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THE

RIFTSTM

Your Guide to the Megaverse



Palladium News
Coming Attractions
G.M. & Player tips
BTS O.C.C.s
Rifts® stuff and more!

L·O·N·G

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Number One

A G.M. & Player's guide and sourcebook for

Rifts and the entire Palladium Books® Megaverse®!

Special Thanks to everybody involved and the intrepid souls who sent in logo designs in The **Rifter** Logo Contest (the winner graces this page and the **cover**).

Our apologies to anybody who got accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

Based on the **RPG** rules, characters, concepts and Megaverse® created by **Kevin Siembieda**.

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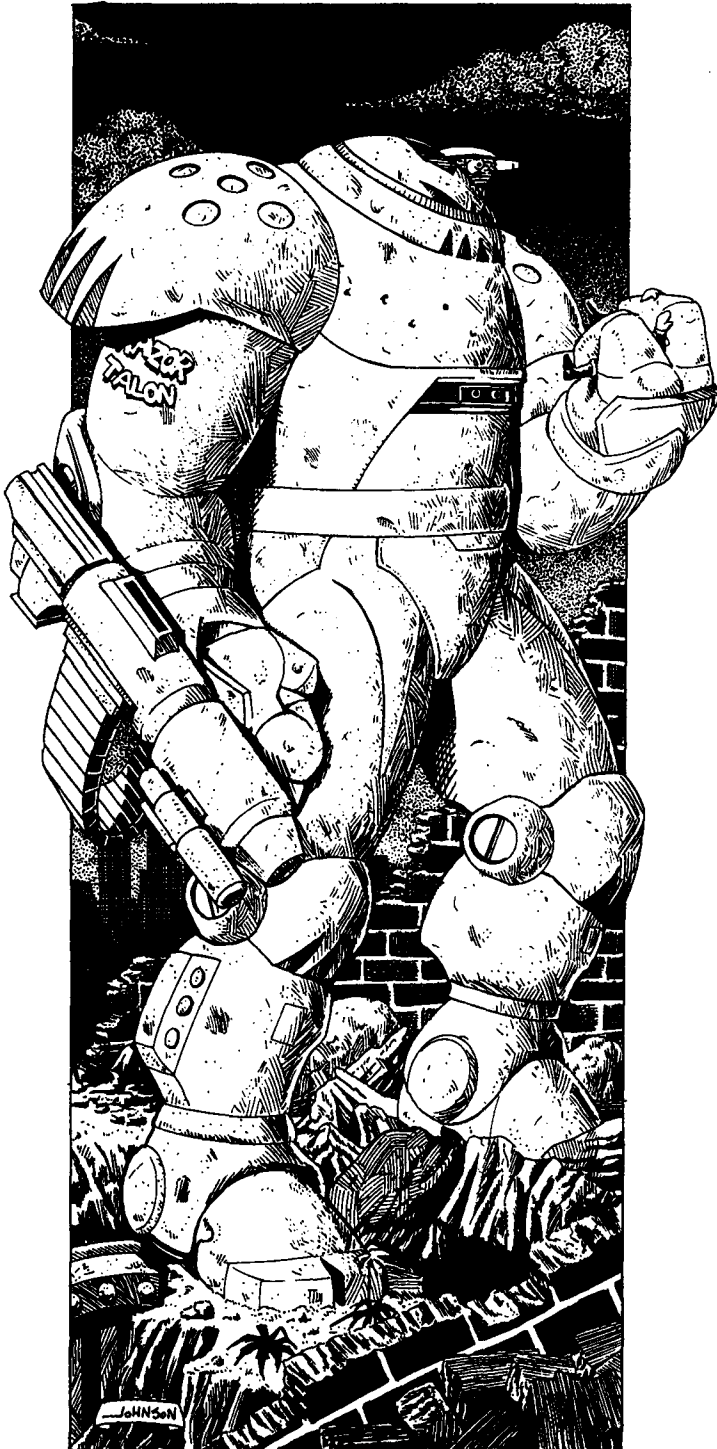
Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFVER™

#1

BRANDT-97

RPG Guide and Megaverse® Sourcebook



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Game designer and consummate Game Master, Erick Wujcik, offers suggestions and humor on how to come up with names for RPG characters.

Page 13 — Knights of the Dinner Table[™]

Our long time pal, Jolly Blackburn, and the good folks at KenzerCo have agreed to let us publish new and continuing KoDT strips! Cool! *Plug time*: The KoDT is published as a (monthly?) black and white comic book. Issues #4 to present are available for around \$4.00 each from Kenzer and Company, 1935 S. Plum Grove Rd., Suite 194, Palatine, IL 60067

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Page 30 — Rifts[®]: The New Roman Republic

Rodney Stott offers his view of *Rifts* Italy, the Mafia, and the growing New Roman Republic of *Rifts* Earth. This optional *Rifts*[®] setting can be fun, but is probably different than what Siembieda has planned for the region. Optional R.C.C. and equipment.

Page 42 — Rifts[®]: The Knights of Kamnos

James M. G. Cannon presents a brief overview of the heroic Kamnos Knights who serve the Three Galaxies. A *Phase World*[™] setting; Optional O.C.C. and equipment.

Page 46 — Rifts[®]: The Hammer of the Forge

James M. G. Cannon gives us a short work of fiction concerning the legendary Cosmic Forge. A *Phase World*[™] setting.

Page 50 — Rifts[®]: The Siege Against Tolkeen

A wonderful work of fiction revolving around the Tolkeen conflict, by David Haendler. This story will be serialized over the next several issues of *The Rifter*[®]. Warning: This story has strong language and violence.

Page 66 — Heroes Unlimited[™] New Major Super Powers

Some of these super abilities are awesome, others clever, and some silly, but all are fun, optional abilities that will make a fine addition to any super-powered campaign. Siembieda was so impressed by some, that he's considering adding a number of them to the official *Heroes Unlimited*[™] RPG! By Aaron Oliver and Steve Trustrum.

Page 84 — Nightbane[®]: New Morphus Tables

Aaron Oliver strikes again, with some outrageous (but usually cool) ideas for optional *Nightbane*[®] *Morphus*[']. Warning: Some of this material, like the *Gross Stigmata Table*, is a bit ... well ... gross, and may be inappropriate for young readers.

Page 93 — Nightbane[®]: The Inlustris

A new, optional, faction for *Nightbane*[®] by William R. Muench.

Includes the optional Uziel R.C.C., Psiren P.C.C., magical Psiren songs and characters of note.

Page 104 — Nightbane[®] Hook, Line and Sinker[™]

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Page 118 — The Rifter[™] Subscription Info

Page 111 — Beyond the Supernatural[™] O.C.C.s

A handful of optional Psychic Character Classes (P.C.C.s) by the wily William Muench. Plus the Transcendent P.C.C. by James Calder — see you in the next life.

The Cover

The cover painting is an old favorite by *Kevin Long*. It first appeared in the *Rifts*[®] RPG as one of the interior color plates. Long is not back with Palladium Books Inc. We always enjoyed his artwork and will be reusing, from time to time, some of the artwork published by Palladium in the past. Moreover, there is a pile of Long art done for Palladium that has yet to see publication.

The Logo

The logo on the cover is the winner of Palladium's "The Rifter[™]" Logo Contest. We were surprised by the number of quality submissions. We were also surprised that so many included Da Vinci's "Universal Man" as part of the design. **Ramon Perez Jr** was so impressed by the entries that he didn't even try to compete.

Our selections were made by majority vote of five judges (Kevin and **Maryann** among them). Dynamic design, form, function, readability, and versatility (i.e. use in black & white and color) were all major factors.

The winner is *Steve Edwards* (see front cover). The radiant sun pattern representing (to us) a dimensional rift, energy, magic, and a bright future.

First runner up who would have been our first choice, except the use of the Universal Man element seemed a bit distracting and large, potentially competing with the cover art. Furthermore, it seemed to work best in color, so it lost in the categories of function and versatility, but man, it was gorgeous. Unfortunately this entry was sent to us via email, and **Maryann** lost his name and email address. Hopefully, you know who you are, and please contact us to let us know who you are! To verify who you are, **resubmit** your logo with your name and **address**.

Niklas Brandt, in Sweden, (see page three) was the next runner up. A nice crisp, clean design.

An honorable mention goes to *J. Lester Guidryll*, one of the designs that used the image of the Universal Man (see page one) and to *George Purdy* who did a sort of T-2 design, nice.

Optional and Unofficial Rules & Source Material

Please note, that the vast majority of rules, tables, characters, equipment, adventures and stories are "optional" or "alternative" things one can include in his campaign or enjoy reading. They are not "official" to the main games or world settings. For example, The excellent story, *Siege Against Tolkeen*, is likely to be very different than *Siembieda's* "official" world book(s) when it comes out. Likewise, Siembieda had not considered putting high-tech Wolfen in Italy and may not include them in any "official" sourcebook. As for optional tables (like the *Nightbane® Morphus Tables*) and adventures, if they sound cool or fun, use them. If they sound funky or inappropriate for your game, ignore them.

All the material in *The Rifter™* has been included for two reasons: One, because we thought it was imaginative and fun, and two, we thought it would stimulate your imagination with fun stuff that you can use (if you want) or which might inspire you to create your own wonders.

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Coming Next Issue ...

More words of wisdom from Erick Wujcik.

More Knights of the Dinner Table™!

More great art!

The latest news and developments at Palladium.

The continuing saga of the Siege Against Tolkeen.

Rifts® source material.

Optional stuff for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®.

More great artwork, adventure and fun.

Magic, Monsters and more



From Behind the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

Welcome to the first issue of The **Rifter**[™].

The **Rifter**[™] is your guide to the Palladium **Megaverse**. A **sourcebook**, handbook, guide, news source, information exchange, and means of entertainment.

The **Rifter**[™] is unique and special because it is as much yours, our fans and gamers, as is it is **Palladium's** and its creators.

As a guide and sourcebook to the Palladium "**Megaverse**," each issue will provide official, unofficial and optional information, stats, monsters, equipment, heroes, **villains**, adventures, rules and suggestions for **Rifts**®, **Palladium Fantasy RPG**®, **Heroes Unlimited**[™], **Nightbane**®, **Robotech**® and other Palladium role-playing games — old and new. Typically, 40-50% will be dedicated to the ever-popular **Rifts**® RPG, with material for other Palladium role-playing games. Many of the contributions will be tailored for use with *any* RPG. Since Palladium uses one basic set of rules, much of the material can be easily adapted from one Palladium RPG setting to another.

More than that, **The Rifter**[™] is designed to help broaden our world of role-playing. To introduce new ideas, offer twists on old standards, and food for thought applicable to the role-playing experience in general, not just Palladium RPGs. To this end, **The Rifter**[™] will provide the thoughts, views and suggestions of Game Designers and Game Masters like *Erick Wujcik* and his piece on selecting names for characters, and *my* piece on evil characters and villains. Along these lines, we'll be including a broad selection of material **from fans and freelance writers** offering spins on and alternatives to existing Palladium material, as well as unofficial **and/or** optional adventures, villains and cool stuff.

We'll be doing a certain amount of experimentation with **The Rifter**[™] too. We may offer some serialized material spread over 2-4 issues, theme issues (i.e. all horror issue, all robot issue, etc.), focus on a particular RPG or setting, print a mini-game (off the wall stuff), short stories, and comic strips, among other things. Sometimes we'll hit gold, sometimes we may get silly, and other times we'll miss the target. We'll need you, our fans and readers, to let us know what you like and what you don't.

What you'd like to see more of, and what you hope to never see again. **Don't** be shy, let us know what you think (constructive comments preferred). Work *with* us to build something dynamic and **fun!**

The goal of **Rifter**[™] **Editor-in-Chief** Wayne Smith, as well as **Maryann**, me, and most of our contributors, is to create a role-playing publication that is more than just a sourcebook. A publication that is exciting, evocative and fun. A publication that not only provides source material for the vast and ever expanding **Palladium Megaverse**®, but which inspires and gives gamers new ideas. Plus we want this to be "your" vehicle to adventure. Your forum to contribute to the world of **Rifts**® and other **Palladium RPGs**. That's one reason we're publishing *fan material* from the Web and beyond. To show you what other "non-professional" but talented and imaginative gamers are doing.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I get inspired and excited when I see what other people are doing. I love to see how diverse groups of gamers interpret, expand and personalize the RPG worlds I've helped to create. It gives me ideas of **my own** and expands my horizons. I guess, that's because me, **Maryann**, **Erick**, **Alex**, **Ramon**, **Wayne Breaux**, **Wayne Smith**, and most of the **Palladium crew** are "fans" of **Palladium** and role-playing in general, just like you. We love what we do and we love role-playing and **storytelling**. We get a kick out of breathing life into imaginary RPG worlds and feed off each other — sharing ideas and getting crazy! As "fans" ourselves, it helps us create the kind of role-playing games, supplements and excitement our products are famous for. **The Rifter**[™] is just one more way for all of "us" fans to exchange ideas, hopefully on a more personal and less formal level.

I've built my company on the concept of one game system and infinite possibilities. **Palladium's** universal (**Megaverse**) set of rules gives us the vehicle to go **anywhere** and do anything. To travel to infinite and wondrous role-playing worlds. To explore every genre and setting. To unleash the imagination. Each and every one of us are **Rifters** — explorers of the infinite, human imagination. With this unique publication we shall voyage to worlds and enjoy adventures spawned in the minds of follow **Rifters**. Together we will help shape and define certain places in the **Megaverse**® that we already know and love: **Rifts**®, **Palladium Fantasy RPG**®, **Heroes Unlimited**[™], **Nightbane**®, **Ninjas & Superspies**[™], **Robotech**®, and other **Palladium** role-playing games. In the process we may glimpse and discover new avenues of adventure. Gee, why am I fighting the urge to shout, "to boldly go where no one has gone before!" I'd better quit before I get too carried away.

We all hope you enjoy **The Rifter**[™] and find it an invaluable vehicle to greater adventure, stimulating ideas and loads of fun.

— *Kevin Siembieda, 1998*

The Name Giver

G.M. & Player Tips by Erick Wujcik

It isn't just a part of the job, as Game Master, it's what we do.

Coming up with names. Rich, meaningful, resonant names. Interesting, quirky, memorable names. Cool, funny names that the players remember. Names that strike fear. Names that inspire awe.

Bucky, James the Timid, Isaac Gump, Urenfogger are all names that don't have much of a charge. They work perfectly for getting the player characters to underestimate the competition. Which shows that names can also be wonderfully misleading, a mask, or another truth-behind-the-truth.

Names for characters. Names for animals, creatures, monsters and bugs, from pet puppies to pet pterodactyls. Names for places, including buildings, towns and cities, geographical oddities, mountains and valleys and deserts and plains, streams and rivers and lakes and oceans, worlds and moons and comets and suns, clusters and galaxies, not to mention all the myriad alternate universes in the Palladium Megaverse.

Names for items, artifacts, foodstuffs, tools, weapons, whole new sciences and technologies. Philosophies, religions, magical systems.

There is really no limit to the number of names that a Game Master needs to invent.

The art of naming is complex.

On the one hand, the more research the better. Coming up with names involves book work, a keen observational eye, and a lot of doodling around with a pencil (better yet, a word processor) trying out different combinations of letters and syllables.

On the other hand, a really good Game Master can whip out names with lightning speed.

Want a model? Check out the movie "The Usual Suspects." For those of you who haven't seen it, I won't spoil things. Suffice to say, they used one of my favorite tricks for smoothly coming up with a lot of names.

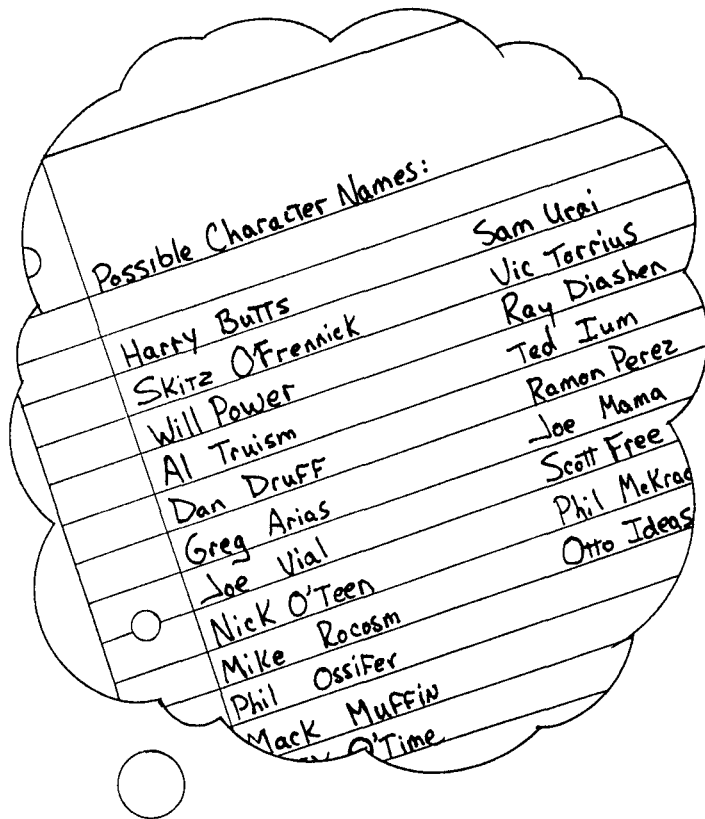
That's one great trick. Here are a whole bunch of others...

Green-Grass Golem-Gash

Try saying it. "Green-Grass Golem-Gash." Do it fast, do it in strange voices, do it with an accent. Sure, you'll trip a few times, but it's not that hard to master a smooth rendition.

Green-Grass Golem-Gash is one of my all-time favorite names. I have no idea where it came from. It was just one of those things that popped into my head when I was trying to fill in a list of magical swords.

Since I had a "Circle of Twelve Mages," and a "Circle of Twelve Artifacts," in the early (the first!) **Dragonwright** Campaign, I thought there ought to be at least twelve interesting magical swords.



I had already come up with a handful of good names. **Deathkiss**, for example, was planted in the Tombs of **Gersidi**, a very early adventure in the campaign. **Blackbright**, a sword that could only be wielded by one who was undead, was another early entry. I sat down and started listing a bunch more. **Ironfrost**, **Victrionix**, **Righteous Wraith**, **Bloodseed**, and... **hmmm...** what comes after that?

Green-Grass Golem-Gash.

It sounded funny. It sounded good. It sounded right.

I had no idea of what it would be, what it would do, what purpose it might serve in the campaign. I just liked saying it.

Green-Grass Golem-Gash.

It worked beautifully. It was one of those unforgettable names, and it helped me create a personality for the sword that was unique. After all, if I liked saying "Green-Grass Golem-Gash," it made sense that the sword itself also liked the sound of its own name, and that every time the sword spoke (which was a lot!), it liked to refer to itself, Bob Dole-style, in the third person.

How do I know it was a successful name?

The only way to judge it is by getting the reactions of the player characters. Do they like the sound of it? Do they refer to it by name? Does the use of the name create a reaction? Green-Grass Golem-Gash was a success by any measure.

By the way, filling out the rest of the list of swords are **Mercyblade**, **Krugenfelder**, **Dragon-Hewer**, **Tammarande** and **Opal's Eye** (no, the group still hasn't found all these mystical blades). All interesting names. Some names that have become legendary. None as good as Green-Grass Golem-Gash.

GM Tip: One of the big advantages of coming up with a list of names, early in a campaign, is to build in a lot of anticipation. No, you don't need to know what each item does, or even have a clue as to what the item is (for years the group debated the nature of such items as the "**Ard of Bright**" and the "**Ilonath Barecth**"), just come up with the names. When the group found an old ruined temple, complete with the names (and a few tantalizing fragments describing the items), they were really excited to finally have a complete list of all the names of the "Circle of Twelve Artifacts." It was a big deal. Finding each new item from the list, a task that took over ten years, was always exciting, because the anticipation was so great.

My Big Mistake

If there is one thing I did wrong, back in the early days of creating my various role-playing campaigns, it was taking names from other sources.

Back when I was young and stupid, too often I took the easy way. I stole names from wherever I found 'em. From books, television, movies, whatever.

That turned out bad in the short run, and in the long run.

Right away, almost instantly, many of the names I used were recognized by the players (who would have suspected that so many upstanding young students would know all the names from an obscure television soap **opera?**). Whenever the names were recognized I had to put up with either (1) ridicule or (2) criticism.

It was worse later on. First were problems with getting things published (game manufacturers are a tad skittish about printing

something bearing a name **trademarked** by, say, Disney, or **Lucasfilm**). Too many changes were needed, and I was always afraid that I'd slip up and miss one.

Even more important was the impact on the player characters. Names that I invented, that were my creations, had more of a long-term impact on the campaign. Players took them seriously. Original names had a chance of becoming legendary, at least among my circle of gamers (and really, when it comes down to it, does the opinion of anyone else really **matter?**).

I can't emphasize it strongly enough.

Game Masters should create their own names.

Don't think you are good enough? Work at it. As with any aspect of role-playing and Game Mastering, the more you do it, the more likely it is that you will get better, that you will find yourself with a valuable new skill.

Tools of the Namer

Dice

Using dice to come up with names has the advantage of being fast. However, just as the odds of coming up with a batch of monkeys banging on keyboards is unlikely to generate great literature, so using dice to come up with names is unlikely to produce any really epic name. Back in the old days, when I was in a hurry I used the following technique.

First, roll a six-sided.

If the result is low (one, two or three), then roll a twelve-sided for the exact letter from the start of the alphabet. In other words, 1 = A, 2 = B, 3 = C, 4 = D, etc.

If the six-sided roll is high (four, five or six), then roll the twelve-sided and start in the middle of the alphabet, where 1 = M, 2 = N, 3 = O, 4 = P, and so on.

Not a perfect system, since it leaves out Y, Z, but I found that I tended to make too many names starting with X or Z anyway.

Since you need more vowels than consonants, alternate rolling a six-sided where 1 = A, 2 = E, 3 = I, 4 = O, 5 = U, and 6 = Y.

The good thing about rolling up names like this is that it is fast. Whenever the group would meet a new non-player character, or hear about a monster, or come into a town, I could come up with plenty of odd-sounding names.

The not-so-good thing about this system is that most of the names were garbage.

Oh, they were okay for an hour or two. It's just that almost none of them stuck. None of the names turned into the names that the players would use when telling their war stories.

That's not to say that I don't use the dice anymore. Far from it. I'm always grabbing for the dice when I'm stuck for a name. Now, however, I only roll one letter, just as a starting place. Then I roll it around in my mind, seeing what kind of possibilities my imagination can generate.

Reference Books

While dice have their place, the main tool of a good name giver is a good library. Of course, make use of your local public

or school library. It's also a good idea to start putting together your own set of good reference books.

No, I'm not talking about spending money. A lot of my best volumes on naming were **freebies**.

One of the nice things about the books that come in handy for name reference is that they are mostly worthless. For libraries, bookstores and most book-owning people, it is important to have the latest, most accurate, most up-to-date version of a dictionary, encyclopedia, or any other reference book.

As someone looking for good names, new isn't necessarily better. In fact, some of the very best books are old. Obsolete, even.

For example, just last week, as I was preparing for the writing of this article, I stopped by a local used bookstore. There, sitting on the "free" shelves (ask, most used bookstores have a batch of books that they are eager to give away), was an old "**Winston Simplified Dictionary**," inscribed with "**Kermit Jacobs** - Nov 18 1920." Heavily defaced (by Kermit, or by later generations of Jacobs, I don't know), filled with graffiti, and otherwise pretty damaged (I don't know how, but somebody drilled a small hole all the way from the front cover to page 49, centering on the word "bathe"), this is still a handy book for any Game Master.

Oddly enough, the older the better. Why spend the big bucks on a brand new dictionary when it will be out of date in a year or two (in case you haven't noticed, our language is changing all the time; what with the internet, et al, even the rate of change is accelerating). Old dictionaries are better, partly because they are cheap (somewhere in your area is a scuzzy used book store, where there are piles of big old dictionaries, selling for something less than ten cents a pound). When it comes to dictionaries, I recommend getting one of the really big suckers, filled with all kinds of obscure words.

Speaking of obscure words, sometimes "real" words work very well as names. An example from the **Dragonwright** Campaign is "**Heresiarch**," defined as a messiah who preaches heresy. One of the players happily accepted the title of "Heresiarch" and used it for quite some time before he happened to find it in a dictionary.

Another category of free, or really cheap books, are old foreign language books. Scan through a French-English dictionary, or a textbook on Chinese, and you'll come up with plenty of odd sounding words.

One of my favorite tricks is using a foreign dictionary, and looking up a word that might be some kind of clue. For example, I see "betray" is "**trahir**," and "betrayal" is "**trahison**" in French. I wonder how many players might figure out that there is something wrong with "**Trahir Trahison**," the new sword they've hired?

Another good source for names is, no big surprise, name books. Again, check around the used bookstores. You'll find a surprising number of books on names. Among the cheapest, and also the most useful, are "baby naming books" (also ask your **older** relatives), which contain the names and meanings of hundreds of first names.

I paid real money for a copy of *The Writer's Digest Character Naming Sourcebook* by **Sherrilyn Kenyon**, *Writer's Digest* looks, 1994. It's pretty handy, especially if you need a name associated with a particular language, since it contains thirty-five

different name lists, each divided in female and male sections. I haven't used them yet, but I never know when I'll need a list of "Arthurian Legend Names," or names based on Native American or Teutonic languages.

Final stop on our list of good reference books is a volume that you already have. It's called a telephone book. Especially when it comes to creating contemporary names, there is really no better resource. Don't just take the names as they are. Either mix them up, matching different first and last names, or use the names as inspiration to create your own strange variations.

GM Tip: Combining dice with books is another cool way to come up with names quickly. Take a quick peek at the total number of pages in a book. My 1945 *Japanese-English Dictionary of Sea Terms* by Lt-Cdr. C. Ozaki (another free book!) has 731 pages of dictionary. To generate a name I start by rolling an eight-sided, for the hundreds, and then a set of percentile dice. So a roll of 4 on the D8, and a roll of 51 on the percentile takes me to page 351 (round down on the D8, so you don't miss the first ninety-nine pages). Once there I notice that "**Koganfu**" means "inshore wind." Depending on what I need at the time I could use "Koganfu," shorten it to "**Kogan**," or just use the name "Inshore," which also sounds pretty good.

Computer Software

A good Thesaurus is an excellent reference book, but I much prefer the electronic version. I'd be surprised if you had to add a thesaurus on to your computer system, because most good word processors have one built-in. Once you get past the initial learning curve, finding neat names on a computer thesaurus is wicked fast.

For example, lets say the characters meet a character who is wearing a very fancy outfit. I start by looking up the word "fancy," which gives me a long list that includes the word "ornate." That's a possibility, but then I click on "ornate" and get "rococo." Nice sound, rococo. Jimmy Rococo? Andreas Rococo Vaughn? Rococo Zimphere? The possibilities are **endless...**

You might also want to check out some of the more advanced features of your spell checker. Using mine (I'm still using Word-Perfect 5.1 on this machine, which dates from the age of MS-DOS), I can use the **asterix** character ("*") to do "wild card" searches. For example, if I need a word that ends with "**ithian**" (because I like the sound of the name "Corinthian" in **Neil Gaiman's Sandman** comics), I enter "***ithian**," and get "**nabothian**" which sounds excellent (oddly enough, I can't find it in my big dictionary, so I guess I'll have to make a trip to the **library**)...

Building Original Names

As good as it is to consult reference books, the best names are often those that you invent from scratch. Of course spending a lot of time with dictionaries, breaking down words according to their component parts, and fiddling with the pieces, that's all a necessary part of the **process...**

Suffixes, Prefixes, & Infixes

Back in the late 1940's, my Aunt **Camille** received a scholarship to study art in New York City. Just as Camille was about to

leave on the train, her mother, my grandmother, had some kind of bad feeling.

"I'm coming with you," said my grandmother, and hopped on the train as it pulled out of Detroit. **Camille** argued, pointing out that the school would take care of everything. Besides, what help could her mother be? Gram spoke fluent Armenian, but broken English, and she was on her way to New York, a city where she had no friends and no family.

Sure enough, when they got to New York, it turned out that Gram was right. Camille had no place to stay, and very little money.

So Gram, my wise grandmother, picked up a copy of the New York City telephone directory. Then she started calling Armenians all over Manhattan. And pretty soon she had set up Camille with all the necessary living arrangements, in a community where she would be looked after and protected.

How?

Simple enough. Most Armenians have a common suffix. That is, most (not quite all, but most), have a last name that ends in "ian." **Evarian**, **Dekarnikian**, **Gerarian**, **Kervorkian**, **Serafian**, and **Misralian**. Go through any telephone book and, if you avoid the listings for names like "O'Brian," you'll find plenty of Armenians.

A lot of nationalities have common *suffixes*, or endings. "**Chavez**," "**Mendez**" and "**Vasquez**" are clearly hispanic. "**Atag-nostopoulos**," "**Kaloyropoulos**" and "**Panapolos**" are obviously Greek.

A trio of the suffixes I've used in the Dragonwright campaign are "-al," "-ahz" and "-nar." This helps to identify names like "**Ba-al**," "**Aprek-nar**," "**Muj-ahz**" and "**Unba-al**" as belonging to a particular class of gods and demons, or with the characters who worship those demons and devils.

Prefixes that you might find in the telephone book include "van" and "van der" for Dutch names, "von" for German, and "O'" for Irish.

I've come up with a bunch of family names, associated with a particular fantasy ruling class, all with the prefix "d'." So "**d'Althin**," "**d'Fingal**," and "**d'Voren**" are all clearly marked.

Just as prefixes are standard chunks attached to the beginnings of names, and suffixes are the pieces stuck on the ends, so *infixes* are bits that go in the middle of a name. This isn't common in English, but lots of other languages, such as the Philippine language, Tagalog, have all kinds of interesting infixes. For example, adding "le" into the word "valea" (meaning "stupid"), turns it into valelea ("stupidity") in the Niutao dialect of Tuvalu in Polynesia.

Take a couple of Niutao infixes, like "fu," "ka," and "pu," add them to some standard English, and you easily generate some cool sounding names.

David can be Dafuvid or Dakavid or Dapuvid. **Maryann** becomes **Mafuryann** or **Makaryann** or **Mapuryann**.

Also consider the following names; BillyJoe Magee and BetsyJoe Magee, CindyLou and MaryLou and DonnyLou **Krammer**, EdnaLouise and SaraLouise Smith, not to mention JoeBob and **JimBob Kovlowski**. "Joe," "Lou," "Louise," and "Bob" are all infixes in these examples.

While coming up with an infix is a bit more difficult, it can also have a certain rhythm when used with a whole batch of related character names.

Stream of Consciousness

So, now that you know about prefixes, suffixes and infixes, here is a detailed example of how they can be used.

My players have grown wary of a group of particularly nasty elves, who combine magic into a form of technology. Among these elves, who aren't exactly enemies, but who can be quite dangerous, they've met characters named Chromatic, **Necrophon**, and **Styolite**.

Back when I first came up with the elves, I tried to make all the names sound vaguely technological. They do, to my ear. When I want to come up with another one of their group, when I need another name, I usually just try to take some contemporary technological term, and warp it.

So, "**Prosak**" could be "**Prosakton**" or "**Sakrapon**" or "**Orsopak**."

How?

I start with "Prosak."

Then add components of the names of the elves we've already met. Chromatic, Necrophon and Styolite. The suffixes would be "tic," "phon" and "ite." (I'll leave it as an exercise to the reader to work out the prefixes and infixes.)

Adding extra sounds on the end, I could get Prosakton, Prosakic, **Prosakite**. Prosakton, of these three possibilities, just sounds better.

In this case, putting extra sounds at the start just doesn't seem right.

Break it into "Pro" and "**Sak**." One prefix, one suffix.

First, just switch 'em around.

Sakpro?

Not enough of a name, I think.

Sakpron? Maybe.

Sakprotic? No way.

Sakpropon? Okay, at least it sounds like a name. It's just that "**propon**" is sort of hard to say. Too easy to twist up the tongue. "**Sakropon**" is better. "Sakrapon" is better yet, since it seems to lend itself to an interesting pronunciation; "**Sa-KRA-pon**."

So how did I end up with "Orsopak?"

More switching around. "Pro" backwards is "**Orp**," but "**Orp**" sounds dumb. "Or" isn't too bad... If it started with "Or," then what?

Orpak" Naw. Too short.

Orpropak? Hmmm...

Orcropak? **Ormapak**? **Oryopak**?

I just kept messing around, putting in different sounds.

Until I came up with Orsopak.

It sounds good to my ear. I can say it out loud. It seems to fit in with the others, Chromatic and Orsopak, Orsopak and Necrophon, Styolite and Orsopak.

In other words, I just keep messing around until I come up with something that sounds right.

Magic Names

Playing around with suffixes, foreign dictionaries and software tools are all okay, but the real art of naming is finding a name that fits.

It isn't science, or technique. There is no trick to this.

Finding just the right name is more a matter of instinct. It's an art. Like all art, it's impossible to explain. The best I can do is come up with examples. Here are some of the best names I've invented.

Vagrant and Reaper.

In a conventional sense they aren't even "names." They are words that you might find in a dictionary. However, as names they have worked brilliantly.

Both are from my original *Amber Diceless Role-Playing* campaign. In the case of "Reaper," I was looking for the name that would describe the father of several of the player characters. He wasn't going to be a nice guy (you probably figured that out, just by the name). More, he was going to be downright nuts. And I very much wanted the players to fear him. I'm happy to say that I succeeded. Even now, years after one of the player characters cut off his head, the name "Reaper" still inspires fear and dread in the players.

As for "Vagrant," I was looking for a name for one of the important figures in the Courts of Chaos (a kingdom of powerful demons and shape-shifters). As an assistant to the royal family I came up with a title, "High Lord of Protocol." He would be big and powerful, with incredible political clout. Someone who could intimidate with words alone. Someone who would always know exactly the right etiquette and proprieties in every situation. I pictured a huge demonic figure, covered in glittering green and black scales, wearing... nothing but a tuxedo vest and a black **g-string**. I have no idea where the name "Vagrant" came from. It seems so counter-intuitive. Yet the juxtaposition of the name "Vagrant" with the campaign's most "proper" figure worked out perfectly.

Doc Feral

When it comes to a character name, this is another of my perfect assignments. For those of you who don't recognize him, Doctor Victor Feral was the main villain created in the original Palladium game, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Other Strangeness* (made way back in 1985). Here was a character who believed in putting humans first, and in subjugating mutant animals (i.e., the player characters). He was a delightful combination; a character who was totally upstanding in his dealings with humanity, and completely venal otherwise. Short, sassy, and full of spit, Feral is still a great **name**...

Haldeman and Napalm

Ask the players in the Dragonwright Campaign about really powerful mages, and you'll likely hear these two names.

Napalm was one of my very first, the holder of the entryway to "Napalm's Dungeon." There is no substance known as "Napalm" in the campaign, but the name is clearly evocative. I don't know if the players ever saw Napalm cast a fireball, but you know they've got to be thinking that he must have something pretty hot up his sleeve.

As you may recall, there was a prominent figure in Nixon's Watergate Scandal named Haldeman. Of course, that Haldeman didn't have exclusive rights to the name, since there are plenty of other **Haldemans**, famous and otherwise (Joe Haldeman, the author of "**The** Forever War," is a fine science fiction writer). Still, choosing to name the evil sorcerer in my fantasy campaign "Haldeman," has worked out very, very well. While the name has a modern ring, it works just fine in a Palladium setting.

Left-Side-Wound and Two-Trees

Early in the **Dragonwright** Campaign, nearly two decades ago, the characters first met up with **Kankorin** and **Emerin** (see Palladium's *Monsters & Animals*). The ritual of being adopted into the tribe had two parts. First, each player character was paired with a young Kankorin and sent out for a ritual combat with an Emerin. The survivors were given tribal Kankorin names. However, the names were to be based on what happened during the ritual combat. The result was that many of the player characters have memorable names to this day. The names weren't really mine, I didn't invent them, but I can take credit for introducing the tradition. Speaking from experience, when a player character has a tribal name based on the wounds they received in a desperate battle, it is a very good **name**...

GM Tip: A couple of years ago, I ended up running a role-playing session with a huge group, along with two other Game Masters. While I had designed the scenario, I wanted to keep it open-ended, and to give the other two Game Masters enough freedom to move with the flow of events, as well as to invent new non-player characters (NPCs) as needed. Still, I wanted it to look organized, from the point of view of the players. Most of the NPCs would be demons, but demons from two very different realms. Rather than hand out a list of names, I came up with a pair of simple rules. One batch of demons were all to have names based on automotive parts, and the other on words for astronomical objects. No, not just "carburetor" or "Venus," but switched around a bit. It worked fine, and it was clear to the player characters that "**Anarator**" and "**Exafold**" belonged to one group of demons, while "**Evenus**" and "**Ijupar**" were clearly from another. It turned out to be an easy, very quick, way of inventing names (it was easy to segregate the demons according to their names, so a big tough guy might have a name based on "engine block" while a smaller, smarter one's name could be based on "accelerator"), and it was a technique that was invisible to the players.

Now it's your turn ...

I could go on.

Agranin, a major demon, Alstay the Bonestealer, a witch of supernatural proportions, Apnik, a minor demon-sprite, Ayeron the spider god... all the way to **Zelerum**, a suit of demon armour. All the good names found me, whispered in my ear, and demanded to be used.

All of my role-playing life I've been known as a guy good with names (for example, that little name, "Rifts," that was a good one). I like names, I like naming things, and I even like thinking about how to name things.

It didn't happen overnight. I didn't come naturally. Like just about everyone else, when I first started coming up with names it seemed impossible. As if the people who invented good names were some kind of tricksters.

It turns out that it wasn't magic. For me, for you, for anyone who wants the knack of naming, all it takes is work and practice. And a little imagination...

GM Tip: Check out Palladium's *Mystic China*, for another take on coming up with names.

AFTER STUMBLING ACROSS A COPY OF GARY JACKSON'S "GRUNGE WARRIORS IN THE BARGAIN BIN AT WEIRD PETE'S SHOP, BA DECIDES TO BUY IT. AFTER WEEKS OF RESEARCH AND PREPARATION THE GRUNGE WARRIORS CAMPAIGN IS FINALLY UNDER FULL SWING.

OKAY AS YOU APPROACH THE OUTSKIRTS OF NEW DETROIT YOU NOTICE THE CITY GATES HAVE ALREADY BEEN CLOSED FOR THE NIGHT. A PAIR OF **CLASS IV HOVER-TANKS** PATROL THE OUTER WALLS.

WHOOOAH!!! HOLD ON THERE TEX!! THOSE LIBERATORS HAVE A THREE MILE BLAST RADIUS!!

HEY, I WANTED TO BUY SUPPLIES IN THIS CITY!!! **JERK!!**

DOOFUS!!

CLASS IV'S EH??? I **NUKE 'EM** WITH A PAIR OF **LIBERATOR MISSILES** FROM MY **BACKPACK WEAPONS ARRAY!!**

BACK BLAST, SMACK BLAST!!! WHO CARES?? MY NUKE-JOCKEY BODY ARMOR SHIELDS ME FROM ALL FORMS OF LETHAL RADIATION!!!

THIS GAME ROCKS!!! LAY DOWN A COUPLE OF TACTICAL-NUKES AND RAKE IN THE EXPERIENCE POINTS BABY!!! HOODY-HOO!!

FOR THE LAST TIME NUMB-DICE THE REST OF US DON'T HAVE **NUKE-JOCKEY BODY ARMOR!!!** SO LAY OFF WITH THE **NUKES!!!**

NO NUKES?? WHAT'S THE USE OF HAVING THE BIG STICK IF I CAN'T USE IT?

BOB, WE'VE BEEN PLAYING FOR SIX HOURS AND YOU'VE NUKED EVERYTHING WE ENCOUNTERED. THIS ISN'T A WARGAME YOU KNOW, IT'S A **ROLE-PLAYING GAME!!**

EASE UP ON THE TRIGGER FINGER DUDE!!

OKAY, BOB'S MISSILES TAKE OUT THE **TWO HOVER-TANKS** AS WELL AS HALF THE CITY. EVERYONE EXCEPT BOB IS IRRADIATED WITH **35 POINTS OF GAMMA RAYS!!**

SORRY DAVE, THAT KNOCKS YOU UP ANOTHER **MUTAGEN LEVEL!!!** YOU'RE GONNA HAVE ROLL ON **MUTATION TABLE FIVE AGAIN!**

OH **GREAT!!!** I ROLLED A **FOUR!! HAIRY PALMS!!** THAT'S IT!! HAND OVER THOSE MISSILES, DUDE I'M DISARMING YOU!!

WERE SERIOUS BOB!! HAND OVER THOSE MISSILES!!!

OR ELSE!!

BACKOFF JACK!! IF YOU CANT STAND THE HEAT GET OUT OF **GROUND ZERO!!**

YOU BETTER LISTEN TO THEM BOB. **POSTAPOCALYPTIC EARTH** IS VERY UNSTABLE/1 WASN'T GOING TO MENTION THIS BUT EVERYTIME A **NUCLEAR WEAPON** IS DETONATED THERE IS A **CUMULATIVE ONE PERCENT CHANCE** THAT THE ENTIRE PLANET WILL EXPLODE IN A **CHAIN REACTION**

WHAA...HUH?? **EXPLODE??** YOU'RE JUST MAW THAT UP. MY **KICK-ASS CHARACTER IS WREAKING HAVOC** ON YOUR PRECIOUS ADVENTURE SO YOU WANT TO SHUT HIM DOWN!

DAMMIT BOB!!! WE'RE LIVING IN A WORLD RAVAGED BY NUKES. WE SHUN THE USE OF SUCH DESTRUCTIVE WEAPONS.

CHAIN REACTION??

GRAB HIM!!

C'MON GUYS!!! LEAVE ME ALONE!! I PROMISE I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL FROM NOW ON. WHAT DO YA SAY!!

EASY THERE BOB!! JUST HAND OVER THAT WEAPONS **ARRAY BACKPACK** AND NO ONE GETS HURT.

KEEP DISTRACTING HIM, DAVE. I'LL STUN HIM WITH MY **PULSE RIFLE!!**

WE SHOULD TAKE HIS **SATELLITE RELAY UNIT** AS WELL!!

THIRTY MINUTES LATER.....

UH...BOB,WHAT'S YOUR CHARACTER DONG?? EVERYONE ELSE IS GOING TO THE TAVERN TO HAVE A ROUND OF DRINKS.

C'MON DUDE!! MAYBE WE CAN PICK A FIGHT WITH A MUTANT OR SOMETHING?? HUH?

I CANT BELIEVE THIS! HE'S GOING TO **SULK** ALL NIGHT BECAUSE WE TOOK HIS MISSILES AWAY!!

I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING. I'LL JUST SIT OUTSIDE THE CITY UNTIL THEY GET TIRED OF TALKIN' AND STUFF!!

YEAH, I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL BAD FOR HIM.

C'MON BOB!! GET INVOLVED WITH THE GAME WILL YA? I'M SORRY WE TOOK YOUR **NUKES** AWAY!! BUTTIT'S NO FUN GETTING ROASTED WITH RADIATION AND WATCHING YOU RAKE UP ALL THE EXPERIENCE POINTS!! I WANNA CHANCE TO **KILL SOMETHING TOO!!**

JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!! GO HAVE YOUR STUPID DRINK. I'LL BE HERE



LOOK BOB. WHAT IF WE GIVE YOU BACK ONE **MISSILE** FOR EMER&ENCY USE ONLY? HUH? WILL YOU STOP POUTING AND GET BACK IN THE GAME DUDE?

TEN MINUTES LATER.....

OKAY AS YOU ARE WALKING ALONG THE ROAD YOU NOTICE A MAW ON A **MOTORCYCLE** APPROACHING YOU FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION.

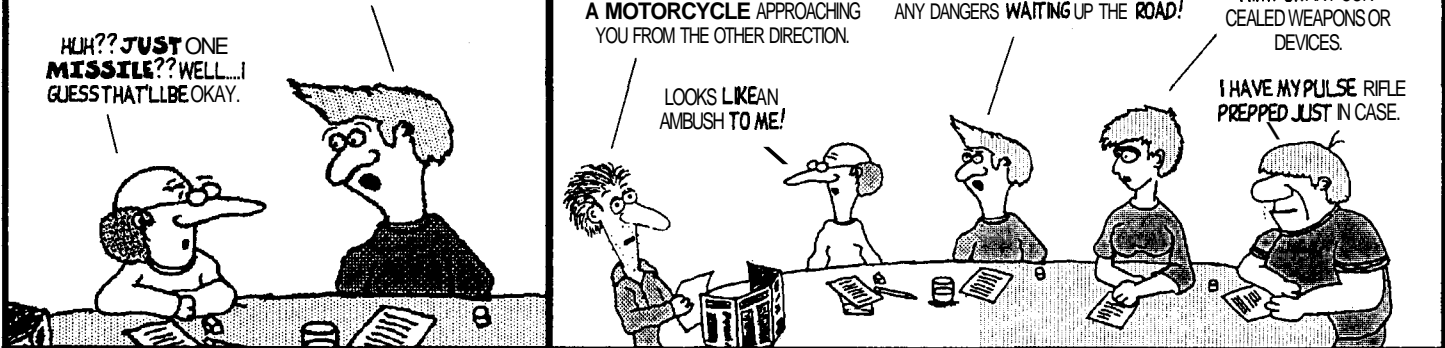
I FLAG HIM DOWN TO STOP. MAYBE THIS GUY CAN TELL US F THERE ARE ANY DANGERS WAITING UP THE ROAD!

GOOD IDEA, DAVE. WHILE YOU DO THAT, I'LL DISCREETLY SCAN HIM FOR ANY CONCEALED WEAPONS OR DEVICES.

HUH?? JUST ONE **MISSILE**?? WELL...I GUES THAT'LL BE OKAY.

LOOKS LIKE AN AMBUSH TO ME!

I HAVE MY PULSE RIFLE PREPPED JUST IN CASE.



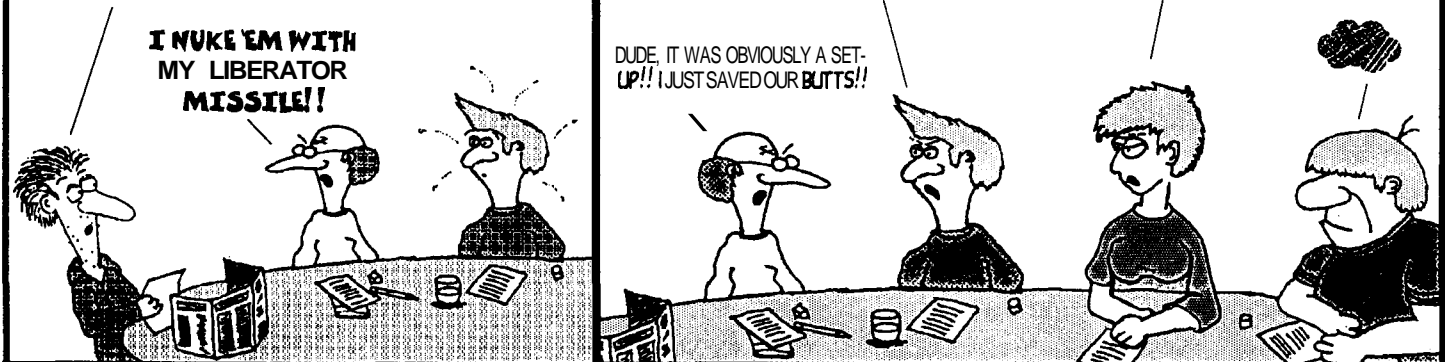
AS HE DRAWS NEARER, THE **MAN ON THE MOTORCYCLE SMILES WARMLY** AND WAVES AS HE SLOWS DOWN TO...

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING???

I GUESS WE SHOULD HAVE DEFINED WHAT CONSTITUTES AN 'EMERGENCY'!

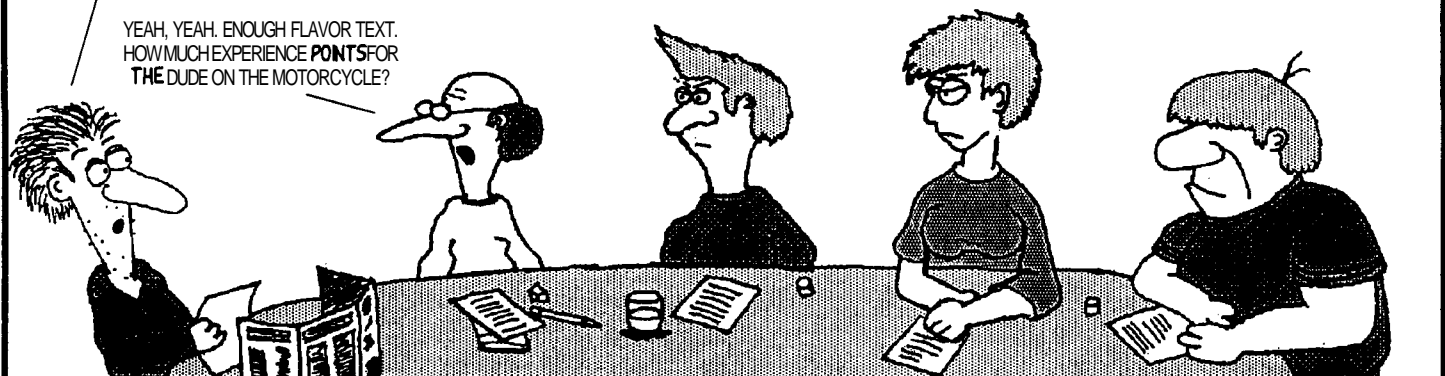
I **NUKE 'EM** WITH MY **LIBERATOR MISSILE!**

DUDE. IT WAS OBVIOUSLY A SET-UP!! I JUST SAVED OUR BUTTS!!



BOB'S MISSILES TAKE OUT THE MOTORCYCLE AW RIDER- NO PROBLEM. SWCE THE **MISSILE DETONATED A MERE 500 YARDS** FROM WHERE YOU WERE STANDING EVERYONE, EXCEPT FOR BOB, IS **IRRADIATED** WITH **WO POINTS** OF **FRAMMA RAYS!** BUT PONT BOTHER ROLLING FOR MUTATION OR ANYTHING. UNFORTUNATELY. THE **NUCLEAR BLAST** IS THE STRAW THAT FINALLY BROKE THE FRAIL UNSTABLE BACK OF MOTHER EARTH. A **CHAIN-REACTION** IS STARTED THAT TEARS **AROUND** THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE EARTH AS THE **CRUSTS** VIOLENTLY TORN APART. **HOT MOLTEN LAVA AND RERY GASES** ARE **SPEWED** INTO SPACE AS A **BRILLIANT FIREBALL** FOUR TIMES THE SIZE OF THE **EARTH**.....

YEAH, YEAH. ENOUGH FLAVOR TEXT. HOW MUCH **EXPERIENCE POINTS** FOR THE DUDE ON THE MOTORCYCLE?



Palladium News, Info, & Coming Attractions

By Kevin Siembieda (the guy who should know)

News

Palladium's 1998 Schedule is BIG!

Eight new **Rifts®** books are on schedule, *plus* three more issues of **The Rifter™** (April, August and November; or something like that).

Four new **Palladium Fantasy RPG** titles are in production, **The Western Empire** and the two **Old Kingdom** books among them. These three should be out by summer with **Wolfen Wars** out in the fall.

The revised and updated **Heroes Unlimited, Second Edition** should be at the printer's as you read this and will ship by the end of January or early February. Three or four sourcebooks for **Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Ed.** will follow throughout year, and **Rifts® Dimension Book Four: Scraypers** is a wonderous alien world of superheroes ideal for **Heroes Unlimited** (and easy to adapt to an S.D.C. or M.D.C. setting).

The revised and updated **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & More Strangeness;** is a nice companion to *Heroes Unlimited* (and it's not kid stuff).

Plus we hope to slip in a pair of **Robotech®** books and maybe a book or two for **Nightbane®** and maybe a few surprises. Over 20 products in all!

How is this possible?

For the first time ever, we have a dozen freelance writers working on a dozen products for Palladium's *entire* product line. Before the first beads of sweat appear on your brows, and the questions about whether or not Palladium can keep up its usual high level of quality, let me assure you that the answer is *yes*.

I will personally edit and rewrite (as is necessary) each and every one of these books to make sure the quality and continuity is preserved. Our same great artists *Ramon Perez Jr., Wayne Breaux Jr., Scott Johnson, Martin McKenna, Mike Dubisch, Dave Carson, and Kent Buries* will be contributing more dynamic artwork than ever before. *John Zeleznik* has already committed to doing 12 new covers, and you'll be treated to some impressive new guys too, perhaps most notable is *Paulo Parentes* who has done outstanding art for **Heroes Unlimited™, 2nd Ed.** and the **TMNT® & More Strangeness RPG** (a revised edition of the Classic TMNT RPG).

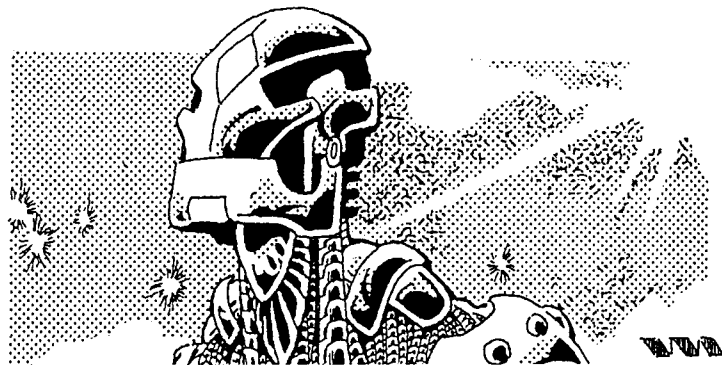
What can I say. We spent a good portion of the last year or two cultivating new talent. Not "Shmoes" to crank out rushed, second rate product, but truly exceptional and promising artists,

editors and writers. Me, *Maryann*, and all of the folks at Palladium, staff and freelance, are dedicated to quality and strive to do our best. Undoubtedly we'll fall on our face from time to time, and some books will be truly outstanding while others may only be very good, but know that we always try to do an excellent, quality and fun product each and every time.

The Palladium crew and I are *trying* to do more products this year (and hopefully on time too) because that's what you, our loyal fans and fellow gamers seem to want. We are trying it this year, because we finally think we have the people to do it without a drop in quality. Long time Palladium fans know we rarely rush out a product or publish junk just to make a buck. Our game books are just too precious to us. They reflect our ideas, ideals and talents. We want to shine, not produce "so-so stuff." These goals and sentiments will not change with our increased productivity. In fact, if we can't keep our level of quality high, we'll reduce and reschedule books.

Another reason Palladium is trying to do more, is to provide products for our many different product lines. It drives us more crazy than it does you when we cannot support our various RPG lines. When I reworked the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** into the second edition, I had hoped to follow it up with at least three new sourcebooks over the next year. However, time and other commitments prevented me from doing so. As much as I love **Rifts®** and most of the games Palladium publishes, the **Fantasy RPG** is my personal favorite. It's what started my company and I have a zillion ideas for it ... and **Rifts®**, and **Heroes Unlimited™**, and *Beyond the Supernatural*, and a whole truck full of books (I suffer from an overactive imagination), but it just wasn't possible. However, now, with a solid crew of excited and imaginative staff and freelance writers and artists, I hope we can finally give *all* RPG lines the attention they deserve and maybe kick out some new RPGs in the next few years (*Mechanoid Space* and *RECON Modern Combat* among them).

Enough rants and raves. The following pages offers specific information about works currently in production, updates about products we've mentioned in the past, and coming attractions.





No price increase from Palladium

We're fielding an increasing number of calls from gamers concerned that Palladium will be raising its prices or reducing its page count. We are not.

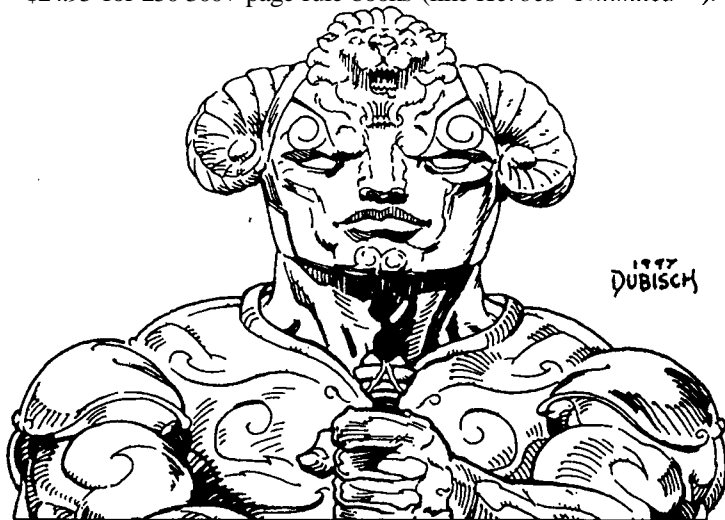
Palladium Books has always tried to give its customers more bang for their hard earned buck and will continue to do so. You can expect the same big, beautifully illustrated, information packed books at the usual Palladium prices:

\$12.95 for 112 to 128 page book (except for *The Rifter*[™])

\$16.95 for 160 pagers

\$20.95 for 196-224 pagers

\$24.95 for 250-300+ page rule books (like *Heroes Unlimited*[™]).



Federation of Magic[™] & Pyscape[™] are huge hits

Both of these hotly anticipated books have been quickly snapped up by *Rifts*[®] fans and are blowing off the shelves so fast, that some stores can barely keep 'em in stock. *The Complete Strategist*, in New York City, took 120 copies for its two stores! Fear not, we have plenty in stock, so there shouldn't be any shortages.

Of course I'm horribly biased, but I thought both of these world books really delivered with great art, new material, world information and fun ideas. *Pyscape*[®] also collects *all* psionic powers in one book so G.M.'s don't have to flip through three different ones to find *psi-powers*. As for *Federation of Magic*, that baby just came together like a dream.

If you haven't seen these two, check them out. Both retail for \$16.95 and are found at stores everywhere or directly from Palladium Books.

Rifts[®] Index & Adventures — Volume Two

This is a *Rifts*[®] title that should not be overlooked.

It is 128 pages (32 pages bigger than Volume One) and has some excellent Appendix Listings for all magic spells, magic items, psionics, CS weapons and equipment, O.C.C.s and other valuable reference information. *Rifts*[®] Index Volume Two features a Kevin Long cover and indexes and references the last two years of *Rifts*[®] releases, including *Juicer Uprising*[™], *Coalition Navy*[™], *Coalition War Campaign*[™], *New West*[™], *Lone Star*, *Spirit West*[™], *Rifts*[®] *Underseas*[™], *Game Screen & Adventure Pack*, *South America II*, *Sourcebook 2: The Mechanoids*[®], *Phase World*[™], and *Rifts*[®] *Japan*.

The adventure section is 48 pages with two full adventures and a score of *Hook, Line & Sink*[™] Adventures.

\$12.95 for 128 pages of stuff that will keep you gaming for months. Shipped from Palladium's warehouse on December 17, 1997. Available at stores everywhere or directly from Palladium Books.

Palladium's Website is hot

The Palladium Web Page (www.palladiumbooks.com) celebrated its one year anniversary in December with approximately 140,000 "hits." That's an average of roughly 72,000 "hits" a month (11,666.6 to be exact).

The Website offers up-to-date news, press releases, information, special offers, and previews (art in color and black and white), as well as frequently asked questions, company profiles and interaction with Vice President *Maryann* Siembieda.

Maryann enjoys running the Page and the interaction with fans, and the whole thing continues to be a lot of fun.



Thom Bartold is back!

Thomas Bartold is a name that graces many of Palladium's products. Thom is a dear friend, author of *Island at the Edge of the World*, *Maryann*'s right hand (and usually the left one too), one time Palladium *Troubleshooter* and all around great guy.

Two and a half years ago, he left Palladium to do some globe-trotting. He's lived in Germany and Poland (and learned to speak both languages quite well), and has visited France, Italy (seen the Pope), Belgium, Switzerland, and Egypt.

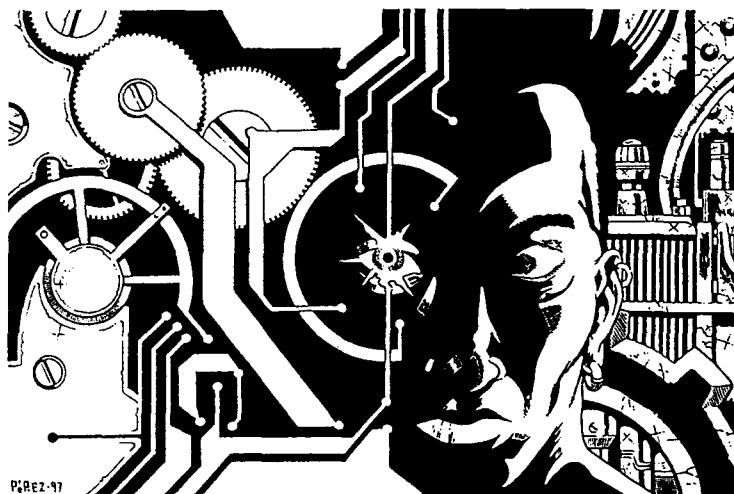
Thom will be continuing his world travels but will also be working for Palladium again, sometimes at our Michigan offices, sometimes overseas. We're glad to have him back.

Licensing News

As many of our readers know, Palladium has been looking to expand our presence into marketplaces outside role-playing. This means licensing our stuff to other companies to make novels, comic books, computer games, toys, movies, and so forth. This is much more difficult than it may sound. While our zillions of **Rifts®** players may agree with us crazy guys and gals at Palladium that **Rifts®** (or Palladium Fantasy **RPG®**, **Nightbane®**, **The Mechanoids®**, etc.) would make a wonderful film, toys, games, etc. convincing big, mass market companies who barely know what role-playing is, and who may have never heard of **Rifts®**, can be a monumental task.

Over the years, Palladium has turned down a handful of tiny licenses either because they weren't very good, or we feared they might interfere with some future opportunity.

Well our patience and planning looks like it might finally be paying off.



Rifts® Computer & Electronic Games?!

Last year, *Surge Comics Properties, Inc.* gave Palladium a call to ask if they could represent "Rifts" as one of the properties their agency handles. This was cool, because *Surge Comics Properties* are the guys who turned the black and white *Ninja Turtles* comic into movies, TV shows, toys, **apparel/clothing**, books, posters and a ton of other stuff (whether you liked all these things or not, there's no denying they did a great job and made millions of dollars). Equally exciting is that they called "us," and *Surge* only takes a handful of new clients every year. But even with guys like this batting for Palladium, it takes months of ... waiting ... nothing happening ... pitches and more waiting. However, our licensing agent is current having serious talks with two different, major computer and cartridge game companies who have expressed an *interest* about licensing **Rifts®** for electronic and computer games! There are no contracts yet, but keep your fingers crossed and you may see **Rifts®** computer games and Sony Playstation or Nintendo games in the near future.

Meanwhile, we've been recently approached by a On Line game operator who is interested in doing "official" **Rifts® RPG** games On Line. He's exploring the possibilities with *Surge* now.

It's too soon to even hint at **what's** being discussed (and discussion does not mean a deal), but we'll offer details as we get 'em.

Rifts® Miniature License with Agents of Gaming

By the time you read this, the ink should be drying on contracts with **Agents of Gaming** to produce a *new* line of metal miniatures based on the **Rifts®** role-playing game line. They also plan to release an "official" **Rifts® Miniature Game** based on the RPG. The game and first minis are currently slated to make their debut at the *1998 Gen Con®*.

The new miniatures will probably be 28 mm and include 'bots and vehicles as well as humanoid figures — we'll reveal more about these projects as details and release dates are firmed up. **Note:** Palladium will continue to sell its current line of 25 mm miniatures as well.

Info & Stuff

Beyond The Supernatural™

Beyond the Supernatural™ is scheduled for a revised, Second Edition probably in early 1999; written by Kevin Siembieda.

The BTS Second Edition will keep all the concepts, monsters and **characters/O.C.C.s**, and offer more background material and details about the mysterious supernatural world that coexists with our own. Plus more on being an investigator of the supernatural, as well as how to conduct and build adventures.

At this stage, I don't anticipate the book coming out before 1999, but you never know.

Mechanoid® Space RPG

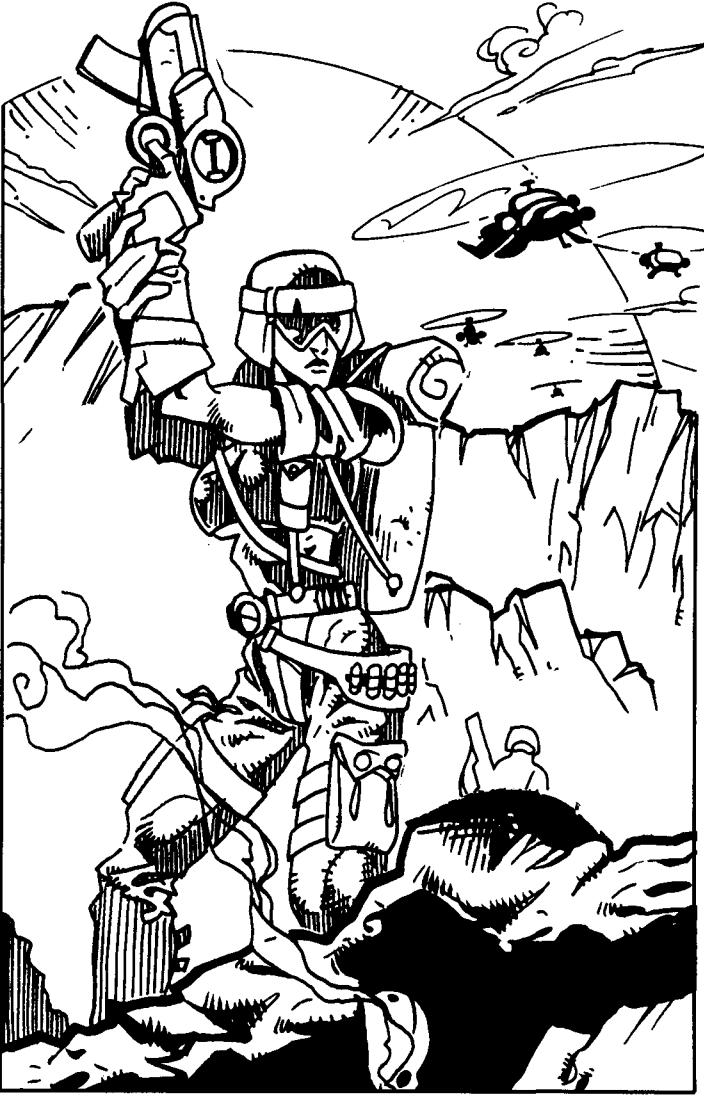
Mechanoid® Space is a project I've been kicking around for years. It's something I want to do badly, and I have reserved the writing and design of **Mechanoid® Space** (a tentative title which may be changed) for *myself*.

While I have been making notes and plotting out story elements, designs, characters, and presentation in my mind, I have been unable to do any serious work on the book. I want **Mechanoid® Space** to be epic and exciting, so it will require months of my time — some projects just take a lot more time than others, and this is one of them. The problem is, I haven't been able to schedule myself enough time to work on this project.

Now, I know some people think, as the boss, I have all the time in the world. I wish that were true. I often find there just aren't enough hours in the day to do everything I need to do, let alone all the things I want to do. To write this **Mechanoids®** book and do it right, I'd have to schedule 3-6 months of my time, which, in the past, would mean 3-6 months of no other product. However, with Palladium's gaggle of budding young freelance writers, I hope that we can actually start to get books completely written, edited and laid out months in advance! If we can, it "should" help to buy me the time I need for special projects floating around in my head. Of course, I personally supervise, edit and do rewrites on 95% of all Palladium products, so

my time will still remain stretched and seriously limited, but it should free me up to some degree by the end of the year.

I'm hoping to do **Mechanoid Space™** and a **sourcebook** or two for it next year (1999).



RECON® Modern Combat

I won't bore you with the trials and tribulations this proposed RPG has given us, but believe it or not (barring the unexpected), **RECON® Modern Combat** should finally see publication sometime in the next 18 months.

No promises or release dates until I review the finished manuscript, but I think we finally have an author who can do this role-playing game justice and follow it up with **sourcebooks**. We'll keep ya posted on its development.

Chaos Earth™

A Rifts® Dimension Book Series

It my fault this book (probably a series of books) is not out yet. The author has turned in a massive manuscript and a huge addition month ago, but I haven't had a chance to go over it. Why? Because I'll have to split it into at least two 160 to 224 page books, plus I think I'll want to add a bunch of stuff and rework or change some things. It's a big job so its on the back burner, but *not* forgotten (the author, will be glad to hear this more than anybody).

Rifts® Japan 2

This is another book that I'm selfishly saving for myself, although I don't know when I be able to get to it. Consider it off the schedule indefinitely.

Rifts® Lemuria — Cancelled

Steve Sheiring had the best intentions when he announced to me (and I to the world) that he would write **Rifts® Lemuria**, a dynamic companion to **Rifts® Underseas**. Steve did a lot of research and had some great ideas. Unfortunately, he quickly (and I suspect a bit painfully) discovered that writing did not come easy for him —**which** is probably why he's Palladium's Director of Sales and my right hand man and not a professional writer.

I'll probably take Steve's notes and unfinished writing and do **Rifts® Lemuria** in the future, but not anytime soon.

Alien Conspiracy — Cancelled

The story behind **Alien Conspiracy** is similar to Steve and Lemuria. Alex Marciniszyn is an excellent editor, idea man and even has some experience as a writer. Unfortunately, the book is taking Alex forever to write (his other duties at Palladium are part of the problem as they constantly interfere with Alex's writing), so we are officially taking it off the schedule. Maybe a few years from now, should Alex ever finish it (that's a hint, Al), you'll see it back on our release list.

Coming Attractions

Heroes Unlimited™, 2nd Edition

Ships End of January or Mid-February

We're still shooting for a January release, but with the December holidays, End of Year bookkeeping, and some unexpected personal matters to deal with, **Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition** may slip into February. Come on, its a humongous book, and you know me, if I'm going to redo it, I'm going to do it right.

Like the *Palladium Fantasy RPG, 2nd Edition* of 1996, **Heroes Unlimited™** is more of an upgrade and update than a radical rework. The same basic system of rules, skill selection and character creation will apply.

Most changes have been rules clarifications, additional material and things that fans have asked us to change or include over the years.

Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition is a complete role-playing game in itself. As such it is set in our modern world, but it and its superhuman characters can be easily modified to fit any of Palladium's RPG settings (another dimension, an alternate Earth, aliens, people with strange powers, etc.).

The basic rule book enables players to create virtually every *type* of hero imaginable: Mutants, aliens, psychics, cyborgs, robots, superhumans, super-sleuths, weapon masters, super-psy-



chics, masters of the mystic arts, super-soldiers, genius inventors, Mega-Heroes, and even crazy heroes.

- Over 100 super abilities plus special skills and genius.
- Cyborg and robot hero creation rules.
- Super vehicles creation rules, gimmicks and high technology.
- Secret identities and secret organizations.

- Adventure ideas, guidelines and tons of fun.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda with additional text by Breaux.
- Compatible with Rifts® and the entire Palladium Megaverse.
- Around 300 **pages!**



2nd Edition changes include ...

Rules clarifications and details, especially in regard to many of the superhuman powers and abilities.

All super abilities are listed and described in one book (includes those from *Villains Unlimited* and *Aliens Unlimited™*), plus a handful of new ones.

More psionic powers (yes, stuff from our other RPGs) and a different approach to psychic heroes.

P.P.E. system for magic.

Optional "Mega-Heroes" — superhumans with the power of demigods, i.e. guys like Superman, the Hulk, and other powerhouse heroes. This mega-superhero category is present due to *popular demand*, but must be played with caution, because otherwise, these god-like beings can seriously imbalance the campaign.

- New, dynamic *Steranko* cover.
- New artwork and more!

Heroes Unlimited™ is the core book in a vast *Megaverse®* of comic book hero adventures with *Villains Unlimited™*, *Aliens Unlimited™* and *TMNT & Other Strangeness, 2nd Edition* all available now! *Hardware Unlimited™*, *The Galaxy Guide*, *Scrapers™*, *Delphineous' Guide to the Megaverse™*, and *The Nursery* coming soon! Plus other adventure sourcebooks under development!

Cat. No. 500

Retail Price: \$24.95

Page Count: Probably around 300 pages.

Anticipated Date of Release: January 26, 1998, but may slip into February.



Palladium Fantasy RPG®

I have big plans for the *Palladium Fantasy RPG* series. 1998 will see heavy support for it. Four books are on the "definite" 1998 schedule. They are ...

Old Kingdom Mountains™
Old Kingdom Lowlands™
The Western Empire™
Wolfen Wars™

Palladium 1998 Publishing Schedule

Note: The following dates are tentative "ship" dates from the Palladium Books® warehouse to our distributors. Products will not appear in stores till about one week later. All dates are tentative and subject to change. The release dates are fairly solid and should delays occur, they should not be more than 2-4 weeks later than posted.

January, 1998

The Rifter™ #1 — Player's Guide & Sourcebook
Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition — January 26 (or February)

February, 1998

Rifts® Dimension Book 4: Scrapers — February 23

March, 1998

Ninja Turtles & More Strangeness, 2nd Ed. — March 9
Palladium Fantasy: Old Kingdom Mountains™ — March 20
Rifts® Warlords of Russia™ — March 30

April, 1998

The Rifter™ #2 — Player's Guide & Sourcebook — April 16
Rifts® The Magic of Russia™ — April 24

New Rifts® books for 1998

Eight new **Rifts® World Books**, plus **Dimension Books** and issues of **The Rifter™** are currently being written. They are, in tentative order of release:

Rifts® Dimension Book 4: Scrapers — February 23
Rifts® Warlords of Russia™ — March 30
The Rifter™ #2 — Player's Guide & Sourcebook — April 16
Rifts® The Magic of Russia™ — April 24
Delphineous' Guide to the Megaverse®
Rifts® Australia — probably 2 or 3 books on Australia
Rifts® Canada
Rifts® Free Quebec™
Rifts® Scotland
Rifts® Cyber-Knights®
Rifts® Dimension Book: The Grand Paladins™
Rifts® Dimension Book: Phase World™; The 3 Galaxies
Dimension Book: Chaos Earth™
The Rifter, Numbers 3 & 4; Summer & Fall.

Note: Dates are not provided for books not yet assigned a specific target release date.





Rifts® Dimension Book 4: Scraypers

For Heroes Unlimited™ & Rifts®

Alien invaders conquer and enslave a planet.

Its population of superheroes is decimated.

Those heroes who survived the invasion go underground to form a freedom fighting movement — they vow their world shall **be free again!**

But traitors complicate matters. Many super-villains now serve as the henchmen and assassins of the alien conquerors.

Epic superhero adventure with non-stop action, intrigue and betrayal, with the fate of a planet hanging in the balance.

This *Rifts® Dimension Book* is based on the artwork, designs and concepts of fan favorite artist John Zeleznik. "Big Daddy" John actually did all the artwork and preliminary concept work two years ago as a *Rifts Dimension Book. I* (Kevin **Siembieda**) felt the material was equally wonderful for a **Heroes Unlimited™** sourcebook that could be used for adventures on an alien world (either linked to contemporary Earth or as its own specific game environment) or as alien heroes and villains that could be brought into the modern Earth setting in any number of ways —

super-powered refugees, advanced scouts for an invasion by the bad guys, alien heroes in search of allies or who have come to Earth to get something (a device, person, alien artifact, info) that will help their cause, or who have come to Earth to protect their people from the monsters who have enslaved their world, etc. Or **Scraypers** could be a future or alternate Earth.

I loved the idea of taking a world where superheroes were (relatively) commonplace, have it invaded by powerful aliens and put the superheroes in the role of freedom fighters. They are forced to hide, live and function underground as political criminals hunted as dangerous criminals and dissidents (and giving greater meaning to preserving one's secret identity). To complicate matters, many old super-foes have joined the alien invaders as their minions and advisors. This change in the power structure has reversed the roles of hero and villain, placing evil super-villains in positions of power and authority and the heroes in the role of "wanted criminal." Meanwhile, some old "arch-enemies" also fight against the aliens (often using extreme measures) which can lead to distasteful (and dangerous) alliances and strange bedfellows for our heroes.

This desperate yet noble and heroic storyline sets up adventures where the heroes (and villains) engage in spying, sabotage and deception to titanic battles where they go all out in their bid to free their world from their evil enslavers. Blow out, no-holds-barred **action!**

In many ways, **Scraypers™** is a giant "adventure setting" and idea book ideal for **Heroes Unlimited™**. Because of the vast amount of material covered, those using it as a **Rifts®** setting will need to refer to *Heroes Unlimited™* to have the full range of super abilities and information to really go crazy with it. It is a bit of a change for **Rifts®** players (although it can fit in beautifully as one of the outer worlds in the *Three Galaxies of the Phase World* series) and a bit of a cosmic leap for **Heroes Unlimited™** players, but I, personally, think the setting is unique, incredibly dynamic, action packed and fun to play.

- **Characters and concepts by John Zeleznik.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda**
- **Diabolical villains and courageous heroes.**
- **An alien world setting and adventure ideas.**
- **For use with Rifts and Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition.**
- **Wrap around cover and interior art by John Zeleznik.**
- **160 pages — \$16.95 retail.**
- **Anticipated Date of Release: February 23.**

Rifts® Warlords of Russia™

I've only glanced at this manuscript by Kevin E. Krueger, one of our promising freelancers, but it looks fantastic. **Techno-junkies** will love it because there are a lot of Russian weapons, vehicles, **bots** and equipment (similar to **Rifts® Triax & The NGR**) along with world information, deadly rivalries and a chaotic environment.

Ramon Perez Jr., Wayne Breaux Jr., Scott Johnson and a new guy have already been scheduled to illustrate this big book.

Warlords of Russia should make a great companion to **Triax & The NGR** and the entire European and Asian settings of **Rifts Earth**.

- **The Warlords of Russian — heroes or bandits? Their clans, armies, resources and goals.**
- **The Sovietski — New Soviet.**
- **The Master Machine, mysterious supplier of artifacts, weapons, bots, vehicles and equipment.**
- **World information, adventure ideas and more!**
- **224 pages — \$20.95 retail.**
- **Anticipated Date of Release: March 30**

Rifts® Magic of Russia™

Author Kevin E. Krueger couldnot contain all of his ideas for Russia to just one book, so **The Magic of Russia** will follow a month after the **Warlords**.

- **Russian Magic and mystical factions.**
- **Magical weapons and items of note.**
- **More on the Warlords.**
- **More world information and adventure ideas.**
- **160 to 224 pages (final page count not yet determined).**
- **Either \$16.95 or \$20.95 retail.**
- **Anticipated Date of Release: April 24.**





Rifts® City Creation Rules

By Eric J. Lind a.k.a. The Tungsten Avenger

One of the hardest parts of game mastering is creating unique locations for campaigns. Too many games start off in bars, with the rest of town left pretty generic until one of the players starts nosing around and asking questions. Speaking as a player and a G.M., I have found this lack of detail when describing locations to be very frustrating. The City Creation Rules are my solution to the problem. By mixing and matching the various categories, an almost unlimited number of **communities** with very different flavors can be created. Dare to be different - start off a campaign in the library of a magic-friendly, low-tech, anti-psyhic town that hates non-humans and subscribes to vigilante justice. Your players will thank you.

Step One: City Size

The size of any given city will greatly influence its resources, attitudes and inhabitants. As the City Creation Rules are intended as an aid for you, the G.M., it is up to you to decide what size of city is required for your campaign needs.

The points listed under each category are meant to be a suggestion for the total points for all city features. Unlike the rules for mercenary companies (Rifts Mercenaries) or circuses and traveling shows (Vampire Kingdoms), the City Creation Rules shouldn't be treated as ironclad. Ultimately, it is your choice as the G.M. what your city will look and feel like. These rules are a fairly good guideline, however, and should produce a balanced location for any game.

In choosing the size of your community, keep in mind what you really need for your game. Most campaigns don't need an entirely new metropolis every few miles. Villages and towns, on the other hand, are perfectly suited for most adventures. Most small communities are great for plot hooks, R&R, or even terrorizing (if your players tend to be a bit gun happy). Cities should be reserved mainly for bases, important stops during journeys, and those really expensive repairs and hard to find items that most player characters are constantly craving.

Finally, don't deck out your community with the biggest and best selections in every category. Even with the 500+ points a metropolis has available, your mega-city won't have everything. Think of all the cities in the U.S. with more than one million people. Does Denver have the same feeling as New York? Is Miami just like Seattle? Of course not. The cities of Rifts Earth each have their own, unique flavor. By keeping your newly cre-

ated towns and cities different, your campaign will be more enjoyable, both for you and for your players.

1. Hamlet. A small community of no more than 50 people. The hamlet generally has very few resources and can offer little to passing travelers, other than a warm place to sleep, a little food, and maybe some hospitality.

60 POINTS are available, plus an additional 10 POINTS to spend on criminal activity and 10 POINTS for Natural Resources.

2. Village. This is generally the largest that wilderness communities ever get, ranging up to around 250 inhabitants. It's likely that modern weaponry is used, but facilities for repairs and the like will be primitive at best. The village will be similar to the hamlet in terms of resources.

120 POINTS are available, plus an additional 10 POINTS for technology and 10 POINTS for attitude towards outsiders.

3. Town. At 2000 people, a town is what most weary travelers look for during their journeys. While there's no guarantee that a town is any better equipped than a village or hamlet, the odds are considerably better that it will be. A community of this size usually resembles the towns of the Old West, with a main street and not many other roads.

180 POINTS are available, plus an additional 10 POINTS for laws and law enforcement and 10 POINTS for notable businesses.

4. Small City. Few communities ever reach this plateau in growth. Cities of this size almost certainly have some "edge," whether it be technology, magic, valuable natural resources, etc. They are likely to trade regularly with other communities and probably have a few villages and hamlets that depend on them for support.

240 POINTS are available, plus 20 POINTS to be distributed between technology and/or magic and 10 POINTS for notable businesses.

5. City. The communities of Los Alamo, **Juarez** and **Kingsdale** all fall into this category. They are bustling centers of people and will be known stops for travelers, mercenaries, and other groups. It is likely that expeditions are launched from cities, as they are the best places for gathering provisions and supplies.

300 POINTS are available, plus 20 POINTS for notable business and 20 POINTS for wealth.

6. Metropolis. In the decimated planet of Rifts Earth, few communities ever reach 100,000 or more inhabitants. There just aren't that many people. Nearly all of the cities of this size are famous (or infamous) for their advanced civilizations. Most of the major population centers of the Coalition States, as well as **Lazlo** and **Tolkeen**, fall into this category.

500 POINTS are available, plus 20 POINTS for military and 20 POINTS for laws and law enforcement.

NOTE: The city and metropolis are probably the two categories that GM's will want to "fudge" a little. It would be almost impossible to "buy" all of the notable businesses that undoubtedly exist in a large city with the somewhat limited points provided. The other categories, however, still work pretty well.

Step Two: City Features

A. Government

1. Anarchy. This community really isn't a community at all. Most residents are scattered miles away from each other, with the only common bond being some kind of supply depot somewhere in the middle. Cost: None.

2. Oppressive Dictator. The ruler of this town is a selfish or evil despot who controls every aspect of the city. The people are heavily taxed and the law is generally "might makes right". On the upside, the dictator will want to take care of his property and will defend the town from hostile invaders. Cost: 5 points.

3. Commune. The inhabitants of this community live in a free society. Everyone is considered equal, and disputes are handled by a group of elders. While this might sound idyllic, this form of government usually ends up being conquered by outside invaders, as the residents are often disordered and poorly trained. Cost: 10 points.

4. Benevolent Dictator. While this city is still ruled by a dictator or monarch, he/she is honestly concerned about the welfare of the citizens. The laws are fair, but harsh, and the members of the military/police are usually given only a slap on the wrist if they commit crimes. Cost: 20 points.

5. Aristocratic Republic. This town is controlled by a highly selective group who may or may not care about the needs of the people. Democracy exists, but only in the aristocracy or oligarchy. In other words, less than 25% of the general populace has a say in the running of the community. This government often changes to some other form relatively quickly. Cost: 30 points.

6. Democracy. In this city, all citizens are given an equal say in the government. The system might be republican in nature (elected officials) or be a true democracy, with all citizens voting on all issues. Cost: 50 points.

B. Natural Resources

Unlike other categories, several different natural resources can be bought to give a different feel to the community.

1. None. This community has few or no resources at all. It exists purely as a result of outside resources. Cost: None

2. Small Body of Water. Water in any quantity can be a great asset to a town. A small body of water can be a small sized river, a large pond, or a spring. Small bodies of water won't be able to support trade, but will supply food and power. Cost: 10 points

3. Forest. This community is located near or in a forest. It will rely on the timber industry as a source of income and most inhabitants will be experienced woodsmen. Cost: 15 points.

4. Agriculture. Nearly all towns farm, but a community with this resource farms a lot. The surrounding countryside for miles will be devoted to growing crops. A river or some other source of water is needed to make an agricultural community survive. Cost: 15 points

5. Large Body of Water. A large body of water is considered by most city planners to be a free road to mass trade. A large river, lake or coastal location can become a frequent stop on shipping routes. Cost: 20 points.

6. Mineral. This city has the good fortune of being located near a large mineral deposit. Whether it be coal, gold, or some-

thing else, this community relies on mining for a large chunk of its revenue. Cost: 30 points.

7. Petroleum Products. This is an invaluable resource in the time of the Rifts. Most people can't afford nuclear power, so petroleum is used as a major source of fuel. Communities with access to oil can become wealthy overnight, with people flocking to them to trade. Of course, this has its downside, as greedy invaders may seek to take over the oil fields. Cost: 50 points.

C. Location

1. Wilderness. Sure, you're in the middle of nowhere, but you rarely have any problems with neighbors (there aren't any) and no one ever attacks you. Cost: None.

2. Aggressive Neighbors. A city with aggressive neighbors is bound to have constant conflicts and skirmishes. On the upside, inventions are fueled by conflict and the city may have some kind of technological or mystical revolution. Cost: 5 points, but add 5 points to technology or magic

3. Active Rift. Being near a rift can be a major boon, or a major pain. Magic users will welcome the extra energy and power, while **magic-phobes** (e.g. the Coalition) will do everything in their power to destroy the rift and everything that comes out of it. Cost: 10 points, but add 5 points to magic level

4. Monster Zone. As with most other locations, being near a monster zone has its ups and downs. The monsters can be used for a variety of things and might just turn out not to be monsters at all. However, supremacist communities will despise every monster and kill them on sight. Cost: 10 points, but add 5 points to magic level.

5. Harbor. To acquire this option, the community must be set along a large body of water. Having a natural harbor can be a very lucky break. Ships will stop at the harbor for rest and repairs, bringing with them items for trade. On the other hand, pirates may see the town as a great place to take over and use as a base of operations. Cost: 20 points, but add 10 points to natural resources

6. Trade Route. Every community wants to be located near a defined trade route, as trade is the means to gain wealth. Optimally, this city has something to provide to traders, whether it be a good rest stop or having some tradable goods. Cost: 45 points, but add 15 points to wealth and 10 points to either technology or magic

D. Pre-Rifts History

This measures the number of Pre-Rifts artifacts or technology that the city may have. Simply because the town is sitting on an archaeological find doesn't mean it's using the technology to its fullest potential. The community could be sitting on a treasure **trove** and not even know it.

1. None. This town was built nowhere near a Pre-Rifts city and thus has no chance of benefiting from any discoveries. Cost: None

2. Small Town. A community located near the ruins of a small city is less likely to find fantastic new technology, but may come into the possession of books (from a library or school), some artifacts, and a sense of history. Cost: 10 points.

3. Liberal Arts College. Similar to number 2, this kind of find provides only knowledge, as opposed to weapons or fantas-

tic technology. The inhabitants of the community are likely to gain an appreciation for science and the arts and might parlay their discovery into a cultural revolution. Cost: 10 points

4. University. Discovering a Pre-Rifts university is the stuff dreams are made of! These institutions of higher learning generally had numerous colleges specializing in engineering fields, computers, the sciences and liberal arts. If a town can struggle through the maze of "**edu-speak**" and **techno-babble** that surrounds the university's treasures, the town can advance its technological level by leaps and bounds. Cost: 20 points

5. Military Base. Jackpot! Pre-Rifts military bases hold untold treasures. Anything from weapons to nuclear generators to working vehicles, power armor and robots could exist in these ruins. Roll or choose from the following table.

01-20 - Communications Outpost. A small station set up to collect satellite data and relay it to other posts. A communication outpost will have a large amount of high-tech computers and radio equipment. Cost: 15 points

21-40 - Air Base. This base is likely to have combat aircraft, cargo planes, flight capable power armor and high-tech communications gear. Cost: 20 points.

41-60 - Army Base. The ruins of this post will have vehicles, advanced weapons, power armor, and robots. Cost: 25 points.

61-80 - Naval Base. Obviously, this base must be located along a relatively major body of water. Ruins of this nature could have anything from small patrol boats to huge carriers, submarines or aircraft. Cost: 20 points for ruined ships, 30 points for seaworthy ships.

81-00 - Military Center. Some **Pre-rifts** towns, like Colorado Springs, Colorado, were home to numerous different military bases. Such locations will have benefits from any or all of the previous bases. Cost: 50 points

6. Major Metropolis. Through some quirk, this city was mostly spared the brunt of the nuclear attacks and natural disasters and managed to not be turned into a pile of radioactive rubble. Finds like this come along once in a dragon's lifetime and could have universities, military bases, industrial plants and other technological sites. Cost: 75 points

E. Attitude Towards Outsiders

1. Reclusive Xenophobes. These people hate and fear all outsiders and react by trying to remove themselves from all outside influences. If the community is invaded (defined as anyone who doesn't belong coming to town) the residents will react violently and attack. Cost: None

2. Aggressive Isolationists. At first glance, this seems like a contradiction in terms, but this is the way many isolationist handle outsiders. The Coalition is a perfect example of this. They react to undesirables by attacking and destroying them. The war against Tolkeen is only the most recent instance of this policy in action. Cost: 5 points

3. Wary. The inhabitants of this community are suspicious of non-residents. They are likely to overcharge, be close-mouthed, and suspect outsiders of being evil and dishonest. Cost: 10 points

4. Neutral. Communities that take this attitude are generally subjected to a large transient population, like traders or other travelers. They are viewed as a necessary fact of life and might even be considered friends, but they are still outsiders. On an

ideological level, all people are **equal**, but the villagers maintain a superior air. Cost: 20 points

5. Open Arms. Outsiders are welcomed as total equals. As a matter of fact, the community has a high turnover rate, with people coming and going constantly. Cost: 45 points

F. Racism

1. Racial Supremacists. The Coalition typifies communities with this attitude. The town is made up of predominantly one race and members of any other race are considered worthless, if not attacked as monsters. Cost: None

2. Slave Owners. This city uses members of other races as slaves. Abuse and mistreatment is commonplace and killing of slaves is completely legal, if a bad investment. The denizens of Atlantis hold this attitude. Cost: 5 points

3. Second Class Citizens. The inhabitants of this community are rather diverse, but one group is dominant. They hold all of the power and look down on the **others**. the sub-races have some rights, but will always be discriminated against. Cost: 10 points

4. Coexistence. This is a very unusual situation. Several different races all live in the same area, yet retain their autonomy. Trade goes on between the different groups and they would come to the aid of the others, but the situation is somewhat similar to present-day Europe. Cost: 25 points

5. Total Equality. In communities that have this attitude, all people are treated as equals, regardless of race, species or beliefs. **Lazlo** typifies this view. Cost: 45 points

G. Technology Level

1. Pre-Industrial. These people have developed **metallurgy**, basic machines, and other limited **technology**, but definitely can't offer the kind of services the average adventurer requires. They will be somewhat afraid of high-tech, but will quickly adapt. Cost: None

2. Industrial Age. The tech level of this community is around the level of the late 19th century. Firearms and other explosives are well known and semi-advanced machinery (steam power, basic planes, etc) are utilized. Cost: 5 points

3. Atomic Age. In this city, the people have advanced to the level of the late 20th or 21st century. Nuclear technology is known of, but not widely used. Energy weapons are almost available for manufacturing and basic repairs might be possible. Cost: 10 points

4. Advanced Tech. Northern Gun represents this level of technology. Mega-damage weapons and armor, simple robots and war machines, and other modern amenities are common place. Cost: 25 points

5. Cutting Edge Tech. The leading nations of the Earth are at this level of advancement. Whether it be from **Pre-Rifts** discoveries or new designs, a community with technology at this level is a force to be reckoned with. Cost: 50 points

H. Magic Level

1. Anti-Magic. Similar to the Coalition, the members of this community violently hate magic, mages and everything related to them. Wizards are hunted down and killed as monsters and anyone even suspected of practicing magic is watched and mistrusted. Cost: None

2. Disbelief. The residents of this town don't hate magic, they simply don't believe in it. If exposed to wizardry, they will respond by trying to debunk the **"tricks."** If the existence of magic is proven, their attitude toward it will be based on how the first few mages behave. Cost: 5 points

3. Limited Magic. Various people in this town use magic, but they are few and far between. As with number 2, the reaction by the general populace will be determined by the alignments and actions of the mages. Cost: 10 points

4. Prominence. Numerous mages live and work in this city, but the people as a whole don't use magic. The wizards are considered to be important to the community and magic is usually considered to be a neutral force of nature. Cost: 25 points

5. City of Magic. The entire community uses magic in various aspects of life. Doctors, mechanics, everyone uses magic to enhance and better their lives. Attacks on this town will be met with deadly force from the paranormal. Cost: 50 points

I. Psychic Level

1. Psi-Haters. The denizens of this city hate and persecute all psychics. Much like many people on the Palladium world fear Mind Mages, so do the people of this town fear everyone with even the smallest psychic ability. Cost: None

2. No Psionics. Through some bizarre twist, the people of this community are incapable of having psychic powers. How this psychic inability occurred can be an entire adventure hook. Cost: 5 points

3. Limited Psionics. Psychics live in this town, but the total percentage of people with any form of psychic powers is less than 10%. Of those, perhaps 1% are master psychics. Cost: 10 points

4. Rifts Average. This community sits right at the "Rifts Earth Average" for psionic powers. In other words, everyone in town rolls on the character creation chart in the Rifts Main Book for psychic powers. Approximately 25% of the entire town has at least a couple psychic abilities. Cost: 20 points

5. Rivals Psyscape. This city is positively brimming with psychics. Many skills and professions have lapsed as psychic abilities have taken their place. Practically everyone is a minor psychic or better, with 25% of the residents having major or master psychic abilities. Cost: 45 points

J. Military

1. None. No organized military exists in this community. Any invaders will be met with little resistance. Cost: None

2. BYOG (Bring Your Own Gun) The town has some kind of plan for being invaded, but there is no training and everyone is expected to supply their own weapons. Cost: 3 points

3. Militia. Like number 2, this option requires each person to supply himself, but the training is provided by the community. The level of training varies from place to place, but this town can survive against fairly formidable foes. Cost: 5 points

4. Mercenaries. If a town has enough cash to fund a mercenary army, they will be well defended, but it costs a fortune and mercenaries are notorious for being rowdy and untrustworthy. Cost: 10 points

5. Standing Army. This city has the resources to field, train and supply a standing army. Gear is provided and the troops gen-

erally have some combat experience. Enemy forces generally think twice before attacking this city. Cost: 30 points

6. Crack Troops. The members of this city's army are known throughout a wide area as being formidable. They train constantly, have the best weaponry, and can hold their own against forces many times their size. Cost: 50 points



K. Laws and Law Enforcement

This measures purely civilian justice. The military may act as a police force or they can be completely separate entities. Use a measure of common sense in creating the relationship between these two forces.

1. None. This town is completely lawless. Might makes right, but be sure to watch your back. Cost: None

2. Vigilante Justice. While there is no actual police force, the citizens band together to enforce their own brand of **justice**. This is generally dictated by a mob mentality, so hangings and shootings are usually dispensed quickly, and on the basis of emotions and little actual evidence. Cost: 3 points

3. Sheriff. An appointed sheriff and his deputies are the official police force. They generally act as police, judge, jury and executioner, but must follow the laws of the town, or be subject to an angry mob. Occasionally, this system will break down into number 1 or 2. Cost: 5 points

4. Basic Judicial System. This town has evolved a basic code of laws and some semblance of due process. The police force is bound by certain restrictions, accused criminals get a basic trial, and punishment generally fits the crime. Whether the trial is by a jury, a judge, or some other form depends on the town. Punishment is usually harsh, similar to the laws of the Wolfen Republic (Phase World Sourcebook). Cost: 15 points

5. Complex Judicial System. This system is similar to the modern day legal system. All accused criminals (potentially only the citizens of the community) have basic rights which must be respected. Laws have evolved that govern most aspects of life, the police are generally on the up and up, and capital punishment is rarely invoked. Cost: 30 points

L. Notable Businesses

These elements may be purchased several times to provide atmosphere for the community.

1. Bar/Tavern. The standard plot device for almost any campaign. The bar can be sleazy, high class or anything in between. If this option is purchased several times, the taverns will be in competition and should try their hardest to bring in new customers. Cost: 2 points for a sleazy dive, 5 points for an average bar, or 10 points for a high class establishment or club

2. Weapons Dealer. An arms merchant might be independent, or a licensed dealer for a specific company. Either way, the merchant should have access to a variety of weapons, ranging from S.D.C. hand weapons, to heavy energy weapons and missiles. Cost: 15 points

3. Library. With the literacy rate being so low, a library and the people who work there can be invaluable to a community. Generally, the staff is made up of rogue scholars and scientists who earn their living translating documents, identifying artifacts and chemical compounds and potentially making repairs or offering basic medical services. Cost: 25 points

4. Operator or Techno-Wizard. Repairs are vital to travelers. If a town has an operator or **Techno-wizard** running a garage, it will be made a regular stop on trade routes, thus bringing revenue to the community. Cost: 25 points

5. Marketplace. While most towns have some kind of a market, this goes beyond the average. At any given time, the market will have 3D6 merchants (mostly transient) and on special days, that number may increase by five times or more. Any variety of goods can be found, but no guarantees are made and prices range dramatically. Cost: 30 Points

6. Slave Market. Incorporated into the town is a busy market dealing in the selling of sentient beings. Obviously, a community must take some view of members of other species that tolerates a slave trade. The town generally gains plenty of revenue from

such activity, but it also contributes to tremendous social problems. Cost: 30 points

7. Arena. Entertaining the masses is important to towns, and arenas have been a popular way of doing this for thousands of years. Fights may be between animals, monsters, humans, or anything else. The arena may also be used as a form of capital punishment and visiting adventurers may be forced into fighting. Cost: 40 points

8. Vehicle and Robot Dealer. A weapons merchant rarely has the resources to supply vehicles, robots, and power armor. This store will have access to numerous kinds of simple S.D.C. vehicles, hovercraft, and light M.D.C. armored vehicles. Common robots and power armor will be available, with "special" orders available at a high markup and possibly a long waiting period. Cost: 45 points

9. Alchemist or Magic Shop. Depending on a town's views on magic, this store could be an important part of the community, or an out-of-the-way, seldom used hole in the wall. An alchemist can have access to rare, mystical components, spell lore, and information about the world at large. Cost: 50 points

10. Magic Guild. A guild of this nature usually only exists in communities with favorable views on magic, but mystic undergrounds have been known to spring up where magic is suppressed. These organizations provide support and protection for their members, as well as supplies, spells, and other necessary things. It is important to note that non-member mages, those who anger the guild, and generally unwanted persons will be discriminated against or persecuted by the guild. Cost: 50 points

M. Power Source

1. None. This village expects the inhabitants to provide their own sources of power and heat. Cost: None

2. Basic Water. This is basically the same as number one, except the town has developed simple hydro-power, like water wheels for certain businesses, or methods of irrigation. Cost: 3 points

3. Coal. This fossil fuel is utilized for the creation of power. Each building still has its own furnace, but the town sells coal, as opposed to the residents being required to cut their own wood. Cost: 5 points

4. Oil/Natural Gas. A town with this resource has a central power plant with power lines linking the buildings to provide electricity. Cost: 10 points

5. Nuclear. Nuclear power is one of the most efficient sources of power for a wilderness community, but it's expensive to acquire and maintain and potentially dangerous if something goes wrong. Cost: 35 points

6. Alternative Fuel. This could take the form of solar power, advanced hydro-electric, or some other unique form of power. These forms have their advantages in being relatively cheap, but they usually don't provide much energy for the maintenance costs and are susceptible to destruction by invaders. Cost: 35 points

7. Mystic Power Generators. A town that chooses this option obviously must have a favorable view towards magic. The mages and **Techno-Wizards** of this community have developed a mystic generator that provides enough energy to power an entire town! Depending on the size of the community, one or many

generators may be used to provide power to all of the inhabitants. Cost: 50 points

8. Rift Power. To acquire this option, Location: Active Rift must also be purchased. This gutsy invention provides limitless power for a community of any size, but is also extremely dangerous. Playing with the energy of an active rift is risky at best, requiring safety measures for times of high rift activity (eclipses, solstices, etc.) as well as the creatures that might want to enter our dimension through the rift. Even so, towns that have the ability to tap this vast resource are usually willing to take the risk to possess the immense power a rift can provide. Cost: 60 points

N. Wealth

1. Impoverished. The vast majority of the residents of this community are barely eking out an existence and many die of starvation each year. Cost: None

2. Poor. While most people make enough to live on, very little is left over and if something goes wrong with crops or other money-makers, the village will revert to number 1. Cost: 5 points

3. Blue Collar. This represents a lower middle class society. Generally, the people can survive a few lean years on their reserves, and a little bit of extra money can be made each year. Cost: 10 points

4. Middle Class. The vast majority of communities live at this level or level 3. The people can afford a few luxuries and the town has enough revenue sources to be able to continue to prosper during a bad year or two. Cost: 25 points

5. Wealthy. Few places manage to make it to this level. The people can afford numerous luxuries, drive expensive vehicles, wear fancy clothes, and look down on everyone else. Cost: 45 points

6. Filthy Rich. Possibly only the higher levels of Chi-Town and some of the wealthier regions of the N.G.R. attain this level of wealth. The city is dripping with money and even the poor are at level 3 or 4. Cost: 60 points

O. Criminal Activity

1. None. Either through the effectiveness of the legal system, or simply because the citizens are extremely honest, the crime rate is low to nonexistent. Cost: 60 points, but add 10 points to wealth, 5 points to notable businesses, and 5 points to government.

2. Petty Crime. The crimes in this town are limited to "mundane" acts, usually theft, the occasional assault, and the very rare murder. Most people still feel very safe and can walk around freely at night and leave their doors unlocked. Cost: 45 points, but add 5 points to wealth and 5 points to notable businesses

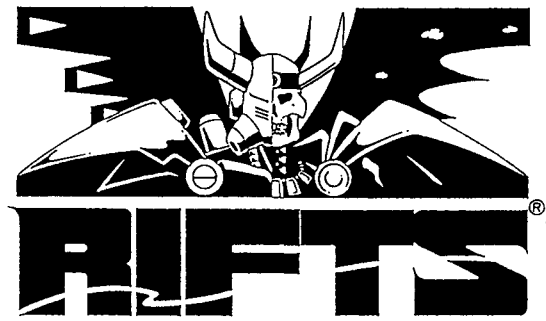
3. Crime Problems. Some modern day cities are at this level. Crimes are committed frequently and the police force is undermanned and overworked. Cost: 20 points

4. Government Corruption. The government of this city is as dirty as a septic tank. Nearly every member of the government, from low-level clerks to police to ranking politicians, accepts bribes and is driven by greed. Cost: 15 points, but add 5 points to government (things look good, but really aren't)

5. Mafia or Thieves Guild. Nearly all criminal acts are controlled or dictated by one or a few criminal organizations. This

actually provides an element of protection, as long as one is in good standing with the criminal cartel. Cost: 5 points

6. Total Anarchy. This state usually occurs when there is no police force of any kind. Criminals commit their crimes openly and without fear of reprisal, citizens are forced to remain in hiding for fear of being victimized, and the general wealth of the city is pretty low. Cost: None



The New Roman Republic

By Rodney Stott

Italy, a land with a history going back to ancient times, once the center of world power. The Wolfen, a tribal humanoid race from the Palladium Fantasy World. Only within the last 100 years did the Wolfen become united and form the Wolfen Empire, yet close similarities exist between the Wolfen and the ancient Empire of Rome.

Some anthropologists studying the Wolfen couldn't believe the similarities. Speculation exists that the Romans once had contact with Wolfen culture, and from this contact came the legends of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a **Wolf**.

During the Coming of the Rifts the old links between Italy and the Northern Wilderness flared to life. Through the rift came a Wolfen Legion, along with the large township in which they were based. The survivors were surprised to see the Wolfen come through the rift dressed in the armor of old Rome. The legion was hard pressed, but they fought to survive in this new world. At first the human survivors were afraid of the Wolfen, but the humans that came through with the legions soon helped to restore confidence and hope to the humans. With the assistance of the Wolfen, Rome was reconstructed, and several NATO armories in the vicinity were found. The weapons and equipment recovered provided the Legion with modern means to fight off dangerous, often monstrous opponents.

From this humble start grew the New Republic, founded on the principles of the Wolfen Empire and the Old Republic of Rome.

The New Republic Government

Capital: New Rome I *Neo Roma*

The government is based upon the ideals of the Wolfen Empire from the Palladium World and the Constitution of the twelve tribes of the Empire.

Governmental Bodies

The High Council: This council includes the leaders of the Wolfen Tribes of Rome and the Elected Leader of each member city-state within the Republic. The purpose of the council is mainly ceremonial and is to ratify decisions made by the Senate and the Peoples Assembly. One member of the Council is elected President for a five year term by the rest of council, and once elected, cannot be re-elected until each other councilor has sat as President.

The Senate: The Senate includes 12 elected representatives from each member state, 6 from each province and 3 from each state which has petitioned to join the republic. The Senate is an

advisory body able to veto legislation passed by the Assembly, censor policy, and to appoint or dismiss any civil servant. Each senator is elected for life.

The Assembly: The assembly is the only body able to create or abolish taxation, the representatives to the Assembly are elected in their own states by whatever method that state prefers and for the term set by that state, (some are elected, others are passed from father to son, etc.)

The other branches of the Republic

The Imperia: This is a body of 6 people elected by the senate, who are the real administrators of the republic (similar the head of the British Civil Service). These people do the real work in the running of the Republic, they collect taxes, assign money, raise and control the army, and appoint civil servants.

The Magistia: These people act as governors in the provinces and petitioned states. They are supposed to work with the local governments of their state, and have the power to call upon elements of the local military to support their position, and the position of the Republic.

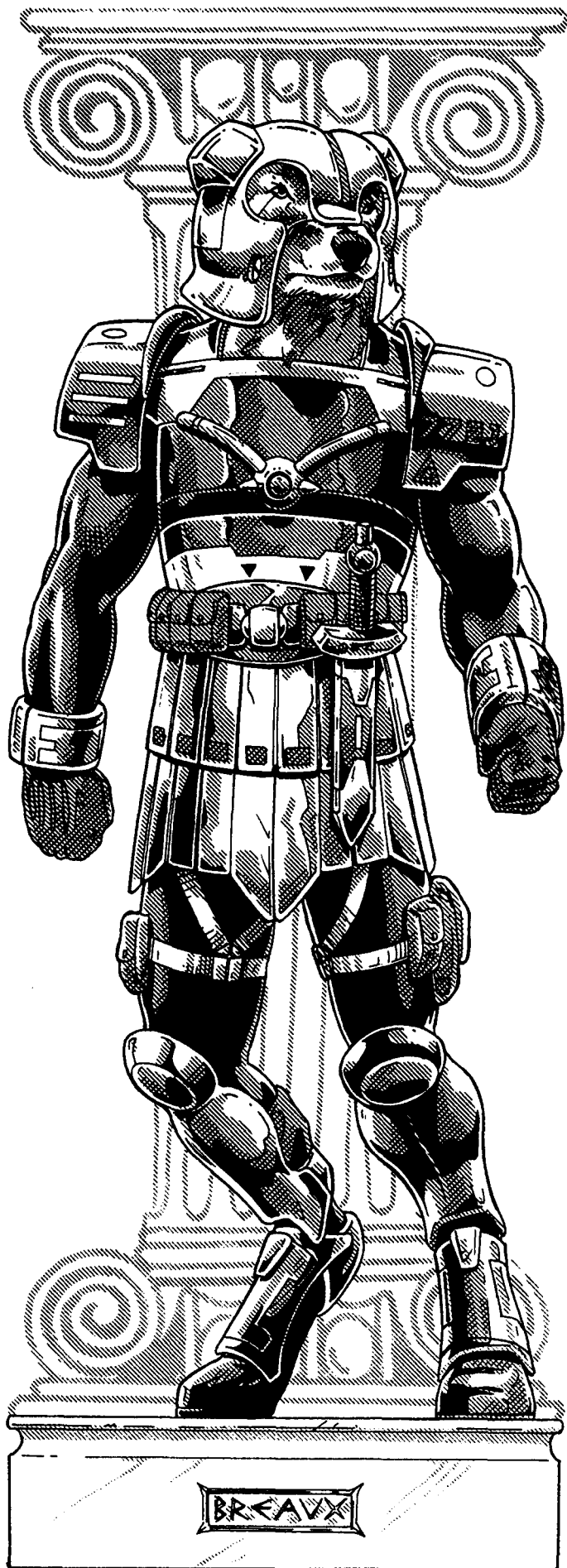
The Praetoria: These people are the civil judges appointed to administrate over civil conflicts, these conflicts can be between citizens, states, companies etc., they do not have jurisdiction over criminal law. The Imperia, or the Magistia or even the **Quatoria** may nominate each member of the Praetoria but their appointment comes from the senate.

The Quatoria: These are the police and the criminal judges of the republic. In remote areas they act as the police, judge and executioner, and if warranted can deputize others. In the cities there are various ranks from patrol-man to Judge; these ranks determine their jobs as well. The Quatoria is appointed by the Imperia, or temporary Quatoria can be appointed by the Magistia within their territory.

The Bureaucra: This branch consists of the rest of the civil services (scholars, administrators, librarians, translators, and postal workers. It is the Bureaucra that does much of the actual work within the Republic.

Education

The Republic believes in education, and is proud of its high literacy rate. Schooling is compulsory for all children from the ages of 6 to 15, with full schools in the cities, and remote areas having "school of the air" (radio based correspondence schools, for those who aren't in Australia). Literacy is at 80%, a record for most of the world during this time.



Languages

The main languages taught in the Republic are Wolfen, Italian, **Dragonese**, and Euro, with Wolfen and Italian being the **official** languages of the republic, and most citizens 80% are literate in at least one. The official written languages are Wolfen and Italian, since the written form of Wolfen is a phonetic language, capable of recording any spoken language and being read back perfectly in that language. More information about the written Wolfen language can be found on pages 17 and 18 of **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness**.

Currency

The New Republic accepts the **NGR** credit, and issues it's own credits, and a form of hard currency. This currency resembles the Wolfen currency of the palladium world, but each denomination has a holographic seal embossed on each side.

Components of the New Republic

Unsubdued Peoples

These include hostile races like Gargoyles and Brodkil.

Coyle Hordes

In addition to the Wolfen elements that were imported from the palladium world, Coyles were rifted in. These renegades lurk on the fringes of the republic, ambushing republican forces and giving the republic a bad name, by attacking communities which are not aligned to the republic. Rumor has it that some Coyle factions have aligned themselves with the Gargoyles to the north.

Gargoyles/Demons/Brodkil/Bug Bears/Splugorth

The Wolfen have a healthy respect for all life forms, and have a "live and let live" policy, treating all races equally, but they have to draw they line with these creatures. They have been declared dangerous enemies of the state, and are treated as such.

Affiliate races

Elves, Frost Giants, Ice Dragon

(the latter two races are not believed to reside in Italy)

No treaties are in held with these races, but they are viewed as friendly.

Bearmen, Drakin, Dragon Wolves, Emirin, Faeries, Unicorns, Water Nix and Wing Tips.

These races are respected and are considered to have provisional status as citizens of the republic.

Changelings, Dwarves, Ogres, Gigantes and Trolls.

The Wolfen are not comfortable with these races, but do not want to declare them enemies, so they are trying to fit them into republican society. The Ogres, Gigantes and Trolls have a problem with self government, while the Changelings and Dwarves have been mistrusted and suspect.

Wild Carnivorous Animals (Wolves, Bears, Mountain Lions, Hawks, Eagles)

These animals are regarded with respect and protected.

Attitudes toward the Rest of the world

Triax:

The Republic understands the reasons behind the treatment of non-humans in the **NGR**, but the current policy is to aid those non-humans covertly, while they support the **NGR** campaign against the Gargoyle Empire. The **NGR** has left the Republic alone to this point, and is actually considering a treaty with them, as it would provide the **NGR** with secure facilities for attacking the Gargoyles from the south.

The Gargoyle Empire:

The New Republic is against the empire, but for the time being are keeping things quiet, so as to not provoke the Gargoyles or their **Brodkil** allies into attacking them.

Atlantis:

The New Republic is totally opposed to the **Splugorth** and all they **represent**, including the New Phoenix empire in Egypt.

Republican Military Forces

The New Republic has a strong military, based on the imperial Roman Legions and the Legions of the Wolfen Empire. The Legions are under the direct command of the Imperia and the Senate. These forces are known as the Republican Legions. Each city within the republic also has its own legion for the city's self defense. These legions are the city's home guard, and are known as Quatoria Legions (Police Legions).

The Navy

The republic does not have an official Navy, though the Quatoria Legion from New Venice and the 3rd Republican Legion operate fast patrol craft as well as several troop transports. The Senate is considering the formation of an actual Navy, independent of the Legion command structure, to patrol the coastal waters.

Republican Legions:

There are currently 3 Republican Legions active in the New Republic, with plans by the senate to create an additional Republican Legion. The 1st Republican Legion is based in Milano, and is responsible for security along the northern border (the Gargoyle Empire), and the old French border. The 2nd Republican Legion is based in Sicilia and is responsible for the occupation of the Island and keeping the Mafia (Sicilian Republic) at bay, this legion has control only of the coastal regions and does not venture into the mountains in force, except on occasion. The 3rd Republican legion is based in Roma, and is responsible for guarding the Republican capital.

Each legion consists of 5000 troops, including Power Armor and Robot pilots.

Republican Legion Structure:

9 Cohorts consisting of 500 infantry troops each.

1 **Scutaria** Cohort consisting of Tanks and Giant Robots.

Each infantry Cohort is divided into 18 Maniples of 25 Soldiers and 2 Maniples of **Cataria** (Power Armor Troops).

Quatoria Legions:

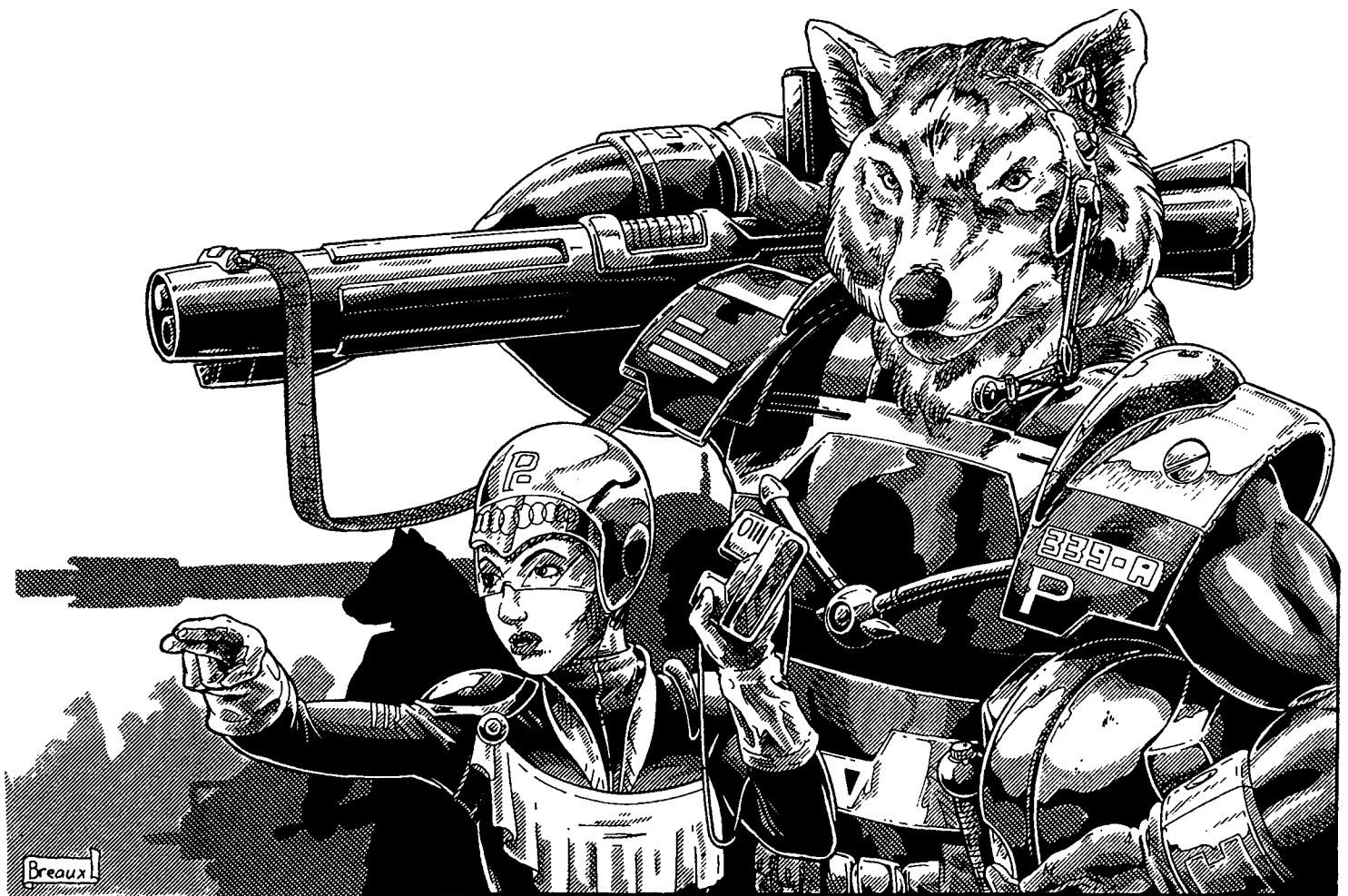
The Quatoria Legions are the equivalent of the Home Guard, Army Reserve or National Guard. They are under the direct command of the various city authorities. These legions are mostly made of a full time core of Officers, generally retired officers from the Republican legions. The rest of the legion consists of part time soldiers who donate several weeks a year to service, and receive military training. This provides a enormous reserve of trained soldiers ready to defend their homes.

Republican Army Ranks

1. **Iagia**: Private or "citizen soldier"
2. **Xavia**: sergeant 2IC in the maniples
3. **Lanipia**: Lieutenants: in command of maniples
4. **Centuria**: Captain, in charge of 4 to 6 maniples, plus 2 for each cohort.
5. **Quingia**: Majors, in charge of cohorts
6. **Militaria**: Colonel, these are considered extra officers, they do the paper work and handle the bureaucracy that can keep the legion in the field. They are also assigned to security and espionage divisions within the legion.
7. **Legatia**: Generals, there are only 3 active generals in charge of the legions, and there are currently 4 others who are not in active command, serving in the Imperia and Senate.
8. **Tribunia**: These positions are separate from the Republican Army, and are the commanders of the Home Defense forces.

Republican Army Titles

1. **Promotia**: **Temporary/Brevet** rank, used for promotions while in the field.
 2. **Imperia**: Commander, applies to leaders of Cohorts, Legions.
 3. **Tormentia**: Originally a Bowman, now applies to snipers, and riflemen, and to officers commanding such units.
 4. **Ballistia**: Originally and still applied to artillery and officers commanding artillery units.
 5. **Scutaria**: Originally heavy cavalry, now applied to Tanks and Robot squads.
 6. **Cataria**: Originally applied to Heavy Armor or Heavy Infantry Soldiers, now applies to Power Armor troops.
 7. **Clibania**: Originally applied to Light armor or light infantry soldiers, now applied to mobile troops, those that use **APCs** and Motorcycles and other high speed transportation.
 8. **Comitia**: Scouts or Escort troops
 9. **Hastaria**: Originally **Polearm** or Anti-Armor Infantrymen, still applied to those units and officers whose training is to take out 'Bots, Tanks and other Armor and fortified positions.
 10. **Dolabria**: Engineers
 11. **Auxilia**: Secondary troops.
 12. **Mulia**: Labor/convict troops or their officers. Prisoners in the republic who are considered low risk are placed in labor divisions of the army, they do the hard work, digging trenches, cooking the food, and other sundry tasks.
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The Cities of the New Republic

Member States

New Rome or Neo Roma

Home to the 3rd Republican Legion.

Capital of the Republic

New Rome was founded on the ruins of Rome, by the survivors of a Wolfen city that was rifted to earth. The Wolfen scholars who had been rifted to earth unearthed the history of the ruined city they stood in, as well as the Roman Empire, from the **shattered** libraries of Rome. With help from the surviving humans living near Rome, and with assistance that the Wolfen mages had managed to rift in from the Palladium world, they rebuilt the city and restarted high tech manufacturing facilities, using technical texts, and humans who had worked in those fields. New Rome today looks like a cross between Ancient Rome and a high tech city. Highways thread through a city with a rebuilt Colosseum and buildings resembling those of Ancient Rome, but build of concrete and modern alloys. The seat of the republican capital, the city boasts of a large university, and schools of magic.

Major sites of Neo Rome

The Capitol Building

The Capitol building is a sprawling complex, taking up 5 city blocks, and is the home of the Republican Senate and the Assembly of the people. The building is guarded by ceremonial units of the 3rd Republican Legion and is open to the public every day from 10 in the morning to 4:30 in the Afternoon.

The Colosseum

The Colosseum has been rebuilt and looks like the ancient Colosseum, though it has been fitted out with modern high technology features. The original purpose of the Colosseum was for blood sports, but since blood sports are banned within the Republic, the Colosseum is a major theatre complex and outdoor recording studio. Here classics from several dimensions are performed and recorded. A Company called the Colosseum Players plays here regularly, and specializes in Shakespearean productions.

The Great Library

The Great Library of Rome is a new construction which lies across from the Capitol building. The Great Library holds the collected archives from the excavations around Rome, and throughout the Empire, as well as works from the Wolfen Empire. The library is split in 3 sections, the first being a Public Library where citizens of the Republic can borrow books and video disks. The second section is the Museum, which falls under the

control of the library, containing numerous artifacts, glimpses of the past. The 3rd section of the Library, open only to scholars and researchers, is the archives, where the cataloguing of material occurs as well as the storage of rare books. It is in the archives that rare books and manuscripts are preserved and transferred to video disk so they can be released to the general public. The library has a great collection of pre-rift manuscripts dating back to the early years of the Catholic Church, as they managed to unearth the fabled Vatican library.

Rome University

The University of Rome is a large university campus unmatched by most other centers of learning on Rifts Earth. The University teaches the Sciences, Magic, Arts and Humanities as well as Engineering.

Population

Wolfen 150,000

Humans 50,000

Elves 500

Other 3,000

Milano

Home of the 1st Republican Legion

Milan is a small city, just recently granted Member status, and is close to the Alps, and to the Gargoyle Empire. Famous for its history, Republican archaeologists from the great Library and the University are digging in the ruins of the old city, to unearth treasures of the past. The town is a military city, and would not survive without the Roman Legions providing economic support. Many businesses cater to the military, including arms dealers, outfitters, bars and recreational facilities. Many travelers travelling through southern Europe pass through Milan. The Milan City Council has legalized Prostitution providing the establishments meet strict hygiene and safety standards.

Major sites of Milano

Dominique's

Dominique's is the largest brothel in Milan, and has 50 women and 5 men of various races working there. The rates are reasonable. Dominique's also has a bar and several theatres (movie and stage) within its complex, catering to all whims and desires.

Population

Wolfen 6,000

Humans 20,000

Napoli

Second city state of the republic.

Naples is a thriving city, whose livelihood depends on what limited trade exists along the western Mediterranean sea, and fishing. Naples also has a decent ship building facility. Salerno just to the south is considered part of the Naples City State, and is the major industrial site of the republic. The Naples industrial district is responsible for the construction of 75% of the republican legion's armaments.

Population

Wolfen 20,000

Human 30,000

Major Provinces

Sicilia

Home of the 2nd republican legion

Sicily is the homeland of the Mafia, and when the rifts occurred the Mafia took control of the island, seizing power from the struggling elected officials. If you were on Sicily, and you weren't related to one of the families or didn't have essential skills, the Mafia executed you. The Mafia, using Italian Army weapons and equipment, managed to fend off many of the monster attacks that plagued the region, and formed their own isolationist government (see the Sicilian Republic). They kept to themselves on their Island until 100 years ago when the Mafia discovered the fledgling Roman Republic. Trying the old methods first, they tried to corrupt the governing bodies, but unlike the Italian governments that existed prior to the coming of the rifts, which were prone to corruption and bribery, these officials reported the attempts to the Quatoria. The Mafia, shocked that their plan didn't work, declared war on the republic. The republic replied by sending in the 2nd legion, which managed to take Palermo, Messina and Catania away from Mafia control. Though the Mafia still controls the countryside, and has resorted to tricks of old like ambushes and bombings, the 2nd legion has instituted patrols in force to track down Mafia strongholds and manufacturing Facilities.

Population

Humans 30,000

Wolfen 6,000

For further details on Sicilia please see The Sicilian Republic below

Petitioning States

Trieste/New Venice

The city of New Venice is undergoing approval to become the next member state of the republic, and is receiving considerable support from the republic, in the way of materials and training. Unfortunately, New Venice is often threatened by the Gargoyles and **Brodkil** to the north.

Population 15,000

The city of New **Venice/Trieste** was founded by refugees from Venice and Trieste just above the new sea level after the coming of the Rifts. In fact, to protect themselves they built their city in the new marshlands that were created, using boats and sinking supports into the new seabed. As well as settling in the upper stories of buildings that survived the rising waters, like the original Venice. By building the city in the marshes they escaped the worst depravations from the monsters that ravaged the land, and the relative shallows kept the worst of the sea monsters from attacking the survivors. The new city rests at the foot of the Alps near what was the town of Udine. When naming the city they debated naming it after the cities that the survivors came from, the Italian city of Venice and the Austrian city of Trieste. The city council decided to name their city after Venice, whose heritage was similar to that of the new city, built in the marshes.

New Venice is actually divided into two cities. The upper city is home to the Humans and other surface dwellers, while below

the waters in the submerged buildings live the population of the undercity. These include the aquatics **Kreel-Lok** and **Kappa**, among others. The undercity and the uppercity do not have much contact with each other, but they do share a common council. The population of the undercity is unknown, but estimated to be 10,000.

The ruling body of New Venice is a council, made up of the city elders, which come from the 5 families that rule the uppercity, and the elders of the undercity.

The city produces fast hydrofoils and underwater craft, though the shipyards are not of the quality of Naples.

The New Venice military is primarily an amphibious force, using shallow drafted patrol boats, hovercraft, Jet Skis, helicopters and VTOL craft.

The New Republican Legionnaire O.C.C.

This OCC is the mainstay behind the republican Legions, 95% off all soldiers within the Legions are of this OCC. Other military OCCs can be selected and could be considered specialists or Foreign trained soldiers.

All Characters receive the basic training then go for advanced training in their specialty. Officers then go to officer school to receive further training.

Attribute Requirements

P.E.: 12 I.Q.: 12 or higher for Officer training.

O.C.C. Skills

- Radio Basic (+10%)
- Running
- Climbing (+5%)
- Language: Wolfen or Italian (+20%)
- Language: Native 98%
- Literacy: Wolfen (+10%)
- W.P. Spear
- W.P. Energy Rifle
- W.P. Sword One
- W.P. of choice
- Hand to Hand Expert
- Select 1 M.O.S. Specialty from the ones listed below

M.O.S. Training:

Tormentia/Rifleman Training

This is the basic training for becoming a Rifleman

- First Aid
- Pilot Truck
- Sniper
- Swimming (+10%)
- W.P. Grenade Launcher
- W.P. Auto & Semi Auto Rifle

Ballistia/Artillery training

This training enables the character to pilot and fire mobile Artillery and the Large cannons used for fire support.

- W.P. Heavy
- W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons
- Read Sensory Equipment (+10%)
- Weapon Systems (+10%)
- Pilot Truck (+5%)
- Pilot Tanks and APCs

Scutaria/Tank/Bot Crew Training

This training is for the Armored divisions and teaches the character tank and giant robot operation.

- Weapon Systems (+10%)
- Read Sensory Equipment (+10%)
- Pilot Tanks and APCs (+20%)
- Pilot Robots and Power Armor (+15%)
- Robot Combat Elite: 'Bot (no Power armor can be selected)
- Robot Combat Elite: **'Bot** (no Power armor can be selected)

Cataria/PowerArmor Training

Soldiers who select this M.O.S. are taught to use the Power Armor used by the Legions, and are used to support other troops in the field.

- Weapon Systems (+10%)
- Read Sensory Equipment (+10%)
- Pilot Robots and Power Armor (+15%)
- Navigation (+15%)
- Robot Combat Elite: Power Armor Selection
- Robot Combat Elite: Power Armor Selection

Clibania/Mobile/Light Infantry

The Light Infantry are trained in fast response tactics, and are highly mobile being equipped with Jet Packs, Hover cycles and motorcycles.

- Pilot Jet Pack (+15%)
- Pilot Hover Vehicle (+10%)
- Pilot Motorcycle (+15%)
- Read Sensory Equipment (+10%)
- Weapon Systems (+5%)
- First Aid (+10%)

Comitia: Scouts or Escort troops

The Scouts are independent troops trained to recognize and evaluate enemy forces, ambushes and traps.

- Wilderness Survival (+15%)
- Intelligence (+15%)
- Detect Ambush (+10%)
- Detect Concealment (+10%)
- Tracking (+10%)
- Navigation (+10%)

Hastaria/Anti-Armor Training

Hastaria troops are trained to destroy enemy armored positions, plus these infantry troops are trained in techniques to destroy/capture enemy robots.

- Pilot Tanks and APCs (+5%)
- Demolitions (+15%)
- Weapon Systems (+15%)
- W.P. Energy Pistol
- W.P. Heavy
- W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons

Dolabria:Engineers

These engineers receive training at the University of Rome, and are used as support troops by the legions, Their jobs include building fortifications, repairing Legion equipment and transportation.

Advanced Mathematics (+10%)
Electrical Engineer (+15%)
Mechanical Engineer (+15%)
Weapons Engineer (+15%)
Camouflage (+10%)
Read Sensory Equipment (+10%)

Imperia/Officer Training

Skills package cannot be selected until 5th level. Only experienced soldiers become eligible for officer training. To see if the character is selected for officer training roll a D20 to **pass** the officers candidates tests, if the roll is 17 or **better**, the character can take the officers skill package, and graduates to the officer experience tables. If the roll is failed, he cannot retry the exams until reaching the next level.

(I.Q. bonus is calculated using the M.E. bonus to save vs. Psionics using I.Q. instead of M.E.)

(a bonus of +1 is added to the roll to pass the test for each level beyond 5).

Intelligence (+10%)

W.P. Energy Pistol

Language: Dragonese (+10%)

Literacy: Dragonese

O.C.C. Related Skills

Select 6 from the following list; select an additional skill at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

Communications: Any.

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Any.

Espionage: Any.

Mechanical: Any.

Medical: First Aid or Paramedic only.

Military: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rouge: Any.

Science: Math skills only

Technical: Any.

Weapon Proficiencies: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: Select 7 secondary skills from the above list.

Equipment And Weapons

Legionnaire Body Armor (**Environmental/Heavy** or Light depending on training), Scutum Shield, Gladius **Vibro-sword**, Pili-um Energy Spear, Republican Survival Pack (similar in content to the NG-S2 survival pack), **NR-10** or **NR-12** Assault Laser Rifle, 3 Grenades

In addition,

Officers, Engineers, Pilots and Anti-Armor troops are issued **NR-18 Laser Pistols**

Anti-Armor troops are issued **NR-27 Heavy Plasma Cannons** or **NRR-1 Rocket Launcher** instead of the laser rifles.

Heavy Infantry can select the **NR-14 "Firebreather"** instead of the **NR-10** or **NR-12**.

Power Armor Pilots can select 1 power Armor suit

Tank Crew training allows one tank or bot to be used.

Light Infantry can select any small light and fast hovercycle or motorcycle.

Engineers also receive a portable tool kit.

Money

The character gets room and board at a barracks or subsidized off base accommodation as part of the pay package.

Monthly pay package is 2,000 cr.

Character starts out with 1,500 cr. from basic training.

Cybernetics

The character starts off with none, most will only get cybernetics or bionics for medical purposes, though some areas will consider augmentation (Anti-Armor and Rifleman training mainly)

Experience point table: as per CS Military Specialist.

Officers add 2,000 Experience points per level of experience.

Equipment and Weapons of the New Republic Legionnaire

Environmental Body Armor

This armor resembles the Classical Roman Legionnaire armor with the addition of arm and leg armor, and with a face plate this armor can become full environmental body armor.

Comes in two standard sizes, Wolfen and Human

Wolfen Size: 100 MDC

Weight: 25 pounds

Cost 50,000 Cr.

-15% Prowl Penalty

Human Size: 60 MDC

Weight: 17 pounds

Cost 30,000 Cr.

-15% Prowl Penalty

Republican Legionnaire Scout Armor

This armor resembles the Roman Legionnaire armor more closely and is a laminated armor rather than a Heavy Environmental suit. Note this suit is not environmental, but is designed for mobility.

Wolfen size: 80 MDC

Weight 18 pounds

Cost 25,000 Cr.

Human Size: 45 MDC

Weight 10 pounds

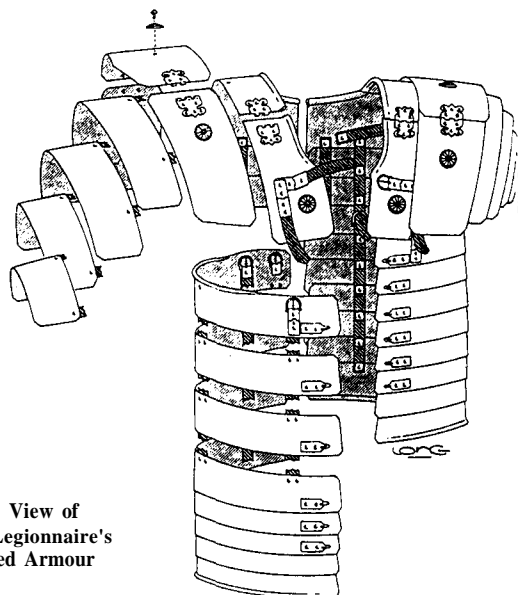
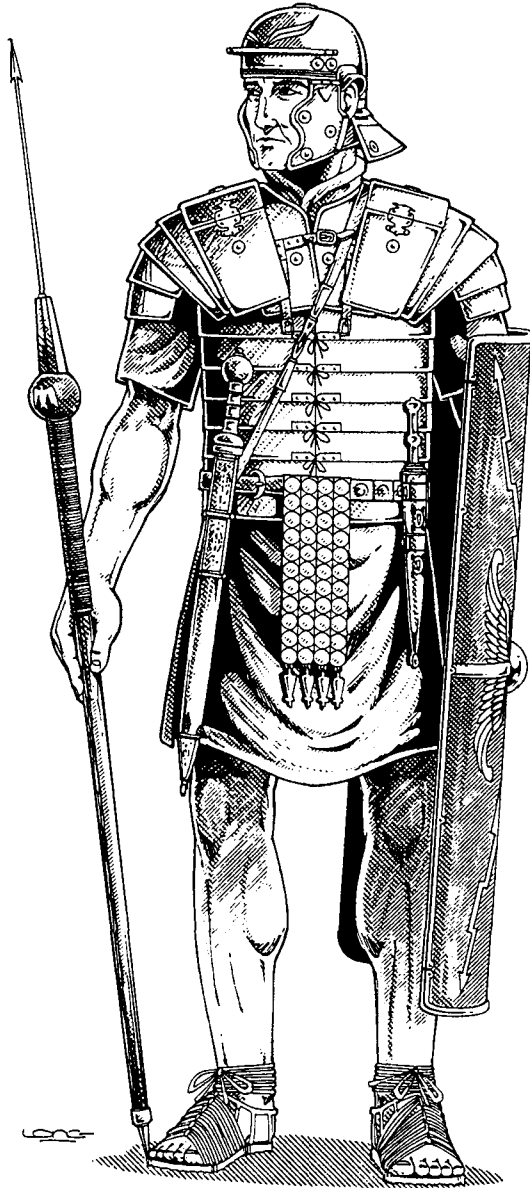
Cost 15,000 Cr.

No Prowl Penalty

Scutum Shield

This is a 60 MDC (human) / 90 MDC (Wolfen) shield issued to all Legionnaires

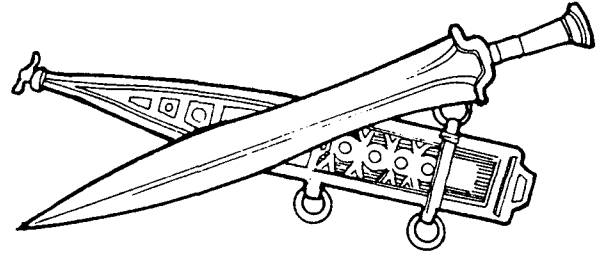
Roman Legionnaire
c. 50-250 A.D.



Exploded View of
Roman Legionnaire's
Laminated Armour



Pugio. A straight, double-edged dagger used by the Romans.



Gladius short sword

2D4 M.D. (This is essentially a Vibro-short sword).

Pilum Energy Spear

The energy spear is constructed using stolen Kittani Plasma technology.

Weight 10 pounds

Mega-Damage: 2D6+4 MD per strike or Plasma blast doing 6D6 MD, each plasma blast drains 10minutes from the e-clip.

Rate of Fire: Equal to Hand to Hand attacks per melee

Payload: The Energy Clip contains enough power for 2 hours of constant use, a maximum of 12 plasma blasts (the Wolfen design uses an extra large e-clip design) a standard Kittani e-clip can also be used with the Pilum but a 60 minute power supply.

Maximum Effective Range: 100 ft.

Market Price: 35,000 Cr.

Phalanx Main Battle Tank

The Phalanx MBT is the mainstay behind the Republican Legions Armored Core. This tank was designed for maximum combat effectiveness in a variety of terrains. The tank has a traditional style to it, though it has some additional features hidden away.

This tank has been in service for the last 20 years within the Republic and has proven its reliability over and over again. The tank is equipped with standard treads for propulsion, but it is also equipped with a backup Hover Jet System to provide limited maneuvering capabilities. The reserve Hover Jet system can lift the tank 2ft above the ground. The Phalanx is also equipped for limited water travel for crossing lakes and rivers, in this case armored balloons are inflated that can enable the tank to float while being propelled by movement of its treads, and 2 small propellers. If these balloons are not inflated or are destroyed the tanks can still function underwater by travelling along the bottom of the river.

Model Type: NRA-03

Class: Main Battle Tank

Crew: 4 (Driver/Gunner/Commander/Communications)

M.D.C. By Location:

*Main Body - 400

**Treads (2) - 100each

Turret - 200

Rail Cannon - 125

***Inflatable balloons (6) - 50 each

Co-Axial Laser - 30

Missile Pods (2) - 100each

****Sensor Tower - 50

Hover Jets (4) - 30 each

*Destroying the main body will shut the tank down.

**Destroying one of the treads will render the tank immobile unless hover jets are engaged.

***Destruction of 3 or more of the inflatable bags will cause the Tank to sink in **water**, and to travel along the bottom.

****Destroying the Sensor tower will force the tank crew to rely on backup sensors (-2 strike) and visuals.

Speed

Maximum on Land: 60 mph (100 Km/h) on open terrain.

Hover Capability: 35 mph (60 Km/h)

The Hover Jets need to cool after 30 minutes of use (requiring them to be shut down for 1 hour before reactivation)

Water Surface: 10 mph

Statistics

Height 15 feet

Width 14 feet

Length 20 feet

Weight 70 tons

Power Supply: Nuclear 10year life

Weapon Systems

1. 120 mm Rail Cannon

This is the main gun of the tank, and is a large bore rail cannon capable of firing a variety rounds. The Tank is capable of carrying 40 rounds in the autoloader, with the gunner being able to select the next type of round to be fired.

Rate of Fire: equal to the Hand to Hand attacks of the Gunner

Payload: 40

Standard HE Round

This is an old round designed for use against soft skin targets like light armor, and emplacements.

Damage: 2D6x10 MD

Range: 2000 ft

Blast Radius: 15 ft

HEAT Round

This round is designed as a tank killer.

Damage 2D6x10+20

Range: 2000 ft

Blast Radius: 5 ft

Fragmentation Round

This round is designed for use against infantry.

Damage: 1D6x10

Range: 2000 ft

Blast Radius: 35 ft

Incendiary Round

This round uses White Phosphorous and other chemicals that ignite when exposed to air, and is deadly to infantry without body armor.

Damage: The round does 1D6x10MD initially, and continues to burn for 1D6+2 melees doing 3D6 MD per melee

Range: 2000 ft

Blast Radius: 40 ft *special, all targets within the blast radius have a 30% chance of being hit with fragments from the incendi-

ary round (standard dodge applies (no roll is possible)), these fragments will do 3D6 MD for 1D4 rounds.

Hypervelocity Round

This round is a relatively new round for the tank, when fired a ramjet is engaged accelerating the round to tremendous speed, then the ramjet is discarded leaving a sabot style round that can tear through most targets. This round is designed to slam through armor, roll on the following table to determine results

01-75% nothing vital hit

76-95% system damage roll on optional damage tables

96-00% major system damage (if cockpit is hit 1/2 damage is inflicted to the pilot)

Damage: 1D6x10+20

Range: 10,000 ft

Blast radius: None

2. Co-axial Laser gun

This weapon is operated by the commander.

Range: 1500 ft

Damage: 3D6 MD

Rate of fire: Equal to the Hand to Hand attacks per Melee of the operator.

Payload: Effectively Unlimited

3. Missile Pods (2)

These are designed to fire mini-missiles

Range: as per mini-missile used (generally Plasma)

Damage: as per mini-missile used (generally Plasma)

Payload: 4 Mini-missiles per launcher, for a total of 8.

Rate of Fire: one at a time or in volleys of 2, 4, or 8

Sensor system:

As per robot vehicles the targeting computer gives the gunner a +3 to strike with the main gun and mini-missile launchers.

Scutum "Shield" Armored Troop Carrier

The Scutum Troop carrier is a large half-track armored personnel carrier/truck used by the Legions for troop and cargo transport. The Scutum is armed with a variety of light weapons only, and is not designed for front line use, though it has performed adequately in skirmish situations.

The Scutum, like the Phalanx MBT, is equipped with floatation devices for river crossings.

This vehicle requires conventional power sources (diesel fuel), and even though the cabin and the troop bay can be sealed it cannot operate underwater.

The Scutum is the most common vehicle used by the Legions, apart from normal jeeps.

Model: NRTC-01

Class: Troop Carrier

Crew: 2, Driver and Gunner, and can carry 25 troops (Wolfen and Human) in the rear Troop Bay.

MDC By Location

*Main Body - 275

Driver's Cab (pilots compartment) - 150

Troop Bay - 200

Troop Ramp - 75

Armored Wheels (2) - 65 each

Treads (2) - 100 each

Laser Turret - 20

Headlamps (6) - 15 each

Floataion Bags (6) - 50 each

*Destruction of the main body will shut down the Scutum

Speed:

Driving on Open Ground: 75mph

On Water: 15mph

Height: 12ft

Width: 12ft

Length: 35ft

Power Supply: Diesel

Effective Range: 300 miles before needing refueling.

Weapon Systems

1. Laser Turret

This is the main weapon system of the Scutum and is used for defensive purposes only. The gunners seat next to the driver is elevated when this weapon is to be used, and the gunner is exposed to the air when firing the gun (-2 to hit the gunner).

Damage: 5D6 MD

Range: 900 ft

Payload: 100 round capacitor (must be replaced or recharged when empty; takes 2 rounds to change)

There are firing ports in the sides and rear of the troop bay allowing the troops to add their fire power to that of the gunner. Troops dismount via a drop down ramp at the rear of the transport.

Republican Wolf Rider Robot

This robot is relatively new to the Republican legions, in service for only the last 4 years (as of 101 P.A.). This **bot** has been designed for mountain combat where the Phalanx MBT cannot really function. To allow for increased mobility the 'bot rests on 4 articulated legs.

The 'Bot takes many of its features from the Phalanx, including the main armament, but unlike the Phalanx the cannon is not turret mounted, and thus can be given slightly better armored protection. In addition, the Wolf Rider is also equipped with a Hover Jet system, but in this version, the Hover Jets can even be used to boost the leaps of the Wolf Rider.

The bot is a serious combat vehicle used primarily in mountainous terrain, and the legs of the bot have been designed to allow a nice smooth running and leaping motion, similar to that of a Wolf.

The bot requires a crew of 2 to operate, and can carry up to 6 Wolfen size troops in side-mounted troop pods (3 soldiers per side), or cargo.

Class: Mountain Terrain Combat Robot

Model Type: RMTCR-01

Crew: 2 (pilot/co-pilot), can carry 6 troops

MDC by Location:

*Main Body - 275

Pilots Compartment - 180

Troop/Cargo Pods (2) - 100 each

120mm Rail Cannon - 130

**Legs (4) - 80 each

***Hover Jets (6) - 30 each

****Wolfs Head - 150

Side Lasers (2) - 20 each

Tail - 50

***Destruction** of the Main Body will render the 'bot completely immobile

****Destruction** of 1 leg will reduce speed by 25% but otherwise will not impair the 'bot, destruction of two or more legs will render the 'bot immobile unless backup hoverjets are engaged.

*****Destruction** of 2 or more of the Hover Jets will reduce the leaping capabilities of the 'bot by half as well as eliminate its hover mode.

******Destruction** of the head will reduce all bonuses by half.

Speed:

Running: The 'Bot can run a 60 miles per hour (100 km/h)

Leaping: The 'Bot can leap 20ft high and up to 50ft long with thrusters

Flight: The Wolf Rider is capable of limited hover flight (in this mode the legs stretch to the front and the back, as if the 'bot is in mid leap. Maximum Altitude is 10 feet and the Hover Thrusters can only maintain **flight/hover** for 20 minutes before requiring cooling.

Height: 25 feet

Width: 10 feet

Length: 25 feet plus a 6-foot tail

Power Supply: Nuclear with a 10 year life span.

Weapon Systems

1. 120mm Rail Cannon

This is the same cannon that is mounted on the Phalanx MBT.

Payload: The 'bot can carry 20 rounds for the Cannon

Rate of Fire: Equal to the Hand to Hand attacks per melee of the Pilot.

2. Side laser Cannons

There is a laser cannon mounted on each side of the main body of the Wolf Rider, which are operated by the co-pilot.

Damage: 4D6 Single shot, 8D6 Twin Blast.

Range: 1600 ft

Rate of Fire: Equal to the hand to hand attacks per melee of the co-pilot.

Payload: Effectively Unlimited.

3. Wolf's Head

The **wolf's** head is an integrated weapons package and sensor system.

The eyes of the wolf are a set of high intensity Spotlights, and can be changed to **IR** or **UV** Spotlights if required.

The Ears are the Wolf Rider's primary radio transmitter and receiver unit, as well as being directional microphones.

The Mouth of the Wolf contains a MD Flame thrower, plus the teeth are Vibro weapons.

Mouth Plasma Flame Thrower

Damage: Short burst: 4D6 MD, a long burst does 2D4x10MD (2 attacks), the flame-thrower can also incinerate a 15 ft are doing 2D6 MD to all targets.

Range: 30 feet

Payload: the head contains enough fuel for 100 short bursts

4. Hand to hand Combat:

Bite: 1D6x10 MD

Claws: 3D6 MD

Ram/Body block: 3D6 MD

Stomp: 2D6 MD

Tail Strike: 1D6 MD

Robot Combat Elite - Wolf Rider

2 hand to hand attacks per melee plus those of the operator

+2 to strike

+1 parry

+1 dodge

+3 roll

+1 attack at level 5 and 10

The Sicilian Republic

This expansion details the Mafia in Sicily, and throughout Southern Europe, and Northern Africa.

Sicily, even in the days before the coming of the rifts, was always nominally part of Italy, but was controlled by the powerful organized crime families of the region. These families had their own arms manufacturing facilities, both legal and illegal, and controlled vast money making corporations. The families ran drugs, smuggled contraband and military secrets, engaged in assassination, and other nefarious activities. When the Rifts came, Sicily was rocked by the earthquakes and other disasters. This provided the opportunity for the Mafia to throw off any pretence of serving the Italian government and they took control of the Island. The secret military reserves of the Mafia, as strong as many national armies, defended the Island against the monster hordes that closed in on all directions. The casualty rate was high but the people saw the Mafia as their saviors, and flocked to serve the Mafia. The Mafia also lost contact with most of the world when the Rifts erupted, causing many arms of its organization to die, but some groups thrive today, as in North America with the Black Market, the remnant of the Mafia in America.

When the New Roman Republic expanded into Southern Italy, they encountered the Mafia (Then calling themselves the Sicilian Republic), and they quickly made peace with each other, but this was to enable the Mafia to slip agents into the Roman power system, and to attempt control the Roman Republic, like the Mafia of old did in **pre-rift** times. This attempt failed and several agents were captured and divulged the plan to the Roman Authorities. At this point the Mafia launched an all out war on the Roman Republic, but were driven back after several disastrous battles. The Roman legions managed to drive the Mafia out of Southern Italy, and then managed to conquer the towns and lowland districts of Sicily itself, but the interior is still dominated by the Mafia. Recently, through **agents** in the **NGR**, the Mafia contacted the Coalition States of America, and requested assistance. The CS has responded to this call from fellow their humans by sending advisors, and training staff, as well as some surplus military hardware to Sicily, to train and assist the Mafia forces. In return the Mafia is willing to provide technological data gained from its operatives within the **NGR**, plus other technology which the Mafia had stolen from other sources.

The Roman Occupation has driven the Mafia into the mountains and western portions of the island. The Sicilian Republic now has its capital **Agrigento**; the capital was located in Palermo before the Roman occupation.

The Roman legions have achieved a stalemate on the island, with most of the warfare turning into odd skirmishes and terrorist attacks. The Legions control the coastline of the North and Eastern sections of the island while the Mafia controls the southern coast. The Roman Republic, upon gaining control of the coastal regions of Sicily, established a provincial governor, based in the old government house in Palermo, and has established military bases in Messina and Catania. The base in Messina is a transit base, for supplies coming into the country. The Mafia has a secret manufacturing facility and training base located in Malta, and near the ruins of Tunis. The Mafia also has close ties with Sardinia and Corsica, with friends among the local population. This friendship has provided the means for the Sicilian republic to continue the fight against the New Republic, by providing men and material for their war effort. Several factories **nearing** destruction at the hands of the Romans were managed to be dismantled and transported to Sardinia, where they produce war materials destined for use against the Romans.

Corsica and Sardinia

Corsica is a mountainous Island; what large towns existed there before the coming of the Rifts were destroyed by Natural disaster. The people of Corsica live a mainly rural life, and have developed into tough fighters, well able to defend their homeland against all comers. Sardinia lost many towns when the rifts erupted, along with much of its population, and what humans survived managed to eke out a living as farmers and hunters. That is, of course, until the Sicilian Republic came to the aid of the Sardinian people 100 years after the coming of the Rifts. With their help the Sardinians have developed several factories to produce luxury goods and military hardware. When the Romans invaded Sicily, the Sardinians supplied assistance to the Sicilians, but were unable to make any real difference in the course of the War. At the moment the Sardinians are ferrying supplies into Sicily.

Mafia Military Tactics and Strategy

The Mafia prefers to use hit and run assaults, and terrorist style tactics in its warfare. They can participate in a stand up war if they have to, but they try to avoid such tactics.

The Mafia and the Coalition States of America

The Mafia still exists in North America, the descendants of the close knit crime families from before the rifts. The Mafia has a heavy interest in the North American Black Market, as well as the lower levels of the fortress cities of the Coalition, where they control much of the local crime. In the Wilderness the Mafia is not as strong, but they do support several mercenary companies and control several small towns, generally along trade routes along the Northeastern United States. The Italian Mafia do have official representation within Chi-Town, with a official embassy located there staffed by the Mafia, though the embassy officially represents "**The Sicilian Republic.**"

Equipment and Weapons of the Sicilian Republic

The Sicilian Republic prefers to avoid direct confrontation, so their weapons and methods are more subtle in style. It is with this sense of subtly and style that I have tried to create the following weapons and equipment.

Vibro-Garrote

The Mafia have developed a silent assassination weapon that can easily be concealed within a belt. The **Garrote** is powered by two miniature energy cells which are in the handles of the Garrote. This powers a Vibro blade system in the Garrote allowing the Sicilian agents using this weapon to cut through most materials, and is an effective weapon even against supernatural creatures and power armor.

Damage: When energized the **garrote** does 2D6 MD, when not energized the Garrote does 1D6 SDC damage plus PS damage bonus.

Special: The Garrote is a really nasty **weapon**, but using the standard Palladium Combat system the Garrote could be considered very ineffective.

In Revised Recon (maybe Recon Modern Combat will cover this!) they had rules for garrote combat, where the Garrote can only be used for a surprise attack from the rear and on a successful hit (roll under Agility) will either kill or knock out the opponent (no ST damage is suffered), if the attack roll fails it does 1D10 damage to the victim.

These rules seem OK, so I have decided to modify them to fit into the standard Palladium Rules.

Garrote Attack: To make a successful attack using the Garrote you must attack from Surprise and Behind. To hit, you must make a called shot (a roll of 12+). A successful hit but, below a roll of 12, will inflict the base damage (generally 1D6 plus damage bonus direct to hit points unless otherwise stated). If the called shot is successful the character then then decide to either Kill the opponent, or to knock the opponent unconscious.

The garrote attack can only be used for the first attack of the melee.

Tactical Display Glasses

The Sicilian has equipped their operatives with high tech sunglasses than can be used as a heads up display. These glasses are polarized, and light adjusting. The glasses are required to be connected to some sort of portable computer system, or can be connected via a headjack to receive Video Display while audio signals are transmitted to the ear.

Sicilian Weapons

The Sicilian Republic armaments are basically the same as old style Coalition weapons. The republic also manufactures knock-offs of the Triax weapons.

The Mafia Enforcer O.C.C. _____ ■

This is the main class of soldier for the Sicilian Republic and the Mafia.

These troops are trained in intimidation and stand over tactics as well as surprise and ambush. They are not trained to act as front line soldiers like in most traditional armies, but even

though they are not trained in that capacity, they can function in this role.

Race Restrictions: The Enforcer is restricted to Humans Only, from Sicily or North America

Attribute Requirements: I.Q.: 10, M.E.: 12, M.A.: 12

Special Abilities:

Trust/Intimidate: 55%+3% per level of experience

(If the character has a natural **Trust/Intimidate** score from a high M.A. either raise it to 55% or add +15%, whichever is higher)

+2 vs. **Pain/ Mind Control/ HF**

O.C.C. Skills

Language: Italian or English (American) 98%

Language: Italian or English +20%

Literacy: Italian or English (American) + 20%

Radio Basic +10%

Read Sensory Equipment +10%

Detect Ambush +15%

Streetwise +20%

Detect Concealment +15%

W.P. Energy Pistol

Intelligence +15%

W.P. Automatic Pistol

Hand to Hand Expert

*Hand to Hand Expert can be upgraded to Martial Arts, or Assassin if evil, for 1 Other Skill

O.C.C. Related Skills

Select 10 skills at level 1; select an additional 2 skills at levels 3, 7, 11 and 15

Communications: Any

Domestic: Any

Electrical: Basic Electronics Only

Espionage: Any (+5%)

Mechanical: Basic or Automotive Only

Medical: First Aid or Paramedic only

Military: Any (+5%)

Physical: Any

Pilot: Any except Large Robots

Pilot Related: Any

Technical: Any

Rogue: Any (+5%)

W.P.: Any

Science: Any

Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills

Select 8 secondary skills from the above list.

Equipment:

2 Black Suits

Energy Pistol with 2 spare energy clips

Automatic Pistol with 2 spare magazines

Light MDC body armor (probably Triax Plain Clothes Armor)

Sunglasses

Vibro Knife

Armored Briefcase (30 MDC)

Air Filter and Gas Mask

Distancing Binoculars

Vehicle (a conventional vehicle of choice)

Money:

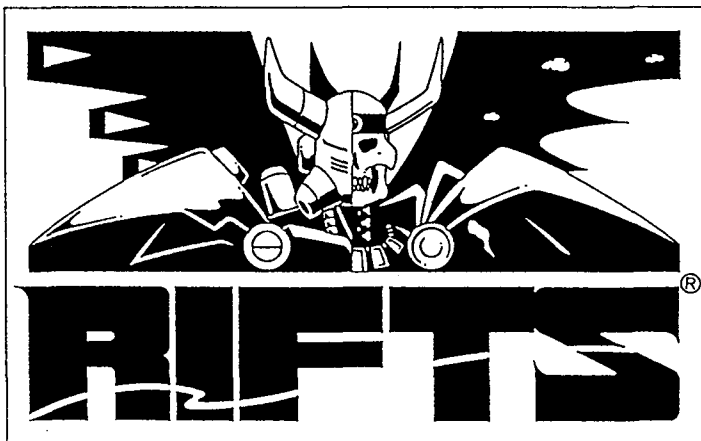
The character starts out with 3D6x100 Credits and 4D6x100 Credits in Black Market Items.

Cybernetics and Bionics

The Enforcer does not object to Cybernetic and Bionics, and will most likely have a **cybernetic/bionic** limb or implants (Partial reconstruction only).

Experience Points

As per Special Forces Soldier (Rifts Mercenaries)



The Knights of Kamnos

By James M.G. Cannon

"And when the Trolls devoured Man's children, and the Demons of the Sky brought fiery rain upon Man's home, Man knew despair; despair blackened his heart and made him cower in the darkness, hiding in caves like the hated Troll. But in the darkness burned a tiny ember. An ember that became a flame, and then, as Man watched, the flame became a mighty blaze. Mighty Culann carried the Flame of Justice in his hands, and with it, he slew the Troll and destroyed the Demons of the Sky. And Man left the caves forever."

— one of the more poetic retellings of the genesis of the Knights of Kamnos.

Kamos is a Class M world located on the fringes of CCW space in the Ceres System. The planet's unique orbit around Ceres ensures that nine months out of its thirteen month revolution consist of cold, dark winter. As well, rampant rift activity plays with Kamnos' ecosystem. Life has evolved on Kamnos — life that is vicious, frightening, and dedicated to survival. No native sentients arose on the icy world.

Kamos possesses an active **geo-tectonic** system. Currently, three massive continents exist on the planet, the largest one stretched across the equator like a belt. Geologic evidence suggests that such was not always the case. Volcanoes pepper the continents and the ocean floors, but are particularly common along the edges of tectonic plates — earthquakes take place in these regions as well.

Surrounding the three continents is a great ocean. Most of the planet's water is locked in the ice at the poles, however. This means that the seas are a good 500 meters more shallow than they could be, and also contributes to the size of the continents.

The ocean is named Tiron. The continents are: Panos, at the north pole, **Grgathos**, at the equator, and Kemos, stretching along the southern hemisphere and almost touching the southern pole.

For roughly 3.7 billion years, Kamnos existed without the interference of sentients. But that changed seven hundred Terran years ago, when a random rift deposited 1200 human beings on the northern tip of Grgathos. The humans originated from a world called Earth, at a time known as the 23rd Century. Great wars had ravaged the surface of that Earth, and random rifts were not uncommon. The size of the one that transported them to Kamnos was uncommon, but the phenomenon itself was not rare.

Due to the war-torn nature of their previous home, these unwilling settlers were better prepared than most to adapt to the hostile conditions of Kamnos. At first the humans attempted to return to their old world. But unable to control the rifts, and faced with the dangerous Kamnion winter, the escape attempts were abandoned.

Along with the 1200 humans, a large portion of a city had been transported to Kamnos as well. Twenty-third century technology and armaments were available to the settlers, and proved to be the key to survival in those first few decades. The settlers were so successful, in fact, that their numbers increased almost geometrically. In time, they began to explore and tame the wild reaches of equatorial Grgathos.

It was late in the 24th century, by settler **reckoning**, that they first encountered the bulky, predatory primates that they dubbed ice trolls. The ice trolls were the dominant predators of the central Grgathan plains. Carnivorous, gigantic, and possessing an ape-like intelligence, the ice trolls would prove to be the gravest danger the settlers dealt with. More numerous than the perils occasionally spit out by the rifts, and in many cases better organized, the ice trolls created an ideological split in the settlers community.

Militant factions of the city urged for the creatures to be wiped out. Others wanted to study the creatures and perhaps tame them. Still others felt it best to ignore them. Meanwhile, the ice trolls learned very quickly that the humans were tasty treats. Their hunting grounds expanded into settler territory. The war, if the genocide that followed could be called a war, began in earnest. There seemed little for the settlers to do but hunt the beasts to extinction.

In the midst of this chaos, a **Kreeghor** cruiser, wounded in a battle with a CCW ship, stopped in the Ceres system for repairs. A routine scan of the system revealed the settler's community to the Kreeghor. Thinking it was a CCW colony, the Kreeghor, bent on revenge, headed for Kamnos and attacked the city. The settlers were able to repel the damaged Kreeghor battle cruiser, but just barely. Much of the city was destroyed, and thousands more citizens died in a single day than had perished in the entire ice troll war to that point.

Weak, demoralized, and scattered, the settlers were easy prey for the bloodthirsty trolls.

A minor company of soldiers, who fought under the banner of "**The Flame of Justice**," and followed the lead of one Colonel Shea Culann, sustained few casualties in the Kreeghor attack. Culann realized immediately that desperate steps needed to be made. He rallied the people to his banner, and convinced them to abandon Grgathos and seek refuge on the southern continent of

Kemos. Leaving the ice trolls behind, the settlers did just that. They constructed crude airships and, using the fair summer weather, coasted to Kemos.

No ice trolls existed in Kemos to tax the strength of the people. They soon realized why, however. The environment of Kemos was even more brutal and savage than that of **Grgathos**. Hundreds died in the first winter. But the people persevered, and survived. With no natural enemies to concern them, the people sought to abandon arms. Shea would not let them.

He explained that he had only forced the move as a temporary measure. At some time in the future, humanity must return to Grgathos and tame the wild land. All of **Kamnos** must fall under the control of humanity. To do otherwise would leave them vulnerable to more alien attacks. Shea proposed a radical solution. He pushed for advancement of existing weapons, vehicular, and genetic technology. His dream was to tame the planet and create an armada of ships to defend their world from aliens.

To do all this Shea created a warrior order loosely based on the ancient samurai of old **Earth's** Japan, and the paladins and chevaliers of old Earth's Europe. He dubbed them the Knights of Kamnos, and divided them into three distinct orders. The first branch would be the Order of the Blade: the warriors and soldiers of the Knights. These people would be the **shocktroops** of humanity, trained in the harsh conditions of Kamnos, taught to survive and kill at any cost, with any weapon. The second branch would be the Order of the Anvil: the scientists and healers of the Knights. These would be the people who would develop the new technologies that would make humanity supreme on Kamnos — energy weapons, power armor, rail guns, airships, tanks, medicines, creature comforts, and so on. There was also another, secret project Shea devised for them. The third branch was the Order of the Flame, named for **Shea's** sold unit. This order would serve as the political leaders of the people, as well as the enforcers of justice.

With Shea's charismatic leadership, dogged ambition, and driving force, the Knights of Kamnos were forged out of the settlers like a fine sword in a smithy. Tempered by extreme hardship, entrusted with the sacred duty to defend the race, the Knights became, in a short period of time, very accomplished and very fanatic soldiers.

Before all was ready for the conquest of Kamnos, though, Shea's secret project needed to be completed. He was **nearing** the end of his life when the order of the Anvil made the initial breakthrough in coding DNA and transforming **RNA**. Before his death at the age of 96, General Shea Culann witnessed the creation of a legion of superhuman soldiers. His Knights of Kamnos were gifted with abilities above and beyond those of ordinary mortals.

Armed with those abilities, trained and motivated to be the defenders of a species, the Knights **had** little trouble leading the way to conquer Kamnos. And when two more **Kreeghor** battle ships — fully operational and equipped — arrived on Kamnos, the Knights successfully repelled them with only minor casualties and very few deaths.

By the 28th century, settlers reckoning, the humans of Kamnos, now referring to themselves as Kamnions as often as Terrans, were poised to enter space. They colonized the Ceres system and sent out probes to neighboring systems. It was shortly thereafter that the Kamnions came into contact with the

Consortium of Civilized Worlds. At once shocked and delighted that they were not the last remnants of humanity in a hostile galaxy, the Kamnions applied for entry into the Consortium. Twenty years later, Kamnos became a CCW world, complete with all the privileges and problems that such membership entails.

Kamnions were now free to leave Kamnos, to explore the galaxies and perhaps settle on a more hospitable world. Surprisingly, few Kamnions elected to do so. They recognized that the harsh realities of Kamnos made them a hardy people, and a match for almost any armed force in the galaxies. And the Knightly Orders needed to be maintained.

It is now two hundred years later, and Kamnos is still one of the more militant members of the CCW. Every time the CCW Congress begins a session, the first words out of the Kamnion representatives are invariably, "Let's declare war on the Kreeghor Empire." Kamnions of all ages serve in the CCW military, and Kamnos is one of the few worlds in the Consortium that actively support the Resistance — openly and without pretense.

The Knights still exist on Kamnos. They have spread throughout the galaxies, actually, and though the main headquarters of the organization is located on Kamnos (on Kemos still), there are hundreds of thousands of chapter houses spread throughout civilized **space**. **Three** exist in Center alone. The Knights are just as militant as ever; they are a warrior order first and foremost. Yet Knights of the Anvil serve galaxy-wide as doctors, scientists, and healers. Knights of the Flame are frequently Bonded Deputies, diplomats, and peacemakers.

Still dedicated to the preservation of humanity before all other races, the Knights have softened their xenophobic views greatly. The Wolfen, particularly, are well liked by all Kamnions, and Knights and **Quatoria** frequently work together. Noro, Oni, and other humanoid and human-like races are also tolerated and well liked. More inhuman creatures, like the Kreeghor, **Splugorth**, **monro**, and **t'zee**, are distrusted if not hated outright. The Knights reserve a special hatred for all things Kreeghor, though, even above the dreaded Splugorth.

Strangely enough, Knights of Kamnos distrust **Cosmo-knights** and anything else linked to the Cosmic Forge. The **UWW** is treated with politeness officially, but Kamnions do not like magic or mystic **mumbo-jumbo** like the **Cosmo-knights**. Long years dealing with the rifts of Kamnos has taught them that much, at least.

Knights of Kamnos serve all over the Three Galaxies. Like marshals in the Old West of Earth, they carry guns and blades and try to right the injustices of the galaxies so that normal humans can live their lives in peace. Knights of Kamnos are powerful beings, armed to the teeth, highly trained in combat, and gifted with extraordinary abilities. In addition, they are devoted to the preservation of humanity — some would say fanatically so. There are many factions in the Three Galaxies that hate and fear the Knights. Like Cosmo-knights, Kamnion Knights fetch exorbitant prices in Kreeghor space, and Splugorth will pay handsomely for them too.

But that just makes the career a little more interesting.

Knights of Kamnos swear an oath of service before becoming knighted. The Knights swear to uphold the laws of humanity (and of local space), to defend **humanity** (and its allies) against the depredations and machinations of aliens (evil), to serve with honor, courage, and compassion, and to never surrender.

Positioned in the exact center of the continent of Kemos is the vast and sprawling city-state of Shea. Here lies the home of the Knights, a seven tiered monastery carved from the living rock. Millions of candidates from all over Kamnos flock to these spartan halls every spring. The selection process is quick, precise, and **grueling**. Only humans are allowed to apply, and they must be within the range of eight to twelve years of age. All others are refused. Only a fraction of the applicants are accepted; when the three weeks of spring are over, hundreds of thousands will return home tasting defeat.

For those who remain, a singular honor is placed upon them. They begin training immediately. Conditions are harsh, instructors are cruel, and the environment is unforgiving. Students remain at the monastery for most of the year. The only time off they receive is during the short spring. Only a handful graduate from their initial schooling and become squires. The transition from student to squire usually takes about four years, sometimes six. At the end of school, most squires have decided which Order they wish to apply to.

The next four years are designed to weed out the rest of the weaklings. Military training begins in earnest, and the first steps are laid for the genetic reconditioning. Again, only a fraction of the squires are capable of continuing. When their squire status ends, the candidate is welcomed into the Order of his or her choosing. A series of daunting tests, designed to find the limits of a squire's loyalty, courage, integrity and honor further hammer at the squire's self-image. Many outsiders are amazed to learn that almost a 100% of the squires perform admirably. But if anyone was able to slip through the cracks in the previous levels of training, they are halted here.

After the tests are completed, the squire is now a full-fledge Knight. A short ceremony makes this official, and during the ceremony, the new Knight is anointed with the Oil of Change. If the genetic reconditioning was done correctly, the Knight is suffused with the Flame of Justice and is empowered with superhuman abilities. If the Knight's body rejects the transformation, though, he or she will be consumed by the Fire.

It is small wonder, then, that the Knights are as incorruptible and fanatical as they are.

Note: Only humans can become Knights of Kamnos, and 95% of the Knights are natives of Kamnion.

Alignment: Typically Scrupulous or Aberrant; any

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 12, P.S. 14, P.E. 14, P.P. 11 or higher

O.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses:

1. Physical Bonuses: add 1D4x10+25 S.D.C., +1D6 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +1 to P.P., and +1D6 to SPD, on top of physical skill bonuses.

2. Combat Bonuses: add one additional attack per **melee**, +1 initiative, +1 strike/parry/dodge, +4 vs. horror factor, and +2 pull/roll w/**punch/fall**.

3. Superhuman Abilities: roll on page 162 and 163 of **Heroes Unlimited**, or use the tables for the Invincible Guardsmen in the Phase World sourcebook.

O.C.C. Skills

Order of the Blade:

Literacy(98%)

Languages: Select 2(+15%)

Radio: **Basic(+15%)**

Intelligence(+20%)

Detect Concealment(+20%)

Detect Ambush(+20%)

Computer Operation(+5%)

Read Sensory Equipment(+5%)

Climbing(+15%)

Weapon Systems(+10%)

Navigation (land)(+5%)

Wilderness Survival(+10%)

Physical: Any 2

Pilot: Any 2

WP: Any 5

Hand to Hand Assassin or Martial Arts

Order of the Anvil:

Computer Operation(+15%)

Computer Programming(+10%)

Literacy(98%)

Languages: **Select**4(+15%)

Advanced Math(+20%)

Radio: Basic(+15%)

Science: Any 2(+20%) or Medical: Any 2(+20%)

Electronics: Any 2(+10%) or Mechanical: Any 2(+10%)

Physical: any 2

Pilot: Any 2

WP Energy Pistol

WP Energy Rifle

Hand to Hand Expert

Order of the Flame

Math, **Basic(+10%)**

Literacy(98%)

Languages: select 3(+15%)

Radio: **Basic(+10%)**

Intelligence(+20%)

Consortium **Law(+15%)**

Computer **Operation(+10%)**

Computer **Programming(+10%)**

Computer **Hacking(+10%)**

Criminal Sciences and Forensics(+10%)

Physical: any 2

Pilot: any 2

WP: any 3

Hand to Hand Assassin or Martial Arts

O.C.C. Related: select 7; one more at levels 2, 5, 10

Communication: *All:* Any(+10%)

Domestic: *All:* Any

Electrical: *Blade, Flame:* Basic only;

Anvil: **Any(+10%)**

Espionage: *All:* Any(+10%)

Mechanical: *Blade, Flame:* Basic only;

Anvil: Any(+10%)

Medical: *Blade, Flame:* First Aid only;

Anvil: **Any(+10%)**

Military: *Blade, Flame: Any(+15%); Anvil: Etiquette only*

Physical: *All: Any(+10%)*

Pilot: *Flame: Any(+15%), Blade, Anvil: None*

Pilot Related: *All: Any (+15%)*

Rogue: *Flame: Any(+5%), Blade, Anvil: None*

Science: *Anvil: Any(+10%), Blade, Flame: None*

Technical: *All: Any(+5%)*

Weapon: *All: Any*

Wilderness: *Blade: Any(+5%), Anvil, Flame: None*

Secondary Skills: Select 3 at levels 1, 4, 8, 12 with the same restrictions as above.

Standard Equipment:

two energy weapons of choice, two ancient style weapons of choice, suit of personal M.D.C. armor, communicator set, hand held computer, four grenades, utility belt and pack, survival knife, climbing kit, first aid kit, and a personal vehicle — usually a hover-bike or rocket sled or something of the like.

Additional equipment can be obtained at the local chapter house. Minor types of equipment will naturally be easier to get than major kinds; if a character requests a tank, he or she had better have a damn good reason for using it. And the player's chances of getting another one in the future increase dramatically if they return the first one in one piece.

Money: 3D6x10,000 credits in savings. Earns an average of 6 to 10 thousand credits a month.

Cybernetics: Will consider bio-systems for medical purposes only. Otherwise, they rely on their formidable natural abilities.

Kamnion Armaments And Equipment

SC-10 "Trollkiller" Plasma Pistol

This is a bulky pistol with a short grip and a thick barrel.

Weight: 4 lbs. (1.8 kg)

Mega-Damage: 4D6 MD

Rate of Fire: Standard

Effective Range: 1000 feet (305 m)

Payload: 10 shots

Cost: 18,000 credits

SC-22 "Atomizer" Heavy Laser Rifle

A sleek, long barreled rifle, the Atomizer comes equipped with a sniper's scope, standard e-clip port, and a power cord that enables the rifle to be hooked up to power armor or other external energy source for a relatively unlimited payload.

Weight: 5 lbs. (2.3 kg)

Mega-Damage: 1d4x10

Rate of Fire: Standard

Effective Range: 6000 ft (1829 m)

Payload: 15 shot clip or external energy supply

Cost: 25,000 credits

SC-2000 "Eliminator" Rail Gun

A heavy weapon, usable only by beings with a PS 25 or higher, the Eliminator is one of the few rail guns used in the Three Galaxies.

Weight: Gun: 60 lbs. (27 kg); Clip: 15.5 lbs. (7 kg), light ammo-drum: 45 lbs. (28 kg), heavy ammo-drum: 150 lbs. (70 kg); ammo-drums are worn on the back

Mega-Damage: A burst inflicts 5D6 MD and fires 25 rounds.

One round does 1D4 MD.

Rate of Fire: Standard

Range: 3500 ft(1200 m)

Payload: The clip houses 275 rounds (12bursts). The light drum houses 825 rounds (36 bursts). The heavy drum carries an astonishing 2500 rounds (100 bursts). Reloading a drum takes 3 minutes for untrained individuals, but trained mechanics can load it in 30 seconds.

Cost: 50,000 credits

SC-002 Flame Weapon

A flame weapon appears to be an ancient style weapon, typically a sword, mace, hammer, or so on, that, with the flick of a button, becomes sheathed in a field of flame, thus enabling the weapon to do mega-damage.

Weight: Varies with weapon type

Damage: Works just like a normal weapon of the type, inflicting standard S.D.C. damage. The flame field has settings: 4D6 MD or 1D4x10 MD.

Payload: The e-clip has enough power for a low energy field to last up to forty minutes. A high energy field has an average life of twelve minutes.

Cost: 20,000 credits

Body Armor:

Designed exclusively for the use of the Knights of Kamnos, the AN series of armor uses modular technology to provide maximum protection with minimum discomfort or mobility problems. The armor is always colored blue with black trim. The insignia of the Order is typically inscribed in the armor over the left breast.

The armor consists of a set of backplates, gauntlets, greaves, and a wide belt. The weight is evenly distributed and there are no penalties to mobility. In this form the armor possess 1/3 its total M.D.C. and an AR 14.

A voice activated command will initiate the armor's full defense capabilities, sheathing the wearer in a suit of full environmental mega-damage armor. The transition takes about ten seconds to occur.

AN-65 Knight Light Armor

- M.D.C.: 80
- Weight: 20 lbs. (9 kg)
- Good mobility at full extension: -5% prowl penalty
- Cost: 30,000 credits

AN-90 Knight Medium Armor

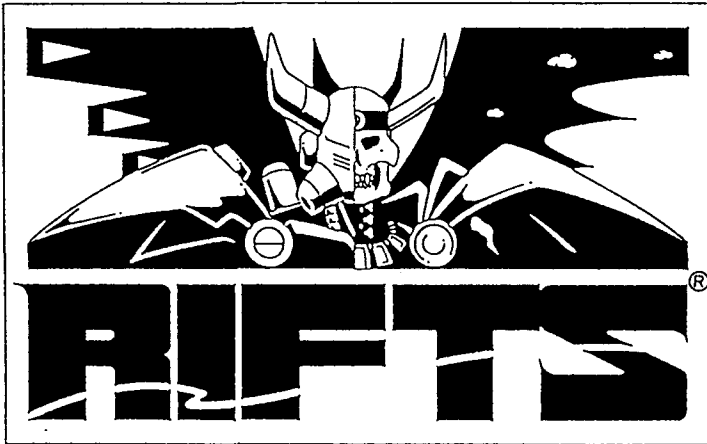
- M.D.C.: 100
- Weight: 30 lbs. (13.5 kg)
- Decent mobility at full extension: -10% prowl penalty, -5% other athletic skills.
- Cost: 45,000 credits

AN-101 Knight Heavy Armor

- M.D.C.: 120
- Weight: 40 lbs. (18 kg)
- Fair mobility at full extension: -15% proul penalty, -10% other athletic skills
- Cost: 60,000 credits

Experience Table

1 0 – 2,500	9 85,001 – 105,000
2 2,501 – 5,000	10 105,001 – 145,000
3 5,001 – 10,000	11 145,001 – 200,000
4 10,001 – 20,000	12 200,002 – 250,000
5 20,001 – 35,000	13 250,001 – 300,000
6 35,001 – 50,000	14 300,001 – 400,000
7 50,001 – 65,000	15 400,001 – 500,000
8 65,001 – 85,000	



The Hammer of the Forge

By James M.G. Cannon

Crucible of Fire

Earth 1967

The desert stretched out before him, as far as his eyes could see. Waves of heat rose up from the sandy ground, creating the illusion of moisture. In the distance, the great blocks of mesas rose up from the earth, shattering the horizon.

Caleb pressed his foot down harder on the accelerator, and the dune buggy responded. The engine roared, and the vehicle lurched forward, devouring the desert floor under its heavy wheels. The wind whipped at Caleb's short, blood red hair, and particles of sand and dust were thrown against his goggles. Out here, in the silence and emptiness of the desert, Caleb felt at home. The speed his buggy could reach was just the icing on the cake.

He was trying to forget that in a mere two days he would be shipping out for boot camp. And after that, he would go on to South East Asia. Vietnam. Just like his dad, Caleb would get to fight the Red Menace in a foreign land.

Caleb didn't want to go. His father may have been gung-ho to go to Korea, and felt the same way about his only son going to Vietnam, but Caleb saw things differently. It wasn't that Caleb hated war or liked Communism or anything like that. He wasn't some kind of deviant, for God's sake. He believed in America and what it stood for. His father was proof that the military could better a man, and dad owed his education to his years of service. By association, Caleb did as well.

No, Caleb wasn't like those cowards who ran to Canada, or those commies who demonstrated against the war. He knew it was a good cause. He knew Communism was evil, and had to be stopped. He just had no ambition to be the one to stop it. Let someone else do it; if he had wanted to go to Vietnam, he would have enlisted in the marines, not waited to be drafted.

But there really was no denying reality. Caleb Vulcan was going to war. He would learn how to kill, and he would learn to be a warrior. It did not matter that Caleb wanted to stay home, and race his cars and maybe learn how to fly.

Well, there was one plus to service. He might get to fly.

The mesas drew closer, and the engine of his dune buggy howled in ecstasy as he let it have its head. The speedometer climbed into the red, and Caleb smiled for a moment, careful not to swallow any sand. The buggy ate the ground up and spat it out as he thundered across the landscape.

The sky was so blue it hurt the eyes to look at it, and the sand was golden brown. His buggy was bright red and gleaming under the layer of grit and sand. He was eighteen years old and immortal, and though somewhere in the back of his head he knew about death, he was sure it waited for him in the jungles of Vietnam, not out in the desert, where he had raced so many times before.

He never saw the rock. Buried under sand for many years, only in recent weeks had the wind worn away at the layer of earth covering it. Caleb didn't expect it to be there, and he was barreling along at too fast a pace to see it in time to correct his trajectory.

The right front tire collided with the rock, and the wheel twisted under Caleb's hands. The buggy spun out of control, and Caleb's grip came loose. The buggy flipped over, spinning through the air. It came crashing down on the ground, turned over, and it rolled a few more feet before coming to rest on the sandy plain.

Caleb, miraculously, remained conscious. He felt blood pooling on his cheeks, and he couldn't see anything out of his left eye. His arms refused to move, and his legs were immobile as well, no matter how hard he tried to shift them. He twisted in his seat, trying to get some part of his body active, to pull him the wreck. Something in his gut gave out as he moved, and Caleb felt the icy hand of unconsciousness reach out for him. He resisted it though, knowing that if he faded, he would die.

But his body could not be denied. Roughly used, it needed to repair itself. It could not do so if Caleb's brain was screaming in pain. As the shock settled into him, he slipped out of consciousness. The last thing his mind registered as he went under was the smell of leaking gasoline.

Mercifully, he never saw or felt the explosion.

* * *

Caleb opened his eyes carefully, the memory of the crash still with him. His eyes — both of them — registered a field of darkness surrounding him, a darkness as black as pitch. A pool of light lay across his body, illuminating his small human form. He expected to see that body shattered and broken.

He was whole.

"Oh Jesus," he whispered, and his voiced echoed in the darkness. "I'm dead." He recoiled from his own words, shivering as they rebounded all around him.

"No, not yet," came a rich, authoritative voice, reverberating out of the black. It was a woman's voice. Caleb jumped, his eyes wide with alarm. He could not see the speaker, though it sounded as if whoever it was stood nearby.

"Who — who are you?" A sudden thought occurred to him. "God?"

There was slight chuckle. A woman's laugh, from behind him. Caleb whirled, but the dark was as impenetrable there as it was before him.

"No, we are not your God, Caleb Vulcan," the voice said. "Though there are many who do pray to us, we have never claimed divinity."

Caleb cautiously turned to face the voice again. He was surprised to see a sparkling light forming in the void, like a single star in the sky. As he watched, open mouthed, the light expanded, growing and flickering dozens of colors as it did so.

Caleb almost found his voice just as the light flared up, forming a huge, generous face. Caleb's eyes narrowed against the brilliance, and all around him he could see tongues of flame flare, taking on the shapes of people, driving the darkness away. Caleb raised a hand to his brow, and fought against the panic that threatened to engulf him.

"Then what are you?" he demanded with as much strength as he could muster.

"We are the Forge of the Cosmos," the face said, smiling as it did so. Somehow, that smile calmed Caleb, and spoke to a part of him hidden away, deep within his soul. "Millennia ago we were created to guard the galaxies from the depredations of evil souls, those who would exploit the nature of the cosmos and her children."

Caleb's hand fell away from his face, unconsciously, and his eyes widened, taking in all the light that surrounded him.

"To that end, Caleb Vulcan, we search the length and breadth of the Universe for souls with the proper balance, the desire to do good. When we find a being worthy of the honor, we offer them a place in the ranks of the most sacred order of the cosmos. The Cosmic Knights."

Caleb could not believe what he was hearing. Yet, part of him wanted to, a part of him that was young and old at the same time, a Caleb that had once thrilled to the stories of Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers and Isaac Asimov, a Caleb that had died with his mother, a Caleb who had not survived the cold pragmatism of his father. A Caleb that longed to fly.

"We have observed you for many years, Caleb Vulcan, and we have determined that within you beats the heart of a hero. We have come to offer you the honor and curse of our power. We would make you one of our knights.

"Before you accept, Caleb Vulcan, know that a life as our servant is not an easy one. You will be called upon to face dauntless tasks and face dangers that may prove insurmountable. You will be given vast and inestimable might, but know that such power corrupts and we do not tolerate corruption. You will walk a narrow path, Caleb Vulcan, and though your efforts may bring happiness and prosperity to countless millions, know that such happiness will forever be denied you. For above all, Caleb Vulcan, more important than your life or loves, is the duty, the pact. To defend the light, and never let it fall into darkness.

"Should you join us, Caleb Vulcan, you will surf the stars and visit planets and peoples never dreamed of by your brethren. But you will also face treachery, horror, and the razor thin line between good and evil. This is not an easy thing we ask of you, Caleb Vulcan."

Caleb stood stock still for a few moments, letting the words settle into his brain and heart. He looked away from the face, and he saw the flames dimming one by one, and the darkness flowed back like a wave. He spun on his heels and took a step towards the solemn, glowing visage of the Cosmic Forge.

"Take me," he rasped. "Make me one of you." There was no hesitation in his voice, no anger, no fear. Caleb Vulcan saw his opportunity to fly, and he grabbed it with both hands. That child that had awakened within him would not let him do otherwise.

The huge face smiled once again, and then the features collapsed, leaving a ball of light spinning in the darkness. Caleb had a moment of confusion, and then a ray of energy crackled from the globe, reaching out and slamming into Caleb. The energy caressed his body, tracing every contour, etching every muscle and the bone beneath. As Caleb writhed in a mixture of ecstasy and agony, a dozen more shafts of light exploded from the globe and hammered into Caleb, driving him to one knee. He cried out a word that even he could not understand, and raised his hands up in a gesture of supplication. The globe unleashed all of its energy, and Caleb was lost within an undulating wave of scintillating light. The light washed over him, through him, inundating him in its power. It sang to him as it came into him, a wordless melody that caught his heart and trapped it with bonds of servitude and duty. His every cell cried out as the energy swallowed him whole, molecule by molecule.

The light pierced his mind, and a window opened within him, a window that looked into the future. His future.

He saw a man in green, with a wolf's face and a shimmering ax held in one claw-like hand. There was a towering woman in silver, and she was kissing Caleb on the forehead. A giant of metal and flesh bellowed as it shattered a building with one swipe of its arm. A hive of otherworldly creatures bubbled over a man of red steel, drowning him in bodies. A starship skimmed the edges of a black hole, daring destruction on a sacred mission. Beneath the sea, beneath light and air, Caleb held a blade of fire that would not extinguish, and used it against a tentacled monstrosity that devoured whales and submarines as Caleb wrestled it. And there, Caleb stood in chains, the marks of his rank stripped from him, his eyes dead and weary. A thin boned man with the ears of an elf laughed, and his fine fingered hands closed about the throat of Caleb's wife. An army of mechanical creatures tore apart a world, piece by piece, while Caleb watched immobile. He saw all those things and more as the energy of the Forge washed over him, inundated him, transformed him.

It was an eternity before the wave receded, leaving Caleb exhausted and spent in a pool of light, surrounded by darkness. Shakily, Caleb drew himself up to his full height. Etched across his psyche was the knowledge of what he had become. No more was Caleb Vulcan a child of man. Now he belonged to the stars, and everything they shone upon. The images, the flashes of his possible futures, were buried deep, leaving only impressions of dread and elation.

His eyes flashed with crimson light, and a suit of metallic red armor formed around him, encasing him in a protective sheath. Like a second skin, the armor flowed over him, bonding with him. It would come whenever he called it now, no matter where or when he was. The armor was a part of him, a symbol of his power and his station.

His mind's eye recognized the ability to craft a weapon, but Caleb decided to wait on that. Now, he wanted to test his newfound powers, to learn his strengths and weaknesses. Around him, the darkness faded, and the pool of light winked out of existence.

Caleb Vulcan now hung in space, and the vast starfield of the cosmos blinked and flickered before him. Some of those stars were planets, and Caleb knew that civilizations greater than Earth's thrived upon their alien shores.

Caleb concentrated, centering his power within himself, and after a short while his eyes, hidden under the helm of office, flashed red again, and Caleb transformed into a crimson stream of light that rocketed forward, traversing the void, seeking the stars.

And adventure.

* * *

Eventually, exhausted, Caleb returned to a corporeal form. He shifted out of his energy form only a few hundred kilometers from a huge planetary mass that dominated his vision. The bright blue of the planet's atmosphere could not hide the golden tan of its primarily sandy surface. From his vantage point — high up in the void of space, still too far away to be sucked in by the planet's gravitational pull — he could make out a series of huge rivers crisscrossing the world's equator. Judging by their size, the "rivers" were wider than the Mediterranean Sea, though Caleb could only guess at their depth.

Intrigued, he flew towards the planet and pierced its atmospheric coating. Immediately he felt heavier, more solid, as well as the intense heat of his entry as his small form barreled through the ionosphere and he plummeted earthward. His metallic red armor shimmered and glowed, and he felt a minor warmth, almost comforting after the cold of space. He knew he should be burning up into little more than a cinder, but it seemed whatever power enabled him to ply the spaceways unaided also made him impervious to the heat of entry.

And then — almost too quickly — he burst out into sky, glowing like a star. He laughed out loud, and marveled at how metallic and harsh his voice sounded. His body cooled, and he dove through cloudbanks, burning them away into steam and causing droplets of water to condense on his red clad body.

So this was what it meant to fly like the birds. Free, unfettered by earthly laws or physics, he could suspend his own body above

the earth simply by concentrating. And just as, in space, he could match the speed of light, here in an atmosphere he could fly faster than any simple jet. He laughed again, and unleashed his full power, exploding through the air in an incredible burst of speed. He blinked, and he was hundreds of miles away from his starting position.

He drew to a halt, and hovered in a standing position high above the earth. Overhead, only a few kilometers away, was the cold vacuum of space. Below, on the planet's surface, adventure beckoned.

Caleb Vulcan began to realize just how much power was at his disposal, and he remembered the words of the Forge, warning him of the dangers of corruption. He forced himself to relax. There was a difference between testing one's limits and fooling around. Perhaps it was time to explore this world, and see if there was anyone in need of help.

That was his purpose, he recalled. To protect. To rage against the dying of the light.

A moment later he dropped like a stone from the sky. He slowed as he came close to the actual ground, and dropped lightly amidst the dust and rocks, his red boots kicking up puffs of the tiny flakes.

Another mental command sent his armor away, disappearing in a flash of cerisian light. Caleb Vulcan stood alone on the vast plain of a desert world, breathing foreign air and looking out on an alien landscape. He was disappointed to find it looked quite a bit like the Arizona desert he grew up playing in. He shrugged, deciding that not every planet he would visit needed to be too different from Earth.

He checked himself over, and to his surprise, saw that not only did he look the same — medium height and build, short blood red hair — but he wore the exact outfit that he put on before taking his buggy out. Dark jeans, white jersey, and cowboy boots. More surprising was that he still retained his wallet, keys, pocket knife, handkerchief and goggles. He suddenly wished he had put tennis shoes on that morning instead of his boots. Caleb shrugged. It was nothing he could alter, so it was best to just accept it and deal with it.

He picked a direction at random and began to walk.

In a short while, as the sun began to pummel him, and his feet twisted in the boots designed for riding, not walking, Caleb began to regret traveling on the ground. It would be so much easier and comfortable to take to the air, where the armor would protect him and the flight would free him. But again, he reminded himself of the Forge's admonition, and he decided to continue walking.

At last, as his forearms and face were beginning to redden, and he could feel the blisters painfully developing on his feet, he topped a rocky rise to find a road in the distance. Not much of one, to be sure; it wasn't much more than an area of ground where the red sand had been brushed away, but its very existence hinted at some sort of intelligent life. Despite his discomforts, Caleb's pulse quickened at the very thought. He was going to be the first human being to encounter an alien — the idea fired his imagination and caused him to redouble his speed.

He reached the road in moments, and up close it appeared to be much as Caleb had thought. Simple, but effective. He could just make out wheel impressions in the dry dust of the road. It

looked like they might have been made by some kind of tracked vehicle, but Caleb couldn't be sure. The wind had damaged the sign too much.

Caleb began to follow the road, rubbing at his raw forearms unconsciously. The sun was doing a terrible job on his fair skin. He resisted the temptation to suit up. Truth be known, Caleb wasn't sure what would constitute an abuse of power, but having been raised by a very strict military man and devout Lutheran, Caleb felt he should toe the line as close as he could. Better to be too careful than too frivolous.

Such thoughts caused him to reflect momentarily upon his father. Caleb knew he should be missing the man, but he did not. He was glad to be gone from under his **father's** shadow.

Suddenly, his ears picked up the whine of an engine. He looked back, and saw a cloud of dust whipping about some kind of metallic vehicle. The machine was speeding along the road, and it looked like it would reach Caleb in moments. Caleb hopped off the road and stuck his thumb out. There was no telling if aliens picked up hitchhikers, but Caleb was about to find out.

The machine roared past him, the engine roaring, dust flying up in its wake and finding its way into Caleb's mouth and nose. His goggles were coated with a layer of the stuff. Yet Caleb still caught a glimpse of the vehicle.

It was long, and narrow, shaped like an arrowhead. It moved on two wheels, much like a motorcycle, and a dome of glass, reminiscent of fighter jet's cockpit, stretched out on top of the vehicle. The glass of the cockpit was too dark for Caleb to make out the driver, but Caleb was elated nonetheless. He had just seen his first alien.

Caleb hopped up and down. "**Woohoo!**," he shouted, and got a mouth full of dust. It took a moment for him to remember that he was still stranded in the desert. "Oh well," Caleb shrugged. "If it gets too bad, I can just fly outta here."

Wiping the dust from his face with his shirt, he continued his march. Somehow, the sun seemed less harsh, and the boots less painful.

It was a good fifteen minutes later that he saw another cloud of dust on the horizon, heading toward him. Curious, Caleb again left the road and stuck his thumb into the air.

As he waited, the vehicle became more distinct. It was clearly more bulky than the other car, and moved more slowly. Yet it still devoured the road at an impressive clip. Gradually, Caleb made out the shape and character of the machine. It looked like a Mack truck. It had a huge cab, with a dark glass windshield, and a snub nose. Enormous tracked wheels churned up the surface of the road. A low, flat trailer stretched out behind the cab, and Caleb could see white, metallic boxes stacked upon it.

His second alien looked so... **Earthlike**. Caleb felt the disappointment well up in his chest, but forced it down. He stood his ground and waited. Perhaps the driver would look more alien than his truck.

Caleb was surprised when the truck slowed down as it approached him, and drew to a complete halt as it came parallel with where he stood. With a hiss, the driver's side door lifted open. Caleb sucked in a breath, preparing himself for some hideous, tentacled, multi-eyed creature out of Haggard or Raymond. But again Caleb felt the cold stab of disappointment.

Sitting in the cab was a grizzled old man — a grizzled old *human*. He looked like any of a half dozen older men from home, his face raw from a life outdoors, his hair white and slicked back, a pair of spectacles perched on his blunt nose. His weathered cheeks were marred by several days of stubble. He didn't wear a silvery suit with a ray gun belted at his side, but rather a drab, gray jumpsuit. The collar was open, and Caleb could see the man's red undershirt.

The man looked at him with an expression halfway between a smile and a grimace. He spoke, loudly, but whatever tongue he used was unintelligible to Caleb. It didn't sound like a language from Earth. Caleb brightened. "I'm sorry," he said, "I don't understand you."

The man shook his head. "Didn't mean to throw ya, kid," the man said in passable English. Caleb's heart dropped. He seemed to have an odd accent, but he clearly spoke English. "Didn't realize ya didn't know T-one. Anyways, you look like you're in a spot of trouble."

Caleb nodded. "Yeah, **my...uh...** buggy flipped on me out in the desert. I've been walking for hours... lost my way. I was trying to get to town..."

The man laughed, a short, harsh bark. "I'll say ya got lost. Yer headed the wrong way. But ya are in luck; Misery is where I'm headed. Hop in. I'll give ya a lift."

Caleb's sigh of relief was heartfelt. "**Thank** you."

There was another hiss as the passenger side door opened, and Caleb jogged around the front of the truck to climb into the cab. He groaned as he settled into the plush seat, stretching his long legs out before him under the dash. The man chuckled again, and stuck out his paw. Caleb took it. "Caleb Vulcan," he said.

"**Rik Nybek**," the man said. His grip was strong, and he had the hand of a workman. As it turned out, Nybek was a farmer, a man of the earth. Or so Caleb at first assumed; in truth, Nybek did not grow crops, he farmed water. His "plantation" in the desert consisted of huge, automated units that could drill deep into the earth, beneath the water table, into underground aquifers or streams, to gather water for the community of Misery, and the real farmers, those who grew food through irrigating their crops with Nybek's water. Nybek wasn't the only water fanner in the area, but he was one of the most successful.

Caleb was surprised and strangely reassured by Nybek's unusual narrative. Caleb had taken the man for a simple trucker, automatically categorizing him with labels Caleb had learned on Earth. Nybek looked like just another redneck drinking down at Munden's Pub, but he was so much more than that. An alien who looked human, who seemed normal, but had a most extraordinary job. Farming water? Caleb's initial disappointment at encountering Nybek faded rapidly.

And then he saw Misery.

The town appeared on the horizon quickly, appearing out of the haze of dust and afternoon sunlight as if by magic. The town itself was relatively unimpressive; composed of a number of low buildings fashioned out of white clay and bricks, spread out over a wide area. A high wall, built from the same material as the buildings, encircled the town, and the road led up to a heavy wooden gate. Caleb had seen shanty towns on Earth that looked more substantial than Misery, but the lesson of Rik Nybek

stayed with him, and he decided to past judgment until after he had a chance to look at the place up close.

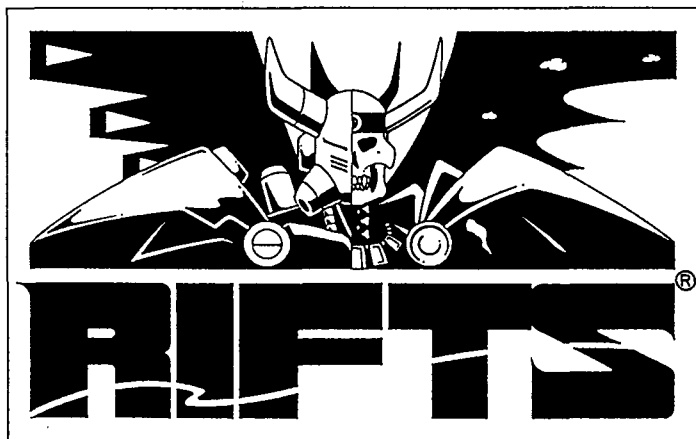
His reserve was justified, Caleb felt, as **Nybek's** truck bounced along the road and through the gate into town. For, leaning against the wall by the gate, smoking a cigarette of some kind, was a ten foot tall bipedal lizard, clad in a battered suit of armor, with shimmering copper skin and golden eyes, and a whipcord tail lashing against the wall.

An alien.

Caleb's heart began to pound within his chest, and he was sure Nybek could hear the organ pumping loudly. Now Caleb knew — he *knew* — he was on the greatest adventure anyone had ever witnessed.

Aliens.

What else did Misery hold?



The Siege Against Tolkeen

By David Haendler

Chapter One

The nine sorcerers of the Tolkeen High Council were in their private throne room, each sitting on a gilded, bejeweled chair. On the floor was traced a pentagram in chalk, which the thrones lay inside of. The only light was provided by dozens of torches on the walls. Other than that, the cold, stark room was empty. Sweat beading on their faces, the wizards slowly looked at each other.

Four of the Council Members were humans, three men and a female, to be precise. They were all in either middle or old age, and all of them were wearing identical, **rune-covered** robes. One of the men nervously sucked on a cigarette, its blue-gray smoke mingling with the dark fumes of the torches.

One of the Council Members was a cocky, yet powerful godling. His handsome and youthful features belied his incredible age and fantastic powers. He was the only one of the wizards to enjoy or appreciate human fashion. The godling wore faded jeans, an open leather overcoat, and a pair of sunglasses. The only signs of his mystic orientation were the numerous pendants hanging from his neck and the **Necronstaff** clutched in his hands.

Two of the Council Members were Lizard Mages. They were brothers, in fact, and best of friends, who had traveled the Megaverse for millennia. They sat facing each other, looking coolly into each other's eyes. Occasionally their iguana-like faces would twitch with anticipation tempered by fear.

One of the Council Members was an elf. He was young and actually rather inexperienced. Recently, his father, the former holder of his post, had died of a heart attack, allowing the young sorcerer to inherit the lofty position. He appeared to be the most nervous of the lot, and constantly looked around at the others, sweat pouring from his brow.

The final, and most important member of the Tolkeen High Council was an ancient ice dragon. It sat in its enormous throne, in the very center of the chamber, quietly running its claws up and down a rune-covered Sword of Atlantis, touching and feeling every inch. "It is time" said the dragon, its voice like rolling thunder. "Let us begin the Gathering. Remember, if we **do** not succeed, then Tolkeen shall surely fall."

Each of the Council Members nodded in unison. The smoking human tossed his smoldering tobacco away. Then, they began to chant obscene, unknowable syllables, carefully pronouncing every word of power.

The ground beneath them began to shake. Many of the torches suddenly extinguished, leaving the throne room in near-total darkness. Still, the chant continued. And soon there was light again, as the very floor began to glow with a fey, blue energy. Bolts of the power shot up through the legs and bodies of several of the chanters. Gritting their teeth against the pain, they continued their chant.

The spell continued on for about fifteen minutes, at which point the ground began shaking. Indeed, there was a powerful tremor in the air itself, which ripped bits of gold from the thrones, and hurled the dead torches from their sconces. The sorcerers gripped onto their armrests, and tried not to be thrown from their seats.

The light emanating from the floor became so bright it was painful to see. All of the wizards save the godling and the dragon closed their eyes to save themselves from retinal damage. The former had his sunglasses and a natural toughness. The latter had only an indomitable will to continue.

Soon, it became noticeable that there was a type of magical vacuum in the throne room. Each of the wizards felt it, an invisible impulse trying to wrest their magical reserves away from them. The vacuum was almost impossible to resist. The young elf, able to stand no more, gave in, and then gasped in shock and horror as a large part of his soul was wrenched out of him. Unconscious and nearly dead, he lay slumped in his chair. Not a single one of the other Council Members raised a finger to help him.

"Be brave," the dragon urged mentally to the others, its voice resounding in their heads. "**The** demons will be here soon." The others, heeding his request, tried to gulp down the pain and continue.

After a few more minutes, the tremors had grown too great to ignore. Two of the humans were thrown from their chairs onto the floor, where they were enveloped by burning magical energy. One of them managed to keep on chanting, and got back up to his throne. The other did not, as the shock had knocked him unconscious. After a while, the mystical flames began to burn and scorch his flesh.



The dragon suddenly grabbed its rune sword, and plunged it into the floor. In an instant, the bright magical energies dancing on the floor gathered into the sword, and shot through the blade and hilt, creating a beam up towards the ceiling. The tremors also gathered around the weapon, and created an area of shimmering, vibrating force around it.

"The moment of truth has arrived," announced the dragon, via telepathy to the others. "It is time."

The wrenching sensation became even stronger than before. One of the Lizard Mages was suddenly wracked with spasms as his mystical energy was drained too fast. He stayed conscious and kept on chanting, but was on the verge of death.

The sword began to quake with a terrible ferocity. A swirling, inky blackness was slowly brought up through its blade, then shot up to the ceiling, which it passed through. Then, a second one came. And then a third. And so on.

A total of nine patches of darkness were invoked by the spell. After the ninth had passed through the ceiling, the Sword of Atlantis shattered with the force of a grenade. Razor-sharp fragments of it scattered all over the room, some of them imbedding in the ice dragon's flesh and drawing blood as cold as liquid nitrogen. The wyrm seemed not to notice or care. The blue light generated by the blade went out, leaving the room in darkness. The chanting stopped. Many of the Council Members let out sighs of relief. One of the Lizard Mages began to light some torches with a minor spell. The godling tried to rouse the sleep-

ing elf. One of the humans gently shut the eyes of the fallen Council Member, who resembled a piece of well-cooked meat after his burning by the mystical flames.

"Let us tend to the wounded in a few moments," suggested the dragon, rising from its throne. "We must first see the results of our work," The other Council Members rose from their seats, and followed the wyrm out of the room, through its rune-decorated gates.

They walked up a ramp to a door of compounded ceramics, three feet thick, covered with runes of protection, and carefully sealed with a complex electronic lock. One of the humans quickly punched in a number on a keypad. Then, with a hiss of hydraulics, the door slowly began to swing open, letting in the bright light of day.

The Council Members stepped outside, into the fresh air of the city streets. They stood at the foot of a great pyramid, one which rivaled anything produced by the Egyptian kings. Orbiting around the top of the structure were nine crystals, each at least 30 feet tall. In the center of each gem was barely visible a patch of total and utter blackness, a swirl of dark out of which strange shapes occasionally formed.

"We've done it!" exclaimed the godling, with an impish grin on his face.

"Yes," said one of the humans breathlessly, lighting up a cigarette with trembling hands. "The Nine Weirds are in their proper positions. And may God have mercy on our souls."

"Whatever gods you may believe in have little say in this matter," boasted the ice dragon imperiously. "Even they will be powerless when we decide to burn Chicago."

Meanwhile, on the borderlands of Tolkeen, Elizabeth Perrin waited anxiously, her finger on the controls to her C-TX60 Laser Cannon. "Where could they be?" she asked nervously, talking to no one in particular. "Jack and Karny were supposed to have herded that elemental over here by now!. I hope nothing bad's happened to them."

"Don't worry," chuckled Pierce, her gunner counterpart. "You know how those two like to make an entrance. They'll probably swoop in out of the horizon any minute now, guns blaring and rockets launching every which way, with the elemental running right into our kill zone." The two of them sat hunched over laser cannon controls in a "Line Backer" tank, wearing identical light combat armor. They were in elevated chairs in order to reach their consoles, which were some nine feet off of the floor. The other six crew members sat all around in fairly cramped conditions at the bottom.

The tank sat in a forest, behind a large oak tree, with a camouflage sheet draped over it. There were two more of the war machines as well, one sitting in a ditch with a sheet over it, and the other one carefully hidden behind a veritable wall of large saplings. There, they waited in ambush, for one of the most powerful entities in the Megaverse.

Jack Perrin's Scout Cycle swooped over a grove of trees, its intake vacuum sucking up several leaves and tearing them to green shreds. His partner stayed carefully on Jack's left flank, keeping a keen eye out for trouble.

"Well," muttered the wingman over his radio. "We've been out here for nearly an hour, and still no sign of this elemental HQ said was supposed to show up any minute now. Why are we after this goomba, again?"

"He's been a naughty monkey," replied Jack. "He's been preying on our installations up here. So HQ, in its infinite wisdom, decided to hunt the hunter. And you know what happens to naughty monkeys."

The two friends simultaneously yelled, "**They** get spanked!" at the tops of their lungs, and then began to laugh deliriously. It was an old, inside joke between the two of them. The two friends buzzed over the top of the forest, laughing and talking and flying. They did not know that they were being watched from below. There, from beneath the leafy canopy, a slab of granite in the shape of a man with two white, glowing eyes, sat hidden from view. Seeing the two Scout Cycles fly overhead, it got up to its feet, and began chasing at an impossible speed.

"Hey, man, did you see Rutger's Comedy World last night?" asked Jack.

"Yeah," replied Karny. "**Didja** see that skit about the Lofty who went to the 'Burbs for some smokes?"

Suddenly, the elemental leapt up at them. It brought both of its hands down into the intake valves of Jack's Scout Cycle. With an explosion of sparks and flame, the jet engine shattered, causing the hoverbike to spiral downwards in a shroud of flames and smoke. Before he knew what was happening, Jack Perrin was in a free-fall to the hard ground below. His Scout Cycle had fallen out from underneath him, so he just fell. There was a quick jolt of impact as he fell through the forest's canopy. Then,

a much harder, more severe jolt hit him as he crunched down into the ground. Dull pain shot through his back and shoulders, and his vision swam with colors. For a few moments, he was too dizzy and disoriented to do anything. Finally, he got up, and looked at the nearby burning wreckage of his bike. Looking up, he realized that he had fallen nearly fifty feet. At no other moment in his life had he been so grateful for combat armor.

In the distance, he saw the elemental chasing after Karny. *It left me for dead*, Jack thought. Then, he saw the direction which his wingman was leading the monster, and chuckled. *Good ol' Karny*, he thought. *Leading that bastard straight into the ambush.*

Pulling his walkie-talkie out of his utility belt, Jack set it to the frequency of the tanks. "Get ready for company, 'cuz an earth elemental's coming to dinner!" he laughed. "ETA about a minute. Bastard downed my cycle, so I'll have to hoof it. Be there in a little while."

The familiar voice of his wife crackled back, "We'll set an extra place for you, honey." Smiling broadly, Jack put the walkie-talkie away, and began to stroll towards the ambush. He felt every bit of confidence, knowing that the elemental was walking into a death trap.

After all, he reasoned. Not even a greater earth elemental could withstand three tanks at once.

Chapter Two

Jack looked around the battlefield in utter, total disbelief. The forest had been made into a clearing. It looked like the ground had torn itself apart, creating huge ditches and seemingly bottomless chasms. Mighty trees had been turned into kindling, a thin layer of tiny, burning wood chips on the ground. They crunched beneath his **jackbooted** feet when he walked, releasing tufts of black smoke. Sometimes, the fire licked his armor, blackening the white sections, but doing no damage.

The three tanks had been pulverized. One of them had been caught in a widening pit, and was then crushed when the gully began to close. The black, skull-shaped armor on the front had been pulled apart by the pressure. It looked like the death's-head was screaming, with a pillar of flame and inky smoke pouring from its open mouth.

One of the tanks had been just outside the wake of destruction, out of the field of shattered wood. It had been ripped to shreds by the elemental. Its crew members were lying nearby, their limbs and heads plucked off and strewn about, still in their armor.

The final tank, the tank which his wife had been in, was caught in the quake. It had apparently exploded when a pillar of rock, rising up from beneath the **hovertreads**, had pierced the miniature nuclear power plant. While a full meltdown had not occurred, a great explosion had taken place. Fire belched from every opening, licking at the air. The armor was beginning to melt.

"You bastard," Jack sobbed, sinking to his knees in the burning clearing. "You were supposed to die, dammit! Why didn't you die?" The trooper looked at the tank, his wife's funeral pyre, and was suddenly filled with violent rage. "**YOU BASTARD!!**" he bellowed. "**WHY DIDN'T YOU DIE?! ANSWER ME!! AN-**



SWER ME!!!!" His strength leeched away from sorrow and anger, he lay face down on the burning ground, and put his helmeted face in his Kevlar-gloved hands to cry.

Suddenly, he heard a moan from within a nearby chasm. Getting to his feet, Jack ran over to it, wondering if perhaps someone could have survived. There was a precipice easily twenty feet deep, at the bottom of which lay **Karny**, twisted over the wreckage of his Scout Cycle. It had been knocked out of the air, apparently by the huge fists of the elemental.

"Jack?" he gasped, his voice dry and wheezing. At that moment, **Perrin** saw that his friend's crash was hard one. One of his bike's handlebars had penetrated his armor, and was piercing his stomach. Blood and chunks of bone lay strewn over the controls.

"What happened, Karny?" asked Jack. "How did this happen?"

"Elemental," said the dying pilot. "**Tougher** than HQ thought. Used spell to take out two tanks, then tore the other one apart with its hands. It got me with a boulder when I tried to strafe it." "Look," said Jack. "I'll call HQ with my radio. They'll medivac you. You're going to be all right."

Karny laughed bitterly, and then began to violently cough. "You forgot, I was **pre-med**," he croaked. "I know...something about wounds. This type of injury will take a long time to kill me. Not long enough, though. They'd need **least an hour** to get here...and I've got half that."

"So what should I do?" asked Jack, the tears beginning to run down his face again.

"I don't want to spend the last thirty minutes of my life in pain," Karny said, reaching up to Jack. "Just finish me off. Make it nice and clean."

"All right," said Jack, drawing his pistol. "If that's what you really want. But first, tell me, which way did he go?"

"Not really sure," gasped Karny. "North, I think. Please, do it. This hurts real bad."

"All right, buddy," said Jack sadly, taking careful aim at the opening in his friend's armor. "Rest in peace."

Underneath his helmet, Karny smiled winsomely. "The dead are no longer lonely," he said softly.

The sound of a single laser shot, crystal-clear, cut through the silence of the battlefield.

Jack scrambled down the ravine, dropping from handhold to handhold. Finally, he reached the bottom, where the corpse of his best friend lay. After gently pulling **Karny's** remains from the Scout Cycle, he pushed the bike onto its side, then carefully opened a cargo compartment right behind the seat. Inside lay a **Hellfire Cannon**, with a long-style **E-Clip** already loaded.

"One thing I'll say for you, Karny," Perrin said sadly. "You always loved to be prepared." Pulling out the bulky rifle and slinging it over his back, the pilot carefully climbed the steep sides of the ravine. Then, checking his armor's electronic compass, he began trudging northwards.

The greater earth elemental paused for a moment, and looked down to the tightly packed dirt beneath its rocky feet. The spirit wondered why it was here, on a world which was rich with magical energy, yet peopled by unremarkable insects. *Why has my little brother commanded me to slay these pathetic creatures,* it wondered. What could they have done, what could they have

been capable of doing, to require its attentions in slaying them? Suddenly, there was a slight buzzing sensation in the elemental's head. He sensed another one of the mortals, another one of his enemies, arriving from the south.

The spirit wondered what was happening. It seemed that the mortal was hunting it, but that was incomprehensible. Why would it throw its puny life away attacking an infinitely greater force than itself? The elemental could simply not dismiss this burning question. It sat down on a nearby rock, and began to puzzle out what was happening.

Jack looked up at the elemental. It was sitting on a boulder, its hands stained with black ash, fires still smoldering on its broad, granite shoulders. The thing paid no heed to him. It simply sat, its head resting on one of its thick hands, staring off into the distance.

The soldier pulled his **Hellfire** cannon into place, and took careful aim. Carefully gazing through the eyepiece, he got a perfect view of the monster's shoulder blades. "This is for my wife, you monster," he hissed, through clenched teeth.

Pulling the trigger, he caused a stream of liquid flame to engulf the spirit's head and shoulders, bathing them in white hot flames for almost a minute. But then the fires died down, and he could see that the elemental was unharmed, unblemished from the attack.

The spirit's thoughts were interrupted for a moment by uncomfortable warmth on his shoulders. It gently rubbed the area with its rocky fingers. A few seconds later the discomfort ceased, and the spirit went back to wondering whether or not the human could have some link with the ones it had slain moments ago.

Jack inserted the other clip, tossing the old one aside. Then, he took aim on the head, carefully lining up another perfect shot. But it wasn't enough to shoot the monster in the back, and it wasn't effective, either. He wanted the thing to know that it was under attack, even though deep in his heart, he realized that his attack was useless and suicidal.

"Hey, moron" he bellowed at the top of his lungs. "Over here!"

The elemental heard a sound from behind. Turning, it saw that the human had already arrived. That was somewhat of a surprise to the spirit, who had thought that it was alone.

Jack grinned as he saw the elemental turn towards him, although tears were running down his cheeks. He pulled the trigger on his cannon, and a stream of energy shot out, hitting the spirit right between its glowing eyes. The creature's head was bathed in fire hot enough to reduce a man to atoms. The rock that it sat on was beginning to melt into lava.

The spirit felt the uncomfortable warmth again, this time right between its eyes. Its vision was temporarily impaired by the flames engulfing its face. Feeling a strong measure of annoyance, the elemental smothered the fires with one of its hands. Then, with the other, it called forth a boulder from its home plane of existence. A piece of pure rock, hard as a diamond, slowly formed on its open palm.

Jack realized what was coming, and also realized that flight would do him no good. "I'm coming, Elizabeth," he said calmly, and then closed his eyes and dropped his gun.

The elemental fulfilled its little brother's request yet again. It hurled the boulder, with all its might, into the puny human. Although it was a tiny exertion for the spirit, the victim was crushed. The boulder hit the poor creature dead center, throwing it backwards into a tree, and crushing it. The human fell to the ground, and moved no more. The spirit then decided that it was a moot point whether or not humans could feel determination or any other emotions, and went on its way.

Tucson Llaillan, the elvish explorer (or so he liked to call himself), looked up with dread at the Great Pyramid and its nine crystalline satellites. He had never really liked any of Tolkeen's city-state, let alone Grand Alamar, the capitol. Too magical. Despite his heritage, the elf greatly preferred his own mental prowess to any mystic junk. His powers were useful, reliable, and had never once backfired on him or summoned up any uncontrollable demons, unlike the tools of some "sorcerers" he had heard of.

The city streets were bustling with activity, much more than Tucson felt comfortable with. He had grown up in small border villages, and damn it, he liked it there. Just like the army to evacuate everyone, whether they want to be evacuated or not, he thought bitterly.

Soldiers, their crimson uniforms resplendent in the August sun, proudly strolled down the streets, some of them in shiny chrome armor, or with assortments of magical weaponry hanging by their sides. Occasionally a military vehicle or a civilian car would sputter by, parting the crowds to let them pass, and magically hovering inches off of the ground.

Many of the crowd's members were refugees from the border towns, like the elf was. Most of them carried all their worldly possessions in satchels on their backs, or occasionally on a cart. Living space cost a premium in the crowded conditions of Tolkeen, and therefore, most of the displaced poor found themselves suddenly homeless. Entire families lined the alleyways, setting up tents or gathered around fires. Dozens of lean, hungry faces looked up at the elf.

Self-consciously, he walked into a shadowy doorway to tighten his fake bionic leg. He had bought it right before his forced move to Grand Alamar, to keep himself out of military service. It was a plastic "sleeve" which fit over the limb and created the illusion that his right leg was a rickety, unstable piece of junk from the worst chop-shop in town. The army had poor bionics facilities, so poor or damaged cybernetics could not be repaired or replaced. Recruits with lousy artificial parts were simply sent on their way. Although the prosthetic would not hold up to any kind of scrutiny in a medical examination, at least it kept people from asking him if he had gone to the recruiting office.

Strange as it was, Tucson actually preferred a few years as a homeless person to a tour of duty in the Tolkeen army. He had no experience with guns or magic and had a touch of cowardice to boot. The elf believed that he wouldn't last five minutes in a bar room brawl, let alone a stand-up fight against the Coalition's war machines.

Confidant that his fake bionics were firmly in place, the elf walked back out onto the streets again. He still had not seen any good places to pitch a camp, where he could have privacy when he wanted it and aid when he needed it. *Perhaps I should try to find the mass transport headquarters*, he mused. *An old, aban-*

done tube car would be a great place to bed down. Those things are heated, lockable, and nearly impregnable to assault.

"How much longer 'till the solstice?" asked the godling, looking over the shoulders of the ice dragon, who had changed into human form. The **wyrm** was hunched over a computer which had mystical sigils of power carved into its monitor, keyboard, and data tower. On the screen was a calendar, written in Dragonese, and using a thirteen day week.

"Read it for yourself," said the dragon, with no small measure of annoyance in its deep, rumbling voice.

"You know that I can't read," said the godling. He chuckled bitterly. "I can speak a hundred different **tongues**, but this damn dyslexia keeps me from reading a single **friggin'** word."

"Oh," said the dragon, a smile curling its lips. "I forgot. DO forgive me."

"Just tell me how long it is," said the godling.

"It will be 109 days until the winter solstice," said the dragon. "That's about five months. Five months we have to hold out, until we can tap into enough energy for the ultimate **teleport** spell. Our pyramidal bomb will be transported directly on top of Chi-Town, at which point the Nine will be slain."

"And their death screams will sound as far north as Free Quebec, and as far south as Lone Star," said the godling. "Our ley lines will be weakened for years, but we won't need them for defense **anymore**." "And in time, they will recycle, and our great empire will become whole once more."

Chapter Three

Jack sat in his apartment, reeking of beer and cheap cigarettes. He was dressed in a plain white T-shirt and torn, faded blue jeans. Both were stained with spaghetti sauce, grease, and alcohol. There was a thin haze of smoke in the air, making breathing difficult.

Sitting with him were two representatives of the Coalition military, both in clean, nicely pressed dress uniforms. They seemed woefully out of place in the filthy, smoke-filled room. "Why're you here?" asked Jack, glaring at the two through bloodshot eyes. He took a drag from his cigarette, coughed a few times, then went on. "You knock on my door at three in the morning, invite yourselves in, and sit down on my couch. Why?"

The first of the two, who wore an Air Force officer's uniform, replied coolly, "We need your help, Mr. **Perrin**."

"I'm out of the military!" barked Jack. "Got a certificate to prove it. I don't want any more to do with your Unity Campaign or whatever the hell name you've given it!"

"I understand your concern," said the general, not at all perturbed. "We know about how you lost your wife in the border hostilities. But this is a matter of national **security**! Thousands of soldiers, or millions of civilians might die if you don't help! Doesn't that mean anything to you?" His words were a little too dramatic, like he was reciting a speech he had memorized long ago.

"What're you talking about?" asked Jack, taking another drag.

The second man, an intelligence agent by the looks of him, suddenly jumped into the conversation. "You know that right now, a great part of our army is massed on the Tolkeen borders, ready to begin a massive offensive. However, our intelligence agents have warned us that in their capital city, Grand Alamar, the greatest magicians of Tolkeen have created a magical weapon which dwarfs anything we've seen so far. Unfortunately, we do not have exact coordinates for this doomsday device."

"Where do I come in?"

"We need you to fly a prototype spy-plane over the city, to locate the weapon from overhead. Then, we'd have the coordinates which we need to destroy it, with a precision bombing run. You'd start your flight at one of our border bases, go in high altitude to evade their sensors, then come in low over the city when you arrive."

"Why can't you nuke the whole freakin' city? Carpet-bomb it."

The man shook his head. "We'd need a massive air convoy for that, which would easily be seen and shot down by their air defenses. Besides, the city has certain protections against large-scale bombing. Our strike will depend on a handful of stealth bombers coming in low."

The other man, almost as an afterthought added, "You understand, of course, that everything we say here is strictly confidential."

Jack nodded, muttering, "Yeah, of course."

"Will you do it?" asked the intelligence officer. "You'd have a quick medical check-up at the local recruiting office, be sent to the borderlands tomorrow, and start the mission the night you arrived. After completing your mission and returning to base, you'd receive 100,000 credits for your work, and then would be free to resume your civilian lifestyle, exactly as before."

Jack looked down to the floor, deep in thought. Then, he gazed up to the mantle, to a framed photograph of himself and his wife, on their wedding day. "Why me?" he asked, after a long pause. "You've got plenty of **RPA flyboys** down there who aren't washed-up or alcoholics. Why pick me for this mission?"

"Because you're the best," said the general solemnly. "Your unit led the Tolkeen force in confirmed kills, and a large part of that was due to you. Hell, one time you and your **wingman** managed to both out-fly three **hatchling** dragons at once AND lead them into a **trap**!"

Jack smiled bitterly. "I guess we did get more of them than they got of us," he admitted. Noticing that his cigarette was worn down to a burning stub, he tossed it into a nearby ashtray. "But there's one other thing that's troubling me. What happens if I don't see anything?"

"In that case," said the intelligence officer, "We go ahead with the invasion. Our intelligence reports have not been very clear on this weapon. Nobody knows exactly what it does or how it works, and the odds are good that it's just an urban myth, or a real weapon which has been greatly exaggerated. Our magical experts have told us that anything with such a great power level would have to be huge, so it couldn't be kept in a building, and there are no illusion spells great enough to hide such a big device."

Jack said nothing. He simply stared up at the picture of himself and his wife on their wedding day. How happy they had been.

"Mr. Perrin, if there is a secret weapon, and if we begin the invasion before it is destroyed, then millions of innocent humans could die. Is that what you want?"

Jack said nothing.

"Mr. Perrin, there is no time to waste on this matter. We need your answer."

Jack buried his head in his hands. He was trembling ever so slightly.

"Mr. Perrin!"

"All right," he whispered hoarsely. "All right, damn you. I'll do it."

"Your country thanks you."

The general pulled a document with the official seal of the CS military out of an attache case, along with a pen. Jack picked it up and looked it over. The paper was simply a contract for "mercenary services." He reluctantly signed.

The general shook Jack's hand. Then, the two men left the apartment. Jack sat alone in his apartment, thinking about what the next few days could bring. He walked over to the window, then looked out over his home city. It was a large, yet quiet farming community. Dawn was just beginning to poke its head out from over the distant horizon. Jack thought about all the people in his city who could be spared by what he would soon do. He was surprised to realize that it meant nothing to him.

Then, he looked up at his wedding picture, and looked down at the network of scars the boulder had left on his chest when it caused his armor to rupture. And he thought of how this could be his great revenge.

This thought cheered him up very much, in a malignant and unwelcome way.

Perrin walked into the local recruiting station at 8:30 AM, wearing his old dress uniform and a pair of sunglasses to cover up his bloodshot eyes. A few hours to get ready had done him a world of good. He had taken his first shave in about a week, had a nice hot shower, and had gulped down a homemade hangover cure. It didn't make him feel a whole lot better, but he at least looked presentable.

"Are you Mr. Perrin?" asked the recruiter, a typical enough desk worker.

"Yeah," said Jack. "I was told to report here for a medical checkup."

"I was told that you'd be here," said the man, with a cheerfulness which irritated Jack. "Just go into the next room and follow the doctor's instructions. If you pass the medical examination like I think you will, then you'll get into a hovercar that we got for you, and you'll be on your way to Fort Joseph."

Jack nodded, then walked through the door with a red cross painted on it. Behind the door was a complete doctor's office, with all the latest equipment, including a miniature CAT scanner. A young, attractive woman in a doctor's lab coat wearing surgical gloves was tweaking some of the buttons on a vision testing device. "Hi," she said sweetly. "I take it that you're Jack Perrin?"

"You got the right guy," he said, nodding his head slightly. "What do I have to do?"

"For a start," she said. "Why don't you strip down to your briefs?"

Jack reluctantly shed his uniform, neatly folding up the jacket, shirt and pants, and placing them on a nearby table. Looking down at his body, he saw that he was not the man that he had been a few months ago. His muscle tone had degenerated and his washboard stomach had become a beer belly. Also, there was the confounded network of pale scars. "What now, doc?" he asked quietly.

"Nothing," she laughed. "I just like to see guys in their underwear." Jack gave her a strange look, causing her to chuckle even more. "It's a joke, ace," she said merrily. "Here, why don't you just lie down on that **tray-thingy** on the CAT scanner?"

Of all the doctors in the States, why do I get the one with the deviant sense of humor, Jack wondered. However, he complied with her **request**, and lay down on his back, on what looked like a small sliding cot protruding from the scanner. The doctor came over and pushed a few buttons, causing the cot to slide into the machine.

It came out a few seconds later. Jack climbed off of the tray, and looked over the doctor's shoulder at a handful of charts, x-rays, and strangely colored **thermographic** pictures which were coming out of small slots in the side. "I didn't think those machines could do all that," Perrin said inquisitively.

"**This** is a deluxe diagnostic model," said the doctor as she thumbed through the readouts. "It does almost everything in a normal checkup in a few seconds." Frowning, she pointed at the lungs in a thermographic image. They were much fainter than they should have been, and there was a thin layer of cooler material on the inside. "You been smoking much?" she asked with concern.

"Yeah," he admitted. "Like a chimney."

Then, she pointed towards the liver, which was blotched by areas of warmer and cooler temperatures. "And I trust you've been washing down all that tobacco with plenty of alcohol," she said, her voice thick with sarcasm.

"Yeah."

"Well, I want you to stop both of those for a while. You've been overindulging. And for heaven's sake, swear off at least the drinking for the duration of your little mission."

"Oh, yeah, well that's just common sense. I don't fly drunk."

"You'd better not!" she said, placing her hands on her hips. "Because if you crash around here, then I'm stuck doing the **coroner's** report, and do you know how hard it is to ID you with dental records when your head has been liquefied?"

"I get the picture."

"Good. Now get over on the table over there. I've got to check your reflexes." Obliging, he hopped on up, while she took out a small, rubber-headed hammer.

"Well," she said with obvious appreciation when the test was over. "You may smoke and drink too much, but you've got the reflexes of a Juicer!"

"**Thanks,**" he muttered.

"Last test, big guy," she said, picking up the holographic vision tester which she had been tuning when Perrin came in. She placed it right next to him, and then turned it on. It created the illusion of an eye chart, with pictures of dogs, cats, eyes, and many other simple images. It was clearly designed with illiterates in mind, and that suited Perrin just fine. While he could read and write, it did not come easily to him. In a low monotone, the pilot read off what he **saw**.

"Good job," she said, smiling sweetly. "Not a great job, but you qualified. I'm giving you a clean bill of health, but cut back on the boozing, OK?" She pulled a folded piece of paper out of one of her pockets, signed her name, and handed the paper to Jack.

"Thanks," he muttered half-heartedly, and began to get his clothes back on.

"Oh, and one more thing," she added. "When you get back from your mission, look me up, OK?"

"Only if I get back," he sighed, and then walked out the door, shutting it behind him.

The three hour ride up to the Tolkeen borderlands was uneventful. The pilot and gunner of the Skull Patrol Car were both silent for the entire journey, although the gunner had a small CD player hooked into his armor. Perrin suspected that the man was listening to jazz music, which was the latest CS fad.

Finally, the hovercar began to sink down from its cruising height of 500 feet. It arrived at an air force base, docking on one of many concrete landing platforms. Perrin stepped out of the car, and looked around him. Everywhere were soldiers and technicians running from place to place. Huge warplanes were being tuned up, and off in the distance, a squadron of Super SAMAS were standing guard in the skies. The intelligence officer walked out of the enormous control center, and ran up to Perrin. "Glad you finally arrived. Come with me and I'll tell you more about your mission." The pilot nodded grudgingly, and the two walked off towards the headquarters.

Chapter Four

Tucson sat by his fire, feeling quite pleased with himself. The lizard which he had caught for his supper was roasting on a skewer (actually an old dagger), and was almost ready to eat. He had found a superb home for himself in the subterranean abandoned tube car lot. His new "house" was a techno-wizard subway car which had derailed and shattered its energy matrix. Unfortunately, since it had no electricity, the elf had been forced to create his own heating and light system. A handful of candles scattered around the room had done well for illumination, and a wastebasket full of old newspapers lit aflame was warming him nicely.

Suddenly, a distant growling broke the perfect tranquility of the moment. Tucson glanced at the ancient, pre-Rifts revolver in his open backpack. The weapon gave him a sense of security, although it wouldn't do a thing against many of the ghouls and vampires known to haunt the subway and sewer systems. For those, Tucson thought, I will just have to rely on what I know best. Noticing that one of his candles had gone out, the elf snapped his fingers, and caused it to flare up, even brighter and hotter than before.

A few minutes later, he noticed that the flesh of the cooking lizard was nicely browned and was actually beginning to burn a little bit. Anxious to save his dinner, he reached into the fire, and pulled the meat off of his dagger. He took a small bite, and found the flesh a little bit too tangy and tough for his tastes. Still, realizing that it beat no dinner at all, he continued to devour the dead reptile.

He had only taken another few bites, when his mouth began to sting and ache. Gingerly rubbing his slightly swollen tongue, he began to look the creature over. Although his knowledge of biology was limited, he could tell that its species was clearly not native to Earth, or any other world he had visited. No, the lousy thing was a minor creature of magic! Running his fingers along its blackened spine, he could just barely make out tiny blue sparks of stored magical energy pop out.

"Is there nothing in this reeking city which isn't magical?" grumbled the elf, tossing the half-eaten creature back into the fire, where at least it could serve as fuel. "A guy can't even get a half-decent meal without electrocuting his mouth."

"Oh, I don't know about that," said a deep, grating voice from behind him. "I think the food here is quite tasty."

In one fluid movement, the elf spun around and grabbed the handgun from his bag, pointing it at the intruder. "Who the hell are you, buddy?" spat Tucson.

Before him stood a tall, pale young man with strange yellow eyes and jet black hair. The intruder was dressed in the most immaculate clothing, with a leather overcoat, a designer suit, power tie, and a pair of the finest shoes Tucson had ever seen. He smiled slightly at the elf's outburst.

"It's quite simple," he replied. "I am Arturo, the lord of these tunnels. You are trespassing. And by my laws, that makes you, and everything you own, my property."

"Buzz off, preppie," growled Tucson. The stranger gave him the creeps, and he wanted to get rid of him as soon as possible. "My law says get out of my tube or eat leaden death."

Arturo opened his mouth, and suddenly his canine teeth began to warp and elongate into a pair of long, viciously sharp fangs. "Don't worry," he muttered. "I don't want much, just a sip or two of your blood. A mouthful less won't kill you."

"Shut your word-hole!" screamed Tucson, trying to sound as confident as possible, even though in his heart he was scared half to death. He aimed directly over the vampire's heart, and fired three times, each shot filling the abandoned car with gunsmoke. The three bullets pounded into the vampire's flesh, but did not pierce the skin. Grinning widely, the monster reached down, and picked up the three slugs, which lay at the ground by its feet.

"Are you going to waste any more ammunition or can I have your blood? Just a taste is all I want from you."

Tucson, trembling like a frightened schoolgirl, tossed the pistol out one of the tube's open windows, as it would be useless to him but very handy to the vampire. Then, reaching deep into the dark corners of his mind, he activated the mind-fires, and wrapped them around his body. Arturo fell back, covering his face with his hands, as the elf burst into flames. The vampire looked up once the brightness had subsided, expecting to see the vagabond a charred husk. Instead, he saw Tucson, perfectly healthy, yet burning like a torch. "You're a Burster," hissed the vampire.

"Yes," laughed Tucson with a forced bravado. "Fire can burn even your unholy flesh. So be gone, before I attack you."

The vampire laughed, and retracted his fangs. "You know that if we were to fight, I would win easily," he said softly. "You do know that, don't you?"

"Yes," admitted Tucson.

"Very well. You may keep your wretched blood. But I will require a favor of you, if I am to let you stay in my tunnels. Any other vagrants or drifters that you see in this area, tell them to go into the shack under twenty-ninth street. That is my dwelling place. It is where I feed, although I usually do not kill my victims. Dead men don't bleed."

The elf nodded grimly.

"Good," said Arturo. "And every week, I shall demand a housing tax of twenty percent of your income. If not for that steady inflow of money from the vagrants under my rule, I would be unable to acquit myself in the manner in which I am accustomed."

"You'll get your money."

"I'd better. I'll know if you've been holding out on me. Oh, and one more thing. Don't try to tell the police or any self-styled "demon hunters" the location of my house. I've prepared well for such a contingency, so don't delude yourself into thinking that a silly little mortal like yourself can stop me."

With that, the vampire exploded into dark, grayish mist, and flew out of the tube car through an open window. A moment later, Tucson's handgun floated back through the window and into the elf's hands, suspended on a thick tendril of mist.

"Thanks," muttered the elf grudgingly, and then tried to fall asleep in a corner. His efforts were in vain.

"This is the Stealth Cycle version 4.5," announced the intelligence operative proudly, pointing to the vehicle on the landing pad before him. The bike was an odd-looking piece of equipment, consisting of a black mass of metal in various angles, two triangular wings, and twin nose-mounted, octagonal lasers.

"Weird looking," commented Jack. "What's with all the funny angles?"

"Stealth technology," said the officer, rather irritably. "It can't have any curves or 90 degree angles to keep radar from picking it up."

"Where do I sit?" asked Jack. "I don't see any seat or handlebars."

The officer pushed a small button on one of the wings. The top half of the bike swung upwards, with a hiss of hydraulics. Inside was a typical cockpit, with a video screen replacing a windshield. "There are several hidden videocams on the cycle which feed into this screen. You can see what's in front of you, behind you, underneath you, over you, or to your sides. And you can get up to 200x magnification. Or if you want you can break up the images into boxes to see several at once. You'll be shown how to use it to maximum potential."

Jack nodded, visibly impressed. "What about armor and weapons? I might run into trouble up there."

"There's two light laser cannons, but they don't have real stopping power. Also, their fighters, their power armor, and their personal armor are all enchanted with spells which make them invulnerable to energy. These lasers are primarily for defense, to distract the enemy just long enough to get you out of the fight. As for armor, well, this bike is made out of a special material which absorbs some types of energy. That's to avoid electronic detection. But the material's a tad more brittle than most armor, so you won't last long in a stand-up fight."

"How fast can this thing go? Sounds like I'll have to be running a lot."

"Up to 550 miles per hour. And the handling's pretty good, too."

"Sounds good. Are the coordinates already in the computer?"

"Yes they are. You just have to fly over the right place at no more than 1000 feet, and the bike will automatically take the pictures."

"One last question. Any idea what they've got flying air defense up there?"

"Mostly minor air elementals. But they are really just there in order to sound warnings, and to track intruders. Once the word's got out, a couple of TW fighter planes are sent in. The fighters aren't so tough, but they're fast and maneuverable."

There had been 43 words in the officers response, but Jack had heard only one. That word was "elementals."

"I'll be sure to say hi from Elizabeth," said Perrin under his breath.

Chapter Five

Jack Perrin soared into the sky, the Coalition base far below, until the largest war machines had become tiny black dots, and until the mightiest trees were merely sticks of brown and green. He watched the digital altimeter count upwards, until he was at the proper altitude. Then, with a quick push on the foot pedals, he caused an abrupt acceleration. The afterburners came to life with a flash of smoke and flame, and the stealth cycle roared ahead.

Technically, Jack thought, this thing isn't a cycle. I'm using a joystick to pilot it, and I'm sitting in a cockpit. Sure handles well, though.

Perrin pushed a button on the console, and a small box appeared on the screen, showing what was below the bike. He saw lush, rolling forests quickly rolling by, marred by concrete pillboxes and gray little army bases, like warts on the face of the wilderness. Slim highways stretched out, connecting the bases.

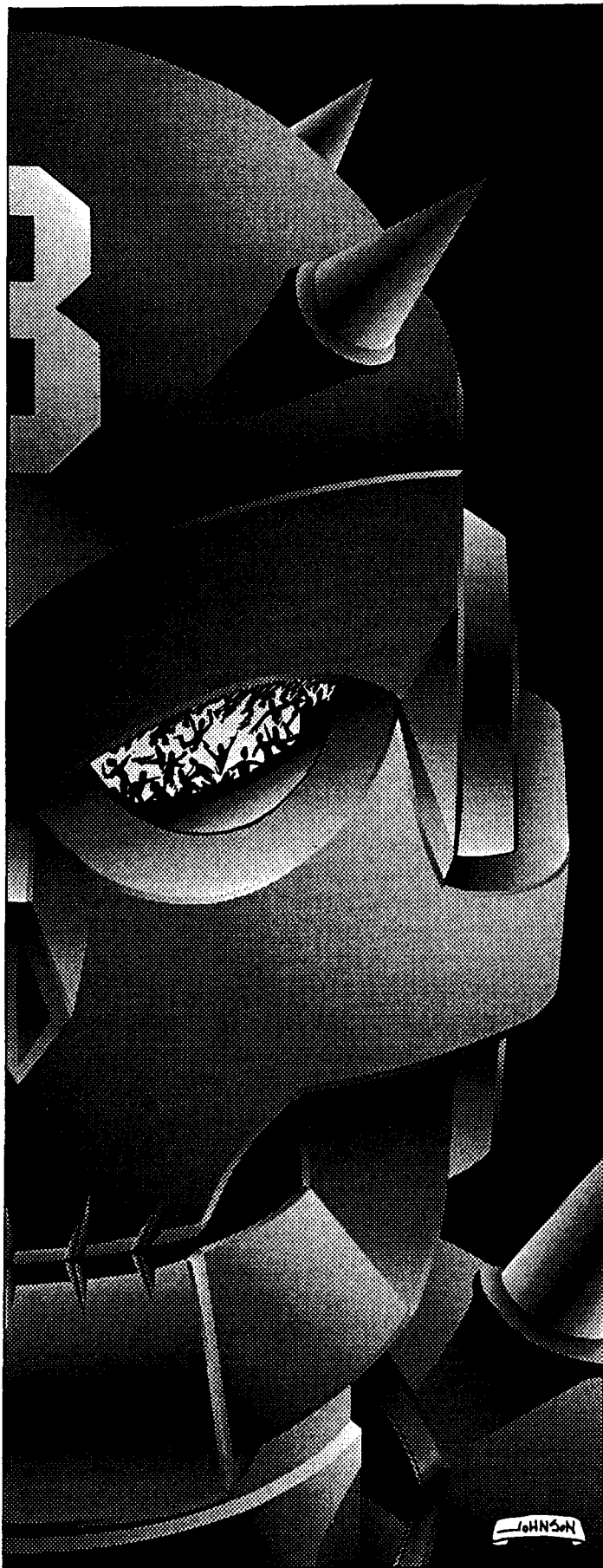
There were a handful of towns below, as well. There were enormous magical war machines positioned in some of the towns, like floating tanks made of bone, or rune-covered lightning cannons. The ordinary people seemed to be gone. They had been evacuated, no doubt, taken to a more secure position.

Occasionally, if he magnified the image enough, Jack could see hulking gray golems, or even fire or earth elementals. It was all he could do to suppress the urge to abandon his mission and attack the magical atrocities. "They'll die soon enough," he told himself, trying to shove down the rising rage into a tiny, bitter ball of controllable anger. "Every last stinking one of them will die."

The minor air elementals kept a tight attack pattern behind the Coalition aircraft, each ready to attack at a moment's notice. They went unnoticed by the stealth cycle's radar, as they were no more than vortexes of swirling winds given life.

"Little brother," their leader said, into a tiny air disturbance by its head. "We have spotted one of your enemies. He is a small one, but fast by your standards. Do we attack?" The disturbance suddenly sped toward a small base below, at an enormous speed.

The magical thing passed through a reinforced ceiling three inches thick, and arrived by the head of a tall man in a blue robe,



who sat in the center of the room. He was surrounded by humans and D-Bees who sat at **techno-wizard** computers. It hovered next to the warlock's ear, and quietly repeated the air elemental's message.

The warlock considered this for a moment, and then created a communications bubble of his own, rolling it out of thin air. He replied into it, "Attack the intruder. Do not let him reach the airspace over Grand **Alamar**." The bubble shot off into the atmosphere.

Then the warlock turned to the men around him. "**There's** an intruder in the airspace, too small to be a bomber. It's probably a scout. I want two Falcons sent up after it. This bastard can't be allowed to get near the pyramid, even if it is warded."

A blast hit the afterburners of the stealth cycle, very nearly destroying them. Jack almost lost control of the aircraft, only barely managing to keep from plummeting out of the skies. He quickly pushed the rear-view button, and saw a force of six whirlwinds in the shape of men. One of them began to surge forward, its ham-sized fists flailing towards the camera.

Instinctively, **Perrin** pulled up, and soared above the **elementals**. The one who had tried to attack was left clawing the air, and the others were momentarily confused by the evasive maneuver. Then, they too began to move upwards to engage their hated enemy.

They threw their entire bodies into the assault, literally trying to tackle the cycle. One of them nearly sheared a wing off, but the others were evaded by means of a quick acceleration and barrel roll.

Perrin pressed down hard on the energy pedal, and was suddenly pushed back into his seat by the immense G-Forces. The cycle suddenly doubled its speed, reaching its maximum velocity. "You won't catch me today, you stupid bastards," growled Jack through clenched teeth.

Most of the **elementals** were left behind, but one of them, the one who had hit the cycle's wing, hung on, and pulled itself onto the front of the vehicle. It raised one hand, to smash through the cockpit.

Jack pressed down onto the trigger. There was a quick burst of brilliant red light from the laser cannons, and the elemental dissipated into mist. Perrin zoomed through it, leaving the dispersed being and its siblings behind. They were unable to catch up.

The forest beneath began to disperse into buildings and small communities. Most of them seemed to be shanty-towns, like dozens of miniature Chi-Town Burbs. Perrin realized that he was getting closer to his target, closer to the central city of Tolkeen. He also realized that the air defenses here were bound to be better.

"Bastard's evaded the **elementals**," said the warlock. "I want a battery of medium range missiles ready to deploy. Summon all the fighters in the vector. I don't want this spy getting in." The men around the warlock began relaying the orders with their computer consoles.

Jack saw them first only on his radar, but then visually as they closed in on him, coming from behind. There were two **techno-wizard** fighters, bulky and heavily-armed, but slow and hard to maneuver.

"Surrender or be shot down," croaked a bestial voice over **Perrin's** radio. The sentence had a strange accent to it, as though American was not the enemy pilot's first language. That meant D-Bee. And D-Bee meant evil.

"You think you can catch me?" asked Jack, his voice filled with malice. "Then bring it on."

As if in response, the TW machine-guns of the two planes began chattering away, spitting bolts of pure force. The bursts were easily evaded by a quick downwards dive.

"That all you got to offer me?" screamed Jack. "If that's the case, your stinking country's doomed!"

A pair of medium range missiles suddenly shot out at Perrin, emerging from the undercarriage of one of the warplanes, and locking onto the stealth cycle, following it and gradually catching up.

Perrin suddenly turned his aircraft, to face the pursuing explosives. They rushed in to destroy him, as he lined them up in the sights of his laser cannons. There was a burst of energy and then a gout of smoke and flame as the two missiles exploded. The stealth cycle was scorched by the flames, but remained intact.

The two warplanes zoomed in towards Perrin, who was in turn rushing at them. The Orcish pilot of one of the planes lined up a perfect shot at the cockpit with his TW machine-guns, and pulled the trigger. But in the split second between the thought and execution of his deed, the stealth cycle pulled up, leaving the magical guns blasting air. Almost effortlessly, the stealth cycle began cruising just overhead of the two warplanes.

Perrin's radar read that more enemies were incoming. Lots more. So, as the two fighter planes began to turn upwards to face the stealth cycle, Jack pushed on the accelerator again, and rushed ahead. By the time that the two warplanes were facing him again, he was miles away. Taking his cue, the two pilots began to push on their accelerators to close the gap.

"Open fire with the missiles!" barked the warlock. "He's too close! If he comes in low, he'll see the pyramid!"

A roof-mounted letterbox-style battery of medium range missiles began to aim upwards to the skies. Its operators, a pair of encrypted soldiers, looked up, anxiously awaiting their foe's arrival.

Perrin was astonished as a missile zoomed up past him, missing by only a few feet. He looked down, to see a missile launcher, which was opening fire with everything that it had. Steeling his nerves against the pitching and rolling, Jack began evasive maneuvers. "So close," he reminded himself. "It would be stupid to die here."

A wing of six light fighters began to close in from the distance, coming in from the front. Missiles were soaring up into the heavens like birds taking flight, and to evade them, Jack was having to pitch and roll like a gargoyle on acid. But it made no difference to him. Looking at his coordinator, he saw that he was in the right place. Looking down, he could see nothing save the towering skyscrapers and sprawling apartment buildings of Grand Alamar. There was nothing that looked like a secret weapon.

"Looks all clear," he reported over his radio, back to the air force base. "Seems that those reports were just rumors."

"We roger that," replied a voice which was heavily furred by static and disruption. "Return to base."

"I don't think that's possible," grunted Perrin, trying to dodge a volley of incoming laser fire from the light warplanes. "Good luck with your war."

Jack then turned off the radio, and faced straight ahead, towards one of the incoming enemy planes. What the hell, he reasoned to himself. I didn't think I was gonna survive this one.

The enemy pilot was a frightened teenager from the sticks. He had only wanted to be a farmer, and was terrified when he got drafted and tossed into a fighter after a brief crash course in flying. A more experienced pilot might have taken proper actions to avoid Perrin's suicide run. But this pilot was just a frightened kid.

The stealth cycle hit the fighter plane dead on. The last thing the enemy pilot saw was a black metal point coming through his cockpit. The two aircraft burst into flames, and went spiraling towards the ground. They crashed in an abandoned apartment building, going straight through the roof and smashing through several floors, before the twisted metal and broken bodies finally settled into an immobile heap.

Jack Perrin found himself sprawled out, trapped beneath a mass of slag and pinned under a metal beam from the enemy plane's frame. His armor had saved his life, but he was unable to move, and pain shot through his body. There was also the terrible knowledge that sooner or later the Tolkeen police would find him, and would probably torture or kill him. But, in a strange way, he was happy to be alive.

Looks like the devil takes care of his own, he thought to himself.

Chapter Six

Jack was shocked into awareness by the feeling of ice cold water poured on his face. His eyes couldn't focus well, and his entire body hurt. He tried to get up, but didn't have the strength. However, he had power enough to open his mouth and swallow some of the icy water. The stuff was foul-tasting and brackish, but it assuaged his burning throat.

"You okay, buddy?" asked a faint, far-off voice. "You were real banged up when I found you."

"Where?" gasped Perrin, using up most of his feeble energy.

"You were in an old dead-storage warehouse. It's where people put the stuff they don't want to throw away, but don't need. I sometimes go in there, foraging for anything that's worth money."

"No. Where am I?"

"Oh," responded the voice. Its owner came into Perrin's cloudy field of vision. He was a tall, thin man, with a face that looked to Jack like a big pink blur. "You're in my home. It's an abandoned rail car. But I've fixed it up real nice. It's got heat and lights and everything."

"Thanks," gasped Perrin. "You...resistance?"

"Resistance?" asked Jack's savior, seemingly bewildered. "You think I'm a rebel? Just who are you, anyway?" The man put his hands on his hips and began looking down at the wounded flyer, expecting an answer.

Jack suddenly realized that his rescuer didn't know that he was a Coalition soldier. It made sense. The stealth cycle hadn't had the death's head motif or any other CS identification on it, and Perrin's armor had been wrecked in the crash.

"No," Jack replied. "I'm a test pilot. Was trying out...new light plane. Controls weren't right, and I crashed into a patrol plane."

"What were those shots that I heard?"

"Other pilots thought I was...attacking. They opened fire."

"That figures. These soldiers are a bunch of paranoids. They never even try to contact people or reason with them, just throw them out of their homes or shoot them."

Jack smiled inwardly. His rescuer sounded bitter towards the Tolkeen army. That could be something that he could build upon later, or perhaps use as an appeal.

"One question," Jack muttered, as he felt himself begin to slip into unconsciousness. "Why didn't you leave me for soldiers?"

"I just had this gut instinct that you didn't want them to. It's one of my special gifts. I have a sort of instinct for people's feelings."

A chill went down Jack's spine, even though the room was very warm. His rescuer was a psychic! In Tolkeen, any kind of paranormal abilities could only mean trouble. "Any other gifts?" he asked, needing to know what kind of creature his host was.

"Yeah," said his savior, with a heavy dose of pride. "I can sort of control fire, too. And I don't get burned. You get your sleep now. You need it." With that, he left the room.

Jack suddenly got the mental picture of his sleeping body enveloped by flames, shriveling into a blackened skeleton. He then felt very unwilling to sleep. However, his body commanded it. Perrin slowly slipped into a fitful, restless slumber.

In the next compartment of the tube car, Tucson sat, staring at a flyer in his hands. It had a cartoon of an ominous, grinning skeleton on it, the bony figure holding a plasma rifle in its hands. Beneath it, several lines of small print spoke of the atrocities and cruelty of the Coalition government. The elf knew that the wounded man in his home was a CS spy, even the most simple mind scans showed it loud and clear. But the true question was what to do about it.

Part of the elf wanted to go back to his patient's bedside, and burn the sleeping human into a cinder with a thought. That would clear up the trouble, but went against his morals. Another part of the elf wanted to report the human to the government, so that the spy would be arrested and interrogated. That would help the government, but might get him in trouble for sleeping in a tube car which was technically government property. The presence of police or army in the sewers might anger Arturo, and that would bring real trouble.

The answer suddenly dawned on the elf. He would just tell the vampire to get rid of the dying spy. That would leave his conscience mostly clear, and might even get him on the blood-sucker's good side. He tossed on a jacket, and then ran out of the tube car and into the tunnels beyond.

When next Jack awoke, he found that he barely had the strength to stand, although his vision was still cloudy and his motor control was poor. He got to his feet, and began to walk around the tube car on his wobbling, unsteady legs. In one corner of the room, he found a duffel bag carefully hidden under a chair. Inside were exceedingly few things of value. It was mostly just knick-knacks and some clothes. However, there was a small roll of coins, a silver medallion, and an old, rusty handgun, all of which Perrin took with him. Then, he walked out of the rail car,

and into the dark tunnels beyond. But there was no light to see, and he could barely see, anyway. Perrin tripped over a rail, hit his head on a nearby car, and fell to the ground, unconscious once more.

"And you're positive that he's not someone who'll be missed?" asked Arturo, walking side by side with Tucson. The two were walking through the dark tunnel together, towards the elf's home.

"The police don't take it well when important people vanish in the sewers."

"He's not anyone important," snapped back the elf, surprised by his own vehemence. "He's a Coalition spy."

"If you say so," said Arturo, shrugging his shoulders. The two finally reached Tucson's car, and entered.

Perrin was woken by the sound of a high-pitched scream. He got to his feet unsteadily, and looked around him. His vision was really messed up, swimming and pitching crazily, and his head ached with a horrible throbbing pain. The Burster's rail car was alight with fire, and another shriek came from within.

"Lying bastard!" thundered a voice which Perrin had never heard before. "You promised me a meal, and by all the gods, I mean to collect!"

"Please!" begged Jack's rescuer. "I'll find him for you! He can't have gone far! Please! Just a few minutes and you can have him!"

"I no longer desire his blood! I want yours!"

Jack considered his options. He decided that whatever was inside the car, probably a vampire, would probably hunt him down soon after finishing off the Burster. However, the psychic HAD betrayed him, so maybe it would be better to let the man die. Perrin had begun to walk off, when he felt a slight twinge within him. It was something he had not felt for months. Conscience.

"Altruistic dunce," he muttered to himself, as he trudged off to the burning rail car.

Perrin ascended the steps, and saw a raging inferno inside. The elf was standing at the center of a bonfire and frantically causing minute explosions of flame all around. A tall, youngish man with burning clothes that had once been of good quality, stood at the edge of the flames, trying to protect his handsome face with his hands. Only when he pulled his hands away could Perrin see the pair of bestial fangs.

"Smile pretty now," Perrin grunted. He held the elf's silver medallion out in front of the gun, and tried, with great difficulty, to aim properly. The vampire turned, saw the gun and the silver, and began to charge the human in an attempt to snatch both away.

Jack fired. The bullet went straight through the medallion, biting off a sizeable chunk of silver. The metal-coated slug hit the vampire's belly, tearing through his fine clothing, and ripped into the foul creature's withered organs. Shrieking in pain, Arturo fell the floor, clutching his bleeding flesh and rolling around in agony.

Suddenly, the vampire exploded into greenish mist, which began to fade out of the windows.

"Well," gasped Tucson, mentally extinguishing the raging fires in the tube car. "I suppose that I owe you some thanks. And an apology."

Perrin tossed the shattered medallion away, and pointed the pistol at the elf. "Give me one reason I shouldn't blow your head off," he rasped.

"Because I could have left you for the military police. And they hate Coalition spies."

Perrin paused for a moment, thinking it over. He then tucked the handgun into a pocket. "Good point," he muttered. "Very good point indeed."

Meanwhile, in the back room of a nearby bar, the Human Freedom Association was meeting. Its members included some of the toughest mercenaries to grace the Tolkeen area, including more than a few Crazies, Juicers, and Borgs. Although the group was typically rowdy and boisterous, everyone put away their beer mugs and listened intently as their leader, the Crazy nicknamed "Rick Freedom" spoke.

"Soon, we will be able to throw off the shackles of our cruel society!" he boasted, the coolant plugs in his head rising and falling out of his skull as his adrenaline levels rose and fell. "We all saw the air battle which happened yesterday, in which the horrid magic pigs shot down a plane, a plane which a human was flying!"

"Well, my sources have informed me that the flyer of that plane was an ace from the Coalition, named Jack Perrin! I also have learned that the fascists have not found him **yet!!** This man will be our link, our envoy to the Coalition States. Through him, we shall get our orders from the greatest government humanity ever produced. But in order to do that and fulfill our purpose, we must first find him, before the military police do."

Chapter Seven

"What the hell is that?" asked Perrin, pointing up to the gigantic pyramid. In the dim twilight, the crystals orbiting the structure were barely visible. With his dizzy, cloudy vision, Perrin couldn't make them out. But he definitely saw the enormous pyramid, and it filled him with dread.

"That's the High Council's pyramid," replied Tucson, as he helped the wounded pilot walk through the back alleys and side streets of Grand Alamar. "Apparently, there's some kind of spell on it. I've heard that it's supposed to be some kind of super-weapon. But if that was the case, they'd have used it long ago."

"Oh, crap," exclaimed Perrin loudly, very nearly falling to the grimy cobblestones. "I didn't see it from overhead. How the hell is that possible?"

"Illusion magics," said Tucson, with very little concern. "The entire city looks completely different from overhead. It's to prevent bombings."

"They're walking into a trap," gasped Perrin, as he slid into unconsciousness and crumpled into a heap on the ground.

Tucson grabbed him up, and carried him like a parent carrying a sleepy child to bed. *C'mon man*, thought Tucson. *Hang in long enough for me to get you to a Body Fixer. Don't die on me yet. You may follow that demon Prosek, but I still want to keep you alive.*

Meanwhile, the voice of Emperor Prosek spoke from the speakers of a Death Bringer APC, clear and loud. He was giving a historic speech, a speech that officially launched the Minnesota

campaign, and all the soldiers listened attentively, their minds totally focused on his words of encouragement and support.

"My fellow humans," he began. "In a matter of minutes you will be engaging one of the most fiendish enemies of the human race. The inhabitants of Tolkeen consort with demons. They sacrifice children. They twist our reality in horrible and obscene ways using their magics. This can not be tolerated. This will not be tolerated."

"Already our informants have told us that they are planning to engage in a campaign of expansion, which will sweep their demonic empire hundreds of miles across northern America. Thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of innocent humans, who wished nothing to do with the brutality of war, would be killed in this unholy and unethical attack. It is for those humans that we fight! We are the greatest protectors of the human race. We are the ones who stand against the annihilation of humanity! So, we must destroy Tolkeen. Its blasted ruins will be a monument to the stupidity, and the ultimate doom, of consorting with rifted horrors."

There was a slight pause in the emperor's speech, inserted for drama, before he resumed his speech. "Now, my generals have informed me that there is some talk of a magical super-weapon in Tolkeen. I assure you that this is not true! One of the Coalition's most skilled and loyal pilots, Jack Perrin, confirmed that there is no doomsday weapon, by undertaking a dangerous flight over the capital city of Tolkeen. Sadly, in this mission, he was shot down and killed. He died to ensure that you brave soldiers would be safe in your invasion. Please, make his sacrifice mean something."

"Now, it is time for action. When you battle, know that you are fighting for the safety of humanity. We are battling to show the magicians and their monsters that they are ultimately helpless against a strong and organized human race. Your actions will tell them to get off of our world, because there is no place for them here. I have never been more proud of the Coalition's military than I am at this moment. Go out, and do my words justice. And let the invasion begin."

The soldiers in the Death's Head Transport let out a great cheer, as the machine slowed, then stopped just outside of Tolkeen's borders. The men inside were sheathed in an assortment of Smiling Jack and Super SAMAS armor. Slowly, the great doors slid open, and the men leaped out. Their jets activated, and they fell into formation and soared off into battle.

Sergeant Donald Hartman led the Black Dog assault team, a group of ten of the best-trained assault pilots in the Coalition States. They swept in low over the landscape, weapons ready for action. "Sensors show a cluster of bogeys up ahead!" announced Hartman to his men. "Iron Man or People of the Sun?"

A multitude of opinions shot back over his radio, with the general consensus leading towards Iron Man. "Ozzy it is," said Hartman gladly, and pushed a button on a small metal case which had been welded into his Super SAMAS. Most of the time, pre-Rifts music was forbidden, but Hartman had gotten special permission from his commanding officer.

Rock music blared from his armor's speakers, along with the rasping proclamation, "I...am...IRONMAN!!!" In a clearing below, the crew of a missile base heard the music, and began to scramble for cover. Before they could reach it, the Black Dog assault team soared overhead, weapons blazing.

Hartman swooped in low over the pillbox, which served as the crew's temporary home, and unleashed a furious volley of micro-fusion mini-missiles. There was a slight clattering as the grenades hit the concrete roof and bounced or rolled around. Then, there was a roar of flame and the whistling of shrapnel as the pillbox exploded.

A couple of the men rushed over to their medium range missile battery, hoping that they could use the explosives to hold off the enemy. One of the Black Dogs came in from behind, and atomized the two men with a gout of flame from his plasma ejectors. Then, with another shot, he blew up their missiles.

An enemy soldier pulled a metal tube out from his utility belt, and threw it up at the SAMAS that destroyed the missiles. The thing hit the power armor, and stuck to it somehow. There was suddenly a strange, whistling **noise**, as the soldier frantically tried to pull the thing off. Suddenly, the tube exploded into a rift, twisting and warping space and time for the unfortunate SAMAS trooper. The power armor, and the man inside, was pulled apart in thousands of directions at once. The rift then collapsed, dragging the rubble into some alternate dimension. There wasn't even enough of the pilot left to bury.

Some of the other soldiers pulled out their side arms or energy rifles, and began firing at the power armor troopers. Most of the guns were normal, but a few fired bolts of lightning or magical nets.

"Let's finish this, shall we?" asked Hartman, over the roar of his **Ozzy Osbourne** CD. "**Cuisinart** maneuvers, on four." The SAMAS troopers swooped in towards the ground, activating their **vibro-blades** for combat. They then began swooping past the soldiers and slashing out with the blades. After a few passes like this, the enemy soldiers had been hacked to pieces.

"Good work today," said Hartman, pulling an impaled soldier off of his sword and turning off his CD player. "Now, we simply hold our position until we're relieved of duty." Suddenly, he was interrupted by a faint alarm inside his armor. "**That** might be **tough**, though," he sighed. "Since radar's tracking something big coming in. ETA of about three minutes."

"Do we take the fight to it?" one of the Black Dogs asked.

"**Naw**," said Hartman, shaking his head. "I'm thinking maybe a sloop and beat." The SAMAS troops, following orders, flew up about fifty feet, and prepared for battle.

Mere moments later, trees in the distance began falling, as if something was knocking them over. Whatever was coming was getting closer and closer...

It then burst into the clearing, weapons blazing. The thing looked like some horrific monster kept alive by foul magics. It was made of huge bones, from dozens of different creatures, pieced together by technology and magic, with the end result resembling the skeleton of a wingless dragon. Missile launchers graced its back, and there were twin lightning rods mounted on either side of the head.

The Black Dogs swooped in to greet their visitor, taking hits and giving them. One Super SAMAS took a direct blow to the head from a missile, and fell to the ground, the suit still functioning, but the pilot inside dead.

Four of the SAMAS pilots grasped the thing by its front legs when they came within range, and managed to flip it over onto its back. The bone tank lay there, frantically thrashing its bony legs and claws around, hoping to hit something, anything.

The Black Dogs hovered over its belly, and simply began dropping micro-fusion grenades from their forearms. Most of them slipped through the cracks in the bone armor. There was a great roar, and the monstrous war machine burst into flames.

The pilots landed by the blackened bones, and breathed a collective sigh of relief. "Like I said, people," said Hartman. "Good job today."

Flashes of magic, bursts of gunfire, and distant explosions sounded throughout the night, and all involved in the war knew that those sounds would continue for months to come. A **Death's Head** Transport flew overhead at one point, but was hit by dozens of bursts of unnatural lightning, and crashed into the forest. In the distance, huge force fields began to flicker on and off as they took hits from lasers and missiles. The siege had begun.

Chapter 8

"Jeez, what happened to this guy?" asked the ape-like D-Bee. He had a high forehead, lots of bristly black hair, and a mouthful of blunt, shockingly white teeth. The being wore a full doctor's suit, including a white doctor's suit, facemask (which hung around his neck), and even a utility belt with dozens of pockets. Each pouch held medical gear, of many varying types.

The **D-Bee's** high-tech medical gear contrasted sharply with his office. The three stood in the living room of a dingy apartment, with no furnishings save a chipped sink, and a large table covered in sterile plastic. The shades were down, so the dim illumination of the room came from a bare light bulb hanging from a chain on the ceiling.

"He got caught in a plane crash, and then got in a fight before he could completely recover," said Tucson, as he hoisted the unconscious **Perrin** onto the table. "He's been passing in and out of consciousness for about three days."

As if on cue, the human began to moan, and tried, in vain, to sit up.

"Ah, good," said the doctor eagerly, taking out a small penlight but not turning it on. Holding it between his hairy, misshapen thumb and forefinger, he began to move it back and forth. "Please follow the penlight with your eyes, sir."

Perrin tried to oblige. However, his senses were blurry and distorted. He could barely even see the penlight, as a speck of blue against a lump of black. His eyes didn't move well, causing pain when he tried to look from side to side. However, even in his wounded state, the pilot could easily tell that the doctor was not human, and tried to hold down his instinctive rage and panic.

"**Hmm**," said the doctor, suddenly grasping **Perrin's** head and shining the light into one of his eyes. "Are you having problems focusing your vision?"

"Yeah," Perrin muttered. Full speech was beyond him in his dazed and incoherent state.

The doctor began looking at the bruises on **Perrin's** forehead. "Looks like he's got a concussion," he said to Tucson. "I can give him something for the pain and to keep him awake, but I don't really have the equipment to mend him up proper. I'll do a quick x-ray to make sure there aren't any skull fractures and put his head in a brace of some sort, to prevent further injuries. It'll cost you around 200 creds for the medication, and another 225 for my medical services."

"Fine," muttered Tucson, feeling around in his pockets. His fist closed on a thick roll of coins, his life savings. Most of it would be spent helping this bigot get better, and much of the rest would be spent feeding the man. "Sure hope you're worth it, buddy," said Tucson, under his breath.

The D-Bee proceeded to take several pictures of Perrin's head, with a small device that looked like a camera. Some small photos, barely bigger than wallet-sized pictures, printed out of the side, showing the pilot's skull. The doctor looked Perrin over for a moment, and then pronounced him free of skull fractures. He then handed Tucson two small bottles full of pills, and gave him detailed instructions as to their use.

"By the way, how's that cyber-leg treating you?" the doctor asked, lines of concern furrowing his large brow. "It looks sort of rickety."

"Ah, it's doing fine," said Tucson quickly, not wanting the body fixer to take a closer look at the fake prosthetic. "I'll see you later, doc."

"Fine," said the doctor cheerfully, helping Perrin off of the table. "I'll be sure to get the word out to you if I have to change offices." The doctor pulled a window shade out of the way, and looked out over the sprawl of New Alamar, the skyline dominated by the High Council's pyramid and its unnatural satellites. Military aircraft and dragons swooped and soared in the skies.

"With the damn war going on, I'm surprised how well they persecute unlicensed doctors," said the D-Bee bitterly, shutting the window. "But they do. About every three or four weeks, some bastard I patched up turns me in for the reward, and I have to get out of yet another home."

"He's in there," said a fat, reeking creature of the same race as the doctor. He stood just outside the door to the body fixer's office, along with two red-garbed inquisitors in full combat armor. The D-Bee was dressed in a stained, sweaty undershirt and a pair of torn dress pants, puffing on a cheap, soggy cigar. "A half-dead human and an elf went in a few minutes ago. His latest patients, no doubt."

"You've been very helpful, sir," said one of the inquisitors, the man's voice obscured into a harsh rasp by the gas mask he wore. "You'll get your payment in the mail." The D-Bee, seemingly content, waddled off into a nearby room.

The body fixer had just finished the dressing for Perrin's head when the inquisitors broke the door down. The two policemen strode into the room, telekinetic machineguns at the ready. "Surrender now!" yelled one of them. "This is an illegal clinic!"

"Crap!" yelled the doctor, trying to make a break for it. He held his forearms out in front of his head, and smashed out through a window. There was a shower of glass as the body fixer leapt out onto a fire escape.

But before he could scramble down the rusted metal ladder to freedom, one of the inquisitors was already on him, pulling him back through the shattered window by his collar. The body fixer was rudely thrown down onto the floor and handcuffed.

Tucson knew the hell that would await him, but still preferred it to instant death at the hands of the inquisitors. Angrily, he held his hands up, in surrender. Perrin did the same, hoping that the tortures of the Tolkeen military were not quite as bad as the Coalition propaganda said.

The three men were handcuffed, and led out of the building at gunpoint. They were then quietly shuffled into a paddy wagon, chained to the sides, and driven away.

I really wish that they'd heat these rooms a little more, thought the interrogator as he walked into the dungeon. The cool concrete walls were splotted with blood in many colors from many species, and the smooth surface was broken by iron manacles and restraints protruding from metal sockets. Securely chained against one wall was a severely beaten, half-dead human, who looked up at his tormentor with a gaze of pure venom.

This one might prove to be a challenge if he was in full health, thought the interrogator. *But in his weakened state, he's no more than a little morsel to be picked apart at my will. Might be entertaining, though.*

"Well, Mr. Perrin," he said, staring directly into his bound victim's eyes. "Oh, yes, we know your name," he said, noticing the captive's look of surprise. "We know your name, and we know your sins." Then, with a minute gathering of will, the interrogator began to probe the pilot's mind, savoring memories of guilt, fear, and intimidation like a child picking out the best chocolates in a box of candy.

"Oh, and I do wish to extend my condolences about your wife," said the interrogator, grinning widely, his words dripping sarcasm.

"Shut your damn mouth," Perrin growled. "My wife has nothing to do with this."

"Oh, no, she has everything to do with this. She's the reason that you're here. To get revenge for her. Well, I must say, if that's your reason to come here and kill good people, then you're a misguided fellow indeed. If you really wanted to avenge her, you'd commit suicide. It's your fault that she died."

"Let me out of these chains and say that, you stinking coward."

"Well, I'm only saying it because it's true. I mean, you were the one who pressured her into a life in the army. You were the one who didn't herd the elemental correctly. If you had helped Kerner get it right in their field of fire, that monster would have been destroyed. But it came in from the side, and tore the tanks to shreds." The interrogator had no idea if that was true or not, however. He was merely playing on Jack's fears and insecurities. And judging by Perrin's reaction, he had done well.

"I'll kill you, you son of a bitch!" screamed Perrin, feebly trying to break free of the restraints. "I'm going to rip your eyes out of your head and shove 'em down your throat!"

"Well, now you know what it's like for the thousands of innocent people you and your Coalition have slaughtered. The deaths of loved ones, senseless brutality, fear and paranoia, now you know the horrors that have been inflicted on so many non-humans."

"Non-humans are the enemy."

"No," said the interrogator. "This is the enemy." And with that, he projected into Perrin's mind a series of images and emotions he had programmed into dozens of other captive CS troops and personnel. They were pictures and sounds of D-Bee villages being destroyed by mammoth war machines, and of alien children dying by laser fire, and of magic-using healers and doctors being tortured and slain. It was the emotions of a parent mourning a slaughtered baby, and the fear of a refugee caught beneath

the feet of an enormous robot. Perrin suddenly found himself helpless before the onslaught of emotion and trauma. He began sobbing wordlessly, unable to cope.

"You helped bring this about," said the interrogator sadly. "And we can't tolerate things like this. You wouldn't tolerate it, either, if you were in our place. So, we don't really have any choice but to execute you. That's the typical punishment for murderers."

"Get out ... of ... my ... head, you ... stinking ... mind-raper."

"I just want to hear you admit one thing," said the interrogator, as he pulled out a long, bone-handled knife. "I want to hear you confess that you realize why you are being killed. Say that you know why you're being executed."

"Just...kill me."

"Still need more proof of your depravity, eh?" asked the interrogator. He then projected his favorite image, that of a small, adorable D-Bee child clutching a teddy bear, being ripped apart by the jaws and knives of a slaving Dog Pack. Perrin began convulsing with rage and terror.

"Ready to admit it?" asked the interrogator, placing the blade of the knife directly at Perrin's throat.

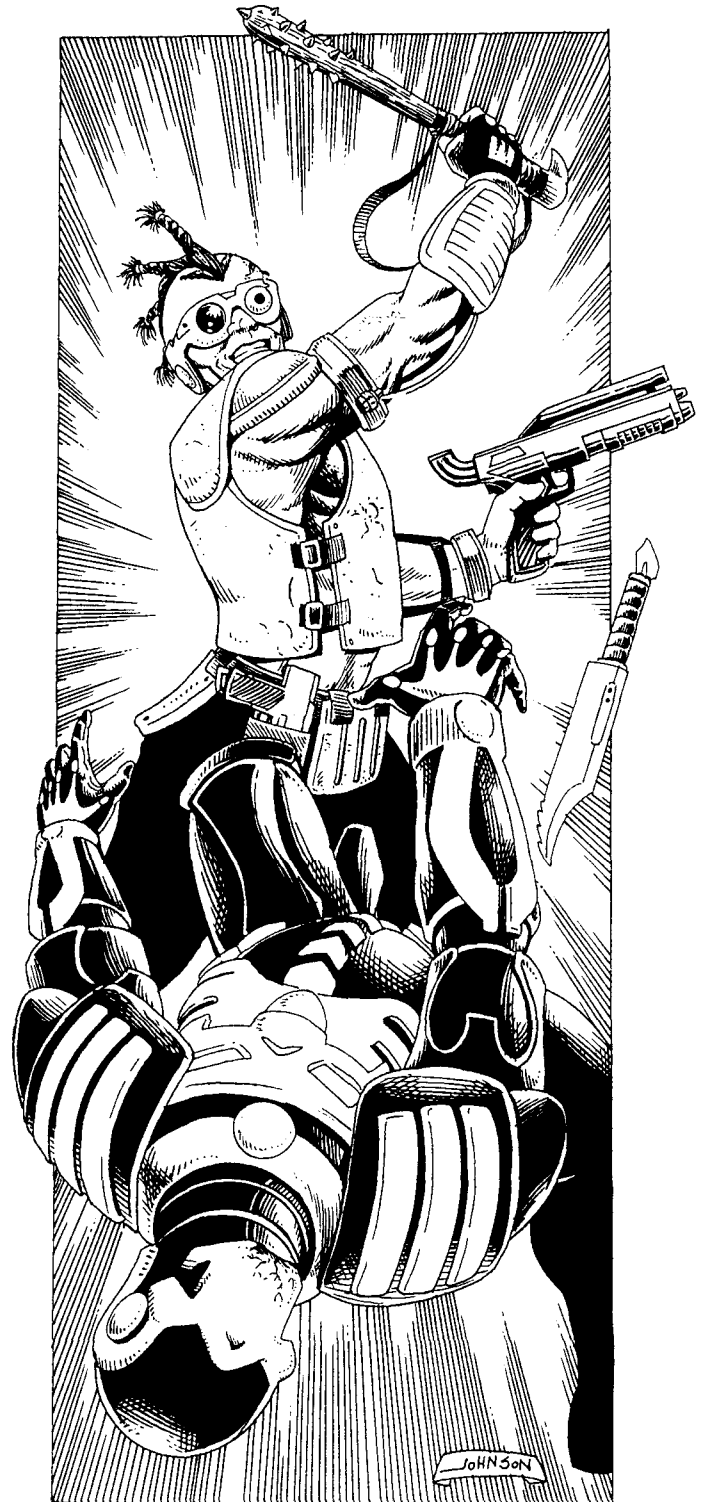
"I realize why you want to kill me."

"Thank you," said the interrogator politely, and then began to make his incision.

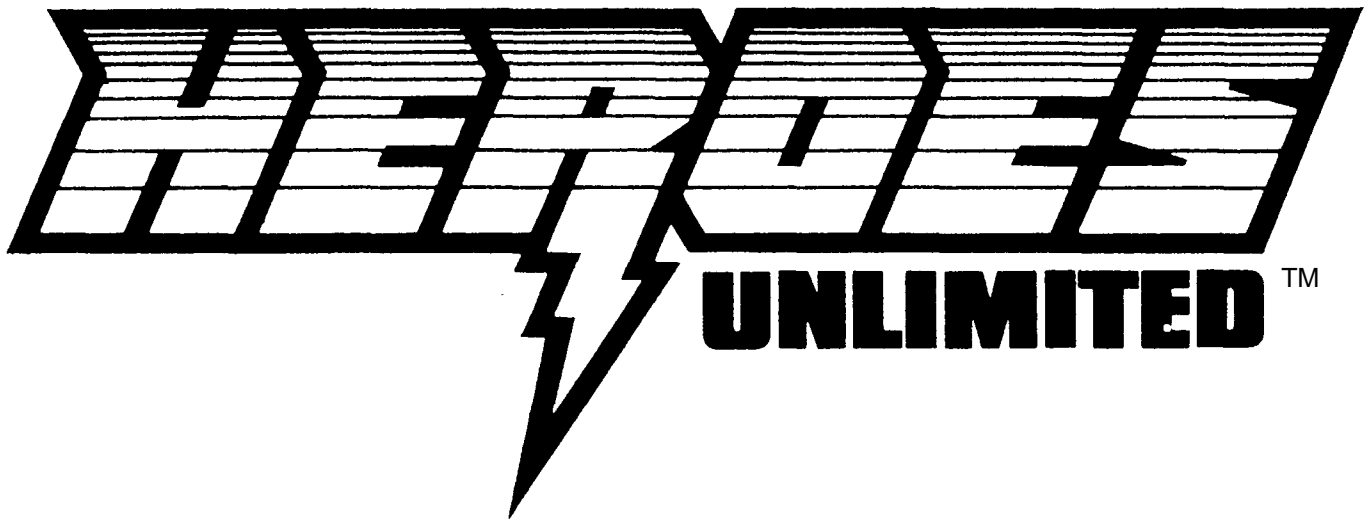
Suddenly, the door to the dungeon swung open. The interrogator turned, to see a rag-tag squad of terrorists running into the room, guns smoking. He tried to create a shield of telekinetic force to protect him, but it was too late. By the time that he had even realized the extent of the threat, a Crazy had neatly impaled him on a type of vibro-polearm.

"Geez, Rick, this guy doesn't look like much of a hero," muttered a lock-picker, as he struggled to free the half-conscious Perrin.

"Oh, but he well," said Rick Freedom, sliding the dead psychic from the end of his spear. "When he's leading us into battle, I promise you that he'll look like Earth's greatest hero."



To Be Continued ...



New Major Super Powers — Optional —

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox and Steve **Trustum**

Adaptation

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power allows a being to alter his body to best suit his environment. But, unlike evolution, these changes happen in a matter of seconds rather than eons.

1. Atmospheric Adaptation

This power lets the character breathe in any atmosphere. The process begins when the being is exposed to the new atmosphere. He will begin coughing as his metabolism reacts, and pass out in 1D6 minutes. He will enter a coma-like sleep for 1D4 hours. When he awakes, he will be able to breathe the new atmosphere without problems. While the character is unconscious, he is completely defenseless, unable to wake up, even if attacked, until he has completely adapted to the new gases. The individual must go through this process every time he wishes to breathe a different type of atmosphere, even if he has previously been able to breathe the same one before his last adaptation.

2. Environmental Adaptation

This allows the being to alter his physiology to best suit the area around him. Only one of these adaptations can be used at a time. Altering the body into any of these forms takes one full melee of concentration. The hero can hold any of these changes for up to one hour per level of experience.

Underwater: Gills grow on the sides of the character's neck and webbing grows in between the fingers and toes. The character can breathe underwater as well as air and his swimming speed is twice the Spd attribute.

Aerial: A thin membrane grows between the character's arms and legs, allowing him to glide (same as minor super power). The membrane is very delicate and will rip, sending the hero plummeting to the ground, if they take more than 3 points of damage.

Arboreal: This adaptation allows for easier climbing and acrobatics. Small claws grow from the fingers and toes (1D6 damage), as well as a prehensile tail and feet. Adds +50% to climb

skill (if character does not have climb skill, use 65% without the bonus added in). The prehensile feet and tail work the same as the descriptions in the mutants section of *Heroes Unlimited* (ignore climbing bonuses).

Nocturnal: The character's eyes double in size and become incredibly sensitive to light. The character will have nightvision (range of 300ft (92m)), but will be blinded completely by normal light (-8 to strike, parry, and dodge, automatically loses initiative). The ears will also become sensitive, doubling the hero's normal hearing ability.

Arctic: The person's body will grow a layer of soft fur, as well as a layer of insulating blubber, making the character extremely tolerant of sub-zero temperatures, taking only 5% of normal damage from cold.

Desert: The character's limbs become thin, but the body swells to store water and food. The character also becomes more tolerant of heat and the sun's radiation, never suffering from sunburns, heat stroke or fatigue. After a good drink (4 to 5 gallons of water) the character can last a week without another drink. Unlike the other adaptations, this power lasts 24 hours per level of experience.

Healing: A special adaptation that lets the hero increase his natural healing ability by five times. This requires that at least half of the character's S.D.C. be depleted before it can be activated. The character goes through no noticeable physical change while using this ability, but he will get very hungry very quickly.

3. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

+1D6 to P.E.

+3 to Save vs. Poisons and Magic

+2 to Save vs. Psionics

+15% to Save vs. Coma/Death

Alter Limbs

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

A character with this power will be able to change his arms, legs, hands and feet into different and useful forms.

1. Body Weapons

Identical to minor super power

2. Useful Objects

The Character can alter his limbs into a variety of useful objects, from a pencil sharpener to a pancake flipper. Some of the more useful ones for a hero include lock-pick finger (+10% to pick locks skill), climbing claws on hands and feet (+25% to climb skill), and rope (up to 25ft)

3. Shield

The character can form his hand or hands into a shield to block all damage from bullets, lasers, weapons, rain, etc. Counts as a normal parry, but a straight roll is made at a -2 (hey, it's better than the straight roll with a -6 to normally block bullets)

4. Stretch Limbs

The character can stretch his limbs straight out, only being able to bend them at the normal joints. Arms can stretch up to 8ft (2.4m) long and legs can stretch up to 10ft (3m) long.

5. Locomotion

By altering his legs, the hero can travel much faster than normal. He can create skis for snow or for being pulled in water. Springs will allow the hero to jump up to 20 ft (6.1m) up and across and let the hero move at twice his Spd attribute. There are, of course, other items, but remember, nothing with moving parts (no wheels).

6. Glide

By turning his arms into large wings, the character can glide through the air. Same as minor super power.

7. Other Abilities and Bonuses

Add 2 attacks per melee

Add 1D6 to P.S.

Add 1D4 to P.P.

Add 1D6 to P.E.

Add 1D4 X 10 to S.D.C.

Alter Physical Structure: Astral

By Steve Trustrum

This power allows the character to change his form into that of an astral being, allowing the character to enter and travel the Astral Plane as though he were a native of that dimension (thus lacking a cord).

Even if this power is not activated and the possessor is on Earth (or whatever his natural dimension may be), he can still see, perceive and talk to astral beings that are visiting his dimension.

Also, all of the character's other powers and abilities are also considered to be able to affect astral beings, whether the character is in his astral form or not. Thus, a character possessing the Alter Physical Structure: Astral power (whether in his natural or astral state) who also has the power Energy Expulsion: Energy, could harm an astral creature in its natural form using the latter power.

Alter Physical Structure: Plant

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power allows the character to take on the appearance and general abilities of a plant.

1. Survive without Food

While in plant form, the hero can absorb sunlight and minerals from the ground, allowing him to survive indefinitely without food as long as enough water is available.

2. Water Storage

In plant form, the character will be able to store large amounts of water for survival. He can absorb enough water in 1D4 hours to allow him to survive for 12 days + 1 day per level of experience without so much as a sip. This power also allows him to filter salt water into fresh water in his body. By concentrating, the character can even release this water through his hands. All stored water will be released when the hero reverts back to human form.

3. Plant Resins

Range: touch

Damage: special

Duration: varies

Attacks per Melee: counts as 1 attack, can be used up to 4 times per melee

The hero will be able to generate different types of plant resins from his hands. The different types that can be created are poison ivy, aloe, sap, and toxins.

Poison Ivy: This potent substance causes a severe reaction on skin, including a rash, severe itching, and watering eyes. Scratching the rash will only make it worse and it will remain even after the goo is washed off, but will wear off in about 3 days, and there are several creams available that will neutralize the itching. While scratching, the hero loses 2 attacks per melee and is -3 to all combat rolls.

Aloe: This is a very soothing chemical that is often used to treat burns and other skin irritations. It can be used to counter the effects of any of the other plant resins mentioned. Using it on normal wounds will make them heal in half the time as long as they are kept covered with the stuff.

Sap: This is an extremely strong adhesive that can be used to glue broken items back together or to stick enemies in one spot. It is strong enough to seal down someone with a P.S. of up to 20 for 3D4 melee rounds, characters with a P.S. above 20 can break free in 1D4 melee actions. A thorough coating of the sap (entire body) can even hold a character with up to P.S. 30 for 4D6 hours.

Toxins: This substance imitates countless toxins produced by plants worldwide. The immediate exposure does no damage, but after 15 minutes, the victim must roll to save vs. lethal poison every 15 minutes for 1D4 hours. A failed roll means the character takes 2D6 damage directly to hit points. Most hospitals and doctor's offices will have special anti-venoms to counter the effects of such poisons.

4. Other Abilities and Bonuses

While in plant form, the character breathes through his entire body and is nearly impossible to smother

Character will regenerate lost limbs in 3D6 weeks

Add 2D6 x 10 to S.D.C. in plant form

While in plant form, character has an A.R. of 10

Add 2D6 to P.S. in plant form

Character is immune to all plant toxins

In plant form, character radiates no heat and therefore cannot be detected by infrared or heat sensors

1. Plasma Bolt

Range: 100ft (30m) + 10ft(3m) per level of experience

Damage: 1D6 x 10

Duration: instant

Attacks per Melee: equal to hand to hand attacks

Bonus: +2 to strike

The hero can fire a flaming bolt from his hands. It will instantly light any flammable material and 2 or 3 bolts will melt through a strong metal door.

2. Partial Invulnerability

Since the hero's body is composed of very loose molecules in this state, any object encountered will pass right through him, if the object survives that long! His body is so hot that most wooden, metal, plastic or glass objects will be vaporized while passing through the body. Explosions, fire and radiation also do no damage. Electricity and most energy blasts do full damage.

3. Melt Obstacles

Because of the great heat of the character's body, he can melt through most walls, doors, floors, or any other materials with a touch. This also makes it impossible for the hero to hold anything while in this form (clothing and other items extremely close to the body when it first ignites will be protected). Simply leaning against a wall while in his fiery form will melt through it. Because of the ease of melting through things by touching him, a hero should usually choose to fly above the ground and floor to avoid falling through it.

4. Flight

By keeping the air around him superheated, the hero can make sure that he stays above the ground. By pulsing bits of plasma in different directions, he can achieve speeds of up to 200mph (320km/h).

5. Flaming Rage

Range: touch

Damage: 3D6 x 20 plus penetration

Duration: 1 minute (4 melees) per level of experience

Attacks per Melee: starting it uses 1 attack/action, standard number of attacks + 1 can be made, but must be collision-type (see below)

Bonus: +1 to strike, add 50mph(80 km/h) to flight speed

By concentrating pure anger and rage, the character can super-enhance his powers to amazing levels. The body will glow twice as brightly and be surrounded by a flaming aura. While in this state, the hero can fly straight through objects, leaving an explosive wake behind him, doing major damage to vehicles, robots, and even buildings. While like this, A.R. has no meaning. The character is hot enough to burn straight through any objects, doing full damage as long as he hits.

Rather than actually burning through humans and other smaller objects, they will take ¼ normal damage and be knocked 1D6 x 10ft (3D6 meters) away just by the force of the heat aura unless anchored firmly, in which case full damage is done.

In this state there are a few disadvantages. For instance, even though the character receives an additional attack per melee while enraged, all attacks can only be used for collisions and passing through targets or dodging. Also, once the time limit is up, the hero is burned out and tired. He will lose his plasma state, changing back to human form and falling back to the Earth, and taking full falling damage, so it may be a good idea to



Alter Physical Structure: Plasma

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This ability allows a hero to turn his body into a humanoid mass of highly energized, bluish-green gas.

get down near the ground in the last melee. He will not be able to re-light himself for 2D6 minutes.

6. Other Abilities and Bonuses

Add 60 S.D.C. in Plasma form

Add 2D6 to P.E. in Plasma form

7. Disadvantages

While in the energized form, a touch from this character is very dangerous. Contact with other humans causes 1D6 x 10 damage! The hero will also vaporize any objects he touches or tries to pick up. This means that the character should be very careful about the use of his powers to avoid injuring or possibly killing innocent bystanders or causing major property damage.

The being will also stand a chance of lighting nearby objects on fire, see the possible ignition table under the *Alter Physical Structure: Fire* superpower in *Heroes Unlimited*.

Alter Physical Structure: Putty

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

The character has the ability to turn his body into a mass of putty-like substance, which can be converted from a soft, malleable form to a hard, dense form. Converting from soft to dense form uses one **action/attack** per melee.

1. Abilities in Soft Form

Character's body is like a soft, very thick liquid, similar to clay. The character can melt down and slip through an opening as small as an inch thick (must be at least 4 inches wide) but it will take a little while to squeeze through such a small opening (1D6 melees for every 100lbs (45kg)). Blunt attacks, such as punches, kicks, blunt weapons, or bullets, do half damage, and bladed weapons and falls do no damage! Energy, fire, explosions, electricity, and gases do normal damage; cold does double damage. The hero can also stretch his limbs, making them up to three times longer.

If cut in half or severed from any part of the body, he will be able to **reattach** the lost part or parts with no ill effects.

While in this form, the character will not be able to pick up anything greater than half his maximum P.S. will allow, it will simply pass through his hands. He will also leave slimy, easy-to-follow tracks.

2. Abilities in Hard Form

While in hard form, the character's body is like a brick, and has an A.R. of 14 against all attacks. Any one hit that does 25 damage or more will shatter that particular part of the hero's body, a hit doing 45 or more damage will shatter the hero's entire body. A shattered body part or body can melt into soft form and reattach itself in 1D4 actions.

3. Body Weapons

Same as the minor super power. The character can form his hands into weapons while the limbs are soft, then harden them. Changing hands and arms from soft to hard for weapons purposes does not use up any attacks.

4. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Add 2D4 to P.S. and P.E. in putty form (roll once for each and use as constants each time the character changes)

Add 300 S.D.C. in putty form

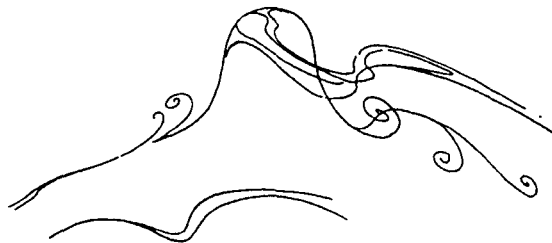
S.D.C. recovers three times faster while in putty form

Horror Factor: 10 (optional)

5. Disadvantages:

Weight is doubled in putty form; Spd is two thirds normal.

Minus 1D8 P.B. while in putty form (roll once and use as a constant whenever the character transforms)



Alter Physical Structure: Smoke / Mist

By Steve Trustrum

This major allows the possessor to change his form into a smoke or mist like entity. Such a state grants the following abilities:

1. Immune to Attacks: All attacks such as punches, lasers, poisons, etc. will simply pass through the user's form, causing no damage. However, attacks such as magic and psionics have full affect and explosions, while causing no damage, will cause the character's form to dissipate, taking it 1D6+4 melees to reform, during which the character can do nothing save put his form back together.

2. Fly: The character can fly at a speed to be randomly determined at the character's creation (1D6x10). While trying to move against strong winds, the speed is half (and is impossible against winds such as those that exist within a typhoon). However, travelling in the same direction as such winds reverses the affects, making the character move faster.

3. Dissipate Lasers: Any laser or similar light based attack which passes through the character while in mist form will still affect anything behind the character yet will have its damage and range reduced by 25%.

4. Alter Dimensions: Capable of shifting his shape about, the character can cause his body to flow through opening such as cracks under doors, thus making this power ideal for spying.

5. Obscure Vision: The cloudiness of the character's smoke state causes anyone trying to look through him to the other side (or who is encompassed by the character) to suffer the following penalties: -2 to initiative / strike / parry / dodge due to lack of clarity.

6. Choke Opponent: By forcing apart of his altered form into an opponent's mouth or nose, the character can cause him to choke. Anyone choked in this manner is set upon with a coughing fit and is -2 to initiative, strike, parry, and dodge (a save vs. toxins will negate these penalties. The choking lasts for as long as the character keeps his form within the nose or mouth, requiring a save against the choking affects for each melee that the choking continues.

7. Vulnerability to Wind Powers: Spells such as Wind Rush will cause the character's form to dissipate, much the same as if it was caught in an explosion.

Alter Physical Structure: Vapor

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power allows the user to transform himself into a roughly human-shaped, opaque cloud. Any object or clothing the character is wearing (up to 100lbs) while he transforms will be changed into vapor with him. While in this form, the hero has the following abilities:

1. Partial Intangibility

The hero's body cannot be struck or harmed by any solid objects, this includes punches, kicks, bladed and blunt weapons, bullets, arrows, cars, falls, etc. In addition, he only takes half damage from electricity, radiation, and energy-based attacks. Fire and cold-based attacks, as well as magic and psionics do full damage.

Explosions or strong wind blasts (over 60mph or 96km/h) will spread the hero's body over a large area. He will take no damage, but will be unable to do anything for the next 3D6 melees while he pulls his body back together.

2. Flight

The hero can alter the molecules of his body to make himself **lighter-than-air**. By carefully catching onto passing air currents, he can fly at a speed of 50mph (80km/h) plus 10mph (16km/h) per level of experience (any higher than this will disperse the hero's body, see above).

3. Suffocation

By surrounding an opponent, the super-being can cut off his air supply. Doing so means the victim will become dizzy and light-headed within one melee, pass out in 2D4 melees, and die after another 3 minutes, of course, a truly good hero would never go this far.

4. Partial Invisibility

While in gaseous form, the person's body is transparent, meaning that it is difficult, if not impossible, to see him in the dark. The hero automatically receives a prowling ability at 85% (does not increase with experience). The mutant can also stand within any venting gas, such as subway grates, leaky steam pipes, or fog and become completely undetectable.

5. Other Abilities and Bonuses in Gaseous Form:

Hero can fit through any openings, no matter how small, as long as they are not airtight

Hero is completely immune to the effects of gases

Hero radiates no heat in gas form; thus he cannot be detected or tracked by infrared or heat sensors

Character has no measurable weight, hovering 2 to 6 inches above the floor

6. Disadvantages:

Like intangibility, when this power is in use, the hero cannot pick up or use any solid objects.

The character cannot talk in any voice above a loud whisper while in this form.

Animate Drawings

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This amazing ability allows heroes to bring their artwork to life with a thought. The only downside is that the hero can only animate his own, original drawings (no printed or photocopied pictures) and making a good drawing takes time.

The character can control the appearance and abilities or increase them by using up a little more time. Drawings are generated using Drawing Points (D.P.), for every D.P. spent, the creation will be that much more powerful (see chart below). Basically, each D.P. put into a drawing requires one melee action, bringing the picture to life takes another melee action. The character can mentally command and control any animal or robot drawing. Once the drawing is brought to life, the paper (or canvas, wall, etc.) is left completely blank.

1. Drawing

Range: touch, control range is 1000ft (305m)+ 50ft (15m) per level of experience

Damage: varies, see below

Duration: drawings can be up to 2 months old and still be animated, living drawings will disappear in 3 melees plus one melee per level of experience, duration may be extended (see below)

The character will start out with a natural drawing talent of 95%. One roll is needed for every 3 D.P. put into a drawing (if a drawing uses 2 or 1 D.P., roll once). This power can be focused through any drawing tool; pencil, pen, marker, paintbrush, charcoal, etc. The following is a list of objects, creatures, and powers and their D.P. cost:

Creatures: Creatures can fight in combat. They have no real skills other than fighting and aren't very bright. The mental attributes and P.E. do not apply because they have no real mind (therefore, are immune to psionics) and will work tirelessly until they disintegrate. Their physical prowess is about average. Combat skills include 2 attacks per melee, +2 to strike, and +1 to dodge.

Bug-Sized (S.D.C.: 1D4, P.S.: 3, Spd.: 7, 1 damage per bite, maximum of 2 in (4cm) long, cannot have any additional drawing features except extended duration) DP cost: 1, can be made to fly for 1 additional D.P. (Spd: 15)

Small Animal (S.D.C.: 2D8, P.S.: 6, Spd.: 10, 1D4 damage from bite/claw, max. of 2ft long/tall (.6m) D.P. cost: 3

Medium Animal/ Humanoid (SDC: 2D6 + 15, PS: 11, Spd: 11, 1D6 damage from **punch/bite**, maximum of 6ft long/tall) DP cost: 5

Giant Animal/Humanoid (S.D.C.: 3D6 + 25, P.S.: 16, Spd.: 15, 1D8 damage from **punch/bite**, maximum of 18 ft (5.5m)

tall/long) D.P. cost: 8

Creature Features:

Light Armor (A.R.: 8, add 15 S.D.C.) D.P. cost: 5

Medium Armor (A.R.: 10, add 25 S.D.C.) D.P. cost: 10

Heavy Armor (A.R.: 14, add 35 S.D.C.) D.P. cost: 15

Claws or Teeth 1D10 damage, D.P. cost: 5

Flight: Winged (Spd.: 65mph, +2 to Dodge and Damage in flight) D.P. cost: 10

Flight: Jets (Spd.: 150mph, +4 to Dodge and Damage in flight) D.P. cost: 15

Flight: Wingless (Spd.: 200 mph, +5 to Dodge and Damage in flight) D.P. cost: 20



Breaux!

Spines/Quills A unique kind of armor, any punch or kick that hits the creature will deal 1D6 damage to the attacker, D.P. cost: 10

Extra Heads provide 1 extra bite attack per melee, each extra head gives 1 extra Horror Factor point, D.P. cost: 5 each, maximum of 6 extra heads

Extra Limbs also provide an extra attack, D.P. cost: 6 each pair, maximum of 3 extra pairs

Weapon a simple blunt or spiked club. For more complicated weapons for your creatures, see below. Creatures can only operate the weapon that they were drawn with, 1D10 damage (2D10 for giant creatures), +2 to strike, D.P. cost: 3

Increased Attributes D.P. cost: 1 per 1 point increase

Horror Factor the creature can be made extremely hideous, giving it a Horror Factor of 10, D.P. cost: 2

Attraction/Suction/Magnetism Power basically, it just gives the creature the ability to suck or draw others closer to it, like a mutant vacuum cleaner, use rules for the Magnetism super power, except target does not need to be metal to be affected, D.P. cost: 6

Energy Blast such as fire breathing or laser eyes, 3D6 damage, range: 100ft(30m), D.P. cost: 5

Nightvision range: 250ft (76m), D.P. cost: 3

Thermal Vision range: 250ft (76m), D.P. cost: 3

Extend Duration by making it more realistic, a picture can last longer than normal, D.P. cost: 5 per additional melee

Objects: Drawn objects are completely real and solid until they disappear, with all the functions and abilities of such a device.

NOTE: even though body armor may be drawn for the hero, by the time it is created and the hero is able to get into it, he will most likely have less than a melee in which to use it, making it rather ineffective. Simple, hand held equipment is usually the only equipment that would be worth using before it dissipated.

Simple, Inert Device Simple objects, such as ladders, blocks, clubs (1D8 damage), poles, or any object without any real movement or powers, D.P. cost: 1 each

Complex, Inert Device Things with a more intricate, but non-moving form such as swords (2D6), books (blank), nets, and so on. D.P. cost: 2

Simple Mechanical Device A basic wheeled device, doorknobs, light bulbs, and so on. Complex mechanical (cars) or electrical (VCR's) are too complicated to simply be drawn, D.P. cost: 4

Projectile Weapons a basic pistol, rifle, laser blaster, or any other gun-type weapon that the artist may conceive can be drawn. They usually hold 6 to 20 rounds and can only shoot single or short bursts. The damage starts out at 2D6 and may be raised 1D6 for every extra 2 DP spent in addition to the basic cost (max. of 10D6), D.P. cost: 4

Extend Duration by making it more realistic, a picture can last longer than normal, D.P. cost: 4 per additional melee

2. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Add one action per melee (not attack)

Add 1D6 to M.E.

Add 1D4 to M.A.

NOTE: because it may take a while to draw anything very useful, a hero may wish to doodle in his spare time, just to make sure that he usually has at least one good drawing on hand that can be summoned up in an instant. (doodling usually creates 40 D.P., roll once for drawing skill for entire thing).

GM's are advised to use discretion when deciding what kind of drawings a character can and cannot bring to life, (no man-eating buildings). A good rule of thumb is nothing bigger than a Buick.

Bio-Armor

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power proves especially useful and impressive, especially for those heroes commonly finding themselves in harsh environments, underwater, or in outer space.

1. Retractable Plating

The character can create a complete body covering of a natural metallic substance. This armor can appear in any design that the player wishes. In this form, the character has an A.R. of 14, any rolls to strike above 14 will do damage to the character, anything equal to or below will do no damage. Area effect damage, such as explosives, will do half damage. Normal strength punches, kicks, and blunt or bladed strikes doing less than 20 damage do no damage, despite the roll to strike.

The hero can mentally retract or deploy his armor at will. Doing so uses one attack/action per melee.

2. Sealed Systems

While in the armor form, all a character's portals to the outside world are closed off from the rest of the world. Not even air can reach the character through the metal hide. When in this form, all a character's bodily functions are made more efficient and air is recycled. The hero's air, food, and water supply will be enough to last his P.E. times 5 minutes, plus 2 minutes per level of experience. Two minutes may not sound like a great deal, but remember, that's eight full melees of combat as an armored warrior.

3. Impervious to Outside Conditions

While in armor, the conditions outside are of little matter to the hero. The vacuum of space, pressure of deep water, radiation, freezing temperatures (to -100 degrees Fahrenheit), intense heat (up to 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit), poisonous atmosphere or unusual gravity, all will have little or no effect on the hero within the armor.

4. Propulsion

In the metallic form, a character can propel himself by venting small amounts of gas or energy waves. Underwater, he can move at about 60mph (96 km/h) + 10mph (16 km/h) per level of experience. In space or in other zero or low-G environments, he can move along at about 250mph (400 km/h) + 15mph (24 km/h) per level of experience. Although flight isn't possible while on a planet, extended jumps are. The superbeing can leap 30ft (9.2m) up or 50ft (15m) across plus 5ft (1.5m) each per level of experience.

5. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Bonuses in normal form:

+3 to save vs. toxic chemicals

+1D6 to Spd.

Bonuses in armor form:

Add 2D4 to P.S.

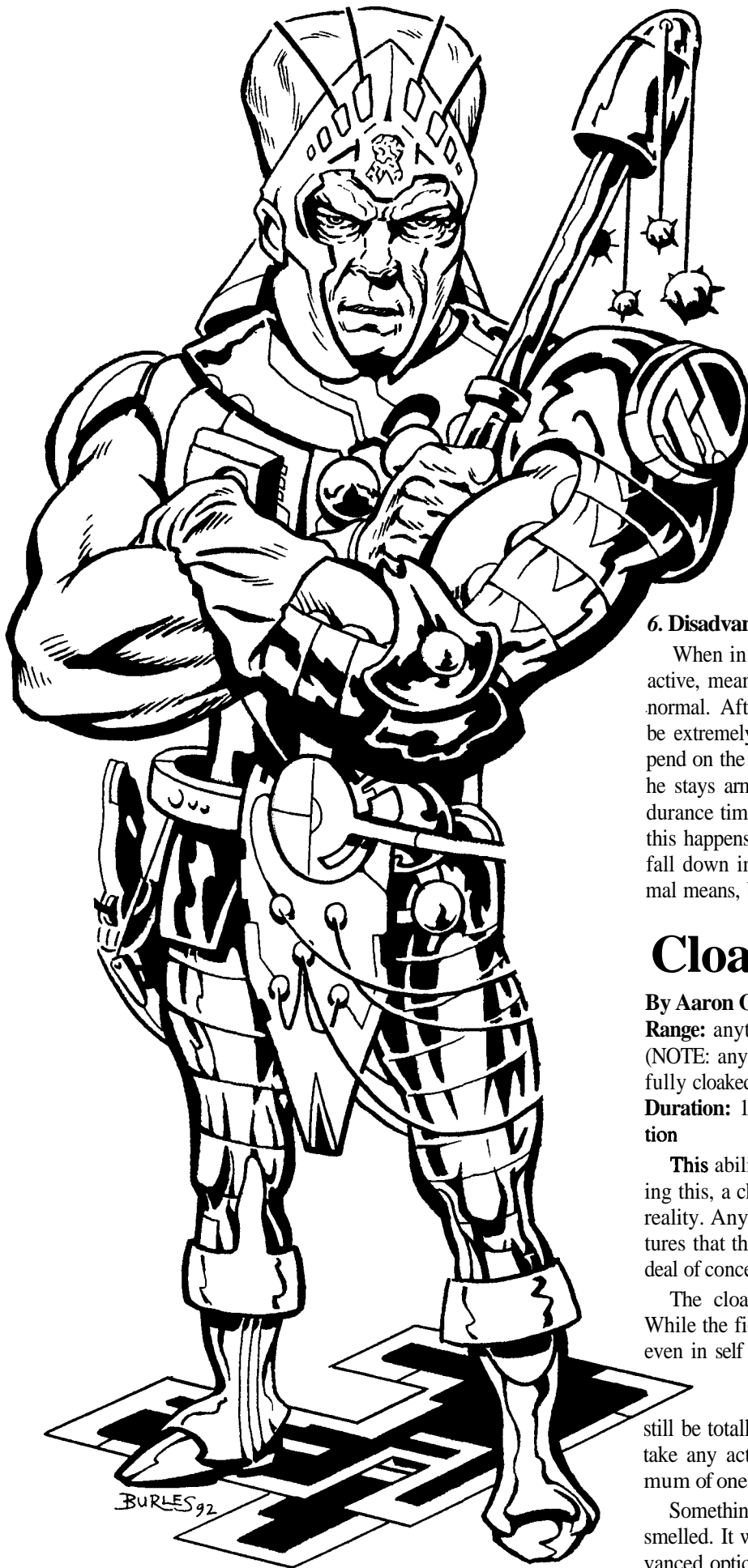
Add 1D4 x 100 S.D.C.

Add 1D6 to P.E.

Add one attack per melee

Add 2D6 to Spd.

NOTE: these are all in addition to the bonuses from the non-armored form



6. Disadvantages

When in this form, the hero's metabolism will become hyperactive, meaning that he will burn food nearly 8 times faster than normal. After coming out of his armored form, the person will be extremely hungry and thirsty, the amount of hunger will depend on the amount of time the hero spends in his metal form. If he stays armored until the very limit of his sealed systems' endurance time, he will completely run out of metabolic energy. If this happens, the armor will completely retract and the hero will fall down in a coma. He must be brought out of a coma by normal means, but with a bonus of +20% to do so.

Cloaking

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

Range: anything within 15ft(4.6m) at time of activation

(NOTE: anything that is only partially within the range will be fully cloaked as long as at least 40% of it is within the field)

Duration: 1D4 x 10 minutes or until the hero breaks **concentration**

This ability is an odd mix of invisibility and intangibility. Using this, a character can hide himself and those around him from reality. Any objects, such as small vehicles, sheds, or other structures that the character is touching can be cloaked with a greater deal of concentration, cutting maximum time in half.

The cloaking field requires a great deal of concentration. While the field is up, the character cannot take any other actions, even in self defense. He will enter a trance-like state, but he will

still be totally aware of everything around him. The hero cannot take any actions other than speaking slowly or walking (maximum of one third his top speed).

Something that is cloaked cannot be seen, felt, heard, or smelled. It will be invisible to radar, sonar, and any types of advanced optics. Only a psionic presence sense can find a cloaked

individual. Once someone moves more than 15ft (4.6m) away from the hero, the cloak will be dropped from around him, he will not become re-cloaked unless the hero drops the cloak and reactivates it after he is within range again.

When someone is cloaked, he cannot attack anything that isn't cloaked, just like being intangible.

1. Bonuses

Add 2D6 to M.E.

Add 1D6 to M.A.

Hero can sense other activated cloak fields, although he will have no idea what is inside.

Control Density

By Steve Trustrum

Capable of affecting the density of either the world around him or himself (or both), the character possessing this power gains a variety of benefits.

Firstly, the character must roll below to see what the power will affect and in which manner it manifests itself.

Objects Affected Manifestation

01-40 Self Only 01-40 Reduce Density

41-80 Other Objects Only 41-80 Increase Density

81-00 Both 81-00 Both

The meaning of objects affected is fairly self-evident; if the result is "Self Only", then the character's density control affects only his own body. If the result is "Other Objects Only", the his control affects only the body of others as well as inanimate objects. "Both" obviously results in the character being able to do both the former.

If the manifestation result is "Reduce Density" then he is only able to use those powers listed under that section, the same goes if the result is "Increase Density", save with respects to that section only. If the result is "Both" then he can both increase and reduce density.

Note that these effects are temporary only and last only so long as the user of the power maintains them.

The range of the power is determined by the user's level of experience; at first level the power affects only those objects touched directly and then goes up in ranges of 10 feet per additional level.

Note: only one effect can be maintained simultaneously per 3 levels of the **user's** experience.

Reduce Density:

The character can decrease the density of objects, with the following results:

- Reduce the object's effective weight by up to 500 lbs. per level of experience.
- Increase leaping distance in increments of 10 feet (both long and high) per level.
- Reduce the A.R. of objects by one point, plus an additional point per every two levels of experience he possesses after the first.
- Reduce the S.D.C. of objects by up to 50 points per level.
- Reduce the Speed or Physical Strength attribute of something by a maximum of one point per level of the power user.

- After 3rd level, the character can reduce an **object's** density to the point where it will float on air like a helium filled balloon.
- Reduce the density of falling objects / projectile weapons so that they do less damage upon impact. This reduction is represented by rolling damage as normal and then reducing the total by up to 10% per level of the **user's** experience.

Increase Density:

The character can increase **the** density of objects, with the following results:

- Increase the object's effective weight by up to 500 lbs. per level of experience.
- Increase the A.R. of objects by one point, plus an additional point per every two levels of experience he possesses after the first.
- Increase the S.D.C. of objects by up to 50 points per level.
- Increase the Speed or Physical Strength attribute of something by a maximum of one point per level of the power user.
- By increasing an object's / creature's density, the power user can make it more difficult for that creature to move. In this manner the target's Speed can be reduced by 10% per level of the user's experience.
- Increase the density of falling objects / projectile weapons so that they do more damage upon impact. This increase is represented by rolling damage as normal and then increasing the total by up to 10% per level of the user's experience.

Control Elemental Force: Kinetic Energy

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

A surprisingly powerful ability over the energy of movement itself. This power's effects alter how quickly something moves. Living creatures (or robots with **AI**) can resist the power's effects by rolling a saving throw of 13 or higher against each "hit". The word "hit" is used to imply a focused attack with the power, no physical contact is necessary.

1. Null Movement

Range: 100ft (30m) + 10ft (3m) per level of XP

Damage: none

Duration: as long as the character concentrates

Attacks per Melee: equal to half the **character's** total attacks per melee, each "hit" counts as one attack

Bonuses: automatically strikes

This ability allows the super being to drain the movement energy from a target, slowing it and stopping it quickly. When used on humans and other "slow" objects, it cuts their speed in half (as well as attacks per melee and bonuses) for the first "hit", and stops them completely with a second "hit". Faster targets, such as most vehicles and beings with Extraordinary Speed powers will require four "hits" to stop completely; each hit reduces their speed by one fourth of the norm. Targets that can move at the speed of sound or faster are reduced in speed by 10% for each "hit". The maximum weight allowance the super being can affect is one ton per level of XP. He cannot effect anything moving at lightspeed or faster.

The super being also suffers a penalty of -1 to strike, parry, and dodge for every "hit" being maintained (ex. If he is holding two normal humans perfectly still, he suffers a -4 total, holding one normal human still and slowing a super human with "sonic speed" to half his normal ability would make a total of -7)

2. Increase Movement

Range: 200ft (60m) + 50ft (15m) per level of XP

Duration: 1 melee per level of XP

Damage: none, other than possible **collision**

Attacks per Melee: can be used once per melee, counts as one attack

Bonuses: automatically strikes

This power allows the being to temporarily DOUBLE a target's speed. Just because he can move twice as fast does not mean he can react twice as fast, consequently, the target receives only one additional **attack/action** from his boosted speed. One harmful consequence of moving so much faster is that, at high speeds, a vehicle (or even your own legs) can be very difficult to control. For every melee action the target has (including the 1 bonus attack provided by the power), there is a 30% chance that he is about to run into something (65% for targets moving faster than 400 **mph** or **640km/h**). That action must be used to make a successful dodge against 15 or he will run into whatever object the GM decides. Typical collision damage for an average human running into an object (wall, dumpster, light post) is 1D6, otherwise, use collision and impact rules in the combat section. One last, unfortunate side-effect of this power is that the affected **person/vehicle** is unable to stop until the duration **ends!**

Control Elemental Force: Time

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. **DreamFox**

The control time power gives a hero control over certain aspects of Temporal Energy (**T.E.**). For more details about T.E. and time travel, see Erick Wujick's *Transdimensional Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. The character cannot travel through time without a time machine.

1. Slow Others

Range: 140ft (42.7m) plus 5ft (1.5m) per level of experience

Duration: 1D4 hours

Attacks per Melee: once per melee, counts as one attack

Bonuses: instantly hits as long as target is within the hero's line of vision

The hero can cut the amount of T.E. flowing through an individual in half, effectively halving his speed. He can slow down two individuals or one vehicle per level of experience. While the **target(s)** are at half speed, their speed, attacks per melee, bonuses, combat dice rolls, and damage inflicted are reduced by half (round down).

A character affected by this power will feel normal, but will think the rest of the world is moving faster. Slowing an individual is a good way to slow down the spread of poisons or give a person a better chance of surviving a coma until he can get to a hospital. (The character takes a point of damage every two hours rather than every hour, for example). The effect can mentally be dispelled at any time by the creator.

2. Accelerate Others

Range: 130ft (40m) plus 5ft (1.5m) per level of experience

Duration: 1D6 hours or until canceled

Attacks per Melee: once every minute, counts as one attack per melee

Bonuses: instantly hits as long as target is within the hero's line of vision

With slightly more concentration, a character can double the force that T.E. flows through an individual's body, doubling his speed. When speed is doubled, so are the character's attacks per melee, speed, bonuses, and damage.

While like this, the character will simply feel like the entire world has slowed down and that he is simply moving normally. Like this, a character's aging rate is also doubled (ex. A character that is affected for 3 hours will have aged 6 hours). This is a good way to speed up long term projects such as fixing an engine or painting a house, it can also help your buddies in a fight who are badly outnumbered. The effect can mentally be dispelled at any time by the creator

3. Time Freeze

Range: self or bubble up to 10ft (3m)

Duration: 1 minute per level of experience

Attacks per Melee: uses all attacks for the first melee

Uses per Day: once, plus one additional use at levels 3, 8, 11, and 14

The character can freeze the time around him, creating one small bubble around himself where time will pass normally. The character cannot move beyond the bubble, the stopped air forms an impenetrable barrier, which means that a bubble only covering the character (self) will not allow him to move at all. This can be used to freeze time when a bullet is coming at the hero, then simply walk out of its path. It can also be used when the character needs a few extra minutes to prepare something or to think. The effect can be mentally dispelled at any time by the creator.

4. Accelerated Aging

Range: 90ft (27.5m)

Duration: 4D6 hours

Attacks per Melee: can be used once per day

Bonuses: Automatically hits as long as target is within the hero's line of sight

One of the more potent aspects of this power, the age acceleration actually transforms the target into an older form of himself. This is most commonly used to transform a person into an elderly and decrepit form, totally incapable of fighting. In this ancient form, the target suffers the following: -5 to strike, -4 to damage, -8 to dodge/parry, speed and attacks per melee are halved, -25% to all skills (memory is bad, will have trouble remembering friend's names)

Disadvantages: This ability is very taxing on the hero, temporarily draining 1D6 P.E. points every time it is used. If the character's PE is reduced to 0, the hero drops into a coma for 1D4 hours. Lost P.E. heals back at a rate of one per hour.

5. Reduce Age

Range: 90ft (27.5m)

Duration: 4D6 hours

Attacks per Melee: can be used once per day

Bonuses: automatically hits as long as the target is within the hero's line of sight

Like the Accelerate Aging power, this ability changes the temporal make-up of the person. This ability is usually used to transform a being into a small child or even an infant. While in a young form, reduce all physical attributes, as well as attacks per melee by half (round down), as well as -3 to strike, -5 to damage, and only one quarter normal S.D.C. In infant form, no actions are possible, and even talking will sound loose and fumbling.

Disadvantages: This ability is very taxing on the hero, temporarily draining 1D6 P.E. points every time it is used. If the character's PE is reduced to 0, the hero drops into a coma for 1D4 hours. Lost P.E. heals back at a rate of one per hour.

6. Other Abilities and Bonuses

The character can stabilize time portals and hold them open as long as he concentrates. Concentrating to keep a portal open uses all attacks per melee.

Character can sense any points of recent time travel.

Character can sense disturbances in the past (things that shouldn't be happening in our history) and can pinpoint the exact time in which they're happening.

Add 1D6 to M.E.

7. Optional Use with *Transdimensional TMNT*

Character is immune to the effects of TE evolution and devolution

Can open up portals to null time zones (random each time, no time traveling without assistance)

Can protect other people/objects from effects of T.E., 1 person or object per level of experience

Divine Healing

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power gives the hero amazing abilities of healing himself and others.

1. Enhanced Healing

Super Healing: Can instantly regenerate 2D6 hit points twice a day

Doesn't fatigue

Half damage from fire and cold

No scarring when healed

Broken bones heal 10 times faster than normal

2. Regeneration

The character can regenerate lost body parts (except heads). This process requires that the character remain still and calm, the wounded area will heal over in 2D8 minutes. After the exposed area has healed over, the character can go about his (almost) normal life, the new limb will finish growing in about 3D6 additional days.

3. Longevity

Because the character's body heals itself so well, it will only age about one third the normal rate. Once the hero reaches physical maturity (about 20 for humans), his aging process will begin to slow, allowing him to live about three times longer than normal, about 210 years for humans.

4. Healing Trance

When the character suffers from extreme damage, he can enter a deep, coma-like sleep to super enhance his healing abilities. In this state, all the character's wounds are healed and he is



brought back to perfect health, even if he was teetering on the verge of death. The character must remain in the trance for 1D4 days and cannot be woken up until he is completely healed.

5. Healing Touch

Range: touch

Duration: 2 minutes/permanent

Uses **per Day:** 5 + 1 per level of experience

The hero's healing ability is so potent, that it can actually be transferred to another by touch. Through a touch, the hero can heal 3D8 hit points or S.D.C.

He will also be able to nullify poisons infecting another by absorbing it into his body. He must make his own roll to save vs. toxins, but of course, he is much more likely to defeat it.

6. Restore the Dead

Range: touch

Duration: 1 hour/permanent

Uses **per Day:** 1

This is by far the most impressive ability that the hero possesses, but it is also the most dangerous to the hero. Any person who is "recently" dead (death occurring within the last 8 hours) may be brought back to life by the hero. He must concentrate for 1 hour straight while in physical contact with the corpse. The body will then be restored to life with 3 hit points. The bad side is that the hero will take 2D6 x 10 damage, this is actually life essence that is transferred into the body. There is also a 35% chance that the character will lose 1 P.E. point.

7. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Add 3D6 to S.D.C.

Add 2D6 to Hit Points, rather than the usual 1D6, per level of experience

Add 1D6 to M.A.

+25% to save vs. coma/death

+5 to save vs. psionics

+6 to save vs. toxins

Liquefaction

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

A hero with this power can transform solid objects into liquid with a thought. The liquid state of the hero's targets resembles mercury, forming a rounded structure. It is also amazingly coherent, clinging to itself in rain, heat, even underwater.

1. Temporarily Liquefy Objects

Range: touch or 50ft (15m)+ 10ft (3m) per level of experience

Damage: all S.D.C. is temporarily destroyed, all S.D.C. is recovered after duration is up

Duration: 6D6 minutes + 2min per level of experience, the user can control the duration in increments of 1D6

Attacks per Melee: equal to hero's hand to hand attacks

Bonuses: automatically hits if object is in person's line of sight

The character can turn any object within his vision into a thick goo. The target will instantly burst into a puddle until the duration is up. Afterwards, the object will return to its original form with no permanent damage. Maximum size of a target is the equivalent of a medium sized car (about 2 tons).

2. Temporarily Liquefy Animals

Range: Touch or 10ft + 1ftper level of experience

Damage: target takes 1D6 damage after reforming

Duration: liquefaction lasts 2D8 minutes

Attacks per Melee: equal to half the number of hand to hand attacks per melee, each use of this power counts as 1 attack

Bonuses: target can attempt to save vs. by rolling a 15 or higher on 1D20 with P.E. bonuses added in

This will allow the hero to turn any animal (including humans) into a slimy puddle. The target will return to its normal form after the duration is up with no permanent damage. However, the process is very painful and any intelligent creature runs a chance of temporary insanity. Roll 1D6, on a roll of 1-5, no insanity occurs, on a 6, the character will become skittish, reclusive, and very timid, having trouble fighting crime, moving quickly or speaking complete sentences. Insanity lasts 1D4 days.

3. Liquefy Self

Range: self

Duration: as long as hero concentrates, but no more than 12 hours

Attacks per Melee: no attacks are possible while in this form

By concentrating on himself, the character can gently transform into a liquid form. In this form, the character cannot take damage from bullets, blunt objects, blades or other physical sources. The character cannot perform any skills involving any degree of dexterity. However, in this form, the hero can squeeze through tiny cracks and openings and climb up walls with 90% proficiency.

4. Other Abilities and Bonuses

Character can breathe in any liquid medium

Add 5D6 to S.D.C.

Add 2D6 to Hit Points

Lycanthropy

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This is an odd ability that allows the person to change from his normal, human state into a mutant animal-like creature. The person can change at any time, doing so uses one **attack/action**. To determine the hero's exact structure, roll on the table below to determine the type of animal, then use the rules for mutant animals in the mutants section of *Heroes Unlimited* or *TMNT and Other Strangeness*. Ignore the S.D.C. rules given in the size level chart, S.D.C. is the same as in human form except for bonuses listed below.

Animal Table:

1-20 Wolf

21-35 Dog (Mutt)

36-55 **Rat/Mouse**

56-70 Big Cat (Lion, Tiger)

71-85 Bear

86-00 House Cat

Animal attribute bonuses are only applicable when in mutant form. Any additional super powers (not animal powers) can be used in either state. Any Unusual Characteristics or other mutant features the hero possesses will be apparent in both forms. Aside from his natural, animal abilities, the character also has a few extra abilities:

1. Enhanced Healing

The character heals three times faster than a normal human and can regrow lost limbs or fingers in 3D6 x 10 **hours!**



2. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Add 1D6 x 10 S.D.C. while in animal form

Add 1D8 to P.S. while in animal form

Add 2D6 to Spd. while in animal form

3. Disadvantages:

The odd gravity effects during a full moon or solar eclipse will cause the character to lose control of his transformation, transforming at random every 2D6 minutes. He will be unable to change back and forth willingly during these times until he is fifth level or higher. After tenth level, he will have enough experience to not be affected by the changes in gravity.

Natural Combat Ability

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power grants inherent knowledge of fighting styles. The character need not have ever taken any courses in fighting or even self defense, he will simply know how to do these things. A character with this power will not be able to learn other Hand to Hand combat skills.

1. Provides the following abilities at first level:

+ 3 Attacks/actions per melee

+3 to Strike

+4 to Parry

+6 to Dodge

+3 to Pull Punch

Automatic Parry ability

Kick attack does 1D8 damage

Back Flip: 75% plus 5% per level

Knockout/Stun on roll of 19-20

Jump Kick: counts as two attacks, automatic Critical Strike

Jump 10ft (3m) high by 15ft (4.6m) long, plus 2ft (.6m) per level of experience

2. The following abilities and bonuses are received as the character grows in experience

2 +3 to Roll with **Punch/Fall**

3 +2 to strike, +3 to **Parry/Dodge**

4 +4 to Damage, Judo-style throw/flip, victim takes 1D6 damage and loses initiative and one attack

5 One additional attack per melee

6 +3 to **Parry/Dodge**, entangle

7 Paired Weapons

8 One additional attack per melee

9 Leap Attack (critical Strike), +2 to Entangle

10 Critical Strike on roll of 18-20

11 +4 to damage

12 +3 to **Parry/Dodge**

13 **Knockout/Stun** on roll of 16-20

14 One additional attack per melee

15 Death Blow on roll of Natural 20

Reconstruction

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power allows a hero to repair anything without needing any knowledge of how it might work.

Range: touch, 100ft (30.5m)+ 15ft (4.6m) per level of experience range

Damage: none

Duration: as long as character remains within range
Attacks per Melee: can be used up to twice per melee
Bonuses: none

1. Repair Objects

If the hero simply touches an item, it will instantly be restored to perfect condition, regardless of its previous condition. This works with anything; vehicles, documents, walls, or anything else the hero can touch that is not alive. There are of course, a few limitations: the largest object that can be restored would be equivalent to a small building or extremely large semi-truck. The object will only remain intact as long as the character stays within range, after the character walks the maximum distance away, there is a 90% chance that the object will fall apart, reverting to it's previous condition.

2. Create Invulnerable Objects

By concentrating, the hero can make an object that he is touching temporarily invulnerable. This can include weapons, vehicles, or armor. Concentrating to keep an object invulnerable will take away one attack per melee, -2 to all combat rolls, and -15% to all skills. There is only one problem with this, once the character stops concentrating, there is a 75% chance that the object will completely fall apart.

3. Other Abilities and Bonuses

+15% to all electrical and mechanical skills
Machines will tend to not break down while the character is around
+4D6 to S.D.C.

Self Explosion

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power turns the hero into a walking bomb, capable of blowing himself apart and taking absolutely no damage from it.

1. Explode Whole Body

Range: self and 15ft (4.6m) radius

Damage: 2D6 x 10 damage, add 3D6 if power's user is in close, physical contact with the target (i.e. bear hugs, tackles)

Duration: instant

Attacks per Melee: counts as 3 attacks

Bonuses: affects everything within radius

The hero's body completely blows apart, injuring or damaging anything too close. The hero's body will reform itself quickly, leaving him standing, untouched.

2. Explode Limbs

Range: touch

Damage: special

Duration: instant

Attacks per Melee: counts as one attack per each limb used (ex. If one arm is used, it counts as one attack, if both legs are used, it counts as 2 attacks)

Bonuses: Automatically affects what character is touching

The character can concentrate to make any number of his limbs explode. This can be used to cause differing amounts of damage:

Finger — D4 damage each

Hand — 3D8 damage each

Arm/Leg — 1D4 x 10 damage each

Foot — 2D8 damage each

This can also be used to make incredible jumps, by blowing apart both legs simultaneously. The character can leap up to 45ft +5ft (13.7m + 1.5m) per level of experience up or across.

3. Mega-Damage Explosion

Range: self and surrounding area

Duration: one melee

Damage: special

Bonuses: automatically hits everything in blast radius

This is an extremely powerful explosion the character can create, however, it is extremely dangerous, both to the hero and the surrounding area. (Note: This explosion requires 10 melees of concentration to set up and is irreversible after 7)

The Explosion Does:

10,000 points of damage to the first 100ft radius

5,000 points of damage to the following 100ft

1,000 points of damage to the next 100ft

500 points of damage to the next 200ft

100 points of damage to the final 200ft

— Total Blast Radius: 700ft

Roll on the Following Survival Table:

1-10 Character lives, no permanent damage; unable to use power for 1D4 weeks

11-25 Character survives, but permanently loses all super abilities

26-86 Character is atomized

87-00 Character survives, but the **character's** power mutates into a completely new power, roll on the random ability table. Also roll on the insanity table: Neurosis and Phobia

4. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Skin has an A.R. of 8

Explosions, heat, and fire do half damage, all other attacks do full damage

Add 1D6 to P.E.

Add 1D4 x 10 to S.D.C.

Sonic Absorption

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power allows the character to absorb sound waves and redirect them in other forms.

1. Reflect Sound

The hero can absorb any dominant sounds and mimic them. The mimicked sound occurs within 1D4 seconds of the original sound. This will also enable the hero to absorb sonic attacks of any form. By doing this, he takes no damage or penalties and has the option of reflecting the attack back at **it's** normal damage.

2. Sonic Conversion

This aspect of the power relates the individual's strength and abilities. This allows the person to absorb loud noises or sonic attacks and use the energy to increase his abilities. The amount of time the increased abilities last depends on the decibel level of the sound he was exposed to.

The extended abilities last 1 melee for every 10 decibels above 80 as well as during the exposure to the noise. Bonuses While Charged: +1 to initiative, +3 to strike and parry, +5 to dodge and damage, all damage taken is reduced by half.

A sonic beam doing 3D6 damage can be fired. This uses up 1 melee's worth of bonuses. Range: 300ft (92m), +3 to strike for an aimed shot, +1 for shooting wild

3. Sonar

Range: 400ft (122m) plus 100ft (30m) per level

By absorbing sound waves from all directions at once, the hero can develop a radar-like sense of things around him. The abilities include:

Interpreting Shapes: 50% plus 8% per level

Estimate Distance: 60% plus 8% per level

Estimate Direction: 50% plus 8% per level

Estimate Exact **Location:**34% plus 8% per level

4. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Immune to the effects of high volumes, such as pain and ringing in the ears and temporary deafness

Sonic attacks do no damage

Hearing is about twice that of a normal person and can filter out any background noises no matter how loud primary sounds may be

Spiral

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This odd power gives the hero the ability to spin molecules at an amazing rate, providing a variety of effects.

1. Spiral Blast

Range: 100ft (30.5m)+ 10ft (3m) per level of experience

Damage: 1D6, 3D6, or 6D6

Duration: instant

Attacks per Melee: equal to total hand to hand

Bonuses: +2 to strike

This fires a blast of rapidly spinning air molecules that hit like a ton of bricks.

2. Nausea

Range: 50ft (15m)+ 6ft (2m) per level of experience

Damage: none, except penalties

Duration: 1D4 melees

Attacks per Melee: counts as 2 attacks

Bonuses: +3 to strike

By spinning a **person's** inner ear and the contents of his stomach, one can make him feel sick enough to severely limit his combat abilities, losing one attack per melee, -4 to strike, parry, and dodge, and every melee he must save vs. poison or use two attacks/actions vomiting.

3. Flight

By spinning the air molecules upward around him, the character can raise himself **and/or** one other into the air. Top speed is **100mph** if flying alone or 50mph while bringing someone else. While another person is being lifted, he is at the mercy of the controller and will not be able to move very well on his own. Maximum duration is 20 minutes at a time + 10 minutes per level of experience.

4. Parry Projectiles

Range: 3ft (1m)circle up to 50ft (15m) away or 10ft (3m) bubble with hero as the center

Damage: special

Duration: shield is instant, the bubble lasts 1 melee

Attacks per melee: shield counts as normal parry, concentrating to keep the bubble up uses all attacks per melee

Bonuses: +2 to parry, normal parry bonuses do not apply

By spinning air and dust molecules fast enough, the hero can create a wall of force. The wall will redirect bullets, missiles, weapons, and humans that touch it. Humans touching it with bodies or weapons will be tossed 10 + 1D6 feet away, taking 1D6 damage. With deflected bullets, thrown objects or missiles, there is a 30% chance that they will be redirected at another person. The shield cannot block lasers or electricity. Fire and explosives do half damage.

5. Disintegrate Matter

Range: 10ft(3m)

Damage: infinite, target is completely destroyed

Duration: instant, permanent

Attacks per Melee: uses all attacks per melee

Bonuses: automatic strike

This is the most dangerous power available to the character. By spinning every molecule in an object at different rates, he can completely destroy it by separating every molecule. This power is also extremely dangerous to the hero as well; there is a 25% chance that the effect will reflect back at the hero, destroying both the target and the power user. Even if the hero survives being disintegrated, he will still take 1D6 x 10 damage and permanently loses 1 P.E. point. This power will also work on people, but a hero would never use it in such a manner.

6. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Sense of balance: 90%

Character cannot become dizzy

Character can nullify whirlwinds and whirlpools

Add 1D6 to Spd attribute

1D6 x 10 S.D.C.

Super Consumption

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

This power turns the character's stomach into a bottomless pit, capable of eating nearly anything. The stomach of this person transforms 95% of everything eaten into pure energy, meaning that, no matter how much the hero eats, it will be nearly impossible for him to get fat. The person will be able to eat even non-foods, like stone, metal, or plastic.

1. Tongue Lash

Range: 10ft (3m) plus 1D4ft(2D6x10cm) per level

Damage: 1D8 for whip

Duration: instant

The character's tongue can stretch from its normal size to incredible lengths. The end has a large ball of muscle that can grip to most any surface or around objects and is strong enough to pull nearly anything to the character's mouth that he can swallow(see below). The tongue shoots out with amazing speed, like a bullet, and is +4 to strike. The tongue's incredible length does not impede the character's ability to talk.

The tongue is strong enough to support the character's full weight above the ground for as many melees as he has P.E. points.

2. Alter Depth

Within the **character's** mouth, normal depth and volume hold no real meaning. He can swallow whole things many times larger than himself. At the first few levels, the character can swallow something as big around as a basketball and as long as 10 feet (3m). At sixth level, he would be able to swallow something as large as a motorcycle (without a sidecar) and 15 feet (4.6m) long. By eleventh level, the hero would be able to swallow a Volkswagen Bug up to 25 feet (7.6m) long. The character will not need to chew these large objects and will not choke unless the try to eat some thing too long. If a character attempts to tongue lash something into his mouth that is too large, it will hit him in the face, doing 2D6 damage and knocking him down.

3. Hyperactive Metabolism

Nearly 95% of everything the character eats is converted directly into pure energy. All this excessive energy gives the hero +5 to Parry and Dodge, +4 to Strike, +3 to Damage, and 2 additional attacks/actions per melee. This incredible metabolism also means that the character will be in almost constant motion and will find it nearly impossible to sit still for any length of time. He will be unable to sleep for long periods of time (over 3 hours at a time) and will have to take several short naps a day to get enough sleep.

The extra metabolism also means extra appetite. The hero must eat at least 3 times his own weight every day! (It doesn't have to be all food, it can include bricks, bowling balls, or hand guns) Without food, the character will starve to death in 36 hours.

4. Acid Spit

Range: 20ft (6.1m) plus 2ft (1D4x10cm) per level

Damage: 2D6 plus 1D6 per level per melee

Duration: burns for 1D6 melees

Attacks per Melee: once per melee, counts as one attack

Bonuses: +2 to strike

By contorting his stomach, the super being can well up a glob of very powerful stomach acid. The substance will eat through any substance until it wears off or is washed off with water. It burns through normal clothes on contact and will cause severe burns to the skin after the first melee. If spat into an opponent's eyes, he will be blinded (-8 to strike, parry and dodge), if it is left in the eyes for two melees, the target will be blinded temporarily for 1D4 days. If left in for 4 or more melees, the character will be permanently blinded unless he seeks professional, medical attention within 24 hours. If medical help is found, the duration of the blindness is 2D4 weeks.

5. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Character is immune to all **ingested** poisons, poison gas or injected poisons still do full damage

By swallowing explosives, the blast will be contained and the character only takes 1/3 normal damage

Character's sense of taste is about twice that of a normal person's

Superior Energy Expulsion

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. **DreamFox**

This power is very similar to the normal energy expulsion powers, but is more powerful and grants additional bonuses not included with the minor powers. The player must choose what type of energy is used: Energy, Light, Electricity, Fire, Cold, or Sound.

1. Energy Expulsion:

Range: 600ft (183m)

Damage: 3D6 plus 1D6 per level of experience

Duration: Instant

Attacks per Melee: same as hand to hand

Bonuses: +3 for an aimed shot, +1 for shooting wild

The exact nature of the blast depends on what specific type of energy is chosen. But the effects are still similar. The damage from these blasts can be controlled in increments of 1D6, or the hero can choose to fire a mini-blast, doing only one point of damage.

2. Aura Effect

Range: 10ft(3m) plus 2ft (.6m) per level of experience

Damage: equal to one half expulsion damage

Duration: one melee attack (about three seconds)

Attacks per Melee: equal to one half hand to hand attacks, using the field only takes one attack

Bonuses: hits everything within range automatically

This causes a wide sphere of energy to flash around the character's body, damaging everyone and everything around him. Usually, some sort of residue will be left from the burst, such as ash or frost.

3. Ricochet

This allows a character to ricochet or bounce his energy expulsion power off of objects to hit a target. For each ricochet, there is a -1 to strike and a -1D6 to the damage. A ricochet shot can only be ricocheted as many times as the character has dice of damage (i.e. a character with 4D6 Energy Expulsion: Fire could ricochet three times and still do damage to the target). If a shot is ricocheted so that it hits an enemy from behind then the enemy is at a -4 to dodge. Each ricochet does 1D6 damage to the object that it was ricocheted off of. Shots can be ricocheted off of a person, but the character must make a strike roll and it adds a -2 to strike instead of the normal -1.

4. Power Blast

Range: 300ft (92m)

Damage: normal damage times 4, plus knockdown

Duration: 7 seconds (half a melee)

Attacks per Melee: can be used once per minute (four melees), takes up half the character's attacks per melee

Bonuses: +4 to strike

This powerful shot draws energy from the being's very core to deliver a long, powerful blast at a single target. The shot continues, unbroken for half a melee. If it hits, the target is pushed one foot back for each point of damage and, at the end of the blast, is knocked down (characters with invulnerability, alter physical structure: metal or stone, or growth, or are inside or are a giant robot, move back one foot for every five points of dam-

age and are **65%** likely to be knocked down). Those knocked over from the blast are considered stunned for the rest of the melee, unable to get up or take any other actions

5. Other Abilities and Bonuses:

Character takes only half damage from the same form of energy (including energy expulsion powers)

Superbeing can cause his eyes, hands, or similar parts to glow, providing up to 60 watts of light

Tentacles

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. **DreamFox**

A hero with this power has the ability to create long, tough tentacles from some part of his body (usually hair or skin). These tentacles are under the complete control of the hero and work like extra arms or prehensile tails.

1. Tentacle Abilities:

Length: 6ft (2m) plus 1D6ft (1D4x50 cm) per level of experience

Width: ¼ to 2 inches (character decides)

Tentacle PS: Half the hero's P.S. per tentacle (Ex: four tentacles would have the combined strength equal to twice his normal P.S.)

Tentacle SDC: 50 per foot, if a tentacle is severed, the character takes 3D6 damage and loses one tentacle and the extra attack it provides for 2D6 hours

The tentacles are roughly equivalent to prehensile tails. They can pick up objects, support the character above the ground, grab or tie up enemies, and even hold and use (with limited ability) melee weapons, but are -4 to strike and parry and normal bonuses to strike and parry do not apply. They cannot fire guns. When used as weapons, tentacles can do a punch-type impact, doing 1D4 damage **per** tentacle used (maximum of 10D4 or quick roll 1D4 x 10) plus P.S. damage bonuses, or they can be used as a whip, doing 1D8 damage with no P.S. bonuses included.

A character can create and use 3, + 1D6 per level or experience, tentacles at a time. Each tentacle has one attack per melee in addition to the hero's normal attacks. Each is +3 to strike and parry, but other bonuses except P.P. are not applicable. Each has a Bonus of +6 to dodge, again, no other bonuses are applicable. Tentacles can form back into the person's normal skin or hair and become completely unnoticeable. Tentacle S.D.C. heals three times faster than normal.

Undeath

By Steve Trustrum

Introducing this power into a campaign requires great care on the part of the Gamemaster. The character is an undead creature and as such gains the following advantages:

1. **Powers/spells/psionics** that affect only living beings no longer have any affect.
2. Regenerates 2D6 H.P./S.D.C. per melee and can regenerate lost limbs (save the head) within 1D4 days.
3. No longer needs to eat food or breathe.
4. Is immune to poisons and toxins.
5. +1D6x10 S.D.C.

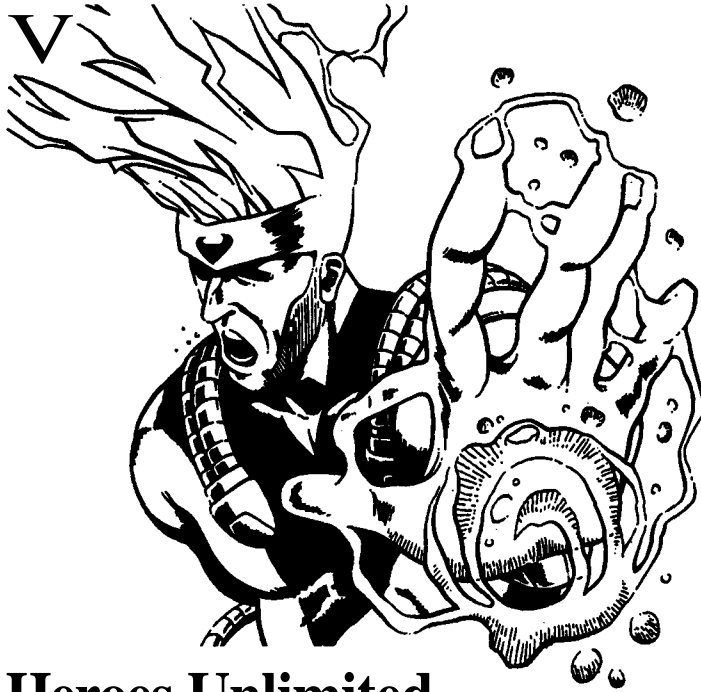
Unfortunately, with the character's state of **undeath** comes several disadvantages as well:

1. The player must consult with the Gamemaster to determine a weakness by which the character can be affected (e.g.: silver, crosses, sunlight).
2. The character must feed upon the life energy of other beings by consuming a minimum of 25 P.P.E. from the living per week, per level of the character (though the victim need not necessarily be killed).
3. Has a horror factor of 8 plus 1D8
4. Physical Beauty is reduced by 1D10 points, thus determining how evident the character's body has been altered by its undead state.



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Nightbane®

New Morphus Tables ——— Optional ———

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. **DreamFox**

Running out of ideas for making truly unique Nightbane characters? **We've** got just the thing. Ten new Morphus appearance tables, ranging from wild, to wondrous, to weird.

Animated Nightbane Table

This table is for comic or animation-style Morphus forms. This may be considered an Alien Shape table for those GM's going by the book. Nightbane with these features may have been fans of the types of animation they have become, or perhaps artists of them. A third possibility is that these **'Bane** have always been (please excuse the pun) highly animated, and that is now reflected in their true form. All these forms are three-dimensional, move freely and as comfortably as the **'Bane's** normal body, and can be seen from any perspective, as a normal person could be, they just appear to be cartoons.

01-12 Pencil and Ink: The Morphus looks like a perfect sketch of a person, almost human, except that their body is white or off-white (depending on the type of paper used), shaded slightly with normal pencil. The primary lines of the character and their features will be in black ink. The character can even be used as a sketch pad, but any markings made that are not normally part of their form will disappear within 1D4 hours. Add 1D6 to P.B., 1 to M.A., and 20 to S.D.C. The colorless form can be very unsettling, add 3 to Horror Factor.

13-24 Sketch: This might be considered the predecessor to the Pen and Ink above. This Morphus looks like a rough drawing in need of refinement. They will be white or off-white, resembling some type of paper. Their bodies and features are made from rough pencil lines. There will be no dark or definite features, even in the face, making the character appear to be nothing more than a white outline from a distance. Other than this, the Morphus resembles an average human with slightly **blurred** features (like being viewed through thick fog) and a very pale complexion. Like the Pen and Ink, this image can be very disturbing to those looking at it, add 4 to Horror Factor. Also add 1 to P.B. and M.E. and 30 S.D.C.

25-36 30's Black & White: The Morphus is short, about three or four feet tall (1 to 1.3 meters), with a large, round head, round body, and **shorter-than-normal** arms and legs. Their mouth is large and usually pulled up into a large grin, the eyes are large, white ovals with large pupils and no irises, and the nose is a ball in the middle of the face. All the **character's** emotions will be extremely showy and exaggerated. They will have large feet and

hands with three fingers and toes. Their voices will be higher than usual (even males) and they will typically enjoy singing and whistling. They are only black and white in color. Their clothes will usually only be a pair of shoes and either a pair of shorts or a skirt and large pair of panties. Add 2D6 to Spd., 1D4x10 to S.D.C. and 1D6 to Horror Factor.

37-48 Comic Strip: The character resembles something out of the Sunday funnies. They **don't** look realistic or human at all and may even have shapes that appear to be impossible to be 3-D. Most (85%) will be in vivid colors. The character may even resemble a popular figure in the comics. One strange effect is that when the character talks, it will sound like incoherent gibberish, but their words will appear in a bubble above them (others must know how to read to be able to speak with the character). On the plus side, blunt impacts, like punches, falls and frying pans, do no damage! Add 6D6 S.D.C. and 1D4 to Horror Factor.

49-61 Modern American 'Toon: This is basically the style of animation that America has been using for the past 50 or so years. The character has large, round eyes (or possibly, the eyes are one oval with two pupils), a small nose, three fingers, a thin neck, and is either much shorter or taller than the average person. Their bodies may be short and round, incredibly heavily muscled, or rail thin. The character's features are done in heavy black lines and lack a great deal of detail. The body will have relatively little shading, colors being uniform until they are separated by a line. The head will be disproportionate to the rest of the body, either being too large or too small. This form is also easily applied to Nightbane with animal features, these Nightbane usually do not wear any clothes. Blunt impacts do half damage. Add 1D6 to M.A., 1 to P.S. and P.E., 1D6 to Spd., 1D4x10 to S.D.C., and 1D6 to Horror Factor.

62-75 Japanimation/Anime: This is the Japanese style of art that has become incredibly popular in the states. The **'Bane's** nose is small, almost non-existent. The eyes are overly large and well detailed. The mouth is small, but can open incredibly (and impossibly) wide, especially when the character is excited or scared. The skin is shiny and smooth and, at times, the Morphus will stand perfectly motionless, with only their mouth moving to talk. The clothes are either futuristic, Japanese, or martial arts outfits, or some combination of those. The Nightbane receives +10% to motionless prowling (hiding), +1D6 to P.B., and +1 to P.P. Add 4D6 to S.D.C. and 1D4 to Horror Factor.

75-84 Child's Doodle: This **Morphus** looks like it's been drawn by a child. The head is a large, squiggly circle, the body is a large oval, and the limbs are crooked lines. The eyes are either dots or circles and the mouth is a semicircle filling half the face. These characters can bend their bodies in unbelievable ways and are completely double-jointed, giving them a +4 to roll with punch/fall. The character's coloration is white with the lines drawn from pencil or markers and colored in loosely by crayons. These Nightbane can acquire any elite talents that require a Toy form at one less P.P.E. than normal. Add 1 to P.E., **1D6x10** to S.D.C., and 1D6 + 1 to Horror Factor.

85-00 Animated Animal: Many cartoon stars are anthropomorphic animals. Roll on the Animal Form table to determine what type of animal the character resembles or choose one on your own. The character will be fully bipedal, with two human-like arms and hands, a furry but definitely human trunk, and a head resembling a **cartoony** version of the animal. Do not roll on a specific animal table! Re-roll on this table, ignoring any rolls of 85 or higher, to determine the animation/art style the anthropomorphic animal resembles. The Nightbane can acquire any elite talents requiring an animal feature.

Armadillo Table

For many in the world of the twenty-first century, reality has become as frightening as any horror movie (with the possible exception of those put out by the **Hotchkiss** companies). Because of this, it is not surprising that many simply wish to hide away from the world, or at least not go out without some added protection. The armadillo is normally thought of as a walking tank, fulfilling these people's need for protection very well. All armadillo Nightbane have the ability to tunnel through dirt and clay (not loose material like gravel or sand or hard materials like rock) at one-third their normal Spd. This leaves a passable tunnel behind them, which will normally remain until some heavy force causes its collapse (tunnel built beneath roads will normally collapse within minutes). The exact size of the tunnel depends on the type of Armadillo features possessed. Armadillos also have the ability to excavate (hollow out) large, underground areas. One cubic foot of dirt per point of P.S. can be removed in half an hour. These areas collapse after a few hours or, if properly reinforced, could be permanent. They can keep up either of these activities (digging or excavating) at this pace for two minutes per point of P.E. They also have a natural swimming skill of 65%.

01-15 Giant Armadillo: The **Morphus** is an enormous armadillo, measuring over ten feet (about 3 meters) from nose to **tail!** The thick, plated shell provides an extra **1D4x100** S.D.C. and if they roll themselves into a ball, roughly five feet (1.5 meters) across, they take only one-third damage from any and all attacks, even Darkblades! (No actions can be done while in ball, other than rolling). They can roll at top speed, but have no way of seeing where they are going while **doing** so. Rolling over someone does **1D8x10** damage. The armadillo's paws are too large and clumsy to hold anything or perform skills (-60%), but the claws add **4D6** to supernatural P.S. damage. A tail swat does supernatural P.S. damage, and a bite only does **1D8** damage. The armadillo's great size and strength add 10 to P.S. and 6 to P.E., but subtract 3 from P.P. and 4 from Spd. The form, although very alien, still seems peaceful to others, adding only 2 to Horror Factor. These **'Bane** leave tunnels approximately seven feet (2.1 meters) across while digging.

16-35 Were-'Dillo: These Nightbane still appear to be large armadillos, standing around six feet tall (1.8 meters), but stand upright and possess thick, human-like arms and legs. Their thick shell grants them an extra 5D4x10 S.D.C. and, like the larger form, the **'Bane** can roll into a large ball and take only one-third damage from any attacks. Balls are about three feet (.9m) across. Rolling over someone while balled up causes 5D6 damage. Their hands are more claw than finger, causing a minus 20% to all delicate skills, but adding 3D6 to supernatural damage. A bite does 1D6 damage. Their strength is also much greater than the average person, adding 7 to P.S. and 5 to P.E., but they are slightly clumsy, subtracting 3 from P.P. and Spd. They also add 1D4 to horror factor. **Were-'Dillos** leave tunnels about five feet (1.5m) across while digging.

36-55 Humanoid Armadillo: These Nightbane could pass for human in very bad light, but still possess an elongated nose, pointed ears, tough, banded back, stubby tail, and short, black claws. Their tough skin adds 2D6x10 S.D.C., but cannot be rolled into a ball. Their strength is still great, adding 5 to P.S. and 4 to P.E., but subtracting 2 from P.P. and Spd. Their tiny claws add 1D6 damage to a punch. These **'bane** leave tunnels about four feet (1.2m) across. Add 1D6 to horror factor.

56-70 Shell: The **'Bane**, although otherwise human, has a tough, armadillo shell growing from his back. It is impossible to hide with anything short of a cloak or cape. The shell adds 5D4x10 S.D.C. and allows the **'Bane** to roll into a ball, like above. Rolling over someone does 4D6 damage. The form also adds 2 to P.S. and **1D4** to horror factor. The **'Bane** can tunnel as well, leaving a three-foot (.9m) wide path behind him.

71-80 Armadillo Head: The body of this **Morphus** appears to be a totally normal human (as far as Nightbane go), but the head has an elongated muzzle, scales, coarse fur, tubular ears, and the beginnings of a shell under the hair. This adds 6D6 to S.D.C., 1 to P.S. and improves perception, adding 3 to any hearing or smell-related, or 1 to any vision-related roll. A bite does 1D8 damage. This form adds 1D4 to horror factor. These **'Bane** can tunnel as well, leaving a three-foot (.9m) wide path behind them.

81-90 Claws: The hands and feet of the **Morphus** possess thick, tough claws almost three inches (8cm) long. These subtract from accuracy of the hands (-15% to any delicate skills), but improve climbing ability (+15%) and hand-to-hand damage (+2D6 to supernatural damage). They also add 2D4 to S.D.C. and 1D6 to horror factor. These Nightbane can tunnel surprisingly well with just the claws, leaving 4-foot (1.2m) tunnels behind them.

91-00 Armadillo Centauroid: This form appears similar to the Giant Armadillo **Morphus**, except where the neck should be is the waist and upper body of a human. The shell is very tough, adding **1D4x100** to S.D.C., but the human torso prevents the **'Bane** from rolling into a ball without seriously injuring themselves. They also add 8 to P.S. and 6 to P.E., but subtract 3 from P.P. The giant claws on the armadillo legs add 3D6 to supernatural P.S. damage. A swipe from the tail does normal P.S. damage. The form also adds 1D6 to horror factor. These Nightbane can tunnel well, leaving seven-foot (2.1m) wide tunnels

Dolphin/Whale Table

Cetaceans, also known as dolphins and whales, have long been popular animals in people's minds. They are intelligent and playful creatures, and seem to possess almost human-like personalities. All these creatures are mammals and must breathe air. All Nightbane with these features can hold their breath for 1D6+5 minutes and have an **echolocation** power, similar to radar. In other words, they can pinpoint objects in the dark or when blinded, and are able to operate perfectly under such conditions. They cannot be surprised by an attack from behind and can make strikes against invisible foes with only half the normal penalties (they are still affected normally by illusion powers). Unless otherwise mentioned, they also have a natural Swim Skill of 80%, swimming speed is running Spd plus 50% (Ex: a character whose land Spd. is 24 could swim at a speed of 36).

01-15 Full Cetacean: The Nightbane is fully dolphin or whale-shaped. The body will be long and tube-shaped with wet, rubbery skin and little hair. Their arms have been replaced with simple flippers (incapable of manipulating any objects) and their legs have become a tail. Exact size, shape, and coloration depend on the species. Dolphins are typically 5 to 7 feet (about 1.8 to 2.3 meters) long, and receive +1D6 to I.Q., +1 to M.A., +3 to P.S. and P.E., +4 to P.P. when swimming, +2D6 to Swimming speed, +2 to all perception rolls, and +1D6x10 S.D.C. Whales can range from 6 feet to over 100 feet (about 2 to 30 meters) long, though anything over 20 feet or 6 meters, about the size of a killer whale, is probably a bit much for a player character. Whales also receive +1D6 to I.Q., +1 to M.A., +3 to P.S. and P.E., +4 to P.P. while swimming, +2D6 to Spd., +2 to perception rolls, and +1D6x10 S.D.C. For every 2ft (.6 meters) larger than 8ft (2.1 meters), add 2 to P.S., +1 to Spd., and 1D4x5 S.D.C. These 'Bane possess a natural Swim Skill equal to 98% (Spd. as above), but will be helpless on land (P.S., P.P., and Spd. all reduced to 1 and no attacks per melee!) unless purchasing the Air Swimmer talent (allows character to swim through the air, as high as twenty feet (about 6 meters) above the ground, as if they were in the water, the character does not suffer penalties from drying out, permanently costs 5 P.P.E. but is always active while in **Morphus** and does not interfere with any other talents). In a pinch, these characters can manipulate objects with their mouths (-50% to delicate skills, -5 to strike or parry with held weapon, cannot use modern weapons like this). A head-butt from a dolphin does Supernatural PS damage + 1D8. A bite from a whale does Supernatural PS +1D6. Either animal adds 1D6 to Horror Factor, +1 for whales over 10 feet (3 meters).

16-35 Humanoid Dolphin/Whale: The character still resembles a whale/dolphin, but the tail is replaced by a pair of legs with webbed toes and the flippers to the sides have become **humanoid** arms with webbed fingers (-10% to delicate skills). There is still a triangular dorsal **fin** on the back, and the coloration and the head's shape are still definitely animal. The Nightbane is roughly human sized (6 to 9 feet tall, or 2 to 3 meters). A head-butt from a dolphin or a bite from a whale does Supernatural PS damage plus 1D6. Add 1 to I.Q. and M.A., 3 to P.S., P.E., and P.P., 1D6 to Spd., 1D6x10 to S.D.C., +1 to all perception rolls, and 1D6 to Horror Factor.

35-55 Finned Humanoid: The Nightbane is relatively human, but has a triangular **fin** growing from each forearm (however many arms they may have), as well as on the lower leg, and

a dorsal fin in the middle of the back. Their fingers and toes are webbed as well. The hair is most likely black, blue, blue-gray, or white. The character has no visible ears. Fins add +2 to punch or kick damage. Add +1 to I.Q. and P.S., +2 to P.P., and +3D6 to swimming Spd. This form grants +20 S.D.C. and 1D4 to Horror Factor.

56-70 Exotic Aquatic Humanoid: The Nightbane appears mostly human, but has soft skin of a strange tone, webbed fingers and toes, and the hair is black, blue, blue-gray, or white. Their eyes also have a strangely exotic nature. The character can easily pass for human. Add +1 to P.P., +1D6 to I.Q., + 1D8 to P.B., and 2D6 to Spd. Add 6D6 to S.D.C. and 1 to Horror Factor.

71-85 Cetacean Head: The 'Bane's body is human, but the head is that of a whale or dolphin, complete with blowhole. Head-butt or bite does supernatural PS damage plus 1D6. Add 1D6 to I.Q., +1 to M.A., +3 to swimming Spd, +2 to all perception rolls, and 3D6 to S.D.C. Add 1D4 to Horror Factor.

86-00 Mermaid: From the waist up, this Morphus appears to be a normal human, but from the waist down is a long, dolphin-like tail. The tail is slightly longer than the rest of the body, giving the average "mermaid" a length of about 7 feet (2.1 meters). In this form, the Morphus is nearly helpless on land (P.P. and Spd. are reduced to 3, halve normal number of attacks and no combat bonuses) unless the Air Swimmer talent is purchased (see note above). Add 2 to P.S., +3 to P.P. while swimming, +3D6 to swimming Spd. and 1D4x10 to S.D.C. Adds 1D4 to Horror Factor.

Enlarged Features Table

This Morphus form is perfectly normal in appearance, the only exception is that one feature is grossly enlarged. The rest of the body is perfectly normal in size and shape, unless other Morphus features dictate otherwise. A 'Bane with one of these features usually has a relatively high opinion of themselves, especially in whatever area that has become "larger than life".

01-12 Enlarged Cranium: These 'Bane have usually either prided themselves on their brainpower or their hair. Either way, the head above the eyes has become incredibly large, roughly two feet (.6m) across. This can appear as a huge mass of hair, a super-sized forehead, or look like the brain has grown through the skull. Add 30% to the character's total weight, add 2D6 to the I.Q. and 1D6 to M.E. Add 6D6 S.D.C. and +1D4 to Horror Factor. Despite appearances, these 'Bane have no neck problems.

13-26 Bulbous Eyes: The **Morphus'** eyes are roughly the size of tennis balls and bulge from the head. The majority of these people have thought their eyes contain a certain charismatic power. The eyes themselves can be anything the player desires, yellow and cat-like, dark like a rodents, insect-like, and so on. No matter what the appearance, the 'Bane has perfect eyesight and extended night vision (range 100 feet or 30m), they also receive a +3 to any vision-related perception checks. Add 2D4 S.D.C. and 1D6 to Horror Factor. The Morphus may purchase any vision related talent at a cost of 1 less P.P.E. than normal (minimum of 1 P.P.E.)

27-40 Muscular Arms: These **Morphus'** arms aren't just muscular, they're enormous, and reach down to their knees. They have wide shoulders and biceps that are easily as big

around as their head, their hands and chest, however, are normal size and, compared to these giant arms, may even seem smaller than normal. These individuals have usually believed their physical strength makes them important. Add 4D6 to P.S., 1D4 X 10 S.D.C., +1D6 to Horror Factor, and increase the total body weight by 50%. The character may purchase any super strength-related talent at a cost of 1 less P.P.E. point than normal (minimum of 1 P.P.E.).

41-54 Enormous Hands: These are people who have always depended on their hands to support them (boxers, doctors, artists). Their hands have become super-sized, over two feet (.6 meters) across and three feet (1 meter) long! The character can grab and hold any man-sized or smaller object simply by making a successful roll to strike. The character's gripping strength is equal to twice their P.S. attribute (it takes a combined strength greater than this to break the captive free). Also, by squeezing they can do one point of damage per melee for every P.S. point above 15, or they can simply hold the victim until they wish to release them. The fingernails (now roughly three to four inches across) are very tough (AR: 19) and can be used to parry weapons. Finally, add +1D6 to P.S., +1D6 X 5 S.D.C., +1D4 to horror Factor, and increase total body weight by 35%. Surprisingly, these large digits do not interfere with any of the **'Bane's** delicate skills.

55-68 Swelled Chest: This goes one of two ways, either the **'Bane's** chest is large and muscular-looking, or, for some females, well, use your imagination. These people have either valued their muscles **or...ahem**, to get them by or at least make them attractive, and now these features have been super-enhanced to inhuman sizes. Add 2D6x10 S.D.C. and the character's chest has an A.R. of 8. Increase P.S. and P.E. by 2D4 and Horror Factor by 1D4. Increase the character's height by 1D4 feet (or 2D6x10 centimeters), and double the character's weight. This is due solely to the size of the chest; the legs, stomach, **neck**, arms, and head are all normal size. These characters will have trouble walking through ordinary doors unless they turn sideways (and even then, for some).

69-82 Bulbous Belly: These characters may not have ever actually valued their eating ability (then again, some might), but this form is more representative of gluttonous and greedy people. The **'Bane's** stomach rolls out in numerous fatty rolls and is soft and squishy. Increase P.S. by 1D6 and reduce P.P., P.B., and Spd. by 1D4. Double the character's weight, and add 3D6x10 S.D.C. Any blunt blows to the stomach area, even car collisions, do no **damage!** Increase the Horror Factor by 1D6.

83-90 Boulder Butt: Do I really need to go into detail on this one? The **Morphus'** rear is inflated to the size of a small trunk (almost four feet across). These people may have valued a cute and tight rear, or they may have just felt self-conscious about their own posterior. Their weight is increased by 50% and their P.P. is dropped by two points. On the plus side, falls do half damage as long as the character lands on his backside, the character's S.D.C. is raised by 1D6x10, and the butt can be used as a blunt weapon, doing 1D8 damage plus P.S. bonus. Add 1D6 to Horror Factor.

91-00 Giant Feet: The character has valued either their speed or footing for years. These loves are now reflected in their size 50-EE feet, covered with a second "skin" shoe of the player's choice. Decrease the **Morphus'** P.P. by 1D4, but increase their

Spd. by 5D6. A kick from these giant feet does 2D6 damage and is +2 to penetrating armor. The character also has one extra attack per melee, so long as it is used for a kick. Increase their weight by 20% and add 1D4+3 inches (2D6+6 cm) to their height. If using the optional knockdown rules, the character is +15% to avoid being knocked over. The character may purchase any speed related talents at a cost of 1 less P.P.E. than normal (1 P.P.E. minimum). Add 2 to Horror Factor.

Everglades Table

For all those Nightbane out there who are as fond of this expansive wetlands as I am, I have put together a combination of the various elements found in the Florida Everglades. Now, I don't want anyone out there getting confused: the Everglades are not a swamp (they contain a few), they are wetlands. Swamps are dank, murky, muddy areas filled with stagnant water. Wetlands are brightly lit areas, mostly grasslands, which are covered almost entirely by a few feet of water. The Everglades are home to hundreds of species of fish, birds, reptiles, and mammals and provide valuable breeding grounds for many more.

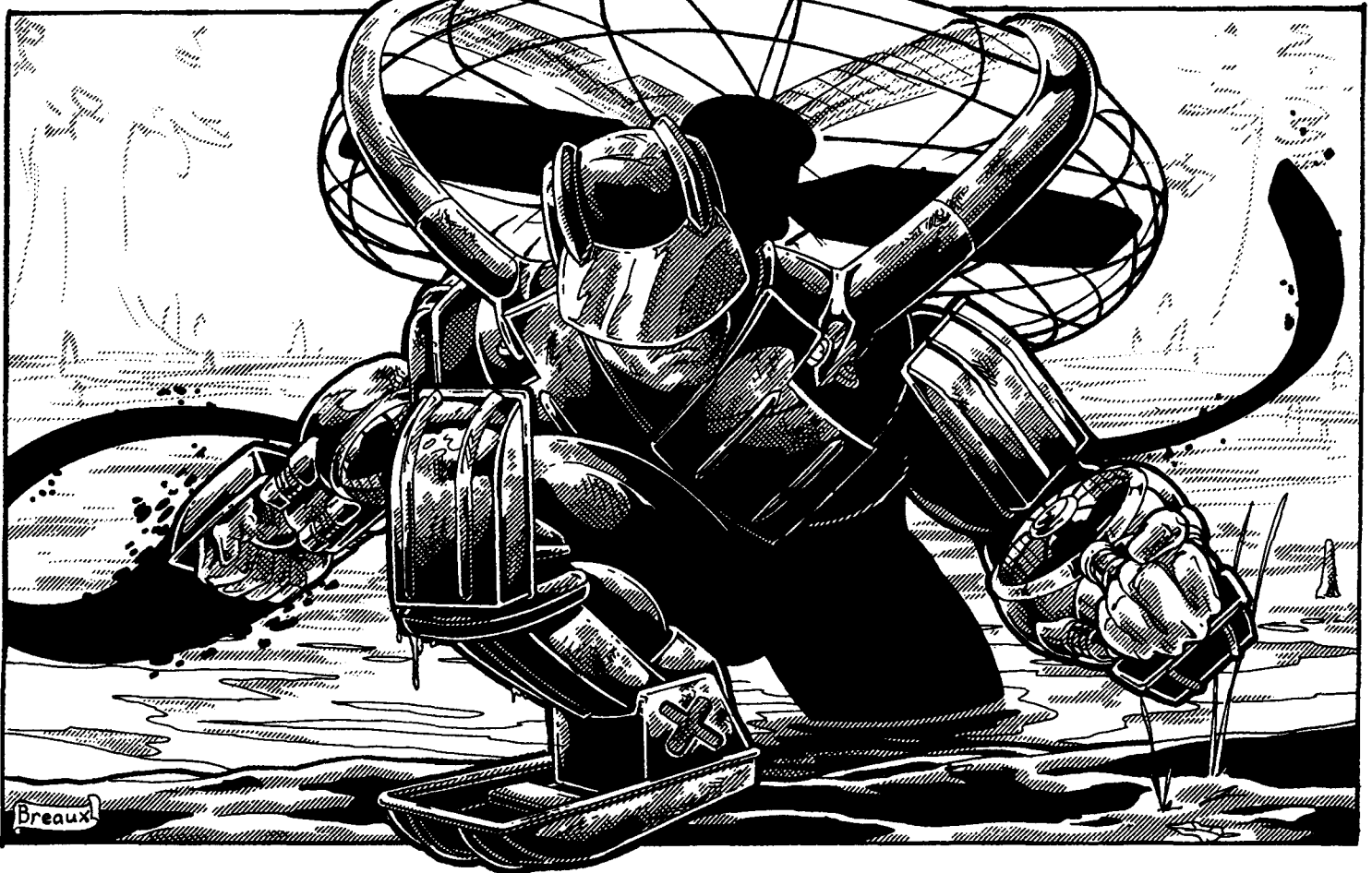
In the world of the twenty-first century, the destruction of these valuable wetlands has continued and, under King Moloch's control, even sped up. It is only natural that among the hundreds of people who loyally defend this valuable world, a few would turn out to be Nightbane. Their **Morphus** would then reflect this deep love of these almost-magical lands.

01-15 Gator Man (or Croc Man): Very similar to the Humanoid Reptile in the first book, the Gator Man has a humanoid body, although hunched over, but is covered in tough, dark-green scales. Their head resembles an alligator, with a flat snout, rows of sharp teeth, little or no hair, and eyes set on top. Their jaws have become incredibly powerful, capable of snapping bones easily. A bite does supernatural P.S. damage, plus 2D6. Their hands and feet have become webbed, and each finger tipped with a powerful claw, adding +3 to punch damage, but makes delicate work difficult, -15%. Their long tail aids them in swimming, adding 2D6 to swimming speed (natural swim skill of 85%). Add 3 to P.S., 1 to M.E., 2D6 to **Spd.**, and 1D4 X10 + 10 to S.D.C. Their tough hide provides an A.R. of 12 and a Horror Factor of 1D6. These Nightbane can purchase any Elite Talents requiring an Animal Form.

16-30 Mud-Form: The **'Bane's** body is made of thick mud! In addition, small plants grow from various areas, sticks and twigs poke out here and there, and water drips from them constantly. Like the Plasmoid form, the Nightbane can squeeze through small openings, slip out of bonds, and physical attacks only do half damage. They also do not need to breathe, allowing them to walk along a riverbed, or through a poison-gas cloud, or survive an airtight room indefinitely. Unfortunately, they constantly drip mud and water, leaving a clear trail wherever they go. Add 4D6 to S.D.C. and 1D6 to Horror Factor.

31-45 Bird Body: The **Morphus** is that of some sort of water bird, particularly cranes, pelicans, ibis, ducks, gulls, and eagles. Their bodies, although basically human, have feathers rather than hair, dark eyes, and the mouth and nose poke forward slightly. Their toes are webbed and they can float on water (except eagles) at a speed equal to running. There is a chance (1-30%) of wings growing from their backs, starting at their shoulder blades. It is more likely (31-80%) that the wings grow

from the arms instead. If they have wings, they can fly at a speed of **1D6x10**. Excellent vision adds 1 to initiative and perception. Add 1 to P.S., 2 to P.P., 1 to P.E., 3D6 to S.D.C., and 1D4 to **horror** factor. These Nightbane can purchase any Elite Talents requiring an animal form.



46-60 Air-Boat: So, these aren't part of the natural landscape, but they are a necessity if you want to travel through the Everglades without damaging it. The **Nightbane's** body has now become grafted with certain air-boat parts so they can do the same. Their feet have been replaced by short, metal skis and their eyes (and possibly, entire face) has been covered by a wind-shield-like visor. Their entire body is stout and powerful-looking, but by far, the most noticeable feature is the enormous, circular fan mounted on their back. It is almost as large as the character is tall and only clears the ground by about a foot (.3 meters) and is covered by a screen to keep children and small animals from accidentally being sucked in. The fan can be used to propel the character across water (or underwater), muddy ground, ice, and sand at their Spd. attribute plus **2D6x10!** By lying on their backs, the **'Bane** can become a sort of hovercraft, hovering 1 to 6 feet (.3 to 2 meters) above the ground, but must find another method of locomotion. The fan makes a deafening noise when on and makes it impossible to prowl with it activated. Add 2 to P.S., 3 to P.E., and **1D6x10** to S.D.C. This form, although not truly ugly, is still frightening, add 1D4 to horror factor, plus 2 when the fan is on. These Nightbane can purchase any talents requiring a Bio-Mechanical form.

61-75 Reeded Skin: The skin of the **Morphus** is covered in short reeds and grass. This can vary in type from normal grass to

seaweed to cattails or any combination (such as seaweed-covered legs, grass growing from the torso and arms, and reeds springing up where the hair should be). They can breathe both oxygen and carbon dioxide and can feed entirely off of sunlight and water. When in an environment similar to what they are made of, they can blend in with 90% success (like a motionless prowler). Add 1D4 to M.E., 1D6 to P.E., 4D6 to S.D.C., and increase Horror Factor by 1D6-1 (minimum of 1). These **'Bane** take double damage from fire.

76-90 Fish Body: The Nightbane possesses the body of a giant fish! This is complete in every way except for size, which is now six to nine feet (2 to 3 meters) long. The most common species include catfish, bass, and small grouper. Although their fins are incapable of performing delicate skills, using weapons, or even punching, they can attack with head butts or tail lashes, both of which do supernatural P.S. damage plus **2D6**. These **'Bane** can breathe both air and water, although they will be quite helpless on land (P.S., P.P., and Spd. all reduced to 1). The alternative is to purchase the Air Swimmer talent, which allows character to swim through the air, as high as twenty feet above the ground, as if they were in the water, and the character does not suffer penalties from drying out; permanently costs 5 P.P.E. but is always active while in Morphus and does not interfere with any other talents. Add 1D4 to P.S., 2 to PP., 1D6 to P.E., and

swimming speed is twice normal Spd. Increase S.D.C. by **1D6x10** plus 10, and Horror Factor by **1D4+1**. These **Nightbane** can purchase any Elite Talent requiring an animal characteristic.

91-00 Spirit of Destruction: This is either for those **Nightbane** who actually support the destruction of the wetlands, or those who try to teach a lesson to others through fear and pity. They appear to be normal humans (other than other **Morphus** features) except that the head is completely hidden underneath a ragged, cloth hood. Not even the face can be seen without close examination. Upon that examination, or if the character pulls back the hood, their face reveals all the emotions and horrors summoned by the destruction of the habitat. It reveals the death of innocent beings and their eventual extinction, the slow draining of the life from these millions of square miles, the poison and sickness caused by dumping, and the beauty that may soon never be seen again. Those witnessing this must make a save vs. Horror Factor 17 or either break down crying or run away, refusing to believe what they saw. Increase ME. by **1D6+1**, P.S. by 1, Spd. by **2D6**, and S.D.C. by **3D6**, but reduce P.B. and M.A. by **1D6** each. The hood itself only adds 1 to Horror Factor, but the unmasked face has the effects as above. These **Nightbane** can purchase any elite talents that require a **Stigmata**.

Griffin Table

Griffins are powerful creatures of Greek, and later, Medieval myth. Their large, majestic forms commonly command respect from all who picture them. They were also rumored to line their nests with gold, gems, and other precious minerals. **Morphus** with this form either possess or admire the power and grace that these creatures emanate. Although most are not truly greedy, most **Nightbane** with this form are somewhat materialistic and protective of their possessions.

Because of their affinity for riches, a griffin **Morphus** can acquire any talents relating to gold, gems, or precious minerals for 1 P.P.E. less than normal. (No talent can ever be reduced to 0)

01-15 Full Griffin: This **Morphus** transforms completely into one of these gigantic creatures. They are slightly larger than an elephant and covered with shiny, golden feathers and fur, making prowling somewhat difficult (-20%). Their transformation grants them +**2D6+7** to P.S., +3 to **P.P.**, +10 to P.E., +5 to P.B., +**4D6** to **Spd.**, and +**3D6x10** S.D.C. and they can fly at **100mph** plus 15mph (**161km/h**, plus **24km/h**) per level of experience. The **creature's** natural instincts grant a +1 to initiative and strike rolls, as well as +2 to perception rolls (+4 to any rolls involving gold, silver, or precious stones). Vision is twice as powerful as a normal human's. The griffin's beak provides an extra attack per melee and does **3D6** damage per bite, and they have retractable claws that do **4D6** damage for a swipe or **1D8** for a **slam/pin** (also grant climbing bonus of +25%). In this form, the **'Bane** has no thumbs, making delicate skills impossible except by manipulation with the beak (-65%). Adds **2D4** to Horror/Awe factor.

16-35 Were-Griffin: Can stand on two legs, but is between seven and nine feet (2.1 to 3 meters) tall. Cannot be disguised as a human because of large beak, long lion's tail and wings. +7 to P.S., +2 to P.P., +9 to P.E., +4 to P.B., +**2D8** to **Spd.**, +**2D6x10** S.D.C., flight speed is **85mph** plus **10mph** (**137km/h**, plus **16km/h**) per level of experience. The **Morphus** is +3 to any perception rolls involving gold or precious gems. Vision is roughly twice as powerful as a normal human's. Beak does **2D8** damage

for a bite or **1D6** for a peck. 70% chance of retractable claws that do **3D6** damage for a swipe, as well as granting a +30% climbing bonus. Delicate skills can be done, but are somewhat difficult with the oversized **paws/hands** (-30%). Adds **1D6** to Horror/Awe factor.

36-60 Humanoid Griffin: This is basically a large-looking person covered completely with soft, golden fur. 50% chance of beak existing, and 45% chance of retractable claws (+25% to climb skill). +5 to P.S., +1 P.P., +7 to P.E., +3 to P.B., +**1D6** to **Spd.**, small wings do not allow for flight, but the **Nightbane** can glide at up to 60mph (**9km/h**) with enough altitude. Vision is perfect by human standards. **Paws/Hands** can use any normal tools or devices without penalty. Beak (if applicable) does **2D6** damage and **claws** can do **1D8**. +3 to Horror/Awe factor (+4 if beak is present)

61-75 Partial Griffin 'Morph: This **'Bane** looks like a normal human with certain griffin body parts grafted on. The head possesses a beak that does **2D6** damage, and the eyes grant perfect eyesight. Furry arms and paws add +3 to P.S. and are 50% likely to possess a set of retractable claws doing **1D8** damage and adding 20% to climbing skill. Large wings allow the **'Bane** to fly at 65mph (**105km/h**). The **Morphus** also has a long, lion-like tail. Adds **1D6** to Horror/Awe factor.

76-90 Lower Body Griffin: This form is simply a human with the lower body and wings of a griffin. Add +**3D6** to Spd. and +5 P.E. for running time and carrying loads. Wings allow the **Morphus** to fly at 85mph plus 5mph (**137km/h** plus **8km/h**) per level of experience. Small claws on the feet add +4 damage to a kick if the **Nightbane** is barefoot as well as adding +10% to climb skill. Adds **1D4** to Horror/Awe factor.

91-00 Griffin Centauroid: The **'Bane's** upper body is human, but beneath it is a griffin's body, beginning at the neck. The griffin body is about the size of a Clydesdale horse and causes a -20% to prowl +7 to P.S., +6 to P.E., +2 to P.B., +**3D6** to **Spd.**, and +**4D6x10** S.D.C. Nose is slightly pointed and ears cling to the side of the head. Wings allow the **'Bane** to fly at 85mph plus **10mph** (**137km/h** plus **16km/h**) per level of experience. +1 to initiative and +2 to perception rolls. Vision is much better than the human norm. Adds **1D6** to Horror/Awe factor.

Gross Stigmata Table

If you're one of those people who didn't think the **Stigmata** table in the main book was disturbing enough, these are for you. Reader discretion is advised.

01-10 Splitting Headache: The **Nightbane's** head has been split apart! We're not talking about a neat, little sword slash across the cheek. Nope, it looks more like a pipe bomb had been strapped onto the hairline! Blood is splattered across their face and clothing and the brain (or what's left of it) can clearly be seen twitching around in the skull and dribbling from the wide wound. More than likely (85%), one of the eyes has been knocked out by the force that cracked their skull and either left an empty socket or is dangling by it's nerves. Add **2D6** to S.D.C. and 5 to horror Factor.

11-20 Visible Intestines: The **Morphus'** abdomen has been slashed open and now everything that is supposed to be inside is hanging out and highly visible. Aside from just seeing the intestines, stomach, and parts of the liver, they also constantly drip

blood, leaving a highly visible trail wherever the Nightbane goes. Add 1 to P.E., 5D6 to S.D.C., and 1D6 to Horror Factor.

21-30 Outer Veins: Every blood vessel that would normally be an inch under the **Bane's** skin is now running along the surface, crisscrossing the surface with countless red tubes and making their skin ripple and pulse with every heartbeat. Add 6D6 to S.D.C. and 1D4+1 to Horror Factor.

31-40 Psycho: The Nightbane looks like a raving psychotic. They are spattered with blood from head to toe, their eyes are opened incredibly wide, their mouth is constantly pulled into an evil grin, and their entire body shivers as if in anticipation. In addition to this, there is a knife, ax, or similar weapon permanently attached to one of their hands, adding 2D6 to P.S. damage. Whenever they talk, their voice will be convoluted and they will laugh or giggle maniacally after every few words. Add one attack per melee, +1 to initiative, +2 to P.S., +3D6 to S.D.C., and +1D6+1 to Horror Factor.

41-50 Nightmare Pet: Roll once on the animal type table or choose an animal at random. This type of creature is permanently a part of the Nightbane, appearing as if he were impaled on it or it was sewn on in a quick, careless manor. The fur is matted and covered with blood and the creature is constantly growling, squawking, or hissing and struggling to free itself from the **Morphus**. The Bane receives an extra attack from this creature, which will **bite/horn/claw** during combat, doing 4D6 damage. Add 1D4X10 S.D.C. and 1D4+1 to Horror Factor.

51-60 Decapitated: The **Morphus'** head has been cut off of the body and now must be carried in their hand or in some other manner. The neck stub squirts up bits of blood and flesh every few minutes and the bottom of the head drips almost constantly. Despite this, the head still sees, smells, hears, eats, and speaks normally and the movement isn't restricted. The body can be controlled from up to 3 miles away per level of experience (of course, it isn't much good if the Bane can't see or hear what it's doing). The head houses all of the **Morphus'** Hit Points, while the body is composed entirely of its SDC (striking the head requires a called shot, at -3 to strike). The head can also be swung by the hair like a mace, adding 1D8 to PS damage. The **head's** skin is pale and the eyes bulge slightly. Add 2D4 to Hit Points and 1D6+1 to Horror Factor (minimum of 4).

61-70 Blood-Sucker: The **Nightbane's** canine teeth are grossly enlarged, even beyond those of vampires. In addition to that the teeth, along with their lips and chin, are constantly dripping with a disgusting mixture of blood, drool, and bile. Their eyes are heavily bloodshot and wide, making them look perpetually hungry. A bite from these teeth does 4D6 damage plus the victim must save vs. lethal poison or take an extra 5D6 damage. Add 2D6 to S.D.C. and 1D4 to Horror Factor.

71-80 Slashed: The Nightbane looks as if someone has taken a razor blade and crisscrossed it **across** their face. Several of the pieces have already fallen out or are peeling off, revealing muscles and tendons beneath, along with plenty of blood. Add 5D6 to S.D.C., reduce P.B. by half, and add 1D4+1 to Horror Factor.

81-90 Acne: This could make anyone wish to be a normal teen again. The **Bane's** face, along with most of their body, is covered in thousands of huge, infected **zits!** These will bleed from time to time and, if popped, release a very corrosive substance (5D4 damage, 5 foot range), any pimples popped will reform within an hour. Add 2D6 S.D.C., reduce P.B. by 5, and add 1D6 to Horror Factor.

91-00 Crushed: Some part of the **Morphus** looks like it has been crushed beneath a heavy weight or vehicle. The portion of the body is only 1 to 3 inches (2 to 7cm) thick, has broken and shattered bones ripping through the skin at several spots, along with countless cuts and tears in the skin that are constantly bleeding, not to mention heavy bruising and distortion. Add 4 to roll with punch/fall, +1D4X10 S.D.C., and 1D6+1 to Horror Factor.

Otter Table

Playful, hyper, optimistic, and unpredictable; even with the seemingly horrible downward spiral of the world today, many people are still able to muster up these emotions and continue on with life happily. Nightbane like these commonly become an animal with a very similar outlook: the otter. These **'Bane** can be either river or sea otters, the only major difference being size (sea otters are larger).

Despite the exact nature of their forms, all Nightbane with otter features have an automatic swim skill equal to 85% and their swimming speed is double the normal Spd attribute. They can hold their breath for 1D6 minutes per level of experience. Finally, they possess small, sensitive whiskers that can detect the tiniest changes in the air or water, allowing them to sense air and water temperature accurately, sense **wind/current** direction, and sense the approach of something from out of sight (anyone attempting to prowl up on them are at -30%).

01-15 Giant Otter: The **Morphus** is identical to a normal otter, the only difference being that when this otter stands on its hind legs it reaches six to ten feet (1.8m to 3m) tall. Like all otters, they are very flexible, giving them a +5 to roll with punch/fall. The giant size, along with the thick fur adds 2D6X10 +20 to S.D.C. and they take no damage from cold. Their hands look too large and inarticulate to perform fine skills accurately, but are still surprisingly dexterous, subtracting only 20% from skills. A bite does 4D6 damage, a swipe from the webbed, clawed hands does punch damage +2D6, and a tail slap does punch damage. The **'Bane's** nightvision is even better than most, adding 500 feet (150m) to their range. Finally, add 8 to P.S., 5 to P.P., 4 to P.E., and 10 to Spd. Add 1D4 to horror factor.

16-35 Were-Otter: All of the Nightbane's features are still distinctly otter, but the body shape is human. They stand from five to seven feet (1.5m to 2.1m) tall, are covered in dark brown fur, have rubbery, webbed hands and feet with small claws, a thick, muscular tail reaching to their ankles, and a head that couldn't be mistaken for human. The hands are very nimble, but still clumsier than human hands (-10% to delicate skills). Nightvision is very good, adding 300ft (90m) to their normal range. A bite does 3D6 damage, a claw slash does punch damage plus 1D6, and a tail slap does punch damage. This form adds 4 to P.S., 3 to P.P., 3 to P.E., and 2D6 to Spd. Increase S.D.C. by 2D4 X 10 and horror factor by 1D6

36-55 Humanoid Otter: The body is completely human, although furry. The hands are dark with slight webbing (no increased damage, no penalty to skills). The face is normal except for a slight muzzle, dark nose, and very small ears. The tail is short and stout. These **'Bane** could pass for human in bad light or with heavy clothing. Nightvision is better than **average**, adding 100ft (30m). Add 1D6 X 10 to S.D.C., 3 to P.S., and 2 to P.P. and P.E. Increase horror factor by 1D4.

56-70 Otter Tail and Whiskers: The Nightbane appears to be a normal human being (as Nightbane go, anyway), except for the long whiskers growing from the cheeks, and the muscular tail reaching to their ankles. The whiskers are even more sensitive than most other otter forms, providing all the normal abilities plus a bonus of +2 to initiative (+4 underwater). The tail can be used to attack, doing punch damage, or to aid in swimming (add 3D6 to swimming speed). Add 3D6 to S.D.C., 2 to P.S. and P.P., and 1D4 to horror factor.

71-89 Webbed Hands and Feet: Again, the 'Bane appears to be a normal person except for the dark, rubbery hands with webbing and small claws. The webbing helps when swimming, adding 4D6 to swimming speed, and the claws add to hand-to-hand damage, doing punch damage plus 2D6.

90-00 Otter Centauroid: The body of this Nightbane resembles a giant otter, but beginning at the neck is a human torso, arms, and head. Because of their size, these 'Bane will have trouble fitting into vehicles and through many doorways. Add 2D6x10+10 to S.D.C. Add 7 to P.S., 4 to P.P. and P.E., and 10 to Spd. A tail slap does normal punch damage, and a swipe from the clawed otter hands does punch damage plus 2D6. Also add 100ft (30m) to nightvision range.



Saurian Table

In our modern world, most people have had at least a passing fascination with dinosaurs. Although most people outgrow them, many still admire these long-gone lizards. The 'Bane with these features may admire any of these creatures for a variety of reasons, but most will be at least a little more curious than the average person.

01-14 Sauropod Neck: The gentle giants of the dinosaur days, the sauropods ranged in size from the size of an elephant to the 100 foot (30.5m) long *Ultrasaurus*. The Nightbane's neck is

1D6 plus one foot (.3m) long and can bend and twist to a limited degree (although not as flexible or limber as a prehensile tail or trunk). The 'Bane's nostrils are on top of their head, rather than the front of their face, allowing them to breathe underwater with only the very top of the head above water. The Nightbane can hold their breath for 10 plus 2D6 minutes. The **Morphus'** arms and legs will appear very thick and round, almost tree-like. Their eyes also hold a sort of placidity and peaceful and trusting nature, regardless of their alignment. +4 to P.S., +1D6 to M.E., +1D6 X 10 to S.D.C. Adds 4 to Horror Factor.

15-28 Raptor Legs: Raptors were not merely represented by the *Velociraptors* shown in certain popular movies. The family includes several dozen other members, all sharing quick wits and an even quicker set of legs. The feet have three toes, and the legs are covered with dark scales (brown, black or green). Legs add 2D6X10 to Spd. and 6D6 to S.D.C. The 'Bane also possesses a large scythe claw on the big toe of each foot that does 3D6 damage with a kick. Add 1D4 to Horror Factor.

29-44 Ceratopid Head: This family includes one of the favorites of many children, the *triceratops*. All the ceratopids share the bony frill around their head, in any imaginable pattern, as well as a parrot-like beak. A head-butt will do 2D6 damage, but uses two attacks, the beak can do 1D6 damage from a bite. There is an 85% chance the Morphus will have 1D6 horns; each horn will add 1D6 damage to a head butt, or can be used to slash, doing 2D6 damage, regardless of how many horns there are. The bony frill adds 1D6 X 10 S.D.C. and gives the head a natural A.R. of 15. The Nightbane also gains 1D8 to P.S., P.E., and Spd. Adds 1D6 to Horror Factor.

45-58 Ankylosaur Shell: The **Morphus'** entire back is covered with a tough, bony shell with large spikes protruding from it and a long tail ending in a hard, bone club. The shell adds 1D6 to P.S. and 3D6X10 to S.D.C., and has an A.R. of 16 for any attacks from the rear. The tail adds an extra attack per melee and does 1D10 damage. There is a 50% chance that the shell continues over the head, down to the nose. If this happens, the character has no hair or only hair along the outer edges. The shell will be covered with small horns, doing 2D6 with a head butt and giving the head an AR of 12. Adds 1D6 plus 1 to Horror Factor.

59-72 Duckoid Crest: The duckoids, or **Hardosaurs**, were a group of large wading dinosaurs with enormous, decorative head-crests they used to create deep mating calls. The crest extends one to two feet back from the head and can be of almost any design. The lips will protrude slightly like a duck's bill. The character can make deep, resonating noises through their crest that can be heard up to TWO MILES away! Anyone standing within 20ft of the Bane when they make one of these sounds will have to make a Saving Throw vs.16 to avoid deafness for 2D6 minutes (-3 to strike, parry, and dodge, -6 to initiative). The Morphus also has the ability to compose beautiful melodies with their crest, giving them a sort of sing skill automatically (80% +3% per level). The Bane can control the volume as easily as they control their normal voice. They can also hold their breath for 2D6 minutes and receive a +20% to swim skill if taken. Adds 1D6 to Horror Factor.

73-86 Tyrannosaur Jaws: The fierce and famous king of the 'Terrible Lizards', the *Tyrannosaurus Rex* is known by most people. This Morphus will possess an enormous head, nearly twice the normal size, as well as elongated. The mouth covers

half the face and is filled with jagged teeth, doing 4D6 damage with a bite. The Bane's sense of smell is about twice the normal level, and add 100 feet to **nightvision** range. The form adds 3 to P.S., 2 to P.P., 3 to P.E., 2D6 to **Spd.**, and 1D6X10 S.D.C. The arms and fingers will extend from the front of the body rather than the side and will only be two-thirds as long as normal (-20% to any delicate skills). This horrifying visage adds 6 to Horror factor.

87-00 Pterodactyl Wings: The character's body is gaunt with an elongated head. Enormous wings sprout from beneath the arms (wingspan equals three times **Morphus'** height). Although not able to fly, the **'Dactyl** can make exceptionally long jumps (up to 100ft long, not up), and, with enough altitude, they can glide at up to 85mph. There is a 60% chance that the Nightbane's feet will be prehensile, they can grasp items and carry them, but have trouble with any delicate skills (-20%) and combat (-3 to strike, -5 to parry). Adds 4 to Horror Factor.

Weird Clothing Table

This is a table I've made for those players out there who want their characters to look weird, but don't want a totally alien appearance. It may be thought of as an Alien Shape table if you're going strictly by the book. Nightbane showing these features may have been fond of certain articles of clothing and now find themselves permanently a part of it. On the other hand, it may represent an aspect of their personality or a great love or fear. All these clothes are actually a sort of second skin that has formed over the **Morphus** and, no matter how artificial they may look, are actually as much a part of them as their normal skin. The clothing does not alter the rest of their body or change their size or shape, it simply covers the body they've already got.

01-10 Old Favorite: This person has been permanently covered with their favorite article of clothing. This will most likely include a ratty old sweater, pair of jeans or shorts, an old pair of tennis shoes, and a nappy-looking hat. These clothes are almost always old and comfortable, but are not likely the kind of thing a person would wear out in public. Add 3D6 S.D.C. and 1 to P.E. This form grants no bonus to horror factor (they **don't** look alien or disgusting, just poorly dressed).

11-20 Disco Inferno: This **Morphus** looks like they've just walked out of a bad 70's movie. Guys will be decked out in a leisure suit, complete with bell-bottoms, ruffles, open chest, and gaudy chains. Girls will have a short dress in ugly, bright colors, as well as tacky jewelry. Both sexes will also have platform shoes and huge hair (a must). These characters will constantly be ready to dance and will often hum or even sing disco songs. Add 5D6 to **S.D.C.**, 1D4 to P.P. and P.E., and 1D6 to horror factor. (Just a suggestion, but this form can be incredibly nasty when combined with certain stigmata).

21-30 Classic Victorian Era: This is a time period spreading from early to late **1800's**, best characterized in England. The ladies of this period were expected to cover every part of their bodies below the neck and commonly wore elegant, high-necked dresses that spread out in long, full skirts reaching the floor, linen stockings, leather high-heeled boots or shoes, and elbow-length gloves. They usually wore expensive (or at least, expensive looking) jewelry. The gentlemen of the era wore tail-coats, ruffled shirts, pants reaching down to the knees, linen stockings reaching up to the knees, and buckle shoes. These Nightbane

tend to either be from that era, very patient and proper, or have a taste for the refined. Add 1D6 to M.E., 1 to M.A., and 1D4x10 to S.D.C. (from the heavy layers of clothing). Add 1D4 to horror factor.

31-40 Animal Costume: The Nightbane should roll on the Animal Form table and take the appropriate Humanoid Animal from the resulting animal, but with the following modifications. The form looks to be a costume, with seams, a zipper etc., but is actually the skin of the Nightbane. Add 2D6 S.D.C. but gains one less point of H.F. than normal for the animal form. The Nightbane may still choose Elite talents appropriate to the animal form he rolled. (Special thanks to Matthew Ignash for this one.)

41-50 Clown Suit: The Nightbane's **Morphus** appears like it's dressed in a clown outfit, although this outfit may not be removed. It may vary from relatively simple to the most outrageous outfit ever. Multi-colored polka dots or pin stripes adorn the outfit (the Nightbane's skin) and insure that the character will stick out in any crowd. The exact colors, as always, are up to player and GM, although cheerful Nightbane will have brighter colors than the dour and depressed. The clothes feel as if they are made of very starched cloth, and provide +4D6 S.D.C. +1 Horror Factor because of the other features of the Nightbane combined with the clown getup looks frightening. (Special thanks to Smitty for this one.)

51-60 Futuristic: The **Morphus** looks like something out of a cheap sci-fi movie. The clothing is most likely tight, shiny, and has rings at several points. Other interesting little additions that might be present are high-tech gizmos attached here and there (no real function, they just look cool), a colored visor across the eyes, or strange hair colors. Lasers and other light-based attacks do half damage, due to the reflective nature of the clothing. Add 4D6 to S.D.C. and 1D4 to horror factor. These characters can purchase any Elite talents requiring a Bio-Mechanical form.

61-70 Old Fogey: This is the **Morphus** of those Nightbane who are mentally **elderly**, or just have no taste. The shirt is wrinkled and faded, the belt is hiked up high, and the pants or skirt are a tacky color (most likely plaid), and starched. They will also be wearing flat loafers and knee-high socks and possibly bifocals or a hearing aid. Add 1D6 to I.Q. (older and wiser) and 2 to M.A. Increase S.D.C. by 10 and horror factor by 2 (mostly due to the shock of seeing an old man or woman in mortal combat).

71-80 Baby: For those Nightbane who are immature or just like to be pampered. This **'Bane** is dressed in a large, bulky diaper (cloth or disposable, player's choice) with a safety pin, a baby bonnet on the **head**, bib, pacifier hanging around the neck, and a pair of baby booty shoes. These Nightbane will prefer their meals pureed or out of a baby bottle and give off a constant aroma of baby powder or a dirty diaper. Add 2 to M.A., 1 to P.B., and 1D6 to crawling Spd. Add 5D6 to S.D.C. and 1D4 to Horror Factor (due mostly to the fact that enemies will be laughing their heads off).

81-90 Legitimate Businessman: Decked out in the classic outfits for the **1920's** gangster, these Nightbane are ready for anything the underworld may offer. The guys are dressed in a finely pressed, pinstripe suit and a fedora with the brim pulled down. Women, or Molls, are dressed in a halter top and tight, knee-length skirt (both are most likely pinstripe), fishnet stockings, **beret**, and possibly a single garter band. These Nightbane

receive +1 to M.A., 5D6 to S.D.C., +1D6 to their horror factor, and automatically receive W.P. **Sub-Machinegun** while in their **Morphus**.

91-100 Opposite Sex: The Morphus is dressed in clothes that are obviously meant for a member of the opposite sex. The Nightbane's true gender may be bluntly obvious (a dress and a five o'clock shadow, or a business suit being pressed out in the chest), or cleverly disguised, so they truly appear to be the opposite sex. Of course, their are no true changes to their physical body, it's all just cleverly hidden. Add 1D4 to M.A., 1D6 to either P.S. or P.P. (player's choice), 3D6 to S.D.C., and 1D4 (if character does not look like gender) or 1 (if they resemble the gender) to horror factor.

The Inlustris

A New Faction for Nightbane® — Optional —

By William R. Muench

*He could hear the click of heels on the pavement behind him. It was getting nearer. Perfect. Jericho increased his pace and heard his tail follow suit. He smiled a dark smile to himself. Ahead he could just barely make out the forms of his compatriots as they ducked between two cars. The trap was set. Jericho broke into a run and glanced back over his shoulder. The demon bitch was looking from side to side through its sunglasses, checking for witnesses. Its long red hair was plastered to its scalp from the persistent downpour but even that couldn't ruin its beauty. Jericho took a moment to laugh inwardly at the incongruity of the creature's appearance, that of a beautiful woman in her late twenties, and its nature. However, Jericho **didn't** have any more time. He heard a rustle of clothing and threw himself to the side just as the Dakini's five-inch claws flashed by. As he landed, Jericho's allies stepped out from their hiding places, silenced **sub-machineguns** flashing in the darkness. Dozens of bullets ripped through the creature's **Armani** suit and it finally fell to the ground, now a bloody pulp. Not saying a word, everyone turned and disappeared into the night as they went their separate ways.*

Origins

In 455 C.E., the Germanic tribes invaded the city of Rome and destroyed what was once the greatest city of its time. With this act the western world was plunged into the Dark Ages, a time of death and despair which would last for nearly a millenia.

The Teutonic hordes that sacked the city of Rome were more than simple barbarians. They were led by the chieftain Odoacer, a powerful Night Prince. In 476 C.E., a coalition of Germanic tribes deposed the young emperor Romulus Augustulus and elected Odoacer to rule in his stead. From there he was able to strengthen the fledgling Cult of Night and spread its influence throughout Europe. Within the next 100 years, Odoacer raised support from across the known world, from Egypt to Dacia to

Britannia. As time passed he used his magical and illusory abilities to change age and form, but retain his position of supremacy. In the year 612 C.E., Odoacer attempted to return the **Nightlords** to Earth. The world would have endured an eternal Night, one to last until the end of time, were it not for a group called the **Inlustris**.

Formed in 36 B.C.E., the Inlustris were at first a minor power. Shortly after the assassination of the would-be Emperor, Julius Caesar, powerful members of the supernatural community heard rumors that the assassination was orchestrated by Nightlord minions. In response, they organized a cabal of powerful sorcerers and psychics, refusing membership to all who were not human. Thus the Inlustris were born. They began a crusade to protect the human race from the supernatural elements of the Megaverse, particularly the Nightlords. During the days of the Roman Empire the Inlustris were not very successful due to the extravagant lifestyle of the Roman aristocracy. They believed that much of the Romans' famed ingenuity and wealth was derived from otherworldly sources in exchange for slave labor and worship (part of the origin of the "Mystery Cults" of ancient Rome). Although they believed this, they were unable to prove it. Regardless, the leaders of the Inlustris were unable to make inroads into the higher circles of Roman society. They fared no better with the lower classes. Only a few decades after their founding, the Inlustris were on the brink of collapse. Many members saw their quest as a fruitless one and had turned their backs on old compatriots. As the **Pax Romana** lengthened, the Inlustris continued in their decline. Near the end of the second century C.E. the Roman Empire began to crumble. Some modern scholars believe that the supernatural beings supposedly backing the empire slowly withdrew their support to other sections of the world such as Byzantium, the Far East, and Central America. As the empire slowly disintegrated, more and more second sons and disinherited daughters sought out the Inlustris as a way to power. By the time the military autocracy of the **Severi** emperors was established, the Inlustris had swollen to nearly twice their previous size and strength.

These new members brought new blood into the cabal and they once again began to energetically fight the Nightlord minions and the scattered Cult of Night wherever it was found. By the time the end of the Roman Empire drew near, the Inlustris were thousands strong, composed of some of the most powerful sorcerers and psychics of the time. When Odoacer assumed the throne of Rome, the Inlustris began a campaign to blunt his power. Performing a great ritual in the **Saharan** grasslands, the Inlustris transformed a pair of humans into magical beings, a fusion of man and magic. These beings, known as the **Uziel**, became the heart of the Inlustris power. Relatively unsuccessful until the year 612 C.E. due to being in their military infancy, a group of Uziel nevertheless stopped Odoacer shortly before he was able to crack the **Mirrorwall** and release his masters. However, their success was not total. Unknown to the Inlustris, a lone Nightlord named Yasuva slipped through and single-handedly brought about the first Dark Age. He encouraged mobs and influenced some of the most despotic rulers of the millenia. While creating this chaos, however, he remained in the background, biding his time.

Following the defeat of Odoacer at the hands of the Uziel, the Inlustris became spectators once more. They only acted when it was required, preferring to remain secluded in their Aerie, high

in the Swiss Alps. Throughout the centuries the **Inlustris** have protected the Earth from various menaces, including a master vampire during the Crusades and a **Mindolar** who entrenched himself in Europe during the **mid-20th** century. It wasn't until 1996 C.E. that they once again appeared in force. The lone Nightlord, Lord Yasuva, had resurfaced.

The Inlustris, Before Dark

A few years prior to Dark Day, Lord Moloch regained contact with Lord Yasuva. Before this no one was sure what had happened to Yasuva. But with a Nightlord already on Earth, **Moloch's** plans began to take on new shape. He sent Yasuva an artifact which would create a hole in the **Mirrorwall**, with the possibility of shattering it altogether. If they could break a hole in the Mirrorwall rather than shattering it, they would have access to all of Earth. If, however, the Mirrorwall was shattered and all the various realities slid together the Nightlords would have a much greater task before them. They felt that the risk was worth the potential gains.

Over the next few years, Lord Yasuva began gathering support among the supernatural community. He had gathered to his cause a variety of supernatural creatures, including a handful of Necrophim, independent vampires, and a small Cult of Night. Just prior to Dark Day, he gathered his forces in Romania at the sight of Trajan's Column. This column was erected by Emperor Trajan of Rome in 113 C.E. to commemorate his victory over the Dacians. Unknown to Emperor Trajan, it was also located on the site of a powerful ley line nexus. The column was to serve as a mystic lightning rod, focusing the power of Lord Yasuva and the artifact, creating a hole in the **Mirrorwall**. Luckily for the people of Romania and the world, the Inlustris were able to destroy Lord Yasuva before he completed his ritual, toppling the column in the process. Although they took extremely heavy losses in the battle, they recovered the artifact. They spirited it away to their Aerie in the Alps and since then have guarded it diligently. They aren't totally sure what the artifact does, but they recognize power when they see it. Because the ritual was prevented, the Nightlords were forced to use their secondary plan. Rather than uniting the two dimensions, they conducted massive rituals in order to pull the Nightlands closer to Earth. Since then, the Nightlords have ignored the Eastern European country, focusing their attention elsewhere.

The Nightlord Invasion

When the Nightlords invaded on March 6, 2000 C.E. they knew very little about the Inlustris. They were not sure who had destroyed Lord Yasuva, only that a new (to them) player had entered the arena. The Nightlords did not connect the Shining Legion (see below) with the relatively untrained band of **Uziel** who had fought Odoacer nearly 1500 years earlier. Because of this **unfamiliarity**, the Inlustris escaped the invasion relatively unscathed. They lost some of their far-flung operatives and a few others were killed during the rioting, but on the whole they weathered the storm well. One thing that the invasion did was to reaffirm their mission with some of the younger members, who would soon become the hope of the faction.

The Shining Legion took the heaviest losses, losing over 500 Uziel and over 250 humans. Although this loss was severe, the Legion has persevered and is quickly on its way to recovery.

The Inlustris, After Dark

Since Dark Day, the ranks of the Inlustris have swelled once more. Although infused with new recruits from the sorcerous populace, they are still a minor power. Immediately following the destruction of Lord Yasuva, a new figure came to prominence within the organization. Daphne Covenant, known as The Siren, is a Uziel born to normal, albeit sorcerous, human parents. She is the first Uziel ever born whose parents weren't Uziel. No one knows how she became a Uziel, but regardless of her parentage, she is the most powerful of the Uziel ever to be born. For along with her natural powers, she is a Psiren. She progressed quickly through the ranks of the Inlustris, riding a wave of success as she won battle after battle against the Nightlords. She now leads the Helix, the ruling body of the Inlustris.

Throughout the centuries the Inlustris has remained a purely human organization and this has not changed. They are dedicated to preserving the purity of humankind. Although not evil, they are human supremacists. This has led to scuffles with the Guardians, whom they see as **less-than-human** pawns, and, more rarely, with Nightbane. Most Inlustris are unsure how to treat the Nightbane, for they are at least partially human. This has led to a cool relationship with most of the Nightbane factions.

The Helix

The Helix is the ruling body of the Inlustris, a cabal of powerful and intelligent beings, both mundane human and mighty Uziel. The original helix was comprised of eight sorcerers and psychics, Roman Senators all. In the beginning years, one had to be a Senator to sit on the Helix. These days a being is judged by their accomplishments and deeds rather than their pedigree. The Helix is made up of eight officers, each of which fulfills a specific role. All officers are determined by election, including the **Princeps-Ell**. Elections are held every three years, except in the case of the Princeps-Ell, which elections are held for every year. Currently, the offices are as follows:

Princeps-Ell: The person who fills this position is the overall ruler of the Aerie and the Inlustris, effectively a monarch. Currently held by Daphne Covenant, a 7th level Sensitive Uziel / Psiren hybrid.

Imperator-Ell: The leader of the Shining Legion, the military arm of the Inlustris, which combines the Uziel along with ranks of sorcerers and psychics. Currently occupied by Nicodemus Valkier, a 9th level Psychokinetic Uziel.

Magister-Ell: The person responsible for teaching all of the youth living in the Aerie. Currently occupied by a 14th level Genius known only as **Armande**. **Armande** has held this position for nearly 50 years.

Magus-Ell: The representative of the magic users living in the Aerie. A role currently fulfilled by Angela Knight, an 8th level Mystic.

Animus-Ell: The representative of the psychics living in the Aerie (not including the Uziel). The current representative is Psyche Rake, a 7th level Psiren.

Uziel-Ell: Like above, the representative of the Uziel population living in the Aerie. A position currently held by the elderly Simon Lucius, a 15th level Healer Uziel.

Scriptor-Ell: The head historian and librarian of the Aerie. This person keeps track of all records relating to the Aerie, from

recording births and deaths to keeping the library in order. Currently filled by James Lector, a 6th level Acolyte.

Custos-EH: The butler of the Aerie. The Custos-EH keeps track of all food supplies and mundane work required to keep the Aerie livable. The current Custos-EH is Peter Hayden, one of the few mundane humans in residence at the Aerie. He is equivalent to a 10th level Acolyte.

The Shining Legion

The Shining Legion is the military arm of the Inlustris. The Legion is comprised of ranks of sorcerers, psychics, and at its heart, the Uziel. Due to the small numbers of the Inlustris and their supernatural aspect, the Legion operates mostly with guerilla tactics. This includes espionage, sabotage, assassination of key Nightlord figures, raids, and even pitched battles which are kept out of the sight of mortals.

Currently, the Legion is comprised of roughly 2,500 soldiers, or about two-thirds of the entire faction. This number includes those operatives in the field as well as those living in the Aerie. The breakdown is as follows:

- 20% Uziel (500)
- 27% Psychokinetics (135)
- 24% Pyrokinetics (120)
- 16% Telekinetics (80)
- 13% Healers (65)
- 11% Sensitives (55)
- 9% Hydrokinetics (45)
- 80% Humans (2,000)
- 28% Sorcerers (560)
- 17% Mind Masters (340)
- 16% Mystics (320)
- 15% Psirens (300)
- 8% Naturals/Geniuses (160)
- 7% Kinetics (140)
- 5% Astral Lords & Astral Mages (100)
- 3% Dream Makers & Dream Dancers (60)
- 1% Other (20)

The Aerie

High in the Swiss Alps lies an ancient castle surrounded by a powerful spell, millennia old. In the fourth century B.C.E., a rich Roman Senator commissioned the building of a fortified villa high in the Alps. After his death it sat unused until Hannibal's march through the Alps in 218 B.C.E. when a detachment of his army became lost and wintered in the castle. They were the last people to set foot in its halls until the cabal of the Inlustris occupied it in 76 C.E. When the sorcerers arrived they placed powerful wards which would protect them from discovery by the outside world. These wards function to this day, protecting the castle from all forms of detection, including satellite and normal human vision. Since the Inlustris arrived they have added on to the original structure, and now it resembles a small mountaintop city. The population breakdown is as follows:

Population: A current population of approximately 1,700 individuals

Racial Breakdown:

- 12% Uziel (200)
- 88% Human (1,500)

Transients: 3D6 transient agents at any given time

In the Aerie there are a variety of modern conveniences, from electricity to running water to Internet connections. These are provided by a variety of means, some magical, some technological. In addition, there is a drilling ground for the Legion, a three million volume library burrowed out of the mountainside, and living quarters for 4,000 inhabitants. The Aerie would be the perfect spot for humanoid characters to hole up and hide from the Nightlords, if they can find it.

In addition to the Aerie, the Inlustris have a variety of other outposts throughout the world. Here are some of the more prominent ones:

New York City, New York: The Inlustris established this outpost in the sewers of New York City a few years ago, soon after Dark Day. They felt that they needed to keep a closer eye on the denizens of New York City. This cell includes nearly 75 members of the Shining Legion.

Washington, D.C.: One of the oldest cells in North America, the Washington cell is nearly twenty-five years old. It was established during the Cold War in order to keep a better eye on the American government. After Dark Day it became an important listening post to keep tabs on the Carson administration.

London, England: Another cell is located in London in a sub-basement of the Tower of London. Unknown to many, the Tower sits upon a ley line nexus, which the sorcerers of London use to their advantage.

Beijing, China: In this country of billions, there is only a handful of Inlustris cells. The cell in Beijing is easily the largest, with over thirty operatives.

Devil's City, Nightlands: A small cell was recently established in Devil's City to keep an eye on Lilit's operations, as well as those of the Demons working with her. Because this cell was established within the last few years, it is still small, numbering only a dozen operatives.

There are other cells scattered throughout the world. A cell can be found in most major European cities and about one third of major North American cities. However, most of these cities only have small cells of ID6 agents.

The Uziel R.C.C.

In the year 502 CE, a group of powerful sorcerers performed a great ritual known as the Kiss. The ritual was so powerful that it drained the magic from nearly a third of Africa, resulting in the Sahara Desert. With the magic in the area seriously depleted, the grasslands have withered over time until only a desert remained, a desert that grows larger every year. The end result of this ritual was the race of beings known as the Uziel. Due to the heavy Christian influences of the time, the new beings were named after the angels who, according to the Bible, served as lieutenants in Heaven.

The Uziel are beings of great power. It is only their low numbers that have prevented them from becoming a major power in the world. When the Uziel battled Odoacer, they only numbered 56. Their number had risen to nearly one thousand before the battle with Lord Yasuva. Since then, however, their numbers have fallen once more. In order to gain strength, all Uziel are encouraged to procreate as often as possible, starting as early as age fourteen. However, their inbreeding has led to many aberrations and genetic flaws. Thankfully, magic has limited such oc-

currences. Such malformed babies are euthanized at birth because the **Uziel** community feels that such inferior children should not have to go through life with such limitations. However, the pure essences (P.P.E.) of the children are put to use in the forging of the **Brightblades**, the special weapons of the Uziel (see below). This, combined with their violent life, keeps the number of Uziel **low**.

Physically, the Uziel look virtually identical to normal humans. They all vary normally in height, weight, and hair and eye color. It should be noted that they are all Caucasians, due to the fact that the two original Uziel, Cornelia and Ennius, were Roman. Their only distinguishing mark is the tattoo of a pair of wings on their shoulder blades. They are not truly tattoos however since the Uziel are born with these markings (note that there is no known way to remove the markings). These wings are the reason they received the name Uziel. In addition, the coloring of the wing tattoos indicates their psionic abilities. Red for **Pyrokinetics**, blue for **Hydrokinetics**, green for **Psychokinetics**, black for **Telekinetics**, purple for Sensitives, and orange for Healers. The only Uziel to develop Psiren powers, Daphne Covenant, has silver and purple markings.

At will the Uziel are able to extend their wings, an awe-inspiring sight. When they undergo the transition, known as the **Mutari**, a variety of things happen. First, the wings on their back begin to glow brightly. This glow is visible even through thin clothing (**t-shirts**, blouses, etc). Next, their eyes begin to glow, the same color as their markings. Then a pair of wings made of crackling energy (the appropriate color, of course) explodes from their back and their bodies undergo some slight changes (note: This does not ruin their clothes). Their vision increases in acuity, their muscles increase in tensile strength, and their body becomes more streamlined (if they're overweight, they slim down, etc).

One fact of Uziel life is that all Uziel become soldiers in the Shining Legion. There are no exceptions based on physical ability because those Uziel who are less than perfect are killed as children. Those who do not want to be part of the Shining Legion based on their personal preference are "re-indoctrinated" with the Uziel belief system. This process consists of psychological and magical treatments, which continue until the Uziel gives in and joins the Shining Legion.

Natural Abilities of the Uziel

1. The **Mutari**: As stated above, the Uziel can undergo a change where wings extend from their back and their body changes slightly. This new form is known as the **Domino**. This change takes two attacks/actions (roughly six seconds). During the first action the **Uziel's** eyes and tattoos start to glow, and during the second their wings appear. While in their **Domino** form, the Uziel gains the following abilities: Fly for a number of hours equal to their P.E., eagle-like vision (can read a sign 2 miles (3.2 km) away), Nightvision with a range of 300 feet (91.4 meters). In addition, their regenerative powers increase to 4D6 H.P./S.D.C. per minute and their strength and endurance become supernatural.

2. **Superior Attributes**: When in **Domino** form the **Uziel's** attributes increase slightly. Add +3 to M.A., and +6 to P.S., P.P., and P.E. In addition, they can fly at a speed of **2D4x10+40mph**. P.S. and P.E. are considered supernatural.

3. **Immunities**: The Uziel are immune to the vampire's slow kill bite while in either their natural form or in the **Domino**. They are also impervious to mundane disease (non-magical).

4. **Psionic Powers**: Among the major powers of the Uziel are their specialized psychic abilities. There are six divisions of Uziel as explained below. The training a Uziel receives is also dependent upon their powers. For example, Sensitives are usually scouts or leaders. Healers are the medics, and the various **'Kinetics** are front-line soldiers. Because they are all soldiers, their powers have been optimized to hone their combat abilities. Thus they are able to use their powers more efficiently than most psychics. Note that Uziel cannot gain any more psychic **powers!** It should also be noted that Daphne Covenant, The Siren (see below), is unique and falls outside these categorizations.

Pyrokinetics: The **Pyrokinetics** are the red-tattooed Uziel. They have mastery over the element of fire and as such, are useful against the tight ranks of the enemy Hounds. Note that the Nightlords are not impervious to **pyrokinetic** fire because it is of a psychic origin. Pyrokinetics gain the **Pyrokinesis** psionic power but all I.S.P. costs are reduced by half, rounding down.

Hydrokinetics: The Hydrokinetics are the blue-tattooed Uziel. They have mastery over the element of water and are deadly against vampires. Hydrokinetics gain the **Hydrokinesis** psionic power but all I.S.P. costs are reduced by half, rounding down.

Psychokinetics: Psychokinetics are a rarity and very few psychics who are not Uziel have been known to develop **psychokinetic** powers. Psychokinetics, sometimes called Psychos behind their backs, gain the Psychokinesis power with all I.S.P. costs reduced by half, rounding down. Psychokinesis is elaborated on below.

Psychokinesis

Range: Varies

Duration: Varies

I.S.P.: Varies

Psychokinetics are psychics who are more in tune with psychic energy, and this allows them to directly manipulate psychic energy in different ways.

1. **Detect Psionics**: Same as the psionic power but double the range.

2. **Psi-Storm**: The ability to release a storm of psychic energy that travels in a straight line to its target, damaging everything in its path. **Damage**: 4D6 S.D.C. plus 1D6 S.D.C. at levels 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15. **Range**: Can travel up to 100 feet (30.5 meters) plus 10 feet (3.04 meters) per every even level (2, 4, 6, etc.). The storm itself is 5 feet (1.5 meters), plus 1 foot (.3 meters) per additional level, wide. Thus at first level it affects a path 5 feet wide and a maximum of 100 feet long. **Duration**: Instant. **I.S.P.**: 40.

3. **Advanced Meditation**: Because Psychokinetics are more in tune with their I.S.P., they are able to achieve a deeper trance state and recover 8 I.S.P. per hour of meditation rather than the usual 6 I.S.P. per hour.

Telekinetics: The Telekinetics are the black-tattooed Uziel. Telekinetics, or "**TKs**" as they have come to be called, are able to affect matter by pure concentration. TKs get the Telekinesis psionic power but all I.S.P. costs are reduced by half, rounding down. Note: This is the *minor* psionic power, not Telekinesis: Super.

Sensitives: Sensitives are identified by their dark purple tattoos. Sensitives get the following powers at first level: Empathy, Object Read, Presence Sense, See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Dimensional Anomaly, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, and Telepathy. At level three they can choose either Astral Projection and Astral Navigation or **Dreamdance:** Minor. At level seven those who chose the Astral powers gain Astral Transference and those who chose Dreamdance: Minor get Dreamdance: Superior.

Healers: The Healer **Uziel** have orange tattoos and are trained in medicine. Healers gain the following powers at first level: Deaden Pain, Healing Touch, Increased Healing, and Induce Sleep. They then gain Psychic Diagnosis at level two, Psychic Purification at level three, and Psychic Surgery at level four.

The Uziel R.C.C.

Alignment: Any, but 80% are considered aberrant due to their use and support of the **Brightblades**. The rest are mostly good with a few evil members who do not care if people are hurt in their attempt to save humanity.

Awe Factor: The Uziel's awe factor only applies when their wings are extended. Then it is equal to one half their **P.B.** (round fractions up), +4. So an Uziel with a P.B. of 14 would have an Awe Factor of 11.

Average Size: Standard human, although they tend to be tall and slim (5 feet 8 inches average for females, 6 feet for males).

Weight: Varies, from 110-220lbs (49.5-99 kg) depending on size and gender.

Average Life Span: Uziel live for an average of 300 years, although some have been known to live up to 600 years.

Attributes (Persona): Roll attributes normally (3D6), these attributes are for the normal human form.

Attributes (Domino): The domino form of the Uziel is the supernatural, "angelic" form. When in the domino the Uziel has higher than normal physical attributes. See natural abilities, above.

Hit Points: P.E. +1D6 per level

S.D.C. (Persona): The persona is slightly more resilient a normal human. 15 plus skill bonuses.

S.D.C. (Domino): Add 2D6x10+30 to the persona's S.D.C.
P.P.E.: 1D6x10 due to their highly magical nature.

Natural Abilities: Heal at a rate of 4D6 H.P./S.D.C. per day. Resistant to cold due to superheated blood (takes 1/2 damage from cold based attacks) which allows them to survive in temperatures down to -25 degrees Fahrenheit (-32 degrees Celsius), their average body temperature is 125 degrees Fahrenheit (52 degrees Celsius).

Combat: All Uziel in their persona have two attacks per melee plus those gained from hand to hand training (same as normal humans). In their Domino the Uziel gains one additional attack per melee.

Damage: In their persona, by weapon or hand to hand damage only. In their domino, damage is as per supernatural strength.

Bonuses (Persona): +4 to save vs. horror factor, in addition to attribute and skill bonuses.

Bonuses (Domino): +4 to save vs. horror factor, +2 to save vs. possession & mind control. +4 to dodge while in flight. All are in addition to attribute and skill bonuses.

Magic Powers: None, Uziel cannot learn nor practice magic. All of their P.P.E. is inaccessible and locked up to provide the energy for their transformation.

Psionic Powers: Special, see natural abilities.

Vulnerabilities / Penalties: None

R.C.C. Skills: All Uziel are trained in the following skills from an early age.

Native Language & Literacy: Latin (98%)

Language & Literacy: Choose two (+20%)

Mathematics: Basic (+30%)

Computer Operation (+15%)

Lore: Nightlands (+10%)

Lore: Demons & Monsters (+10%)

Military Etiquette (+10%)

W.P. Sword

Hand to Hand: Expert

Additional training is determined by the Uziel's powers. All Uziel are divided into divisions as follows: legionnaires (*militis*, composed of the various 'kinetics), Scouts (*speculatoris*, comprised of the sensitive psychics), medics (*medici*, the healer psychics).

Legionnaires:

Intelligence

Wilderness Survival (+10%)

Strategy/Tactics (+10%)

Body Building

W.P. Sword: Gains a bonus of +2 to strike and parry with swords

W.P. Knife

W.P. Shield (found in Palladium FRP, 2nd Edition)

Hand to Hand: Expert is upgraded to Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

Scouts:

Intelligence (+20%)

Wilderness Survival (+15%)

Detect Ambush (+10%)

Detect Concealment (+10%)

Tracking (+20%)

Prowl (+15%), note that prowling is extremely hard in their Domino form; their wings make them very visible, -20% to prowl while in their Domino.

Land Navigation (+10%)

First Aid (+5%)

Medics:

Paramedic (+20%)

Holistic Medicine (+10%)

Toxicology (+5%)

Biology (+10%)

Chemistry (+10%)

Botany (+10%)

Identify Plants and Fruits (+15%)

R.C.C. Related Skills: Select four skills in addition to their Division skills from the following list. Also select two at levels 3 and 5, and 1 at levels 8, 12, and 15. All new skills start at level one proficiency. Note that most Uziel are hesitant to use technology extensively, although they do have the capabilities to learn about it.

Communications: Any

Domestic: Any (+10% to singing and play musical instrument)

Electrical: Electronics: Basic only
 Espionage: Any (+5%)
 Mechanical: Basic Mechanics only
 Medical: First Aid or Holistic Medicine only (+5%)
 Military: Any
 Physical: Any (+5% when applicable)
 Pilot: Civilian piloting skills only
 Pilot Related: None
 Rogue: Any
 Science: Any
 Technical: Any (+10%)
 Weapon Proficiencies: Any
 Wilderness: Any (+5%)

Secondary Skills: Uziel are also able to learn 8 secondary skills, limited as above.

Equipment: Uziel do not own much of their own because of their military lifestyle. Virtually all Uziel own a **Brightblade**, however (see below). In addition, they may own a few sets of clothing and personal items. Uziel who are posing as normal humans may have their own house, apartment, etc. and all other appropriate items. Uziel are also able to get most items they may need for an assignment upon request. These items include clothes, armor, backup weapons, and other mundane items. These items may be either modern or antique.

Money: Uziel have very little use for money unless they are stationed in the outside world. If they are, the Uziel will have the equivalent of **1D4x1000** American dollars available.

Experience: Use the Nightbane experience table.

The Psiren P.C.C.

"Beware the banshee, for when she wails, men die..."

Psirens are women gifted (or some might say, cursed) with a magical voice. The most famous of the Psirens are the Banshees (Bean Sidhe, literally "woman fairy") of Ireland and the Sirens of Greek myth. Banshees still exist to this day, but they are rare and often hide their powers. The Banshees are a portion of those Psirens with precognitive powers. They often see the death of others and wail at the visions. This has led to their being hunted, for many people have thought that they caused deaths rather than foretold them.

These women (and the extremely rare male) have the voices of goddesses (or gods). While their voices are beautiful, they are also extremely deadly. Psirens are able to do wondrous things with their voices, from mesmerizing people to destroying buildings. In ancient times, a person was able to neutralize their powers by simply plugging their ears. In post-Dark Day Earth, their abilities have increased to the point that they are a force to be feared, even by the minions of the **Nightlords**.

Although the Psirens are not a psychic discipline limited to the **Inlustris**, there is a large contingent of Psirens working with the Inlustris. Psirens are often sent out as agents because they are more difficult to detect than a supernatural creature such as the Uziel.

As a small side note, Psirens are also known to have a talent for spoken languages.

Psiren P.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses:

1. The Voice of the Psiren: The voice of the Psiren is capable of a variety of things. It can be used to destroy or to heal, to protect or to attack. The usual tactic of a Psiren is to begin singing and then simply change their Song to accomplish different things. They may sing the Song of Destruction, and then a short burst of the Song of Protection to ward off incoming gunfire, and then switch back to the Song of Destruction. Be aware however that a Psiren cannot undertake serious physical exertion and keep singing. This means that in order to defend themselves they usually use the Song of Protection. **GM Note:** You may wish to have Psirens roll against their Singing skill to use these Songs. At first level the Psiren knows all the songs except the Song of Insanity. The Psiren gains this song at level 5. See the section on Songs of the Psiren for more details.

2. Psionic Powers: In addition to their special abilities (see below) all Psirens can choose four powers from the sensitive or healing psionic categories. Psirens are considered Master psychics.

3. I.S.P.: M.E. attribute plus 3D6x10. Add 1D4+M.E. per level of experience. Psirens recover I.S.P. at the normal rate.

4. Bonuses: All Psirens are +3 to save vs. Dream Manipulation / Combat and +1 to save vs. possession and insanity.

The Psiren P.C.C.

Alignment: Any

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. and M.E. of 13 or higher.

Note: 90% of all Psirens are female. Males are also called Psirens.

Attribute Bonuses: +1D4 to M.A. and P.B.

There are two skill options for a Psiren character. The first is a Psiren who is not affiliated with the Inlustris and has had a normal education prior to developing her powers. For these characters, simply use the Basic Nightbane skill package found on page 89 of the *Nightbane* main book and add the skill of Singing (+25%). For Psirens trained by the Inlustris, use the following skill package.

PCC Skills:

Native Language & Literacy: Latin (98%)

Language & Literacy: Choose four (+30%)

Mathematics: Basic (+30%)

Sing (+40%)

Computer Operation (+15%)

Lore: **Nightlands** (+10%)

Lore: Demons & Monsters (+20%)

Military Etiquette (+5%)

W.P. Sword

Hand to Hand: Basic. Hand to Hand: Basic can be upgraded to Expert at the cost of 1 skill, or martial arts or assassin at the cost of 2 skills.

Other Skills: Select 10 other skills from the categories below.

These skills should reflect the position they have been trained for by the Inlustris, whether it be that of a scout, a warrior, an espionage agent, etc. Because of the wide range of training available, these categories are very broad. GM's, use your common sense.

Communications: Any (+10%)

Domestic: Any (+5%)
 Electrical: Any
 Espionage: Any
 Mechanical: Any
 Medical: First Aid and Holistic Medicine only
 Military: Any (+5%)
 Physical: Any except Acrobatics
 Pilot: Civilian vehicles only
 Pilot Related Skills: Navigation only
 Rogue: Any
 Science: Any
 Technical: Any (+10%, +20% to languages and literacy only)
 W.P.: Any
 Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to choose 4 secondary skills at level one. In addition, the character can select 1 skill at levels **3, 6, 9, 12** and 15.

Equipment: Varies with background, setting, and training. May have an old car or motorcycle.

Money: 1D10x100 American dollars in cash in addition to 4D6x1000 in various possessions.

Conversion Notes:

RIFTS®: The Song of Destruction can also do M.D.C. at the Psiren's discretion, but the I.S.P. cost is doubled. The Song of Protection provides an M.D.C. barrier, but the AR still applies as the M.D.C. is depleted.

Palladium Fantasy **RPG™:** No changes

Heroes **Unlimited™:** No changes

Psiren Experience Table:

10,000 - 2,500
2 2,501 - 5,000
3 5,001 - 10,000
4 10,001 - 20,000
5 20,001 - 30,000
6 30,001 - 50,000
7 50,001 - 80,000
8 80,001 - 120,000
9 120,001 - 170,000
10 170,001 - 225,000
11 225,001 - 275,000
12 275,001 - 350,000
13 350,001 - 420,000
14 420,001 - 520,000
15 520,001 - 700,000

The Songs of the Psiren

The Songs of the Psiren are very potent weapons against the living, and even the inanimate. When using the Songs, a few things should be noted:

1. Those who are deaf are only affected at half strength. So if the Song of Destruction would do 20 points of damage to a person, it would only do 10 points to a deaf or hearing impaired person (severely hearing impaired, if you can hear more than 25%, you take full damage).

2. Cybernetic sound filtration systems will not stop the Song of a Psiren. Amplified hearing will **DOUBLE** the effects (damage, duration, etc.). Artificial life forms (machine people, for example) are immune to the mind-affecting Songs. However, Songs like the Song of Destruction will still damage them as normal.

Song of Destruction

A loud, high-pitched Song. It sends out powerful sonic waves **that** disrupt matter that they come in **contact** with. As Psirens gain in experience, they are able to control this power better, until they are able to target single objects. Against living creatures this power is most likely to rupture blood vessels in the brain or head, and possibly rupture eardrums. Targets of this song lose 1/2 of their attacks per melee and their speed attribute is reduced by 50%. In addition, they are -4 to all combat actions and -50% to all skills due to the intense pain.

Damage: 3D6 + 1D6 per each even level (2, 4, 6, etc...) per action

Duration/I.S.P.: One melee action per **3 I.S.P.** spent

Range: 200' + (M.E.+50') per level

Area of Effect: Varies. At first level, the Psiren affects a 360-degree area. They cannot focus it any more than that. At second level, they can narrow the sonic waves to a 90 degree area in front of them (note that the Song is still heard by others, however they are not affected by the sonic waves). At third level, the waves can be narrowed to a 10 foot (3 meter) wide **'beam'**, and at fourth level the Psiren can affect a single, man-sized target. At fifth level, the control is refined to the point that they can affect a small, 6 inch (15 cm) object. Note that even if you are fifth level, you can still affect a 360-degree area.

Song of Healing

A soothing, quiet Song that is very calming. Those nearby (within 25 feet / 7.6 meters) will start to drift into a light trance unless they make a Saving Throw vs. 12 (mental endurance bonuses do apply). This is the most passive Song that the Psirens possess, and cannot be used during combat. Some say that this relaxing Song is one of the most beautiful things in the Megaverse (an awe factor may be applicable depending on the situation, consider it to have an awe factor of 17). While the Psiren is singing this Song she channels positive healing energy into her target, increasing their natural healing to incredible rates. While the target is healing, they are put in a deep trance. They will awaken 3D4 minutes after the Song is ended, or if they experience great pain (at least 2D6 S.D.C. damage). The Song can be restarted, uninterrupted, as long as the target does not awaken.

Healing Powers: The effectiveness of the song increases with the level of the Psiren. At first level, the target heals 1D6 per hour. At second level, the rate is increased to 1D6 per half hour. At fourth, 1D6 per 15 minutes. At sixth level, 1D6 per minute. At eighth, the target heals **1D6** per melee.

Duration/I.S.P.: Because this is such a quiet and relaxing Song, it relaxes the singer as well. They can maintain it for one hour per 10 I.S.P. spent. Note that the Psiren must take short breaks to drink water and eat if she is singing for a prolonged period of time. Also note that the Psiren regenerates I.S.P. while she is singing, albeit at half the normal rate. This song can only be maintained for a number of hours equal to the Psiren's M.E. If they wish to continue past their limit, they must roll against

their singing skill with cumulative penalties; -10% for the first hour, -20% for the second, -30% for the fourth, -60% for the fifth. It is impossible to continue for more than five hours past their limit.

Range: Maximum of 10 feet (3 meters), however if there is not physical contact, reduce the amount healed to 1D4 rather than 1D6.

I.S.P.: 10

Area of Effect: At first level, only a single person can be affected. However, at level 7, all the people in a 50 foot (15 meter) radius can be affected.

Song of Insanity

A truly deadly and cruel song, the Song of Insanity tears the target's mind to shreds, a process known as being "mind burned". It combines the Song of Destruction with the Song of Mesmerism to force the target to repress all of their memories (this is NOT possible with the Song of Mesmerism itself) and then turn the target's mind into jelly. The longer the target is exposed to this song, the more insane they become, until they are a gibbering and drooling lump of flesh. Note that this song is very rarely used by Psirens of a good alignment.

Effects: After the first 30 seconds, roll a Saving Throw vs. 16. If the target fails, the target's I.Q. and M.E. drop by two points and they have no attacks per melee. Roll once on the random insanity table. If they save, they are largely unaffected except for piercing headaches, which lead to penalties: -5 to all combat actions and their attacks per melee are reduced by half. Roll to save every 30 seconds. When either the I.Q. or M.E. are reduced to zero, the target(s) fall into a coma and require life-support. While the Psiren is singing, their target is -5 to all combat actions and their attacks per melee are reduced to one.

Duration/I.S.P.: Each 30 second period costs 30 I.S.P. at the beginning of the period (so if the Psiren sings for 40 seconds, it costs 60 I.S.P.). The Psiren can keep singing this Song for a number of 30 second periods equal to their mental endurance. If they attempt to sing past this limit, the song begins to affect them. Thirty seconds past the limit pressure builds in their head, right behind their eyes. After a minute, the pain increases until it feels like ice picks are being shoved into the person's skull. After a minute and a half, the ice picks are joined by liquid fire. After two minutes, the Psiren's I.Q. and M.E. attributes decrease by two points EACH per additional minute. These losses are permanent! The only thing that MIGHT be able to save their mind is a Restoration spell or the intervention of a god. Their brain is literally being burnt up! Each minute past their limit the Psiren must make a save vs. 13, +1 per minute past the first, including mental endurance bonuses, or stop singing due to the pain. So after the second minute, the Psiren must save vs. 14, and so on. If they consistently make the saves until their I.Q. and/or M.E. are reduced to zero, they fall into a coma and require life-support.

Range: 100 feet + M.E. feet per level (starting at level 1)

I.S.P.: 30

Area of Effect: At first level the Psiren cannot specify a target, rather they affect a radius equal to their range. At second level, they can effect everyone in a **90-degree** area to their front for a distance equal to their range. At third level, they can target a specific person within their range. Note that everyone will hear the Song, but the power will only be targeted against an area as noted above.

Saving Throw: Save at 16 or higher. Mental endurance bonuses are applicable.

Note: Because of the amount of time required for this song to be effective, it is generally not widely used in battle. This song is not gained until 5th level

Song of Mesmerism

The Psirens are known for their seductive voices, voices which men (and women) will die for. This is sort of a super-hypnotic suggestion. As long as the Psiren keeps singing, the target remains mesmerized. The only time they get a second save is if they are told to do something contrary to their alignment, like a principled person killing an innocent, etc.

Duration/I.S.P.: One melee per 5 I.S.P.

Range: 300 feet + M.E.x10 feet at levels 3, 6, 9, 12, 15

Area of Effect: At first level the Psiren cannot specify a target, rather they affect a radius equal to their range. At second level, they can effect everyone in a 90-degree area to their front for a distance equal to their range. At third level, they can target a specific person. Note that everyone will hear the Song, but the power will only be targeted against an area as noted above.

Saving Throw: Save at a 14 or higher. Mental endurance bonuses are applicable.

Song of Protection

A vaguely soothing, persistent Song, mostly composed of the lower notes of the **Psiren's** particular octaves. This Song forms a protective shield composed of psychic energy. The shield forms a strong barrier against all physical, energy, and magical energy attacks (fire balls, lightning, etc.). Both sonic attacks and gases will pass through the shield, though.

AR: Not applicable when the S.D.C. reservoir is full, but gets an AR of 18 when the reservoir is depleted 50%. Reduce that again to 15 when 75% of the S.D.C. reservoir is gone.

S.D.C. Reservoir: Mental Endurance x10 + (Mental Endurance + 10) per additional level. This S.D.C. regenerates at a rate equal to the **character's** Mental Endurance per half hour.

Duration/I.S.P.: The shield is created by spending 20 I.S.P. and will last as long as the S.D.C. reservoir holds out or as long as the Psiren sings. The Psiren can sing for three times their Mental Endurance in minutes. The S.D.C. is an indicator of the mental strength of the Psiren. As the S.D.C. is depleted, the Psiren's control begins to waver (see AR, above). When all of the S.D.C. is depleted, the Psiren is stunned for 1D4 melees.

Range: 100 feet + M.E. feet per level (starting at level 1)

Area of Effect: At first level the Psiren can only create a **two-dimensional** protective screen 10 feet (3 meters) tall and 10 feet (3 meters) wide. This screen must be within the line of sight of the Psiren. At second level the Psiren is able to create a protective bubble surrounding the Psiren for a 15 foot (4.6 meter) radius (cannot be created around someone else, unless the Psiren is also inside the bubble). At third level, the Psiren can make temporary shields which are used to parry attacks. They simply snap up to block an attack and then disappear. Note that these ARE automatic parries. When parrying using these shields, roll for damage as usual and take it off of the S.D.C. reservoir. This S.D.C. cannot be used to create shields until it regenerates. At fourth level, the Psiren can create protective bubbles around other people, as long as the targets are within their line of sight.

Song of Sleep

The Song of sleep is similar to a psychic lullaby. This is the only Song which the Psiren does not need to continue singing in order for its effects to be felt. When the Psiren begins singing **his/her target(s)** begin to feel drowsy (-5 on initiative, -3 to strike, parry, and dodge and they will be somewhat disoriented and confused as their mind approaches the **Dreamstream**). At the end of one melee, they must make a save vs. psionics or fall into a deep slumber. Those that make their save must make another save at the end of the next melee. After the second save, if they remain awake they must make a save every melee in order to remain awake. During this entire time they remain drowsy (see penalties above).

Duration/I.S.P.: This song lasts for one minute per 10 I.S.P. spent. Once the Psiren stops singing, **his/her** victims will remain asleep for 3D6x10 minutes.

Range: 75 feet + (M.E.+25 feet) per additional level

Area of Effect: At first level the Psiren will affect a radius equal to their range. At second level, they can affect a **90-degree** area in front of them with a radius equal to their range. At fourth level, they can target a specific individual.

Characters of Note

The Siren, Daphne Covenant

In the late 1970s a young woman was born in the Swiss Alps to a pair of humans, **Kristopher** and Anastasia Covenant. **Kristopher** was a relatively powerful sorcerer and Anastasia was a powerful Psiren. To the surprise of her parents, Daphne was born with the tattoos of a **Uziel**. Furthermore, the tattoos were like nothing anyone had seen before. Daphne's tattoos were a normal purple but they had veins of silver running through them. Although the ruling council at the time was not sure what to make of Daphne, they knew that something was special about her. The Helix therefore took her education in hand and placed her directly under **Armande**, the **Magister-Ell**. Daphne was trained to be a leader of the next generation of **Inlustris**. To this end she was trained as a leader, a diplomat, and a warrior.

When Daphne entered her teenage years, her powers became evident. In addition to being a Sensitive Uziel, she had inherited the powers of a Psiren from her mother. This revelation allowed Armande to specialize her education even more and the end result was a natural leader who could relate to all portions of her subjects.

Daphne began her career at the age of 17. Given the command of a small squad of Uziel, she destroyed an Avatar of Lord Yasuva. This was only the beginning. As her successes mounted, she was given more and more responsibilities until now, at the age of 28, she leads the Helix.

Since the return of the **Nightlords**, Daphne has been dedicated to one thing: their destruction. The Siren has organized her forces and expanded their scope, establishing new bases throughout the world and expanding even into the Nightlands. Daphne



Covenant will not rest until the Nightlords are either expelled or obliterated.

Daphne Covenant - Uziel / Psiren Hybrid

Alignment: Scrupulous

Attributes: I.Q.: 19, M.E.: 22, M.A.: 17 (20), P.S.: 14 (20), P.P.: 20 (26), P.E.: 15 (21), P.B.: 21, Spd.: 16, 100mph flying in her Domino form. Note that attributes in parentheses refer to her Domino form.

Age: 28 **Height:** 5 feet 10 inches (1.7 meters) **Weight:** 125lbs. (56.25 kg)

S.D.C.: 47 (167)

HP.: 48

Awe Factor: None (14)

P.P.E.: 50

R.C.C.: Unique Uziel / Psiren Hybrid

Level of Experience: 7th

Natural Abilities: Heal at a rate of 4D6 H.P./S.D.C. per day.

Resistant to cold due to superheated blood (takes 1/2 damage from cold based attacks) which allows her to survive in temperatures down to -25 degrees Fahrenheit (-32 degrees Celsius); her average body temperature is 125 degrees Fahrenheit (52 degrees Celsius).

1. The **Mutari:** Daphne can transform from her persona (human form) into her Domino (supernatural aspect) in two attacks. While in her Domino form, the Uziel gains the following abilities: Fly for a number of hours equal to her P.E., eagle-like vision (can read a sign 2 miles (3.2 km) away), Nightvision with a range of 300 feet (91.4 meters). In addition, her regenerative powers increase to 4D6 H.P./S.D.C. per minute and her strength and endurance become supernatural.

2. **Immunities:** The Uziel are immune to the vampire's slow kill bite while in either their natural form or in the Domino. They are also impervious to mundane disease (non-magical).

Disposition: Daphne is a born leader who works her hardest to see the Nightlords destroyed. She, unlike some of the older generation, gets along well with non-humans such as Nightbane, **Wampyrs**, and the Guardians. However, in order to retain her position, she cannot associate with them or form alliances with such factions. She also deplores the killing of **newborns** who are less than perfect and has put an end to such practices, including the creation of the **Brightblades**. However, unknown to her, Brightblades are still being forged in limited quantities and imperfect babies often meet with unfortunate accidents. Daphne's driving force is the wish to defeat the Nightlords and, one day, integrate the **Inlustris** with the rest of human society. However, she does not know whether she has the life span of a Uziel or a normal human, and therefore she never wastes time.

Psionic Powers: Daphne is a Sensitive Uziel with the following powers: Empathy, Object Read, Presence Sense, See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Dimensional Anomaly, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Telepathy, **Dreamdance:** Minor and Dreamdance: Superior. In addition, as a Psiren she has all of the Songs and the psionic powers of bio-regeneration, healing touch, Clairvoyance, and Suggestion.

I.S.P.: 321

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

Attacks Per Melee: Five per melee in her persona, six per melee in her Domino

Damage: Persona: 1D4 for a punch, 1D8 for a kick, or by weapon. Domino: 1D6 on a restrained punch, 2D6 on a normal punch, or 4D6 for a power punch.

Bonuses (Persona): +4 to save vs. horror factor, **trust/intimidate** 45%, **charm/impress** 55%, +5 to strike, +6 to parry, and dodge, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with impact, critical strike on natural 18-20, paired weapons.

Bonuses (Domino): +4 to save vs. horror factor, +2 to save vs. possession & mind control, **trust/intimidate** 60%, +12% to save vs. **coma/death**, +3 to save vs. magic & poison, **charm/impress** 55%, +5 to damage, +8 to strike, +9 to parry and dodge, +13 to dodge while in flight, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with impact, critical strike on natural 18-20, paired weapons.

Vulnerabilities / Penalties: None

Skills of Note: Daphne knows the following languages (including literacy) at 98%: Latin, English, French, Greek, German, Spanish, Italian. In addition, she knows the following skills at 98%: sing, intelligence, military etiquette, mathematics: basic & advanced. She also knows the following skills at 85%: all lores, strategy/tactics, anthropology, archaeology, research, computer operation, W.P. sword, detect ambush, tracking, and wilderness survival.

Allies of Note: In addition to her private guard of twelve Uziel, Daphne counts among her allies Nicodemus **Valkier**, the **Imperator-Ell**, and the rest of the Helix. She also considers Jericho Cornelius a good friend and ally.

Minions: Everyone in the Inlustris

Weapons & Equipment: Due to her personal aversion to the Brightblades, Daphne carries an artifact saber into battle. Although not especially flexible in its use, the saber does do a great deal of damage (1D6x10 S.D.C.). Considered a minor artifact.

Money: Although she does not have a great deal of money she could call her own, Daphne has the resources of the Inlustris at hand which totals roughly 470 million dollars due to their centuries of existence.

The Ghost, Jericho Cornelius

Jericho Cornelius is a direct descendent of one of the founders of the Inlustris, Gaius Cornelius. Jericho grew up in the Aerie like all the other children of the Inlustris and discovered at an early age that he was fascinated with the ins and outs of espionage. He was fascinated by spy movies and novels. Therefore he turned all of his energy towards learning all he could about being a spook. Jericho would be at home in the Spook Squad, he probably would have been one of their top operatives. But instead he's the main gatherer of **HUMINT** (human intelligence) for the Inlustris. Currently Jericho is stationed in New York City as a high level secretary in the National Security Bureau.

Jericho Cornelius - Genius/Natural

Alignment: Aberrant, used to be scrupulous

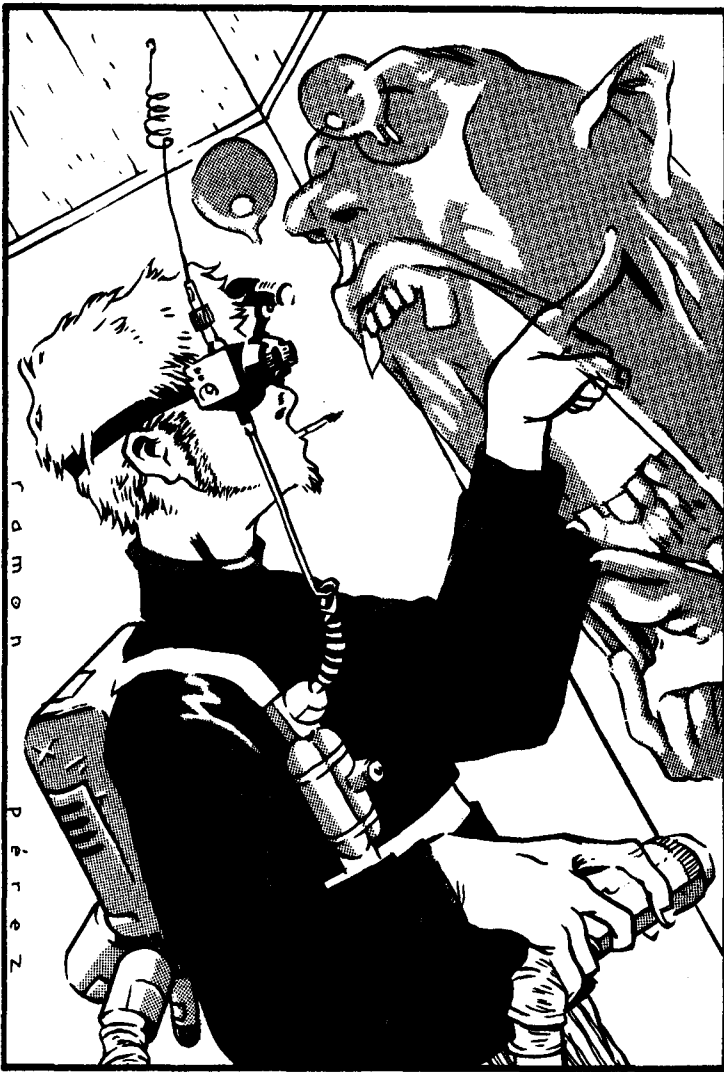
Attributes: I.Q.: 22, M.E.: 22, M.A.: 20, P.S.: 15, P.P.: 23, P.E.: 18, P.B.: 19, Spd.: 32

Age: 32 **Height:** 6 feet (1.8 meters) **Weight:** 165lbs. (74.25 kg)

S.D.C.: 74

HP.: 63

P.P.E.: 2



P.C.C.: Natural / Genius

Level of Experience: 10th

Natural Abilities: Exceptional Physical Prowess, Mental Genius

Disposition: Jericho is totally dedicated to destroying the Nightlords. He was once a better person but circumstances have driven him to do horrible things. Jericho is often the person who handles assassinations and other dirty work. He hopes to one day get rid of the Nightlords for good and then leave the Inlustris and have a family and a normal life.

Psionic Powers: Mind block, total recall

I.S.P.: 66

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand: Assassin

Attacks Per Melee: Seven attacks per **melee!**

Damage: By hand to hand or weapon

Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +6 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +4 to damage, +6 to roll with impact, +6 to pull punch, knock-out/stun on a natural 17-20, critical strike on a natural 19-20, +2 on perception rolls, +2 to save vs. dream manipulation/combat, +2 to save vs. illusions, +4 to save vs. psychic attack or insanity, **trust/intimidate** 60%, +6% to save vs. coma & death, +2 to save vs. magic/poison, **charm/impress** 45%.

Vulnerabilities / Penalties: None

Skills of Note: Languages & Literacy: English, German, Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, all at 98%. Fieldcraft (90%), Cryptography (90%), Radio: Basic & Scramblers (85%), Surveil-

lance Systems (90%), Disguise (98%), Escape Artist (90%), Intelligence (98%), Forgery (85%), Pick Locks (85%), Climbing (98%), Prowl (91%), Swimming (98%), Pilot: Automobile (76%), Computer Hacking (70%), Palming (80%), Lore: Nightlands (65%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (65%), W.P. Sword, W.P. Sub-Machinegun, W.P. Knife.

Allies of Note: The Inlustris, Daphne Covenant, and a few friends within the Spook Squad

Minions: A network of nearly 100 intelligence operatives

Weapons & Equipment: Jericho usually only carries what he needs for his current mission. This usually includes a small SMG kept in his briefcase, a pair of ceramic knives, and any important documents or papers. He always carries a cellular phone.

Money: Jericho usually has about \$500 on him and has access to a few million if given a couple of days.

The Brightblades

Although the Inlustris consider themselves the champions of good in the world, they have veins of darkness running through them. One of their greatest evils is the Brightblades. The name is an incongruity because the brightness of the blades is created with the captured P.P.E. of dying children. As explained above, due to the limited amount of Uziel a great deal of inbreeding has occurred. This leads to genetic flaws and birth defects. In order to "spare" their children a life of disability, the Inlustris euthanize their children. They then bind the children's dying P.P.E. to swords, the Brightblades. These magical swords are named after the children who died in their making and the dead are honored throughout time.

There is currently a schism in the Inlustris over whether to continue using the Brightblades. While the older generation still supports their use, the newer generation questions the ethical problems. How can an organization pretend to protect humanity when they themselves kill their children and turn them into weapons against the Dark? Does this make them no better than their enemy? While the overwhelming majority says that it does not, there is a growing faction led by Daphne Covenant who seeks to end this practice.

The Brightblades appear to be normal swords, usually of the broadsword variety. Although not nearly as powerful as the legendary Artifacts, they do have some redeeming qualities. When used by **non-Inlustris** or Uziel in their Persona, the sword appears to be a normal blade and does 2D6+3 S.D.C. However, when the Uziel are in their Domino they are able to bring the sword to life and turn it into a glowing blade of energy. The sword then does 5D6+6 S.D.C., quadruple damage to the Dark and those bonded with it, such as Moloch! In both forms the sword is indestructible and can transform itself into a small pendant so that it can be concealed (and it also is a good way to identify other Inlustris). All members of the Inlustris who wish a **Brightblade** are given one as supplies permit. Members of the Shining Legion have preference when handing out the Blades.

Some Final Notes Concerning the Inlustris

The Inlustris are a force dedicated to preserving humanity at any cost as long as it does not endanger human life. The endangerment of supernatural creatures, even benevolent creatures,

does not concern the majority of the **Inlustris** in the least. In this sense they are similar to the Coalition States from Rifts Earth. The **Inlustris** are, almost without exception, human supremacists. This uncompromising attitude is so ingrained that they, the **Uziel** in particular, are willing to lay down their lives to protect humans. The need to protect humans is often used to support the creation of the **Brightblades**, a practice considered to be utterly evil by all civilized people. The **Uziel** see it as a necessary sacrifice in order to protect humankind.

Characters who run across the **Inlustris** should believe that they truly do have the best interests of humanity at heart. The only reason they should think otherwise would be if they found out about the **Brightblades** or if they are inhuman themselves. An adventure or even a campaign could result if the characters stay with an **Inlustris** cell and then find out about the **Brightblades**. What should they do? If **they're** good characters, they should try to stop the manufacture of more **Brightblades** by whatever means necessary. But its possible that they have made friends within the **Inlustris**. Where do their loyalties lie?

Hook, Line, and Sinker™

Adventures for Nightbane®

By Aaron Oliver a.k.a. DreamFox

Outgunned

Hook: The player characters, probably first or second level, are assigned by their faction to guard an abandoned warehouse where they have hidden a mirror. They are to make sure no harm comes to the mirror and no one enters or exits the building until a recon (or search and destroy, or special ops) team of **Nightbane** emerges from the mirror. The **Nightlands** equivalent of the warehouse also has a mirror set up in it, and is the only planned escape route for this mission.

Line: While this seems like ordinary grunt work for entry-level characters, they may be in for the fight of their life. At the time when the **Nightlands** team is supposed to return through the mirror, it will turn black, ripple, and the bloody, badly beaten body of one of the team members will fall through. He (or she) will utter one word before dying and fading away: "ambushed..." With that, **NSB** agents (some **ashmedai**, some **doppelgangers**) will burst through the door and **Hounds** will begin to pour through the mirror.

Sinker: This should be pretty obvious. The player characters will have to escape, they are too badly outnumbered to stand and fight, and fighting their way out will also be very difficult. The recon team was somehow discovered by the **Nightlords** and tortured until they told everything. However, the **Nightlords** believe they are invading a major safe house, that is why they've sent such strong forces. Once they discover they've been duped, they'll march back home grumbling and aren't likely to give much of a chase to any who manage to escape from the initial assault. If you are trying this **H.L.S.** with a more experienced group, you might want to throw in a **Night Prince** or **Avatar** with the invasion force.

Power Struggle

Hook: The Player characters have traveled to a mid- to large-sized city where there have been an incredible amount of monster reports in the past few weeks. Since there is little activity in the area from any of the factions, no one is quite sure why so much force is being directed into the relatively small area.

Line: The city, as well as much of the surrounding suburbs, is being ripped apart in powerful, supernatural battles! A master vampire was recently created in the city and she, in turn, has begun creating an army of secondary vampires. This has not gone unnoticed by the **Avatar/Night Prince** assigned to control the area, and he has begun sending **Hounds**, **Hunters**, **Doppelgangers**, and **Ashmedai** to battle the growing vampire population. Any time two large groups of each side meet, several buildings wind up being damaged or destroyed, dozens of citizens are injured, and several are even killed. It is up to the player characters to figure out how to stop this.

Sinker: This master vampire has not wasted any time! In the three weeks since she gained her powers, she already has **2D6X10** secondary vampires serving her, plus an additional **1D4X10** wild vampires are running loose on the streets. A few **Wampyrs** have been created as well, but most have either been killed or are in hiding. The **Avatar/Night Prince** controlling the area is certainly not abiding to **Moloch's** rules of keeping their involvement in the world quiet, and if **Moloch** (or most any **Nightlord**) discovers what is happening (and they will within a matter of weeks), they will take over the extermination of the vampires. The player characters will want to make sure that does not happen, (that will most likely result in the entire city being destroyed in a heartless "terrorist attack"). Then again, they **don't** want to allow the vampires to gain too much power, either. This might require calling in some outside help and may even expand into an entire campaign.

Gifts From Strangers

Hook: The player characters have just completed a raid, assault, or similar activity near **Los Angeles** and are tired, injured, and low on ammo. They are camping out, either in the **Nightlands** or the wilderness of **Earth**, for one night before they start their trek home.

Line: As the characters are about to turn in for the night, they hear the sound of someone breathing and walking towards them. A man in a shabby cloak and carrying a long object wrapped in rags is **running/hobbling** towards them. He seems like he is running from something (GM's option on whether this guy is a Nightbane, wizard, psychic, supernatural creature, or just an ordinary human). He hands over his package to one member of the party and says "Here, take it, **quickly!**" He then turns and runs into the bushes/rocky **outcropping/cave**. Try as they might, the characters can't find him again. Removing the dirty, old rags, they discover a rod, about two or three feet (.5 to 1 meter) long, that looks like it's made from pure gold.

Within twenty minutes of the strange man's disappearance, a group of **Hounds/Hunters** (whichever your players hate more) comes along, apparently following him, but as soon as they see the player characters, they attack. One of the characters picks up the rod and uses it as a makeshift weapon. They swing it at the nearest enemy. Hit it or not, the **Hound/Hunter** collapses into a pile of parts, like a suit of armor with no one in it. If they try it again, the same thing will happen. In addition, whoever is holding the rod will not be directly attacked by any of the **minions!** This is definitely a hot **find!**

Sinker: The rod is actually nothing more than an antenna, and a trick of Lady Lilith. She can tell whenever the rod is pointed at a minion and broadcasts a command through the rod for the minion to die instantly. Moloch is aware of her plan and has ordered all Nightlords to have their Hounds and Hunters cooperate. In addition, all the Hounds, Hunters, **Dopplegangers**, Ashmedai, etc. have been ordered not to attack the rod's wielder unless directly ordered by Lilith, Moloch, or one of their Avatars.

The strange man who gave them the rod believed he was doing the right thing. He escaped from Lilith and stole the rod, desperate to find someone who could make better use of it. The reason the player characters cannot find him is because Lilith had a Hound waiting nearby to grab him and bring him back.

Lilith's plan is wickedly simple: if the factions believe they have an ultimate weapon against the minions, they'll get overly eager, especially the Resistance or the Nocturnes. They may rush plans for a direct assault into the Nightlands and, as soon as that happens, they will discover that the rod no longer works, leading to major casualties for whichever faction is foolish enough to try. Any attempts to read the rod through magic or psionics will only reveal incredible power, equaling the power of a Nightlord (actually, the power is a Nightlord: Lilith), but not what it is or how to direct the energies.

Mmm Mmm Good...

Hook: A new food fad is sweeping the nation: Poppers, a ridiculously sweet toaster pastry. Everyone, from children to full-grown adults, loves the things and, more than likely, at least one member of the group has taken a liking to them.

Line: One of the player characters or their close friends is at home, trying to relax. They've tossed a Popper into the toaster and flipped on the television when they hear an explosion from the kitchen. They rush back to discover the toaster has exploded and where it used to be now stands a hideous, two-foot, impish creature. It will put up some fight, but even a lone character

shouldn't have too much trouble handling it. What they don't realize is that this is going on all over town and, within a matter of weeks, will happen all over the country.

Sinker: The Nightlords are equally confused about the exploding toasters and the appearance of these strange little creatures. In truth, it is not their doing, but the work of a particularly nasty group of demons. The Poppers are actually eggs of a special species of **demonling** that hatch when exposed to a heat source (like say, a toaster). They started the Poppers company as a means of spreading the eggs across the country to cause mass panic and destruction, but are not particularly interested in conquering anything currently, just raising a little Hell.

The first few shipments of Poppers were actually real food, not the eggs. That way they could spread their popularity without raising suspicion. Now that they've established a strong foothold in the market, they're just about ready to ship out the demon-egg Poppers. The only thing left to do is test the eggs to make sure they'll work properly, which is why the **character's** toaster exploded, along with many others around the relatively small town.

GM's, feel free to design your own demonling, or use one of those from the Nightlands **sourcebook**. I recommend something that isn't too bad against player characters, especially one-on-one, but in large numbers, or against normal humans, they're a nightmare. Probably something with teeth and claws and three or four attacks per melee.

Under the Weather

Note: this HLS will also work well with **Beyond the Supernatural**.

Hook: The player characters, for some reason or another, are at an old-fashioned circus. The attractions include the Snake Lady, the Tattooed Man, the Fat Lady, a variety of sideshow freaks (including some **Nightbane?**), and even a Gypsy **Fortune-Teller**.

Line: While looking around, one of the party offends the Gypsy somehow. The enraged old **man/woman** points a finger at their head, mumbles a few words in some unknown dialect, and then walks away without saying another word. Shortly thereafter, the circus is besieged by some supernatural evil (Nightlord minions, vampires, demons, take your pick). The characters fight their way to safety, but something is wrong with the one who offended the gypsy; they aren't **healing!**

Sinker: The gypsy has cursed the character by negating any and all healing abilities, even supernatural ones. In addition to this, they are not regaining their **I.S.P./P.P.E.** once it is spent. Any sorcerers or mystics in the group will recognize that the character is, indeed, cursed, but the exact method is so ancient and forgotten, they will have no idea what to do about it. To make matters worse, everyone in the circus scattered during the attack, so tracking down any individual will be difficult. Now the characters must find the gypsy and plead with **him/her** to remove the curse. Once the curse is removed, all lost **S.D.C.**, hit points, **I.S.P.**, and **P.P.E.** are regained normally.

If you wish to extend the adventure out longer, you may arrange it so that the gypsy wants a favor done, or wants proof that the character is true and valiant enough to be saved. They may have to retrieve rare spell components from the Nightlands, save



the life of one or more of the other circus members captured in the attack, or defeat a powerful enemy, all while under the magic's effects.

Chasing Shadows

Hook: Somewhere in a fairly large city at night. The player characters are out for one reason or another, most likely patrolling for supernatural menaces.

Line: The night seems exceptionally slow, and the characters are on the verge of calling it quits and getting to bed early tonight, when one (preferably the character with Premonition or Sixth Sense) receives a sudden urge to duck. They drop to the ground as a shadow passes where they used to be and smashes into the brick wall next to them. If they manage to see anything, it is only a shadow (not a shadowy figure, mind you, but a shadow) running back into the darkness. This will continue throughout the night. Characters with danger-sensing abilities will constantly be shouting "Duck!" at their friends (be fair, at

least give them a dodge roll), and still nothing is seen but a shadow. Are they worried yet?

Sinker: The trouble is coming from a local cult (Shadow Cultists or something new). They have discovered a much more potent version of the Shadow Meld spell which actually transforms the person into a shadow, (sort of like the Shadow Slide talent, but with same duration as Shadow Meld, and the person cannot be harmed by physical attacks while in shadow form, but can still attack normally; costs 17 P.P.E. to cast). They are using it, along with other spells like Superhuman Strength and Energy Bolt to wipe out their enemies without being seen or heard. There are only about five spell-casters (fourth or fifth level) running around doing the dirty work, but if they get annoyed, they can cast their spells on normal cultists to transform them into shadows during a fight.

Of course, there are several questions left unanswered. First; where did they get the spell from and does anyone else know it? Why are the cultists going after the Player characters (if they are Shadow Cultists, the answer should be **obvious**)? Could any magic users learn this Improved Shadow Meld?

Watch the Skies

Hook: The sun has set, the air is quiet, and the Nightlords are apparently taking a night off. To put it bluntly: it's the perfect night to just kick back and relax for once. And our player characters are doing just that.

Line: In the wee hours of the morning, they are disturbed from whatever activities they've found to occupy their time by the sound of a nearby explosion and a bright flash of light. They rush to investigate to find a large crater (a good 20ft/6.7m) in the ground. In the hole, surrounded by twisted shards of metal, is a pale, thin humanoid figure with a large head and two large, black eyes. Any of the characters who frequent shows like "Unsolved Mysteries" or "The X-Files" will think it's a little too familiar to be coincidence.

The creature will regain consciousness in a few minutes, despite looking almost near-death. He speaks English, but his voice sounds strange and hollow, and he speaks with a strange lisp. It's apparent that he's taken a pretty bad blow to the head, and cannot remember who he is or where he came from. He will naturally be afraid of anyone who approaches him at first, but may soon warm up to some of the characters who show some kindness. **However**, there will be little time for conversation, as news reporters and police arrive within minutes after the characters. For the next several days, the alien, as well as anyone aiding it, will be relentlessly tracked by news hounds and the N.S.B.

Sinker: The player characters will have nothing to worry about as soon as they can fix one, little problem: get their **ET's** memory back. The truth is, the little alien isn't from another planet at all. It seems that while Ray Psykes was driving along a small country road, his car was struck by a falling meteor. The explosion tore his vehicle to shreds and the pain caused the young Nightbane to undergo his becoming, but not before sustaining a concussion that wiped away a good portion of his memory. Psykes was a fan of science fiction and his **Morphus** became almost identical to those images of aliens on TV. The concussion, however, also caused an unexplainable damage to his brain that fails to register him as a Nightbane to others of his

kind or to psychics, although he still has a supernatural scent for Hounds to track. The N.S.B. isn't sure what the creature is, but if he is an alien, he'll prove invaluable for advancing technology. If he's a Nightbane, then they can kill him when they find out so. Either way the **Nightlords** are **happy**.

Uncovering Dark Secrets

Hook: Recent rumors in the Nightbane underworld seem to imply that vampires are particularly interested in an extinct volcano near the Pacific coast of Washington state. Some scholars may recognize the volcano as the one many Native American myths speak of as the prison to an ancient, dark force. Those who investigate will notice a large amount of vampire activity around the volcano at night, and may discover hidden mining equipment.

Line: The vampires are indeed searching through the volcano. They are using heat-resisting spells in order to explore blazing-hot, **sulfurous** caverns near the pools of molten rock far inside the mountain's cone. They seem to have a little more knowledge of the Native American myths that makes them think they're true. Deep underground, chained to a wall of rock and basking in the light of the glowing magma, they find **it**...

Sinker: The ancient evil exists! It comes from a long time ago, several thousand years, and it has remained imprisoned, weakened by the light, since the last time the volcano erupted: 9,000 years ago. It is the ultimate in dark creatures: an evil Guardian. Whether this Guardian was created by the same force that created the more familiar forms, or if it is a twisted mockery of the defenders of light, it is still alive. The anti-Guardian is identical to its cousins, save that its powers and strengths are based on dark rather than light, and his are much stronger than an ordinary Guardian's. This being draws his strength from darkness the same way that a normal Guardian draws it from the light, and by being robbed of darkness for so long by the constant glow of the lava, has been left comatose, but that will change once he is released by the vampires. The Master vampire believes he can control the being's dark power, but until it re-awakens with nightfall, nothing can be said for sure.

Mark "The Bloody Knife" Sampson, NPC Killer

With accompanying Hook, Line & Sinkers®

By Shawn Merrow

A series of bloody murders plagued the city of Chicago during the summer of 1997. The killings shocked the public through their very violent nature. They perplexed the Police by the lack of useful evidence. The fear got worse as not a week went by without a new murder. More often than not it would be several murders. The killings seemed to be random, ranging from the poor to the very rich. Entire families were butchered. In one case a family of three was found chopped up and spread all over their living room floor. Their internal organs were found in a stew pot on the stove.

After the tenth killing a special task force was formed to look into the murders. The officer placed in charge was Detective

Foster. He had a reputation as the best homicide detective in the city. However, this case was confusing as hell to him and the search for clues was long as frustrating. The case was made harder since it could not be determined why the killer was killing the people he was. Also, it wasn't long before the media started calling him "**The Bloody Knife**" killer. This meant the Police had to catch a psychopath while surrounded by a massive media circus. The first real clue did not pop up till after the eighteenth death. They were able to get a partial description of the killer leaving the scene of a crime.

Using this description they started going through the list of local murders and released mental patients. A match was found with a former mental patient by the name of Mark Sampson. He had received several years of counseling for extremely violent outbursts. This included the burning down of a neighbor's house, killing everyone inside, and the stabbing death of his little brother. A warrant was immediately put out for his arrest. He was tracked down in short time to a small apartment on the south side of Chicago. The arrest should have been a simple one but one of the arresting officers who had just lost a friend to the killer **went** out of control and put Mark in the hospital. Because of this and a lack of evidence the court ordered that Mark be released. Sadly the court wasn't allowed to consider the fact that no murders took place during the month Mark was in the hospital.

The deaths kept piling up month after month and the cops could not get an arrest. The media was practically demanding the head of Detective Foster be served up on a silver platter for his lack of success. Several times Foster thought he had Mark for sure but he would always slip away for one reason or another. This eventually drove Foster to alcoholism and a deep depression. During the summer of **1999** he was getting wasted in a bar after having looked at the one hundred and twenty-third murder by "**The Bloody Knife**". While he was at the bar Mark Sampson came walking in and made some smart mouth remarks to Foster when he saw him sitting there. That started a nasty verbal argument, which quickly escalated into a fight. How the fight ended was what really shocked the city. The patrons who were there recall Mark throwing the Detective to the ground and saying he was going to butcher his wife and kids and there was nothing he could do about it. What came next was even more surprising. Foster pulled his service pistol and killed Sampson in cold blood in front of a whole bar of witness. He then muttered "over my dead body" before passing out.

When he woke, Foster found himself in jail and up on charges of murder. It wasn't more than a few days after the killing when he started to suffer horrible nightmares. This quickly led to mental problems. This got even worse when his wife of twelve years divorced him. At that point his sanity snapped completely. His lawyer used an insanity plea, and was able to get him put into an institution rather than prison. The insanity was assumed to have been caused by the alcoholism and all the stress he had been under for the last few years.

It was actually something much worse. Foster had studied Mark Sampson for years and knew him better than his own parents. Two days after he killed Mark a new Persona was created in his Dream Pool. This new Persona was based on everything he knew about the real Mark, but worse. The new Mark started giving Foster terrible nightmares every night. Usually at least

once every night they would involve the slaughter of his ex-wife and son. By the time Dark Day came around Foster just sat in the corner and drooled all day. When Dark Day struck the massive Dream Storm it created blew open Foster's Dream Pool and released the Mark Sampson Persona. It then turned into a Living Nightmare.

The new Mark Sampson found himself able to travel freely through the Dreamstream and the real world. Being based only on what Detective Foster had known of him, the only thing he knew how to do was to kill people. He wasted no time before he started killing. When Foster, who had finally started recovering, heard about the new killings he committed suicide. Found next to his body was a note reading, "I killed the wrong man. Now I must die."

Killing Style: Mark prefers to kill his victims with knives. He rarely stabs a victim less than twenty times and likes to leave body parts lying around. Plus, he likes to taunt the police, and his victims, with messages written with blood. The pistol is just a backup in case the situation gets out of control.

Relations to Nighbane Factions: Lord Magog knows of him and has instructed the Chicago Police to ignore him. He figures there is no point in interfering with someone having so much fun and he likes all the fear and chaos Mark creates. The rest of the Factions would consider Mark a monster that needs to be destroyed.

Current Status: He still stalks the streets of Chicago, with occasional trips to other cities. He doesn't do much in the Dreamstream since he prefers to work in the real world. Though he will occasionally mess with someone's Dream Pool just for kicks.

Name: Mark "The Bloody Knife" Sampson

Alignment: Diabolic

S.D.C.: 228

Weight: 170 lbs. **Height:** 6 feet **Age:** 5 years as a Living Nightmare though he looks to be in his 30.

P.P.E.: 7

Horror Factor: 8 for people who don't know who he is. 12 for people who do.

Attributes: I.Q. 21, M.E. 18, M.A. 14, P.S. 26, P.P. 20, P.E. 18, P.B. 17 (can be altered by shape-shifting), Spd 24; all physical attributes are supernatural.

Description: Mark is a tall man of average build. He looks like your average American white male. He has dark brown hair and brown eyes. There are no major marks on his body except for a four inch long scar on the upper part of his right arm. For clothes he prefers to wear all black with trench coats being a favorite.

Disposition: The Human Mark Sampson was a very sadistic killer. The Living Nightmare version is even worse. Mark can think of nothing better to do than to kill. Though he doesn't kill randomly, instead he carefully chooses a target and plans out the attack. The planning of the attack rarely lasts more than one or two days. When the attack does happen it will be extremely violent and quick. He also loves to leave his victim horribly disfigured to create as much fear as possible.

Inanities: Obsessions: Death - He is obsessed with killing people. The more brutal the better.

Experience Level: 3rd level Living Nightmare

Magic Knowledge: None.

Natural Powers: Dream Travel, Dream Manipulation, Increase Attributes, Reshape Self. See Between the Shadows page 107-108 on how these powers work.

Psionic Powers: Bio-Manipulation, Empathic Transmission, Induce Pain, Suggestion

I.S.P.: 187

Combat Skills: Equivalent to Hand to Hand: Assassin

Attacks per Melee: 5

Damage: 2D6 S.D.C. on a Restrained Punch, 4D6 S.D.C. on a Full Strength Punch, 1D4x10 S.D.C. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). Also add +11 S.D.C. to all these attacks.

Bonuses: +5 to Strike, +3 to Dodge, +3 Parry, +3 to Roll with Fall, +5 to Pull Punch, +4 to Initiative, +3 to Saving Throw vs. Magic, +5 to Saving Throw vs. Psionics, +12 to Saving Throw vs. Horror Factor, +4 to Dream Combat, 35% Charm/Impress.

Weapon Proficiencies: W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Knife

Weapons & Equipment: He usually has several knives on him and a .45 ACP Model 15 General Officers pistol if he needs more firepower.

Skills of Note: Climbing 57%, Concealment 37%, Interrogation Techniques 57%, Language: American 67%, Literacy: American 47%, Pick Locks 47%, Pilot: Auto 77%, Prowl 42%, Radio: Basic 62%, Streetwise 37%

The Bloody Knife Killings HL&S

Hook: The players are in Chicago and hear of the brutal murders being committed by "The Bloody Knife" killer. If they look into it they will find that the Police are doing next to nothing to find the killer.

Line: For one reason or another the players come to the decision that they must stop the killings. If the players are good, they would do it just to stop the killings. Otherwise, have Mark kill someone associated with one of the players.

Sinker: Stopping Mark will not be an easy task. He is a powerful creature that can pop in and out of the Dreamstream at will. The players will get no help from the Police. The Nightlord controlled parts of the Police may even hinder the players since Lord Magog likes Mark.

Rooting out the Evil HL&S

Hook: The players hear of the killings and the fact the Police are doing nothing to stop them.

Line: When the players look into the Police department action. They will discover it is completely under the control of Lord Magog.

Sinker: If the players can get enough proof they may be able to prove to the public that the Police are corrupt. This could at least cause some setbacks in Lord Magog's plans.



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Beyond The Supernatural OCCs

The Bard PCC

By William Muench

Bard is a slang term for a person who has bent a portion of their psychic talents into the development of their artistic abilities. They are often accomplished painters, musicians, and writers who wander from city to city. In their travels they often learn a great deal and become capable of taking care of themselves.

The Bards can either be very outgoing people (often have the story-telling or musical abilities) or very rude (often the absorbed artist, they don't realize they're rude). Their clothing often makes some sort of statement about themselves and is relatively distinctive.

The Bard culture sprang up when thousands of members of a generation developed significant artistic talents and began to wander from city to city exploring the artistic world. They became performers, singing for a meal or being hired to paint a mural for a city.

The Bards are a class unto themselves, not extremely powerful but definitely interesting if played right. Some people who study psychic phenomena have said that they are simply a subcategory of Naturals and to an extent they're right. But the Bards don't care what they are, they're too busy enjoying their work.

Bard P.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses:

1. Psionic Powers: In addition to their special abilities (see below) all Bards can choose six powers from the lesser psionic categories and two from the Super category.

2. **ISP:** ME attribute plus 1D6x10. Add 2D6 per level of experience.

3. Special Abilities; Bards often channel their powers into 1D4+2 different mediums which they come to excel at. Each Bard has a favorite form however. Choose a favorite medium. This gets a bonus of +35%. The character's second favorite medium gets +30%, third gets +25%, fourth gets +20%, fifth gets +15%, and sixth gets +10%. These bonuses apply to all skills given by the specialties.

Different Mediums Include:

Musical Instrument: Any ONE instrument is played exceptionally well. Gets Play Musical Instrument.

Musical Composition: Can write songs very well and often rather quickly. Gets Musical Composition (25%+5% per level).

Poetry: Can write exceptional poetry in nearly any form from haiku to iambic pentameter. Gets Writing: Poetry.

Prose - Short Stories: Can write short stories in a few days that are of a superior quality. Gets Writing: Short Stories.

Prose - Novels: Can write novels in mere weeks (1D4+5) that are of a superior quality. Gets Writing: Novels.

Prose - Non-fiction: The Bard is very good at writing articles, reports, etc. Gets Writing: Non-Fiction.

Story-telling: A good story-teller can hold an audience rapt for hours at a time. This includes telling a story around a campfire in addition to in front of a group of people. Stories can be made up on the spot. Gets Storytelling (25%+5% per level).

Photography: The Bard is conversant with many different techniques relating to photography and can use most cameras easily and with little instruction. Gets Photography.

Dancing: The psychic energies of the individual have been focused into the art of dancing. The Bard has often studied 1D4 different styles of dancing (tap, ballet, ballroom, etc) and can learn new ones quickly. Gets Dancing.

Singing: The Bard has developed a beautiful voice and can often sing at least two different ranges (soprano, alto, tenor, bass, baritone, etc). Gets Sing.

Painting: The Bard often has a distinct style but is conversant in the use of all types of paints and techniques. Gets Art: Painting.

Drawing: Includes the use of pencils, pens, charcoal, etc. Gets Art: Drawing.

Sculpting: The Bard can create lifelike statues from a variety of materials. Gets Art: Sculpting.

Computer Graphics: The Bard has a superb understanding of the principles behind creating computer graphics and is familiar with a wide variety of programs for creating such graphics. Gets Computer Operations and Art.

Tumbler: A superb gymnast who has focused on their tumbling skills to the point where it's an art form. Gets Gymnastics or tumbling.

Martial Artist: Has studied martial arts extensively to the point that it's an art form. Gets 1 martial art form from Ninjas & Superspies or Mystic China. Counts as two mediums and in addition costs 2 secondary skills.

4. Bonuses: All Bards get +3 to save vs. Dream Manipulation / Combat and +1 to save vs. possession and insanity.

Alignment: Any

Attribute Requirements: IQ and ME of 13 or higher

PCC Skills:

Native Language and Literacy: 98%

Basic Mathematics: +30%

Streetwise: +10%

Pilot: Select 1

Domestic: Choose 2

Technical: Choose 2 Lores

WP: Select 2

Hand to Hand: Expert

Hand to hand: expert can be changed to martial arts at the cost of 1 other skill.

Other Skills: Select 5 other skills.

Communications: Any

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: None

Espionage: Any except sniper and tracking

Mechanical: Automotive only

Medical: First Aid and Holistic Medicine only

Military: None

Physical: Any (+5% when applicable)

Pilot: Boat, Motorcycle or Truck only

Pilot Related Skills: Navigation only

Rogue: Any

Science: Any

Technical: Any

WP: Any

Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to choose 3 secondary skills at level one. In addition, the character can select 1 skill at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

Equipment: Varies with background. Often has supplies suitable for their specialties (instruments, art supplies, camera, etc). May have an old car or motorcycle.

Money: 1D10x100 dollars in cash in addition to 1D6x1000 in various possessions.

Bard Experience Table:

- 1: 0,000 - 2,500
- 2: 2,501 - 5,000
- 3: 5,001 - 10,000
- 4: 1,0001- 20,000
- 5: 2,0001- 30,000
- 6: 3,0001- 50,000
- 7: 5,0001- 80,000
- 8: 8,0001- 120,000
- 9: 12,0001 - 170,000
- 10: 170,001 - 225,000
- 11: 225,001 - 275,000
- 12: 275,001 - 350,000
- 13: 350,001 - 420,000
- 14: 420,001 - 520,000
- 15: 520,001 - 700,000

The Cursed Psychic P.C.C.

By James Calder

Note: This character was designed with the first edition *Beyond the Supernatural* game in **mind.Game** Masters are, of course, free to develop this character with O.C.C. skills and O.C.C. related skills as necessary.

Sarah heard the front door close. She cringed underneath her covers as she realized what was going on. It was well after 3 in the morning and her father was drunk again. Hopefully, she would be spared his wrath tonight. Hopefully.

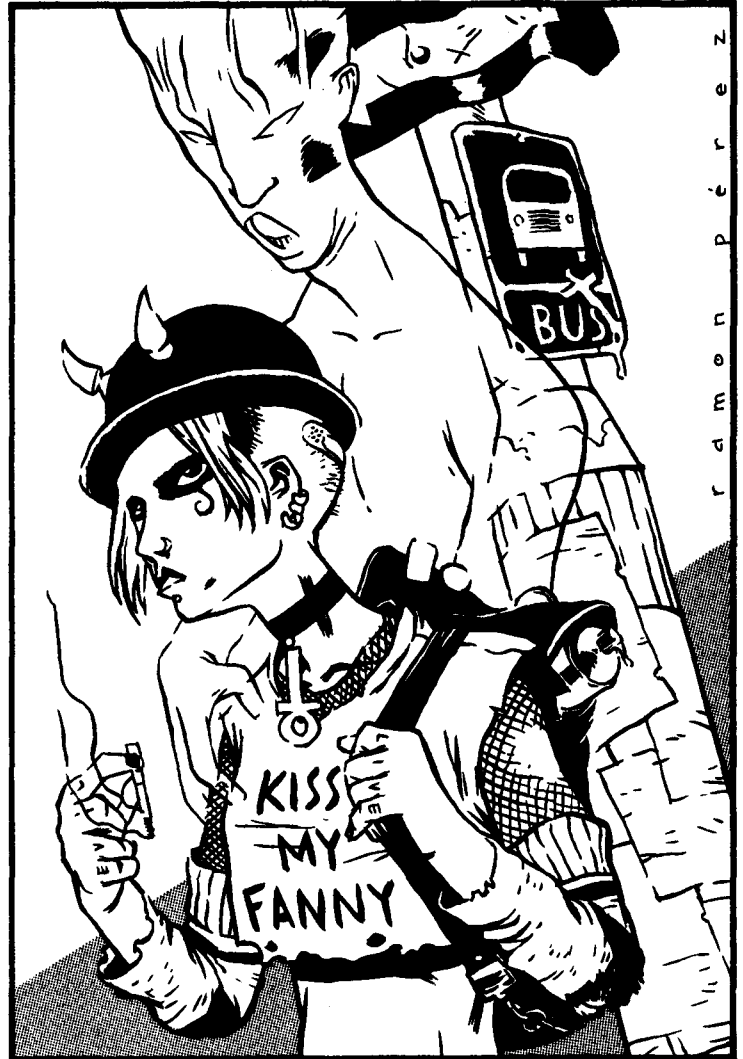
"SARAH!!! You left this doll on the steps again!"

Oh no!, she screamed in her head as her bedroom door flew open. "You need to be punished!"

No sooner had he said that, then a book flew off the shelf and struck Sarah's father square in the head.

"What the?!?" He said with muffled dismay. Another flew and another, till the bookshelf lay bare. Her father was now on the ground, a large wound on his head.

Just then, he felt a tap on his back. A doll, seemingly animated, says matter-of-factly, "You won't hurt Sarah anymore ... Daddy."



The cursed psychic is a person who is frequently forced to sense the supernatural **unwillingly**. Nightmares, sensings, and haunting visions persistently plague this character. **Whether** it is clairvoyance, **precognition**, or telepathy, the character feels that the powers she has been granted are more a curse than a blessing.

Sometimes the supernatural abilities manifest themselves randomly or when the character is in **danger**. **Either** this serves to help the character, or it helps her go insane.

A disadvantage of the cursed psychic is the apparent lack of control over her supernatural abilities. A spectacular advantage of this class is that since the character does not have control over the powers, she does not "register" as a psychic. P.P.E. vampires and See Aura will *not* reveal the cursed psychic as a psychic.

Determining P.P.E. Points

Figuring out the **character's** potential psychic energy points is quick and **simple**.The total P.P.E. is **1D8**.This is because the cursed psychic does not need the P.P.E. to select psychic abilities.

Determining Inner Strength Points (I.S.P.)

All psychic powers require the expenditure of psychic inner strength points (I.S.P.).With the case of the cursed psychic, there is no willing expenditure of I.S.P., but there is still the expenditure.

The cursed psychic's I.S.P. is 4D6 plus 10 per level of experience beginning with second level.

Determining Psychic Abilities

The cursed psychic's abilities are slightly different than other **psychics**.The character does not choose the abilities.Instead, the character randomly rolls the abilities and then determines how they manifest themselves.

1. Powers Manifest (roll percentile): 01-20 Randomly

The powers and abilities appear at seemingly random **times**.It is left to the **GM** when and if the abilities manifest themselves.

21-40 Subconsciously Controlled

The powers and abilities surface when the character needs them most.Not by choice, just when the subconscious needs **them**.These experiences may explain the guardian angel phenomenon.

41-60 In Times of Duress

The powers and abilities manifest when the character is under strong or severe **emotion**.For instance, when the character is severely frightened (maybe when the character fails a horror factor check), a cursed **telekinetic** will suddenly throw a rock at a fiend.

61-80 In Times of Danger

The powers and abilities manifest when the character or her compatriots are in danger.For instance, a cursed clairvoyant will sense an oncoming car when her dog steps out onto the road.

81-00 In Times of Relaxation

The powers and abilities manifest when the character is at rest, meditation, or sleep.Visions and/or nightmares plague this character constantly.

2. Powers

The player now decides which power the cursed psychic is "afflicted" **with**.The player may choose a power that is apropos to how the power manifests itself.For instance, if the power manifests whenever the character is at rest, the player may want an ability that conveys **information**.The player may select any physical, healing, or sensitive ability.

The power itself is a stronger version of the original ability (but at twice the cost).Double the duration, range, and any **effects**.The player may select one psychic ability at levels 1, 4, 7, 10, and 13.

3. I.S.P. Expenditure

Because the character has no choice in the execution of her abilities, I.S.P. is expended a little differently .The character can actually use their abilities into the negatives.If this occurs, after

the ability is used, the character drops into unconsciousness and will not awake until the I.S.P. level is brought back past 0.

4. Psychic Invisibility

The cursed psychic does not register as psychic.That means see aura will not reveal the cursed psychic as a psychic and P.P.E. vampires will not deem the character worthy to feed on.These characters are not psychic beacons.

Bonuses And Vulnerability

Special:Needs a 13 or higher to save vs. psychic attacks.

+2 to save vs. horror factor

+1 to save vs. possession

The character has a 5% chance of developing a random insanity (usually a phobia, or may develop alcoholism or drug addiction) each time the power manifests.Only one insanity will be developed in this way.

The character may or may not have control of the effects of her **abilities**.They could be beneficial or detrimental.

The Priest O.C.C.

By Chad Uskoski

Author's Note:For simplicity's sake, I'm mostly sticking to Roman Catholicism here, since Horror movies/stories seem to use the Roman Catholic Church more than any other.Different churches and religions can be substituted, hopefully with little alteration.

Also, I'm using the Palladium 2nd edition style setup for the O.C.C. **statistics**.Games that aren't using it will be soon enough.

Finally, it is not my intention to offend anyone or their religious **beliefs**.This is simply an attempt to fill a void that should be present in any modern horror role-playing game. Also note that some elements of realism were traded for **playability**.This isn't a completely accurate translation, but **it's** fairly close.

As long as the supernatural has roamed the earth, Priests have been there to fight it. Regardless of the religion the Priest may practice, there have always been the Keepers of the Faith who were ready, willing, and able to do battle with the demons that infest our world. The supernatural has slowly disappeared over the past five hundred years, and there hasn't been much call for the major faiths to ram wooden stakes into corpses or clear ghosts from haunted houses. However, the major religions still train (or at least have the instructions handy) their ministers, priests, and monks in the art and faith of fighting pure evil.

The main religion that still battles satanic forces in the world is the Roman Catholic Church. Other religions; including Judaism, Protestant Christians, Islam, and most Native **American/African** religions; are capable of performing the duties of demon hunters, it's just that the Roman Catholic Church are simply the most visible.

The main skill that Priests wield in battling evil, besides spreading the Word of God, is the Rite of Exorcism. The Roman Catholi6 Rite of Exorcism, regardless of what you may see in the movies, is a long and detailed ceremony. Some of the elements involved include asking the saints to pray for both the possessed and the exorcist, prayer to God, and reading select passages from the Gospels.

Also among the Priest's weapons is his own Faith. Faith is a powerful force. It is the unbending, unwavering belief in something. True Faith goes to the core of a person's personality and is evident in their every action. Faith can help someone in the most horrible of situations, against the most hideous of monsters. Almost regardless of how terrible the problem that the person faces, they will not be afraid because they know that their God (or gods) will help defend them. It is similar to the total belief that a Nega-Psychic has that the supernatural does not exist. Unlike that oddity of nature, though, the Priest can lose his Faith. Should something overwhelm his belief, his Faith may vanish along with the strength that comes with it.

The Church, as a whole, accepts in principle the existence of magic and the occult. They don't condone it, of course, just accept that it is a real force in the world. Most individuals, though, don't really believe its there because they don't see it every day. Werewolves aren't trying to rip their throats out and they don't see corpses rising from their graves, so it's not real to them. This can make getting help from the Church difficult, but not impossible.

The war against evil requires many allies, often forcing the Priest to fight alongside people and things he'd rather put a wooden stake through. But most Priests believe that desperate times call for desperate measures. A Priest *will* fight alongside magicians, psychics, and monsters of all types, provided that they are battling evil forces. While doing so, he'll also do everything in his power to convert his allies to his religion, trying to save their souls no matter how evil they may seem. He won't associate much with them, otherwise, and will always act in his God's name.

Priest O.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: IQ 11+, ME 13+

O.C.C. Abilities:

1. Faith:

A Priest, before he can be accepted into his Order, must prove his Faith before elder Priests. So, whatever happens later in life, it is assumed that a first level Priest will have this ability.

Faith is the driving force behind a Priest. It is the absolute, unshakable belief in one's God and the principles one stands for. Faith powers a Priest like P.P.E. does a Magician and I.S.P. does a Psychic, but it does not drain from them. It is more related to **one's** Mental Endurance than a measurable power. This provides a number of bonuses which increase every third level.

Losing Faith: It is possible for someone to lose their Faith. This occurs when something extraordinarily traumatic happens, such as a death in the family or the loss of a body part. A Priest who has lost his Faith cannot continue in his priestly duties, at least not at full effectiveness. When something traumatic occurs, such as a failed saving roll against **Insanity** or Trauma when something has happened that could shake one's Faith in God, roll against the character's ME. If the roll comes in under the ME, then the Priest retains his Faith. If not, then the Priest loses all Faith bonuses and can no longer use any of **his/her** O.C.C. Abilities.

Regaining Faith: Should a Priest lose his Faith, he will lose all bonuses from that ability. But not all is lost. A Priest can regain his Faith in one of two **ways**. The first, and most often used, is counseling with other Priests and believers combined with

prayer and intense study of one's religious texts. This process could take anywhere from a few months to a few years (4D6 months). Once regained, the Priest will once again have his Faith, but only at starting levels, which then rise as though the Priest had restarted at level one.

The other, and the far more dramatic one, is that the Priest simply goes on with his life until something truly special or unusual happens. Perhaps the Priest will witness a miracle, such as seeing a dying person recover from a terminal disease. Alternately, they may face a horror or series of events that instantly revives their belief in Good and Evil, such as a personal encounter with a demon or alien intelligence (evil creatures with a Horror Factor of 17 or higher). When this happens, the Priest's Faith flares back to life in a spectacular flash. For a 24 hour period, the Priest's Faith and O.C.C. abilities will return at whatever level it was lost, but at four times its original strength! After that period, the Faith returns to the level it was at when it was lost.

Bonuses:

+4 to Save vs. Psionics; + 1 at levels 3, 7, 12, and 15.

+4 to Save vs. Magic; + 1 at levels 3, 7, 12, and 15.

+1D4 to M.E.

+4 to Save vs. Horror Factor; + 1 at levels 3, 7, 12, and 15.

+1 to Exorcism Strength; + 1 at levels 3, 7, 12, and 15.

2. Exorcism

This is fundamentally identical to the spell of the same name. In this case, it can only be performed as a ritual, so a slow process is required.

The process itself is quite involved, first requiring the special permission of the Priest's Bishop. This will probably be rather tough to get, and will require solid evidence of possession. The next step is to make sure that the possessed person is really possessed, not just suffering from mental or physical illness. This can be accomplished by observing certain signs, such as speaking in a language that the possessed person doesn't know or if the possessed person knows things that they couldn't possibly have heard about or learned.

Once the Priest is sure that the person really has an evil spirit inside them, the real task begins. Ideally, this will take place on consecrated (Holy) ground. If not, it should be in the **person's** home or any place away from the public eye. First, the Priest must find out as much as possible about the possessing spirit, usually just by asking it questions. What kind of spirit is it? When did it first possess the victim? This kind of questioning will help the Priest learn what parts of the Rite will work best, as well as discover if there is some outside force holding the spirit inside the victim's body (spells, ancient scrolls, amulets, orders from a more powerful demon, and the like). The Rite can take months of prayer, fasting, and reading from select Scriptures. Once completed, the Priest must test the victim, to see if the spirit is still in there, hiding in some dark corner of the victim's psyche, or is fully exorcised. If the spirit is not gone, the process must be repeated until it is finally driven from the victim.

The driving force behind this rite is not P.P.E. or I.S.P., but the Priest's Faith. As such, it really costs nothing except time and effort.

Range: 30 feet (9.1 meters)

Requirements: Holy Water, a copy of the Bible, and a Crucifix for the victim to hold.

Duration: The ritual itself takes 1D6 weeks.

Its effects are instantaneous and last for a minimum of 6 months.

Saving Throw: 12 + Exorcism Strength (see Faith Bonuses)

P.P.E.: None

Conversion Notes: This concerns only the Roman Catholic Rite of Exorcism. When converting this to another religion, it is best to have some reliable source on exorcism for that particular religion. If none is available, use this with the appropriate changes in holy symbols.

3. Other Abilities:

Create Holy Water: A Priest is capable of blessing water. Besides the usual anti-vampire applications, holy water is needed in exorcisms and for blessing people and items. The amount blessed is irrelevant, but it is not possible to bless natural bodies of water. Requires one melee round to make the blessing and lasts until the holy water is mixed with normal water.

Blessing: A Priest can also bless people and objects. Blessed people are +2 vs. Psionics and Magic, and get a temporary bonus of +2 to ME. Blessed objects are effective as weapons against the supernatural, regardless of the monster's vulnerabilities, similar to Magic Weapons. There is no multiplier to damage, just straight rolls just like using the item as a normal weapon. The blessing takes one melee to perform and lasts for 1 to 6 hours (1D6).

Symbol: Almost every religion has a symbol, and most have several. In Christianity, the main symbol is the Cross. In Judaism, that symbol is the Star of David. Regardless of the symbol, it becomes a weapon in the hands of a Priest. All creatures that are affected by the Cross are affected by a Religious Symbol in a Priest's hands, but at twice its usual effectiveness.

O.C.C. Skills:

Mathematics: Basic - 98%

Language: Native - 98%

Language: Latin (or the traditional language of the religion in question) - 90%

Language: Select one - 90%

Select two science skills (+10%)

Lore: Religion (+25%)

Lore: Select one (+20%)

Research (+10%)

History (+10%)

Hand To Hand combat can be selected as an O.C.C. Related or Secondary skill. Basic counts as one skill and Martial Arts as three. Expert, Assassin and Commando are not available.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select eleven other skills. Select two more at levels four, six, nine, **thirteen**, and fifteen.

Communications: Any except Radio: Satellite and Scrambler

Computer: Any

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: Basic Electronics only

Espionage: Intelligence, Land Navigation, Wilderness Survival only

Mechanical: Basic and Auto Mechanics only

Medical: Any (MD counts as two skills) (+10%)

Military: None

Physical: Any except Acrobatics, Gymnastics, and Wrestling

Pilot: Any

Advanced Pilot: None

Pilot Related: Any except Weapon Systems

Science: Any (+10%)

Stage Magic: None

Technical Any (+15%)

W.P. Any except Heavy and Energy

Secondary Skills: Select six from the previous list. No bonuses

Standard Equipment: The standard uniform of the character's religion, at least one copy of the Bible (or the main religious text of the religion in question) on them and several more at home, a small selection of religious symbols, reasonable personal possessions (for a Priest), a small apartment or living quarters at the Priest's church/monastery, and possibly (65% chance) a small automobile (2D6 years old). Other equipment may be purchased or issued by the Church as needed.

Money: Starts with 2D4x100 in cash, Can get more through the church, but would need a good reason.

Game Master Notes: This class could be considered offensive by some people. Others could be uncomfortable playing a character of a different religion than their own. If this is the case, even if only one person gets upset, don't use it.

Experience Table:

1 0,000 - 2,000

2 2,001 - 4,100

3 4,101 - 8,500

4 8,501 - 16,500

5 16,501 - 25,000

6 25,001 - 36,500

7 36,501 - 50,100

8 50,101 - 70,000

9 70,001 - 95,200

10 95,201 - 130,000

11 130,001 - 179,500

12 179,501 - 230,500

13 230,501 - 280,000

14 280,001 - 328,900

15 328,901 - 390,000

The Pseudo-Psychic P.C.C.

By James Calder

Note: This character was designed with the first edition *Beyond the Supernatural* game in **mind**. Game Masters are, of course, free to develop this character with O.C.C. skills and O.C.C. related skills as necessary.

Madame Divina looked longingly into her crystal ball, "Detective, you will find the body of the deceased near ... railroad tracks."

Lieutenant Keith Johnson, ever skeptical, replied, "And these railroad tracks, are they anywhere in **particular**?"

"They are in North **Dakota**."

"Madame Divina, the deceased was found in North Carolina."

"With a dog?"

"No dog."

"Just as I thought, the spirits are cheating with me. It is obvious *she* is in North Carolina and has an aversion to dogs."



The pseudo-psychic is *not* a psychic. It is an individual who believes that he is psychic or is someone who has developed normal abilities that mimic psychic abilities.

The pseudo-psychic is someone who has channeled his P.P.E. into the abilities of probability reasoning and subconscious inference. The character can sense and read a lot from a situation simply by being placed in the situation. Subconscious manipulation of the environment can create a **pseudo-psychokinetic**; the reading of facial features has created many pseudo-diviners.

The characters may develop skills that would label them rogues; they just feel that they are required to perform the **paranormal**. This belief that the character has great psychic ability in fact creates a virtual psychic rock, completely unafraid of the unknown.

The worst thing about working with one of these characters is they feel they are experts in the field and will often discount the abilities of true psychics as "bogus", citing some obscure (albeit, non-factual) work or psychic hotline to back up their claims of supremacy.

Determining P.P.E. Points

The character has 3D6 P.P.E. points. This is the pseudo-psychic's permanent base. There are no powers to purchase.

Bonuses And Vulnerabilities

The character must roll over 15 to save vs. psychic attacks.

+5 to save vs. horror factor ("I am one with the vampire, it does not frighten me!")

+3 to save vs. magic ("Magic? I wrote that spell she's casting!")

+5 to save vs. possession ("I cannot be possessed, let the demon try to get in me!")

The character cannot read magic and has no natural psychic abilities.

Cannot really sense the supernatural, evil, or magic.

1. Subconscious Inference

The character has developed a sort of precognitive ability. He has learned to read facial features and the significance of certain past events in order to be able to "see" the future. The pseudo-psychic must concentrate on the individual or scene to be able to see the future or present (in the case of pure **clairvoyance**). The limitations are that all relevant information must be presented to the psychic and a semi-clear path must be **determined**. The base skill represents the ability to draw a correct conclusion.

This ability also allows the pseudo-psychic to see the desires and dreams of the subject simply by observation.

Base Skill: 30% + 4% per level of experience.

2. Subconscious Manipulation of the Environment

The character is able to systematically use the environment to his **advantage**. The pseudo-psychic can appear to **telekinetically** move objects or bend **spoons**. This is due to more mundane reasons, but the pseudo-psychic is convinced they are true paranormal abilities. **Base Skill:** 25% + 5% per level of **experience**. This ability gives the character a +20% to the palming skill.

3. See the Seer

The character seems to have developed an unnatural ability to determine when someone is watching. This may include a person, a demon, or some evil force. The character gets an uneasy feeling ("Do you get the feeling we're being watched?"). **Base Skill:** 30% + 3% per level of experience.



The Transcendent PCC

By James Calder

The transcendent is cursed with a kind of **immortality**. The "soul" or "consciousness" of the individual never fully dies, but instead moves on to inhabit a new **body**. These memories and experiences (as well as individual consciousnesses) move to the current life's subconscious, where they come to life when **triggered**. This character is proof that past lives and *deja vu* exists, however the transcendent doesn't know it. They may suspect it, but can never entirely prove it.

What does this mean for the character? The character has years (even centuries) of past knowledge that seems to manifest itself at the most unusual of occasions. A character with an **arcanist** in a previous life, may suddenly find themselves with the power to cast a globe of daylight when confronted by a **vampire**. Once the danger has passed, the character suddenly forgets the knowledge and cannot recreate it for the life of **them**. A character with a psychic past life may receive premonitions just before an attack by a creature that killed the previous life.

The lives may or may not be related, that is, **ancestral**. There is no explanation for these phenomenon.

The transcendent is **not** a psychic or a practitioner of magic. Luck or whatever has made the character what **s/he** is.

Base P.P.E. is 2D6.

Determining Past Lives

First, determine the number of past lives. GMs are free to determine where such a limit should be placed, but rolling 3D6 will give between 3 and 18 past lives.

Second, determine the number (or proportion) of the past lives that are significant in the development of the current **character**. Roll percentile, and multiple the result by the number of past lives (rounding down). For example, if a character generates 12 past lives and then rolls 46% on the percentile dice, the character has 5 ($12 \times 0.46 = 5.52 = 5$ after rounding) significant past lives.

Third, determine what role the significant past life played (if the roll results in another Arcanist or Psychic after one has already been assigned, that significant past life gets molded into the other and the total number becomes reduced - **do not** reroll for another past life).

01-15 Special: Arcanist or mystic. This past life was involved in the mystical **arts**. The character gains the following abilities:

Sense Magic, Sense PPE, and Understand the Principles of Magic at -30% (not really "understanding," just has inklings and insights). The character may also gain the same spells as an Arcanist, but cannot learn or purchase new spells (I don't know how I know, I just do). Whether or not the spells are available is calculated this way. **Take** the $(100 / (\text{spell level})) + (100 / \text{number of past lives}) - (100 / (\text{level of experience}))$ is the percentage that the character will know the spell. So, for instance, a 4th level transcendent character with a mage past life is trying to determine if he knows **Globe of Daylight**. It's a first level spell and he has 9 significant past lives. Therefore, he must get under $(100/1) + (100/9) - (100/4) = 100 + 11.111... - 25 = 86.11$

This character gains a one time bonus of 3D6 to PPE.

16-30 Special: Psychic. The past life was a psychic of some kind. The character gains the following abilities:

Sixth Sense, See Aura, and Sense PPE.

The character may also check to determine if the character knows a particular psychic ability. Use the same calculation as above, substituting **ISP** cost for spell level. The base **ISP** is the same as the latent psychic and increases at 10 **ISP** per level.

31-50 Professional. The past life was a professional individual of some merit. Select one skill from any skill category at +40% (do not include skill bonus from education or high **IQ**). Other skills selected from this category receive a bonus of +35% (do not include skill bonus from education or high **IQ**). This knowledge is inherited not taught, so the prerequisites are not **necessary**. So, for instance, if a character had a medical doctor in a past life, the character can perform the same skills as a doctor (doesn't know why), but will not be able to become a practicing doctor without the proper education.

The character will also attempt to take charge when his or her expertise are needed.

51-75 Aristocrat. The character really did not necessarily have great training in life, but instead was of strong character and / or **upbringing**. The character may add 2D4 attribute points to I.Q., M.E., M.A., or P.B. in any combination or in any quantity.

In addition, the character will be fond of rich, extravagant things despite current situation.

76-00 Child. One of the past lives died as a **child**. What does this mean? Essentially, the character receives the same bonuses as applied to the optional victim character.

Optional Additions to this character:

- The character has multiple personality syndrome. The character's past lives actually come to the surface on behalf of the individual instead of surfacing at **random**. The player may, with the support of the GM, create separate characters to be housed in the one **body**. The true character does not know the others exist (or does).
- Other past life possibilities that I didn't think of.
- Random skills from insignificant past lives. Perhaps a past life was an expert seamstress who lived a happy, productive life. **Character** would gain Sewing at 98%.

Bonuses and Vulnerabilities:

- The character gains all the bonuses and vulnerabilities of all the significant past lives divided by their number rounded up. So, if a past life would have a +4 vs. magic and the character has 3 significant past lives, that becomes +2 vs. magic.
- Must roll a 13 or higher to save vs. psychic attack if there is a psychic in the **past**. Otherwise, the standard over 15 is used.

Notes

This PCC was created with the 1st edition Beyond the Supernatural in mind. If you intend to use this creation for Nightbane or Rifts, the GM should use **his/her** judgment as to how to allot **OCC** skills and Related Skills. One suggestion, is to use the Psychic PCC from the Nightbane main book.



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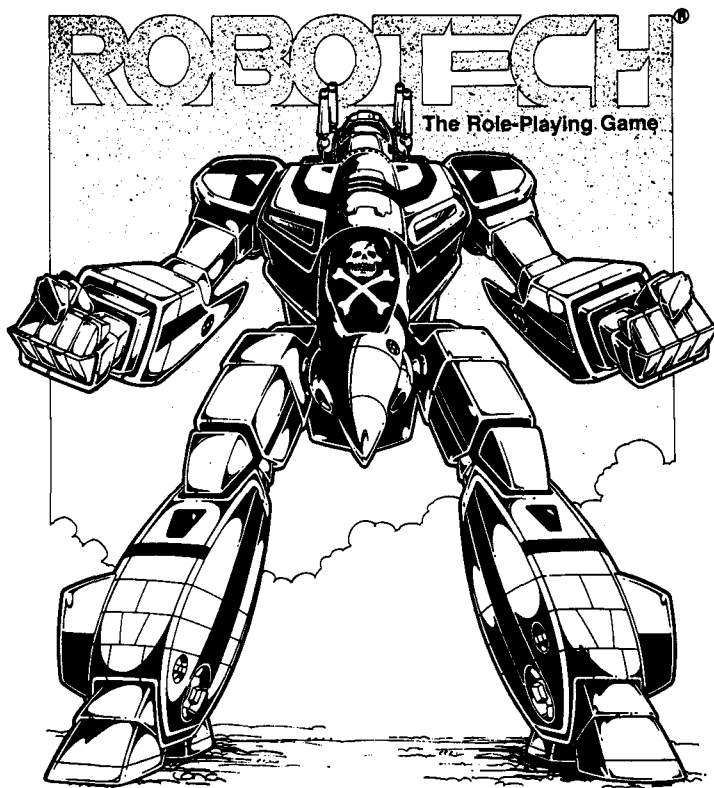
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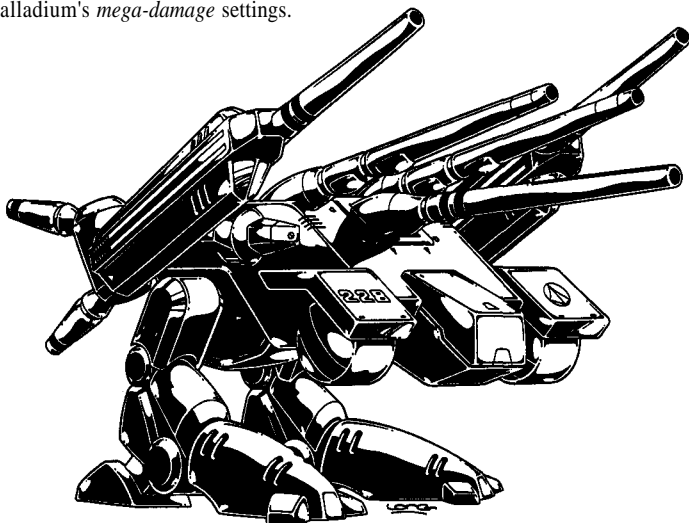
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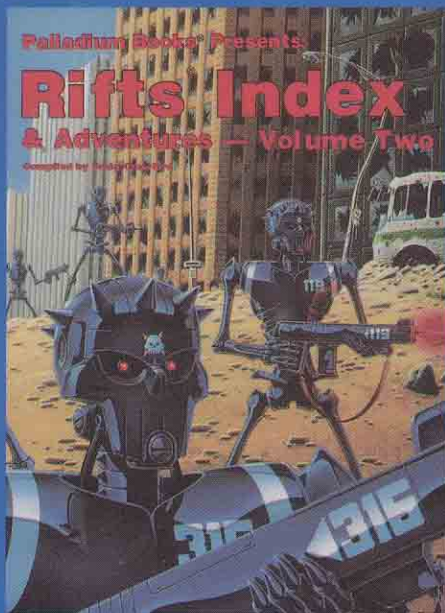
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