

# INVADERS

from

# BELOW

<sup>™</sup>

by Scott Paul Maykrantz



# INVADERS FROM BELOW™

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## DEDICATION

*Thanks to Rob Bell for his invaluable assistance, to Kevin Mayfield for helping to make Champions one of my favorite Games, and Edgar Rice Burroughs for inspiration.*

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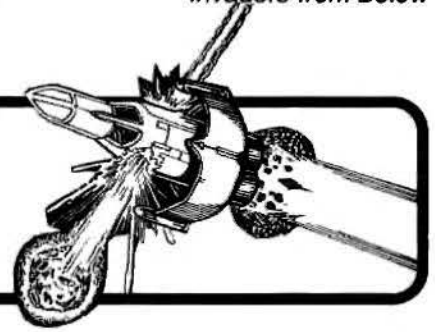
Printed in U.S.A., First Printing 1990

Produced & Distributed by Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc., the exclusive manufacturer of Hero Games.

**STOCK #:** 409

**ISBN** 1-55806-103-7

# INTRODUCTION



*Bruised and lost, Seeker ran through the twisting subterranean tunnels. He held one of the glowing crystals in his palm to light the way. His head was still fuzzy from the blow that knocked him out, making the narrow passages shift before his eyes. Behind him, he could hear the echoing howls of his pursuers. He paused to catch his breath and remembered the strange events that brought him here.*

*Only a few hours ago, he and the other Champions had been battling a strange group of supervillains at the nuclear power plant. The villains called themselves the Darklings. The Darklings threatened to destroy the planet with their "Subterranean army" if anyone stood in their way of collecting material to build a nuclear bomb. When the heroes were closing in, the Darklings suddenly disappeared.*

*A quick search of the plant uncovered a secret passage to a wide underground tunnel. Jaguar picked up the scent of the Darklings and the heroes gave chase. The tunnel was lit by small, glowing stones. Obsidian picked out a stone from the walls for each Champion — if the rest of the tunnel was not similarly lit, each would have a source of light. The tunnel sloped downward, into the earth. The chase went on for a long time. Too long. The Champions marched for over an hour, deeper and deeper.*

*And then the army appeared. They were humanoid, but not human. Their sickly white skin was offset by their knotted black hair. They all carried weapons — from hatchets to rifles — and growled hungrily. They pounced upon the Champions, overwhelming the heroes with sheer numbers.*

*Caged and chained, the heroes awoke as they were being carried through the tunnel. If they had been moving at that pace all along, they were far below the Surface by now. With the use of his special martial training, Seeker escaped his bonds. But he could not free the others without being risking recapture. He would have to find another way to save them.*

*After dashing through twisting passages off of the wide tunnel where the Champions were being carried, Seeker heard the howls of rage from the creatures. He ran quickly, evading the creatures. Now Seeker followed passages that ran parallel to the wide tunnel, allowing him stay close to the rest of the Champions. And always he went deeper and deeper into the earth.*

*Where are these foul creatures taking the Champions? What happened to the Darklings? Can Seeker save the others before this army of creatures terrorizes the surface world?*

## OVERVIEW

Subterra is a land of human-like creatures, located deep beneath America. The Subterrans were originally a race of aliens who came to Earth in a starship, seeking a new home. The starship's computers were supposed to alter the genetic structure of the aliens so they could survive on Earth. But a passing comet damaged the computers, scrambling the ship's controls and transforming the aliens into savage, subterranean beasts.

The result is a race of ant-like humanoids. They multiply rapidly, live underground, and work industriously for a common goal: to rule the planet and enslave or destroy humanity! Their leader is King Earthwyrms, a powerful mentalist. Earthwyrms also leads a super-powered cadre, the Darklings.





Unfortunately for mankind, the Subterrans are not as stupid as ants, and they can't be crushed as easily. They are as violent as they are industrious. They spend their time stealing weapons from humans and steadily multiplying. And they love the taste of human flesh. Soon, they will begin their invasion of the Surface world ...

### WHAT'S INSIDE

Following the introduction, this book is organized into eight sections. The first section is the origin of Subterra and the Subterrans; this background includes a timeline. This is followed by a complete description of Subterra, the home of the Subterrans and the Darklings. Next is a chapter on life in Subterra, the details of the society, government, and specific locations in the land beneath the earth. Next are two chapters of character descriptions, first the Subterrans, then the Darklings and King Earthwyr. This is followed by a chapter on campaigning — tips on adapting the characters and situations in this book to your own campaign. Finally, two chapters of scenarios are provided, each with maps, NPC stats, and enough information to start an adventure or campaign.

### THE VILLAIN ORGANIZATION

In a campaign, treat King Earthwyr and his Darklings as a villain group. They are unusual because of their incredible resources: the Subterrans and the kingdom beneath the earth. But, like other villain organizations, the Darklings have a definite goal (to enslave or kill humanity and rule the Earth), a roster of powerful individuals, and a leader, King Earthwyr.

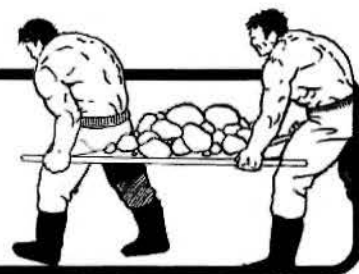
### NON-SUPERHEROES VS. THE SUBTERRAN MENACE

In a Heroic-level campaign, very few changes are needed to present the Subterranean menace to your player character heroes. The Subterrans simply become an evil race in a hidden land, not an army led by super villains. The Darklings can be reduced to the level of Competent Normals.

The scenarios can be modified to emphasize investigation over combat. The PC heroes can discover the underground lands and begin to explore, dealing with Subterrans in small numbers. If the PCs are captured, they will be taken to King Earthwyr in Subterra. Unlike a Champions campaign, where the heroes would fight out of their predicament, the heroes can use their wits to escape a deathtrap.



# THE ORIGIN OF SUBTERRA



The Subterrans originally came from the planet Wyrm. They ruined their planet and journeyed through space in suspended animation to seek a new home on Earth. But a freak accident caused the plan to fail miserably — a comet struck the starship and caused extensive damage to the on-board computers. The Wyrmians successfully reached Earth, but their malfunctioning ship left them miles under North America instead of landing safely on the Surface. The damaged computers, which were supposed to control the alteration of the Wyrmians' genetic structure, instead transformed them into monsters. They emerged from their starship deep beneath the earth as savage humanoid, hungry and violent.

When they emerged from the starship, a mutated Subterranean named King Earthwyrm took command. By combining his intellect and the brawn of the other Subterrans, he built a giant cave in which to live. From this cave, they dug to the Surface, where they discovered mankind. Since that time, the Subterrans have prepared to invade the Surface and take control of the planet. King Earthwyrm has carefully coordinated the preparation. He even created a group of super-powered secondaries, the Darklings.

The complete story follows.

## FROM WYRM TO EARTH

Long ago, there was a habitable planet called Wyrm, located several thousand parsecs from Earth. It was an industrious world populated by an intelligent race of humanoids. The planet had a methane-based atmosphere and low gravity. As a result, the Wyrmians had a very strange physiological makeup, with much weaker muscles and bones than those of humans. The planetary government was minimal because the Wyrmians were so peaceful and good-natured; there was no crime, poverty, or war.

The technology of the Wyrmians was very advanced. Wyrmian scientists perfected techniques for suspended animation, rapid space travel, power from matter-to-energy conversion, environmental study, genetic engineering, and many other forms of technology. The population of the planet skyrocketed and huge cities were built across the globe.

### EXODUS

Approximately seven and a half centuries ago, the scientists of Wyrm concluded that their planet's ecosystem had been spoiled by pollution. In forty years, the planetary gene pool would mutate out of control, creating lethal viruses and killing off all existing life. To avoid total racial suicide, the scientists began searching the stars for a new planet to call home.

Using their amazing technology, they found Earth. Probes told them that there was already intelligent life on Earth, but the Wyrmians could not find another suitable planet. They would have to colonize their new home by peacefully sharing the planet with humans.

A starship was built. A small fraction of the population was randomly selected by computer. Those lucky enough to be chosen to go to the new world were placed in suspended animation on board. Sealed "tombs" were built on Wyrm for the rest of the population. Those who stayed behind would remain in suspended animation until the starship travellers could return for them.

The plan was to reach Earth to start anew, this time with better regard for the environment. Because the Wyrmians would not be able to cope with Earth's gravity or atmosphere, the starship's inboard computers would alter each passenger's genetic structure. The Wyrmians would arrive at their new home with different bodies, but the same minds. The process would take thousands of years, however, because each Wyrmian body had to die and be reborn with subtle changes hundreds of times. In effect, the passengers were going to undertake computer-controlled evolution. The entire process would take much longer than the trip to Earth — the Wyrmians would have to evolve in their berths for thousands of years while the starship rested at their new home.

The passengers were selected and placed in their suspension berths. The berths were filled with special chemicals to keep the passengers safe and sleeping — they would also stop aging. Scientists linked the central computer of the starship to the berths and set the final adjustments on the starship machinery. The central computer would pilot the sleeping cargo, land the craft on Earth, and control the evolutionary process. When the Wyrmians were finished evolving, they would awaken and begin settling their new home.

The ship was equipped with a machine that made synthetic food for the sleeping passengers. This machine was powered by a total matter-conversion power plant — it could turn matter into energy. Thus, their food supply was limitless. The ship also contained a machine that made synthetic cloth, also powered by the total matter-conversion plant. When they reached Earth, everyone would have clothing.

The scientists and ship's crew began the countdown for the launch and returned to their berths on board. To preserve the greatest possible number of Wyrmians, piloting was handled by the on-board computers. The ship's crew would stay in suspended animation unless something went wrong. If they were needed, the computers would wake them to deal with the problem.



The first half of the trip was a complete success. The starship operated perfectly. Then tragedy struck when a comet collided with the starship, damaging the computers on board, including the piloting computers. Although the damage did not cripple the ship, it was extensive enough to cause many disastrous malfunctions.



### EFFECTS OF THE COMET

The first malfunction was the failure to wake the crew. The pilots and technicians, who should have been roused from suspended animation to fix the damage, slept on until the ship reached Earth. Still worse, the propulsion system had been damaged. The starship was supposed to drop the propulsion system (which made up a full nine-tenths of the craft) in the vacuum of space as the rest of the ship drifted into Earth's atmosphere. The landing mechanisms would slow the entry into the atmosphere and the ship would land in the sea. There, at the bottom of the ocean, the Wyrmians could evolve in peace. When they were done, the craft would rise and the Wyrmians could begin dealing with humans, hoping to find a peaceful way to share the planet.

Instead, the damaged computers triggered the propulsion system's self-destruct mechanism before it was released. The propulsion system floated away and exploded, destroying the Wyrmian's means of returning to their home planet.

The ship plunged into the sea. The computer then engaged the small auxiliary engines, driving the craft into the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. This caused further computer damage and killed eighty percent of the passengers. The damaged computer then repeatedly fired the laser cannons (which were intended to be used to destroy approaching asteroids while enroute to Earth), carving a tunnel in front of the ship. The course of the ship was slightly westward, taking it down under North America. The ship's fuel ran out as it reached a subterranean cave that was just large enough to contain the craft. The ship came to rest fifteen kilometers under the future location of Kansas City.

The final effect of the damaged computers came when the evolution of the sleeping Wyrmians ended. They should have changed just enough to be able to breathe Earth's atmosphere and to cope with Earth's gravity. But, in addition to some randomly-selected traits, the computers altered the Wyrmians to suit their local environment, the subterranean depths. Their minds were changed, too. They were less individualistic. They loved violence, enjoyed tireless labor, and had an innate sense for digging and creating strong rock structures. Although they were only slightly less intelligent than the average human, they lost nearly all of their amazing scientific ability.

## CREATING A HOME BENEATH THE EARTH

After the computer triggered the end of the aliens' slumber, they climbed out of their craft and began to explore the area. Of the thousands in the starship, only a few hundred survived. But, thanks to their new genetic structure, they loved their underground home.

A mutant fungus stored on the ship was accidentally released by the crash. This fungus, which collected carbon dioxide and filtered and transformed it into clean oxygen, was created by the Wyrmian scientists in case the ship had to make an emergency landing on a planet before reaching Earth. The crash released the fungus which, according to design, grew rapidly along the cave walls and ceiling. Without this amazing plant life, the passengers would have suffocated.

### THE KING IS BORN

Damage to the ship also caused the creation of the first — but certainly not the last — subterranean being to have superpowers. A row of berths were fractured and emptied their chemicals into a pool of waste toxins. The reaction of the toxins and the chemicals created a thick, bubbling substance. When the evolved beings rose from their berths thousands of years later, many of them fell into the pool.

Only one survivor climbed out of the pool, dripping and steaming, with incredible powers. The combination of liquids in the pool reacted with his rapidly-changing genetic structure, transforming him and giving him great mental abilities such as telepathy, mind control, and a mental blast. The chemicals also made him extremely intelligent and evil. He had a great lust for power and a deep desire to cause suffering and to kill.





The survivor analyzed his situation as the others crawled through the cave surrounding the ship. He found the damaged computers and read through the ship's records of the journey to Earth. After learning the whole story, he made himself King and named himself Earthwyrn, after the two planets that created him.

Although his first impulse was to maim and kill the subterranean humanoids, he decided instead to satisfy his lust for power by making them his slaves. King Earthwyrn used his mental powers to secure his position, commanding the others to build a home out of the subterranean rock. His goal was to raise an army to take over the planet. The computer records indicated there was intelligent life on the Surface. Earthwyrn delighted in the idea of annihilating them.

Immediately, the humanoid creatures began to dig. At first, the work was slow because there were so few survivors. But, after the King learned how to make the synthetic food and cloth machines function, the construction accelerated. When he provided food and clothing for them, the Subterraneans pledged their undying loyalty to him. He would no longer have to use his mental powers to secure his position of power — as long as they were fed, he was their King.

## THE CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

Other important pieces of machinery were salvaged from the remains of the starship. King Earthwyrn used his incredible intelligence to rebuild them. He spent several weeks fixing damaged berths, successfully redesigning them into cloning chambers. Soon, living duplicates of the subterranean beings were created on a regular basis. The population grew steadily. The one power plant, which could convert any kind of matter into energy, was used to dispose of the rocks that were cleared as the cave was being dug. This created power for the cloning chambers, the synthetic food machine, and the synthetic cloth machine.

They dug until they had created a huge cave — as big as Manhattan — with a ceiling 1000 meters overhead. The Subterraneans left seven massive columns of rock to support the ceiling. Underground rivers began to flow into the subterranean valley, creating a source of fresh water and a few small lakes. Around most of the cave, a wide shelf was carved — this shelf was widened at three points which now serve as locations for important structures, such as the Science Dome (built from the remains of the Wyrmian starship), the Abyssal Gate (where tunnels leading to the Surface begin), and the Nest, which is the throne of the King.

On the valley floor, clusters of crude, multiple-room houses of rock were built. Soon, the floor of the massive cave was strewn with villages. The Subterraneans used the houses to stay warm and to catch a few moments of rest between work shifts.

King Earthwyrn created the Darkling council when the construction of the cave was completed. He selected several of his subjects and, one by one, threw them in the pool of chemicals that created him, hoping to create more super-powered beings. All but a few died. After many "volunteers" were submerged in the pool, Earthwyrn had a group of beings endowed with incredible powers. He called them the Darklings and charged them with the task of helping him govern his underground land.

## DIGGING TO THE SURFACE

As the underground land neared completion and the cloning chambers were in full swing, the King ordered large groups to dig upward. The digging started at the Abyssal Gate, a bridged passage over a deep chasm at one end of the Great Cave. The Abyssal Gate would serve as the only entrance and exit from the Great Cave.

The miners created a crisscrossing network of tunnels above the Great Cave, known as the Underland. From the upper tunnels of the Underland, they carved the Downroads, wide tunnels that gradually reach the Surface.

When the Downroads reached the Surface, the Subterraneans were linked with America. When the news reached the King, he immediately issued the order to avoid contact with Surface people — he wanted to catch the humans by surprise when the invasion began. The King and the Darklings felt they needed many years to prepare, and they did not want humans to prepare for them. The Subterraneans had to have time to increase their population (their army), to steal plenty of weapons from the Surface, and to learn all they could about humanity.



Immediately, a campaign began to steal as much weaponry, fuel, vehicles, and information from the Surface world as possible. The Subterrans concentrated on America because King Earthwyrn felt that was the most powerful nation on Earth — after America fell, all other nations would follow. Over the years, every other nation was visited, but America remained the focus of King Earthwyrn's invasion scheme.

The theft and spying operations were carried out by the Darklings and those living in the Underland, under the watchful eye of the King. They stole as much as they could with the least amount of risk to their secrecy, careful to avoid being detected by humans. The larger items were taken during carefully coordinated missions. In time, they had secretly accumulated a huge arsenal.

## OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

While exploring the Surface world, the Subterrans discovered their extreme sensitivity to sunlight. And they found that they could not heal while above ground. Luckily, one of the Darklings (Rumbler) was able to adjust the synthetic cloth-making machine to make cloth that would protect their skin. But the Subterrans could not avoid the healing problem — this was a weakness they would have to endure.

Then the news spread of how tasty humans and Surface animals were. Some Subterrans couldn't resist risking the secrecy of their race to try this new delicacy. This created another reason to invade the Surface world: humans provided a limitless supply of delicious, real food.



As new Downroads were constructed, some were found by humans. Spelunkers (both professional and otherwise) discovered the tunnels and, eventually, the creatures who built them. But the few humans who escaped alive were regarded as crackpots. Those who didn't get away were eaten or imprisoned. The King and the Darklings interrogated the captive humans, eager for information that would help the coming invasion of the Surface world. Military and political information was of particular interest.

Soon after they learned about the Surface world, King Earthwyrn ordered all of his subjects to learn and speak English. He reasoned that studying mankind's weaknesses and defenses (not to mention dealing with their leaders) would be easiest if both races spoke the same language. He chose the language of Americans. The old Wyrmian tongue was dropped and nearly everything was renamed. Everyone learned that their new home planet was called Earth, or Terra. They named themselves "Subterrans" and called their hidden underground home "Subterra."

## READY TO INVADE

The Subterrans are almost ready for their invasion of the Surface world. A decade of preparation has been spent stealing weapons and planning strategies. Some experimental missions have taken place, typically involving terrorizing small American towns or stealing weapons from United States military bases. The majority of these missions have been designed and carried out by the Darklings, under the leadership of King Earthwyrn.

The invasion is about to begin ...

## TIMELINE

- 7,000 years ago:** Wyrmians leave Wyrn in suspended animation for Earth.
- 4,500 years ago:** Wyrmian starship is hit by a comet; shipboard computers are damaged.
- 3,000 years ago:** The starship reaches Earth and plunges into the Atlantic ocean. It burrows into the earth, eventually reaching the future location of Subterra.
- 19 years ago:** First Subterrans emerge from their spacecraft. King Earthwyrn names himself. Construction of Subterra begins.
- 18 years ago:** The Science Dome is completed.
- 13 years ago:** Subterrans begin to dig upward.
- 9 years ago:** Construction of Subterra is completed. Darklings are created. Construction on Underland and Downroads begins.
- 6 years ago:** Subterrans reach the Surface world.
- 4 years ago:** English becomes the official Subterranean tongue.
- Today:** King Earthwyrn and the Darklings are making final preparations.
- Tomorrow:** The invasion begins...



# SUBTERRA



Subterra is the home of the Subterrans and their leaders, the Darklings. It is located fifteen kilometers below Kansas City. Subterra is composed of three sections: the Great Cave, the Underland, and the Downroads.

The Great Cave is a huge cavity in the earth where the majority of the Subterrans live and work. The Darklings and King Earthwyrn live here as well. The Underland is a maze of tunnels and rooms carved in the rock above and around the Great Cave (see cross-section map). A portion of Subterrans live and work in the Underland. The Downroads are wide tunnels connecting the Underland to the Surface; the Downroads are as wide as highways and have a gradual incline that take them up to the Surface.

## LIGHT

There is no day or night in Subterra. Although all Subterrans have infrared vision, they need light to make out objects that do not produce heat, such as tunnel walls and buildings.

When Subterra was being constructed, natural oil deposits were tapped. Under the direction of King Earthwyrn, the Subterrans soaked their synthetic cloth in the liquid, wrapped them around rocks and set them on fire. This provided a feeble but useful light source while they worked.

Later, when Crystal joined the Darklings, she created thousands of fist-sized glowgems, crystals that give off light indefinitely. Glowgems can be found in nearly every part of Subterra. Crystal makes new glowgems continuously and places them in areas of low illumination. When the few unlit areas (for example, minor tunnels) are travelled, Subterrans carry glowgems with them. Unlike humans, Subterrans can sleep as comfortably in bright light as in darkness.

## WEATHER AND TEMPERATURE

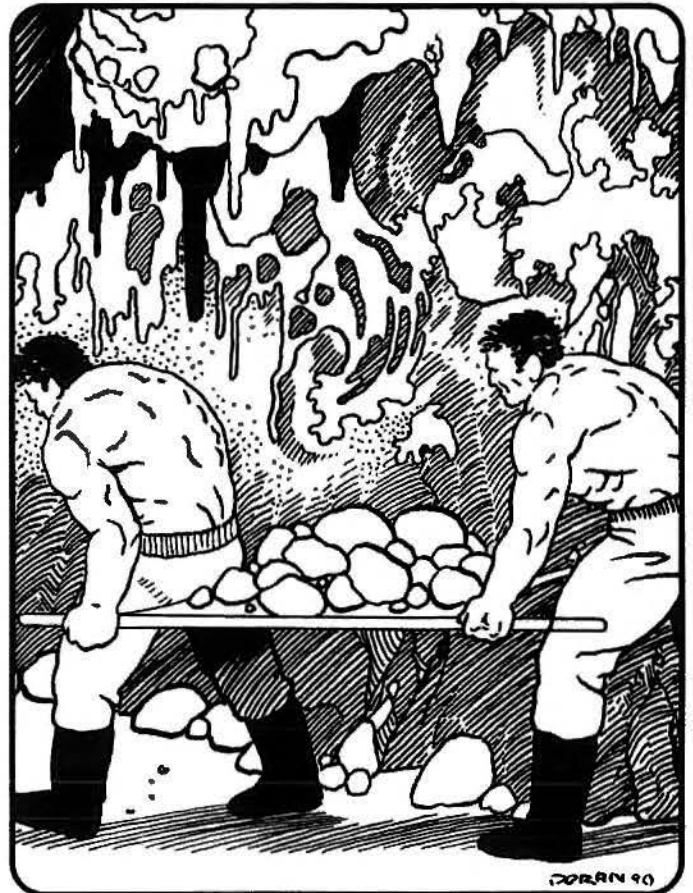
There are no natural weather patterns, precipitation, or wind in Subterra. This — and the heat generated by millions of working Subterrans — generates a stale, hot atmosphere.

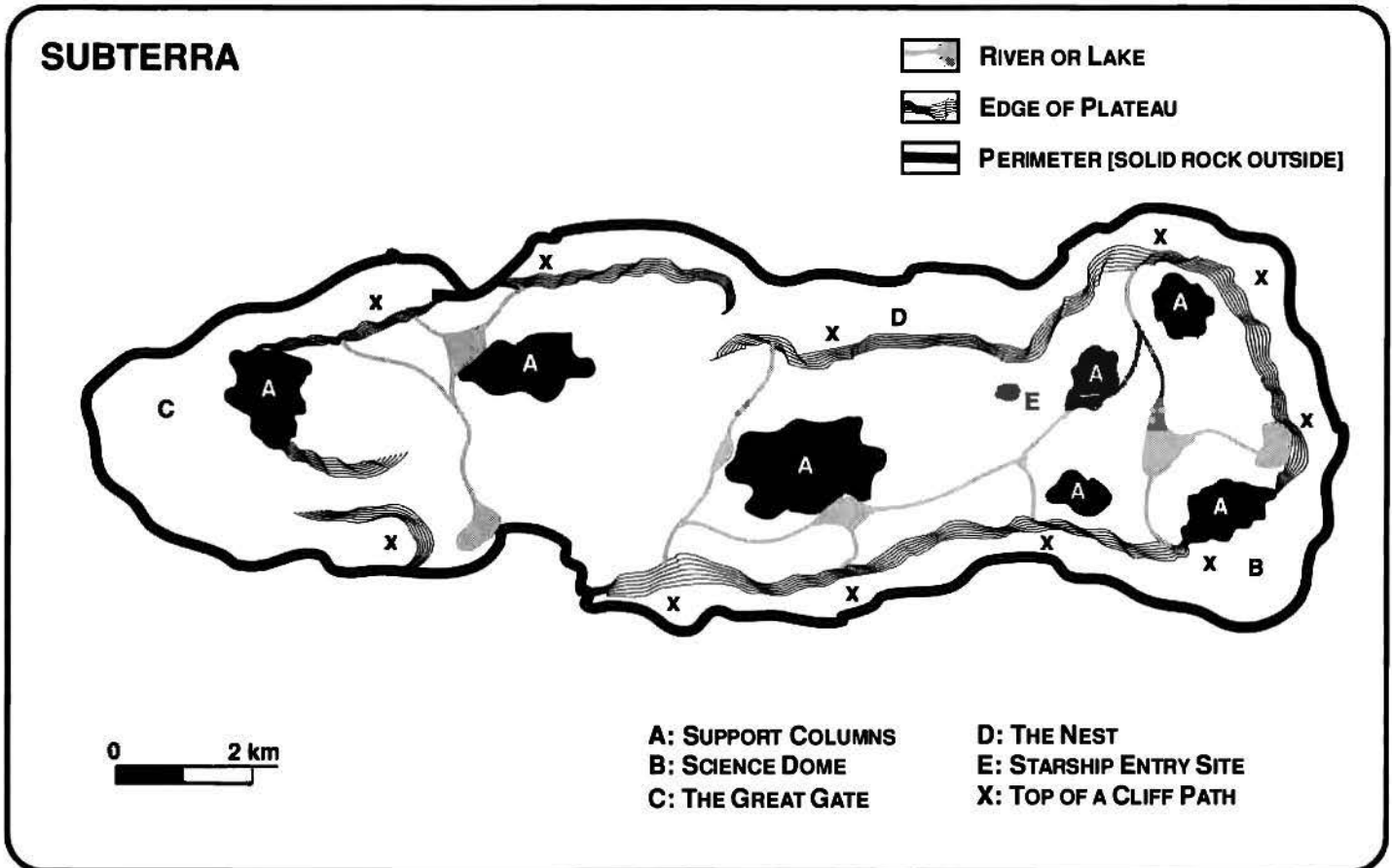
The fungus on the ceiling cleans the air, making it breathable, if somewhat odd-smelling.

## THE FUNGUS

The only animals in Subterra are the Subterrans. The only plant is the Wyrmian fungus that allows the Subterrans to breathe.

The fungus is a thick gray moss that sticks to rock. As designed back on Wyrn, the fungus collects carbon dioxide and turns it into oxygen — but it doesn't need sunlight to live. It also filters the air of impurities (thus the gray coloration). The fungus is found on the ceiling and upper walls of the Great Cave, the Downroads, and the tunnels and caves of the Underland. It is just few centimeters thick everywhere except the Great Cave, where it is three meters thick. The fungus has DEF 0 and BODY 1 per cubic meter. The fungus layer is soft and sticky. Because of the sticky qualities of the fungus, anyone who touches it will be the victim of a 4d6 Entangle attack!





## THE GREAT CAVE

The Great Cave is an underground valley with a surface area approximately equal to Manhattan Island. The landscape is a valley of rock, dotted with villages and rivers. A plateau encircles most of the valley; it is half a kilometer to two kilometers wide. To an observer looking upon the valley from the plateau, the valley floor is in constant activity, lit by the hazy shine of thousands of small, glowing crystals. The clamor of digging and building creates a steady background noise.

## THE PLATEAU

The encircling plateau is 50 to 75 meters above the cave floor. The cliffs drop straight down from the edge. However, there are steep paths carved into the cliff face that connect the floor with the plateau. The top of each path is marked on the map by an X. Each path is 10 to 15 meters wide. They are commonly littered with debris and falling rocks.

There are also two locations where the plateau meets the valley floor, creating a wide, gradual ramp to the plateau top. These ramps are located near the Abyssal Gate and approximately two kilometers from the Nest. The two ramps (each is about half a kilometer wide) are used to transport vehicles that are too wide for the paths.

## THE CEILING

The ceiling of the Great Cave is 1000 meters from the floor. Thousands of Subterrans, using crude climbing equipment, died carving this part of the Great Cave.

The cave ceiling cannot be seen from the plateau or the valley floor. There are several hundred thousand stalactites hanging from the roof of the Great Cave, but few are big enough to grow out of the fungus layer.

## THE COLUMNS

The seven columns (marked with A's on the map) support the ceiling. If all seven were removed, the roof would collapse, destroying the Great Cave and most of the Underland. (This would also cause a minor earthquake in Kansas, directly above Subterra.) However, each column is .5 to 1.5 kilometers thick. They are composed of tremendously hard stone. Part of their density is derived from the pressure of the earth above them. The rock has DEF 15 and BODY 25 per cubic meter (the rock surrounding the Great Cave is only DEF 10, BODY 25).



## LAKES AND RIVERS

The small, circular lake marked E on the map leads to the Atlantic Ocean. This is the pool from which the Wyrmian starship emerged. This is the only source of salt water in Subterra. The tunnel between this lake and the ocean has a uniform shape, a circular tube about one hundred and seventy meters in diameter. The other lakes are large but shallow; the deepest lake is only ten meters deep. The rivers between the lakes are the same depth. Each river is ten to thirty meters wide. There are half a dozen bridges over each river.

Subterrans get their water from the lakes and rivers; they bathe in them, too. There are no fish or other animal life in the water, since it comes from the very bottom of an ocean trench.

## ROCK HOUSES AND VILLAGES

The flat rock of the valley in the Great Cave is scattered with about twenty villages. The villages are clusters of large rock houses. The villages are growing steadily — they currently cover half of the valley floor. Soon, the entire valley floor will be one giant village. The villages do not have names; Subterrans never have a need to distinguish one from the others.

The houses are built about twenty meters apart, creating streets. Subterrans build their houses in an orderly fashion, so the streets are part of an even grid, with intersections meeting at ninety-degree angles.

## ROCK HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

Each house is three stories tall and very sturdy. They are all fifty meters by fifty meters in size and almost twenty meters tall. Each room is twenty meters square, with a ceiling just over five meters tall. Walls are DEF 12, BODY 20 except on the ground floor, where they are DEF 16, BODY 18 — ground floor walls must be thicker to support the upper floors. Ceilings and floors are DEF 16, BODY 24.

The upper floors (including the roof) are accessible by stairs along the outside of the house. Each room has columns to hold up the ceiling. There is approximately one column (a meter thick) every ten square meters — four per room.

The houses are built by fashioning bricks out of rock. The rock is collected from the mines of the Great Cave and the new tunnels in the Underland. The bricks are chipped and stacked, using mortar to hold them together. Although these walls are crude, their sheer size gives them stability. The floors are made of the same brick and supported by the columns. After three levels, the house is too heavy to support itself, so another house is constructed.

Most of the houses are connected by subterranean tunnels. Each tunnel is only large enough for two Subterrans to walk abreast, but they are safe and sturdy. They are used as a quick way to get to another house — an alternative to simply crossing the street. Each tunnel is accessible by a pit containing a steep staircase carved into the rock.



## ROCK HOUSE USES

Subterrans live in these houses. They provide additional warmth for those who are not working for the moment. Almost every room has a coal furnace (stolen from the Surface), synthetic cloth mattresses, and lots of furniture stolen from the Surface. The rooms are lit by glowing crystals.

The rock houses are also used to store weapons and tools. In each room are several dozen guns, knives, picks, and axes. These can be used by anyone; if a Subterranean needs a weapon or tool, he simply walks into a room and grabs one. New tools and weapons are dumped in empty rooms. This impersonal method of storage is used because all tools and weapons belong to everyone ... and there is no other place to put them!

No one owns these houses. Anyone who wants to rest for a few hours or sit down and eat with a group of other Subterrans simply finds a room with some available space. When a subterranean is finished, he leaves and returns to work. The rock houses are constantly being built, to make room for the growing population. At any time, a room has a fifty percent chance of being full.

## THE MINES

There are many coal mines in the Great Cave. To dig, the Subterrans use the same axes, picks, and other metal tools they use to dig rock. The coal is distributed throughout Subterra along with food and clothing. It is used in the furnaces of the rock houses and Underland caves.

## THE SCIENCE DOME

The Science Dome is what is left of the Wyrmian starship. Excess pieces were removed, leaving the main passenger section, including the matter-converter power plant, the passengers' berths (which became the gestation chambers), the synthetic food machine, and the synthetic cloth machine. These pieces of the craft were moved in the early years of the construction of Subterra to its present location, a plateau in the far corner of the Great Cave.

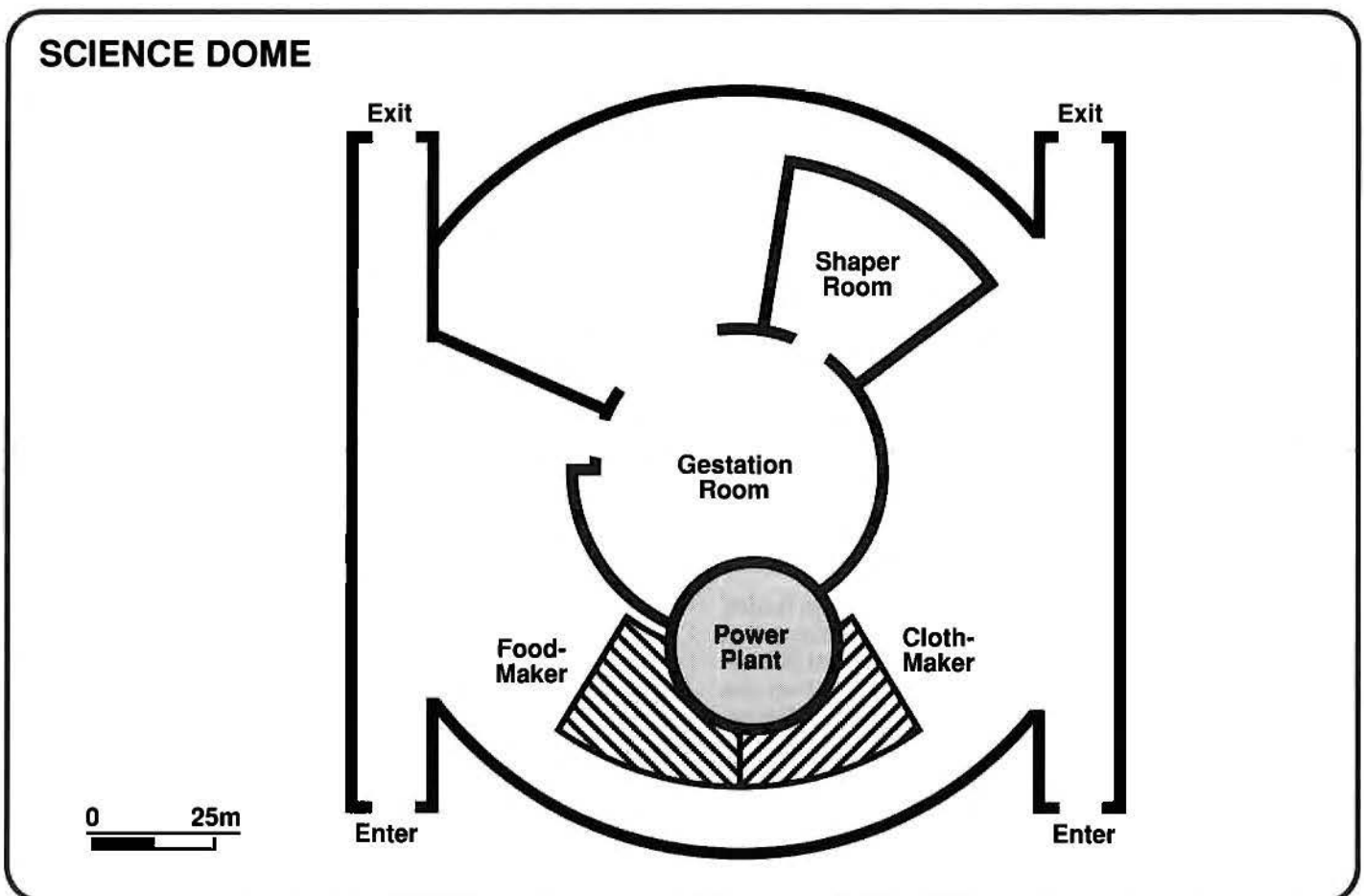
The interiors were altered under the direction of King Earthwyrm. The current layout allows Subterrans to enter through two passages, then exit through passages on the other side of the building. The walls (both exterior and interior) and ceiling of the Science Dome are DEF 12, BODY 15. Although it was moved intact to its location on the plateau years ago, it cannot be moved again without causing it to fall apart.

The Darklings and King Earthwyrm watch over the Science Dome carefully. They stop by regularly to make sure everything is running correctly.

The Science Dome is really just a creation station, where vital products and Subterranean clones are made. The collection and distribution is like an assembly line. There are always at least ten vehicles outside the two exits. These are loaded with the synthetic food and cloth. When one vehicle leaves to distribute the supplies, another returns, ready for more supplies.

## THE FOOD DISTRIBUTION ROOM

The first entry passage leads to the food distribution room, where the synthetic food is collected. The Subterrans enter, grab as much synthetic food as they can carry, and take it out the exit passage. Some Subterrans stay in this part of the Science Dome, collecting the synthetic food from the machine to hand over to the Subterrans walking through. These Subterrans have Professional Skill: Synthetic Food Packing. The synthetic food machine has DEF 10 and BODY 25.







### THE GARMENT-MAKING ROOM

The second entry passage leads to the garment-making room. Subterrans work here, collecting the synthetic cloth from the machine, and sewing them together into the standard Subterranean garments. Other Subterrans come in, collect the clothing, and load the vehicles outside. Those who work sewing the garments have Professional Skill: Synthetic Garment Sewing. Rumbler, one of the Darklings, built the sewing machines and trained the Subterrans here to use them. Some of the garments are taken into a room near the exit, where newly-cloned Subterrans are dressed. The synthetic cloth machine has DEF 10 and BODY 25.

### THE GESTATION ROOM

In the middle of the Science Dome is the Gestation Room, which contains the Gestation Chambers. The Gestation Chambers have DEF 4 and BODY 20. Newly-cloned Subterrans awake and are helped out of the Chambers. They are then taken to the adjacent room (next to the Shaper Room) and dressed in their synthetic garments. The new Subterrans become aware of their surroundings between the time they leave the Chambers and as they are getting dressed. By the time they have their clothes on, they know enough by instinct to exit through the garment-making room and start working in the Great Cave with the other Subterrans.

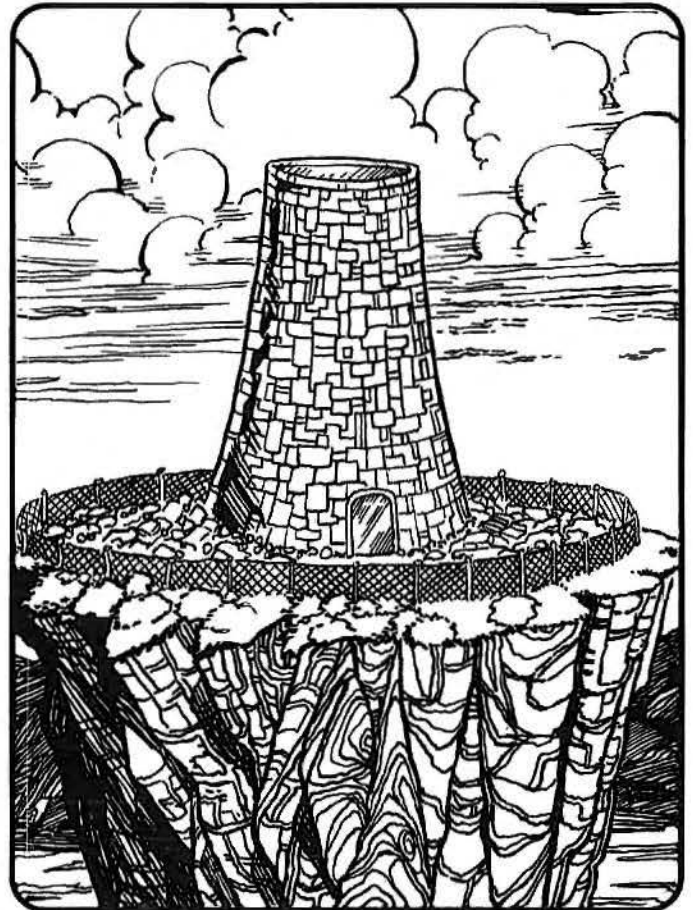
### THE POWER PLANT

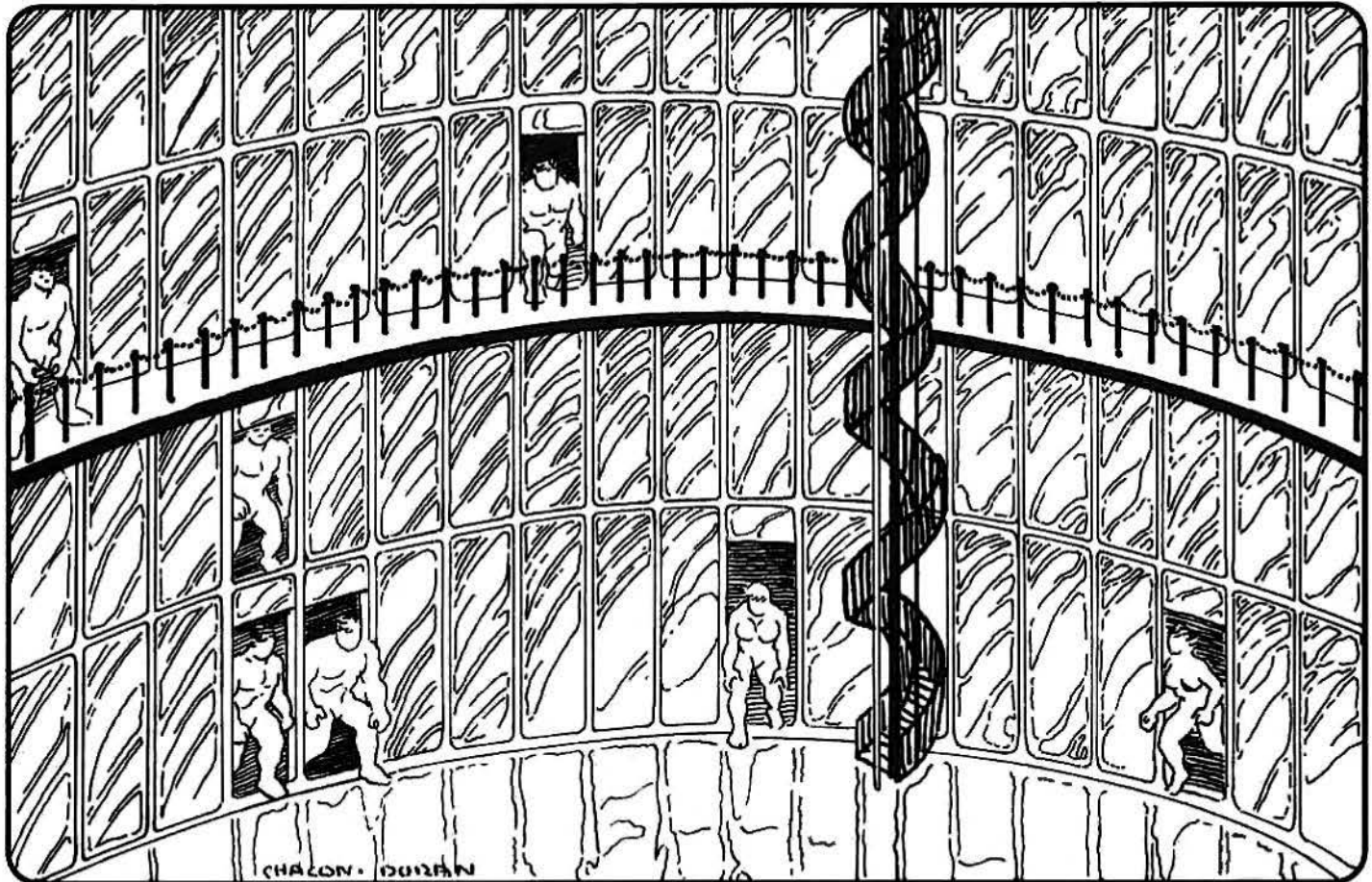
The power plant, located in three different rooms, gives power to the Gestation Chambers, the synthetic food machine, and the synthetic cloth machine. Rocks, used to fuel the power plant, are fed into the power plant from any of these rooms. The power plant has DEF 8 and BODY 25.

### THE SHAPER ROOM

The Shaper Room is located next to the Gestation Room. The door to the Shaper Room is a thick steel door, as strong as the Science Dome walls. Inside is the Shaper Pool. The Pool is a huge tub full of sizzling chemicals. It looks a lot like a swimming pool full of opaque soda pop. The chemicals are a synthesized DNA liquid, a literal gene pool.

When a living body enters the Shaper Pool, the being's DNA reacts to the current DNA structure in the liquid. The Shaper Pool liquid's DNA structure is constantly changing, so every being who enters the Pool has a different transformation. Most of the changes brought about by the Shaper Pool are deadly — the being is transformed into something that can't survive or is killed by clashing DNA patterns. But, about ten percent of the time, the being's DNA is altered wildly. This causes genetic reactions capable of creating super powers and altering the being's form and/or mind. The Shaper Pool can, but does not always, eliminate Disadvantages. For example, a Subterranean who enters the Shaper Pool may leave with a set of amazing powers and none of his racial Disadvantages such as Susceptibility to direct sun-





light. However, as in the case of the Ghoul, a Subterranean can leave the Shaper Pool with the same Disadvantages he had before. However, Crawler also went into the Shaper Pool and lost all of his racial Disadvantages but kept his racial Talent and Power (Bump of Direction and IR Vision, respectively). Anything can happen.

The liquid in the Shaper Pool has no effect if it is consumed orally or intravenously. And, if the entire body is not submerged in the Pool, the being will usually die a painful death.

## THE NEST

This is the headquarters of King Earthworm and the Darklings. It is also the principal armory of the Subterraneans—a fenced-in compound of vehicles and weaponry.

The Nest has a short tower made of scrap metal in the center. The scraps came from the pieces of the Wyrmian starship that did not go to the Science Dome. As a result, the tower looks crude, with metal plates bolted over other uneven pieces. The walls and furniture inside were taken from the Surface world.

The tower is surrounded by a fence topped with barbed wire. This fence is over two kilometers long, separating most of the plateau from a wide path along the edge. The fence was stolen from the Surface in pieces over the course of several years. It has one gate (also topped with barbed wire) near the ramp leading up to the plateau.

## THE YARD

Inside the gate is a massive compound full of weapons of war, known as the Yard. These are King Earthworm's prized possessions; all of them will be used in the invasion. There are several working tanks with a full complement of ammunition, a handful of Armored Personnel Carriers in various states of disrepair, jeeps and trucks, a dozen Howitzers, and many other military vehicles. There are also hundreds of crates of grenades, grenade launchers, and rifles. All of this hardware is scattered throughout the Yard, making the place look like the junkyard of the world's largest army.

## THE NEST TOWER

Inside the tower are three floors.

### The First Floor

The lower floor is the entry chamber and the cages for captive humans. There are twenty-six humans here presently; all are Americans. They are fed and clothed in return for information and technical know-how. All of them are mechanics, military people, or professionals of some kind. They all desperately want to leave and warn the rest of humanity.



### The Second Floor

Each Darkling has a room on the second floor. They keep their personal effects in their rooms and decorate them to their taste.

**King Earthwyrn's room** is the largest, with a huge bed and several chairs and a desk. The walls are unadorned. A small communications console has been built into the desk by Rumbler; this console allows King Earthwyrn to address all rooms in the Nest Tower (and the Yard).

**Crawler's room** is a smelly, filthy chamber full of decaying tree trunks for climbing — like a monkey's cage at a zoo. The walls are caked with muck and claw marks. A thick mat of soiled synthetic cloth, his bed, can be found in the corner. No one can stand to go inside except Crawler himself.

**Cornerstone's room** is cluttered to meet his personal tastes. The walls are plastered with centerfolds. Along the floor, against one of the walls, is a stack of fifty or sixty cartons of non-filter cigarettes. The only furniture is a simple bed, a reading light, and a small stack of magazines.

**Crystal's room** is small and plain. She has a bed, a chest of drawers, and a small night stand. The furniture is covered with a thin layer of dust — she is almost never here because she prefers to stay in Minotaur's room.

**Dungeoneer's room** is a workshop which he uses to make new torture devices. Heavy planks of wood and metal scraps are stacked against the walls. In the center of the room is a work bench with several power tools, including a table saw and a riveter. Dungeoneer is rarely here, however — he usually works and sleeps in one of his dungeons scattered throughout the Underland.

**Echoer's room** houses the old memory banks from the Wyrmian starcraft. Rumbler linked a small viewing console to these data banks so she can review the history of Wyrm, written in the Wyrmian tongue. The only other furniture in the room is a chair, a standing lamp, and a small bed.

**Ghoul's room** is crammed full of little prank gadgets and movie monster junk. He has a collection of books about fear, books about famous horror films, whoopee cushions, joy buzzers, make-up kits, and other similar merchandise. All of this stuff is piled on two tables, on the floor, and on his bed.

**Grayshape's room** is very clean. He has one large bed, a desk (used principally for writing in his daily journal), and a small shelf of books. He can be found here quite often, reading and writing — his favorite literary subject is the military strategy of famous people such as Napoleon and Sun Tzu.

**Madame Zhalla's room** is decorated with old Russian furniture and relics. All of them are antiques, believed to have been destroyed centuries ago. Any single item in her room could be sold for \$10,000 to over \$1,000,000 on the Surface. However, Madame Zhalla does not let anyone in her room; the furniture and relics all have a sentimental quality to her.

**Minotaur's room** has a bed, two chests of drawers, and a rack for his axe. He also has some battery-powered, hand-held video games, which he loves to play. Crystal usually sleeps here with him.

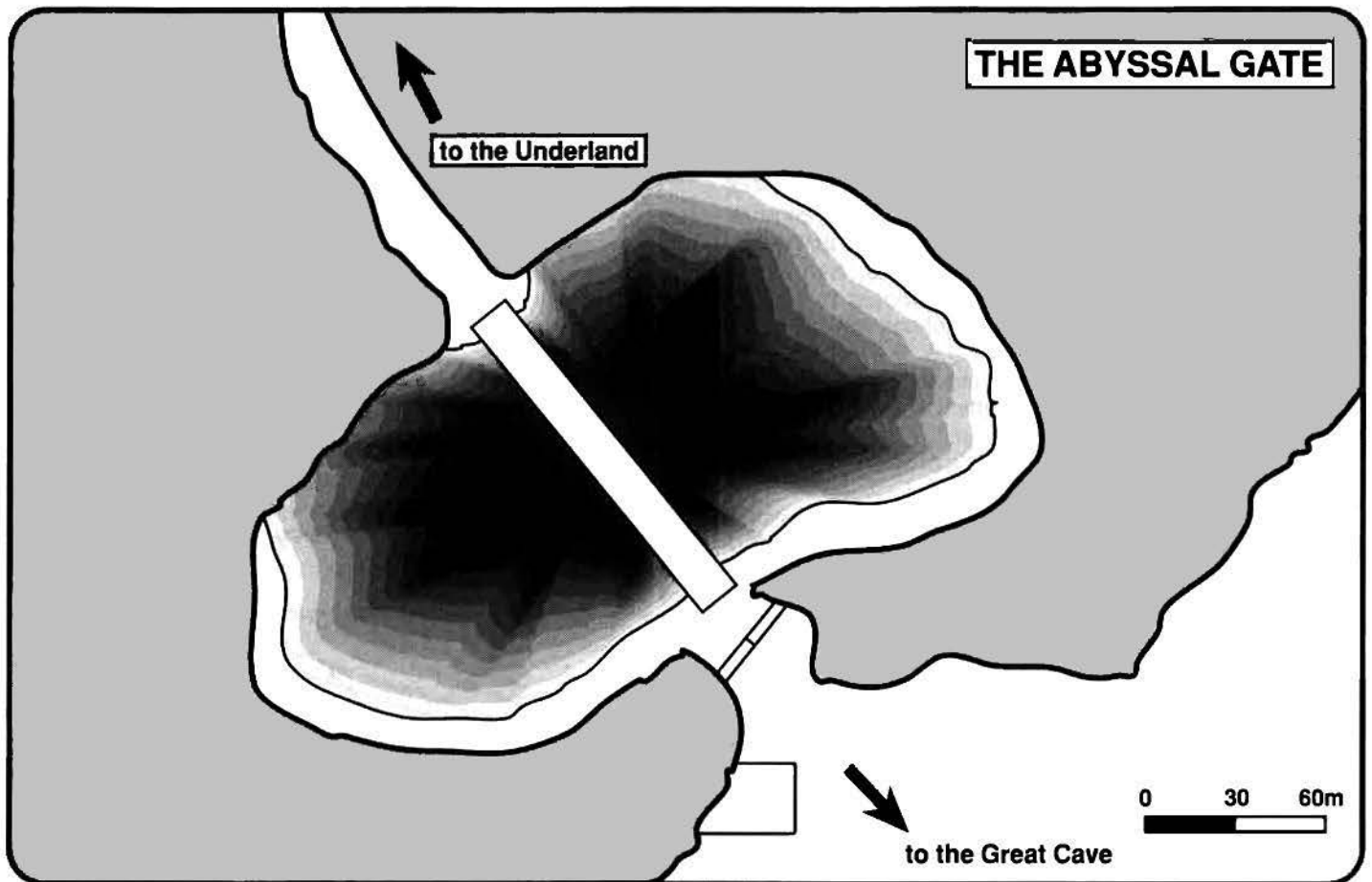
**Mole's room** is almost as bad as Crawler's. Although she spends most of her time digging through the Underland and helping other Darklings carry out secret missions on the Surface, she may rest here from time to time. The room is full of dirt and chunks of rock. Decaying food, mounds of filth, and perhaps a human limb or two can be found buried in the corner.

**Rumbler's room** is almost as big as King Earthwyrn's room. It is a full-fledged workshop. He has one large worktable, two smaller tables, and a desk. There are also several power tools, a few small drums of chemicals, and a rack full of hundreds of small drawers containing screws, nuts, bolts, electrical items such as fuses and wire, tape, tools, and thousands of other tiny mechanical pieces. Rumbler works here as often as anywhere else, developing new inventions for the King and studying technical manuals stolen from the Surface.

### The Third Floor

The third floor of the Tower is a single large room with a metal table in the center. This room is used as the meeting chamber for the Darklings and King Earthwyrn. They meet here several times a week to discuss the preparations for the invasion.





### The Roof

A spiral staircase from the third floor room leads to the roof of the tower. On the roof are several binoculars, bolted to poles. The connection between the poles and the binoculars is hinged, allowing the viewer to see all parts of the Great Cave in fine detail from the tower. The Darklings come up here often to watch the Subterrans work.

## THE ABYSSAL GATE

At one end of the Great Cave is the main entrance and exit, known as the Abyssal Gate. This is the only portal between the Great Cave and the Underland. When the invasion begins, the Subterranean army will march through the Abyssal Gate.

The Abyssal Gate begins at the point where several Downroads reach a bridge in a large cave. The bridge is suspended over an abyss-like chasm (thus the name). At the other end of this bridge is a pair of steel doors and a large group of armed guards. Beyond the steel doors is a guardhouse made of rock. The entire chasm is lit by over two hundred glowgems, making it almost painfully bright.

The bridge is made of thick steel, stolen from a cooling tower of a partially-finished nuclear reactor. It is bolted to the rock and very strong; several tanks could cross it at once without a strain. The low metal walls along either side of the bridge are thick as well, adding support.

The chasm is at least two kilometers deep, maybe more. No one really knows. The Abyssal Gate was built here when this natural pit was discovered — King Earthwurm wanted to take advantage of the depth of the pit and decided to place the entrance to his kingdom here. There is a ledge that surrounds most of the chasm, carved into the rock when the bridge was installed. If an enemy army tried to attack the Great Cave, Subterrans can line up on this ledge with rifles to defend their home.

The doors are built from more of the thick metal stolen from the cooling tower. They are mounted into the rock by giant hinges. Because of the great weight of the doors, the Subterrans must grease the hinges every hour or the doors will stick in their current position. The doors are usually left open, but they can be closed and bolted if necessary.

The rock guardhouse is two stories tall, with three rooms. The forty guards of the Abyssal Gate are here at all times, so the guardhouse has become their home. Each has Professional Skill: Guard 8-, and is armed with two loaded machine guns. The rooms are full of Surface world furniture and weapons. If the guards need extra weapons or ammunition, they have plenty to choose from here.



## THE UNDERLAND

One third of the Subterranean population lives in the Underland, a vast network of tunnels and caves between the Great Cave and the Downroads. Clusters of caves in the Underland are separated by a maze of twisting passages. The clusters are small underground communities. Each community member supports the others; some patrol the tunnels for intruders, some dig new tunnels and caves, and others repair and strengthen the caves and tunnels to prevent collapse. Each community is in constant contact with other Underland communities nearby.

All Subterraneans living in the Underland are of the same race as those living in Subterra. They think and act the same. Except for their Area Knowledge skill levels (which are reversed), they have identical statistics. There is no social stigma for living in the Underland.

The only subterranean creatures who live here except Subterraneans are a few rats and roaches — both are considered a delicacy among Subterraneans!

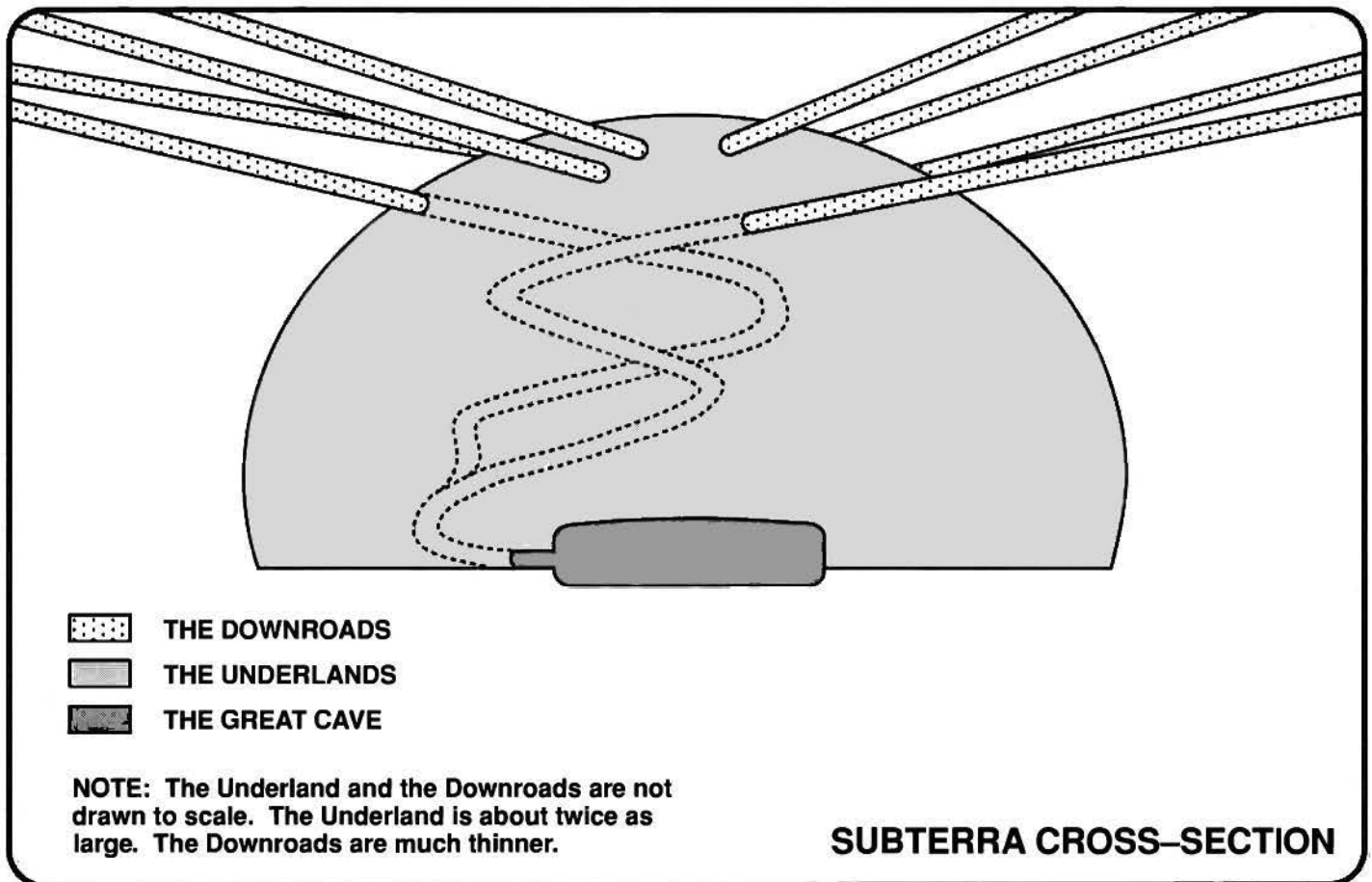
## UNDERLAND TUNNELS

The tunnels are one or two meters wide and two or three meters high. Dimensions fluctuate gradually; every hundred meters, either dimension increases or decreases by half a meter. There is a countless number of these tunnels. They have uneven floors, ceilings full of stalactites, sparse lighting (glowgems illuminate only a fraction of them), and are full of sub-passages, alcoves, and hidden doors. The majority are clean and dry. Subterraneans travelling through the Underland tunnels carry glowgems to light their way.

There are also a few Downroads that extend through the Underland (see Downroads, below).

## UNDERLAND CAVES

Caves range from the size of a closet to a ballroom. Many floors have earthen tiles or synthetic cloth carpet. Except for the lack of windows, many caves look like the interior of a castle. The ceiling of each cave is covered with a thin layer of gray fungus — this is the same fungus that covers the ceiling of the Great Cave.



Communities consist of ten to thirty cave rooms. Caves are well-lit by glowgems. Subterrans living in the caves spend their time stocking weapons, digging, collecting food, and patrolling the passages for intruders. They get water from underground rivers and springs.

Many caves have a designated purpose; a cave full of mattresses is a sleeping chamber, a chamber housing weapons is an armory, etc. Other caves (usually the smaller ones) have random debris inside and can be used for any purpose by wandering Subterrans. Well-used caves sometimes have piles of human clothing, furniture, and other items stolen from the Surface world.

## EXILES

Some Subterrans in the Underland are exiles. They were kicked out of Subterranean "society" for one reason or another and live in infamy at the outer edges of the Underland. Expulsion is the worst penalty for a crime. Common crimes include refusing to work, being too violent with fellow Subterrans, and promoting peace. All of these crimes are very rare — there are, at most, a hundred exiles.

Subterrans in the Underland can sense who is an exile, and will treat the exile accordingly. Exiles live alone or with other exiles, dealing with normal Subterrans only on rare occasions.

## THE DOWNROADS

The Downroads are the highways connecting Subterra with the Surface. The Downroads allow Subterrans to move vehicles and heavy equipment between the Surface and Subterra. When the invasion begins, armies will march through these tunnels.

There are over a hundred Downroads. Each begins at the upper section of the Underland and gradually reaches the Surface. Each Downroad ends just below the Surface in America. These locations are spaced evenly across the continental United States, about 500 kilometers apart. The Downroads do not reach the Surface in any other country ... yet.

Half a dozen Downroads continue through the Underland to the Great Cave. These Downroads meet at the Abyssal Gate. These tunnels are needed to transport vehicles from the top of the Underland (where all of the other Downroads end) to the Great Cave, so they can be brought to the Nest.

All Downroads decline, but they are not too steep — for every 10 kilometers traveled, the traveler will be 1 kilometer deeper beneath the Surface. Because of this consistent decline, a vehicle traveling from the Surface to Subterra can simply coast the way down. But going back up requires power. Each Downroad is approximately 150 kilometers long. They have gradual twists and turns, making each a sort of spiral ramp.



The Downroads can be as narrow as a one-way street or as wide as a eight-lane highway. Each has a ceiling from six to ten meters high. Widths and heights fluctuate gradually — every ten kilometers, the tunnel will lose or gain a half a meter from either dimension. The floors are smooth or cobbled, but always very flat. All Downroads are lit by glowgems created by Crystal.

Minor Downroads connect the major routes, allowing a vehicle or traveler to alter his path. This is just like our interstate highway systems — there are many major highways, each interconnected by smaller roads. In the Downroads, a junction to another Downroad occurs approximately every fifty miles. These junctions are much more frequent as one gets closer to the Underland, however — a traveler leaving the Surface must stay in one Downroad for at least 50 kilometers before he finds the first junction to another.

Narrow tunnels run parallel to each Downroad on both sides. These tunnels are used by Subterranean patrols and Darklings to move around vehicles blocking the road. The tunnels are also available to be used strategically for ambushes and stealth if Subterra is invaded by humans. The tunnels are the same size and shape as Underland tunnels.



# LIFE IN SUBTERRA



## GOVERNMENT

Subterra is ruled by King Earthwyrn. His subordinates, the Darklings, are his loyal henchmen. The common Subterrans have no voice in government. They do as they are told without question. There are no taxes, voting, political parties, or written laws in King Earthwyrn's government. When he feels the need, King Earthwyrn uses the Shaper Pool to create new Darklings; this always happens when a Darkling dies or is "removed from service" for disobedience.

Earthwyrn and his Darklings reside in the Nest, a stronghold overlooking the valley of the Great Cave. The Darklings and the King design and carry out complex and delicate missions on the Surface world. They monitor the progress of the Subterrans, noting the amount of additional preparation needed before the invasion.

## ECONOMICS

There is no trade, business, or money in Subterra. This is because no one owns anything. Everyone can use any weapon or tool available. Everyone is working in harmony for their common cause: to take over the Earth.

## POWER

Power for the synthetic cloth machine, synthetic food machine, and the gestation chambers comes from the Wyrmian matter-conversion power plant. This power plant can convert any dense matter into energy — its primary source of fuel is rocks. When the Great Cave was being built, the rocks were fed into the power plant, creating much-needed food and clothing. The power plant also provided a convenient place to get rid of the rocks removed to create the Great Cave.

Subterrans also have several coal mines and have tapped natural gas deposits. They use the coal to feed furnaces in the rooms of the rock houses. Refined gas stolen from the Surface is stockpiled along the back of the plateau behind the Nest — this gas is used to fuel the stolen surface vehicles.

## INTERCOMMUNICATION

All communication between the Underland and the Great Cave is by word of mouth, telepathic contact from King Earthwyrn, or by messenger. Messengers carry information written in English on synthetic cloth. Although average Subterrans could probably learn to use radios or telephones stolen from the Surface world, they prefer their current methods.

## MESSENGERS

Communication between the Underland, the patrols in the Downroads, the Subterrans spying on the Surface, and the Great Cave is the responsibility of messengers. These Subterrans are quick and have great endurance. They know all subterranean areas better than anyone else (KS: Subterra 16-, KS: Underland 17-). Messages are written on synthetic cloth (or cloth from the Surface world) and stored in scroll tubes. Because the average Subterranean speaks English poorly, messages are often misspelled and crude.

For example, a message from a veteran Subterranean spy to King Earthwyrn might read:

Sire:

Near Sanfrancisco. At Alameda Naval Stashin. Stoled many new guns and other wepons. Truck full of them came days ago. I need help. One more to help me. I have good hiding place. I am watching them well. End.

## TECHNOLOGY

Although the average Subterranean is just a little less intelligent than a human, they have only marginal scientific ability. They are masters of building rock houses, stealing weapons, fighting, and digging, but they could not fix a toaster if their lives depended on it.

However, most of the Darklings, after being altered by the Shaper Pool, have greater intelligence than the average Subterranean — they learn faster. The Darklings also consult with several human prisoners; the captives with useful knowledge are allowed to survive in return for these services. The Darklings also gain knowledge from King Earthwyrn, who has absorbed technical information from captive humans for over ten years.

Subterrans build very few of their tools, machines, and weapons. They can dig and build rock houses, but they rely on human technology for everything else. They are quick to learn how to use weapons and vehicles, however; a Subterranean can drive a car after a few days of practice (but he could not fix it).

The highest priority in technology is in preparing for war. Subterrans steal automatic rifles, not flashlights. A crate of grenades will be stolen from a military compound before a bunk bed. Tools needed to help prepare for war are almost as important as weapons.

To dig, the Subterrans use picks and axes. They do not

use powered tools. Before they stole tools from the Surface, they used picks fashioned from the useless metal interiors of the Wyrman starship. The Wyrman metal is very strong and tools made from the starship lasted for several years. But, eventually all tools are worn away chipping at rock. There is always a need to steal new tools. This is why the construction of Subterra took so many years — even though there is so many Subterrans, they had only brute strength and crude tools to dig.

Subterranean medicine is very simple. They instinctively know how to bind wounds using the synthetic cloth, but have no knowledge of surgery or preventive medicine. There are no Subterranean doctors or hospitals. Luckily for the Subterrans, their bodies have a healing rate and basic constitution far exceeding that of humans — they have less of a need for advanced medicine.

## WEAPONS

Subterranean weapons are simply stolen human weapons. They stockpile anything they can get their hands on, but their greatest interest is in personal hand guns and rifles. The rock houses on the floor of the Great Cave are full of assault rifles, shotguns, hunting rifles, .38 Specials, .45s, and all types of 9 millimeter handguns. In general, if Americans use it, the Subterrans have stolen it. The more common the weapon is on the Surface, the more the Subterrans can steal it.

With the current supply of weapons, every two out of three Subterrans can arm himself. The Underland and the Great Cave also have a plethora of ammunition, knives, and sharp tools. Many Subterrans carry a knife or axe on their person at all times.



For weapon stats, use any gun or knife listed on pages 200-201 in the *Hero System Rulesbook*. Guns, rifles, and modern knives are the most common, but a few Subterrans may even sport relic Japanese katanas, tasers, or compound bows.

## VEHICLES

The most common stolen vehicle is the American military jeep; the Subterrans own over a hundred. They also use pickup trucks, family cars (with the roof and windshield removed), and motorcycles. They like powered vehicles, so bicycles and skateboards are never stolen.

The Subterrans treat their vehicles with care. Each vehicle has a specific Subterranean assigned to it, known as the designated operator. The designated operator must refill the vehicle, make sure it is in working condition, and drive it. This Subterranean has Transport Familiarity with Small Ground Vehicles (1 point).

If a mechanical problem can't be fixed by the designated operator, he takes the vehicle to the Nest, where captive humans or Darklings repair it (if possible). Still, many Subterrans become careless (such as reckless racing through the Downroads) and crash their vehicles. These losses are not as common as the acquisition of new vehicles, however; so the vehicle fleet is always growing.

The primary use of the vehicles is to transport rocks, coal, weapons, tools, food, and clothing throughout Subterra. A jeep, driven by the designated operator, will take a heavy load of synthetic food, synthetic cloth (sewn into Subterranean garments), and coal to any location where it is needed. The driver will empty his load and collect any stolen weapons, tools, or messages. He then returns and, after a tune-up and refuelling, starts all over again.

## NAVIGATION UNDER GROUND

Subterranean passages are hard to navigate except for Underland Subterrans, who know the Underland tunnels and Downroads very well. A character without AK: Underland can become hopelessly lost very quickly. Unless he finds Subterrans to lead the way or an Downroad, he can starve to death in the maze of passages.

A successful roll against AK: Underland will tell the character the best route to the Underland, to a preferred Downroad, or to the Surface. Failed AK: Underland rolls can land the character(s) in a pit, a dead end, or a crumbling passage. Pits will be 2d6 meters deep. A dead end can be a flat wall, a ledge, or a passage too narrow to walk through. Crumbling passages are triggered by striking the wall or ceiling.

## PATROLS

Armed patrols of three to ten Subterrans wander throughout the Underland and the Downroads. Patrols carry rifles and axes. They look for intruders to bring back to King Earthwyr (or to eat) and problems in the passages. Common problems include stuck vehicles and getting food to communities located on the outer edges of the Underland.



## ACCESS TO THE SURFACE WORLD

There are hundreds of open connections between the Downroads and the Surface world. At the present time, all such connections are in America. About half a kilometer before a Downroad reaches the Surface, it splits into dozens of narrow tunnels. Nearly every deep cave in America has a narrow, out-of-the-way passage that serves as an entrance to one of these tunnels, and on to a Downroads. All sewers in major cities have at least one connection. Other openings come through cellars, mines, and underground shelters.

All connections between the Downroads and the Surface are either concealed or isolated. Concealed connections are secret doors etched in brick walls or cut out of cave walls — they are hard to find no matter how close you are. Isolated connections are wide open holes. But isolated connections are always located in places that are hard to reach or see. An isolated connection could be a hole in the shadows at the ceiling of a cave, a hole smashed in the wall of subway maintenance tunnel, or a doorway in an old sewer drain.

There are also some connections that are dangerously large, where the Downroad itself reaches the Surface. The Subterrans need these connections to get vehicles under ground. Mines and tunnels for cars or trains that are old or rarely used are sure to have a giant fake wall or pit leading to the Downroad. They are hard to come by and very valuable, so the Subterrans take advantage of every low-risk opportunity to build one.

Many humans have accidentally found connections to the Downroads. Most have been professional spelunkers or scientists. Some have found a concealed door or were simply travelling down into the earth until they noticed that the tunnels were obviously carved, not natural. Other humans have followed spying Subterrans as they return to the Downroads. There have also been many cases of humans who have blundered into a Downroad purely by accident (teenagers exploring old mines, for example).

In nearly every case, the humans have been captured or killed. Those few who got away were not believed when they told their story (the subterrans fill in the discovered cave to conceal the evidence). But every situation is a risk — at any time, a credible scientist or legal authority could find a connection to the Downroads or see a Subterranean. Such a person, trusted and intelligent, could carefully uncover the shocking truth ...

## SPYING ON THE SURFACE WORLD

Many Subterrans explore the Surface world to steal supplies, weapons, and information. They are skilled thieves, with years of practice. They go up at night, when ultraviolet rays are weak and they can use the darkness for cover. They always wear their protective synthetic clothing. Most have a hideout or two which they use as a home between excursions on the Surface, one-room caves located near a connection to a Downroad.

These Subterrans usually venture into areas of low population, among communities of questionable honesty. For example, some of their best sources of information are the isolated towns of rural Southern America and the Midwest. Locals who see them are disregarded as eccentric or accused of drinking too much the night before.



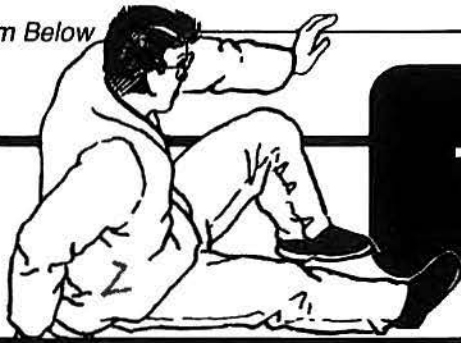
The Subterranean spies steal most of their weapons from United States military bases and the warehouses of defense contractors. They use the high numbers of weapons to their advantage — if a location has sixty crates of automatic rifles, one missing crate might not arouse suspicion.

The best Subterranean spies watch the cities. They live in the sewers and subways, eating homeless people. There are over a hundred resident spies in New York City, and proportional numbers in other major American cities. These spies are especially careful; they have millions of eyes to avoid. But they get more information than any others.

Some Subterrans go above for other reasons. A few want real food, while others simply love to terrorize humans. These renegades are hated by the other Subterrans. They risk the invasion to please themselves. The renegades are careful to avoid being seen, but their actions — chasing children through forests, setting barns on fire, snatching cows and dogs to eat — risk everything for personal gain.

But only a small fraction of the Subterrans who regularly roam the Surface are ever seen. Most who venture above are practiced, careful, and explore their own personal "beat." Watching the same area allows them to learn the habits of the locals: when the coast is clear, where to find important information, which people are in authority. The Subterranean knows what weapons their area has to steal, how much can be stolen, and when more weapons will arrive.

While some of these spies simply stand outside open windows to hear the television news or steal shotguns from homes on the outside of town, others are much more brave and skillful. More than one Subterranean spy has stolen military maps and records, or entire sets of encyclopedias. These are rare and special cases, however. Overall, the Subterrans like to play it safe rather than destroy a decade of preparation. They leave the big jobs to the Darklings.



# THE SUBTERRANS

Subterrans are Skilled Normals. They are physically superior to humans, but mentally weaker. They have natural infrared vision and a perfect sense of direction. Their Professional Skills, Area Knowledge, and English are learned in their first few weeks after birth. Subterrans have no Characteristic Maxima.

Because of their genetic makeup, Subterrans cannot heal above ground or stand in direct sunlight. Their skin is highly sensitive to ultraviolet rays, and Subterrans suffer third degree burns after only a few minutes of exposure.



## APPEARANCE

Subterrans look a lot like deformed, albino humans with black hair and black eyes. Their backs are slightly hunched, with broad shoulders. Their skin is pale, almost white, and their heads, hands, and feet are oversized. Subterrans have legs that are proportionately shorter than that of humans, giving them an ape-like gait; this also makes their arms seem too long.

Subterranean eyes are small. Their hair grows only on their heads. Most of them are very dirty — living underground has given them an opportunity to collect incredible amounts of filth. Some Subterrans bathe in the rivers of Subterra once a year ... and are covered with grime a week later.

SUBTERRANS					
Val	Char	Cost	25+	Disadvantages	
12	STR	2	5	Physical Limitation: BODY can only be healed underground and out of sunlight (infrequent, impairs slightly)	
12	DEX	6			
12	CON	4			
12	BODY	4			
8	INT	-2	10		
8	EGO	-4			Susceptibility: 1d6 per minute from direct sunlight (Common ... for a Subterranean)
12	PRE	2	10		
4	COM	-3			Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, recognizable)
3	PD	1			
3	ED	1			
3	SPD	8			
5	REC	2			
24	END	0			
26	STUN	2			

Cost	Powers	END
5	IR Vision	0
<b>Skills and Talents</b>		
3	Bump of Direction, only while underground (-1/2)	
5	AK: Subterra 14-	
2	AK: The Underland 11-	
3	Professional Skill 12- (Miner, Digger, Synthetic Garment Sewing, Synthetic Food Packing, Rock House Construction, or Guard)	
3	Survival (subterranean) 11-	
4	Weapon Familiarity (common melee, small arms) 8-	
1	Basic English	
<b>Equipment</b>		
1	Anti-UV ray clothing (+1 ED; protects covered areas from sunlight damage)	

OCV: 4; DCV: 4; ECV: 3; Phases: 4, 8, 12

COSTS:	Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base
	23	+ 27	= 50	= 25	+ 25



## PHYSICAL QUALITIES

Subterrans sleep heavily, but only for a few hours a day. The majority of their waking hours are spent working on something. They do not get bored and can sit for hours staring at a wall if they have to (for example, while acting as a guard or waiting).

Subterrans are very good at repetitive physical labor, such as digging or carrying heavy loads. The comparison to ants is appropriate here: hundreds of Subterrans could move a thousand tons of rock without a single complaint. They work until the job is done, only pausing long enough to maintain their health.

Subterrans are masters of tunnelling and survival underground. They do not have the Tunneling power — they rely on their strength, endurance, and simple hand tools to dig. They have an inborn ability to judge the strength of rock formations and to carve tunnels and caves that won't collapse. They can navigate underground as if they had intimate knowledge of every subterranean passage. Every Subterranean knows how to find the nearest source of water from underground lakes and streams.

Subterrans are also as agile in twisting underground passages as a human on the Surface — with only a faint light, they can walk on uneven ground and avoid obstacles as easily as a human walking across a room.

There are two Subterranean genders, male and female. Both genders have certain telltale physical traits similar to that of humans (males have shorter hair and smaller chests, for example), but both genders are treated as social equals. Reproduction does not involve either gender, however — Subterrans are cloned.



## ATTITUDE AND PERSONALITY

The genetic redesign of the Wyrmiens changed their minds as well as their bodies. Although the Wyrmiens were peaceful and only came to Earth to avoid extinction, the Subterrans love violence and want to conquer the planet. They like machines of destruction, but prefer to use their bare hands to kill. They also love the taste of flesh ...

They can't build much of anything except tunnels, caves, and houses made of rocks. They just don't have the necessary skills for invention. But, they learn quickly how to make something work. Refuelling and tune-ups are easy, but replacing or adding parts is very hard for them to master.

## COLONY CONSCIOUSNESS

Subterrans are nearly as smart as humans, and each has his or her own personality. However, they share a special subconscious awareness similar to ants and other colony insects. King Earthwurm calls this "colony consciousness."

Colony consciousness is the ability of all Subterrans to act from exactly the same instincts, making reflex decisions at the same time. As a result, a team of Subterrans engaged in the same activity seem to communicate telepathically, working in perfect synchronization. This is not telepathy, however. It is really just a strong set of instincts, powerful enough to go unquestioned.

For example, when a dozen Subterrans are digging a tunnel, each has the same feelings concerning the direction, size, and shape of the tunnel. If one Subterranean begins to alter the direction of the passage, he is acting on an impulse that all of the other Subterrans feel. There is no need to discuss this decision because everyone has the same impulse. In a full-scale war, an army of Subterrans would fight with excellent organization and effectiveness. (They would, however, lack the individualism critical to the best soldiers and leaders.)

Colony consciousness is not constant, however. It only comes into play during a structured activity like construction, digging, or marching. If a Subterranean is doing something on his own, like fighting or talking or operating a vehicle, he makes decisions just like a human. In a group of less than six (or when the members of a group are performing different tasks), colony consciousness is not active.

## LANGUAGE

Since King Earthwurm's official language change, Subterrans speak English (1 pt. for basic conversation). Although they can speak as well as any American, Subterrans have lazy tongues, causing them to speak in chopped sentences and to slur some words.

## PERSONAL NAMES

Names for individual Subterrans are the only remnant of the old Wyrmiens language. Although all of the other words were changed when English became the new tongue, personal names remained. These names are always three or more syllables long. Many have doubled consonants, apostrophes, and Xs (which makes a Z sound if it is the first letter). There are more structural and grammatical details to these names, but they are too intricate for humans to understand.

**Examples:** *Raquiterrrod, X'ingharrrdash, Skogtheximmarrz, K'exannittouwax, T'irrgusttrrand.* For more examples, note the names of many of the Darklings.

## CLOTHES

All garments are made from a synthetic cloth created by the machine salvaged from the starship. The cloth is sewn into worksuits. Each worksuit is a set of matching pants and shirt made of thick, radiation-resistant fibers (+1 ED). Worksuits come in one color, a dull green. Standard Subterranean footwear are boots made of the same material — one size fits all cloned Subterraneans.

A Subterranean in a worksuit and boots will not be harmed by sunlight unless parts of the body are not protected, such as the hands and head. The Subterraneans wear these clothes at all times, even though they do not require protection from ultraviolet rays while underground.

## FOOD AND WATER

Subterraneans need the same amount of food and water as humans. They drink saltwater as often as fresh water — more than enough of both types are available in Subterra. Subterraneans cannot tell the difference in taste.

Subterraneans like to eat flesh. This can be cooked or raw; each Subterranean has his preference. However, because there is no other animal life in the Great Cave and they are not cannibals, they are forced to eat synthetic food. Subterraneans very much prefer fresh human flesh ...

Synthetic food is made in a special machine salvaged from the Wyrman starship and then distributed throughout Subterra. It doesn't look like food. It comes out of the machine as a thick, brown paste that becomes hard after a few days. Although it has flavor, the taste is faint and obviously artificial. The hardening is a side-effect of its powerful preservatives. It takes eight weeks to spoil; this gives the Subterraneans time to distribute it to all corners of the Underland before it becomes inedible. By the eighth week, the fake food is as hard as a rock.

While eating, satisfying hunger is more important than manners. Subterraneans use their fingers. They don't sit down or make an event of eating. Their meals are usually quick bites between work.

## REPRODUCTION

Subterraneans reproduce through the use of cloning chambers, housed in the Science Dome. Known as the Gestation Chambers, they were once berths from the Wyrman starship. The average output of clones is somewhere between one and three thousand; the chambers are faulty and the flow of new Subterraneans is very erratic. Subterraneans are born as adults, grown and ready to work.

The great advantage of the cloning chambers is the growing population which increases the army. Because they are produced faster than they die, the population is booming. And King Earthwyrn wants as many Subterraneans as possible for the invasion.

This method of reproduction has its drawbacks, too. The Subterraneans are dependent on the cloning machines for new Subterraneans. King Earthwyrn and the Darklings have not been able to fix the erratic output, either. They fear further tampering may permanently damage the whole system, and so they just leave it alone. If intruders come to Subterra, the Gestation Chambers (and the entire Science Dome for that matter) will be protected by armed Subterraneans and any available Darklings.



## SUBTERRANEAN RELATIONSHIPS

There are no Subterranean families. There is no marriage — males and females do not become attached to each other romantically. No Subterranean can have the Romantic Rivalry Disadvantage.

Subterraneans do have "friends", who are the members of their usual work detachment. Such "friends" always work together and they plan to fight side-by-side on the day they invade the Surface. But, because there are no real social activities and everyone has the same hopes and dreams (to conquer and feed), friendship between Subterraneans is not as strong or as deep as it is for humans.

## RELIGION

Subterraneans have no religion. In fact, they don't understand the concept. If a Subterranean were to go to a church in the Surface world, he would think the humans were simply honoring their own King. Subterraneans have no concept of life after death, either. They think dead humans are simply easier to eat. Anyone who tries to explain life after death or religious beliefs to a Subterranean will be met with a blank stare.





## JOBS AND DAILY ACTIVITIES

Subterraneans spend their time working; they don't do anything else. They have no art, music, sports, or organized entertainment. Any Subterranean who finishes a job will take a break to eat, sleep, or drink (if necessary) and then find more work to do. Subterranean social life consists of brief conversations between tasks.

Subterraneans don't work because they have to, however. They want to work. Every activity is directed toward the goal of taking over the Surface world and destroying humanity. They serve their King with undying loyalty because they know the reward is plenty of battle and fresh flesh. The only reason Subterraneans build houses is to shelter the growing population, the population that must grow so they will have an army large enough to take over the planet.

Ninety-nine percent of all Subterraneans work at repetitive, physically strenuous jobs. Subterranean Professional Skills include Miner, Digger, Synthetic Garment Seamstress, Synthetic Food Packer, Rock House Builder, and Guard. Subterranean work rarely requires thought, and, when it does, instinct from the colony consciousness is usually all that is needed. As a result, these jobs are performed well but the results may not be pleasing to the eye. For example, Subterranean rock houses are sturdy and practical, but they look ugly because Subterraneans have no sense of aesthetics.

A job that requires real thought and training is handled by a Subterranean with the correct skills. The Subterranean will be trained by Darklings or captive humans. Such jobs include: designated vehicle operator (Transport Familiarity, Mechanics, Combat Driving), Underland patrol (Combat Skill Levels, Survival, PER bonus), and Surface spies (Stealth, Shadowing, Lockpicking). Repair and scientific tasks are performed by the Darklings and King Earthwyrms, who may use captive humans for assistance.

The Subterraneans may take time out from working to chase down a human. King Earthwyrms regularly releases captive humans (those who don't have technical skills or information valuable to him) into the Great Cave. The humans must hide and scavenge for synthetic food to survive. The Subterraneans are always watching for them — when the Subterraneans find them, they hunt their prey in bloodthirsty mobs. This gives the Subterraneans some practice for the upcoming invasion and lets them release some of their need for violence. And they get a fresh meal of real flesh, too.

## DEATH

Subterraneans have a life expectancy of ten years, give or take a year. In the final months, the Subterranean becomes very weak and his vision dulls. Later, he stops eating and drinking until he dies.

When a Subterranean dies, a very strange thing happens. His skin becomes hard and brittle. Organs coagulate and fuse into a densely-packed substance. After only a few hours, a dead Subterranean body becomes as solid and unyielding as the rocks of their home. In other words, dead Subterraneans turn to stone! Of course, if there is no body to petrify (for example, if a Subterranean is dropped in a pool of acid) nothing happens. But death from a wound or disease will trigger the petrification. The corpse is not made of real stone, but it is as strong as stone and feels like it.

No one knows exactly why this happens. The cause can be linked to the damaged evolution computers in the starship, of course. A petrified body is as solid as a man-sized rock (DEF 4, BODY 4). A Subterranean graveyard looks like a field of statues — the dead serve as their own tombstones. Some of these corpses are collected for such a purpose; other are simply destroyed and forgotten.





# THE DARKLINGS

The Darklings (also known as the Darkling council) are more than a group of super villains. They are the rulers of the hidden nation of Subterra. They work and live together, planning and then carrying out missions to secretly steal weapons and equipment from the Surface world. They are also the principal defenders of Subterra — they protect the Subterrans from Surface heroes and will serve as generals in the invasion. Their headquarters is the Nest, located along one wall of Subterra.

The Darkling roster changes from time to time. Several Darklings have been killed during missions on the Surface or eliminated for disobeying King Earthwyr. When this happens, King Earthwyr immediately creates a new Darkling in the Shaper Pool. Of course, because the Shaper Pool kills all but a few who enter it, he may have to go through thirty or forty Subterranean "volunteers" before he has a suitable replacement. Earthwyr is also wary of creating a Darkling more powerful than himself — if such a being rises from the Pool, he will kill it immediately and try to create another.

Some of the Darklings are humans who King Earthwyr has recruited to his cause. King Earthwyr has consciously tried to combine Subterrans with humans in the Darkling council. He trusts and prefers Subterrans, but he also values the sensibilities of humans, especially human criminals. Their knowledge of the Surface world is important, too.

## KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Most Darklings (human and otherwise) have the following set of Knowledge Skills reflecting their familiarity with geography and culture on the Surface:

**KS:** Modern Human Society

**AK:** America

**AK:** Earth (the Surface)

**KS:** Modern Human Society is used to determine if assumptions about human culture are correct — for example, is football in Britain the same as football in America? Are dogs used as pets or food?

**AK:** America is used for accuracy of geography in the United States — does the Mississippi River flow north or South? Are there mountains in Kansas?

**AK:** Earth (the Surface) is global geography — Is Scotland part of the British Isles? What countries make up Southeast Asia?

Each Darkling with these skills has different base skill rolls. The humans (or those who were human before they entered the Shaper Pool) usually have higher base skill rolls because they lived on the Surface until they became Darklings.





## DARKLING MISSIONS

Missions to steal from the Surface are carefully planned in the Nest. Most missions take place at military bases or weapons manufacturing plants. If they do it right, the Darklings can steal a lot of weapons from these places without attracting too much attention. (If need be, they can kill soldiers who see them). If a truckload of rifles is missing in Lebanon, no one would suspect that super-powered creatures from beneath the earth stole it!

Usually, the Darklings arrive in the area through a connection between a Downroad and the Surface. Then they sneak around, collecting as much hardware as possible, and return to their subterranean home. They may spend a week or two stealing from a particular area, bit by bit. Alternately, they can bring large groups of Subterrans along to help them move the stolen goods, cleaning out a military base in only a few hours.

## BACKGROUND OF THE DARKLINGS

Most of the Darklings were created by the Shaper Pool. This makes many of their backgrounds and origins nearly the same. Each of these Darklings was a common Subterranean, working in the Great Cave, when he (or she) was selected by King Earthwyr. If the Darkling was once a human, he or she was captured by the Subterrans.

Next, the captive human or Subterranean was submerged in the Shaper Pool and luckily came out alive, with super powers. Each of these new Darklings was trained and filled with knowledge by King Earthwyr or other Darklings. Most are loyal, but each has his or her own motivations and degree of devotion to the King's plan (see individual descriptions for details). Any details that differ from this common background is noted in each character's description.

## A NOTE ABOUT SHAPER POOL EFFECTS

The Darklings who were Subterrans when they entered the Shaper Pool can lose some of their racial attributes. Some have emerged from the Pool looking like a common Subterranean and retaining all of their racial abilities such as IR Vision and sensitivity to sunlight. Others have emerged looking like anything but a Subterranean, with no Subterranean attributes. The attributes the Subterranean retains cannot be changed later. Any Darkling who was once a Subterranean may or may not petrify when he dies — that is one effect of the Shaper Pool that can't be tested until it actually happens.

The Shaper Pool has also transformed the personalities of the survivors, making most of them evil. The chemicals seem to eliminate any sense of morality and conscience. Although the Darklings can control themselves, they all have a desire to cause suffering in others.

The personalities of the Darklings are much more like typical super villains than Subterrans. Each has been around captive humans and on the Surface long enough to pick up common slang terms and American attitudes. When they meet Surface heroes, they will exhibit the same mindless bravado and evil actions as other villains (such as taking innocent bystanders hostage to escape from the heroes). When the PC heroes first meet the Darklings, they will not know these evildoers are from beneath the earth unless they investigate the backgrounds of the Darklings or track them when they escape to Subterra.

KING EARTHWYRM					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
16	STR	6	25	Psychological Limitation: Obsessed with idea of becoming King of the Earth (Very Common, Total)	
20	DEX	30			
26	CON	32			
25	BODY	30			
35	INT	25	20	Psychological Limitation: Paranoid (Very Common, Strong reaction)	
30	EGO	40			
30	PRE	20			
8	COM	-1	20	Psychological Limitation: Megalomania (Very Common, Strong)	
21	PD	18			
21	ED	16	25	Psychological Limitation: Hates mankind (Very Common, Total)	
6	SPD	30			
20	REC	24	5	Physical Limitation: BODY can only be healed underground and out of sunlight (infrequent, impairs slightly)	
90	END	19			
75	STUN	29			
			10	Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, recognizable)	
			10	Reputation (as supreme and uncompromising ruler of Subterra), extreme, 8- (higher among Subterrans and Darklings)	
			498	Darkling/Villain Bonus	
Cost			Powers		END
125	Multipower (125 Point reserve)				
22 m	9d6 Ego Attack, half END				7
19 m	15d6 Mind Control, half END				5
17 m	14d6 Mind Scan, half END				4
60	12d6 Telepathy, half END, Concentrate				4
20	20 pt. Mental Defense				0
5	IR Vision				0
27	Characteristic: Speed 10 only with Mental Powers (-1/2) (in addition to his other Phases, he can use Mental Powers in Phases 3, 5, 9, and 11)				0
<b>Skills and Talents</b>					
10	Eidetic Memory				
10	2d6 Luck				
3	Bump of Direction, only while underground (-1/2)				
5	AK: Subterra 18- (based on INT)				
5	AK: The Underland 18- (based on INT)				
4	KS: Modern Human Society 17- (based on INT)				
4	AK: Earth (the Surface) 17- (based on INT)				
3	AK: America 16- (based on INT)				
5	Interrogation 16-				
3	Systems Operation 16-				
3	Bureaucratics 15-				
3	Conversation 15-				
3	Persuasion 15-				
5	Science (Wyrman technology) 14-				
5	Mechanics 12-				
3	Electronics 11-				
3	Survival (subterranean) 11-				
4	Weapon Familiarity (common melee, small arms) 8-				
2	Transport Familiarity (ground) 8-				
2	Fluent English				
15	+3 with mental combat				
<b>OCV: 7; DCV: 7; ECV: 10; Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12</b>					
<b>COSTS: Char. Powers Total Disadv. Base</b>					
318 + 395 = 713 = 613 + 100					

**Background:** King Earthwyrn was just like all of the other Wyrmi-ans in the berths of the starship until the craft hit the Atlantic Ocean. The impact cracked many berths open, killing the occupants. It also broke the seal on a large vat of toxic waste chemicals, located under the floor of the berths. The liquid in the cracked berths combined with the chemicals, creating a strange and powerful fluid.

When the Subterrans rose from the berths three thousand years later, many tumbled into the vat. The chemicals reacted with one Subterrann's DNA structure, causing him to transform. By a stroke of luck, he did not die. Instead, he transformed into a creature of incredible mental and physical power. He climbed out of the vat and saw the other Subterrans scramble across the battered starship interior in the dark.

The lucky Subterrann quickly learned to use his mental powers by practicing on the others. He read their minds, scanned their memories, subdued a few with mental blasts, and then took control of the rest. He also tested his great strength on a few, killing them with his bare hands. Using his superior intelligence and powers, he convinced them to worship him. He commanded them to begin building an underground home and to prepare for war on the Surface. If any resisted, he used his great strength and powers to kill them.

He then explored the remains of the starship, checking computer-automated records of their former planet and their journey to their new home. He named himself by combining the name of the planet he came from and his new home: Earthwyrn. He chose the title of King and fashioned a crown out of a piece of metal from the starship's hull.

King Earthwyrn oversaw the entire construction of Subterra over the years. He organized the building of the Science Dome. When he moved the vat of chemicals that created him (which he called the "Shaper Pool") to the Science Dome, he carefully protected it; it would be used later to create more powerful creatures like himself. When the time came, he used the Shaper Pool to create the Darkling council, a group of super-powered servants who would help him plan the invasion of the Surface.

King Earthwyrn is now almost ready to begin his attack on the Surface, but he is also getting old. He has outlived the normal Subterrann life expectancy. Madame Zhalla, Cornerstone, and Grayshape are all rivals to become the new King (or, in Madame Zhalla's case, the new Queen). But King Earthwyrn is not dead yet and, because no one knows the exact effects of the Shaper Pool, he could be around for years to come.

He is fully aware of the rivalry between these three Darklings, but he pretends he isn't. As long as the competition does not get out of hand, he is eager to see who comes out on top. Although the rivalry makes him more paranoid about usurpers of the crown, he knows the invasion will benefit if they regularly try to out-do each other to win his favor.

King Earthwyrn rarely leaves the Nest. When he does, he will have a good reason, such as joining the Darklings in a crucial Surface mission or going to the Science Dome to maintain the invaluable cloning machines. In the Nest, he plans all the details of the preparation and strategies of the invasion, carefully reading and studying an enormous amount of information he has collected from the Surface over the years. He reads books about military strategy and theory, memorizes entire sets of encyclopedias, and keeps a careful account of all supplies and equipment in the Nest.

**Motivation/Personality:** As a result of his transformation in the Shaper Pool, King Earthwyrn is a villain of the highest order. The chemicals made him evil to the core — he wants to enslave, cripple, or kill everyone he sees. Fortunately for the Darklings and Subterrans, he is usually able to resist his urges, saving his bloodthirsty desires for the invasion. The Shaper Pool also made him a little crazy; he is deluded, paranoid, and obsessive.

Earthwyrn is also megalomaniacal — he feels he is destined to rule the Earth. He has collected information about humans for over a decade, interrogating prisoners, scanning human minds while sneaking around on the Surface, and collecting facts from the Darklings. The invasion is the tool he will use to make himself King of the Earth.



Through his study of mankind over the years, he has also learned to hate humans and their cultures. His obsession with ruling the planet has festered into a strange psychosis: he assumes that a small group of influential humans know about Subterra and are plotting against him. When anything he plans goes wrong, he blames mankind, even if the error was obviously caused by the Darklings or Subterrans. Because of this delusion, he plans to use the invasion as a means of revenge as well as a means of attaining power.

King Earthwyrn is paranoid about usurpers trying to steal the crown of Subterra from him. He demands complete loyalty from the Subterrans and his Darklings. He has made sure that all newly-cloned Subterrans know they serve him. Subterrans who act rebellious in any way are killed by the King without a second thought.

Although he is aware that some Darklings are not completely loyal to him, he tolerates this as long as they do not disobey him. If he thinks a Darkling is plotting to kill him to take the crown, he kills that Darkling immediately. On a few occasions in the past, he has merely imagined a Darkling was plotting to usurp the crown and killed the innocent Darkling. These dangerous delusions help keep the Darklings in line, however — they know that any indication of rebellion can mean instant death.

Earthwyrn conducts his preparation for the coming invasion very carefully. He has had plenty of time to learn how to avoid being discovered by humanity. He also knows the weaknesses and strengths of his army. All major missions to the Surface are planned with King Earthwyrn — his contributions to each scheme often mean the difference between success and failure. He also regularly sends messages to the Subterrans spying and stealing from the Surface, reminding them to be cautious or to seek specific information.



**Quote:** "I am the ruler of this planet! My time has come! If you stand in my way of destiny, I will sear your brain and bury your ashes!"

**Powers/Tactics:** King Earthwyrn emerged from the Shaper Pool with incredible mental powers. He can read or send thoughts, scan memories, send a mental blast, resist other mental powers, and control others with his mind. His favorite Power is his Mind Control.

Earthwyrn likes to scan the minds of captive humans. If one of them has valuable technical skills, he can use the human as an instructor ... whether the human wants to teach him or not. Earthwyrn can also scan all information about the Surface world from these humans, a practice that has made him more knowledgeable about 20th Century mankind than the members of the Darkling council.

King Earthwyrn's body was also effected by the Shaper Pool. The chemicals made him tough and strong. He has great endurance and is very quick. Over the years, King Earthwyrn has lost some of his physical strength and speed from natural aging, but he's still a formidable opponent in hand-to-hand combat.

Today, King Earthwyrn generally avoids combat. If he must fight, he will use his Ego Attack, then use Mind Control on the most powerful opponent. He uses powerful Mind Controlled heroes against other heroes whenever possible. If he is attacked in the Nest, he will use the Wrathstone (see the Golem's description for details about the Wrathstone). As a last resort, he will fight physically. If this happens, he will usually pick up a sword or automatic rifle to augment his natural speed and strength.

**Appearance:** King Earthwyrn is a tall, heavily-muscled Subterranean. His back is even more hunched than the average Subterranean however — his lumpy back is the highest point on his body! His skin is particularly pale and his head is bald. His face is wrinkled and ugly.

He wears a robe, tied at the waist by a leather belt. On his head is the crown of Subterra, a simple helm made from Wyrman metal salvaged from the starship. On rare occasions, he will carry a heavy pistol or sword.

**Background:** After graduating from high school in New York, Randall Thikes travelled the world, then served four years in the U.S. Army. He developed a feel for people, perfected a tough attitude, and discovered a love for action and danger.

Cost	Powers	END
13	Detect structural weakness in non-living objects +5 to PER roll	0
13	15" Teleport, Armor Piercing, x6 END	24
<b>Equipment</b>		
10	1d6 HKA, Handblade — OIF	1
25	+5d6 HKA, Handblade — OIF, 0 END, only after successfully finding structural weakness (-1 1/2) only usable on non-living objects (-1 1/2),	0
15	2d6 RKA, handgun — OAF, 4 clips of 8 shots each (+0)	0
13	+10 PD, +10 ED (total: 18 PD, 16 ED)	
	Bodysuit — OIF	0
7	10 points Flash Defense, Helmet Visor — OIF	0
<b>Skills and Talents</b>		
20	Find Weakness with handblade, 13-	
2	Contact: other American private investigators 11-	
1	Contact: Washington, D.C. police 8-	
6	KS: Modern Human Society 17- (based on INT)	
6	AK: America 17- (based on INT)	
6	AK: Earth (the Surface) 17- (based on INT)	
3	AK: Subterra 14- (based on INT)	
3	Criminology 14-	
3	Deduction 14-	
3	Stealth 14-	
3	Persuasion 13-	
7	Shadowing 13-	
7	Streetwise 13-	
2	AK: The Underland 11-	
3	Survival (subterranean) 11-	
3	Weapon Familiarity (unarmed combat, small arms) 8-	
4	Transport Familiarity (small ground vehicles, SCUBA, parachuting, boats) 8-	
0	Fluent English (native language)	
6	+3 OCV with Handblade	
<b>OCV: 7; DCV: 7; ECV: 7; Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12</b>		
<b>COSTS: Char. Powers Total Disadv. Base</b>		
240 + 164 = 404 = 304 + 100		

CORNERSTONE				
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
18	STR	8	10	Enraged when tied up or caged
21	DEX	33	14-	11-
30	CON	40	20	Psychological Limitation: Reckless/Loves action and danger (Very Common, Strong)
17	BODY	14		
25	INT	15	15	Psychological Limitation: Loves to kill (Common, Strong)
20	EGO	20		
20	PRE	10	15	Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Strong)
14	COM	2	15	Psychological Limitation: Overconfident (Very Common, Moderate)
18	PD	14		
17	ED	11	15	Psychological Limitation: Addicted to nicotine
5	SPD	19	25	Hunted by Mafia 11-
15	REC	10	10	Hunted by NYC drug lord 8-
60	END	0	25	Hunted by FBI 11-
65	STUN	24	5	Professional Rival with Gray-shape
			5	Professional Rival with Madame Zhalla
			5	1d6 Unluck
			129	Darkling/Villain Bonus

After leaving the military, he took advantage of his talents and desires by becoming a cat burglar. During this time, he discovered his reaction to being tied up — when he was bound and gagged by a double-crossing partner, a latent claustrophobia made him explode with anger and adrenaline. He broke free of his bonds and, in a blind rage, killed his captor. When he crossed the path of the Mob, he changed his identity and took up yet another profession, private investigation, with a base of operations in Washington, D.C.

Thikes' very first case was an insurance fraud investigation. He was looking for a scientist, Dr. Ronald Bussa, who was thought to have died when his lab in his barn exploded. No concrete evidence of the body could be found. Before the insurance company would award Bussa's widow, Thikes was hired to investigate the case. After only a month, Thikes found Dr. Bussa in a second lab under his house, hidden by a secret cellar door. Dr. Bussa was trying to raise money by faking his death; his wife was in on the scam.

Thikes was about to turn Dr. Bussa over to the insurance company when Bussa made him an offer: the scientist would give Thikes a dose of what he was working on. Dr. Bussa said it was an immortality serum, but it was actually an experimental concoction designed to develop the latent mutations in anyone who injected it. Before Thikes could answer, Dr. Bussa's wife crept up behind Thikes and knocked him out with a baseball bat. Then the Doctor injected the serum into him. Thikes made a perfect Guinea Pig: the serum would either kill the pesky investigator or prove that Dr. Bussa was a brilliant scientist.

But nothing happened; the serum seemed to be a total failure. Thikes was tied and gagged but, in a fit of rage, he escaped and beat the two Bussas senseless. Then he turned the good Doctor and his wife over to the insurance company and the authorities. Thikes never knew what happened while he was unconscious and, as his reputation as a PI grew, he soon forgot all about that first case.

But the drug was in his system. It began to effect his mind and body. Little by little, he became sadistic and greedy. The drug seemed to bring out the worst in him. Before long, he was moonlighting as a hired assassin and drug dealer.

The drug also effected his body. He became much stronger and could take a lot of injury before he even slowed down. He discovered that he could move much faster than the average human. Thikes made good use of his new-found physical prowess to inflict as much pain as possible on his growing roster of enemies. A year after he solved the Bussa case, Thikes took a case to find a missing child, Marcia Smith. Because he wanted to quit the PI business and become a full-time drug dealer — he decided to make this his last case. Marcia had been playing in her front yard in a suburb of San Francisco when she disappeared. Thikes searched records, met with contacts, and followed every lead for months without any progress.

Then he stumbled onto a cave just outside of town, a possible hideaway for a criminal. On a hunch, Thikes spent several days searching the cave using rented spelunking equipment and fighting off bats. Finally, he found a narrow doorway, obviously made by some creature's hand, and began to explore a Subterranean Downroad.

When he was ambushed by Subterraneans, he screamed ... and then he was suddenly back in the mouth of the cave. Instead of continuing his exploration, he left the cave and practiced his new ability. He discovered that he could teleport short distances in his range of sight, but the jump made him weak.

He also discovered that he could see the hidden weak points of objects around him. When he looked at a bridge near the cave, the entire structure appeared to be covered with glowing stress lines. The lines intersected at one particular joint in one of the supports. He took an axe and struck that spot. The bridge crumbled. Thikes narrowly escaped being crushed by teleporting away. These were, of course, the effects of Dr. Bussa's serum. Thikes had no idea where the powers came from, but that didn't matter too much to him. A week later, Thikes had total control of his super abilities and decided to finish off the case. He returned to the Downroads, convinced he could solve any investigation case with his new powers. He was able to cause caves and tunnels to collapse on attacking Subterraneans and teleport around others. Eventually, he forced one of them to take him to their leader. He met King Earthworm and the Darklings.

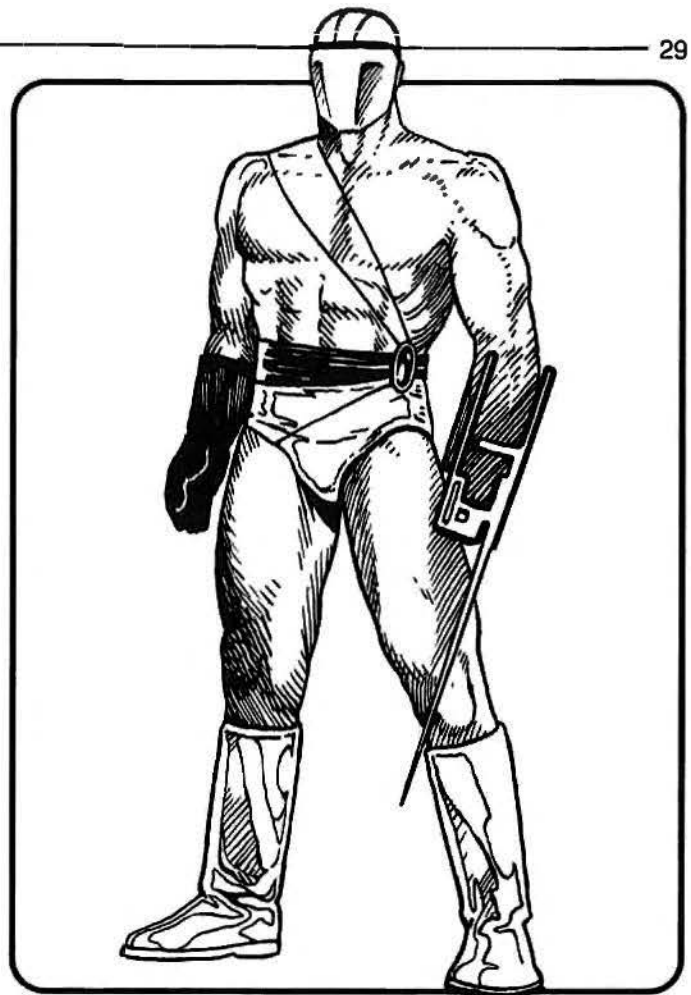
The King and Thikes got along right away. King Earthworm appreciated Thikes' wicked personality and sharp attitude. Thikes, eager to reap the rewards of world domination, convinced the King that he was vital to their cause. After a quick demonstration of his powers, Thikes took the name Cornerstone and became a Darkling.

He never found Marcia Smith...

**Quote:** "Mess with me and I'll bring this whole place down!"

**Motivation/Personality:** Dr. Bussa's chemicals have transformed Cornerstone into a murderous villain with no conscience. He wants to help King Earthworm kill humans. His dream is to set up concentration camps after the invasion has taken place, to exterminate as many people as possible.

Cornerstone has a devious, forceful personality. He is always promoting his various personal strengths. For example, he knows more about the Surface world than the others. He adds vital details to plans of a mission such as background on the people ("You'll all note that only a fraction of the personnel of an American military base live on the premises.") or area ("We can't come out the Downroad through the subways of Los Angeles, stupid! There are no subways in Los Angeles!"). The others don't know most of these details and can't help but value Cornerstone's expertise.



This arrogant attitude has been challenged by Grayshape and Madame Zhalla on more than one occasion. But Cornerstone has always come out on top. He makes an effort to detect their subtle attacks on him, and retaliates in kind. But he is always careful to remain loyal to King Earthworm — he doesn't want the King to feel threatened and kill him.

**Powers/Tactics:** While planning a mission, Cornerstone tries to provide a few opportunities to use his amazing ability to topple inanimate structures and objects. If possible, his actions will be vital to the mission. For example, if the Darklings are going to kill someone who found Subterra and escaped alive, Cornerstone will suggest that they wait until their prey enters a building — then he can knock the building down. If they are going to kidnap a human to interrogate for vital information, Cornerstone will suggest the kidnapping take place on a bridge — if they are followed, he can knock down the whole structure. He also uses his Handblade to break down walls, shatter weapons, etc. Cornerstone only teleports when he absolutely has to. He can go for months without teleporting once. His primary use of teleporting is to get out of the way of a building, bridge, wall, or other structure he is knocking down.

Cornerstone also enjoys one-on-one combat. He likes to test his strength and agility against single opponents by initially faking weakness, then pounding his opponent to hamburger. He would love to fight a super hero.

**Appearance:** Cornerstone wears a full-body suit of gray material with red highlights. He wears knee-high black boots, one black glove, and his Handblade. The Handblade looks like a half-meter-long chisel mounted to a metal hand grip.

In combat or on a mission, he wears a close-fitting helmet with a transparent red shield that covers his face. When he has a moment of relaxation or time to remove the helmet, he always has a lit cigarette in his mouth.



CRAWLER					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
30	STR	20	25	Berserk when attacked mentally	
30	DEX	60	14-	11-	
25	CON	30	15	Psychological Limitation: Likes to kill (Very Common, Moderate)	
20	BODY	20			
7	INT	-3	15	Psychological Limitation: Unpredictable and impulsive	
14	EGO	8		(Very Common, Moderate)	
25	PRE	15	20	Psychological Limitation: Animalistic (Very Common, Strong)	
4	COM	-3			
22	PD	16			
20	ED	15	15	Psychological Limitation: Fears mental attacks (Uncommon, Total)	
7	SPD	30			
13	REC	4			
58	END	4			
49	STUN	1	20	Distinctive Features (not concealable, major reaction)	
			5	Professional Rival with the Mole	
			407	Darkling/Villain Bonus	
Cost		Powers		END	
40	4d6 RKA (acid spittle), x2 END			12	
56	3d6 HKA (claws), half END			4	
21	Damage Resistance, 22 PD, 20 ED			0	
12	+6" Running (12" total)			2	
9	+10" Superleap (14" total)			2	
14	+9" Swimming (11" total), x2 non-combat velocity			2	
27	5" Tunnelling through DEF 10, x2 END			2	
27	Desolidification, cannot travel through physical barriers (-1/2)				
5	IR Vision			4	
15	Clinging (+15 Clinging STR)			0	
5	Life Support, amphibious			0	
5	Extra Limbs (two extra arms)			0	
60	Regeneration, +6 BODY per Turn			0	
<b>Skills and Talents</b>					
3	Bump of Direction, only while underground (-1/2)				
3	Stealth 16-				
7	AK: The Underland 16-				
6	AK: Subterra 15-				
9	Concealment 13-				
9	Tracking 13-				
5	Shadowing 12-				
5	Survival (subterranean) 12-				
4	Weapon Familiarity (common melee, small arms) 8-				
2	Transport Familiarity (ground) 8-				
1	Basic English				
<b>OCV: 10; DCV: 10; ECV: 5; Phases: 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12</b>					
<b>COSTS: Char. Powers Total Disadv. Base</b>					
247 + 315 = 562 = 462 + 100					

**Background:** Shathasathus, a Subterranean, survived the Shaper Pool and gained extraordinary powers. But the chemicals in the Pool also caused some damage to his mind, making him less intelligent and a little crazy. Nevertheless, King Earthwyrms has kept him in the Darklings as one of the group's greatest thieves and warriors.

**Motivation/Personality:** Crawler's transformation in the Shaper Pool gave him the personality of an angry serpent — ferocious and crude. He can be very unpredictable. He is prone to quiet contemplation, followed by sudden activity and, more often than not, violence. He is not very intelligent, but he makes up for it with sheer ferocity.

Crawler has learned to resist his impulses to kill; he waits until the time is right. Around the other Darklings, Crawler is like a pet around them: he does as he is told and remains loyal. Crawler loves serving as a Darkling but doesn't really care about world-domination.

Strangely enough, Crawler is intelligent enough to help plan missions and carry on a simple conversation. Although he is animalistic by nature, he is smarter than he acts. This is the big difference between Crawler and Mole — she is a true animal while he can take part in simple tasks and discussions among the other Darklings. He refers to himself in the third person and talks about his own exploits as if he had watched himself in action.

Crawler does not like Mole. He sees her as a threat to his position as the Darkling mascot. Although he does not try to harm her, he will not aid her in any situation.

**Quote:** "Crawler will rip you to pieces! Crawler will drink your blood! You cannot catch Crawler!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Crawler has a plethora of abilities to allow him to kill and move. He can run, leap, and swim at high speeds. His body can also stretch and compress, allowing him to slither through small openings. In combat, his Damage Resistance and Regeneration make him hard to knock down and keep down. His high Speed reflects the number of attacks he has with four arms. And, if his opponent is too far away, he can spit a thin stream of black acid!

Tactically, Crawler is notoriously chaotic. He has a fifty-fifty chance at the beginning of a battle to jump into the fray at full force or to run and hide, waiting for a safe opportunity to make a surprise attack. If Crawler has a particular task to perform, he will stick to it, but he will find an unusual way to do it. For example, if he is told to watch a captured hero, he might decide to go somewhere and simply take the hero with him.

**Appearance:** Crawler does not look anything like a Subterranean. He is tall and thin, covered in hard-packed muscles. His skin is dark. He has a forked tongue that flips in and out of his mouth constantly, slurring his speech. He has a second set of arms on his rib cage, below the primary set at his shoulders. All four hands and both feet end in long, sharp claws. He is often seen wrapped around a piece of furniture or clinging to the wall.



CRYSTAL					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
15	STR	10	10	1 1/2x STUN and BODY from Darkness attacks	
22	DEX	36	5	Accidental Change: to normal personality (Uncommon, 8-)	
25	CON	30	30	Enraged when stressed (includes combat; VC) 14- 11-	
15	BODY	10	20	Psychological Limitation: Attracted to Minotaur (Very Common, Strong)	
22	INT	12	20	Psychological Limitation: Enjoys killing (Very Common, Strong)	
17	EGO	14	20	Psychological Limitation: Contempt for humanity (Very Common, Strong)	
15	PRE	5	15	Psychological Limitation: Predator of helpless human prey (Common, Strong)	
16	COM	3	207	Darkling/Villain Bonus	
16	PD	13			
14	ED	9			
6	SPD	28			
14	REC	12			
62	END	6			
48	STUN	13			
Cost		Powers		END	
20	Elemental Control — Light Powers				
a-80	8d6 Flash, explosion, half END (+1/4), no range			8	
b-30	10d6 EB (concentrated radiation)			5	
c-20	40 pts Flash Defense			0	
d-20	Change Environment: make illuminating crystals (glowgems), 2" radius, varying degrees of illumination (+1), Uncontrolled, Continuous, 0 END			0	
30	Full Life Support			0	
<b>Skills and Talents</b>					
5	KS: Modern Human Society 15- (based on INT)				
5	AK: America 15- (based on INT)				
2	AK: Earth (the Surface) 11-				
2	AK: Subterra 11-				
2	AK: The Underland 11-				
1	Mechanics 8-				
2	Weapon Familiarity (small arms) 8-				
1	Transport Familiarity (small ground vehicles) 8-				
0	Fluent English (native language)				
6	+4 Range Skills Levels with Flash				
OCV: 7; DCV: 7; ECV: 6; Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12					
<b>COSTS:</b>					
	Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base
	201	+ 226	= 427	= 327	+ 100

**Background:** Jamie Derry was born with a chemical imbalance in her brain that caused her to develop two personalities. Her normal personality was that of a sweet and intelligent girl. But, at any time, she could suddenly become violent and evil. Her parents drove themselves deeply into debt as they tried to find a cure for their daughter, but nothing worked.

Over the years, Jamie became her evil self more often, her evil self became more wicked, and her parents ran out of money and credit. They had to keep her locked in the cellar to prevent her from prowling through the town, and setting fire to houses.

When her normal personality surfaced, Jamie was crippled by fear and guilt of her darker side. She could not control the change. She dreaded each minute, waiting for the evil side to return.

When she was eighteen, she ran away from home while her normal personality was temporarily in control. Feeling cursed and suicidal, she traveled to the outskirts of town, where she found a cave. A storm was brewing so she went inside.

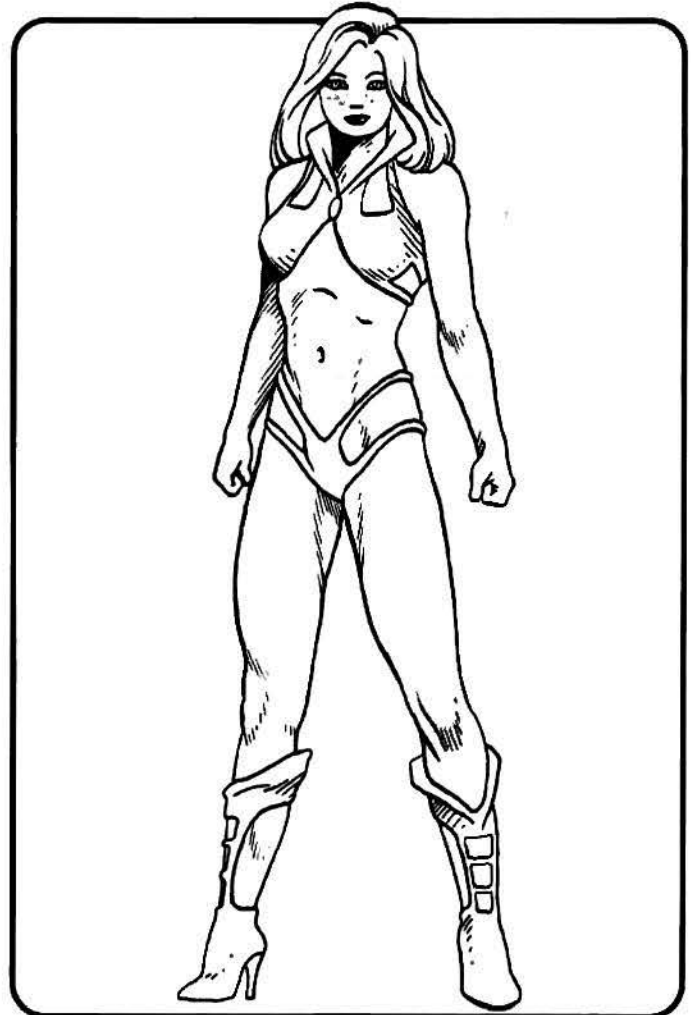
Using a makeshift torch to light the way, she began to explore. Soon, she was lost. Panicking, she accidentally dropped her torch. Jamie spent the next forty hours crawling through the cave, cutting and bruising herself along the rocks. She was terrified. When her dark side suddenly surfaced, she was still terrified, but also furious.

Finally, while she was near death from dehydration, she crawled into the Crystal Cave. The cave was a large underground chamber with walls of pure, irradant crystals. The crystals began to shine when she entered, giving off bright illumination and, unknown to her, radiation. Soon, the light was too bright to stand, and she began to lose consciousness.

She thought she was hallucinating when she suddenly began to feel strong, regaining her health in seconds. She stood up and tore off her clothes, revealing smooth, gleaming skin. The radiation transformed her into a living crystal, with the ability to shine light from her body. She was also able to turn rocks into illuminating crystals with a touch; she called them glowgems. She did not need food, water, air, or sleep to survive. But the Crystal Cave also made her current personality, her dark side at the time, much more dominant — she would return to her normal personality only on rare occasions for just a few hours.

As she discovered her new abilities, she continued to search for a way out of the cave. While she searched, she thought about all of the death and destruction she could create using her new-found powers. But instead of finding the Surface, she found a Downroad. As she explored, she ran into — and killed — many Subterrans. Eventually, she was found by Minotaur, one of the Darklings, who was roaming the area. They had a brief battle, but soon they both realized that they were natural allies. He was attracted to her aggressive, violent nature and she was impressed by his physique, power, and presence. Minotaur invited her to become a Darkling.

The two talked during their trek to Subterra and both began to feel the first stirrings of love for the other. She told him about the place that endowed her with her powers — she called the place the Crystal Cave. (Incidentally, Crystal never returned to the Crystal Cave — she tried several times but was never able to find it.)





When they reached the Nest in the Great Cave, she displayed her powers for the Darklings and King Earthwyr. After she showed King Earthwyr that she could make glowing crystals with a single touch, she was immediately recruited. Minotaur suggested she call herself Crystal. Crystal has served King Earthwyr faithfully ever since as a Darkling and by giving light to Subterra.

**Motivation/Personality:** Crystal is very violent and tough, with frequent outbursts of rage. Her permanent chemical imbalance brings out the worst in her. Although she tends to relax around Minotaur, she is always eager for battle and she is actively involved in preparing for the invasion.

One of her primary jobs is creating glowgems — she spends several hours of every day touching smoothed, fist-sized rocks. These are sent out among the Subterrans and planted in dark parts of Subterra. When she gets tired from using her power, she takes a break and starts again the next day. Her job will be over when the invasion begins or when Subterra is fully lit.

In the meantime, she amuses herself by working on vehicles with Minotaur. She isn't a gifted mechanic, but she and Minotaur like to be together whenever possible. She also goes "hunting" on the Surface at night, tracking and killing humans in secluded places. She likes to follow deer hunters in the forests, kill truckers on lonely stretches of highway, and blind sewer maintenance technicians in the lower pipes of major cities.

Crystal's Accidental Change back to her normal personality is rolled once per day. If she reverts to this personality, she loses her powers. She will become frantic and guilt-ridden; sometimes she just cries and rolls into a ball until her evil personality returns. She knows what she does in her other personality (plotting the destruction of mankind among evil super-beings) and prays her nightmare will end. Her dark side (and her powers) come back 1d6 hours later.

When the change happens, Minotaur is usually there to take care of her. King Earthwyr has no patience for these outbursts of civility (and sobbing), but Crystal is too valuable to remove from the Darkling ranks. If Crystal is "hunting" alone at the time of a change, she will try to get help (and warn the world about the Subterrans) before her dark side returns. She has failed on these occasions thus far — her dark side returns before she can convince anyone (they always think she's crazy).

**Quote:** "I'll melt your eyes from their sockets!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Crystal likes to fight. When a battle breaks out during a mission, she will select a target and use her Flash, then fire some Energy Blasts. When Crystal uses her Flash Power, her body glows, becoming translucent, then unbearably bright. She tends to stay close to Minotaur for protection — they also work as a team.

Crystal's Energy Blast is fired from her hands. She discovered the Energy Blast when she learned to control the amount of radiation her body emits. At first, she gave off radiation like the crystals in the Crystal Cave. But, by subconsciously retaining that energy, she is able to fire stored radiation in a coherent blast. There is no limit to how long she can go before she fires an Energy Blast — after she has stored her maximum amount of energy (enough for a 10d6 EB), she starts to emit radiation again, whether she wants to or not. The emitted radiation is harmless.

Crystal can turn any common, ordinary rock or stone into a shining crystal. She calls them "glowgems." She chooses the intensity of the light, from a dim glow to a bright luminance. The crystals never burn out or lose their level of intensity, although they will "turn off" if exposed to radiation. However, the crystals cannot be larger than a baseball. They also can't be made to shine bright enough to cause CV penalties or to damage anyone's eyes. Crystal has created thousands of them for the Subterrans to use, giving light to most of the Great Cave and all of the Downroads. Without Crystal, they would be lost in the darkness.

**Appearance:** Crystal looks a lot like she did before she found the Crystal Cave. She is of medium height and build, with straight, shoulder-length hair. Her hair is silver and the freckles on her face are reflective, like tiny mirrors. Her skin is not silver, but it is unusually clear and has a slightly metallic look. She wears a revealing costume so she can make good use of her Flash-ing skin.

THE DUNGEONEER					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
22	STR	12	10	2x STUN from magic	
20	DEX	30	20	Psychological Limitation: Sadistic (Very Common, Strong)	
30	CON	40			
15	BODY	10	25	Psychological Limitation: Obsessed with history and practice of torture (Very Common, Total)	
26	INT	16			
18	EGO	16			
23	PRE	13			
6	COM	-2	15	Psychological Limitation: Loner (Common, Strong)	
22	PD	18			
20	ED	14	5	Physical Limitation: BODY can only be healed underground and out of sunlight (infrequent, impairs slightly)	
4	SPD	10			
20	REC	20			
80	END	10			
50	STUN	9	15	Susceptibility: 2d6 per minute from direct sunlight (Common for a Subterranean)	
			10	Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, recognizable)	
			10	Reputation (sadistic loner) 8-	
Cost		Powers		END	
24	6d6 Aid to "combat Characteristics": STR, DEX BODY, PD, ED, SPD, STUN (one at a time; +1/4) 5 returned per hour (+3/4), increase only while touching someone in pain (-1 1/2)				6
5	IR Vision				0
<b>Equipment</b> (see Powers and Tactics for descriptions of equipment)					
62	3d6 HKA, Continuous, 5 MiniMaidens with 15 charges each (75 total charges; +3/4) OAF — MiniMaidens				
40	8d6 STUN Drain, OAF — The Drain Chains, 15 Charges				
31	5d6, DEF 5 Entangle, Entangle and Character Both Take Damage (+1/4), OAF — Extension Whip 15 Charges				
7	+10 ED, OIF — Anti-UV Radiation costume				
<b>Skills and Talents</b>					
2	Bump of Direction, only while underground (-1/2)				
10	AK: The Underland 19-				
8	KS: History and engineering of torture 17-				
8	Mechanics 16-				
5	AK: Earth (the Surface) 14-				
5	AK: Subterra 14-				
4	AK: America 13-				
3	Stealth 14-				
2	KS: Modern Human Society 11-				
3	Survival (subterranean) 11-				
4	Weapon Familiarity (common melee, small arms) 8-				
2	Fluent English				
16	+2 with all combat				
<b>OCV: 7; DCV: 7; ECV: 6; Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12</b>					
<b>COSTS:</b>					
	Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base
	216	+ 241	= 455	= 355	+ 100



**Background:** Derrgath'xexxuss, a common Subterran, emerged from the Shaper Pool with super powers and a malicious personality. His skin also became even more sensitive to ultraviolet radiation than the average Subterran. As a result, he always wears his protective garments and only ventures above ground at night.

When he began exploring the Surface, he discovered the art of torture. He stole hundreds of books about famous torturers in mankind's history, including the Spanish Inquisition, Vlad the Impaler, and the Nazi death camps. His twisted mind clung to this image and he began calling himself the Dungeoneer.

The Dungeoneer was able to convince Rumbler to build some special torture devices. Dungeoneer knew exactly how he wanted them to work, but he needed Rumbler's help to figure out the details. Dungeoneer now carries his special weapons with him at all times.

Dungeoneer also builds larger, simpler torture machines on his own. He has recreated many of the infamous torture devices from mankind's history and placed them in his hidden torture chambers scattered throughout the Underland. He spends a lot of time in these chambers, using the machines on helpless human prisoners. Because he spends so much time perfecting his torture techniques, he is a bit of a loner — he is always tending to his own business until he is needed.

**Motivation/Personality:** The Shaper Pool made the Dungeoneer cruel, violent, and completely without mercy. He is certainly the most vicious of the Darklings. He can't wait until the invasion, when he will get the chance to inflict pain on thousands of helpless people.

Many of the other Darklings find the Dungeoneer's sadistic nature disgusting. Although they value his ability (everyone knows he can be very useful), he is often too wicked and demented for them to stand.

The Dungeoneer often takes Mole through the Downroads to track down humans who have discovered the hidden subterranean tunnels. King Earthwyrn encourages the Dungeoneer to do this because it ensures the secrecy of Subterra. But King Earthwyrn never asks the Dungeoneer what he does with the humans he finds.

**Quote:** "I delight in your screams for mercy! My power and your pain are one!"

**Powers/Tactics:** As a result of the Shaper Pool, the Dungeoneer can increase his own physical qualities from the energy of someone else's pain. Once he has increased his Characteristics, he does not have to continue to inflict pain to use them at their increased values. When the Darklings are engaged in a battle, he will "power up" some of his Characteristics on various victims so he can fight more effectively. For example, he may capture some innocent bystanders and, while inflicting pain upon them, increase his PD and STR. Then he can go toe-to-toe with a hero.

Although his powers are useful, the Dungeoneer is more interested in the mystique of torture and his "tools of the trade." He likes to stalk unsuspecting victims, strap them down in his torture machines, and go to work on them. He thinks of himself as the master of this black art, worthy of fear and respect from everyone.

Each MiniMaiden (short for "Miniature Iron Maiden") is a shoebox-sized gadget; he has five. Each is a cluster of interlocking plates with sharp spikes on one side. The MiniMaidens are folded into a crude cube and hung on the Dungeoneer's belt. When he uses one, he removes it and triggers the MiniMaiden to snap open. Then he throws or strikes his target with it. When the MiniMaiden hits, the plates try to fold into a cube again, causing the spikes to dig into the victim's flesh. The gadget acts like a mechanical mouth and is hard to remove without causing additional injury.

The Drain Chains suck physical energy from anyone who is bound by them. The Chains are long and can be divided into three shorter Chains. To separate them, the Dungeoneer uses a special Drain Chain key. He uses the Drain Chains to capture tough opponents.

His Extension Whip is a telescopic whip that extends or retracts when triggered by a button in the handle. He uses the whip to capture weaker opponents, such as normal humans.

**Appearance:** The Dungeoneer looks like a typical Subterran except for his clothing and weapons. He wears a tight-fitting black costume with an executioner's hood; the material of the costume protects him from ultraviolet rays. Sharp metal studs adorn the costume on the arms and legs. On his wide belt are his weapons: five MiniMaidens, his Extension Whip, and the Drain Chains.

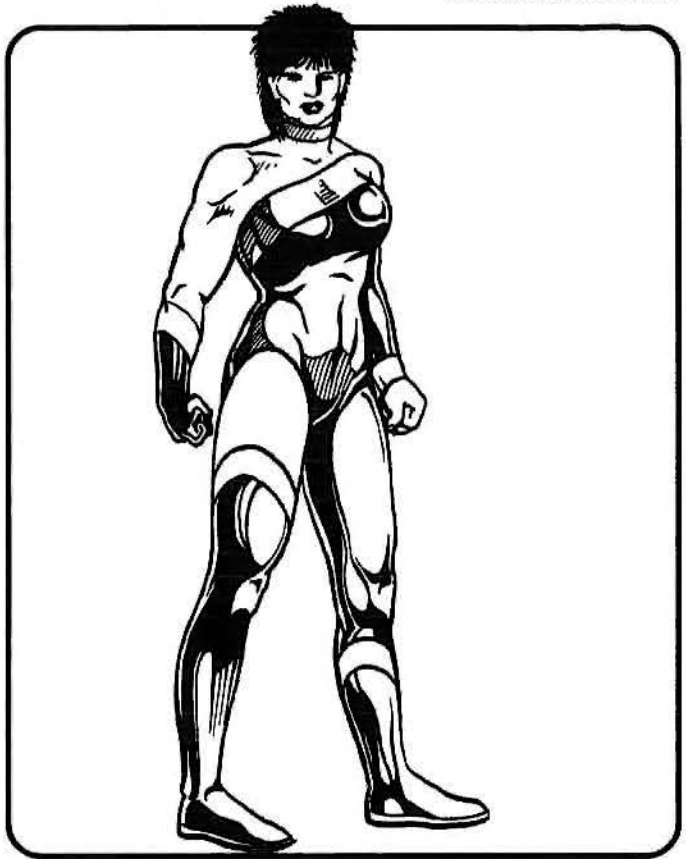


ECHOER					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
20	STR	10	10	2x STUN from magic attacks	
24	DEX	42	15	Psychological Limitation: Likes to kill (Common, Strong)	
28	CON	36	20	Psychological Limitation: Headstrong (Very Common, Strong)	
17	BODY	14	20	Psychological Limitation: Headstrong (Very Common, Strong)	
21	INT	11	15	Psychological Limitation: Antisocial (Common, Strong)	
18	EGO	16	15	Psychological Limitation: Antisocial (Common, Strong)	
25	PRE	5	15	Psychological Limitation: Hates being touched or stared at (Very Common, Moderate)	
26	COM	8	15	Psychological Limitation: Hates being touched or stared at (Very Common, Moderate)	
23	PD	19	5	Physical Limitation: BODY can only be healed underground and out of sunlight (infrequent, impairs slightly)	
25	ED	19	5	Physical Limitation: BODY can only be healed underground and out of sunlight (infrequent, impairs slightly)	
5	SPD	16	5	Physical Limitation: BODY can only be healed underground and out of sunlight (infrequent, impairs slightly)	
16	REC	12	10	Susceptibility: 1d6 per minute from direct sunlight (Common for a Subterranean)	
74	END	9	10	Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, recognizable)	
53	STUN	11	10	Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, recognizable)	
Cost		Powers		END	
114	8d6 NND Energy Blast (not against Force Fields), Indirect (any direction), 0 END, Double Knockback, Invisible Power Effects/sight, Time Delay (up to 11 Segments), Concentrate (1/2 DCV), Gestures, Incantation				0
24	Damage Resistance 23 PD 25 ED				0
5	IR Vision				0
<b>Equipment</b>					
7	+10 ED, Anti-UV costume — OIF				
<b>Skills and Talents</b>					
3	Bump of Direction, only while underground (-1/2)				
21	Ventriloquism 20-				
3	Interrogation 15-				
3	Stealth 15-				
4	AK: The Underland 14- (based on INT)				
3	AK: Subterra 13- (based on INT)				
5	Shadowing 12-				
2	Survival (subterranean) 11-				
2	Mechanics 11-				
2	AK: Earth (the Surface) 11-				
2	Weapon Familiarity (small arms) 8-				
1	Transport Familiarity (small ground vehicles) 8-				
2	Fluent English				
16	+2 with all combat				
OCV: 8; DCV: 8; ECV: 6; Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12					
<b>COSTS:</b>					
	Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base
	238	+ 219	= 457	= 357	+ 100

**Background:** Callixoddattan, a Subterranean, is one of King Earthwyrms's greatest Shaper Pool creations. She emerged from the Pool with a strange, unearthly beauty that appeals to both humans and Subterraneans. The Shaper Pool also altered her mind — she is now much smarter, but she is also very mean-spirited, murderous, and antisocial.

She also gained the ability to throw sonic screams and, using her hands, bounce them off of walls. When she began to explore the Surface with the other Subterraneans, she learned to throw her echoes against the ground, buildings, trees, and anything else solid.

She retained her natural Subterranean weaknesses, but her skin (which is still sensitive to sunlight) became resistant to Killing Attacks as a result of the Shaper Pool. Taking the name Echoer, she has become a strong part of the Darkling team.



**Motivation/Personality:** Echoer is headstrong and generally antisocial. She hates the idea that everyone thinks she is beautiful. She likes to help plan missions and may occasionally work with Rumbler and Minotaur on vehicles, but she cannot tolerate anyone touching her or staring at her. She usually just keeps to herself until she has something very important to say.

As a result of her transformation in the Shaper Pool, Echoer is only happy when she kills. Although she usually scowls and keeps to herself, she smiles and laughs when she kills someone, especially a human. She takes advantage of every opportunity to indulge in this activity.

Echoer is fascinated with her Wyrmsian heritage. She has spoken with King Earthwyrms many times about the possibility of returning to Wyrms. The King isn't interested, but he has told her that, if the invasion is a success, they may attempt to bring the sleeping Wyrmsians to Earth. Of course, the King is probably lying ...

Echoer has many Wyrmsian relics from the starship in her room in the Nest. This collection includes the ship's memory banks and a computer console to read them. At her insistence, Rumbler hooked some car batteries to the console so Echoer can review the memory banks in her spare time.

**Quote:** "If you touch me, I'll scream!" or

**Powers/Tactics:** Echoer can fire a sonic blast from her mouth. At first, she thought this and her tough skin were her only powers. But then she discovered that she could use her hands to direct the blasts, bouncing them off of inanimate objects. She practiced until she had mastered many tricks. She is even able to delay a blast by ricocheting it hundreds of times before it strikes her target.

In combat, Echoer is a great fighter. She likes to be at the front of the battle, taking on the toughest opponents. She is very skilled at ricocheting her blasts to hit opponents in the back or knock them off of their feet. She has also learned a little about stealth and shadowing from Cornerstone.

**Appearance:** Echoer is a tall, well-built Subterranean with a straight back and unusual features. Her face looks like a Subterranean (small black eyes, pale skin, etc.) but, somehow, she is very beautiful. Her black hair is short and she wears a tight blue costume.

THE GHOUL				
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
25	STR	15	15	1 1/2x STUN from physical Killing Attacks
26	DEX	48	15	Psychological Limitation: Overplays his role as hideous creature (Very Common, Moderate)
20	CON	20	15	Psychological Limitation: Loves combat (Common, Strong)
15	BODY	10	10	Psychological Limitation: Prankster (Common, Moderate)
15	INT	5	10	Physical Limitation: BODY can only be healed underground and out of sunlight (infrequent, impairs greatly)
15	EGO	10	15	Physical Limitation: END can only be regained underground and out of sunlight (frequent, impairs greatly)
25	PRE	15	15	Susceptibility: 1d6 per minute from direct sunlight
0	COM	-5	5	Dependency: Must Summon once per day (any number of corpses) or take 3d6 (Uncommon)
21	PD	16	10	Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, recognizable)
17	ED	13	10	Darkling/Villain Bonus
5	SPD	14		
14	REC	10		
46	END	3		
45	STUN	7		



**Corpses:** Note that all corpses animated and controlled by the Ghoul will not have the same statistics as other undead creatures animated by other characters. The Ghoul's power gives his undead slaves their particular attributes, including an innate hunger for human flesh. The Ghoul cannot control his corpses.

Cost	Powers	END
45	Summon up to 512 human corpses (75 extra Character Points for each; see stats below), half END, must be in graveyard/near available corpses (-1 1/2)	6
25	Desolidification; affected by energy attacks; half END, only usable through rock, stone or soil (-1)	2
36	30" flight, x2 non-combat velocity, half END only while underground (-3/4), only while Desolid (-1/2)	4
26	Detect human corpses (sense): discriminatory enhanced PER +12, range, partial Concentration (1/2 DCV), half END	1
5	IR Vision	0
<b>Skills and Talents</b>		
3	Bump of Direction, only while underground (-1/2)	
6	AK: Subterra 15-	
5	AK: The Underland 14-	
5	AK: America 14-	
5	Stealth 14-	
3	Shadowing 11-	
3	Survival (subterranean) 11-	
2	KS: Modern Human Society 11-	
2	AK: Earth (the Surface) 11-	
4	Weapon Familiarity (common melee, small arms) 8-	
2	Transport Familiarity (ground) 8-	
2	Fluent English	
24	+3 all combat	

OCV: 9; DCV: 9; ECV: 5; Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12

COST:	Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base
	181	+ 173	= 354	= 258	+ 100

CORPSE				
Val	Char	Cost	25+	Disadvantages
5	STR	-5	10	Hungry for human flesh
6	DEX	-12	20	Mute
15	CON	10	15	Must be Summoned
22	BODY	24	20	Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, extreme reaction)
2	INT	-8	15	Susceptibility: 1d6 damage per minute (caused by rotting in general, roll every minute)
0	EGO	-20		
20	PRE	10		
0	COM	-5		
5	PD	4		
5	ED	2		
3	SPD	14		
2	REC	-4		
30	END	0		
32	STUN	0		

Cost	Powers	END
30	Total Life Support	0
60	Only takes BODY damage	0
0	Immune to all EGO attacks (standard for all Automations; see p. 180 of <i>Champions</i> )	0

OCV: 2; DCV: 2; ECV: na; Phases: 4, 8, 12

COSTS:	Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base
	10	+ 90	= 100	= 75	+ 25





**Background:** The Ghoul is a Subterranean named X'anhattou who was submerged in the Shaper Pool by King Earthwyrn. He emerged with the power to animate human corpses. He can also become a ghost and float through solid earth and stone. After spending a few months learning about human culture and learning about undead folklore, he called himself the Ghoul.

Although he gained some incredible powers from the Shaper Pool, the Ghoul also gained some disadvantages. He retained his natural Subterranean Disadvantages and Subterranean IR Vision. He learned that he had to animate corpses regularly or be wracked with pain and weakness. He also lost the ability to regain his END above ground.

**Motivation/Personality:** The Ghoul is rather proud of himself for coming out of the Shaper Pool with such ghastly powers. He plays his role as the Ghoul to the hilt, sneaking around and pretending to be Death's personal servant. Ghoul loves to stalk the villages of Subterra, the Underland, and even the Surface world, scaring everyone with his ghastly presence.

The Ghoul gets along with the other Darklings quite well. He can fade into the background (literally!) but he is not afraid to take command when the opportunity arises. He loves being a Darkling because of the importance and heavy activity — he wants to lead his fellow Subterraneans to the conquest. The Ghoul joins the Darklings in their missions of evil to satisfy his need to Summon corpses. He is as violent and bloodthirsty as the average Subterranean, but not as evil as most of the other Darklings.

Ironically, the Ghoul is also the Darklings' comic relief. He is a great practical joker and enjoys springing cruel pranks on the others. Of course, his favorite pranks involve scaring people.

**Quote:** "I'll scare you to death ... and then bring you back to kill your fellow man!"

**Powers/Tactics:** The Ghoul can float through all earthy substances like a ghost. Although this is useful for passing barriers of brick or concrete, his favorite use is to hide in the ground, then suddenly appear in front of an opponent (and make a scare-based Presence Attack) or behind (and make a surprise hand-to-hand attack).

If there is a graveyard within a kilometer of a combat area, the Ghoul will try to lure an opponent there, possibly by capturing an innocent bystander so a hero will chase him. He will then Summon all of the corpses from the graves. Unfortunately for him, he cannot control his undead servants — but they are all animated with the desire for human flesh. Of course, they don't last too long (as soon as they arise from their graves, they begin to rot away) so he must rely on sheer numbers of corpses to have an effect in a battle. They are also excellent for creating diversions (endangering the lives of innocents, for example)

**Appearance:** The Ghoul looks like a typical Subterranean, but his skin is covered with various bumps and sores, making him look diseased. His hair is uneven and sticks out. Although he is not a zombie, the Ghoul tries to look that way — he wears ripped clothing and has been known to drool and stare for effect.

GOLEM					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
50/80	STR	40	10	2x STUN from magic	
18	DEX	24	10	2x BODY from sonic attacks (Uncommon attack)	
45	CON	70			
25/28	BODY	30	15	Enraged when STUN reaches 10 or less 14-, 8-, (Uncommon)	
14	INT	4			
20	EGO	20	25	Psychological Limitation: Must obey possessor of Wrathstone (Very Common, Total)	
34	PRE	24			
4	COM	-3			
30/33	PD	20	25	Distinctive Features (Not Concealable, Extreme)	
30/30	ED	21	30	Misc. Disadvantage: Only active when animated/life lived in segments of time	
4	SPD	12			
19	REC	0			
90	END	0			
73/76	STUN	0	167	Darkling/Villain Bonus	
Cost		Powers		END	
18	3d6 HA (belly oven), Damage Shield, Armor Piercing, 0 END, No Knockback				0
15	Growth (+3 BODY, +3 STUN, -2 DCV, +2 PER rolls against, +1" reach, +15 STR, -3 Knockback) 0 END Persistent, Always On				0
15	Density Increase (800 KG, +15 STR, -3 Knockback +3 PD, +3 ED), 0 END Persistent, Always On				0
25	Damage Resistance 25 PD 25 ED				0
12	-12 Lack of Weakness				0
15	Does not Bleed				0
Skills and Talents					
2	AK: Subterra 11-				
2	AK: The Underland 11-				
1	Basic English				
15	+5 in H-to-H combat				
<b>OCV: 6; DCV: 6/4; ECV: 7; Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12</b>					
COSTS: Char. Powers Total Disadv. Base					
262		+	120		= 382
		=	282		+ 100

**Background:** The Golem is an animated magic creature and the only Darkling that wasn't (and isn't) a human or Subterranean. The Golem is the product of a magic item called the Wrathstone, a fist-sized chunk of rock that once belonged to the infamous witch Baba Yaga. Baba Yaga gave the Wrathstone to Madame Zhalla, and Madame Zhalla gave it to King Earthwyrn.

To use the Wrathstone, a humanoid four meters tall must be built out of rock. When a person holding the Wrathstone mentally wills the Golem to come to life, the rock humanoid shudders and transforms, becoming a living, thinking creature. Its features change as well — the Golem has giant mouth and a bulging belly with a door on it that does not have to be built into the original rock humanoid. When the possessor of the Wrathstone commands the Golem to be gone (or if the Golem is destroyed), the creature stops moving and then crumbles into a pile of tiny stones.

The inside of the Golem is a hollow cavity filled with fire, like an oven. The fire burns constantly. The Golem has a huge mouth and a large door on its stomach that it uses to throw opponents into, trapping them in the flames (this is its Damage Shield HA). The Golem is also incredibly strong and resistant to injury.

The Golem will obey verbal commands of the possessor of the Wrathstone. If the possessor can't give verbal commands (if the possessor is gagged, for example), or if the Golem is in possession of the Wrathstone, it has a free will and can do whatever it chooses to do!

King Earthwyrn has three rock humanoids in the Nest Yard, waiting to be transformed into the Golem. He will create the Golem if he needs a bodyguard or if the Darklings need the Golem during a mission. Both of these situations are rare, so the Golem is seldom created. The Golem is a sort of "secret weapon."

**Motivation/Personality:** The Golem has a personality. It is humorous (it has a deep, thunderous laugh), polite, and friendly to its allies. It is a great listener and it can carry on a conversation with anyone. It remembers all of its life — each time it is animated, it picks up from when it left off last time. The Golem is completely loyal to the possessor of the Wrathstone. This is not because it wants to, but the magical properties of the Wrathstone make it feel obligated to serve. If the possessor does not command the Golem, it will do what it wants to do (such as wander around looking for combat, help other Darklings, or attend to the King). It will stop if commanded but, when there are no commands, it has a free will.

If the Golem possesses the Wrathstone, it is still a faithful servant of King Earthwyrn. It knows the Darklings, it knows about the Subterraneans, and it supports the invasion. It hopes that, if the invasion is a success, it will be able to live as a ruler of some kind or serve as advisor to the King.

If a PC hero gets ahold of the Wrathstone, he can control the Golem. But the Golem won't appreciate it. If this happens, the Golem will do as commanded ... and kill the hero as soon as it can.

**Quote:** "You look chilled. Allow me to warm you. No? Would you rather I crushed your bones to dust?"

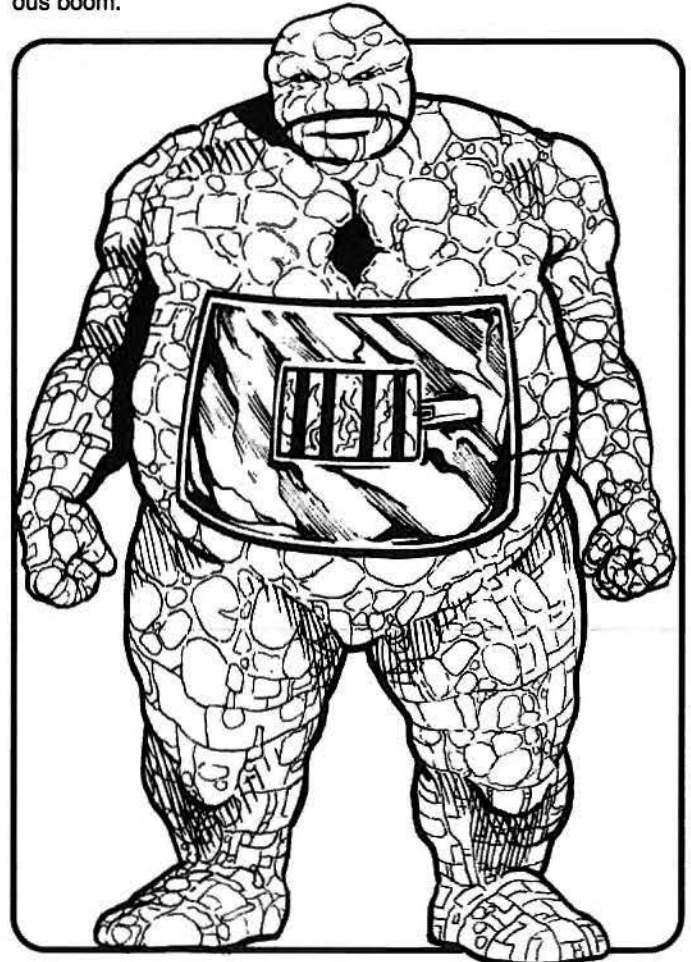
**Powers/Tactics:** The Golem uses its incredible strength and durability in combat. Few heroes can stand up to it for long. It is also an excellent battering ram and shield for other Darklings. When Cornerstone has the Wrathstone, he commands the Golem to carry him. Crawler usually rides on the Golem's back when they travel through the Downroads. When it fights heroes, the Golem is eager to grab one or two opponents and throw them into its stomach. Anyone inside will be unable to escape unless the Golem's STUN or BODY reaches zero. The Golem's interior has the same PD, ED, and Damage Resistance as its exterior.

When the Golem's BODY reaches zero, it crumbles into a pile of small stones. If the Golem was the possessor of the Wrathstone when this happens, the Wrathstone will be buried in the pile. If there is another rock humanoid on hand, ready for transformation, a new Golem can be created immediately.

The only way to permanently destroy the Golem is to kill it after destroying the Wrathstone. The Wrathstone itself has DEF 15 and BODY 50.

**Appearance:** The Golem looks like a cross between a Sumo wrestler made of bricks and an oven with a head and limbs. Its giant body is made of magically-strengthened earth and stone. The head is wedged into the large shoulders, with two tiny red coals for eyes, no nose, and a giant mouth. The creature's mouth is so big, it takes up most of its face.

On its chest is a fist-sized bubble of stone that can hold the Wrathstone perfectly — when the Golem is in possession of the Wrathstone, it puts the magic orb there so it can use both of its hands to fight. On its big belly is a metal door. The door has a handle and a small window with metal bars. Fire can be seen through the little window, burning and spouting licks of flame. When the Golem opens the door, heat and fire roar. The door closes with a thunderous boom.





GRAYSHAPE						
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages		
10	STR	10	10	1 1/2x from Flash vision attacks		
26	DEX	48	20	Psychological Limitation: Lust for power (Very Common, Strong)		
25	CON	30	15	Psychological Limitation: Loves Echoer (Common, Strong)		
25	BODY	30	15	Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, recognizable)		
30	INT	20	10	Physical Limitation: Mute (All the Time, Greatly)		
24	EGO	28	10	Physical Limitation: Fat (Infrequently, Slightly)		
25	PRE	15	5	Professional Rival with Cornerstone		
10	COM	0	5	Professional Rival with Madame Zhalla		
20	PD	18	15	Darkling/Villain Bonus		
20	ED	15	5			
5	SPD	14	5			
12	REC	10	5			
60	END	10	5			
47	STUN	4	5			
			364			
Cost		Powers		END		
107	Multiform: Stone Sphere			0		
62	Density Increase (Mass: 100,000 KG, +50 STR, -10 Knockback, +10 PD, +10 ED), 1/2 END			3		
20	Damage Resistance 20 PD, 20 ED			0		
10	-10 Lack of Weakness			0		
37	Mental Defense (35 pts Hardened)			0		
5	IR Vision			0		
10	Life Support: doesn't need to breathe			0		
Skills and Talents						
3	Bump of Direction, only while underground (-1/2)			0		
5	AK: Subterra 17- (based on INT)			0		
5	KS: Modern Human Society 17- (based on INT)			0		
5	AK: America 17- (based on INT)			0		
4	AK: Earth (the Surface) 16- (Based on INT)			0		
4	AK: The Underland 16- (based on INT)			0		
7	Mechanics 13-			0		
3	Bureaucratics 12-			0		
4	Weapon Familiarity (common melee, small arms) 8-			0		
2	Fluent English			0		
24	+3 with all combat			0		
OCV: 9; DCV: 9; ECV: 8; Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12						
COSTS:		Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base
		252	+ 297	= 549	= 449	+ 100

**Background:** King Earthwyrn was shocked when one of the first Subterrans he threw into the Shaper Pool rolled out! The Subterranean, Karrthennxdegenn, quickly changed back to his other new form, a humanoid with stone skin. He called himself Grayshape. Although he was mute, he quickly learned to write down what he had to say to communicate.

When the King was unable to penetrate Grayshape's mind, he was going to kill the Darkling — he didn't like the idea of a super-powered being who was immune to his mental powers. But the King had a hunch that Grayshape would be loyal and useful, so he gave the Darkling a few weeks to prove himself. The King's intuition paid off — Grayshape became the King's right hand man in the early years of Subterra. He was hard-working, intelligent, and (as far as the King knew) loyal. Grayshape has served the King ever since, helping to keep accurate records, supervise all operations, plot for the invasion, and help the King plan the strategy of the invasion itself. King Earthwyrn has forgotten his initial mistrust of Grayshape.

GRAYSHAPE (Stone Sphere Form)						
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages		
30	STR	20	25	No hands or arms (All the Time, Fully)		
20	DEX	30	15	No legs (All the Time, only Slightly impairing because he can still roll around)		
25	CON	30	15	Mute (All the Time, Greatly)		
25	BODY	30	25	Blind (All the Time, Fully)		
23	INT	13	286	Darkling/Villain Bonus		
24	EGO	28				
20	PRE	10				
10	COM	0				
27	PD	21				
28	ED	23				
4	SPD	10				
11	REC	0				
60	END	5				
57	STUN	4				
Cost		Powers		END		
45	Growth: up to 16 meters (maximum of +9 BODY, +9 STUN, -6 DCV, +6 PER rolls against, +45 STR -9 Knockback)			4		
60	Shrinking: down to a 3.2 cm pebble (4 milligrams -12 PER rolls, +12 CV, +18 Knockback)			6		
20	20 PD 20 ED Damage Resistance			0		
10	-10 Lack of Weakness			0		
37	Mental Defense (35 pts Hardened)			0		
20	+10" Running/rolling (16" total)			3		
35	360 Degree Spatial Sense			0		
15	Life Support: doesn't have to breathe, eat, sleep or excrete			0		
OCV: 7; DCV: 7; ECV: 8; Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12						
COSTS:		Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base
		224	+ 242	= 466	= 366	+ 100

But inside Grayshape's unpenetrated mind, he is plotting to take the crown. Along with his physical abilities and drawbacks, the chemicals in the Shaper Pool gave Grayshape a lust for power. He wants to be King of the Earth. But he is smart enough to know that he will have trouble planning and conducting the invasion as King — he is mute and he does not have the intimidating mental powers King Earthwyrn has. Grayshape plans to wait until King Earthwyrn dies. But now he has to compete with Cornerstone and Madame Zhalla to be the King's successor. He still takes care of many important administrative tasks, but Cornerstone's skillful manipulation of others and Madame Zhalla's tenacious nature have pushed Grayshape into the background.

**Motivation/Personality:** Grayshape loves power. He regularly travels throughout Subterra on "the King's business" — attending to the needs and problems of the land. For example, he makes a careful search of the Science Dome at least once a week, keeps careful records of the hardware in the Nest, sends Subterranean spies to find specific information from the Surface, etc. When he takes care of these tasks, he is demanding and brutal; he enjoys ordering Subterranean around with messages written on a slate. Grayshape will kill any one of them who questions his authority.

Grayshape acts as team leader at Darkling meetings when King Earthwyrn has chosen not to attend. Grayshape begins each meeting by presenting the outline of a mission important to the latest stage of invasion preparation. He writes this on a piece of paper and one of the Darklings reads it aloud. As the group decides what to do, Grayshape nods a "yes" or "no" to make final decisions. Madame Zhalla and Cornerstone (and sometimes other Darklings) may disagree with him from time to time but, unless everyone disagrees with Grayshape, he has the final authority at the meeting. (Of course, King Earthwyrn's opinion, if he is present at the meeting or asked to join to solve a dispute, is final in all cases.)

In the field, Grayshape writes what he has to say if he needs to converse with another Darkling. But most missions on the Surface are carefully planned and don't need much talk when they happen.

**Quote:** None: he's mute.

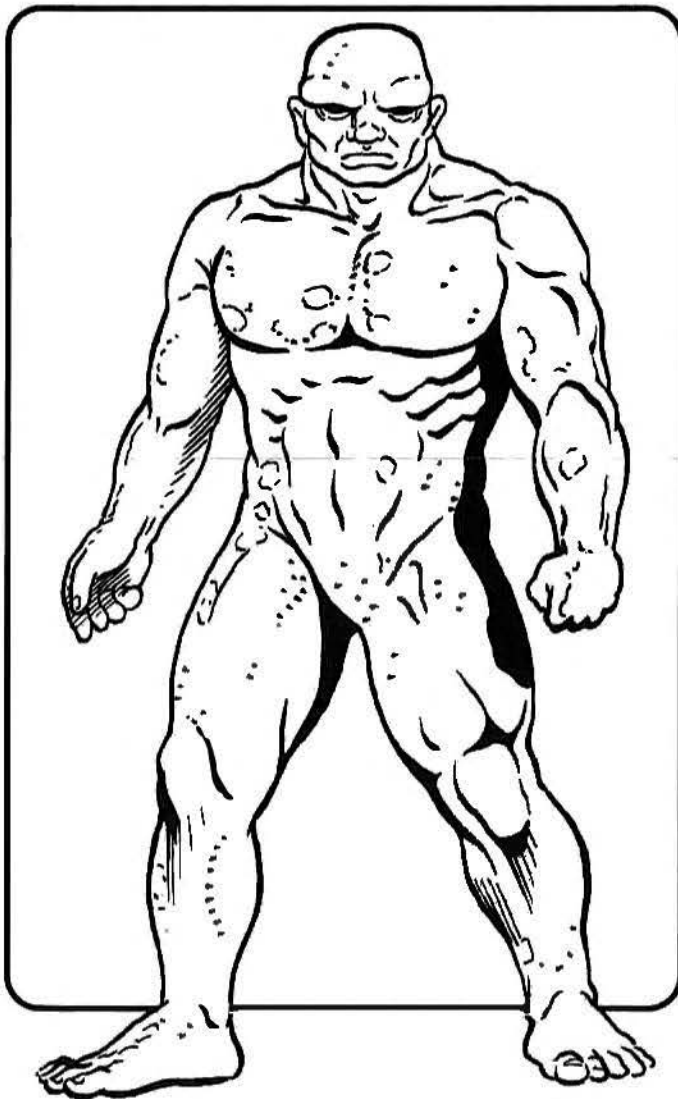
**Powers/Tactics:** Grayshape's skin has the strength and texture of rock. He can alter the density of his humanoid form, becoming as hard as diamond if necessary.

Grayshape also has the strange ability to transform himself into a sphere of solid stone of nearly any size. As a giant boulder, he is capable of rolling over people and buildings. As a pebble, he can hide in someone's pocket or "disappear" by posing as a tiny stone on the ground. Anyone touching the sphere can tell it is alive by feeling it expand and contract slightly — Grayshape subconsciously "breathes" as the sphere even though he does not require air.

In humanoid form, Grayshape enjoys hand-to-hand combat but he is careful avoid needless, risky battles. To spare his fellow Darklings from Killing Attacks, he will take on any opponents who have claws, swords, or similar weapons.

**Appearance:** Grayshape is a short, wide humanoid with coarse, gray skin. He has no hair. His face resembles most Subterrans (oversize head, small black eyes) but his back is straight and his hands and feet are not oversized. He wears no clothing.

His stone sphere form is smooth and perfectly round. The sphere is the same color as his skin: slate gray. The sphere has no features such as eyes or limbs.



MADAME ZHALLA					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
12	STR	2	20	2x STUN and BODY from poisons, toxins, chemicals	
20	DEX	30			
24	CON	28	10	Enraged if treated disrespectfully, 11-, 11-	
12	BODY	4			
26	INT	16	20	Psychological Limitation: Hates men (Very Common, Strong)	
27	EGO	34			
25	PRE	5	15	Psychological Limitation: Dislikes Subterrans (Very Common, Moderate)	
8	COM	-1			
16	PD	14			
16	ED	11	15	Psychological Limitation: Feels she should kill anyone who wounds her physically (Common, Strong)	
5	SPD	20			
15	REC	16			
82	END	17			
40	STUN	0	25	Hunted by KGB, 11- Professional Rival with Cornerstone	
			5	Professional Rival with Grayshape	
			387	Darkling/Villain Bonus	
Cost		Powers		END	
60	"Curse" 2d6 Major Transform, Cumulative change target into anything (+1), Gestures				7
60	"Blink" 30" Teleport; half END, Gestures				4
28	"Faces" Shapeshift into humanoids, Usable By Others: one other person, Zhalla does not lose the Power, half END, Gestures				2
27	"Wall of Earth" 20 PD, 20 ED Force Field must have several tons of loose earth to use to build the wall (-1/2)				4
33	"Pyromagic" 4d6 RKA (energy), One-Hex Area of Effect, Gestures, Limited Power: this power causes an existing fire to grow rapidly; an existing fire (any size) must be in range for this power to work (-1 1/2)				9
36	"Earth-Flight" 20" Flight, Usable by Others (up to 8 plus M. Zhalla, +1 1/4) OAF — huge chunk of earth, must have several tons of earth to serve as flying platform (-1/2)				4
29	"Earth Passage" 3" Tunneling DEF 10, Gestures				4
2	Life Support: Immunity to Aging, reduced to Slow Aging (10 years equals 1 year) (-1/2)				0
<b>Equipment</b>					
22	Invisibility ring (normal sight, no fringe) 0 END, OAF				
<b>Skills and Talents</b>					
3	Lightsleep				
6	AK: Earth (the Surface) 17- (based on INT)				
5	AK: Asia 16- (based on INT)				
11	Disguise 15-				
3	KS: Modern Human Society 14- (based on INT)				
3	KS: Witches and wizards 14- (based on INT)				
7	Acting 14-				
5	Persuasion 13-				
3	Bureaucrats 12-				
2,2	AK: America 11-, AK: Subterra 11-				
24	Fluent with accent in English, German, Armenian, Polish, Slovenian, French, Spanish, and Hungarian				
0	Russian, native language				
25	+5 with magic spells				
<b>OCV: 7; DCV: 7; ECV: 9; Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12</b>					
<b>COSTS:</b>					
	Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base
	206	+	396	=	602
				=	502
				+	100

**Background:** Madame Zhalla is not a product of the Shaper Pool. She is a true witch who has allied herself with King Earthwyrn.

As a child in Russia centuries ago, Madame Zhalla mastered the ways of magic. An orphan, she was found by the infamous Baba Yaga in the wilderness. Baba Yaga sensed evil in the infant and, after casting a few powerful spells, learned that the infant's mother was human but her father was a demon! Baba Yaga named the child Zhalla, a Ukranian word meaning "the Demon's child," and raised her as her own daughter.

Through Baba Yaga's magic, Zhalla's aging was slowed. Under her foster mother's tutelage, Zhalla learned to cast spells. Because of the demon blood in her veins, Zhalla learned very quickly that hate and pain can lead to power. Baba Yaga also gave her foster daughter two tangible gifts, a magic ring and the legendary Wrathstone. (For information about the Wrathstone, see *Golem*, above.)

After Zhalla had grown to adulthood, she left her foster mother and travelled throughout Asia. She disguised herself with magic and conventional methods, assuming the role of political figures, from revolutionaries to queens. She always took the role of a woman. In every case, she had to forfeit her roles because she gained power and influence too quickly for a woman. This would eventually attract too much attention, forcing her to fake her death and disappear. Then she would travel to a new place and assume a new identity. In all of her roles, she would abuse her power for her own desires; she especially enjoyed killing innocent people for petty political reasons.

Her life had been so influential over the centuries that, just after World War II, a reputable Russian scholar made a startling discovery. He had proof that dozens of the most important women in the political history of Asia and Europe had been a single, chameleon-like woman. Zhalla found this man immediately and, after their secret meeting, he was soon committed to a Siberian insane asylum. Thanks to Zhalla, his documented proof was never found.

After that incident, Zhalla went into hiding. She lived in caves and mountains for decades, using her magic to create small, underground palaces. She continued to perfect her magical talents, mastering new magicks and improving her old spells.

Four years ago, as Madame Zhalla was carving her latest home deep under a mountain near Afghanistan, she discovered one of the Downroads leading to Subterra. The network of caves and tunnels she found was full of battle-ready, hungry Subterrans. She fought off most of them but, in the end, she was knocked unconscious.

They were about to eat her, but they decided to take her to King Earthwyrn. If she is powerful enough to kill so many Subterrans, they reasoned, she could join their cause for global domination.

King Earthwyrn was impressed by Madame Zhalla's powers and evil nature. She immediately joined the Darklings. Her only demand was to be treated with respect, not as some underling or "filthy cave dweller." Because of that initial encounter with Subterrans, Zhalla thinks of them as stupid savages.

**Motivation/Personality:** Madame Zhalla is on good terms with King Earthwyrn, but she doesn't care much for the other Darklings. She thinks all Subterrans and human men are a lower form of life — the latter attitude was inherited from Baba Yaga. But she demands respect from everyone. Her demonic father has made her incredibly evil as well — she enjoys power, causing strife, and making innocent people suffer and die. To the other Darklings, Madame Zhalla is a crotchety old woman with a chip on her shoulder. King Earthwyrn places her in charge of missions quite often. Unfortunately for the others, she takes advantage of this privilege by abusing one of her teammates. She will pick a Darkling and force him or her into the most dangerous situations on the mission, threatening to tell King Earthwyrn that the Darkling was being lazy or questioning her command. She has also been known to throw a few "warning" spells at a random Darkling or Subterranean when she is in a mood. Some Darklings feel she may be slipping into senility. This may be true, as she is getting quite old.

Madame Zhalla wants to help rule the world when King Earthwyrn takes over. After a long life spent seeking power, she hopes to realize this dream as a Subterranean ally. She hopes that King Earthwyrn's favor of her will provide enough leverage to allow her to rule the continent of her choice — she wants Asia. If King Earthwyrn dies, she will try to take the crown for herself; she feels she is the only logical candidate to succeed the King.

**Quote:** "Obey me or pay the price! I can bring centuries of power and fury upon you with but a simple gesture!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Madame Zhalla knows several powerful spells. She prefers to keep her opponents at a distance but, if an attacker gets too close, she'll Transform him into a worm or monkey. Pyromagic allows her to increase the size of any fire at an explosive rate — a simple cigarette can turn into a fireball in an instant. Her Earth-Flight spell causes a large chunk of earth under her to levitate and fly; up to eight other characters can ride on the chunk with her.

Zhalla also owns a magic ring, one of two parting gifts from Baba Yaga. The ring is not a magic item in itself, but it allows Madame Zhalla to use her one magic spell that she has not yet perfected — she "channels" the spell through the ring.

Madame Zhalla is an excellent spy. She uses her Faces to assume any identity in her imagination. And a Blink can place her inside any otherwise secured installation.

**Appearance:** Madame Zhalla is a homely woman who appears to be in her mid-sixties. She wears layers of old robes and a short hooded cape. She dresses in earth tones with black details. Her face is wrinkled and hard. Her hair is jet black and very, very long. Two wide streaks of white hair start at her temples. On her finger is a gold ring with a large green gem.





MINOTAUR					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
45	STR	35	20	2x STUN and BODY from all physical attacks, when not holding axe	
22	DEX	36			
23	CON	26			
20	BODY	20	20	2x STUN and BODY from all energy attacks, when not holding axe	
15	INT	7			
20	EGO	20			
40	PRE	27	20	Enraged when Crystal is hurt (Uncommon) 14- 11-	
2	COM	-4			
28	PD	19	20	Psychological Limitation: Attracted to Crystal (Very Common, Strong)	
27	ED	22			
5	SPD	18			
20	REC	12	5	Psychological Limitation: Enjoys roaming the maze-like tunnels of the Underland (Common, Moderate)	
46	END	0			
58	STUN	0		Dependency: 3d6 per day unless axe has "tasted human blood" that day	
			20	Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, extreme)	
			299	Darkling/Villain Bonus	
Cost		Powers		END	
30	2d6 HKA (horns) (4d6 HKA w/STR)			0	
30	Damage Resistance 30 PD 30 ED			0	
12	+6" Running (12" total)			2	
18	END Reserve: 80 END, 10 REC			0	
11	Clairsentience: Precognition, can only see one minute into the future (-1), only usable to navigate an unknown path (-1 1/2)			4	
<b>Equipment</b>					
45	3d6 HKA, 0 END, OIF — Magic Axe				
<b>Skills and Talents</b>					
10	AK: The Underland 19- (based on INT)				
17	Mechanics 18-				
7	AK: America 16- (Based on INT)				
6	KS: Modern Human Society 15- (based on INT)				
14	Danger Sense 13-				
2	AK: Earth (the Surface) 11-				
2	AK: Subterra 11-				
0	Fluent English (native language)				
8	+4 with axe				
<b>OCV: 7; DCV: 7; ECV: 7; Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12</b>					
<b>COSTS: Char. Powers Total Disadv. Base</b>					
297 + 212 = 509 = 409 + 100					

**Background:** Britton Douglas was once a part-time mechanic and full-time street enforcer for a minor crime organization in Toronto, Canada. One night, he found a hidden passage to a Downroad while chasing a burglar who had broken into his apartment. Britton followed the burglar into an alley, and then into an old service entrance to the sewers. Britton was too angry to give up the chase. But he lost the thief in the darkness. While he tried to find his way back, he heard a strange sound near a soft glow he saw in the distance.

Britton ducked through a narrow sewer drain toward the glow. As he approached, he saw a Subterranean watching him. The creature was holding a simple torch. Behind the creature, Britton saw a tunnel leading to a Downroad. Of course, the Canadian criminal had no idea at the time what the creature was or where that tunnel led. But he knew what to do when the Subterranean snarled and charged him — Britton fought back. He killed the creature and, taking the torch, he began to explore Subterra.

Britton fought off many more Subterraneans for the next few days and was eventually captured. The Subterraneans took him to King Earthwyrms. Britton reacted with rage, spitting and cursing at the King and the Darklings. King Earthwyrms took Britton to the Shaper Pool and dropped him in, hoping that the rude, disrespectful human would die.

But Britton rose from the Pool in the form of a humanoid bull. He had great strength, incredible endurance, and the ability to navigate any path before him. This last ability made him take the name Minotaur, as he could now escape from any maze. Minotaur also went through a major personality change — like many other Darklings, the Shaper Pool brought out the worst in his nature. He no longer has any morals or conscience. He will gladly kill anyone who stands in the way of the King Earthwyrms' plans.

After a few years of service to the King, he found Crystal (see Crystal's description). They have been together ever since. He has become an expert mechanic and is vital to getting the major vehicles of the invasion in working order.

Sometime after his transformation, Minotaur broke into a museum to "shop" for a costume. He found a huge Viking axe and a pair of trunks and boots covered in horsehair that were recreated from Mongolian legends. The garments fit him and he now wears them all the time.

Little did he know, the axe was cursed. The axe has magic powers that were triggered when Minotaur touched it, after thousands of years of disuse. The curse blackened his soul even more than the Shaper Pool, making him a creature of evil. The axe must be carried at all times. When it is out of his possession, his body becomes sensitive to injury — a good left hook could kill him. And the axe must be used to kill a human every day or Minotaur will be wracked with intense pain.

**Motivation/Personality:** Minotaur supports the invasion because he knows he can't live on the Surface looking like he does. He is also evil by nature because of the curse of the axe, so he enjoys hurting others. He is not as interested in power as most of the other Darklings — he would like to continue to serve as a henchman for the King if the invasion is a success. He just enjoys combat and death. He is still able to show affection for Crystal and his fellow Darklings, however; he saves his evil passions for his excursions on the Surface. Minotaur is very loyal to King Earthwyrms. Although he once hated his bull-like form, he now thinks of his transformation in the Shaper Pool as a blessing in disguise. Without his tough body and strength, he would not be able to inflict so much pain and suffering on others. He spends most of his spare time in the Yard of the Nest, fixing vehicles with Crystal, and (sometimes) Rumbler or Echoer.

**Quote:** "Just another @#&\*!\$! day to bash some @#&\*!\$! heads. Come on and try me, punk — my axe is thirsty for blood."

**Powers/Tactics:** The Shaper Pool gave Minotaur many powerful abilities. His skin is incredibly hard and resistant to all attacks. He can use the horns on his head as weapons. He also has great endurance to complement his strength.

Minotaur's ability to choose the right path through precognition allows him to get anywhere he wants to go. He can see into the immediate future, watching himself choose the correct path. He can't see himself arrive at his destination, but he can see his next few steps on the way there. If he was in a mine field, he could watch himself dodge all of the mines as he walked. In the Underland, he is constantly watching the near future, allowing himself to choose the quickest route through the labyrinthine tunnels. He can also use this ability on the Surface, to find a way into a military base or out of a sticky situation. The ability only works while searching for a path, however — he can't see himself defuse a bomb or find the weakness of a hero.

Minotaur has a very direct combat strategy: beat 'em to a pulp. He loves to use his axe on weak targets to "get them outta the way." In a fight, he will protect Crystal.

**Appearance:** Minotaur looks like his namesake. He is tall and covered with thick muscles. His head is a combination of a human and a bull, with bovine features, two large horns, a short mane, and human-like ears. He wears trunks covered with horsehair and fur boots. He carries a large axe.



MOLE					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
20	STR	15	10	2x STUN from magic	
33	DEX	69	25	Psychological Limitation: Single-minded, concentrates on one thing at a time (Very Common, Total)	
20	CON	20			
14	BODY	8			
4	INT	-6			
15	EGO	10	25	Psychological Limitation: No social ability (Very Common, Total)	
20	PRE	10			
2	COM	-4			
18	PD	14	5	Physical Limitation: BODY can only be healed underground and out of sunlight (infrequent, impairs slightly)	
18	ED	14			
5	SPD	7			
11	REC	6			
40	END	0	10	Susceptibility: 1d6 per minute from direct sunlight (Common for a Subterranean)	
39	STUN	5	10	Distinctive Features (concealable with major effort, recognizable)	
			5	Professional Rival with Crawler	
			177	Darkling/Villain Bonus	
Cost			Powers		END
45	3d6 HKA (natural claws)				0
125	20" Tunneling through DEF 20, half END				6
10	Tracking Scent				0
5	IR Vision				0
Skills and Talents					
3	Bump of Direction, only while underground (-1/2)				
6	AK: Subterra 15-				
2	AK: Earth (the Surface) 11-				
2	AK: The Underland 11-				
1	Basic English				
<b>OCV: 12; DCV: 12; ECV: 6; Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12</b>					
COSTS:					
Char.	Powers	Total	Disadv.	Base	
168	+ 199	= 367	= 267	+ 100	

**Background:** Rixxaghukilldeth was a common female Subterranean when King Earthwyrn threw her into the Shaper Pool. She was lucky enough to survive, but she did not exactly improve. She emerged as a savage, snarling beast — loyal and controllable, but ferocious. King Earthwyrn named her the Mole because of her incredible digging ability.

Mole has hundreds of small caves throughout Subterra and the Underland that she calls home. She builds them by herself. Each cave has some bones from past meals and a crude bed. When she is not needed at the Nest, she travels from cave to cave, searching for food and combat. When she is needed, she is summoned after a mission has been planned — she does not take part in the intellectual duties of the Darklings.

Rumbler has built a tiny signalling device that hangs on a chain around her neck. When she is summoned, a Darkling triggers the signaller from a remote device in the Nest. This causes Mole's device to beep quietly. When this happens, she begins to dig to them immediately.

**Motivation/Personality:** Mole likes to eat fresh flesh, dig, and fight. She is not very smart, but she has always been very loyal to the King and the other Darklings. She gets along particularly well with the Dungeoneer, who takes her through the Underland and the Downroads to find humans. She does not get along with Crawler, however, possibly because they feel competition from their similar animalistic natures.

**Quote:** "Kill you! Eat you! <snarl, drool>"

**Powers/Tactics:** The Mole is commonly used to fight and capture Surface-dwellers. Her amazing tunneling ability allows her to pop up anywhere on the Surface and escape just as easily. When the Darklings need to arrive in a particular location, they often follow a tunnel created by the Mole to get there.

In a battle, the Mole will randomly select an opponent and fight until she is almost dead or her opponent is dead. She responds to orders very well, so Darklings in charge of a mission (Madame Zhalla, Grayshape, or Cornerstone) will often stay close to her and order her to take care of certain opponents or tasks. The Mole can talk, but she rarely has a need to express anything more important than "I'm hungry" or "Let's kill him!"

**Appearance:** The Mole looks like a Subterran except she has a thick mane of hair extending from her brow, over her back, to her waist. Her posture is even worse than the average Subterran — she can hardly stand up straight and prefers to crawl around on all fours. Her hands end in short, sharp claws. She wears a thin but strong chain around her neck with a small metal disk on it — this is the signalling device.



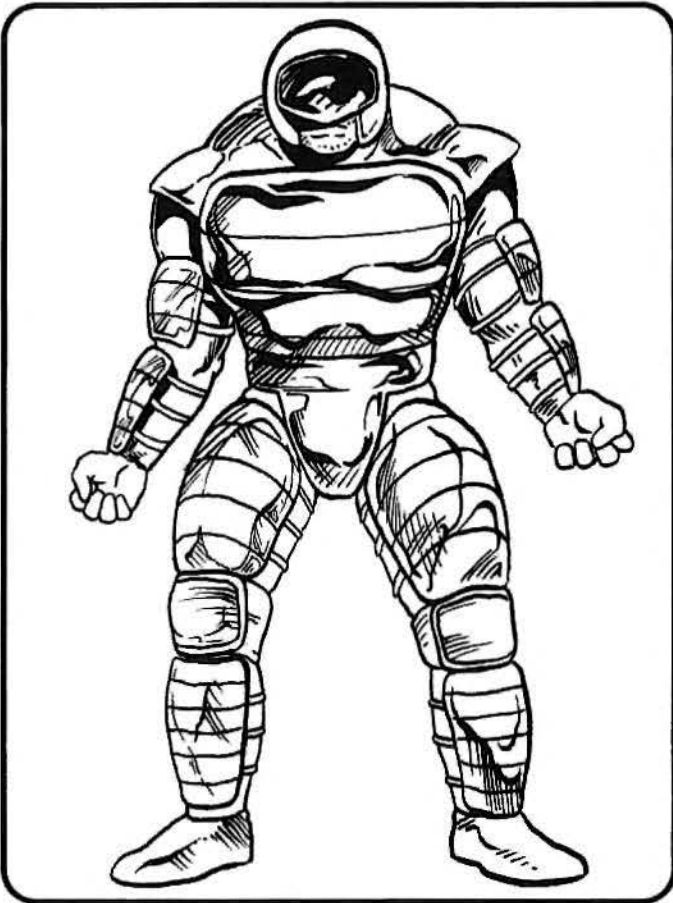
RUMBLER					
Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages	
15	STR	5	10	1 1/2x effect from Flash Attacks (vision)	
24	DEX	42		Psychological Limitation: Obsessed with using his intelligence; to learn and invent (Very Common, Strong)	
25	CON	30	20	Physical Limitation: BODY can only be healed underground and out of sunlight (infrequent, impairs slightly)	
16	BODY	12		Susceptibility: loses 3d6 INT/Turn when EGO is attacked	
30	INT	20		Susceptibility: 1d6 per minute from direct sunlight (Common for a Subterran)	
20	EGO	20		Distinctive Features (easily concealable, recognizable)	
25	PRE	15	5	Darkling/Villain Bonus	
8	COM	-1			
15	PD	12			
10	ED	5			
5	SPD	16	20		
13	REC	10			
50	END	0			
46	STUN	9	10		
			249		
Cost		Powers		END	
5	IR Vision			0	
<b>Equipment</b>					
32	Multipower (112 point reserve), OIF: Rumble Gloves, Independent			0	
22 m	10d6 Hand-to-Hand Attack, Double Knockback Area of Effect/16" Radius, Hole in the Middle, 0 END			0	
21 m	10d6 Hand-to-Hand Attack, Double Knockback Area of Effect/28" Cone, 0 END			0	
5	Improved anti-UV ray clothing (+5 ED; protects covered areas from sunlight damage)			0	
7	10 points Flash Defense, OIF: Eye Shield			0	
20	Armor +10 PD/+10ED, OIF: Personal Body Armor			0	
11	Quick-Heal Pills: Regeneration, +5 BODY per turn, 10 Charges (10 pills), OAF Expendable Independent			0	
<b>Skills and Talents</b>					
3	Bump of Direction, only while underground (-1/2)				
9	Inventor 18-				
13	Mechanics 16-				
16	Weaponsmith (energy weapons, slug throwers) 16-				
13	Electronics 16-				
6	Science (Wyrman technology) 16-				
3	KS: Modern Human Society 16- (based on INT)				
3	AK: Subterra 16- (based on INT)				
2	AK: America 15- (based on INT)				
3	Stealth 14-				
9	Demolitions 14-				
3	Conversation 13-				
2	AK: Earth (the Surface) 11-				
2	AK: The Underland 11-				
4	Weapon Familiarity (common melee, small arms) 8-				
2	Transport Familiarity (ground vehicles) 8-				
2	Fluent English				
6	+3 levels w/Rumble Gloves				
<b>OCV: 8; DCV: 8; ECV: 8; Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12</b>					
<b>COSTS: Char. Powers Total Disadv. Base</b>					
195 + 224 = 419 = 319 + 100					



**Background:** The Subterranean originally called Gredran'daxatec emerged from the Shaper Pool endowed with incredible scientific aptitude, he was a natural inventor. He was also endowed with a vulnerability to mental attacks. This weakness caused him to feel such intense pain when mentally attacked, he would temporarily be unable to think clearly. After he discovered his incredible ability to invent, he became obsessed with creating gadgets and collecting knowledge. Gredran'daxatec began constructing gadgets and repairing machinery immediately after he left the Shaper Pool. He served King Earthwyrn faithfully for months as one of the first Darklings. One of the first gadgets he created causes shock waves in the earth — after the weapon was perfected, King Earthwyrn named him Rumbler.

When King Earthwyrn discovered Rumbler's weakness to mental attacks, he used that to keep the Darkling under his thumb — the King could cause Rumbler to lose his amazing intelligence. Rumbler's obsession made this loss unbearable; he would do anything for his King, as long as he was able to continue his work.

Rumbler is one of the vital members of the Darklings. His scientific ability has been used to build the Tower in the Nest, to repair and operate many stolen vehicles and weapons, and to keep the hardware in the Science Dome in working order. Without him, the Gestation Chambers or the power plant in the Science Dome might not be operating today.



Although he has built and repaired many fantastic devices over the years, he is not as smart as many other inventor villains. He cannot throw together a new gadget every day, or even every week. Rumbler is limited by time and resources. Even if he has the materials together to build a new gadget, he usually has months of maintenance work to take care of to keep the invasion preparation on schedule. And if he spends too much time on his personal projects, King Earthwyrn will have to punish him ...

**Motivation/Personality:** Rumbler spends his time fixing things and designing new gadgets. He spends a lot of time with King Earthwyrn and Minotaur, who are also closely involved in the technical upkeep of the Subterranean arsenal.

Rumbler is not skilled enough to build some weapons — he doesn't know how to create chemical weapons or nuclear devices (yet). He is also unable to build a device to protect himself against mental attacks. He tried this once but, because he had to "tune" the instrument to protect his particular set of brain waves, the device itself acted as a mental attack on him!

Rumbler is a loyal servant of King Earthwyrn. He never questions the King's authority. He is as evil as the other Darklings because King Earthwyrn wants him to be. In the past, he contemplated escaping from the Darkling ranks during a mission on the Surface, but he is sure that King Earthwyrn would eventually find him and destroy his mind forever.

**Quote:** "It's time to rumble!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Rumbler has invented several weapons for himself and a few creations for the other Darklings. He is working on new stuff all the time but he can only turn out only a few gadgets per year because of his lack of adequate facilities, his duty to repair the machinery in Subterra, and the fact that he is still learning.

The Rumble Gloves are large and bulky and cover his hands and forearms. The palms of each Glove can break away, allowing him to manipulate tools or a gun. If he wants to cause a shock wave, he must have his hands inside the gloves and touch the ground.

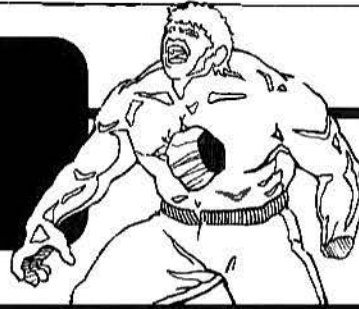
Rumbler also built some protective devices for himself. His personal armor wards off Killing Attacks, his helmet visor neutralizes the Flash attacks that he is so sensitive to, and his anti-ultraviolet clothing keeps the sunlight from his sensitive skin.

Rumbler made the Quickheal Pills to help the other Darklings and himself. Many of them cannot heal on the Surface, or may need a Pill to survive wounds in a battle with heroes. He needs at least six weeks to make a new batch of Pills.

In combat, Rumbler will get into the thick of things. He will not hesitate to fight a hero who is obviously more powerful than him. If an opponent stays off the ground to avoid his shock waves, he will call upon another Darkling to get the opponent down — for example, Echoer could knock a flying hero out of the sky with a sonic blast.

**Appearance:** Rumbler looks like a Subterranean except his back is straight and he can grow facial hair. He wears a full-body suit of protective synthetic cloth under his personal body armor. The armor consists of a torso harness, plates for the upper and lower portions of each arm, shin and thigh plates, and a spherical helmet. The visor on the helmet is reflective, covering his eyes and nose. Rumbler always has a week's growth of stubble on his chin.

# CAMPAIGNING



This chapter describes the various uses of the Subterranean/Darkling menace in an ongoing campaign, and the effect of those uses on the game world.

Consider every organization in the campaign, from the FBI to VIPER. What do they know? When did they discover this information? Are these rumors, or hard facts? Do they know about the Darklings, but not about the Subterraneans?

## WHO KNOWS ABOUT SUBTERRA?

Before you introduce the Subterraneans and Darklings, you should decide if any of the organizations in your campaign world know about them. It is possible that one or more organizations, especially UNTIL and PRIMUS, could have records on file. They might know about the Downroads. They might know that the Subterraneans are stealing weapons, vehicles, and information from humans. Or they might know about Subterra itself. Their agents might have even visited once or twice, incognito or by contacting King Earthworm. In order to prevent a panic, these organizations could be keeping a lid on the whole "Subterranean menace".



## HOW MANY SUBTERRANS ARE THERE?

There are anywhere from 500,000 to 50,000,000 Subterraneans. The exact number is up to you. Because the cloning chambers that produce Subterraneans are erratic (with an average somewhere between one and three thousand Subterraneans per day), the exact population is unknown.

If you want the heroes to be able to destroy all of the Subterraneans using combat and conventional warfare, the population should be as low as possible. 500,000 Subterraneans could be killed by human soldiers, like a normal war. And, following the war, a few adventures featuring the PC heroes tracking down the last few Subterranean survivors will eliminate the menace from below completely. One of the scenarios ("Ground Zero") is based on a conventional war against the Subterraneans.

If the population is high (up to 50 million), the Subterraneans will be too numerous to be eliminated with conventional warfare. The heroes will have to come up with less direct methods to kill them. For example, they could seal the Subterraneans underground after destroying the gestation chambers, cause a flood in the Underland and Subterra, or destroy Subterra by knocking down the giant rock columns in the Great Cave.

## SUBTERRAN ALLIES

Once the invasion begins, King Earthworm will try to recruit some Surface villains into the Darkling ranks. He might even be able to recruit villains who are (as yet) unknown to the PCs. As payment for their services, King Earthworm offers a small nation for each villain to rule after the King has taken dominion of the planet. Who could turn down an offer like that?

The number of villains King Earthworm can recruit into the Darkling ranks is up to the Game Master. If the invasion is going to be played as a series of epic adventures, you may want to use powerful, recurring villains to strengthen campaign continuity — surely the most powerful villains will have a hand in an invasion of America! And new or relatively unknown villains can be used to make sure King Earthworm never runs out of Darklings to fight the heroes. You could even rename some minor villains with Subterranean or earthen motifs to fit in with the original Darklings.

(Alternately, some super villains could temporarily forget their disputes with the PC heroes and help save the planet. Although they would go back their evil ways as soon as possible, these new allies can create some great roleplaying opportunities and excitement in the adventures.)

## THE INVASION

**Warning!** Playing the invasion will have significant effects on your campaign world. Many innocent people will die, millions of acres of land and property will be destroyed, and the history of the world will be changed. The following description of the invasion is included only for those GMs who want to change their campaign world. If your campaign is losing its excitement and you think a major change in global conditions will rekindle that old magic, this is for you.

If King Earthwyrn knows the heroes are aware that the Subterrans exist, the invasion will begin. The King may have wanted more time to prepare, but he has no choice — the Subterrans and Darklings must begin their assault on the Surface before mankind can organize their defenses. Alternately, the invasion can begin before the world at large discovers the Subterranean menace; King Earthwyrn may catch mankind by complete surprise!



When the invasion begins, the Subterrans will be armed with all available weapons that have been stolen over the past six years. Each Subterranean will carry at least one rifle, a few grenades, and a knife. Many will have more weapons (a pistol, an axe, etc.) and several clips of ammunition. A Subterranean sporting a bandolier of bullets, two machine guns and a scimitar will not be uncommon.

The Subterrans will come out of the Downroads from over a hundred locations across North America. They will try to kill (and eat) as many humans as possible. They will also try to set fires and destroy property around them. The plan is to keep every human occupied, fighting for his life against a Subterranean. This will delay organized defense or retaliation for days — the humans will be too busy trying to survive to fight back!

The Darklings and thousands of Subterrans will be raiding human military locations in the first few days of the invasion. They will try to steal more weapons, take control of military bases, and destroy every area they can't control. More and more Subterrans will reach the Surface and continue to ravage human communities.

Once the Subterrans begin to invade, King Earthwyrn will send the Darklings to emergency meetings with violent rebel groups in North America. The King wants to ally himself with underground radicals and terrorists. The Darklings will claim to support any violent, intolerant, radical philosophy. Once these groups have seen and heard of the devastation throughout the land, most of them will join King Earthwyrn's cause. They all want a slice of the conquered land (and, after that, the rest of the world). His cause will appeal to their rebellious, underdog attitudes. This situation is used in one of the scenarios, "Guerrilla Warfare."

The King has instructed the Darklings to promise anything the groups desire — he could conceivably give them anything once he has become the supreme dictator of Earth. The groups that join his cause are spared from attack by Subterrans. The ally groups are instructed by the Darklings to do as the Subterrans do: destroy and kill until America surrenders. Of course, when the invasion is over, King Earthwyrn will not keep his promises; the radical groups will get nothing.

While the King recruits violent rebel groups, his Subterrans will begin to concentrate their attacks on principal targets. They will attack and attempt to destroy seats of power, safety, and health — government offices, capitol buildings, courts, police stations, military bases, fire departments, electric power plants, and hospitals. The Subterrans will also start destroying all forms of mass transit. This will force fleeing humans to fend for themselves. This will reduce the humans' chances of organizing against the Subterrans by promoting the inherently selfish survival instinct of humans (fighting for food while looting grocery stores, etc.).

The Subterrans have some advantages and disadvantages on the Surface. Their sensitive skin and lack of familiarity with human surroundings and customs will give mankind the upper hand. But, the Subterrans can counter these weaknesses by using their own resources. They have built-in fallout shelters. They can hide from attacks by ducking into sewers or mines, where humans are at a disadvantage. If they need to retreat, any Subterranean can lead the others to the closest connection to a Downroad where they will be safe.



When the invasion takes place, some questions must be answered. If the Subterrans win the war, what will they do with the surviving humans? Undoubtedly, some of the Subterrans will have a victory feast. But what about human POWs? And consider the Subterrans' ability to survive above ground — if they don't like life on the Surface, they may just decide to rule from below!

If the humans win, will they kill all of the surviving Subterrans? Will King Earthwyrn give up before every Subterranean is dead? If the Subterrans surrender, the people of the Surface may allow them to continue to live underground as long as they are unarmed and closely watched, to prevent against another invasion. Subterrans could serve as slaves. Earth could become the home of two intelligent races. There could even be Subterranean player characters!

## PREVENTING THE INVASION

Although playing the invasion could be fun, the primary concern of the heroes should be preventing the invasion before it begins. Full-scale war is not as appropriate to the super hero genre as saving the world from imminent disaster.

### DETECTING THE SUBTERRANS

To stop the Subterrans and Darklings, the heroes must first detect the presence of these creatures beneath the earth. This information can come from a variety of sources.

The most likely clue will be the discovery of the Subterrans or the Downroads by the PC heroes themselves. This could happen during an adventure in which the heroes are fighting the Darklings — they could see some Subterrans in the background or follow fleeing Darklings into the Downroads. The heroes may also be involved in an adventure that does not include Subterrans or Darklings and accidentally find evidence. For example, while chasing an old villain into the city's subway system, a hero may accidentally find a Subterranean spy's hideout.

Alternately, agents of an affiliated law-enforcement or intelligence organization, Contacts, or even normal citizens could tell the heroes that the subterrans exist. The heroes will probably hear about missing military hardware from one or more of these sources. The heroes could also hear about sightings of Subterrans across the country — each description is different, but certain critical features could link all of the sightings (such as green clothing, pale skin, or oversized hands and feet).

Tabloid news magazines are a source of clues as well. Although the people of the Surface world don't know of the menace growing under them, there is plenty of evidence here. Tales told around the country of creatures stealing cattle or confronting children in cornfields are regarded as fiction and sensationalism. No one noticed the sudden rash of tabloid stories with headlines like "Unearthly Creatures Crawled Out of the Ground and Ate My Daughter!"



The PCs should have several opportunities to detect the presence of the Subterrans before it is too late — don't spring the invasion upon them without giving them a chance to prevent it!

### ACHILLES' HEELS

Although the Subterrans have strength in numbers and may use the element of surprise to defeat mankind, they have many weaknesses. Each of these weaknesses is a true Achilles' Heel, an easy target that can cripple King Earthwyrn's plans.

The first Achilles' Heel is the Wyrman fungus growing on the walls and ceilings of Subterra. Without it, the Subterrans will quickly use up their oxygen and suffocate. If the PCs can develop a method of destroying the fungus (a chemical sprayed throughout the tunnels, for example), they will easily defeat the Subterrans.

If the glowgems are drained of their power, the Subterrans will have trouble travelling through Subterra. Although Subterrans living in the Underland know their local tunnels by heart, they will be helpless in all other areas. The Darklings will have flashlights and torches to help themselves, but the Subterrans will be lost in the dark. The glowgems could be drained using the Change Environment power. Or, if a PC hero can successfully analyze a glowgem and understand what makes it glow, they could be drained by hitting them with radiation.

If the Science Dome is destroyed (or damaged), the Subterrans will be in dire straights. If the Gestation Chambers are destroyed, no new Subterrans will be born. Eventually, they will die out.

The Subterrans will also be without clothing if the Science Dome is destroyed. Without clothing, they will not be able to venture onto the Surface during daylight hours. If the heroes could use their powers to bring sunlight into Subterra, they could eliminate many Subterrans without endangering people on the Surface. Sunlight could be produced using Flash or Energy Blast if the character's description specifically states that these powers have the special effect of being ultraviolet radiation or pure sunlight.

If the Science Dome (or just the synthetic food machine) is destroyed, the Subterrans will become very hungry. Without food, they will fight their way to the Surface in a feeding frenzy. Hopefully, the players will realize that this final Achilles' Heel could backfire.

## DESTROYING SUBTERRA

To eliminate the threat of invasion, the heroes may try to destroy Subterra ... with the Subterrans in it. This is possible by destroying the huge columns of rock that support the Great Cave, by flooding Subterra, or by spreading a disease that is fatal to Subterrans. The latter method (disease) does not fit the super hero genre, however, and should only be used as a last resort. The first two methods are further detailed in the Scenarios chapter (see "The Flood" and "Ground Zero").

The columns can be knocked out using explosives or, perhaps, a man-made earthquake. Any hero with an earthquake-generating power would be very useful for such an operation. The principal danger, however, is getting out of Subterra before it collapses — the players have to figure out a way for their characters to get to the Surface before being buried alive. If Subterra collapses, however, a strong shock wave will shake the Surface area above. This may even create a gigantic crater directly above what used to be Subterra.

If Subterra is filled with water, the Subterrans will die quickly and completely. This is one of the most effective and easiest methods of destroying Subterra. A flood would also eventually erode the tunnels and caves, causing them to crumble. The effect would be similar to the earthquake method. If the flow of water is strong enough, it could also knock out the columns in the Great Cave and have enough force to kill anyone who happens to be in the Downroads at the time. Again, like the disease method, flooding out the Subterrans might not be acceptable to some heroes.

## OTHER METHODS

Instead of destroying Subterra, the PCs have at least three other options. They can seal the Subterrans in their home forever, they could transform the Subterrans into their original form, or an agreement between human and Subterranean leaders can halt the invasion before it goes too far.

If all of the connections between the Surface and the Downroads were located, Subterra could be sealed, preventing any contact between Subterrans and mankind. However, the Subterrans would also have to be rendered unable to dig new tunnels. If this happened and the Gestation Chambers were destroyed, the Subterrans would eventually die out.

If any of the PCs are skilled scientists (or know characters who are), they could alter the Gestation Chambers to produce more docile creatures. They might even be able to fix the damage done by the comet and produce Wyrms, making the original quest of the Wyrms for a new home an eventual success. If the scientists could also alter existing Subterrans, their troubles would be over. This method of eliminating the Subterranean menace is especially appropriate to the super hero genre.

If the PC heroes can bring the leaders of America (the President, of course, and maybe a few other officials) to meet with King Earthworm and the Darklings, a truce may be called before the invasion actually begins. It is doubtful that the humans would agree to a surrender, but they might agree to anything just to buy some time. If the heroes failed to stop the invasion, let the President intervene to talk with King Earthworm. If the meeting between the leaders fails to reach an agreement, the heroes will at least have had some time to prepare a new strategy.

## GAME MECHANICS UNDER GROUND

### PERCEPTION ROLLS

Perception rolls underground are usually penalized for low contrast (-1) and night darkness (-2). Because there is no sunlight, starlight, or moonlight, illumination must be aimed. If a source of light is held up to illuminate an area in the Underland, outcroppings will block the light and alcoves will remain in shadow. Heat-based vision is useless to see cave and tunnel walls underground; however, these vision types work normally when used to see warm-blooded creatures.

### SUBTERRANEAN SURVIVAL

Successful use of the Survival Skill underground will allow a character to locate a source of fresh water, judge the strength of a natural bridge, etc. When any of these situations arise, make a skill roll for every character with Survival. Modify the roll by -1 to -5 for lack of tools or light, and an additional -5 if the character is claustrophobic. AK: Underland or other appropriate Knowledge Skill can be used as a Complimentary Skill.

## TALENTS

Some Talents are particularly useful under ground. Absolute Time Sense comes in handy because it is always nighttime under ground, and thus impossible to tell if it is day or night on the Surface. Bump of Direction gives a +2 bonus to all uses of KS: Underland and uses of Survival Skill to avoid getting lost. Danger Sense can be used to detect tunnels and caves that might collapse.

## MOVEMENT

Several combat maneuvers — Move By, and Move Through in particular — will be difficult or impossible in the narrow tunnels of the Underland. The exact degree of difficulty must be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Game Master, however.

## STRUCTURAL STRENGTH OF PASSAGES AND CAVES

As a traveller descends into the earth, the surrounding rock becomes harder. Just below the Surface, as deep as humans have explored, the rock is DEF 8, BODY 18 (per cubic meter). But, in Subterra, the rock is DEF 10, BODY 25. These values are used for Tunneling and for all attempts to break tunnel walls.



# SCENARIOS

When the heroes of a *Champions* campaign discover the Subterranean/Darkling menace, the GM should be prepared. Read through this entire book before the PCs get involved. You should also have an idea about which scenarios in this book you will use — some scenarios may not fit the overall tone of your campaign world.

The scenario descriptions are not complete. You will have to fill in many details to make the scenario fit your campaign. Feel free to change names and locations in the scenario descriptions to fit your campaign world background, the experience of the players, and your playing style.

The scenarios are divided into two basic groups, Pre-Invasion Scenarios and Invasion Scenarios. Each group begins with a description of a long scenario, complete with appropriate statistics and a map. Each of the two adventures are followed by three shorter scenarios.

The Pre-Invasion scenarios deal with the hidden Subterraneans and the covert activities of the Darklings. The Invasion scenarios are situations the heroes can encounter when the Subterraneans and Darklings begin the war against the Surface.

The scenarios of each group can be linked together into a complete adventure. Choose the ones you like best and link them together, in any order. You can even play all of the scenarios as a mini-series.

## USING THE DARKLINGS IN THE SCENARIOS

In all cases, the Darklings will retreat from a battle if they think they can't win — they are not stupid. There can also be Darklings nearby who enter the situation after some of the Darklings have been defeated.

In all of the scenarios, choose which Darklings you would like to use — they are not always together. Each mention of the Darklings in a scenario refers to the particular group you have chosen. Use the Darklings you feel are most appropriate, the ones you like the most, or the ones who present a challenge to the player character heroes. For example, if there are five PC heroes, each worth 300 to 350 character points, you might select the following Darklings to be involved: Madame Zhalla, the Ghoul, Rumbler, Echoer, and the Mole.

It is better to select too many Darklings than to select too few. You can easily fudge a roll to give the PCs the edge or fabricate an "accident" or "bad luck" to put the villains off-balance. But you may have more trouble making weak villains stronger or fudging your players' die rolls. (And your players will have much more fun defeating tough villains than beating up some wimps.) When selecting which Darklings are involved, King Earthworm is not considered a Darkling; he should be encountered only if it adds to the plot.



# PRE-INVASION SCENARIOS



Before the invasion, the Darklings will be carrying out various missions on the Surface. Humans are regularly finding connections to the Downroads and then getting killed or captured for their discoveries. The PC heroes can encounter the Darklings and assume they are just another villain group. The PCs may also be involved in less violent investigations — searches for missing people, clues leading them to the Subterranean menace, and reports of missing weapons and equipment from military bases.

The PCs can also discover Subterra before the invasion. This will allow them to warn Surface organizations and possibly sneak into the Underland to gain information. The Surface will be ready.

## THE MAN IN BLACK

In this scenario, the heroes discover that a new villain, Lucius Provocateur (aka: The Man in Black), is dealing arms to the Darklings. This is a good introductory scenario for the heroes — they will meet the Darklings and, as the adventure unfolds, they will discover that this not your average villain group.

### THE SITUATION

Lucius Provocateur is one of the world's most powerful black market arms dealers. He sells military supplies to third world countries, giving them everything from grenades and medical supplies to helicopters and missiles. Because of the color of his hair and clothing, he is known as The Man in Black.

Provocateur met King Earthwyrn a year ago, after one of the Darklings contacted him. They forged a solid working relationship based on equal admiration for the other's devious motives. Ever since, Provocateur has regularly supplied weapons and equipment to the Subterraneans in exchange for millions of dollars and technical assistance from several Darklings. For example, Rumbler has created two weapons for Provocateur.

Provocateur and King Earthwyrn have devised a scheme to rid themselves of heroes who may get in the way of their plans. Provocateur has been a critical source of information for King Earthwyrn — without The Man in Black, King Earthwyrn would not know the names of the world's most famous and powerful heroes. Their scheme involves luring the PC heroes into a trap.

The two villains will use Provocateur's desert bunker as the trap. They will attract the PC heroes with anonymous information, leading them to the bunker. Then the Darklings and Provocateur's agents will then kill the heroes.

### LUCIUS PROVOCATEUR (The Man in Black)

14 STR	16 DEX	16 CON	15 BODY	18 INT
18 EGO	18 PRE	12 COM	5 PD	5 ED
3 SPD	7 REC	42 END	32 STUN	

**Equipment:** 15 PD 15 ED Force Field, 0 END (+1/2), Field Generator — OIF (-1/2); 2d6 RKA, 0 END (+1/2), 15 Charges (-0), Gyrojet Pistol — OAF (-1)

**Skills:** PS: Black Market Arms Dealing 20-, KS: International Politics (based on INT) 18-, AK: North Africa (based on INT) 17-, Persuasion 15-, Streetwise 14-, Bureaucratics 13-, Conversation 13-, Transport Familiarity (Ground, Air, and Water categories) 8-, Weapon Familiarity (all categories) 8-, Fluent Conversation English, Fluent Conversation Latin, Fluent Conversation French (native tongue), +3 Skill Levels with Gyrojet Pistol

**100+ Disadvantages:** Psychological Limitation: Bloodthirsty (Very Common, Strong), Normal Characteristic Maxima, Dependence: Xentrill (Uncommon, 1 hour, 2d6), Secret Identity, Experience/Villain Bonus: 42

**Character Background:** Lucius Provocateur, a Frenchman, became a black market arms dealer in Libya after murdering his boss. He is the head of a large, secret organization that supplies military supplies to the world's most violent nations. Over the past few years, he has become a master merchant and modern day pirate — he steals most of his wares from America and the Soviet Union, then sells them for unbelievably high prices. Few organizations in America or the Soviet Union even know Provocateur exists, but many have heard the name: "The Man in Black." The Soviets and Americans would be too embarrassed to admit that their greatest weapons have been stolen on a regular basis.

Provocateur is addicted to a rare chemical compound called Xentrill. The drug keeps him in his excellent physical and mental shape, but he must take a dose (orally) every hour or suffer great pain and internal injury.

### GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

The scenario begins when the heroes get an anonymous tip. They receive a written message (telegram, fax, mail, whatever) that is only four words long. It says, simply: The Man in Black. No name is signed. The heroes will not be able to find out who left them this message, or why. The heroes will have to investigate to become involved in the scenario.

### THE ADVENTURE

If the heroes check the name on any national law enforcement database, however, they will find some interesting leads. "The Man in Black" shows up, but only in passing references. There is no file on The Man in Black anywhere.



If the heroes keep checking, a dossier suddenly shows up where they have checked before. It could be a file that belongs to the CIA, FBI, or other Pentagon agency. Or it could be in the database of another of the campaign organizations. One of Provocateur's agents installed the file after discovering that the PCs were looking for it. The agent does not have access to the PCs' database, but he can get into the files of the other organizations.

The dossier file tells them only enough to pique their interest. They will find out that The Man in Black is a very powerful and dangerous man, someone they must find and punish. But the file does not tell them the identity of The Man in Black or exactly what he does. The file does, however, indicate that his home base is in Northern Africa.

## THE SEARCH

The PCs will have to investigate northern Africa (primarily Libya, Egypt, and Morocco) to find more information on The Man in Black. This is a good opportunity for espionage-based encounters. The heroes can deal with local intelligence organizations — they may have to bribe officials or steal some information. Some organizations will not want the heroes meddling in their business and will take measures to imprison or kill them.

One event which will occur is an encounter with the Al-Laffila, a secret assassin organization. The heroes will get a tip to check out an abandoned museum outside of Cairo, Egypt. When they arrive, they will find the small building locked and, if they find a way inside, empty. Once inside, however, the heroes will easily find a stairway leading to a large underground storage room full of weapons. There are records here, as well, which list a secret installation in the desert as the central headquarters. Provocateur's name is also on several sheets of paper in a locked file drawer.

Unfortunately for the PC heroes, the Al-Laffila have been watching the museum, hoping to get the weapons for themselves. When the heroes get inside, they will be attacked by a horde of black-garbed assassins (two to each PC). Use the stats for Green Dragon (except their native language is Egyptian) or create your own Al-Laffila assassins. Either way, it will be an exciting battle.

The Al-Laffila assassins will run for cover if they start to lose. But, after moment's rest, they will attack again. They will continue to do this until they (or the heroes) are all dead.

If the heroes do not begin searching for the desert bunker immediately after this encounter, other events can occur. For example, the PCs might travel in disguise to Egypt to meet a contact. They are noticed by agents of a Libyan intelligence organization and ambushed in Cairo. The Libyans might have their own super villains or perhaps they have agents in powered armor (use Turtle Armor in *Champions*, p. S43). If the PCs win the battle, they may find more clues leading them to The Man in Black. If they lose, they will be captured. Of course they will have a chance to escape the clutches of the Libyans.

While they search for clues and information, The Man in Black's agents will keep the PCs on the trail. If the PCs get discouraged or can't find new information, the agents secretly aid the heroes. They will send more anonymous informants, bribe local intelligence officers to deal with the PCs, and provide other clues.

While this is going on, the heroes may discover that they are being aided in their investigation by Provocateur's hidden agents. A hero may spot one of the agents watching them. Or, the PCs might notice that new information seems to show up just when they really need it. Although you can try to hide the agents' aid to the heroes, some players will figure it out. When they do, they may realize that they are being set up.

## THE TRAP

Finally, the trail leads the PCs to the desert bunker, headquarters of The Man in Black. The heroes find out that it is located in the Sahara Desert, underground. They will have to search the desert for the bunker. If they don't hire locals to guide them, they will get lost.

The only locals who will help them are a tribe of merchants, nomads who have refused to change with the Twentieth Century. This tribe, the Fezzerrans, wear the colored silk robes of the Arabs of ancient times. Their Sheik, Sheik Ahmek, is a fat, humorous man with a large harem and great wealth. The tribe rides camels and they live in great, beautiful tents.

The heroes will have to present themselves as respectful guests of the Sheik as he takes them to the bunker. If they do not appreciate his hospitality, he will refuse to help them. They must listen to his stories, drink, eat, and watch his harem dance. If the heroes are good guests, the Sheik becomes a loyal friend. He does not let anyone except the heroes know he is taking them to the bunker — the others in the tribe think that are merely taking a shortcut to the next oasis. When they reach the area over the bunker, Sheik Ahmek pays a fond farewell to his guests.

The heroes will have to search the desert sands for the bunker doors, hidden in a dune. The guards and the Darklings are waiting inside. The PCs will think the place is deserted at first — all but a few of the lights are off and everyone is hiding. However, after they pass under a watch room, steel plates drop into place and trap them inside. Then the battle begins.

If the heroes know they are walking into a trap, they may take precautions or enter from another direction (by tunneling in, or breaking through the roof). If the heroes are caught in the trap, the guards and Darklings will hit them with a 6d6 NND gas; once the heroes have been softened up the Darklings will attack.

## OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

If the heroes win, they can bring The Man in Black to justice. They will also have clues leading them to Subterra (if they haven't discovered it yet). If they check the Control Center in the bunker, they will find computer banks full of information about Provocateur's operation and his dealings with King Earthwyrn. The GM must decide exactly what information is here.

If the heroes lose the battle, they will be captured and taken to the Nest in the Great Cave. This can lead to one of the other scenarios, "Subterra Explored."

## SMITHTOWN

In this scenario, the Darklings have taken control of a U.S. military base in rural Kentucky. The base is located very close to Smithtown, population 6500. Most of the personnel at the base either live in Smithtown or frequent Smithtown's stores and bars.

### THE SITUATION

When the scenario begins, the Darklings have already taken the base. Most of the soldiers are held captive — the rest have been eaten. There are over fifty Subterrans on base, acting as henchmen to the Darklings. The plan is to collect as many army vehicles, weapons, and information as possible and take it all back to Subterra.

But the people of Smithtown know that all is not right at the base. There have been reports of strange creatures wandering around outside of town. And the abrupt announcement about the closing of the base has caused rumors to fly.



The Darklings arrived by digging a tunnel between an Underland downroad and an old mine shaft in the hills nearby. Unfortunately for them, they reached the surface on the opposite side of Smithtown from the base. As a result, they had to dig under the small town.

If the Ghoul is involved, he has taken an interest in the local cemetery. He will have set up a base of operations in the cemetery's only mausoleum. He is ready at any time to summon the graveyard's dead residents.

### GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

The action begins when the PC heroes are called to help the people of Smithtown. It is possible that the heroes will ignore the call because they are too busy. If the heroes won't come, the townspeople pull a few tricks from their sleeves. They can say that they are going to honor the heroes and give them the key to the city for their heroic efforts — just choose a publicized previous adventure as the efforts honored. Or, the people of Smithtown may tell the heroes that they saw the heroes' arch enemy in town. They will keep trying until the PC heroes show up. Then they tell the real reason why they need help.



## THE ADVENTURE

When the heroes arrive, they find no evidence of the Darklings or Subterrans. If they go to the military base, they will be met by the guards at the gate, who tell the heroes that the base has been shut down temporarily for security reasons. Nothing is the matter, they say — this is strictly a military exercise. The heroes are not allowed inside, no matter what they do or say.

Of course, the soldiers have been told to put up a front under orders from the Darklings. The Darklings have threatened to use all of the weaponry in the base on the local towns if the soldiers don't play along. Although most of the soldiers would like to kill the Darklings, their commanding officer has ordered them to obey the villains — he will not risk the lives of the unsuspecting locals.

If the heroes stick around, they may catch a glimpse of wandering Subterrans or Darklings. The villains and the creatures are active at night, cautiously preying upon the Smithtown people.

When the heroes are finally convinced that there are creatures in Smithtown, the Subterrans attack. The people of Smithtown will hide while the heroes deal with the menace. Then the Darklings attack. Their surprise attack and overwhelming numbers should allow them to capture the heroes and take them to the military base.



After the players think it's all over — the Darklings are going to kill them and eat them — a noise is heard outside the base. It's the people of Smithtown! To repay the favor of coming to their aid, the people of Smithtown break into the base to save the PCs.

They are armed with pitchforks and shotguns. In the battle, the Ghoul will bring plenty of corpses while the other Darklings and Subterrans use the weapons of the base. During the melee, the heroes should be able to free themselves, or the townspeople can release them. Then, with the PCs leading them, the townspeople should be able to defeat the Subterrans.

## OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

If the heroes win the battle, they can capture several Darklings and force information out of them. This will lead them to Subterra and help them prevent the invasion. As a result of this scenario, the Pentagon will start investigating U.S. military bases for similar infiltration. If the heroes don't want the Pentagon involved, they will have to figure out a way to keep this scenario a secret.

If the heroes lose the fight, they will be taken to the Nest in the Great Cave as prisoners of King Earthwyrn. There, they will be interrogated.

## MELTDOWN

In this scenario, the Darklings take over a nuclear reactor. They plan to steal the necessary materials to build a nuclear bomb. The Darklings are trying to do this without exposing themselves to the outside world, but, in the course of the scenario, their presence is discovered by the PCs.

## THE SITUATION

The nuclear power plant can be located anywhere appropriate to the campaign. It must be somewhere outside a city or large town; it is usually in a rural community about a hundred miles from a metropolis. The nuclear plant is similar to most: the reactor produces intense heat through atomic fission, which produces steam from a controlled source of water. The steam turns turbines, generating electricity. The steam is cooled in a tall tower, which is in turn cooled by a manmade mini-lake, called a cooling pond. The water that turns to steam and the water in the cooling pond are not combined at any time.

The danger of a nuclear power plant is the chance of a leak of radioactivity into the atmosphere. Any imperfection in the containment of the steam or reactor can release a deadly cloud. A second (and much more catastrophic) danger is a meltdown, in which the reactor runs out of control and creates enough heat to burn through all protective safeguards, releasing all of its deadly radiation with the potential to kill millions. The nearby metropolis would become a graveyard.

## GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

The PC heroes become involved when they are alerted to the crisis in the nuclear power plant. This can happen in any number of ways. The heroes could hear about an emergency situation at the plant on the television news. They could be called through affiliated organizations about the trouble. Or, they might be passing near the area and see or hear something that attracts their attention.

## THE ADVENTURE

The Darklings have taken the technicians in the Core Control Room hostage. If they don't get the materials to build an atomic bomb, they will start to destroy the reactor building, causing a release of radioactive gas into the atmosphere or, if they do enough damage, a meltdown. They don't want to do this (that would attract too much attention), but they will if they are disobeyed.

The GM must decide how the Darklings got into the plant. They might have tunneled into any part of the plant from a Downroad. Or, they could have simply infiltrated the plant after reaching the Surface from a hidden connection to a Downroad nearby. If they infiltrated, Madame Zhalla is a likely candidate for the mission, as is Grayshape, who could turn into a stone and roll into the cuff of a guard's pants. There plenty of other methods the other Darklings could have used, as well.

The Darklings do not want anyone except the technicians in the reactor building to know they are here. They are trying to complete this mission without attracting attention outside the plant. They plan to kill everyone at the plant when they get what they came for.

Several Darklings are in other parts of the plant, making sure no one leaves or enters while they are here. One will be staking out the security shack (a two-room checkpoint between the parking lot and the main building), which houses the electronic controls of the front gate. One or two Darklings will be on the fenced-in grounds outside the building. And at least two will be in the reactor building itself, disguised as guards and seated at security stations. The security stations in the reactor building include video screens of the thirty cameras located throughout the plant. Any heroes who approach without precautions will be seen before they even get past the surrounding fence.

If the Darklings see the heroes coming, the Darklings will attack. Their attack will concentrate on retaining their secrecy (if possible), by using ambushes and group coordination.

If the heroes arrive without being detected by the Darklings (which will be very hard to do), they can catch the villains off guard. But, as soon as one Darkling knows they are under attack, he or she will alert the others if possible.

During the battle, at least one Darkling will try to release radioactive gas or cause a meltdown. The most likely candidate is Crawler, Mole, the Dungeoneer, or Madame Zhalla; each of these villains would love to see millions die horribly. If the battle goes against them, they will try to escape or bargain to a truce by threatening to kill technicians.

Meanwhile, the technicians will try to escape to safety or, for those with the courage, help the heroes capture the Darklings. They know much more about the weak points of the reactor and can mislead the villains.

## OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The meltdown will take place if any Darkling is able to damage the reactor core, located near the cooling tower. If the meltdown happens, everyone at the plant (except heroes with high Energy Defense or appropriate Life Support) will die. Be sure to give the heroes plenty of chances to prevent this disaster — fudging rolls to let them save the day is always better than catastrophic failure and the death of millions.

If the heroes prevent the disaster, the Darklings will try to escape. The heroes may be able to find the connection to the local Downroad and begin to explore Subterra.

## SUBTERRA EXPLORED

### THE SITUATION

In this scenario, the PC heroes find Subterra, the Great Cave, and battle King Earthworm and his Darklings. The heroes are found and captured. They have to escape to warn the rest of mankind about the invasion.

### GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

The heroes start the scenario by finding and exploring the Underland. They might find it by themselves or they might be contacted by an outsider who takes them there. They might also track Subterrans who have been spying on the Surface.

### THE ADVENTURE

In the Downroads and the Underland, the heroes will surely get lost and fight hundreds of Subterrans. If the PCs are careful, they may be able to keep their presence secret until they find Subterra. Otherwise, messengers will inform the Darklings. If the Darklings are aware of superpowered heroes in the Downroads and the Underland, they will immediately investigate. The Darklings will try to capture the PC heroes. If they can't, they'll go for the kill.

If the heroes find the Great Cave without being discovered by the Darklings (or if they incapacitate the Darklings), they can explore. This is a good opportunity to present a hidden land to the players. The heroes can disguise themselves as Subterrans, sneak through the villages of rock houses, infiltrate the Nest, or discover the Science Dome. They may be spotted by Subterrans and have to fight or flee. If the heroes escape a mob of Subterrans, the Darklings will soon be informed of the heroes' presence in the Great Cave. The Darklings will immediately try to find and capture the heroes.

If the heroes are captured, they will be taken to the prisons under the Nest Tower. King Earthwyrn will have ordered the Darklings to create special cells for the heroes. The Mole can dig a cell for each PC under the Nest Tower. Rumbler can build security systems in the cells and special cuffs or cages to hold each hero.

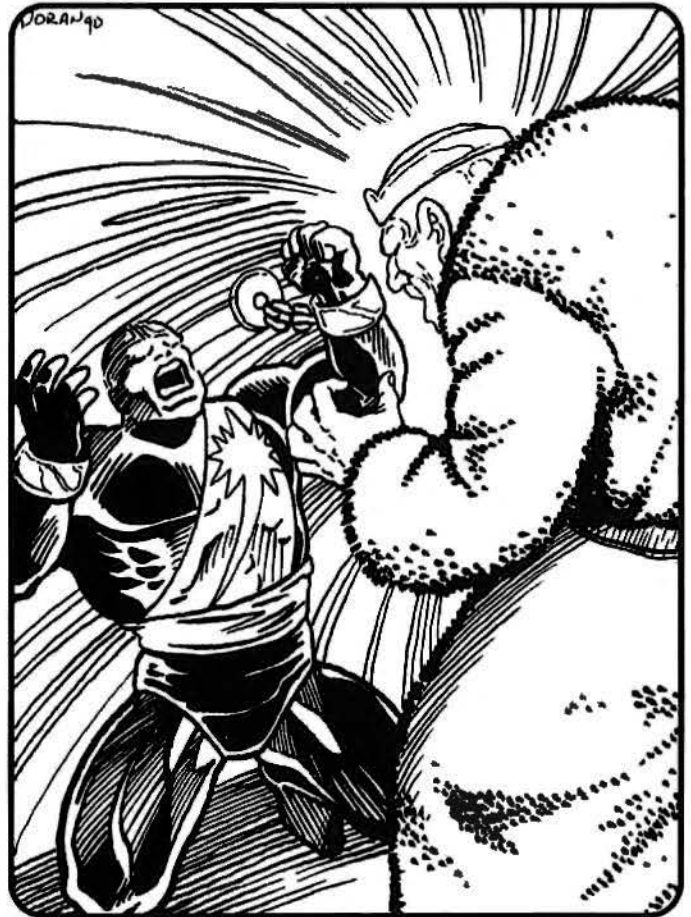
King Earthwyrn will visit the heroes and taunt them. He may even tell them his master plan to invade the Surface and rule the Earth. He will also use his psionic powers to learn all the PCs know. If any of the PCs have strong psionic powers, he will battle that PC mind-to-mind. If he is in danger of losing a mental battle, he will try to escape and send the Darklings down to subdue the psionic PC. The PC hero will not be killed — he will be drugged or beaten to unconsciousness.

The PC heroes must escape and warn the rest of the world on the Surface. They will be watched by the Darklings at all times. King Earthwyrn visits them daily and reads their minds, so an escape plan will be nearly impossible to keep secret. The heroes may manage to shield their minds from King Earthwyrn or simply use brute force to break out and fight for freedom.

The heroes may find help from the other prisoners — captive humans who have been forced to work for King Earthwyrn over the years. These wretches are in the cells at the bottom floor of the Nest Tower. By combining the captives' knowledge of the Darklings and the heroes' power, the two groups may be able to form a means of escape ... if they can keep their schemes hidden from King Earthwyrn.

If the heroes escape and King Earthwyrn finds out, he will order all Subterrans to search for the fugitive heroes. A posse of all available Darklings will be formed. Subterrans in the Underland will also be alerted. King Earthwyrn will even dispatch a special team of Subterrans armed with precious weapons from the Nest (bazookas, flak jackets, mortar shells, army jeeps, etc.) to find and kill the heroes.

If the heroes bring the captives with them, the group will travel much more slowly. The captives are weak from malnutrition and cannot fight or run. Although they will have a better knowledge than the heroes of the tunnels of Subterra tunnels and Subterranean behavior, they must be carried and protected if they are going to survive. A smart player will think to give the captives guns from fallen Subterrans — they are all strong enough to pull a trigger!

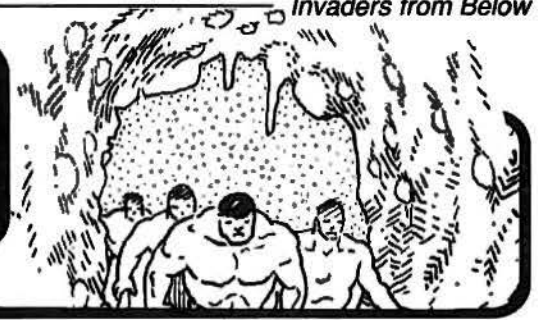


## OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Assuming the heroes make it back to the Surface alive, they should warn the appropriate organizations of the Subterranean menace. When King Earthwyrn knows the heroes escaped, he will order the invasion to begin immediately.



# INVASION SCENARIO



These scenarios can be used during the actual invasion (if it takes place) or to prevent the invasion from happening.

## CITY UNDER SIEGE

In this scenario, the Darklings begin the invasion by blocking out the sun with clouds. They use a special weather-controlling machine built by Rumbler, operated out of a hideout in the city's sewer system. The clouds will rain, drenching the city and causing a blackout from the lightning. They will also protect the Subterrans from the harmful rays of the sun.

This scenario takes place in a major American metropolis. If the PC heroes have a metropolis as their base of operations, this scenario takes place there. Otherwise, the heroes will have to come to the city to stop the Subterrans and the Darklings.

### THE SITUATION

Rumbler has created a special machine that can create thick, deadly thunderheads. The machine itself is a large metal box with a bank of controls; this is known as the generator. The power box, which is as large as the generator, is linked to it by a thick cable. The generator is linked to a twenty-meter antenna which Rumbler has dubbed the "sky trigger." The sky trigger sends the energy of the generator into the sky overhead, causing the creation of the thunderheads. The sky trigger is linked to the generator by another long, thick cable.

The Darklings have created a small headquarters for this operation below the target city. The headquarters will house the weather-controlling machine and its power supply. The HQ is located in the city's sewers so the Darklings can get to it easily from the streets or the Underland. They are also just below a skyscraper. They will mount the sky trigger on the roof of this building. The sky trigger has DEF 5 and BODY 15. The cable linking the generator and the sky trigger hangs in the skyscraper elevator shaft, through the bottom of the building, and down into a shaft carved by the Mole leading to the ceiling of the sewer HQ. If the cable is severed, the machine will cease to function.

### GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

The heroes will hear about the storm through many sources. If they are in the city itself, they won't need to be informed — the storm will be right outside their window. Power cables will be knocked down — this is a job for superheroes! Otherwise, any affiliated government or campaign organization will contact them immediately. The storm will also be on all news broadcasts, as special bulletins in some cases.

If the PCs still need a reason to get involved, add a personal element. One of the heroes may discover that a relative or associate is in that city and in danger of being killed. Try to place anything of value to the heroes in that town at the time of the storm, from a villain they are searching for to a stolen group vehicle that has suddenly turned up there.

### THE ADVENTURE

When the adventure begins, the clouds have been created and the sky is dead black. Rain is pouring down and lightning cracks every few minutes. The entire city is as dark as night. When the heroes arrive on the scene, the lightning suddenly causes a blackout — the city is almost completely dark. Looting begins almost immediately.

Then the Subterrans attack. From out of every manhole and cellar of the city, the ugly subterranean creatures emerge, fighting and killing humans. They will be wearing their anti-ultraviolet ray clothing but, with the sun's rays blocked by the storm clouds, they don't really need the clothing to survive. Their infrared vision allows them to see in the near-dark of the city streets.



## THE CITY STREETS

The Subterrans are armed with rifles, pistols, and knives — every Subterranean has at least two of each. They will kill and eat every human they find. Gun stores will be ravaged by Subterrans who want more weaponry. They also set fires in the buildings. The fires will grow large enough to continue burning, even with the rain. Some Subterranean groups will direct their efforts of destruction against the authorities and organizations of the city; fire departments, police stations, and hospitals become targets.

When the heroes arrive, they will have more than enough to do. The city is in utter chaos. They can fight Subterrans, save people from burning buildings, try to get people to shelter, catch looting criminals, etc. Try to set the scene of total pandemonium, darkness, and rain. If the heroes have never seen Subterrans before, the scenario will be particularly exciting.

Some of the locals will fight back against the Subterrans. A few brave souls will band together and form pseudo-military support groups in this time of crisis. Each will have one or two leaders who hold the group together. These groups are composed of frightened people who are still willing to put their lives on the line. As time goes by, more of these groups will emerge. Each group will outfit themselves with their own weapons at first (kitchen knives, a pistol from the bedroom closet, baseball bats, etc.). Later, they will collect more weapons, particularly from dead Subterrans.

The PC heroes can encounter these groups and enlist their aid. However, the majority of members will be inexperienced and very nervous. The heroes may also find help from street gangs and homeless veterans. These two groups of people will suddenly be highly appreciated, as they know how to handle dangerous situations, weaponry, and combat-related stress.

## ENDING THE STORM

Meanwhile, the Darklings will be in the sewer HQ and the skyscraper above it. They have used several hundred Subterrans to clear out the skyscraper so they can protect the cable linking the sky trigger with the generator below. The Subterrans are still in the building, guarding it from intruders. Each Subterranean is heavily armed. Any humans who were in the building when it was taken over have been eaten.

Before long, the PCs will want to end the storm overhead. If they don't know that the storm is artificial, any of the local authorities will let them know. Local meteorologists have determined that this storm is not natural and they have spread the word to all precincts, fire stations, etc.

The PCs have to find the sewer HQ and the sky trigger. They may have powers which allow them to sense the center of the storm. Otherwise, they will have to get an aerial view of the city. The sky is darkest and the rain is the heaviest just above the sky trigger, so anyone flying above the skyline will easily see the center of the storm. When they find the skyscraper mounting the sky trigger, they will see strange orange beams of energy flowing from it into the clouds above. They might also notice the large groups of heavily-armed Subterrans guarding the manholes around the building. This will direct the heroes to the sewers.

Once they find the sewer HQ and sky trigger, the heroes can confront the villains. The Darklings are ready for them. The Subterrans in the skyscraper can be found on every floor, waiting to fight. The Darklings are on the roof, at the bottom floor of the skyscraper, and in the sewer HQ. They will spare no force to protect their device.

## OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

If the heroes survive and dismantle or destroy the weather-controlling machine, the storm quickly evaporates. The Darklings will flee to the Underland, but the Subterrans will continue to invade the city. However, the Subterrans will meet with greater resistance from the humans in clear weather. They will also take damage from the sun to exposed body parts — their hands and heads are unprotected from the sun's ultraviolet rays, causing excruciating pain.

Although the heroes may have saved this city from total devastation for the moment, the invasion has begun. This city and the rest of the world are under siege ...

If the heroes fail, the siege will continue and the invasion will escalate. If the heroes can't defeat the Darklings here, they will have to try a new strategy or simply try to destroy Subterra itself.

## THE SEWER HQ

The sewer headquarters is carved out of solid rock next to a major sewage pipe. The interiors are dark and damp — water drips from the ceiling, the floors and walls are made of rough, sharp stone, and the only lighting is a few glowgems per room. The ceiling of each room is four meters above the floor.

A tunnel in the sewer HQ leads to the Underland. Any PCs who enter this tunnel will meet twenty or more armed Subterrans. If the Subterrans are not killed, they will flee into the Underland and spread the word that there are intruders.

# GUERRILLA WAR

## THE SITUATION

The Darklings have allied themselves with a secret, radical American terrorist group, the Jack Henshaw Society, active in the northern United States. The Jack Henshaw Society, or JHS, is fighting for "the return to freedom" of America. But they also actively (and verbally) promote Fascism; they want a government run by a military dictator; and they have been allied with many other radical groups in the past. No one knows who they are allied with now or what they really want. But the JHS continues to secretly prowl the country, recruiting new members and lurking in their secret hideouts in the forests of Michigan, Minnesota, and North Dakota. There are approximately one thousand JHS soldiers.

Their leader is Jack Henshaw. He changed his name (as every leader of the JHS has) to the name of their founder. The current Jack Henshaw is a bloodthirsty butcher and a brilliant military strategist. He is very charismatic and his men are completely loyal. The organization is heavily armed and specializes in guerrilla warfare in a forested terrain.





## GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

The PC heroes are alerted to the activity of the JHS when they hear several towns in Montana have been devastated. The invasion has started and the JHS has taken part. (Or, if the invasion has not yet begun, the JHS got a little excited and jumped the gun.) They destroyed one small town, caused heavy damage in another (by setting fires and using large weapons), and took most of the townspeople prisoner. The heroes will find out through any reliable sources, including public news services.

## THE ADVENTURE

When the heroes arrive, they will find plenty of death and destruction ... but no one to fight. The Jack Henshaw Society and the Subterrans are hiding in the forest, waiting for the heroes to track them down. When the heroes enter the forest, they are in the Jack Henshaw Society's turf.

If the heroes take to the sky during this scenario, the Jack Henshaw Society will do their best to knock them down. They have five heavily-armed helicopters and thirty ground-to-air missiles. The GM should try to keep the player characters in the forest — if they simply fly over the forest and find the Jack Henshaw Society headquarters, the scenario will be over too soon.

Their first encounter with the Jack Henshaw Society takes place at a canyon in the forest, a deep gorge. The heroes must cross on a suspension bridge, wide and strong enough to support several small trucks. The JHS has set up defenses on the other side of the canyon. If the heroes can fly, they will be the targets of the ground-to-air missiles. If they cross the bridge, they will be attacked by Subterrans and JHS soldiers. If the PCs make it to the other side, they will find only a few Subterrans and JHS soldiers left on the other side — the majority of them will have fled into the forest before the heroes reach them.

Their second encounter is at a small lake in the forest. There is an island directly in the center of the circular lake, one of the many hideouts of the Jack Henshaw Society. The JHS soldiers send a message to the heroes: they have twenty prisoners, innocent local townspeople. The townspeople will be executed if the heroes try to reach the island. The heroes have to find a way to reach the island undetected. Their best chance is at night. If they get to the island, they will find a band of fifty JHS soldiers and the twenty townspeople.

Between these and future encounters, the heroes will be attacked by quick, camouflaged JHS soldiers and Subterrans. Each group consists of ten Subterrans and ten JHS soldiers. The JHS has taught the Subterrans their particular brand of guerrilla warfare. They fall out of trees, jump out of hidden pits, and crawl out of rivers to ambush the enemy. Each is armed with an automatic rifle and a knife. After a quick attack on the heroes, they will try to escape into the forest — everyone runs in opposite directions. Then another group attacks ...

The GM should feel free to add additional encounters and attacks until the heroes find the hidden JHS headquarters. Each encounter will take place in a special, natural feature of the forest — other encounters can take place in a steep valley, a cave, near a small town, etc. The heroes could also run into a bear or wolves. To find the headquarters, the heroes will have to track the JHS soldiers or use their powers to locate it. They might even take a JHS soldier prisoner and force him to show them the way.

The Jack Henshaw Society's headquarters is a fortified cave at the top of a steep cliff. When the heroes arrive, they will be attacked by more JHS soldiers and Subterrans. If they can fight past the soldiers and Subterrans and enter the cave, they will find a single, large room inside. The room is full of electronic gadgetry and weapons. It is lit by floodlights pointed at the ceiling. Also present inside are Jack Henshaw and several Darklings.

## OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

If the heroes are able to kill or capture Jack Henshaw and the Darklings, this part of America will be free of violence for the rest of the invasion. You may also decide that Jack Henshaw or the Darklings have vital information for the PCs — this will make the scenario more rewarding. For example, the heroes can interrogate the Darklings, Subterrans, or JHS soldiers to learn about Subterra. Or, the equipment in the cave may contain computer data with valuable information.

If the heroes fail, they will be killed or taken to the Nest in the Great Cave as prisoners of King Earthwurm. If they are taken prisoner, they will have a chance to escape and possibly save the world (see "Subterra Explored").



## THE FLOOD

### THE SITUATION

In this scenario, the PCs flood the Underland and Subterra. The Underland tunnels and Subterra have natural drainage holes, of course, and deep pools where water is collected to drink. But, if enough water fills the tunnels in a short time, the drainage holes and pools will overflow and the Subterrans will drown. If the water rushes through fast enough, most of the Subterrans will be killed by the blast.

### GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

If the PCs don't think of the idea, an old scientist, Dr. Thomas Roger, contacts them. Dr. Roger was once a notable professor at Harvard, but he has since gone into retirement. Last year, he accidentally discovered the Underland and the Subterrans. No one believed his discovery, so he has spent most of the year collecting proof. He is aware of the Subterrans' hunger for human flesh. He knew they would become a threat to humanity, so he has devised a method of killing all of them — by flooding the Underland and Subterra.

When Dr. Roger contacts the heroes, he shows them his plan. He has discovered a downroad located below one of America's largest dams (probably the Hoover Dam). He wants the heroes to evacuate everyone from the area, set off explosives to create a tunnel between the area below the dam and the downroad, and then destroy the dam itself!

If the heroes go along with this plan, they will have to gain the approval of the Governor and the President. In a time of crisis, the heroes may be given a green light on the operation. If the President agrees, he will make the U.S. Army available to the heroes. The Army can help evacuate the locals in the towns down river from the dam.

### THE ADVENTURE

Dr. Roger soon becomes a problem when the operation begins. Although he is brilliant, he is also crazy. Every minor problem will be solved with a quick, simple solution from Dr. Roger. For each problem, devise a solution and allow it to work just as Dr. Roger describes. For example, if the heroes are having trouble evacuating people from the area, Dr. Roger could suggest that they be taken out by loading them on the local trains. As the GM, you make sure the plan works perfectly. But, when Dr. Roger is not devising brilliant ideas for minor problems, he wanders around, getting in the way of the heroes and muttering to himself. He will tell them about some of his outlandish theories of the meaning of the universe. He will corner a PC and preach his belief that humans are the descendents of intelligent prehistoric worms!

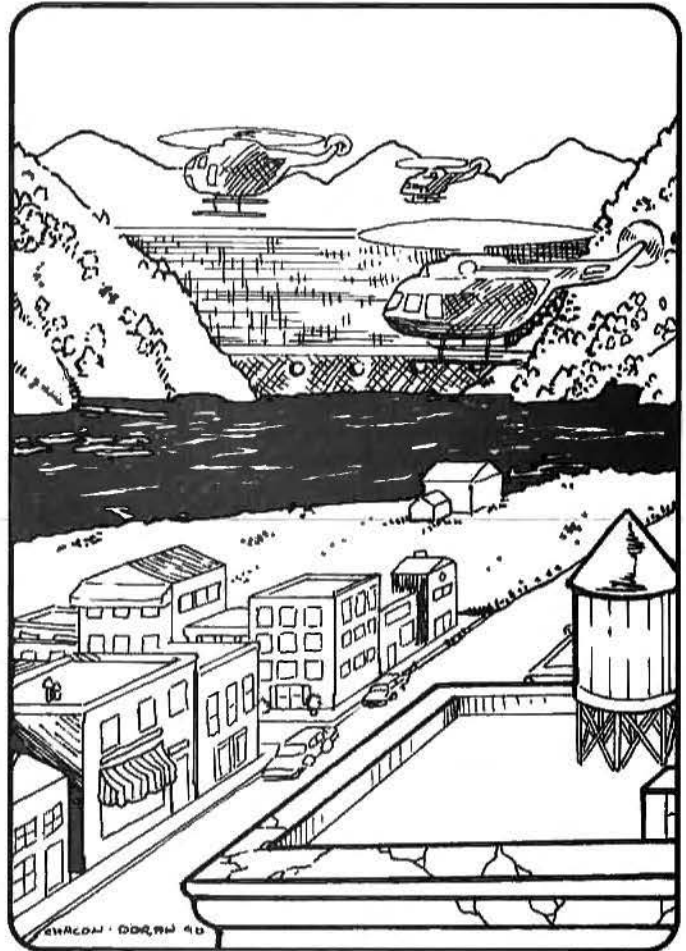
Evacuating the locals will not be easy. Below the dam is a large river valley full of small and medium-sized towns. The townspeople will not want their homes washed away, even if it helps fight the Subterrans. Although most can be convinced to leave, a few will hide and leave evidence of their presence.

This forces the heroes to search for them in the towns below the dam — perhaps even as the explosives are being prepared or primed.

To destroy the dam, the heroes will have to plant explosives at the base of the seven principal support beams in the dam wall. Then they have to plant explosives in the center of one of the towns below the dam to create a tunnel to the downroad below it. Or, if the PCs have sufficient powers and/or strength, they can do the destruction themselves, without explosives. The heroes will have plenty of explosives, provided by the U.S. Army.

When the explosives blow, the dam will crumble and the water will flood the valley. The hole in the town will act like a drain in a bathtub, emptying the water in the flooded valley into the Underland. As the river continues to flow, the water will reach Subterra and fill every tunnel between the Great Cave and the Surface.

But, before the dam is destroyed, the Subterrans discover what is going to happen. They send a message to King Earthwyrn, who then sends hundreds of Subterrans and all available Darklings to the dam to thwart the heroes' plan. They will try to kill the heroes, kidnap Dr. Roger, or stop the evacuation of the locals.



## OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

If the heroes can destroy the dam in time, the flood will kill almost every Subterran in the Underland and the Great Cave. King Earthwyrn has a slim chance of escaping the flood alive. The flood will destroy the cloning chambers, preventing the creation of new Subterrans. Of course, the heroes will still have to help fight the Subterrans who are already on the Surface. But, because the Subterrans cannot heal on the Surface, the remainder of the invasion will not last long.

If the heroes fail to destroy the dam (or if they choose not to), more and more Subterrans will arrive on the Surface, armed and ready to feast on human flesh. The heroes have a few more options to end the invasion, however — see the following scenario.

## GROUND ZERO

In this scenario, the heroes join a counter invasion of humans into Subterra. The U.S. Army and Marines have been mobilized under the leadership of General Benjamin Bricker.

This scenario should take place after American intelligence organizations know about Subterra. They should know that they can get to Subterra through the Downroads. They should also know that the leader of the Subterran invasion is King Earthwyrn, and they should have a general idea of the layout of the Great Cave itself.

## THE SITUATION

General Bricker's strategy is to use military vehicles, large weapons, and as many superheroes as he can find to march through the Downroads to Subterra. When they arrive in the Great Cave, they will plant powerful explosives on the seven support columns, then retreat. They want the heroes to protect the explosives and escape at the last minute before the explosions bury them alive.

## GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

The PC heroes are asked to join because they "know the area." They are also needed to add some muscle (and any other special abilities they have) to the operation.

## THE ADVENTURE

The General also wants to kill as many "subhuman carnivores" (as he calls them) as possible. He would like to kill every Subterran in the Great Cave before the explosives are even planted. However, this may be impossible, and the destruction of Subterra may be necessary to kill all the Subterrans. Although some politicians and other military officers have suggested sparing the Great Cave for their own use after the Subterrans have been defeated, General Bricker is taking no chances. He wants the Subterrans dead and all of their caves and tunnels destroyed.

The invasion, known as the "march through the Downroad," will be a military attack convoy. The General has charted the route through a Downroad to the Underland and the Great Cave. The convoy will leave the Surface from one of the large connections between a U.S. military base and a Downroad.

The convoy from the Surface will be spearheaded by the heroes and a team of special operations soldiers. The special operations soldiers know everything the American intelligence organizations know. If the Pentagon has a map of the Downroads, the special operations soldiers have memorized it. If an organization in your campaign world has discovered that Subterrans can only heal under ground, the special operations soldiers know that, too. Because the PC heroes and the special operations soldiers will be at the front of the convoy, they will have time to trade this information; by the time they reach the Underland, the heroes will know everything the special operations soldiers know.

However, these conversations will be interrupted by Subterran attacks. Once the Subterrans know they are being invaded, they will spare no force to kill the intruders. The humans will use their hand weapons and flamethrowers to fight as the convoy marches on to the Great Cave. General Bricker will not allow their heavy artillery to be used under ground, where they can cause a tunnel collapse. The convoy will be engaged in constant combat while moving as fast as possible through the Downroad.



The Subterrans will set up roadblocks, coordinated by the Darklings. They will pile rocks and wait with loaded weapons behind them. If the heroes can't destroy these blockades, the convoy may have to switch to other Downroads to get to the Great Cave.

If the players feel that the General (an NPC) is stealing their limelight, the General could die in the march through the Downroads. One of the heroes could then become the leader of the convoy. Obviously, the hero will also have to make sure the convoy keeps moving. The job is hard and not as glamorous as fighting at the front of the convoy.

Eventually, the convoy will reach the Abyssal Gate. By the time the humans reach the Abyssal Gate, King Earthwyrn will have prepared his Subterrans for their arrival. The battle is sure to be spectacular.

If the humans break through, they can spread out. They will be able to use their heavy artillery. As they fight among the villages of rock houses, the battle will resemble the conflicts in Lebanon, with smoke and gunfire filling the rubble-strewn streets.

The special operations soldiers will inform the PC heroes about the Science Dome and the cloning chambers. With or without the heroes, the soldiers will locate and try to destroy the Science Dome. If the heroes help, they can prevent new Subterrans from being created ever again by destroying the cloning chambers. If the heroes don't help, they soldiers might fail.

If the Great Cave is destroyed, there is a small chance that the plateau where the Science Dome sits will survive most of the collapse. If the cloning chambers are not crushed by the falling cave ceiling, new Subterrans may be able to dig their way to the Surface years later. If an able leader takes command of surviving Subterrans, the whole invasion may begin again ten years later ...

The explosives must be placed and protected by the PCs. The explosives are large packages of experimental chemicals. Each package has the size and weight of a washing machine. They were specially designed to cause a shock wave similar to a concentrated earthquake.

There are ten packages of explosives — the heroes can place more than one against one of the larger columns. Each package has a remote-controlled trigger buried in the center. This is controlled by a small, hand-held box. The box is the timer (which cannot be reset once it begins the countdown) and sends the radio signal to the triggers in the packages to explode.

The packages will have to be placed close to the columns and away from the Subterrans. The Subterrans will try to get to the packages if they see them. The heroes can put the explosives high above the valley floor if they can manage to stick the explosives to the columns or carve a shelf in a column for them. Or, the heroes could disguise the explosives.

Once the explosives are placed, the humans will quickly retreat back the way they came. The convoy will turn around and head back to the Surface. The heroes will have to fight off Subterrans for at least an hour before the humans are close enough to the Surface to be safe.

When they set the timers, they have to save themselves. Let the players chose the amount of time they think they need ... then delay their escape with attacks and blocked Underland tunnels! Subterrans will grab them and rush upon them, holding the heroes and they attack. The heroes will have to scramble and think fast to escape in time.

## OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

If the heroes make it far enough from the Great Cave before the explosion, they will survive. If they are still in the Underland, the tunnels will shake, knocking them to their knees. Rubble will fall from the ceiling. But the tunnels will not collapse. If they are too close, however, they will be buried alive miles below the Surface. Only a miracle or their powers will be able to save them.

## OTHER OPTIONS

If both *Ground Zero* and *The Flood* seem too bloody for the heroes, the GM should design some alternate way to end the invasion. For example, it is possible that the PCs could negotiate with King Earthwyrn. Maybe if they beat him in single combat, the other Darklings would follow the PCs' orders!

As another alternative, the GM could allow the PCs to sabotage the Subterrann's food supply. Perhaps if the food were altered, the Subterrans would become more docile.

Other options are available, of course, and are limited only by the GM's imagination.





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