Darkness Device.

Having a character with this skill is extremely important to this adventure. If no Storm Knight possesses the skill, the Knights can encounter someone in the Resistance who will offer to train one of them. Failing that, the Knights may have to hire a cyberlegger in New Culmont to give them some help (of course, it will probably cost an arm and a leg ... perhaps literally).

The Power of Fear

Keep in mind that, although Scratch and his horrors are operating in the Cyberpapacy, they are still connected to Orrorshan reality. This means they can make use of the Power of Fear. As soon as the Knights begin seeing signs of Scratch's grisly work, they will have to begin making *Perseverance* checks.

In a way, this will be a benefit to them, as it will help them to tell which atrocities have been perpetrated by Scratch and which by some other force.

Selective Invisibility

Selective invisibility is a new three-point power available to Orrorshan horrors. Although the creature using this ability is invisible for all practical purposes, it can be spotted by those who know to look for it. A *find* or *Perception* total of 23 will allow a character to spot the horror.

The truly disturbing aspect of this ability is that the horror can become visible to certain persons while remaining unseen by all others. The creature can speak with, attack, or simply intimidate a person while she is standing in a crowded room, and no one else will see a thing. This allows horrors to put the power to use as a means of driving victims insane.

Use of *selective invisibility* adds +10 to the creature's *dodge* value.

