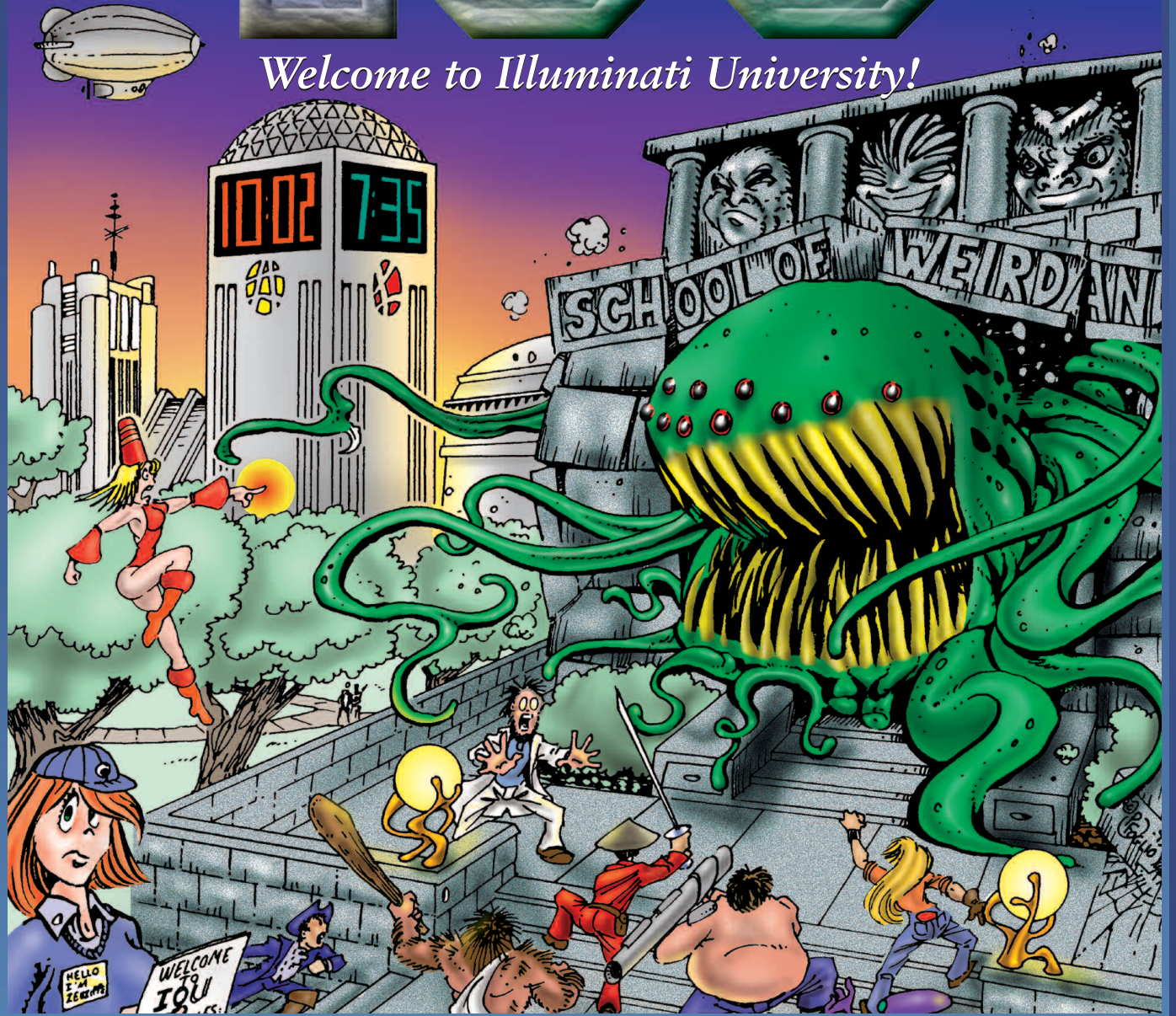


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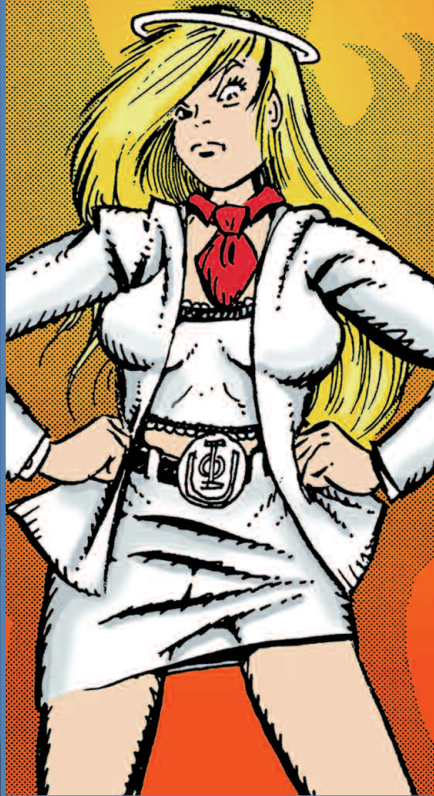
BY ELIZABETH MCCOY & WALTER MILLIKEN

ILLUSTRATED BY PHIL AND KAJA FOGGIO

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

WHAT DOES THE "O" STAND FOR?

**YOU'RE NOT
CLEARED FOR
THAT!**



Admit it. College would have been more fun if you were allowed to blow up the instructors. And you really would have liked to major in Military Biology, Anti-Social Sciences, Double-Entendre Bookkeeping, or Computer Wizardry. Too bad you didn't know about IOU.

Illuminati University is THE best place to learn Things Man Was Not Meant To Know. With departments like Weird and Unusual Science and Engineering, Inapplicable Mathematics, Misanthropology, and Zen Surrealism . . . not to mention extracurricular activities like Democrats for Cthulhu, Moopsball, and food fights that set off nuclear alerts . . . this is college as it should have been. And gadgets? Everything from the Crockpot of the Gods to the Enigmatic Alien Device Button-Pushing Table.

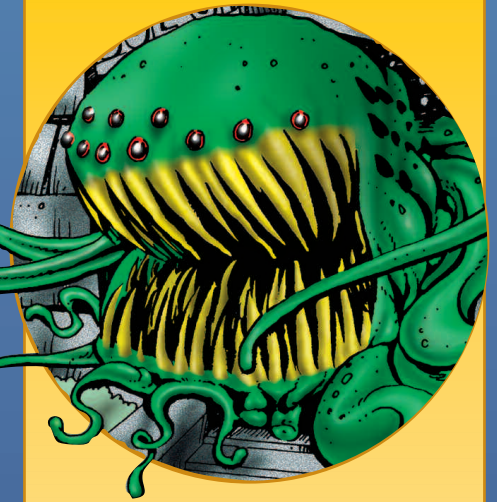
Illustrated by the one and only (two and only?) Phil and Kaja Foglio, this book supports three different campaign styles . . . Silly, Weird, and Darkly Illuminated. *GURPS IOU* takes you from creating a character to enrolling in classes, to study, finals, and the occasional academic blood feud, all the way to graduation.

If you survive.

IOU

. . . where Unusual Background isn't just an Advantage, it's a way of life.

STEVE JACKSON GAMES
www.sjgames.com



GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised is needed to use this supplement in a *GURPS* campaign, but it can easily be adapted as a humorous campaign setting for any game system.

ORIENTATION LEADERS:

Written by

Elizabeth McCoy
and Walter Milliken

Edited by

Lillian Butler

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Phil Foglio
and Kaja Foglio

FIRST EDITION, SECOND PRINTING
PUBLISHED APRIL 2000

ISBN 1-55634-206-3



9 781556 342066

SJG01995 **6072**

Made in
the U.S.A.

G U R P S[®]

IOU

WELCOME TO ILLUMINATI UNIVERSITY!

By Elizabeth McCoy and Walter Milliken

Edited by Lillian Butler

Cover by Phil Foglio, colored by Derek Percy

Illustrated by Phil and Kaja Foglio

GURPS System Design by Steve Jackson

Alain H. Dawson, Managing Editor

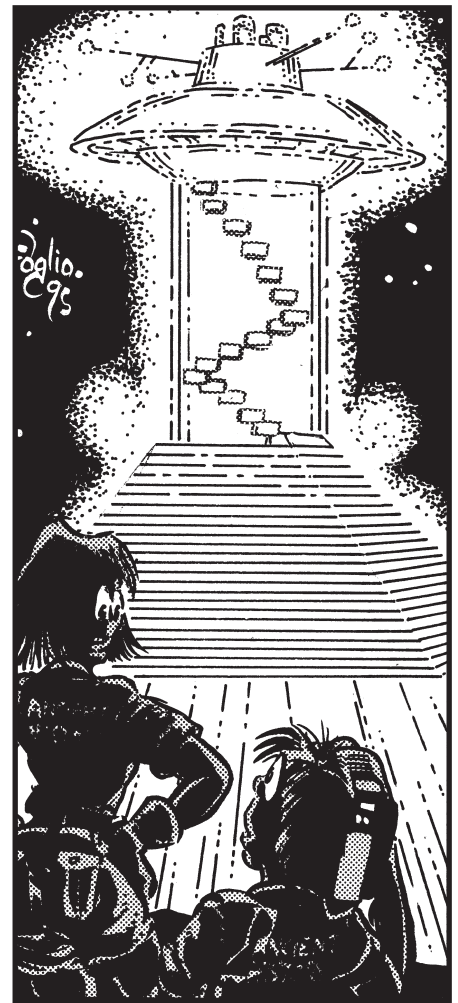
Page Layout and Typography by Lillian Butler and Jeff Koke

Interior Design by Jeff Koke; Cover Production by Derek Percy

Print Buying by Russell Godwin

Art Direction by Lillian Butler

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Our thanks to the original IOU crowd:

Founder Yarlekk, Walter Milliken, Archangel Beth, Professor Esteban, The Mentor, The Ogre, Green-Eyed Lady, THE Unseen Dean Cloudecat, TempDean Sleeve Coat, Dave Nalle, Chairthing Metalhead, Brett Slocum, Mike Hurst, Earl "Shiva" Cooley, Research Subject Krome, Stefan Jones, B.C., Elric, Chairthing Ryden, Professor Pdraig, Silver, Ivorythorn, Student Judah, Student Gremlyn, Professor Case, Laughing Lemming Boy, Professor Grendel, WindLord, Pat Crumhorn, Ed Gore, Charithing Mephron, Justin Case, Invading Alien X'noleum Tenz, Dean Gus "Lestat" Smedstad, Student Voltaire, tkm, Student Monty, Morgoth, Professor Elros F., Mark Hagerman, Sean Rodden, Michael "Wintermute" Eaton, Crackpot, Mack Pitchford, compucious, Professor Dr. Memory, Talisar, C. David Dent, Invading Alien/Professor Caradon "B'thoriai Argh," Schadwen, Deliamber, Professor Bughunter, Captain "Newob Det" Zwack, Professor Anselm, Student TanisHalf-Munchkin, Chad Irby, Urhixidur, Student Two-A-Day, Rif Christiansen, Student Jim Cowling, Student Mikey the Kid, Deliamber, Amal Hess, Mercurio, M*n*r "Captain Yid" N*s*s*nc*, Heathen God, EggHead "Dr. Igor von Torkemoff," Tomb, Phillip "Dr. Phil Off Sophy" Vela, IOU Campus Reporter, IOU Campus Security, Ghost In The Machine, Royce Day, Student Yossarian, Chairthing Tse-T'non-Chai, Ghost In The Machine, Freshthing TSRminator, Mason Kramer, TempDean Lady Tamiko Danica Drake, Professor bonsai, Liberator, Freshthing Paranoia, Student Wolverine, Dr. ditto, The Cure, Christian Death, Razor, the highlander, KC, F.B. "Ches" Vecchio, Kirk Anderson, Nick Kinnas, Dean Dr. What, ken "thingfish" primer (and Battlesmurf), Professor Howard the Dolphin, Chairthing Astral Advisor, Professor Ancient Gnome, Curator John M. Ford, Edward Goldstein, Secretary Lilith, Dean Mephisto, Steve Jackson, Thanatos, Bob Schroeck, Count Zero, Chairthing Red Fox, Baron Helstar, Chief of Security \Hacmania/, Steve Brinich, Psychotic Budgie, Jeff K, Professor CWM, General Counsel Trag, Gradthing Traveller in Black, Terry McCombs, Lone "Dr. Whateless" Wolf, Mandrake, Highland Thing, Alan "Alanator" Goldstein, Arnold, Thugbuster, Hunter, Chrome Sync, Rick Gerdes, Invading Alien Fareless Liter, Digital Brujo, and everyone from the branch campus on ARRAKIS BBS.

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ISBN 1-55634-206-3

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid). Our online magazine includes new rules and articles for *GURPS*. It also covers the hobby's top games – *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, and many more – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Or check out our Web site (below).

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request. Or download them from the Web – see below.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for an online catalog, errata, updates, and hundreds of pages of information. We also have conferences on CompuServe and AOL. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. Much of the online discussion of *GURPS* happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to majordomo@io.com with “subscribe GURPSnet-L” in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to <http://gurpsnet.sjgames.com/>.

The *GURPS IOU* web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/iou.

PAGE REFERENCES

Rules and statistics for this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition, Revised*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set, Third Edition, Revised*.

Page references that begin with an M refer to *GURPS Magic, Second Edition*. Other references are G for *GURPS Grimoire*, TT for *GURPS Time Travel*, P for *GURPS Psionics*, UT for *GURPS Ultra-Tech* and SU for *GURPS Supers*.

No, this isn't a *GURPS* supplement about moneylenders . . . exactly. “IOU” stands for “Illuminati University.” If you happened to be wondering what the “O” is for – you're not cleared for that information. IOU is the ultimate in cross-genre campaign worlds – one that combines the worst aspects of the modern-day world, weird science, bizarre happenings, time-, space- and dimension-travel, and the imaginative world-view of those newspapers found only in the supermarket checkout lines, and puts them all in a blender set on “puree.”

IOU is the campaign setting that will let you use *everything* in the *GURPS* system. Of course, you can run an *IOU* campaign using nothing more than the *Basic Set*, but no one at Steve Jackson Games is going to complain if you want to use every *GURPS* supplement you own, and go looking for more. We do recommend you have *GURPS Magic* and *GURPS Time Travel* is required if you plan to do anything with actual time travel at IOU. *GURPS Grimoire* will also be very useful, especially its coverage of high-tech magic. *GURPS Supers*, *GURPS Psionics*, and *GURPS Fantasy Folk* may also be helpful if the GM allows the more exotic abilities from these books.

ORIGINS

Illuminati University started life as we know it as a message area on Steve Jackson Games' Illuminati BBS, and will – probably – end life as we know it in its incarnation as this worldbook. (No, we're *not* going to explain what we mean by that – it's left as an exercise for the student . . .) The IOU board evolved (or degenerated, depending on how you look at things) into a freewheeling hybrid between a shared-world anthology and a roleplaying game. Meanwhile, one of the authors had been running a series of *GURPS* games at gaming conventions, partly inspired by R. Talsorian Games' *Teenagers From Outer Space*, but with university students for characters. One day, the BBS board and the convention series suffered a violent collision, and this worldbook somehow resulted.

Among other dubious distinctions, Illuminati University was the first university to be seized by the Secret Service (in the now-infamous Steve Jackson Games BBS raid).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Elizabeth McCoy, formerly of Austin, Texas and currently living in the Frozen Wastelands of southeastern New Hampshire, has numerous qualifications for being one of the authors – including five cats, a twisted sense of humor, experience at three colleges of various sizes and a degree in English which would make a dandy dartboard if it weren't rectangular. Of all the “traditional” literature which she has been forced to read in her studies, she recommends “A Modest Proposal” by Jonathan Swift, but hastens to point out that *Illuminati University* is much sillier.

Walter Milliken lives in the temperate, rational suburbia of southeastern New Hampshire, and has a well-paying *real* job as a computer programmer and systems architect. So it isn't quite clear how he got into the business of writing warped nonsense like *GURPS IOU*. Must be brain-damage – a view justified by the fact that he previously wrote the offbeat adventure “Sahudese Fire Drill” in *GURPS Fantasy Adventures*.

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS IOU?

The first obvious answer is that it's everywhere, with branch campuses that are interconnected by arcane means. (IOU is an interdimensional nexus . . .) The second obvious answer is that it's wherever the GM wants it to be.

The GM is encouraged to set it in place of a local university, if one is handy, or a famous one if it's not. This worldbook generally assumes that the campus is near a small-to medium-sized town, and has at least 8,000 students.

As a reference, mundane universities have about 5,000 to 80,000+ students, and range from being the sole reason for a town (such as College Station, Texas) to sitting in the middle of a thriving city (such as those in Boston, Massachusetts).

CAMPUS RULES

In a nutshell, these are the main rules that will be enforced by major deans and administrators, and not just Campus Security. In more complex terminology, most of these can be found in the student handbook, but this is the simple version that is passed down from student to student (and professor to professor).

- 1: The ArchDean always gets 10%.
- 2: There aren't *any* exceptions to Rule #1. No freebies!
- 3: Don't mess with cats.
- 4: Thou shalt never lower the Arch-Dean's stock values.
- 5: First-semester freshthings are completely off-limits.
- 6: No black holes on campus. Except small ones on pizza.
- 7: No antimatter on campus, either. Even on pizza.
- 8: Destruction of the Earth, the Sun or other Solar System objects requires the written permission of the ArchDean.
- 9: No faculty blood-feuds without a current permit!

IOU is proud to be the university that pioneered the concept of "drive-through" classes – just the thing for today's busy citizen with little time to spare for education.

IOU OVERVIEW

THE UNIVERSITY

Most universities strive to bring together a wide range of people from different cultures, worldviews and branches of knowledge, to create a vibrant intellectual community. Illuminati University takes this concept a step farther out: it is an intellectual crossroads in time, dimensions – and weirdness. The entire campus is a Weirdness Magnet; if something strange happens on Earth, it probably happens at IOU. At least once a semester . . .

IOU is the odd corner of the world where all the strange, non-mainstream people collect to find their own kind: the witches, the mad scientists, the vampires and werewolves, the psis, the rock stars . . . even the chiropractors. Similarly, odd artifacts and books find homes in the campus Museum, the Library and forgotten basements where old research projects are left to molder away until some unfortunate grad student turns them up on a scrounging expedition. IOU is the place where New Age became Old Hat – in 1892.

The University is the epitome of the academic counterculture, a bastion of academic ivory-tower isolation from the crass, material world. Yet the name implies that the whole campus is somehow associated with the ultimate masters of that same world . . . the Illuminati. Is IOU a dumping ground for the world's misfits, or a training ground for its future rulers? Anyone studying the campus carefully will probably decide that both theories are accurate.

Superficially, IOU looks like any university campus – clusters of buildings set in expanses of lawn and carefully-tended shrubbery, with students wandering along the many pedestrian walks, lounging on benches studying and playing Frisbee behind the dorms. Those people not blinded by a mundane worldview, though, will notice more: some of the architecture is decidedly odd – how many universities hold classes in a giant treehouse? Or have bomb craters where one of the science buildings used to be? Or have gargoyles that actually move to watch passers-by? And many of the students and faculty are . . . *different*.

HISTORY (ORAL TRADITION VERSION)

According to campus legends, the University is as old as the universe . . . and maybe even *older*, which would make the universe just another failed

WUSE experiment. However, this theory is hotly contested by students from the College of Metaphysics, who point out that "Universes, Creation of" is *clearly* under the jurisdiction of the Department of Applied Theology (and cite J. Halvah's thesis project, "Universe Creation in 144 Hours or Less" as evidence).

Since it is so old, the University had no name until a few more educational institutions were created and orga-



WELCOME!

It loomed taller than all the buildings on campus, save perhaps the clock tower, and looked capable of withstanding even WUSE's biggest toys. Students and faculty were arrayed around the walls, mostly peering over them with trepidation or blatantly cowering (with some screaming; the Hysteria department was holding finals early), while the gardeners shook their heads morosely as they covered the shrubs to keep the slime off.

The ArchDean herself was waiting at the gate with a bullhorn, tapping one booted toe in mild impatience and irritation. She raised the bullhorn and called out, "HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! OR ELSE."

Amazingly, the creature halted for a moment, waving tendrils in the air and hooting as if it had swallowed several off-key calliopes.

"OR ELSE I'LL FLUNK YOU OUT, THAT'S WHAT. I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE AN ILLUMNUS."

PERSONALITIES

The NPCs listed here are optional, though *someone* will fill these positions. Feel free to alter or totally replace anyone – this is the Illuminati University, after all, and who's to say that the old Dean didn't get . . . replaced.

Not all the major campus personalities are detailed here, just enough to give the general flavor. Note that student characters will *hear* about these people, especially when being threatened with them as authority figures, or in campus gossip. But *meeting* them is rare – the GM may wish to have student characters make a Fright Check at -2 on meeting a dean (at -5 for the ArchDean), with a -5 modifier if the student has a guilty conscience, and an additional -5 modifier if the student has been summoned to the NPC's office or workplace.

At most, a student might interact with one of these people once a semester. *Faculty*, on the other hand, will see them much more often, usually carrying financial reports, wearing ominous expressions and asking pointed questions about profitability or extraordinary expenses.

Three variations are given for each character, based on the campaign style the GM is using: Silly, Weird or Darkly Illuminated (see pp. 95-97).

THE ARCHDEAN

Unlike the other NPCs in this section, the ArchDean's statistics and skill levels are not listed. In most student-based campaigns, she won't appear as anything but a (somewhat capricious) elemental force that is only seen from a distance. Maybe a student will see her once a year – and it will be a decidedly nerve-racking experience.

The leader of the University should be a larger-than-life figure of awe and mystery, often referred to (with a furtive glance over one shoulder) and feared, but rarely seen. Through magic, tech or Methods Students Were Not Meant To Know, she is always well-informed as to the goings-on outside her office in the Clock Tower, which she rarely leaves. Students should always dread talking to the ArchDean, for while she may let them off relatively easy on one thing, the other shoe could drop at any time.

The advantages that she is known to have will vary somewhat from version to version. All are Very Beautiful, have Voice and unreasonable levels of Charisma, Alertness and Wealth. Being the ArchDean, she has her immediate underlings (e.g., all the deans in the various schools) as an Ally Group – probably an unwilling one. GMs should assume that the ArchDean has Magery 3 or better (she has been observed to cast minor spells) and some unknown set of psionic abilities. Her

It howled like a squadron of maddened jet fighters and surged forward a few yards. The ArchDean was unimpressed.

"AND I SUPPOSE YOU THINK I WON'T PUBLISH THOSE PICTURES?" she asked sweetly. The forgotten evil froze and began edging backwards, furtively putting uprooted trees back in their holes and cooing like a psychotic dove. The ArchDean continued, "NOT TO MENTION THE ONES AT THE ILLUMNI CENTER PARTY LAST YEAR."

The crawling horror turned, wailing into the night, and fled through the dimensional rift that opened in front of it.

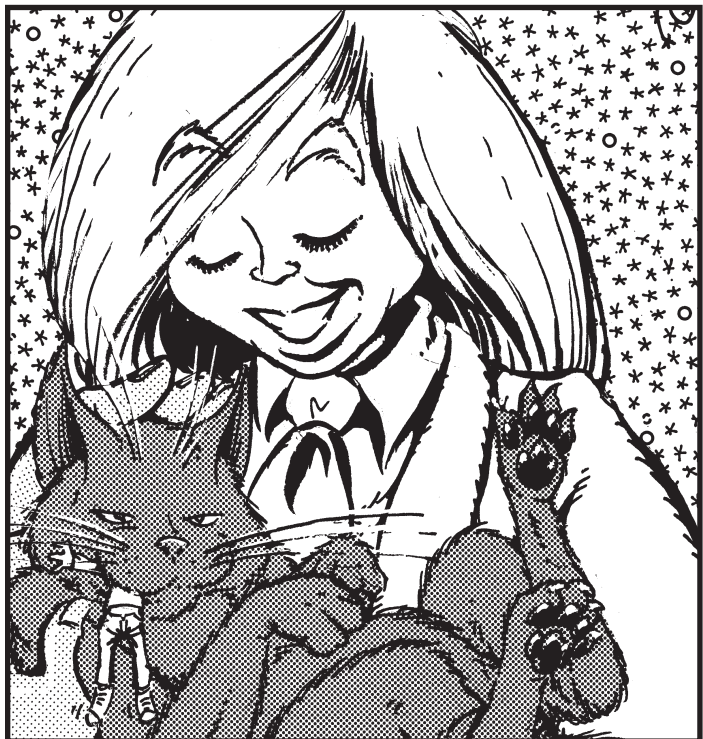
"Good grief," the ArchDean muttered, lowering the bullhorn. "They graduate, take over one little universe, and start thinking they can get out of paying their Library fines."

personal protections are something *beyond* the third level of The Treatment. If the GM feels a need to justify something improbable favoring the ArchDean, well, she has Luck, and lots of it.

Disadvantages are only hinted at. She declares first semester freshthings to be Off Limits, and enforces this. She also keeps lots of cats, and doesn't tolerate attempts to torment them. She sometimes *acts* absent-minded, which probably doesn't mean anything, and anyone who's in charge of *this* University may very well be a Weirdness Magnet.

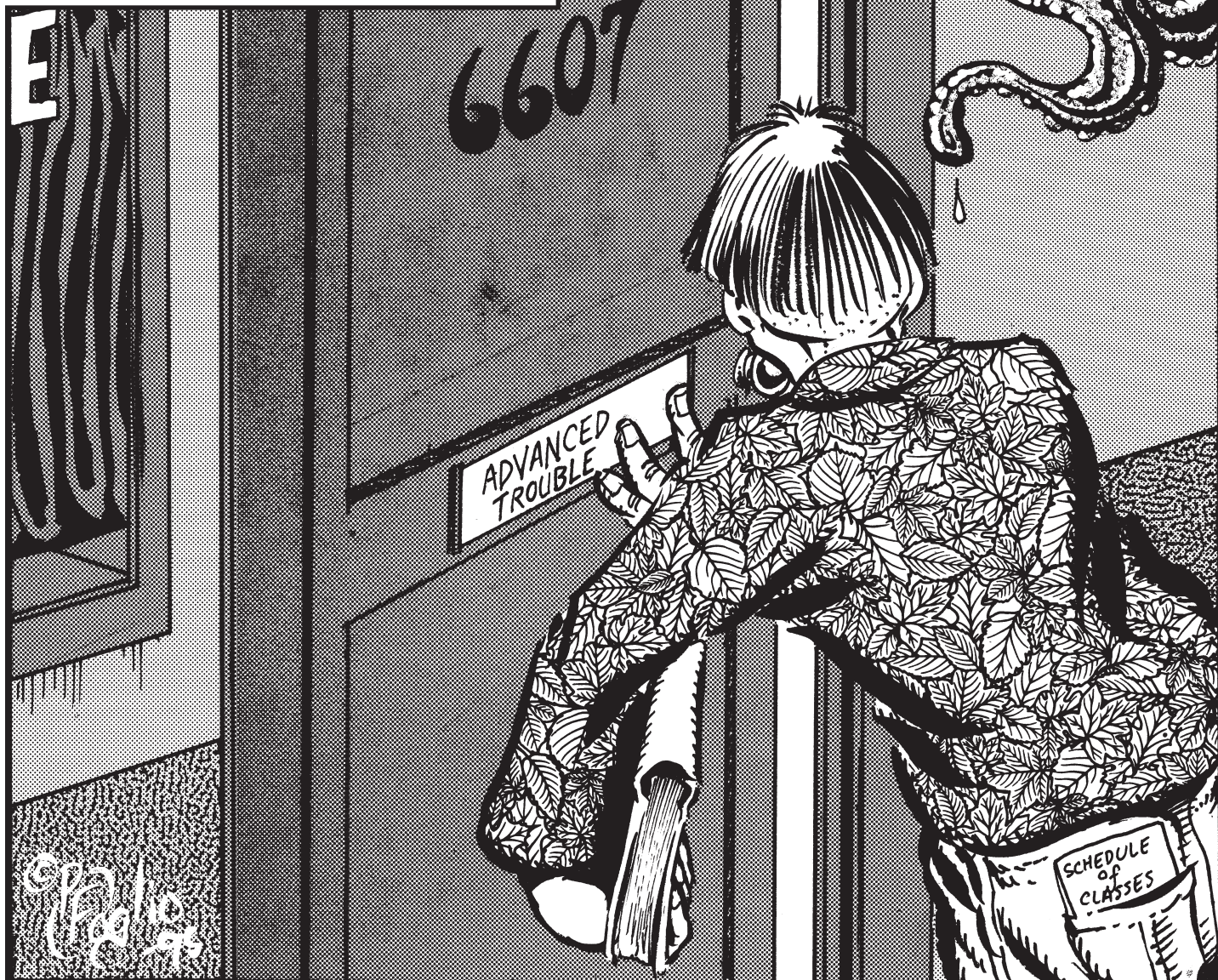
The ArchDean has a lot of obvious quirks, including her liking for cats, her style of dress and the fact that she doesn't ever tell *anyone* her name. She's simply "the ArchDean," "Her ArchDeanshipness," "Ma'am," or whatever sincerely respectful honorific the person she's talking to is inclined to use. ("ArchSchnookums" is *not* a good choice, for instance.) The weird thing about this is that *no one* seems to notice she doesn't have a name!

Her skill levels are generally stratospheric, and she's got a lot of skills. Administration, Merchant, Leadership and Sex Appeal are obvious ones.



THE IOU CAMPAIGN

John Smith checked the room number against his class-schedule, cracked the door open to peek through and – when the resulting scenery looked reasonable – walked in. A young woman was in the room already. WUSE major. John could tell – it was something about the way she had a CIA gull’s internal components strewn over her desk and the two adjacent ones.



The rest of the class trailed in over the next few minutes. John waved to Lorie and Marcus – he'd had a class with the two alternate-dimensioners last semester, and stranded sentients should stick together. A blond wolf trotted in, carrying a backpack, and turned into an embarrassed-looking member of the Team. A redhead in black sat down next to John, and began lecturing her black cat about heckling. The cat muttered under its breath and blew a raspberry.

Finally Professor Barmo arrived. John pegged him for a COUP teacher “on loan” to the English Department, since Barmo had a Bullet-Proof Briefcase (on sale at the campus bookstore). Barmo pulled his notes out of the briefcase and set them on the lectern. “Greetings, class. I’m Professor Barmo, and this is Combat Journalism 323, which will fulfill one non-major English requirement. Is everyone in the right classroom?” The Team wolf sounded out the letters on his class schedule, and Lorie chucked a shuriken at the teacher; despite her excellent aim, it clattered against the wall. John groaned to himself – even though he was teaching a measly English class, Barmo had gotten The Treatment, which meant John wouldn’t have a chance of reading his mind and figuring out what the teacher **really** wanted to see papers about.

****CLICK****

John Smith checked the room number against his class schedule and walked in. A young woman was already inside, standing on a chair at the back of the room to examine the security camera at closer range. Something about the way she held her power screwdriver said “WUSE major” to John.

The rest of the class trailed in over the next few minutes. John waved to Lorie and Marcus – he'd had a class with them last semester, and had a notion that wherever they were from, it was about as far away (and far out) as his homeworld. Maybe it was Lorie's ears . . . An unshaven Team member came in, wearing dog-tags around his neck, followed by a redhead in black who was talking quietly to the (oblivious) black cat riding on her shoulders.

Finally Professor Barmo arrived: a nondescript fellow with an executive's briefcase. “Good morning, class. I’m Mr. Barmo, and this is Competitive Journalism 323, for non-majors. Is everyone in the right room?” The Team member checked his class schedule a few times, and John tried to slip into Barmo's mind, to see what kind of papers he really wanted. John “bounced” painfully. A mindshield? On an **English** teacher? Drat. And he could have sworn the teacher **wasn't** wearing one, too.

****CLICK****

John Smith checked the room number against his class schedule and walked in. A young woman was already there, and she looked up warily from behind the desk's lectern at John's entrance. He carefully avoided looking at her and took a seat near the door – WUSE or COUP, he wasn't sure, and he didn't want to evaluate any explosions or bugs first-hand.

The rest of the class trailed in over the next few minutes. John nodded to Lorie and Marcus – they'd had a class together last semester, and there was a chance they'd remember him. An unshaven Team member came in, wearing dog-tags around his neck, followed by a redhead in black. As she passed John, he noticed a black cat peeking out of her backpack.

Finally Professor Barmo arrived: a carefully bland man in a dark suit, carrying a slim briefcase. “Hello. I am your teacher for Advanced Journalism 323. Are you all in the correct class?” The Team member surreptitiously checked his class schedule, and John tried to slip into the professor's mind, to see what kinds of papers he **really** wanted . . .

He woke up groggily, with Marcus and Lorie leaning over him. The chubby pre-med student looked relieved and called, “He's all right, sir,” while Lorie helped John to his feet.

IOU IN OTHER GENRES

By its very nature as a dimensional nexus, Illuminati University can show up in any other universe the GM wishes. The University will always have a Tech Level at least 3-4 higher than the rest of the world, and perhaps more if introduced into a **GURPS Ice Age** campaign. Here are some suggested treatments for other worlds/genres.

Yrth (GURPS Fantasy) – Most of the time IOU collectively ignores Yrth, since there's not much that the University wants from there. The exception is Sauhudese gardeners, who may very well travel freely to and from Sahud. Occasionally Yrth is assaulted by a group of students on vacation – say, the WUSE Class of '98. Critical failures of Teleport spells in Yrth sometimes strand the transported individuals on the IOU campus. A Weird University will have less traffic with Yrth, mostly just accidents while reading Books Man Was Not Meant To Read Aloud, but former Yrthling students are quite possible. A Darkly Illuminated campus may have ties with Necromantic mages who receive spell components in return for supplying IOU with research subjects for mind-control experiments. Sometimes the spell components are former research subjects; the University is big on recycling.

A Yrth-based IOU would be difficult to explain – Yrth doesn't approve of tech *at all* – but a magic-focused University is possible. The Unseen University in Terry Pratchett's Discworld series is mandatory reading for this option.

Other fantasy worlds could easily have a Metaphysics-dominated IOU.

Supers – The University is essentially unchanged, except for the larger number of metahumans on campus. Add a School of Superhumanities (SoS) to handle things related to superpowers: super-genetics, super-history, etc. (They *will* be in conflict with other schools.) In all versions of the University, the amount of damage that rampaging supers might cause should be minimized as much as plausible, and a little beyond that. IOU is used to strange powers that can topple buildings in a single hiccup, and builds accordingly. A Silly campus will have Mundanes who don't believe in superpowers, even when the rest of the world does! A Darkly Illuminated IOU will probably be experimenting with the origins of super-abilities; while Illuminati University may be the best place for a young super to train and discover the limits of his powers, the University is also discovering *everything* about him, and may have some suggestions on how a metahuman Illuminus might be helpful . . .

Continued on next page . . .

IOU IN OTHER GENRES (CONTINUED)

Cyberpunk – Add chrome, leather and flash to the campus, but just a bit *less* than might be expected; when the shocking becomes commonplace, the University expands its strangeness in other directions. The University will probably be the Darkly Illuminated version, though a Weird IOU is possible. (Silly cyberpunk is almost a contradiction in terms. But if you can make it work . . .)

From the outside world, IOU has few links into the Net – very few deckers will even know “iou.edu.com” exists. Or *can* exist . . . From University computers there are links *everywhere*, and the only problem is getting proper passwords. Deckers cannot break into THE computer at IOU at all, except with the help of a student or faculty. After dodging all kinds of ICE, slipping past countless Watchdogs and using every skill at his disposal, a decker might eventually come across a message that reads: “Congratulations, you have placed out of THE computer Science 101, and earned a free semester at Illuminati University. Do you accept?”

In any version, IOU owns several Corporations outright. The Darkly Illuminated University will be a source of new designer drugs, and prying Netrunners may find that THE computer is an Artificial Intelligence with Electronic Deathtouch instead of Black Ice.

Space – The way Illuminati University fits into a Space campaign will depend heavily on what the GM has previously set up. The University could have a relatively small campus on one world, branch campuses on several worlds (why is there a Main Building in each branch campus with the ArchDean in residence?) or IOU could have an entire world to itself. If a Silly University has set up shop on a hostile planet or asteroid, there will be no obvious reasons for the Earth-like conditions on campus. As always, Illuminati University will have a slightly higher tech level than the rest of the universe, and will often have a distressing lack of respect for Precursor artifacts.

Lensman – Not until Mentor pays his overdue library fines.

*The teacher nodded. “Good. We shall have a roll-call now, and see if we have everyone.” John had the unpleasant feeling Barmo was looking at him, and wondered if he’d made a mistake, assuming a simple English teacher wouldn’t be one of **Them** . . .*

Illuminati University can be used as a setting for an entire campaign, with the characters as students, staff, faculty or “Other,” or as a background for one-shots. If the characters are all students, putting them in the same class makes a natural starting place for a PC group to form, and there are always required courses to pull them together again – not to mention paperwork bumbles, scheduling mishaps and computer errors; it’s perfectly reasonable for the party-hearty Team member to end up in a Postnuclear Physics class with the ivory-tower genius. Dormitories are another good place for characters to meet. At IOU, the generic “the adventurers all meet in the tavern” scene is replaced by the group of lost freshthings meeting in the dorm lounge . . .

Depending on the players’ interests, the GM may want to start the campaign with unsuspecting 100-point freshthings as they arrive at IOU for the first time (offering numerous opportunities for traumatic experiences, such as their first bite of cafeteria food), instead of seasoned second-semester freshthings (or upperclassthings) who already know the ropes.

Staff are likely to be assigned to work in the same building or area, and faculty will encounter each other at meetings, either as rivals from different schools, or as allies (sometimes reluctant ones) striving to ensure that their colleges don’t get the budget cuts this semester.

If IOU is placed into an existing campaign, it is recommended that the GM figure out some reason why the PCs will have access to Student Life Insurance. Just being toted along and processed by the cleanup crews is perfectly reasonable, though there will be a bit of a hassle when the Health Center discovers that these people weren’t students. Of course, the GM doesn’t have to mention that this place is IOU, or that the PCs aren’t really going to be dead permanently (just talk fast, before anybody rips up a character sheet).

In an existing campaign, IOU can be a strange locale that the PCs discover in the course of an adventure, deal with, and leave as quickly as they can manage – or a bit of “flavor” that they might encounter and wonder about – or a source of the subtle manipulations that they’ve been tracing for years. Or all three . . .

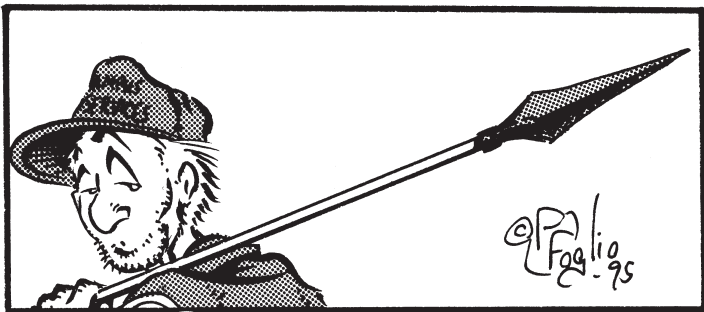
CAMPAIGN STYLE

IOU campaigns lend themselves to considerable variations in style. These range from the outright silly, brain-dead campaign, through mystery, weirdness and horror, to the darkly-illuminated tone of *GURPS Illuminati*.

While an **IOU** campaign will probably stay with one particular style, it is possible to change if the GM desires. It is not hard to incrementally turn a darkly-illuminated or weird IOU into a silly one, though characters from hard-bitten, dark campaigns may not mesh well with lunatic science, rampaging rubber

monsters and aliens with silly plots to corner the ice cream market on Mercury; they may quickly long for the bad old days of demonic conspiracies and elaborate quintuple-crosses. Silliness will rapidly run riot, given half a chance.

Converting a silly campaign to a darker style can be much harder. The easiest way is to use that old chestnut, the “alternate universe” gimmick. A silly IOU has plenty of crazies with unreliable magic or tech – probably half the professors commute to campus from alternate realities (and some of them seem to stay there, even while teaching). Something



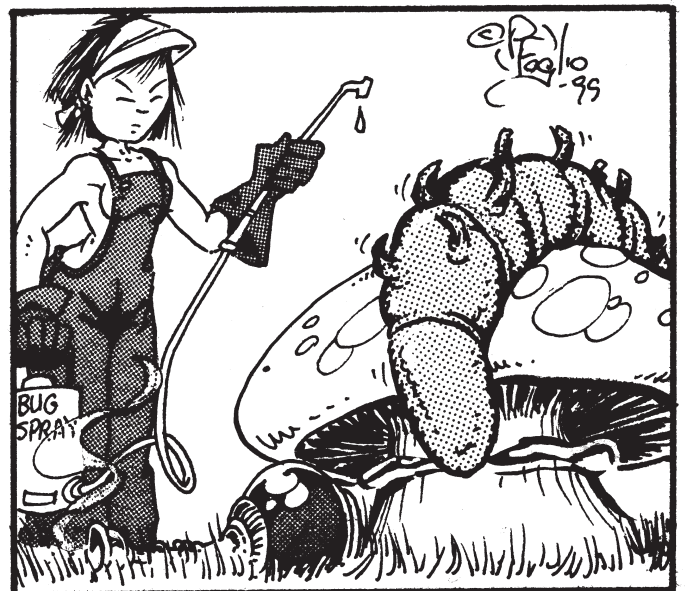
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