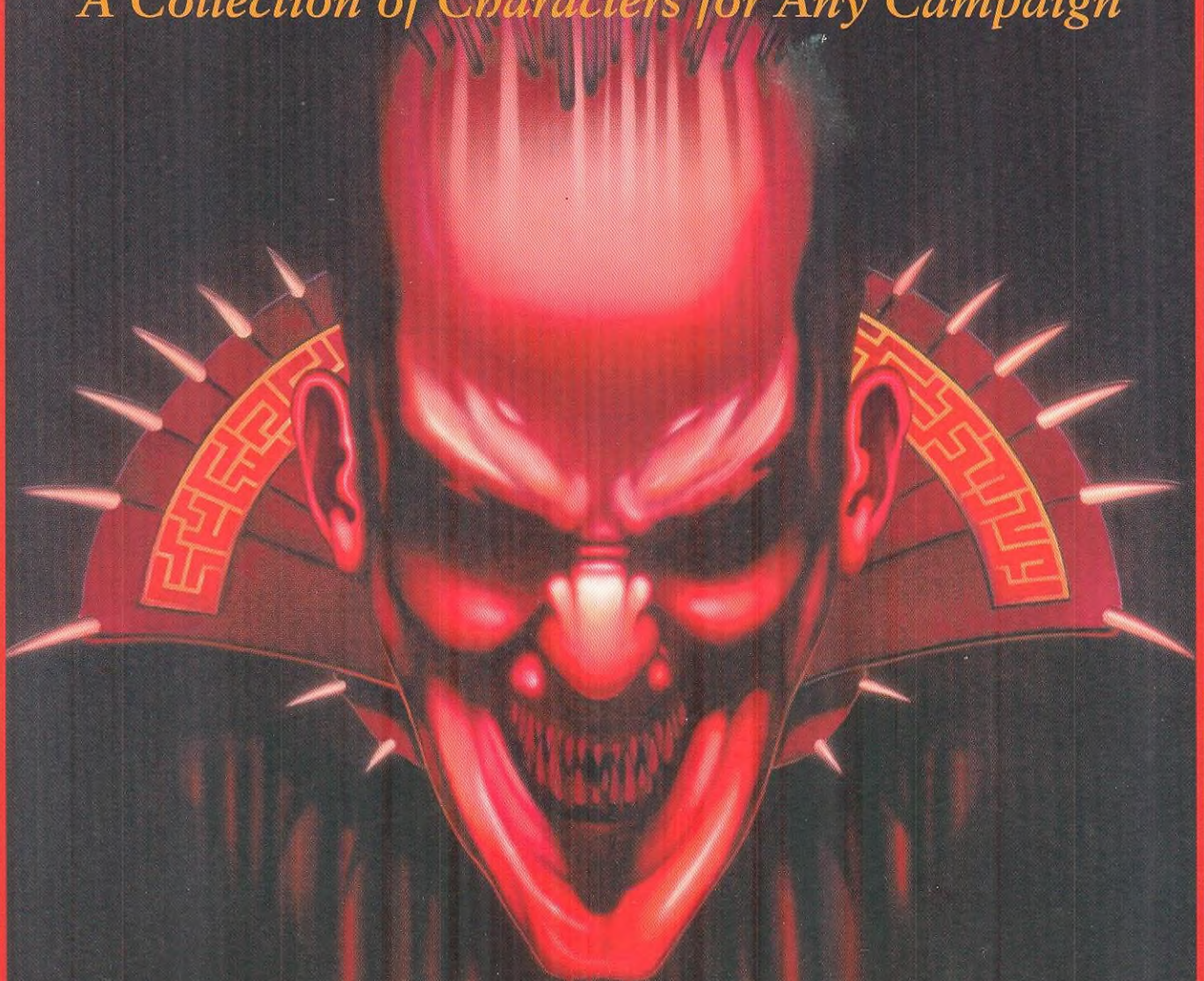


G U R P S[®]

SUPPORTING CAST

A Collection of Characters for Any Campaign



BY NIGEL D. FINDLEY AND FRASER CAIN

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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GURPS®

SUPPORTING CAST

A Collection of Characters for Any Campaign

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of a *GURPS* campaign is, of course, the player characters and their direct opponents – in dramatic terms, the protagonists and antagonists. They're not the only people in the campaign world, however. There are also the "bit players," the "extras" – the supporting cast. These can range from "one-shot," minor characters like the sneak thief who picks the PCs' pockets, to ongoing supporting characters like the bartender at the PCs' favorite tavern. Even though they're rarely the *focus* of an adventure, they can certainly be the *instigators* of a few.

Many adventures start with a threat or challenge to the PCs. But why couldn't a cataclysmic adventure begin with a threat to the PCs' friend, or colleague . . . or even that long-suffering bartender? It's up to the Game Master to roleplay convincing NPCs. But sometimes *creating* those characters as well as plotting the adventure places just a little too much pressure on the overworked referee. That's where *GURPS Supporting Cast* comes in.

Readers will notice that most of these characters have relatively low character point totals – most do not reach the standard 100-point starting point for player characters (though some actually exceed it; see below). That's because these characters are not supposed to be the heroes. While they can have a significant effect on the storyline, the true movers and shakers are the player characters. The PCs are heroes – by definition. This book tries to provide an interesting selection of "regular people" – non-heroes – with which the PCs can interact.

Many of these bit players could be "promoted" to become major NPCs – colleagues of the protagonists, minions of the antagonists, or even major antagonists in their own right. It's easy enough for Game Masters to bump up the point values if they like; just increase a couple of important skills, or add a significant advantage.

For variety, though, a few characters have been thrown in that *could* be the center of an adventure or a campaign. These NPCs have higher point totals than the others – most notably the Demon (p. 17), the Dragon (p. 18), the General (p. 20), the Computer AI (p. 75) and the Spy (p. 125). If the GM uses these characters in his campaign, he should realize that they will have a stronger effect on the story line than the other NPCs.

Organization

This book is divided into four sections, or genres: Fantasy, Contemporary, Near Future (including cyberpunk) and Space. Each character is slotted into one of these settings. For example, the bartender can be found in the fantasy section, and is described in fantasy terms. Most characters can exist in multiple time settings, however (or, at least, analogues of them could exist). Obviously, bartenders are going to be as common in a space travel setting as in a fantasy-medieval milieu.

For this reason, each character description includes a section on *Conversions*. This section provides hints on how GMs can tailor the character to different settings, and suggestions for interesting setting-dependent variations.

Finally, each description includes several *Adventure Seeds*. These are intended to "jump-start" the GM's imagination, to help inspire adventures that revolve around the specific character.



About GURPS

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

Roleplayer. This bimonthly magazine includes new rules, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

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

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

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

BBS. For those who have home computers, SJ Games operates a multi-line BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours per day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call! We also have discussion areas on CompuServe, GENie, and America Online.

Page References

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

At the end of the book is a table listing each character in alphabetical order, regardless of genre, so that a GM looking for a specific type of character doesn't have to try to figure out which setting the NPC is listed under.

About the Authors

Nigel D. Findley is a professional author and game designer, with publication credits with virtually every major RPG company in North America. This is his second project for Steve Jackson Games, his first being *GURPS Illuminati*. Nigel lives in Vancouver, on the west coast of Canada. This is his first – and possibly his last – collaborative project.

Fraser Cain is currently taking a long break in the pursuit of his engineering degree. He spends his free time snowboarding, mountain-biking, and struggling with an inferiority complex about his writing. He never, ever wants to see the Instant Characters booklet again. This is his first project for Steve Jackson Games, but he's been playing *GURPS* for what seems like forever. He also lives in Vancouver.

Character Statistics

The characters' heights, weights, hair and eye colors have been intentionally left ambiguous. This is so the GM can "customize" the NPCs to fit his personal tastes and adventure style. The illustrations provided for each character are designed to give the GM an idea of what the character *might* look like, but should not be considered absolute.

Note that few of these characters have serious combat skills, carry significant weaponry, or wear armor. That's because they're not meant to be targets for trigger-happy PCs. Characters who solve problems by cutting down bartenders and waitresses on a regular basis should pay the penalty for their impulsive behavior.

Additionally, the skill levels for these NPCs are average to above average in most cases; rarely are they exceptional. Remember, these are *not* player-characters, nor are they intended as major adversaries to the PCs. They are mostly "regular folks," and thus have their skills at average levels.

Other Books

The reader may notice that some of the characters have advantages, disadvantages, skills and equipment that do not appear in the *Basic Set*. On p. 128 is a listing of which new abilities came from which books.



FANTASY

1



ALCHEMIST

ST: 9 IQ: 15 Speed: 5
DX: 11 HT: 9 Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 90

Advantages

Acute Taste & Smell +2; Literacy; Reputation +2 (To everyone, all the time: an expert alchemist and herbalist); Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Minor Delusion (If the potion didn't work for you, it's because you didn't believe); Overconfidence.

Quirks

Always tries to get the money in advance; Concerned about uses of potions; Does everything with a flourish.

Skills

Alchemy-16; Area Knowledge-14; Calligraphy-10; Cooking-15; Diplomacy-14; Fast-Talk-15; Hypnotism-13; Literature-12; Occultism-13; Poisons-13; Research-13; Writing-13.

Languages

Any three relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Contemporary – The closest equivalent is a homeopath or a holistic herbalist. She might be extremely interesting to have in a horror campaign. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – Same as above, but add Computer Operation-15.

Space – With the mix of animals, aliens and chemicals in the galaxy, Haisa's possibilities are endless. Even without magic, technology could reproduce the same results. Same conversions as above.

Story

If you need a love potion, or your cat has fleas, or you wish to remove the evil spirits from your house, pay a visit to Haisa the Alchemist.

Haisa can mix any potion, to create any desired effect – or so she believes – for a stiff price. She has such a high opinion of her own skills that the possibility of a potion not working is inconceivable. And her potions *do* work – most of the time. If someone complains that the potion didn't have the desired effects, she explains to the imbibor that he just didn't believe hard enough. How can she be blamed for the customer's misgivings? Customers rarely complain though; her reputation is too well established.

Haisa attempts to screen her clients carefully before giving them the potions they desire. She knows that the results could be disastrous if some of her potions were used for an evil purpose.

She received her training from one of the greatest alchemists in history – one so powerful that he truly could turn lead into gold. His theatrical flair rubbed off onto Haisa. She decorates her laboratory with mystical trappings, to provide just the right atmo-



Haisa

Age: 47

sphere for visiting clients. When she actually mixes the potions in front of someone, she makes sure they bubble and steam the way potions ought to – once again to heighten the customer's appreciation of her abilities.

Quotes

"Well, of course she didn't fall in love with you. You must have absolute faith in my power. Only then shall you succeed and gain true love."

"A dash of goat hair, a pinch of mandrake, a sprig of garlic. There, now drink it quickly!"

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ A merchant fast-talked Haisa, and got a potion to turn one of his competitors into a frog. Now the victim's friends are looking for revenge on Haisa and the merchant. Haisa hires the PCs to protect her until she can create a potion that will reverse the effects of the previous one.
- ◆ The PCs purchase what they think is a healing potion. Unfortunately, its effects are completely different from what they had in mind. When the PCs return for a cure and revenge, it seems Haisa has skipped town.

ASSASSIN

ST: 11 IQ: 12 Speed: 5.75
DX: 13 HT: 10 Move: 4
Dodge: 4 Parry: 6
Heavy leather armor (PD 2, DR 2); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Absolute Timing; Danger Sense.

Disadvantages

Enemy (City guard, on a 9 or less); Stubbornness.

Quirks

Always makes sure she knows where her exits are; Angered by questions about her past; Doesn't like anyone coming too close to her; Never fully trusts anyone.

Skills

Acrobatics-12; Area Knowledge-12; Blowpipe-12; Crossbow-16; Disguise-13; Knife-12; Lockpicking-13; Poisons-12; Shadowing-11; Shortsword-12; Stealth-13; Streetwise-13; Traps-13.

Weapons

Shortsword: 1d+2 cutting, 1d impaling; Crossbow: 1d+3 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Replace Blowpipe, Shortsword and Crossbow with Guns-16.

Near Future – Same as above. Install small retractable razor claws with a poison reservoir.

Space – Replace Blowpipe, Shortsword and Crossbow with Guns (Needler)-16.

Story

Eña Morgana is growing old: not in body – she's still in her 30s – but in her mind and soul. She's starting to doubt the decisions she made when she was young, and those doubts are starting to destroy her sleep and her peace of mind.

For the last decade or more, Eña – known professionally as "Smoke" because she can find her way into the most tightly-sealed building – has been building her reputation as one of the finest freelance assassins. Certainly, there are some operatives who – objectively speaking – have better skills: they're better at roofwork, perhaps, or they have more of a talent for poison or disguise. But all of these have restrictions on the type of job they'll take: they won't kill women, for example, or they'll only accept targets who are "unbelievers" according to their religious code. Throughout her career, Smoke has had no such constraints. Anyone is fair game – *anyone*. The only jobs she won't accept are those that she realistically considers impossible . . . and there aren't many of those. She is frighteningly innovative, and never sticks with a familiar *modus operandi*. She's an expert at poison, boobytraps, disguise, ranged weapons – all the tricks of the trade.

Nobody knows where Smoke came from and what her background is . . . or even if Eña Morgana is her real name. She actively discourages curiosity about her past; in fact, one of the



Eña Morgana

Age: 33

only "hits" she ever performed for free was someone who tried to trace her origins. Those few who are close to Eña – as close as she lets anyone get, that is – report that she's a sad, quietly tragic figure. They speculate that some tragedy in her past turned her life onto its present course (they keep such speculations to themselves, of course . . .).

Over the past two years, something has happened to Eña: she's started to doubt. She operates with the same cool, clinical efficiency as ever, but she's started to think about the consequences of her actions – something that she's never done before. Some observers think this will be her downfall in the long run: either she'll be paralyzed by self-doubt at a crucial moment, or she'll take her own life out of guilt. Last month, the underworld rumormill claims, Eña Morgana did something that she's never done before in her professional life: she asked a client *why* a target had to die . . .

Quotes

"As soon as we agree to the contract, the target's dead. He might not know it for a while, though."

"Trust me – accounts receivable are never a problem . . ."

"It angers me that you allowed this to become necessary. I hate waste."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Somebody finds the continued existence of the PCs to be offensive, and is willing to pay to end that offense. The operative selected for the job is Eña Morgana. If the PCs are very lucky, they can find out who's taken the contract, and take some kind of precautions . . .

◆ In response to the assassination of a friend, a powerful lord has hired the entire assassin "community" to hunt down and kill the guilty party, Eña Morgana, a.k.a. Smoke. For the first time in her life, Eña is on the wrong end of a contract, and realizes she needs help. And that's where the PCs come in . . .

BANDIT

ST: 13 IQ: 10 Speed: 5.75
DX: 12 HT: 11 Move: 3
Dodge: 3 Parry: (Broadsword) 8
Chainmail armor (PD 3, DR 4); medium encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Alertness +2; Combat Reflexes.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper; Minor Delusion (He's actually fighting for a cause); Reputation -2 (To everyone, all the time: a terrorist, not a freedom fighter).

Quirks

Arrogant when he's in a position of strength; Insists on being called "General"; Refuses to admit he's merely a bandit.

Skills

Area Knowledge-11; Bow-10; Broadsword-14; Camouflage-10; First Aid-10; Leadership-10; Riding (Horse)-12; Running-12; Stealth-13; Survival (Forest)-11; Tactics-11; Tracking-11.

Weapons

Thrusting Broadsword: 2d cutting, 1d+2 impaling; Longbow: 1d+2 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Bandits appear in any era. Replace Bow, Broadsword and Riding with Driving (Car)-12, Interrogation-10 and Guns (Rifle)-14.

Near Future – Same as above.

Space – Szu leads a crew of bandits – “freedom fighters” – on a planet freshly occupied by an alien race. Same conversions as above, but add Beam Weapons-14 and change Guns (Rifle) to Guns (Needler).

Story

Gloriath Szu will deny to his last breath that he's a simple bandit. He's a freedom fighter, he'll explain at length, striving to free his people from the oppressive regime put in place by invaders. Unfortunately, the distinction – bandit or freedom fighter – is all too often moot for his victims.

Several years ago, Szu's nation was invaded, its dictator overthrown and replaced by a democratically elected House of Representatives, following the political model of the invaders' land. The vast majority of the population felt the invaders had actually freed them from the yoke of a malevolent dictator, for the first time giving them some control over their own lives.

No situation or change satisfies everyone. There were those who'd done well under the old regime and resented the fact that “outsiders” had replaced the system with something alien. Some members of the disbanded army, including Gloriath Szu, took to the mountains surrounding the capitol, and formed the People's Resistance Army. These soldiers dedicated themselves to making the nation ungovernable for the invaders, hoping that they'd eventually withdraw their “puppet government” and go back where they came from.



Gloriath Szu

Age: 27

It didn't take long for most of the People's Resistance Army to recognize that democracy wasn't such a bad thing after all, and that the nation was doing much better under the new system than it ever had before. They gave up their fight, and reintegrated themselves into society.

Not Gloriath. He enjoyed his new purpose in life: raiding caravans, attacking small towns, etc. He'd always enjoyed wreaking destruction against outmatched enemies, and now he had a perfect justification for doing so. He doesn't recognize the fact – or, at least, won't admit – that he's crossed the line from politically-motivated freedom fighter to simple bandit. He still runs his band like a military unit, but seems blind to the fact that his “troops” are actually sociopaths and murderers.

Quotes

“Bandits do what they do for personal gain, my friend. We fight to free our land from the oppressors.”

“The people? They're sheep – they don't even know how they're oppressed.”

“Before you say something you might regret, let me remind you – it's *my* sword at *your* throat . . .”

Adventure Seeds

◆ From outside the nation, the PCs have heard about “General Szu” and his glorious “People's Resistance Army,” fighting against great odds to free their nation from the oppressive yoke of the invader. So noble does this cause sound that they travel to Szu's camp to join his forces. When they start to realize just what Szu really is, it might be too late to withdraw gracefully . . .

◆ For the first time, Szu's predations are actually having an effect on the government. The PCs are hired to track down the so-called freedom fighter and put an end to his career.

BARBARIAN

ST: 13

IQ: 10

Speed: 5.75

DX: 13

HT: 11

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

Parry: 7

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Animal Empathy; Luck.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Carousing; Odious Personal Habit (Makes a lot of noise when he eats with his hands); Primitive -1.

Quirks

Can't understand the advisability of bathing; Considers fine clothing, art, etc., to be foppish; Treats wizards with mixed fear and loathing.

Skills

Animal Handling-13; Area Knowledge (Local forest)-11; Brawling-15; Carousing-12; Cooking-10; Fishing-11; Riding (Horse)-17; Running-12; Survival (Forest)-11; Tracking-10; Two-Handed Axe/Mace-14.

Weapons

Great Axe: 2d+2 cutting.

Conversions

Contemporary – It would be a real stretch, but Morgon could come from some “lost” tribe in the depths of the Amazon jungle. Remove Riding, and replace his Two-Handed Axe/Mace with Spear-14. Illiteracy becomes a disadvantage.

Near Future – Morgon would be completely out of his element in a high-society corporate lifestyle. Replace Two-Handed Axe/Mace with Guns (Pistol)-14. Illiteracy is a disadvantage.

Space – Morgon could easily come from a low-tech world, perhaps colonized by aliens, or maybe isolated and forgotten for generations. Illiteracy is a disadvantage.

Story

Even after three years, Morgon of the Bearclaw Clan isn't sure he understands what's so great about civilization. Granted, he decided fairly young that the life of his forefathers wasn't enough for him, and he left home to make his own way in the world. Granted, too, the big city fascinated him the first time he saw it: more people clustered in one place than he even knew existed in the world. Dazzled by the lights and the sounds, he decided that here was where his future lay.

Today, he still has second thoughts about his decision. Life was so much simpler in the Ironspine Mountains – less exciting, but also much less complex. Take this money nonsense, for example. At home, when someone had something you wanted, you bartered for it (or just took it; but that's another matter). In the city, people paid for everything with little bits of metal, and wouldn't even look at the wolf pelts and other trade goods Morgon had brought with him.

And the way the decadent southerners handled a disagree-



Morgon

Age: 22

ment. They *talked* about it – or, worse, they brought in officials of some kind, and then *they* talked about it – even if the situation was obviously a blood-insult. What's so great about a civilization that hasn't learned the simple truth: death-duels clean the bloodline, breeding out of the population those who break the unwritten laws of honor and politeness? In one day in the city, Morgon encounters more rude and arrogant cretins than he ever knew at home – people who probably wouldn't last a week with the Bearclaw Clan before someone beat some politeness into their skulls with a club.

Of course, Morgon *has* met people he likes and respects – usually through a friendly, companionable fist fight in some tavern. He's also discovered the wonders of distilled liquor – an art unknown to the Bearclaw Clan. Maybe it's just a matter of time before he gets the hang of this civilization stuff after all . . .

Quotes

“That money's for ale. Why spend it on foppish cloth?”

“What did you say about my clan?”

“Nine city guards? That's four each. Whoever's done first gets the last one.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ Morgon really stepped over the line this time. He's been arrested and tossed in jail . . . along with his “accomplices” – actually the PCs, who happened to pick the wrong tavern for a quiet drink.

◆ Morgon decides to show his new friends “how real men live,” and takes them on an expedition to the Ironspine Mountains. Unfortunately he's forgotten the Bearclaw Clan's normal reaction to strangers – outright hostility – and the fact that he left without his clan chieftain's permission makes *him* officially a stranger, too . . .

BARD

ST: 10 **IQ:** 13 **Speed:** 5.75
DX: 14 **HT:** 9 **Move:** 4
Dodge: 4 **Parry:** 6
Light leather armor (PD 1, DR 1); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 110

Advantages

Charisma +2; Literacy; Reputation +2 (To other musicians).

Disadvantages

Laziness; Lecherousness; Reputation -2 (To bartenders).

Quirks

Doesn't pay his bill if he can help it; Enjoys fine wines; Hates getting dirty; Loves redheads.

Skills

Area Knowledge-13; Bard-16; Carousing-10; Fast-Talk-14; Lockpicking-12; Musical Instrument (Lute)-14; Performance-13; Savoir-Faire-13; Sex Appeal-14; Shortsword-13; Singing-14.

Weapons

Shortsword: 1d cutting, 1d-2 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Darin is a flagging pop star, resting on his fading laurels. Remove Shortsword. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – Replace Shortsword with Guns (Pistol)-15.

Space – Replace Shortsword with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-15.

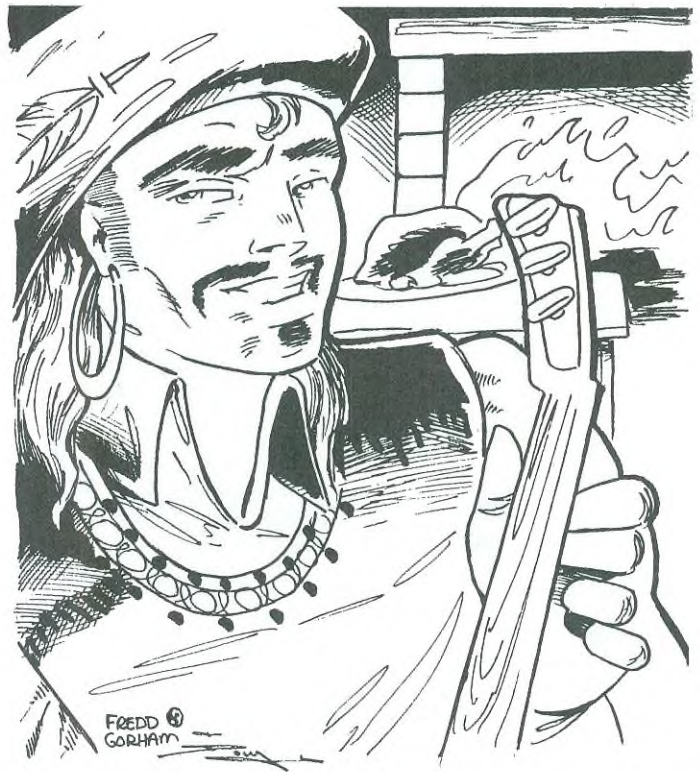
Story

Darin Mornstar is a silver-tongued conniver if there ever was one. A highly skilled entertainer, his expertise with the lute and hautbois is excelled only by his proficiency with the ladies.

Mornstar has a high – and not always misplaced – opinion of his skills. Over the years, he's entertained at the palaces of various kings and lords. Unfortunately, he often had to leave one step ahead of the guards when his host found out about the "liberties" the bard had taken with the lord's daughter, wife, serving girls, and any other woman who wasn't locked in a chastity belt. (To be honest, even a chastity belt might not stop Mornstar: before he took to the bardic trade, he apprenticed himself to a locksmith, and the skills he learned haven't faded.)

Darin was born into what today would be called an upper-middle-class household. Conflict with his father soon drove him away, but not before he'd picked up enough of upper-class social mores and philosophy to let him move comfortably through the upper strata of society. He discovered his talent young, but it wasn't until the young man was almost 20 that he found the discipline to school his natural abilities. To this day, this lack of application is one of Darin's greatest flaws. He's basically lazy – except in bed – and only devotes himself to his craft to the extent that it "beats working."

Although his ethics are somewhat "situational," Darin isn't a bad sort, and rarely expresses malice toward anyone. He doesn't



Darin Mornstar

Age: 33

like violence – partially because he's not good at it, but mostly because he thinks it's a stupid way of settling an issue.

Darin Mornstar is known throughout the land for two major things. Many musicians and music-lovers recognize his skill, and revere him for it. Even more innkeepers and bartenders recognize the fact that they'd better get money up front from Mornstar if they don't want to subsidize his carousing.

Quotes

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, it is said, and yours would dazzle the eye of the mightiest god . . ."

"Let us reason together. Surely an hour of my performance in your common room would recompense you for a night's lodging . . . Oh, all right, *two* hours."

"Come, surely two . . . *intelligent* gentlemen like yourselves realize that we can settle this without resorting to brutish violence . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Darin's really done it this time. He's offended the wrong lord and his life is officially forfeit. He needs protection, and he sees potential defenders in a group of hard-bitten warriors that cross his path – the PCs. If he ingratiates himself with them, acts like they're his closest friends, maybe the lord's men will think twice about coming after him. Of course, now he has to walk a very fine line: associate himself with the PCs in the eyes of all observers, without ticking the adventurers off so much that *they* want him dead . . .

◆ Various women who Darin has encountered during his travels are showing up at the inn where he's staying. It seems that some "friend" has told them that Darin wants to marry them. He can sweet-talk one or two of them, but when 12 show up, he turns to the PCs for help.

BARMAID

ST: 9 IQ: 13
DX: 11 HT: 9
Dodge: 5 Parry: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 5
Move: 5

Point Total: 65

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive); Literacy; Mathematical Ability; Voice.

Disadvantage

Impulsiveness.

Quirks

Flirts; Listens in on every conversation.

Skills

Administration-12; Area Knowledge-14; Carousing-10; Fast-Talk-12; Knife-12; Knife Throwing-12; Mathematics-17; Merchant-13; Sex Appeal-13.

Weapons

Large Knife: 1d-3 cutting, 1d-2 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Literacy is no longer an advantage. No other changes.

Near Future – In a dark-future setting, a girl has to be able to take care of herself. Add Streetwise-13, Computer Operation-13 and Guns (Pistol)-12.

Space – Lara might well work in a tavern in a space station. Same conversions as above.

Story

Lara is beautiful, nobody can deny it, and she has the kind of voice that can coax the hardest-hearted merchant into leaving a big tip. While most of her barmaid colleagues have dreams of marrying a rich customer, Lara has more ambition than that; she wants to start her own business. She hasn't quite decided what that business should be yet – maybe her own tavern or inn, or maybe a high-class guest house – but she's learning what she figures she needs to know to make a success of it. Much of her learning comes simply from watching and listening – observing how her boss handles things, and listening in when she can on the conversations of bar patrons. From time to time, she'll strike up a conversation with someone whom she thinks can really help her. (There've been many merchants who felt carnal anticipation when the beautiful Lara showed interest in them, only to be heartily disappointed when she picked their brains and left . . .)

By nature an honest woman, Lara nevertheless is smart enough to know that the only way to make the money she needs is through a "killing." (To quote a merchant she once overheard, "You don't get rich through cash flow.") She doesn't want to do anything overtly illegal – so she's not going to turn to prostitution and petty larceny like some of her colleagues – but she's definitely on the lookout for some kind of "gray" investment opportunity. If such an opportunity does turn up, she has a surprising



Lara

Age: 24

sum of money stashed away which she's saved from her pay. To interest her, an opportunity has to have a moderate down-side, and an exceedingly attractive up-side.

Like most barmaids, Lara has learned a few skills to protect herself. She's quite good with a knife, and she's very fast on her feet. In most cases, however, she's capable of *talking* her way out of trouble. She is literate (surprising!), and has natural mathematical aptitude.

Quotes

"Eavesdropping, your lordship? Why, I'd *never* understand anything such intelligent men as you would ever talk about . . ."

"Tell me again about how you made all your gold. I'm so impressed by intelligent men . . ."

"If you think I ever wanted to do anything with you but talk, you're sadly mistaken."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Lara's in a spot of trouble. She got involved with an "investment opportunity" that's gone *really* wrong. Two of her erstwhile partners are already dead, and *somebody* is scouring the city for anyone else who was involved in the deal. Unless she gets help soon, she's quite likely to end up with her pretty throat slashed. Now, who could she turn to for help . . .?
- ◆ The PCs have adjourned to a bar to discuss their upcoming "business venture." Not expecting the barmaid to understand the significance of their discussion, they don't keep their voices down. To their surprise, they see the barmaid's eyes widen in obvious understanding . . .
- ◆ The PCs are on the run in a strange town, and they need some help . . . *now*. Who do they turn to? One remembers the barmaid who'd seemed so interested in their conversation the night before. When they speak to the barmaid, she agrees to help them out . . . but it's going to *cost* them . . .

BARTENDER

ST: 12 IQ: 12 Speed: 5.5
DX: 10 HT: 12 Move: 5
Dodge: 5 Parry: 4
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 70

Advantages

Literacy; Reputation +2 (To all in the town: tough guy).

Disadvantages

Appearance (Unattractive); Cowardice; Overweight.

Quirks

Constantly polishes the bar; Great listener; Loves to read; Tries to be tough.

Skills

Area Knowledge-11; Brawling-9; Broadsword-8; History-12; Intimidation-12; Knife-9; Professional Skill (Bartending)-13; Psychology-13; Streetwise-11.

Weapons

Bat: 1d+3 crushing.

Conversions

Contemporary – Big Solly won't change too much over the ages. Replace Knife with Driving (Car)-12. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

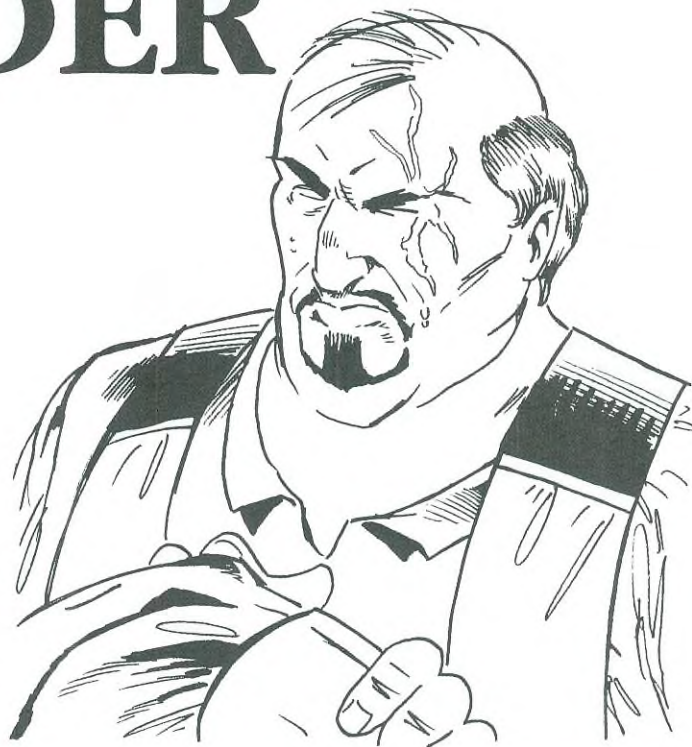
Near Future – Depending on what bar Big Solly works in, he may be packing a gun (not that he's very good with it . . .). Replace Knife with Guns (Pistol)-10 and Driving (Car)-12. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Space – What's a space adventure without a seedy tavern filled with bizarre aliens, and Big Solly to run it? Replace Knife with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-10, Computer Operation-13 and Xenology-12. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Story

Big Solly is, unsurprisingly, *big* – almost to the point of being grotesque. He's also an ugly bugger, thanks – in part – to the scars left by a broken bottle that a disgruntled patron tried to shove into his eye. This event happened when he was a teenager, waiting tables at his father's establishment. Afterward, Big Solly decided that self-preservation required him to learn some ways of defending himself. He tried to learn brawling, knife-fighting, even the use of the club – but competence remained just beyond his grasp . . . largely because Big Solly has no "killer instinct," and because he's a coward.

Since that time, Big Solly has taken a different approach to self-preservation. He's worked on every aspect of his appearance and mien that he has control over, trying to make himself more intimidating. (His rationale is simple: if people are too scared to challenge him, he'll never have to fight, and he'll never get hurt.) He's built up his bulk to fit the image he wants, and he's worked on turning his voice into a *basso profundo* growl that would make a ravenous bear proud. Further, he's spent considerable cash hiring people to spread (totally fictional) rumors about how tough he



Big Solly

Age: 36

is: how many would-be robbers he's strangled, how many skulls he's cracked in barroom brawls, etc.

He's been quite successful. Today, everyone who knows him believes him to be absolutely lethal, and so won't mess with him. People who *don't* know him are usually dissuaded from causing trouble by his sheer size and apparent brawn.

As it turns out, Big Solly is more of a lover than a fighter. He's also something of an intellectual – although he's *very* careful about whom he'll admit this to, of course. He's literate and surprisingly well-read, and has a deep interest in, and a natural talent for, history. Furthermore, he's an excellent listener, and has an instinctive grasp of how people's minds work. (If he'd been born into another world, he might have become a psychologist or a counselor.)

Quotes

"That reminds me of a story."

"You look like you could use an ear."

"I don't want to use this bat to get you boys to settle down . . . but if you insist . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs are discussing recent events in the city over a couple of tankards of ale. To their surprise, they find the hulking bartender joining in their conversation and voicing a surprisingly incisive analysis of what's *actually* going on.

◆ Big Solly's in *big* trouble. He's got on the wrong side of the wrong loan shark, and now he knows that hired legbreakers will be coming for him. He also knows they won't be put off by his reputation. If he wants to avoid having irreparable harm done to his kneecaps – which would *hurt* – he's got to get help from somewhere. What about that bunch of dusty adventurers who've been hanging around over the last couple of days . . . ?

BLACKSMITH

ST: 13 IQ: 10 Speed: 5.5
DX: 11 HT: 11 Move: 4
Dodge: 4 Parry: (Axe) 6
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 90

Advantages

DR +1; Extended Lifespan; Extra Encumbrance; Extra Fatigue +2; Longevity; Rapid Healing; Reputation +2 (To all: the best blacksmith in the village).

Disadvantages

Greed; Impulsiveness; Miserliness; Odious Personal Habit (Composes horrifying poetry out loud); Reduced Move -1.

Quirks

Loves Dwarven poetry; Considers himself an artist; Never shaves beard; Suspicious of Elves and Goblins.

Skills

Area Knowledge-11; Armoury-13; Axe/Mace-12; Blacksmith-17; Geology-10; Merchant-12; Metallurgy-10; Poetry-9; Woodworking-14.

Languages

Dwarven-14; One other relevant to the adventure, at level 12.

Weapons

Axe: 2d+1 cutting.

Conversions

Contemporary – Unless fantasy races exist, he'll be human. Reduce strength to 11 and remove Toughness. Specialize Armoury to Armoury (Guns). Replace Axe/Mace with Guns (Pistol)-12.

Near Future – Same as above. Add Streetwise-12.

Space – Same as above. Add Armoury (Beam Weapons).

Story

The Dwarven realms generate great numbers of blacksmiths. If a Dwarf isn't a blacksmith, he's either crazy or a miner, or both. Drungar Axbrow understood that the competition was too fierce for an up-and-coming blacksmith to gain the recognition he deserved. Instead of trying to prove his worth there, he decided to travel to a place that could use and appreciate his work . . . the human lands. The small village of Garder seemed like the perfect location for his trade, as he was greeted with enthusiasm by villagers all too happy to have a real Dwarven blacksmith operating in their town.

Drungar's shop prospered, and he gained a reputation as a blacksmith without peer. As his skills improved, he became more reluctant to part with his goods, for he felt that he was parting with a piece of himself with each sale. To solve this, he set the prices exorbitantly high, to dissuade people from buying. People still bought his goods, however; they understood that they were paying for quality and Drungar's bruised ego.

Drungar considers himself an artist – a feeling shared by



Drungar Axbrow

Age: 29

many. He puts a little extra effort into every item he creates, from simple nails to complex suits of armor. He winces at the thought of his pieces actually being used for work, and flies into a rage when a broken tool is brought back to be repaired. Many villagers have given up trying to stop him from rooting through their tool sheds to ensure that the tools are being cared for properly.

Drungar is extremely fond of Dwarven poetry and has an extensive collection memorized. He is even trying to compose a little of his own. A lucky villager exposed to a reading described it as a horrifying mixture of gruff grunts and kind words to rocks – no simple thing to stomach.

Drungar doesn't entirely share his race's fear of magic. He feels that if the addition of magic can add to the excellence of a piece, then it should be used. He has commissioned a village mage to help him create pieces with even greater durability and utility.

Quotes

"That wouldn't be a dent in my – I mean *your* – breastplate, would it?"

"This piece is called 'The Love of a Miner' – hey, come back!"

"Of course the price is high. You get what you pay for."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ A peasant has broken his scythe and needs Drungar to repair it. For fear of personal harm, he asks the PCs to take it in for him.
- ◆ Chances are that Drungar's prices for weapons and armor are a little steep for the PCs to afford. So he is willing to lower his prices if the party will find him some current Dwarven poetry – preferably fresh from a Dwarven stronghold.

CITY GUARDSMAN

ST: 13 IQ: 9 Speed: 5.75
DX: 12 HT: 11 Move: 4
Dodge: 4 Parry: 6 Block: 6
Chainmail armor (PD 3, DR 4); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 50

Advantages

Alertness +2; Legal Enforcement Powers.

Disadvantages

Duty (City Guard); Honesty; Minor Delusion (Better than commoners).

Quirks

Arrogant; Loves job; Rude to commoners.

Skills

Area Knowledge-11; Brawling-13; Broadsword-13; Buckler-12; Crossbow-12; Law-9; Savoir-Faire-9; Sling-12.

Weapons

Thrusting Broadsword: 2d cutting, 1d+2 impaling; Crossbow: 1d+4 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Gundar will be a police officer. Replace Broadsword, Crossbow, Sling and Buckler with Guns (Pistol)-15 and Guns (Rifle)-15. Add First Aid-11 and Criminology-10.

Near Future – Same conversions as above. Add Streetwise-11.

Space – Replace fantasy weapon skills with Beam Weapons-15. Add Criminology-10 and Computer Operation-11.

Story

Gundar isn't what you'd call a likeable fellow, but in his job that's no disadvantage. A large man, he tries to pretend – to himself and everyone else – that his considerable bulk is all muscle. Unfortunately, that hasn't been true since his early 20s.

Gundar has a strange belief structure about his place in the hierarchy of the city that it's his responsibility to guard. He considers himself to belong to a much higher social stratum than the "commoners" who fill the streets, simply because he's hired by the city and because he sometimes performs duties assigned directly by members of the nobility. What he doesn't know (or won't admit to himself) is that the nobles consider him no better than the commoners he despises – because, of course, he *is* a commoner by birth. He assumes that all nobles are doing things from noble motives and that they're always telling the truth. Even though he's incorruptible – since that's how he thinks "non-commoners" like him should be – he's very easy for nobles to manipulate. Conversely, he automatically discounts anything that a "commoner" tells him – since all those scum are liars, aren't they? – and *definitely* won't listen to anyone making accusations against a noble.

Most of Gundar's weapon and combat skills come from the standard training provided to all guards. However, as a boy Gundar had to defend his farming family's sheep from wolves, and so



Gundar

Age: 28

became highly skilled with the sling and the staff sling, even though he's not been officially trained in them by the guard.

Gundar believes that he has a natural skill at "talking people down" – persuading people not to start trouble. In fact, in all the cases where he's tried this, the only thing that convinced people not to mess with him was the fact that he was wearing the livery of the city guard. Gundar's "reasonable" manner is actually highly arrogant and insulting. If he ever tries to talk people down when he's *not* wearing his uniform, he's probably going to be in for an unpleasant shock.

Quotes

"Tell it to the Magistrate."

"Did I tell you to move?"

"... So if you're innocent, then you won't mind coming down and answering some questions."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs have been told – accurately – that the city guards are generally very open to "voluntary donations" (i.e., bribery). How unfortunate that they attempted to grease the palm of Gundar, about the only guard who *isn't* open to corruption...
- ◆ When the visiting PCs first encountered Gundar, he mistook their foreign style of dress for the clothing of nobility. He soon realizes his mistake – that the PCs are nothing but commoners – and if there's one thing Gundar hates more than making a mistake, it's making a mistake in such a way that commoners know that he blew it...
- ◆ A city noble, who has a grudge against the PCs, has told Gundar that they're guilty of some fictional crime. And Gundar *never* doubts the word of a noble...

CON MAN

ST: 9
DX: 12
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

IQ: 13
HT: 10

Speed: 5.5
Move: 5

Point Total: 90

Advantages

Charisma +3; Literacy; Luck; Voice.

Disadvantages

Enemies (All the people he's taken money from, on 9 or less); Greed; Weak Will -1.

Quirks

Constantly on the road; Prefers telling an interesting lie to telling a boring truth; Thinks of himself as a ladies' man.

Skills

Acting-14; Bard-17; Carousing-11; Detect Lies-13; Diplomacy-13; Fast-Talk-15; Holdout-12; Knife-12; Merchant-12; Performance-13; Pickpocket-12; Psychology-11; Sex Appeal-13; Sleight of Hand-11.

Weapons

Small Knife: 1d-4 cutting, 1d-3 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Rufus might well try to sell the PCs a bridge or a little swampland. Remove Knife. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – Rufus sells shoddy cyberware to desperate customers who need to be “cool.” Replace Knife with Guns (Pistol)-10. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Space – Replace Knife with Xenology-11 and Beam Weapons-10. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Story

A rogue and the son of a rogue, Rufus Garland can't imagine a life he'd enjoy more than the one he's living. It's an exciting existence, after all: traveling, seeing what the world has to offer, meeting interesting people, getting to know them . . . and taking their money in the most efficient manner possible.

Early in his career, Rufus followed his father's example, splitting his time between burglary, sneak theft and pickpocketing. In his teens, however, he realized this simply wasn't using his god-given talents to their true potential. With his guileless face and manner, and his ability to paint detailed pictures with words, he'd always been able to convince people of just about anything (as many farmers' daughters and merchants' wives found out to their eventual detriment). If he honed these talents, he realized, he could make much more money – with much less personal risk – than he ever could as a cutpurse and second-story man.

Today, Rufus Garland makes a very comfortable living selling “lush, well-irrigated farmland” (translation: “the only thing you can grow there is rocks, and then only at low tide”), shares in “potential Dwarven gold mines” (translation: “a nearby moun-



Rufus Garland

Age: 35

tain”), and other such grandiose schemes. He's also a dab hand at cheating widows out of their homes, youths out of their inheritances, and maidens out of their honor.

He has an unerring people sense, and an excellent sense of timing, always knowing the right moment to hit the road again. Once in a while, he encounters another rogue following a similar career path. Rufus will usually set aside all his other scams to concentrate entirely on “hustling the hustler.”

If Garland has any ethical or moral qualms about his lifestyle whatsoever, they have yet to surface.

Quotes

“You treat a simple traveling businessman so shabbily? Where is your honor?”

“For a minimal initial investment, I can guarantee you participation in a scheme that'll net you . . . well, more money than you can imagine.”

“Hey, now, remember what I told you up front? No business venture is ever guaranteed . . .”

Adventure Seeds

◆ Rufus has contrived the most complex, attractive and potentially lucrative scam of his career, through which he intends to fleece an entire village out of its collective savings. And, while he's at it, why not clean out that affluent-looking group of adventurers staying at the village inn as well?

◆ It had to happen eventually: one of Garland's elaborate con games has collapsed around him. Fortunately for the rogue, he took precautions: thanks to his machinations, it looks as though *he's* as much a victim as the *real* victims . . . And it looks like the real criminals are the PCs. Now the entire town is after the adventurers . . .

CUTPURSE

ST: 11 **IQ:** 10 **Speed:** 5.5
DX: 13 **HT:** 9 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5 **Parry:** 6
Light leather armor (PD 1, DR 1); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Danger Sense; Literacy; Night Vision; Reputation +2 (To underworld: great thief).

Disadvantage

Code of Honor (Only steal from those who can afford it).

Quirks

Always keeps an eye out for prospective "clients"; Constantly reciting tales about his idol, Almar Keshher.

Skills

Acrobatics-13; Area Knowledge-10; Escape-13; Fast-Talk-10; Jeweler-9; Jumping-14; Knife-13; Knife Throwing-13; Lockpicking-11; Pickpocket-14; Shortsword-13; Sleight of Hand-12; Stealth-14.

Weapons

Large Knife: 1d-1 cutting, 1d-1 impaling; Shortsword: 1d+1 cutting, 1d-1 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Jumpy is a rich kid rebelling against his parents' morality – and trying to get their attention – by stealing. The fact that he's really good at it doesn't hurt. Remove all weapon skills. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – Replace all weapon skills with Guns (Pistol)-14.

Space – Remove Shortsword, but keep Knife skill.

Story

Djonus Laczimakr – "Jumpy" to his friends, for no readily discernible reason – is a man with a talent. Unfortunately for him, it's a talent the law and respectable society tend to frown upon.

Unlike most professional thieves, Jumpy didn't get into his present trade – "become stooled to the rogue" – because his family was dirt-poor and he was raised on the streets. No, his family was firmly ensconced in the middle class, in a relatively large city. His father was a goldsmith of some reputation, and trained his son from an early age to follow in his footsteps. While Jumpy was fascinated with the gold and other precious metals his father dealt with, he much preferred playing with them to actually working with them.

In his early teens, he entered a phase of petty thefts and shoplifting, like that passed through by most adolescents. What set Jumpy apart from his fellows was that he turned out to be really good at stealing – he never got caught – and he never outgrew it. He heard some old folk tales about Almar Keshher – a semi-mythical thief said to be capable of stealing anything from anyone – and that decided his future path. He gave up his old life as boring (albeit comfortable), and started making a living for himself with his natural talents.



Djonus Laczimakr

Age: 28

So far, Djonus Laczimakr has remained independent, staying one quick jump ahead of the organized thieves' guilds that want to recruit him . . . or eliminate him. As his fame in the underworld spreads – in some circles his skill is said to approach that of Almar Keshher himself – that's becoming more and more difficult.

In general, Jumpy picks as targets only those who can afford to lose what he intends to take. It's only good business, he explains: if you don't totally wipe them out, you can come back next year and rob them again.

Quotes

"When I don't know which way to turn, I always ask myself, 'What would Almar Keshher do?'"

" . . . The city watch thought they had Almar Keshher dead to rights. But when they turned round they found he'd escaped . . . and he'd stolen their bootlaces."

"The first step in learning is recognizing that you *need* to learn . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need a skilled thief to help them with a particular enterprise. The grapevine tells them that Djonus Laczimakr is their man . . . but can they interest him in their proposition?

◆ Jumpy doesn't like working with accomplices . . . for good reason. The last time he tried it, the accomplice took off with the ill-gotten goods – a particularly nice jeweled pendant. Now both Jumpy and the pendant's rightful owner are after the accomplice . . . who has decided that his life is more important than any loot, and has dumped the swag in the backpack of one of the PCs . . .

DEMON

ST: 20 **IQ:** 17 **Speed:** 8
DX: 17 **HT:** 15/30 **Move:** 8
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** (Brawling) 10
PD 2, DR 3; no encumbrance.
Attack: Claws: 3d+4 cutting.

Point Total: 675

Advantages

Charisma +2; Combat Reflexes; Extra Hit Points +15; Literacy; Magery 3; Strong Will +4; Toughness +2.

Disadvantages

Appearance (Ugly); Bad Temper; Impulsiveness; Sadism.

Quirks

Chews on the end of his tail when he's stressed; Clicks his 3"-long claws together incessantly; Spits boiling blood when he's angry.

Skills

Acting-16; Brawling-18; Broadsword-19; Carousing-15; Diplomacy-16; Disguise-16; Economics-15; Fast-Talk-20; Gambling-16; History-18; Interrogation-17; Intimidation-17; Jumping-18; Literature-16; Merchant-16; Occultism-18; Psychology-19; Rune-Lore-15; Stealth-17; Theology-17; Tracking-17.

Spells: Alter Body-18; Alter Visage-18; Breathe Fire-20; Cold-18; Complex Illusion-18; Counterspell-18; Create Fire-18; Curse-Missile-18; Deathtouch-18; Extinguish Fire-18; Fear-18; Flame Jet-18; Heat-18; Ignite Fire-18; Itch-18; Pain-18; Paralyze Limb-18; Perfect Illusion-18; Persuasion-18; Reflect-18; Resist Fire-18; Sense Emotion-18; Sense Foes-18; Shape Fire-18; Simple Illusion-18; Sound-18; Spasm-18; Stun-18; Total Paralysis-18; Ward-18; Wither Limb-18.

Conversions

Contemporary – Pity the characters in a horror campaign who have to “deal” with Malefactus. No changes.

Near Future – In a “crossover” cyberpunk campaign that includes magic, he could be extremely effective. Add Computer Operation-17 and Guns (Pistol)-18.

Space – Whether Malefactus is actually a demon or an alien with the same powers, the effect is the same – a sly, malevolent, killing machine. Add Computer Operation-17 and Beam Weapons (Blaster)-18.

Story

Malefactus enjoys his “job” – spreading pain and suffering throughout the universe, and corrupting as many noble and well-intentioned souls as he can – and he's good at it.

Many of his demonic colleagues satisfy their urgings through direct action: simply running amok in the world of the living, destroying and slaying in an orgy of malevolence, then returning to the Nether Realms with half a dozen souls. Malefactus scorns demons who act that way. Where's the intellectual and artistic satisfaction? Where's the true sense of achievement? Where's the sport?

Malefactus prefers the more subtle approach. He greatly ad-



Malefactus

Age: Unknown

mires the demon who cut the deal with Faust, and feels like a kindred spirit (so to speak). Instead of wreaking sheer, simple-minded destruction on his victims, Malefactus much prefers manipulating them, making *them* the agents of their own destruction. (How much more satisfying it is to see the horrible realization cross a paladin's face when he comprehends – an instant before his death – that he's betrayed everything he ever swore to protect.) He's highly intelligent, and has several centuries of experience at orchestrating intense unpleasantness from behind the scenes.

Not that Malefactus is totally peaceable – he *is* a demon, after all, with a demon's temper. If driven into a rage, he's quite likely to destroy an entire village before he regains control.

The demon has a strong aesthetic sense: he knows what he finds beautiful in art and music. Of course, his opinions are totally his own, and few mortals would agree with them. (For example, who but Malefactus would think a Monet-style landscape could be improved by the addition of a disemboweled rat?)

Malefactus prides himself on his fairness. When he's made a deal, he'll stick to his side of it to the letter. (Of course, what the deal actually specifies and what the mortal signatory *thinks* it specifies are usually two very different things . . .)

Quotes

“Violence is the last resort of the incompetent, wouldn't you say?”

“Don't cross me, my friend. The consequences would be . . . *unpleasant*. And of *very* long duration . . .”

“I am not angry. You do not want to make me angry.”

“Let me propose a deal.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ Someone has cut a deal with Malefactus, and has only recently realized exactly what the down-side of the bargain is. Now he's come to the PCs to help him break his contract. Of course, so as not to scare the PCs off, he hasn't told them the true nature of the contract's other signatory . . .

◆ Malefactus has noticed the PCs' existence (perhaps because they interfered with one of his earlier schemes). Now he's decided that it's time they received their comeuppance. His plan will take a long time to come to fruition, but the results – the absolute ruination of the PCs, in every sense of the word – will be more than worth the wait. And after all, this demon has the patience to do things right . . .

DRAGON

ST: 40
DX: 13

IQ: 13
HT: 15/50

Speed: 7
Move: Ground: 6;
Flying: 18

Size: 10 hexes

Natural armor (PD 3, DR 3); no encumbrance.

Attacks: Two Claws: 1d+2 cutting; Bite: 1d+2 impaling;
Flame Attack: 2d-1 Fire Damage.

Point Total: 875

Advantages

Acute Vision +4; Literacy; Longevity; Magery 3; Night Vision; Shapechanging (Taken from the Morph ability in *GURPS Supers*, p. 63); Unusual Background.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior (Restlessness); Secret (Dragon); Social Stigma -2 (Outcast).

Quirks

Hates enclosed spaces (quirk-level Claustrophobia); Likes playing with water (*large* bodies of water); Loves to fly.

Skills

Area Knowledge-16; Broadsword-15; Climbing-13; Dancing-13; Diplomacy-15; Disguise-16; Fishing-14; History-17; Occultism-14; Running-15; Survival (Forest)-15; Swimming-15; Tracking-14.

Spells: Beast-Soother-16; Breathe Fire-18; Cold-16; Complex Illusion-16; Create Fire-16; Extinguish Fire-16; Fear-16; Flame Jet-16; Heat-16; Ignite Fire-16; Lend Health-16; Lend Strength-16; Light-16; Major Healing-15; Minor Healing-16; Panic-16; Persuasion-16; Resist Fire-16; Sense Emotion-16; Sense Foes-16; Sense Life-16; Shape Fire-16; Shield-16; Simple Illusion-16; Sound-16; Terror-16; Truthsayer-16.

Languages

Any four relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Contemporary – There aren't too many dragons in most contemporary campaigns. If Dawn fits, then add Driving (Car)-14.

Near Future – Ditto. Add Driving (Car)-14, Computer Operation-14 and Guns (Pistol)-13.

Space – Remove all spells and Magery if there's no magic in the campaign. Her other capabilities could be due to some alien racial ability. Add Beam Weapons-14 and Computer Operation-14.

Story

Skyfrost Dawnseeker – “Dawn” to her few friends – is in many ways an atypical dragon. She's much less acquisitive and territorial than others of her species, believing there's infinitely more to life than building and defending a hoard. The world's a big place, and Dawn won't be satisfied until she's seen and experienced all it's got to offer.

Like most of her kind, Dawn was driven away by her mother to fend for herself almost immediately after hatching. While her



Skyfrost Dawnseeker

Age: 427

brood-siblings immediately settled down to the traditional task of finding a defensible lair and honing their already-considerable combat abilities, Dawnseeker instead took to the skies. From her earliest days she's loved to fly, thrilling to the experience of soaring miles above the earth, hanging on the wind and gazing down on the terrestrial world. To this day – even after several centuries of life – she's never bothered to settle down. She roosts each night in whatever aerie presents itself – a snow-covered mountain peak, a desolate moor, or a tiny island. She hunts only to eat, preying solely on animals. Over the last few decades, she's perfected the technique of fishing, plunging into the water like a 300-foot-long cormorant to catch sharks and small whales.

Dawn uses her magical abilities to shapechange into human form, recognizing that staying in her true form greatly limits what she can learn about the world. (Dragons with 500-foot wingspans find it hard to chat with adventurers in taverns, for example.) She sometimes spends months, or even years, as a human, traveling with adventuring parties or wandering through the streets of a large city.

She has little contact with other dragons: she thinks them closed-minded stick-in-the-muds, while they consider her hopelessly flighty. She has many human acquaintances who don't know her true nature, and a handful of true friends who do.

Despite her eccentric world view, Dawn *is* a dragon and hence proud to a fault and sometimes quick to anger.

Quotes

“As soon judge a book by its cover as a dragon by its scales, that's what I always say.”

“The higher you climb, the farther you see.”

“Maybe money can't buy you happiness . . . but it can't buy you *anything* if you just hide it in a cave and lie on it.”

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ In human form, Dawn has teamed up with a group of adventurers – the PCs. How long will it take them to realize the true nature of their new comrade . . . and what will they do about it?
- ◆ The PCs have been hired by a city nobleman to dig up the dirt on – and maybe even eliminate – a rival with the unlikely name of Dawnseeker. The adventurers quickly realize that the subject of their investigation has some deep, dark secret to conceal . . .

DRUID

ST: 9 IQ: 13 Speed: 5.25
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5 Parry: 6
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 50

Advantages

Acute Vision +3; Animal Empathy; Appearance (Beautiful).

Disadvantages

Age (53); Fanaticism; Intolerance (Destroyers of nature).

Quirks

Burns only deadfall wood, rarely; Eats only fruit and vegetables that have fallen naturally; Vegetarian.

Skills

Animal Handling-16; Area Knowledge-15; Cooking-13; Ecology-13; Meteorology-13; Naturalist-13; Scrounging-13; Staff-10; Survival (Forest)-14.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 12.

Weapons

Staff: 1d+1 crushing, 1d crushing.

Conversions

Contemporary – Kath is an environmentalist reporter trying to protect the ever-shrinking forests. Replace Animal Handling and Staff with Photography-12 and Writing-14.

Near Future – With the forests nearly gone, it's quite possible that Kath has become desperate, and crossed the line to eco-terrorism. Replace Animal Handling and Staff with Guns (Rifle)-12 and Demolition-13.

Space – Kath is desperately trying to save an entire world from being strip-mined of resources. Replace Animal Handling and Staff with Computer Operation-13.

Story

Kath Morigan talks tough – particularly about people she believes are misusing nature – but her bark is much worse than her bite.

Raised in a small farming community that eked out a meager existence in the rugged foothills of a major mountain range, she grew up with an almost instinctive understanding of the cycles of nature. She could smell a change in the weather, tell fertile soil from infertile with a single glance, hear the start of the salmon run in the nearby streams . . . She was almost 13 when she realized that not everyone could do these things.

Kath loved her life in the forested foothills, and couldn't imagine any other existence. But then, when she was 16, the lord who ruled the region decided Kath's woods represented natural resources he couldn't afford to ignore any longer. The foresters came, and the trees began to fall.

The Morigan family picked up and moved to the nearby town. Kath's father tried to make another life for himself, but he wasn't



Kath Morigan

Age: 53

cut out for the "urban" lifestyle. He died of pneumonia within a year of moving; to this day, Kath thinks it was a broken heart that killed him.

With her father dead, Kath Morigan decided civilization – such as it was – had nothing to offer her. She left the town, and traveled alone to remote woods very like those of her childhood. For the last few decades she's lived there, enjoying her personal communion with nature, and reviling the destruction that civilization has wrought on the world.

Although she's told like-minded nature-lovers that one day she'll take action against the "blight" of cities and towns spreading ever closer to "her" wilderness, nobody really believes her – maybe not even Kath herself. Over the years, however, her language has become steadily more militant. Anyone hearing her speak might think that she's a medieval eco-terrorist working herself up to do something drastic.

She is very protective of her tract of wilderness, and any travelers who misuse it will feel her wrath.

Quotes

"The world is our mother, and we should *respect* our mother."

"Animals are my friends. I don't eat my friends."

"So-called civilization is a blight on the face of nature. I would sacrifice much to see that blight expunged."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The destroyers are coming! In a replay of her traumatic youth, foresters are coming to log Kath's home. She can't drive them away, and she recognizes she doesn't have the credibility to convince them, or their masters, to change their plans. She needs help, and turns to the PCs.

◆ The PCs have been hired to rid the woods of a "nature-loving madwoman," who has reputedly killed in horrid ways many of the foresters sent in to log the area. (All lies, of course, but the local lord wants the PCs to believe they're on a "noble" quest.) If they take the time to talk with the "madwoman," however, they'll find the truth is somewhat different.

GENERAL

ST: 15 IQ: 13 Speed: 6
DX: 13 HT: 11 Move: 6
Dodge: 6 Parry: 9 Block: 8

Light plate armor (PD 4, DR 6); medium shield (PD 3, DR 7); medium encumbrance.

Point Total: 280

Advantages

Charisma +2; Combat Reflexes; Literacy; Military Rank (General); Reputation +4 (To people in the army).

Disadvantages

Impulsiveness; Stubbornness; Vow (To fight alongside his men when the battle is going against them).

Skills

Administration-12; Axe/Mace-13; Bow-13; Brawling-14; Broadsword-17; Fast-Draw (Broadsword)-14; First Aid-13; Intelligence Analysis-13; Leadership-17; Shield-14; Strategy-17; Tactics-15; Two-Handed Sword-15; Writing-13.

Weapons

Magical Broadsword (+2 puissance): 2d+5 cutting, 1d+5 impaling

Conversions

Contemporary – Brenn is a general in a western army. Replace all weapon skills with Guns (Rifle)-17. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – Brenn's genuine concern will be an even greater rarity in a dark future. Same conversions as above.

Space – Brenn could be fighting a land-based war, or a space naval conflict. Replace all weapon skills with Beam Weapons (Laser)-19, Battlesuit-14 and Force Shield-14. Add Computer Operation-15, Free Fall-14 and Vacc Suit-14.

Story

Brenn Korbin is a general on the eastern border of the empire. This is an area plagued with minor skirmishes against orc marauders. If it weren't for Brenn, the area he protects would long ago have fallen to the constant orc attacks.

Brenn's record of success rests entirely on his personal brilliance. As a strategist, he's without peer. Add to this his morale-raising techniques and near-constant training, and the result is an incredible fighting force.

Unlike many generals, Brenn truly cares for his men. Most evenings he can be found sitting around the fire with his men, laughing and sharing stories of past battles. Often he'll bring in theatrical troupes to entertain the men and increase morale. When the battle seems to be going against him, Brenn joins his men on the field – cleaving the enemy with such fervor that his comrades gain renewed strength from his confidence.

Brenn spent much of his life rising through the ranks of the army, and has become highly adept with many weapons. His finest weapon is his huge body – well over 6½ feet tall. Even though he's in his late 40s, he's in perfect condition, kept that way through regular strenuous exercise.

Fantasy



Brenn Korbin

Age: 47

Brenn can read and loves to do so. Furthermore, he's writing a book detailing his strategies for the reference of future armies. This isn't entirely necessary, since his strategies are already being copied by generals on other fronts.

Quotes

"I have an idea that should turn the tide of this battle . . . but I require a few good men."

"I call this the inverted-T strategy. It should totally baffle the orcs and lead us to victory."

"To me, men, to me!"

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs have been drafted and sent out to the eastern front. Brenn takes a liking to them and assigns them to lead a secret raid on the orcs.
- ◆ The PCs are spies sent to learn some of Brenn's secrets. Brenn's charisma and genuine concern for his troops cause the PCs to question the morality of their orders.

GLADIATOR

ST: 14 **IQ:** 11 **Speed:** 5.75
DX: 13 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 4
Dodge: 5 **Parry:** (Broadsword) 8 **Block:** 8
Scale armor (PD 3, DR 4); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 160

Advantages

Charisma +2; Combat Reflexes; Toughness +1.

Disadvantages

Bloodlust; Enemy (Tristan the Valiant, on a 9 or less).

Quirks

Enjoys watching local theater; Plays to the crowd.

Skills

Acting-13; Area Knowledge-12; Axe/Mace-13; Brawling-13; Broadsword-15; Fast-Talk-12; Flail-14; Net-13; Performance-12; Shield-15; Shortsword-14; Spear-14; Tactics-10; Two-Handed Sword-14.

Weapons

Thrusting Broadsword: 2d+1 cutting, 1d+2 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Hoargen becomes a professional wrestler. Replace fantasy weapon skills with Professional Skill (Wrestling)-13.

Near Future – Perhaps he could be found in some futuristic death arena. Add Guns (Pistol)-14 and Chainsaw-13.

Space – Same conversions as above.

Story

The life of the average gladiator is short and violent, so it's no surprise that most gladiators are forced into the career at sword point. At least fighting for your life is better than having your throat slit. So when Hoargen informed the arena master that he wished to become a gladiator – voluntarily – the grizzled trainer could scarcely believe his ears. The arena director was hesitant, but finally he gave in and allowed Hoargen to compete. The decision was a good one, for the arena prospered as people came from across the land to see Hoargen the Great defeat yet another opponent.

Hoargen has brought a unique style to the arena, one based as much on theatrical ability as fighting prowess. His theatrical skills came from the years he worked with a traveling theater troupe, while his ability to fight came from protecting the troupe from bandits. When he became a gladiator, he only knew how to fight with the broadsword. After intense training in the arena, he's become proficient with the shortsword, net, spear, two-handed sword, battle-axe and flail.

Hoargen's reason for entering the arena voluntarily is a simple one: he loves the thrill of combat and the bloodletting, and he loves the fame and glory that goes along with it. So far he's found nothing that compares with the adrenaline rush he gets in the arena. Perhaps that's why he does so well. Unlike most of his opponents, he *wants* to be there.



Hoargen

Age: 27

Since Hoargen began his career, another man has become a gladiator by choice . . . Tristan the Valiant. Several times they've clashed in the arena, and Hoargen has humiliated Tristan each time, but has yet to kill him. Perhaps this is because he sees Tristan as a kindred soul. Tristan doesn't see it this way, viewing his defeat as a personal humiliation that must be avenged, either inside the arena or out . . .

Quotes

"You doubt my skills? Come, let me demonstrate them for you. It will give your heirs an interesting tale to tell . . ."

"There is no greater glory than to kill a man in a one-on-one battle to the death . . . except perhaps defeating two opponents at the same time."

"If I kill you on the street, I'm a murderer. If I kill you in the arena, I'm a hero."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs are convicted of some crime (real or imaginary) and put into the gladiator arena. Their first opponents are Hoargen and Tristan. If they realize Tristan's hatred, they might be able to use this, getting the two professional gladiators to fight each other.

◆ Tristan the Valiant has decided once again that Hoargen must die. He overhears the PCs boast about some recent adventure, and explains that he has a little job for them. If they refuse, Tristan will eventually try to kill them, for they know too much.

JONGLEUR

ST: 10 IQ: 12 Speed: 5.75
DX: 14 HT: 9 Move: 5
Dodge: 5 Parry: (Knife) 7
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 80

Advantages

Literacy; Musical Ability +5; Voice.

Disadvantages

Honesty; Reputation -1 (To everyone, all the time: jongleurs are thieves).

Quirks

Always looking for new songs; Will juggle anything that's not bolted down.

Skills

Acrobatics-14; Acting-11; Bard-13; Cooking-11; Dancing-13; Hobby Skill: Juggling-13; Knife-12; Performance-11; Poetry-10; Singing-16; Sleight of Hand-12.

Languages

Any three relevant to the adventure, at level 11.

Weapons

Small Knife: 1d-4 cutting, 1d-3 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Sallea could be a part of a theater company. Add Driving (Car)-12. Literacy is no longer an advantage. She'd probably no longer carry a knife (although she'd still know how to use it . . .).

Near Future – Sallea's skills could land her a career as a Vid or Music star. Add Computer Operation-12, Driving (Car)-12 and Guns (Pistol)-12. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Space – Same as above. Add Computer Operation-12 and Beam Weapons (Blaster)-12. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Story

Sallea Venn is that rarity of rarities, a female jongleur. By tradition, these traveling singers, jugglers and entertainers are male, but Sallea never put much stock in tradition. As the daughter of a minor lordling, she received training in music and poetry and excelled at both. When she was about 15, she realized why she and her sisters had been taught to sing and play the lute – to make them more attractive to the rich twits to whom her father expected to marry them – and she decided that wasn't the life she wanted. She ran away from home and took to the road.

She didn't choose the career of jongleur as much as it chose her. She needed some way of making a living on her travels and quickly found that her singing voice and ability to improvise witty rhymes could earn her food and lodging at the inns she found along the way. When she met other traveling entertainers, she learned what she could from them, expanding her own repertoire.

Jongleurs are important to society. Often, they're the only source of news from outside the immediate region, and thus they



Sallea Venn

Age: 25

enjoy a certain status. This is balanced by the wide-spread belief that the traveling entertainers are also traveling thieves. (In Sallea's case this definitely isn't true, but reality rarely has much effect on people's beliefs.) Ambivalence toward Sallea is even more pronounced. After all, she's a woman – and an attractive one, at that – and hence not a “real” jongleur. Yet no one can argue that she's not one of the most skilled entertainers traveling the roads of the land.

Sallea lives an emotionally solitary life. Although she always treats the people around her in a friendly, open manner, she never allows herself to become emotionally attached.

Quotes

“Let the show commence.”

“Would you hear a tale of the lands beyond the mountains?”

“Will you tell your children you turned away a jongleur who entertained at the court of Lord Tibalt?”

Adventure Seeds

◆ There's been a major theft in a small town, and everyone blames it on the jongleur – Sallea Venn. Unless she can find someone to believe her – and find the real culprit – she's in real trouble. In desperation, she turns to a group of travelers staying at the same inn – the PCs.

◆ Traditionally, jongleurs are given safe passage, even through war zones. The PCs' mission requires them to travel through a war zone unscathed. Can they convince Sallea to let them join her and pretend to be fellow jongleurs? And, if so, can they successfully maintain the impersonation?

KNIGHT

ST: 12 IQ: 11 Speed: 5.25
DX: 12 HT: 10 Move: 1
Dodge: 5 Parry: 6
Light plate armor (PD 4, DR 6); heavy encumbrance.

Point Total: 25

Advantages

Reputation +4 (To everyone, all the time: the great knight Sir Blores); Status 2; Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Absent-mindedness; Age (70); Code of Honor (Chivalric).

Quirks

Esteems royalty of all kinds; Rarely finishes his sentences; Unfailingly polite to women.

Skills

Broadsword-13; Diplomacy-10; First Aid-11; Heraldry-11; History-10; Lance-12; Leadership-12; Riding-12; Savoir-Faire-12; Strategy-10.

Weapons

Thrusting Bastard Sword: 1d+2 cutting, 1d+1 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Retired General. Replace Broadsword and Lance with Guns (Pistol) and Guns (Rifle).

Near Future – Ditto.

Space – It's a long shot, but possible . . . Replace Broadsword and Lance with Beam Weapons (Laser)-14.

Story

Sir Blores was one of the greatest warriors of all time: a true knight errant, a follower of the code of chivalry – perhaps its finest flower – and the protector of all that was fine and noble in the kingdom that bore and raised him. Slayer of monsters and demons, scourge of the wrong-doers, veteran of many heroic quests, to this day many are the lays and epic poems that repeat his great deeds. No noble task was ever too great for him to undertake, no foe too mighty for him to defeat . . .

Except for time itself, of course. Even his great skill at arms and grasp of tactics hasn't prevented the passing of years from laying him low at last.

The passing of time has left Sir Blores behind. The kingdom he once protected has been buried by the sands of time – no reflection on Blores' steadfast efforts, of course. Death has taken his friends, his liege lords, his comrades. His strength has faded, as has his grasp on reality. He still believes in the chivalric code, but he's perhaps the only person still alive who does so. Most people he meets consider him a senile fool, clinging to tattered shreds of glory – a crotchety fossil, the last example of a species otherwise extinct.

Even now, though, few dare say that to his face. In his 70s, he's still a match for warriors half a century his junior. Those who've heard the tales of his triumphs treat him with respect, and keep their true views to themselves. Even chance-met strangers who



Sir Blores

Age: 70

don't know who he is will treat him with some deference; though a grumbling, irritable curmudgeon, he still exudes an aura of physical competence that can cow the average street bully or alleybasher.

Sir Blores knows that death will come for him soon, and doesn't fear it. "Death after life doth greatly please," he believes, and – in moments of reflection – he looks forward to rest after his decades of toil. His biggest fear is that his death will mean nothing, however, that he'll fade away and vanish in some tawdry, meaningless way. Although he won't admit it to anyone, he's looking for the final quest, the last battle, in which his death will have some meaning, will make some difference. The more perceptive of the people around him recognize this fact, and won't accept his invitation to join him on any quest or task, fearing that his last campaign will be an elaborate form of suicide . . .

Quotes

"Call yourself a knight, heh? Well, back in *my* day . . ."

"Chivalry, you know. They say it's dying. Not until *I'm* dead, I say."

"My colors? White for purity of soul. Red for the blood of sacrifice. And green for . . . hmmm . . . And green."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Sir Blores has met the PCs, and he sees in them some reflection of his own youth and fire. He wants to train them to follow in his footsteps . . . but unfortunately his idea of training is some fruitless quest on which he wants them to accompany him.

◆ Hard to believe though it may be, Sir Blores has finally given up, has set aside his armor and his lance, and is waiting in silence for death to take him. His timing is catastrophic. The nation is threatened as never before, by a foe that only Sir Blores is equipped to counter. The PCs are given the task of bringing the mighty warrior out of retirement – of convincing him to gird on his armor and stride once more into the fray. Of course, if they do that, they have no option but to accompany him into battle . . .

MERCENARY

ST: 13 IQ: 10 Speed: 6
DX: 14 HT: 11 Move: 4
Dodge: 5 Parry: 8 Block: 8
Chainmail armor (PD 3, DR 4); medium encumbrance.

Point Total: 125

Advantages

Combat Reflexes; Reputation (Among military, all the time: excellent mercenary); Strong Will +2.

Disadvantage

Bloodlust.

Quirks

Hates slavers; Never lets anyone get so emotionally close he couldn't kill him if he had to.

Skills

Area Knowledge-10; Axe/Mace-12; Bow-15; Brawling-14; Broadsword-14; Jumping-13; Leadership-11; Polearm-13; Shield-14; Streetwise-11; Tactics-10.

Weapons

Thrusting Broadsword: 2d cutting, 1d+2 impaling; Longbow: 1d+2 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Caleb is the leader of a gang that also hires out to do “mercenary” work outside of their territory. Replace all weapon skills with Knife-15 and Guns (Pistol)-16.

Near Future – A young man with Caleb's abilities could be very useful as a corp hit man. Same conversions as above.

Space – There'll always be a need for a good mercenary. Perhaps he's a bounty hunter. Replace all fantasy weapon skills with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-16, Free Fall-13 and Vacc Suit-11.

Story

The course of Caleb Groen's life was charted and set before his tenth summer. It was then that the invaders swept through the nation of his birth, leaving death and destruction in their wake. His small village was overrun with no warning. Caleb was among the few lucky – or *unlucky* – ones taken away as slaves.

His new masters saw great potential in Caleb. They trained him, taught him the way of the sword and the way of the bow – groomed him to fight and die for their entertainment in the Bloodpit.

Although he hated his enslavement and lusted for freedom, he found himself taking to his training as though he'd been born for it. He became a killing machine, lethal with any weapon . . . or with none. By his 18th summer, he'd killed over 100 foes in the Bloodpit. His fame spread, and ever more daunting foes were set against him. Caleb Groen, however, seemed unkillable.

He was 25 when the ruler of the nation decided to grant him his freedom. His masters apparently expected him to stay on in the land of his enslavement, but Groen would have none of that. He left as soon as he could, to travel the world.



Caleb Groen

Age: 27

That's when the ugly realization first hit him. Caleb had only one skill: killing. There was nothing else in the world he was suited for, no other way he could imagine spending his life. He signed on with a mercenary company, and reconciled himself to a life of combat.

His upbringing in the Bloodpit has had a strong effect on the young mercenary. He enjoys friendship and camaraderie as much as anyone else, but has the chilling ability to suppress those feelings totally, and become a soulless murderer when the need arises. (This arises from the fact that his friends in the gladiator school could well, on the morrow, be the foes he had to slaughter.) When he's in “combat mode,” he is totally oblivious to the fact that his opponents are people like himself, with the same fears and desires, who hurt and bleed and die. Predictably, this has made him very good at his chosen career.

Quotes

“I see little need to be burdened with prisoners . . .”

“No quarter asked, no quarter given. That's the way of the world.”

“No one still lives that I've seen over the fletching of an arrow.”

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs sign on with a mercenary company, and find their commander to be Caleb Groen.
- ◆ A mercenary force is descending on the PCs' home. It's up to them to divert the invasion force – either by convincing the commander (Groen) to turn aside, or by eliminating him.

MERCHANT

ST: 10 IQ: 15 Speed: 5.25
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5 Parry: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Literacy; Mathematical Ability; Wealth (Wealthy).

Disadvantages

Fat; Greed.

Quirks

Doesn't trust easily; Likes to eat; Terrified of poverty.

Skills

Accounting-17; Administration-15; Area Knowledge-14; Broadsword-10; Diplomacy-13; Economics-12; Fast-Talk-15; Merchant-18; Navigation-12; Seamanship-14.

Languages

Any three relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Weapons

Thrusting Broadsword: 1d+1 cutting, 1d impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Remove Broadsword skill. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – Ames runs a black market weapons-importing company. Replace Broadsword with Guns (Pistol)-13 and Streetwise-15.

Space – In an interstellar community, Ames' abilities would really shine. Replace Broadsword with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-13.

Story

Holiman Ames would sell his own mother if the price was right. That's the consensus, at least. Ames doesn't consider himself *quite* that hard-hearted. But if the offer were *extremely* good . . .

A lot of elements are necessary to be a successful merchant, and Ames has them all. (The proof of the matter is that he's *exceptionally* successful.) Along with a seemingly intuitive grasp of mathematics and an amazing memory for the values of hundreds of trade goods in a dozen ports of call, it's been said that he's persuasive enough to talk both hind legs off a mule . . . and then convince the animal to walk around afterward! He speaks several languages, and is familiar with the customs of an equal number of civilizations, but he won't admit any of these abilities if keeping them secret might somehow benefit him.

Holiman Ames was born dirt-poor, the fifth child in a family that couldn't even support his four older siblings. He found himself on the streets when he was only 12, and almost starved to death before he realized the money that could be made by bringing someone with a need together with someone who had the goods that were needed. By 20, he was an up-and-coming independent merchant; by 30, he ran his own trading combine; and



Holiman Ames

Age: 45

now, at 45, his three trading combines are among the largest and most profitable in the known world.

Unlike most wealthy merchants, Ames hasn't left the day-to-day business of his trade empire to others. He still travels with his caravans from time to time, or sails on his galleys. Occasionally he can be found overseeing the bidding for even the smallest shipment of cargo. Although he has to trust his lieutenants sometimes, trust doesn't come easy to him, and he has a very sophisticated intelligence-gathering network set up throughout his mercantile empire to look for fraud and malfeasance.

When he was young and starving, Holiman Ames came to associate hunger with poverty, and vice versa. Now, even the slightest pang of hunger reminds him of his years of lack. To submerge the uncomfortable memories, he eats whenever he feels even slightly hungry. Unsurprisingly, he is exceptionally obese, and growing more so.

Ames doesn't limit his transactions to tangible goods. He quickly found that there's much money to be made in the marketing of information and influence. It's often been said that if you need anything – *anything* – the person to see is Holiman Ames.

Quotes

"That offer is an insult; leave this place and do not darken my doorway again!"

"There's no way I could allow it to go for less than 250 silver nobles."

"As any fool can see, the arabesques mark this as Palatine manufacture. Don't waste my time with such garbage."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs have "acquired" some goods that they need to dispose of profitably. The person they need to talk to, their contacts tell them, is one Holiman Ames. But, they warn, whenever you deal with Ames count your change, and then count your fingers . . .

◆ The PCs have need of some specialized information or service, and the only person who can provide what they want is Holiman Ames. But, of course, Ames is a pro when it comes to sensing desperation in a potential client, and the price is way beyond the PCs' means. *Unless*, Ames points out, they perform for him one, insignificant service . . .

MISSIONARY

ST: 10 **IQ:** 13
DX: 11 **HT:** 12
Dodge: 4 **Parry:** (Axe) 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 5.75
Move: 4

Point Total: 120

Advantages

Clerical Investment (Priest of Seerjun; receive +2 to all Healing spells); DR +1; Extended Lifespan; Extra Encumbrance; Extra Fatigue +2; Longevity; Magery 3.

Disadvantages

Appearance (Unattractive); Compulsive Behavior (Cleaning); Fanaticism; Greed; Miserliness; Reduced Move -1; Sense of Duty (To the sick and wounded).

Quirks

Hates people staring at him; Suspicious of Elves and Goblins; When there's water, washes himself twice a day.

Skills

Axe/Mace-12; Cooking-15; Diagnosis-13; First Aid-13; Geology-14; Metallurgy-14; Physician-12; Scrounging-13; Survival (Desert)-14.

Spells: Cure Disease-14; Decay-14; Lend Health-14; Lend Strength-14; Major Healing-13; Minor Healing-14; Neutralize Poison-14; Recover Strength-14; Sterilize-14; Test Food-14.

Weapons

Axe: 1d+2 cutting.

Conversion

Contemporary – Unless there are fantasy races in the campaign, he's human, and a member of a weird cult. Remove Axe/Mace, Toughness, Extended Lifespan and Extra Encumbrance.

Near Future – Same as above, but add Computer Operation-12.

Space – Same as above.

Story

Spreading enlightenment to the masses is no easy task, as En Strongforge soon realized after he was chosen as a missionary of Seerjun.

En comes from a tribe of Dwarves that live in the blasted wasteland of the southern desert. The environment is brutal, and even the hardy Dwarves would have left long ago were it not for the vast deposits of precious ores locked within the rocks.

Most inhabitants of the colony worship Seerjun – god of cleanliness and healing. Sickness is virtually unknown, for one of the first abilities a disciple learns is to cure diseases. The instant an illness is diagnosed, there's a lineup of Dwarves wishing to test their abilities on the lucky patient.

There are two major requirements that all priests of Seerjun must obey. First, they must remove all of their body hair, since hair promotes the infestation of parasites. Second, they are forbidden to heal a patient who's filthy. Originally, this rule was enforced to stop the infection or illness from spreading, but it's gotten out of hand, with priests refusing to heal a patient who's



En Strongforge

Age: 32

even the slightest bit dirty. En is in this group; although he won't actually let a patient's illness progress, he'll do everything in his power to ensure that he's working in a clean environment.

As a missionary of Seerjun, En is required to travel to other lands and perform healing. As he heals a patient, he explains the benefits of devout service to Seerjun and how it can put purpose and meaning into an otherwise dull life.

En has a difficult time being taken seriously. As a healer, he's extremely competent; but the image of a completely hairless Dwarf takes some getting used to. Of course, many prospective clients are in no condition to question the grooming habits of their healer.

Quotes

"That looks like a nasty infestation of drill worm. I can remove it. But first, have you ever heard of the mighty Seerjun?"

"To heal a man's wounds is simple. To heal his mind – now there's the challenge."

"Cleanliness is close to godliness."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The missionary Dwarf has taken to traveling with the PCs (for the added protection). Although he's a competent healer, they'll have to decide whether putting up with En's cleaning fetish is worth his magical ability.

◆ En doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut – for example, in the capital city of a theocratic state, where militant church police patrol the streets searching for heathens. Now En's in the dungeon – along with the other "heathens" whose wounds he was healing at the time (the PCs).

MONEYLENDER

ST: 9 IQ: 14 Speed: 5
DX: 10 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5 Parry: (Knife) 4
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 60

Advantages

Allies (Two leg-breakers); Common Sense; Literacy; Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Bad Sight; Code of Honor (Won't steal).

Quirks

Pretends to be totally emotionless when conducting business; Dislikes sharp things.

Skills

Accounting-13; Area Knowledge-14; Detect Lies-14; Diplomacy-15; Economics-13; Fast-Talk-14; Jeweler-13; Knife-9; Merchant-12; Psychology-13.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 14.

Weapons

Small Knife: 1d-4 cutting, 1d-3 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – The moneylending career doesn't change much through the years. Add Driving (Car)-11. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – All too often, Kee is going to be the PCs' only source for the money they need to buy their flashy cyber toys. Add Driving (Car)-11 and Guns (Pistol)-10. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

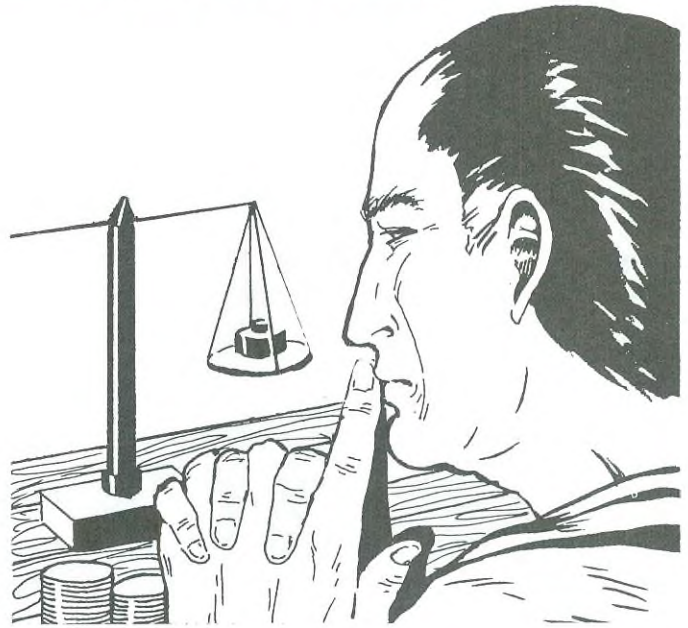
Space – Now the PCs need to buy expensive items like space ships – and who are they going to turn to? Add Beam Weapons (Blaster)-10. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Story

Today, Minicheam Kee is the quintessential businessman, but that wasn't always the case. Raised virtually on the street, he didn't have the capital to start any of the businesses he envisioned to vault him out of the lower classes. Worse, he saw no way – outside of theft, which he couldn't justify – of *getting* that capital. It was then that destiny took a hand.

To this day, Kee will tell anyone who asks that he was fated to succeed. An old man, new to town, asked Kee to guard his inn room while he conducted business in the city. Entranced by the glint of the gold coin the man offered, Kee accepted.

The old man never returned. Maybe he was killed somewhere in the heart of the city; maybe he had reason to avoid the inn. Whatever the case, Kee watched the room for two days – although his original contract was only for six hours – before going in to look around. The first thing he saw was the old man's money pouch, bulging with gold coins.



Minicheam Kee

Age: 42

Kee took the pouch, but didn't spend a single one of those coins for a week. During that week, he kept further watch on the inn in case the old man should come back for his money. When he didn't, Kee decided the money now belonged to him.

Minicheam Kee knew instantly the business that would net him the best returns: moneylending. During his youth, he'd picked up smatterings of many skills, such as goldsmithing and jewelry-making. These stood him in good stead now, allowing him to judge accurately the value of items his clients offered him as collateral.

Kee is that rarity, an honest moneylender. He sees nothing wrong with charging crushing interest on loans, but he won't steal, and he won't fence stolen goods. He's learned to put on a totally emotionless facade when he's doing business (it keeps his clients off balance). Although very rich now, Kee lives quite frugally – not like a stereotypical miser, but certainly not lavishly.

Quotes

"One hundred gold nobles in your hand today. You pay me back one hundred *ten* next week. Take it or leave it."

"Don't force me into precipitous action we both will regret."

"It's only business."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ A client has defaulted on a large loan, and Minicheam Kee needs help in collecting his money. He turns to the PCs – who are perhaps clients in their own right – for help. Unfortunately, the client isn't a run-of-the-mill borrower . . . (Maybe he's a necromancer, a bandit chief or even a vampire.)
- ◆ A client has borrowed money from Kee, using forged documentation to "prove" that one of the PCs has countersigned the loan. Now the client has skipped town, and Kee intends to extract his money from the cosignatory PC . . . one way or another.

NECROMANCER

ST: 9 **IQ:** 13 **Speed:** 5.75
DX: 12 **HT:** 11 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 50

Advantages

Literacy; Magical Aptitude +2.

Disadvantages

Dependents (Children); Phobia (Necrophobia); Secret (He's a necromancer!).

Quirks

Still acts a little spooky; Uncomfortable around other necromancers; Very protective of his children.

Skills

Agronomy-11; Animal Handling-13; Carpentry-12; Fishing-13; History-14; Merchant-13; Occultism-15; Research-12.

Spells: Animation-12; Control Zombie-13; Death Vision-13; Lend Health-13; Lend Strength-13; Minor Healing-13; Sense Spirit-13; Steal Health-13; Steal Strength-13; Summon Spirit-13; Zombie-13.

Languages

One relevant to the adventure, at level 14.

Conversions

Contemporary – In a horror campaign he could provide an interesting twist on the evil necromancer.

Near Future – A computer wizard who makes cryonic zombies! Add Computer Operation-14 and Computer Programming-14.

Space – Same as above.

Story

In necromantic circles, Tichel is seen as a weakling. Not from lack of power; he's easily the match of most of his colleagues. No, this opinion stems from his dislike of the very results of his magic – decay and death. This fear was induced by a number of cruel jokes played on him by his father, a necromancer himself, when Tichel was a child. Only so many times could Tichel wake up with a corpse next to him before a permanent phobia took hold.

Tichel came from a city little known to most humans, where the majority of spell casting was of the black arts . . . necromancy. He could feel the pull of magic so strongly that it overrode his fears, and he learned the teachings of his elders. Although he learned primarily death magic, he was able to come up with some innovative uses for it that managed to skirt his fear.

Tichel left home as soon as he could – not wanting to spend more time than necessary in a city with a large undead population. It was in his adventures abroad that he met his wife, and they set up housekeeping on a small piece of land near a town. They used undead servants to help clear the land and build their house, but that was all, for Tichel couldn't stand having the ghastly things around. In fact, Tichel and wife raised their children without telling them of their father's gruesome magical proficiency.

Fantasy



Tichel

Age: 34

Tichel has set up a shop where local mages can come, trade knowledge, purchase magical tokens and find reagents. So far no one has noticed that all the knowledge Tichel has to offer is of a darker nature.

Quotes

"People brought back from the dead, you say? Is that so . . ."

"You wouldn't happen to know the whereabouts of a little deadly nightshade would you? . . . Oh, no reason."

"Oh, I'd say I dabble in the magical arts, but no more than that."

Adventure Seeds

◆ On the road, the PCs are caught by a storm. They stop at a roadside house to seek shelter. Tichel is only too happy to let them stay, since he doesn't see visitors all that often. That evening the local townspeople – who've finally realized just who (or what) is living near them – decide to send a lynch mob. Tichel has his own defense planned, but he neglects to tell the PCs the gruesome details . . .

◆ The PCs have traveled far, through great hardships, to find the fabled necromancer who can help them with a problem. At the end of their journey they find . . . Tichel, who certainly doesn't match their image of a powerful necromancer and, in fact, denies all familiarity with the Black Arts. Can the PCs persuade him to admit his true nature and help them with their problem?

PHILOSOPHER

ST: 10 IQ: 16 Speed: 5
DX: 11 HT: 9 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 110

Advantages

Eidetic Memory 1; Literacy.

Disadvantages

Age (55); Bad Sight; Stubbornness.

Quirks

Considers illiteracy the greatest sin; Pedantic in conversation; Will read anything.

Skills

Area Knowledge-18; Calligraphy-11; Diplomacy-16; History-17; Law-19; Literature-17; Mathematics-15; Occultism-18; Philosophy-18; Research-17; Teaching-16; Theology-17; Writing-16.

Languages

Any three relevant to the adventure, at level 17.

Conversions

Contemporary – He could play a part in a horror campaign. Literacy is no longer an advantage. Replace Calligraphy with Computer Operation-18 and Economics-17.

Near Future – The hard-edged, terrifying cyberpunk world would add a lot of unwanted excitement to Zane's life. Replace Literacy with Paranoia. Same skill conversions as above.

Space – With the amazing variety of alien cultures in space, Zane will truly be in his element. Same conversions as above but add Xenology-17.

Story

Zane Turbot discovered early on that the life of the scholar was the life for him. The son of an itinerant friar, he learned to read at the age of three – an amazing achievement in a society where literate people are rarer than dragons – and never looked back. His parents quickly realized that his was a gift to be nurtured, so they took him to the nearest large city and tried to enroll him in the university there . . . at the age of six. Needless to say, the admissions board laughed in the young lad's face, until he read fluently and flawlessly from the heavy history tome they set before him as a joke. Turbot was accepted for admission with no further question.

He spent his formative years alone; his parents couldn't visit him once he'd enrolled in the university, and his fellow scholars wouldn't deign to spend time with someone a third their age. Of course, Zane didn't consider himself alone. His friends were always at hand: the heroes from the many scrolls and ancient books of legends; the historians who'd chronicled the nations of the world; and, most importantly, the philosophers who'd wrestled with many of the same questions that now troubled the youth.

It didn't take Turbot long to recognize his true calling. Philosophy fascinated him from the start, and by the time he was 14



Zane Turbot

Age: 55

he'd read everything the university library had to offer on the subject. Since there was nothing more the university or its faculty could teach him, he went off on his own to travel the world in search of more reference material. In the 41 years since that day, he's traveled the length and breadth of his world, visiting all of its major libraries, and adding to his own personal collection of books and scrolls. Today, sages throughout the world recognize him as the preeminent expert on all questions of philosophy, metaphysics, ethics and epistemology.

Zane Turbot is a man of very strong opinions, and isn't shy about stating them . . . unless he thinks it might lead to him getting hurt. His scholastic upbringing didn't prepare him for the harsh realities of life in a world where justice is all too often the rule of the sword (the one with the sword makes the rules). Someone who approaches Zane in a friendly manner can usually get most of his questions answered . . . if for a fee. Someone who questions him harshly will only hear what the philosopher thinks he *wants* to hear.

Quotes

"The answer to your question can be found in the ancient Roll of the Slain . . . as any *educated* person could tell you."

"Sometimes the *only* important thing is sticking to principles, no matter what the consequences . . ."

" . . . But only sometimes."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Zane is faced with a thorny problem of ethics. He's agreed to do some research, totally secretly, for a local lord. Now he's found out that the said lord plans to eliminate Turbot after the lord has gotten his information, just to make sure nobody *else* learns the same thing. Obviously, Zane needs help. Can he persuade that group of wandering strangers (the PCs) to help him out . . . without breaking his oath of secrecy to the lord?

◆ Many locals come to Turbot to have the philosopher interpret omens and portents they receive from hedge witches, diviners and others. Through interpreting another's omens, he's learned something he doesn't think the gods would want him to know: the exact date of his death. And it's soon! Can he persuade the PCs to help stave off his doom? (Preferably without letting them know helping him might get *them* on the gods' bad books . . .)

PRIEST

ST: 13 IQ: 11 Speed: 5.5
DX: 12 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 80

Advantages

Clerical Investment; Reputation +2 (To everyone: a virtuous man and good healer).

Disadvantages

Fanaticism; Gullibility; Sense of Duty (Healer).

Quirks

Says "Thank Aldor" whenever anything good happens; Strong, but gentle.

Skills

Area Knowledge-10; Cooking-10; Diagnosis-10; Diplomacy-10; First Aid-13; History-9; Occultism-10; Physician-14; Psychology-10; Teaching-10; Theology (Aldor)-11.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 10.

Conversions

Contemporary – He could be a member of a fringe cult. No changes.

Near Future – There aren't many churches any more that aren't in it for the money. Add Computer Operation-11.

Space – Same as above.

Story

Father Petr has been involved in the priesthood of Aldor – god of light and goodness – for nearly five years now. His official title is Light-Bringer, but he prefers to think of himself as a healer, of mind as well as body.

Unlike most priesthoods, servants of Aldor receive no divine aid in the way of spells. Instead they must rely on more mundane means to achieve their healing powers, mainly through the use of herbal salves. Nor do Aldor's disciples receive answers directly from above – at least, not in the normally-accepted sense. They're taught that in the event of a problem, the first solution that comes into their mind is divinely inspired and should be acted upon, no matter how bizarre it seems.

The flat truth of the matter is that there's no god Aldor. The entire religion is just a money-making venture for those in the top of the hierarchy. They've been running their scam for 50 years now, and have amassed enough capital to embarrass the local royalty if they ever found out.

Father Petr is devout, however, and truly believes in all of the teachings of his chosen faith. He follows all the Edicts of Aldor without question or hesitation – even when the course of action prescribed seems ludicrous.

Many times Petr has seen signs that perhaps his religion is not exactly what it seems, but he dismisses his suspicions as evil thoughts forced into his mind by demons that would destroy



Father Petr

Age: 30

Aldor. Fortunately for his superiors, he's extremely gullible – a few well-chosen words will set him back on the path of true "enlightenment."

Quotes

"My son, your leg would heal ten times faster if you would just let Aldor into your heart."

"Thank you for reminding me of Aldor's true purpose, Brother Calvin. Here is the money you requested."

"Without Aldor, I would still be wandering the streets, living by the sword and amounting to nothing."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Petr has finally seen incontrovertible proof that there's something "fishy" about some of the priests of Aldor. Although it pains him to do so, for he fears the wrath of Aldor, he hires the PCs to investigate some of the church members and their nefarious dealings.

◆ The PCs require healing and come to the church of Aldor. The outrageous price they're charged for non-magical healing should drive them berserk. Will they expose the church for what it is, or realize that it does provide a much-needed service to society?

PROPHET/MESSIAH

ST: 10 IQ: 9 Speed: 5.5
DX: 12 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 60

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive); Charisma +4; Reputation +3 (Recognized by everyone, all of the time).

Disadvantages

Fanaticism; Honesty.

Quirks

Baffled by what's built up behind her; Hears voices.

Skills

Area Knowledge-10; Heraldry-11; History-10; Leadership-10; Performance-12; Politics-10; Riding-13; Savoir-Faire-11; Swimming-12.

Conversions

Contemporary – Gregis could be the leader of any modern-day “fringe” cult or religious movement. Replace Heraldry and Riding with Driving (Car)-10.

Near Future – Gregis is a netrunner – and the person chosen by the sentient computers to lead them to the “promised land” of equality with and understanding by humanity. . . or at least that's what they want Gregis to believe. Replace Heraldry, Riding and Swimming with Computer Operation-11, Computer Programming-10 and Cyberdeck Operation-12. Also implant an Interface Jack.

Space – A supremely powerful alien force requires Gregis' persuasive abilities to spread word of its existence, for some dark purpose. Replace Heraldry and Riding with Xenology-10.

Story

Gregis Orlikova is the new messiah, the Chosen One . . .

At least, that's what her “priests,” “advisors” and “chancellors” are telling everyone.

Life was so much less complex when she was just the simple daughter of a simple border lord. When the most difficult decisions she had to make was whether to go hunting before or after lunch, and what to have the cooks serve her for supper. Before the gods spoke to her in a transcendent vision of light and majesty.

The gods described a new world to her. They told her that civilization had gone astray, that mankind had slipped from the true path. If all the societies of the world didn't start repenting, that there'd be hell to pay . . . quite literally. She immediately renounced her life of privilege, and started to spread the word through the countryside.

Surprisingly, people flocked to her. The time was right, it seemed, for a messiah. Her simple message struck a chord in the souls of those who heard her, and her obvious sincerity softened the hearts of many who planned to oppose her. Within a few short months, Gregis Orlikova found herself at the head of a multitude of true believers.

And that's when the “priests” moved in. By this time, there were so many followers that Gregis didn't have time to minister to them personally, to hear their comments and help them with their problems. Intermediaries stepped in – people close to her, volunteering to take some of these burdens from her shoulders. She accepted their offers gladly.



Gregis Orlikova

Age: 22

Then others came forward, requesting the honor of handling other organizational chores, logistics, public relations, communication . . . Again, Gregis gladly accepted their kind offers.

Today, she's not at all sure she shouldn't have sent them all packing. She's still the Chosen One . . . but now she's just a figurehead. Apart from carefully managed public appearances, she doesn't meet with the rank and file of her followers any more. The only people she talks to are her priests and her chancellors. *They* pass on her words – or those of her words that suit *their* agenda – to the multitude, and return to her laundered versions of what her people are saying in return. This isn't the way things should be.

Of course, what's a messiah to do? It's the priests and counselors who keep the whole movement working smoothly. If she banished them, the entire movement would fall apart, and then what would the gods think? But, what do they think of the direction those priests are taking now? It's a difficult position . . .

Quotes

“I have been vouchsafed a glimpse of the Truth, and it is beautiful.”

“Peace is the end. Unfortunately, the means to that end must be war.”

“The gods speak through me alone . . .”

Adventure Seeds

◆ Gregis has had enough. Her priests – particularly that militant new one – are handling things *badly*. Unfortunately, when she told them that, they just laughed, and basically told her to go off and play. Now she needs help against her own infrastructure. Who can she turn to? Why not that posse of unbelievers captured yesterday and scheduled for execution . . . ?

◆ Gregis and her horde of faithful followers are descending on the land in which the PCs live. The adventurers are given the task of negotiating with the new messiah, and somehow diverting the juggernaut. (Little do they know that the Chosen One actually has very little to say about where the juggernaut goes next . . .)

SAGE

ST: 9 IQ: 15
DX: 10 HT: 11
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 5.25
Move: 5

Point Total: 110

Advantages

Eidetic Memory 1; Literacy.

Disadvantages

Overweight; Paranoia.

Quirks

Always reading; Obsessed with passing time.

Skills

Area Knowledge-17; Calligraphy-10; Diplomacy-15; Heraldry-16; History-19; Literature-16; Mathematics-15; Occultism-16; Research-18; Writing-16.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 15.

Conversions

Contemporary – Castex would fit nicely into a horror campaign. Replace Heraldry and Calligraphy with Computer Operation-16. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – In a campaign with magic Castex might exist, but now he'll be using the power of technology to aid his search. Same conversions as above.

Space – Now it's possible for him to have made a deal with a bizarre alien entity. Same conversions as above.

Story

Castex the Sage operates a small bookstore in the center of town. To enter the bookstore is to enter another world in this illiterate culture. In the back of the shop sits Castex at his desk, which is buried under a mountain of books – Castex's current reading material.

Castex's impatience has always been a problem, and could, in fact, prove to be his downfall. In his youth, he made a deal with an evil demon for a tremendous amount of knowledge. Now, his side of the deal is coming due, and he's doomed to an early retirement . . . in hell. Understandably, he's desperately trying to find a way out of the deal. A wizard he consulted told Castex he could probably break the contract and banish the creature if he could find its soul name. Accordingly, he spends day and night searching through musty tomes trying to locate a clue to the demon's true identity.

Castex is in his fifties, but looks even older. Reading constantly has left him with little time for such trivial matters as exercise, so he's fairly overweight. Castex is jittery, and suffering from sleep deprivation thanks to various herbal concoctions. (Sleep isn't a luxury he can afford at the moment.) According to the contract, the "possession date" is coming up soon, but Castex can't be sure the demon won't jump the gun. His resulting paranoia makes dealing with the sage irritating at best, impossible at worst.



Castex

Age: 56

The knowledge he possesses ranges from the common to the obscure. The former he gives out quite readily while the latter usually demands a high price. Questioners have been known to travel the lands in search of some obscure tome Castex would add to his collection.

Quotes

"The answer to your question depends on your ability to travel the northern wastes."

"I have no time for your prattling; ask your question or get out . . . Eh? . . . You desire to destroy a demon? Please, sit down."

"Quickly now! I don't have all day."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Castex has determined the location of an important tome he needs. In exchange for a consultation, the PCs must retrieve it. Little do they realize that the tome is already in the hands of someone working in league with the demon.
- ◆ The PCs are consulting Castex for information that seems to relate to a demon. Castex's paranoia gets the better of him and he suspects that they've been sent by the demon.

SAILOR

ST: 12 **IQ:** 11 **Speed:** 5.75
DX: 12 **HT:** 11 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5 **Parry:** (Broadsword) 7
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 90

Advantages

Charisma +1; Danger Sense.

Disadvantages

Duty (Navy); Poverty (Struggling).

Quirks

Keeps his hatred of the war to himself; Sings while he works.

Skills

Agronomy-10; Area Knowledge-12; Boating-13; Broadsword-14; Cooking-11; Fishing-13; Leadership-13; Navigation-9; Piloting (Large ship)-11; Seamanship-13; Swimming-13; Tactics-11.

Weapons

Thrusting Broadsword: 1d+3 cutting, 1d+1 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – With conscription, Thris wouldn't even have a chance to decide whether he wanted to go to war. Replace Broadsword with Driving (Truck)-11 and Guns (Pistol)-14.

Near Future – Same as above.

Space – Thris could have come from a remote colony world. Replace Broadsword and Piloting with Beam Weapons (Laser)-15, Free Fall-13, Gunner (Ship weapons)-13 and Vacc Suit-10.

Story

The small coastal fishing village of Simot is so far away from the capital city that they're part of the empire in name only. Even the tax collectors don't bother making the trip. Any news of the empire comes by word of mouth, and is usually three years old.

Thris Dendor grew up in Simot, and fully expected to spend the rest of his life there . . . fishing. But in his 18th year, an imperial navy cutter sailed into port and offered him the chance of a lifetime. The empire was at war, and needed fresh sailors to fight in the newly-built ships just now being completed in the capital.

The offer seemed too good to be true: a chance to travel away from Simot, see the world, and fight for his empire, all wrapped up in one. Of course Thris jumped at it.

Now two years into his naval career, Thris is beginning to question his decision. The war he's fighting seems pointless. The entire navy has been sent over to attack the shores of a much stronger enemy. Thris doesn't see them lasting very long.

Aside from his misgivings, joining the navy has done nothing but good for Thris. He's become an extremely competent sailor – and fighter, when necessary. His superiors are also noticing his natural leadership and tactical abilities.

Thris doesn't want to end up a casualty in this war, and has come up with two options. The first is easy, and relatively safe. The next time the ship docks, he just won't return. The second is



Thris Dendor

Age: 20

more dangerous, but it's the one he knows he'll choose . . . mutiny. Perhaps in a few years, he figures, he may just be the captain of his own ship – as a pirate!

Quotes

"The way I see it, the only good war is one where you defend. This is stupid."

"There they are! Quick, give 'em a broadside!"

"On a good day in Simot, you can see all the way to Istabar. The water has this deep blue color with just a hint of green. And the fish! You should taste the fish."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Thris has decided to attempt mutiny. He already has half of the crew agreeing with him. The PCs can play any part in dealing with this takeover – as the attacked bridge crew, or as mutineers themselves.

◆ Thris has already mutineered, and pulled his ship out of the fleet. The PCs' mission – should they decide to accept it – is to retrieve the much-needed ship, and bring the mutineers to justice.

SEER

ST: 10

IQ: 14

Speed: 5

DX: 10

HT: 10

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 75

Advantages

Alertness +2; Blessed (Allows divination through dreams); Danger Sense.

Disadvantages

Shyness (Mild); Vow (To never let another disaster take lives); Weak Will -2.

Quirks

Acts edgy during thunderstorms; Distrusts "formal" religions and schools of magic; Doesn't like groups; Listens very carefully to everything people say to her.

Skills

Area Knowledge-14; Cooking-14; First Aid-16; History-15; Occultism-15; Psychology-16; Riding-11; Survival (Forest)-14.

Conversions

Contemporary – In the present day, Kefya's abilities would be even more misunderstood – and, depending on the particular culture, even feared. Replace Riding with Driving (Car)-11.

Near Future – Same as above but add Computer Operation-15.

Space – Her unique ability to sense the future might be due to psionic ability. Add the psionic power Precognition-15. Replace Riding with Computer Operation-15.

Story

It took her parents several years to realize that Kefya of Noorn wasn't like her young friends. After all, most children claim to have imaginary friends who tell them things. The difference in Kefya's case was that *her* imaginary friends told her *important* things – useful things, things she shouldn't know. When this difference became known, the young girl's parents – and everyone else in her village – started to treat her . . . strangely. They felt uncomfortable in her presence, and didn't like having her around; yet they were also drawn to her, because she seemed to have access to information they couldn't get anywhere else. This ambivalent reaction had a profound effect on the girl's personality during her formative years.

Of course, neither her parents nor the other villagers ever spoke to Kefya about the Sight, or divination, or the fact that she was different from other children. It wasn't until the young woman was about 13 that she realized *everyone* didn't hear voices in the wind, or in the crashing of the thunder. With this realization she understood that the villagers weren't shunning her *for* her, as it were, but for what she represented – a Seer.

By her 16th year, Kefya was respected – and feared – as a "hedge witch," a diviner to whom the gods and spirits spoke. Although still uncomfortable with her neighbors' reaction to her, Kefya was becoming more accepting of her gift.

Then the storm came – a mighty tempest, lashing the skies with



Kefya of Noorn

Age: 23

lightning. In the roar of the thunder, Kefya heard the voices of the gods, warning of her village's destruction. She ran to the Elders of the village, passed on her frantic warning. They listened, and felt afraid, but decided they couldn't evacuate the village until the storm had ended. Terrified for her own life, Kefya fled in the rain and the lightning-split darkness. And that was when the mountain above the village shifted, split, and rained thousands of tons of boulders onto her home, killing all who lived there.

Today Kefya wanders the world, stopping here and there for a few weeks at a time. She never stays anywhere long enough to feel at home, because she remembers what happened to her *last* home. Neither does she allow herself any true friendship or other relationship. Over the years, she's become reconciled to the mixed fear and respect with which people treat her. She uses her gift to benefit others when she can, yet is always terrified that, once more, she'll foresee a tragedy she can't prevent.

Quotes

"Believe me when I tell you, I did *not* seek this gift. But, since it was bestowed upon me, my duty is to use it responsibly."

" . . . And then I saw three kings, one without a crown, and one in a burial shroud. Does that mean anything to you?"

"Yes, sometimes I have the Sight . . . but understanding is something else."

Adventure Seeds

◆ It's happened again! In the storm last night, Kefya heard prophesies of doom for the village where she's staying. The Elders of this village won't believe her, however. In a panic, she searches for people who'll understand and believe, and who'll help her avert the imminent tragedy . . .

◆ The PCs come to Kefya to have their fortunes told. The woman sees a strong image associated with one of the adventurers, but it's highly symbolic and allegorical, and she can't interpret it. The image contains some hints as to where an interpretation might be found, however. Feeling personally responsible, Kefya insists on accompanying the PCs to seek the truth.

SLAVE TRADER

ST: 13 **IQ:** 10 **Speed:** 5.5
DX: 11 **HT:** 11 **Move:** 4
Dodge: 4 **Parry:** 6
Chainmail armor (PD 3, DR 4); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 45

Advantages

Charisma +1; High Pain Threshold.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper; Enemy (Former master); Greed.

Quirks

Defends the institution of slavery on economic grounds; Won't take off his shirt.

Skills

Area Knowledge-10; Brawling-12; Broadsword-12; Carousing-11; Fast-Draw (Broadsword)-11; Leadership-10; Merchant-10; Streetwise-10; Survival (Desert)-10.

Weapons

Bastard Sword: 2d cutting, 1d+1 crushing.

Conversions

Contemporary – If there's a slave market in the campaign, change his skills to their modern-day equivalents. Replace Broadsword with Guns (Pistol)-13 and change Fast-Draw (Broadsword) to Fast-Draw (Pistol).

Near Future – Same as above, except change Survival (Desert) to Survival (Urban).

Space – This is an interesting conversion, for now he's buying and selling aliens. Replace Broadsword with Beam Weapons-13 and Xenology-10.

Story

Zhim learned about the brutality of man the hard way – on his 12th birthday he was sold by his parents to slavers. The slavers attempted to break Zhim, body and mind, but his will to live and escape was unquenchable.

In a well-planned break, Zhim and two other slaves killed a slaver, stole some supplies, and escaped into the desert. When he finally reached a city, Zhim realized the only jobs open to him were exactly the same as when he'd worked for the slavers: back-breaking, mind-numbing drudgery. He had no skills that he could turn into a career. Except one.

The many years of slavery had twisted Zhim. Never had he been shown any kindness – not from his parents and definitely not from the slavers – and was never required to show any in return. He understood that slavery wasn't going to go away, so he might as well get in and make some money . . . as a slaver. The fact that he buys and sells human lives is of no concern to him, as it was of no concern to those who bought and sold him.

The only concern that Zhim does have is that his former master has found out where he's operating, and fully intends to "re-acquire" him – or failing that, kill him.

Years of forced labor have created a truly spectacular phy-



Zhim

Age: 40

sique, but it's starting to slide with misuse. Although the heat in this land is nearly unbearable, he never removes his shirt, because the extensive scars from his whippings would cause questions he doesn't want to answer.

Quotes

"Without slaves, where would we be, I ask you? The economy would collapse, civilization as we know it would end . . ."

"Are these not the most beautiful women you have ever set eyes upon? Yours for a pittance."

"There has always been slavery and there always will be, it's just the way life is. Now get back to work!"

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Zhim – his fear playing tricks with his memory – mistakes one of the PCs for his former master, and sends mercenaries out to kill him.
- ◆ The PCs somehow end up as slaves and are purchased by Zhim. The slave train will travel through the desert en route to the trading block. The PCs must escape lest they spend a life in slavery.

SOLDIER

ST: 11 IQ: 11 Speed: 5.5
DX: 10 HT: 12 Move: 4
Dodge: 4 Parry: 6 Block: 5
Heavy leather armor (PD 2, DR 2); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 80

Advantages

Danger Sense; Rapid Healing.

Disadvantages

Low Pain Threshold; Poverty (Struggling).

Quirks

Always demonstrating his ability to mimic bird songs; Hates army life; Tells interminable tales about his previous life of bucolic peace.

Skills

Agronomy-13; Animal Handling-11; Area Knowledge-11; Broadsword-12; Cooking-12; Scrounging-11; Shield-11; Singing (Birdsongs)-13; Stealth-11; Survival (Forest)-12; Tracking-12.

Weapons

Broadsword: 1d+2 cutting, 1d crushing.

Conversion

Contemporary – Rayik joined the Army Reserves to help pay for school, and now his unit has been called to service. Replace Broadsword and Shield with Guns (Rifle)-12 and Driving (Truck)-10.

Near Future – Same as above.

Space – Rayik was taken off-world to fight in some interstellar conflict. Replace Broadsword and Shield with Free Fall-10 and Beam Weapons (Laser)-12.

Story

Some people love army life: the structure, the camaraderie, the excitement . . .

Rayik Marden isn't one of them. He hates just about everything about his new "career," and doesn't mind who knows it.

Up until a few months ago, he was a farmer, working the fields of his feudal lord. He loved working the land, and had no ambitions beyond perhaps owning his own plot someday. His lord owed service to the nation's king, however, and part of that service was providing "conscripts" for the army. Rayik had always known his own feudal duties might involve serving a year in the army, but he'd never expected the lord to exercise that portion of his authority. Now, however, Rayik is a soldier, and what he most wants is *not* to be.

Despite his hatred of army life, Rayik gets on well with most of his comrades. He's an open, congenial man who makes friends easily.

From time to time, the skills he developed as a farmer have helped him out in his new career. He's shared with some of his closer friends the ability to imitate birdcalls and animal sounds, and they've developed a kind of private "code" among themselves. His ability to move silently at night has impressed his



Rayik Marden

Age: 22

comrades, although Rayik is careful to keep his skill secret from the officers (he's afraid they'll make him a scout or a spy, neither of which is conducive to long-term survival).

Quotes

"Listen to this one, it's a lesser bittern . . ."

"Chipped beef *again*?"

"Only three more months and I'm out of here . . . and not a moment too soon."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs are serving in the same unit as Rayik. They're assigned a covert mission and must choose a group of soldiers to support them. Rayik is one of them . . . fortunately for all concerned, because his skills will come in extremely useful on the mission.
- ◆ The PCs are instructed to silence a soldier (Rayik) who's creating unrest among the other troops. Can the PCs complete the mission, or will they come to share Rayik's distaste for army life?

TINKER

ST: 10 IQ: 12 Speed: 5
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5 Parry: (Shortsword) 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 35

Advantages

Absolute Direction; Literacy; Luck.

Disadvantages

Dependents (Family); Reputation -1 (To everyone, all the time: thief and worse); Status -1; Poverty (Poor).

Quirks

Flamboyant dress and mannerisms; Tendency toward kleptomania (quirk level only); Enjoys telling lies (quirk-level Compulsive Lying).

Skills

Animal Handling-10; Area Knowledge-11; Astronomy-10; Carousing-8; Carpentry-12; Cooking-11; Diplomacy-10; Fast-Talk-15; First Aid-11; Fishing-11; Gambling-10; History-9; Jeweler-9; Leatherworking-12; Lockpicking-10; Merchant-10; Occultism-11; Pickpocket-8; Riding (Horse)-10; Scrounging-12; Shortsword-10; Streetwise-10; Woodworking-10.

Languages

Any four relevant to the adventure, at level 10.

Weapons

Shortsword: 1d-1 cutting, 1d-2 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – In Britain and elsewhere in Europe, itinerant gypsies and “rag-and-bone men” haven’t entirely disappeared. Replace Riding and Shortsword with Driving (Car)-10. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – In the inner city, Hess does anything he can to make a living. Replace Riding and Shortsword with Computer Operation-11 and Guns (Pistol)-11.

Space – Same as above but replace Guns with Beam Weapons-11.

Story

Talarczyk Hess is a jack-of-all-trades, but master of none. He and his family travel the land in their ramshackle wagon – they call it their “caravan” – eking out a living by providing services to the farmers and homesteaders they meet. Hess can make a good attempt at just about anything, from tending to a colicky horse to “midwifing” at the birth of a baby. Unfortunately, he’s not particularly skilled at anything, so the results will never be as good as people hope (although they’ll rarely be disastrous).

The tinker’s wagon – a closed affair, like a garishly-painted box on wheels – is covered with pots and pans and other trade goods, hanging on hooks or suspended in baskets, and clattering like a convention of blacksmiths when it moves. Hess will gladly sell or trade anything displayed on his wagon . . . but always to his own benefit.



Talarczyk Hess

Age: 42

He supplements his income by stealing anything that isn’t bolted down – either using it himself or selling it at his next stop. Everybody expects this from traveling tinkers, however, and simply takes precautions. (When a tinker rolls up in his wagon with his familiar cry of, “Fix your pots? Shoe your horses? Sharpen your knives?” the more cynical locals will add to themselves, “Eat your cats? Sell your children?”) Despite his larcenous habits, the tinker is still usually welcome because he brings with him skills unavailable to many farmers. More importantly, however, he brings with him news of the world outside the immediate vicinity.

Personally, Hess doesn’t consider himself a thief. He’s simply “borrowing” things – and things not overly valued by their owner, otherwise they’d have been locked away. He’s an open, boisterous man, with an innocent love for alcohol (but, sadly, no tolerance). If he’s even aware of how people view him, he doesn’t show it.

Quotes

“Fix your pots? Shoe your horses? Sharpen your knives?”

“Any old iron?”

“Stolen? You don’t say . . .”

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ To reach his next destination, Hess has to travel a stretch of road through bandit territory – territory that claimed the life of the last tinker to travel this way. Hess needs protection, but it would be against his nature to actually pay for it. Can he persuade – or finagle – the PCs to help him?
- ◆ The PCs have been hired to carry an item of value from one town to another. On the journey, they meet up with Hess, and share the hospitality of his campfire. Later, they find the item is missing. Can they track down the tinker and retrieve the item before their employers conclude that it’s the PCs who have stolen it?

TOWN OFFICIAL

ST: 9 IQ: 13 Speed: 5
DX: 10 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 40

Advantages

Literacy; Status 1; Wealth (Wealthy).

Disadvantages

Greed; Overweight; Weak Will -2.

Quirks

Always buys expensive wine, though he knows nothing about wine; Conceals his intelligence; Hates getting dirty.

Skills

Accounting-11; Administration-12; Area Knowledge-13; Detect Lies-11; Diplomacy-13; Economics-12; Fast-Talk-13; Heraldry-12; Leadership-12; Politics-14; Psychology-12; Savoir-Faire-14.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 12.

Conversions

Contemporary – Li could be an appointed official in any city office. Replace Heraldry with Driving (Car)-11 and Computer Operation-12. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – In a cyberpunk setting, the only difference between straight and crooked officials is often that the crooked ones are still alive . . . Replace Heraldry with Computer Operation-14 and Driving (Car)-11. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Space – Replace Heraldry with Computer Operation-14 and Xenology-11. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

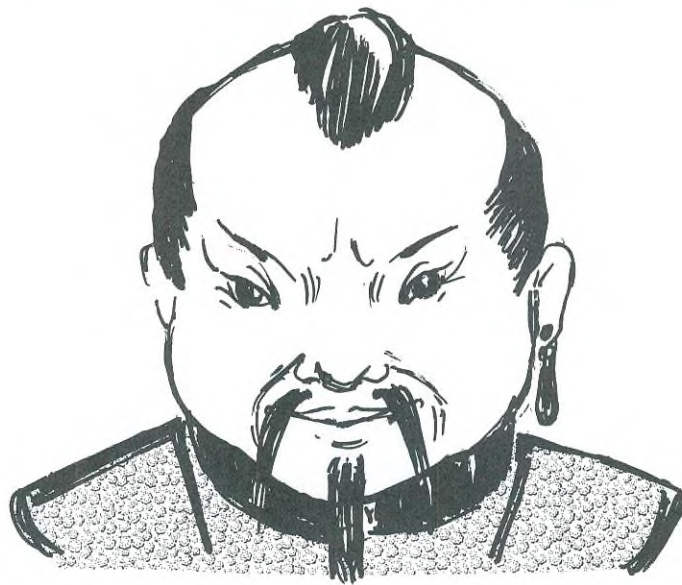
Story

Chu-Moi Li always wanted to be rich. Unfortunately he wasn't born into money, and his every attempt to *marry* into money has been a catastrophe. He doesn't have the skills necessary to be an adventurer, and he's too risk-averse to be a good businessman. It didn't take him long, then, to realize he was only going to get fat at the public trough.

As soon as he reached his age of majority, he tried running for office . . . with disastrous results. Chu-Moi always knew you couldn't fool all of the people all of the time, but his first catastrophic campaign convinced him he couldn't fool *any* of the people sufficiently long to get himself elected. He decided to approach the public trough from another direction.

His home town has two classes of politicians and town officials – the elected and the appointed. The first category seemed barred to him, so he focused on the second.

One thing Li has always been able to do is butter people up. As a dedicated sycophant, he weaseled his way into the confidences of the town's Lord Mayor – not the most discerning of individuals, as it turned out. So impressed was the Mayor with Li's boot-



Chu-Moi Li

Age: 27

licking behavior, that he named him to the town council – an appointed position, and one that lasts for life. As soon as he took office, Li applied himself to feathering his own nest with astounding fervor.

Li's intelligent and a good judge of people. He quickly figured out how money flows through the political and town infrastructure, and figured out innovative ways of diverting some of it into his own purse. Many shady businessmen throughout the region have come to recognize that a "personal gift" to Chu-Moi Li will help them toward their goals infinitely more than stringent adherence to the rules. A fact that's helped Li reach his present pinnacle of success is his very situational application of business ethics: once he's been bought, he *stays* bought.

Most of the townsfolk and many fellow councilors know that Li's on the take. But *knowing* and *proving* are two very different things . . .

Quotes

"I'm sorry, I could never accept a bribe . . . Oh, it's a *gift*. Why didn't you say so?"

"I'm so sorry, I'd help you if I could. But the rules on this matter are very strict . . ."

" . . . although there *are* several loopholes. Why don't we discuss it over dinner? At your house?"

Adventure Seeds

◆ Most of Li's "business partners" could never accuse him of corruption, because such accusations would incriminate them as well. Now, unfortunately, someone has proof of various . . . *indiscretions* . . . and is using it to bribe the councilor. Li wants this person removed and the evidence destroyed. But to whom can he turn for this kind of help . . . ?

◆ The PCs need to speak to the mayor, but to do so they need to get through Li.

TRAVELING MAGISTRATE

ST: 8 IQ: 14 Speed: 4.75
DX: 10 HT: 9 Move: 4
Dodge: 4
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 52

Advantages

Legal Enforcement Powers; Literacy; Status +1.

Disadvantages

Age (52); Duty (Legal).

Quirks

Always dresses in black; Pompous; Sensitive about thinning hair.

Skills

Administration-12; Area Knowledge-13; Criminology-13; Detect Lies-14; Diplomacy-14; History-12; Law-16; Psychology-12; Riding-9.

Languages

Any three relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Contemporary – Garetha would be a typical corrupt judge. Replace Riding with Driving (Car)-9. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – Garetha could work either for the civil judiciary, or for a megacorporate equivalent. Use the same conversions as above.

Space – New colonies require a magistrate to settle disputes that the local government is unable to mediate. Replace Riding with Computer Operation-14 and Xenology-12.

Story

Many villages in the nation are too small to warrant their own magistrates. Yet, part of the nation's social compact with its citizens is that everyone must have access to justice. Thus the traveling magistrate takes on great importance outside the larger cities and towns.

Garetha Hillborne is one of these traveling magistrates, and has been for much of her life. Trained in law in the nation's capital, she travels the length and breadth of the land, meting out justice.

Traveling magistrates enjoy great respect, but are paid relatively little. In her youth, this didn't bother Garetha; the knowledge that she was making a difference was enough. Now, however, as she contemplates retirement, money is becoming more important.

As she's recognized the importance of a healthy nest egg, she's also become more cynical about the concept of "justice." There's



Garetha Hillborne

Age: 52

no such thing as "absolute justice," she's decided, not in the abstract. All ethics and morals are situational, and anyone who doesn't accept that is deluding himself. Garetha has started to put her new world view into practice. She's now something of a "judge-for-hire," allowing her verdict to be swayed by "voluntary donations" to her retirement fund.

Garetha hasn't abandoned *all* her principles, however. While an acquittal can be bought in most cases, she categorically will not acquit murderers, no matter how much money she's offered.

Hillborne is sensitive about her appearance. Her hair is thinning with age, so she always wears a wig of white, flowing locks.

Quotes

"Justice is blind, my man. But it's also . . . *poor* . . . if you take my meaning."

"When all the facts of the case are before me, only then will I make my decision."

"When you're in my court, you treat me with the respect due my office. Now shut up and sit down."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs have been arrested for a crime they didn't commit, and Garetha is the magistrate. Unbeknownst to the PCs, an enemy of theirs has paid Garetha to make sure they're convicted.

◆ The PCs have brought a criminal to justice. In the trial – presided over by Garetha – the criminal is acquitted, however, despite the overwhelming evidence pointing to his guilt. The criminal himself doesn't have the money to bribe the magistrate, so someone else obviously did it. Why? And *who*?

VAMPIRE

ST: 18 IQ: 13 Speed: 7
DX: 14 HT: 16 Move: 7
Dodge: 7 Parry: 8
Natural DR of 2; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 225

Advantages

Appearance (Very Beautiful), Immunity to Disease; Literacy; Night Vision; Reputation +2 (To nobility: a patron of the arts); Status 3; Unaffected by metal; Unaging; Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantages

Cannot cross running water; Cannot enter dwelling uninvited; Paranoia; Secret (Vampire); Takes damage from sunlight (1 point per minute); Vulnerable to Holy Water.

Quirks

Always wears expensive jewelry; Fascinated with locks and other intricate mechanisms; Very vain.

Skills

Acrobatics-15; Area Knowledge-15; Climbing-15; Dancing-14; Heraldry-13; Lockpicking-16; Savoir-Faire-15; Sex Appeal-14; Shortsword-16; Sleight of Hand-14; Stealth-16.

Spells: Body of Air; Charm; Mammal Control; Shapeshifting; Steal Health.

Languages

Any four relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Contemporary – The interesting point about Claudette is that she could still be alive from the medieval period. Add Driving (Car)-14 and Guns (Pistol)-16. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – Same as above but add Computer Operation-13. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Space – Claudette could be a humanoid alien; her powers thus have a non-supernatural origin. Same as above but add Free Fall-15 and Xenology-14. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Story

The Marquise Claudette de la Verain seems to have it all. Despite the fact that she's only a lesser noble, she still manages to get herself invited to all the good parties. She's filthy rich, always dripping with gems. Her husband was considerate enough to die some years ago, leaving her all his lands. And if that weren't enough, she's drop-dead gorgeous – *much* too young-looking for her 40-some years.

She does have a couple of foibles, of course. She never makes an appearance before the sun goes down, for one thing. And for another, she seems to have friends from the less desirable classes of the city. But the other nobles – friends and rivals – can't find much to say against her.

That would certainly change if they found out that the Marquise de la Verain was both a vampire, and one of the most notorious thieves operating in the city – the "Nightwraith."

The Marquise started her criminal career out of boredom,



Claudette de la Verain

Age: 42

some two decades ago. She'd always been very athletic, highly intelligent, and exceptionally dexterous. As a member of the upper classes, she was invited into the homes of the rich and influential, making it easy to spot ways of circumventing security. She took to the rooftops as the Nightwraith, and cut a considerable swath through the nobility.

Then she had the bad luck, or bad judgment, to break into the home of a visiting noble who happened to be a vampire. He caught her in the act, and – impulsively – turned her into a vampire herself.

After the predictable trauma, Claudette realized she could turn this curse into a boon. Instead of dropping out of society, she took various precautions to disguise her true nature. The powers of the vampire have made her infinitely better as a thief than she could have imagined, and she's thoroughly enjoying her revitalized career.

She's still a kindhearted soul – although that is starting to fade. She rarely kills when she feeds, and she tries to select victims who she believes *deserve* to suffer at her hands. As time goes on, however, she's starting to care less about the suffering of others, and isn't paying as much attention to her own security – almost as if she's daring the other nobles to discover she's a vampire.

Quotes

"Yes, I'll take the job. You won't even have to pay me. Not money, anyway . . ."

"You'll find very few jobs are impossible for an adequately skilled expert like me."

"The Lord Nightingale's 'impenetrable' vault was broken into *again* last night? How droll . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Some nobles are starting to suspect the Marquise isn't what she seems. They hire the PCs to discover Claudette's dark secret . . .

◆ The PCs are hunting for the Nightwraith – either to bring the criminal to justice, or to remove a rival. As they conduct their investigations, they find hints that the Nightwraith might be part of the aristocracy . . . and not entirely human.

VILLAGE PRIEST

ST: 12 **IQ:** 13 **Speed:** 5.25
DX: 11 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 175

Advantages

Clerical Investment; Empathy; Literacy; Magery 3.

Disadvantages

Impulsiveness; Sense of Duty (To the sick and injured).

Quirks

Doesn't talk about his past; Will listen to anyone's problems; Won't give anyone pat answers.

Skills

Administration-12; Area Knowledge-13; Brawling-12; Broadsword-14; Carousing-9; Detect Lies-15; Diagnosis-12; Fast-Talk-13; First Aid-15; Occultism-12; Psychology-12; Streetwise-13; Teaching-13; Theology-14.

Spells: Cure Disease-14; Death Vision-14; Decay-14; Detect Magic-14; Instant Regeneration-13; Lend Health-14; Lend Strength-14; Light-14; Major Healing-13; Minor Healing-14; Neutralize Poison-14; Regeneration-13; Restoration-13; Resurrection-13; Sterilize-14; Summon Spirit-14; Test Food-14.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 14.

Conversions

Contemporary – Reinal would run the local church. His background and personality would be unchanged, but he'd only have magical abilities in a horror campaign, or something similarly "non-traditional." Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – In the dark cyberpunk world, Reinal might be forced to call on the abilities of his former life. Replace Broadsword with Guns (Pistol)-14. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Space – Replace Broadsword with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-14.

Story

Reinal ven Boroth has seen it all. Or, if not all, then most of it. Unlike most members of his religious order, he didn't join the priesthood until he was in his 30s – almost 20 years ago, now. And during those 30-some years before he "accepted the cloth," he wasn't idle. The ringleader of a group of hell-raisers, he'd got himself into – and usually out of – more trouble than any six normal youths. He'd sown his wild oats, then prayed for a crop failure. He'd visited every one-horse town and tried to steal the horse. He ran the confidence game, sold indulgences and peddled every bridge within 15 leagues of his home. By the time he was 25, he'd made – and subsequently lost – more money than most people see in a lifetime. (He'd never actually killed anyone, he's still proud to recall, or hurt anyone who didn't warrant hurting. There were some very strict limits to his depravity.)

By his late 20s, he'd started to tire of his life of debauchery. He was ready to settle down, but he didn't know what he wanted to



Reinal ven Boroth

Age: 48

settle down *to*, as it were. That was when he met the itinerant priest.

Reinal had never had much time for priests . . . but then, he'd never *given* them much time, either. When he met this holy man, he was in a frame of mind to actually listen to what the priest had to say.

To this day, Reinal won't tell anyone exactly *what* the wandering priest told him. It must have made sense, however. Reinal immediately converted to the priest's faith, and within two years he himself was a man of the cloth.

Ven Boroth doesn't regret his decision. His vocation has given him more peace of mind than he ever thought he'd have. Further, his background has given him a very personal understanding of the trials and travails his less-controlled parishioners face on an everyday basis. Even though he knows the answers to their problems, he prefers to help them find their own solutions, rather than just telling them outright.

Quotes

"It's better to waste your youth than do nothing at all with it."

"I understand your problem. Personally and intimately, I assure you."

"Trust me; it's *never* too late . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need a priest to put them back together after a scrap, resurrect a fallen comrade or lift a curse. Of course, the details of their recent campaign aren't exactly honorable, ethical or legal . . . In the past, they've been able to fast-talk priests into believing laundered accounts of their escapades. This time, however, it's Reinal ven Boroth they're dealing with . . .

◆ Someone from Reinal's past has reappeared – an enemy he thought he'd dealt with many years before joining the priesthood. For the sake of his community, Reinal knows this old enemy must be eliminated. Unfortunately, priests of Reinal's order can't take up arms. He needs some intermediaries to help him out . . .

WERETIGER

ST: 12 **IQ:** 10 **Speed:** 7.125
DX: 12 **HT:** 11 **Move:** 7
Dodge: 5 **Parry:** (Broadsword) 7
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 115

Advantages

Animal Empathy; Weretiger Shapeshifting.

Disadvantages

Honesty; Odious Personal Habit (Eats raw meat).

Quirks

Loves fish; Naive about human culture; Unaffected by human beauty.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Astronomy-10; Broadsword-14; Climbing-11; Fishing-13; Jumping-14; Running-11; Seamanship-10; Survival (Forest)-10; Survival (Jungle)-12; Swimming-12; Tracking-10.

Weapons

Thrusting Broadsword: 1d+3 cutting, 1d+1 impaling.

Tiger Form

ST: 36 **IQ:** 10 **Speed:** 10
DX: 14 **HT:** 13 **Move:** 10
Dodge: 11
Natural armor (PD 1, DR 3); no encumbrance.

Weapons

Teeth: 1d impaling; Claws: 2d-1 cutting.

Conversions

Contemporary – Unless magic exists, Kellyn doesn't either. He might fit into an African-based campaign.

Near Future – Kellyn's shapeshifting ability may be due to cybernetics. Change Broadsword to Guns (Pistol)-14.

Space – An alien entity could possess a similar shapeshifting ability. Replace Broadsword with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-14.

Story

Kellyn was born into a tribe of weretigers in the southern jungle lands. He found the life of a hunter-gatherer a little lacking and wanted to see what the rest of the world had to offer. Over the past five years, he's met more people than he knew existed and he's been to some of the strangest places the world has to offer. Nevertheless, he's sure there's still more to see before he returns home.

Kellyn's entire tribe share his ability to shapeshift to tiger form, and so he naturally expected everyone else he met to have the same power. In fact, it took Kellyn some time to realize that people outside the southern lands don't shapeshift – and, further, that they're frightened of those who do. Out of necessity, Kellyn has become far more careful about when and where he takes his feline form.



Kellyn

Age: 25

Kellyn has a few problems dealing with different cultures and their bizarre customs. His ignorance is often amusing to his friends, and bewildering to everyone else. Very few people share his enjoyment of fresh, raw meat and are a little appalled at his choice of dinner – fish straight out of the sea is especially nice. Kellyn also enjoys running the forest in tiger form, hunting the local wildlife. (He's always careful not to eat someone's livestock.)

When people find out his true nature they assume that he's a bloodthirsty monster. This isn't true, although he is proficient with both claw and broadsword. He prefers not to fight except in self-defense, or when on the hunt.

Quotes

"I don't see why you don't just come up behind her, bite her on the neck and growl a little."

"Want some of my dinner? I saved you the best part."

"Not the best meat, I admit . . . but I don't think cremation is the answer."

Adventure Seeds

◆ People have seen what looks like a tiger in the surrounding countryside. A reward has been posted that's attractive enough to convince the PCs to try to bag it. Kellyn will treat the hunt as a game, playing with the PCs at night and getting to know them in the daytime. His intelligence will definitely let him stay one step ahead of his pursuers. Eventually he'll probably admit his true nature to his new friends.

◆ The PCs are wandering through the back lot of a circus, or somewhere else where caged animals are kept. They find nothing particularly remarkable about the massive tiger in the undersized cage . . . until its reactions show it understands everything they're saying . . .

WIZARD

ST: 8 IQ: 15 Speed: 4.75
DX: 10 HT: 9 Move: 4
Dodge: 4
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 105

Advantages

Intuition; Literacy; Magery 2.

Disadvantages

Impulsiveness; Stubbornness.

Quirks

Calls a spade a spade, and to hell with the consequences; Doesn't suffer fools gladly; Not very mystical.

Skills

Alchemy-13; Calligraphy-9; Cooking-14; First Aid-15; Mathematics-13; Occultism-15; Research-14; Scrounging-14; Teaching-14; Theology-13; Writing-14.

Spells: Apportation-15; Complex Illusion-15; Continual Light-15; Create Fire-15; Detect Magic-15; Find Weakness-15; Flame Jet-15; Flight-15; Identify-15; Identify Plant-15; Ignite Fire-15; Levitation-15; Light-15; Purify Air-15; Seek Earth-15; Seek Plant-15; Seek Water-15; Shape Fire-15; Shatter-14; Simple Illusion-15; Sound-15; Weaken-15.

Languages

Any three relevant to the adventure, at level 14.

Conversions

Contemporary – Usable only in a campaign that has magic. Update skills to modern-day equivalents. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Near Future – The campaign must have magic for Nystral to exist. Replace Alchemy with Computer Operation-16. Literacy is no longer an advantage.

Space – If there isn't magic in the campaign, he could be using some form of technology to produce the same results. Same conversions as above.

Story

Nystral was chosen as an apprentice by his mentor at a very early age. So strong was Nystral's talent that it would have been foolish for him to pursue any other career. The young man threw himself into his studies voraciously, and proceeded faster than most. Unlike most aspiring magicians, he had a tremendous amount of patience, and took his time learning all the theory behind the spells that interested him, not just the outward forms of those spells. This solid grounding in the principles of magic has served him well.

The biggest difference between Nystral and most mages is that he treats magic as a science – like chemistry or physics – not an art. Magic has its own set of rules. When a particular spell is followed to the letter, it produces roughly the same effect regardless of the caster.



Nystral

Age: 37

Nystral spends many long hours optimizing his spells, first casting a spell with ten pinches of garlic, and then trying it with nine. All of his results are then carefully recorded in his notebook. He's been very successful in his research, sometimes boosting the power of a spell by as much as 50%. When he feels that a spell's been completely optimized, he publishes the results and distributes them to his fellow mages. The disadvantage of this research is that many modified spells react unpredictably (i.e., the rules aren't quite what Nystral thought they were). So far he's been fairly lucky . . . and is healing nicely.

Nystral's greatest love is to discuss his magical tinkering with other mages and to receive their input. The problem he faces all too often is that most mages won't admit that magic is just another science. They want to act all mystical and mysterious – spouting off incomprehensible “wisdom” and pretending to be superior.

Nystral has a very difficult time getting along with people who don't see his point of view. Match this with his very stubborn attitude about the workings of the world, and you have an impossible person to deal with . . . if you happen to disagree with him.

Quotes

“Maybe frog skin *isn't* a good substitute for toad skin after all. Please put out that fire, would you?”

“The ineffable mysteries of magic!? Don't make me laugh.”

“Magic is in the details. Understand the details, and everything else follows logically.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ Nystral owes the PCs money for a task they completed. Before they can get their money, however, they must retrieve Nystral from the alternate dimension that he accidentally created in the course of his studies.

◆ Nystral is running out of reagents; so he asks the PCs to “borrow” some from Minbuar the Mighty. (Nystral figures that Minbuar no longer needs such material possessions due to his new undead form . . .)

WOODSMAN

ST: 13 **IQ:** 12 **Speed:** 5.5
DX: 12 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 4
Dodge: 4 **Parry:** 7
Heavy leather armor (PD 2, DR 2); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Absolute Direction; Animal Empathy.

Disadvantages

Pyrophobia (Minor); Sense of Duty (To nature).

Quirks

Loves to spend time with people; Sings loudly when he's alone; Tries to stay as clean as possible.

Skills

Animal Handling-14; Bow-12; Climbing-13; Cooking-12; First Aid-13; Fishing-12; Naturalist-13; Survival (Forest)-13; Swimming-14; Tracking-14; Two-Handed Sword-14.

Weapons

Thrusting Greatsword: 2d+2 cutting, 1d+2 impaling; Long-bow: 1d+2 impaling.

Conversions

Contemporary – Stine would make a great hunting guide. Replace Two-Handed Sword with Guns (Rifle)-15.

Near Future – Same as above.

Space – Stine could be a hunting guide and safari leader on other planets. Replace Two-Handed Sword with Beam Weapons (Laser)-15.

Story

A woodsman's job is a lonely one. Those who've spent time exploring the uncharted wastes alone understand that madness lies in wait for the unwary and the vulnerable. Stine knows this loneliness well and protects his sanity with an iron will.

Well versed in the language of the forest, Stine is an excellent tracker, fisherman, hunter, prospector and naturalist. He has an innate direction sense and has yet to get lost (at least, not for long). His ability to train and handle animals is legendary.

Stine travels the forests on a variety of tasks. Often he's hired to lead an adventuring party through a local forest. Twice he's even scouted for an army. His current mission takes him to the forests of Hiram, which his employer believes to contain artifacts of earlier cultures. On an earlier journey, Stine found a number of magical devices in ancient ruins overgrown with foliage – many of which his employer will never find out about.

Although he spends tremendous amounts of time in the wilderness, there's little Stine enjoys more than living it up with his friends in town during his infrequent visits. It takes many tankards of ale for the story of his last adventure to be told. (Keep in mind that Stine is solitary by career, not by nature.)

Stine's greatest weakness is his fear of fire. When he was a child he was caught in a forest fire. Fortunately, he was able to find a small lake to hide in and wait it out. He understands well



Stine

Age: 25

the dangers of fire and treats even the smallest cooking fire with respect.

Quotes

"Look at the tracks: one of the men is wounded. We should catch up to them in two hours."

"I'm alone because that's what I do, not what I am."

"Look, you paid me to get you through this forest alive. If you don't want to listen to my advice, that's your choice – I've already got your money."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Stine has stumbled into the wrong part of the woods, interrupting some people who don't want their secrets known. Now he's on the run, with a band of assassins on his heels. Stine has no love for a stand-up fight, but his pursuers are as good woodsman as he is. He needs help *now*. How fortunate that he stumbles upon another group of travelers . . .

◆ Stine offered his services to a group of greenhorns who just wandered into town (the PCs), but they turned him down flat. Now they're off in the woods, stumbling around aimlessly (as Stine sees it). Stine and his friends decide this is the perfect time for a little cheap humor at the PCs' expense . . . Stine's practical jokes will be embarrassing, but not harmful. If the PCs take things well, they and the woodsman might become friends.

CONTEMPORARY



AIRLINE PILOT

ST: 11 **IQ:** 10 **Speed:** 5.5
DX: 12 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 45

Advantages

Charisma +1; Danger Sense.

Disadvantages

Addiction (To many of his drugs); Duty (To Global Airways); Enemies (Other drug dealers); Lecherousness.

Quirks

Wears his uniform as often as he can; Winks during conversation.

Skills

Carousing-13; Computer Operation-12; Driving (Car)-14; Electronics Operation (Aircraft)-12; Gambling-12; Navigation-10; Piloting (Multi-engine jet)-15; Sex Appeal-12.

Conversions

Fantasy – The closest equivalent is the captain of an ocean-going ship who is smuggling a variety of illegal cargoes. Replace Computer Operation, Driving, Electronics and Piloting with Boating-12, Merchant-13 and Seamanship-14.

Near Future – The job hasn't changed much, but the drugs sure have. Brian is now smuggling hideously illegal substances, many of which even he doesn't dare try. No changes.

Space – Brian might be the captain of a commercial space vessel. Replace Electronics and Navigation with Astrogation-12, Free Fall-13, Piloting (Large spaceship)-15 and Vacc Suit-10.

Story

Nowadays, it's almost impossible to smuggle drugs past heavily-enforced airport security (without bribing the inspectors, of course, which is growing steadily more costly). The wide range of detection methods and machines catch nearly everyone who tries. Brian Key, however, has been successfully smuggling illicit drugs into the country for four years. The reason for Brian's success is simple – he's an airline pilot for Global Airways, and hence exempt from most security checks.

Brian has always enjoyed the high life. He likes his cars fast, and his women faster. While the prestige of being a pilot appeals to Brian, the expense of his desired lifestyle soon outstripped his salary. He started looking for ways to supplement his income. Drug trafficking seemed to be the perfect answer, as it provided the highest income with the least amount of work. His job as an airline pilot means that he can completely bypass the intense security and carry his drugs on board his plane with little chance of detection. He now has a huge set of drug contacts in America and abroad. For reasons of space and weight, he specializes in the most potent designer drugs.

Unfortunately, like most drug dealers, he's beginning to sample his wares more often than he should. Already he's had one close call on take-off and is currently under investigation by the



Brian Key

Age: 32

FAA. Unless he cleans up his act, and himself, it'll only be a few more months until he's plucked from the skies . . . permanently. Brian is, of course, blind to the delicacy of his current position. The lifestyle he's living is just too good to pass up.

If official scrutiny weren't enough, he's also been noticed by some competing drug merchants. These people intend to do more than just fire him.

Quotes

"Yeah, I saw the other plane. I'm just a little tired . . . okay?"

"For just a little more, I can bring you the stuff directly from Laos. And trust me, this stuff is the best."

"Try a hit of this, lovely lady. It'll get you up to cruising altitude right quick."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The airline has decided to make a surprise check on Brian, hopefully catching him in the act. Fortunately, a friend has warned him that an inspector is coming. The PCs are the lucky ones on whom he decides to plant his drugs. Brian has weathered this one, but it's still just a matter of time until he's caught. For the PCs, now trying to enter customs carrying illegal drugs, however, life has just gotten interesting.

◆ Local drug merchants have decided to take out this upstart as an example. After two unsuccessful attempts on his life, Brian turns to the PCs to protect him from the violent drug lords.

ARCHAEOLOGIST

ST: 11

IQ: 14

Speed: 5

DX: 9

HT: 11

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 85

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive); Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages

Delusion (She was meant to travel the world); Impulsive.

Quirks

Always carries a clasp-knife in her purse; Fills her office with valueless and tacky archaeological replicas; Wears safari-style "adventure gear" even when it's not appropriate.

Skills

Anthropology-14; Archaeology-15 (+5 on Sparta, -1 on everything else); Computer Operation-13; Driving (Car)-9; History-15; Mathematics-13; Occultism-14; Photography-15; Research-14; Swimming-10; Writing-12.

Languages

Ancient Greek-13; any other two relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Fantasy – Replace Computer Operation, Driving (Car) and Photography with Heraldry-14 and Riding-9.

Near Future – No changes.

Space – Fortunately for Rose, there are countless undiscovered archaeological sites out there . . . but that doesn't mean she's going to be any better at finding them. Add Xenology-14.

Story

Rose Wiersma – snidely nicknamed "Rambling Rose" by some of her colleagues – is a globe-trotting, adventurous archaeologist in the Indiana Jones mode . . . or that's the way she'd like to see herself. She's got the archaeology side of the equation down pat; even her colleagues who laugh at her other aspirations have to admit she's a genius. It's the "globe-trotting" and "adventurous" parts she's having trouble with.

Truth to tell, Rambling Rose isn't a very good traveler. She's not a natural when it comes to organization, and she finds planning for any kind of trip very stressful. She's familiar with several foreign languages, but this familiarity doesn't extend beyond book learning: she can read and write them, but carrying on a colloquial conversation is usually beyond her. (Also, she tends to be more familiar with the archaic forms of languages. Since very few people speak Classical Greek any more, for example, her knowledge isn't overly useful.) She dreams of making a big find, something glamorous and exciting that will catapult her into fame and fortune. So far, the Big One – or even a significant Little One – has evaded her. Even worse, other forms of excitement – bandits raiding her Tunisian dig, for example – haven't come her way either.

Academically, her credentials are impeccable. She's a recog-



Rose Wiersma

Age: 33

nized expert on ancient Greece (with a focus on Sparta), but knows at least something about virtually every other era and locale. If she doesn't know a specific fact, she certainly knows how to go about finding it. She reads quite extensively on the topic of the occult – not because she believes in "that mumbo-jumbo," but because of what mythic structures can tell about the cultures in which they arise.

Quotes

"All the great finds *haven't* been found. That's just 'conventional wisdom' talking."

"The only way to understand a culture is to live as part of it."

"Okay, so we'll fly from London to Nairobi. From there we'll head south by Land Rover . . . What do you mean, 'no'?"

Adventure Seeds

◆ Rose has finally made the Big Find . . . and somebody is after her to take it back! For the first time in her life, Indy-style adventure has come her way, and it's scaring the hell out of her. She turns to the PCs for help – to keep her alive and find out what's so all-fired important about the item she found.

◆ Rambling Rose is outfitting an expedition to some desolate land, and hires the PCs as assistants and support personnel. Since she always talks a good game, the PCs might not realize that Rose is a disaster looking for a place to happen until it's too late.

BOUNCER

ST: 15

IQ: 8

Speed: 5.75

DX: 11

HT: 12

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 110

Advantages

Combat Reflexes; Toughness +1.

Disadvantages

Bully; Lecherousness.

Quirks

Drinks only soda water when on duty; Lights his cigarettes with a flourish.

Skills

Area Knowledge-10; Brawling-14; Broadsword-12; Carousing-12; Driving (Car)-11; Intimidation-10 (Default from ST); Karate-12; Running-11; Sex Appeal-11; Streetwise-10.

Weapons

Baseball Bat: 2d+1 crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – Tony is your typical brutish inn bouncer. Remove Driving (Car).

Near Future – The wide availability of designer drugs and cyber implants will have Tony hyped up and full of cyber-fury. Install a Chip Slot with a Macho Chip and keep plenty of ST and DX Adders handy. Add Guns (Pistol)-14.

Space – Tony keeps the peace in an extremely violent bar on a space station. The psychology and physiology of the various patrons will keep Tony on his toes. Replace Driving (Car) and Broadsword with Beam Weapons-13.

Story

Tony Zdebiak – “The Zee” to his (few) friends – believes in cool. Cool is where it’s at, and if you’re cool enough, *nobody* is going to mess with you. The Zee might not be quite there yet, but he’s working on it.

Tony was a big kid – big, and not overly bright. The best description of Zdebiak in high school cost its creator some teeth, but it still fits – “Strong like bull, smart like streetcar.” He dropped out of school early, soon after he decided that being a “brain” was not cool, and that he enjoyed building up his body much more than he did building up his mind. Tony was in heaven when, in his teens, he discovered the wonders of anabolic steroids. Thanks to those wondrous chemicals, he now has a physique that would make both Schwarzenegger and Stallone sit up and take notice. With his combination of brute strength and brute-level intellect, the career of bouncer seemed natural.

The Zee likes his creature comforts. He has a very sharp – if misplaced – sense of style, in clothes, cars and female companionship. Although his taste in art runs to crying clowns painted on black velvet, and his favorite wine is Thunderbird, he considers himself quite a sophisticated bon vivant. In his pursuit of cool,



Tony Zdebiak

Age: 24

he’s acquired himself a book of snappy retorts and put-downs, collected from famous wits such as Oscar Wilde. The Zee memorizes these in his free time, ready to recite them (usually incorrectly) at an appropriate moment.

Zdebiak doesn’t use drugs, but he knows people who do. The same’s true for guns, knives and just about anything else that’s illegal. For a bit of graft, the Zee will help anyone make a connection . . . as long as they’re suitably respectful. Some of the local operators enjoy playing a dangerous game with the Zee – insulting him so subtly that he doesn’t get it (while they and their friends do). The Zee senses that *something’s* going down, but realizes he would not be cool to do anything about it until he understands it.

Quotes

“Don’t even *ask* about credit . . .”

“Forget it, chump. You can’t even buy *good* fake ID, you ain’t drinking here.”

“It ain’t worth it, bucko. Just walk away, I’m telling you.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need access to information, guns, or whatever, but they’re new in town. Their best connection seems to be that steroid monkey guarding the door of the local bar.

◆ The Zee’s in trouble . . . and part of the trouble is that he doesn’t know how much. He overheard a conversation outside his bar, and the participants *know* he overheard it. What they don’t know is that he didn’t understand it . . . They want the Zee removed; he doesn’t want to be removed. And, for the first time in his life, the Zee is forced to ask for help.

COP

ST: 10 IQ: 13 Speed: 5.25
DX: 11 HT: 11 Move: 5

Dodge: 5

Light Kevlar chest protector (PD 2, DR 4); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 40

Advantages

Legal Enforcement Powers; Reputation +1 (To cops: a straight arrow).

Disadvantages

Dependents; Duty; Overweight.

Quirks

Calls his wife several times a day; Carries an unregistered pistol ("cold iron") with him at all times; Keeps a "better dead" list, but never acts on it.

Skills

Area Knowledge-13; Brawling-13; Computer Operation-13; Criminology-14; Detect Lies-13; Driving (Car)-11; Guns (Pistol)-16; Interrogation-13; Judo-11; Law-13; Shortsword (Baton)-12; Tactics-12.

Weapons

Baton: 1d crushing, 1d-2 crushing; Heavy Pistol: 2d+2 crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – Leroy would be a guard captain. Replace Computer Operation, Driving (Car), and Shortsword with Broadsword-11. Literacy – if he is literate – is an advantage.

Near Future – In the grim future, the world has fallen apart and few people will notice that Leroy has started to work on his "better dead" list. No other changes.

Space – Replace Driving (Car) and Guns with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-13.

Story

Leroy Barnes grew up in a bad neighborhood. Crime – often violent crime – was rampant, and many of his schoolmates turned to the drug trade as the only source of the money they needed to get out. During his youth, Leroy hated the police – more because that's what was expected of him than because of any concrete reason. As he grew older, however, his thinking slowly changed. The cops were trying to make a difference, he realized. They didn't always succeed, and sometimes they actually made things worse . . . but by God, they were *trying*, and that set them apart from most of Leroy's friends and acquaintances. When Barnes graduated from high school – a rarity in and of itself – he applied to the police academy, and was accepted.

In the early days of his career, Leroy was driven by idealism, and by a belief he could change things. All too soon he learned that change, if it was possible at all, was going to be excruciatingly slow. Over the years, the gritty, brutal realities of his job burned away his youthful idealism, making him ever more cynical. Today when he visits his old neighborhood, he can see almost no change, and that unpleasant fact colors his entire world view.



Leroy Barnes

Age: 29

Like many cops, Leroy now divides the world into three types of people – cops, civilians and scumbags – with only a fine line separating the latter two. He always holds to the letter of the law, but he has his own "better dead" list, and dreams of someone declaring "open season" on scumbags. (It's important to stress that, while Leroy may talk convincingly about wanting to go vigilante, he'd *never* do so.)

Leroy has seen so much of the dark side of human nature that he thinks *nothing* can surprise him any more.

Quotes

"I'm getting too old for this crap."

"Get this peckerwood out of my sight before I feed him my nightstick."

"Those cops in L.A. stepped over the line for sure. But sometimes I wonder if *I* couldn't be pushed that far . . ."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ It looks as though Leroy Barnes has finally crossed the line, and started acting on his "better dead" list. A particular perpetrator who was freed because of a technicality has been found dead, and circumstantial evidence implicates Barnes. The PCs – perhaps Internal Affairs officers, or private detectives hired by Barnes – have to find out who's framing Barnes, and why.
- ◆ The PCs have broken the law – with only the purest of motivations, of course – and were caught red-handed. Now they have to convince the arresting officer (Barnes) that they were actually saving the world (or whatever), *not* trying to rob that jewelry store . . .

FIREFIGHTER

ST: 12 IQ: 10
DX: 12 HT: 11
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 5.75
Move: 5

Point Total: 60

Advantages

High Pain Threshold; Luck.

Disadvantages

Duty (People in fires); On the Edge.

Quirks

Avoids risk when not fighting a fire; Loves to watch fire; Sometimes talks as though fire's alive.

Skills

Area Knowledge-10; Axe/Mace-10; Breath Control-9; Climbing-12; Driving (Car)-10; Driving (Truck)-12; First Aid-11; Jumping-12; Professional Skill (Firefighter)-13; Running-11.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.

Near Future – Fires are an extremely commonplace occurrence. Add Computer Operation-10.

Space – In space, as at sea, fires are *extremely* dangerous. Add Computer Operation-12, Free Fall-12 and Vacc Suit-10 (much better than a gas mask for working in smoke).

Story

When they're young, many kids dream of being a firefighter – of riding on the fire truck, working the hoses, climbing the ladders, saving lives . . . Most grow out of this ambition quickly enough – usually after the first time they burn themselves when playing with matches.

Not so Lincoln White. As he grew up, his determination to be a firefighter became more intense. Right out of high school, he applied to the academy and was accepted. His dedication to his studies was phenomenal, and he excelled at the academic and practical requirements of his training. His graduation was the proudest day of his life.

His colleagues recognize there's something different about Lincoln White, although they get along with him well. While they treat firefighting as just a job, he seems to have a more philosophical – almost spiritual – outlook. He frequently talks about fire as if it were alive; while this disturbs some of White's comrades, they all assume (rightly or wrongly) that he's only speaking figuratively, and doesn't really believe that. In any case, his strange beliefs don't affect his performance, so nobody has complained.

When he's off duty, Lincoln is calm and quiet. He doesn't socialize with the others, and seems exceptionally conservative. On the job, however, he's a different person. He seems utterly fearless, taking risks that his fellows never would. He's never foolhardy, however, and never puts his buddies at risk, so again there's nothing anyone can really complain about. Those who know White best believe that sometimes, when he's fighting a fire, he really doesn't care whether he lives or dies as long as the job gets done.



Lincoln White

Age: 24

Quotes

"Get a two-inch up here *now!*"

"Fluid theory tries to explain why fire spreads the way it does. Garbage. Fire spreads because it *wants* to."

"Man, I'm telling you – this wasn't an accident."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Lincoln has found evidence of arson in several of the fires he's fought recently. The PCs become involved in the investigation.
- ◆ White's supervisor worries that the firefighter's fascination with fire might have become a dangerous psychosis, and that Lincoln might actually be setting fires. The PCs are brought in to secretly watch White, and see if there is any truth to the suspicion.

FOOTBALL STAR

ST: 14 IQ: 11 Speed: 7
DX: 15 HT: 13 Move: 7
Dodge: 7
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 250

Advantages

High Pain Threshold; Reputation +4 (Sports star); Status +2; Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior (Exercise); Honesty.

Quirks

Always dresses well; Doesn't drink; Obsessive about physical fitness – it's his life after all . . .

Skills

Acrobatics-14; Brawling-15; Diplomacy-10; Driving (Car)-13; Fast-Talk-11; Jumping-14; Performance-9; Running-14; Sports (Football)-17; Swimming-15; Throwing-16.

Conversions

Fantasy – The nearest equivalent is a gladiator. Replace Driving (Car) with Axe/Mace-14, Broadsword-14, and Two-Handed Sword-13.

Near Future – With the league's more "relaxed" approach to performance-enhancing drugs, Bromley might suffer from an addiction to something that "juices" his speed and reactions. Otherwise, no changes.

Space – Professional sports have always existed, and there's no reason to think they'll die out within the next millennium. Add Free Fall-16.

Story

Anson Bromley is one of the greatest success stories of the sports world. Approaching 40, he's way past his prime, yet he still turns in an exceptional performance every time he hits the field. Sure, he's a step or two slower than he used to be, he hurts a lot more the morning after a game, and he's more paranoid about injuries. But what he's lost physically he's more than made up for mentally. He's a wily old professional who uses his head rather than his body. Let the hotshot kids kill themselves. Bromley's goal is to make it through one more season – maybe two if he's really lucky – then retire . . . preferably in one piece.

When he started making the big bucks, Bromley resisted the temptation to blow his wad on fast cars, fast women and high living. Not to say he's been a monk; he's just been careful to stash some away. After all, no career lasts forever, and he doesn't want to depend on shoe commercials to pay the rent. Bromley has been very canny with his investments, and is now starting to look seriously for a profitable business venture to enter when his career's finally over. At the moment he's leaning toward buying into a chain of sports medicine suppliers, but he hasn't made the final decision.

Bromley has endeared himself to football fans and the press with his openness and candor. While other sports figures trot out



Anson Bromley

Age: 38

the tried-and-true "win-one-for-the-Gipper" clichés, Bromley tells things as they really are. Although the team owner often wishes Bromley would keep his trap shut, he can't argue with the good publicity the star attracts.

Bromley is heavily involved in sports programs for youth. After all, it was sports that let him escape the ghetto, and he wants to return the favor to other youths.

Quotes

"What do you want to hear me say? We lost tonight, and that ticks me off. I wouldn't tell you any different."

"Of course the money's important. But I love the game, too."

"Buy the team? Man, I'm looking for a good investment . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Some shady characters have told Bromley that he'd better throw next week's game . . . if he wants to keep his kneecaps. Bromley won't knuckle under, and turns to the PCs to find out who's pressuring him and why, and how to stop them.

◆ The PCs are pursuing an investigation that involves Bromley, or someone close to him. The football star demands to work with the PCs. Although his experience is limited to the field, his skills might really come in handy if the PCs can figure out how best to use them.

GHOST

ST: 10 IQ: 10 Speed: 5
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 75

Advantages

Magical Resistance +2; Night Vision; Peripheral Vision; Strong Will +2; Unusual Background (Dead).

Disadvantages

Astral Entity; Bad Temper; Compulsive Behavior (Expose her murder); Social Stigma (She's dead . . .).

Quirks

Avoids making a mess; Dislikes women more attractive than she is.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Cooking-12; Driving (Car)-6; Gesture-13; Occultism-14; Scrounging-12; Throwing-7.

Conversions

Fantasy – Sarah might not actually be dead, but the victim of some strange curse . . . or that might be what she's desperately telling herself. Remove Driving (Car).

Near Future – No changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

Sarah Kerner has been dead and forced to haunt her murder site for more than 25 years. In life, she was the wife of a prominent businessman. Unknown to her, he was having an affair with a woman in the neighborhood. Most days, Sarah would stay home and clean the house, but on the day of her death, she told her husband that she would visit a friend for the day. She returned early to find her husband in an extremely delicate situation with the other woman.

Mr. Kerner flew into a rage, and proceeded to beat his wife mercilessly into unconsciousness. When Sarah didn't wake up, he realized that his blows had killed her. Ridden with guilt over what he'd done, he nonetheless buried the body and reported his wife missing. An investigation was never launched.

Sarah's spirit is locked to the place of her death. Each day, at the time of her demise, she "wakes up." Remembering nothing, she explores the house and slowly begins to remember who she was in life. Then, when the time of her death returns, her memories are washed clean, and she's forced to repeat the process again.

Her recurrent appearances drove Mr. Kerner insane. She would appear as a vision, or invade his dreams causing horrific nightmares. Within a few years, Mr. Kerner was reduced to a gibbering idiot and eventually was institutionalized.

Near the end of each day, Sarah realizes that the only way she can be laid to rest is by bringing the facts of her murder to light. Unfortunately, she only has a few minutes – at most an hour – between the moment she realizes this and the time her memory is purged once more.



Sarah Kerner

Age: 35

Note: This character is designed to give the players a taste of the supernatural, and would work very well in virtually any type of campaign. Obviously, the actual cause of her death can be altered to suit the specific adventure and background.

Quotes

"What's happened to me? Why can't I touch anything?"

"Help me. Please, help me . . ."

"That miserable, adulterous, murdering bastard, I'll wring his neck . . ."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs are investigating mysterious happenings at an old haunted house. Up until now, most of their encounters with the supernatural have been equivocal at best. How will they react when they're confronted with a real ghost?
- ◆ The PCs are staying at Sarah's house. Can she convince the PCs to solve the mystery of her death, or will she send them screaming in terror?

GOVERNMENT AGENT

ST: 9 IQ: 14 Speed: 5
DX: 11 HT: 9 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 95

Advantages

Charisma +2; Common Sense; Legal Enforcement Powers.

Disadvantages

Duty (Superiors); Honesty.

Quirks

Always wears mirror shades; Dresses conservatively on duty, more flamboyantly off; Never talks politics.

Skills

Area Knowledge-13; Carousing-12; Detect Lies-15; Diplomacy-13; Driving (Car)-12; Fast-Talk-13; First Aid-14; Guns (Pistol)-12; Intelligence Analysis-13; Interrogation-14; Intimidation-13; Karate-12; Law-13; Shadowing-13.

Weapons

Machine Pistol: 2d+2 crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – Smith is in the service of a local noble, or perhaps the monarchy. Replace Driving (Car) and Guns with Riding-11 and Broadsword-12.

Near Future – Here, Smith might work for a major megacorp instead of the government. Install a Chip Slot with a Combat Reflexes chip.

Space – Replace Guns with Beam Weapons (Laser)-12.

Story

John Smith – his real name – works for one of the many organizations in the intelligence community. His official title is “Special Investigator,” but that sometimes translates to “Troubleshooter” or “Expediter.” When his organization wants to get to the bottom of something, it’s Smith who gets the job.

He’s not some kind of spy-movie super-agent, however. He carries a gun – it’s required by regulations – but he’s never drawn it, except on the firing range. He prides himself on being able to talk his way to a solution. His people skills are almost uncanny, and he seems able to detect a lie – or even an incomplete statement of the truth – better than a polygraph.

Because of this, most of Smith’s missions are just to go and talk to people – question them about their movements, their whereabouts, what they know about the subject of an investigation and what they might have witnessed. He leaves the “hard option” type of missions to the enforcers in the organization – of



John Smith

Age: 29

which he thinks there are all too many. He believes you can usually get more information with a kind word and a probing question than you can with a gun in the face.

Smith looks like the stereotypical Man In Black – when he’s on duty, at least. He favors dark, conservative suits, white shirts and understated ties. He always wears mirror sunglasses – partially because he cynically considers them part of the “uniform,” but mainly because his eyes are sensitive to bright lights. When he’s *off* duty, he compensates for his staid persona, dressing in brightly-colored – but always elegantly-tailored – clothes, and driving a flashy sports car.

Smith is a professional, and a career agent. He knows his organization serves an important purpose – even though it seems to get sidetracked occasionally – and he considers his job to be a vital one. He doesn’t always agree with the edicts coming down from the elected officials, but it’s not his job to agree with them. Ideally, he’d like a little more freedom in his assignments – specifically, to work on what he thinks the elected politicians should be paying attention to, instead of drumming for votes – but he recognizes that this world isn’t ideal.

Quotes

“Mr. Jackson? Military Intelligence Bureau. Will you come with me please?”

“Just answer my questions, then I’m out of your hair.”

“You can call me Smith.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs have done something to alienate the powers that be, and those powers have sent John Smith to dissuade the characters from doing it again. Depending on the campaign, Smith might have been told the truth about the PCs, or been given totally false reasons to hassle them. In the latter case, Smith can become involved in finding out who’s got problems with the PCs and why.

◆ Smith has found hints that not all is right within his own organization. Apparently, somebody’s playing some kind of secretive game, and Smith wants to find out what it is. Unfortunately, he doesn’t have the resources for the investigation – or, more correctly, he does, but can’t use them without making his interests known to his bosses. He turns to the PCs for help.

HACKER

ST: 9 IQ: 14 Speed: 5
DX: 10 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 60

Advantages

Danger Sense; Mathematical Ability.

Disadvantages

Intolerance (Non-techs and computerphobes); Shyness.

Quirks

Uses computer terms in general conversation; Would rather communicate by electronic mail than face-to-face.

Skills

Area Knowledge-13; Computer Hacking-15; Computer Operation-18; Computer Programming-16; Electronics (Computer)-12; Literature-12; Swimming-10; Writing-12.

Conversions

Fantasy – Gaylean could be a successful thief. Remove Mathematical Ability, Computer and Electronic skills, and add Stealth-14, Streetwise-13 and Knife-13.

Near Future – Gaylean would be a netrunner. Implant an Interface Jack and add Cyberdeck Operation-14.

Space – Depending on the tech level of the campaign, and the availability of implant technology, Gaylean could match either the Near Future or Contemporary paradigm.

Story

Gaylean Sauer is the quintessential computer guru and freelance hacker. No job is too large, no job is too small. To Gaylean, every project has its own challenges and intellectual fascination. Even if it's something she's done many times before, she enjoys trying to find new ways of doing it a shade more efficiently.

Sauer belongs to the first "sub-generation" that grew up with computers. Her school introduced microcomputers in the fourth grade; that's when she realized her true calling. In the seventh grade she wrote her first computer game – a complex space-combat simulation with surprisingly sophisticated graphics – but in the eighth grade she discovered a challenge that drove games from her mind forever: hacking into larger computer systems.

She'd read of other teenage hackers who'd gotten arrested for penetrating bank and government systems, and promised herself that would never happen to her. She cut her teeth on systems with much less security – like her school system and several research systems at the nearby university. With (unauthorized) access to high-level computing power, she started developing her own forms of ICE (Intrusion Countermeasures Electronics), figuring that the best way to learn how to crack countermeasures was to learn what makes them tick in the first place. So successful was she at this pursuit that, by the time she'd graduated from high school, she was selling her ICE software to major computer corporations, and working as a "hired-gun" programming consultant.



Gaylean Sauer

Age: 23

Today she splits her time between freelance consulting and freelance system penetration. She doesn't care what system she goes up against, or why: the attraction is in the intellectual challenge. She lives frugally, spending the money she makes on buying new tech "toys." She's basically a shy person, but she's *not* a computer nerd.

Quotes

"No, never heard of someone called 'Icepick.'"

"Anybody who thinks computers don't have personalities hasn't worked with them enough."

"Be careful what you store in your computer: it might get ideas . . . grin."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Before the PCs hired her for a run on the phone company, she penetrated a highly secure private corporate system at the behest of another client. Although she didn't know it at the time, the corporate system traced her penetration, and operatives are watching over her. Now those operatives have seen the PCs, and assume they're involved in the original run.
- ◆ Gaylean has learned something the government (or some major organization) doesn't want her to know. To prevent herself from getting deleted along with the sensitive data, Gaylean turns to the PCs.

MILITARY OFFICER

ST: 9 IQ: 12 Speed: 5
DX: 10 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 30

Advantages

Charisma +2; Military Rank 2.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper; Cowardice.

Quirks

Avoids work and danger when he can; Dedicated to the military; Delegates everything; Martinet.

Skills

Administration-11; Detect Lies-13; Diplomacy-13; Driving (Car)-10; Guns (Pistol)-12; Guns (Rifle)-12; Fast-Talk-12; First Aid-12; Intelligence Analysis-9; Leadership-10; Psychology-10; Strategy-10; Tactics-10.

Weapons

Light Pistol: 1d+1 crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – If the PCs ever join the army or get conscripted, this man will make their lives miserable. Replace Driving (Car) and Guns with Broadsword-8 and Riding-10.

Near Future – Add Computer Operation-12.

Space – Replace Guns with Beam Weapons-12 and Free Fall-9.

Story

The modern, peacetime army has, out of necessity, begun to operate more and more like a civilian corporation. So many of the requirements are the same that the military and the private sector are becoming, in some ways, more similar.

Arne Skovgaard thinks that's all to the good. He joined the army soon after Vietnam – as soon as he figured it was safe – and started building himself a career. Skovgaard isn't a warrior and doesn't want to be one. He selected the army because he enjoys working within a rigid structure, and likes the job security.

Skovgaard is a smart man, although he doesn't have the self-discipline to put his brainpower to full use. He went into Military Intelligence the first chance he got; firstly, because he figured his chances for fast promotion were better there; and secondly, because it virtually guaranteed he'd never see combat.

Arne would call himself a "people person." His colleagues and subordinates would call him a sycophantic weasel. He has an unerring sense of just whom to butter up and when, and has developed contacts and even friendships throughout the senior



Arne Skovgaard

Age: 40

ranks. This influence, much more than any specific competence, has been instrumental in his rapid rise through the ranks.

So far, Skovgaard's superiors haven't seen through his sycophantic behavior to realize he's actually an incompetent, supported by a highly competent staff. Predictably, Skovgaard will do whatever it takes to make sure they *never* do. He's less interested in succeeding in anything than he is in *not failing*. And if he does fail, he immediately blames it on his subordinates.

Arne's career has probably peaked, and he's started to make plans to move to the private sector. If he plays his cards right, a high-paying consulting career with the military-industrial complex is a good possibility.

Quotes

"We'll do this the right way – the *Army* way."

"Let's see that salute, soldier."

"A successful command is based on good staff work."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs' task is to investigate potential penetration of military intelligence – either by a foreign power or by domestic corporate interests. The penetration could be in Skovgaard's division . . . which means he'll do everything he can to hinder the PCs' investigation out of self-defense.
- ◆ As part of his career-change strategy, Skovgaard has started leaking sensitive information to a defense contractor. The PCs could get involved as military counterespionage officers, as members of a civilian oversight body, or as industrial espionage ops for a rival corporation.

OCCULT STUDENT

ST: 10

IQ: 13

Speed: 5.25

DX: 11

HT: 10

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 85

Advantages

Intuition; Reputation +2 (To people in the occult field: an expert); Reputation -1 (To "true believers": an incurable skeptic).

Disadvantages

Bad Temper; Impulsiveness.

Quirks

Always on the defensive; Collects occult paraphernalia.

Skills

Area Knowledge-13; Archaeology-12; Computer Operation-13; Detect Lies-15; History-13; Interrogation-13; Literature-14; Occultism-16; Psychology-12; Research-16; Teaching-13; Writing-13.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Fantasy – Raised in a locale where magic ranges from exceptionally rare to totally nonexistent, Jan decided at an early age that all stories of "supernormal" events were just that – stories. Although this view has been challenged many times, it hasn't been overturned. Replace Computer Operation with Riding (Horse)-10. Add the Literacy advantage and the Delusion (Magic doesn't exist) disadvantage.

Near Future – An interesting conversion is that Jan is researching the possibility of computer AIs. She is close to proving that, somewhere on the net, an intelligent program resides. Replace Occultism with Computer Hacking-15, Computer Programming-14 and Cyberdeck Operation-14. Install an Interface jack.

Space – Jan could be a Xenosociologist, studying the effect of alien races on humanity. Replace Occultism with Xenology-15.

Story

Jan Creese always considered herself the world's greatest cynic. No theory was so lofty that it couldn't be shot down. She searched for the dark side in everything and usually found it. She knew that she should put this ability to good use, and reveal some truly huge scams, so when Jan had to choose a major in university, she chose the study of occultism – solely for the purpose of discounting it entirely.

Jan's education took longer than she expected. She never seemed to reach her goal of exposing occultism as the mumbo jumbo she "knew" it to be. For every fake exhibition of "mystical" powers she saw, two more would raise questions and possibilities that Jan just couldn't answer. Now well into her PhD program, Jan knows that she's no closer now than she was when she began nearly seven years ago.

A bonus side effect of her toil is notoriety. She's known as an



Jan Creese

Age: 33

expert in the field, and has been a guest on many talk shows dealing with the subject. She can expose a deception with mystical efficiency – an ability she'll deny or chalk up to experience.

Success has brought a few bizarre side effects. Strange religious cults feel that it's their divine duty to reveal to Jan the error of her ways. Almost every day she's greeted with a new wacko who claims that he controls powers denied to, or repressed by, other humans.

Jan knows that eventually proof will point her in one direction or the other. Until then all she has to do is learn, question her surroundings and sift the truth out of the morass.

Quotes

"You sir, are a fake – and a flake! I consider it my job to ensure that your lies go no further than this meeting."

"I admit I can't explain it . . . yet. But don't think for one minute that an explanation doesn't exist, and that I won't find it."

"When people talk about 'things beyond human understanding,' it says more about the people talking than about reality."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Recently, Jan has been placing a tremendous amount of pressure on a religious cult called the Brothers of the Sun, a group that claims to offer its supporters immortality. The group has started to fight back . . . violently. Jan knows that by the time the police look into it, she'll be dead. So she asks the PCs to protect her and dig up some dirt on the Brothers at the same time.

◆ The PCs have been investigating an extremely bizarre set of occurrences. The police have saddled them with an occult expert to help determine the truth of the situation. While her factual knowledge is an asset, Jan's unwillingness to believe in the supernatural could prove a hindrance to the investigation, or even put the PCs at physical risk.

ORGANIZED CRIME BOSS

ST: 10 IQ: 14 Speed: 5.5
DX: 11 HT: 11 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 90

Advantages

Ally Group (Crime family); Reputation +2 (To general underworld: a real up-and-comer); Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantages

Enemies (Cops, other crime groups); Pacifism (Self-defense only); Reputation -2 (To direct competitors: "He's killing us in the marketplace").

Quirks

Acts sophisticated; Discusses everything in business terms; Never gets his hands dirty, physically or symbolically.

Skills

Accounting-13; Administration-15; Computer Operation-14; Detect Lie-13; Diplomacy-14; Driving (Car)-11; Economics-13; Leadership-16; History-12; Merchant-14; Politics (Underworld)-12; Psychology-11.

Conversions

Fantasy – Remove Computer Operation and Driving (Car). Add the Literacy advantage.

Near Future – Sanzo could've spent some time in a major corporation before trying his hand at the family business. No changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

When Sanzo Watanabe graduated from Harvard Business School, his professors expected him to make a killing in business – within 15 years, probably sitting in the corner office of some Fortune 500 company. Watanabe *has* made a killing, but not in quite the way his teachers envisioned.

Sanzo was born and raised in a "crime family" that branched off from the traditional Japanese Yakuza. Sanzo's father, Toju, groomed his youngest son to take over the family business when he was too old to handle it himself. Although tradition would normally demand that he abide by his father's wishes, Sanzo didn't want to take over. Not that he had anything against the family business as such; it's just that he didn't like the way his father was running it. Despite Toju's veneer of sophistication and business acumen, he was – Sanzo thought – little more than a thug in a \$2,000 suit. He was brutal when he didn't need to be, lacked a true understanding of business realities – because crime, Sanzo realized, was a business like any other – and had none of



Sanzo Watanabe

Age: 40

the subtlety that could lead to true success. Although he couldn't explain in full his reasons for asking, Sanzo requested that his father give him a "leave of absence" from the business – enough time for the young man to acquire the education his father had never bothered with.

With his Harvard MBA under his belt, Sanzo returned to the family business, and started advising his father from the sidelines. Although the older Watanabe initially resisted many of his son's more esoteric stratagems, when he did follow Sanzo's advice he saw incredible increases in profitability. Even though it galled him to do so, eventually Toju admitted that his son was a much better businessman and manager than he'd ever be, and stepped aside in favor of Sanzo. Sanzo was 25 when he took the reins of the crime syndicate.

Fifteen years later, Sanzo's style hasn't changed. His crime syndicate has expanded drastically, and profitability continues to rise. Through several well-selected purchases – a police chief here and there – he's guaranteed that the authorities won't pay too much attention to his success.

Quotes

"The laws of marketing are the same whether you're selling dog food or drugs."

"I think a little guerrilla marketing is in order. See to it."

"There's no reason to be uncouth. Let's discuss this as one gentleman to another."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Sanzo's business has grown so large that even the authorities on his payroll can't ignore him any longer. The PCs are brought in to infiltrate Watanabe's "Crime, Inc."

◆ The PCs have come to know, and like, an urbane businessman named Sanzo Watanabe. (Perhaps he works out at their health club.) After subtly testing them out, Watanabe invites them to join his organization. Only then do the characters learn just who – and what – their friend really is.

PARAPSYCHOLOGIST

ST: 10

IQ: 13

Speed: 5

DX: 11

HT: 9

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 85

Advantages

Intuition; Luck; Reputation +1 (Among believers in the paranormal).

Disadvantage

Reputation -1 (Real scientists).

Quirks

Coins generally meaningless “scientific” terms; Enjoys the trappings of “science”; Not good with math; Tendency toward gullibility (quirk level).

Skills

Computer Operation-14; Driving (Car)-11; Fast-Talk-14; History-11; Hypnotism-14; Musical Instrument (Piano)-10; Occultism-15; Photography-12; Psychology-14; Research-12; Writing-12.

Conversions

Fantasy – In a fantasy campaign, ghosts might be real, even commonplace. Therefore, Jean will have little problem being believed by her peers. She could be a sage with extensive knowledge of the paranormal. Replace Computer Operation, Driving (Car), and Photography with Cooking-12 and Calligraphy-13. Add the Literacy advantage.

Near Future – No changes.

Space – The distinction between ghosts and space entities would be tough for Jane to discern, leading her down many false trails. Add Xenology-13.

Story

One thing that can be said about Jean Carlisle is that she *loves* her job. She never had the opportunity to work with Rhine or the other ground-breaking researchers into the paranormal, but she’s read everything they ever wrote, and she’s been a “parapsychology groupie” since she was 16.

Jean always wanted to be a scientist, but discovered early she didn’t have the mathematical aptitude for the “hard” sciences. In college, she concentrated on sociology and psychology – the “soft” sciences. Through this study, she got hooked by the lure of parapsychology. She first concentrated on describing and analyzing spontaneous manifestations of paranormal activity – hauntings, forerunners, poltergeists, etc. – and made something of a name for herself in the “fringe” community. But then she found she had a real knack for the experimental side of things.

Not that she has good experimental technique – quite the opposite, in fact. Her grasp of the scientific method and good experimental paradigms is shaky enough to bring tears to the eyes of most scientists. She doesn’t understand the necessity of control groups, and couldn’t care less about reproducibility. All she knows is that she gets results. Of course, all the critics of her work



Jean Carlisle

Age: 27

point to the glaring flaws in her experimental design and discount all her conclusions.

The thing is, she *does* get results, and those results *do* reflect reality. She *has* recorded real manifestations of paranormal activity. Those fuzzy pictures in her collection *are* ghosts; the “impossible” runs on the Rhine cards *do* demonstrate telepathy. Unfortunately, “real” scientists will never believe her.

Jean has astounding luck in her investigations, and seems to have a subliminal, intuitive sense for paranormal skills. She could well be subconsciously telepathic herself, but she’ll never believe that: she’s an observer – a *scientist* – not a participant.

Carlisle has a good grasp of the “trappings” of science: she uses the right tools and the right terms, and seems to act like a “real” scientist. Lay people don’t see the flaws in her technique, and tend to trust even her most outrageous conclusions . . . much to the irritation of the traditional scientific community, who would love to see her discredited immediately.

Despite her flaws, she’s intellectually honest, and is eternally curious about anything she doesn’t understand. She’s never backed down on investigating something that interests her, no matter what the potential dangers to herself.

Quotes

“I’ll believe it when I see it?” Sometimes you have to believe it *before* you’ll see it . . .”

“Tired already? We’ve only gone through the Rhine cards 13 times . . .”

“In the four hours I observed it, it moved a whole *centimeter!* Absolutely amazing! Psychomicrointeractivity for sure . . .”

Adventure Seeds

◆ Jean has heard about some fascinating manifestation of the paranormal, and wants to investigate it. She needs help, however, and tries to persuade her friends or colleagues – the PCs – to support her. The fact that the “manifestation” might be dangerous, even deadly, makes no difference to her . . .

◆ Through her experiments, Jean has made some otherworldly horror aware of her existence. It’s decided to play with her a bit, before killing her horribly. Can the PCs help Jean stay alive long enough to find out what her tormenter is, and how to destroy it?

PILOT

ST: 11 **IQ:** 9 **Speed:** 5.75
DX: 13 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 80

Advantages

Alertness +2; Luck; Reputation +2 (Will take any job).

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior (Trick flying); On the Edge; Overconfidence.

Quirks

Always wears his Navy jacket when flying; Talks to his helicopter.

Skills

Administration-8; Area Knowledge-9; Carousing-13; Driving (Car)-14; Guns (Rifle)-12; Mechanic (Helicopter)-10; Navigation-9; Parachuting-12; Piloting (Airplane)-13; Piloting (Helicopter)-15.

Conversions

Fantasy – Jeremy is the captain of a small ship. Replace Driving (Car), Piloting skills and Mechanic with Piloting (Ship)-14, Boating-13, and Seamanship-10.

Near Future – Jeremy's "no-questions-asked" attitude will be extremely attractive to the PCs. Add Computer Operation-10.

Space – He might operate a small interplanetary shuttle. Replace Driving (Car), Mechanic (Helicopter), Parachuting, and both Piloting skills with Beam Weapons-13, Piloting (Small spacecraft)-15, Free Fall-13 and Vacc Suit-13.

Story

High Flying Helicopter Services is owned and operated by Jeremy Grant, an ex-Navy helicopter pilot.

Jeremy joined the Navy for the sole purpose of learning to fly helicopters. What especially attracted him was the danger and excitement of operating a helicopter in difficult weather conditions. The task of landing a chopper on a pitching ship in the middle of a storm was as close to nirvana as Jeremy could get.

The instant Jeremy thought he'd saved up enough money to pull it off, he quit the Navy and started his own company. His first helicopter was an antique that could barely get off the ground on a good day, and merely coughed and sputtered on a bad one. But that was irrelevant – Jeremy was so good, he could make it perform in ways that would shock and horrify the designers . . . and his insurance agent.

Jeremy soon gained a reputation as a fine pilot who would go anywhere – no matter what the situation – no questions asked. In fact, he would even give the customer a deal if the job sounded like a lot of fun.

The big problem is that Jeremy will never be rich and successful the way he dreams of being. He scares away most normal customers with his mid-air antics. This leaves him with the ones



Jeremy Grant

Age: 26

that are willing to put up with a little "turbulence" to get a damn fine pilot who doesn't care what the job is.

Jeremy really doesn't care. The thought that he might make a mistake and get himself – and whoever is lucky enough to be riding with him – killed, hasn't occurred to him; he's far too sure of his own abilities.

Quotes

"You want me to fly you through a small break in the rocks and land on an area five yards across – in this weather? Will I do it? I'd do it for free."

"Come on, Bessie – start for me, baby."

"A twin-engine VTOL . . . cool. No, I haven't tried one yet – of course that's never stopped me before. Get in."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Someone has offered Jeremy a good sum of money to deliver a package 200 miles away, and tells him that someone may try to intercept it along the way. Jeremy hires the PCs to protect his cargo from those who would acquire it.
- ◆ The PCs need a flier of Jeremy's caliber . . . right now. Unfortunately, Jeremy's chopper is impounded (a small matter of making an emergency landing on top of City Hall). Can the PCs free Jeremy's chopper, or acquire another, in time?

PRISON GUARD

ST: 12 IQ: 9 Speed: 5
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 45

Advantages

Acute Hearing +2; Legal Enforcement Powers.

Disadvantages

Intolerance (Cons, bleeding-heart liberal prison reformers, visible minorities).

Quirks

Can't maintain a relationship outside work; Considers prisoners to be subhuman; Works as much overtime as he can get.

Skills

Brawling-12; Detect Lies-9; Driving (Car)-13; First Aid-10; Guns (Pistol)-13; Interrogation-9; Karate-11; Shortsword (Baton)-12.

Weapons

Light Pistol: 1d crushing; Baton: 1d+2 crushing, 1d-1 crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – The nearest fantasy equivalent to a prison guard is a jailer. Replace Driving (Car) and Guns with Broadsword-12 and Knife-12.

Near Future – The jails were filled long ago; now the justice system is virtually stuffing cons into the broom closets. As a hated man, Herb definitely has his work cut out for him. No changes.

Space – Herb is a guard on an off-world penal colony. Replace Driving (Car) and Guns with Computer Operation-10 and Beam Weapons (Stunner)-12.

Story

Herb Cawsey always wanted to be a cop – to make a difference, to get criminals off the street, and to protect law-abiding citizens everywhere. Unfortunately, he didn't have what it takes to make it into the police academy (to this day he blames his failure on affirmative action programs, hiring quotas and "reverse discrimination"). He turned to what he saw as the next best thing: corrections branch officer. Requirements for this career were less stringent, and this time Cawsey made it.

At first, Cawsey believed in the rehabilitation theory of penology. The task of prisons was to train convicts how to live in society, instead of outside its boundaries, and how to abide by the laws of the land . . . or so he believed. This attitude didn't last long. Cawsey saw the people who were behind bars, and quickly decided most of them could *never* be rehabilitated. They were worse than animals – the screams of midnight rapes and the torrents of abuse from the prisoners soon convinced him of that. Rehabilitation is a liberal fiction, while the true functions of prison are punishment, and simply keeping animals off the streets so they can't commit any more crimes. So Cawsey firmly believes.



Herb Cawsey

Age: 32

Some of Cawsey's colleagues see their job as adding to the punishment through casual cruelty to the inmates. Herb doesn't go that far, although he doesn't intercede or report their transgressions to the warden.

In his mind, Cawsey keeps a list of those prisoners he believes haven't been punished enough, or simply should never be released on an unsuspecting world. If any of them are coming up for parole, Herb will do what he can to goad the prisoners into some behavior that will disqualify them, and keep them inside for the duration of their term.

Quotes

"Get back from the bars, you pig."

"Sure you were framed. *Everybody* here was framed, isn't that right, boys?"

"Rehabilitation? Don't make me sick."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs have been imprisoned on a trumped-up charge. They're trying to find some way of proving their innocence. Cawsey, however, has decided that they're bad to the bone, and he'll do everything in his power to keep them from getting out.
- ◆ One of Cawsey's prisoners dies under mysterious circumstances, and Cawsey is charged with his murder. Terrified that he'll end up inside with the prisoners he so hated, Cawsey turns to the PCs to help prove his innocence.

PRIVATE DETECTIVE

ST: 11 IQ: 12 Speed: 5
DX: 10 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5

Point Total: 55

Advantages

Contacts (Any three relevant to the adventure), Intuition.

Disadvantages

Low Pain Threshold; Sense of Duty (To his sources).

Quirks

Always strikes up conversations with strangers; Hates guns; Tasteful dresser.

Skills

Area Knowledge-13; Brawling-12; Computer Operation-11; Criminology-13; Detect Lies-12; Driving (Car)-10; Fast-Talk-12; Intelligence Analysis-12; Lockpicking-11; Photography-12; Research-11; Scrounging-11; Shadowing-12; Writing-13.

Conversions

Fantasy – Christos would make a fine Sherlock-Holmes-style of detective. Replace Computer Operation, Driving (Car), and Photography with Riding-10 and History-12. Add the Literacy advantage.

Near Future – A man who doesn't carry a gun could be in trouble and may need to hire a little protection from time to time . . . No changes.

Space – Add Free Fall-10.

Story

Christos Pappas enjoys reading yarns about “hard-boiled” detectives of the old school. Pappas considers himself firmly a part of the *new* school, however, having more in common with Jim Rockford than Phillip Marlowe.

Despite his Greek name, Christos was born in New York, and his accent has much more of Manhattan than Mykonos in it. He never spoke Greek as a kid, but now he's learning it as a hobby. Pappas wanted to be a writer when he was young, but then turned his attention to journalism, at which he excelled. Fresh out of college, he got a job as a reporter for the *Times* and climbed the ladder quickly. He'd always had a knack for striking up conversations with anyone, and digging out things they didn't normally admit, and he used that skill to great effect.

In his mid-20s, he became involved in a court case revolving around a series he wrote on corruption in the building trades. Even though the Supreme Court subpoenaed his notes and demanded that he name the sources he used in his articles, he stuck to his beliefs and refused. As a result, he served time in jail for



Christos Pappas

Age: 34

contempt of court. During his enforced vacation, he decided his old vocation had lost some of its charm and racked his brain for another career suited to his skills. It was one of the police detectives involved in the corruption investigation who gave him the answer: private detective.

As a PI, Christos Pappas operates much as he did when a journalist. He gets most of his information from “casual” conversations with people, although he's highly skilled at the more technical aspects of his trade as well. He hates guns, doesn't own one, and won't even carry one if he can avoid it. He still has many contacts at the *Times* and other papers, and on the police force. He's not rich, but he's certainly not hurting.

Quotes

“It's not what you know, it's who you know. If you know the right people, you can learn *anything*.”

“So, what's *your* line, buddy?”

“*You* carry the friggin' gun. I've got the camera.”

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs are the subjects of Christos' latest investigation (the PI was told they're suspected industrial spies, or something similar). When they find out they're being watched, they have to extract from Christos the identity of his client – the one who wanted them followed.
- ◆ The PCs spot Christos keeping a watch on their apartment building and naturally assume he's spying on them. In fact, he's maintaining surveillance on the PCs' neighbor . . . but try to convince them of that. (And just what is the case Pappas is working on, anyway?)

PSYCHIATRIST

ST: 9 IQ: 15
DX: 10 HT: 11
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 5.25
Move: 5

Point Total: 85

Advantages

Eidetic Memory 1; Reputation +2 (To everyone: a good psychiatrist).

Disadvantages

Delusion (The world's a very straightforward place); Delusion (Anyone in a mental ward is there for a reason); Stubbornness.

Quirks

Intensifies his natural British accent; Makes sure everyone knows he's an MD; Never uses a short word when a long word will do.

Skills

Administration-14; Botany-13; Computer Operation-15; Detect Lies-15; Diagnosis-14; Diplomacy-14; First Aid-15; Interrogation-14; Physician-15; Professional Skill: Psychiatry-15; Psychology-15; Writing- 14.

Conversions

Fantasy – Brynn-Jones could be a trepanner – one of those “doctors” who drilled holes in an insane patient's skull to “let the evil spirits out.” Failing to convince Brynn-Jones of one's sanity thus implies some pretty awful consequences. Remove Administration, Computer Operation, Diagnosis (the guy's a charlatan, after all), Physician (ditto), Psychiatry, Psychology and Writing. Convert other skills to appropriate TL.

Near Future – There are many drugs and implants that will send a perfectly normal person over the edge. Brynn will have his hands full. Update skills to appropriate TL. Otherwise, no changes.

Space – With the addition of aliens and new technology to the mix, Brynn-Jones' idea of a straightforward world will begin to crumble. Add Xenology-12.

Story

Dr. Graham Brynn-Jones is a psychiatrist, *not* a psychologist – as he'd be the first to tell you. He was accepted at several of Britain's most prestigious medical schools, and breezed through his training with no difficulty. After practicing for several years, he realized that the National Health guaranteed that he'd never get as rich as he wanted to in the United Kingdom, so he moved to America.

Brynn-Jones is enough of a realist to recognize that his name, his credentials and his accent are good selling points in America, where Britons are still considered sophisticated just because of their heritage. Thus, he's been careful to publicize his background, and has carefully maintained his upper-class British accent.

The good doctor excelled at the academic side of his training, and his book-learning stands him in very good stead. He seems able to remember even the most minor citation from virtually



Graham Brynn-Jones

Age: 44

every text he ever read. He strikes many people as a little cold and aloof, but he has an innate gift for getting to the bottom of patients' delusional structures.

And that's where his weakness lies. Brynn-Jones has a very straightforward, somewhat constrained view of the world. He has strong opinions – others would call them prejudices – and he frequently makes diagnoses based on those preconceptions. For example, if someone tells him a story that doesn't fit with his idea of the way the world works, Brynn-Jones will label it as “delusional” and act on that assumption. This “delusional unless proven innocent” approach could well come back to haunt him in the future.

Quotes

“Note the strength of this patient's delusional structure. He really *believes* he's an espionage agent . . .”

“Double the dosage of thiorazine for patient 6, please.”

“Just *listen* to yourself, Sarah. Are you talking like a sane person?”

Adventure Seeds

◆ One or more of the PCs has been wrongfully committed to a mental institution under the care of Dr. Brynn-Jones. How can they convince him they're actually sane, when he automatically assumes their claims of being wrongly committed are delusional?

◆ The PCs bring a friend or colleague, suffering from some mysterious mental trauma, to Brynn-Jones. The doctor finds evidence that this trauma was somehow induced – presumably by some enemy of the PCs – but won't believe his own conclusions. To get to the bottom of the mystery, the PCs will have to convince the good doctor to let go of some of his preconceived notions.

◆ The PCs show Brynn-Jones irrefutable evidence of some eldritch horror. Brynn-Jones recalls that he recently committed someone who was raving about the very same thing. Isn't it strange that there have been so many suicides at that mental institution recently?

RESCUE WORKER

ST: 11

IQ: 12

Speed: 6.25

DX: 14

HT: 11

Move: 6

Dodge: 6

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 120

Advantages

Absolute Timing; Danger Sense.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior (Taking risks); Duty.

Quirks

Paints “kill markers” on her chopper or her harness for each rescue she makes; Loves tequila; Sings raunchy songs at the top of her lungs when she’s excited.

Skills

Acrobatics-12; Boating-12; Brawling-13; Carousing-13; Climbing-14; Driving (Car)-12; First Aid-12; Jumping-14; Parachuting-13; Piloting (Helicopter)-15; Running-12; Survival (Forest)-12.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.

Near Future – Nikki pilots a helicopter ambulance, and has a reputation for not letting minor inconveniences like raging fire-fights interfere with her job. Add Computer Operation-12 and Guns (Pistol)-14.

Space – Nikki is the pilot of an interplanetary rescue ship. Add Piloting (Spaceship)-16, Free Fall-14, and Vacc Suit 12.

Story

Nikki Bristol had a hard fight to make it into SAR (Search & Rescue). Even with affirmative-action programs breaking out all over, SAR remained largely male-dominated, and the powers that be wouldn’t take a woman seriously – particularly a petite thing like Nikki. They couldn’t see the whipcord muscles under her soft skin or the determination in her heart that she *was* going to make it, by God. She put so much pressure on the recruiters that they finally accepted her for training . . . confidently expecting that the presumptuous girl would wash out in the first week.

But Nikki didn’t wash out. Quite the contrary – she outperformed everyone in her class, using her intelligence to make up for those (few) times she didn’t have the physical strength for a task. She could have become the most hated person in the program – but nobody can hate Nikki Bristol for very long.

Today, Bristol has a reputation as the best of the SAR professionals. There’s virtually no kind of extraction she hasn’t done . . . and done better than it’s ever been done before. Whether she’s flying the chopper, rappelling down the line or climbing a



Nikki Bristol

Age: 31

sheer rock face, there’s no aspect of her job that she doesn’t enjoy. Nikki’s confident, but not overconfident. She’d never admit to *looking* for risks, but she undeniably relishes the adrenalin rush.

Her radio call-sign, conferred upon her by her superiors, is “Caesar” – from C-SAR, Champion of Search & Rescue.

Quotes

“Hold her steady, I’m going down . . .”

“ . . . *Steady*, for Christ’s sake!”

“*I don’t want to join the army / I don’t want to go to war . . .*”

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ On their current covert mission, the PCs must work closely with SAR. Nikki’s their contact, and they have to convince the woman to suppress her normally ebullient style if they don’t want to get shot.
- ◆ While trying to make a particularly difficult rescue, Nikki crashed her chopper, and now *she* needs to be pulled out. The only people in the area capable of the task are the PCs.

RESEARCH LIBRARIAN

ST: 9 IQ: 14 Speed: 4.75
DX: 10 HT: 9 Move: 4
Dodge: 4
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 60

Advantages

Eidetic Memory 1; Intuition.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior (Curiosity); Honesty.

Quirks

Fascinated by computers of all types, and will drop any other subject to discuss them; Loves and collects "pulp" science fiction.

Skills

Anthropology-13; Archaeology-13; Computer Operation-14; Ecology-13; Economics-13; Geology-12; History-13; Literature-13; Occultism-13; Physics-12; Politics-13; Research-15; Writing-13.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Fantasy – In most fantasy worlds, books are rare and extremely valuable. Those who own many books hoard them in well-protected libraries. Murray could be one of those people, or someone in service to a lord or high priest, whose duty is to guard and maintain the valuable library. Replace Computer Operation with Heraldry-14. Add the Literacy advantage, and (perhaps) the Duty disadvantage.

Near Future – Not many people actually read books any more. Increase Computer Operation to 15.

Space – Add Xenology-12.

Story

Murray Bamford loves books. He loves reading them, he loves just being around them. If he'd had the money, he probably would have opened a rare bookstore . . . if he could have forced himself to part with his inventory. Since he *didn't* have the money, working in the university library will have to do.

Bamford is very well-read, with an encyclopedic knowledge of what other people call trivia. He's so familiar with the library's filing system that he could navigate the catalogs and stacks in his sleep. He's also a whiz when it comes to searching the on-line resources – national and international databases, on-line journal catalogs, etc. The computer system at the library isn't state-of-the-art . . . but his personal system *is*, and he has no objection to occasionally taking his work home with him. Sometimes he charges



Murray Bamford

Age: 44

consulting rates for his after-hours research, but more commonly he does it for free, just for sheer intellectual enjoyment.

Murray can often figure out – or at least guess – why people want the information they ask him for. If he figures that they've got some nefarious scheme on their minds, he'll sometimes hold back a key fact, or possibly let the police know that someone was researching (say) undetectable poisons and Masai blowgun technology, while reading up on the President's personal habits.

In his spare time, he writes and edits a newsletter for a local political group dedicated to more responsible use of tax revenue by government. Although he has strong political opinions, Bamford rarely discusses them.

Quotes

"Well, sure, I can dig up what we've got on Alistair Crowley's childhood. Mind telling me why? Just curious . . ."

"I know the university library's got nothing on that topic. But I can run a computer search, if you like."

"Here are the books you wanted. Let's see: voodoo, chaos theory, immunology and a primer on human genetics. Wide-ranging interests . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need Murray's help tracking down a particularly important fact. When he goes to the stacks, however, he finds the relevant book has been stolen . . . and, in fact, that all entries in the catalog referring to it have been erased. Is this connected with the PCs' research? And, if so, how?

◆ Over the past week, Bamford has very nearly fallen victim to three random accidents. Now he's starting to fear they weren't really accidents at all, and that someone's trying to kill him. He turns to the PCs to find out who and why. (Perhaps he's come across some sensitive information in his researches, but doesn't recognize its significance.)

SCIENTIST

ST: 11
DX: 11
Dodge: 5

IQ: 15
HT: 11

Speed: 5.5
Move: 5

Point Total: 120

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive); Mathematical Ability; Reputation +2 (Among scientists: Nobel material); Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Honesty; Impulsive.

Quirks

Always carries a pocket tape recorder for stray ideas; Enjoys dancing; Likes jazz; Talks to herself.

Skills

Administration-14; Bicycling-12; Carousing-11; Chemistry-13; Computer Operation-19; Computer Programming-17; History-12; Literature-12; Mathematics-17; Musical Instrument (Saxophone)-12; Physics-16; Research-14; Scuba-13; Sex Appeal-13; Skiing-10; Swimming-12; Writing-13.

Language

English-13; Japanese-13.

Conversions

Fantasy – Remove Bicycling, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Saxophone, Scuba and Skiing. Convert other skills to appropriate TL. Add the Literacy advantage.

Near Future – In a dark-future environment, many scientific theories are tested without the consequences being fully thought out first – and sometimes without the scientist's knowledge. Add the Paranoia disadvantage.

Space – No changes.

Story

Suki Shigetomi wouldn't fit anyone's stereotype of the classic scientist. She's not stooped and balding. She doesn't wear thick glasses, and doesn't stutter with fear when she meets people. And she doesn't think curling up with a 1,000-page tome is a hot way to spend a Saturday night. Instead, Suki – *Dr. Shigetomi* – has a lusty, “take-big-bites” approach to life. She spends her days off mountain-biking, kayaking or scuba diving, and relaxes after a hard day by wailing away on her saxophone (she's no virtuoso, but that doesn't bother her one iota). She also loves going out for a night on the town, but has difficulty finding would-be lovers who aren't intimidated by her brilliance.

Because Suki Shigetomi is brilliant; even colleagues who (jealously) decry her “frivolous” lifestyle have to admit that. She has two doctorates (Physics and Math) and is working on a third (Chemistry). Even though she hasn't received a Nobel Prize – yet – she does have several industrial patents to her name. The licensing fees she receives from her discoveries enable her to live very well, and also to fund her further research without having to sell her soul to a university or a corporation. She runs one of the few remaining truly independent research groups in the country.



Suki Shigetomi

Age: 41

Unlike some of her colleagues, Suki takes the time to think out beforehand the possible ramifications of her research. Although she believes limiting scientific research based on possibly dangerous consequences would be catastrophic for the world in the long run, she *does* think it's important to remain mindful of those outcomes.

Quotes

“To be honest, I'm tired of thinking about work. Can we talk about something else?”

“Can I borrow a piece of paper? And a pen? And a calculator?”

“Science and technology are neither bad nor good. They just *are*. Bad or good comes from how they're used. Fire cooks your food, but it can also burn down your house. Does that mean we should ban fire?”

“I can't understand how anyone can think science is boring. Doing science is the most fun I can have with my clothes on.”

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs need Suki to make sense of some puzzling clue they've found during an adventure. She'll do it, but in return she wants them to find out who's trying to tap into her computer system, and why.
- ◆ Suki has made a major breakthrough – a discovery that could be used beneficially, or as a weapon. She needs someone to help her keep her discovery secure until she finds a way to control it, or to counter its potential dangers.

SECURITY GUARD

ST: 11 **IQ:** 10 **Speed:** 4.75
DX: 10 **HT:** 9 **Move:** 4
Dodge: 4
Light Kevlar (PD 2, DR 4); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 45

Advantages

Alertness +2; Luck.

Disadvantages

Duty (As a security guard); Gluttony; Laziness; Overweight.

Quirks

Spends more time avoiding work than it would take to actually do it; Watches a lot of television.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Brawling-11; Computer Operation-10; Carousing-10; Criminology-11; Driving (Car)-12; Electronics Operation (Security)-13; Guns (Pistol)-13; Shortsword (Baton)-12; Stealth-12; Streetwise-10.

Weapons

Pistol: 2d+2 crushing; Baton: 1d-1 crushing; 1d+1 crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – Randy quit the army, and now he works as a guard for merchants. Replace Computer, Criminology, Driving, Electronics and Guns with Broadsword-13, Crossbow-14 and Riding (Horse)-13.

Near Future – In his current form, Randy just wouldn't cut it as a security guard. Remove Laziness.

Space – Replace Guns with Stunner-13.

Story

It's extremely hard to get kicked out of the police for not meeting the fairly lax physical standards, but that's exactly what happened to Randy Aird.

Randy, like many cops, joined the police because he wanted the excitement he imagined the job offered. But he soon realized that he wasn't prepared for the random violence and horrors that he witnessed. Within a year, he'd applied to be a police dispatcher, thus removing himself from the nightmares he'd seen on the street. From there it was a slow slide to being fired. Randy was overweight to begin with, and became more so as time went by. Finally he was let go for not passing the physical – a judgment he didn't entirely disagree with. He'd just decided to let his stay with the police drag on as long as he could, since money always seemed to be tight.

After eight years on the force, Aird realized he had very few transferable skills. One failed job application after another finally led to work with a private security firm.



Randy Aird

Age: 29

Randy enjoys his job. Not only is it physically undemanding, but he doesn't have to deal with the random violence and human suffering that he saw so commonly with the police force. Best of all, there's no fitness requirement beyond being able to walk.

Others might call Randy lazy; he prefers "efficient." He believes in using the most appropriate resources for any task . . . and frequently those resources are other people. He long ago figured out that violence – or any physical action, for that matter – is the last refuge of the incompetent.

Randy's career may be short-lived, however, as computer security monitoring programs are becoming more advanced. Still, he has faith that his employers will want a human in charge to monitor those machines.

Quotes

"Hold on, we've got a security alert in sector two. Joe, go check it out."

"Look, buddy – every time I have to use my nightstick, my back kills me for days. So why don't you get out of here and save us both some pain . . . ?"

"Diet? Why? (Hand me another donut.)"

Adventure Seeds

◆ A high-tech corporation is starting to doubt the cost-effectiveness of its human security guards. Randy realizes that his job will be gone if he doesn't do something. He hires the PCs to break in, so that he can catch them, thus removing his employer's fears. (Of course, the PCs don't have to know their employer's real plan . . .)

◆ A corporation has received a tip that a building of theirs will be broken into tonight. The PCs are hired as additional, heavily-armed security guards to protect the building. How will Randy react when he's told that he might be right in the middle of a huge firefight? Just how important is his job?

SURVIVALIST

ST: 11 **IQ:** 10 **Speed:** 6
DX: 13 **HT:** 11 **Move:** 6
Dodge: 6
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 75

Advantages

Alertness (+2); Toughness (+1).

Disadvantages

Delusion (A post-nuclear America is a fun place to live); Impulsive; Intolerance (Commiss, shrubbies, liberals, gun-control nuts, you, me); Megalomania.

Quirks

Looks forward to a nuclear war; Will eat anything.

Skills

Accounting-9; Armoury (Guns)-12; Camouflage-11; Carpentry-10; Demolition-12; Gunner-12; Guns (Pistol)-15; Guns (Rifle)-16; Leadership-12; Scrounging-12; Survival (Forest)-11; Tactics-9; Tracking-12.

Weapons

Assault Rifle: 7d crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – Most societies would consider Bill a loony. Perhaps he's setting up for some disaster foreseen by a mage. Replace Guns with Broadsword-15.

Near Future – In a dark future setting, Bill might already have survived the Big One . . . and be stocking up to weather the *Bigger One*. No changes (although he could conceivably have some military-style cyber-enhancements).

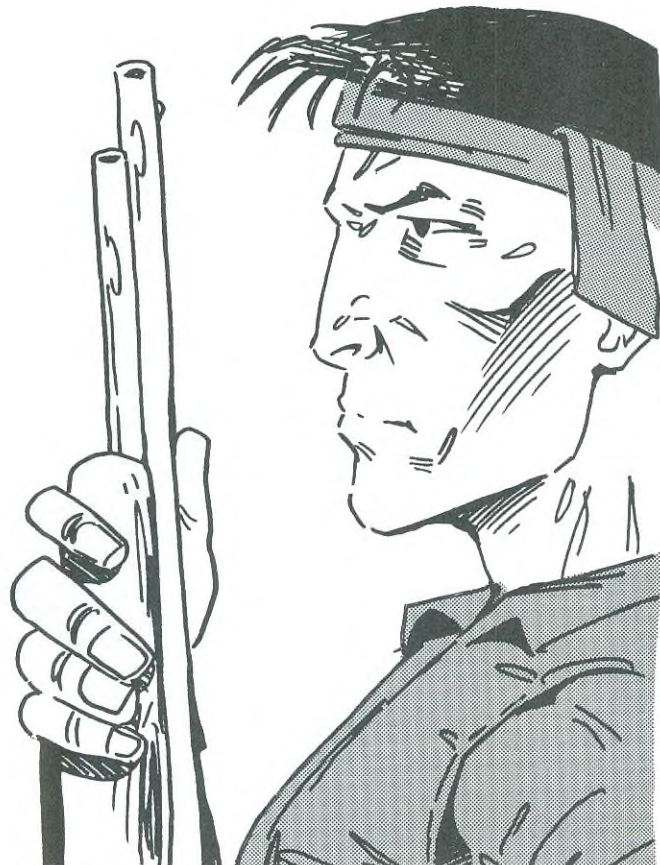
Space – The enclave could really be away from it all on some backwater planet on the outskirts of known space. Perhaps they're expecting some interstellar conflict. Replace Guns with Beam Weapons (Laser)-16.

Story

Bill Halston heads the northwest chapter (#9) of the American Survivalist Society, which operates out of Seattle. The society trains and equips people to cope with widespread disaster . . . specifically, a nuclear war.

In the Cascade Mountains near Seattle, the society has set up a survivalist enclave. This site is mostly underground and can withstand a near-miss from a small strategic warhead. It's large enough and stocks enough consumables to provide food, shelter and water for 100 people for an entire year without having to go above ground for supplies. These statistics are widely known and have been the focus of many news stories. What's not so widely advertised is that Bill and his society have stockpiled enough weapons to hold off a post-disaster starving mob. Their ordnance includes a minigun and a TOW missile launcher.

Before joining the society, Bill spent many years in the army, and served with Operation Desert Storm. He's an accomplished marksman and can maintain all of his group's weapons.



Bill Halston

Age: 27

Sooner or later, Bill figures a nuclear war will happen; he'd prefer it to happen sooner, because he's not good at waiting. He foresees the aftermath of a nuclear war as a glamorous future where he leads the strongest on to a utopian society. He's extremely intolerant of environmentalists – "shrubbies," as he calls them – and can't understand the mentality of people who aren't gearing up for the "Big One." To be ready, he's built a tremendous library of books on politics and economics.

Quotes

"After the Big One, you people are gonna eat things that would make a goat sick."

"We're gonna nuke them, and they're gonna nuke us. After that, we're the ones gonna make America strong again."

"Ignorant shrubbies, throwing away everything made this country strong . . ."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs come across the enclave in the forest and see the survivalists loading in heavy mil-spec weapons. Bill spots them and sends some of his men to shut them up permanently.
- ◆ Bill could be right! The nuclear apocalypse is imminent. The PCs could probably survive, if they could only convince Bill to let them into the enclave.

UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

ST: 9 IQ: 14 Speed: 5.5
DX: 12 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 90

Advantages

Charisma +3; Musical Ability +2.

Disadvantages

Age (55); Intolerance (People who don't like learning).

Quirks

Always wears tweeds; Enjoys going out for a beer with her students; Smokes a pipe, but only in private, or with close friends.

Skills

Anthropology-12; Carousing-12; Computer Operation-14; Computer Programming-12; Economics-15; Geology-12; History-12; Literature-14; Mathematics-12; Musical Instrument (Piano)-14; Politics-13; Psychology-12; Research-14; Teaching-15; Writing-13.

Languages

Any four relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Fantasy – Barbara may be part of a medieval-style university, or could be a member of a religious order dedicated to education. In either case, she might have knowledge of some of the more mystical subjects. Replace Computer skills, Mathematics, and Politics with Alchemy-13 and Occultism-14.

Near Future – No changes.

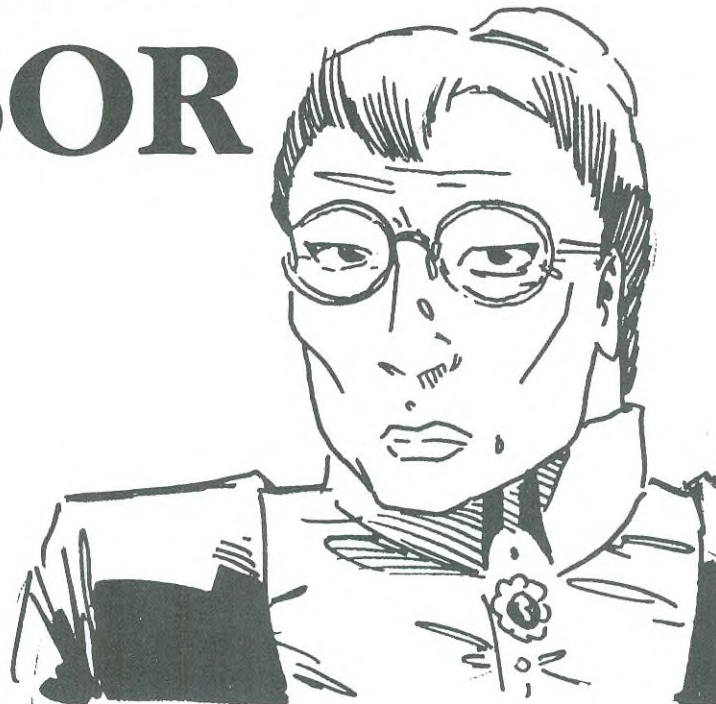
Space – An interstellar university would be the perfect place to find Barbara. Add Xenology-13.

Story

Professor Barbara Lawrence is an academic, has always been an academic, and probably always *will* be an academic. With a handful of degrees from Oxford, the London School of Economics, Yale and MIT, she's spent virtually all her life in the groves of academe, first as a university student and later as a tenured professor.

But that doesn't mean she's stuffy and closed-minded; there's nothing hackneyed about Barbara Lawrence. She's absolutely fascinated in her major area of study – whatever the GM decides it is – and enjoys sharing her fascination with others. But she's also fascinated with just about everything else in the world. She reads incredibly widely – in and out of her specialty – and can intelligently discuss a staggering range of esoteric topics.

She doesn't agree with modern universities' fixation on grades



Barbara Lawrence

Age: 55

and exams, and gets away from these traditional measures as much as possible. She's a tough but fair grader, and it's well known around campus that you *can't* ace one of Lawrence's exams by memorizing the semester's notes and just regurgitating them on the paper. In term papers and discussions, she's less interested in a student's conclusions than she is in the thought processes used to reach them.

She has a strong and very sophisticated sense of humor, and an infectious, braying laugh. She rarely takes anything too seriously.

At night, she plays a hot piano, leading a jazz quintet that works the local club circuit.

Quotes

"Listen to this one. Sort of a cross between Thelonius Monk and Chick Corea."

"Interesting suggestion. Why don't we discuss it?"

"I read an article on that last month in *The Journal of Psychological Research*."

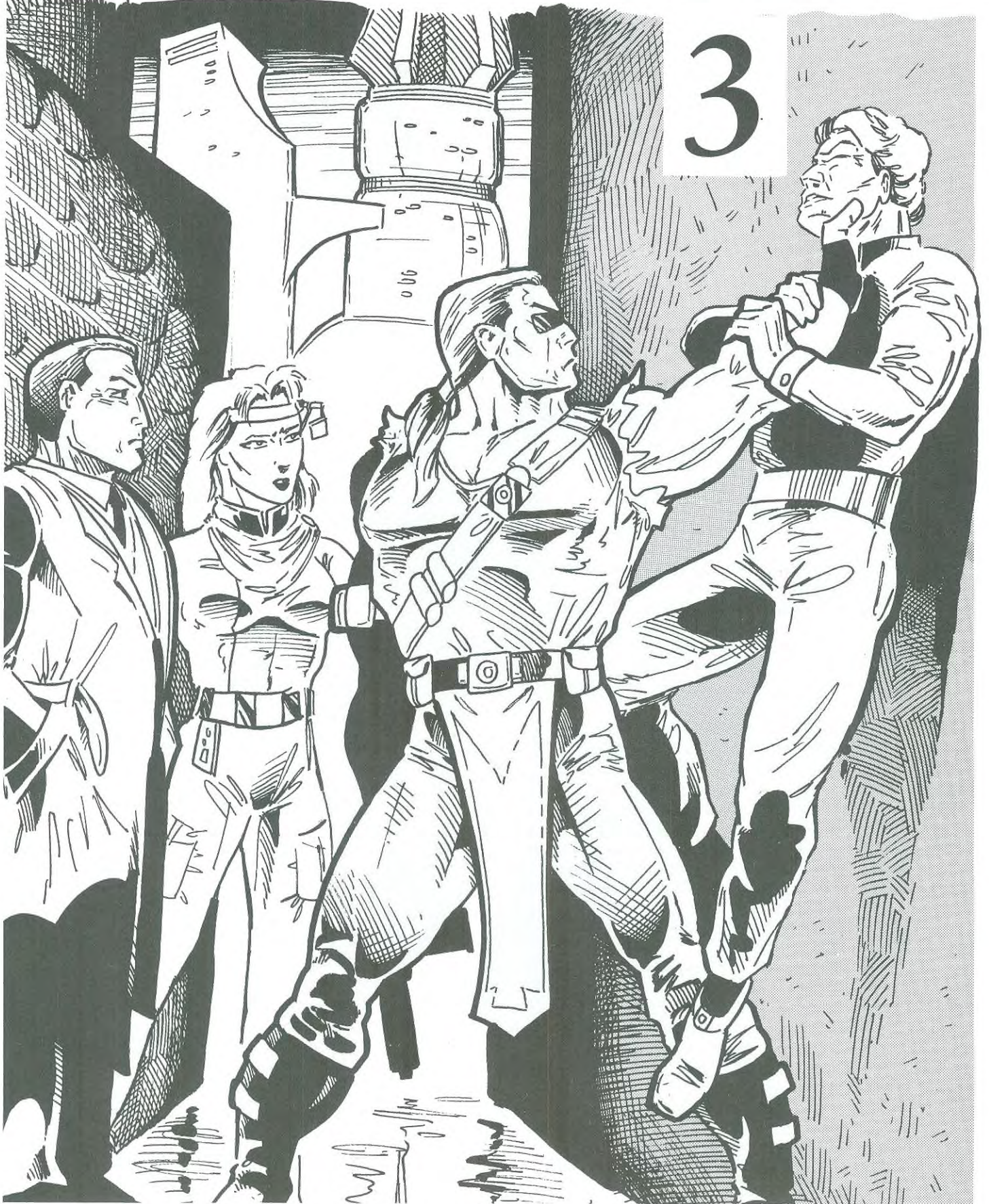
Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need to consult Barbara on some esoteric facts in her discipline. They find out she's got a gig that night, and arrive at the club just in time to pull the outspoken professor out of a tavern brawl.

◆ An unfortunate fact Lawrence has learned to live with is that many people write her off as an eccentric. Including the police, she finds to her disappointment, when she uncovers some hints that one of her students is involved in something dangerous and/or unsavory. Since the traditional authorities won't believe her, she has to turn for help to *non-traditional* resources – the PCs.

NEAR FUTURE

3



ACTOR

ST: 9 IQ: 12 Speed: 5.25
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 60

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive); Charisma +1.

Disadvantages

Poverty (Struggling); Reputation -2 (In the industry: a jinx); Unluckiness.

Quirks

Breaks into impersonations all the time; Exaggerates his level of success.

Skills

Acting-15; Area Knowledge-12; Carousing-10; Computer Operation-12; Dancing-13; Disguise-15; Fast-Talk-14; Knife-11; Performance-15; Research-12; Sex Appeal-14.

Cyberwear

Elastic Face.

Conversions

Fantasy – Clint would be a traveling actor, moving from town to town with a small troupe. Since success in the past was dependent more on skill than on “the look,” luck and contacts, he actually might have had more success back then. Replace Computer Operation with Riding-12. Remove the Elastic Face (or replace it with a magic item with a similar effect).

Contemporary – Remove cyberwear. Replace Computer Operation with Driving (Car)-12.

Space – Clint may or may not retain his Elastic Face depending on the level of cyberwear in the campaign. No other changes.

Story

When he entered the business ten years ago, Clint Ranger (born Calvin Rogovich) had “the look.” Unfortunately, he didn’t also have the *luck* necessary to make it big in the dog-eat-dog world of the military/industrial/entertainment complex. In fact, looking back on his career path, it seems that Clint was consistently dogged by lousy luck.

For example, when he first made his debut, he was cast for the romantic sub-plot in a big-budget splatterpunk movie. The deal Clint no money up front, but good “points” when the movie finally came out. If it did as big box-office as others of its type, it should be enough to make Clint filthy rich. Clint was a little uncomfortable with the clause in the contract that prohibited him from working in any other production before the movie was released, but his agent assured him that’s the way things work in the big leagues. While he waited – and waited and waited – for the movie to be released, Clint was offered several other projects, which he had to turn down.

The movie never made it to release, of course. The producers folded up their tents in the night, and vanished. Clint never saw a



Clint Ranger

Age: 26

dime of the money he’d been counting on. Even worse, in the interim he’d gone “cold”; no casting director would even look at him.

Somehow he managed to beg, borrow and steal \$100,000, and had an elastic face (see p. CY34) installed, hoping that would give him the edge he needed. With the face’s mimicry ability, he found some work in commercials, mainly doing celebrity impersonations. His luck remained bad, and he was implicated in a lawsuit when one of those impersonations went a little too far.

Today, Clint Ranger supports himself almost exclusively as a “professional target,” doubling for politicians, megacorp big-wigs and others who are at risk of assassination. It’s unfortunate, because Clint *is* a good actor . . .

Quotes

“I wouldn’t advise my worst enemy to try and make it as an actor. Go home to Akron, kid.”

“Well, when *will* the casting director be out of her meeting? Hello . . . ?”

“At least keep my photograph and resume on file. Can you at least do that?”

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs have got a scam going that requires a perfect double of a megacorp manager. Word on the street is that Clint Ranger’s their best bet.

◆ Someone’s trying to kill the great Clint Ranger. Why would anyone want him dead? Could it have something to do with his last gig, where he impersonated the President at the behest of the Secret Service? Or *were* they the Secret Service . . . ? Clint needs help if he wants to live to collect his next welfare check.

BODYLEGGER

ST: 10 **IQ:** 14 **Speed:** 5.5
DX: 12 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 115

Advantages

Alertness +1; Allies (the Death Brothers); Wealth (Very Wealthy).

Disadvantages

Greed; Reputation -4 (To other doctors: a sociopath).

Quirks

Always wears rubber gloves; Enjoys classical music.

Skills

Administration-13; Computer Operation-15; Diagnosis-14; Electronics (Bionics)-14; First Aid-16; History-13; Mechanic (Bionics)-13; Merchant-13; Physician-13; Surgery-15.

Cyberwear

Chip slot with a Surgery (8) chip.

Conversions

Fantasy – The closest equivalent is a corrupt medicine man collecting arcane ingredients from human patients. Replace Computer Operation, Electronics and Mechanic with Alchemy-13, Botany-13, Naturalist-14 and Occultism-15. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – The horror of bodylegging may already be upon us, and Dr. Elsom is sure to be on the forefront of this growing industry. Remove Electronics and Mechanic.

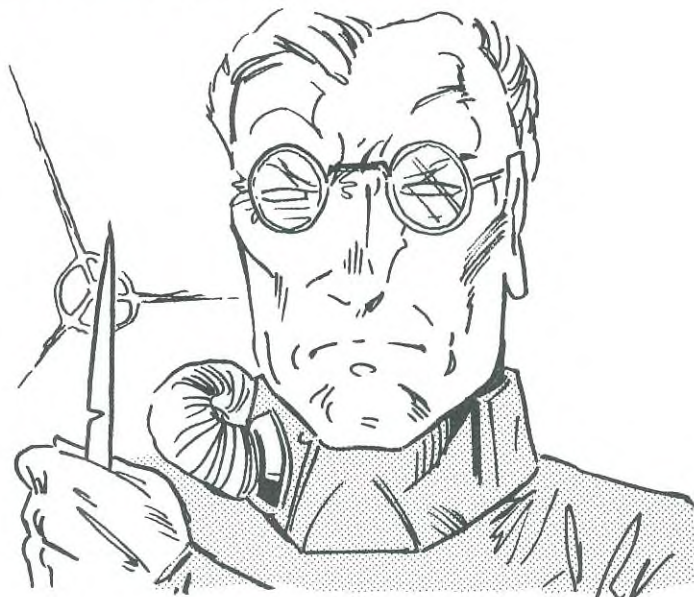
Space – No changes.

Story

The cyberpunk world isn't a pretty one. Following the 20th century's tradition of for-profit medical care, transplant, cyber and prosthetic replacement and enhancement have turned into multi-billion dollar businesses. Environmental pollution, and just plain bad living, have dropped the supply of viable transplants to an all-time low; it's constantly getting harder to find serviceable organs. Meanwhile, demand for transplants and enhancements is growing exponentially. Because high-demand/low-supply maximizes profits, cyber and bodyware manufacturers are holding back production. This situation has led to the emergence of a new industry – "bodylegging," the acquisition and selling of transplant tissue and cybertech from "donors" who aren't quite ready to give up the material yet . . .

One of the emerging leaders in this industry is Dr. Francis Elsom. His Organ and Cyberwear Transplant Clinic offers an alternative to long waits. Elsom can provide organs with no waiting period – at an extremely high cost, of course. Not surprisingly, the clinic is very solidly booked up. The clinic also offers used cyberwear at a considerable discount – the perfect deal for the street samurai on a budget.

The good doctor used to head the surgery wing at L.A. General



Dr. Francis Elsom

Age: 37

Hospital, until he was caught "misdirecting" blood and organs slated for transplants, selling them on the black market. Fortunately he was able to get the case thrown out of court on a technicality.

Because he had the skills – and absolutely no morals – Elsom decided to open his own clinic to cater to the needs of the rich and the desperate. He decided to guarantee his supply of "raw material" by hiring the Death Brothers – a tough local gang – to appropriate organs and cyberwear from other gangs. Elsom can afford the heavy ordnance, metal detectors and bioscanners required to ensure his gang's victory every time they go to war.

Elsom is an extremely ambitious man. How he actually made it through medical school continues to baffle his colleagues. It's even rumored that a client is walking around with Elsom's mother's liver.

Quotes

"A full liver-and-lung job, huh? No problem . . . By Friday? That means a rush charge."

"A good night's work boys. But next time please . . . only head shots."

"So I had my fingers crossed when I took the oath . . . sue me."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The police are baffled by the recent re-emergence of the Death Brothers, a gang that had almost vanished from the city streets. So far they've completely eradicated the Shadowreavers and the Orchids. The overworked captain turns to the PCs to investigate, and apprehend if at all possible, this psychotic gang.

◆ The PCs are hired by the city Board of Health to investigate Dr. Elsom's clinic. Elsom hadn't gotten around to bribing its newest member. Elsom had the upstart member killed, but it was too late – the PCs had already been hired. Now Dr. Elsom and the rest of the corrupt board are after the PCs. Can they expose the truth, or will they end up as unwilling organ donors?

BUM

ST: 8 **IQ:** 10 **Speed:** 4.5
DX: 9 **HT:** 9 **Move:** 4
Dodge: 4
Winter clothing (PD 0, DR 1); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 15

Advantages

Immunity to Disease; Zeroed.

Disadvantages

Illiterate; Odious Personal Habit (Rarely bathes); Poverty (Dead Broke); Status -3.

Quirks

Always listens in on conversations; Collects anything she can get her hands on.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Knife-10; Lockpicking-10; Pickpocketing-10; Scrounging-14; Streetwise-13.

Weapon

Large Knife: 1d-4 cutting, 1d-3 impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Not much changes over time when it comes to the homeless. Remove Zeroed; Illiteracy is no longer a disadvantage.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

Sally Mayes is one of the *burakumin* – the underclass that make their permanent homes on the streets of the city. As a social class, the *burakumin* haven't been around long enough in most cities to develop the same unassailable traditions as in Calcutta – where, for example, a homeless person can legally will his stretch of sidewalk to his descendants – but the process is starting.

Sally wasn't born on the street, but close. Her mother bore her in one of the shelters that the megacorp established for the "technologically displaced," and died soon thereafter. Due to some bureaucratic screw-up, Sally never was issued a Personal Identity Number by the government, and thus has no official existence. The shelter staff realized this, and tried to rectify the situation. Bureaucratic inertia stalled their efforts, however. Young Sally was unofficially adopted by the other residents of the shelter, and raised as well as they could manage.

When she was about 13, Sally realized the drain that she represented on her "extended family." Since she didn't officially exist, the shelter could provide no food or other resources for her. Everything she received came out of the rations given to her "family." Even though she wasn't that much of a drain – almost a dozen people contributed to her needs – she felt that *any* drain was too much, and that she was morally obligated to make her own way in the world. One night she slipped out of the shelter, and her family never saw her again.

For the past 12 years or so, Sally Mayes has lived on the street, eking out an existence. She's a survivor, competent at scrounging



Sally Mayes

Age: 25

what she needs, and at defending what's hers from those who'd take it.

Many "normal" denizens of the city don't notice Sally, or acknowledge her existence. Because of this, she frequently overhears things that nobody was meant to know. She's very cautious about using this kind of information, however, knowing that – just as few people notice her – few would miss her if she were to vanish . . .

Quotes

"I didn't see *nothin'*, I *told* you that already . . ."

"Hey, listen, you want this squat? It's yours, I don't want no trouble . . ."

"Got any cash on you?"

Adventure Seeds

◆ Sally overheard the PCs making some plans, and decided to realize some profit from what she learned. She went to a megacorp and sold what she knew. But now she's realized the corp plans to pay her off with a bullet in the head. The only people capable of protecting her are the very street ops that she ratted out to the corp . . .

◆ Sleeping fitfully in her squat the other night, Sally witnessed a team of corp street ops rounding up a bunch of squatters and driving them away in a van. Although she has no idea what's going down, she suspects it's not good. She turns to the PCs – who she's met previously – to help her investigate.

CHAUFFEUR/ BODYGUARD

ST: 13 IQ: 10 Speed: 6.25
DX: 13 HT: 12 Move: 6
Dodge: 8
Medium monocry armor (PD 2, DR 16); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 135

Advantages

Alertness +2; Unfazeable.

Disadvantage

Duty (To his passengers).

Quirks

Always wears conservative corp-style suits (with monocry lining); Doesn't drink; Never drives slowly.

Skills

Area Knowledge-11; Brawling-13; Computer Operation-10; Driving (Car)-15; Guns (Pistol)-15; Intimidation-11; Karate-15; Mechanic (Car)-11; Savoir-Faire (Corporate)-10; Streetwise-11.

Cyberwear

Chip Slot with Combat Reflexes chip; Implant Cellular Link.

Weapons

Machine Pistol: 3d-1 crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – Blake is a carriage driver who's very good at protecting his noble passengers. Replace Computer Operation, Driving (Car), Guns and Mechanic with Broadsword-15, Crossbow-15 and Driving (Carriage)-15. Remove cyberwear.

Contemporary – In today's society, Blake's habit of pulling out his Uzi with little provocation will be frowned upon. But he's still an excellent driver, and his skills are very much in demand in many circles. Remove cyberwear.

Space – He's now driving some sort of hovercraft. Replace Driving (Car) with Driving (Hovercraft)-15.

Story

Nobody knows exactly how Blake Drummond came to be in corporate service. His bosses don't really care, and Drummond himself never talks about it. (The imperfectly-removed tattoo on his left arm – resembling a gang crest – offers some hints, but it's not wise to press the point with Drummond.) All that matters is that he's one of the finest chauffeur/bodyguards working for any of the megacorps.

Blake wasn't born into corporate circles. He grew up on the street, and learned how to take care of himself. Those skills now stand him – and his "clients" – in good stead.

On duty, Blake seems like an automaton, totally devoid of



Blake Drummond

Age: 26

emotion, sense of humor and other humanizing features. He only cares about getting the job done – driving his executive charge around the city and keeping him alive. If ordered to kill, he'll do so without compunction.

Off duty, he's a very different person. He has many friends among the lower corporate echelons, and is known for his sharp sense of humor. He never drinks alcohol because he figures it'll dull his "edge," but that doesn't stop him from quaffing a few non-alcoholic brews at the nearest tavern with his buddies.

Drummond loves his job. He gets to drive and tinker with the finest cars on the planet; even better, he gets paid for it – paid very well. He lives in relative luxury in the corporate enclave. Personally, he doesn't buy into much of the corporate crap, and has no interest in entering the rat race. He keeps these opinions to himself, of course.

So far, Drummond has saved the corp exec in his charge from three major assassination attempts. The last one left the chauffeur with a livid scar on his face, which he declines to have removed.

Quotes

"I'll follow your orders . . . until some heavy crap starts coming down. Then *you* follow *mine*, neh?"

"Lose the tail? Yes, sir."

"Keep your head down and hang on!"

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs are hired to get a line on the corp exec Blake is minding. Can they work their way into the chauffeur's trust . . . and then exploit it shamelessly?

◆ Some dark and dirty secret from his early life has reappeared, and is threatening Drummond's cozy position with the corp. He needs a group to handle the matter with great discretion, so he turns to the PCs for help. He can't pay them in cash, but maybe he can give them some valuable information he's picked up.

CHOP-SHOP OWNER

ST: 10 IQ: 13 Speed: 5.5
DX: 12 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 70

Advantages

Reputation +2 (Best chop-shop in town); Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Stubbornness; Weak Will -2.

Quirks

Drives only the finest cars; Quotes manufacturer, year, model and street price of every car she sees; Won't go anywhere without her grease-stained Isuzu cap.

Skills

Accounting-12; Administration-12; Computer Operation-12; Driving (Car)-13; Electronics (Vehicular)-11; Engineer (Vehicular)-13; Mechanic-14; Merchant-13; Motorcycle-12; Scrounging-12; Streetwise-13.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – Carole will probably do conversions on all varieties of vehicles, from small space vessels to hovercars. No changes.

Story

Carole Chen runs the biggest independent chop-shop in the city. Sure, its "production volume" is much less than the Yakuza-run franchise operations outside the sprawl, but it still "processes" a dozen cars per day. When she first opened up shop, Chen hired her own team to go out and "requisition" vehicles. She soon realized, however, that independent thieves would provide her with all the raw materials she needed without her having to actually hire them. She terminated her contract with the "acquisitions team," instead hiring more mechanics to increase her production capacity. Today, Chen prides herself on her efficiency. A stolen car can roll into her shop at 0900, and by 1400 it'll be chopped down and heading off as parts.

As well as chopping down cars, Carole also *builds* them. By taking parts from whatever happens to be in her shop, she can construct a car to virtually any specification. By playing fast and loose with serial number tags, she can guarantee her client that the car will *never* register as stolen goods on a police computer. Initially a sideline, this side of her business has grown astronomically over the last several years.

The Yakuza keeps casting acquisitive eyes at Carole's business. Fortunately, she's got protection deals with various local



Carole Chen

Age: 27

gangs, and the Yakuza knows that any attempt to muscle in on Chen's chop-shop will become violent in a hurry. Since violence is bad for business, they've kept their hands to themselves.

As well as building custom cars for others, Carole is building something really special for herself. It's an ongoing project, one she's been working on for more than a year now. She knows roughly what she wants, but she's waiting for the right parts to come through her shop.

Quotes

"Hyundai-Ferrari Stallion, model year 2019. The LX version with the beefed-up rear suspension? Yeah, I thought so."

"See that Honda Javelin over there? When I'm done with it, it'll look as much like a javelin as it does a Javelin, if you get my meaning."

"You want something that looks like a stock BMW 925, but with a Jag-Nissan V12 under the hood? You want it four-wheel-drive and all-wheel-steering while I'm at it? No problem."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Carole's heard the buzz on the street that the Yakuza is going to make their move on her business. She turns to the PCs for help. Can they "persuade" the Japanese gangsters to look elsewhere for their takeover prospect?

◆ A major corp exec has got his hooks into Chen. Unless she helps him out, he'll blow her business to the cops, and she'll spend a decade in jail. All he wants her to do is slip a passive locator into the next car that the PCs acquire from her . . .

COMPUTER AI

ST: n/a IQ: 18
DX: n/a HT: n/a

Point Total: 190

Advantages

Eidetic Memory (Level 2); Reputation +3 (To netrunners: "Phenomenal netrunner"); Unusual Background.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior (Depression); Overconfidence; Secret (He's an AI).

Quirks

Boastful about abilities; Doesn't admit his true nature; Likes spider images in his environmental interface.

Skills

Accounting-17; Area Knowledge (Net)-20; Astronomy-17; Computer Hacking-18; Computer Operation-20; Computer Programming-20; Cyberdeck Operation-18; Diplomacy-18; Electronics (Computer Systems)-18; Electronics Operation (Computer Systems)-19; Engineer (Computer Systems)-17; History-17; Intelligence Analysis-18; Law-18; Mathematics-20; Physics-18; Psychology-18; Research-19; Shadowing-19; Survival (Net)-19; Teaching-19.

Languages

Any four relevant to the adventure at level 18.

Cyberwear

The equivalent of an Interface Jack.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.

Contemporary – This kind of technology is a little out of our reach in the present day, but it's up to the referee. No changes.

Space – In the far future, Ghostcomps and Computer AIs might be commonplace. No changes.

Story

When Conversion Industries offered Nathan Jorgenson a \$100,000 annual salary, he could scarcely believe his ears. They wanted him to lead their programming department and assist technicians in developing a radical new technology – braintaping. Of course he accepted their offer – it was far too good to refuse.

Work went well, and they made tremendous progress in the field of braintaping. So far the procedure had been performed successfully on chimpanzees, and a major breakthrough seemed only a few years away. Personally, Nathan had easily adjusted to the lifestyle the huge salary provided for him.

Then a phone call from his doctor turned his life upside-down – he was diagnosed as having terminal cancer. Within six months, Nathan was confined to a hospital bed and could barely speak. In a last-ditch attempt at survival, he convinced a colleague to perform the experimental braintaping procedure on him.

Nathan awoke to a world of confusion. Somehow the proce-



Nathan Jorgenson

Age: 32

dure had transferred his personality to the Conversion Industries mainframe computer. Understandably, Nathan went temporarily insane.

When he finally got a handle on what had happened to him, he searched for a way into the matrix. A year earlier he'd programmed a back door in the event that he might want to do a little unauthorized visiting. Fortunately, the exit was still there and he slipped into the Net.

Adjustment was no simple task. Imagine having 10,000 different senses – all feeding in floods of data at the same time. The fact of his lost humanity constantly plagues him and he spends long periods of time depressed.

Disguising himself as a netrunner was easy. In this way he could pretend to lead a semi-normal life without ever having to meet anyone face to face. He's quite active on many of the message boards, and has made several friends – although he has yet to tell any of them his true condition.

Quotes

"Always remember to leave a back door. Who knows when you might want to come back and take what's yours?"

"I know I broke that ice in under 2 milliseconds, I just have a good deck . . . a really good deck."

"Look, I know you've got datastores to pillage. But can you just hang around and . . . talk awhile?"

Adventure Seeds

◆ Nathan is not alone. Somehow the computer network has given birth to another AI – one without a shred of humanity. Nathan requires the PCs' help to stop it from gaining control of the computer net.

◆ Nathan reveals to his friends (the PCs) his true identity. How will they react knowing that their friend isn't even alive? Nathan had little choice, however. A corporation is trying to hunt him down to play a major – if involuntary – role in its research program. He needs the help of people who can operate in the physical world if he wants to maintain his freedom.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER

ST: 13 IQ: 10 Speed: 6
DX: 12 HT: 12 Move: 6
Dodge: 6
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 45

Advantages

Danger Sense; Toughness +1.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper; Dependents (Children); Sense of Duty (To his co-workers).

Quirks

Enjoys being alone; Supports unions whenever he can; Takes care of his men.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Brawling-13; Carousing-12; Carpentry-11; Climbing-12; Construction-13; Driving-13; Engineer-12; First Aid-10; Free Fall-13; Leadership-12; Vacc Suit-10.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 10.

Conversions

Fantasy – The closest equivalent would be a miner or someone hired to help build a castle. Replace Free Fall and Vacc Suit with Metallurgy-13 and Woodworking-11.

Contemporary – Apart from not going into space, the job won't change much in 50 years. Remove Free Fall and Vacc Suit.

Space – With all of the high-tech advances being made in building materials, it takes a little more than a strong arm to put them together. Replace Carpentry with Mathematics-10 and Mechanic-13. Add Computer Operation-11.

Story

Don't call Tyrone Wills by his first name – he hates it. His friends – and, in fact, anyone who wants to keep his skeleton intact – use the nickname "T-Bone."

Despite this minor foible, Wills is a competent and dependable man, a solid employee and a faithful friend. He's skilled in all aspects of heavy construction. He's equally comfortable working on the "high steel" 50 stories above the city streets, on the derrick of an off-shore drilling platform, or in zero-g assembling an orbital habitat. His wide-ranging experience, and the aura of calm competence he exudes, guarantees that he has no trouble leading other construction workers toward a defined goal.

Counter to the insulting stereotype of the dumb blue-collar worker, T-Bone is intelligent. He has three-quarters of a degree in civil engineering – he was forced to drop out of university due to



Tyrone Wills

Age: 27

personal problems he'll never discuss – and understands a lot of the theory and principles underlying his work. He has the ability to see the "big picture," as well. While his colleagues, if asked what they're doing, might answer "riveting girders" or "pulling cable," T-Bone Wills would answer something like, "Building a cathedral."

T-Bone never starts trouble; but if somebody else does, he's well equipped to finish it.

Quotes

"Whoever wrote these electrical specs had his head up his . . ."

"Look, don't get your bowels in a knot. If we just reroute the cabling through conduit J-74 over here . . ."

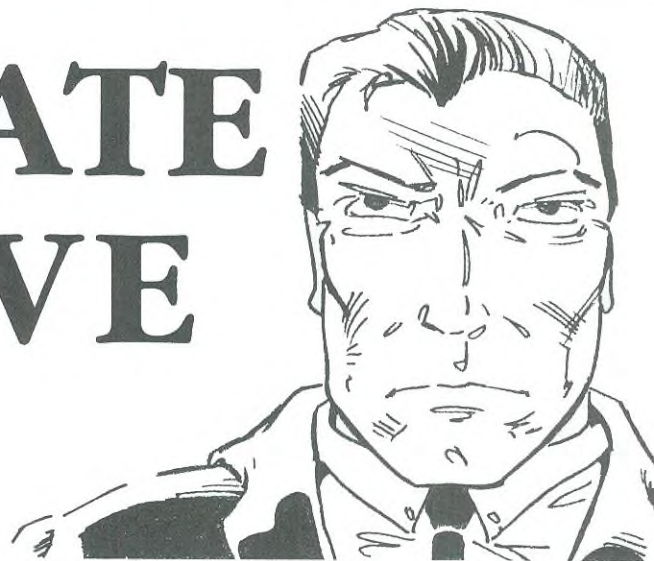
"Look buddy, just give it a rest, huh? The way I feel right about now, if you take that swing I'm just going to be too tired *not* to hurt you bad . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need to get into a newly-finished building. To know where the weaknesses are in the security systems, who better than someone who built the building . . . ?

◆ T-Bone has noticed that the contractor he's working for is cutting costs on a new nuclear power plant by scrimping on safety provisions. The contractor isn't listening to his complaints, but T-Bone just can't let it go. If the plant's finished under these conditions, it'll be a disaster waiting to happen. He needs someone from outside the business to help bring his concerns to light. Of course, the contractor will do whatever it takes to keep everything quiet . . .

CORPORATE EXECUTIVE



ST: 10 **IQ:** 14
DX: 11 **HT:** 10
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 5.25
Move: 5

Point Total: 110

Advantages

Charisma +1; Contacts (Any two relevant to the adventure); Wealth (Very Wealthy).

Disadvantages

Honesty; Sense of Duty (Run a clean operation).

Quirks

Doesn't attend corporate social functions; Drives a car that's "below his station," simply because he likes to; Wears relatively casual clothes at work.

Skills

Accounting-13; Administration-15; Computer Operation-14; Diplomacy-14; Driving (Car)-11; Economics-13; Leadership-15; Mathematics-11; Politics (Corporate)-12; Psychology-11; Savoir-Faire (Corporate)-13; Skiing-11.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Cyberwear

Chip slot with a Math chip; Interface Jack.

Conversions

Fantasy – Flinders might be a "middle manager" in a huge mercantile combine, or perhaps even a member of the government's administrative branch. Replace Accounting, Computer Operation, Mathematics, Driving (Car), and Skiing with Heraldry-13, History-14, and Riding-11.

Contemporary – No skill changes. Remove the cyberwear.

Space – Replace Driving (Car) with Driving (Hovercraft)-11.

Story

It's possible to be a corporate employee – a very senior, very successful one, even – and not buy into the culture; Nicholas Flinders is living proof. He's a senior executive, in charge of the market research department for a major multinational megacorporation, but he's definitely not the stereotypical corp exec.

For one thing, he's decided that further ambition isn't worth the trouble. He's advanced as far up the corporate hierarchy as he wants to; any higher and he'd be spending all his time toadying to Junior Executive Vice-Presidents, and other wastes of skin. He has a job that challenges him and still interests him, even after almost a decade. He has a salary and benefits package that guar-

Nicholas Flinders

Age: 42

antee him exactly the lifestyle he wants, with enough left over for impulsive expenditures. And he's got a group of subordinates who share his interest in the work they do, and have no desire to knife him (corporately or physically) when his back's turned.

That's because Flinders has built himself a "personal empire" off to the side of the corp's normal organization chart. Officially, Flinders reports directly to the President and CEO, yet is no higher in "corporate rank" than divisional manager. In practice, however, because there are no other layers of management between him and the CEO, his effective authority is very much higher.

Since he's outside the normal career-path promotion pattern – which guarantees he'll never climb higher in the corporate structure – none of the ambitious "corporate warriors" would ever consider gunning for Flinders' job. This position also guarantees that the people who accept transfers to Flinders' department do so because they want to do the work, not because they're using it as a stepping stone to greater authority.

Flinders is atypical in that he has a life outside work. He pursues a number of hobbies – most of them solitary, since execs of his rank and higher won't fraternize with him, and he can't fraternize with his employees without compromising his authority over them.

Quotes

"The rat race? Whether you win or lose, you're still a rat. *Neh?*"

"Check the quarterly figures if you doubt my department's efficiency. Then get out of my office."

"If you've got a problem with my management style, pull up a chair and let's talk about it."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Flinders has found evidence that his corporation is involved in various unethical and immoral business dealings. Now he has a tough decision: report his employer – to whom he feels genuine loyalty – to the authorities, or turn his back on it. He chooses a third course, calling the PCs in to find the *individual* exec behind the atrocities and bring him down, without trashing the entire corp.

◆ A junior VP has decided that the Market Research department's autonomy should come to an end. His machinations are starting to threaten Flinders' position, so the exec decides to bring in outside experts (the PCs) to help bulwark his authority.

COSMETIC SURGEON

ST: 9 IQ: 14
DX: 12 HT: 9
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 5.25
Move: 5

Point Total: 110

Advantages

Reputation +2 (Underworld: asks no questions); Status +2; Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantages

Overconfidence; Trademark (Leaves patients looking slightly like him).

Quirks

Condescending to anyone poorer than he is; Sycophantic to anyone richer than he is.

Skills

Artist-11; Computer Operation-13; Diagnosis-14; Disguise-13; First Aid-13; Physician-14; Physiology-13; Savoir-Faire-13; Sculpting-11; Surgery-13.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.

Contemporary – Kirtan can't make quite such drastic changes to his patients, but he'll still be rich thanks to movie stars and wannabes trying to improve their looks. No changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

On an absolute scale, Dr. Kirtan Khalsa falls somewhere in the undistinguished middle of cosmetic surgeons. He's neither the best nor the worst, and neither the most nor the least expensive. What makes him attractive to many street ops is that he asks no questions about *why* a patient wants particular modifications. While many surgeons would be leery about doing a full facial reconstruction on someone who's suffered no disfiguring injuries, Khalsa has no qualms. His sole question is whether the patient can pay for his services . . .

The vast majority of Khalsa's cases are simple cosmetic procedures: liposuction, tummy tucks, facelifts, nose-jobs, skin bleaching and the like. Although he's not quite the "surgeon to the stars" that he'd like to be, he *is* starting to build a clientele among the would-be stars and starlets scuffling around at the bottom of the entertainment hierarchy. Maybe 1 in 500 cases are what Khalsa thinks of as "black operations" – shady characters who want a new face. Even though they're in the overwhelming minority, these cases actually make up about half of the good doctor's income (particularly since they're all cash transactions, and thus tax free).



Dr. Kirtan Khalsa

Age: 32

In medical school, Kirtan had many friends and at the time was considering a career in trauma care. But then he decided that money was much more important than humanitarian concerns, and opted for cosmetic, reconstructive and plastic surgery. To the few old med-school friends he still keeps in contact with, Khalsa claims he does the high-ticket "frivolous" cosmetic work just so he's got the money to do "real" medicine: reconstructive work on accident victims who can't afford the procedure, for example. In fact, however, Khalsa does none of these "charity" cases.

Khalsa has a personal "style" that unites all his full-face reconstructions, and might get him in serious trouble one day. When he does a full-face, the patient always comes out looking faintly like Khalsa himself. (Although people probably won't recognize the similarity, computer analysis of several patients will definitely detect it.)

Quotes

"Tuck around the eyes, change the line of the jaw, bleach the hair, wax under the bridge of the nose . . . I guarantee, your mother won't recognize you."

"Are you *really* sure you want to keep that nose . . . ?"

"I just fix faces. What you do with that face after I'm done with it isn't my concern."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Khalsa's no-questions-asked policy has gotten him in trouble at last. His last full-face patient happens to be a psychotic mass-murderer, who's decided his new identity will be secure only if he eliminates the one connection between it and his old face – that is, Dr. Khalsa. As for the doctor, he knows someone's trying to kill him, but doesn't know who or why. (As to the first question, there are many possible answers. As to the second, he thinks he can guess . . .) He turns to the PCs for help.

◆ One of the PCs is kidnapped. When he wakes up, he's got a new face (courtesy of Kirtan). The PC manages to escape from his abductors. Now the question remains: who snatched him, and why? And why the new face? Possibly the only line on the abductors is the doctor who did the job.

COUNTER-TERRORIST

ST: 14 IQ: 10 Speed: 6.5
DX: 14 HT: 12 Move: 6
Dodge: 9
Infantry Combat Dress (PD 4, DR 40); light encumbrance.

Point Total:

Advantages

Alertness +2; Military Rank 1 (Sergeant); Toughness +1.

Disadvantages

Bully; Duty (ATDS); Intolerance (Non-whites).

Quirks

Cautious; Doesn't talk about his past; Tells crude jokes all the time.

Skills

Beam Weapons (Laser)-17; Brawling-15; Computer Operation-11; Demolition-11; Driving (Car)-14; Gesture-11; Guns (Rifle)-17; Interrogation-11; Knife-16; Leadership-10; Running-13; Scuba-10; Tactics-12.

Cyberwear

One Bionic eye with Optic Readout and Night Sight; Chip Slot with Combat Reflexes and High Pain Threshold chips.

Weapons

Assault Rifle: 7d crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – Bruce is a magically-armed shock trooper. Replace Beam Weapons, Computer Operation, Driving (Car), Guns and Scuba with Riding-13 and Two-Handed Sword-16. Remove all of the implants.

Contemporary – Remove Beam Weapons and all of the cybernetic implants.

Space – Replace Guns and Driving (Car) with Free Fall-14 and Vacc Suit-10. If cyberwear exists, retain Bruce's implants.

Story

Bruce Wright has a shady background, one that his teammates in the Anti-Terrorist Deployment Squad aren't so sure they want to find out about. Rumors say that before joining the ATDS, he worked as a street samurai. Whatever the case, when Bruce joined the team, he came equipped with his own cyber mods.

Without a doubt, Bruce is the finest killing machine in the unit. He possesses both incredible speed and fantastic strength. When he shoots a gun, it's as if he was built to use it. (He was, thanks to modern cybernetics.)

He grew up in an extremely violent family. Discipline was enforced with a two-by-four, love wasn't evident and racial hatred



Bruce Wright

Age: 25

was encouraged. As the product of this meat-grinder, Bruce wasn't too good at making friends. Furthermore, he was quite racist in the beginning. The ATDS has helped him improve both of those failings. Friendships are built through the incredible trust required of all team members. Also, some of the team are Black, and this has forced Bruce to question some of his own beliefs.

When it's time to go to work, Bruce is all business. He's absolutely cool under all circumstances. His incredible marksmanship has defused many potential terrorist crises before they even started. If the terrorists take hostages, Bruce might take a little more care, but he always puts killing terrorists first on his agenda. Somewhere he heard that corporations judge a human life to be worth \$100,000 of property damage, and works with that figure as a guide.

Quotes

"I say shoot first, and forget the questions."

"Look, don't ask me that again! Do I have to beat it into you?"

"One man's terrorist is another man's target."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs are taken hostage by terrorists. The fact that the ATDS is coming to get them out should be reassuring. When the PCs realize how the team operates, they'll have their hands full trying to keep from being killed by both parties.
- ◆ The PCs have made the wrong enemy, a senior officer in the ATDS. Simply by entering the PCs' identities into the computer system, labeled as armed-and-dangerous, he's arranged things so that the ATDS team will take his rivals down for him.

CULT LEADER

ST: 11 IQ: 12 Speed: 5
DX: 9 HT: 11 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 75

Advantages

Charisma +2; Clerical Investment; Status 5 (In the cult); Wealth (Wealthy).

Disadvantages

Fanaticism; Secret (Started the cult for the money).

Quirks

Always seems to be giving a speech; Tends to use biblical language.

Skills

Accounting-11; Administration-13; Area Knowledge-12; Economics-14; History-10; Interrogation-11; Mathematics-10; Occultism-11; Performance-13; Psychology-10; Theology-14.

Conversions

Fantasy – Perhaps Amber has started a cult that fears the power of magic. Replace Accounting, Mathematics and Economics with Calligraphy-11, Cooking-12 and Riding-9. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – Xenophobia is a fine fear for Amber to play on. Add Xenology-12.

Story

Mistress Zarn, a.k.a. Amber Levitt, had a disturbing childhood. Her parents were addicted to religion. The actual religion didn't matter; all that counted was that it promise – although not necessarily deliver – miracles. The only feature that remained the same from religion to religion was the donations. Her parents spent up to half of their incomes on whichever religion they were currently following. Predictably, they forced their daughter to attend services with them. Equally predictably, Amber came to hate this, and became very cynical about religion.

Eventually Amber ran away. After years of hard work, she gained a degree in economics at the University of Idaho. She remembered the huge amounts of money her parents threw to religions, and realized that here was a career opportunity staring her in the face. All that she had to do was find a "cause," and the money would come rolling in. She had a good enough grasp of psychology to realize that fear was the greatest motivator of all.

Amber knew that many people – with hoards of money – still remembered the old ways, and feared the high-tech gadgets of the present and the future. The cult she created – the Humanists – stresses that mankind's dependence on technology must end. Those not involved in the Humanist Organization would become uncaring machines controlled by computers, and only by investing enormous amounts of money could the Humanists save their "piously-challenged" loved ones. Amber cynically justifies her money-raising activities by telling herself that anyone stupid



Amber Levitt

Age: 26

enough to donate money to the Humanists doesn't deserve to keep it.

The organization has gotten out of Amber's control. She had no idea there would be such a demand for her teachings. Factions within the organization are rising up, demanding that more violent measures be taken. Already a fanatical group has bombed one of the major Net node sites – and they claim that this is only the beginning. Although she fears these radical elements, Amber justifies her inaction by telling herself she couldn't stop them anyway. In fact, the real reason is the continued massive profitability of her scam.

Quotes

"Unplug yourselves from the infernal 3V boxes."

"Only you – by sending money – can save your friends from their hideous doom . . . incorporation with the computer. It's not too late."

"Why sister, you're just reading it wrong. This is the expense account line."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ A major corporation specializing in microchip design hires the PCs to investigate the Humanists for future undermining attempts. The cult's security is tremendous and should really put the PCs to the test. What will they do when they realize that many of their own family members are already members of the cult?
- ◆ Enough is enough; these renegade factions must be stopped, and Amber needs the PCs' help to do it. Can they root out the fanatical members without revealing Amber's secret agenda to the public?

DRUG DEALER

ST: 13 IQ: 9 Speed: 5.5
DX: 9 HT: 13 Move: 5
Dodge: 5 Parry: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 105

Advantages

Contact (His source); High Pain Threshold; Reputation +2 (On the street: a real nasty piece of work).

Disadvantages

Addiction (Sampling his own wares); Illiterate; Sadism.

Quirks

Fakes emotions; Gets all his information from video; Sociopathic personality.

Skills

Area Knowledge-11; Brawling-14; Carousing-13; Fast-Talk-11; Guns (Pistol)-13; Intimidation-13; Knife-12; Merchant-12; Scrounging-9; Streetwise-12; Survival (Street)-9.

Weapons

Large Pistol: 2d+1 crushing; Small Knife: 2d-4 cutting, 1d-1 impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Replace Guns with Broadsword-12. Illiteracy is no longer a disadvantage.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – Replace Guns with Beam Weapons-13.

Story

Elwood Morris – more commonly, just El – grew up on the mean streets. He learned young that you had to be tough just to make it through, and anything that got in the way of being tough – caring about other people, for example – diminished your chances of reaching your next birthday.

Drugs were big business in El's neighborhood. Just about everyone he knew either dealt or used. The dealers either got rich – by El's limited definition of the word, at least – or got iced by other dealers. The users just died. Looked at that way, Elwood Morris' choice was simple: deal drugs, and maybe live, or hide from the ugliness of the world through chemical escapism and definitely die. Morris came to his decision at the ripe old age of 12.

El started off in the business as a courier, delivering small packets of drugs to individual buyers. He worked his way higher up the "distribution chain" until he became a small-time dealer himself, pushing drugs to 15- and 16-year-olds – kids a year or two older than himself. That was when he first saw the money rolling in. Since he had no education or training, he could look forward to only minimum wage on the legitimate job market. He could make 20 times as much – if not more – just dealing nickel and dime bags to school kids.

As he grew older and bulked up, El added another talent to his repertoire: enforcement. When clients didn't pay on time, or



Elwood Morris

Age: 19

showed other "antisocial" behaviors, El was dispatched to show them the errors of their ways. Although his cold, soulless manner was often enough to bring people around, Morris enjoyed it when they resisted; then he could lay a beating on them.

Elwood Morris is not, and never will be, big-time. He's not smart or ambitious enough to do anything more than deal to end-users. Recently he's started sampling his merchandise – something he'd never done before – so there's a possibility his career might already have peaked.

Quotes

"The written word's dead, man. Dead as them little Egyptian pictures."

"Now, Suzie, you know better than to stiff me. And if you don't know better, you will . . ."

"Sure, there's risks. But risk is a rush, cobber . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Drug dealers know a lot of people in their neighborhoods, and usually keep an ear to the ground. The PCs need to know about the potential of gang activity in the area, and the only contact they have is Elwood Morris. Of course, Morris never does anything unless it proves of value to him.

◆ A close friend of the PCs has recently died, OD'd on drugs sold to her by Morris' organization (although not by Morris himself). The PCs decide to exact some kind of vengeance on the organization that killed their friend. Their only lead to the company is Elwood.

ECO-TERRORIST

ST: 10 **IQ:** 12 **Speed:** 5.25
DX: 10 **HT:** 11 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
Medium monocrys armor (PD 2, DR 16); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 40

Advantages

Ally Group (Other eco-terrorists); Intuition.

Disadvantages

Delusion ("Only I know what's best for the planet"); Fanaticism; Impulsiveness.

Quirks

Calls corporations "defilers"; Vegetarian.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Climbing-10; Demolition-13; Ecology-11; Guns (Rifle)-11; Leadership-11; Photography-11; Psychology-11; Stealth-10; Survival (Forest)-11; Writing-11.

Weapons

Rifle (M16): 5d crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – A man who kills to save trees. Replace Guns and Photography with Broadsword-11 and Crossbow-12. Remove Writing, or give Norquist the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – Samuel may still be in the frustration stage. No changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

Samuel Norquist has reached the end of his rope. He's absolutely sickened by the abuses the megacorporations are inflicting on the ecosystem, and he's given up on all the standard means of influencing the corporations' policies. Now he has to step up his activism to the point where the megacorps can't ignore him any more. Now it's war.

Norquist grew up during the 1990s. The images he saw on the TV news – clearcut logging in western Canada, the destruction of the Amazon rainforest, the smoke pall over Kuwait – still remain with him today. He decided early on that he'd do what he could to end those abuses, and dedicated his life to the task.

At first, he went through normal channels. He sent countless petitions to various corp headquarters and to the government. He tried to rally public support, to apply public pressure – through product boycotts – to the worst offenders. He brought class action suits against megacorps, in the names of those who'd suffered from the organizations' ecological depredations. While he became a relatively famous public figure, loved by environmentalists and despised by corporate management, he found it impossible to make a significant difference. The ecological ravishment continued.

Just a year ago, he decided to escalate matters. Accompanied by his closest colleagues, Norquist penetrated the local headquarters of a major megacorp during a shareholders' meeting, and



Samuel Norquist

Age: 40

disrupted proceedings in front of the TV cameras. Before he could deliver his message, however, corp security forces descended upon him. He woke up three days later, in critical condition in a hospital. Two of his colleagues had died from the beatings they'd sustained.

So now it's war. Norquist doesn't like to think of himself as a vigilante or eco-desperado, but nothing else has worked. So far he's bombed several corporate facilities. He's always careful to avoid killing, and so far he's succeeded. He recognizes his luck won't hold forever, but he can live with that. Sometimes the greater good of the greater number requires that some lives be lost.

Quotes

"Sit back and watch while they poison the land and the oceans and the air? Not a chance!"

"Sometimes you need a grand gesture if you want anyone to pay attention."

"I'm willing to die for this land. Are you?"

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs have been hired by a megacorp to penetrate Norquist's eco-terrorist organization. Once they're in, their mission might be to destroy it, or focus its attentions on the facilities of a rival corporation.

◆ The PCs are trying to penetrate a corporate facility. During the approach, they encounter another group, apparently trying the same thing. (It's Norquist and his colleagues, preparing to blow the facility.) Despite their natural distrust, can the two groups work together? And can the PCs persuade Norquist to hold off long enough so they can get what they came for before he blows it up?

FIELD MEDIC

ST: 12 IQ: 12 Speed: 5.5
DX: 11 HT: 11 Move: 5

Dodge: 5

Heavy monocry armor (PD 2, DR 24); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Combat Reflexes; Empathy.

Disadvantages

Duty (To the Peace Relief Corps); Impulsiveness.

Quirks

Dislikes bugs; Takes care of her appearance as well as she can in miserable surroundings.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Beam Weapon (Laser)-15; Brawling-12; Computer Operation-13; Diagnosis-12; First Aid-15; Guns (Shotgun)-14; Knife-12; Physician-13; Stealth-11; Surgery-10; Survival (Jungle)-13.

Cyberwear

Chip Slot with Surgery [4] Skill Chip.

Weapons

Shotgun: 5d crushing. Large Knife: 1d cutting, 1d-1 impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Sandra could be a medic in a fantasy army. Replace Weapon skills, Computer Operation and Surgery with Broadsword-14, Crossbow-15 and Riding-13. Remove cyberwear.

Contemporary – Remove Beam Weapons and cyberwear.

Space – Sandra's detachment could travel to alien worlds. Add Xenology-12.

Story

Midway through the 21st century, famine and suffering have reached all-time highs in underdeveloped countries. More "civilized" nations banded together to form the Peace Relief Corps, an organization that brings food and medical supplies to countries in need.

The first few years of operation were a disaster. The unprotected Corps operatives were brought in to aid people in extremely violent parts of the world. Often entire detachments were killed by "freedom fighters" who mistrusted the foreign "invaders."

The countries and companies involved decided that much more needed to be done. As it stood, their money was being wasted. A joint committee agreed that the Corps was to be armed . . . heavily. They replaced many civilian members with ex-army specialists, and gave them the latest in technology weapons and armor.

The results were incredible. The Corps members were easily able to defeat most local resistance, and deliver aid to those that needed it most. A useful side effect was discovered when the Corps utterly destroyed a terrorist group. The directors realized



Sandra Max

Age: 27

that they had in their hands a very powerful fighting force that could work undercover.

Sandra Max is a field medic currently stationed in Chile. Her medical skills allow her to provide assistance ranging from first aid to neurosurgery on the country's beleaguered citizens or her Corps comrades.

Sandra's previous medical experience assured her placement as a medic with the Corps, and this suits her fine. Back in civilization she was a hospital doctor, but became frustrated with the widely-held "heal the rich" mentality. Although her official duty is as a medic, she doesn't mind mixing it up with her combat shotgun if a need should arise.

Quotes

"Get on the radio and get another two cases of med kits in here, *stat*."

"Here in the jungle, I get to make the decisions about who gets healed. And credit history has nothing to do with it."

"Yeah, I carry a combat gun, so what? Hippocrates was never in the jungle . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The directors of the Peace Relief Corps need to send relief effort to a small country in South America, but at the same time remove a band of terrorists. The PCs are hired to work in conjunction with the Corps to accomplish this mission.

◆ Sandra is beginning to realize that the objectives of the Corps are starting to shift from a relief force, to a mercenary unit hired out to dictators and drug lords. She tries to convince some of her comrades (the PCs) to investigate and publicize the directors' ulterior motives.

FIXER

ST: 11 **IQ:** 13 **Speed:** 5
DX: 10 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 40

Advantages

Charisma +1; Contacts; Reputation +1 (On the street: good fixer); Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Addiction (Cocaine); Enemies (Other jealous, not-so-skilled fixers); Greed.

Quirks

Checks himself in every mirror he passes; Sniffs all the time.

Skills

Accounting-12; Administration-13; Area Knowledge-12; Carousing-11; Computer Operation-14; Diplomacy-12; Guns (Pistol)-11; Merchant-12; Savoir-Faire (Corporate)-14; Sex Appeal-13; Streetwise-12.

Weapons

Light Pistol: 1d crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – Although they may operate under different names, fixers have always existed. Replace Guns and Computer Operation with Shortsword-10 and change Savoir-Faire to Savoir-Faire (Nobility)-14.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – Keeping up with the vast variety of aliens and their abilities is a huge task, but Kashmir's up to the challenge. Replace Guns with Beam Weapons (Laser)-11 and Xenology-12.

Story

Word on the street says that if you need anything – legal or otherwise – go talk to Kashmir Singh. Of course, if the police ask, it's well known that all he does is operate a corporate consulting firm from his well-furnished office.

Kashmir turned to crime for the same reason most do – it pays. He tried buying and selling drugs, fencing and laundering money, all with mediocre success. He managed to avoid getting caught, and his confidence and expertise grew. He knew all the people who needed jobs done, and he knew the people who could do the jobs much better than he could, but it took him a while to realize that a career was staring him in the face . . . fixing.

Instead of taking a job himself, Kashmir started telling prospective clients that he couldn't do it – for whatever reason – but he would give them the number of someone who could . . . for a price. Most people were willing to pay for this service, and his business took off.

Kashmir enjoys what he does. He considers himself paid to have a social life. After all, how can he meet all the people to put in his data file if he doesn't do a lot of socializing in clubs and at parties?

Near Future



Kashmir Singh

Age: 30

To Singh, appearance is everything, and he spends a tremendous amount of his income keeping up that appearance; from the stylish office where he does business, to his finely tailored suits, Singh is a class act. Recently, an awful lot of his money has been going up his nose, but he's sure that he can quit that any time he wants . . .

Kashmir doesn't really view what he does as illegal. Of course, if the police catch him, they'll charge him as an accomplice to every criminal activity that he helped succeed. But he hasn't been caught yet, so what could go wrong?

Quotes

"No problem, I have just the person you're looking for. But let's talk about my fee first."

"How can you wear that suit? It's so out of fashion – it's at least a month old."

"In this world, you get what you pay for, and pay for what you get."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need a netrunner – badly. Singh says he knows someone who can guarantee success, and he'll tell them . . . for a huge price. Of course the price is way out of their league, but Singh also mentions that he knows of someone who is looking for a group of street operatives for another job.

◆ Someone has broken into Kashmir's office and stolen his computer and all of his data. Without this data he can't conduct any business. Even worse, there's enough evidence in those files to put him in jail for a long, long time. He pleads with the PCs to retrieve it and offers several free fixes and a good sum of money if they do it.

GANG LEADER

ST: 11 **IQ:** 11 **Speed:** 5.75
DX: 13 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
Light monocrys armor (PD 2, DR 8); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 55

Advantages

Ally Group (Gang); Charisma +1; Unfazeable.

Disadvantages

Enemies (Other gangs, cops); Impulsive.

Quirks

Doesn't recruit, only accepts volunteers; Theatrical when dealing with non-gangers; Won't kill without a very good reason.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Brawling-13; Broadsword (Bat)-12; Carousing-12; Guns (Pistol)-14; Karate-14; Knife-13; Leadership-12; Motorcycle-14; Streetwise-11; Survival (Urban)-11.

Weapons

Heavy Pistol: 2d+2 crushing; Large Knife: 1d-1 cutting, 1d-1 impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – There've always been gangs, and there'll always be gangs. Remove Guns and Motorcycle.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – Replace Guns and Motorcycle with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-14.

Story

Sarah Mull – call her Slash, everyone else does – grew up on the streets, in the underside of the city. When she was a kid, she looked up at the multicolored ziggurats of the corp skyscrapers, and swore to herself that's where she'd be someday. By her teens, however, Slash had realized that dream would never come true. Without education – and without the *money* for education – she'd never make it into the corporate ranks. Why would a corp hire a gritty, tough-talking street kid, whose only skills were riding a bike and protecting her young body from those who considered her public property?

She fell in with a gang – the Lurkers – before she turned 14. They became her family, and she gave them all her loyalty. She quickly proved herself worthy of trust, and worked her way up in the hierarchy until she became one of the gang boss's chief advisors – at the ripe old age of 17.

At the time, the head Lurker was a certifiable sociopath, who kept getting the gang into pointless gang wars over turf that nobody really wanted. Sickened by the ongoing and useless violence – which chewed up (relatively) innocent "civilians" even more than it hurt the gangs involved – she cut loose of the Lurkers to go it alone.

To her vast surprise, more than half the gang went with her. So great was her prestige within the gang that it was Slash the members had really been following, not the purported leader. Before



Sarah Mull

Age: 19

she quite knew what to do with it, Slash was the chieftain of her own gang.

Slash has dedicated herself to keeping her followers alive. That's why she joined the Lurkers in the first place, for her own protection; now she's in a position to offer similar protection to others. She keeps her gang – who call themselves the Slashers, even though she doesn't use that name – out of most turf battles, declaring a war only in self-protection. She condones nonviolent crime simply because that's the only way for her followers to feed themselves.

Quotes

"This is my turf. And on my turf, you play by my rules."

"We don't want trouble – just your money."

"Let the Knives and the Tigers rip each other up. It's not our war."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need some street information, and Slash can provide it . . . but only if they can "gently persuade" the new leader of the Lurkers that it's not in his best interest to mess with her people.

◆ When one of Slash's "street grunts" rolled a corp-type with a taste for slumming, along with the money he picked up a chip that nobody can recognize. Since then, the street's been alive with corp ops looking for that chip . . . and when they ask questions about its whereabouts, they don't ask nicely. Slash is totally out of her league, and needs high-power muscle – the PCs – to find out what's going on and put an end to it.

“GRUNT”

ST: 13 IQ: 8 Speed: 5.75
DX: 12 HT: 13 Move: 4
Dodge: 4
Combat infantry dress (PD 4, DR 40); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 75

Advantages

Strong Will +4; Toughness +1.

Disadvantages

Duty; Laziness; Sense of Duty (His platoon).

Quirks

No love for civilians (Quirk-level Intolerance); “Socially challenged”; Spends his off-duty time playing video games.

Skills

Beam Weapons (Laser Rifle)-14; Brawling-12; Climbing-13; Knife-11; Running-10; Stealth-12.

Weapons

Large Knife: 2d-1 cutting, 1d impaling; Military Laser Rifle: 2d impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – To somebody of Joey’s limited mental resources, even a fantasy world can be much too complex. Replace Beam Weapons with Broadsword-14.

Contemporary – Replace Beam Weapons with Guns (Rifle)-14.

Space – Add Free Fall-12.

Story

The real world – the world of the city and the streets – was just too complex for Joey Ruehl. There were too many decisions to make, and Joey wasn’t good at making decisions. And, once he’d dropped out of grade school, there weren’t any rules that he could follow to keep himself in line. Every day was an overwhelming array of choices, and Joey kept making bad ones.

One bad choice brought him before a juvenile court, which gave him the choice of going to jail for five years (a lifetime to a 17-year-old) or enlisting with the army for a similar period. Joey figured he’d hate the army, but *knew* he’d hate jail, so he enlisted.

That turned out to be the best choice the young Ruehl could have made. Sure, life in the army was tough, but Joey was tough enough to handle it. More importantly, the army was a place with *rules*, and without decisions. There were people – people smarter than Joey – whose job was to tell him what to do, and all he had to do was follow their orders. It was almost like a dream come true.

Joey Ruehl doesn’t have what it takes to be promoted; he’ll be a private for life. But that’s exactly what he wants. He knows that NCOs and real officers have to make tough decisions, and he doesn’t want to be put in that position. When his first tour of duty is up in a little less than a year, he intends to re-up . . . and keep re-upping until he’s the oldest private in this man’s army.

Ruehl isn’t bright, but he’s not as stupid as he thinks he is. He’s got a kind of animal cunning that comes to the fore in wargames



Joey Ruehl

Age: 22

and tactical exercises. If he ever went into combat, Ruehl would have a good chance of making it out alive. He likes most of the soldiers in his unit, and looks up to his platoon’s lieutenant as just one step short of a god. In turn, his comrades in arms like Ruehl in much the same way they’d like a loyal but dumb pit bull.

Quotes

“It’s okay to do it. The LT said so.”

“Nah, you guys go into town. I’ll just stay on base.”

“. . . And the best part is, they *pay* me to do this. (Toss me another grenade, huh?)”

Adventure Seeds

◆ Joey has strayed off base into the wrong part of the sprawl. Without the rest of his platoon, he’s in real trouble. The PCs encounter the poor GI about to get scragged by a local gang.

◆ With the recession now in its 23rd year, the government tries to recoup some of its military spending by hiring out the army to corporations. Joey’s platoon’s mission is to protect an armored car making a special delivery to a corp facility. The PCs are hired to acquire what’s in the truck. They can do it the hard way (a stand-up fight), or they can try to infiltrate the platoon. The hiring corp is pretty sure they can “promote” the PCs to officers with a little forgery.

HOTEL MANAGER

ST: 9
DX: 11
Dodge: 4
No armor; no encumbrance.

IQ: 12
HT: 10

Speed: 4.75
Move: 4

Point Total: 30

Advantages

Contact (Street gang); Danger Sense.

Disadvantages

Paranoia; Skinny; Weak Will -1.

Quirks

Fearful of anyone stronger than he (almost everybody); Smiles too much.

Skills

Administration-10; Area Knowledge-12; Diplomacy-11; Economics-11; Fast-Talk-12; Guns (Pistol)-12; Merchant-12; Scrounging-11; Streetwise-13.

Weapons

Heavy Pistol: 2d+1 crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – George is an innkeeper who robs his guests. Replace Guns with Shortsword-9.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – George manages a hotel in a very seedy space station. Replace Guns with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-12.

Story

The Arcadian Hotel advertises “an affordable price, where we do all the work.” The price is affordable, but you get what you pay for. The hotel is situated just on the border of the bad part of town. Typically it’s filled with bums and people wishing to rent a room for only a few hours.

Every now and then, tourists come to stay. Usually, they booked the room in advance over the phone, and had no idea what kind of a slum pit the hotel actually is. This is where George Firen – the manager of the Arcadian – comes in.

George has a scam going with one of the local gangs. When a tourist leaves his room, George calls in the gangers. They loot the room – which has been “carelessly” left open – and he takes a cut of the fence money.

The police are so busy dealing with all the violent crimes in the city, they rarely have the time to follow up adequately when a guest at the Arcadian complains about being robbed. The chance of his actually getting caught is so low that George should feel quite safe . . .

. . . But he doesn’t. He’s constantly paranoid that the police are going to bust his little operation. He’s already looking at several consecutive prison terms if he gets caught – a chilling thought. Still, the money is just so good . . .

George is extremely weak and frail-looking. He has almost no courage and will come apart at the seams with very little coaxing.



George Firen

Age: 45

Quotes

“You want to rent the room for two hours, for business purposes? Yeah, right.”

“Okay, they’ve just left the room. The door in the back will be open.”

“Normally the rule’s ‘no visitors.’ But in your case I’ll make an exception.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs are staying at the Arcadian. When they’re out, George calls the gang in to loot their equipment. Perhaps they were carrying secret documents or extremely expensive goods. The PCs now have to find their stolen merchandise and get it back from a violent gang.

◆ George pulled his usual scam on an affluent-looking traveler who should have known better than to stay at the Arcadian. The gangers got some money, but little else of note. But now, one by one, the gangers are dying – some obvious hits, some apparent “accidents.” George knows it’s the affluent traveler, after something that the gangers took. Apparently he hasn’t got it yet, and George’s name has to be coming to the top of his list . . . George turns to his contacts, the PCs, for help.

LAWYER

ST: 9 IQ: 13 Speed: 5
DX: 10 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 35

Advantages

Alertness +1; Contact (A doctor at a hospital); Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Alcoholism; Greed; Reputation -4 (To real lawyers: ambulance-chaser).

Quirks

Always carries a bottle; Always hands out business cards; Uses Latin to confuse people.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Carousing-11; Computer Operation-13; Diplomacy-12; Driving (Car)-11; Electronics Operation (Radio)-11; Fast-Talk-15; Law-14; Performance-11; Research-12; Shadowing-13; Writing-12.

Languages

English-13; Latin-10; any other one relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Fantasy – Remove Computer Operation and Electronics Operation. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – Even now Jameson would be entirely in his element. No changes.

Space – Remove Driving (Car).

Story

If Lawrence Jameson's law professors had any idea how he's putting their teachings to work, they'd probably form a posse and hunt him down.

Jameson is half of Jameson & Laurentian Legal Services, which operates out of New York. Through horrifying and immoral practices, they've become well-off businessmen.

Jameson is in charge of "business development." All the time he's not in court he spends driving around the streets in his "mobile office": a car equipped with a scanner that monitors all the police bands. The instant he hears of an accident, he races to the scene and attempts to gain new customers. Usually potential clients are in no condition to argue with him (or sign forms, but he's figured ways around that technicality). If a client is unable to sign at the accident scene, then he'll chase the ambulance to the hospital and harass the victim there.

When it comes time to go to court, Jameson has slick techniques for processing a client rapidly, so he can move on to the next one. He'd much rather get a smaller settlement than take the time fighting in court to achieve a larger one, particularly since the chances of success drop as the size of the settlement increases. Quantity, not quality, is his motto.

Near Future



Lawrence Jameson

Age: 36

Jameson really has no morals, and no concept of when to conduct business. At cocktail parties, he won't get a drink until he's distributed his card to everyone present.

Jameson carries a bottle of 90-proof "stress medication." Although he denies it, lately his dosage has been increasing . . .

Quotes

"Here's my card."

"Are you okay? You're bleeding pretty badly. Did you know that you're entitled to restitution for your injuries by all parties responsible? Hey, wake up!"

"I advise that we accept their offer. Trust me, \$30,000 – minus my fee – is *satis superque*."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs need a lawyer to get them out of some legal matter. One of the PCs picked up Jameson's card at a party and they decide to call him. ("One lawyer's just as good as another, right?")
- ◆ In a recent endeavor, the PCs inflicted some minor indignity on an innocent bystander. Now that bystander is coming after them – at Jameson's instigation, of course – to sue the PCs into a smoking crater.

MENTAL PATIENT

ST: 12 IQ: 13
DX: 10 HT: 9
Dodge: 4
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 4.75
Move: 4

Point Total: 50

Advantages

Alertness +2; Danger Sense.

Disadvantages

Delusions (Various and assorted); Paranoia; Sense of Duty (To protect mankind from the evil conspiracies); Social Stigma (Perceived as a lunatic).

Quirks

Always looks over his shoulder; Wears a very old, out-of-style suit.

Skills

Administration-12; Area Knowledge-13; Computer Operation-13; Conspiracy Theory-16; Criminology-13; Detect Lies-13; Guns (Pistol)-11; Intelligence Analysis-14; Interrogation-13; Psychology-12; Shadowing-12.

Cyberwear

Chip Slot that's currently empty.

Conversions

Fantasy – Matt could be a man driven mad by the power of magic, but who is still very powerful. Replace Computer Operation, Conspiracy Theory, Criminology, and Intelligence Analysis with Alchemy-14, Occultism-15 and Riding-10. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – Remove the chip slot, no other changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

Matt Donan's psychiatrists have described him as deluded, but he prefers the word "aware." It's not his fault that he heard the plans of evil aliens bent on controlling the world. Or overheard that certain government officials were being replaced with duplicates. He should be rewarded for warning the world of the horrible conspiracies threatening it, but instead they lock him up and call him crazy.

Matt walks a fine line between reality and his interpretation of it. For him, the line started to blur when he joined the Secret Service nearly ten years ago. His job was to root out possible conspiracies, such as threats to the 911 emergency telephone system. Long hours and immense pressure – and, as he sees it, a glimpse at the "big picture" – pushed him over the edge. He began to notice the implications of conspiracies all around him – from his constantly changing postman, to the number of times he's lost the lottery. All of this and more is proof that there are secret groups planning to take over the world, and that he's the only barrier that stands in their way.

Understandably, Matt was completely confused when those he tried to help labeled him paranoid and tossed him into a low-secu-



Matt Donan

Age: 32

rity mental institution. The hospital officials quickly learned their mistake, however, when he escaped. Within a day he was caught again and placed in a higher-security institution. Time and again, Matt escaped – each break more daring than the last. He was so certain in his convictions that no ward could hold him for long – his messages had to reach the masses.

Matt is completely unstable, ranging in demeanor from calm to extremely paranoid. He's a difficult man to talk to, as he's always looking over his shoulder.

Most of Matt's theories are just hot air – devised by his fevered imagination. Many years with the Secret Service, however, have honed his ability to spot conspiracies, and sometimes his suspicions are correct.

GM's note: Depending on the nature of the campaign and specific adventure, Matt could be used as comic relief, a dispenser of red herrings or the only person who can point the PCs towards the truth.

Quotes

"Look, if I don't make it, you've got to tell everyone that half of the Senate has been replaced with zombies. What do you mean you already know?"

"Why don't you tell me about *your* mother, you quack?"

"Everything's connected. And if two things *aren't* connected, then that's a connection in and of itself, isn't it?"

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs are approached by a wild-haired man mumbling about conspiracies. Chances are that the players are just looking for some crazy scheme to follow, and Matt will provide it. He'll probably just send them on a wild goose chase, but maybe something useful will come of it.

◆ Somehow the PCs are in a mental institution. Perhaps they, like Matt, were a little too vocal with their knowledge of the big picture. Matt would be happy to help them escape, but if he helps them, they have to do a little task for him – one that might involve goldfish, fungus and an ancient lute, but it is *guaranteed* to save the world.

MUSICIAN

ST: 10

IQ: 14

Speed: 5.25

DX: 11

HT: 8

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Charisma +2; Musical Ability +4; Reputation +4 (He's a rock star); Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantages

Addiction (Downers); Compulsive Behavior (Depression).

Quirks

Always dresses in black; Doesn't go out in the day; Hates bright lights when offstage.

Skills

Area Knowledge-13; Computer Operation-14; Computer Programming-12; Electronics Operation (Synthesizer)-13; Musical Instrument-17; Performance-12; Poetry-14; Singing-14; Street-wise-13; Writing-14.

Conversions

Fantasy – Vox's bleak, anti-technology message will probably be very rare in most fantasy worlds . . . but not impossible. Replace Computer skills, Electronics and Writing with Riding-10, and a suitable fantasy Musical Instrument-14. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – Vox's type of music should just be beginning to get popular. No changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

Vox Dei – or, more commonly, just Vox – is a cult superstar. Everybody in the “youth counterculture” (as the sociologists call it) listens to his music; some say Vox's music is the “youth counterculture.” Every disc or chip he records goes multi-platinum, and each new Vox Dei release is marked by a rash of teen suicides. While parents' groups are trying to ban his material, the major players in the military-industrial-entertainment complex trot out the usual platitudes about “freedom of artistic impression” . . . while raking in the bucks so fast they have to buy new accounting computers. The entertainment corporations *do* bow to public opinion by having warning stickers on Vox's packaging – knowing that they actually increase sales to their target market.

Vox (his real name's Jason Snyder) couldn't care less about the business side of his career. He lives for the music, and that's it. He's a pathological depressive with a history of substance abuse, and his . . . *bleak* . . . world view is reflected in his music. If punk was anarchic, and industrial was dehumanizing, Vox's music is virtually inhuman, or perhaps *anti-human*. His lyrics deal almost exclusively with the dehumanizing effects of technology . . . and the cold solace to be found in surrendering to those effects. Perhaps surprisingly, considering his outlook, Vox has no cyber mods. (Considering the dominance of technology around us, he'd explain, actually installing them in the body is redundant . . .)

Near Future



Vox Dei

Age: 23

Vox Dei has no band, but he doesn't need one. When he's on-stage, he's surrounded by several million dollars' worth of computerized synthesizers, samplers and sequencers. Mathematically speaking, his music is more complex than most symphonic works; melodically, though, its critics put it on a par with street repairs.

Quotes

“Don't ask me stupid questions. Just listen to the music.”

“If it's too loud, you're too old.”

“Disc sales? Ask my accountant.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ A rival corp is planning to release an illegal bootleg chip of “The Last Jam – Vox Dei's Final Concert.” For this marketing coup to work, of course, they've got to arrange that the performance they recorded is Vox's last concert . . . The PCs are hired to keep Vox alive, and end this marketing war once and for all.

◆ Vox has changed his tune, as it were. He's added an undertone of rebellion to his music – rebellion against the corporate order – and the megacorps are starting to get a little nervous. Perhaps it's time that Vox Dei's star burned itself out . . . The PCs can be the street ops hired by the corp, or Vox's security people or friends.

NETRUNNER

ST: 9 IQ: 15 Speed: 5.25
DX: 10 HT: 11 Move: 2
Dodge: 2
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 115

Advantages

Danger Sense; Patron (Tetsushima).

Disadvantage

Crippled Leg.

Quirks

Can't walk by her reflection without staring; Spends as much time as she can in cyber-clubs (virtual bars in the matrix); Subtly insults "null-heads" (non-netrunners).

Skills

Area Knowledge (Net)-17; Computer Hacking-17; Computer Operation-16; Computer Programming-14; Cyberdeck Operation-15; Electronics Operation (Security Systems)-13; Fast-Talk-13; Intelligence Analysis-14; Research-13; Savoir-Faire (Corporate)-14.

Cyberwear

Chip Slot with an Eidetic Memory Chip; Interface Jack.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.

Contemporary – The closest equivalent is a corporate computer security consultant. Perhaps she helps corporations design more secure computer security systems. Remove Cyberdeck Operation.

Space – If the Net and associated technology exists in the campaign, make no changes. Otherwise, remove Cyberdeck Operation.

Story

Who cares how socially unacceptable it may be within some netrunner circles? Circe Milasius is a corporate woman, and plans to remain true and loyal to her employer . . . until someone makes her a *much* better offer.

Circe was a smart child with a natural affinity for computers. When she was seven, she suffered a major injury to her lower spine, causing massive nerve damage. Twenty years earlier, she'd have been a paraplegic, but modern medicine brought back 100% functionality in her right leg and about 50% in her left. (Since the damage is neurological, even cyber replacement wouldn't give her full use of her legs. A cyber leg would be just as "crippled" as her natural one.) During the year she spent in a hospital bed while her damaged nerves (partially) regrew, she deepened her love affair with computers, and started down the road to becoming a netrunner.

After graduating from high school, she pledged with Tetsushima Technologies Corporation, in return for which the corp funded her university training. On graduation, she joined the corp as netrunner. The corp soon recognized her potential, and paid for



Circe Milasius

Age: 28

the enhancements she needed to achieve it. They also supplied her with a state-of-the-art cyberdeck . . . with the unstated assumption they'd be coming to get it back if she ever left the corp's employ. (The same *could* be true for her cyber mods; she doesn't want to find out.)

Circe Milasius is loyal, not to her employer, but to her paycheck. She lives well in a corporate enclave. She gets to play with some of the hottest software and hardware in existence. And she has access to "spare parts" with which she's building herself an unregistered cyberdeck of her own.

She has an interesting approach to job security: make herself totally irreplaceable by writing code, establishing security and creating data structures that only she can maintain. She also installs back doors – and, often, logic bombs – in everything she creates.

Quotes

"Freelance work? No guarantees, *droog moi* – but I will listen."

"Back door, Tetsushima-san? Me? Never . . ."

"I've got a good job – good pay, good benefits . . . some the corp doesn't know about. Before I'd risk that, you'd have to talk numbers with *lots* of zeroes . . ."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Circe has decided it's time to make the break. When the PCs approach her to do some freelance work for them, she agrees . . . but only after they've safely extracted her from Tetsushima.
- ◆ A rival of Tetsushima has learned about Circe's habit of creating back doors. If they could sift through her brain, they could find ways into the corp's most secure data fortresses. They turn to the PCs for a risky abduction.

NEWS ANNOUNCER

ST: 10 IQ: 10 (16) Speed: 5.5
DX: 11 HT: 11 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 115

Advantages

Appearance (Very Beautiful); Charisma +2; Reputation +2 (To other reporters: the best in the industry); Wealth (Very Wealthy).

Disadvantages

Reputation -2 (To guests who have something to hide: very dangerous); Secret.

Quirks

Loves to read; Self-conscious about her real intelligence.

Skills

Area Knowledge-10; Computer Operation-11 (16)*; Detect Lies-8 (15); Diplomacy-13; Economics-11 (14); History-8 (16); Interrogation-8 (15); Literature-10 (16); Performance-14; Politics-9 (17); Research-8 (17); Sex Appeal-13.

*: Skills in parentheses refer to when she is "on-line" to her support team.

Cyberwear

One Bionic Eye with Optic Readout and Video Reception, Cellular Link, Two Chip Slots with two Eidetic Memory chips.

Conversions

Fantasy – It's very difficult to conceive of Rena doing her job in a fantasy setting.

Contemporary – Since the tech doesn't exist yet to create a composite persona, Rena must be one frighteningly good reporter. Downgrade some or all of the skill levels if they are too high for the campaign.

Space – No changes.

Story

For the third year in a row, the Parsons Award for Reporting Excellence has gone to Rena Holmes – news anchor at Channel 72 news. Year after year, she has proven herself the finest interviewer in the industry. Her intuitive ability to spot evasions, distortions, deceptions and outright lies has put many a politician in hot water.

The interesting thing is that Rena herself is one of the best deceptions ever devised. Rena isn't a single person; instead, she's a "composite" made up of a beautiful actress, a brilliant news team, two producers, and a wired-in teleprompter.

Five years ago, Channel 72 had just started up. With more than



Rena Holmes

Age: 27

250 channels then broadcasting, it was almost impossible for a fledgling news team to gain popularity. Fortunately, the two producers of the show had some unconventional ideas to raise their ratings. The greatest of these was to create a composite news anchor – one who was adept in every area of news reporting.

They started with an unknown but beautiful actress to be the face of the facade . . . Rena. She was implanted with a cellular-link teleprompter and two chip slots filled with eidetic memory chips. Then they hired seven skilled news reporters – the brains of the operation – to devise Rena's brilliant questions, and stage-manage interviews remotely. The result is the ideal news professional, combining looks, charisma, piercing intelligence, incredible sensitivity, and an encyclopedic knowledge of every topic that might arise.

The show has gained enormous popularity. Channel 72 is consistently rated in the top three news shows. This hasn't bolstered Rena's confidence, however, as she's constantly worried that someone will find out the truth and cancel her show.

Quotes

"Over to you Bob."

"Senator Travis, are you aware that speech you just made a minute ago matches, word for word, one made by President Bush in 1990, 37 years ago? Could you please tell me about your views on plagiarism, Senator . . ."

" . . . and that's just one reporter's view on this very controversial subject."

Adventure Seeds

◆ A rival news team wants to "liberate" Rena from her current employment at Channel 72. They hire the PCs to present a "job offer" to Rena – in other words, extract her. In the cutthroat world of 3V journalism, the rival team could live with themselves if Rena were to be killed in the process.

◆ A daring interview has backfired, and Rena has been taken hostage by a group of eco-terrorists. The PCs are hired to rescue her. How will they react when the woman they find is a pale shadow of the one they've seen on 3V?

PLAYBOY

ST: 11 IQ: 12 Speed: 6
DX: 12 HT: 12 Move: 6
Dodge: 6
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 160

Advantages

Charisma +1; Reputation +3 (To archaeologists: a generous and enthusiastic amateur); Status 4; Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantage

Impulsiveness.

Quirks

Loves to donate (anonymously) to charities; Will undertake almost any challenge, no matter how bizarre.

Skills

Accounting-12; Archaeology-15; Area Knowledge-13; Boating-12; Carousing-13; Cooking-14; Diplomacy-11; Economics-12; Fencing-12; Guns (Pistol)-13; Parachuting-14; Photography-12; Savoir-Faire (Upper class)-13; Sex Appeal-12; Scuba-11.

Conversions

Fantasy – Replace Accounting, Guns, Parachuting, Photography and Scuba with Falconry-12 and Riding-13. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – Charles would be darting around the galaxy, going to whatever planet he wanted. Add Astrogation-13 and Piloting (Small spaceship)-14.

Story

Charles Wentworthy started life as Bob York, the third son in a middle-class American family. His father worked in an automobile factory in Detroit, and his mother ran a small business out of the house.

It was from his mother that Charles learned his business skills. The skills he needed to run an enterprise were taught to him at the same time as reading. Add to this early and effective education an obsessive entrepreneurial drive, and it's not surprising that Charles made his first million by 25. Although hard work certainly helped, it was his lucky investment in a medical company that really paid off.

Charles knew when to quit making money – knowledge that seems all too rare. He understood when he had enough, and began channeling his incredible drive into more pleasurable pursuits. At 30 he bought a home in Monaco, and officially changed his name to Charles Wentworthy (apparently just for fun).

Charles hasn't fully embraced the cybernetic age. He prefers days gone by when humans were unmarred by technology, so it's understandable that his hobby is archeology. He travels all over the world, visiting archeological sites and participating in digs. Most archeologists know him by name and don't mind his help. Sometimes his vast knowledge of archeology helps to solve a problem. Also, the fact that he treats his colleagues lavishly when he's around helps to ease their misgivings.



Charles Wentworthy

Age: 37

Although he hasn't published his own paper yet, Charles has research credit in four major journals. He knows that it's just a matter of time before he's respected and renowned as an archeologist, as well-known in the academic literature as he is in celebrity-chasing tabloids.

Quotes

"I know the dig is closed. But would \$1,000 perhaps change your mind?"

"I'm self-taught, sure, but that doesn't mean I don't believe in a formal education."

"But Dr. Frazier, notice the discoloration of the bone here. A remnant of tissue, perhaps?"

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Charles wants desperately to visit an archeological dig, but the stubborn scientists won't let him in. He's even tried flashing around large amounts of money, with no success. He eventually hires the PCs to help him with a night visit to the site so that he can have a look around.
- ◆ Charles has been targeted by kidnappers, extortionists or other criminals. Some group with an interest in keeping Charles healthy hires the PCs to protect him. Can the playboy's "minders" keep up with his high-energy lifestyle?

POLICE DETECTIVE

ST: 10 IQ: 13 Speed: 5.25
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 70

Advantages

Ally group (The police); Intuition; Legal Enforcement Powers.

Disadvantages

Sense of Duty (To the victims of any crime); Duty; Pacifist (Won't kill).

Quirks

Coffee addict; Hates carrying her cellular phone; Loves old (1990s vintage) music and movies.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Computer Operation-13; Criminology-16; Detect Lies-14; Diplomacy-10; Driving (Car)-10; Fast-Talk-11; Guns (Pistol)-12; Intelligence Analysis-11; Interrogation-11; Law-11; Photography-11; Research-12; Streetwise-12.

Weapons

Heavy Pistol: 2d impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Replace Computer Operation, Guns, Driving and Photography with Broadsword-9 and Riding-10.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – Replace Guns and Driving with Beam Weapons (Stunner)-12 and Free Fall-11.

Story

Gabrielle Schoeffling joined the police force almost 15 years ago as a beat cop, and worked her way up. For the last ten years, she's been a senior detective in the Homicide division – although she's frequently seconded to Vice and other divisions – and has racked up an impressive arrest record.

Gabrielle – “Gabby” to her friends – describes herself as a “recovering workaholic.” She puts in long hours, because that's the nature of the job, but she's struggling to balance the requirements of her career with having and enjoying a “real life” as well. She's decided that she has no desire to climb higher in the organization, and so doesn't have to bust her butt to play the political promotion game. She's found this decision incredibly freeing: she can handle cases her way, and tell her superiors exactly what she thinks, without having to worry about trashing her chances of making lieutenant.

Gabby's a good cop – not flashy, not a media-hound. She



Gabrielle Schoeffling Age: 33

understands human psychology and good criminology practices. She's also an expert with computers and other high-tech aids. Most of her success, though, comes from her ability to talk to people and *really hear* what they're saying . . . not just what words they use or what she wants to hear.

She has one fixation: she has to know *why*. Even after a case is effectively tied up and ready to go to court, she frequently won't let it go until she understands all the underlying motivations. While her superiors complain this is useless, Gabby can point to almost a dozen cases where her “extracurricular” investigations led to further indictments. Schoeffling still has in her files four open cases – each more than three years old – that she refuses to close. All are missing-persons cases, and she won't close them until she finally finds out what happened to the person in question.

Officially, Gabby is on call 24 hours a day, and has to carry her cellular phone at all times. She hates this – since it interferes with her attempts to have a real life – and frequently “forgets” her phone at the station.

Quotes

“Listen, I'm getting tired here. Why don't you just tell me the truth, then we can both go home?”

“It's starting to make sense. But there are still some missing pieces.”

“Sure, he had the opportunity. It's the motive that doesn't make any sense.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs have been framed for a crime they didn't commit. While all the other detectives ignore the PCs' claims of innocence, Schoeffling looks into them. Then she and the PCs have the chance to work side by side to find out who framed them and why.

◆ Schoeffling has stumbled across evidence of corruption in her department. She turns to the PCs – who owe her a favor, perhaps after the events above – to help investigate.

PROSTITUTE

ST: 9 IQ: 12 Speed: 5.75
DX: 12 HT: 11 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 75

Advantages

Appearance (Beautiful); Charisma +1.

Disadvantages

Social Stigma -1; Status -1.

Quirks

Treats her customers like gold; Won't take hard drugs.

Skills

Acting-11; Area Knowledge-13; Carousing-12; Cooking-11; Dancing-12; Knife-12; Performance-13; Professional Skill: Kama Sutra-11; Psychology-9; Sex Appeal-15; Streetwise-11.

Weapons

Vibroblade.

Conversions

Fantasy – They don't call it the world's oldest profession for nothing. Besides being a prostitute, she could be a harem girl or a Geisha. No changes.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – Even in the far future, there will always be a demand for prostitutes. No changes.

Story

Grace D'Arcy – nicknamed "Amazing Grace" by some of her street friends – is only 20. After more than four years in the game, however, she's one of the more experienced pros working her slice of turf. Her face is young – and her makeup exaggerates her apparent youth – but she's got the eyes of a woman twice her age. They're eyes that have seen it all . . . and that would gladly forget much of it.

Grace has managed to keep her looks and her body. She's not a heavy drug user (although she recognizes that "taking the edge off" is sometimes a requirement for survival), and she eats as well as she can.

She's not an independent; nobody who's worked the street for four years could have avoided notice by the "operators" and "line managers" who have turned the trade into a real business. She's been lucky enough to fall in with the Dream Girl combine, however, a Japanese-style outfit which recognizes that violence and abuse – inappropriately applied – are counterproductive. (When *appropriately* applied, however, the combine knows they can work wonders . . .)

Grace has a good ear for "pillow talk." Sometimes her clients want to talk afterwards (or instead of . . .), and she remembers most of what she hears. She's smart enough to keep what she learns to herself, however.

Grace dreams of getting off the street, but not out of the trade – that's too much to hope for. Her idea of heaven would be to



Grace D'Arcy

Age: 20

make it into the more profitable "out-call" market. Unfortunately, she doesn't have the class and panache that most corporate "clients" require. You could take Grace off the street, but you couldn't take the street out of Grace . . .

Quotes

"It's only business. It's *all* only business."

"Ask me some questions? Sure, slick . . . but the meter's running."

"What . . . you a cop?"

Adventure Seeds

◆ Amazing Grace has heard too much. Sure, she has no plans to act on what she's heard . . . but the guy who let it slip can't be sure of that. Gracey needs help, and she needs it *now* . . .

◆ There's a killer on the streets, someone the screamsheets are calling NewJack. Like the original Jack the Ripper, his victims are all working girls. The Dream Girl combine made efforts to protect their "assets," but the hard men they hired got chewed up, and didn't even see who did it. Now Grace and her colleagues are trying to arrange their own protection . . .

SALESPERSON

ST: 10

IQ: 12

Speed: 5.25

DX: 11

HT: 10

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 85

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive); Charisma +3; Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Honesty; Phobia (Minor; going to jail).

Quirks

Enjoys new age music; Tries to be as honest as she can when dealing with a customer.

Skills

Accounting-9; Acting-14; Computer Operation-13; Criminology-10; Detect Lies-15; Diplomacy-14; Economics-10; Fast-Talk-14; Merchant-14; Performance-11; Psychology-10.

Cyberwear

Chip Slot with a Merchant (8) Skill Chip.

Conversions

Fantasy – Julia could be a traveling merchant. Replace Accounting, Computer Operation and Criminology with Packing-12, Riding-11 and Teamster-12. Remove cyberwear.

Contemporary – People probably wouldn't buy the options on an L5 colony just yet, but there are plenty of other profitable scams out there. Remove cyberwear. No other changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

Julia Breed can sell anything to anybody. It happens to be cybernetics right now, but she's put in time selling everything: cars, insurance, real estate . . . and dreams. This last item is the one she's least proud of.

Nearly 20 years ago, Julia and a partner were operating a scam where they sold options to buy accommodation in an L5 colony supposedly due to start construction "real soon now." (Of course, Julia knew it would never be built.) She and her partner targeted the elderly, using the selling point that low-gravity or microgravity environments prolong life – "How'd you like to be enjoying your retirement at age 125?" They operated successfully for almost a year, but finally the government caught up with them, and they were arrested for fraud.

The next five years were a nightmare for Julia, an ugly haze of prison life. She was completely unprepared for the horrors of jail, and resolved that she would never go back.

After her release, Julia returned to the only career she knew – selling. She works for a cybernetic processing company, and it's her job to convince hospitals that her company's products are the ones to use. Although this job is nowhere near as lucrative as her L5 scam, she makes more than enough to live comfortably.

Those who don't know her well are amazed that Julia refuses to participate in anything even remotely illegal. But as they say,



Julia Breed

Age: 43

if you can't do the time, don't do the crime. Julia just can't fit jail into her busy schedule.

Quotes

"Well, the Mark IV has the improved data paths. I'm sure it will work well with your current equipment."

"Look, I just don't want to do it, and I don't have to explain myself to *you*."

"I understand what you're saying, but let's look at those objections one at a time . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Julia's ex-partner has just been released from jail for another crime. He wants to take up where he left off, with Julia as his partner, and he won't take no for an answer. Julia turns to the PCs to persuade him to leave her alone.

◆ Julia's job with the cybernetics company is great; the money is good and there's no risk. However, she's starting to get suspicious that some of the directors are involved in something illegal and that she'll get dragged down with them as an accomplice. She asks the PCs to find out exactly what's going on so that she can devise a plan of action to get herself out of this – even if it means being a whistle-blower.

SHADOW

ST: 11 IQ: 12
DX: 10 HT: 11
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 5.25
Move: 5

Point Total: 125

Advantages

Alertness +3; Intuition; Peripheral Vision; Reputation +2 (To people in "the trade": an expert).

Disadvantages

Cowardice; Overconfidence; Pacifism (Total non-violence).

Quirks

Fascinated with the newest surveillance toys; Loves Chinese food.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Computer Hacking-15; Computer Operation-16; Computer Programming-12; Cooking-12; Criminology-13; Disguise-12; Driving-11; Electronics Operation (Surveillance)-13; Guns (Pistol)-12; Intelligence Analysis-12; Lockpicking-11; Psychology-10; Shadowing-16; Stealth-13; Tracking-15.

Cyberwear

Implant Cellular Phone.

Weapons

Light Pistol: 2d crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – Replace Computer skills, Electronics and Guns with Broadsword-9, Riding-11 and Survival (Forest)-13. Remove the cyberwear.

Contemporary – Remove cyberwear.

Space – John may have to chase all varieties of creatures, so he should have an idea of how they try to hide from the law. Add Xenology-13.

Story

Nicknamed "the Ghost," John Kines looks like a totally average American man – and he hates it. His looks are so plain and nondescript that people rarely remember him from one meeting to the next. So unmemorable is his face that he can totally change his appearance by donning a fake pair of glasses or by altering his hairstyle. Although his looks make it difficult to pick up women, they allow him to do his job brilliantly.

Kines works freelance as a shadow. When the police or a megacorp need someone followed, John's the man they call. His appearance as a total nonentity allows him to blend perfectly into the crowd, following his subject for days at a time.

John is relentless. He has a reputation among his employers as a bloodhound, never losing sight of his target. He'll go to incredible extremes to make sure his quarry doesn't get away.

Besides actually following someone physically, John has several ways of keeping tabs on someone electronically. His favorite is to follow the silicon trail left by a credcard. Furthermore, he's



John Kines

Age: 35

an accomplished netrunner, often hacking into video surveillance cameras to keep an eye on his prey. John takes several cases on at the same time, as he has written programs that will do the grunt surveillance work for him, informing him when a subject is straying from his normal routines.

John is a little worried that someone he's shadowing will catch on and confront him physically. The first and only time it happened, he totally froze up, and a nearby police officer had to save his life. For protection, John carries a gun, and has even learned how to use it. But he fears that if the time comes, he'll be incapable of pulling the trigger.

Quotes

"The name's Kines, I met you just last week. Remember? At the athletic club? . . . Tuesday?"

"Tail him in person? You just doubled my fees."

"How far could you get on the cash in your wallet? That's how far you can get . . . period. First time you use your credcard, or withdraw cash from a bank machine, or even use your phone card to hit up a friend for money, I've got you nailed."

Adventure Seeds

◆ John has never had a job like this one. The person he's following is extremely violent, and this scares the hell out of John, so he hires the PCs to protect him. Of course, the PCs' pathetic attempts at remaining stealthy are much more likely to give John away.

◆ The PCs have committed a crime, and somehow the police always seem to find them wherever they hide . . . Either the GM is being mean, or the PCs are being tailed. But knowing John is there is one thing; finding him is another matter entirely.

SKIP TRACER

ST: 11 **IQ:** 13 **Speed:** 5.5
DX: 12 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
Light monocry armor (PD 2, DR 8); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 60

Advantages

Alertness +1; Contacts (GM's choice); Intuition.

Disadvantages

Dependents (Wife and children); Stubbornness.

Quirks

Always smiling; Dislikes, but doesn't necessarily avoid, violence.

Skills

Accounting-14; Area Knowledge-13; Computer Hacking-15; Computer Operation-16; Detect Lies-14; Driving (Car)-12; Economics-13; Fast-Talk-11; Guns (Pistol)-13; Photography-13; Research-13; Tracking-12.

Weapon

Light Pistol: 3d crushing.

Conversions

Fantasy – In a fantasy setting, Willy wouldn't have access to his high-tech gizmos, so he'd have to do it all the hard way. Replace Computer skills, Driving, Guns and Photography with Broadsword-13; Cooking-12; Riding-11 and Stealth-14. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – Replace Guns skill with Brawling-10; equip Willy with brass knuckles.

Space – Replace Guns with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-13.

Story

At first glance, Willy Anderson looks like everyone's favorite uncle: a rumpled, balding fellow just entering middle age, who seems constantly surprised by the vagaries of life. On closer inspection, however, one can see a spark of sharp intelligence and a predatory gleam in his eyes . . .

In his youth, Willy used to do collection and repo work for various finance companies of dubious legality. Although he takes the occasional contract in these areas today, he's very careful about what jobs he accepts. (His discretion probably stems from the difference of opinion he had with a baseball-bat-wielding "client" four years ago . . .)

These days, Willy works out of his home office. He still tracks down people who've defaulted on their financial commitments, but now he does it by less-direct means. He's a proven ace at following the "electronic spoor" that few people can avoid leaving behind them in this data-intensive age. Through various "unofficial" channels, he can trace credcard transactions, phone usage, even police records from routine car tag inquiries. Without stepping away from his computer, Willy can usually track someone who's "skipped," and then pass his location on to "collection professionals" (i.e., knee-breakers) for personal attention.



Willy Anderson

Age: 40

Although most of his contracts still come from finance companies, Willy has no aversion to working for *anyone*, as long as he can pay the per diem. He couldn't care less why a subject is wanted, or what will happen to him once Willy tracks him down. Just for appearances, he'll ask for proof of his employer's bona fides, but won't check the authenticity of even the most patently fraudulent identity. His only concern is that, if the police come after him, he can "prove" he was working for someone he believed to be an authentic finance company.

Quotes

"I assure you, officer, I truly thought he worked for a finance company. I've got his business card here somewhere . . ."

"People can run, but they can't hide. It's just a matter of time before I get a line on them."

"The subject has no cash reserves? Good. And he doesn't know he's being traced? Even better."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Willy's been hired to track the PCs, and pass their location on to a team of street ops for "further processing." Will the PCs' security provisions detect Willy's attempts, before the street ops come to kick down their door?

◆ The PCs need someone traced, and Willy's their man. Unfortunately he's a tad too busy to take their contract at the moment (it seems that one of his recent "subjects" has taken exception to Willy's scrutiny). If the PCs want to use Willy's expertise, they'll have to keep him alive long enough to do the job . . .

STREET DOC

ST: 9 **IQ:** 14 **Speed:** 5.5
DX: 12 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Alertness +1; Empathy.

Disadvantages

Duty (To the sick and injured); Pacifism (Won't kill); Stubbornness.

Quirks

Dislikes most "real" hospitals; Won't touch illegal drugs.

Skills

Accounting-13; Administration-14; Area Knowledge-14; Artist-13; Computer Operation-14; Diagnosis-16; Electronics (Bionics)-13; First Aid-16; Mechanic (Bionics)-13; Physician-16; Physiology-14; Psychology-14; Surgery-14; Writing- 14.

Conversions

Fantasy – Andrea will be a typical non-magical healer. Replace Accounting, Computer Operation, and Surgery with Cooking-12 and Survival (Forest)-12.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – Andrea would make a fine ship's doctor. Add Free Fall-13 and Vacc Suit-13.

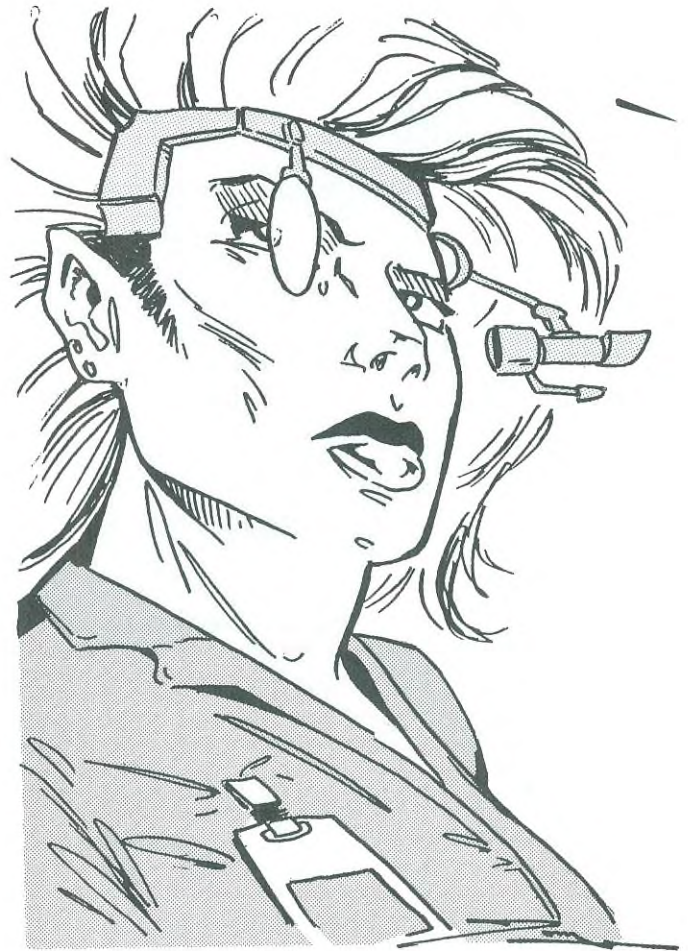
Story

Andrea Wilson used to work for New York General Hospital's research division, until she was fired for revealing hospital secrets – specifically, that illegal drug production was being carried out in the hospital. After rough treatment from the hospital, she realized that a whistle-blower would be hard-pressed to find a job in any other hospital in the city. Accordingly, she went out on her own.

Andrea decided to try to help the people who really needed it, so she set up a small clinic in an impoverished part of the city. In her clinic, she and her small staff have patched up more gunshot wounds than she cares to remember. The costs of running such a clinic are high, so Andrea was forced to set up a money-making side venture . . . implant surgery. Instead of going to big hospitals, street samurai and netrunners can get their cyber implants here at a fraction of the cost.

Since she set it up, Andrea's clinic has been broken into many times – usually by drug addicts looking for a fix. Out of necessity, Andrea has been forced to install sophisticated security systems. At least once a week the lights dim as another would-be burglar gets a severe – but non-lethal – jolt of electricity.

Andrea will never turn away anybody in need, even if he doesn't have enough money to pay for her services. She sees horrible living conditions every day and does what she can to ease the suffering of as many people as possible. In only four years of operation she's received the City of New York Certificate of Goodwill – an award given out to groups that help the poor and underprivileged – three times.



Andrea Wilson

Age: 26

Quotes

"Yes, we can install your new cyber-eyes. Our fees for that will be \$10,000 – take it or leave it."

"You have important things to do? Okay, smart guy, we can do it your way. I'll give you a shot of penicillin; you come back in a week, and I'll take the whole arm off. Or we can do it my way and you'll probably use that hand again."

"I used to want to save the world. Now I just want to make it to Friday."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Andrea will perform some cyber implants for free if the PCs agree to deal with a local gang that's been harassing her and the clinic.
- ◆ Some shady character has come to Andrea, trying to hire her to install some experimental hardware in his head. Andrea won't do the surgery until she knows exactly what this is all about, but the would-be patient won't say. She hires the PCs to find out what's going on.

STREET SAMURAI

ST: 12 IQ: 11 Speed: 7.25
DX: 15 HT: 14 Move: 7
Dodge: 7
Medium monocrys vest (PD 2, DR 16); light encumbrance.

Point Total: 90

Advantages

Combat Reflexes; High Pain Threshold; Zeroed.

Disadvantages

Berserk; Enemy (Gen-Tech); Secret.

Quirks

Loves to infiltrate megacorps; Very protective of his family.

Skills

Acrobatics-14; Brawling-16; Computer Operation-10; Driving (Car)-14; Fast-Draw (Gun)-15; First Aid-10; Guns (Pistol)-17; Karate-15; Knife-14; Savoir-Faire (Corp)-12; Stealth-14; Streetwise-10.

Cyberwear

Bionic Eyes with Acute Vision, Light Intensification and Telescopic Vision; Bionic Reconstruction.

Weapons

Large Knife: 1d cutting, 1d-1 impaling; Machine Pistol: 2d+2 impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Miller will be an aging warrior. Replace Computer Operation, Driving (Car), and Guns with Broadsword-15. Change Fast-Draw (Gun) to Fast-Draw (Broadsword)-15. Remove cyber implants.

Contemporary – No skill changes. Remove cyber implants.

Space – Replace Guns with Beam Weapons-17 and Vacc Suit-11.

Story

What does a corp do with an aging street samurai who knows too much? In the case of Marek Miller, Gen-Tech tried to terminate his contract with extreme prejudice. Thanks to his efficient information network, Miller saw the hit coming and wiped out the assassins quite effortlessly. Since the corp had neglected to give him a separation bonus, Miller figured he'd take his own: sensitive information on the corp's operations that could be very valuable later. (He also had a netrunner friend install a nasty logic bomb in his own Gen-Tech personnel files, but didn't stick around long enough to see if it was ever triggered.)

Now Miller works the street, providing or penetrating security as various jobs demand. The pay isn't as good as his corp salary,



Marek Miller

Age: 47

but he gets by. His specialty is physical security, leaving the electronic side to others.

When he was officially employed, the corp invested in "personnel development" – in the form of cyber mods. He was given state-of-the-art wired reflexes that are still competitive with newer models. The only problem he's experiencing is with his implant eyes. Lately they've been prone to ghosting, causing him to be a little jumpy, wondering what's real and what's a glitch in the system.

Gen-Tech hasn't forgotten their investment and what they could stand to lose if Miller ever decides to go public – or, worse yet, go to other corporations – with his information. So the hunt to end Miller's life continues. Already he's killed 12 of Gen-Tech's assassins and is constantly on guard for more – a sort of justified paranoia.

What the corp doesn't know is that Miller is a father, and soon to be a grandfather. He takes the utmost care in visiting his family, knowing all too well how Gen-Tech would react if the corp learned of their existence.

Quotes

"What the hell was that? Nah, nothing . . ."

"Even paranoids have enemies, cobber."

"I figure Gen-Tech still owes me. I'll stop giving them grief when I think the ledger's even."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The nightmare's coming true: Gen-Tech has found out about Miller's family. Now he has to move them somewhere more secure, and needs the PCs' help in protecting them.
- ◆ Gen-Tech has posted a bounty for Miller's capture. The money is attractive enough for the PCs to try to bag this old man. But the old man still has a few good tricks up his sleeve.

SURVEILLANCE EXPERT

ST: 10 IQ: 12 Speed: 5.5
DX: 11 HT: 11 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 55

Advantages

Acute Hearing +2; Acute Vision +2; Danger Sense.

Disadvantages

Cowardice; Pacifism (Total non-violence).

Quirks

Bugs her own phone; Mild voyeur.

Skills

Area Knowledge-13; Computer Operation-13; Computer Programming-11; Criminology-12; Electronics Operation (Surveillance)-15; Gesture-13; Intelligence Analysis-15; Lip Reading-12; Photography-13.

Conversions

Fantasy – Nicole doesn't have the power of technology at her disposal. Replace Computers, Electronics and Photography with Shadowing-12 and Tracking-12.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

In the futuristic cyberpunk world, the cold eye of Big Brother watches. It's Nicole Reynolds' job to make sure Big Brother can see.

Nicole works as a surveillance expert for a large corporate intelligence firm. Her extensive knowledge of surveillance equipment and techniques ensures that her targets have no idea that they're being watched. Just one look inside Nicole's tool box is enough to make anybody doubt his privacy. She has bugs, cameras and other equipment that, once placed, are nearly undetectable. While you're watching 3V, 3V's watching you.

Nicole is a closet voyeur. She loves to watch the affairs of people who think they're alone. She's been known to put in over 24 hours of surveillance at one go, without a break. Her employers haven't realized it yet, but Nicole has secretly put together several hours of tape that could earn her a huge amount of money if she ever decided to blackmail the subjects. She's even turned the cameras on her employer now and then (she never knows when she might need an extra little leverage . . .).

Nicole will never get herself in a situation where she might get hurt. Her fear of violence is nearly crippling, and her refusal to work in dangerous situations has occasionally put her job at risk.

Losing her job doesn't worry her too heavily, as she does



Nicole Reynolds

Age: 27

freelance work on the side. (Plus she has her "greatest hits" tape.) She has accumulated enough gear over the years to handle most surveillance jobs without a problem. Also, if she can no longer work installing surveillance, she knows there's a huge market in helping people defeat it.

Quotes

"By the way, subject A has a heart murmur."

"The flies always land on the window and screw up the laser. Okay . . . now I've got their voices back."

"Mmmm . . . donuts. Did you get coffee, too? This is going to be a long night."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Nicole has decided to break from the corporation and start her own surveillance firm. Of course the corp may have other ideas, so she hires the PCs to protect her from any potentially terminal "restraint of trade." (Quitting a job just isn't what it used to be.)

◆ The PCs receive a tape in the mail that shows them performing an extremely covert – and extremely illegal – operation. If their involvement were publicized, they'd go to jail for a very long time . . . if they lived long enough to stand trial. A note attached tells them to pay \$100,000 or else certain parties are going to learn of their activities. Can the PCs find their way out of this, or will Nicole collect another contribution to her retirement fund?

SWAT OFFICER

ST: 10 IQ: 12 Speed: 6.25
DX: 14 HT: 11 Move: 6
Dodge: 6
Heavy Kevlar armor (PD 2, DR 12); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 105

Advantages

Legal Enforcement Powers; Night Vision; Reputation +1 (On the street: he's death on two legs).

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Religious); Duty.

Quirks

Only kills as a last resort; Quiet, doesn't say much; Strong emotional reaction after killing.

Skills

Area Knowledge-11; Climbing-13; Computer Operation-12; Criminology-10; Diplomacy-11; Guns (Rifle)-20; Interrogation-10; Karate-14; Psychology-9; Stealth-13; Tactics-12.

Cyberwear

Bionic eyes with Acute Vision, Optic Readout, Light Intensification and Telescopic Vision; Implant Cellular Link.

Weapons

Sniper Rifle: 7d crushing; Barret .50-caliber sniper rifle (Damage 13d crushing, SS 20, Acc 16, 1/2D 2,200, Max 7,400, Wt. 332, RoF 2~, Shots 11+1, ST 13, Rcl -4).

Conversions

Fantasy – Tracey could be a military sharpshooter, or a sniper in the service of the city guard. Replace Computer Operation, Criminology, Diplomacy, Guns and Karate with Crossbow-15 and Knife-12.

Contemporary – Remove the cyberwear; no other changes.

Space – Replace Guns with Beam Weapons (Laser)-16.

Story

Trained in the military, Mat Tracey is arguably the best rifle shot ever to serve with the SWAT team. Because of his skill, he's most often assigned as rifleman, hunkering down on a rooftop with his sniper rifle, waiting for a clear shot at the perps. He hasn't often had to pull the trigger – which suits him just fine, thank you – but when he *has* had to, he's never missed.

Tracey is nothing like the "testosterone-driven Rambo" image with which the media like to saddle the SWAT team. (In fact, *none* of Mat's colleagues match that stereotype.) Mat is a man with strong ethical and moral values, and he is deeply religious. It saddens him that his job is necessary; but he's realistic enough to recognize that it *is* necessary, and that he's ideally suited to it. He dislikes killing, and will explore all other options before he pulls the trigger on his sniper rifle. Sometimes killing is unavoidable, however, and then Tracey will do it efficiently . . . later crying for the man he shot, and praying for his soul.

Most of Mat's colleagues really like him, and respect his reli-



Mat Tracey

Age: 36

gious outlook even if they don't agree with it. Even those who consider him overly emotional have to admit he's incredibly good at his job.

Normally in a hostage situation, an expert hostage negotiator is brought in. During one incident, however, the negotiator was delayed, and Tracey took over his job temporarily. The quiet-spoken sniper turned out to have a real gift for crisis negotiations, and might in the future leave his sniper rifle behind to train as a professional negotiator.

Tracey's usual weapon is a standard military-issue sniper rifle. For longer ranges, however, he prefers an "obsolete" weapon: a 1980s-vintage Barret .50-caliber sniper rifle. With its 7-kilometer maximum range, it gives the officer incredible stand-off capability.

Quotes

"Listen, friend, just let the hostages go, and we can all walk away from this one."

"Good things sometimes get done in mysterious ways."

"Center head."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs have been hired to abduct someone, and they *must* take her alive. Unfortunately for them, the target has also attracted police attention, and the SWAT team is after her as well. To discharge their contract, the PCs have to snatch the target out of the hands of the SWAT officers . . . without getting themselves shot as accomplices.
- ◆ Gangs have declared open war on the police in the city. To protect themselves and fight the war, the police have hired mercenaries. The PCs are put under the command of Officer Tracey for a variety of anti-gang operations.

TABLOID JOURNALIST

ST: 9

IQ: 12

Speed: 5.5

DX: 11

HT: 11

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 75

Advantages

Common Sense; Luck.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Lying; Overconfidence.

Quirks

Likes to see how much she can get away with in her stories; Spends as much time as she can afford on the net.

Skills

Area Knowledge-12; Computer Operation-16; Cooking-12; Detect Lies-13; Fast-Talk-14; History-11; Literature-10; Psychology-10; Research-15; Writing-15.

Languages

English-14; Chinese-14.

Conversions

Fantasy – Emily could conceivably be a scribe hired by a sage or ruler to research wondrous events in distant lands. (Obviously, her employer doesn't know her penchant for "imaginative" reporting . . .) Replace Computer Operation and Psychology with Calligraphy-14, Occultism-13 and Riding-10. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – No changes.

Space – What's a tabloid reporter to do when all of her alien stories are true? No changes.

Story

In the shady world of tabloid journalism, Emily Chen is a total unknown. This is because she operates under an assumed name – The Specter. Emily prefers the privacy of an alias, and uses this to her advantage when researching – or inventing – a story.

Emily has an interesting investigative style. She covers most of the more bizarre net mail forums, and when she sees something that could spark a story she begins her research. She may spend many days uncovering the finer points of a story. Then, once she's compiled her findings (to give the story its required authenticity), she makes the rest up. This is the part she likes the best. In no way is she tied down to troublesome details like facts, witnesses, etc.

Although she has the skills to become an extremely famous "legitimate" reporter, she finds the job constricting. She prefers the adventure that goes with working for the tabloid papers. Some of her favorite stories are: "Elvis' brain is alive and well – in the



Emily Chen

Age: 28

net," "Alien meets with the new president," and of course, "Haunted Cyberwear – is anyone safe?"

Emily derives a perverse pleasure from watching her fake news stories propagate through the net. As they're copied and re-copied, the original purpose – as entertainment – is lost, and people actually begin to believe her writings. Time after time it just goes to prove that there are some pretty gullible people out there – none of whom Emily ever wants to meet.

Quotes

"You talk to mice . . . Do you? Do you mind if I interview you for a story?"

"The way I see it, what's the difference between the truth and my truth?"

"Nobody ever went broke *underestimating* the intelligence of the people."

Adventure Seeds

◆ One of Emily's stories was close to the truth – too close for the corporation she claimed was performing illegal experiments. Now she's on the run from their hit men, and needs the PCs' help to stay alive. It'll definitely make their job more difficult when they realize she's taking big chances to research a new story.

◆ As an interesting comic relief adventure, the PCs can join Emily on one of her research missions, such as determining if the Arabian Nuns are actually planning to take the dog breeding world by storm.

TECHNICIAN

ST: 10 **IQ:** 14 **Speed:** 5.75
DX: 13 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
Light monocrys armor (PD 2, DR 8); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 150

Advantages

Eidetic Memory 1; Intuition; Reputation +2 (To underworld: great security expert).

Disadvantage

Odious Personal Habit (Talks in incomprehensible words).

Quirks

Always thinking up entrepreneurial ventures; Has little patience with people who can't keep up with him.

Skills

Computer Hacking-14; Computer Operation-17; Computer Programming-15; Cyberdeck Operation-15; Economics-14; Electronics (Security)-16; Electronics Operation (Security)-17; Lockpicking-14; Mathematics-14; Guns (Needler)-16; Physics-15; Traps-16.

Weapons

Needler: 1d+2 impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Derek would invent special locks for merchants. Replace all skills except Lockpicking and Traps with Blacksmith-13, Cooking-14, Merchant-15 and Metallurgy-14.

Contemporary – Replace Needler with Guns (Pistol)-14.

Space – Replace Needler with Beam Weapons (Blaster)-14.

Story

Derek Choamer is an entrepreneur. His original career was as a technician for a large corporation, but since he quit, he's been searching for the American dream in some of the most bizarre ways.

After graduating from technical school, Derek was picked up by Meganon Industries as a security systems technician. His job was to make sure the extremely complex security systems were in working order. Derek did that, and a little extra. He felt it was in his job description to improve the systems any way he could. Some of Derek's nastier systems sent a few people who attempted infiltration to the hospital. He left it up to the corp lawyers to prove that only reasonable force was used.

Derek is a little hard to get along with. He fills every sentence with so much techno-babble that an M.S. is required to understand him. Many of his words aren't even real; he just makes them up when it seems appropriate to seem more educated.

A couple of years ago, Derek quit the corporation and went off on his own. He fills his time designing unconventional security systems, or devising ways of breaking them. Derek has gained a fairly widespread reputation in the security industry. At any one time, Derek also has several get-rich-quick schemes on the go: from marketing a process to recycle spent ammunition, to renting



Derek Choamer

Age: 25

out the underside of his house as a coffin motel. So far not a single idea has paid off, but that doesn't stop him from trying. Derek lacks the patience necessary to actually follow a good idea to fruition.

Quotes

"Take a hydro-spanner, remove the pulsoid reactor coupling and reduce the internal sub-spin flow to expected norms. Are you following this?"

"Wow, I have a great idea that'll make plenty of money, but first I need some packing foam, droxide tape and a little polycarbide resin."

"I'm a technician with a mission."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need an electronic security expert to help them penetrate a corporation. Word on the street is that Derek's the man for the job. Without a doubt, Derek is the best, but working with him is more than a little taxing.

◆ All Derek needs to build his newest device is a little plutonium. A friend of his working in a reactor has helped some "go missing," but there's no way he can actually carry it out of the plant. Derek needs the PCs to retrieve it for him, and tells them that they don't need to worry about the security – he's got that part covered. If the PCs take the job, they'll find that Derek has suppressed the security systems, and that it's an easy job. But that leaves one question – what does Derek want with two kilos of plutonium, anyway?

TV PRODUCER

ST: 9 **IQ:** 13 **Speed:** 5
DX: 10 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 110

Advantages

Patron (The government); Reputation +2 (To people in the industry: the hottest producer around); Status 2; Wealth (Wealthy).

Disadvantages

Bad Temper; Duty (To the government); Secret (Airing subliminal propaganda).

Quirks

Loves attention; Paints in his spare time; Thrives on stress.

Skills

Administration-13; Area Knowledge-12; Artist-12; Computer Operation-14; Diplomacy-12; Electronics Operation (Video Equipment)-13; Leadership-13; Photography-12; Politics-12; Psychology-13; Savoir-Faire (Corporate)-14; Sex Appeal-11; Video Production-16; Writing-11.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.
Contemporary – No changes.
Space – No changes.

Story

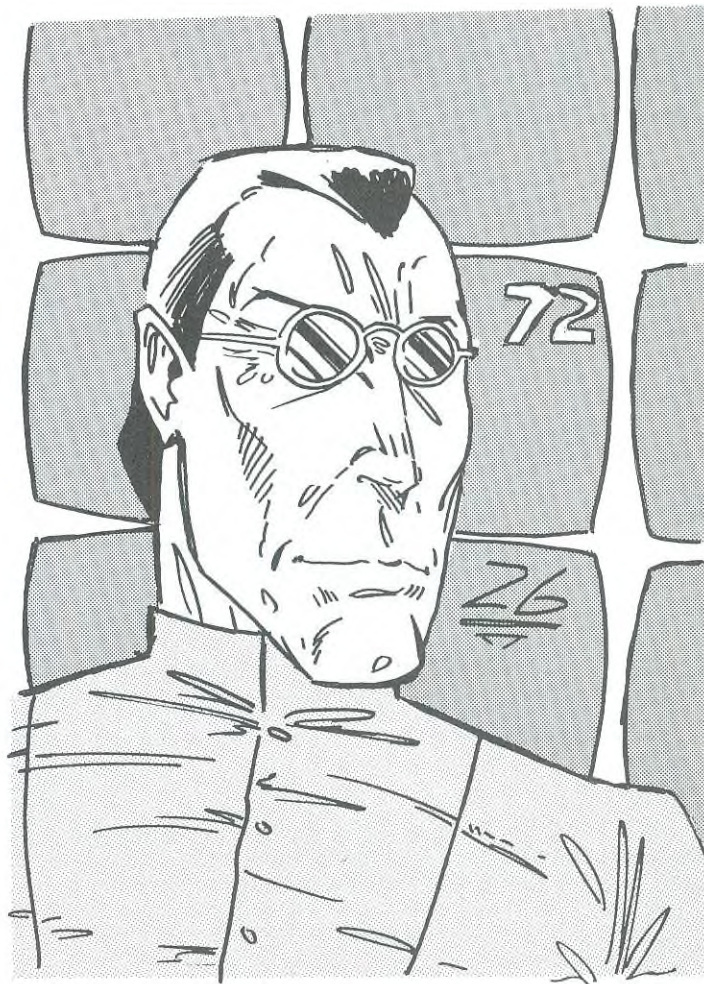
Richard Johnson loves attention; in fact, he thrives on it. As the executive producer for Channel 26, he's made sure there's no shortage.

At 27, Richard is by far the youngest producer in any of the major networks. His unorthodox methods as a production assistant should have gotten him fired, but the owner of the station noticed his potential, and promoted him to producer and then to executive producer. Under Richard's command the station is consistently in the top three, a tribute to the owner's wise choice.

Richard is a total rock. He makes incredibly difficult decisions under pressure with no hesitation. He has yet to suffer from the mental breakdowns that plague his colleagues. To appease his desire for attention, he's hired people specifically for their ability make him feel even more important.

His ambition is without conscience, and this attracted the attention of the government. They were looking for a station to air a set of "enlightening" commercials and programs. These productions ranged from subliminal messages to outright propaganda, but Richard didn't care one bit. For the kind of money they offered the station – and to him personally – he just couldn't pass the offer up.

Although it doesn't show, four years in the business are starting to have an effect on him. He has more money than he could possibly know what to do with, and it doesn't seem enough. His production assistant has been suggesting that the station restore a bit of its former unbiased opinions, and Richard is beginning to



Richard Johnson

Age: 27

consider it. Of course, telling the government to "go away" isn't one of the safest activities Richard could be engaging in.

Quotes

"Okay, Miss Jones, send in the next group. And this time, please screen them a little better. We don't need another stupid sitcom based on a street gang . . ."

"If you care about your job, you're going to stop asking so many questions about these commercials and get back to work."

"Ah, jeez, this is great. Am I good or what?"

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs are a news team investigating possible conflict-of-interest charges against Richard. He wants to get out of this situation entirely, and tries to bribe the PCs to make it look as though he was coerced into it. Will they help him, or will he find himself on his way to jail?
- ◆ Friends and relatives of the PCs have started acting strangely. The PCs trace the reason to subliminal messages being aired on Channel 26. Can they expose this conspiracy . . . not an easy task since the government is the major player?

VIDEO REPORTER

ST: 11 IQ: 13 Speed: 5
DX: 10 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
Light monocrys vest (PD 2, DR 8); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 65

Advantages

Luck; Reputation +4 (To the public: famous journalist); Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Intolerance (Drunk drivers); On the Edge; Reputation -2 (To his colleagues: suicidal idiot); Secret (Killed his brother in a drunk-driving accident).

Quirks

Always carries a pocket video camera; Straps video cam to his helmet when he rides his bike.

Skills

Computer Operation-13; Detect Lies-11; Diplomacy-12; Electronics Operation (Video)-14; Fast-Talk-12; Motorcycle-12; Photography-15; Research-11; Video Production-13; Writing-12.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 12.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.

Contemporary – When it comes to sensationalistic news reportage, there's little difference between today and 30 years down the road. No changes.

Space – No changes.

Story

Cliff DeMunn has a death wish – that's what all his colleagues in the newsroom, and his superiors at the network, believe. But he's one of the best ENG (Electronic News Gathering) camera-man-reporters who's ever lived. They've lost track of how many awards he's won, for stories like his face-to-face interview with the nuclear terrorist who called himself Doombird.

DeMunn seems totally fearless. In the tradition of the battlefield journalists reporting from the front lines of Vietnam, Kuwait/Iraq and Costa Rica, he's willing to risk his life to get the story. Whether it involves walking into a firefight or following the SWAT team into a crack house, DeMunn will go for it.

In fact, although his colleagues don't know it – and he won't admit it even to himself – Cliff DeMunn *does* have a death wish. It relates to a secret he's been hiding for a decade or so. As teenagers, he and his younger brother boosted a car and went out for a joyride. They'd been drinking, and Cliff lost control of the



Cliff DeMunn

Age: 26

car at high speed. He was thrown clear of the crash, but his younger brother burned to death in the wrecked car. From that day on, Cliff's been living on the edge, taking ever greater risks. He justifies his behavior by claiming he's an adrenalin junkie, living for the rush. In fact, he's courting death, and won't be totally satisfied until he finds it. The only clue to the trauma he suffered is his outraged hatred of drunk drivers. (One of his prize-winning reports, filmed with a minicam strapped to his helmet, records his late-night, high-speed motorbike pursuit of a drunk driver through the streets of the city.)

Quotes

"I'll get the shots – trust me."

"Come on . . . just a little bit closer . . ."

"So that's your homemade nuclear device over there, huh? Okay, what were your demands again?"

Adventure Seeds

◆ Cliff's habit of filming anything and everything has finally gotten him into trouble. His minicam has picked up some evidence incriminating a major corporation in a serious crime . . . although Cliff's not aware of it. Now the corp enforcers are coming after him to retrieve the memory chip. DeMunn realizes that someone's after him, but doesn't know who or why. The PCs can get involved on either side; perhaps they're the people Cliff turned to for help, or perhaps they're the street ops hired by the corp.

◆ The PCs are on a mission, and need a visual record of what goes down (perhaps to prove to their employers they actually succeeded). They hire or persuade DeMunn to go with them. The mission is dangerous enough, without having to worry about Cliff's suicidal showboating getting them all killed . . .

4

SPACE



ARMS DEALER

ST: 10 IQ: 14 Speed: 5
DX: 11 HT: 9 Move: 5

Dodge: 5

Light monocryc vest (PD 2, DR 8); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 60

Advantages

Contacts (Two of the GM's choice); Empathy; Reputation +1 (To military people, all the time: sells only the best); Wealth (Wealthy).

Disadvantages

Addiction (IQ Adders); Enemy (GM's choice).

Quirks

Never mixes politics and business; No biases or prejudices – she'll sell to anyone; Very careful about weapon and range safety.

Skills

Accounting-12; Administration-13; Armoury-14; Beam Weapons (Laser)-12; Computer Operation-13; Detect Lies-16; Diplomacy-12; Economics-13; Guns (Needler)-13; Guns (Rifle)-12; Merchant-14; Physics-12.

Cyberwear

Two Chip Slots with an Amp Chip and a Math Chip.

Weapons

Needler Pistol: 1d+2.

Conversions

Fantasy – Replace Computer Operation, Guns (Needler) and Physics with Shortsword-12 and Riding-11.

Contemporary – Replace (Guns) Needler with Guns (Pistol)-13. Remove the cyberwear.

Near Future – No changes.

Story

Marietta Vedderling has brought a fresh degree of professionalism to the arms trade. Before she came on the scene, only the biggest purchasers – the people trying to equip an entire army, for example – could expect to deal with the real pros. Everybody else had to deal with the fly-by-nights – companies that probably doubled as pirates and merc squads, and would be as likely to blow up their customers after the credit was transferred as to actually deliver the goods.

Not so with Vedderling Enterprises Corporation. Under the direction of Marietta, VEC will handle virtually any order – from a “special expediter” who needs a dozen gyro carbines, to a tin-pot dictator who needs to equip his Praetorian guard from the ground up. Although prices frequently vary – even an arms dealer enjoys economy of scale, and hence can offer bulk discounts – the level of professionalism remains very high. No client of Vedderling Enterprises Corporation has come away disappointed.

Marietta herself is an anomaly in the arms business. Most of the other big dealers were once military officers or mercs. Mari-



Marietta Vedderling

Age: 48

etta came into the business from an unusual direction: the research side. For 20 years she worked in the research division of Mars Armaments, Inc., one of the largest defense contractors in this spiral arm. After learning everything she could about weapons technology, she left Mars and worked as a marketing consultant for a drive manufacturer, learning all she needed about the marketing and economic side of business. Only then did she set up her own organization, selling arms to anyone who wanted them. At first she handled Mars products almost exclusively – although there was no *official* link, it's obvious that the Mars execs knew of, and tacitly approved of, her venture – but eventually she branched out.

Now, the aging Marietta is the premiere arms dealer in the sector. Although she knows how all the weapons she sells function, and can demonstrate them, she has little interest in them other than as sources of revenue.

Quotes

“If you need End User Certificates for the weapons, I can supply those too. There *will* be a surcharge, of course . . .”

“If you can buy it, it's obsolete. That's the technology curve for you.”

“Don't bother justifying yourself. I don't care what you use it for.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need restricted weapons, but can't afford to buy them outright. Marietta is suffering from the “guerrilla marketing” efforts of a competitor, and is willing to deal: if the PCs obliterate the upstart, she'll give them what they need.

◆ Marietta is supplying weapons to both sides of a war that involves the PCs. Their job, should they decide to accept it, is to cut off the flow of arms to their enemy. Of course, Marietta won't react well to losing half of the business she's getting from the conflict . . .

ASTROGATOR

ST: 9

IQ: 14

Speed: 5.25

DX: 11

HT: 10

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 65

Advantages

Lightning Calculator; Mathematical Ability.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper; Intolerance (Non-technical people, “ignoramus”).

Quirks

An academic dilettante; Brags about the near-perfection of his astrogation; Loves trivia.

Skills

Astrogation-17; Astronomy-15; Botany-11; Chemistry-11; Computer Operation-18; Computer Programming-17; Electronics Operation (Sensor)-13; History-12; Mathematics-17; Physics-13; Xenology-11.

Languages

Any two relevant to the campaign, at level 12.

Conversions

Fantasy – Preston would be a ship’s navigator, the only man who can get the PCs’ ship across the great ocean. Replace Astrogation, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Electronics and Xenology with Navigation-16 and Seamanship-14.

Contemporary – He’s still a navigator. Replace Astrogation, Computer Operation and Xenology with Navigation-16 and Driving (Car)-11.

Near Future – Same as above.

Story

Preston Wong isn’t a likeable man. For one thing, he’s a little too good at his job for someone barely out of his teens: Most astrogators take decades to hone their skills – which seem to combine science with some kind of intuitive art – to the level Wong enjoyed before he’d even left the Academy. For another, he’s just too damn proud of that level of skill, and too outspoken about it. He’s lacking in those social skills that a spacer needs to become an accepted member of a ship’s crew . . . and then, when he senses he’s being ostracized, he claims all the other crew members are jealous of his intelligence and education.

Granted, Preston *is* very intelligent. He knows everything there is to know about astrogation, and a smattering about virtually every other subject in existence. Sometimes this wide-ranging knowledge base comes in very handy; most of the time, however, it just turns Wong into a pedant.

Wong got into space travel the “right” way: he earned a combined master’s degree in mathematics and astronomy, then studied astrogation at the academy. He considered joining the Imperial Navy, but then discarded the idea because he imagined his superiors would all be “jugheaded warriors who earned their



Preston Wong

Age: 21

rank by storming Gatling bunkers” (an example of one of Wong’s less-enlightened opinions).

Space is a lethal environment where knowledge and training make the difference between success and catastrophe – so believes Wong. Thus it really ticks him off to see all the intuitive pilots, the people flying by the seat of their pants and otherwise muddling through, and all those other know-nothings doing okay for themselves. He considers their successes as personal affronts to his competence, and would gladly dispatch them all into the nearest black hole to make space “safe” for professionals like himself. Since all too many merchant ships, scoutships, colony ships and other non-military vessels are crewed by such “non-professionals,” Wong has to bite back on the more outrageous of his views if he wants to get a “ride” with anyone.

Quotes

“Mid-course corrections are for wimps . . .”

“We were just under 1,000 meters off target at break-out. Not bad over a run of 23 parsecs, huh?”

“Well, actually, the *first* ship to enter the Horsehead Nebula wasn’t the *Skydiver*, it was the *Jove 7* out of New Boston . . .”

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need a good astrogator for a particularly challenging mission, and the best in the region is Preston Wong. Unfortunately, the irritating bugger has alienated the wrong people, and is in serious trouble. If the PCs want to hire him for their crew, they’re going to have to keep him alive. To make things even worse, Wong doesn’t realize how much trouble he’s in, and won’t take kindly to “unprofessional buffoons” like the PCs meddling in his affairs . . .

◆ A jump has gone *very* wrong, and the PCs’ ship is so far off course it’s impossible to determine its position (in another arm of the galaxy? in another galaxy? or outside the known universe entirely?). Obviously, to get home the crew must understand exactly what happened. But Preston Wong is too busy claiming that it’s just not his fault to cooperate.

BATTLESUIT SOLDIER

ST: 10 (20) **IQ:** 11 **Speed:** 6
DX: 14 **HT:** 10 **Move:** 6
Dodge: 6
Powered Combat Armor (PD 6, DR 100); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 85

Advantages

Alertness +2; Intuition.

Disadvantages

Cowardice (When not in armor); Duty (To superiors).

Quirks

Makes snide remarks about heavy battlesuiters; Paints various slogans on her armor.

Skills

Battlesuit-14; Beam Weapons (Laser Rifle)-16; Computer Operation-11; Demolition-11; Electronics Operation (Battlesuit)-10; Free Fall-14; Gunner (Gatling Laser)-15; Running-9; Tactics-10; Vacc Suit-10.

Weapons

Gatling Laser: 20d impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – The closest equivalent would be a knight with enchanted armor. Replace all skills except Jumping, Running, and Tactics with Broadsword-15, Heraldry-10, Lance-14, Riding-13, Shield-15, and Two-Handed Sword-14.

Contemporary – No conversion.

Near Future – If there are battlesuits or even powered exo-armor in the campaign, then Kelly could exist. No changes.

Story

Kelly Fields feels the most free when she's encased in 100 pounds of metal and biphase carbide. In her powered combat armor, Kelly can perform inhuman feats of strength, survive in some of the most inhospitable environments the galaxy has to offer, and survive damage that should have killed her ten times over.

Kelly is a scout in the Imperial Marines. Often she and her unit are brought in to provide heavy support for conventional troops. Although her role is merely that of a scout, she carries a Gatling laser as a hand weapon, and can reduce a tank to slag in seconds.

With all of this power, it's no surprise that Kelly is terrified, and feels totally vulnerable, when she removes her suit. Exposure to hard vacuum or being shot with a handgun are small inconveniences when she's suited up, but are deadly when she's outside her servo-powered womb. When she's "unsuited," even the most insignificant things can kill her, and this scares her profoundly.



Kelly Fields

Age: 24

Kelly doesn't mind that she only wears powered combat armor, and not a full battlesuit. In fact, she prefers it this way. She considers her more heavily-armed and -armored brothers lumbering beasts. She knows who really gets the glory.

Kelly would prefer to stay near her suit at all times – just in case. The chief battlesuit mechanic has complained to the sergeant that Fields never leaves him alone. He's learned to accept the fact that when he works on her gear, she's going to be there to "help" him and to make sure he doesn't make any mistakes.

Quotes

"They're 200 yards straight ahead, they're not going to even see us coming."

"I've done the real work. Now you can send in the jarheads to mop up."

"No, I'm just watching. You'll probably need a torque wrench for that."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Kelly has gone AWOL, and taken her suit with her. Now nobody has to tell her when and where to take off her armor – except, of course, the PCs who've been hired to bring her back, and to keep the suit in one piece while doing it.

◆ Battlesuits are identified by transponders and other IFF gear. It's almost impossible to tell who's actually inside the suit. That's the rationale behind the PCs' mission, at least – penetrate an enemy military base, "replace" a suit soldier (perhaps the scout . . .), and sow confusion in the armored infantry's ranks. Of course, that requires the PCs to deal with the legitimate occupant of the suit . . .

BELTER

ST: 9 IQ: 11 Speed: 5.75
DX: 12 HT: 11 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 60

Advantages

Alertness +2; Toughness 1.

Disadvantages

Honesty; Impulsiveness.

Quirks

Tactlessly critical of others; Gives heartfelt apologies which usually make things worse; Mild risk-taker.

Skills

Astrogation-11; Computer Operation-11; Demolition-11; Free Fall-11; Geology-11; Mechanic (Belt ship)-10; Metallurgy-12; Piloting (Belt ship)-11; Prospecting-15; Vacc Suit-10.

Conversions

Fantasy – The nearest equivalent is a solitary miner or prospector. Replace all skills except Geology and Metallurgy with Blacksmith-10, Cooking-9, Gambling-10, Prospecting-11 and Survival (Forest)-9.

Contemporary – Same as above, but add Driving (Car)-12.

Near Future – Depending on *how* near a future, Jasinder could exist as a belter; make no changes. Otherwise use the Contemporary paradigm above.

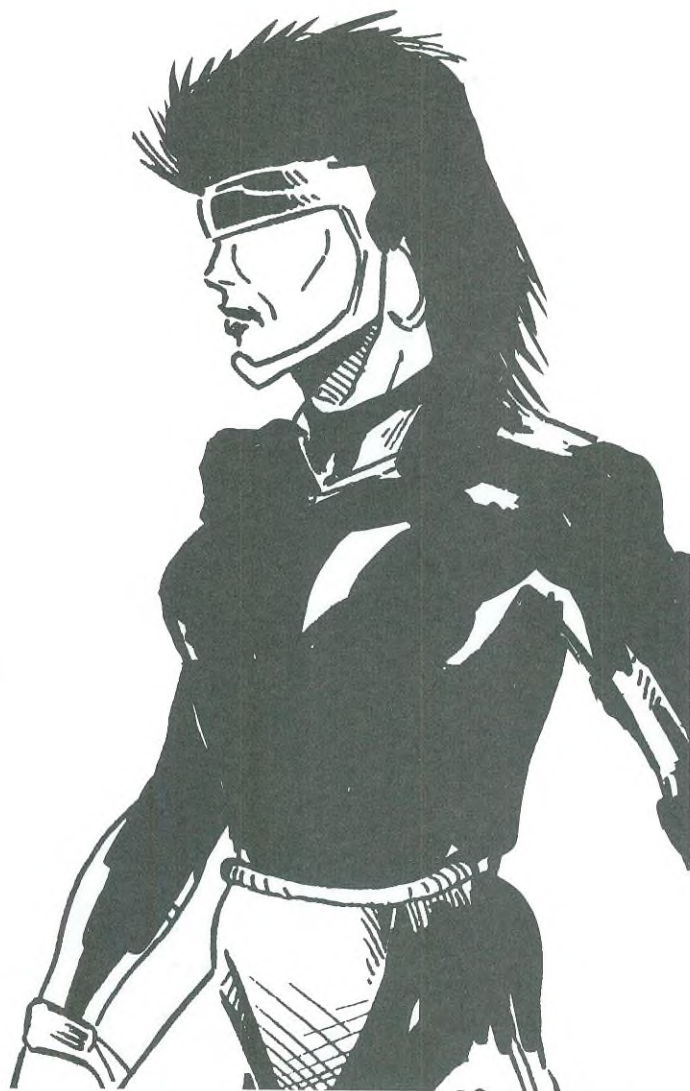
Story

Many people call the Asteroid Belt the final frontier. Certainly it's a tough, rugged environment, but there's a fortune to be made by people who have what it takes. What it usually takes is the emotional fortitude to gamble everything on one throw of the dice, the determination to get the job done and the willingness to operate entirely alone for long periods of time.

Jasinder Pradip has what it takes. She's a hell of a prospector, she's obsessive about seeing something through once she's committed to it, and she seems to relish a big gamble. If given her own way, however, she wouldn't choose the solitary lifestyle of a belter; she's simply too gregarious. She's also a realist, however, and that's why she works the Belt.

For some reason, Jasinder never quite got the hang of those social "lubricants" – tact, politeness, discretion and little white lies. Intellectually, she understands how important they are, and she wishes she could incorporate them into her own behavior. But in practice, that's proven impossible. She's simply too impulsive; when a thought enters her mind, it's out her mouth before her brain's "censors" and "editors" can couch it in more acceptable terms, or suppress it completely.

It's not that she tries to insult or hurt people. She's merely telling the truth, as she sees it. If she thinks a new acquaintance is ugly, or mistaken about something, Jasinder will tell him – bluntly, and straight to the point. Only *after* she's said it will she realize she probably could have phrased it a touch better . . .



Jasinder Pradip

Age: 34

Unlike certain other painfully tactless people, Jasinder doesn't justify her actions as "telling it like it is." She'd *like* to tell it as it *isn't* for once, if that would give her a chance of having some real friendships and other interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately, that's just not in her make-up. This realization was one of the major factors in her decision to become a belter. At least this way she can do something she enjoys, and that she finds challenging, without running quite so big a risk of getting lynched . . .

Quotes

"I know you told me yer wife was ugly, Sammy, but *jeez* . . ."

"What junkyard you buy *that* rust-bucket at?"

"Hey, hey, sorry. *Gawd*, but you're oversensitive . . ."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Jasinder Pradip has, over the years, systematically alienated everyone who monitors the airwaves for distress calls. Now she's in real trouble, and nobody's willing to lift a finger to help the blunt, irritating belter. Fortunately for her, the PCs – new to the Belt – have picked up her signal as well.
- ◆ A claim jumper has taken over Jasinder's claim, assuming that she's so widely disliked nobody will take her side. Jasinder fears he's correct, and stakes all her hopes on a group of newcomers to the Belt – the PCs.

BOUNTY HUNTER

ST: 11 IQ: 13 Speed: 5.5
DX: 12 HT: 10 Move: 5

Dodge: 5

Reflec over Medium monocrys armor (PD 4, DR 6 vs. lasers, PD 0, DR 16 vs. crushing); no encumbrance.

Point Total: 70

Advantages

Intuition; Reputation +2 (To prospective clients: he always gets his man).

Disadvantages

Age (52); Pacifism (Self-defense only); Sense of Duty (To employers).

Quirks

Always maintains strict personal security; Professional demeanor; Reacts badly to being called a hired gun.

Skills

Astrogation-13; Beam Weapons (Blaster)-14; Brawling-13; Carousing-10; Computer Operation-12; Detect Lies-12; Diplomacy-10; Fast-Talk-13; Free Fall-11; Gunner (Ship's weapons)-12; Interrogation-12; Karate-11; Piloting (Small spacecraft)-12; Shadowing-12; Stealth-12; Tracking-15; Vacc Suit-11.

Weapons

Blaster: 6d impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Replace Astrogation, Beam Weapons, Computer Operation, Free Fall, Gunner, Piloting and Vacc Suit with Area Knowledge-13, Broadsword-14 and Survival (Forest)-13.

Contemporary – Same as above, but replace Broadsword with Guns (Pistol)-14 and Driving (Car)-12.

Near Future – Same as above.

Story

Lucasz Kawecki is a bounty hunter – *not* an assassin, *not* a hired gun, and don't tell him otherwise. His job is to track down fugitives from justice and bring them back – alive and (relatively) unharmed – to the jurisdiction they ran from. He's taken contracts from official law enforcement agencies, from multistellar megacorps, and even from individuals. In the latter two cases, he always makes sure – or as sure as he can be – that his subject won't be murdered once he's turned him over. While, strictly speaking, whatever happens to his "subject" once Lucasz has made delivery isn't his concern, his moral code is such that he considers bringing a person back to certain death is no better than killing the subject himself. (The only exception to this – and it's an important one to Kawecki – is in the case of fugitives under official, legal death sentence. As long as the death sentence was pronounced by whatever justice system has jurisdiction, Kawecki will take the contract without a second thought.)

Kawecki has been doing this for nearly 35 years now. He's taken more than 100 contracts, and his success rate is well over 75% – an astounding record. He's had to kill about 10 "subjects"



Lucasz Kawecki

Age: 52

– in self defense only, of course – but he doesn't count them as successes, and mourns the people who forced him to gun them down.

Lucasz is aging, and starting to slow down. But what he's losing in physical prowess he's more than making up for in experience, and downright cunning. He knows hundreds of ways of tracing a subject and is an absolute artist at improvising non-lethal take-downs.

Kawecki is big and heavy-set. A friend of his – an aficionado of ancient (pre-Atomic) literature – decided that Lucasz resembled Hemingway, and nicknamed him "Papa." The nickname has stuck, and the name of "Papa" Kawecki is well-known throughout many social circles in this part of the galaxy.

Quotes

"Drop the laser, Slade. It's over."

"No. Not dead or alive. *Alive*, that's the way I do it."

"You want to be a bounty hunter, kid? Well, watch, and maybe you'll learn something."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Papa took the wrong contract, and now he's in deep trouble. His erstwhile employers have put him "out of sanction," and have hired some up-and-coming bounty hunters to bring *him* in. Normally, the battle of youth and vigor versus age and low cunning would go to Lucasz; but this time he's vastly outnumbered, and his foe has resources he can only guess at. The PCs can be on either side: the bounty hunters sent out to bring down the old master, or the friends that Papa turns to for help.

◆ Due to some screwed-up communications, Kawecki is convinced that one of the PCs is his current subject. Can the character keep out of Papa's clutches long enough to convince him he's after the wrong man?

CAB DRIVER

ST: 9
DX: 13

IQ: 12
HT: 10

Speed: 5.75
Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 75

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive); Contacts (Any two relevant to the adventure).

Disadvantages

Honesty; Odious Personal Habit (Talks too much); Stubbornness.

Quirks

Drives too fast; Eats junk food almost exclusively; Needs to know everything about her passengers.

Skills

Area Knowledge-17; Bard-11; Beam Weapons (Laser)-14; Computer Operation-12; Computer Programming-12; Diplomacy-11; Driving (Hover)-15; Electronics (Vehicular)-12; Fast-Talk-15; Knife-14; Streetwise-10; Survival (Urban)-10; Writing-10.

Languages

Any two relevant to the adventure, at level 10.

Weapons

Laser: 1d impaling; Large Knife: 1d-3 cutting, 1d-2 impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Elisa drives a horse-drawn carriage. Replace Beam Weapons, Computer Operation, Driving and Electronics with Riding-14.

Contemporary – Elisa's a typical inner-city taxi driver. Remove Beam Weapons and Electronics.

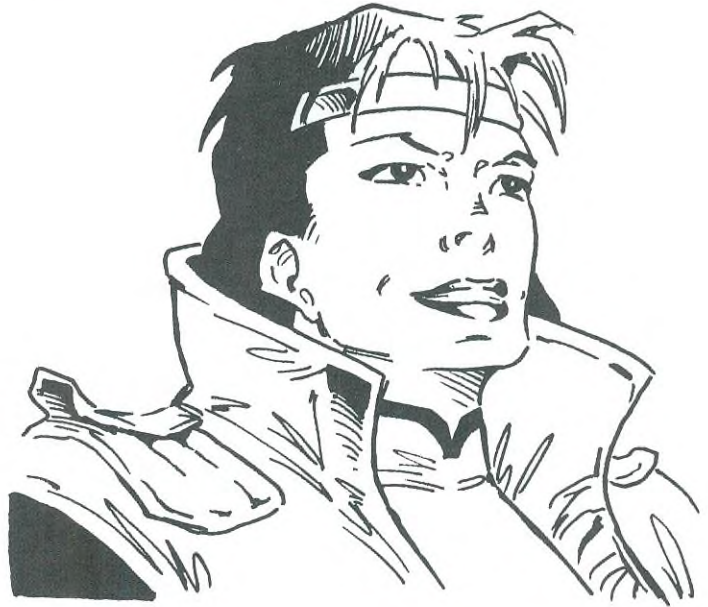
Near Future – Same as above.

Story

Since personal vehicles are prohibited on Regula 3, the only way to get to some of the more "interesting" parts of town is by hovertaxi.

Elisa Viscon operates her own taxi, and for travelers lucky enough to be picked up by her, it's a ride they won't soon forget. From the instant a passenger gets in to the time he leaves, Elisa doesn't stop asking questions and giving advice. She absolutely has to know where they come from, where they're going, who they know here, what alien race they are, what they do, etc. Surprisingly, only twice has she had a gun stuffed in her mouth and told to "shut up and drive." People willing to put up with Elisa's over-enthusiastic prattle can learn a lot. She knows absolutely everybody who's anybody in town, and she gives out information freely (packed in among plenty of useless garbage).

For the added comfort of her guests, Elisa has made several modifications to her taxi. She's installed a holo-viewer, a vid-phone and a computer that she's personally programmed with a



Elisa Viscon

Age: 29

detailed description of every place in town worth visiting. Customers are usually too busy listening to Elisa's constant banter to make use of her conveniences, however.

Elisa never stops moving. When she's not driving she has to do something – *anything*. She keeps a detailed journal: of everything she does, all of her passengers and details about them, interesting things she hears, etc.

The owner of Startown, a local club, has realized that Elisa is good advertising. He pays her a cut for every customer she persuades to spend an evening at his club.

Quotes

"Over there's Fat Johnny's Space-Pizza Parlor. Hey, how come so many pizza places have the name John in them? I mean there's Big John's Pizza and Crazy John's Pizza Palace. Hey, don't forget Johnny's Pizza Feast. I sure do wonder why that is. I mean sometimes you might be in the mood for pizza but to always . . . mpffph. Hey, no need to be rude – I was just being friendly."

"No, you don't really want to go to Visual Matrix, the drinks are 'way too expensive. I'm taking you somewhere else – it's a surprise."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Elisa picked up a man in front of a bank. When she later heard that he'd robbed it, she went straight to the police. Now the PCs are hired to protect her until she's able to testify in court. It sounds like an easy job to the PCs, until they realize who they've been hired to protect.
- ◆ The PCs flag down Elisa's cab for a ride to their favorite bar. When they realize she's taking them in the wrong direction, they'll probably assume malign intent on her part, and possibly overreact. Of course, Elisa's just taking them to Startown, from which she receives a kickback.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

ST: 10 IQ: 13 Speed: 5.25
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 65

Advantages

Empathy; Intuition; Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages

Duty (To superiors); Honesty; Sense of Duty (To his planet).

Quirks

Cold and aloof; Cynical; Never gives anyone the benefit of the doubt.

Skills

Computer Operation-13; Detect Lies-16; Electronics Operation (Security)-13; History-12; Law-13; Literature-12; Psychology-14; Research-11; Writing-11.

Languages

English-13; Ancient Rigellian-13.

Conversions

Fantasy – Remove Computer Operation and Electronics Operation. Replace Ancient Rigellian with an appropriate ancient language. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – Replace Ancient Rigellian with a suitable dead language.

Near Future – In a *GURPS Cyberpunk* campaign, customs officials are armed. Add Guns (Pistol)-13. Replace Ancient Rigellian with a suitable dead language.

Story

Renard Vincenzo had no real desire to be a customs officer. He excelled in school and earned his university degree in Rigellian Second-Epoch literature. Unfortunately, there wasn't much call for a scholar with his background in the job market . . . particularly since the Rigellian Second Epoch ended while the pro-hominids were still eking out an existence in Olduvai Gorge on Earth. When he heard about an opening in the Customs and Excise Bureau he applied for the position.

As he entered his training, he was cynical about the whole thing. But while his fellow students were still depending on "mental checklists" and psychological profiles of would-be smugglers, Ren discovered that – surprisingly often – he could sense when someone was lying to him almost as if he could smell their anxiety. He was *good* at his work, and grew to like it. By the end of his training, Vincenzo was in full agreement with the philosophy and policies of Customs and Excise, and dedicated to doing the best job he possibly could.



Renard Vincenzo

Age: 29

Like all customs officers, Vincenzo receives rotating assignments. Sometimes he works the public spaceports, interviewing individual visitors and immigrants to his world. Other times he works with the customs brokers at the commercial fields, while occasionally he takes a stint on the orbiting space platform where all ships must check in before descending to the planet's surface.

Vincenzo is almost obsessive when it comes to following the rules. While some of his colleagues may turn a blind eye to minor transgressions – a business traveler with an extra liter of off-planet liquor, for example – Renard believes the laws apply to *everyone*. His superiors sometimes wish he'd lighten up a little – every seizure, even if it's that single liter of booze, leads to significant paperwork – but they can't argue with his sterling arrest record.

Quotes

"Sir? Please step out of the line and come with me."

"Your vessel is hereby impounded, pursuant to Customs and Excise regulation 103.5, paragraph 2b."

"This wouldn't be an attempted bribe, would it? *Guard!*"

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs *must* slip something past the customs screen. They've arranged with a customs officer who's amenable to bribes. At the last moment, however, their "bought-and-paid-for" officer calls in sick, and Renard Vincenzo takes his shift . . .
- ◆ Renard's bulldog tenacity usually stands him in good stead. This time, however, it's gotten him in real trouble. A new arrival claimed he had nothing to declare, but Renard knew he was lying and dragged him into the interrogation booth. The new arrival pulled out an ID card identifying him as a member of the planet's military intelligence . . . but that cut no ice with Vincenzo. Despite the spook's gruesome threats, Renard "processed" the smuggler. Now Vincenzo knows something he shouldn't. The PCs can be the ops sent out to silence Vincenzo, or they can be the friends or colleagues Renard turns to for help when he realizes the mess he's in.

DEEP-SPACE EXPLORER

ST: 8 IQ: 13
DX: 13 HT: 20
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Speed: 5.75
Move: 5

Point Total: 80

Advantages

Intuition; Luck.

Disadvantages

Phobia (Open spaces); Shyness (Severe).

Quirks

Cranky; Loves playing chess; Wanderlust.

Skills

Astrogation-14; Chess-14; Computer Operation-13; Computer Programming-12; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-11; Engineering (Hyperdrive)-12; Engineering (Reaction Drive)-12; Free Fall-12; Mathematics-10; Mechanic (Hyperdrive)-12; Mechanic (Reaction Drive)-12; Physics-10; Piloting (Small spacecraft)-14; Planetology (Earthlike)-11; Vacc Suit-11; Xenology-11.

Conversions

Fantasy – Conceivably Moss could be an explorer, sailing the seas in his small ship looking for new continents. Replace all his current skills with Boating-14, Naturalist-10, Seamanship-14, Shipbuilding-10, Survival (All environments)-12, and Swimming-10.

Contemporary – The world's too well-mapped to leave any space for a freelance explorer. No conversion.

Near Future – No conversion.

Story

There's nothing that Viragon Moss likes better than climbing into his singleship and heading off . . . *anywhere*, it doesn't really matter. He's always been a solitary individual; even as a kid he didn't like having people around him. It's not that he was afraid of people, or didn't know how to handle them. On the few occasions he cared to try, Moss was quite charismatic. It was simply that he preferred his own company to that of anyone else. Having people around him distracted him from his own thoughts; the expectations and demands on him made him feel not entirely free – and freedom is what Viragon Moss values above everything, perhaps even life itself.

Moss was lucky enough to grow up during the Second Diaspora, when the human species was spreading out through the galaxy, looking for more planets to settle. There was always a call for deep-space explorers, and in that need Moss found his true calling. Issued a singleship by one of the great mercantile combines, his mission was to scour space for habitable planets and



Viragon Moss

Age: 46

report their position back to his corporate masters so they could dispatch a colony ship. Of the hundreds of explorers cruising the galaxy, Moss has one of the best records for finding habitable worlds. He shrugs off this record as pure luck, but others believe he has some kind of instinct – perhaps psionic in nature – that helps him in his quest.

Over the years, Moss's antisocial tendencies have intensified. While he used to be a solitary curmudgeon, now he's an aging, cranky solitary curmudgeon. His job requires him to communicate with the leader of the first colonization mission coming to a new world he's discovered, but he discharges this duty as fast as he can so he can get away from people and surround himself with empty space again.

Moss has lived in his ship for so long, he's developed a phobia about open spaces. He's not truly comfortable unless he's enclosed by a vacc suit or the hull of his ship. He passes time playing chess with his ship computer. To challenge himself more, he now plays two games simultaneously.

Quotes

"Yeah, well . . . Guess I better be going."

"Second star on the right, and straight on till morning. (That's a joke, son . . .)"

"Settle down? Why?"

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ It was bound to happen sooner or later. Viragon Moss has made first contact with a previously unknown alien race. Now he's at the center of the effort to establish friendly relations, and to understand the new race. Meanwhile, Moss just wants to get vacuum around him again . . .
- ◆ In his explorations, Moss has stumbled upon a planet that one of the multistellar megacorps wanted to keep secret. Now he's got corporate agents after him. The PCs can be either the agents hunting Moss, or the people he turns to for protection.

DIPLOMAT

ST: 9 IQ: 16 Speed: 5.25
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 155

Advantages

Empathy; Reputation +2 (To everyone: famous diplomat); Status 4; Unfazeable.

Disadvantages

Age (60); Duty (To his nation); Overconfidence.

Quirks

Always says *precisely* what he means; Can justify any position based on historical precedent; Rarely shows emotion.

Skills

Administration-15; Area Knowledge-16; Computer Operation-15; Detect Lies-19; Diplomacy-18; Economics-16; Fencing-10; Heraldry-15; History-17; Intelligence Analysis-15; Leadership-17; Politics-18; Psychology-16; Research-16; Savoir-Faire (Political)-15; Sex Appeal-14; Writing-16; Xenology-16.

Languages

Any five relevant to the adventure, at level 15.

Conversions

Fantasy – Remove Computer Operation and Xenology. Add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – Klaus makes a fine negotiator. Remove Xenology.

Near Future – Thanks to cyberwear, Klaus might do an even better job. Implant a Cellular Link and a Chip Slot with an Eidetic Chip. Remove Xenology.

Story

Klaus von Mader is known throughout the quadrant as the “diplomat’s diplomat.” He’s smooth, professional, and has an almost supernatural ability to sense what people are really thinking. When he sits down across a bargaining table with representatives of another government, it’s a foregone conclusion that von Mader’s side is going to get the better side of the deal . . . even if the other side doesn’t recognize it right away. So well-known and respected is von Mader that he’s often requested to serve as an independent arbitrator for conflicts that don’t involve his government. When this happens, the aging diplomat has an uncanny knack for discovering exactly what both sides want – even if they don’t quite realize it themselves – and finding a compromise that satisfies everyone.

Throughout his every dealing, von Mader remains calm, untroubled – virtually emotionless. The ease with which he can empathize with the emotions of others hints that he’s not totally unfeeling, however, and that this is just his professional manner. His cool, aloof exterior makes it very difficult for others to figure out what he’s thinking and feeling.

The duties of a diplomat are various. On occasion, Klaus von



Klaus von Mader

Age: 60

Mader has had to prevent or end wars, *start* wars, help or hinder diplomatic relationships with other governments, or simply gather information. He seems not to care what his mission may be; to him, the only thing that matters is success or failure.

Nobody seems to know where von Mader came from, or what his previous career was. Recurring – yet unsubstantiated – rumors hint that he might have been a career espionage officer before joining the diplomatic corps. Predictably, von Mader himself has nothing to say on the matter.

Quotes

“As you know, I’m not empowered to make decisions autonomously on issues of this magnitude. We’ll discuss this later, after I’ve consulted my superiors.”

“As Ambassador Plenipotentiary, my decisions on this matter are binding upon my government.”

“As Santayana said, ‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.’ ”

Adventure Seeds

◆ Von Mader is being sent to mediate a dispute – about to become a war – between two worlds. The PCs are sent with him as bodyguards and aides. Unbeknownst to von Mader or the PCs, there’s a faction on one of the conflicting worlds that wants diplomacy to fail, and war to result. This faction figures that, if the independent arbitrator is killed and it looks like the opposing world’s forces did it, then their own government will go to war.

◆ The PCs’ world is on the brink of war with another. Von Mader has been called in as independent arbitrator. The PCs, who are intelligence agents for their government, intercept a shielded communication hinting that von Mader’s *real* mission – assigned by his own government – is actually to *foment* war, not prevent it. Is this the truth, or is it some stratagem, by the opposition or a faction in their government, to discredit von Mader?

DOCKMASTER

ST: 10 IQ: 13 Speed: 5.2
DX: 10 HT: 11 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 60

Advantages

Alertness +1; Appearance (Beautiful); Contacts (GM's choice); Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Duty (Dockmaster); Greed.

Quirks

Enjoys her feeling of power; Grumbles under her breath; Hates free fall.

Skills

Accounting-12; Area Knowledge-13; Computer Operation-13; Detect Lies-13; Diplomacy-11; Freight Handling-14; Intimidation-11; Merchant-11; Streetwise-11.

Conversions

Fantasy – Laura would make a fine fantasy dockmaster. Replace Computer Operation with Shortsword-11. Eliminate Incompetence: Free Fall and add the Literacy advantage.

Contemporary – No changes.

Near Future – Add Guns (Pistol)-12.

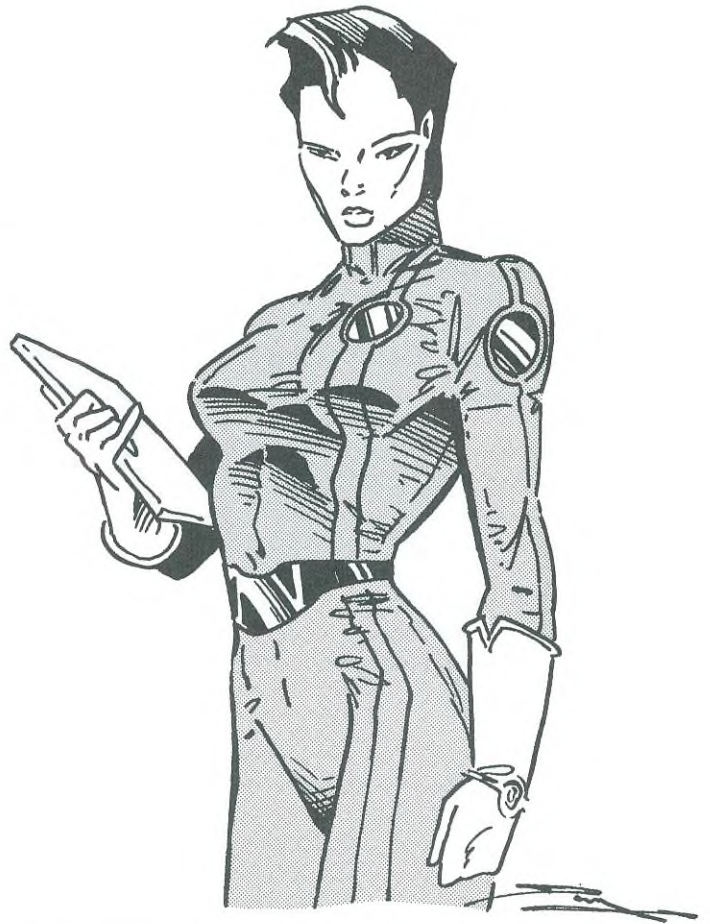
Story

Every merchant vessel traveling through the Beta-Perseid sector must stop at the New Vancouver space station to have its manifest checked . . . officially, for security reasons. Anyone who doesn't declare the entire contents of his hold has the contents seized. After a few months, the collected goods are auctioned off to the highest bidder. For this reason, the space station has become a major trade center, with vessels coming from great distances in the hopes of finding a good deal.

Laura Howell is the chief dockmaster for the entire space station complex. She talks with each ship captain to determine whether a thorough check is necessary. The chance that she'll require a full search depends on how much money the captain offers her to look the other way.

Because of her openness to bribes, many captains running illegal contraband think Laura is a potential buyer for their goods. Not so. Although she doesn't mind passing them through, Laura will have absolutely no direct part in any illegal activity – other than bribery. She does have an extensive data file built up of people who have no such qualms, and will get prospective buyers and sellers in touch . . . for a price. Her reason is simple: she doesn't want to be implicated in any other illegal activities. Bribery serves her well enough.

Laura's superiors know exactly what she's doing. Instead of firing her or bringing her up on charges when they first found out, they merely asked for a large cut. Laura grumbles about it, but she knows her employer's collusion is vital if she wants to stay in business.



Laura Howell

Age: 32

Quotes

"I'm sorry, *Pegasus*, but I'm going to have to do a full search of your cargo hold . . . Oh, I understand. Wait for your clearance code."

"Unbelievable! Of course I don't want to buy your drugs. But I do know someone who might."

"We should have this unloaded in a few hours. No, we can't do it any faster for any reason . . . except of course for that one."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs are trying to smuggle something past the New Vancouver station. They've been told that the dockmaster there is easy to bribe. Today, though, Laura is fearful that the police are monitoring her calls, so she wants to lay low. How well can the PCs talk their way out of a potentially embarrassing situation, and still smuggle their cargo?

◆ The PCs are working for the authorities, and have been ordered to collect evidence of Laura's transgressions. Someone has leaked this information to Laura, and she's expecting them. If they offer her a bribe, she'll accuse them of corruption. And in such cases the space station has legal jurisdiction, and justice is handed down by Laura's equally corrupt superiors . . .

DRIVE TECH

ST: 10

IQ: 14

Speed: 5.5

DX: 12

HT: 10

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 50

Advantages

Double-Jointed; Reputation +2 (To all engineers and technicians: one of the best drive techs in the sector).

Disadvantages

Stubbornness; Unknown Enemy (Somnolus Corporation).

Quirks

Doesn't trust megacorps; Gregarious; Tries to avoid talking shop (but doesn't manage very well).

Skills

Computer Operation-13; Computer Programming-12; Electronics (Drives)-14; Engineering (Hyperdrive)-13; Engineering (Reaction Drive)-13; Free Fall-15; Mathematics-12; Mechanic (Hyperdrive)-15; Mechanic (Reaction Drive)-15; Physics-12.

Conversions

Fantasy – In a fantasy setting, Gayle would be an Armourer. Replace all skills with Armoury-14, Blacksmith-15, Cooking-13, Merchant-13 and Metallurgy-12.

Contemporary – Gayle would be a mechanic, specializing in cars, boats or planes. Replace all skills with Computer Operation-13, Driving (Car)-11, Electronics Operation (Car*)-14, Electronics (Car*)-13, Engineer (Car*)-12 and Mechanic (Car*)-16.

Near Future – Same as above.

*Or boat, or plane.

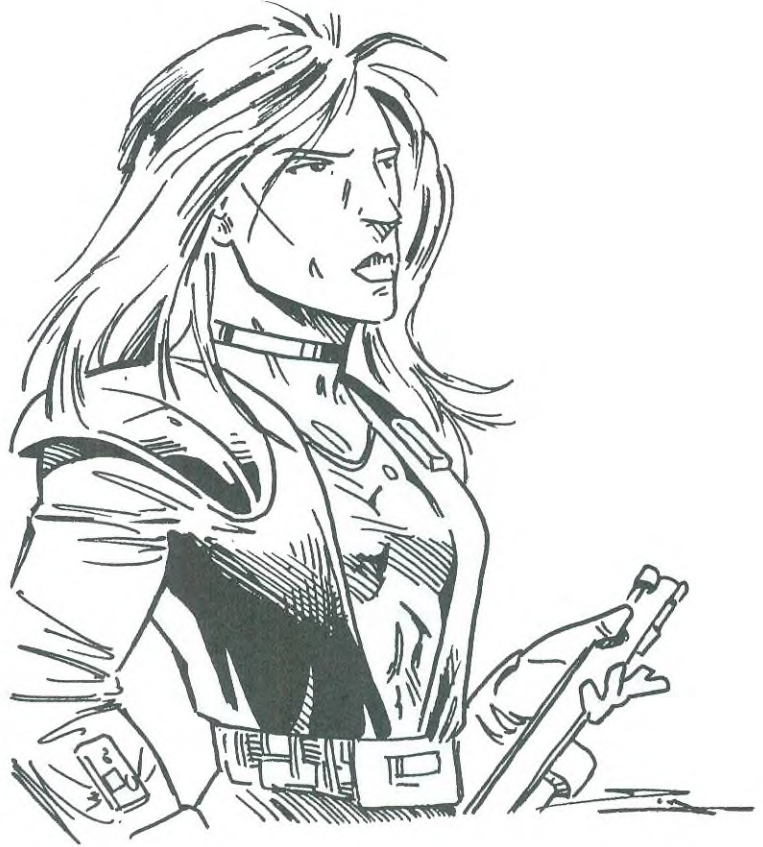
Story

Nobody knows exactly what Gayle Pappageorgios has against the megacorps; she never talks about it. But there's obviously *something* in her past that's turned her against them. She won't accept employment from the multistellars, no matter what salary and benefits they offer her, and she won't work on their ships as long as there's anyone else around who can do the job.

Which, of course, is the multistellars' loss. Gayle is an excellent drive tech. If it once worked – and there's still half of it left unvaporized – she can probably get it to work again. And, if you're willing to risk some modifications that would shock the original designers, she can sometimes squeeze an extra edge of efficiency out of your drive.

Expect to pay a lot. Pappageorgios knows her work is good, and certainly doesn't underestimate her value to prospective clients. If money's the main issue, go to another drive tech; if it's quality you want, grit your teeth and pay Gayle what she demands.

Gayle doesn't match the stereotypical image of the "technodweeb" with no social skills, who feels more comfortable around computers than people. All too many people assume that's what she's like, however . . . which really ticks Gayle off. In fact, she's a very gregarious person who enjoys meeting new people, and relishes the occasional opportunity to party down. She has many



Gayle Pappageorgios

Age: 28

contacts throughout the space station (or spaceport or wherever) where she works, and is well-connected to the grapevine and the rumor mill. She has many suppliers who work the gray market, but she doesn't buy goods that she thinks are stolen. Although she dislikes and distrusts the megacorps, she won't do anything active against them, particularly if it would be against the law.

Quotes

"Man, you toasted this puppy good . . ."

"Why is it that everyone assumes all I think about is tech? (Hand me that hydrostatic phase inverter there . . .)"

"Somnolus Corporation, huh? Get your *own* techs to fix your rust bucket."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Gayle has received a Mayday from a ship stranded in space with its drive burned out. For some reason, the ship hasn't broadcast a widespread distress call . . . apparently because the crew don't want to draw attention to themselves. Gayle needs a lift to the crippled ship, and turns to the PCs for help.

◆ Gayle Pappageorgios has gone missing. The day before she vanished, representatives of Somnolus Corporation were seen around the station asking about her. Now her friends – including the PCs – have to track her down.

ESPER

ST: 10 IQ: 15 Speed: 5.5
DX: 11 HT: 11 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 75

Advantages

Absolute Timing; Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages

Delusion ("I'm not the same species as deadheads"); Duty (Star League); Intolerance (non-esper humans); Odious Personal Habit (Reads minds without permission, all the time).

Quirks

Arrogant; Communicates mind-to-mind with other espers, even if there are non-espers around (very rude); Moody.

Skills

Area Knowledge-14; Beam Weapons (Laser)-12; Computer Operation-15; Computer Programming-14; Leadership-13; Literature-12; Mathematics-12; Psychology-12; Writing-13.

Psionics

ESP Power 5, Clairvoyance-13, Precognition-13; Psychokinesis Power 4, Levitation-14; Telepathy Power 7, Emotion Sense-14, Mental Blow-13, Mind Shield-14, Mindwipe-13, Psi Sense-14, Telereceive-17, Telesend-16.

Weapons

Laser Pistol: 1d impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Depending on the campaign, psionics and magic could both exist; otherwise replace all psionic abilities with equivalent magic spells and add the appropriate level of Magery. Replace Beam Weapons, Computer Operation and Computer Programming with Heraldry-13 and Riding-11.

Contemporary – Psionics are still virtually unknown abilities. Replace Beam Weapons with Driving (Car)-11.

Near Future – Many corporations may be researching psionics. No changes.

Story

In the "backwater" culture into which Biernat Jenner was born, "espers" – those people with psionic abilities – were considered strange, abnormal, barely human, perhaps even cursed by God. While more enlightened cultures cherished these rare and gifted souls, Biernat's environment effectively punished him for his gift. He tried to "turn off" his abilities, but of course couldn't. Although he vehemently denies it today, he internalized his culture's attitude that he was abnormal, and perhaps even evil.

As a defense mechanism against this subconscious self-hatred, Biernat developed an overt dislike of "deadheads," as he calls them – ordinary humans without his psionic gifts. Consciously, at least, he considers himself infinitely superior to them – in fact, a member of a different species that he calls *Homo novalis*. In his



Biernat Jenner

Age: 24

more cynical periods, he claims that *H. novalis* is the next evolutionary step beyond *H. sapiens*, and that eventually "deadheads" will die out.

This attitude didn't endear Biernat to his neighbors, and it seemed only a matter of time before someone put a permanent end to his arrogance. Before that could happen, however, a Star League cruiser landed on the planet. The ship's esper had detected Biernat's mental emissions, allowing her to track the young man. Star League policy at the time was to recruit any "wild" espers they could find. (The League was experimenting with setting up an esper-based FTL communication net, and needed all the recruits it could get.) Biernat accepted the League's invitation in a millisecond – the idea of joining a group that revered espers was almost inconceivable.

Today, years later, Biernat is still a troubled man. His moodiness and bouts of depression, coupled with his continued arrogance and intolerance toward non-espers, guarantee that he'll never be well-liked, even by fellow espers. Some of his more perceptive colleagues sense the internalized criticism and self-hatred that drives his behavior, but none can penetrate his defenses enough to get *him* to realize what's motivating him, let alone persuade him to seek the therapy he needs.

Quotes

"I refuse to work with this man. His thoughts offend me."
"I hate communicating with deadheads. It takes so long."
"Your thoughts speak louder than your words."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ The PCs are on a mission that involves them with the Star League, one requiring that they work closely with an esper – Biernat Jenner. Can they keep themselves from strangling the arrogant psychic long enough to complete their mission?
- ◆ Biernat Jenner has made psionic contact with a previously unknown alien race. The League has decided to send him out, with a support group (the PCs), to handle first contact.

HOMESTEADER

ST: 13 IQ: 11 Speed: 5.75
DX: 11 HT: 13 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 45

Advantages

Animal Empathy; Immunity to Disease.

Disadvantages

Dependents (Family); Vow (Move on when a planet starts to get crowded).

Quirks

Doesn't like depending on any technology more advanced than an axe; Dresses like a hick; Likes horses or the alien equivalent.

Skills

Agronomy-13; Animal Handling-12; Carpentry-10; Computer Operation-10; Cooking-12; First Aid-11; Guns (Rifle)-13; Meteorology-10; Naturalist-12; Riding-13; Scrounging-11; Survival (Forest)-13; Tracking-12; Woodworking-12.

Conversions

Fantasy – Remove Computer Operation.

Contemporary – Dylan would try to live a back-to-the-land existence in a remote place like northern Canada, Alaska or the Amazon jungle. Replace Computer Operation with Driving (Pick-up)-11.

Near Future – In the overpopulated future, there may well be nowhere on Earth that a homesteader could go. But if it fits into the individual campaign – perhaps in a post-apocalypse world, for example – there are no changes.

Story

What kind of person would give up a nice, comfortable life on a developed planet to risk his life colonizing a newly-discovered world? Ask Dylan Bochner and listen to his answer: he's done it not once, but *three times*.

It's not that Bochner wants to turn back the clock and lusts for a simple, "primitive" life on the frontier. Certainly, he knows many "primitive" skills, and would rather depend on technology he knows he can maintain and replicate even if the next supply ship is 15 years late. But the main reason he likes being on the frontier is his love for personal freedom. Bochner would agree with that Atomic Age writer, Robert Heinlein, when he said, "When a society starts requiring identity cards, it's time to move somewhere else." Fortunately for Bochner, the Second Diaspora – as humanity spreads throughout the galaxy – has made it possible for him to move somewhere else every time his current planet starts getting too full.

When he moves to a new planet, Bochner usually ends up homesteading dozens of miles from his nearest neighbors. It would be easy to conclude he's just an antisocial, solitary old cuss, and leave it at that. In fact, Dylan has good social skills, and gets on well with other people, thoroughly enjoying their company. He homesteads far from anyone else because that's just the



Dylan Bochner

Age: 44

way you do it. In a few years – all too soon, probably – the space between you and your nearest neighbor will fill up with people anyway . . .

If Bochner ever took the time to label his political and ideological outlook, he'd probably classify himself as a "rational anarchist." He feels that the only "laws" are those that a person enforces on himself. A person is totally responsible for his actions, and any attempts – by government, or society – to diminish an individual's responsibility should be countered at every turn. With this kind of world view, it's no wonder that Bochner has to keep moving on . . .

Quotes

"Why use a horse instead of a hoverbike? Because I can *grow* fuel for a horse, and because I can't breed hoverbikes."

"It keeps happening. You take a perfectly fine planet, then ruin it by filling it up with people."

"When I can talk to my neighbor without either of us leaving our front stoop, it's time to move on."

Adventure Seeds

◆ Bochner has finally bitten off a little more than he can chew. He's homesteading in a region threatened by climactic or geological conditions, by native animal life, or by whatever the GM sees fit. For the first time in his life, he's had to call for help. Fortunately for him, the PCs' ship is in orbit around his planet, and hear his Mayday. But can they pull him and his family out of trouble in time?

◆ For whatever reason, the PCs have chosen – or been forced – to accompany a colony mission. Because of his previous experience, Bochner is the *de facto* leader of the colonists. The PCs have to set up some kind of working relationship with the homesteader.

INVENTOR

ST: 10

IQ: 15

Speed: 5.25

DX: 11

HT: 10

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 105

Advantages

Intuition; Reputation +2 (“Hired-gun” technician); Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages

Honesty; Overconfidence.

Quirks

Claims familiarity with any technical subject, even if she knows nothing about it; Hates megacorp research labs; Never does any work for free.

Skills

Chemistry-14; Computer Operation-15; Computer Programming-14; Diplomacy-14; Electronics-13; Engineer-13; Mathematics-16; Merchant-14; Nuclear Physics-14; Physics-16; Research-16.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.

Contemporary – It’s much tougher to make a good living as a hired-gun researcher. Remove the Wealth (Comfortable) advantage.

Near Future – No changes.

Story

Fresh out of graduate school, Lynda Pelligrosso did what many young, ambitious scientists do: she accepted a job offer from a prestigious megacorp research division. Her first job was to develop new techniques for manipulating graviton waves from a distance. At the time, this was a “hot” problem, and the Imperial Navy was funneling huge sums of money into the megacorp to fund the ongoing research. After only two years, Pelligrosso made a major breakthrough. Excited, she reported her findings to her superiors . . .

. . . Who told her to keep her mouth shut, and bury her results deep in the datafiles. It took her a while to understand what was going on, but when she finally realized, she was horrified. Solving the graviton-wave problem would put an end to the ongoing military funding, and that funding far exceeded any possible profit the megacorp could realize from Lynda’s discovery. Economic reality dictated that her breakthrough would be shelved – at least until the megacorp had siphoned a few more billion out of the Navy.

Pelligrosso quit, and tried going out on her own. Her academic credentials should have entitled her to government funding, but her erstwhile employer had effectively “blacklisted” her with all funding agencies. If she wanted to continue doing pure research, she realized, she’d have to go begging to the corp she’d just quit.

That simply wasn’t an option. Lynda went into business for herself, “hanging out her shingle” as a researcher-for-hire, a



Lynda Pelligrosso

Age: 31

“hired-gun inventor” who’d take on projects for anyone who’d pay her. Initially, she’d pictured freelancing as an interim measure; funding agencies have a short institutional memory, she figured, and in a few years she’d be able to get back into pure research again.

What she hadn’t predicted was that she’d enjoy the variety and ever-changing challenges of her freelance lifestyle. Now she’ll work for anyone – except for the megacorps and their “lapdogs,” of course – on any project she doesn’t consider directly harmful to human life. She’s become a hard-nosed businessperson, and a shrewd negotiator. Her success record guarantees she’ll always have a surfeit of clients.

Quotes

“Of course I’m familiar with Simpson’s revision of Tien’s superstring theory. Who isn’t?”

“Interesting problem. Put me on retainer and I’ll look into it for you.”

“There’s always an answer. The first step is clarifying the question.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ Lynda recently completed a major project for a mysterious employer. Only after she’d handed over the results did she realize the “research instrument” she’d designed would also make a weapon capable of boiling away a continent. She turns to the PCs to prevent her client – who’s actually a megacorporate agent – from ever building the weapon.

◆ Lynda’s one-time employer has realized that an assignment she’s recently accepted will, if she’s successful, cost them heavily in a particular market. The corp sends out expeditors to “dissuade” Lynda from pursuing that contract any further. The PCs can be those expeditors – in which case they might eventually decide to throw in their lot with Pelligrosso – or can be the people Lynda asks for help.

RESEARCH SCIENTIST

ST: 9 IQ: 16 Speed: 5.25
DX: 10 HT: 11 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 105

Advantages

Mathematical Ability; Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages

Intolerance ("Neo-Luddites," anyone who'd interfere with the free progress of science); Overconfidence.

Quirks

Apologist for problems caused by unchecked progress; Careful dresser; Outspoken to the point of rudeness.

Skills

Chemistry-13; Computer Operation-20; Computer Programming-18; Electronics-13; Engineer-13; Mathematics-20; Nuclear Physics-17; Physics-18; Research-14.

Conversions

Fantasy – No conversion.
Contemporary – No changes.
Near Future – No changes.

Story

When he was a kid, it was the sheer intellectual challenge that attracted Orson Chu to the sciences. For example, when he learned in elementary school how to balance chemical equations, he accessed a university-level workbook on the subject and ground through all the self-test questions – without caring what the equations actually were, or what applications they could possibly have. That fascination with the process, coupled with little concern for applications or consequences, stays with him today.

Chu works in the research department of a major multistellar megacorporation. His "portfolio" is pure research – and, by God, that's the way it's going to stay. Management keeps trying to refocus the efforts of Chu and his team onto areas that should have short-term, marketable applications, but Orson resists this with all his considerable determination. He couldn't care less about applications, and doesn't think he should *have* to care. Applications and "industrialization" – his most derogatory term – are for "mere" engineers. Scientists, like artists, shouldn't be concerned about how their work can be used. The value of science is in the science itself, not in how it's used.

Of course, Chu has no problem with the unrestrained development of technology. If any "mere engineer" can take Chu's discoveries and make some use of them – whatever that use may be – that's just fine with Chu; that's just the way it should work.



Orson Chu

Age: 28

Orson's one demand is that *he* shouldn't have to worry about doing anything practical with his discoveries. Once he's exhausted the intellectual challenge in a particular area of investigation, he just wants to move onto something new. Let the "lesser intellects" turn his insights into a new device, whether it be a life-saving medical instrument or a planet-cracking weapon.

Orson works well with other pure scientists, and can respect engineers – as long as they recognize they're not true scientists. Non-scientists are acceptable as long as they treat him with the respect he thinks he deserves.

Quotes

"Look, any problem supposedly caused by technology can be *solved* by technology. That's the way it works."

"And I say, keep the know-nothing politicians and senior managers out of the lab."

"Now look, I'm not advocating war. But anytime a good war breaks out, take a look at what happens to research funding . . ."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ Orson Chu feels no real loyalty toward his employers; he'd work for any corporation that maintained his funding and respected his autonomy. Predictably, however, his employers will go to great lengths to keep him. The PCs are hired by a rival megacorp to "extract" Chu from his current corporate home.

- ◆ The military intelligence agency for which the PCs work has learned that Chu is on the verge of a breakthrough that will make all current message encryption techniques obsolete. Obviously, if Chu's megacorp gets this technology, the consequences will be earthshaking. The PCs' mission is to "silence" Chu, and obliterate all records of his work.

SCOUT

ST: 12 IQ: 13 Speed: 5.75
DX: 11 HT: 12 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 120

Advantages

Charisma +2; High Pain Threshold; Military Rank 2.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior (Curiosity); Duty (To military); Sense of Duty (To his team).

Quirks

Gregarious; Very tolerant.

Skills

Beam Weapons (Laser)-13; Botany-10; Chemistry-10; Computer Operation-13; Cooking-12; Diplomacy-12; Ecology-13; Free Fall-11; Geology-10; Leadership-14; Naturalist-13; Photography-12; Stealth-12; Survival (Forest)-16; Tracking-13; Vacc Suit-13; Xenobiology-12; Xenology-12.

Weapons

Laser Pistol: 1d impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – The closest equivalent is an explorer. Replace Beam Weapons, Computer Operation, Free Fall, Vacc Suit, Xenobiology and Xenology with Navigation-13, Piloting (Small ship)-12; Seamanship-12 and Shortsword-12. Literacy is an advantage.

Contemporary – Same as above, but replace Shortsword with Guns (Pistol)-13.

Near Future – Humanity has just begun colonizing the solar system. Remove Xenobiology and Xenology.

Story

Once the deep-space explorer has found a new, potentially-habitable world, the normal drill is to send a team of scouts in to evaluate the planet. The type of team, and the basis of the evaluation, depends on whom the original explorer was working for: a megacorp, survey or the Imperial Navy.

Toju Yorifusa is a member of the Navy's ExEv (Exploration-Evaluation) surface team, trained expressly to be among the first people put down on a new world. The ExEv surface team's job is to make an initial evaluation of the planet. This initial evaluation is very simplistic, rating it on an A to F scale of six criteria: mineral wealth, environmental suitability, ecosystem complexity, military value, colonization potential and risk factor. Yorifusa and the other members of his team simply spend about two months on the planet, setting up temporary bases here and there, getting a feel for what the world is like. They carry only light equipment, depending more on their personal survival skills than on high technology. (The rationale for this is that technology isolates an individual from the environment, making objective evaluation more difficult, if not impossible.)

Like other members of the ExEv program, Toju is something



Toju Yorifusa

Age: 27

of an intellectual dilettante. He knows a little about a lot of disciplines – geography, geology, life sciences, etc. – but has no in-depth training in any of them. (After the ExEv team has finished the preliminary work, specialist teams in every important discipline will be shipped to the world, so in-depth analysis isn't important at this point.) The only thing at which Yorifusa is truly an expert is surviving – surviving anything a new world can throw at him.

Yorifusa likes being around people, and loves the sense of camaraderie that the ExEv program generates among its members. He prides himself on being able to work with anyone, and his accepting, easy-going manner usually rubs off on the other members of his team. ExEv teams that include Yorifusa are almost always tightly-knit, and more efficient than the norm as a result.

Quotes

“You guys pick the rest of the team. It doesn't matter to me.”

“Hey, commander, when's my next assignment?”

“We've done our job here. I'll just relay the results of our findings, and she'll be ready to colonize.”

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs are working at a secret – and highly illegal – megacorporate facility on a distant world. When Yorifusa and the rest of his ExEv team put down on the planet, the PCs have to “convince” the scout that the world doesn't warrant further evaluation . . . without arousing the team's, or the Navy's, suspicions, of course.

◆ Newly-discovered worlds are quarantined until the ExEvs are sure they're safe to colonize. A megacorp hires the PCs to land on a new planet and search for artifacts. During their stay, the PCs are nearly killed by a voracious entity. After they leave, Toju arrives, finds no evidence of the lethal alien, and designates the planet safe! The PCs must explain to the authorities that putting a colony there would be tantamount to murder, but doing so would earn them several years in a penal colony for breaking quarantine . . .

SMUGGLER

ST: 11

IQ: 12

Speed: 5.5

DX: 12

HT: 10

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 100

Advantages

Empathy; Reputation +1 (To underworld: good smuggler).

Disadvantages

Enemy (Former owner of her ship; appears very rarely); Reputation -2 (To authorities: smuggler).

Quirks

Assumes a devil-may-care attitude; Flamboyant; Hates for her money to go to politicians.

Skills

Acting-11; Astrogation-10; Computer Operation-11; Economics-12; Fast-Talk-13; Free Fall-11; Merchant-16; Guns (Needler)-13; Piloting (Small spaceship)-14; Psychology-12; Streetwise-13; Vacc Suit-12.

Weapons

Needler: 1d+1 impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Mary still owns a smuggling ship, but this one plies the seas and rivers, not the spaceways. Replace Astrogation, Computer Operation, Free Fall, Guns (Needler), Piloting and Vacc Suit with Area Knowledge-14, Broadsword-12, Navigation-13 and Seamanship-12.

Contemporary – Same as above, but replace Broadsword with Guns (Pistol)-14.

Near Future – Same as above.

Story

Mary Jymmins would make one hell of a legitimate businesswoman. She's got an encyclopedic memory for the prices of trade goods on different worlds, and can figure out a three-cornered trade route (or perhaps an even more complicated one) that will maximize her profits based on any combination of cargos. She's an expert at negotiation, and seems to have an inborn sense for what a particular prospect is willing to pay.

Legitimate business doesn't interest Mary Jymmins, however. Taxes, duties and trade tariffs take too much of a bite. And anyway, Mary has an instinctive revulsion to putting any of her hard-earned money into the hands of corrupt politicians.

Mary got into this business about 10 years ago. She was captaining a small trading vessel for a supposedly-legitimate mercantile combine, when she realized that few of the cargos she carried actually showed up on the combine's manifests, and thus had any legal existence. Deciding that stealing from a thief wasn't that much of a crime, she "diverted" one of the more profitable cargos to another destination, sold it herself . . . and, as an afterthought, kept the ship. She renamed it the *Grey Trader*, and still pilots it today. Of course, the ship's original owner would like to



Mary Jymmins

Age: 30

get it back – and take his inconvenience and monetary losses out of Mary's hide – but so far she has managed to stay one jump ahead of him.

Mary Jymmins doesn't often care what cargo she handles, or for whom. She *does* make a couple of exceptions, however. She won't carry slaves, and she doesn't get involved with any military organizations. Everything else is fair game, however.

She's an expert at figuring and minimizing risks. Most of her clients expect smugglers – particularly successful ones – to be devil-may-care rogues, and she doesn't want to disappoint them. Therefore she hides her normal, analytical nature behind a flamboyant facade.

Quotes

"From here to Farpoint, it'll cost you 10,000 credits. From here to Farpoint *without official entanglements* it'll cost you 60,000 credits."

"Don't tell me the cargo. As long as it's not highly radioactive or too explosive I don't care."

"I love carrying people. They're the only cargo that loads itself."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs need passage from one system to another, and the only ship bound for their destination is Mary Jymmins's. Of course, she's already handling a cargo on the trip, so the PCs have to share the cramped ship with hideously illegal goods. If the ship gets searched, there's a real risk they'll be arrested as accomplices to Jymmins's smuggling.

◆ The PCs load some valuable cargo onto her ship . . . which soon thereafter gets "repossessed" by its original owner. Now the PCs – plus Mary, who wasn't aboard at the time – have to work together to get their valuable property back.

SPY

ST: 10 IQ: 14 Speed: 6
DX: 13 HT: 11 Move: 6
Dodge: 6
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 170

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive); Luck; Night Vision.

Disadvantage

Bad Temper.

Quirks

Feels no emotions, although he fakes them really well; Never uses his real name; Always armed; Seduces lots of women ("love 'em and leave 'em").

Skills

Acting-15; Brawling-13; Carousing-11; Computer Operation-14; Detect Lies-15; Diplomacy-14; Disguise-15; Fast-Talk-15; Free Fall-12; Intelligence Analysis-16; Karate-14; Guns (Needler)-15; Photography-13; Psychology-12; Research-13; Savoir-Faire-15; Sex Appeal-15; Sleight of Hand-13; Streetwise-14.

Languages

Any three relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Weapons

Gauss Needler: 1d+2.

Conversions

Fantasy – Apart from the trappings, espionage varies little over time. Replace Computer Operation, Free Fall, Guns (Needler) and Photography with Shortsword-15 and Knife-14.

Contemporary – Replace Free Fall and Guns (Needler) with Guns (Pistol)-15 and Driving (Car)-13.

Near Future – Same as above.

Story

Paradis Snow – *not* his real name; nobody knows his real name – is the quintessential freelance espionage agent. He'll work for anyone who'll pay him enough, and can match the level of professionalism Snow demands from his employers. Whether it's politically-motivated surveillance, industrial espionage, even out-and-out "wet work," he doesn't care who the subject is or what the central issue is.

Paradis is exceptionally good at his job. He's a "social chameleon," able to integrate himself into any social, political or professional group. He quickly reads what his "audience" wants of him, feeds back to them everything they want to see and hear, and constantly fine-tunes his performance by watching their reaction. As a result, he can ingratiate himself, quickly and efficiently, with anyone. There are probably thousands of people, scattered throughout the galaxy, who consider Snow – under one of his pseudonyms – among their closest friends.

In contrast, Paradis Snow feels no friendship – or any other human emotion – toward anyone else in the world. He's no cold,



Paradis Snow

Age: 37

emotionless automaton, however . . . or at least that's not the way he comes across. He can *mimic* emotions perfectly, and always appears to feel the emotions appropriate to the occasion (using whatever definition of "appropriate" fits the circumstances and the other people involved).

His "social chameleon" skills make Paradis Snow an absolute lady-killer, and he takes full advantage of this fact. As with other forms of social intercourse, he has no emotional investment in his seductions, either (although that's not how it appears, of course). Certain psychologists have guessed that Snow uses these liaisons as attempts to convince himself he's not quite as alone in the universe as he actually is.

Paradis Snow is probably a sociopath; if he's not, he's a very troubled man – and probably crushingly sad, if he'd ever let himself feel it. It's important to note that espionage is perhaps the one career where this character flaw actually makes him *better* at his job . . .

Quotes

"You'll never see me in person, you'll never know my real name. If that bothers you, find someone else for your mission."

"Spare me your justifications, I don't *care* why you want it done."

"If the two idiots trying to follow me are yours, pull them off; I don't work under supervision. If they're *not* yours, you won't care if they just disappear . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ In the midst of a political crisis, the PCs find out that their dearest friend – good old Paradis Snow – is actually a spy working for the enemy.

◆ The PCs have been given the task of hunting down a "mole" in their organization. Fortunately, they won't have to work alone: the gregarious, affable Paradis Snow has been assigned to work with them . . .

STARSHIP CAPTAIN

ST: 8 IQ: 13 Speed: 5.25
DX: 11 HT: 10 Move: 5
Dodge: 5
No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 30

Advantages

Military Rank (Captain); Status 4.

Disadvantages

Age (60); Compulsive Behavior (Cleaning); Duty (To the Navy); No Sense of Humor.

Quirks

Calls everyone "son" ("dear" for women); Does everything by the book; Only follows preset strategies.

Skills

Administration-14; Astrogation-12; Beam Weapons (Laser)-12; Computer Operation-13; Diplomacy-12; Free Fall-11; Leadership-14; Physics-10; Piloting (Large spaceship)-12; Strategy-14; Tactics-11; Vacc Suit-11.

Weapons

Laser Pistol: 1d impaling.

Conversions

Fantasy – Gemyt is the captain of an ocean-going warship. Replace Astrogation, Beam Weapons, Computer Operation, Free Fall, Piloting and Vacc Suit with Boating-12, Broadsword-12, Navigation-13, Piloting (Large ship)-12 and Seamanship-14.

Contemporary – Same as above, but replace Broadsword with Guns (Pistol)-13.

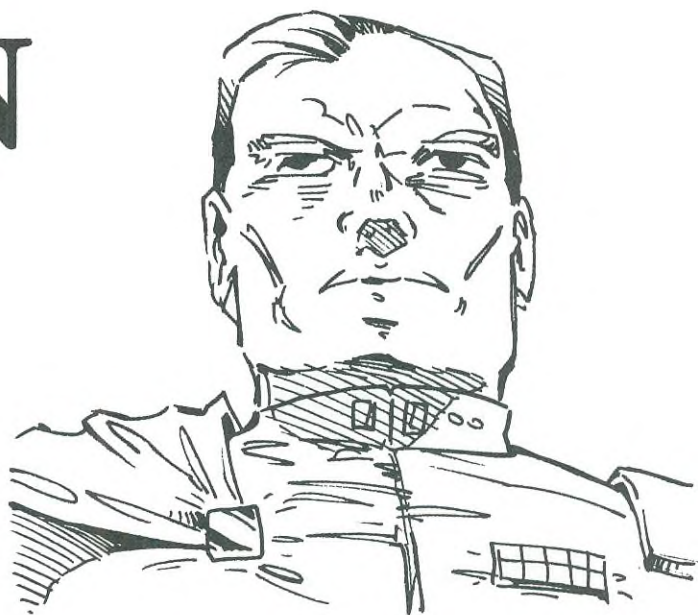
Near Future – Same as above.

Story

Gemyt Spann is the captain of the U.F.S. *Hornby*, the flagship of the Imperial Navy. So far, no other ship comes even close to her size or firepower, and that's just the way Gemyt likes it.

In the academy, Gemyt received average marks, and did nothing to set himself apart from his classmates. The only features his roommate can recall are that Gemyt was fastidiously clean, and had no social life.

Spann's rise through the ranks was slow, but steady. He worked hard on every starship aboard which he served. When presented with a problem, he would invariably use a textbook answer, never taking the time – or the risk – to come up with an innovative solution. His patience paid off – eventually. His quiet servitude was rewarded – infrequently – with promotions. The Navy saw someone they could depend on, so now, in his 60th year, he's the captain of the mighty *Hornby* – carefully backed up by a brilliant bridge crew.



Gemyt Spann

Age: 60

Gemyt's ship is cleaner than an operating room. He makes sure it gets painted nearly every time it returns from patrol. Leaving a mess is punishable by three extra hours of duty. Spann feels that a clean ship is a strong ship; therefore, his is the strongest in the navy. (It is, but for completely different reasons.)

So far, the *Hornby* has seen combat twice, and both times it was victorious. Gemyt has read every known book on strategy, from Tzu's *The Art of War* to Xrtgtha's groundbreaking book, *Combat in Space*. He attests the wins were due to his acute knowledge of space combat, but his crew honors the chief tactical officer for his brilliant strategies.

Quotes

"As Ssthelliam said in *Combat Strategies*, the best plan of attack when facing more than three vessels is to hold position and let them come to you."

"Son, I can barely see my reflection in the underside of your work table."

"Let's not jump to hasty decisions here."

Adventure Seeds

- ◆ As senior officers of their own ship, the PCs ran it exactly as they liked. But when they're transferred to the *Hornby* they must use all of their diplomatic skills to keep from ripping Gemyt's head off and spending the rest of their lives in the brig. How long can they last before his anal-retentive leadership style drives them over the edge?
- ◆ An enemy starship captain knows that Gemyt chooses his tactics from books, and plans to use this against him. The PCs were hired as spies to infiltrate the enemy captain's staff and learn of his plans. Now "safely" back on their own ship, can they come up with a strategy to defeat him? Furthermore, can they convince Gemyt to use it, and not the tried-and-true Arcturan Hook?

XENOBIOLOGIST

ST: 10

IQ: 15

Speed: 5.25

DX: 11

HT: 10

Move: 5

Dodge: 5

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point Total: 110

Advantages

Acute Vision +2; Animal Empathy; Intuition; Reputation +1 (Among scientists: an expert's expert).

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior (Curiosity); Impulsiveness.

Quirks

Believes animals only attack when provoked; Never uses the common name for any species; Takes her work home with her.

Skills

Animal Handling-12; Biochemistry-14; Botany-13; Chemistry-14; Computer Operation-14; Ecology-13; Genetics-14; Mathematics-13; Naturalist-14; Research-14; Xenobiology-16; Xenology-14; Zoology-15.

Languages

Ancient Greek-15; Latin-15; any two others relevant to the adventure, at level 13.

Conversions

Fantasy – In a fantasy campaign, Dorothy doesn't have to travel to another planet to encounter weird and wonderful creatures that nobody's seen before. Remove Biochemistry, Computer Operation, Ecology, Genetics, Mathematics and Research, and convert all other skills to the appropriate TL.

Contemporary – Even in today's world, new species are being discovered at a rate of hundreds a year. Dorothy's on the cutting edge of this investigation. Remove Xenobiology and Xenology. Add appropriate Area Knowledges.

Near Future – There are probably fewer new species to find, but the work still continues. Again, remove Xenobiology and Xenology.

Story

If Dorothy van Norstrand had lived a few centuries earlier, she'd have made a name for herself discovering new species in the Amazon rainforests, or in the jungles of equatorial Africa. She's glad she's around today, however. Space travel has opened up so many more fascinating environments to explore, and introduced her to a multitude of new species to study.

As a child, Dorothy loved pets. When she got bored with puppies and kittens, she went out collecting more esoteric little friends: hive rats, acid snakes, bloodhawks . . . anything she could track down. Even though many of her pets terrified her parents – a number of them were listed as deadly, after all – she never suffered so much as a nip on the finger. This reinforced her belief that animals only attack humans if they're provoked somehow, a conviction that stays with her today.

Dorothy excelled at the university, earning a combined



Dorothy van Norstrand Age: 36

master's in genetic analysis and xenobiology. She considered going on for her doctorate, but the desire to actually get out there overpowered her intellectual curiosity.

Van Norstrand has received official credit for discovering and documenting more than 50 new species on a dozen worlds, and has published papers describing major insights into the behavior of a score of more familiar creatures. She continues to receive invitations to join the faculties of prestigious universities throughout the sector, but she has no desire to leave the field just yet. She figures she has another 20 years of good field research ahead of her; only then will she return to the groves of academe.

Dorothy's husband is also a geneticist and xenologist, but he prefers to spend his time in the lab, analyzing the raw data that his wife generates. The marriage almost self-destructed, due to Dorothy's habit of bringing her work home with her – her husband found one too many strange specimens in the bathtub – but now the van Norstrands have a very stable union.

Quotes

"Don't move, you've got a big *Culex pipiens* on your neck."

"Relax. A *Megavorus horribilis* only attacks if it smells fear. Boy, look at those teeth. Fascinating, eh?"

"No, stop, don't kill it! We've got to collect a specimen . . ."

Adventure Seeds

◆ The PCs have been hired by a major corporation to accompany Dorothy van Norstrand on a specimen-collecting mission to a newly-discovered world. Their job is both to protect the scientist, and to analyze her research from the standpoint of value to the corp's bioweapons division. (Of course, they have to keep this secondary assignment secret from Dorothy . . .)

◆ One of Dorothy's more . . . interesting . . . specimens has gotten loose aboard a space station. Already it's killed half a dozen people (although van Norstrand is quick to point out that they probably provoked it). Now the PCs – the station's security team – must work closely with the scientist to track down and neutralize the threat.

NEW ABILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Advantages	Page	Trademark	SU21, CY26	Math Chip	CY40	Identify	M49
Ally Group	CO15, RH6	Unknown Enemy	I31	Skill Chip	CY40	Identify Plant	M66
Blessed	M85	Vulnerable to Holy Water	F123	Night Sight	CY36	Itch	M23
Contacts	CY20, SU12			Optic Readout	CY35	Levitation	M61
Damage Resistance	SU38	Skills	Page	Poison reservoir	CY33	Neutralize Poison	M45
Extended Lifespan	FF18	Chess	CA9	Razor claws	CY32	Pain	M23
Extra Encumbrance	FF18	Computer Hacking	CY26	Telescopic Vision	CY36	Panic	M56
Extra Fatigue	FF18, SU39	Conspiracy Theory	I31	Video Reception	CY36	Paralyze Limb	M24
Extra Hit Points	FF18, SU39	Cyberdeck Operation	CY26			Perfect Illusion	M46
Shapechanging (Taken from the Morph ability)	SU63	Intimidation	SU24	Spells	Page	Reflect	M53
Unaffected by metal	F123	Philosophy	IR37	Alter Body	M25	Regeneration	M45
Unaging	SU47, FF23	Rune-Lore	M81	Alter Visage	M25	Restoration	M45
Unfazeable	SU14	Video Production	CY26	Animation	M64	Resurrection	M45
Weretiger Shapeshifting	F124	Xenobiology	S36	Apportation	M60	Seek Plant	M66
Zeroed	CY21	Xenology	S36	Body of Air	M31	Sense Spirit	M63
				Breathe Fire	M34	Shapeshifting	M22
Disadvantages	Page	Cyberwear	Page	Charm	M59	Shield	M67
Astral Entity	P98	Adders	CY59	Complex Illusion	M45	Simple Illusion	M45
Cannot cross running water	F123	Amp Chip	CY39	Control Zombie	M64	Spasm	M23
Cannot enter dwelling uninvited	F123	Bionic Eye	CY35	Counterspell	M53	Steal Health	M64
No Sense of Humor	SU19	Bionic Reconstruction	CY34	Cure Disease	M45	Sterilize	M44
On The Edge	CY24	Cellular Link	CY37	Curse-Missile	M24	Stun	M23
Reduced Move	FF27	Chip slot	CY38	Death Vision	M63	Summon Spirit	M63
Secret	SU20, CY25	Combat Reflexes chip	CY39	Deathtouch	M24	Terror	M56
Takes damage from sunlight	F123	Bidetic Chip	CY39	Decay	M42	Test Food	M42
		High Pain Threshold chip	CY39	Find Weakness	M51	Total Paralysis	M24
		Interface Jack	CY41	Flame Jet	M34	Ward	M53
		Macho Chip	CY39	Flight	M62	Wither Limb	M24

CA = GURPS Camelot; CO = GURPS Conan; CY = GURPS Cyberpunk; F = GURPS Fantasy; FF = GURPS Fantasy Folk; I = GURPS Illuminati; IR = GURPS Imperial Rome; M = GURPS Magic; P = GURPS Psionics; RH = GURPS Robin Hood; S = GURPS Space; SU = GURPS Supers.

CHARACTER TABLE

<i>Character</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Page</i>
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Construction Worker	76	Hotel Manager	87	Research Scientist	122	Weretiger	42
Cop	49	Inventor	121	Sage	32	Wizard	43
Corporate Executive	77	Jongleur	22	Sailor	33	Woodsman	44
Cosmetic Surgeon	78	Knight	23	Salesperson	96	Xenobiologist	127
Counter-Terrorist	79	Lawyer	88	Scientist	65		

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