

RPGObjects Presents:

Denizens of the Twisted Earth

by Dominic Covey



DENIZENS OF THE TWISTED EARTH

A Darwin's World Sourcebook v1.1

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apocalyptic d20 game available and your help is greatly appreciated.

INTRODUCTION

The Ancients were, as anyone left alive in this world knows, the Gods who once ruled the earth. Theirs was a time of great knowledge and industry, where technology knew no bounds, and where the world was populated with more people than there were grains of sand. It was a world filled with beauty and great things, where disease was almost unknown and sadness completely extinct.

But something happened. No one really knows what – not anymore, anyway. They call it the "Fall", because that's what it was. Somehow, somewhere, the Gods forgot themselves and fell. Maybe they soared so high that, like a towering spire, they grew too lofty and collapsed under their own might. Perhaps they took for granted all that beauty and became jaded to perfection, and sought only to undo what they had done. Who knows? But it happened. In one fell swoop, all the nations of the world, all it's people, became upset with one another and without so much as thinking brought a terrible end to what had once been.

And so it came to pass. Their weapons were great, their destruction complete. They unleashed on the world a plague of fiery bombs, mighty missiles, and armies of robots. Diseases, their effects forgotten for generations, were brought out from hiding and released on the masses. Men, women, and children died by the millions. Chemicals, poisonous not only to man but the very earth and air, came to taint even the fabric of the planet. And then, the great clouds of red fire came to burn away what was left, erasing every last vestige of the Ancients' presence on the world. Entire cities were blasted into oblivion; nation-states smudged like smoky vapor in the burning wind, or buried under the dust that had once been the bodies of so many billions of humankind.

But life did not die there. Somehow...people survived. Like rats hiding under a smoldering furnace, life escaped ultimate destruction. No one can know who they were, or what horrors they faced in their time – it was far too long ago for anyone to truly know. But they lived, they persisted, and they gave birth to the men of what

is now known as the Twisted Earth, the unraveling ruined world that is DARWIN'S WORLD.

This book, *Denizens Of The Twisted Earth*, puts forward information on these survivors, and the pseudo-societies they have come to resurrect. *Denizens Of The Twisted Earth* is an important addition to the basic rules that embellishes upon the basic framework of the Twisted Earth and it's rumored inhabitants. It is also a major sourcebook for the wind-swept and desolate setting of DARWIN'S WORLD, a lost planet of dead dreams and dwindling life.

Within these pages you will find a much more in-depth look at the deserts, ruined cities, and wilderness of the world; as well as the numerous struggling communities, factions, and post-apocalyptic cultures that vie violently for it's control.

Also within these pages are a number of prestige classes meant to spark interest and creativity in the minds of players and referees alike.

ADVENTURE LOCATIONS

The wastes of DARWIN'S WORLD are home to all manner of creatures and ruined remnants of the Ancients. When designing adventures and scenarios for your players, feel free to incorporate things from movies, books, and even real life. There really is a kind of "beauty" to decay - rusted old oil refineries, the hollow remains of a crashed jet liner, etc. The people of the ruined wasteland make use of mankind's junk and wrecks the way birds make nests from human garbage. Old junkyards are storehouses of useful things, old military depots are storehouses of Ancient treasures, etc. Here are a few ideas to help flesh out the flavor of locations in DARWIN'S WORLD.

Dead Zones: Large expanses of the world were left completely and entirely desolate after the fall of civilization. With climactic change came the encroaching deserts, which engulfed entire regions and even turned some smaller bodies of water into great dune "seas". Such areas are often avoided - they hold nothing for hundreds of miles, just barren, naked sands. Often they are infested with weird mutated life forms (giant sand worms, for instance), and thus they are the perfect place to exile the unwanted

members of a society. As a result, many skeletons are found among the sands ... a few who manage to survive often form bandit groups that raid the trade routes around the outskirts of the 'zone. Despite the slim prospects for life in these desolate regions, the lucky traveler might stumble upon the ruins of some ancient structure - a generations-old tanker, beached in the middle of the sandy desert, still managing to power it's own cargo hold filled with foodstuffs, fuel, and supplies. Perhaps the wanderer is less lucky, finding only an ancient oil refinery, it's parched rusted towers jutting from the sands like gnarled bony fingers struggling for life in this forgotten wasteland...

Fallout Shelters: Rumored "domes" - underground or otherwise completely-enclosed shelters built to withstand a direct nuclear attack, as well as support a large community for decades or more - erected in the American countryside still exist, in one form or another, so many years after the cataclysm they were designed to protect against. Some opened long ago, the occupants eager to see the world again - never to return. Some are now home to weird monsters, having moved in for refuge (or perhaps they are the degenerate descendants of those who once lived there?), while others are still bottled up, their occupants afraid to come out. They are cautious, almost xenophobic communities that hold vast reserves of useful tools, food, water, and knowledge of the Ancients.

Machine Worlds: Many "communities" exist in DARWIN'S WORLD, but those of this type are among the most mysterious. Certain "communities" of robots still exist in the ruin, such as ancient factories, corporate buildings, military bases and depots, etc. Robots that have survived all the decades still roam the halls and corridors, performing the functions they were originally programmed for, never having been given the order to quit. Now that mankind is no longer "mankind", they no longer recognize the orders of mutantkind - and still perform their duties, eradicating "intruders" into their territories. These locations are like taboo regions to wasteland mutants, totally avoided because of the "ruthless and mysterious" inhabitants within. Often entire valleys (old weapon test sites, for example) are bypassed for fear of intruding. More often than not, however, these locations conceal a bounty of pre-holocaust technology and artifacts, and sometimes a group of raiders or

adventurers will dare the legendary guardians to get at what they hide within. Few, if any, return.

Necropoli: The great cities of old, the "necropoli" ("cities of the dead"), are great metal and stone ruins located in the blistered deserts and thick lustrous jungles of the American continent. Usually shunned because of the "glow" surrounding them (the tell-tale sign of lingering radiation from the wars), and legends telling of great diseases infesting them (from bio-engineered plagues unleashed during the final fighting of the apocalypse), they are, regardless, a haven of life. Mutated beings thrive in the tall burnt-out skyscrapers, in the clogged and decrepit sewers, and in the barren streets. Ghouls seem to congregate here more often than other beings, but colonies of "wild men" (insane savage humanoids) are also known to thrive in some as well. In jungle-covered cities of the old South, it is said, snake-men dwell in the old monuments and buildings of the Ancients, possessing a kingdom of great evil and tyranny.

MAJOR GROUPS

The setting of DARWIN'S WORLD is rich with scattered communities and enclaves of civilization. Certainly there exists virtually scores of villages, towns, and even "cities" among the sands, but these are generally isolated or unique, their presence felt only in their specific locality.

Elsewhere, however, exist what can only be described as major factions, movements, and philosophical fraternities. Organized along numerous lines (monastic traditions, neo-military structure, etc), these few are the major powerhouses that promise to one day bring back civilization in their own form – or threaten to bring about another Fall through their own wars of ignorance and domination.

Benders (Ressurectors, Membership 800): The community of Bend City is said to be home to a stable populace of peaceful yet wary folk on the edge of known country. The Big Bend is a rugged valley where once a great river ran wild and free, but which has turned into an impassable gulch that separates the northern, flat lands with the mountains of the south – mountains which, according to local legend, run to the edge of the world.

The Benders maintain this distant outpost because of what Bend City sits right on top of –

oil. Benders claim to be the descendants of the personnel that originally operated it as an important installation of the Ancients. Whatever the truth of their origins, the oil supply is a steady one, steady to such an extent that the water merchants of the Clean Clan have been navigating a particularly-dangerous route south from Trade City to Bend for the past decade or so. In return for their water shipments, the Clean are warily rewarded with bountiful oil that is perhaps the single-greatest source of oil outside of that produced by the Cartel.

This abundant oil does not come without a price. The mountainous desert region around Bend City is legendary for it's dangers – extreme heat and lack of drinkable water, rare but ferocious sand-burrowing worms, and especially *road gangs*. Raiders, whose vehicles have oftentimes been stripped of their electric power to run off combustible fuels, have always sought to crack Bend City open and loot it's wells for the millions of gallons it allegedly hordes.

To protect itself, Benders have turned Bend City into a great fortress, surrounded by metal and wooden walls, great moats, and towering lookouts to spy the dusty approach of such gangs. Not even the Clean and their caravans are permitted into Bend City. The people of Bend City have never shown any inclination to joining any regrowth community, and have even denied the protection of the Cartel. According to the Clean, their dealings are always done at a distance, with intermediary drop-offs and pick-ups, as if they feared everyone else in the world had the plague. As such, accounts of the actual people have always been vague at best.

Brethren (Resentfuls; Membership unknown): The "Brethren" are a rather disturbing army of men, women, and children dwelling in the radiated and diseased ruins of the San Francisco and other cities in the Sierra Gehenna region. Many stories surround the Brethren and it's activities, and traders who have been to their decrepit cities often speak of the danger they pose to outsiders. The Brethren believe that the Ancients were demons, and through their own malevolence they destroyed the world, reducing mankind to what it is now – twisted and hideous. Themselves mutants of a sort (years of troglodilian existence beneath the city – a lifestyle forced upon them by more powerful mutant groups now vanished from the face of San Francisco – has left them albino and photosensitive), they detest everything the

Ancients ever made: guns, television, power, and even medicine. It is their sole goal to destroy everything of technology that was left by the Ancients, slaughter all pure-strain humans and survivors, and bring to the world a new era of "innocence" (or ignorance).

Though they have large numbers, their religious views prohibit the Brethren from employing firearms and other weapons, and as such they are often their own greatest enemy, limiting their own power and abilities. However, large packs of screaming Brethren, clad in their long black robes and only ever emerging after twilight, are more than enough to overwhelm and butcher lone travelers or lightly-armed convoys nearing their cities.

Brotherhood Of Radiation (Ritual Preservationist, Membership 11,000): A well-known movement sprawling over the deserts in recent years is the Brotherhood of Radiation – a community of monastic mutants who follow a dream to bring peace, understanding, and worship of the "holy power" (radiation) abandoned during the Fall. Creating their own bizarre ritual society, their message – though strange – has become one of the most attractive to the myriad mutant races of the world that seek to learn of their "secrets". Many simply wish to believe that their mutations are not a curse, but actually a blessing.

The Brothers are some of the few surviving communities to retain any knowledge of pre-holocaust technology, and they guard this wisdom jealously. Sadly, this often leads to resentment and envy by other, less privileged groups, which spawns numerous rumors about the monks' true motivations and sanity. It is known that the cult constantly radiates new members through exposure to radiated sites, spawning legions of hairless glowing "freaks" that wander out to do all sorts of quasi-religious machinations. Few understand the goals of this organization, but most are sure they are not benevolent.

All over the wasteland, tales of the Brotherhood's "Holy City of Lights" are almost legendary. This once-spectacular citadel of towering skyscrapers and broad leafy boulevards, kept alive with water pumped from other lands, is now a dusty ash-bin, kept brilliantly illuminated by lights from the High Temple. It is a beacon to all who seek enlightenment in the Brotherhood's beliefs.

Outside of the Holy City, the Brotherhood is known to have numerous cells and branches, especially in places of atomic interest (power plants, missile silos, cratered ruins, waste dumps, etc).

The Brotherhood Of Radiation uses the "Holy Cloud" (a mushroom cloud) as it's universal symbol, easily recognized everywhere in the world.

Cartel (Resurrectors, Membership 9,000): One of the best-known trade organizations in the American Southwest, the so-called "Cartel" represents the encroaching influence of an alliance of peoples from all across the wasteland. The Cartel originally started as a group of heavily-armed trade caravans braving the many deserts of the continent, but soon came to embody a number of oil and salt merchant interests with over half a dozen major trade routes extending as far west as Bernardino (after being pushed out of the ruins of Old Los Angeles) and as far east as the Grass Plains. The Cartel, while admittedly motivated solely by capitalist concerns, also seeks to spread civilization and open new markets throughout the post-apocalyptic wasteland. Though not immediately concerned with a resurrection of the Ancient way of life, they are by far the best hope for humanity's future. Their policy is always to tread softly but to carry a big stick, for there are many who would readily prey upon the prosperity and success of the Cartel throughout the wasteland.

The Cartel has grown considerably in the past few decades. It is well known that their capital is the city of "Kingman Town" (said to be a virtual junkyard of oil derricks and rusted-over train cars), but they have spread out from this distant location to maintain outposts in the settlements of Styx, Little Vegas, Midway, the Arid City, and as far west as Bernardino – on the outskirts of the haunted, burned-out ruins of the Necropolis.

Within this band of control the Cartel is a hard and ruthless caretaker of its territory, though this inflexibility towards raiders and vagrants has made these among the safest regions to travel through in the world. The Cartel's symbol is a red field (symbolizing the deserts from which they originated) and a design of lines spreading out from the middle. This symbol is meant to represent the many roads on which the Cartel trades.

Children Of The Metal Gods (Ritual Preservationists, Membership 3,000): The hated "Children of The Metal Gods" are a cult of

technology worshippers who follow the often odd and archaic commands of their masters - robots and androids whom they have discovered in old storehouses and military bases, and brought back to life through the following of "revered magic tomes" (repair manuals). These robots often kill one or two of their "children" before realizing how incredibly naive they are - and begin to take advantage of their worship. Such cults are often brutal, working in unison, sacrificing their lives at the whim and command of their metal masters. Often at the heart of these cults are one powerful artificially intelligent robot, the genius and tyrant behind their power.

Clean Water Clans (Resurrectors, Membership 5,000): The Clean Water Clan is one of the most powerful and widely known trade organizations across the face of the Twisted Earth. From the Free City of Styx to as far north as Free Water, they trade the world's most valuable commodity - *drinking water*. The Clean claim to have a heritage stretching back to the time of the Ancients, and hold that their claim to trade rights across America were established even well before the Fall. They are a highly respected organization, with a powerful status everywhere they go due to their valuable commodity as well as their fierce reputation for brutally destroying competitors, raiders, and enemies of the Clan. Led by a group of wise elders, their main concern is with the generation of profit; they are largely uninterested in politics and other factors that weigh many communities down. In addition, a cunning policy of trading water for technology (or outright theft) has left them with the know-how of producing high-tech weapons and equipment. They are truly a force to be reckoned with.

Entropists (Radicals, Membership 1,250): The "Entropists" are a doomsday group (similar to the Doomriders of the Forbidden lands) known to prowl the old highways and high wastelands of the Mountains of Misery region, striking often into Trader Pass and the southern Far Desert in virtual "fleets" of shiny automobiles and motorcycles, with flapping oriental banners depicting gruesome scenes and proclaiming Biblical sayings about the End of Times.

The Entropists are dedicated to a singularly destructive and nihilistic cause - the ending of all life on the planet. Consumed by strange beliefs and rituals, they sack, pillage, and destroy everything in their path, leaving no survivors and

only burning remains. They are feared throughout the south.

Far Traders (Resentfuls, Membership 1,500): The Far Traders are another well-established trade association that once served the Arid City and its Savant masters. Though not particularly fond of the Savant manner of ruler ship, the Far Traders knew a profit was to be had here, and engaged in Corium trade and the dealing of odd merchandise from the wastes to the West.

The Far Traders are an age-old association, best described as "gypsies" of the mutant world. A long time ago they forfeited their claim to a sedentary existence to become a nomadic people, winding their way across the Twisted Earth in miles-long caravans, their carts, wagons, and Conestoga stacked-high with a menagerie of weird goods from all over the deserts. Though ostracized in many communities as thieves and superstitious beggars, the Far Traders nonetheless hold to their own code and are at least known to be honest - once a legitimate trade has been engaged in.

The Far Trader symbol displays the prophetic words "Trade Is Life" - not only a common Trader saying, but also the very essence of their beliefs and way of life. They exist solely on the profit of barter and exchange, a fact dependent on their acceptance by the peoples of the wasteland. Their symbol also displays the traditional Far Trader trade wagon, which has come to be an easily recognizable flag in the wasteland.

Foundationists (Guardian, Membership 1,000): One of the more famous (or infamous) organizations in the wasteland is the so-called "Foundation", a central association of warrior-thinkers that believes in the preservation of lost technologies for the benefit of a future time, some day down the road, when all the people of the world will be ready to accept their Wisdom. Until that time, the Foundationists seek, through diplomacy, scrounging, or outright military force, to locate and secure lost installations, vehicles, gizmos, and Arcanum from the barbarians of the desert.

The Foundationist movement believes that the only way to secure the future of man and mutantkind is to take extreme measures, and not to roll over like so many others and die. Hard military training and a strict education are the destiny of all who join the ranks. They are known to hold a number of bases and old centers

of military significance (what few remain intact) all over the western part of the Twisted Earth. In particular, the Foundation's presence is most widely felt in Old California, in large settlements and trade hubs where they can best keep an eye on the markets for the appearance of lost technologies. Over the Big Rocks, however, their power and influence is shaky at best, though it is rumored the Foundation is seeking to grow...

The Foundation is well known for its efforts to preserve technology, though they are more often than not viewed as bullies, bandits, or worse. Many think their quest of preservation just a ruse, so that they can accumulate the most powerful weapons and armor for some future plan of conquest. Wherever a Foundationist goes, he is treated with quiet respect, sometimes awe, but usually a subtle dislike.

The Foundationists use a very symbolic icon to represent their philosophy and membership. The twin embracing arms of the Future represents their bright vision of a world-to-come. Above this is the Book of Wisdom, its pages open for all to read – but hovering over this is the Foundationist sword, a reminder that such knowledge comes with a price, and that it must forever be protected with vigilance and valor.

Ghouls (Radicals, Membership 20,000): First there was civilization, then war. And in the dust and ashes of mankind's glory, there were survivors. They survived by staying alive, no matter what the cost – to their minds and their humanity. In the ruins of the many cities scattered across the Twisted Earth, there was little left that was uncontaminated or destroyed in the looting that followed the great collapse so many decades ago. But what was left, and has never since been in short supply, were the bodies of men. Men killed by war or disease.

Ghouls are a widespread and horrible race of degenerate humans and mutants that managed to survive in the ruins for so many years, through abandoning all humanity and sinking to the level of dead-eaters and cannibals. Years of such decadent appetites have left them markedly changed – unhealthy, unstable, and utterly insane. The communities of the world despise ghouls above all others, for their ability to sneak through the sewers and shadowy rubble of the ruins is unparalleled. While not strong individually, a mass of ghouls emerging from the darkness is a most terrifying sight. They often drive before them masses of giant mutant rats

that act to screen their advance rather effectively.

The many ghoul enclaves throughout the cities of the Twisted Earth use a variety of symbols to mark their respective territories against intrusion. Typical examples include a series of bloody streaks and any number of clever or terrifying sayings/slogans.

Movement (Resurrectors, Membership 5,000): The so-called "Movement" is a rather unique – and new – group to visit the rasping, wind-swept deserts of the Grassland Empire. Though said to have had humble beginnings, the organization has grown in recent years to include a vast number of mutants and pure-blood humans alike – something that has not been seen on the face of the Twisted Earth before.

The Movement has a legend that all members know and can recite, word-for-word, with a glimmer of promise, hope, and belief in their eyes. A long time ago (so they say), when Pure Ones and Beastmen fought constantly, with anger and hatred against one another, the red skies of the Twisted Earth thundered with the anger of the Gods. It was on a field of battle, where two opposing forces of man and mutant met, when the sky turned white with the trail of a great comet – a comet that fell from the dimly-visible stars above and impacted on the hard earth between the armies as they faced off.

From the shell of this fallen comet came a living God, clad in a suit of gleaming silver armor, his flesh magically unburned from his descent from the stars. His armor bore the symbols of the Ancients, and with him he carried the great weapons of his brother-Gods.

Awed by the appearance of this God, who came to them with words of peace, the armies of men and mutant were forced to sit and listen. And listen well they did, and came to understand the Love and Peace that was once the Ancients' own, and understood then that this God had come to bring back their Blessed Ways.

The Fallen God (as he came to be known) lived with the people for a time; he wandered the land, they say, and brought peace and harmony where he went. Where his wisdom and words of peace were not enough to tame the foolish children of the Twisted Earth, his mighty weapons set the people right. It is said that he brought an end to the slavery that once was a way of life in the Northern Deserts, and led a coalition of the peoples against the dreaded Mongoliant horde. He united peoples of all races and shapes under

his guidance, and brought the Promise of a new reign of Brotherhood.

That was many years ago, and though the Fallen God vanished as mysteriously as he appeared, his Message has never been forgotten. In the Northlands, his Children continue to carry on his Dream and Promise. Man and mutant live as one, and peace reigns. The Movement spreads, and with their coming they bring their vision of the future, where all men are equal, where choices are made by the people, and where no man may rule others unjustly or with cruelty.

Though He is gone, the Promise remains alive.

The Movement uses a contemporary symbol used to represent the values of the Fallen Gods' vision of the future. It depicts hands of different colors coming together in peace and friendship, and bears the words of Promise that guarantee peace and brotherhood in our world.

Paradise-Believers (Visionary Reinventors, Membership 1,000): The "Paradise-Believers" are a quasi-religious group based in the Forbidden Lands, a collection of misfits and self-proclaimed visionaries whose belief is centered on a mystical quest to reach Paradise (said to be a planet discovered by the Ancients just before the War). The Paradise-Believers are a naive peace-loving group, believing that they can talk their way out of any problem through reason and peaceful gestures. Believer groups across the Forbidden Lands are constructing a fleet of mighty rocket ships (of scavenged metal and junk) with the efforts of their delusional followers to blast their way to the stars. Few believe their efforts are anything but foolish.

Raider Gangs (Radicals, Membership unknown): To state the obvious, there are almost countless individual "gangs" and "bands" of raiders in the blighted radiated wastelands of DARWIN'S WORLD. These bands are usually composed of the absolute dregs of post-holocaust society - murderers, thieves, rapists, and insane mutants. Often they are loosely organized, controlled only by one leader's ruthlessness or bribes. Many of these gangs terrorize a community for a time, before they turn on themselves and destroy one another. Other times, in the case of larger gangs, their own power is enough to keep them together, and these prove to be a blight of their own - often they prowl the wastes in huge motorized gangs (modeled after ancient biker gangs), burning, raping, and pillaging everything in their path.

They are the greatest nightmare of the post-holocaust world, being those careless men and mutants who take what they wish, often destroying entire communities who seek only peace. Ruthless, vicious, and brutal in their tactics, they pose the strongest threat to travelers of the open wilderness.

Rangers (Guardians, Membership 500): The "Rangers" are a notorious force of unforgiving law and justice in the Shifting Wastes, known to "serve" a number of communities throughout the region. Legend traditionally surrounding the rangers suggests that they were, at one time, descended from an actual military unit that survived piecemeal the final Fall, to carry on the rules and justice of the Ancients into this brave new world.

Not unlike wandering "Texas Rangers" from America's distant past, Rangers have a reputation for being the best of the best when it comes to living off the land and waging war against raiders and road gangs. Being descended from professional soldiers, their people have worked hard to preserve the rigorous training and lifestyle that makes them truly "elite". Where the Rangers are known, people look up to them as protectors and lawmen of a higher caliber. Gifts of food and other luxuries are often offered to the Rangers as rewards for their services, but seldom are these accepted by their spartan leadership. It is common for people, upon hearing of a Ranger detachment's arrival in a town or village, to gather and petition them for assistance in whatever trouble they are having.

Rangers employ a symbol used by their fathers, grandfathers, and their predecessors before them. It is the patch of the unit they once served in, usually sewn onto their clothing, uniform, or stenciled onto armor or helmets.

Ravagers (Radicals, Membership 1,000): Among the raider gangs of the wasteland are many of peculiar size and power, and of these the so-called "Ravagers" are perhaps a glaring example of brutality and tyranny. The rampaging army of raiders that follow the Ravager banner is known throughout the Forbidden Lands, led by an infinitely depraved and ruthless raider emperor - whose true name is unknown. The Ravagers are a terror throughout the land; bringing burgeoning communities low for their own perverse pleasure and gain, stamping out all growing civilization in the Forbidden Lands region. Riding on virtual armadas of motorcycles, trucks, and cars that churn enough exhaust to cloud the horizon when

on campaign, and armed with shotguns and automatic weapons, the Ravagers have come to make their name known far and wide. Members of this particularly sadistic raider gang are subjected to tremendous tortures on initiation, but nearly anyone can join if he can survive the test. A few women are kept around only as slaves and playthings, but these inevitably die due to mistreatment and malnutrition.

Savants (Visionary Reinventors, Membership 200, slave races 25,000): This cryptic brotherhood originated among the ruins of the Midwest, and is composed of mysterious mutants who appear to have cultivated a very special ability, which they (and others who have survived contact with them) can only call "magic". The "magic" is, in fact, a mastery of mental powers beyond the norm seen by most of mutantkind. It is said that the Savants are capable of forming invisible energies as they need - but the mental strain is said to be immense and their methods are obviously guarded savagely. The Savants are known for their arcane robes and KKK-style hoods, amassed weapons and refurbished droid servants, and their lack of mercy for any who stand in their way. Some legends claim the Savants are, in fact, the descendants of criminal Ancients who were subjected to great tortures by their former captors, only to survive the holocaust to claim the new world as their own.

Savants compose a nation of bizarre mutant entities that dominate the lands south of the desert and east of the Big Rocks. This is an arid land that rises from the unforgiving sands, turning into the flat open grassy plains that - unlike anywhere else in the world - have seen the steady fall of rain in all but the driest months. This arable paradise, stretching for countless miles towards the unknown lands of the east, skirts the south like a promised paradise just out of the reach of human hands.

Doomriders (Radicals, Membership 500): What some scribes consider to be just another raider gang in the Forbidden Lands, is actually a great new threat to the balance of power in that dry and dismal region. The Doomriders are a sadistic all-male cult that can only be described as crazy madmen. A quasi-monastic society of road warriors, they've got only one purpose in mind - the extermination of the human and mutant races of earth.

No one knows who started the Doomriders, but according to reports they're led by one, perhaps

two powerful overlords who attain their position through sheer brutality, killing all other rivals to the gang's leadership. They view themselves as "warrior-monks" of a sort, charged with a "holy" mission to end the legacy of the Ancients. They're one of those groups (among the more powerful ones too) that detests the Ancients for what they "did" to the world - turning it into the deadly wasteland it is. Burning with this hatred, their alleged goal is to exterminate all mankind, and finish the work the Ancients left undone.

To this end the Doomriders butcher all females they come across - perhaps the greatest atrocity ever known. No woman, not even child, is left with a merciful death. Able-bodied men are taken in by the Doomriders as "janissaries" of a sort, forced and brainwashed into their cause. Those who cannot fight, or are too fair, are tortured or worse, certain to die within a few weeks of mistreatment. No communities are safe from the Doomriders, for they make no friends, alliances, or treaties. Anything they want or need, they simply take, and ruin, soil, or destroy the rest to ensure that life elsewhere cannot benefit from it.

The Doomriders are a threat to more than just the disorganized and scattered communes of the desert. Larger communities such as the Cartel and Water Clans have also suffered their wrath at various times; lucrative bounties have been placed on the heads of all gang members, with a virtual fortune out on their leaders. The Doomriders are a ruthless and powerful organization; they wear good armor, ride modified vehicles (numerous reports of flamethrowers, lasers, and even cannon-mortars), and are well organized for a desert raider gang!

Xenophobes (Guardian, Membership unknown): There are various communities in DARWIN'S WORLD that have progressed beyond the mere struggle for survival, but many of these guard their secret to success/civilization through secrecy - secrecy often guarded with ruthless and merciless brutality. These xenophobic communities are exceedingly common, having their own secluded walled compounds, stockpiles of weapons, food, and fresh water, and often a veritable army of dedicated and ruthless soldiers.

Joining A Group

For those characters wishing to join a faction or alliance, many communities are, in fact, looking for new members (especially those who need

cannon fodder for their inter-community wars). Characters can try to become members of communities whenever they get into friendly (or at least tolerable) contact with them.

No rules can really be established for attempting to join a community; the exact community, its goals and views on independent survivors, etc. are all factors that will play a part in their acceptance of new members. You as GM may use the NPC reaction results to find the general level of acceptance, or simply use role-playing and story to dictate a community's outlook on a certain player character or group.

Outsiders

Beyond the major groups, there are other, alternate paths for characters to pursue in DARWIN'S WORLD. These are only a few examples:

Amazons: In many of the communities of DARWIN'S WORLD, women of all kinds are little more than property - the more handsome, the more valuable as commodities to the various bands of raiders, survivalists, and brutal scum. Treated as mere objects by most, used as trade goods in many communities, and only seldom valued for any purpose other than pleasure and reproduction, they face a nightmarish existence in this world devoid of civilization. But in the radiated wilds, there are some few females - loners mostly - who have struck out to find their own destiny. Many are escaped slaves, or girls secretly exiled by their parents at birth to save them from a horrible fate. Regardless, the solo life is a rough one, even for rugged males, and those few females who have survived to womanhood are among the most vicious, hateful, and brutal of their gender - they have to be, for over every hill lies a community or pack who would just as soon make her a slave as a friend. Those women who do survive are known almost universally among communities as "amazons", tough and savage females who are as skilled at combat as the most rugged survivalists.

Bounty Hunters: In the world of the wasteland, some men choose not to adhere to communities or social organizations, instead seeking profit alone from everyone. But unlike the merchant, whose coming is a great cause of celebration, the bounty man performs the unenviable task of hunting down men and creatures. The bounty man wanders the deserts and ruins, offering his services to communities who have been shattered by raider attacks.

Using his skills as a survivalist and tracker, he hunts with precision, bringing down his quarry with whatever means necessary. He carries only those things that are required for hunting his prey - other things merely slow him down, hampering his dogged pursuit.

Pit Fighters: The many subhuman and uncivilized communities of the wasteland, from the fortresses of desert slave traders to the brutally-oppressive communities with fresh water access, are areas of chaos - mutants from all over congregate at these places to bring their wares, livestock, and to do trade. Crime, too, is a big business, but so is the demand for entertainment. Entertainment has deteriorated with the growing harshness of life, and the only sport the city dwellers care for is combat. In the pits, one man is pitted against another (or, for a treat, against a widely-feared beast), and they fight to the death. Many of these "pit fighters" are slaves, captives, or men sentenced to the pits as punishment. Some few are professional fighters, who go about performing for the money and rewards. Regardless, they are toughened sorts to say the least, but they usually only specialize in melee combat - missile weapons make the battle far too quick and uninteresting.

Purists: "Purists" are post-war survivors who have never (for one reason or another) suffered the effects of mutation, despite all the radiation and mutative chemicals in the ecosystem. Many come from sheltered communities, such as man-made biodomes (totally enclosed ecosystems) deep in the desert, but there are known to be other sources of the purists elsewhere. Purists typically adhere to themselves, sometimes in groups, but seldom, if ever, mingle with mutants, whom they both fear and look down upon as subhuman. Several purist groups are known to prowl the wastes exterminating mutants they encounter, often assembling and performing savage raids of butchery against mutant communities. Characters can come from a Purist background, though it may take some ingenious planning. The most obvious is that the character(s) was expelled from the Purists, or simply ran away. Perhaps the character was beginning to show signs of mutation, and the Purists - afraid to face the fact that they are slowly mutating as well - cast him out. Perhaps there is no mutation, but the character simply disagreed with their Nazi-like discrimination against the mutant races of the wasteland.

Trading Establishments

Trading is a central source of revenue for most communities (some are even founded just for such a commercial purpose). When (and if) characters make friendly or tolerable contact with communities, trade will be possible.

The GM should set up a short list of things available in the community, from readily available items to steeds and mounts, etc, using information provided throughout this book for ideas on availability and frequency. No rules are presented to spontaneously create a market with a few dice rolls – each and every trade community or market will certainly be different depending a number of factors.

If characters have previously traded in goods they have found on adventures, these should be added to the list of goods circulating around (though the GM should decide if they've been sold off yet, depending on their value to the community in question). Rules for determining supply/demand would take up far too much room to cover here, so use your common sense, but certain examples include:

Trader: A typical in-community trader stall or establishment. This type of merchant generally trades with other travelers to replenish his stock, and thus only gets the stuff other people don't want. Junk items and Arcanum are commonly found in trader stalls; foodstuffs have also been known to pop up. Rarely, electronic goods of trivial value may also be found in such minor establishments.

Bazaars: This is the kind of marvelous exhibition set up by traveling merchants when they visit widespread communities - bringing all sorts of interesting and amazing items from across the wasteland. Bazaars are certainly rare events, often involving the attention of the entire town due to the number and exotic kinds of goods made available. Weird and colorful junk items, flashy Arcanum or gizmos, foodstuffs galore, clothing of the Ancients, etc. are all common features of traveling merchant bazaars.

General Store: A typical in-community establishment that carries a wide variety of generic items. Generally such an establishment only carries post-Fall manufactured goods, such as leather gear, primitive armor and weapons, and, on rare occasions, potions, thundertwigs, smokesticks, etc.

Arms Dealer: In some city ruins, where communities are comparatively "richer" due to the near-infinite junk and artifacts (damage or

otherwise) surrounding them, opportunity exists to sift through the ruin and scavenge all manner of goods – weapons included. An arms dealer is a shopkeeper, usually in a city enclave or stockade, who specializes in the trading of arms. Such enterprising folk generally possess their own bodyguards or even private armies, as well as prized stocks of modern-era and advanced arms and armor for sale.

Medicine Men: Medicine men, the doctor or "juju man" of a given settlement, can often be convinced to trade meds - their specialty – as well as primitive chemical concoctions such as potions and the like. Some medicine men have scavenged more advanced medicines and clinical devices (such as *diagnostic scanners*), but such finds would certainly be rare.

LEGENDS, MYTHS, AND FAMOUS PLACES

The wasteland is rife with rumors, myths, and legends, as would be expected from a world of degenerate civilizations and increasing primitiveness. It is obvious to both feral and rising communities that the Ancients were a super-advanced people, almost like "gods", whose inexplicable (and irreplaceable) technology was capable of vast wonders. But there are other legends and tales too.

Fantastic Airships: Far to the west, where the Black West Ocean once ran the length of the old coast in a long ribbon, now lies only the great "Escarpment". Settlements of the Ancients end at the rim of a great cliff wall, suggesting (to those who have any semblance of knowledge left) that this vast sea of shifting dunes was once in fact a vast world-spanning ocean. Now it is all but dried up for as far as the eye can see.

Although it is possible to venture into the Sand Sea (also known to many as the Sea of Sadness, or the Ocean of Glass Tears), few do. The fact that even the ruins of the Ancient cities do not stretch out into the sea means there is simply no reason. None but the most insane merchant will even venture into the Sand Sea, and few lone survivors make their way out there, for there is nothing to be found for thousands of miles.

In addition, the Great Sand Sea itself is a deadly hazard. Literally miles of shifting sand and dust form an unstable surface. Creatures as large as men sink quickly in this sand, which has no end, and no known depth. No traveler who has ever made the foolish attempt to cross the

Great Sand Sea has returned ... most likely their bones lie just a mile or so into the sea, swallowed by the sands.

As far as land-dwellers (those on the former continent of the United States) are concerned, the Great Sand Sea is simply an impassable barrier, to which none can escape, and from which nothing has ever emerged. It is a true deadland in this land of wastes.

But legends and myths persist, weaving fabulous and unlikely stories of life far out beyond the seldom-seen Escarpment boundary. Far to the west, one would not expect to discover that communities (indeed, entire civilizations) exist in the Great Sand Sea. But the stories say otherwise. The sand out in the middle of the former ocean is miles deep, and just as unstable - nothing but the strangest inhuman creatures (giant sand sharks, razor-toothed burrowing whales, etc.) exist out here. How do they survive then?

According to legend, centuries ago, small communities with a certain knowledge fled across the Great Sand Sea - in airships. Constructing zeppelins, these survivors sought to throw their fates to the desert winds.

Today, entire empires of airborne peoples are said to exist far out in the Great Sand Sea, never coming into contact with the land-dwellers (the distance is generally too great). Entire communities exist on gigantic zeppelins (of humongous proportions); solar-powered gas-generation and fuel processing on these massive airships, along with totally self-sufficient agricultural "pods", allow these ships to operate independently for years at a time. So large are these "floating cities" that entire fleets of aircraft are kept on board to defend against the attacks of airborne pirates and marauders.

Just as on the land, the air empires of the Great Sand Sea consider vast areas as their own territory, denying passage by others. Resources are few and far between, and independent merchant airships ply the airways trading between the air cities. Natural gasses are priceless commodities; several small islands (or what once were islands when the sea existed; now they are massive mesas rising from the sand) out in the sea actually mine and refine the gasses, selling to the "people of the airships" in exchange for the life-supporting products they need. These are some of the only land people who know of the floating cities and their vast wars. An entire culture and economy has

developed over the years from the entire phenomenon.

Throw into this mix the fabled bands of "air pirates". Stories portray them as exiles from larger airborne communities; would-be tyrants, and vile mutants, using smaller, faster zeppelins to scour the deserts at night, raiding from secret bases from which they launch small fleets of propeller and jet aircraft, to wreak havoc on airship communities throughout the deserts.

It is truly a fantastic world - if it truly exists. Massive air battles in modified, or scavenged air vehicles, fighting for control of entire zeppelin-cities over a vast world where to touch the ground is certain death (to be dragged under by the loose, shifting sands). Fresh water is the most priceless commodity, followed by the rare lighter-than-air gasses needed to keep the zeppelins in the air for generations. The people of these empires, whether good or evil, preservationist or reinventing their own future civilization, are master pilots, having their own bizarre technology (based on the creation, production, and maintenance of post-holocaust aircraft), and live an existence as bloody and ruthless as any.

Mythical Amazon Paradises: In the great and distant mythical city of the Arid City, where numerous societies have arisen in the ruins, there is a persistent legend of a fabled paradise of women somewhere in the plains.

According to the legend, a community of women, amazons, exists somewhere in the Arid City, taking shelter in a fantastic fortress of twisted metal, stone, and glass, making a fabulous retreat from the discarded waste of the Ancients, defending against all trespassers with merciless hatred. In ancient times, hunting parties of the local communities would seek out the place to capture the fabled fertile women within, for their survival depended on it. With time, fewer and fewer groups set out to find the fabled paradise, for with each expedition, none returned. Today, most of the local populace shuns the Forbidden Reaches entirely, and the quest for the beautiful childbearing women of this place has become just a myth.

Evidence of this paradise is tangible and real, however. The heads of men, and those foolish enough to wander into the Reaches, are often found on stakes or poles on the east side of the ruins, warning against intrusion. It is obvious that some community does exist out there,

though whether it is of the legendary amazons or not, can only be guessed at.

Star Cults: Groups of men congregate amid the desert dunes. Above shine stars through a particularly bleak night sky - clouds, as in the day, are all but gone, leaving a broad and fantastic sphere of darkness above. No cities, and a thinning polluted atmosphere, leave the sky unrestricted to sight.

An old legend, which still finds many adherents (or at least many who listen with some semblance of subscription), is that the Ancients took to the stars before the Fall. Loading themselves into great chariots of metal, they harnessed the greatest destructive forces to hurl themselves from this cursed planet to places unknown, far among the distant stars and the veil of galaxies that are seen moving each year across the heavens.

One day, it is said, these Ancients (or their descendants, most likely), will return to claim what was once theirs - the great Twisted Earth.

From this legend, many cults have risen. There are those who seek to preserve the culture and beliefs of the Ancients, so that when the great descendants arrive they will find brethren worthy of their respect and friendship. Such cults believe that those who do not share the same dedication to preservation will surely perish, as the Ancients will vanquish them as mere animals, lacking any mind or civilization.

There are those, too, who dread the return of the Ancients. Knowing themselves wicked of form and of mind (equating their own loss of civilization and technology as evil, or corruption); they look to the stars each night in fear. Comets and eclipses are omens of the return of the Ancients - foretelling an arrival of the Fire Chariots and the end of their race(s) in a great Armageddon from which there will be no escape.

Others, though, lay upon the sands at night and stare far above, dreaming of the glory that once was the Ancients'. To conquer the heavens - to leave the Twisted Earth and visit such distant places. Staring high, they cannot but dream of what the world once was. It is these, the majority, who revere the Ancients through the admiration of all that has been lost since their vanishing from the face of the Twisted Earth.

The Lost City: In the northern lands it is said an entire city of the Ancients was simply "lost" during the Great End of Man. Such was the power of the Ancients that entire cities could be wiped clean from the face of the earth, in some

places leaving not a bit of ruin or rubble to show for the thousands that once dwelled there.

Such is the tale of the Lost City, a place in the region of the Great Dust Seas, the existence of which is now legendary. According to the legend, a cave somewhere in the mountains overlooking the Dust Seas, as unremarkable and easily-overlooked as any in the rocky badlands, leads down through strange and fantastic lava tubes and tunnels to a great vault, a massive cavern, swallowed entirely by the earth. It is within this buried cavern that the Lost City lies, preserved, as it was thousands of years ago when it was swallowed up by the earth in some great cataclysm, the product of a seismic catastrophe triggered by the wars of the Ancients.

Although the inhabitants of this once former city of greatness died in the same cataclysm that sunk their city beneath the earth and sealed it in with a great churning of rock, new, more horrible creatures from the deeps came to find the largely intact city and make it their home. Dwelling in the darkness, ghouls, mutated giants, and creatures of living fungus came to portion up the city and squabble over it like mutant gangs in surface city ruins. Because it had been lost for so many centuries, it is said that great treasures of knowledge and technology are still to be found deep beneath the earth in the Lost City, but the dangers greatly outweigh the benefits of finding it.

The Lost City, even if it does exist, remains as a kind of "wonderland" of both fascination and dread to the people of the northern deserts.

The Seed-Carrier: One legendary figure in the wasteland is the fabled Trenton Bixby, a character as unlikely as any but whose myth is ever popular. Bixby, according to legend, was (or is; some say he still lives) born in a lost biodome in the desert, the shielding and automation of which had failed, contaminating its sheltered people. Dying, this lost colony of man was forced to abandon itself; it's few remaining souls spreading out into the wastes to find their fortunes.

One of these was Bixby, a small man who chose to bring the message of knowledge to the people of the wasteland. A humble hero, this glasses-wearing man faced all manner of challenges, both physical and social. Ignorance and tyranny stood in the way of his spread of freethinking and scientific wisdom. According to myth, Bixby managed to defeat a great minion of the Metal Gods in a lost temple, acquiring the

great and miraculous weapons within. Taking these weapons as his own, he was thus able to survive against all manner of oppression.

Bixby never chose to conflict, and always preferred a peaceful solution to war - though when forced to fight he was always victorious. This attitude, and the general air of good will about him, won the hearts and admiration of the communities he is said to visit (many communities in the desert harbor some legend about the visit of Bixby, these being fables or stories used to explain the origin of some scientific knowledge or repair of some valuable resource that as managed to keep the community alive), including those of many petty tyrants. In some regions, where formerly hardened bandit kinds have embraced democracy or loosened their grip on their people, some whisper it is because of a visit of this legendary peacemaker.

No one knows if Bixby still lives, or if he ever lived at all. A man with knowledge, who walks the wastes alone, certainly could not survive long against the many dangers of the wasteland. Few remember him, other than his glasses and his peaceful, friendly nature, and he remains to most a kind of patron of the sciences, a mythical figure, and no more. In at least one savage region, images of Bixby are prayed to for guidance on the repair and maintenance of certain mechanical and electronic items, the knowledge of which has long been lost.

The Wheeled Avenger: Another legendary hero, some say embodiment of divine vengeance, is the mythical "man on wheels", known more commonly as the great "Motorcycle Man". To those who still might analyze mythology with a scientific objectivity, the Motorcycle Man stands as a prime example of the people's psychological need for a hero. Although the presence of this figure is considered mainly mythical, there are some entire communities who swear to his existence, and to the deeds he has wordlessly performed against the evils of the desert.

Motorcycle Man is a figure that is said to appear whenever a small-oppressed community is in need of a great hero. He has appeared before when bandit kings have taken absolute control of a village, when mutant armies threaten entire communities, etc. In each case the ghostly hero is described the same - a man in a long leather trench coat, concealed by a helmet, riding on the back of some fire-breathing cycle (known as "The Phantom Ride" in common folklore) which roars

like thunder on the horizon and belches steam and sparks as it races over the dunes. In one hand he holds the legendary Stick of Vengeance, which breathes death on the wicked, dropping even the most heavily armored man with a mere wave of the Motorcycle Man's hand. In the other he casually controls the wild mechanical Ride, sometimes running down his evil opponents.

As legend has it, Motorcycle Man vanishes almost as suddenly as he appears. Bringing swift justice and death to those who would harm the innocent, his presence is quick and brutal, leaving no survivors. He takes what he deems as his - often the instruments of those he has slain - and retreats once more to the swirling sands of the desert. Some never see or hear of him again. Some do, claiming to spy the glimmering of his Ride in the desert (most likely just a mirage), or to hear the roar of it's engine in the howling of a sandstorm.

Fedor The Hunter: This quasi-mythical figure is often attested to in many urban communities, and it is said that he did indeed exist (though which tales about him are true, and which are not, can only be speculated at). A great warrior, Fedor was a lone scav, combing the ruins to survive, often vanishing for years at a time. Equipped with a legendary rifle ("...[which] felled the greatest of tyrant beasts with it's fierce tempest of flame..."), and wearing the skins of a fantastic black panther, he was nonetheless a hero to the civilized people - a kind of mythical "mountain man" who came every now and then to the communities to trade and tell stories of the beasts in the outlying regions.

Fedor is also somewhat deified, being the source of many legends. He is believed to have been a great enemy of Ghouls everywhere, a mythical hunter and was even once saved by the Rat People of Haven through his skills of storytelling - winning himself the cure to a sickness which had befallen him.

Fedor is said to have saved the people of Haven, fighting alongside their warriors like a hero in the great Ghoulish War. He is also said to have kept those isolated people alive, by donating his seed so that they might end years of inbreeding. At least two groups claim to be his descendants there.

Remarkably, the amazons of the Forbidden Reaches also hold Fedor as a hero of their people, for this great rugged figure of lore was said to have defended them against war parties of hunters, even fighting his own brothers to

keep the amazons free. According to their own legends, Fedor took one of their number as his bride, and together they left to wander the ruins. He is still considered a protector to this day, being something of a patron or guardian figure to which many pray.

The Arching Eye: Once every three to five years, a great celestial object rises and falls over the night sky for two weeks in midsummer. This sight is seen throughout the southern deserts of the wasteland, observed by the savage tribal and sheltered communities of the Range of The Lost and Sulphur Peaks. It is a sight that is viewed with suspicion, fear, and awe.

Legends abound as to the nature of this object, which is "larger than a star but not quite a moon". Its movement is noticeable as well, unlike the slowly-shifting Sphere of The Heavens (on which the stars move), and from it can sometimes be observed blinking, pulsing lights - green and sometimes red.

Among the savage brain-eating tribes of Baja, the sight of the "Arching Eye" is one of great terror, and during the few weeks it appears the tribe retreats to it's mountain fortress to wait out the period of ill fortune. It is said that during this time the evil spirits of their plundered and murdered prey rise to bring vengeance against them, and as such their warriors refuse to emerge during the cool, haunted nights.

The Far Traders of Lost Albuquerque, a vast merchant group that wanders the deserts on mutated camels like a great train of gypsies, know the Arching Eye well and time their annual migrations by it's appearance. To them it is a portent too, a sign telling them that their people must move onwards to fresher pastures.

Numerous other groups know of or have come to observe the Arching Eye, and countless other myths and beliefs have arisen from it's short appearance in the sky. Most of these revolve around change and short periods of misfortune or dread. In some primitive cultures, the final week of its appearance (and especially the last night of it's arch through the sky before it vanishes for another year) is cause for great celebration and ceremonies of thanks to the Gods.

Many have commented on the Arching Eye and to it's nature; some claim it is a comet, some say an evil star, others an angry God of vengeance and destruction. Scientists in the Ultraviolet Empire, who claim to have observed the Arching Eye through a great seeing glass set atop the Great Palace in Mountain Home, describe it as a

"great metal wheel ... slowly revolving as it passes through the sky ... it's surface glowing with blinking, glimmering lights..."

The Fantastic "Century Whale": An obscure legend of the southern deserts speaks of a great metal "whale" - a massive metal vessel, perhaps - that once every two centuries makes a landing in an unremarkable spot of the desert and opens it's great maw, sitting quietly and patiently. Larger than any creature known to exist, certainly larger than the tallest towers (almost as high as a mountain), the great whale roars with fire from it's underbelly and shakes the earth like a thundering quake.

According to legend, those who enter the mouth of the beast do so foolishly, for though drawn in by great and fantastic sights within, the beast's mouth inevitably closes and traps them within. After only a few hours of motionless silence, it rises once more into the sky and vanishes into the Heavens, joining once more with the stars of the night's embrace.

Legend has it that the "whale" is, in fact, a colossal space vessel (some learned men of great age say a colony ship of the Ancients, perhaps), far beyond the scope of most men's minds. Within it is an entire city of passages, chambers, rooms, and tunnels. Entire "decks" dedicated to automated agriculture, capable of supporting thousands of people for decades. Automatons and drones wander the halls catering to a ghost crew, long vanished from the haunted, echoing hallways. Lights that bear no flame or heat flicker on and off as if commanded by phantoms. Chitters, groans, and echoes abound in all directions, coming from above and below.

This last legend is attested to by a venerable hunter of the Jackal Jaw tribe, a man who claims that as a youth he and his fellow hunters (all boys at the time) foolishly went aboard the "whale" and found a lost city within. They claimed to have seen all manner of marvels - metal men in the halls, entire levels of automated gardens fit for the feeding of thousands. Yet the scared group saw no sign of human life (though accommodation for thousands was obvious), as if all had simply "vanished" from within. Frightened, they fled, only barely leaping from the beast's maw as it inevitably closed. Of the group, three escaped - the other four were not so fortunate and never made it through the maw. Trapped within, none can say as to their fate, for the whale took off to the Heavens with the

screaming savages inside and was never seen again.

The Cave Of Life: The Nightwind Tribe of savages in the Far Desert has long held one hallowed site sacred above all others. It is the location of a certain mystical "cave", to which young warriors of the tribe are sent to prove themselves as men in the eyes of their peers.

The so-called "Cave of Life" has long been known to the Nightwind Tribe as a place of great evil and mystery. Lying in the middle of flat desert sands, there stands only an open portal in the earth - no hill, no mountain - sometimes lost for years by the great sandstorms known to ravage that desolate wasteland.

This tube leads straight into darkness to a great labyrinth of hollowed-out caves and tunnels in the mighty desert rock. When their ancestors first came to the cave dying of thirst, they discovered within a complex of a strange and unnatural kind - twisting, smooth-rocked tunnels, water-filled chambers, and vaults filled with unnamed subterranean scavengers. They also found a great source of water, a magical "spring", from which the water never seemed to stop flowing. Despite this rare and miraculous find, it was deemed to dangerous to stay in the unknown complex and so they moved on, always remembering the cave's location, passing it's position down from generation to generation.

The ritual of manhood now serves two purposes. The aspirants who go there not only face the legendary dangers there (the mystery of what dwells within alone stands as a great barrier - the sounds of some great bellowing beast have been reported over the years, though this creature has never actually been seen) and thus prove themselves brave, but also are sent to retrieve a substantial supply of the fresh water there to keep the village nourished for years to come.

It is not known what the "cave" is, but it is likely that it was once some kind of installation or complex of the Ancients, for what few accounts of it's construction do exist seem to indicate an advanced origin. If any legendary beast does in fact dwell beneath, it's true nature can only be guessed at. Needless to say, it is unlikely anyone will ever know the truth, for the Nightwind Tribe guards it's ancestral lands (and their mystic source of water) savagely and without mercy.

More information on the Cave of Life can be found in the Cave of Life Adventure supplement published by RPGObjects®.

The Mountain of Time: Legends in the wasteland tell of a fabled "Mountain of Time", a legendary paradise said to dwell in the most savage and desolate part of the deserts. None know the truth behind this wild tale, but according to the legend, this mountain is a jungle paradise, where rivers run freely from the mountain's summit down through lush tropical forest, filled with wild animals, edible fruits, and scenes of great beauty. It is also said, however, that savages dwell on the lower reaches of the mountain, guarding against intrusion with poisonous arrows and darts. Few who have claimed to have seen the Mountain ever wish to return there, despite the alleged beauty and bounty of the place, for they also say it is haunted by "immortal pygmies" - who can be shot or stabbed but always return again later to haunt the trespasser, and some other, greater evil supposedly existing near the summit of the mountain.

Aliens? Legends abound that tell of "visitors" from the stars, who came at the time mankind tore itself apart in it's mad and inhumane wars. A common theme exists in many older cultures that attest to these "aliens", but from there the stories become different and confused.

According to some legends, the aliens - beings from a distant planet or star - came to Earth at the first sign of the great holocaust, at first observing in their great silvery spheres and saucers from space, then landing and attempting to force a peace on the warring factions of humanity. It is said that despite their efforts, these aliens (who are said to appear as anything from beautiful humans to little green men with antennae) were unable to bring their own message of peace to man, and were too killed in the cataclysm that mankind wrought.

Other tales tell that the aliens came as vultures, predators, waiting until the wars were over to come and conquer the planet. It is said by these that the aliens do indeed rule the Twisted Earth, and that any number of mutated beasts found in the wastelands are actually the aliens outside their vessels. Some others suggest that the aliens themselves instigated the war, bombarding earth from space with nuclear bombs and rays of incinerating radiation, wiping entire cities from the face of the earth and churning the landscape like the seas of the lost oceans with their tremendous force. The Ancients fought back with their primitive

weapons, but were unable to stop the inevitable destruction of the human race.

Others claim that the aliens indeed came and conquered, and that a great empire exists somewhere far to the east, in the center of a vast ocean, on a fabled island, where they have erected cities of bronze and polished marble, over flown by hovering fleets of silvery saucers and cigar-shaped dirigibles.

Admittedly these are among the wildest tales of the wasteland, and little - if any - evidence has ever been proven as to the existence (even as far back as the Ancients) of "alien beings" having ever landed on this planet.

The Forbidden Lands: The Forbidden Lands are a region of mesa-like deserts in the wasteland (much like the Badlands of today), where water and technological skills are incredibly scarce. In the Forbidden Lands dwell raider gangs of a most brutal nature, and petty wars are fought constantly over water, technology, and territory there. It is a place where few will venture, for there are said to be only small savage bands of survivors and raiders in the region, and no places of trade, commerce, or peace.

The Great Dust Seas: To the north, where deserts and grasslands intermingle in a dry range that stretches for months in all directions, lie the Great Dust Seas - a number of vast expanses of shifting, sandy desert. It is said that these were once seas (certainly they were too vast to be mere lakes), connecting this region to an even vaster ocean far, far to the east. Whether this is true or not can only be speculated at, but the seas are in fact at a lower level than the surrounding plateaus (to the south). Few have journeyed north beyond the seas, for it considered foolish to do so - few tales speak of what might lie beyond.

Numerous small communities exist on the edge of the Great Michigan Plateau, where grasslands and scrubland provide some few hearty trees and hidden pockets of water. These diminish, however, as the cliffs fall and turn into the flat, rolling Great Dust Seas, traveled only by raiders and merchants.

Some merchants claim to have crossed the Great Dust Seas, in fact using them as a quicker means to travel the "Plateau Coast" (the name used to refer to the settlements along the plateau's rim). They tell of vast deserts, days of perilous travel, and a land infested with strange sights. They tell of particularly insidious mutant

desert raiders, and Ancient "ships" found in the middle of the sands, as if dropped there from some great height, certainly hundreds of miles from water. Some even claim to have found real oceans, far out into the Dust Seas - large bodies of fresh water far beyond the range of most caravans. Again, none can tell what is truth, and what is fiction.

The Cursed Desert: The Cursed Desert is a desolate region in the middle of mountainous deserts in the central part of the known world. Legends of this mysterious place are not widely known, except in the northern lands, where the tales of the strange colored desert are prevalent.

The Cursed Desert is said to be a great "dust bowl", a great expanse of salt desert. So high is the content of salt and other minerals here that the place shimmers under the hot sun. The salt of the Cursed Desert is legendary, and many have tried to come and mine it - though such forays were never heard from again. Legend has it (and those few have ventured to that forbidden wasteland can also attest) that the desert there is of a strange green-blue color, almost like turquoise, the very sand and rocks taking this strange color. Even the bones of ancient animals and creatures are found in this color, as if a great evil magic left a discoloring blight upon the land, cursing the precious salt found there.

Besides great blue bones and boulders, the Cursed Desert is a deadland, quiet and lifeless except for the wind. Some have said that strange glowing creatures walk the haunted salt sea here, but none have ever been able to confirm these reports.

The Hollow Hills: This region, undiscovered by the majority of the populace of the wastes, is a land of steep rising hills and bare stone mesas that ascend into the Great Divide to the west. The Hollow Hills are so named because frequently are found strangely shaped arches of stone, worn away by wind and time. The sound of the unobstructed wind (blowing in from the high mountains) creates a reverberating whistle and echo, which can be heard throughout the hill region.

The Purple Desert: The Purple Desert is a vast stretch of wasteland that once occupied a huge area of the United States. Nuclear detonations and the destruction of numerous metropolis and industrial centers circling and in the region created such a wasting effect of the land that it became a desert, and all the ancient forests and grasslands vanished.

The Purple Desert gets its name from the purplish glow that emanates from the sands at night. During the day, this radiance is noticed as the white sands glow intensely in any sunlight, almost blindingly white. Few beings call the Purple Desert home, but those that do are most certainly highly mutated beings or wildly fantastic new life forms. Most, if not all, creatures that are native to this bizarre desert glow themselves. Few travelers dare come through the Purple Desert, for sickness and wasting fever are said to affect those who do.

The Wasteland Of "Bone Cities": This vast belt of desert and sparse grasslands extends for hundreds of miles. From afar, this flat desolate land can be seen emanating reddish glows in many directions - the glowing ruins of ancient cities in the distance. The Wasteland is spotted with the destroyed and radiated ruins of numerous ancient metropolises, cities said to be constructed in the last days of humanity to provide homes for the millions of homeless of America. These "pre-fab" cities strung along the entire agricultural belt once abundant with crops, but now remain as nuked ruins in the harsh, sand-swept wastes.

Few venture into the Wasteland or to the distant "glows", as radiation is rife in the region, and powerful plains beasts are known to roam within its vast stretching boundaries.

COMMONLY ACCEPTED RULES OF THE WASTELAND

There are a few things that all players (and the GM) should be aware of – though barbarous and savage, the wasteland does have its rules. These are a general "code" by which most folk, from scavengers to community locals, tend to adhere to; if not out of a sympathy for those who'd suffer without it, then in hopes that other will if they ever need to fall back on it's basic stress on hospitality.

- If you are dying and a man shares with you his water, you owe him your life
- If any man frees you from bondage, you owe him your life
- If a man shares salt with you, you are honor bound to put aside differences and feuds for seven days
- If a man shares his shelter with you, you are likewise honor bound
- Never turn against a lord, master, or host who shares water and food with you, even if he is evil or a tyrant, for you are honor bound to respect him
- All men are expected to leave adequate warning of dangers when encountered so that others might avoid them in the future
- Ghouls and cannibals are animals, and should be shown no mercy
- Women should never be killed, for they are too precious
- No man should horde a woman to himself, for they are too precious
- Those with scientific knowledge should never be killed, but enslaved
- If you carry great wealth, never accept hospitality, for it may be a trick
- He who has the biggest gun and the greatest strength makes the rules
- Might makes right
- Never accept a can of anything if it isn't labeled - it could be lima beans

PRESTIGE CLASSES

The world of mankind's aftermath is a different world entirely. Decades after the fall of civilization, few attempts to assemble mankind into a potent force over nature have been made, and even fewer have succeeded. Mother Nature, responding to man's failed chance to guide the planet, and his gross destruction of her children, seems to have prevented man, at every turn, from rising from the ashes to take the threshold again. But from the ashes, a few groups have risen, spawning countless gangs, communities, bands, and miniature societies.

Those who have survived against the odds are stronger, smarter, and better off for all their trouble. Whether members of elite organizations or re-growth societies, or simply wanderers with skills that make them as tough as nails (or as deadly as a one-man army), those who manage to live beyond a score or so years are those to be feared.

Besides the generic backgrounds suggested in the DARWIN'S WORLD Core Rules, there are a number of established organizations and communities for the wannabe petitioner to choose from in DARWIN'S WORLD. Though communities in DARWIN'S WORLD are little more than eggs in a sea of sand, fragile bubbles of civilization and organization in a limitless expanse of chaos, they are nonetheless appealing to the masses of drifters, beggars, and scavvs who seek a better (or easier) life. There are various communities in DARWIN'S WORLD, ranging from slave lord cities to fortresses populated by mad cultists – those below are only the major ones, and certainly there are many more across the Twisted Earth.

BRETHREN FOLLOWER

The so-called "Brethren" are a rising movement and philosophy throughout the wasteland and ruined cities of the Twisted Earth. The children of a dying mankind, mutants and terminal patients of radiation/disease, they are the "Hateful Ones", those who have survived the torment and curse of the Ancient "gods" and now live in bitter hatred of their former ancestors. Dwelling among shattered ruins that stand like tormenting

visions of a great past, they have come to inherit only a cruel world filled with poison and misery.

This bitterness against the Ancients and their ways has spawned a revolution of sorts among many surviving communities of mutants and ruin-pickers. Spurned by more advanced groups (such as purist communities who view them as mere degenerates and "wild men"), they have turned their miserable situation of squalor into a driving force to wipe out any and all remaining vestiges of Ancient glory.

Members of the Brethren adhere to a singular vow, to find and destroy the stink of Ancient life, culture, and technology from the world. Forsaking lasers, advanced medicines, and other wonders, they instead embrace a return to nature (albeit a mutated nature) and an abandonment of the decadence and luxury of the past. To them, a perpetual misery is the only way to ensure that another Fall will never again occur.

To this end, the Brethren actively vandalize and destroy technological items when and where they find them; they mar, burn, or break down old billboards and statuary in the lost cities, and make great bonfires of old libraries and dance wildly in joy around the leaping flames. Advanced devices are smashed to pieces; medicines unfamiliar to them are spilled wastefully or burned up as well.

The Brethren follow a code that completely forbids the use of technology, even against technological foes.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Brethren follower, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Chaotic alignments only.

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Background: Feral, Primitive, Ritual Preservationists (fallen away), Resentfuls, and Radicals only.

Knowledge (mutant lore): 4 ranks.

Feats: Great Fortitude.

Membership: A character wishing to join the Brethren must be admitted by their leadership.

Prohibitions: May not use items of Ancient technology under any circumstances. Items that can be used include basic armor (such as those pre-modern era types presented in the Core Rules), all simple weapons, and potions (primitive medicines). If the Brethren follower ever uses a prohibited device, he is driven out of

TABLE 2-1: THE BRETHREN

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Experience bonus, improved Unarmed strike, rage 1/day
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Trap-making (1d6, DC 16)
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	-
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Rage 2/day, weapon specialization
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Trap-making (2d6, DC 19)
6	+6	+5	+2	+2	-
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	-
8	+8	+6	+2	+2	Rage 3/day
9	+9	+6	+3	+3	Trap-making (3d6, DC 22)
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	-

the Brethren's ranks and cannot advance further in this prestige class.

CLASS SKILLS

The follower's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Brethren follower prestige class.

Hit Dice: d12.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A member of the Brethren is proficient with all simple weapons, as well as all armors and shield use.

Experience Bonus: Members of this prestige class receive bonus experience points for *destroying* technological devices and artifacts (this does not include the destruction of robots or anything else that normally gives XPs for being defeated). The experience point value is equal to 1/100 the market price of the item destroyed. "Destroying" does *not* include the use of one-shot items (such as grenades and medicine). The referee can rule out giving this bonus in uncertain situations.

Improved Unarmed Strike: The Brethren follower receives this feat for free.

Rage: When confronted with any kind of technologically superior foe (this includes robots, androids, soldiers in powered armor, or even an otherwise primitive enemy with a rifle, pistol, or other technological weapon), the follower can whip himself into a battle frenzy. This acts exactly as a barbarian's *rage* ability, with the same limitations and rules.

Trap Making: To help defeat opponents with a technological edge, Brethren followers often devise cunning traps – pits of spikes, punji-

stakes, etc. Setting up a trap takes two full rounds, and the damage inflicted (as well as DC for disarming) when sprung depends on the follower's level. A follower can only make three traps per day (duration lasts until triggered, however).

Weapon Specialization: At 4th level the Brethren follower receives Weapon Specialization as a free feat, but only if he already possesses a Weapon Focus in the same weapon. This Weapon Specialization can only be taken for a simple weapon (melee or ranged).

BROTHERHOOD FORCE MASTER

The Brotherhood of Radiation is a highly popular cult of mutants and altered humans that has spread steadily throughout the American Southwest. Originating in the ruins of ash-blackened Las Vegas almost two decades ago, their movement has attracted many hopeless and desperate souls from all over the dusty wastelands to their "Holy City of Lights".

The history of the Brotherhood is not entirely clear, even to most members of the cult. It is said that some twenty years ago, among the ruins of Las Vegas, a sagacious woman led her weakened people into the shelter of a burned-out nuclear power plant, away from the savages and road gangs of the desert country. Legend states that this princess (whose name is now considered too sacred to pronounce aloud) retreated into the darkness of this old plant where, blessed with radiation-induced visions, she had a *vision*. This dream was of a paradise-like future of peace and brotherhood, a world run by her children and their children's children. Though many thought her mad at first, a strange glow overcame her as she addressed her people, and it soon became clear she was, indeed, gifted.

Since that time the ranks of the Brotherhood have only increased – and exponentially at that. Though the followers of this princess/priestess have taken on odd mannerisms and ritual adornments (long brown robes, shaving their heads, etc), their exposure to the “glow” of their High Temple (the old plant) has left many changed and mutated. Not all are altered in a positive way, and the majority only become sick and must resign themselves to worship from afar, living in squatter-like settlements outside the Holy City. Oddly, though their princess is in her old age, she continues to monitor the new converts, check their progression and strengths, and tutor new disciples in the development of their own innate mental faculties.

As a movement, the Brotherhood claims to seek peace in this post-holocaust world and the rebuilding of a new civilization upon the ashes of the old. They do not fear radiation like so many other people; instead considering it to be the penance man must pay for his mistake in destroying the Earth. Every now and then one of their number will be born with powerful psionic abilities - telekinetic bolts of psionic force, or the ability to spontaneously generate explosive heat.

The Brotherhood, despite it’s true goals, is not particularly trusted in many communities – their religious obsession with radiation and the mutation of mankind, as well as their cult-like structure, makes them suspect to many primitive peoples. Nonetheless, the cult is particularly large and powerful; cells exist in almost every settlement, large or small, along the known trade routes. The Brothers often mount expeditions to recover nuclear technology (even nuclear waste is considered holy), and have been known to pay well those who are interested in helping them achieve their goals.

Followers of this popular desert cult are easily identifiable by their baldness (ritual exposure to radiation, as a test of initiation, causes all members to lose their hair), long monastic robes, and

religious fervor. Many openly embrace radiation and it’s mutative effects; creatures such as nuke pooches and rad wolves are trained and kept as guard-dogs for local cells.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a force master, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Background: Ritual Preservationists and Visionary Reinventors only.

Alignment: Any lawful.

Feats: Iron Will.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Concentration: 8 ranks.

Mutation: The Brotherhood of Radiation attracts to its ranks only mutants (though first, second, and third generations alike are all welcome). Anyone wishing to join the Brotherhood must have at least one mental mutation (*neural*).

Membership: A character wishing to join the Brotherhood must be admitted by the Brotherhood leadership.

CLASS SKILLS

The force master’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Animal Empathy (Cha), Decipher Script (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (ancient lore) (Int), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), and Speak Language (any) (-).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the force master prestige class.

Hit Dice: d8.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A force master receives no additional proficiencies for weapons or armor.

Radiation Immunity: A force master, once enlightened, becomes immune to the detrimental effects of radiation, whether in nature or

TABLE 2-2: THE FORCE MASTER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+2	Radiation immunity, willpower
2	+2	+0	+0	+3	Manipulation
3	+3	+1	+1	+3	Telekinetic shield
4	+4	+1	+1	+4	-
5	+5	+1	+1	+4	Minor precognition
6	+6	+2	+2	+5	-
7	+7	+2	+2	+5	Focus sword
8	+8	+2	+2	+6	-
9	+9	+3	+3	+6	Major precognition
10	+10	+3	+3	+7	Free neural mutation

produced by a weapon. However, he loses all body hair as a result of continued exposure.

Willpower: When forced to make a saving throw, the force master may roll as a Willpower save instead.

Manipulation: A force master has the ability to focus his mind to generate a minor form of telekinetic force. This acts exactly as the spell *Mage Hand*. Using this power requires a standard action, but can be used unlimited times per day.

Telekinetic Shield: At 3rd level the force master has learned the way to focus his telekinetic abilities to create a "shield" of force to deflect attacks against him. The shield provides three-quarters cover (+7 AC and +3 on Reflex saves against attacks that affect his area), but does not impede the force master in any way. Raising a telekinetic shield is a move-equivalent action; it can be maintained for 1 minute per level of force master per day.

Minor Precognition: At 5th level the force master gains the ability of a subtle "second-sight", giving him a +4 enhancement bonus to Initiative.

Focus Sword: At 7th level the force master can generate a beam of pure energy from the power of his thoughts alone. This beam sprouts from his palm and can be grasped without harm, permitting him to wield it like a sword. The *focus sword* cannot be dropped or sundered, and inflicts damage as a bastard sword (1d10 damage, 19-20/x2 crit). Furthermore, the focus sword emits light up to 20 ft, and ignores all non-living matter (including armor and its bonuses to AC). Initiating a focus sword is a move-equivalent action, and can be maintained for 1 round per level of force master per day.

Major Precognition: At 9th level the force master's second sight is incomparable. In addition to those bonuses already gained from this ability, at this level the force master receives a +2 bonus to all Listen and Spot checks, and cannot be *flanked*.

Free Neural Mutation: At 10th level the force master gains the use of any one *neural* mutation, for free.

CHAMPION

The champion is the best a community has to offer, the cream of their elite guard or soldiery. Champions are those individuals who have

survived years of inter-community conflict, raider attacks, or power struggles through his own strength, wit, and martial skill. Champions are almost universally respected and feared as a result, being true survivors whose manner of living is through the killing of all who threaten him or his people.

Champions have a place in almost every society or group, from established citadels of civilization in the desert to rampaging raider gangs. In the former, they are likely the captains of the watch, or the commander of a community-leader's personal bodyguard. In the latter, champions often rise to assume a role of leadership and command, using their power to squash all competition.

Some champions, instead of rising as heroes of a given community, instead hone their skills to their elite rank through gladiatorial games. Their reputation is thus gained not through acts of bravery and lifelong dedication, but rather due to brutality, slaughter, and carnival showmanship.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a champion, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Background: Not open to characters from a Feral background.

Feats: Toughness.

Intimidate: 5 ranks.

Base Attack Bonus: +10/+5.

CLASS SKILLS

The champion's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the champion prestige class.

Hit Dice: d12.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A champion is proficient with all simple weapons, martial, and exotic weapons, and light, medium, and heavy armor and shields.

Rallying Cry: The champion is a figure that rallies his fellows even in the more dire situations. All allies within 20 ft of the champion receive a +1 morale bonus to saves and attack

TABLE 2-3: THE CHAMPION

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Rallying cry
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	-
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Study foe
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	-
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Reputation

rolls. If the champion is brought down, however, this bonus is lost.

Study Foe: A champion can tell a person's weakness just looking at him. If you spend a full-round action watching a foe, you receive a +2 competence bonus to to-hit against him for the duration of a battle.

Reputation: The champion possesses a reputation recognized by raiders, fellow community members, and outsiders alike. When a champion reaches this level she gains the extraordinary ability to instill *fear* in others as a free action once per day.

CARTEL TRADEMASTER

As a society, the so-called "Cartel" is a highly-organized cooperative of uncanny traders and merchants, complete with their own private army. The Cartel is, in effect, a trade empire, hoarding the priceless knowledge of fuel production - their main commodity that they sell for reasonable prices and limitless quantity to the wasteland communes. The Cartel is a vast organization, bringing a new promise of capitalist civilization to the wild wasteland. They extensively seek talented men and women as diplomats ("ambassadors") to the barbaric communities of the Forbidden Lands, as well as recruits for their large army (complete with armored vehicles, towed artillery pieces, and battle rifles). The Cartel desperately seeks to keep relations between it and the various groups it "serves" healthy and productive. Being traders, they cannot afford to rub anyone the wrong way. Still, they have a reputation for dealing swiftly and decisively (often with overpowering numbers) with those who would prey on them, such as road gangs and would-be bandit kings. Traders of the Cartel are renowned as diplomats, peacemakers, and in-depth planners, but they also organize themselves into distinct "divisions" - those who excel at making contact with tribes and communities among the deserts (and securing trade treaties), and those who are best suited to defend Cartel caravans, convoys, and

army movements. This prestige class covers their better-known diplomatic corps.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Cartel trade master, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any neutral.

Abilities: Cha 15+.

Bluff: 7 ranks.

Diplomacy: 7 ranks.

Speak Language: Trade.

Spit Polish: To be a Cartel Trademaster a character must have the "Spit Polish" ability.

Membership: A character wishing to join the Cartel must be admitted by its leadership.

CLASS SKILLS

The trade master's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Innuendo (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), and Speak Language (any) (-).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Cartel trade master.

Hit Dice: d6.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A trade master is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, as well as light and medium armor and shields.

Free Skill Focus: At 1st level the Cartel trade master starts with a free skill focus in the skill, Diplomacy. This otherwise acts as the feat, Skill Focus.

Make A Deal: A trade master can get himself out of trouble by striking an irresistible deal with his captors. Attempting to "make a deal" requires the *subject* to make a Will save (DC 10 + Cha bonus) or let the trader go. There are certain limitations to this ability; the "trouble" must be a sentient creature that speaks the same language as the trader, and also the creature must have some basic need that the trader could possibly provide. Whether or not the trader actually follows through is entirely up to him. A

trader cannot attempt this ability more than once with a given enemy (or community).

Wise Man Speaks: At 8th level the trade master

can add his Wisdom modifier (if any) to his Charisma bonus when dealing in diplomacy, trades, or negotiations.

Peacemaker: The trade master has become renowned as a leader and midway between distant peoples, and his reputation is honored in all communities for neutrality and objectivity. This makes the trader respected as a diplomat and peacemaker. A trader of this level receives a +8 competence bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, Innuendo, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks.

TABLE 2-4: THE CARTEL TRADEMASTER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Skill focus
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	-
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Make a deal
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	-
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	-
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	-
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	-
8	+6	+2	+2	+6	Wise man speaks
9	+7	+3	+3	+6	-
10	+8	+3	+3	+7	Peacemaker

DEMOLITIONS EXPERT

A deadly shadow that moves through the darkness, the demolitions expert is most lethal when his handiwork goes unseen – at least for the time being. The demolitions expert is one whose mastery and understanding of flash powders, fuses, and all manner of explosive devices makes him a fiendish killer. Capable of expertly placing tripwires to trigger violent traps against the unwary, as well as concoct powerful explosives from mundane chemicals, he is a formidable opponent despite his tendency to operate in secrecy.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a demolitions expert, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Abilities: Dex 13+.

TABLE 2-5: THE DEMOLITIONS EXPERT

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Eye for safety, Keen eye, trap making (DC 16)
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Grenadier +1
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	-
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Trap-making (DC 19)
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	Grenadier +2
6	+4	+2	+5	+2	Make Explosives
7	+5	+2	+5	+2	Trap-making (DC 22)
8	+6	+2	+6	+2	Grenadier +3
9	+6	+3	+6	+3	-
10	+7	+3	+7	+3	Trap-making (DC 25)

Feats: Skill Focus (Craft, tinker).

Craft (Tinker): 8 ranks.

Disable Device: 8 ranks.

CLASS SKILLS

The demolitions expert's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (tinker) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Hide (Dex), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the demolitions expert prestige class.

Hit Dice: d6.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A demolitions expert is proficient with all exotic weapons.

Eye For Safety: A demolitions expert never risks the chance of an explosives *Misfire*, either when setting them up (as a trap) or using them in a combat situation.

Grenadier: A demolitions expert receives a special attack bonus when using thrown explosives (such as grenades, dynamite, etc). This increases as he goes up in level.

Keen Eye: A demolitions expert can always use Search to locate traps, no matter the DC of the trap.

Trap-Making: A demolitions expert can rig

any explosive device into a trap,

detonating to affect a single target or target area (if applicable). Setting up a trap takes two full rounds; damage inflicted depends on the explosive used. The DC for the trap depends on the expert's level. A demolitions expert can only make three traps per day (duration lasts until triggered, however).

Instead of being triggered by an opponent, an expert can detonate any explosive trap he has set up *remotely*, if he so wishes.

Make Explosives: At 6th level the demolition expert can actually make explosives from materials he scrounges. To make a desired explosive, the expert must spend a base cost in materials, as well as make a Craft (tinker) check; DC and cost are both based on the type of explosive to be made (see below).

Explosive	DC	Materials Cost
Anti-Tank Grenade	25	75 cp
Concussion Grenade	18	18 cp
Dynamite	18	20 cp
Fragmentation Grenade	20	30 cp
Irritant Gas Grenade	18	405 cp
Molotov Cocktail	12	5 cp
Satchel Charge A	20	140 cp
Satchel Charge B	25	330 cp
Satchel Charge C	30	600 cp
Smoke Grenade	12	5 cp

FOUNDATIONIST PALADIN

A lot can be said about this most famous (or infamous) of post-apocalyptic organizations. They are known by a number of names (many derogatory), but universally call themselves either "Foundationists" or simply "The Foundation". Put simply, Foundationists are ardent and dedicated collectors of the relics of the Ancients. They call themselves preservationists, and openly the word is that they seek only to save the last vestiges of man's technology from the inevitable ruin and decay of this chaotic world.

Foundationists are men (and sometimes women) who revere the Ancients almost like "demi-gods", awed and respectful of the incredible technology and civilization of their forefathers – a civilization of which only ruins and rubble now remain. The Foundationists as a people have many theories as to why civilization fell, but in the end, their ultimate goal is only to preserve and protect whatever remains for a future time when peace and harmony can be

revived. Until that day, which they call "Eden", the Foundationists have sworn to seek out, extract, and hoard all manner of technologies (weapons, armor, vehicles, power sources, medicines, etc), keeping them from even the most well-meaning primitives for some greater purpose far in the future.

Individually, this philosophy makes members of this allegiance quite colorful and easily recognizable; an Foundationists values old, rusty things like they were priceless artifacts, from preserved ration packs to pocket lighters. Any and all things used by the Ancients are worthy of their worship and care, and they will go to extraordinary lengths to acquire them - even if it means theft or war. Though the actual technology of certain Foundationist communities sometimes varies, as a united movement they possess some of the most advanced weapons and military equipment left operable in the world.

In addition to their quest to find and protect technology, the Foundation seeks also to promote scientific understanding and development in the world. What started as simply developing an edge to ensure their survival against other marauding bands in the post-holocaust world, has turned them into the world's foremost experts in the recreation of lost technologies. They are constantly building and recovering the gizmos of the Ancients, from weapons to water-purification tech. They share this knowledge with whoever they deem worthy (folk such as the NCR and the Cartel have already begun to benefit; technology is denied to those who seek to cause pain, terror, and mayhem). In their hearts they carry what many believe to be the seed of resurrecting the glory of the Ancients.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Foundationist paladin, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Background: Ritual Preservationists, Resurrectors, Visionary Reinventors, Guardians, and Advanced communities only.

Alignment: Any Lawful.

Abilities: Int 15+.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Knowledge (ancient lore): 8 ranks.

Membership: A character wishing to join the Foundationists must be admitted by the Foundation leadership.

CLASS SKILLS

The Foundationist paladin's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (ancient lore) (Int), Knowledge (vehicle operation) (Int), and Ride (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Foundationist paladin prestige class.

Hit Dice: d10.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: An Foundationist paladin is proficient with all simple, martial, and exotic weapons, and light, medium, and heavy armor. They are not proficient with shields.

Ancient Lore: All Foundationists have been instructed in the legends surrounding the Ancients. Though in many cases these stories have been altered or embellished, an underlying understanding of Ancient ways is ingrained in the Foundationist psyche. An Foundationist may make a special lore check with a bonus equal to her level + her Intelligence modifier to see whether he understands the general nature and use of any item or object he comes across. The GM will determine the Difficulty Class of the check by referring to the table below.

DC Type of Knowledge

10	Commonly-known information: Figments of Ancient life, culture, and society; Ancient laws and customs; common phrases and sayings from before the Fall.
20	Vague legends, lost information: What certain drugs are used for; how to repair and maintain items of advanced technology; how to construct a makeshift electric motor.
30	Obscure stories of Ancient tech: The general location of lost army depots; the workings of advanced vehicles (tanks); the history of a military unit.
40	Knowledge from just before the Fall: What fate befell a certain city or settlement during the Fall; command codes to a specific missile silo.

Command: The Foundationist Paladin's leadership has not been overlooked, and he is given a battlefield command. The actual rank of the character depends on his level: 3rd "Squire", 5th "Knight", 7th "Paladin", 9th "Paladin-Commander", and 10th "General".

A "Squire" is qualified to lead a single element in the field. He receives a 1st level Guardian as a follower.

A "Knight" is given command of three 1st level Guardians or one 3rd level Guardian.

A "Paladin" commands nine 1st level Guardians, or six 1st level Guardians and one 3rd level Guardian.

A "Paladin-Commander" takes control of a larger force, generally around eighteen 1st level Guardians or twelve 1st level Guardians and two 3rd level Guardians. Instead of 3rd level Guardians he may choose to take a single Thinker (usually a specialized Mech) of 6th level to join him.

A "General's" command can range widely from double that of a Paladin-Commander to an entire field army.

This ability usually takes the place of the Leadership feat for Foundationist paladins. A character may decline the offer of command without consequence. A character with a command of eighteen or more men is often charged with heading an Foundationist mission to colonize or conquer a certain area for the community's settlement, or build a new stronghold (a task requiring several months to years or more). This usually spells the end of his active, front-line service, however.

Heroic Direction: At 6th level, you can use a full-round action to bestow a +2 competence bonus on either attacks or skill checks to all allies within 30 feet. This bonus lasts a number of rounds equal to your Charisma bonus.

Bonus Feats: At 1st level, the Foundationist paladin gets a bonus feat in addition to those feats she already gets for advancing in level. The Foundationist paladin gains an additional bonus

feat at 1st level and every 3 levels thereafter (4th, 7th, and 10th). These bonus feats must

TABLE 2-6: THE FOUNDATIONIST PALADIN

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Ancient lore, bonus feat
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	-
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Command 3
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Bonus feat
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Command 5
6	+6	+5	+2	+2	Heroic direction
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	Command 7, bonus feat
8	+8	+6	+2	+2	-
9	+9	+6	+3	+3	Command 9
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	Command 10, bonus feat

be drawn from the following list: Ambidexterity, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat (Mounted Archery, Trample, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge), Point Blank Shot (Far Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run), Quick Draw, Weapon Focus.

JUJU DOCTOR

The “juju doctor” is one of the most mysterious and yet highly-valued members of any community in the wastes. Legends speak of the painted faces, feathered headdresses, and magic focus sticks of tribal shaman and desert witches, and the potent magic of healing and life-giving they alone possess – a knowledge of the human body and lost spellcraft passed down only through jealous whispers from one generation to the next.

In other places, the phenomenon of the juju doctor is a little more refined, circulating among the educated elite as a priceless science for the repair of injury and disease. In more civilized communities, however, the juju doctor is equally elevated in position and prestige, his art still often viewed as a kind of “magic” in a world of decaying understanding and enlightenment.

Though the juju doctor does not, in fact, have “magical abilities”, his understanding of wounds, disease, and poison (and their treatment) make him one of the most important assets to a people or group in the harsh and inhospitable world of the Twisted Earth.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a juju doctor, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Feats: Brew Potion, Skill Focus (Knowledge, medicine & pharmacy).

Heal: 9 ranks.

Knowledge (Medicine): 9 ranks.

Knowledge (Pharmacy): 9 ranks.

CLASS SKILLS

The juju doctor’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Decipher Script (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (ancient lore) (Int), Knowledge (medicine) (Int), Knowledge (mutant lore) (Int), Knowledge (pathology) (Int), Knowledge (pharmacy) (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (herbalist) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Speak Language (any) (-).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the juju doctor prestige class.

Hit Dice: d4.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A juju doctor receives no additional proficiencies for weapons or armor.

Brew Potion: Though other characters may get the Brew Potion feat, the table below is presented here to show the material cost of making “Potions” (Primitive Medicines):

Medicine	Material Cost
Drink of Fools	13 cp
Juju Salve	25 cp
Infusion of Valor	50 cp
Oil of Remedy	50 cp
Sleeping Potion	50 cp
Purgative	63 cp

Canny Defense: Juju doctors know how to avoid the dangers only they can repair. This acts like a Scav’s ability to dodge, giving the juju doctor an additional Wisdom bonus (if any) to their AC. If caught flat-footed or otherwise denied a Dexterity bonus, the juju doctor also loses this bonus. If canny defense is already possessed due to some other class, there is no further benefit.

Doctor’s Know-How: You have an innate ability to tell what a certain drug, chemical, poison, or medical apparatus will do. If you make a Wis check (DC 20), you can automatically determine how any medical or poisonous chemical, drug, or device will generally operate.

Herbal Medicine (Minor): As you go up levels, you learn more advanced techniques to heal, using mundane herbs and commonly found plants. This ability works just like the spell, *cure minor wounds*. A character may only receive Herbal Medicine once per day. Use of this ability requires a full round action and a successful Heal check (DC 10).

Herbal Medicine (Moderate): As minor herbal medicine, but the Heal check is DC 15, and the effect is like *cure light wound*.

Improved First Aid: When the skill, Heal, is used to stabilize a patient with negative hit points, the 4th level juju doctor brings that character to 1 hit point instead of merely stabilizing hit point loss with a successful roll.

TABLE 2-7: THE JUJU DOCTOR

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+0	+0	Doctor's know-how, herbal medicine (minor)
2	+1	+3	+0	+0	Canny defense
3	+1	+3	+1	+1	Herbal medicine (moderate)
4	+2	+4	+1	+1	Improved first aid
5	+2	+4	+1	+1	Bedside manner +2, herbal medicine (major)
6	+3	+5	+2	+2	-
7	+3	+5	+2	+2	Neutralize poison
8	+4	+6	+2	+2	Witch
9	+4	+6	+3	+3	Bedside manner +4
10	+5	+7	+3	+3	Cure disease

Herbal Medicine (Major): As minor herbal medicine, but the Heal check is DC 20, and the effect is like *cure moderate wound*.

Neutralize Poison: You can treat even the most deadly poisons with seemingly "magic herbs". A character may only receive Neutralize Poison once per contraction. Use of this ability requires a full-round action and Heal check (DC 20).

Bedside Manner: The juju doctor knows how to apply medicines. If a juju doctor actually administers a shot or other medicine personally, his patient's save to check for medical incompatibility is made with a +2 competence bonus (this increased to +4 at 9th level).

Witch: At 8th level the juju doctor can use secret chemical techniques to take a small amount of existing medicine, even those of the Ancients, and make more. The medicines that can be duplicated are listed below, along with the cost in materials and time required for a single dose:

MECH

Covered in an oily layer of obscuring black grease, his clothes soiled but patched-up with a collection of pockets and pouches, a belt jingling with keys, screwdrivers, and wrenches, the *mech* is a unique sight among more advanced communities. The mech is a repairman, a tinker, a "Mr. Fixit" without equal, given the task of maintaining, repairing, or resurrecting items and artifacts of technology and electrical operation.

Though in many communities techs are considered invaluable assets with rare skills in technical fields and mechanics, with an equal (if not prestigious standing) among their peoples, some groups instead enslave the skilled mechs and treat them little better than dogs to be kept in kennels and fed only to sustain their strength. In such barbarous communities, the mech is seen as a "tool" only, keeping machines, water purifiers, and vehicle fleets running.

The Foundation employs an inordinate number of mechs to keep their resurrected machines, weapons, and armor operating in full working order. Mechs (known as "scribes" among their knightly ranks) in the employ of the Foundation are accorded unprecedented dignity and respect by their more militant peers.

On the flip side, among the infamous group known as the "Children of The Metal Gods", mechs are merely weak-minded religious fanatics of little intelligence (but great skill) who have come to not only re-activate lost robots and androids where they find them - but also *worship* them. Though often considered little better than insects to their super-egotistical robotic overlords, the mechs are kept alive in miserable squalor to oil and tend their masters in their campaigns of global conquest.

Medicine	Material Cost	Time Taken
Antitoxin	190 cp	2 days
Filter-Dose	200 cp	2 days
Halazone Tabs	25 cp	1 day
Mercurin	75 cp	1 day
Rad-Purge	190 cp	2 days
Stimshot A	75 cp	1 day
Stimshot B	150 cp	2 days
Superegen	75 cp	1 day
Truth Serum	123 cp	2 days

The juju doctor must have at least one dose of the stated medicine to begin with to use this ability.

Cure Disease: At the highest level, the juju doctor can, with a Knowledge (pathology) check (DC 20) discern the nature of any disease and formulate an effective cure. A character may only receive Cure Disease once per contraction.

TABLE 2-8: THE MECH

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Repair mechanical damage
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Growing toolkit +5
3	+1	+1	+3	+1	Identify
4	+2	+1	+4	+1	Artifice (8,000 cp max)
5	+2	+1	+4	+1	Minor Helper
6	+3	+2	+5	+2	Growing toolkit +10
7	+3	+2	+5	+2	Artifice (16,000 cp max)
8	+4	+2	+6	+2	-
9	+4	+3	+6	+3	Major helper
10	+5	+3	+7	+3	Artifice (32,000 cp max), growing toolkit +15

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a mech, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Background: Ritual Preservationists, Resurrectors, Visionary Reinventors, Guardians, and Advanced only.

Feats: Skill Focus (Knowledge, mechanics).

Craft (Mechanics): 8 ranks.

Craft (Technician): 8 ranks.

Knowledge (Technology): 8 ranks.

Speak Language: Computer.

CLASS SKILLS

The mech's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Craft (any) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (ancient lore) (Int), Knowledge (computers) (Int), Knowledge (technology) (Int), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (any) (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the mech prestige class.

Hit Dice: d4.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A mech receives no additional proficiencies for weapons or armor.

Repair Mechanical Damage: As a full-round action a mech can repair any damage to constructs, doors, sundered objects, and non-living obstacles (including vehicles). The amount repaired is 1d8 hit points, +1 point per level of mech. This ability can be used once daily.

Growing Toolkit: As a mech gains in level, he adds to his personal toolkit and accumulates

numerous gadgets to aid in his endeavors. This equates to a competence bonus to *any* of his Craft skills, dependent on his level. The grubby, often misunderstood tools and trinkets in his kit cannot benefit anyone but himself.

Identify: Lots of interesting things pass through a mech's hands throughout his life, and his hands-on experience with all sorts of passing artifacts (broken or not) means he knows a little about everything. At 3rd level the mech can identify any item he sees and handles. He can determine if it is damaged or malfunctioning, and discern its purpose and use.

Artifice: The mech is a master at duplicating technology, even stuff he barely understands. If a mech has seen and handled a technological object in the past, he can attempt to make a working replica (given the proper materials and time) later on. Common examples of mech artifice include certain junk items, gizmos, weapons, and medical devices. Foodstuffs, drugs and chemicals, and certain other items are of course not reproduced using artifice.

The cost in materials (spare parts, salvaged junk, etc) of the object to be created is equal to 1/3 of its normal cost. The maximum cost (base cost; not the cost of materials) of an item to be created is determined by the mech's level. The time required for the item's creation is one day for every 100 cp in production cost (rounded up). The game referee can place any limitations he deems practical on objects created by a mech.

For example, a mech once examined a maser pistol and now wants to make one from a collection of spare parts. The base cost of a maser pistol (6,500 cp) is within his level limit, so he can go ahead and make the item, spending 2,167 cp in materials and twenty-two days.

TABLE 2-9: THE RANGER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Rigorous training
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	-
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Wanderers reputation
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	-
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	"Feel" for weapon
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	-
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	-
8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Do it with eyes closed
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	-
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Leave no one behind

The object - no matter what it is - is somewhat faulty, however, requiring a Knowledge (technology) skill roll (DC 20) each time it is used; if failed, the object breaks or falls to pieces and cannot be repaired.

Minor Helper: The mech can create a small wheeled or tracked "robot" to assist in operations. A minor helper is merely an automaton that carries small loads such as tools and equipment, and follows it's master about - but can do very little else. A minor helper acts much like a *floating disk*, carrying up to 100 lbs of weight, following 3 feet behind it's creator, never leaving his sight. If separated, the helper will continue to move towards it's creator's location so long as the distance is no greater than 50' (at which time it will remain immobile until the creator comes within 3 feet again). A helper can possibly be destroyed through normal physical damage and effects.

Major Helper: The mech can now create a more useful "helper", equipped with a single articulated arm for manipulation. The major helper operates similarly to a minor helper, but it can also perform simple functions and tasks (scouting, exploring, opening doors, picking up objects, etc), verbally communicated to it by it's creator in 25 words or less. It cannot be commanded again if it leaves hearing range of it's creator.

RANGER

The famed "Rangers" are a militaristic community of men and women who vigilantly patrol the Shifting Wastes region of the Twisted Earth. The Rangers are believed to be the descendants of a US army unit that found itself in the area when the Fall came - taking with it in one fell swoop the remnants of the world they had pledged to defend. Though some suggest their forefathers were, in fact, deserters (why else were they in

the middle of nowhere when the bombs began to fall?), whatever the truth of it one cannot deny they

are among the bravest and most widely-respected men in the world.

Having survived the nuclear exchange isolated in the desert, the Rangers were able to maintain items of high technology despite the advance of the years since the Fall. Though they have almost all but lost the culture they originally were sworn to uphold, generations of soldierly-training and a policy of continued "police actions" to keep the peace have transformed them into the closest thing many tribal and desert communities have to a protective agency.

As such, even generations later, the Rangers have come to symbolize the only law and order in the wasteland. These men and women raise their own, train their own, and protect their own. Few are permitted into their ranks, since few can survive the rigors of the Ranger lifestyle - military rationing, a military command structure, military law and punishments (i.e. firing squads and hard labor), and military discipline rule every aspect of Ranger life.

But despite their rough military origins, the Rangers have undeniably instituted a semblance of law, order, and peace in the desert - a peace backed by the threat of death, of course. Characters who come from the Rangers are assumed to be scouts from the community, probably sent out into the desert to investigate some rumored disturbance, and put things right for the benefit of those under the Rangers' umbrella of protection. Individual groups of Rangers are often sent into the field for months or even years at a time to deal with renegade groups such as road gangs or rising tyrannies, coming into contact with base only every now and then only for supplies, medical aid, or review by their superiors (they still adhere to a strict code called "Rules of Engagement" by which they live).

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a ranger, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Lawful good or lawful neutral only.

Abilities: Con 15+.

Base Attack Bonus: +7.

Feats: Iron Will, Toughness.

Membership: A character wishing to join the Rangers must be admitted by the Ranger leadership. The Rangers don't normally accept new recruits, and those that wish to join are put through terrible hazing and trials before admittance is allowed. Those that stick it through, however, soon learn that the Rangers is all they imagined it to be and more.

CLASS SKILLS

The ranger's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (-), Spot (Wis), Use Rope (Dex), and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the ranger prestige class.

Hit Dice: d10.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A ranger is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and light, medium, and heavy armor. They are not proficient with shields.

Rigorous Training: Rangers are subject to rigorous training that prepares them for hardships. Ranger receive a +4 morale bonus to Constitution checks for making forced marches, difficult physical maneuvers (sloshing through hip-deep mud), or any other task requiring extended exertion.

Wanderer's Reputation: When you enter a new settlement, the reputation of your people proceeds you; locals typically pause, gather, and listen to your needs. A ranger adds his ranger levels to all Intimidate and Diplomacy checks. For instance, a 5th level ranger has a +5 bonus

to all related checks.

"Feel" For Weapon: At this level the ranger has learned to use one weapon perfectly, as if he had the feat, "Feel" For Weapon. The weapon must already be in the character's possession, and must be determined when the level is taken.

Do It With Eyes Closed: At this level the ranger gains the ability to assemble, reassemble, and maintain his weapon with the precision of a machine. As a full-round action, a ranger can effectively repair damaged, jammed, or misfired weapons automatically, with or without the needed parts or even a Weaponsmithing check.

Leave No One Behind: Rangers never quit. You inspire allies to fight to the death at your side as well. Allies within 30 ft of you continue to fight while disabled or dying without penalty. They continue until they reach -10 hit points. In addition, they are immune to all forms of fear so long as you remain with them (within 30 ft). These abilities apply to you as well, but only if others are at risk.

ROAD WARRIOR

The road warrior is a member of a unique breed of men who roam the vast plains and desert wastes of the Twisted Earth, obeying no law, serving no community, and scavenging with each passing day the things he needs from the abandoned hulks of trucks, cars, and other vehicles all along the American road. The road warrior subsists not unlike the scav on rare junk he finds, but his primary concern is not food for his own stomach, or water to sate his thirst, but fuel to power his ride.

The highways of the Twisted Earth still rumble every now and again with the thunder of road gangs and the rare truck convoy of powerful merchant groups. Highway ambushes by motorcycle gangs on fuel and food convoys are not uncommon; neither are the appearance of solitary folk on cycles, cars, or trucks of their own seeking only the freedom of the open road and the detached life of day-to-day survival.

The road warrior is a member of this stereotype, a man who has become reliant on a vehicle for his survival in the empty, desolate

TABLE 2-10: THE ROAD WARRIOR

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+2	+0	Boarding party, offensive driving
2	+2	+0	+3	+0	Defensive driving
3	+3	+1	+3	+1	Vehicular dodge
4	+4	+1	+4	+1	Master mechanic
5	+5	+1	+4	+1	Improved defensive driving

world. This reliance on a car or motorcycle has made him an expert at fighting from the back of his ride, as well as defending himself from the attacks of motorized brigands and warlord armies that are known throughout the sands.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a road warrior, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Feats: Road Warrior.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Craft (vehicle operation): 4 ranks.

Craft (mechanics): 4 ranks.

Special: To become a road warrior a character must be in possession of a working vehicle.

CLASS SKILLS

The road warrior's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (mechanics) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (vehicle operation) (Int), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the road warrior prestige class.

Hit Dice: d8.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A road warrior is proficient with all simple and martial weapons.

Boarding Party: A road warrior can leap from one vehicle to another, even at high speeds. You gain a +4 competence bonus to Dex checks when attempting acrobatic maneuvers during boarding attempts.

Offensive Driving: The road warrior can fire a one-handed ranged weapon and operate a vehicle at the same time, without additional penalty. Otherwise, this is treated as using a second weapon (without Ambidexterity/Two-Weapon Fighting).

Defensive Driving: While driving defensively the road warrior cannot attack, but he gains a +4 AC dodge bonus. In addition, his vehicle also gains a +4 AC bonus. A road warrior can only maintain this defensive posture for one round per level of road warrior.

Vehicular Dodge: A last minute veer. The road warrior can use this ability to literally "dodge" an attack directed at his vehicle. To do so the character must spend a standard action.

Dodging permits the driver to make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) to avoid a hit against himself or his vehicle. A road warrior must be aware of an attack to dodge it.

Master Mechanic: A road warrior gains a +2 competence bonus to Craft (mechanics) skill checks.

Improved Defensive Driving: At this level the road warrior becomes expert at maintaining evasive maneuvers. With this level of ability the road warrior can maintain his Defensive Driving (see above) for an unlimited period, so long as his vehicle is still moving.

SISTER OF THE DESERT (AMAZON)

Women in this awful, radiated world are a rarity in these times, a commodity and luxury to be collected and kept under lock and key. The high radiation of the planet's ecosystem has, over time, diminished mankind's ability to reproduce, and by some abnormal coincidence the frequency of female births in this day and age are plummeting. As such, women have long been valued by the marauders and warlords of the earth.

The so-called "Sisters of The Desert" were, at one time, the priceless slaves of raider kings, debauched community leaders, or gang bosses of the various ruined cities of this savage land. These few women, most often beauties hand-picked from the masses and cultured like pearls, became things for men to achieve and earn in the service of their masters.

But the status quo is not an easy one to maintain, even in these times, and though many slaves are cowed into submission, many more choose to risk death rather than serve as maids, servants, and concubines. When one community is attacked and destroyed, their harems are often abandoned before the victor can come to claim the spoils. Women are not stupid – they have seen their sisters raped to death in the ensuing chaos of a power struggle, and few manage to escape with their lives.

The Sisterhood is made of those few women (and sometimes delicate men or children) who have braved certain death and torture to live free. They are universally a band of escapees, runaways, and renegade "property" seeking only isolation and independence. Unused to a life of hardship and survival, and without their former masters to care for them, many die only months

after escape, until meeting up with the Sisterhood. Given food, water, shelter, and hope, they find that the Sisterhood is the strongest movement on the Twisted Earth.

The Sisters Of The Desert are comprised solely of women (or, in some rare cases, men formerly "used" in a similar fashion for obscene entertainment) who have survived a nightmare life of capture, use, and perpetual abuse. They have come to form a small but determined coalition of scattered tribes that is bent on only one thing - exacting vengeance against the raiders, bandits, slavers, and other tyrannical groups of the wasteland. It is their dream to take back the world as reparation for their existence of squalor, and set up a new society separate from the barbarism of the post-holocaust wasteland.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a sister of the desert, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Feats: Concubine, Endurance.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Special: Generally speaking, only women can be members of the Sisterhood, but sometimes (rarely) exceptions are made. Cells are typically organized and led by a strong female leader, scarred by a life of hardships, and thus the general view of the association is negative towards males in general.

Membership: A character wishing to join the Sisterhood must be admitted by it's leadership.

CLASS SKILLS

The sister of the desert's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Animal Empathy (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (any) (Int), Escape Artists (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis),

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the sister prestige class.

Hit Dice: d8.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A sister is proficient with all simple weapons, and light and medium armor and shields.

Fascinate: A sister, being of the rare female gender, fascinates those who first see her for what she is. On the first round of any meeting, the sister can attempt to fascinate a single opponent/subject. The target must be a sentient human or mutant (character races only), and must fail a Will save (DC 15 + Charisma bonus) for the attempt to succeed. A fascinated subject does nothing but watch the sister, standing still and not acting in any way - even in the middle of battle. An entranced subject can be struck (with a +2 bonus to the attack roll, as if it were stunned), but thereafter it recovers and may act normally. In any event, the fascinate ability only works for 1 round + the sister's Charisma modifier. Using this ability is a free action.

Note that the GM may decide this facet of the Sister prestige class is only open to females - the rare male exception should generally not receive this special ability.

Natural Healing: Sisters are expert at using herbs and natural methods to treat their injured comrades. Once per day a sister may cure 1d8 points of damage freely, on top of other healing due to treatment and rest. Using this ability requires 1d6 hours of undisturbed care, however.

Go For The "Eyes": A sister knows how best to injure her male predator. By taking a full-round action, her attack inflicts an additional +1d6 damage to any *male* opponent. This only applies to melee attacks.

Good With Animals:

Animals feel the naturally gentle nature of the outcast sister too. A sister can duplicate the effects of the spell, *Animal*

TABLE 2-11: THE SISTER OF THE DESERT

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Fascinate
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Natural healing
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Good with animals
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	-
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Go for the eyes
6	+6	+5	+2	+2	-
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	Leave no one behind
8	+8	+6	+2	+2	-
9	+9	+6	+3	+3	-
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	Superior camo

Tumble (Dex), Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Trance (DC 10 + level in sister), but only on non-mutated natural animals. The attempt requires a full-round action.

Leave No One Behind: Sisters never leave their own behind to be captured or suffer a horrible fate. Allies within 30 ft of a sister continue to fight while disabled or dying without penalty. They continue until they reach -10 hit points. In addition, they are immune to all forms of *fear* so long as the sister remains close (within 30 ft).

Superior Camo: At 10th level the sister has learned to disguise herself with paint, leaves, etc. so well that she blends in perfectly with the background. When attacked at a range greater than 100 ft, attacks suffer a 20% miss chance against her.

AN UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

For those players who have had a taste of the world of DARWIN'S WORLD before, you know that this is a history in the making, a world waiting to grow, expand, and develop into new frontiers.

DARWIN'S WORLD is shaped by players like you. Not only by showing interest in the game and it's unique features, but also through the contribution of ideas, creative criticisms, and personal stories. But the shaping of this world goes beyond even this.

Originally, in an attempt to promote interest in the post-apocalyptic genre and (in specific) the world of the Twisted Earth, DARWIN'S WORLD was adapted to serve as a strategic-scale play by e-mail for players all over the Internet to join in and shape the campaign world. The call did not go unanswered; many leapt at the chance to take control of a burgeoning group, large and small, and attempt to bring it through the darkness into a New Age.

Players in the various periodic installments of the play-by-email games of DARWIN'S WORLD have had the opportunity to help shape and direct the ongoing campaign that is the game. In each of these episodes, players have contributed immensely to the foundation and formation of various groups scattered throughout what is now presented here as DARWIN'S WORLD. The first episodes have gone well; the future is open to many more stories of many more cities across the old American badlands.

NECROPOLIS: Necropolis was the first pbem game set up for DARWIN'S WORLD. During 2000, players from all over America got together through email communications, moderated by an objective overseer, in a quest to lead their own diverse communities towards the domination of one of the world's greatest ruined cities - Los Angeles, also known as the *necropolis*, a city of the dead.

NECROPOLIS ran for a total of 14 weeks, covering an epic campaign that saw the rise and fall of many valiant peoples in the old ash-blackened shell of Old Los Angeles. It was a tremendous story of struggling survivors, meager communities, and primitive races seeking to emulate the greatness of their surroundings though the creation of a new beginning. Players

worked hard, against the hostile elements, the threat of starvation and disease, as well as the machinations of their fellow denizens of the city, to rise above the squalor and bring glory and conquest to their names.

In the end, only one community was victorious, the others burned or driven-out of the city forever. But despite the fate of so many brave people, the world has grown. Congratulations to all who contributed their time, interest, and ideas!

SHADOW OF THE SAVANTS: In the summer-fall of 2001, NECROPOLIS was followed by the even more intense, epoch-making, and advanced pbem, SHADOW OF THE SAVANTS. Set ten years after the violent struggles of Los Angeles, SHADOW OF THE SAVANTS took another city from among the wasteland, Dallas, and made it a brand new and even more challenging setting. Like before, players from all over gathered to choose their communities (or invent their own), and throw in their bid to conquer a city once ruled by a tyrannical empire of super-mutants. This time the game was a race to create new empires from the ashes of the old, make alliances and treaties to secure a fragile peace, and face the inevitable return of the dread Savants and their flying machines...

And the story does not end there. Future episodes will most certainly provide ever more players of DARWIN'S WORLD to join in on the fun. There will be other cities: Seattle, Chicago, Kansas City, New York, etc. As the world grows, so will the needs of the victorious few, and perhaps, some day in the future, there will be a great war of city-states against each other rampaging across the entire wasteland!

Though these two games began it all, DARWIN'S WORLD goes on. Players now have the chance to role-play individuals in this chaotic world of rising and falling societies and factions. They can actually play members of the very communities they helped create and lead, shape and define as powerhouses of the Twisted Earth. With this book, a whole new world of adventure awaits!

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