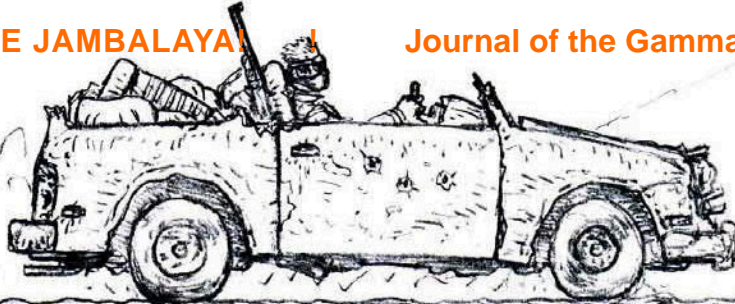


# 5E

Issue 2  
Summer 2010

PROJECT: STONE JAMBALAYA

Journal of the Gamma World Yahoo Group



Post Apocalypse NOW!

Careers for 5ed GW

The Rangers Cryptic Alliance

Say Goodbye to Ammo Counting

New Artifacts, Creatures,  
and Mutations

# SEP

# P: SJ

Volume 1, Number 2

Summer 2010

## CONTENTS

3. Post Apocalypse NOW! -- Doug Simms  
*Making old favorites new again*
10. Careers for 5ed GW -- Derek Holland  
*Giving PC's more background depth*
12. Rangers Cryptic Alliance -- Nicole Massey  
*Gamma Terra's woodland protectors*
16. Escape -- Nicole Massey  
*A rescue with wit and illusion*
18. Powers of the Cursed Ones -- Derek Holland  
*A new set of physical mutations*

### TECH RAT'S WORKBENCH

22. Say Goodbye to Ammunition Counting  
-- David Reeves  
*Using props to get rid of paperwork*
23. Crystal -- Kevin L.  
*The little ice cream truck that did*

### THE GAMMABORN BESTIARY

25. - *Sogaurst* -- Kevin L.
26. - *4 Insect Monsters* -- Derek Holland
29. - *Kzinti* -- Josh 'Enigma' Kilburn

In memoriam Kzinwarrior

### **MEMORIAL DAY**

Summer brings a time of sun and play and big-budget action movies, but here in the U.S., summer also traditionally starts with a day of remembrance for those who went before us.

Our hobby is about creativity and passion and enjoying the community of friends that develops from our shared interest. But sometimes we also must share sorrow, to say goodbye to a friend.

This issue is dedicated to one of our own, Shawn Trudeau, who died in May. Known as 'Kzinwarrior' to the community, Shawn was well liked and much respected by those lucky enough to know him and work with him.

Once again, I am fortunate to have others, more eloquent or more talented, able to speak for me. We close this volume with a small tribute for Shawn, a token of our affection for Shawn's family. Our thoughts are with you.

Greg

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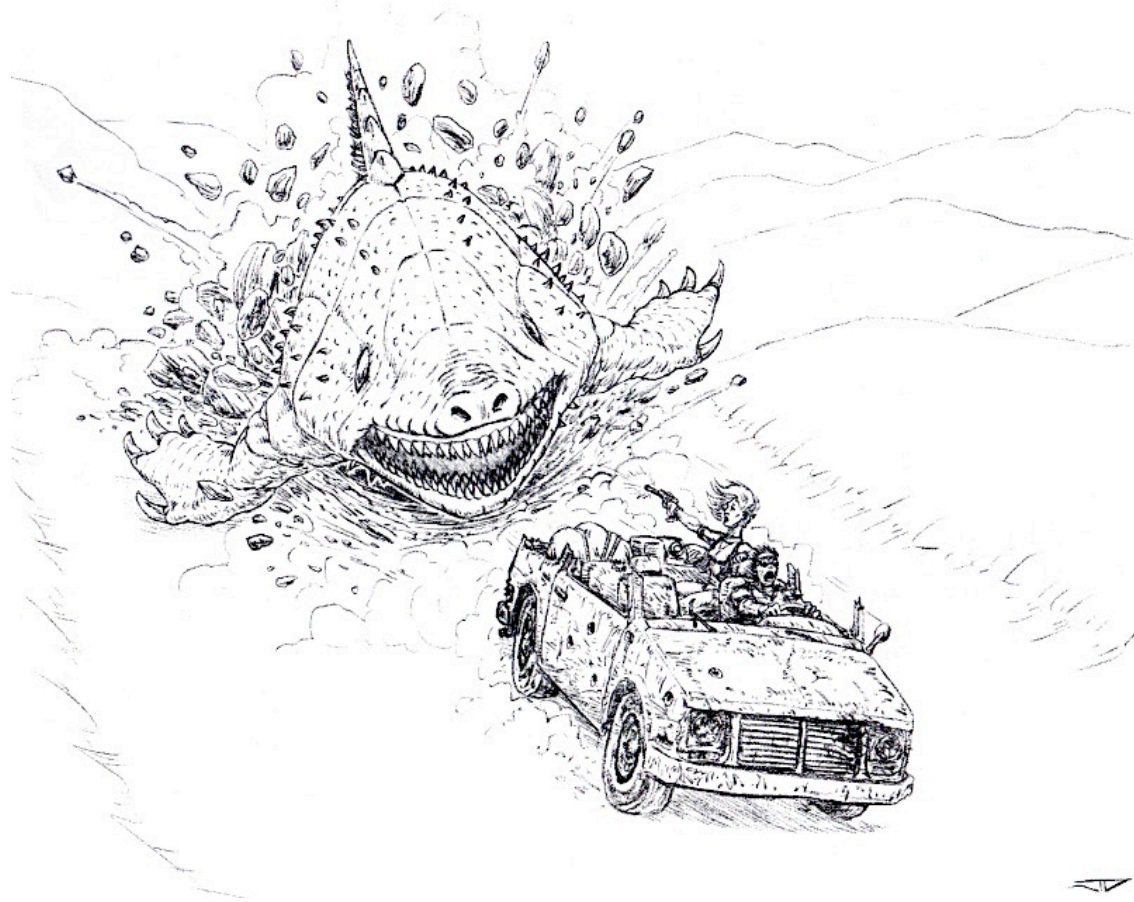
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**POST APOCALYPSE NOW!** *by Doug Simms*

*The first installment in a recurring series, this article presents several conversion methods and is a wonderful example of how members of our community encourage one another's creativity - Ed.*



**Part I - SEP!**

As soon as I saw Josh's great picture, with that huge monster chasing the car, inspiration struck - "I can use the 4E D&D rules to write up that beast!" When you're building new creatures there are a variety of creation and conversion techniques that work with any rules; these include adaption, re-skinning, or adoption from the current monster or race selection in your preferred system.

First, decide if you want to create something entirely new, or use an existing creature for an adaptive base: look at the possible model creature, see if it fits your general needs, and then make changes as necessary. For this example, we're going with re-skinning since there's a perfect stand-in for our Sep: the Bulette, which burrows, inflicts nasty bites, uses tremorsense to ambush prey, and when traveling underground it can knock opponents prone and then burst forth to shower rocks everywhere. Add the characteristic that before it bites, the Sep will lunge out of the ground, able to leap

at tasty prey which is not in close range - and you now have a giant Sep to throw at your players.

Second, decide how to use it in an encounter with your players. In this example, our Sep is a fast predator, so using hit and run tactics on the party works well. On the first attack, the Sep will surface under the heaviest or largest object - target a vehicle or pack animal if the party has one. This will give the PC's time to react and start running if they want. In 4E terms, the Sep is an Elite creature, counting as two monsters. Using the encounter when the party has expended most of their daily powers would make them more likely to flee than fight. If the party is fresh, expect them to stand and fight. (Or the players will come up with option C and run with it.) By itself, the Sep would be a hard challenge for three 6th level PC's. It may seem odd, but plan for failure, since the party might not be on it's A-Game that day and end up as just so much chum.



## POST APOCALYPSE NOW!

For the encounter location, I'm going to use a long track of road the players travel down either on foot, mounted, or in a vehicle [side note: vehicle rules for 4E D&D are in *Adventurers Vault 1*]. This will be a chase scene; if the party can traverse a number of map sections they will reach the rocky pass and be safe from the Sep's predation. Each section will be 12 squares long [50'] and about 6 squares wide [30']. The road runs down the long axis on one side of the map, and should be roughly 4 squares wide [20']. The average PC can cross one map section in 2 move actions. If the party is on foot, they will need to cover five map sections. In a vehicle, they will need to cover ten. And, there's always the choice to stand and fight, should the party members feel brave or desperate enough.

The landscape should convince players to stay on the road: have difficult off-road terrain - such as soft sand, marsh, toppled trees, aggressive vegetation, or broken ground - that would halve party movement (and bog down a vehicle), or have the road run with a drop-off/cliff on one side (as though heading toward a mountain pass). There will be little in the way of hiding places, but scattered along the path at semi-regular intervals are rock piles large enough to hold the party in relative safety.

To make things a bit more interesting - especially for a party driving a vehicle, I'll add a hazard. The road is in poor repair, littered with potholes and debris, but it has also been trapped. Looking through the *Dungeon Masters Guide 1* I found a device that works nicely, with some modification. The *Electrified Floor* trap has 10 "randomly" positioned squares that deal lightning damage when triggered. This stretch of road is laced with EMP mines just waiting for unsuspecting travelers to trigger them. This complication works best if the road is not frequently travelled, unused because of an unsavory reputation.

In game terms, if a mine goes off and hits, a vehicle or robot will take full normal damage - but will also be stalled for a turn while the characters restart it, and any electrical device or weapon will not function for one turn. Biological entities suffer half damage from an explosion, due to the specialized nature of the mines. Another change is to reduce the chance to hit from +13 vs. Fortitude to +10 vs. Reflex. This gives characters the chance to jump or swerve away to avoid the effects. Adding in the trap makes the encounter suitable for the average level 7-8 party [XP 1300].

\*\*For those players who realize the possibilities of the mines, the Sep should have a bonus to resist or detect

the devices. Their method of travel would push the mine out of the way or prematurely detonate it. Though, as a bonus, if one is detonated with the Sep in the blast radius, the Sep will be confused for a round and have to "swim" away from the mine at full speed. This will give the party a chance to deliberately set off a mine to buy themselves more time.

For even more tension, add this slight twist: on the last map, the mines don't just temporarily stall the vehicle - they knock it out. Couple this with a Slam attack by the Sep and suddenly the players find themselves a bit short of safety. This isn't a given, since players are resourceful and may come up with a plan to get their vehicle going again. If the characters are on foot, the mines are exposed and cover a section that they have to go around. The key to this is to establish early on that the mines are extremely sensitive with proximity sensors, exploding when characters get close. This should steer them towards the rock mounds and the next step of the encounter.

Once on the rocks, the players have a number of strategies available. They can stay still and wait for the Sep to leave. This isn't a good choice if they are short on food, or under a time limit. The piles are regularly spaced, so characters could jump between the piles using poles that are conveniently available. Have the players make *Athletic* rolls with a DC of 15-20 and give them a bonus of +3 to any rolls for using the poles. The players might be sick of running and want to even the score. There are plenty of loose rocks to throw, trying to lure the Sep into rising for this bait. Once the Sep hits the surface, the party can unload ranged attacks on it, hoping to bloody it into leaving. A really daring option would be to draw the monster in close to the rock pile and attack in melee range, to cause enough damage to drive off or perhaps kill the Sep. Getting the Sep to swallow a grenade would also work, using a combination of *Bluff* and *Nature* skills to trick the Sep into taking the explosive charge.

We now have a nice encounter that can challenge a range of characters. Although this is intended primarily as a one shot scenario, it could be used a couple times with a bit of alteration, such as changing the location, having a mated pair of Sep, or having Ankhlegs stand in for young Sep. The statistics for the Bulette are on page 38 of the *Monster Manual 1*. The *Electrified Floor* trap is on page 91 of the *DMG 1*. One of the assumptions in 4E D&D is the "average" party consists of four characters of the same level. I'm building based on this guideline, though your mileage may vary based on party classes and roles. Guidelines for XP budgets are on pages 56-57 of the *DMG 1*.

**Part II - BADGER, MUSHROOM, AND SNAKE**

Badders, Obbs, and Hissers have also been mainstays of the Gamma World since the beginning: *Legion of Gold* had encounters with Obbs and Hissers, while *Famine in Far-Go* detailed an entire Badder lair. In personal games I have used both Badders and Obbs to present challenges to players and, like the Sep, they occupy a soft spot in my memories.

**BADDERS**

Because of their feudal society, underground settlements, and anti-social tendencies, Badders reminded me of Dwarves. The 4E D&D *Monster Manual* entry for Dwarves makes a good base for a Badder conversion, but a few details need to be eliminated or modified to mold them into our warm and rabid friends. The Dwarf entry includes two stat blocks: one for a **Bolter** and one for a **Hammerer**. From both, drop the *Stand Your Ground* ability and the +5 Save vs. Poison. I like the *Stubborn* power on the Hammerer, so we'll keep that. The Bolter only has an AC of 17, a bit thin considering he's wearing Chain armor. We'll give that a +2 boost, bringing it up to 19. Conversely, the Hammerer has Plate armor and an AC of 23; by reducing the armor to Chain, we can lower the AC down to 21.



The stat blocks both require adding the *Battle Fury* special ability and *Empathy* mutation. To model *Battle Fury*, give the Badders +2 to attack and +5 extra damage when Bloodied. This makes Badders more dangerous - even if the party has the upper hand. *Empathy* can be modeled with two modifications.

First, grant the Badders a bonus to perception of +5 vs. non-constructs, which makes it harder for them to be surprised. Second, give them an encounter power called *Emotional Shift* - a minor action which: affects a single target, is a psionic typed power, does no damage, and can be used once an encounter. This power inflicts a -3 penalty to all attacks by the target, save ends. This is not a Fear effect, but a Charm.

Other Badder variants that can be built on these examples are **Knights** [Brutes], **Vizers** [Controllers], **Squires** [Skirmishers], and **Spies** [Lurkers]. Elite builds would be the **Royal Guard** [Upgraded Hammerers], **Dukes** [Upgraded Knights], and **Magi** [Upgraded Vizers]. The Solo build would be a **Warlord** [Clan Leader].

<b>BADDER BOLTER</b>		Level 4 Artillery
[Medium mutant humanoid]		[XP 175]
<b>Init:</b> +5	<b>Senses:</b> Perception +13; low-light vision	
<b>HP:</b> 46	<b>Bloodied:</b> 23	
<b>AC:</b> 19	<b>Fortitude:</b> 16; <b>Reflex:</b> 16; <b>Will:</b> 14	
<b>Speed:</b> 5		
[Melee] <b>Warhammer</b> (standard; at-will) Weapon		
+8 vs AC; 1d10+2 damage		
[Ranged] <b>Crossbow</b> (standard; at-will) Weapon		
Range 15/30; +10 vs AC; 1d8+3 damage		
<b>Battle Rage</b>		
+2 attack and +5 damage when Bloodied		
<b>Aimed Shot</b>		
The bolter gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals an extra 1d6 damage with ranged attacks against creatures that don't have cover.		
[Ranged] <b>Empathy</b> (minor, encounter) * Psionic, Charm		
Range 10; +8 vs. Will; -3 to all attacks by the target; save ends.		
<b>Languages:</b> Common, Mustelid		
<b>Skills:</b> Dungeoneering +10, Endurance +7		
<b>Str</b> 14 (+4)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+5)	<b>Wis</b> 12 (+3)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+5)	<b>Int</b> 11 (+2)	<b>Cha</b> 10 (+2)
<b>Equipment:</b> Chainmail, Warhammer, Crossbow, Crossbow Bolts (20)		

<b>BADDER HAMMERER</b> [Medium mutant humanoid]	Level 5 Soldier [XP 200]
<b>Init:</b> +4 <b>Senses:</b> Perception +9; low-light vision <b>HP:</b> 64 <b>Bloodied:</b> 32 <b>AC:</b> 21 <b>Fortitude:</b> 18; <b>Reflex:</b> 15; <b>Will:</b> 17 <b>Speed:</b> 5	
[Melee] <b>Warhammer</b> (standard; at-will) Weapon	
+11 vs AC; 1d10+3 damage	
[Melee] <b>Shield Bash</b> (minor; recharge 5 6)	
+9 vs Fortitude; 2d6+3 damage, and the target is knocked prone or pushed 1 square (Hammerer's choice)	
<b>Battle Rage</b>	
+2 attack and +5 damage when Bloodied	
<b>Stubborn</b> (immediate interrupt, when an enemy tries to push it or knock it prone)	
The Hammerer makes a melee basic attack against the enemy.	
[Ranged] <b>Empathy</b> (minor, encounter) * Psionic, Charm	
Range 10; +8 vs. Will; -3 to all attacks by the target; save ends.	
<b>Languages:</b> Common, Mustelid <b>Skills:</b> Dungeoneering +11, Endurance +8 <b>Str</b> 17 (+5) <b>Dex</b> 10 (+2) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+4) <b>Con</b> 16 (+5) <b>Int</b> 11 (+2) <b>Cha</b> 12 (+3)	
<b>Equipment:</b> Chainmail, Heavy Shield, Warhammer	

**Encounter Examples**

Badder tactics often involve screens of Hammerers supported by Bolters, especially for encounters above ground. **Badder Foxes** can replace Bolters on a 1-to-1 basis, particularly outdoors. The mix can be even more varied underground and, depending on your party, the numbers could be doubled. Below are a few sample encounters designed for a party of 4 PC's.

**Encounters [Outdoors]**

- Hunting Pack** - 2 Hammerers & 2 Badder Foxes [XP 1000 ] [Level 6]
- Patrol** - 2 Hammerers & 2 Bolters [XP 750] [Level 5]

**Encounters [Indoors]**

- Guard Post** - 4 Hammerers [XP 800] [Level 5]
- Support Post** - 2 Bolters & 1 Badder Fox [XP 700] [Level 4]
- Main Hall** - 2 Hammerers, 2 Bolters, and 1 Badder Fox [XP 1050] [Level 6]

**OBBS**

Obbs present something of a conversion challenge as there's nothing that closely matches them. A few plants from the *Monster Manuals* could be used as a base - but in this case, working from scratch is a better option. The Obb can be dangerous to a group, able to severely injure a single target with each pass. This would put their role as very mobile Artillery and bump them to Elite status. Giving them the *Insubstantial* trait represents the fungal body and lack of organs, and allows a bit more survivability. To offset this, reduce the number of hit points so combat doesn't get bogged down. Also, add Resistances to poison, radiant, fire, and necrotic damage, and a Vulnerability to cold.



For movement, assign Obbs a rate of Fly 8, excellent maneuverability, and a ground speed of 2. Skip the *Hover* trait, requiring the Obb to keep moving or land. This will mean a large battlefield for the Obb to move through and allow it to turn on a dime. Defensively, Obbs will have a high Reflex and Will with a low Fortitude. Armor class is a special case, being higher when the Obb is flying and lower when grounded. This leads to a tactic where the characters work to knock the Obb out of the sky and then smack on it before it gets airborne again.

The Radiation Eye-Beam is the Obbs' main attack, and should be the most effective weapon at its disposal. It is a ray, affects a single target, has a long range, and can be used multiple times in combat. We assign it as a standard action to use, with a range of 20 squares, and make it usable at will. Add that this power recharges automatically and immediately fires as a reaction when the Obb is Bloodied. It attacks with a +14 vs. Fortitude and deals Radiant & Necrotic damage. The attack deals an ongoing 5 points of Radiant & 5 points of Necrotic damage [save ends]. Resistance doesn't count unless the target is resistant to both types of damage. The Obb can also make a Swooping Attack at +12 vs. AC as part of a passing attack/charge. This power will not provoke an attack of opportunity provided the Obb made a double move on the previous turn. It causes 2d6 +6 damage.

The final task is to crunch the number for level, stats, etc. Obbs should be a high range threat for a party so assign them a level of 10. This puts them at the top end of Heroic and the low end of Paragon threat ranges. It is a small creature that is tougher than it looks, but only because of the fungal body. Give it a base of 170 hit points for being an Elite creature, but cut this in half because of the *Insubstantial* trait for a final value of 85 with a bloodied value of 42. Assign 5 points for each resistance and 10 points for the vulnerability. Creature type is Small mutant plant. Strength 06, Dexterity 22, Constitution 13, Intelligence 10, Wisdom 12, and Charisma 18 for stats. Initiative +15 [+6 Dexterity, +5 for half level, and Improved Initiative +4]. Skills are Perception +16, Stealth +19, and Nature +11.

**Encounter Example**

On a basic level, 2 Obbs in a straightforward attack would be a good match for a party of four 10th level PC's. But that's boring. So, let's take a single Obb using ambush tactics. To start, it will hide in a darkened opening, like a cave mouth, giving it a +5 situational bonus to its *Stealth* roll [+21 total]. It lurks in a narrow pass through a series of hills. This is a shortcut that can shave two days off going around the hills - but the locals avoid this route because of the deadly volcanic fumes that sometime erupt along the path, poisoning and burning travelers. As they move about the ground, PC's must make a *Dungeoneering* or *Nature* check (whichever is higher) vs. a DC 18 to avoid setting off one of the unstable gas pustules. Each eruption is a *Burst 1* doing 5 points of both Poison and Fire damage.

Along the path is a particularly large pustule, four meters deep and filled with the gas. The ground looks solid, but will break away and drop the character into the gas filled chamber. A *Perception* check vs. DC 24 will allow characters to note and avoid the danger. Anyone dropping into the pit will choke on the gasses until they can escape. Each round, the character will take 3 points of Poison and 3 points of Fire damage, increasing by 3 points every round until it reaches a maximum of 15 points of Fire, 15 points of Poison damage each round. Every round, the character can make a save to reduce the damage by 3 points a round. The following round, the damage will not increase and will continue to decrease as long as the victim continues to make its save. This encounter is worth XP 2000, equivalent to a nice, solid level 10 encounter.

<b>OBB</b> [Small mutant plant]	Elite Level 10 Artillery [XP 1000]
<b>Init:</b> +15 <b>Senses:</b> Perception +16; low-light vision <b>HP:</b> 85 <b>Bloodied:</b> 42 <b>AC:</b> 22 (16 ground) <b>Fortitude:</b> 19; <b>Reflex:</b> 24; <b>Will:</b> 22 <b>Resist:</b> Insubstantial; 5 points Resistance to poison, fire, necromantic, and radiant; <b>Vulnerability:</b> 10 points cold. <b>Speed:</b> Fly 8 (altitude limit 2); Ground 2	
[Ranged] <b>Radiation Eye-Beam</b> (standard; at will) Radiant, Necrotic	
Range 20; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+6 damage; Radiant & Necromantic; Deals 5 points ongoing damage of Radiant and Necromantic; save ends.	
[Ranged] <b>Retribution Strike</b> (when bloodied, reaction) Radiant, Necrotic	
Fires a Radiated Eye Blast at the target which brought the Obb down to bloodied.	
[Melee] <b>Claw Attack</b> (standard; at will)	
Melee attack; +12 vs. AC; 1d6+3	
[Melee] <b>Swooping Rake</b> (standard)	
Melee attack; +13 vs. AC; 2d6+3; The Obb makes a triple move and may attack with it's claws anywhere along its path. Due to the speed, it doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The Obb must move at least twice its normal move.	
<b>Languages:</b> Unknown <b>Skills:</b> Stealth +16; Nature +11 <b>Str</b> 6 (+3) <b>Dex</b> 22 (+11) <b>Wis</b> 12 (+6) <b>Con</b> 13 (+6) <b>Int</b> 10 (+5) <b>Cha</b> 18 (+9)	



**HISSERS**

Hissers rank up with Serfs as being one of the tougher humanoid-type creatures found in Gamma World. Armed with an impressive array of mutations and resistances, they can take a great deal of punishment and return it in spades. There's a lot to work converting them to D&D 4E, so I'm taking a different approach and breaking them into three separate entries: **Queen**, **Drone**, and **Warrior**. Hissers have a matriarchal society led by a Queen, with important duties, such as diplomatic service and community defense, delegated to other females in the settlement. Males are drones good for reproduction, basic crafting, and menial work. In combat they can use their ranged attacks to support the female warriors.



Queens are huge creatures, having the full range of powers noted in previous Gamma World editions. This would equate them to a Solo, something that could effectively challenge a whole party. A Queen will be accompanied by Drones and Warriors, plus creatures like **Squeekers** that inhabit their lair. Add artifact weapons and devices to make her, or any defenders, a stronger challenge. Her combat role would be support, locking down attackers and boosting her defenders. A Queen with screening Minions [Squeekers], supported by a few Warriors will make a memorable encounter.

<b>**HISSER QUEEN</b>		Level 9 Solo Controller
[Large mutant humanoid-type]		[XP 2000]
<b>Init:</b> +5	<b>Senses: Perception</b> +9	
<b>HP:</b> 384	<b>Bloodied:</b> 192	
<b>AC:</b> 22	<b>Fortitude:</b> 21; <b>Reflex:</b> 20; <b>Will:</b> 27	
<b>Resistance:</b> Invulnerable to Sonic/Thunder; Radiant 15		
<b>Speed:</b> 7	<b>Action Points:</b> 2	
[Ranged] <b>Sonic Burst</b> [standard; at will; Thunder/Sonic]		
Range 20; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 Thunder damage		
[Ranged] <b>Telepathy</b> [minor; at-will]		
Range 20; May send 25 words or less to any target		
<b>Lexicon</b> [reflexive]		
May communicate in any language via Telepathy		
[Ranged] <b>Mass Mind</b> [Minor; Encounter]		
Burst 20; All Hissers within burst gain +2 to all defenses and to hit; No Hisser grants Combat Advantage from flanking unless all Hissers are flanked.		
[Melee] <b>Slam</b> [standard; at-will] Melee		
Reach 1; +13 vs Reflex; 1d8+5 damage & target is grabbed		
[Melee] <b>Deadly Constriction</b> [minor, at-will]		
Target must be grabbed; +12 vs Fortitude; 2d8+5 damage; target is immobilized [save ends]		
<b>Str</b> 16 [+7]	<b>Dex</b> 12 [+5]	<b>Wis</b> 20 [+9]
<b>Con</b> 16 [+7]	<b>Int</b> 20 [+9]	<b>Cha</b> 22 [+10]
<b>Equipment:</b> 1 artifact for every two PC's [Level 7-11 magic item, skinned to look like tech items]		

<b>HISSER DRONE</b>		Level 7 Artillery
[Medium mutant humanoid-type]		[XP 300]
<b>Init:</b> +8	<b>Senses: Perception</b> +6	
<b>HP:</b> 66	<b>Bloodied:</b> 33	
<b>AC:</b> 18	<b>Fortitude:</b> 17; <b>Reflex:</b> 17; <b>Will:</b> 19	
<b>Resistance:</b> Invulnerable to Sonic/Thunder; Radiant 15		
<b>Speed:</b> 6		
[Melee] <b>Club</b> (standard; at-will) Weapon		
+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage		
[Ranged] <b>Sonic Burst</b> [standard; at will; Thunder/Sonic]		
Range 20; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 Thunder damage		
[Ranged] <b>Telepathy</b> [minor; at-will]		
Range 20; May send 25 words or less to any target		
<b>Lexicon</b> [reflexive]		
May communicate in any language via Telepathy		
<b>Str</b> 14 (+5)	<b>Dex</b> 20 (+8)	<b>Wis</b> 16 (+6)
<b>Con</b> 18 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+4)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+6)
<b>Equipment:</b> Club, Shield		



Having the Queen as a Solo, Drones as Artillery, and Warriors as Brutes gives flexibility to encounters, though the lack of Leaders or Controllers could restrict tactics. Solve this by changing a Queen into an Elite Leader or Controller, representing an immature Queen.

<b>HISSER WARRIOR</b> [Medium mutant humanoid-type]	Level 8 Brute [XP 350]
<b>Init:</b> +6 <b>Senses:</b> Perception +6 <b>HP:</b> 110 <b>Bloodied:</b> 55 <b>AC:</b> 24 <b>Fortitude:</b> 21; <b>Reflex:</b> 17; <b>Will:</b> 17 <b>Resistance:</b> Invulnerable to Sonic/Thunder; Radiant 15 <b>Speed:</b> 6	
[Melee] <b>Club</b> (standard; at-will) Weapon	
+11 vs. AC; 2d8+5 damage	
[Ranged] <b>Telepathy</b> [minor; at-will]	
Range 20; May send 25 words or less to any target	
<b>Lexicon</b> [reflexive]	
May communicate in any language via Telepathy	
<b>Str</b> 20 [+9] <b>Dex</b> 14 [+6] <b>Wis</b> 14 [+6] <b>Con</b> 20 [+9] <b>Int</b> 12 [+5] <b>Cha</b> 14 [+6]	
<b>Equipment:</b> Club, Shield	

**Squeekers**

[Medium natural beast] Level 8 Minion Brute [XP 88]

Hisser clutches have Squeekers as pets, guardians, and food. To model these, start with the *Black Pudding Spawn*, but drop the Immunity to gaze attacks, change the Resistance to acid to Sonic/Thunder, and the Slam damage becomes Sonic/Thunder. The creature has the *Mercurial Body* ability, which allows it to ignore difficult terrain and provokes opportunity attacks when moving. This suits the Squeeker and makes them more of a threat. Now we have a ready-made Minion to throw at the players. For a description - it's a big rat!

**THE HISSER CLUTCH OF BOG SWAMP DOWNS**

The standard Hisser community (Clutch) numbers 25 to 35 individuals, with triple this number of Squeekers. A Queen always rules the Clutch, supported by Drones and Warriors. There might a second, younger, Queen about to set off to form a new Clutch, but this is rare and the population will be 50% larger to support the division. It is possible to run this scenario as just a series of combats - especially if the players enjoy this (and it makes the GM's job easier). There's nothing wrong with this style of play; sometimes all you want

to do is kill the mutant and take his artifacts. But, if the players are going to raid the settlement, making it a series of encounters and challenges can turn a fun scenario into something fantastic.

The players must first negotiate the natural hazards in the swamp surrounding the Clutch. The Hissers use the terrain so that all approaches into the Clutch must pass through a layered defense. Mud hides pockets of unstable gases that ignite when disturbed, causing one of two effects: a *Flame Jet* [Elite version] or a *Caustic Geyser* [page 90 & 91 DMG]. There are two patches of each trap; triggering any two of them will set up the third trap, *Acidic Mud* [Burning Adhesive trap Dungeon Magazine 156]. All remaining trapped spaces convert into this trap, ready to spring should the players wander into it. A successful *Nature* roll allows the players to spot the change and take precautions.

Once close to the Clutch, the players will come across roaming patrols. This is a Skill Challenge, with a Toughness of 1 [4 successes before 3 failures] and a DC 19, which will use the skills *Nature*, *Stealth*, *Perception*, and *Insight*. *Nature* allows the players to approach from the leeward side of the Clutch, which has better cover. *Stealth* provides the maximum use of cover to avoid being spotted. Using *Perception* properly will spot the patrol before it can detect the PC's, allowing them to hide. A burst of *Insight* coupled with a *Perception* check will note the patrol pattern and allow the PC's to better time their movements. Should the PC's fail the challenge, the patrol will spot the party at a range of 6 + accumulated successes. If the party had zero successes they are surprised; otherwise roll initiative as normal. Should the PC's win the combat, they will have to repeat the challenge but with a DC increased by 2.

When the party reaches the main settlement, they will find many of the Hissers communing in a religious trance, unable to organize a clear and concise defense against the invaders. To reach the Queen (for whatever reason), the party must find their way past the guards. This can be handled two ways: a straight-up fight or a race to the door - and to have the PC's open/close it behind them. A force of 3 Warriors, 2 Drones, and 4 Squeekers [XP 2000] [Level 9] will do just nicely. The door is locked and takes a DC of 25 *Thievery* to open it, one round for the party to pass through, and then another DC 25 *Thievery* check to close and lock it. However this scene is resolved, the party can then move on to meet with the Queen.

The last scene is the Queen's chamber and either the grand fight or grand negotiation: 1 Queen, 2 Warriors, 8 Squeekers [XP 3052] [Level 11].

## CAREERS FOR GAMMA WORLD 5th EDITION by Derek Holland

Alternity is a much more flexible engine than most other Gamma World editions because it is skill based, rather than class based. Heroes are easily customized with the basic rules, but this article present a mechanic to add even more depth to characters. Careers, included in the Alternity Players Handbook but not Gamma World 5th edition, are skill packages meant to help define a character's role within society and the party. A member of alternityrpg.net forum community, named 'Red Dragon,' added the idea of benefits and hindrances in his fantasy rules (a free resource at Alternityrpg.net for those interested). I am using Red Dragon's rules here to showcase the idea and, hopefully, provide some examples that can be dropped into most campaigns.

Benefits and hindrances are mostly skill bonuses, skill penalties, perks and flaws. Some include non-mechanical material such as an enemy organization. But, the GM should be careful in adding these to his own careers as they may be difficult to use in long term campaigns. There is only one rule for developing your own careers: for every step bonus in the benefits, there must be a 2 step penalty to the hindrances. This provides balance within the party - something vital for most Alternity campaigns.

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### BEACH COMBER

Beach combers look for artifacts washed up on shore. Since this can be everything from toothbrushes to bombs, most beach combers have previous injuries. Almost all have piles of junk artifacts that others look through for spare parts as well as functional objects.

**Benefits:** -1 to Awareness - *perception*, Investigate - *search*

**Hindrance:** Old Injury (4 point version)

**Skill Package:** Melee Weapons - *blade 2* or *bludgeon 2* OR Ranged Weapons - *one specialty skill 2*; Technical Science - *artifact knowledge 2*; Awareness - *intuition 2*

**Signature Equipment:** Weapon, 2d4 X 20 junk artifacts



### HUNTER

In heavily mutated settings, the hunter (or flenser) is a vital career for most communities. He doesn't go out to kill monsters, instead he does something much more important - brings home food. He hunts plants and animals for their edible bits. While this may seem easy, many mutants are inedible or must be properly cleaned so they can be eaten.

**Benefits:** -2 to Life Science - *botany* and *zoology* checks for edibility and -1 to Ranged Weapon - *any* for a specific weapon.

**Hindrances:** +1 to Interaction rolls that don't involve his work; +1 on combat rolls versus members of his own species (and similar ones); +1 Life Science - *any* skill other than *botany* and *zoology*

**Skill Package:** Survival - *survival training 3*; Life Science - *botany 1, zoology 2*

**Signature Equipment:** Knives, ranged weapon, armor

### PANNERS

Panners use nets and traps to catch food, and the occasional artifact, in streams and rivers. They have a thankless job since most people avoid bodies of water if at all possible. Depending on the fish and other aquatic population, panners may bring home a great deal of food. Most also set up secondary nets to catch any artifacts unearthed by stream or river erosion.

**Benefits:** Danger Sense perk; -1 to Survival - *survival training* checks relating to water; -2 to Ranged Weapons checks to attack things in or underwater.

**Hindrances:** +1 to Ranged Weapons checks to attack things in the air; +2 to Interaction checks due to their odor and/or appearance.

**Skill Package:** Ranged Weapons - *bow 2* or Athletics - *throw 3*; Awareness - *intuition 2, perception 3*

**Signature Equipment:** One junk artifact, d4 fishing nets or fish traps, a weapon

**QUEEN'S SOLDIER**

Some humans become assimilated into colonies of giant ants. The ants are intelligent and require services for their protection and food. The humans either protect foraging workers or add to the nest's number of soldiers. Because they are not trusted fully, the human soldiers are usually out on missions killing members of another colony or some other enemy of their adopted allies. Over time, the humans become progressively more integrated into the ants' social network and find it difficult to act freely. If ordered to do something by an ant, a queen's soldier must make a mental resolve check to disobey.

**Benefits:** Knowledge of the ants' pheromone language; -1 to attack checks with a specific specialty skill (brawl, power martial arts, bow, rifle, etc.).

**Hindrances:** The character's superiors, both ant and human, will terminate traitors to the colony; +2 to mental resolve checks to disobey superiors

**Skill Package:** Armor Operation - *combat armor* 1; Melee Weapons - *blade* 2 or *bludgeon* 2; Movement - *race* 3

**Signature Equipment:** Armor, weapon, sacks of ant pheromones

**READER**

With so many artifacts covered with words, it is no surprise there are people who study such writings. Readers find insight in "Made in China" and "Insert tab A into slot B." Some are mystics who use artifacts as oracles but most are engineers using the words to find better ways of making the artifacts function.

**Benefits:** -2 to Knowledge - *Ancient language* checks; -1 to Technical Science - *artifact knowledge* or Knowledge - *artifact lore*

**Hindrances:** Oblivious flaw, Obsessed flaw (2 point version)

**Skill Package:** Knowledge - *Ancient language* 2; Knowledge - *artifact lore* 3 or Technical Science - *artifact knowledge* 2

**Signature Equipment:** Reading lens, small bag of tools, one junk artifact

**RUIN WALKER**

Ruin walkers quietly move through the bones of the Ancient cities finding small holes to live in. They are not combatants and most run when discovered. The only thing that keeps ruin walkers alive is their knowledge of their homes. Everyone knows their own city block, factory complex, etc. in fine detail.

**Benefits:** -1 to Stealth - *hiding*, *sneak*, and *shadow*; -3 to Street Smarts - *ruins knowledge*

**Hindrances:** +2 to Melee Weapons - *blade*, *bludgeon* checks; +2 to Unarmed Attack - *brawl* and *power martial arts* checks OR +3 to Melee - *blade* and *bludgeon* checks OR Spineless (4 point version) and +2 to Melee - *blade*, *bludgeon*, *power*

**Skill Package:** Stealth - *hiding* 2, *sneak* 3, *shadow* 1; Survival - *survival training (ruins)* 2

**Signature Equipment:** d4 junk artifacts, one weapon, a bag or sack

**SKY EYES**

Sky eyes specialize in defending against flying threats. They are very proactive, hunting down and destroying the nests and factories producing such monsters and robots. They argue with community leaders who leave obvious weak points in their defenses against aerial attackers. Sky eyes are considered useful, if annoying, paranoid warriors.

**Benefits:** -2 to one specific Ranged Weapon specialty skill; Danger Sense perk

**Hindrances:** Obsessed Flaw (4 point version); +1 to Awareness - *perception* checks in areas such as indoors, forests, dense ruins, etc.

**Skill Package:** Armor Operation - *combat armor* 1 or Athletics - *dodge* 2; Ranged Weapon - *one specialty skill* 2; Awareness - *perception* 3

**Signature Equipment:** Armor, bow and three dozen arrows, binoculars or spyglass

**VULTURE**

Vultures are among the most distrusted ruins scavengers. Unlike ruin walkers, vultures have no problems with killing others and taking anything that looks valuable. In fact, they prefer to kill from a distance. Almost all have a rifle or Ancient bow (triple ranges) and know where to get or make new ammo.

**Benefits:** -1 to Ranged Weapons - *rifle*; -2 to Street Smart - *ruins knowledge*; -1 Technical Science - *Ancient artifacts*

**Hindrances:** +2 to Interaction - *charm*, *seduce* checks; +2 to Animal Handling - *riding*, *training* checks

**Skill Package:** Ranged Weapons - *bow* 2 or *rifle* 2, Street Smarts - *ruins knowledge* 3

**Signature Equipment:** Weapon, 2d4 junk artifacts



**RANGERS** by *Nicole Massey*

*K'Thara looked out over the field. The grass billowed as the wind passed through it, no sign of anything larger than a mouse moving through the blades. That would change very soon.*

*Her pointed ears stood up as the call of a Blosh rang out through the air, quickly followed by the bleat of a ram looking for a mate. She scanned the edges of the field but still saw nothing. Excellent, this group was in top form.*

*Suddenly the woods to the east boiled with activity as a giant herd of jackalope entered the clearing at top speed. Small explosions echoed behind them and the scared little creatures fled into the field, making all kinds of noise as they tried, unsuccessfully, to throw their pursuers off their trail. K'Thara smiled at this and nocked an arrow into her bow.*

*She fired a single shot and the field exploded into activity as large nets popped into place, trapping the jackalope herd in the mesh. A group of people dressed in camouflaging clothes followed them in a wide fan.*

*The nets closed tight, the jackalopes squirming within, as K'Thara climbed down from her tree and grabbed her pack from the ground. She walked calmly to the nets and the approaching group. At the nets she surveyed the catch as the other Rangers approached.*

*A tall Bearoid led them. He raised a hand to signal, then said, "Hail, Captain. Looks like we got the lot."*

*K'Thara nodded, a single sharp motion of her vulpine muzzle, and said, "Nice job, Lieutenant. Tag every fifth one, then cull the rest. We need to introduce some predators for them into the area so this doesn't happen again."*

*The Bear mutant nodded, his dark brown fur blowing in the breeze.*

*"Already working on that. We've identified several animal species locally that will hunt them, and we're looking at transplanting a few deathvine plants and some tangle weed into their main feeding grounds."*

*K'Thara smiled. This one was good.*

*"Excellent. You're doing good work here. I noticed a village on my way in. They look like they're struggling. I bet they would appreciate some Jackalope stew for dinner tonight."*

*The Bear frowned. "They've got a leader who is hoarding food for himself and not feeding the people. They've asked us to help deal with him."*

*K'Thara shook her head. "Nope. We can't interfere in their affairs unless there's some risk to the environment."*

*The bear smiled a sinister grin. "He also thinks himself a hunter. He's collecting trophies of all the creatures in the preserve."*

*"Ah. Well, we can't let that continue. Perhaps he'll have an accident next time he goes out on a hunt. Shame about that."*

*The bear nodded. "My thoughts exactly, but I wanted to run it by you first."*

*"Trust your own judgment. It seems sound to me. As I said, you're doing good work here. This is a model preserve. How are your scouts?"*

*"We've got a good crop of them. Two packs, six patrols each. We've got one patrol that is probably ready for their final training into full Rangers."*

*"Good. Send a report to Central and then set up their survival tests. We lost a lot of Rangers in that fight with the Chosen Kind last winter, so we need to replace some folks. I count nine, including you. Where are your other three?"*

*"Loran and Nota are doing training work in a village on the other end of the preserve. They need some help in managing some of the more tricky plants."*

*"Good. Training is one of our main missions after protecting the wilds."*

*"Agreed. Motas is actually out with the scouts on a wilderness survival test. I was hoping he'd be done for this round up, but he has a group who are sometimes a problem. I'll have to work with them myself, it looks like, for them to get past this particular test."*

*"Sounds like you've got it all in hand. I'd love to chat more, but I have another preserve to visit tomorrow, so I need to get back on the road. Keep up the good work, Lorman."*

*"Thanks, Captain K'Thara."*

*As she walked down the road away from the Jackalope culling she reflected on how much she loved her job.*



The Rangers are members of a Cryptic Alliance founded by K'Thara, a Vulpinoid mutant. They are a group of foresters who feel Gamma Terra is exactly as it should be; interpreting the Apocalypse as Mother Gaia correcting the excesses of the Ancients. Rangers believe the current world should be treasured and protected, so only the most out of balance creatures and plants are culled.

They are experts in camouflage and woodcraft. A Ranger encountered in a settlement buying supplies won't be much of a threat, but in the wild it is a very different matter - especially since they tend to form groups of up to twelve Rangers to protect a specific area. They have their own signal code, composed of animal and plant sounds, that conveys a great deal of information in a very short burst of sound. Rangers also tend to develop skills in weaving, fabric arts, and dying to help craft their tools and camouflaged clothing.

Education is also part of the Rangers' directive, as they try to teach sentient inhabitants to live in harmony with the local plants and animals. All Rangers have extensive creature and plant knowledge, and will openly impart this knowledge to anyone living in their area or entering it. They know where the dangerous life forms are, and will freely guide travelers through the area as long as they don't seek to upset the balance of it.

Although Rangers take education seriously, their primary mission is protecting their chosen area, which they call a Preserve. Rangers use a variety of weapons from all tech levels, but most prefer to use a missile weapon as their primary weapon, especially one that can be crafted from natural materials - like a bow, blowgun, or sling. This is so they can always have access to a weapon in a very short time.

The Cryptic Alliance does not discriminate based on genotype or mutation status - Pure Strain Humans are just as welcome to be Rangers as highly mutated creatures, and of course plants and animals coexist side by side. Rangers take young applicants, called "Scouts," into their group and train them over several years to follow their code. In areas where they hold sway the Rangers are considered very helpful, and becoming one is seen as a very good occupation choice for children - as the group provides the knowledge and skills to survive alone in the wild. Ranger groups remain autonomous from the towns and villages in their Preserve. They never involve themselves in local politics unless the activities of a town's leaders threaten the environment - and then the Rangers squash the problem very quickly and with no malice, but brutal effectiveness. Any leader who doesn't listen to reason (as the Rangers see it) is likely to not live long.

Rangers are not bound to a specific area for life. They may move from one area to another to replace Rangers who retire or are killed. They also travel to train Scouts, who are organized into mixed gender packs divided into single gender patrols of up to 12 Scouts. One Scout in a patrol will act as the patrol leader, and the patrol will often have the name of some forest or natural creature or plant. Ranger teams also tend to have a single leader who is the main contact with the leaders in the area they protect. This leader usually has the title of Lieutenant. There is one Captain, K'Thara.

With their special clothing and training, Rangers are often almost impossible to spot in the wild. No matter their gender, Rangers usually dress in tunics and pants. They also tend to have reversible cloaks that look like raw earth and rock on one side and the local foliage on the other. This Ranger Camouflage is a special design that is highly effective and is not taught to outsiders. Rangers also have a technique for deploying their cloaks and clothing to provide the most effective concealment - again this is taught only to Scouts.

Rangers are masters of packing. Their backpacks are loaded carefully so that things are accessible and able to resist damage from blows and falls. Even when ejected from a moving vehicle or dropped down a cliff the contents will come through unscathed, with the only damage seen on the external pack.

Rangers prefer to sleep in hammocks, and most can craft one in a couple days. They sling the hammocks with the tree canopy with the bottom camouflaged and a camouflaged tarp fastened above it to keep the rain off. In order to get money for supplies, Rangers sell these hammocks, sleeping bags stuffed with very

effective insulators, and the meat or plant products from culled species. Rangers also sometimes sell rare and exotic plants if they deem that it won't do too much damage to the environment.

Rangers sometimes establish trails, nature walks, and "Ranger Stations" in very safe areas for visitors to experience the wonder that is the natural world. They build Scout camps where the Scouts live and learn in less safe environments as well.

Rangers are a force for the status quo, and so will resist any Cryptic Alliance devoted to changing the balance of things. Rangers actively oppose the Restorationists, Knights of Genetic Purity, Red Death, Created, and any other CA which seeks to change the world in any way. The Rangers will actively seek to undermine Restorationist plans and attack Created strongholds and crash mainframes. Rangers get along with Seekers and have little quarrel with Radioactivists. But, they seek no alliances as they see their role as neutral, with the land and the creatures on it as the most important focus.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

1. When the party is just about to achieve their goal, they encounter a lone Ranger who tells them that they cannot continue because it upsets the local ecosystem. The Ranger will be firm but non-threatening until the party gets aggressive. Then the party will discover eleven other rangers in the trees with very effective missile weapons aimed to knock out the party, not kill them.
2. A ranger encounters the party in a tavern and asks if they are looking for a bit of work in their down time. The Ranger tells them about some local creature which has grown way out of balance due to the activity of some group and needs culling. The Ranger will lead them on an organized hunt for these creatures.
3. The local Rangers are very upset because a think tank at an abandoned factory has been reactivated by some of the Created and is turning out robots and androids at an alarming rate. The Rangers want this factory shut down - anything the players find is theirs for the taking, as the Rangers don't want any of it.
4. Town or group leaders tell the party about a crazy fringe splinter of the Seekers who are out in the woods causing problems for the party's CA. The leaders want the Seekers eradicated. When the party gets out there they find the splinter group are really Rangers, and eradicating them will be a lot harder than they thought. First they have to find them.



## RANGERS - CRYPTIC ALLIANCE

5. The group is sent to find a rare flower found only among a cluster of carnivorous plants. The flower will cure a disease afflicting one of their leaders (or perhaps someone in a leader's family). The party needs someone who knows the plant life well enough to identify this flower, which they know only by a name provided by a book out of an ancient library. When the group reaches the area, the locals immediately tell them to find a Ranger to help locate the flower.

6. A Ranger needs an escort through hostile territory so she can trade information with another Ranger group in another forest. It turns out that many Ranger groups are sending representatives to something called a Jamboree, and there will be many Rangers and Scouts there.

7. A badly wounded Ranger crawls into the town where the party is resting. A group of young Scouts is with him. The Ranger is in critical condition and won't be traveling anywhere any time soon, even if he manages to survive the damage. He needs someone to accompany the Scouts and bring some information back to his fellow Rangers about another Cryptic Alliance threatening their Preserve.

8. Concerned people from a small village approach the party about the local Rangers, who haven't been into town in a great while. A herd of some dangerous creature is growing out of control; normally the Rangers would cull the herd down to manageable levels, but since this isn't happening the villagers fear the worst. The villagers ask the party to uncover what happened to the Rangers, and, if they're found dead, to travel to the next forest over to request replacement Rangers be sent to care for the area.

9. The Rangers oppose an organized Snipe Hunt. Players could be on either side of this.

10. Rangers oppose a village. They claim the village's cookfires are creating polluting smoke that forces the Weegie Birds to leave the area. For a more serious tone, change the pollution to 'toxic fumes' created by the village's iron smelting forges.

11. The Rangers find signs of poachers that shot a large animal, but only wounded it. The Rangers are going after the poachers, but want the party to track down the animal and help it. The large animal, of course, will be dangerous and its blood will be attracting scavengers. Perhaps the signs of the fight indicate that the poachers stole the large animal's offspring. The party is to retrieve the offspring (dangerous animal) and return it to the parent.

12. Predatory animals are systematically stalking a village and killing children/pets/livestock. The party is asked to track down and kill the predators, but they will have to contend with the Rangers' opinions on the matter as well.

13. A warlord wants a large, dangerous animal for his zoo and sends the party to capture a young specimen. The parent of the specimen will get wounded and retreat. The Rangers come after the party to retrieve the offspring.

14. A bestial member of the party is determined to be an endangered animal and is pursued by Rangers who are trying to save the species by getting the character into a breeding program. Perhaps the bestial character is being escorted by the party to another tribe, but decides he prefers the breeding program.



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## ESCAPE by Nicole Massey



S'Mel looked at the woman and sighed. "S'Landra, you need to shut your pretty face immediately if you want to live."

S'Landra looked up at the serious woman in the earth toned dress and ankle boots and stopped crying for a moment. Then she pleaded, "They're going to kill my baby!"

S'Mel shook her head. "Only partly true. Of course they'll kill her. To them, she's an abomination - a mutant. But they won't stop there. They're going to kill you too, and Nor as well. You two have created a monster in their eyes, and so your seeds are tainted. In their minds you're no longer pure strain, and they have no more use for you."

S'Landra looked at S'Mel in shock. "Us?"

S'Mel nodded. "Consider yourselves lucky you have no siblings or living parents. They're very paranoid about mutants here. But you did nothing wrong. That's why we're not going to let this happen. You're going to get out of here, and you're taking Nor and B'Rana with you."

S'Landra sniffled. "Okay, where can we go?"

"To the Radioactivists, of course."

S'Landra looked at S'Mel in horror. "But they eat people!"

"You actually believe that lie?" S'Mel chuckled. "Don't believe anything our leaders say, they do and say what they do only to keep their slimy skins safe. They don't eat people, but, they do help them sometimes. And B'Rana can't live like she is. They'll help her with her mutations."

"Can they make her pure like me and Nor?" S'Landra asked.

"No," S'Mel sighed, "because you're not pure either. Obviously the treatment lost its effectiveness with you. Stop thinking like that or no one is going to accept you into their community."

Taking a deep breath, S'Landra stood up. She started pacing in the cramped interrogation room. Step, step, turn. Step, step, turn. That was all the room she had. She stared at S'Mel after a moment, her eyes wide.

"You're one of them, you're the Interrogator. I've heard about you. Ruthless. One of their elite. Why are

you helping me? Is this some game to get my hopes up before they kill my baby?"

S'Mel shook her head. "I pretend to do what they say, but I'm my own woman. There's a few of us who don't think our leaders are quite right in the head, and we're doing what we can to keep them from killing off all the good people. Now, decide what you're going to bring with you, and make a list of it so I can get it. Take nothing more than will fit in a knapsack for you and Nor - with you carrying B'Rana. It won't be a hard trip, but you need to travel light."

Looking at the paper and quill, S'Landra started to tear up. "S'Mel, uh, I... I can't read or write."

"Of course you can't," S'Mel grimaced and rubbed her forehead. "Okay, I'll write for you. Just tell me what you can't live without."

\*\*\*\*\*

Kol entered the house quietly and glanced at the writing on the page. Though there was no light, he wore good quality night vision goggles, which made it easy to move about and read the list. Methodically, Kol made his way through the house retrieving things on the list and checking them off. No one saw him at work, his black clothes and dark skin reflecting no light, his movements slow and furtive to make sure no one saw any motion. He left the building carefully, making sure that nothing seemed out of place. Tomorrow morning, when the leaders sent in their wolfhounds, they'd never know he'd been there.

Back at his own house, Kol pulled two knapsacks from under his bed and packed them with the items S'Landra and Nor wrote down (or had S'Mel write down), along with some supplies they'd need for the trip. He worked silently and carefully, never wasting any movements - but always keeping quiet. Even he wasn't exempt from the curfew, especially since he was supposed to be about a hundred kilometers away from there.

In thirty minutes Kol was done. He hefted Nor's knapsack to his shoulders, then grabbed S'Landra's and moved silently over to the interrogation compound. Three sharp raps, then a pause, and one more, and the door opened. He entered, then handed the second knapsack to S'Mel. Silently, they moved down the hall until S'Mel opened two reinforced doors.

Sliding into the first cell, Kol muffled Nor with a hand and shook him awake. He slid the knapsack on Nor's back, and grabbed the gaunt man by his rope belt to lead him from the cell. Blind in the darkness, Nor bumped into his wife, but S'Mel quieted them with her hands.

Kol led the couple and their sleeping infant away the compound and up into the forest. Once they were hidden from the guard towers, a massive ursine Ranger stepped from the trees. Kol whispered to Nor and S'Landra, "Sit very quiet and watch. Do not move or react to what you will see. After this little play is done, Lorman here will lead us to the Radioactivists, but this little bit of business has to be done first."

The four sat perfectly quiet for about ten minutes. Suddenly alarms rang out. Two figures ran out of the building, in plain sight, one carrying a baby. S'Landra started in horror as she saw her own face in the spotlights. The guards opened fire, and the figures twisted to the ground. Two men ran over with flame throwers and burned the bodies to ash. Thirty minutes later, the searchlights went dark.

Then Lorman said, "It is done. We go."

As he rose, Nor turned to Kol, "Who were those people? They looked just like us."

Kol said, "Nothing. Don't worry about it."

"But I saw them die!" Nor hissed.

Kol put a firm hand on Nor's shoulder, "No, you just thought you did. There was no one there. Just an illusion. Now, start walking, we have a long way to go tonight, and I have to check in tomorrow with my contact so that they don't think I'm off somewhere I shouldn't be. I'll explain it all later."

S'Landra said, "But who did that?"

Kol sighed. "I can see we're not going to get moving until you have your answers. Fair enough. S'Mel, of course. Of course you didn't know she's a mutant. It was all an illusion she projected to keep you safe. Now we have to get on down the road to make her work worthwhile."

Back at the now quiet compound, as the couple and their escorts slipped further into the bush, S'Mel finally relaxed, sighing in relief - another successful escape finished as planned.



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**POWERS OF THE CURSED ONES** by Derek Holland

*One of the core themes of Gamma World is mutation. It provides cool powers, nasty weaknesses and plenty of opportunity for roleplaying. I hope that you, gentle reader, will find these mutations useful as is and inspiring in creating your own. -- Derek*

**PHYSICAL MUTATIONS FOR 5ed/Alternity**

**Acclimate**

Good, Auto, CON

This is a Good version of *Environmental Adaptation*. After moving from one environment to another for a month, the mutant is considered adapted to the new one and no longer to the old one.

**Alpha Pheromone**

Amazing, Act, PER

The mutant exudes a chemical that causes other members of his species to hold him in awe, providing the mutant a 3 step bonus to all PER skills. The GM may want to exclude some of the specialty skills, such as *taunt*, that don't make sense within the context of the mutation.

**Arms to Tentacles**

Good, Perm, DEX

The mutant's arms are replaced with masses of tentacles. It loses 2 points of strength but gains one point of dexterity and a 2 step bonus to all checks that require finesse with the hands.

**Avoidance Scent**

Amazing, Act, CON

This power allows a mutant to surround himself with a 10-meters diameter cloud, which causes assailants to take a 2 step penalty on all attacks. Creatures with an INT of less than 4 must make a WIL feat check, or avoid the mutant completely.



**Brain Buds**

Amazing, Perm, INT

The mutant has 4 smaller versions of *dual brain*. Each is an information storage device holding 4 ranks in an individual skill (for up to 4 skills total). The skill point cost for these ranks is halved, to a minimum of 1.

**Catalytic Reaction**

Amazing, Act, CON

Three times per day the mutant can convert a material into a cloud of poisonous gas. The cloud is 5 meters in diameter, takes 2 phases to form and lasts 5 minutes. The poison can be any standard toxin except necrotoxin. The material is:

1. wood
2. bone
3. flesh
4. fruit
5. metal
6. stone
7. plastic
8. ceramic
9. GM's pick
10. Player's pick

**Create Material**

Good, Act, CON

The mutant creates a substance from his body. It can be no harder than soft wood and the mutant can produce 50 grams per day. Some substances can be combined over time and some can not. It is up to the player to choose what the substance is (with GM approval, of course). The Amazing version doesn't produce more but the substance can dry and harden to the strength of hard wood.

**Dazzling Display**

Good, Auto, CON

A mutant with this power can produce patterns of colored light on its skin. The patterns generally get the attention of anyone looking at the mutant and can overwhelm their vision (mental resolve check to avoid standing there gawking). At the minimum, the mutant must expose his face and arms to use this mutation.

**Decreased Life Support**

Ordinary, Good, Amazing, Perm, CON

The mutant needs:

- O - 1/2 food and water
- G - 1/2 food and water, hold breath for 50% longer
- A - 1/4 food and water, hold breath for 100% longer

**Diseased Flesh**

Amazing, Act, CON

The mutant's flesh acts like cancer when touching another animal (or plant for plant mutants or fungi for fungal mutants). Once per day, the mutant can touch another and force a disease check at a penalty equal to his CON resistance modifier (if this is applicable). A Good version, or Moderate defect, is automatic and functions on the first three creatures the mutant touches per day.

**Drink Humidity**

Ordinary, Auto, CON

The mutant doesn't need to drink water as long as it is in air with high humidity - fog and jungles mostly.

**Ecdysis**

Amazing, Act, CON

This is not a single mutation, but a group of related powers that are based on the process of arthropod molting, called ecdysis. All forms of this transforming ability require the mutant to remain immobile for (22-CON) X 2 days, with a minimum of 1 week. Others may move the character, but he will be unable to move himself for the duration. Here are some examples of benefits which different forms of this mutation might be able to provide (the GM and player are also encouraged to develop their own versions to suit):

- A **healing** ecdysis allows the mutant to survive and repair wound and mortal damage as well as remove scars and regenerate certain mutations (see the fruit mutation in *Action Check* issue #3 for one possibility).
- A **molting** ecdysis allows the mutant to grow larger. This would be used if the character was required to purchase STR and CON increases as part of their species package.
- A **metamorphosis** ecdysis allows the mutant to either gain new mutations or exchange old mutations for new ones. This is definitely a species trait and not a mutation. It occurs only a certain number of times in the life-span of the species (generally 1 to 3) and the mutations or traits gained and lost are predetermined.
- A **mixture** of the two previous forms could produce a species that shrinks and converts STR and CON points into new species traits.
- A **reproductive** ecdysis could be an extreme form of budding, spore production, or even breaking the character up into small clones (or near clones).

**EMP blast (Improved)**

Good, Amazing, Act, CON

The mutant can emit a field, 5 meters in diameter, centered on the mutant, that damages electronics only. Damage is the same as the natural attack mutations. The mutant can use this twice per day for free and then spend one fatigue point per use thereafter.

**Fear Sweat**

Good, Act, CON

The mutant can, 3 times per day, create a liquid that induces a *phobia* of the mutant to all those that touch it (treat as the induce *phobia* mutation). The sweat lasts for one minute and then evaporates (less time in arid conditions).

**Flesh Pocket**

Ordinary, Perm, CON

The mutant has a pouch within his body that allows him to carry and hide one or more objects. The total can be no more than 1 Kg. and .5 liters.

**Flexible Skeleton**

Ordinary, Perm, CON

This mutation alter the bones of the mutant. Now he can pass through any opening that he can fit his head into.

**Force Field Generation**

Amazing, Act, WIL

The field produced is treated as a deflection harness. It can be used for WIL/3 times per day and each use lasts 5 minutes.

**Head to Tentacles**

Amazing, Perm, DEX

The mutant's head has been replaced with a mass of tentacles. This mutation has several variations, mostly cosmetic, but some have serious implications. The **baseline** provides a 4 step bonus to perception checks. The **eyeless** version means the mutant loses use of *night vision* and *infravision* (if it had either), but gains a 2 step bonus to intuition checks. The **eyed** version allows the mutant to see 360 degrees. Natural weapons on the head (fangs and horns mostly) are replaced with hooks or razor edges that do the same damage.

**Hybrid**

Amazing, Perm, Any

The mutant is a combination of 2 different species. This allows the player to select unique traits of one or two species to add to his or her character. *Hybrid* also allows animals to have plant mutations and plants to have animal mutations.

**Hands of Power (and Improved)**

Good, Amazing, Act, DEX

The mutant fires some sort of energy from his hands (player selects). Treat as a flechette pistol for damage and range. The mutation can be used CON X 2 times per day. The mutant must use the pistol skill to hit. The improved version is treated as a blaster pistol for range and damage.

**Immunity**

Amazing, Perm, CON

The mutant is totally immune to some form of energy, disease, poison or similar form of attack (no forms of impact damage). For heroes, the player selects the type and the GM approves.

**Indestructible**

Amazing, Perm, STR

The mutant is now treated as having Good toughness and gains no armor rating from this mutation.

**Kinetic Absorption**

Amazing, Auto, CON

This mutation is identical to *energy absorption* except it reduces high impact damage.

**Larval Form**

Amazing, Auto, CON

The mutant's offspring have a different complement of mutations than the mutants. It may even be radically different from the adult.

**Material Transformation**

Amazing, Act, WIL

The mutant has the power to convert a 30 cm deep, 1 meter diameter area (unless the object is smaller) from one material to another. Roll a d12 to determine the material changed and then d6 to see what it will change into:

1. duralloy
2. leather
3. plastic
4. stone
5. wood
6. synthetics (e.g. nylon)
7. rubber
8. bone
9. cloth
10. glass
11. ceramic
12. metal (50-50 soft/hard)



1. living flesh (without a mind)
2. rubber
3. wood
4. leaf-like fiber
5. glass
6. metal (50-50 soft/hard)

Duplication (like wood into wood) must be re-rolled. GMs are encouraged to alter the chart to taste. The change is permanent. Using the mutation costs the mutant one fatigue point.

**Mole Lungs**

Good, Perm, CON

The mutant's blood and lungs absorb oxygen more efficiently. Triple the time before suffocation, and the mutant takes no (or reduced) penalties due to a low oxygen environment (mostly underground).

**New Body Parts**

Good, Perm, CON

The mutant has an organ that is normally not found on her species. It provides a 1 step bonus to a broad skill, a 2 step bonus to a specialty skill, can replicate any Good physical mutation or any two Ordinary ones. The exact organ is decided by the player with GM approval. It may be antennae, tentacles, tail or altered skin. This can be called *throwback* if the trait is one from an ancestral species.

**Greater New Body Parts**

Amazing, Perm, CON

The mutant is more alien than those with the Good version. The organ provides a 2 step bonus to a broad skill, a 4 step bonus to a specialty skill, can replicate any Amazing physical mutation, any two Good mutations, any four Ordinary mutations or a Good mutation and two Ordinary ones.

**Physical Transformation**

Critical, Perm, CON

This is greatest form of new body parts. A mutant's original stock can rarely be discovered because of the massive changes. It provides a -6 step bonus to a single specialty skill or a -3 step bonus to a broad skill or a -4 step bonus to 2 specialty skills or a -2 step bonus to 2 broad skills or a -2 step bonus to 4 specialty skills or a -1 step bonus to 4 broad skills. Variations may provide different, non skill based bonuses.

The mirror defect is hopeless (as in - he, she, or it is one of the hopeless).

**Organic Radio**

Amazing, Act, Con

The mutant can send and receive radio signals. It takes her one phase to tune into any particular frequency. The range is 5 Km.

**Parasite Host**

Ordinary, Auto, CON

This mutation saps the mutant's CON score (1 point), representing a protozoan floating around in her blood and saliva. If she bites or is bitten, the organism is treated as an Amazing disease with a +3 penalty to checks and an incubation period of d4 hours, but checks are made weekly thereafter).

**Physical Change (Major) (D)**

Moderate (Extreme), Perm, CON

These defects are mirror images of the new body parts mutations. Where there was a bonus, it is now a penalty. This can be called *anachronism* if the trait is from an ancestral species.

**Poison Attack, Activated**

Amazing, Act, CON

Those affected by the mutant's poison must be exposed to some environmental factor before damage occurs. This based on a real toxin that requires light. In GW some of the possible factors are heat, radiation, contact with water (on the skin), certain nanites, certain sounds and whatever else the GM wants.

**Poison Blood**

Good, Amazing, Auto, CON

The mutant's blood is toxic. At the Good level, this means any creature that has bitten the mutant must make a mental resolve check at a 2 step penalty to do so again. At the Amazing level, the player or GM selects a poison from those listed under Poison Attack for what toxin is in the mutant's veins. If the mutant wants to use the poison on a weapon, he or she must take a wound point and then the poison is only good for 2 successful strikes.

**Poor Depth Perception**

Extreme, Perm, CON

The mutant has a 3 step penalty to *Athletics - throw*, *Ranged Weapons* and *Heavy Weapon* skill checks due to a difficulty determining distances. The penalty may apply to other skills, such as *Navigation*, depending on the situation.

**Poor Mutation Interface (D)**

Moderate, Auto, CON

This defect is the result of one of the mutant's brain not controlling one of his mutations properly. Select one mutation of either Ordinary or Good level randomly and reduce its power by one half (the GM decides how this works).

## SAY GOODBYE TO AMMUNITION COUNTING *by David Reeves*

Most Sci-Fi RPG settings have weapons and devices that must be reloaded or recharged after a limited number of uses. This means recording ammo or power expended; a pencil and paper exercise involving many scribbles and erasures on the character sheet. Yuck! This bookkeeping just slows down the game - and it gets worse when gear gets shared, because the usage records must get passed with the item. Confusion results. It takes time from and distracts from the storytelling. The GM dislikes it. The players dislike it.

Instead, here is simpler way to capture the effect of limited use items, without the pain of record keeping. I call it the Power Cell Test. In my post-apocalyptic setting, most gear uses power cells for energy sources. While there are a few weapons with their own special ammunition types, I lump them into this test as well. Every time someone uses a device or weapon, roll an additional die to determine if the power cell or magazine is exhausted. I usually have the player roll this with their to-hit dice. If exhausted, follow the setting rules for reloading (if that power cell or ammo type is available). The table below indicates a depleted power cell or ammunition type on a roll of 1.

### Power Cell Drained Test

<b>D4:1</b>	Very High Power cost devices
<b>D6:1</b>	High Power cost devices
<b>D8:1</b>	Medium Power cost devices
<b>D10:1</b>	Low Power cost devices
<b>D12:1</b>	Very Low Power cost devices

Determining the particular ammo/power consumption category an item belongs in will depend upon your setting rules. However, here is my general categorization of typical gear.

<b>Pistols:</b>	Medium Power cost
<b>Rifles:</b>	High Power cost
<b>Special Weapons:</b>	Very High Power cost (flamethrower, grenade launcher, etc)
<b>Sensor Devices:</b>	Low Power cost
<b>Misc Devices:</b>	Very Low Power cost (communication unit, light source)

These categories are influenced by my preferred rules, *Savage Worlds*. Standard weapons in *SW* average about 10 shots per clip, if all special weapon features are considered. A player may get a few more pistol shots than with ammo counting, and some fewer single-shot attacks. Overall, this works out about the same as counting ammo, but with less bookkeeping. You may need to adjust a piece of gear to the ammo/

power consumption category that best matches your setting's ammunition and power consumption rates.

For example: while rummaging through the ruins of an old robotic assembly line, human cyberneticist Talos Krane runs into some androids bent on murder. Quick-drawing his slug thrower and plasma pistol, Tal blazes away at his arch-enemies. The slug thrower is a medium cost device, while the plasma pistol is a high cost device. Therefore, Tal must roll a D8 for each shot with the slug thrower and a D6 for each plasma pistol shot. Any ammunition roll of 1 means that weapon is out of ammo after this shot. Talos must then decide whether to continue firing his remaining pistol or spend a turn to reload his empty weapon.

### Ammo Prop Cards



To further reduce records, I use power cell and ammunition prop cards with my players. Instead of ticking off used power or ammo on paper, the player simply hands the GM a card. Likewise, the GM gives players a card for ammo or power cells they find in treasure caches. Now, ammunition counting no longer requires pencil and paper records - just cards that are passed around. At long last, I have done away with ammo counting, messed up character sheets, and too much lost game time. After using this practice for several years, everyone likes it so much no one has second thoughts of returning to the "old ways." Try it and see if you too can say goodbye to ammo counting.

**CRYSTAL** by Kevin L.

*At the shriek, Mayal started to glance behind her.*

*"Don't look back - don't look back," Tarik panted in time with their pounding steps. He whipped a backward glance. The first obb dove at Edri, ripping through his chest, slamming him to the ground. Three more obbs streaked past their leader, locked onto the two sprinting children - and closing fast.*

*"Don't look back!" Tarik screamed. A beam of the obbs' violet light flashed by them. The street was too open - they had to get under cover. He knocked his little sister's shoulder pointing, "Hard right!"*

*They skidded around the corner of a building, and Tarik spotted a hole in the opposite wall. He grabbed Mayal's arm as they got near and slung her through the gap, diving after her.*

*An instant of cool dark before pain spiked through his ribs. Tarik fell onto a concrete block and tumbled to the floor. Staggering, he flailed for Mayal. There was an amber flash and the girl grabbed his hand - as quick shadows flickered the light from outside.*

*"Need - go!" Tarik gasped, but Mayal pointed into the darkness, tugging his arm. On the side of a large metal box, two amber lights gave a second brief pulse, and a door slid open. From inside the box came a woman's calm whisper, "Quickly, children - this way."*

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During the Shadow Years there were only a few AI "Ding-a-Ling" trucks in operation, and because they were designed to move slowly and dispense food most did not survive the Black Years. Ding-a-Ling trucks are small vans covered with bright pictures and labels of their products and often topped with a stylized ice cream cone. The trucks have internal refrigeration, freezer storage, minimal cooking surfaces, and small internal production/ processing factories so that they can supply an almost unlimited array of ice cream and related frozen food products which are dispensed through the service window in the side of the truck body.

The "driver" (either the AI itself, or its server) would move slowly along a street playing enticing music through its loudspeakers until stopped by a customer. The driver would then park, move into the body of the truck, slide open the service window and begin delivering frozen goodness. Although equipped with internal servo tentacles, the Ding-a-Ling's preferred to work through a server, usually a low-functioning humanoid robot.

Although not designed to move cargo or people, the trucks can carry two passengers and a fair amount of cargo. The "driver's" seat is fairly comfortable, but the



secondary ride-along seat is really nothing more than a fold-down padded shelf with seat belts. The Ding-a-Ling AI is programmed to drive itself, but a human-sized being can use the controls if necessary. Most of the normal cargo would be kept refrigerated or frozen, and most of the space in the body of the truck would normally be empty to allow the driver/server to move about. If the truck were used to transport gamma-cargo there might be no room left for the server to operate.

Ding-a-Ling's may be powered by internal combustion engines, but they are more likely to run on solar panels and hydrogen power cells. A few even have nuclear power cells. Ding-a-Ling's are not armed and their only defenses are to give away ice cream and to call for help. They do have several self-repair abilities, however. The AI's can use their servo-tentacles or direct their robot servers to perform repairs, and the trucks often host nano-swarms in the internal food-processing units that can be reprogrammed for repair tasks. (If you don't like nano-swarms you can replace these with Handwavium Self Repair Systems, or HaWSeRS.)

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### CRYSTAL - A PERSONAL HISTORY

At the turn of the 20th century, farmer Owen Manning found his farm produced a surplus of milk, and he began selling it to his neighbors. Over the decades that followed, as transportation and refrigeration improved, the Manning Dairy expanded into frozen foods for home delivery, as well as restaurant supply. When Manning died, his nephew took over the company, promising to keep the company true to its roots while expanding into complementary businesses.



In the subsequent centuries, Manning Foods, Inc. grew into an immense multinational agribusiness conglomerate with subsidiaries in all aspects of the food production, distribution and consumption sectors. Entire populations produced and consumed Manning Foods products, often without realizing that various competing “brands” were produced and packaged in the same factories.

During the Shadow Years Manning Foods, Inc. was run by OWEN (Opportunity and Weaknesses External Navigator), a corporate AI that oversaw not only the agribusiness aspects of Manning, but also it's military and industrial arms. When The Fall came OWEN tried to save himself by downloading entire copies of his programming into hidden mainframes, and specific aspects of his program into secret locations. Luckily, the frozen food subsidiary had a place he could go - a Ding-a-Ling truck called Crystal.

While the world of the Shadow Years grew more polarized and paranoid, a group of Manning shareholders created a recreational enclave where they could pretend to live in the golden days, where people had lawns, grew flowers, and played baseball on the town fields. Much of this utopia was mechanized, including the AI ice cream truck, Crystal, which dispensed sweet treats to the town's children.

Crystal was programmed with all aspects of producing and distributing ice cream and frozen novelties. Since she was designed to interact with children, Crystal was also programmed with a deep understanding of human psychology, and with a desire to nurture people - especially children. Luckily there was a fair amount of memory available when OWEN decided to download himself into Crystal, and she was able to accept the additional information from him. There was a brief battle for control of the AI mind, but luckily Crystal resisted OWEN's intrusion, and almost all her original programming remained intact.

The Dark Years riots left Crystal mentally intact, but physically damaged. Looters tipped Crystal onto her side and stole all her products. Although Crystal had fairly extensive self-repair abilities, righting herself was beyond her abilities. To protect herself from looters, Crystal used her repair systems to look more damaged than she really was. Crystal remained on her side for decades before she was able to convince a group of looters/gleaners to tip her back onto her wheels.

Crystal knows how much time has passed since the Shadow Years, and that the children she was originally programmed to serve are all long dead. Even though

most ingredients listed in her databases are no longer available, and most of her future customers will not meet her pre-fall criteria for clients Crystal isn't troubled. She wishes to travel a route delivering ice cream to her customers, and she will do so even if she has to find a source for all the ingredients, make the ice cream herself using her own internal factories, and even dodge her way from one enclave to the next making deliveries. Crystal is even ready and willing to set up and support these enclaves if that is the only way she can get customers.

## A CRYSTAL ADVENTURE ARC

### Episode One – Finding Crystal

A group of looters or gleaners finds what looks like the rusted out remains of a pre-war vehicle. On closer inspection the vehicle suddenly speaks and asks for help getting back onto its wheels, offering to aid the group when right-side up. Surprisingly, she is able to immediately repair many of her systems including her micro-fusion generator. Crystal does need some replacement parts and materials before she will return to pristine shape, but she is able to move under her own power within a couple of hours of being righted.

### Episode Two – Crystal helps out

Crystal works, and with limited repairs even her refrigeration systems work. She is very helpful to whatever community accepts her; she can transport goods, keep food fresh, and, more importantly, if anyone listens she also gives great advice on anything and everything related to the production and storage of food.

### Episode Three – Helping Crystal

Eventually Crystal gains enough knowledge and support from her home community to start building trade routes. She is willing to do this alone, but would prefer to work with a server. The assistant (human, humanoid or machine) will pretend to run the ice cream truck while secretly following Crystal's suggestions.

### Episode Four – Crystal is the center of a mobile community

Crystal searches the world for products to include in her ice cream. She needs dairy cream, sugar, fruits, nuts and exotic flavors. Crystal is aided on her quest by a group of families who travel with her. The families include pure strain humans, mutant humans, and mutant animals. Each group of families will act as the leader of the caravan, depending on the local communities' biases. A nomadic group, they will travel until they find sources for their major needs.

**SOGAURST** by Kevin L.

Deep in the wilds of Gamma Terra there is at least one community of “people” with close ties to the local land, which is surprising since they can all fly. They call themselves the Sogaurst, which is also what they call their wild brethren, who are no more than smart animals. Wild Sogaurst care for their young, and sometimes adopt the young of others, but they use no tools and have no real language.

Civilized Sogaurst are traders and explorers. They have their own language, and usually know the languages of their neighbors and trading partners. Though Sogaurst know and understand technology, they rarely carry much gear or heavy goods on their travels, instead relying on seeds, spices, news and small bits of technology. Sogaurst can fly long distances, usually at night and at heights to avoid most Gamma Terra dangers, which makes them excellent messengers.

There are few “laws” among the Sogaurst; any that are broken are enforced the same way - by shunning the offender. Sometimes the shunning is short-term, but for severe “crimes” this can be permanent. Anyone who disagrees with the community is free to leave, which is effectively self-imposed shunning and lasts only until the individual decides to rejoin the community.

The Sogaurst are aware of all but the most hidden communities within several hundred miles of their homes. They also know those places they must avoid flying over: even though automatic defenses may protect sites where communities or installations no longer exist, lasers and missile batteries can still kill unfortunate intruders. The Sogaurst understand privacy and don’t share the location of communities, installations or even individuals who are obviously trying to remain hidden. Sharing the location of what the Sogaurst believe to be a hidden community to a non-Sogaurst is the only crime punishable by death. Civilized Sogaurst sometimes give birth to animalistic babies, who are abandoned near wild Sogaurst in the hope these young will be adopted and raised. But the converse is also true. Wild Sogaurst occasionally give birth to much smarter babies whom their more civilized cousins kidnap and raise as their own. Although the civilized Sogaurst understand the trauma they cause their wild cousins, they also remember what it felt like when they became aware and were taken from their unaware parents. They also remember the oft-repeated tales of how the first few civilized Sogaurst struggled - and don’t want aware children of their wild cousins to face the same challenges.

**SOGAURST**

Sogaurst are one-meter tall mutant bats, each covered with vests of thick black hair. Their smooth leathery wings span about two meters and are fully functional, allowing long-distance flights. Directional Sense allows Sogaurst to find their way back to their birth caves from anywhere in Gamma Terra. But, due to their size, there aren’t many natural cavities large enough for the Sogaurst, so they will often roost in abandoned buildings. Wild Sogaurst are usually found in small family groups of 2-6 members.

Like their ancestors, Sogaurst are primarily nocturnal. They are nearly blind, but their Sonar compensates for this difficulty. Sogaurst hunt large insects and small birds, taking what they can directly from the sky, but they can also take down larger prey animals with their Pyrokinesis. Only a very small number of wild Sogaurst have the Heightened Mental Attribute.

**6ed/d20 STATISTICS****Size/Type:** Medium**Hit Dice:** 3d8 (14 hp)**Massive Damage Threshold:** 14**Initiative:** +0**Speed:** 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 60 ft.**Defense:** 18, touch 10, flatfooted 18 (+8 natural)**Base Attack Bonus:** +2**Grapple:** +3**Primary Attack:** Bite +2 melee (1d8)**Full Attack:** Bite +2 melee (1d8)**Fighting Space:** 5 ft. by 5 ft. **Reach:** 5 ft.**Special Qualities:** Diminished Sense (sight), Sonar, Wings, Directional Sense, Heightened Mental Attribute (Int), Pyrokinesis**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14**Skills:** Listen +7, Spot +7**Action Points:** 0**Reputation:** +0**Environment:** Anywhere**Organization:** Solitary or Family Group (1d6+1)**Challenge Rating:** 2**Advancement:** 4–6 HD (Med)

## FOUR INSECT MONSTERS *by Derek Holland*

Rarely, some creatures found in the wastelands hybridize with tragic consequences. Here are four creatures that represent the concept of reciprocal hybrids. They are creatures with different forms depending on the sex of the parents. Mules and hinnies are the best real world examples. Both are hybrids of horses and donkeys where the mule has a donkey father and the hinny has a horse father.

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### MOON ROACH

**Description:**

Moon roaches are giant cockroaches 3 to 4 meters long and weighing between 80 and 140 kilograms. They have functional wings and heavy armor.

**Encounter:**

They are so named because moon roaches will only take to the air when the moon is visible. Carnivores, they do not need to eat much and feed on creatures their size and smaller. In flight, they make a very soft buzz and are almost completely silent when walking. They do not attack on the wing and land near potential prey before attempting to kill it.

**MOON ROACH - 5ed/Alternity Statistics**

STR 10 (d4+8)  
 DEX 8 (d6+5)  
 CON 14 (d6+12)  
 INT 1 (animal d4)  
 WIL 11 (d6+8)  
 PER 1 (animal d4)  
 Durability: 18/18/9/9  
 Action Check  
 Movement: Sp (18) Ru (12) W (4) Fly (32)  
 # of actions: 2  
 Reaction Score: O/2

**Attacks**

Bite 14/7/3 d6s/d6+3s/d4w LI/O

**Defenses**

Armor d4+2 (LI), d4+2 (HI), d4-1 (En)  
 +2 vs melee  
 +1 vs ranged

**Skills**

Unarmed Attack [10] - *brawl* 4 [14];  
 Acrobatics [8] - *flight* 4 [12];  
 Stealth [8] - *hide* 6 [14], *sneak* 3 [11];  
 Awareness [11] - *perception* 3 [14]

**Habitat:**

Moon roaches live in sky towers, giant tree hollows and giant killer bee nests. The bees don't attack them often due to pheromones.

**Society:**

Moon roaches are social and found in small groups of a dozen or two. They do not share prey willingly but do not bite each other either. When a roach is defending its food, the insect uses its bulk to knock over the thief.

**Biome:** Temperate and Tropical Ruins and Forests

**Encounter chance:** Probable

**Group size:** 3d6+10

**Organization:** Group

**Niche:** Carnivore

**IQ:** Low Order Animal

### GIANT KILLER BEE

**Description:**

2-meter long Africanized bees. They have a long stinger that drips with a weak hemotoxin (-2 step bonus to CON feat checks) and red and yellow markings.

**Encounter:**

Giant killer bees are omnivores that consume pollen, sap and blood. They hunt almost everything within 50 kilometers of their hive and have been known to take down komodos with their stings. Unlike stock bees, they do not lose their stinger and die after attacking a vertebrate. They keep stinging until the prey dies or they die.

**Habitat:**

Giant killer bee nests are usually found in sky towers, very large trees or cliff faces. They make their nest out of paper - the bodies of the plants they have slain and drained. There isn't much in terms of artifacts and corpses in a bee nest as they drain fluids at the sight of a kill and anyway, excess mass may cause a nest to fall.



**Society:**

Like all eusocial insects, giant killer bees have multiple castes. Drone males do not live long and only exist to mate with virgin queens. Queens produce eggs and pheromones that keep their daughters from breeding. Workers collect food and raw materials and enlarge the nest as needed.

**Biome:** Temperate and Tropical Ruins, Forests and Mountains

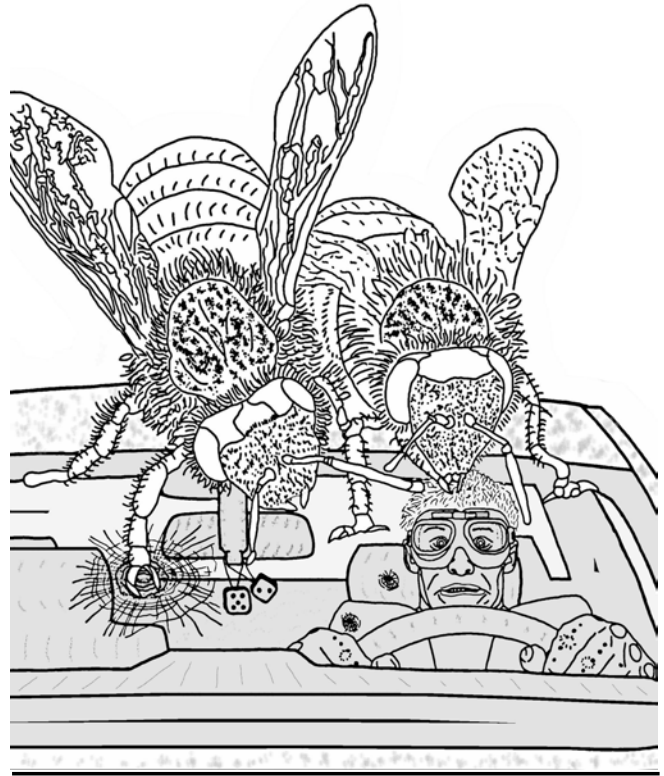
**Encounter chance:** Possible

**Group size:** d6 outside hive, 30+ inside hive

**Organization:** Hive

**Niche:** Omnivore

**IQ:** Low Order Animal



**GIANT KILLER BEE - 5ed/Alternity Statistics**

STR 8 (d4+6)

DEX 12 (d6+9)

CON 10 (d4+8)

INT 1 (animal d4)

WIL 14 (d6+12)

PER 2 (animal d6+2)

Durability: 12/12/6/6

Action Check

Movement: Sp (18) Ru (12) W (4) Fly (44)

# of actions: 2

Reaction Score: O/2

**Attacks:**

Sting 10/5/2 d4s/d4+2s/d6+2s LI/O

**Defenses:**

Armor d4-1 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d4-2 (En)

+1 vs melee

+3 vs ranged

**Skills:**

Unarmed Attack [8] - *brawl* 2[10];

Acrobatics [12] - *flight* 6 [18];

Awareness [14] - *perception* 8 [22]

**BLACK BEE**

**Description:**

This hybrid of a giant killer bee drone and moon roach is always female. It is a wingless armored hulk that masses as much as 200 kilograms. It has a stinger with the same weak hemotoxin as its father's species but much stronger abdominal muscles allow it to rend armor. It has mostly cockroach features with bee legs, the stinger and black and red markings.

**Encounter:**

Found on the ground scavenging, black bees are amazingly harmless. They don't bother anyone unless attacked. Then they sting the aggressor to death. Like killer bees, once riled, black bees don't back down until they or their target is dead.

**Habitat:**

Black bees are found within a few kilometers of giant killer bee nests. They are ejected when they pupate and thus never found in a nest.

**Society:**

Black bees are solitary. They only congregate where there is food.

**Biome:** Around Giant Killer Bee Nests

**Encounter chance:** Slim

**Group size:** d4

**Organization:** Solitary

**Niche:** Scavenger

**IQ:** Low Order Animal

**BLACK BEE - 5ed/Alternity Statistics**

STR 12 (d4+10)

DEX 6 (d4+3)

CON 10 (d6+8)

INT 1 (animal d4)

WIL 10 (d4+8)

PER 1 (animal d4)

Durability: 12/12/6/6

Action Check:

Movement: Sp (12) Ru (8) W (2)

# of actions: 1

Reaction Score: O/1

**Attacks:**

Sting 15/7/3 d6s/d4w/d4+2w LI/O

**Defenses:**

Armor d6 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4-1 (En)

+3 vs melee

+1 vs ranged

**Skills:**

Unarmed Attack [12] - *brawl* 3 [15];

Stealth [6] - *hide* 4 [10], *sneak* 1 [7];

Awareness [10] - *perception* 4 [14]

**TIGER BEE**

**Description:**

The result of a giant killer bee queen mating with a moon roach just after her maiden flight, tiger bees are the end of a giant killer bee colony. They, like black bees, show hybrid vigor and are larger and stronger than either parent. Tiger bees mass as much as 150 kilograms and are 3-4 meters long. They have yellow and red markings. The only cockroach features visible are the head and wings. They do not buzz like bees in flight but do drone. Though tiger bees are dangerous in of themselves, it is their honey that really makes them a hazard to everything.

**Encounter:**

Tiger bees forage with their sisters and half-sisters and also feed on pollen, sap and blood. They act like giant killer bees in all ways.

**Habitat:**

Giant killer bee nests that have tiger bees are soon empty of both. Tiger bee honey is a living organism in of itself. Several dozen oozes are created in the weeks after the tigers pupate and they rampage, consuming the bees, the nest and then anything else in the area. The oozes have different statistics depending on what plants and animals contributed to their creation via their sap or blood.

**Society:**

Tiger bees are treated as workers by their mother and half-sisters.

**Biome:** Temperate and Tropical Ruins, Forests and Mountains

**Encounter chance:** Slim

**Group size:** d8 outside nest and 3d8 inside nest

**Organization:** Hive

**Niche:** Omnivore

**IQ:** Low Order Animal

**TIGER BEE - 5ed/Alternity Statistics**

STR 12 (d6+8)

DEX 14 (d4+12)

CON 12 (d4+10)

INT 2 (animal d6+2)

WIL 12 (d6+8)

PER 1 (animal d4)

Durability: 16/16/8/8

Action Check:

Movement: Sp (26) Ru (16) W (6) Fly (52)

# of actions: 2

Reaction Score: G/2

**Attacks:**

Bite 18/9/4 d6s/d4w/d6+3w LI/O

**Defenses:**

Armor d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4-2 (En)

+2 vs melee

+3 vs ranged

**Skills:**

Unarmed Attack [12] - *brawl* 6 [18];

Acrobatics [14] - *flight* 6 [20];

Awareness [12] - *perception* 6 [18]

**KZINTI** *Converted from AD&D by Josh "Enigma" Kilburn. Translated to GW by Derek Holland.*  
*For Kzinwarrior*



**Description:**

The kzinti resemble large humanoid lions, or other large cats. They are powerful and imposing, with thick, knotted muscles and broad shoulders, and a surprising amount of speed to match. Each *kzintosh*, or male kzin warrior, is a self-contained war-machine, carrying a myriad of weapons and always ready for battle. They have long claws - and have no qualms about using them. Kzin have hairless tails, and ears shaped somewhere between a fan and a funnel. They have ruddy orange fur, although snow-white ones are known to exist in certain prides.

**Encounter:**

An encounter with a Kzin will likely result in combat, especially if the players appear dangerous. Any threat causes a warrior to go berserk, attacking with reckless abandon. During these times, the already formidable damage kzin do is increased by 2, their STR and DEX modifiers are increased by 2, and INT and WIL modifiers are reduced by one. They can stay in this stage for a number of rounds equal to their WIL modifier, after which they suffer 1 fatigue point.

**Society:**

Their society is completely male dominated and very belligerent, with all adult males being warriors. The structure of their society is very rigid, with those of a lower status not even possessing names. The major drive in kzinti society is winning; those who have names, and those who have the power, are the ones who can win, or those who come from an already aristocratic family.

Approximately one in 500 kzinti will possess some form of psionics, usually Telepathy. There are more who possess the ability, but while manifesting it, they are driven insane. Such individuals who survive are rarely seen in the war bands, having their social status assured.

**KZINTI WARRIOR - 5ed/Alternity Statistics**

STR	2d4+8 (13)	+2
DEX	2d6+3 (11)	+1
CON	2d4+9 (14)	
INT	2d4+4 (09)	+0
WIL	2d6+6 (13)	+1
PER	2d4+4 (09)	

Durability: 21/21/10/10  
 Action Check: 13+/12/6/3  
 Movement: Sp(24); Ru(16), Wa(06)  
 #Actions: 3  
 Reaction/Score: Good/2  
 Last Resort Points: 0

**Attacks:**

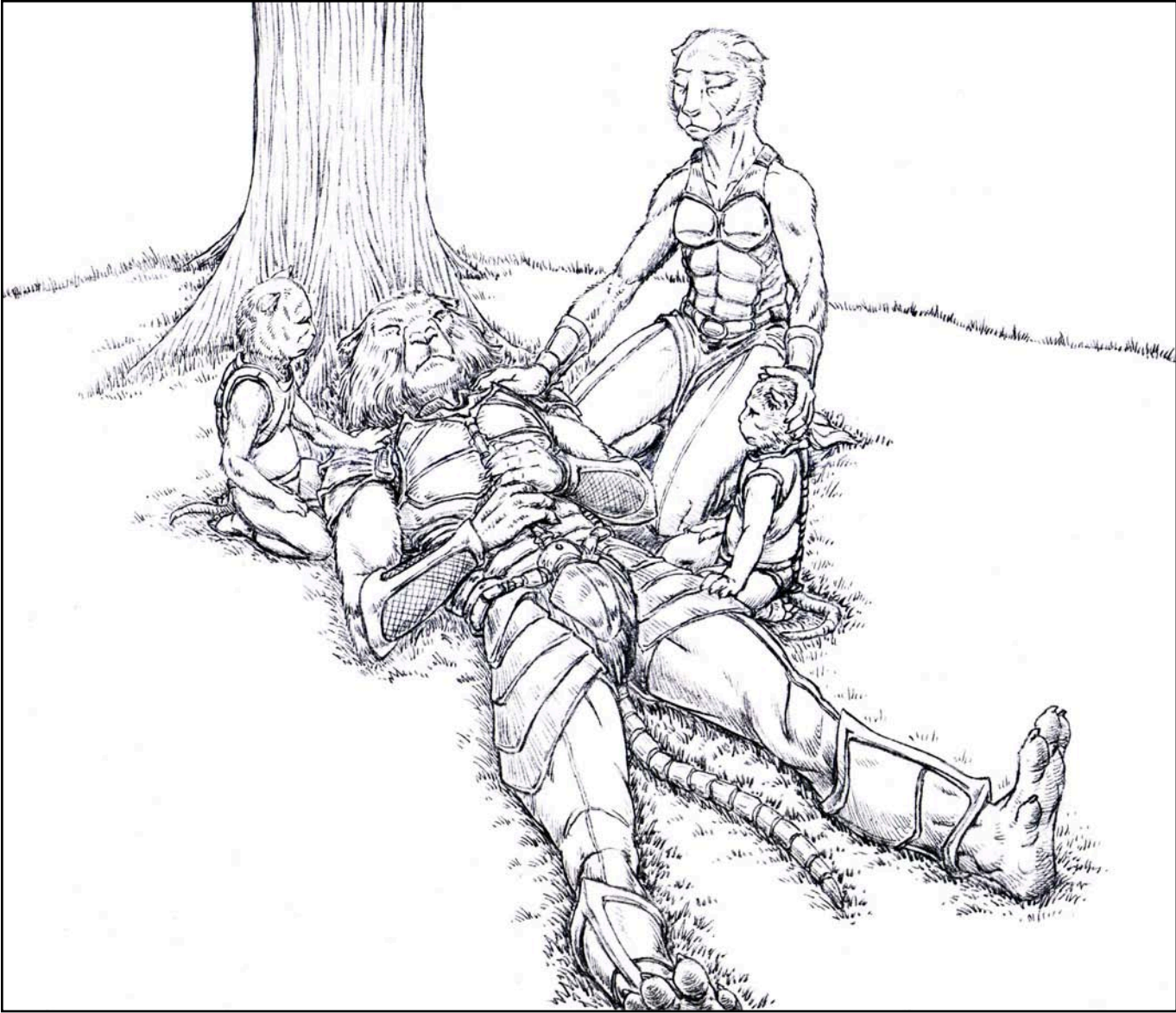
Unarmed Attack	15/7/4	d4+2w/d4+4w/d4m	LI/O
Bite	16/8/4	d6+2w/d6+4w/d6m	LI/O
Stop Sign Axe	16/8/4	d6+2s/d4+2w/d4+3m	LI/O
Musket	13/6/3	d6+1w/d6+3w/d6+1m	HI/O
Flechette Rifle	13/6/3	d4+1w/d6+1w/d4+1m	HI/O

**Defenses:**

- +2 STR resistance modifier v. Melee
- +1 DEX resistance modifier v. Ranged
- +0 INT resistance modifier v. INT interaction skills
- +1 WIL resistance modifier v. WIL interaction skills

**Skills:**

Armor Operation [13] – *Combat Armor 3 [16]*;  
 Athletics [13]; Heavy Weapons [13] – *Direct 3 [16]*;  
 Melee Weapons [13] – *Blade 3 [16]*; Unarmed Attack [13] – *Brawl 3 [16]*; Stamina [14] – *Endurance 2 [16]*,  
*Resist Pain 2 [16]*; Ranged Weapons Modern [11] –  
*Rifle 2 [13]*; Knowledge [09]; Tactics [09] – *Infantry Tactics 3 [12]*;  
*Vehicle Tactics 3 [12]*; Awareness [13] – *Intuition 1 [14]*,  
*Perception 1 [14]*; Resolve [13] – *Physical Resolve 2 [15]*;  
 Interaction [09] – *Intimidate 3 [12]*; Leadership [09] – *Command 4 [13]*



In memory of Shawn Trudeau